



Hamburg's Waterfront Redevelopment in the Context of Historic Trading Networks and the Exchange of Planning Ideas

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Over the last two decades, second cities, such as Hamburg, have started to reinvent themselves, and many use architectural and urban form to claim local uniqueness and increase their international competitiveness. This paper explores Hamburg's current urban transformation around the construction of the HafenCity on 155 hectares of former industrial and harbor land, in the context of selected major urban transformations focusing on the 19th and 20th century. It investigates the major elements, concepts, people, technologies and structures that characterize urban transformation looking at five specific periods.

The first historical moment of interest for this study is the Hamburg fire of 1842 and the consequent innovative reconstruction of the city. The study will then turn to 1871, when Hamburg joined the German Empire and obtained an important compensation packet that allowed the city to construct the warehouse district, the Speicherstadt, and to set up a tax-free harbor, in what is today the HafenCity area. The paper will then turn to the post-World War I era and the construction of office buildings in the vicinity of the harbor area. Furthermore, the paper will investigate Nazi visions for the Hamburg port area in the 1930s, as well as the destruction of the city during the Second World War, and its consequent reconstruction.

The paper concludes to highlight the forces, people, and events that have catalyzed changes in the built and urban environment and investigates border-crossing exchanges of architectural and urban form as major factors in urban redefinition. It connects Hamburg's efforts with urban transformation and waterfront redevelopment projects in other cities world-wide, and it also locates the current moment within the city's long history of urban redefinition and participation in far-flung networks.

KEY WORDS: Port Cities, networking, urban transformation, planning history, Hamburg.