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STASSFURT



## International Building Exhibition Urban Redevelopment Saxony-Anhalt 2010

# STASSFURT



INTERNATIONAL BUILDING EXHIBITION URBAN REDEVELOPMENT SAXONY-ANHALT 2010



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STAßFURT



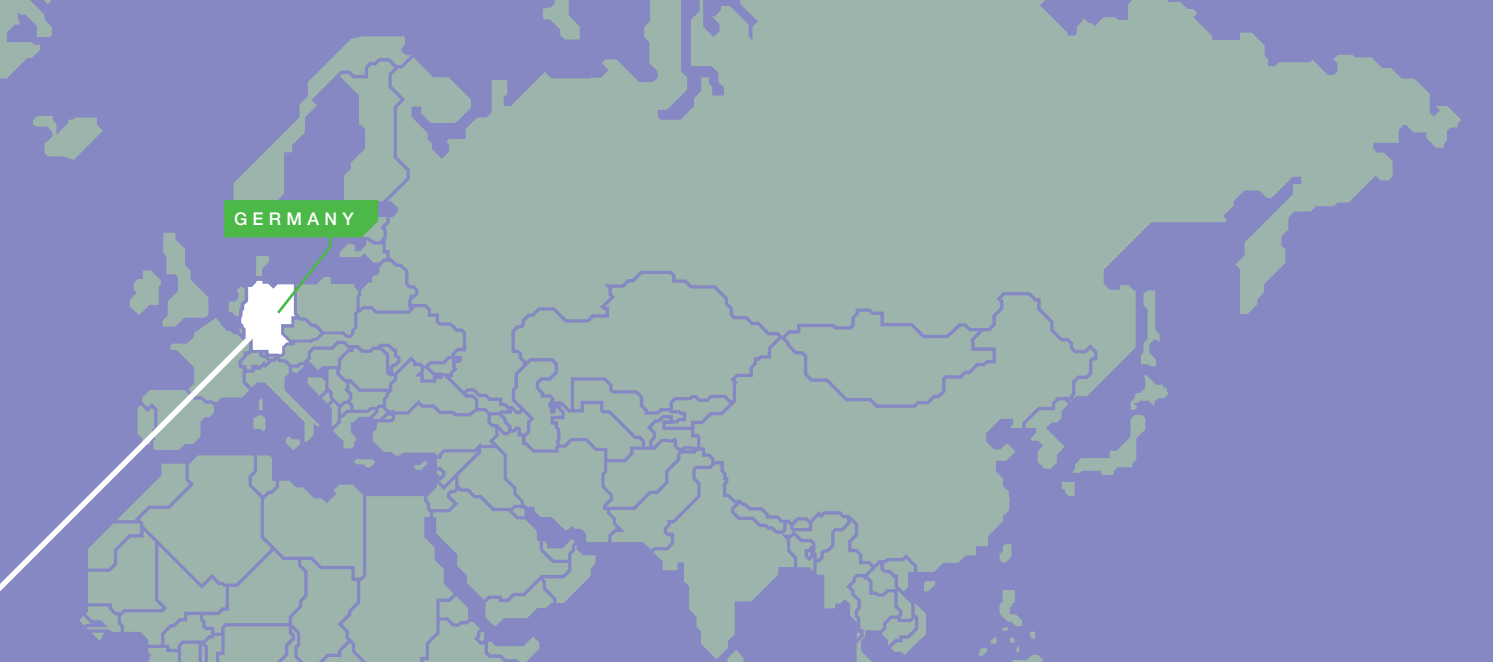
# STAßFURT

GIVING UP THE OLD CENTRE



# THE IBA CITIES IN SAXONY-ANHALT





## GIVING UP THE OLD CENTRE

# STASSFURT

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THE EUROPEAN ADJUSTMENT AND FUNDING POLICY

## CITIES MAKE UP EUROPE

On the path to a united Europe it is important to diminish the differences between prospering and disadvantaged regions. Cities therefore, as the lifeblood of the regions, are central to the European adjustment and funding policy. Cities, particularly those in regions affected by unemployment and emigration, must be stimulated and promoted as vital centres.

From 2000 to 2009, all 19 IBA cities received funding for the operational programmes in Saxony-Anhalt to the tune of 1,958,409,397.05 Euro from the European Structural Funds.

From 2007 to 2013, the ERDF allocates 1,181.2 million Euro to Saxony-Anhalt in order to relieve economic, ecological and social problems in cities. The municipalities participating in the IBA Urban Redevelopment 2010 will therefore benefit significantly from the support provided by the European Structural Funds.

With the IBA Urban Redevelopment 2010, the federal state aims to contribute to urban renewal, to find solutions for social and economic problems and to improve economic development and employment opportunities in the 19 selected IBA cities. With this in mind, participative and integrative strategies and projects are developed for designated problem zones. Further objectives include measures towards the revitalisation of the inner cities, the regeneration of industrial sites and the restoration of wasteland.



### **EU STRUCTURAL FUNDS FOR THE CITY OF STASSFURT**

**Funding 2000–2006, EU resources:** OP ESF 3,702,285.63, OP ERDF 22,369,532.92 of which urban development, redevelopment 3,376,862.93, total 26,071,818.55 | Funding 2000–2006, nat. public OP ESF 2,359,767.37, OP ERDF 21,247,882.26 of which urban development, redevelopment 2,673,196.26, total 23,607,649.63 | Funding 2000–2006, private OP ESF 747,105.80, OP ERDF 39,673,945.93 of which urban development, redevelopment 0.00, total 40,421,051.73 | Funding 2000–2006, sum of investment OP ESF 6,809,158.80, OP EFRE 83,291,361.11 of which urban development, redevelopment 6,050,059.19, total 90,100,519.91

**Funding 2007–2013, EU resources:** OP ESF 130,024.43, OP ERDF 1,694,013.40 of which urban development, redevelopment 314,589.00, total 1,824,037.83 | Funding 2007–2013, nat. public OP ESF 89,108.51, OP ERDF 417,092.24 of which urban development, redevelopment 227,805.81, total 506,200.75 | Funding 2007–2013, private OP ESF 10,462.42, OP ERDF 2,327,151.64 of which urban development, redevelopment 0.00, total 2,337,614.06 | Funding 2007–2013, sum of investment OP ESF 229,595.36, OP ERDF 4,438,257.28 of which urban development, redevelopment 542,394.81, total 4,667,852.64

**Funding 2000–2006 and 2007–2013, EU resources:** OP ESF 3,832,310.06, OP ERDF 24,063,546.32 of which urban development, redevelopment 3,691,451.93, total 27,895,856.38 | Funding 2000–2006 and 2007–2013, sum of investment OP ESF 7,038,754.16, OP ERDF 87,729,618.39 of which urban development, redevelopment 6,592,454.00

**Sum total:** 94,768,372.55

OP ESF – Operational Programme, European Social Fund

OP ERDF – Operational Programme, European Regional Development Fund

All figures given in Euro



AMBITION – AN INTERVIEW WITH ARMIN FORKER

## STASSFURT'S DEVELOPMENT HAS WORLDWIDE RELEVANCE

*Following the opening of the world's first potash mines, Staßfurt experienced an unforeseen period of prosperity. The first signs of subsidence soon showed, which led to the loss of the historic town centre. How did this come about?*

**Armin Forker:** When the first two mineshafts were sunk in 1851/52 in order to mine rock salt, the potash salts were discovered by accident. Their value was soon recognised and the mineshafts were subsequently used to mine potash. Mines were dug up to a depth of 700 metres. Inadequate knowledge of geology, hydrology and the mechanical properties of the salts drew grave consequences. The mineshafts flooded, and a mining subsidence area appeared in the town centre, with the noted consequences.

*Following the political turnaround in the GDR, extensive surveys were made of the area, mainly by the State Office for Geology and Mining Saxony-Anhalt (LAGB) ...*

**Armin Forker:** Surveys of the mining subsidence area were made long before that. Staßfurt is a perfect example of near-continuous study in

relation to potash mining. Observation and analysis began in 1890. In the GDR, geological surveys and mining subsidence studies were carried out from 1962 on, and predictions relating to the areas at risk of subsidence were made for the first time. From 1977, a complex survey including deep drilling began. This localised the area at risk and forecast the flooding of the area. After German reunification, expertise was first based on older data and more recent surveys of the water level. These formed a basis for Staßfurt's interdepartmental working group, which focused from 1995 on Staßfurt's problem. The Staßfurt joint project finally began in 1999 with financial support and active expert assistance from the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt.

*What were the findings of this research, and to what extent was it a prerequisite for urban redevelopment within the framework of the IBA and for the new Staßfurt centre?*

**Armin Forker:** A complex analysis and evaluation was made of the technogenic and geogenic influences on the town. Water levels, subsidences and possible tremors were intensively monitored. Subse-



“Staßfurt’s problem is exceptionally complicated, but also exciting for scientists.”

Armin Forker

head of division in the Ministry for Economy and Labour Saxony-Anhalt

quently, some part of the inner city were defined as unsuitable for building, others were earmarked as safe for redevelopment, and the subsidence area was reduced. A completely new water management system for the city made the recent redevelopment possible.

***Cooperation therefore between experts in diverse fields...?***

**Armin Forker:** Definitely. Scientists and practitioners from various fields, including hydrologists, underground surveyors, geotechnologists, seismologists and mining engineers ... they all worked together in a team.

***There’s a research project for Staßfurt’s mining subsidence area?***

**Armin Forker:** Staßfurt’s problem is exceptionally complicated, but also exciting for scientists, not least because one can draw on a reliable series of measurements going back a number of years. There is such a complex research project, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR). It should be completed in 2010.

***In this respect, Staßfurt acts as a model and has worldwide relevance?***

**Armin Forker:** Staßfurt’s development has worldwide relevance. Russia too has had experiences with the flooding of potash mines, for instance in Beresniki in the south Urals, but they don’t have our level of knowledge. Experts therefore come here to see how we have dealt with the underground surveys, the continuous monitoring and the subsequent plans for redevelopment with the new Staßfurt centre. The concept realised within the framework of the IBA was highly successful and has a model character in that it answers the question of how to plan in cities, which have suffered from mining subsidence. In this sense, Staßfurt really is something special.



STASSFURT

## A STORY OF LOSS AND NEW BEGINNINGS

**Every step in Staßfurt’s “Kaligarten” is a step through 150 years of potash history. The two prominent potash shafts, the first in the world, are now closed. Yet one can still imagine how the now backfilled tunnels led to the once bountiful potash seams. Proud miners worked daily to bring the “white gold” to the surface. Today, in the same location, the sun shines on a lake, which was conceived within the framework of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Urban Redevelopment 2010. The view is expansive, curtailed only by the green area on the opposite shore. This is a good spot to contemplate the history and the future of this “potash city” on the banks of the river Bode: Staßfurt has changed.**

When a large army is camped on a shore and the commander is moreover an Emperor called Charlemagne, chroniclers note the date. For “Starasfurt” on the river Bode, this first verified reference in 806 – in association with an invitation to Abbot Fulrad of St. Quentin to the very same place – is recorded in the annals of history. At an age of 1,204, the city on the southern edge of the Magdeburg Börde there-

fore now counts as one of the oldest in Saxony-Anhalt. Medieval Staßfurt provided travelling merchants passing along the old trade and salt route from Lüneburg to Halle with a convenient ford across the Bode river. Here, waggons, the so-called salt guests, could rest and relax after weeks of travelling. With the construction of a citadel south of the river in the 11th century the people of Staßfurt sought to defend themselves from their enemies. In 1180 this settlement area was granted a city charter.

However, Staßfurt’s location on the river was not the only signifier of its suitability as a settlement area. Natural outcrops of salt on both sides of the Bode presented the ideal prerequisites for a good income. Although the manufacture of refined salt is recorded from the 12th century, production actually began far earlier.

The village of Alt-Staßfurt on the left or north riverbank was under the rule of the archbishopric of Magdeburg, while the Earls of Anhalt controlled the town of Staßfurt on the right bank. In 1276 the city was bonded and it ultimately fell in 1277 to the archbishopric of Magdeburg. This was largely due to the pomposity of the descendants of



Albert the Bear, the Saxon dukes John I and Albert II, who went to such extravagant lengths to celebrate their knightly accolade that they were unable to repay the considerable sum of 6,000 Silberman, which they had borrowed.

Staßfurt's development into a salt town of supra-regional importance is mainly due to the high-yielding salt deposits. In the 15th and 16th centuries, there were 32 salt cottages where the salt – a real treasure, which had to be defended – was won by way of boiling the brine until the water evaporated and only salt was left.

More structures were built, including defensive posts, double walls, towers and roundels. In 1469 a nave was added to one of the defensive towers built from 1420, this was sanctified in 1484 as the Johanniskirche. The tower dominated the cityscape until 1965, as did the so-called Eulenturm of 1450, a spy tower on the inner city wall, which was demolished in 1971. By 1467 the city wall had taken on its final form, enhanced and fortified by a second parallel city wall with a compound between the two. The roundel, which still exists today, fulfilled a defensive role until the Thirty Years' War. It is one of the largest in the

German-speaking area. During this period, field marshal Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly frequently quartered in the so-called Werdenslebenschen Haus, today the Salzland Theatre – a stroke of luck, as his staying there prevented the devastating looting which affected other cities. Today, the theatre's Tilly Hall, which dates back to the 16th century, is one of the city's architectural jewels. The former house of the Salzgraf (a kind of warden who controlled the salt trade) von Dieskau with its original wooden gallery dating from around 1680 is now Staßfurt's city and mining museum. From 1680, Staßfurt was controlled by the Brandenburg-Prussian Duchy of Magdeburg and it remained part of the territory known as the Holzkreis until 1807.

However, the most important date in the city's history is 31st January 1852, when Staßfurt's mineral salt mine celebrated the opening of the world's first two mineshafts for potash. The Prussian Minister President Freiherr Otto Theodor von Manteuffel and the Prussian Minister for Commerce and Industry August von der Heydt attended in person, and the shafts were named in their honour. In 1839, work had already started on an ambitious deep mining project to facilitate the storage of rock salt.



However, the borehole failed to produce any brine, so that a mineral salt mine became the only alternative. In the process of sinking the shafts, the miners came across potassium salts, or potash, which would later become hugely important for the chemicals industry and for agriculture. Staßfurt therefore had the first potash mines in the world, and since then it has been viewed as the cradle of the potash mining industry.

An entirely new industrial sector developed, launching a wave of set-ups. The Erste Chemische Fabrik (first chemicals factory) in the Atzendorfer Straße was established in 1861, followed in 1863 by Sauerbrey-AG-Staßfurt, today Chemieanlagenbau Staßfurt AG. In 1864, there were 19 private potash factories in Staßfurt; in its heyday in 1872 there were 33. The Magdeburg-Buckau chemicals factory, which later became the natron factory, was opened in 1882. In Staßfurt all these laid the foundations for the commercial production of potash fertiliser and for the succession chemicals industries. In the annals of history, there is even something recorded called potassium chloride fever: as the result of wild speculation in the building industry, a number of grand villas were built in the city in the late 19th century.

Salt, known as the “white gold”, brought wealth and status to the city on the Bode. It is said that in its prime, it was wealthier than the mighty city of Hamburg. The city’s development and expansion may be seen in direct relation to this rapid and grandiose economic rise. However, this bounty turned sour in the late 19th century when water flooded the mining fields, making further extraction impossible. In 1901 both shafts were deserted, and these were backfilled in 1905. Up to 1907 150 houses had to be demolished already. What no one had considered was the scale of the problem: directly beneath the historic centre of the town in an area measuring around 200 hectares cavities formed unchecked, and the ground level sank by over 7 metres. At first, this must have struck the townspeople as a bad dream, recollecting the legendary ancient sunken city of Atlantis: houses and towers first developed fissures and then began to sink slowly to rest at crooked angles. The tower of the parish church is still remembered by some as the “leaning tower of Staßfurt”; it had in the end diverged from the perpendicular by 4.86 metres and ultimately had to be demolished in 1965. More than 800 buildings shared this fate, including the historic market ensemble – the



Großer Markt, the Kleiner Markt, the Wendelitz and the Renaissance town hall dating from 1554. These are all included in the list of losses since its designation in the 1970s as an area of surface subsidence – a high price to pay indeed.

Staßfurt therefore, while spared the loss of valuable building substance that affected other cities in WWII, lost its centre as a direct consequence of underground mining. In the GDR era, the few remaining buildings were poorly managed by the city fathers. The construction of the two housing complexes Leninring, today Nord, and Am Tierpark provided many workers in the chemicals and electrotechnical industries (including the GDR's largest television factory) with modern homes outside the city centre. By now this, in addition to the areas damaged by surface subsidence, was falling increasingly into decline. In 1972 potash mining in Staßfurt was suspended. This ended a chapter of Staßfurt's history, and the town centre fell into decay.

In 1989 the political turnaround in the GDR was accompanied by economic upheaval and high unemployment. Today, the production industry dominates in Staßfurt, with the soda production industry as the biggest

employer. There are also 13 industrial parks, which provide additional space for entrepreneurial ideas. Of these, the TLG-Gewerbepark Staßfurt, which was established in 2006 on the grounds of the former television factory, is an excellent example of this type of development.

Staßfurt had to learn to live without its historic town centre, without a public façade, so to speak. For one long year, a diagonal swathe of cleared land running through the old town was an almost familiar picture – one without any palpable perspectives. However, Staßfurt has changed. Where there were once grand buildings, there is now a skilfully designed landscape, which preserves the memories of a great economic heyday and is at the same time a starting point for new visions for the future.







## TRANSFORMATION

# HOW MUCH OF A CENTRE DOES A CITY NEED?

After the political turnaround in the GDR in 1989, the main objective of the city fathers was to rescue the remains of the city of Staßfurt. Economic reform meant that thousands of jobs were lost through the closure or rapid downsizing of former GDR businesses such as the television factory and the construction of plants for the chemicals industry. Young people in particular moved away from the region. While Staßfurt had a population of 25,514 in 1990, this had dropped to 20,681 by 2000: where populations decline, neither trade nor the economy flourish. The buildings in the streets around the town centre, that is, near the mining subsidence area, fell into decline. It became increasingly clear that a functioning and intact town centre, a presentable town centre as a mark of pride in past achievements, is crucial to the residents' sense of identity. Staßfurt, the city divided into three by the river Bode and the railway system, needs its centre as a pivot, and as a connecting link.

Following its absorption into the national and federal funding programme in 1991, the renovation of the city began in Alt-Staßfurt, the area north of the Bode around the Königsplatz and the St. Petri church. Today, 19

years later, more than 70 percent of the buildings have been renovated. Most of the streets, avenues and squares have been modernised, and playgrounds, sports grounds and green areas have been created. As such, the late 19th century neighbourhood around the Königsplatz known as the “Nachtjackenviertel”, marked by the ravages of time and even scheduled for demolition in 1980, developed to become a popular residential area with the option of assuming the functions of the missing town centre. The same applies to Leopoldshall, the eastern district which has been part of Staßfurt since 1946.

Today, the areas undergoing renovation include the historic areas north and south of the Bode, whereby the southern part was only included in the programme in 1999, as was the Steinstraße, the backbone of the historic town – not without reason. At this point, it was still unclear where the scarp in the centre petered out, whether provisions for further structural losses would have to be made, and where rebuilding was possible if at all – in short, what perspectives Staßfurt had for development. By now, they have been completely renovated and traffic-calming





measures have been applied. In the mid-1990s, the municipal authorities, the state government and the mining authorities set up an inter-ministerial working group to look into the issue of urban development in mining subsidence areas. Experts from diverse specialist disciplines surveyed the area, phased their findings into the development of a new water drainage system for the subsidence area and converted them into concepts for urban policy. These formed the foundations for an increasingly obvious conclusion: if the city was to be safeguarded from any further consequences of mining subsidence, then controlled flooding of the area marking the deepest point of the subsidence area would have to be permitted. While the conclusion seals the permanent loss of a coherently-structured city centre, it also provides not only the much-needed confirmation that the issue has been appropriately handled, but also momentum for the future. Should one therefore endeavour to give up the historic town centre in favour of a landscaped lake, and by these means achieve a qualitative improvement? This is the critical question, with which Staßfurt applied to participate in the IBA 2010: How much of a centre does a city need?

#### **Staßfurt in figures:**

Staßfurt's population was at its highest in 1950: 27,877.

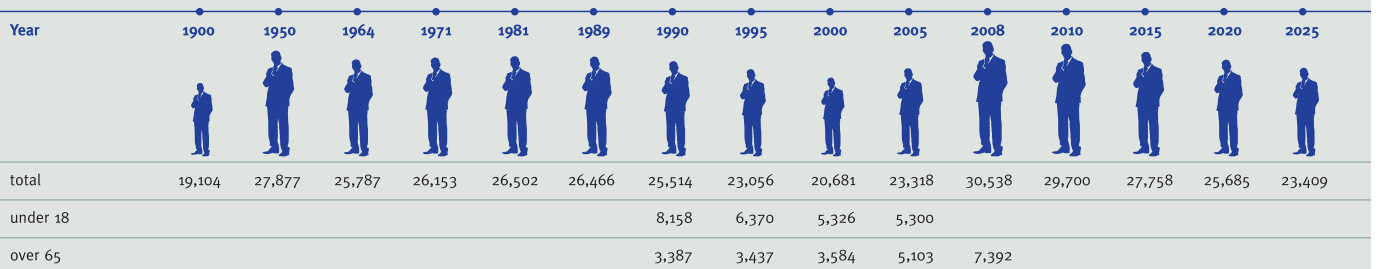
The Urban Development Concept of 2000 predicted a population of 17,800 in 2010. By contrast, the actual population figure for 2007 was 22,322.

Sources for statistics quoted on this and the following pages:  
Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt  
Raumbeobachtungssystem Sachsen-Anhalt (RABE)  
Statistisches Landesamt Sachsen-Anhalt  
Staßfurt Urban Development Concept, 2007  
GDR statistics, 1989  
[www.iba-monitor.de](http://www.iba-monitor.de)  
Status: 11/2009

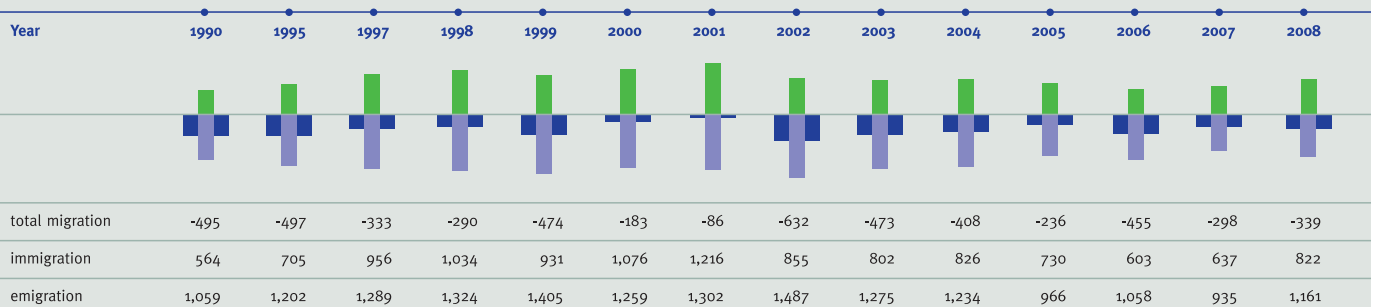
**MORPHOLOGY  
OF THE TOWN CENTRE**

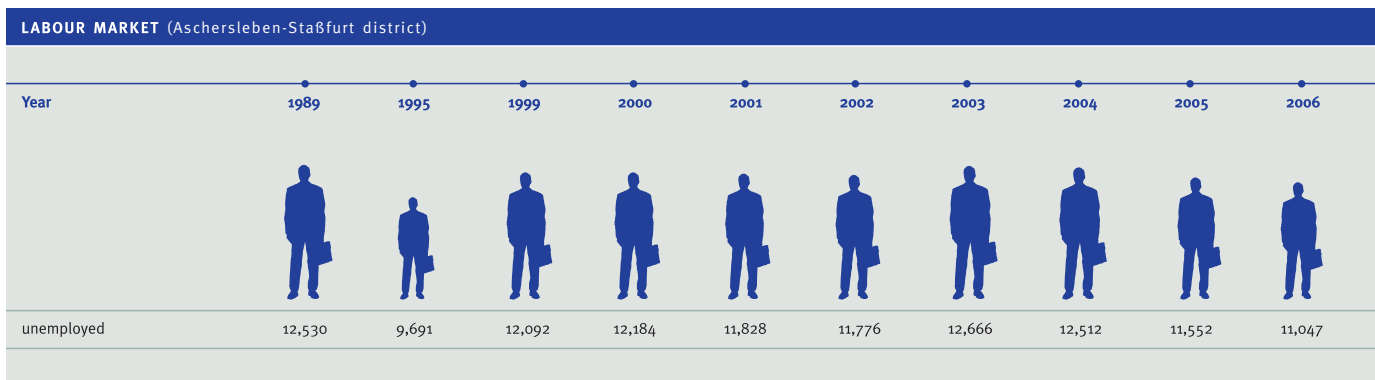
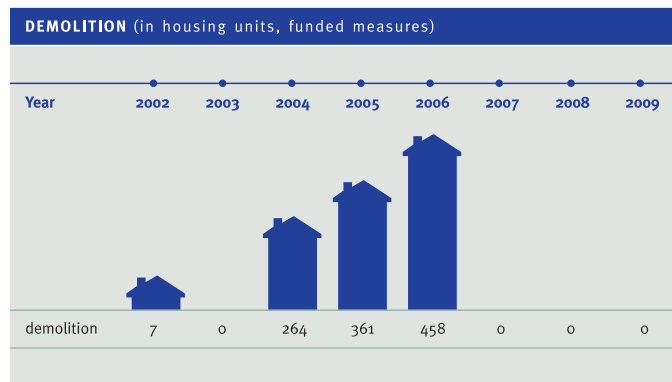
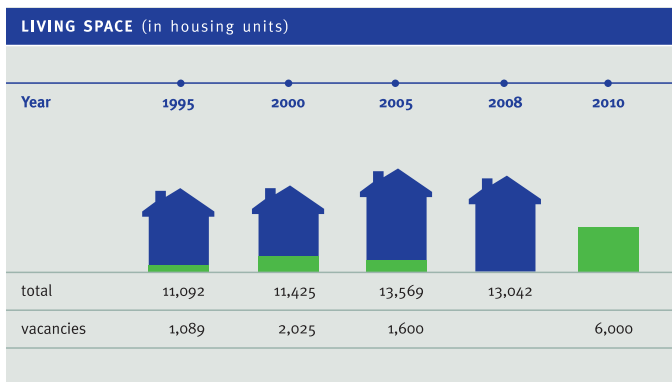


**POPULATION**



**POPULATION MOVEMENT**







## INTERVENTION

# GIVING UP THE OLD CENTRE

In late 2001 Staßfurt drafted and decided on a well-founded urban development concept, setting itself specific goals for urban renewal and redevelopment with a particular focus on housing development. On this basis the city made a successful application to participate in the IBA Urban Redevelopment 2010 with the theme “Giving up the Old centre”, a theme inspired by Staßfurt’s unique situation. In October 2003 Staßfurt was incorporated into Saxony-Anhalt’s group of IBA cities.

The short motto “Giving up the Old centre” was provocative. “Giving up” describes losing the old centre because of mining. But it also stands for moving on, while at the same time remembrance, the thread of the past, is not given up, but rather taken up.

Acknowledging the geological and water-related limitations set by the mining subsidence, a new centre has now been created as a place of remembrance and a source of identification. Today, with its IBA concept “Staßfurt Centre”, Staßfurt demonstrates strategies and solutions which preserve the lost centre in the “city’s memory”.

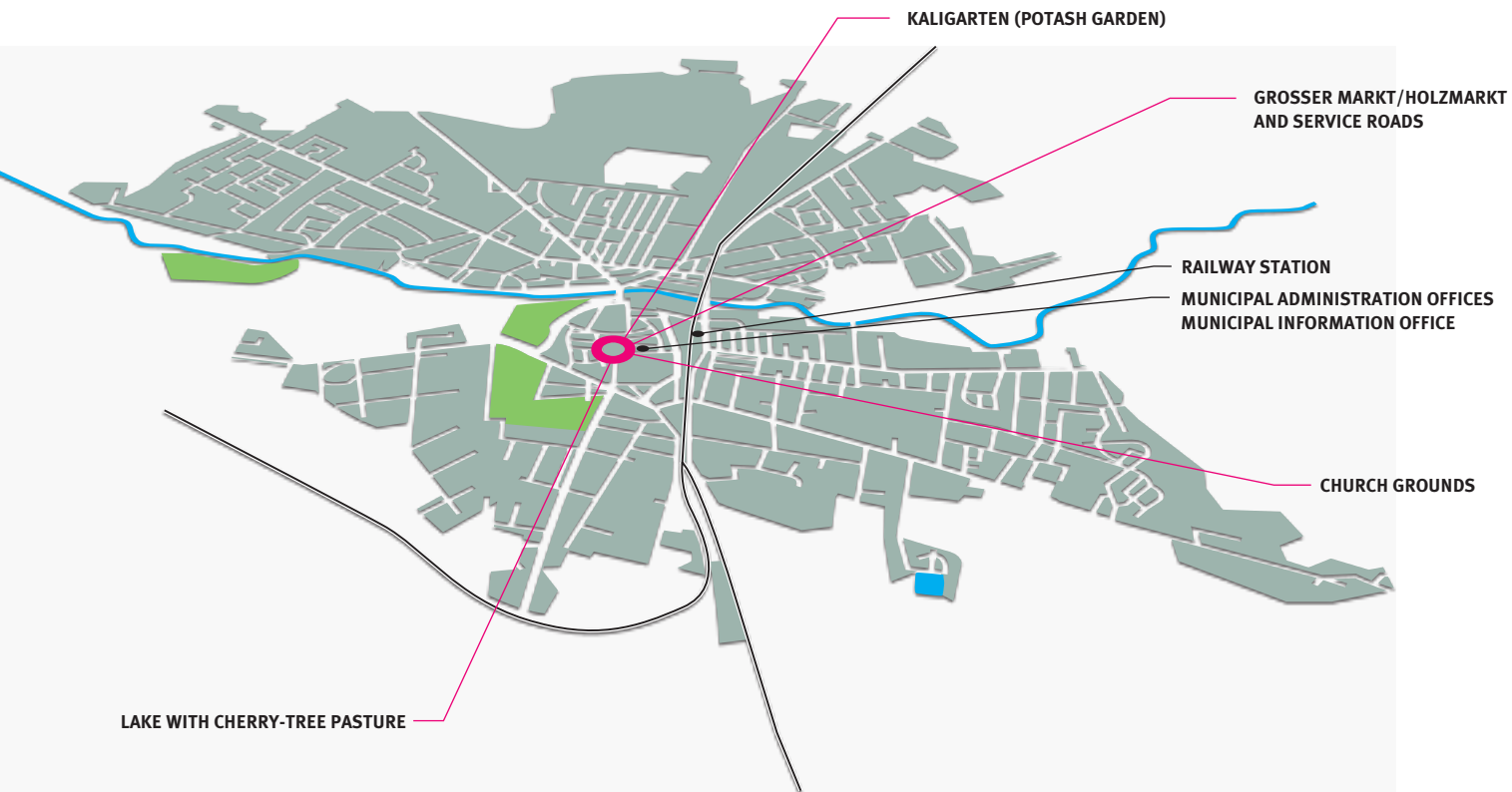
## IBA PROFILE: GIVING UP THE OLD TOWN

How much of a centre does a city need? How can loss be handled and memories preserved? These questions are relevant to almost every city, which has experience of migration and empty space. The IBA is examining these issues in an exemplary way in Staßfurt, where subsidence has caused the irretrievable loss of its historic centre, including town hall, church and houses.

The objective is to give the city centre a new image and thereby give the town as a whole a new relevance (...) In the long term, Staßfurt’s experience of mining and the areas damaged by it are to be made accessible to the public and partnerships will be established with cities and regions with similar problems.

Source: IBA Office “The Other Cities”, vol. 9







from left to right:

Dr. Dieter Naumann →  
 managing director of Wohnungs- und  
 Baugesellschaft mbH Staßfurt

Herr Menz →  
 Menz Optik GmbH

Martin Kriesel →  
 mayor (retd.)



STASSFURT CENTRE

## THE METHOD

At the outset of the IBA process, planners were unable and unwilling to decide in isolation what should now replace the lost centre of Staßfurt. From the beginning, the process was to establish a broad consensus of opinion and general acceptance and be conducted in a spirit of openness. In collaboration with the Saxony-Anhalt Chamber of Architects, an extensive process of organisation began whereby 36 of the Chamber's architects, landscape architects and town planners, who had never worked together in this way before, joined forces to establish twelve teams.

In daily discussions in a one-week interdisciplinary planning workshop and under the watchful eye of the municipal authorities, they developed ideas and proposals for the future design of the centre. This unusual exchange took place in an empty department store in Steinstraße near the subsidence area.

An invitation to participate was posted in large letters on the display windows: "We are redeveloping for you." To add the outside viewpoint,

the workshop included a group of experts such as Prof. Henri Bava (Karlsruhe/Paris), Dr. Wulf Eichstädt (Berlin), Prof. Walter Stamm-Teske (Weimar), Hans Verhuizen (Rotterdam) and Günter Vogt (Zurich). Hosted by Prof. Ulla Luther, citizens, political bodies and municipal representatives met with the experts every evening to discuss possible solutions.

This led to the conclusion that work should continue on the centre, its future role and its structural configuration and to the uncomfortable realisation that Staßfurt centre in the future would look very different from what it looked like in the past.

Consequently, the IBA process focused on a reinterpretation of the town centre and on the search for a new identity, but not on giving up the city. At the end of the planning workshop, the solution of a diverse landscape as a place of remembrance for the sunken historic town centre became apparent and was taken up. The IBA in Staßfurt therefore initiated a new, intensive culture of citizens' participation, which aids identification and helps compensate for the loss of the town



centre. The continuation of the citizens' meetings with planners in the so-called Staßfurt Architecture Salons sets an example.

These salons grew to become a new and high-powered opportunity for citizens to take an active part in the town planning process. In four of these salons major plans for an improved new Staßfurt centre were discussed, developed and adapted in collaboration with the townspeople. Planning processes that transcend the classical parameters of urban renovation and development need these intensive disputes in order to clarify, communicate and extend the understanding of specialised problems. By these means, Staßfurt created a new culture for citizens' participation in the planning process.



STASSFURT CENTRE

## LAKE WITH CHERRY-TREE PASTURE

An elderly lady states that she especially likes to come here in the spring. “In April and May, when the cherry trees blossom. The glorious white flowers are reflected and duplicated in the new lake. It’s sensational. You should see it!” This may well be how the planners imagined the results of their work. Staßfurt’s historic centre was replaced by a remarkable, high quality public landscape zone with integrated aspects of remembrance surrounding a lake set in the basin of the mining subsidence area.

In 2006 Staßfurt celebrated its 1200th anniversary. To mark the occasion, the 4,500-square metre lake situated at the deepest point of the subsidence area was inaugurated as a component member of the new centre. The lake is framed by a series of distinctive design elements – a multi-part open-air system that narrates the history of the city, its development and mining. West of the lake, as part of the overall landscape concept, there is an extensive cherry-tree pasture. This 9,000-square metre area was planted in 2007 with Japanese cherries that flower twice a year and have unusually coloured leaves.

The cherry blossom was a great attraction in the city in 2008 and 2009. Benches situated around the lake invite strollers to rest; from the opposite shore, the reflection of the cherry blossom in the water is extraordinary.







AMBITION – AN INTERVIEW WITH PROF. ULLA LUTHER, STATE COUNCILLOR (RETD.)

## ON THE ENTHUSIASM FOR PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESSES

*In February 2004, when an interdisciplinary IBA planning process explored the question of the future of Staßfurt centre, you accompanied the process as a moderator. How do you remember this period?*

**Prof. Ulla Luther:** The planning process was exceptionally well prepared. Its location in a then vacant department store near the lost centre was an ideal choice in order to document the planning process for everybody and to publicise the experts' thoughts on the future of the city. The workshop unleashed enormous enthusiasm among the local population.

*Enthusiasm for what? After all, the irretrievable loss of the historic centre of the old town through subsidence was beyond tragedy.*

**Prof. Ulla Luther:** Unquestionably. However, it wasn't a new problem either. The biggest structural losses had had to be dealt with in the 1960s and 1970s. The people of Staßfurt were enthused by the fact that 12 highly qualified planning teams of international experts such as Henri Bava, Prof. Stamm-Teske and Hans Verhuizen were taking a sincere interest in the problems of the former salt town and were work-

ing intensively with residents to find a solution. That's a lot of competencies gathered together in one location. This sign of appreciation touched the people of Staßfurt.

*How was so much public attention generated?*

**Prof. Ulla Luther:** Many planning processes are public, so that's nothing special in itself. Nevertheless, there were differences in this case. The planners' work was carried out in full view of the people of Staßfurt, behind the big windows of their old department store – rather than in some office –, and a lot of people came inside, followed the work as a matter of course and introduced their own ideas. The inhibition threshold was very low indeed. Moreover, the planning teams were sensitive to the explosive nature of the subject, and the discussions with the townspeople were a vital component of their work. The press paid close attention to the developments and this generated a regular network of interests. Every evening there were joint discussions about approaches to the problem and the ideas generated.



“The workshop unleashed enormous enthusiasm among the local population.”

*... which you moderated?*

**Prof. Ulla Luther:** ... and which, with the participation of over 70 local people every evening, completely exceeded our expectations. That's a great level of commitment for a small town like Staßfurt with around 25,000 inhabitants. A real mix of people came along, not just the elderly. They were all very interested and played a competent part in the planning process.

*Eventually, it became clear that Staßfurt centre would never be rebuilt.*

**Prof. Ulla Luther:** That was a painful and gradual process of realisation, where we had to struggle to balance the pros and cons. In the end, there was a choice of 12 different solutions. The idea of a lake set in a remembrance landscape became the favourite, and one of the teams was awarded the first prize.

*You mentioned a remembrance landscape. Which element was especially important to the people of Staßfurt?*

**Prof. Ulla Luther:** That it should still be possible to identify the site of the “sunken” church with its leaning tower. The townspeople felt very strongly about this, and it was therefore eventually taken into account in the planning process.

*Today, five years on, the lake and the landscape area have taken shape. What is your opinion of the result?*

**Prof. Ulla Luther:** I still see the area as a large wound, which is understandable when one considers the loss of the church, the town hall and the historic buildings here. The landscape zone is a good solution for those areas where building is no longer possible. To what extent this generates momentum for the sites where building can go ahead remains to be seen. The city is planning to build a competence centre with an attached administration building. The realisation of this project would send an important signal for more private investment in buildings in the centre, create new locations and attract yet more people to the town.



STASSFURT CENTRE

## CHURCHGROUNDS

The parish church St. Johannis, which dates back to 1484 and had an integrated defensive tower from 1420, was located in the actual subsidence area in the centre of Staßfurt. The nave was destroyed in a fire in 1948. Only the tower remained, and its weight on flooded grounds caused it to lean off-balance by 4.86 metres. It became ensconced in the townspeople's memory as the "leaning tower" and finally had to be demolished in 1965. The foundations and the cellar are still found on the spot where the church once stood. The parish moved to the so-called interim church at the city wall, which served as a temporary solution after St. Johannis's demolition.

In February 2004, during the interdisciplinary planning process for the new town centre, it transpired that the townspeople gave great weight to the memories of their old church. They therefore introduced the idea of a place of remembrance.

The landscape architects' design for the site of the historic church therefore reflected this. The foundation wall of the church was outlined with rusty corten steel and the surfaces filled with grass seeds. This created an area, which appears to rise out of the ground; the deliberate slant of the framed green area replays the scenario of the subsidence of the church. At the same time visitors are given the opportunity to enter into the area, the "Holy Lawn", and thereby sense the traces of the lost church. The plateau extends beyond the Rathausstraße up to the Großer Markt.

In the future the special history of Staßfurt's old parish church St. Johannis will be narrated by an "audiovisual aid" for visitors.





Gerald Berlich  
tenant of the house  
Großer Markt 10



STASSFURT CENTRE

## GROSSER MARKT/HOLZMARKT AND SERVICE ROADS

Until the end of 2004 Staßfurt's weekly markets were held on the Wendelitz, at the deepest point of the subsidence area where the new lake is now. The Großer Markt and Holzmarkt, markets that once defined the image of the town, were in the immediate vicinity. The Bennecksche Hof, a traditional Prussian type of fenced-in farmyard named after the first fee farmer, Carl Ludwig Bennecke, was redeveloped in two building phases as a new venue for markets and events.

Today going to the market at the Bennecksche Hof has gained currency; its sophisticated design is held in high regard. At the far end of the area the renovated city wall and towers add an atmospheric framework for the whole.

The Großer Markt is defined by a dark bitumen surface at the southernmost end of the lake. Bordered by illuminated stelas, it is now used for events, markets and sporting activities and as a "parlour" for official receptions.

All the service roads have been updated, and the backbone of the old town, the Steinstraße, has developed into an attractive retail strip that runs parallel to the lake. Even the vacant department store, which attracted the public during the legendary planning workshop of 2004, has now found a financially strong user.

Streets such as the Kottenstraße, which now lead "into" the lake and therefore end at the water's edge, re-chart the history of the city centre. A stone marker records the water level of 4.50 metres. The historic salt cottages also stood here until 2005 as the last witnesses of the town's history in the salt industry. Ultimately, these too had to be demolished.

A bridge, an axis which could in future link the eastern and western shores of the lake, is under discussion, and the people of Staßfurt are strongly in favour of its construction. Schoolchildren voiced their ideas for this bridge in a project carried out in autumn 2009.





STASSFURT CENTRE

## THE KALIGARTEN AND “VISUAL AIDS”

The Kaligarten (potash garden), a historic location where the first two potash mines in the world were inaugurated in 1852, puts in place another building block in the landscape that completes the area around the new inner-city lake. This cradle of the potash mining industry is now a small park with two square pools, which mark the entrances to the mineshafts. Here proud miners once brought the “white gold”, the salt, to the surface.

Many tourists are surprised to find that the entrances to the mines were so close to the town centre – a historic aspect, which the Kaligarten aims to communicate. The area is flanked by the conveyor mechanisms and mine cars typical of the potash mining industry. The park takes a unique approach to the 150-year city’s history of potash mining. It is important as a place of remembrance, as a place which gives the citizens of Staßfurt a sense of identity and as a venue for traditional events hosted by the miners’ association. From here the new landscape area around the lake is revealed in an exceptional way.

Work is currently underway on a concept geared to the communication of Staßfurt’s mining, urban and urban redevelopment history at the authentic site of the city centre. Audio guides, so-called “visual aids”, will, at seven marked locations on a tour around the lake, provide visitors with information on the history of the potash salt and explain the development, growth and recent past of the city. This will revive the missing cityscape while allowing, at the same time, a view of the newly designed landscape zone and lake. Audio guides like these have already proven themselves in other cities as a means of communicating urban history, and here in Staßfurt they endorse the endeavours to preserve the past in the city’s memory.

List of participants in the design of “Staßfurt Centre”

Architects Häfner + Jiménez, Büro für Landschaftsgestaltung Berlin  
Kreikenbaum und Heinemann Planergruppe, Bremen/Sangerhausen  
KS Katrin Schube, Freie Landschaftsarchitekten BDLA, Magdeburg







“The Kaligarten is a site to remember the traditions of the potash miners.”

Gerald Meyer  
mining office Staßfurt (retd.) and chairman  
of the miners' association “Wiege des  
Kalibergbaus” e.V. Staßfurt

AMBITION – AN INTERVIEW WITH GERALD MEYER, CHAIRMAN OF THE MINERS' ASSOCIATION

## STASSFURT HAS “GIVEN UP” ITS PROBLEM

*The consequences of potash mining, which began in the city over 150 years ago, caused massive mining subsidence in Staßfurt, thus destroying its historic centre. How do the townspeople feel about this?*

**Gerald Meyer:** Staßfurt was a minor farming village on the river Bode until the discovery of the potash deposits. This development triggered a significant economic upturn, comparable with the Californian gold rush. The city profited hugely from the salt. When subsidence set in, no one worldwide had experience of it. The people paid dearly, and many houses had to be demolished. People increasingly moved away from the city centre, and this essentially became dysfunctional.

*The IBA theme was “Giving up the Old centre” ...*

**Gerald Meyer:** It was a smart decision and a well-chosen slogan, because “giving up” could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, to create a new city centre at a historic site, which every inhabitant can identify with and remember. Secondly, as “giving up the problem”, in the sense of moving on from the constant lament about loss and the “lack of new developments”.

*Is the lake and the landscaped area around it a good, workable solution?*

**Gerald Meyer:** It was one of many possible solutions, and a choice had to be made. There was no point building on the area. The geological surveys came out against it. In this respect, it's a prudent solution. There's no reason why the city centre shouldn't be a recreation area. Plenty of cities have large parks in the city centre.

*Coming out against it means ...*

**Gerald Meyer:** The survey of the mining subsidence area in the 1970s by the then mining inspectorate Magdeburg resulted in a comprehensive programme to monitor and analyse the subsidence in Staßfurt centre. After German reunification this was continued and intensified. The findings concluded that, because of the subsidence and the flooding associated with it, building in the area where the lake is located now is out of the question.



***How were the mining office and the miners' association of which you are a member involved in the planning process for "Staßfurt Centre"?***

**Gerald Meyer:** The collaboration between the municipal authorities, the local building office and the architects responsible for planning was good from the start. Staßfurt is a small town, and the routes to discussions and decisions are short.

***The name of Staßfurt's miners' association – "Wiege des Kalibergbaus" (cradle of the potash mining industry) – contains a reference to Staßfurt's history. What roles does the club fulfil?***

**Gerald Meyer:** Today, the miners' association has some 70 members. However, the average age is nearly as high as the number of members. There's no new blood. It's therefore so much more important that we as a club pass on the mining history, in that we keep alive the customs and traditions of the potash miners, preserve the evidence of mining and educate young people especially about the diversity of industrial development in our region.

***The "Kaligarten" (potash garden) was remodelled within the framework of the IBA. It is now a meeting place for miners ...***

**Gerald Meyer:** ... and an expression of the positive collaboration between the municipal authorities, the building department, the landscape architects and the miners' association. The Kaligarten is a site to remember the traditions of the potash miners of the city and the region. The world's first potash mines have now been appropriately staged, and objects typical of the mining industry, such as a cable sheave and a mine car, may be seen. The site of the "cradle of the potash mining industry" is now distinguished by cast iron plaques, which were, incidentally, financed by funds collected by the miners' association. Around St. Barbara's day, the miners meet up with other associations from Staßfurt for a parade. Moreover, the guided tours of the historic city begin here – a good starting point, which leads to an understanding of the city and its history.



## EPILOGUE

# PERSPECTIVE 2010+

For 20 years Staßfurt's mining subsidence area has been the focus of intensive geological and hydrological surveys. Concepts have been drafted, and future options for Staßfurt centre have been considered. The findings defined two areas: one where building is no longer possible, and another where the construction of new buildings may be considered. For the former the city, within the framework of the IBA, developed and realised a landscaped park with a lake – “Staßfurt Centre”. This called for the development of a new water management system for the entire city and therefore the subsidence area – an exemplary feat of technical engineering.

Over the course of the redevelopment process, which began in the early 1990s, Staßfurt acquired international competence in its approach to mining subsidence, and this is made available to a wide professional audience. A first international conference on the subject will be held in January 2010 in Staßfurt under the aegis of the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) in Hanover. Research into the mining subsurface of the city will therefore continue. To this end

Since the lake area was flooded with groundwater, the people of Staßfurt have taken without reservation to the landscaped park with its extensive pastures, benches for relaxation and lakeside paths for jogging and walking. This broad acceptance was generated above all by the “architecture salons”, where the plans for the centre were presented and widely discussed. Not least this exchange has schooled an understanding of quality and of building culture and should be applied methodically to future building projects in the city.

The parts of the historic old town defined as safe for construction are now again available for development. There are indications that, in the Großer Markt, Holzmarkt and Rathausstraße areas, private investors and local housing associations are keen to build on wasteland sites or to renovate existing buildings which are empty. This comeback is a second, optimistic factor in the redevelopment of the city of Staßfurt with its history of loss and new beginnings.



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