Europan 17
Berlin

Living Cross

Concept

The design Living Cross deals with the new quarter in Karow. Along the important railroad axis and the future tower station Karow a lively quarter with many facets is created. The existing barriers were broken up as best as possible and integrated into the concept. The given four subareas were taken up and a space for all people was planned. A very important aspect was to effect the accessibility and the minimization of individual traffic. The central promenade, which runs through subareas one, two and three in particular, is characterized by many qualities and invites people to linger. The planning features a very high proportion of open spaces and particularly integrates the themes of sustainable and long-term urban planning. Thus, the blue-green infrastructure plays a decisive role and can be found within each construction field. In addition, it is complemented by the so-called red infrastructure, which is intended to make the neighborhood accessible to all people of any age or physical condition, while still functioning far from car-oriented urban planning, with sustainable mobility systems.

Thematic focus E17

With this year's theme of Living Cities 2, the area is located in the northeast of Berlin in the district of Pankow. On the one hand, the planning area is located within the borders of the capital, on the other hand, the beautiful scenic areas and the periphery of Brandenburg are not far away. The place gets its liveliness from the significant railway infrastructure. This provides a basic connection to the city and the surrounding countryside as far as Poland, but also creates points of conflict with local residents and other connections such as roads, bike paths and foot paths. Thus, the area also showed up on site as a kind of white spot in the landscape - with a lot of potential. From the beginning, it was important for the competition to deal with this area in a sustainable way and to create a new neighborhood with a lot of living space for all classes of the population and yet not to develop a satellite city. In the design, subareas one and four in particular are characterized by sustainable aspects and show that a higher building density can nevertheless be achieved. Through the establishment of community meeting points within the neighborhood, all persons (regardless of whether they are residents or local people) should have the opportunity to participate in numerous events, workshops, training sessions or team events. The participation and the decision about it has to be made by each person, this is another aspect of the living cross, because the liveliness only results from the final users of the area.

Observation area

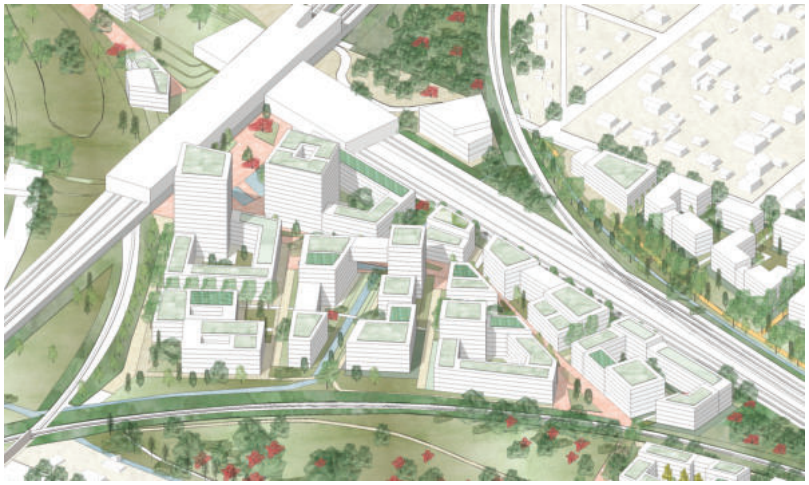
In the process of planning, the superordinate consideration area receives a significantly better connection to the public transport system and thus becomes a networked system. The local recreation areas in the surrounding area will be integrated into the design and will be assigned to a large scale through the establishment of attractive bicycle path connections. In particular, the people already living there can benefit from these new connections. The existing planning for the northern area integrates into the Living Cross and also receives new bus connections. The planned Sellheimer Brücke station offers another possibility for commuters to get to the city center more quickly and also represents an incentive for new residents. Currently, there is a slight mix of uses in the concerned area, which will be significantly improved by the design and will offer further uses, so that a visit to the new quarter is always worthwhile. The chosen design will give many people the opportunity to find a workplace close to home and, for example, to find an exciting place to work in the office and railroad station quarter or in the productive quarter. The open spaces can be used for all kinds of activities and also offer varied and rich in species natural areas thanks to their different planting concepts.

Project areas

The project area is characterized by a variety of different house typologies. These range from stacked town houses, to open and closed block structures, to larger crafts and commercial courtyards.

Project area 1: Office and station quarter

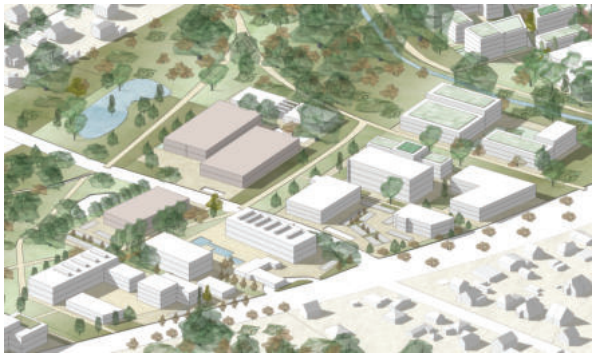
In project area one, the proximity to the train station creates a highly frequented area, with large office buildings and smaller restaurants or stores. The uses of the buildings are not purely limited to the building itself and can vary depending on the time of day or night. Multifunctional floor plans are conceivable in these areas, with open structures for both employees and visitors. The spacious promenade in the center of the quarter is on the one hand a connection for pedestrian and bicycle traffic (and of course the quarters bus), and on the other hand an important place for recreation. The first floor offers a variety of different areas. The train station and its surroundings play an important role. The station forecourt shows itself again and again with different spatial designs, whereby the residents themselves are in demand and can redesign the square using recycled materials provided, such as crates.



Project area 1

Project area 2: Neighboorhood quarter
In project area two, the focus is particularly on the neighborhood. In contrast to the office and train station district, the building density is significantly lower and the proportion of open space is higher.
The design shows that not every resident can have a private open space, but that the communal aspect plays an important role. The open inner courtyards contain areas that can be cultivated by the residents. The same applies to the roof uses, which, in addition to extensive and intensive green roofs, also include communal areas. The immediately adjacent public open space becomes an important recreational area.

Project area 3: productive quarter
In project area three, the focus is on the sustainable manufacturing of products. In this area, too, access for pedestrian and bicycle traffic is provided by the promenade, which creates an exciting spatial impression through slight offsets and the formation of smaller plaza areas.
The different building structures provide for a mixture of craft, commercial and residential areas. The resulting conflicts of use in a few places are prevented by spatial measures and the construction of craft and commercial courtyards allows for a completely different character in contrast to other development structures. The locally produced or manufactured products can be purchased directly at the courtyards or at the changing markets in the neighborhood and the station forecourt. The already existing open space is thereby expanded and supplemented with different plant species. The courtyards are partially integrated into this area, so that the people almost work on the green space.


Project area 3


Project area 4

Project area 4: Experiment House-Farming
In project area four, this term takes on a completely different meaning. Not only does the hill park at the station represent a completely new way of recycling accrued natural materials in the direct vicinity of the excavation pits, and at the same time connects the areas that are currently spatially separated from one another and entices them with a unique open space, further more the chosen building structure also gives it an experimental character. The buildings do not simply stand on the building site, they are rather connected to it and have a greenhouse-like flair. Thus, the radiating heat of the buildings is used for the cultivation of plants, shrubs and trees. These in turn purify the air inside the glass structures in such a way that it can be diverted into the houses with the help of technical equipment, thus ensuring a significantly better indoor climate.

On the one hand, the residents benefit from a healthier atmosphere, and on the other hand, the growth and development of the plants can be specifically observed and studied, and new cultivation techniques, substrate materials or light influences can be experimentally tested.
The house-farming buildings extend along the open space and almost become a part of it. Regular courses and training sessions will be held on the site, giving residents, school classes and students interesting insights into an alternative form of living.

Three neighborhood garages with sufficient parking spaces for the residents are distributed across all project areas. However, due to the new planning, the number of parking spaces is considered to be lower and it is assumed that some of the residents will not own a vehicle or that communities will form to use the vehicles jointly. Reserved car-sharing spaces are also available for this purpose. Furthermore, there is a bicycle parking garage and a garage for commuters. The bicycle parking spaces are especially designed for wider bicycles, such as cargo bikes. A self-help workshop is located on the first floor and the parcel depots are integrated into the different neighborhood garages, so that the delivery trucks only have to drive to the entrances of the neighborhood and no longer from door to door. Another facility is the rental of tools and other machines, which are rarely used in the household, but should nevertheless be available to the residents in case of need.
Another central point is the blue-green infrastructure, which provides for the distribution of rainwater through measures such as retention areas, infiltration trenches and swales. Areas are created in which the water should stay longer and others in which it can flow off faster. The existing rivers are included in the concept for this purpose.
During rain, the water is directed through the aboveground and underground areas and is partially held in storage basins. Such basins are also found in the hill park and, after cleaning, supply the houses with water for washing machines, for example. Depending on the weather conditions, the retention basins can be controlled in a targeted manner so that no flooding can occur. As an important side effect, water management has a good impact on the microclimate.

Due to the existing proximity to the railroad tracks, it was important to find a method within the design to deal with the railroad noise. For this purpose, the design proposes to build over the railroad line with the new S-Bahn tracks, so that the noise is reduced. Similarly, the noise tunnel can be equipped with solar panels and the side walls can be greened. In addition to these measures, it is planned to plant evergreen trees as far as possible in the areas in front of the noise barriers, so that the walls visually recede into the background for the residents.