

URBAN ECOLOGY: PEOPLE, PLACE, PROCESS

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DESIGN, KRONBERG, HANNOVER

Presenter: Reinhard Martinsen

Organisation: City of Hannover, Germany



SUST.
THE LIGHTHOUSE ON SUSTAINABILITY

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Overview

In 1996, during early planning of the Hannover EXPO 2000 international exhibition, it was decided that a new housing estate, servicing 15,000 inhabitants, should be built close to the EXPO site as an example of sustainable urban development. By 2000, the first phase of development, consisting of 3,000 units for 5,000 inhabitants had been completed.

The Hannover-Kronsberg housing project received full support of the state's political decision-makers as well as those at local government level. Adhering to Agenda 21 recommendations, sustainable development is a dominant political objective in Hannover urban development issues. Currently, all planning and public service activities are based around three major factors: that they are economically competitive, environmentally friendly and socially compatible. Citizen participation in municipal initiatives constitutes a major addition to sustainable urban development.

Such an approach requires ambitious solutions and higher standards of building and construction. The state government enlarged the frame of governmental building codes for the Hannover Kronsberg project as a way of demonstrating its economic competitiveness.

Because of the holistic nature of the project, building design

solutions were devised by interdisciplinary teams of architects, along with city and landscape planners. Other experts were consulted on particular issues including energy, traffic and construction. After the structure of the new housing area had been identified, planning and construction tenders were invited through a national competition.

Specific objectives of the Hannover Kronsberg project included developing an urban design that combined working and living facilities. The new district is situated near a commercial area, allowing for good employment opportunities. Other considerations included ensuring a good social mix within the population of the area. As a result, 80 percent of homes form part of a social housing scheme with the remaining 20 percent available for private ownership. Social and cultural infrastructure and developments such as schools and community centres were completed within the early phases of development. A light-rail system means the city can be reached in just 20 minutes, while environmentally friendly land was chosen for rich biodiversity, and to retain the natural storm-water system. Energy consumption was also reduced by an innovative local energy system.

During construction, a town planning task force was instated to co-ordinate the planning and construction process. In addition, a second task force was attached to oversee environmental issues. The unit co-ordinated all activities via



Photography: Renzo Mazzolini

a permanent environmental impact assessment. Practical solutions, including training courses for craftsmen were provided and tenant and house owner participation was encouraged during the development stages.

The city owns most of the land, enabling standards to be kept high.

The level of public awareness about the scheme ensured that the energy concepts and ecological aspects of the project were well supported.

Obstacles to Innovative Developments

Obstacles to the development included the limited time spans, which allowed only pragmatic solutions. There was also some reluctance from traditional planners and architects to participate. Architectural solutions were also compromised, to some degree, in order to create a harmonious living environment.

The Hannover-Kronsberg housing project serves to prove how a sustainable vision can be achieved in line with current market conditions and how an ecological vision can be realised.

For more information, please go to www.sibart.org

Organisation Profile: The Hannover Region

Hannover is the Capital of Lower Saxony, one of the 16 states of the Federal Republic of Germany. Situated in the north of the country, Hannover is an economic, cultural and administrative centre, for just over one million inhabitants.

Hannover is host to major industrial and computer technology fairs, with many global companies establishing headquarters there. Volkswagen and Komatsu production is also based in Hannover.

The social democrat party and the green party share the majority of political support in Hannover. The Lord Mayor and Chief Executive Officer are in post entirely by citizen-elect.

In 2000, Germany hosted the first universal world exposition, EXPO Hannover 2000. The planning and construction of EXPO 2000 started in 1990, under the banner 'Mankind, Nature, Technology'.

In the early 1970s, Hannover implemented an integrated programme of urban development as a way of co-ordinating all public activity. Following the Rio Convention in 1992, sustainable development became the dominant political objective in Hannover urban development. Now, all planning and public service activities are based around three major factors: that they are economically competitive, environmentally friendly and socially compatible. Citizen participation in municipal initiatives constitutes a major addition to sustainable urban development.

The Hannover-Kronsberg housing project serves to prove how such a vision can be created.

Presenter Profile: Reinhard Martinsen

Reinhard Martinsen was appointed Director of Regional and European Affairs for the City of Hannover in 1997. He is also currently Acting Executive Director of the Metropolitan Region of Hannover.

Martinsen held the Director of Environmental Development Planning position for a period of five years, from 1987 to 1992, and was a key figure in the EXPO 2000 team, as co-ordinator of the Environmental Programme. Previous posts include responsibility for the city's educational, environmental and development planning projects between 1974 and 1987.

Prior to his involvement in the municipality of Hannover, Martinsen worked as Project Manager for the Regional Planning Institute at the University of Hannover, where he directed the division of Regional Educational Research and Development between 1969 and 1974.

Martinsen studied Architecture and Town and Regional Planning at the Technical University of Hannover and was awarded a diploma as architect and town planner in 1962. He holds a doctorate in Regional Planning.

Since 1998, he has been a member of the Steering Committee of the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign in Brussels. In 2000, he became a member of the Urban Expert Group of the European Commission, DG Environment. He is also a founding member of the Initiative of German Metropolitan Regions, Stuttgart.

Sust.: The Lighthouse on Sustainability aims to raise awareness of sustainable design in architecture. It was devised by The Lighthouse: Scotland's Centre for Architecture, Design and the City on behalf of the Scottish Executive and in support of the aims of the Policy on Architecture. It is funded by the Sustainable Action Fund.

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