

## Town as Landscape – Late industrial perspectives for renewal

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The subject has the following historical dimensions in Europe

- the industrial **development from landscape to town** (1830-1970): Extension and transformation of pre- and early industrial settlement cores
- the **rediscovery of landscape between urban spaces** through regional and development planning relative to the increasing large-spatial expansion of settlement on one side and relative to the functionalistic image of “flowing space” on the other side (1911-1985) leading to the idea of “town-land-scape” (f.i. by Rudolf Schwarz) in order to frame wild urban development within the arising agglomerations: Frame-works for settlement cores of different origin
- the acceptance of the dissolution of large-spatial urban spaces and the falling back to **individual spaces, surrounded and interrupted by landscape** (1985-to date) appropriate for late industrial transformation.

The current historical dimension in **East-Germany** under influences of de-economization and de-socialization has actually a specific character: The breaks of open spaces in between towns and villages appear simultaneously on several spatial levels (plot, unit of built form arrangement, area, location in relationship to natural and man-made conditions). There are to be seen, this way, various imbalances and breaks in between towns and regions.

The current dimension in **Magdeburg** is characterized by

- the political necessity, to define main areas of urban development (university district and former harbour area in the North) and equally to consider main areas of extending landscape (South),
- the spatial potentials of river Elbe and of the railway line, both crossing the town in North-South-direction and opening new opportunities for “late industrial landscape spaces” as connections between settled areas of different intensity of renewal, as ecologically supporting locations and as local as well as regional inner urban leisure areas,
- the attraction of individual, economical and cultural uses in different places, above all within the city centre and north of it, individual buildings of industrial culture working as landmarks for finding orientation within the town,
- the high quality of usability and of legibility of settled areas of different historical origin, from pre-industrial, former rural areas via industrial urban settlements and extended settlements of the 1920ies towards single-family-housing and multi-storey housing, often immediate adjacent to each other and with a predominantly small-spatial coordination of privately as well as common and publicly usable open spaces,
- The high density of activities and the social integrity of the allotments as cores of social life and common initiatives.

**Magdeburg-South** presents itself within the framework of these characteristics in a specific way full of tension and also unique:

- The four pre-industrially founded cores (Buckau, Salbke, Westerhüsen und Fermersleben) have supported a small-spatial mixture of living and working,
- The main road crossing in North-South direction and still being the central transport line for cars, tram, bicycles and pedestrians with integrated offers of supply and equally the basis for legibility and orientation towards the middle of the town,
- The churches as well as the old relics of industrial use are a dignified image of the rural as well as industrial history waiting for reuse by workshops, trade, service industry or leisure,
- The allotments are a valuable completion of the private gardens at the edges of the settled areas.

### **Magdeburg-South:**

#### **Socio-spatial and economic potentials and aims**

Qualifying the areas has essentially only the perspective of small-spatial renewal by private means in a short- to interim-term perspective. The well demanded **settlement edges bridging towards the landscape, mainly near to river Elbe**, in private ownership are of major importance. Herewith and also within the allotments we find the cultural, economic and social forces by which the vision for renewal can be maintained, cared for and activated again and again.

The urgently needed **new offers for infrastructure within the area** need financial support for local measurements of initiating, designing and establishing as well as being organised on a supra-local level (associations, advertisement by symbols, like wind-sheltered candles at the entrances). Such processes are equally preconditions for a de-central intensification of local bindings.

The **long-term extension of landscape on brown-field sites**, derelict or with minor uses, does not request immediate action. The whole area South, as a location for living and working, benefits from the colourful mixture of uses, the resulting low land prices and, consequently, from the economically very convenient conditions for small-spatial renewal. A valorisation which would make this advantage explode, would be a danger for small-spatial renewal building the carrying force for qualification.

## Magdeburg-South: Principles of building space

Concepts and strategies for building space have to link existing and future un-built and built spaces on different levels (plot, unit of built form arrangement, location in the district). This needs a critical-creative evaluation about the appropriateness of existing conditions for transformation. As the old connections of pre-industrial or industrial formation have become obsolete, elements for building space being appropriate for transformation in urban space and urban structure have to be looked for “outside” the well known relations.

- **The smallest unit plot** is mostly appropriate for renewal, especially, where it unifies a variety of economic uses and users within the organisational unit of a yard or of a group of houses. Built form and private as well as common open spaces build here a range of well usable syntheses. The enclosure of this unit serves towards the “outside”, f.i. by walls, for protecting neighbours from disturbances and equally to protect enclosed uses from insights, serves for orientation in public space as well as for the synthesis of vegetation and built form in private and public spaces. Entrances and gates offer access and vitalize the adjacent public space.
- **The unit of built form arrangement** is mostly attractive where different location advantages (development of streets, supply, proximity to landscape, view connections, marking of places by buildings, like church, and specific uses, f.i. boatshouse) play either individually or together a role for the value of the location.
- **The unit of urban space** is predominantly perceivable, where crossings and traditioned uses reflect a „place-bound centrality“: f.i. where boat berths guide movement towards the river, where shops or workshops complement each other, where neighbourhoods have created offers for leisure activities together.
- **The unit of the whole urban space** is based on these units. The hierarchy of public spaces is going to be changed relative to the social meanings of factories, churches, pubs, boats houses, children gardens etc. over time. The private spaces of the smallest unit of the plot (s.a.) build potentials for use-intensive knots within the “urban fabric”. If core uses, advantages of street development and place-bound centrality meet, the appropriateness for renewal is very high and the value of location can hardly be increased.
- **Regionally important contexts** for renewing the urban structure should give major importance for sustainable development to the listed units. Big new complexes of use and built form, not being appropriate for changes of use, cannot equally carry transformation and are due to become obsolete, when the planned concentrations of uses do not become implemented or, the latest, when they fall derelict. Therefore, Magdeburg-South has highest priority for the renewal of the whole city of Magdeburg.

## **Magdeburg-South:**

### **The understanding of „aesthetics“, relative to „urban concepts“**

The students' concepts have been based on the more than hundred years proved and during the 1960ies pointed to principles of legibility, usability and changeability.

This includes variety of use and form and also robustness, i.e. appropriateness for transformation without any loss of essential characteristics.

These aesthetics are kind of structural. Not being generated from the individual object, but based on values of experience and looking for their reflection in space. This way, it is about place-bound, to social action and experience related aesthetics, not any maxim, raised by the artist as an individual expression of his/her time.