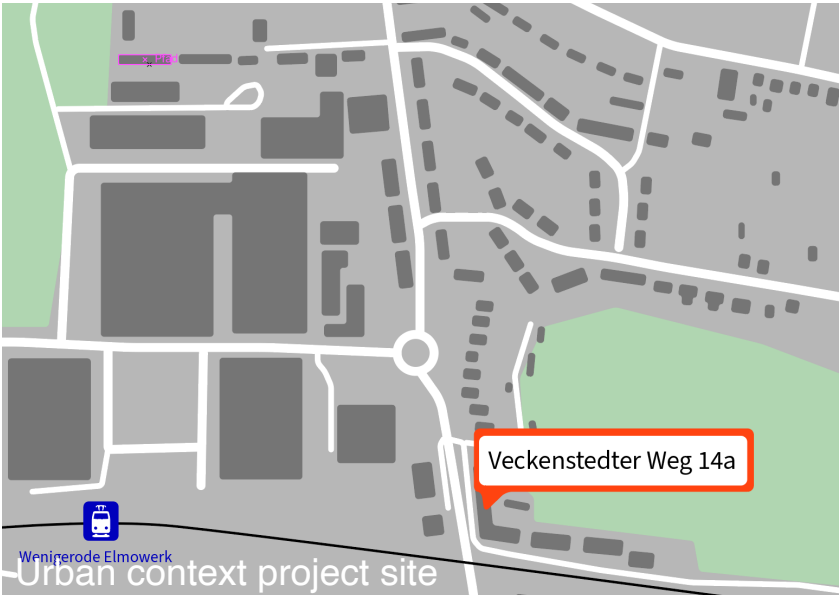


Wernigerode Germany

SCALE: S, M architectural and urban scale
TEAM REPRESENTATIVE: Architect, landscape planner
LOCATION: Town of Wernigerode, Saxony-Anhalt
POPULATION: ~32,810 inhab.
STUDY SITE: 22.37 ha
PROJECT SITE: 8 ha
SITE PROPOSED BY: GWW
ACTORS INVOLVED: GWW, City of Wernigerode
OWNER(S) OF THE SITE: GWW Gebäude- und Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Wernigerode mbH
AFTER COMPETITION: Realization of two residential buildings 2023–24



Integrative and strategic urban building blocks



URBAN CITY STRATEGY

The town of Wernigerode, in Saxony-Anhalt on the north side of the Harz Mountains, is known nationwide as a tourist destination. Its topographical situation only allows for urban expansion northwards. Population figures are stable with a slight downward trend in recent years. There are hardly any vacant flats available for young families to rent in the city. Most families therefore move to surrounding municipalities. GWW Gebäude- und Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Wernigerode mbH wants to change this situation by developing new areas in the city. The area under consideration (including both competition sites) is in the north-western part of the town, separated from the historic town centre by the Hannover-Halle (Saale) railway line.

SITE DEFINITION

The development is heterogeneous: large-scale commercial enterprises, two- to four-storey residential buildings (single-family homes, apartment buildings, terraced houses), and garden plots. To the north is the Bürgerpark, the site of a former garden show with extensive grassy areas, lakes, and various recreational uses. The main railway station is nearby and can be reached in ten minutes over the pedestrian and bicycle bridge to the west of the main station and an underground crossing area on Schlachthofstrasse. Veckenstedter Weg skirts the area on the east. The neighbourhood is framed by four roads and was all developed at much the same time. Two through roads with low traffic frequency provide inner linkage. The housing development on the north-western corner, dating from ca. 1890–1930, was designed as housing for factory workers and staff. The large gardens were envisaged as self-supporting. Other green areas are now used as allotments and growers' gardens or are derelict. There is a kindergarten on Giesserweg, but currently no other facilities of a social nature.



E16 LIVING CITIES Wernigerode Germany



Original plan Veckenstedter Weg



Oblique aerial view Gießbergweg 7



Photo Veckenstedter Weg 76-80



Photo Veckenstedter Weg 76-80



Photo Veckenstedter Weg 14 a



Photo Veckenstedter Weg 14 a

HOW MUST BE DEVELOPPED AND CONNECTED METABOLISM AND INCUSIVITY?

The two project sites mark the corners of a space that is today largely garden land with some small-scale development (former growers' gardens). From an urban planning point of view, it would be interesting to link traditional concepts from the garden city and settlement movements with the increased attention now being given to green spaces in the town for social and ecological reasons. The internal development of cities, which makes sense from an ecological point of view (reductions in land use, sealed-surface areas, traffic requirements), means that today's open spaces must be more than places of contemplation or ecosystem services. They can make an important contribution to socio-ecologically sustainable urban development, both as community gardens and as sites of local food production.

There are no plans to build on the study site in the near future, but suggestions should be offered about what the future 'Living City' could look like. Current debates – such as the populist polarization between 'single-family homes' on the one hand and 'prefabricated housing' on the other – show the urgent need for more differentiated proposals and new ideas of urban living ('urban imaginaries'), which can serve as models far beyond Wernigerode.

Ideas for continuing diversity of use and for a mixture of housing with an integrative character are desirable. Propositions on sustainability and the circular economy are also welcome. Also appropriate would be a mobility and energy concept that is adaptable to the future.

The process aims to develop a sustainable and ecological mixed-use framework plan, with a view to practicable development in smaller building and development phases. As a prelude, the two project sites 1 and 2 should be understood as framework and initiation projects.