



Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg

Erster Bürgermeister

Opening of the new HafenCity University building

2 June, Überseeallee 16

Mr Burdett,

Dr Pelka,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking on behalf of the Senate, as well as for myself, I should like to warmly congratulate the HafenCity University on its new building. We hope, and are indeed sure, that the key, which the Senator for Science and Research has just handed to you, will unlock new doors leading into the future of Hamburg.

Or am I singing off key here? Is this asking too much? I think not. Of course, the symbolic value of many items of everyday use is frequently over-worked. But what I really mean is that we hope that the HCU – especially in view of its location which is so rich with symbols – will play an essential part in adding new subdominant chords to the large and growing city of Hamburg.

Cities resonate in a key of their very own. There were cities that developed and practised democracy. There were cities that gave birth to major inventions. There were cities in which knowledge and prosperity were the common good of all citizens. It was no accident that we included these sentences in our Hamburg government policy declaration.

Today, once more, cities are the places which will determine what the world in the 21st century looks like. They are laboratories where it is possible to conduct experiments that people elsewhere do not yet dare to try. And a recurrent pattern in Hamburg's history is the courage to change the status quo, and we must not lose that.

Cities, especially large cities, always hold out the promise of a better future.

What makes cities attractive and liveable? Having enough good, affordable housing available is the best way to resolve the dissonance called “gentrification” that makes harmony so difficult. What else? Good, comprehensive education opportunities, excellent quality nursery schools for families; places to shop, leisure and recreational amenities, plus cultural highlights. Hospitals. And? An attractive, liveable city must be beautiful.

Partly because, as we have known for a long time, being attractive is a location factor for a city; good transport links are not enough, on their own, to induce anyone to set up his or her innovative company here instead of somewhere else. And partly for the sake of all the people migrating to Hamburg, the people we are hoping to attract and who want to continue their “pursuit of happiness” here.

The concept of the culture of building, or *Baukultur*, has recently gained fresh importance. What should a city be and what should it look like? We need an ongoing public discourse in order to find the answers.

People who live in Hamburg are lucky. Thanks to its waterside location and historic development, the city already starts from a good place. The spectacular locations on the Elbe River or by the Alster Lakes create a backdrop for premium buildings of excellent design, many of which date from the early 19th century and are complemented by other buildings whose contemporary architecture is - not always but mostly - impressively fine in quality.

Hamburg is, moreover, one of the greenest big cities in the world, even if one were to discount the woods, agricultural land and nature reserves that are sited within Hamburg’s city-state limits. 250,000 roadside trees, 120 parks both large and small: green and built-up space is no contradiction in this city, because the two have always been seen as belonging together.

Hamburg is growing and urban development continues too. New buildings are being erected in the central part of the city. This is the opportunity to rectify planning

mistakes - buildings that are now thought unattractive or poor quality - with new structures. But new neighbourhoods are also emerging and they too will place their stamp on the city - HafenCity, for example, that is changing both the inner city and the cityscape itself; or Central Altona, a development that will change the heart of what used to be an independent town.

Here in the HafenCity University we have a good view of the future of the city. A city by the water. And we don't need to wait until construction work in the eastern part of HafenCity has reached the Elbe Bridges, which are easily visible from here, before turning our gaze to the city beyond the bridges. On the one hand to Hamburg's 'East End'. Here are the inner city neighbourhoods - the Hamburg residents know them as Hammerbrook, Rothenburgsort, Hamm, Horn and so on - with excellent waterfront sites along the Bille and Elbe Rivers just waiting to be discovered. And looking south, we see the Elbe Island of Wilhelmsburg and Harburg Upriver Port – the site of the International Building Exhibition and Garden Show – green districts with waterways that have already been discovered and are to be further developed.

In Hamburg, Baukultur means ... and here we can once again draw on a musical analogy ... preserving the old and integrating the new, without pandering to popular opinion and offering something that is so fleeting that by the next season people wonder, "who released that?" We must create quality solutions that satisfy current demands but are also designed to last.

So let's strike up the band! In order to continue the development of the culture of building in Hamburg, we need well-educated specialists. And that's what the HCU is about. Hamburg has decided to create its own university for architecture and metropolitan development, to bring together the disciplines vital to the art of building. This has allowed us to bundle resources and create better offers for everyone. People engaged in a variety of disciplines can collaborate while still students and inspire each other. This is good preparation for the realities of professional working life.

Many different specialists are needed to continue building a liveable city and they must be able to understand what "makes other people tick" in order to work well

together. Because a good house is more than a sound structure and a good city is “more than a heap of stones” as Wolfgang Borchert, himself from Hamburg, once said many years ago.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Richard Sennett, a sociologist from the USA, says the city is a frame of mind... and a physical environment; but they are not automatically in harmony. Why is he right? Because, on the one hand, no progress is made without the citizens' involvement, without the creativity which finds an ideal environment in the 24/7 laboratory called “city”; without spontaneity, social communication, in short, without democracy.

On the other hand progress does not happen without planning, the ceaseless building, enhancing and altering of the infrastructure which allows the physical environment of the city to function in the first place.

Infrastructure growth must - especially in large, growing cities - keep pace and, both in Germany and other European countries, age with its city in smart manner: in a way that benefits every user, including the less mobile.

And the setting for all this is the unabated global rise in the consumption of energy, land and other resources. Germany and its cities are looking for ways to opt out of this type of development.

At the moment Germany is seeking a way out with its turnaround in energy policy, which is intended to guarantee reliable supplies, safety, conservation of resources and urban life with all its amenities.

Are we, is the city, smart enough to achieve that? Richard Sennett postulates open town planning systems, and his compatriot Edward Glaeser sounds a hopeful note with the words: “This is why cities have come back. Knowledge is more important than space.”

A “learning city” that continually reinvents itself - perhaps that is the true, deeper meaning of the “smart city” that everyone's talking about.

And this is where you come in, HafenCity University!

Here's what Hamburg needs and expects of you: Research into the technical, economic, social and environmental development of the city with the aim of exploring the basics, estimating the consequences, providing platforms for exchange, offering qualifications and ideas; transfers of knowledge;

We would like you to link the academic and practical aspects of teaching and research, to expand clusters; to conduct systematic, qualitative research on social cohesion issues, the quality of life and economic power of a modern urban society, which is growing but also wants to be, indeed must be socially inclusive, liveable and prosperous. To put it in more academic terms: systematic reflection and fresh insights for legitimization, control and commitment.

That is no small matter, but there is already, for example, the MIT Media Lab in Boston, USA, whose City Science Initiative, "given the commitment to urban innovation in Hamburg", could well imagine cooperating with Hamburg in a European Living Lab City project. In Boston, "urban development" in general and Hamburg's HafenCity in particular are on the radar.

I find that exciting, and not only because I was able to gain a personal impression some time ago on a visit to Boston. But above all because that is exactly the idea we ought to have: to be a "City Lab" in a "Living Lab City". The HCU must be the place for discourse, where people not only talk about crucial issues in the urban development field, but also experiment with them, develop ideas that are good and - why not? - avant-garde too, in order to arrive, finally, at practical proposals.

Permit me to formulate a few questions which a Hamburg City Lab might perhaps answer.

How can we ensure that our city, with its rising number of residents, and all other cities with increasing populations, grow in such a way that everyone continues to enjoy living in our cities? The whole range of development possibilities is easily

illustrated by comparing two cities: in Singapore 5.4 million people inhabit an area of 714 square kilometres; in Hamburg nearly 1.8 million people inhabit 755 square kilometres. Hamburg, and most other European cities, are not about to experience a population explosion such as that seen by the city state of Singapore, but Hamburg, also a city state, needs to answer the question of how the quality of life and the environment, urban greenery and open spaces can be preserved if, by the end of the 2020s, the city is home to perhaps two million citizens.

And of course, we ought not to pretend we can fix the number of residents by planning committee vote. For example, by limiting residential building activity. The pull of cities, and our city is no exception, is so powerful that nothing will prevent the arrival of people pinning their hopes on a new life in the city. A lack of dwellings would therefore only result in rising prices for the few apartments available, which would affect both long-standing residents and new arrivals alike. Apartments would become out of reach for those earning low wages, or those whose income is merely normal. We must not forget that in Germany the average (monthly) income is about 3,000 euros – gross. And it must be our objective to ensure that someone earning this average wage, or even as little as the minimum wage about to be mandated in Germany - and at 8.50 euros an hour, a 40-hour week translates into 1,473 euros gross a month - is able to afford a place to live in Hamburg or comparable cities.

Cities would fail, both culturally and as places for people's hopes and aspirations, were they to concentrate in future on a homogeneous milieu. Let's turn to another vision in urban policies; we want the creative class to feel at home in our cities and free to develop their talents; but a city that restricted itself to this milieu alone, would also be deadly boring and unable to function at all.

In order to ensure that new built dwellings remain affordable, there is no alternative to public subsidies for housing. Hamburg uses its planning options to mandate that one third of the dwellings in all larger construction projects are rent-subsidized. Thus, scattered throughout the city, including the good residential locations, affordable new apartments are being built; the starting rents are between 6 euros 10 cents per square metre or, under a different subsidy scheme, 8 euros 20. The annual cost to the City of these subsidies is about 100 million euros.

The housing industry tells us that even when a company owns the land, it is not at present possible to build homes to let at starting rents of ten euros per square metre or less without state subsidies. The industry reports that building costs alone, not including the cost of the land, are 2,800 euros per square metre. The average cost in 2012 was 2,602 euros, according to figures released by the Hamburg Mortgage Institute for subsidized housing.

For example, one major task for this university could be to find ways in which homes can be built more cheaply, without compromising on quality. Despite the large stock of over 900,000 apartments in Hamburg, which rent for an average – that is, taking expensive and inexpensive dwellings together - of 7 euros 56 per square metre, it must be possible to create new housing that does not have to be subsidized to make it affordable for people earning a normal wage.

At the MIT Media Lab that was already mentioned, one response to the challenge is the concept of the “CityHome” - an apartment that seeks to provide all the functions of a home on 20 or 45 square metres of floor space by using a large range of options for conversion. However, it is rather debatable whether that is also an answer to the challenges which face the cities of Europe, certainly the less densely populated ones. But it does show that the culture of building in the metropolises throws up new questions.

By the way, we are actually seeing an opposite trend here. The number of square metres available to each person is steadily increasing. And so is the number of apartments required. Here is a telling statistic: the last time 1.8 million people lived in Hamburg, in the 1960s, slightly over 600,000 dwellings met their needs. Today, with almost the same number of inhabitants, 900,000 dwellings are not enough. Of course that has much to do with changes in life styles, family structures and the fact that people are living longer. But it is obvious that the ideal home for a single-person household has not yet been developed. Neither in terms of function, nor price. At any rate, this University’s research teams should not shirk this challenge, because the number of single-person households in our cities continues to rise. In Hamburg they form an absolute majority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Urban green spaces are important: they include nature reserves, the landscape axes, parks, the green network formed by linking together the green open spaces and the many, many roadside trees. All of this must be preserved and tended, we need more of them to enhance the quality of life as well as the city's resilience to the potential consequences of climate change. New ways of improving nature in the city must be developed. Which is, for example, already happening where greenery is being planted on roof-tops. Another aspect of 'Baukultur' in the metropolis.

We know that we need to cautiously set about the densification of our cities if we are to satisfy both the growing demand for living space and the desire for green, open spaces. Perhaps that will mean building five-storey houses where three stories have been normal. Or six stories where there used to be four or five. This could well actually add to the quality of the city. Because that is how many of the most attractive districts in our city are built, for example in the "Wilhelminian style" - although in Germany we prefer to say "Gründerzeit" and leave out any reference to the Kaiser. Part of the charm of these districts is that commerce, even industry, have a place in their midst. Therefore we must finally say farewell to the flawed town-planning ideal of dividing the city by functions. And that is actually easier than in the past, because technical progress has helped reduce emissions.

By the way, commerce and industry still play a large role in Hamburg, unlike in other cities. The view from the windows of this university gives the lie to all those who prophesied that the economy would become totally service-based. We must therefore ensure that German laws are amended to permit commerce and industry to stay "bang in the middle" of town.

And we must think about how commercial buildings could make more economical use of the limited space in a big city than is currently the case. In other words, we are thinking of multi-storey industrial buildings; they already exist in other parts of the world, where new ones are still being built. And commercial buildings should be sustainable constructions, meaning that when the first, second or third user has moved out, they are still in good condition. We are now seeing that happen, not only

in other parts of the world, but with some of our own historic commercial buildings. It is plain to see just around the corner from here, in the historic warehouse district Speicherstadt.

After residential and commercial building issues, transport is the key issue in metropolitan development. In the built city - and in order to safeguard its urban qualities - expanding the public transport system is the only way to guarantee long-term, convenient mobility. So forms of transport in the city must be attractive enough to compete with the private car. Bans and regulations are no substitute for attractiveness.

Therefore investment is needed: in the metro system - in Hamburg that means the "S" and Underground train services - and in bus services and capacity. Above all, transport must be intermodal. It must be possible for people to get from A to B without hassle whenever they want. Therefore a city such as Hamburg relies not only on trains and buses, but on ferries, park & ride or bike & ride facilities for drivers and cyclists, taxis, a wide-spread car sharing network, and a large stock of cycles for hire - known here as the StadtRad... and in London as the Boris Bike.

And these days, of course, everything must be conveniently accessible via an app, like our switchh.

Handicapped accessibility is very important in the urban, metropolitan space, for example in relation to public transport.

It is also clear that the smart city will be electrified, especially in the transport sector. Therefore we must promote electro-mobility, and when it comes to public transport we are pursuing a strict policy of ordering new buses only from the manufacturers of emission-free vehicles.

Urbanity functions especially well in "Walkable Cities", as Jeff Speck shows in his book of the same title. He is, in fact, quite right in saying that the growth of cycle traffic is also a valid measure of urbanity. In this field, numerous improvements are no doubt necessary and possible. We have started to do something about it.

In his book Jeff Speck describes urban development from the pedestrian's point of view and advocates practical compromises. After all, our cities have already been built and the street space can't be extended indefinitely, and after all, the number of cars registered in our cities continues to rise, despite many a speech at many a congress. Speck cautions against listening to experts speaking for only one form of mobility, whether that be the motorists', cyclists' or pedestrians' lobby. He works out what would be needed to satisfy every wish, and I quote: "... a Main Street over 175 feet wide. This is more than twice the normal width and about as efficacious an urban environment as a large-jet runway – and just as conducive to shopping."

We have already mentined the smart city. It is important to use the possibilities the digital world offers. Not only for our transport needs, not only as apps for taxies, public transport, cycle hire or car sharing. But also when using public services, for example when we need to contact the authorities. Or when we seek to improve health-care infrastructure, for example to enable someone in need of care to live a self-determined life in their own home for as long as possible. A vast field of research for metropolitan developers!

The waterside city was also mentioned. However, the amphibian character of our metropolis is not limited to the River Elbe, which we see before us, or the Alster River, which forms a large "lake" in the city, or the Bille, which flows from the east into the city. A lot of rivers and even more canals criss-cross the city. You only really appreciate that if you travel along these old commercial routes. I suggest that you paddle or row a boat along our waterways. And you will gain a completely new understanding of Hamburg. You'll also discover a lot of hidden potential in the city. At least, that was my experience.

Before I forget, I have one small wish. As you know, this building, like others before it, cost more than was budgeted. And next door a huge concert hall is being built; it will be quite splendid, but the cost overrun is several times the original budget. Please find out how this kind of thing can be avoided, teach your students to avoid it and learn to plan construction projects that are completed on budget.

So there we have it, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The underlying concept of the HCU, founded in 2006, is to create a new configuration of the established disciplines of architecture, construction engineering, town planning and geomatics and thus give the university its special profile. Besides focussing on design concepts and technical construction, there is to be an emphasis on socio-economic and social science issues, considerably expanding the interdisciplinary potential of courses. Which is, of course, why the facility is called HafenCity University Hamburg - University of the Built Environment And Metropolitan Development.

Study always involves looking at practical applications, everyone in this city knows that. Any Hamburg native may say, "Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas", meaning "Fortunate is he, who is able to know what is at the bottom of things" when he wants to wade the muddy waters of the upper reaches of the Alster. It is no coincidence that your new university is in the centre of the biggest and most ambitious urban development project now being built in Hamburg. Day by day, you can see the new city taking shape and observe all the things needed to create a functioning, built city environment.

You can judge for yourselves what is good or what is not so good about HafenCity, and draw conclusions for your own work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope I've been able to strike some chords with you. And I wish everyone at the HCU that your studies and observations leave you some time to look out of the window, because Hamburg really is a beautiful city. Thank you very much.