

White Arkitekter and Rabe Landschaften design park in Hamburg shaped by residents' ideas

Together with Rabe Landschaften, White Arkitekter has won the competition to develop a new park along St. Pauli waterfront in Hamburg. Commissioned by the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Energy and Agriculture (BUKEA) in Hamburg, the architectural practices are designing a place for everyone shaped in collaboration with local residents, centred on community.

The new park site lies next to Park Fiction, a widely recognised, locally rooted urban planning and public art initiative that, during the 1990s, prevented proposed waterfront development and enabled residents to come together and shape a public space of their own. The design of the new park is likewise shaped by the influence of local residents. The winning proposal "Das Grüne Ding" (the green thing) is based on the "Wish production", a document with over 700 ideas from the residents gathered by the Park Fiction committee.

'We were given an amazing brief, with ideas from residents of St. Pauli for what the park should deliver. These ideas were useful, playful, radical, and strange, but together help frame an atmosphere or ethos for the project. The site, home to the old fish market and where St. Pauli and Park Fiction meet the river Elbe, is now threatened by seasonal flooding. This, along with the opportunity to reintroduce a new ecological landscape to the space, will also feed into the story. We can't wait to start the process of connecting these wishes and challenges to the place and start to build a unique new public space for the city of Hamburg,' says Jake Ford, Lead Landscape Architect, White Arkitekter.

The new park, which connects Park Fiction to the wider city, responds to residents' wishes for greenery and opportunities to relax by the water by planting trees that create shaded places to linger. Flood protection measures are integrated in the design and establish a future-proof, climate-resilient outdoor environment.

With skate parks, basketball courts, and open spaces for football and exercise, the park will offer settings that invite spontaneous activity and everyday movement. Activities already rooted in the area, including the weekly Sunday market and the city's annual festival celebrating the harbour's birthday, will be given a permanent home in the new park.

'With this design, we are bringing the harbour edge out of its slumber. Where grey concrete still dominates today, we are finally creating the 'Green Thing'. St. Pauli gets what it wanted: a real open space with shade, sports and a beautiful view of the Elbe. I am particularly enthusiastic about the fact that this was planned together with the people from the district. The fact that the neighbourhood's 'wish production' is now becoming a reality is a strong signal for cooperative, climate-friendly and modern urban development. I'm looking forward to when the first balls are thrown here in a few years and we can stretch out our legs towards the Elbe,' says Katharina Fegebank, Second Mayor of Hamburg and Minister for Environment, Climate, Energy and Agriculture.

Influence and participation

The engagement of the local community has been an important part of the process throughout the competition phase. During a workshop, residents were invited to engage directly with the teams and share their perspectives. Members of the community also attended the final presentation, and feedback from the neighbourhood was considered in the decision-making process and will continue to shape the project's further development.

'We are very much looking forward to working with Rabe Landschaften and White Arkitekter!

They have understood the results of our wish production exactly and translated the more than 800 wishes into an exciting park for everyone. The wishes for sport, exercise, socialising and ecology are integrated, while the roughness of the shore strip is preserved. For us, it is now a matter of working out a concept for a tea garden (Cay-Bahcesi), which will shape the place as a hospitable, non-commercial meeting point. It is about creating a social place without eventisation or compulsion to consume. The draft is a great basis for this.' says Justus Linz, Park Fiction Committee.

All competition proposals will be exhibited in the shop window at Kölibri District Centre from 23 February for a period of two weeks.

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White Arkitekter is one of Scandinavia's leading architectural practices. We work with sustainable architecture, urban design, landscape architecture and interior design for current and future generations. Our mission is to enable sustainable life through the art of architecture. Our vision is that by 2030 all our architecture will be regenerative and climate neutral through design excellence. We are an employee-owned architecture collective consisting of approximately 600 employees with a presence in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Canada and East Africa.