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Adaptable city, adapted city

In considering how the subject of the adaptable city can be further developed and more clearly defined, we should give some thought to the purpose of the adaptation. In the current discussion in cities and locations two areas/aims will move more sharply into focus in future.

Firstly, in order to avoid conflicts of grouping, religious orientation or culture a city must be open city, a city that promotes the integration of newcomers. The latter may be new neighbours or immigrants from the district, another city or continent – even from other cultures, lifestyles or phases of life. It involves the basic integration of those who are different to oneself.

This prerequisite must be met in the conceived and planned structure, urban patterns, buildings, floor plans and elevations or streetscape, open spaces and places of retreat.

The question of which type of urban structure and regulation, public or private space will accomplish this, is to be demonstrated in European 13 and possible solutions identified.

Secondly, an adaptable city must provide an open and adequate response. There is no universal answer. It must be 'site-specific'. Each place, each city, each competition task has a specific place, history, society, culture, mood and identity. There is little to be gained from formulating or even copying recipes, procedures or general answers as an 'empty husk'. The draft plan must contain 'site-specific' answers. Wind turbines for generating electricity should only be located where they make sense and the wind is blowing, even if the design brief is for an energy-efficient city. The unique identity should not be lost, but rather reinforced. Identity based on the location creates sound solutions for a city, district or neighbourhood that must be adapted to accommodate the demands of the next generation. A draft plan is called for that – besides rules and structures – develops the potential of a place rather than reinventing it. This should be the more precise definition of European 13 in the discussion about future tasks in the city.

The adapted or adaptable city must in future aim towards integration and pay more attention to the genius loci.

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