

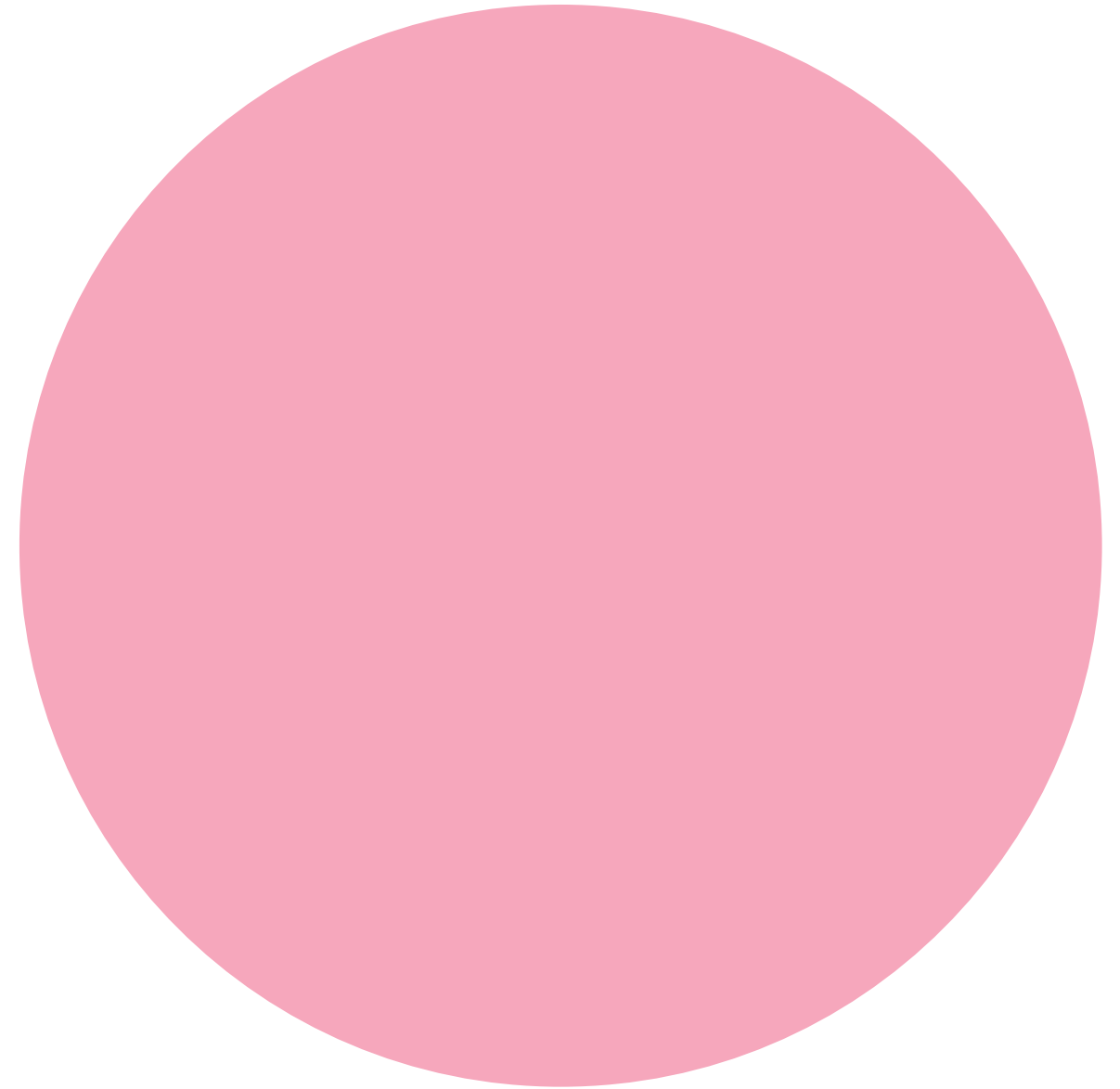


THE STAGE IS SET FOR
INTERNATIONAL
BUILDING EXHIBITION
BERLIN 2034-37

Senate Department
for Urban Development,
Building and Housing

BERLIN





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OPENING WORDS008

A word of welcome Senator Christian Gaebler	008
Foreword Senatsbaudirektorin Petra Kahlfeldt	009
Reflections on IBA Berlin 2034-37 Harald Bodenschatz and Cordelia Polinna	010

IBA BERLIN 2034-37 OPENING EXHIBITION

NEW BEGINNINGS016

The stage is set for IBA Berlin 2034-37	012
A round-up of Berlin IBA ideas since 1996	018
Summary	038
Launch of IBA Berlin 2034-37	042
S-Bahn Ring	050
IBA search areas	068

RETROSPECTIVE078

Urban Development Exhibition in Berlin in 1910	086
German Building Exhibition Berlin 1931	088
Interbau 1957	090
IBA 1987	098
GDR building exhibition, 1987	110
Five conclusions	112

POSITIONS	116	
		Raumlabor Berlin 119
		University of the Arts, Design and Building Planning 128
		TU Berlin, Department of Architecture of Transformation 132
		Berlin Chamber of architects 136
		Baukammer Berlin 138
		Architects’ and Engineers’ Association of Berlin-Brandenburg 140
		Bauhaus Earth 144
		Association of German Architects (BDA), Berlin Regional Association 146
		Association of German Landscape Architects (bdla) – Berlin-Brandenburg 148
		German Academy for Urban Development and Regional Planning (DASL), Berlin-Brandenburg Regional Group 152
		Hermann Henselmann Foundation 154
		Association of Town, Regional and State Planning (SRL), Regional Group Berlin/Brandenburg 156
		Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) 160
		Berlin City Museum 162
		Brandenburg: the golden circle of second-tier towns 164

OUTLOOK	168	
		What can we learn from the history of the IBA? 170
		Perspectives of IBA Berlin 2034–37 174
		Organisation of IBA Berlin 2034–37 177
		Core message of IBA Berlin 2034–37 178

APPENDIX

EXCERPTS FROM THE SENATE BILL	180	
		a. Background 180
		b. Objectives of the International Building Exhibition 2034–37 (IBA Berlin 2034–37) 181
		c. Concept of IBA Berlin 2034–37 182
		d. Location 183
		g. Participation 185
		h. International 186
		i. Outlook 187
		k. Integration of boroughs 187
		Legal imprint 188

A WORD OF WELCOME

The International Building Exhibition Berlin 2034–37 opens up a broad horizon for Berlin’s future. It asks not only where and what is being built, but above all how the established city of Berlin can be developed in a way that is architecturally sophisticated, socially balanced and efficient in terms of resources. This makes the IBA more than just a single project: It creates a space for possibilities in which global urban development challenges can be tackled at a local level, innovative solutions can be tested, and exemplary projects can gain national and international recognition.

This ambition is evident right from the start in two exhibitions. They provide important insights into IBA Berlin 2034–37 and bring to life the history of the IBA in Berlin, its spatial guidelines and future prospects. Together, they are calling for an early public debate on Berlin’s major issues and for the IBA process to be firmly established across the city.

IBA Berlin 2034–37 focuses on the sensitive development of existing neighbourhoods, the conversion of underused spaces and buildings, and new building on sites previously used for other purposes. The aim is to develop exemplary projects that demonstrate how Berlin can be developed in a way that is sustainable, climate-friendly and of high urban quality. The starting point is the existing city, with its buildings, infrastructure and open spaces.

With the expanded ring scenario, the focus shifts to the areas on either side of the S-Bahn ring and along the intersecting radial routes. These transitional areas between the city centre and the outskirts present a range of challenges, but also offer particular potential for creating high-quality living environments. The exhibitions highlight this diversity, recall earlier IBA debates in Berlin, and, through their exploration of new beginnings, retrospectives, current perspectives and future outlooks, provide a comprehensive insight into the ongoing process.

I would like to extend my special thanks to the curators of the opening exhibition, Prof. Harald Bodenschatz and Prof. Cordelia Polinna, who have put together a truly successful exhibition in a very short space of time. I would also like to thank the IBA team at the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing, as well as everyone who contributed to the conception, design and realisation of the exhibitions. I hope the exhibitions prove a great success and that all visitors gain inspiring insights into a project that will play a key role in shaping Berlin’s future.



Christian Gaebler
Senator

FOREWORD

Berlin’s future will not be determined solely by new building, but largely by sensible development, the refurbishment of existing buildings and the revitalisation of underused spaces. Berlin, in particular, is in a unique position to shape its future by building on the city that has already developed, where buildings, infrastructure, open spaces and the transitions between the city centre and the outskirts are all equally important. It is our task to recognise this potential and develop it in such a way that new, well-designed and high-quality living spaces are created.

The opening exhibition in June 2026 will highlight why the IBA Berlin 2034–37 is being prepared right now, with a focus on ‘urban transformation’. Over the past two years, a broad professional dialogue has helped to refine the overarching theme, topics and formats: Climate adaptation, a shift in construction practices, new forms of housing and urban density, circular urban development and resource cycles, a city of short journeys and social resilience. At the same time, it is about open processes, participation and the courage to explore new approaches and solutions.

As the first IBA in the reunified city, IBA Berlin 2034–37 takes a holistic view of Berlin – of East and West, of the connection between the city centre and the outskirts, and of the city and the region. With the S-Bahn ring and the major radial routes – the transport corridors leading from the surrounding areas into the city – the focus is shifting to those areas where the challenges of our time are just as evident as the opportunities for innovation.

The exhibition demonstrates that an IBA emerges from specific locations and real-world transformation challenges, yet at the same time points the way forward beyond individual sites and projects: with the aim of developing exemplary solutions, testing new approaches and inspiring the courage to embrace change. It sees itself as a temporary space for experimentation and learning – and as an invitation not just to contemplate Berlin’s future, but to shape it together.

I hope that visitors will find this exhibition thought-provoking and inspiring, as it offers fresh perspectives on Berlin and brings the IBA Berlin 2034–37 to life as a shared project for our city’s future.



Petra Kahlfeldt
Senate Building Director and Permanent
Secretary for Urban Development

REFLECTIONS ON IBA BERLIN 2034-37

Prof. Harald Bodenschatz and Prof. Cordelia Polinna are curating the inaugural exhibition for IBA Berlin 2034-37. With a preview on 5 June 2026 at the Senate Department for Urban Development and an opening on 30 June 2026 at the Alte Feuerwache in Tempelhof Airport, the launch will kick off a wide-ranging dialogue on the themes, locations and perspectives of IBA Berlin 2034-37.

Cities are not transformed by grand words, nor by exhibitions like this one. They are transformed by the actions of the urban community, through urban development, and through the redevelopment of the existing city. These actions must be underpinned by clear principles: Where and under what programme the urban regeneration is to take place – and with which stakeholders. With a programme that must be tailored to the specific city, one that does justice to the particular location and the current challenges. An IBA Berlin can act as a driving force behind this transformation. And an exhibition leading up to this IBA can help to further clarify the programme and the location during these years of upheaval and uncertainty.

Is Berlin ready for a new IBA? The question of how best to deal with the existing built environment – with what has been built, what has evolved over time, and what appears unchangeable – rightly dominates the current debate on architecture and urban development far beyond Berlin. In light of the environmental urgency, scarce resources and the (social) costs of displacement and new building, comprehensive urban redevelopment is on the agenda: a transformation of the construction sector, an energy transition and a shift in mobility. Many associations and institutions have expressed similar views in their contributions to the exhibition. Thank you very much for your support! But what does this mean for our city, for its residents, and for the specific places within it? Are these general guidelines sufficient as a programme for Berlin? Are they enough for an IBA?

A new IBA Berlin is not starting from scratch. It has some high-profile predecessors against which it will be judged. In particular at Interbau 1957 and IBA 1987. But also at the Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung (universal urban development exhibition) of 1910, the German building exhibition of 1931 and the GDR exhibition of 1987 in East Berlin. We can learn from all these major events – and their complexities – today. Since the late 1990s, planners, architects, academics and civil society initiatives have repeatedly taken up the idea of a new Berlin IBA and developed it further for different locations and themes – at the level of the Senate, but also often without institutional backing, driven by the conviction that Berlin needs this tool. However, none of the proposals has managed to stand the test of time.

During an exploratory phase, several institutions, working alongside planning consultancies on behalf of the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, have identified potential themes for an IBA and analysed and assessed various potential sites for a new IBA. On this basis, Building Senator Christian Gaebler decided in 2026 to hold an IBA along the S-Bahn ring. A good decision, in our view. This ring was created 150 years ago. It gave Berlin a spatial structure that continues to have an impact to this day: as a transition and a boundary between the city centre and the outskirts, as a bridge and a barrier between neighbourhoods, as a corridor along which different realities of life seem to stand in irreconcilable opposition to one another.

In terms of urban development, Berlin is characterised by three spatial structures: its historic centre, its rings and its arterial roads – a basic pattern that links Berlin with major cities such as Rome and Paris. Beyond its historical centre, the rings and arterial roads meet at key urban locations: formerly at the city gates and later at the intersections of traffic rings and arterial roads. Where these intersect, locations of exceptional quality emerge: well-connected, nestled within established neighbourhoods, and linked to the wider city, as well as to Brandenburg. However, these places are often in a state of disrepair today: Spaces dominated primarily by traffic, single-purpose enclaves with limited access, places lacking stable infrastructure for the surrounding neighbourhoods. Their development into new types of satellite centres is fostering Berlin's most important, yet often untapped, strength: its polycentric structure, which forms the basis of a city where everything is within easy reach.

Now that the decision has been made to hold an IBA at the junctions of the S-Bahn ring and the arterial roads, the task is to develop a viable plan for dealing with the legacy of the car-oriented city and to work together to implement it with determination. The new IBA therefore has the task not only of producing designs, but also of exploring organisational models, refining tools and testing new forms of collaboration between public authorities, civil society, academia and the business sector – always with the aim of steering the selected sites towards a better future. IBA Berlin 2034-37 has only just begun. We invite you to help finalise the programme and venues and to get involved in this process!



Harald Bodenschatz,
Cordelia Polinna

THE STAGE IS SET FOR IBA BERLIN 2034-37

Berlin is ringing the changes! Following extensive debate – in expert discussions, universities, associations and initiatives across all sections of urban society – the Berlin Senate has set the course: A new International Building Exhibition Berlin is to take place from 2034 to 2037. With the Senate’s resolution of 24 March 2026 and the planned establishment of an IBA company later this year, what was once an idea is now becoming a binding project.

The reason for this is not merely a long-standing tradition. Berlin faces major challenges today that call not only for ideas, but also for action: housing shortages, ageing infrastructure, the consequences of climate change and social upheaval. The ability to resolve pressing issues in a transparent, participatory and proactive manner is crucial to maintaining trust in democratic institutions and processes.

An International Building Exhibition is not a normal urban development programme. It is a temporary state of exception in which things that initially seem unthinkable become possible: new collaborations, unconventional approaches, groundbreaking projects. And above all: visible results that have an impact far beyond Berlin. This exhibition shows what an IBA can achieve – and why now is the right time.

How can an IBA contribute to Berlin’s sustainable future? This question runs through the entire exhibition. It will be shown in four parts at two Berlin locations, which will open their doors successively in the summer of 2026.

» **New beginnings.**

The first part of the exhibition opens in early June at the building of the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing on Württembergische Straße. Here, the many attempts to establish an IBA since the 1990s are recalled, the format of the International Building Exhibition is explained, key questions facing Berlin are identified – and initial spatial solutions are outlined.

On 30 June, the exhibition will move to the Alte Feuerwache at Tempelhof Airport – a place of international importance in the city’s history. There, the exhibition will be expanded to include three further sections: Retrospective, Positions and Outlook.

» **Retrospective.**

This section focuses on history: What impact did Interbau 1957 and IBA 1987 have, and what about the smaller building exhibitions of 1910 and 1931, and the GDR building exhibition of 1987? And what lessons can we learn from them today? Also on display are a number of urban development models from the new build IBA of 1987 and the central model from the 1987 GDR exhibition.

» **Positions.**

This section features a range of voices advocating for an IBA: a network comprising specialist initiatives, universities, professional bodies and associations – including some from Brandenburg – and, finally, the two commissioned partners “Raumlabor” and “University of the Arts”. Together they ask: What could an IBA Berlin 2034–37 achieve, what should it call for – and how do we begin?

» **Outlook.**

The conclusion presents findings for the future, looking ahead to IBA Berlin 2034–37.

NEW BEGINNINGS



A ROUND-UP OF BERLIN IBA IDEAS SINCE 1996

“International Building Exhibitions are a special format of urban and regional development. They are hallmarks of national building and planning culture. [...] IBAs are constantly reinventing themselves, following no standardised format or procedure. [...] Today, IBAs are building culture exhibitions that, in addition to aesthetic and technological aspects, increasingly incorporate complex social, economic and ecological issues into their work.” This is the current description of the “IBA meets IBA” network, supported by the Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building.

As early as 2011, at the beginning of an intensive search for a new IBA in Berlin, Harald Bodenschatz and Cordelia Polina, on behalf of the Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, formulated ten characteristics that define an IBA: the IBA virtues. These characteristics formed part of a comprehensive two-stage report by the two authors: LEARNING FROM IBA - DIE IBA 1987 IN BERLIN (2010) and PERSPEKTIVEN EINER IBA BERLIN 2020 (2011). They describe what an IBA could and should achieve - in terms of content, location, organisation and politics.

Time and again since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Berlin has sought to launch an IBA in order to find answers to pressing questions regarding urban development. Time and again, however, these efforts have failed. The debates and concepts for a new IBA - some of which involved considerable effort - have now largely been forgotten - and wrongly so!

A01



A02



A01 | A02 Two-stage report on IBA 1987, commissioned from Harald Bodenschatz and Cordelia Polina, 2011 and 2012.
The two-part report was commissioned by Dr. Dagmar Tille, Senate Department for Urban Development, Head of the Building Culture Communication Workshop, Supreme Authority for Monument Protection.

1996-1999

A few years after the turning point of 1989, a new building exhibition was considered. After years of growth euphoria, a sense of disillusionment had set in. Berlin now wanted to demonstrate how high-quality suburban housing could be designed for home ownership. Yet a change of government led to the abrupt abandonment of the project.

2008-2013

The closure of Tempelhof Airport marked the beginning of an intense debate over the content and locations of a widely desired new IBA. The envisaged locations - the airport grounds, Nord-Neukölln, major arterial roads, underutilised areas throughout the city, the outer city and the city centre - illustrate the broad, hotly debated spectrum of these years. This was followed by a lengthy period of inactivity.

Seit 2021

In 2021, plans for a new IBA gained momentum once again. Things began with a broad-scale IBA project focused on climate change. Unlike in previous years, professional associations and the Chamber of Architects now actively contributed their own ideas to the IBA process, ensuring that, despite the climate project losing momentum, the debate did not cease.

IBA-VIRTUES

2011, HARALD BODENSCHATZ, CORDELIA POLINNA

Thematic areas and spatial concept of the IBA

1/ **An IBA concretises approaches to urban development through experimentation.**

An IBA's task is to concretise paths to new urban development through experimentation and to propose urban planning solutions to pressing social issues. An IBA allows for experimentation and opens up new possibilities. This character of the IBA must be preserved through the exceptional quality of the IBA's theme and location; otherwise, there is a risk of overuse and dulling of this instrument.

2/ **An IBA needs a guiding principle.**

An IBA requires a clear, overarching guiding principle under which a wide range of activities can be developed – a theme with broad scope without being vague or arbitrary. The themes of the IBA must be clearly defined from the outset, even before the IBA is established. At the same time, however, they must be flexible enough to allow for different solutions, approaches and outcomes.

3/ **Themes of both international and local importance must form the core of the IBA.**

Contemporary, pressing themes of both international and local importance must form the core of the IBA. The themes of a building exhibition should provide exemplary answers to concrete, local and general challenges of our time and enrich the international urban planning debate. It is important to strike a balance between the local and international integration of the developed solutions.

4/ **The themes of an IBA must mark a paradigm shift in urban planning.**

The themes of an IBA must signal a paradigm shift in urban development. Key stakeholders must be convinced that the current approach to urban planning is no longer viable, particularly in light of international experience and debate. Planning must have reached its limits in terms of its approaches and tools.

IBA procedures

5/ **The spatial setting must anchor the theme of the IBA within the local context.**

IBA projects must be localised according to a spatial structuring concept. This spatial structuring concept must make a significant contribution to anchoring the internationally recognised IBA theme within the local context.

6/ **The IBA is also to develop new planning processes and instruments.**

In the face of shrinking public resources, the IBA must develop answers to the question of how to excellent urban planning and architectural products and processes can be realised in terms of building culture and sustainability, and how the public sector can redefine its role. The developed instruments and procedures are to be integrated into everyday administrative practice after the IBA.

7/ **The IBA organisation must be given a mandate along with the necessary resources to achieve the ambitious goals of the IBA.**

The IBA is organised by a special institution outside the administration, whose mandate and scope of action must be clearly defined in relation to the administration. The IBA organisation requires personnel and resources to develop and implement innovations in terms of products and processes, as well as for research, communication and documentation. The IBA team should be made up of experienced professionals and up-and-coming planners, with experts who are thoroughly familiar with the local situation and those who bring new, outside perspectives. Not only architects and planners are needed, but also experts in funding programmes, planning permission procedures, facilitation, implementation, etc.

8/ **An IBA needs political backing.**

An IBA must have political backing at the highest level in order to mobilise financial resources, foster an environment conducive to high-quality urban design, prevent unnecessary debates and provide the necessary support to those involved in the special organisation and administration in implementing their ideas – even those that are controversial.

9/ **An IBA must strike a balance between integrating initiatives and professional engagement.**

To mobilise resources and gain broad recognition among the (specialist) public, a future IBA must strike a balance between integrating grassroots social movements and initiatives, private stakeholders from the business sector and public administration, between artistic or citizen-oriented idea generation processes and specialist expertise, and between cultural events and professional engagement.

IBA international

10/ **An IBA requires supra-regional and international exchange.**

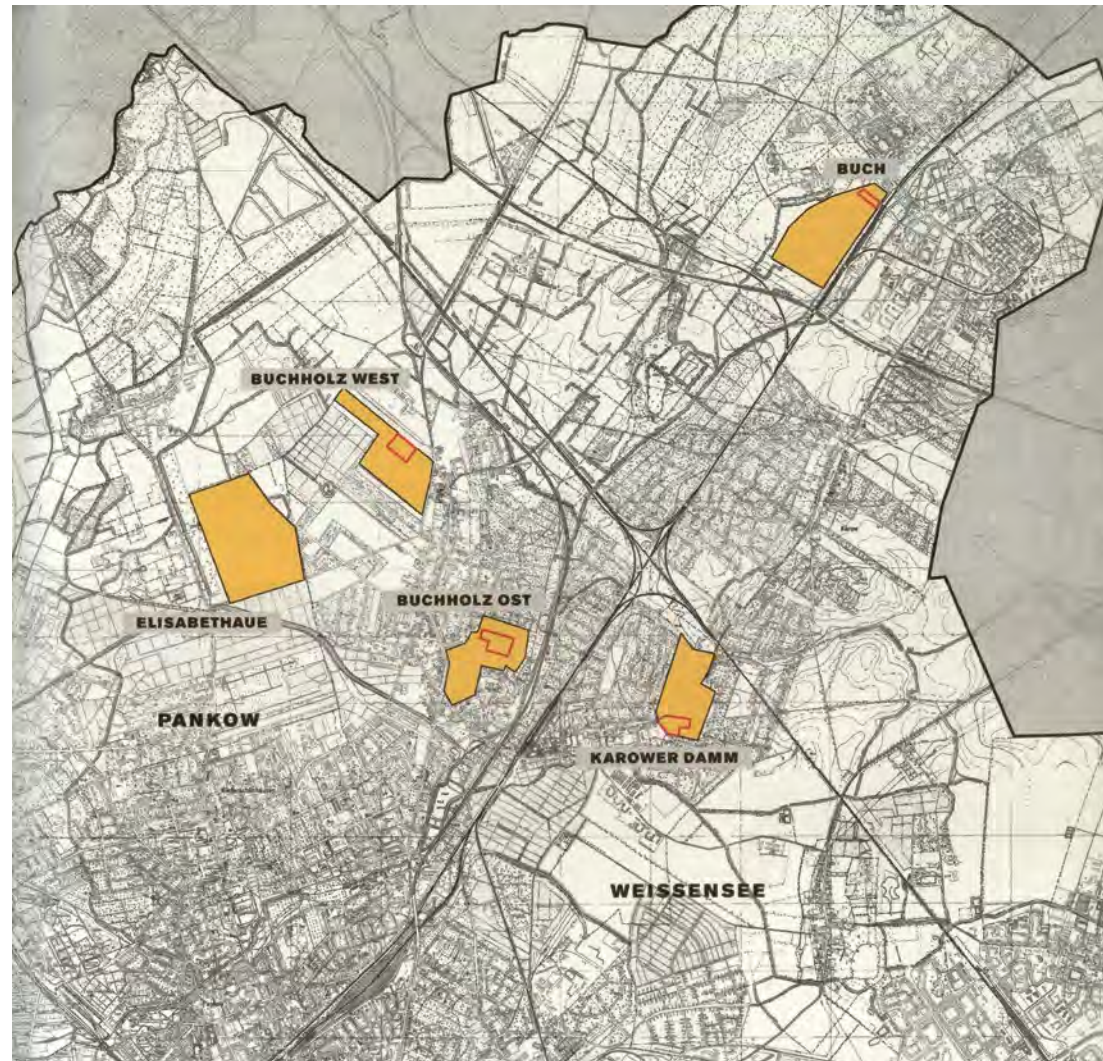
Urban development and architecture thrive on national and international exchange, and need it now more than ever before. Only by inviting innovative stakeholders from both Germany and abroad to work on specific projects can Berlin once again be seen as a benchmark city for urban development, and only then can groundbreaking ideas to be developed as part of a new IBA be exported.



1999: “BUILDING EXHIBITION BERLIN”

As early as 1996, the Berlin Senate had decided to hold a “Building Exhibition Berlin 1999” (explicitly without the word “International”). The theme was “Urban living on the city outskirts”, and the driving force behind it was Barbara Jakubeit (CDU), the Senate Building Director. The aim was to demonstrate how affordable, high-density “owner-occupied housing” could be designed to high standards of urban development. The background to this was a “reorientation of housing policy from subsidised rental dwelling to the 2000 home ownership strategy”, promoted by Building Senator Jürgen Klemann (CDU). The Berlin Senate had adopted this strategy in 1997 in response to the competition between Berlin and Brandenburg for affluent residents. The building exhibition, which had already been prepared in detail in five areas in north-east Berlin, was abandoned after the change of government at the end of 1999.

A03



A04



A03 Areas of the 1999 building exhibition.

The plan was to build around 8000 housing units as part of a public-private partnership, of which around 7000 would be owner-occupied. The aim was to counteract “urban sprawl” through “environmentally friendly” construction methods.

Source: Bauausstellung Berlin 1999. 1. Werkbericht. Berlin 1998, p. 45

A04 Postcard for the 1998 exhibition, project report.

The pre-exhibition at the German Architecture Centre was accompanied by a discussion on architecture, in which the Senate Director of Building was a participant and which was moderated by Carl Steckeweh, Federal Managing Director of the BDA (Association of German Architects).

Source: HB collection

A05 Competition for Elisabethaue, first-prize urban development concept.

Concept for the 1st prize. First prize was awarded to the consortium of Helge Sypereck/ Spath and Nagel/Hannelore Kossel/Ebert Ingenieure/NTS Ingenieurgesellschaft mbH. BLEG Berliner Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft mbH was to act as the developer.

Source: Bauausstellung Berlin 1999. 1. Werkbericht. Berlin 1998, S. 149

A05



2008: IBA “TEMPELHOFFER FELD”

Shortly before the closure of Tempelhof Airport on 31 October 2008, Building Senator Ingeborg Junge-Reyer announced, in March 2008, ambitious plans for a new IBA in 2020 on Tempelhofer Feld: a new use for the airport building, development around the perimeter of the field and a large park in the middle. A centre of the creative industries was to be created, along with 10,000 new jobs and 5000 new homes. In November 2008, Senate Building Director Regula Lüscher emphasised the legal claim of the IBA. Preparations began in 2010, but these quickly led to the IBA withdrawing from Tempelhofer Feld.

2010: IBA NEUKÖLLN-TEMPELHOF

Against the backdrop of the Senate’s proposal for an IBA at Tempelhofer Feld, a shift in the IBA’s location was discussed at the 2nd Neukölln Conference of the Green Party in 2010 – focusing on Neukölln and the theme: gentrification without displacement. In 2011, Green Party politician Franziska Eichstädt-Bohlig further refined this idea: The goal would be an “international sustainability exhibition for and with North Neukölln and for Tempelhofer Feld under the motto ‘Social City in the Age of Climate Change’”. This idea of an “IBA – Neukölln-Tempelhof”, along with the proposal for Tempelhofer Feld, quickly lost its significance.

2010: IBA “RADIKAL RADIAL”

The IBA concept “Radikal Radial” (radical radial roads) brought Berlin’s major arterial roads into the spotlight. Traffic corridors were to become urban lifelines. The programme, which extended beyond Berlin and was developed by the “Think BerlIn” initiative, Harald Bodenschatz and Hildebrand Machleidt, aimed at sustainable urban mobility, the enhancement of public spaces and urban densification at transport hubs. “Radikal Radial” also remained merely a proposal. However, many of the suggestions made at the time later found their way into the debates on street design and the strengthening of Berlin’s polycentric structure.

A06



A06 Planning by the Senate Department for Urban Development for the former Tempelhof Airport.
The planning status is from 2008.

Source: Leaflet

A07 View from Tempelhofer Feld towards North Neukölln.
Buildings of the “Schillerkiez” neighbourhood are visible in the background, 2011.

Source: Harald Bodenschatz

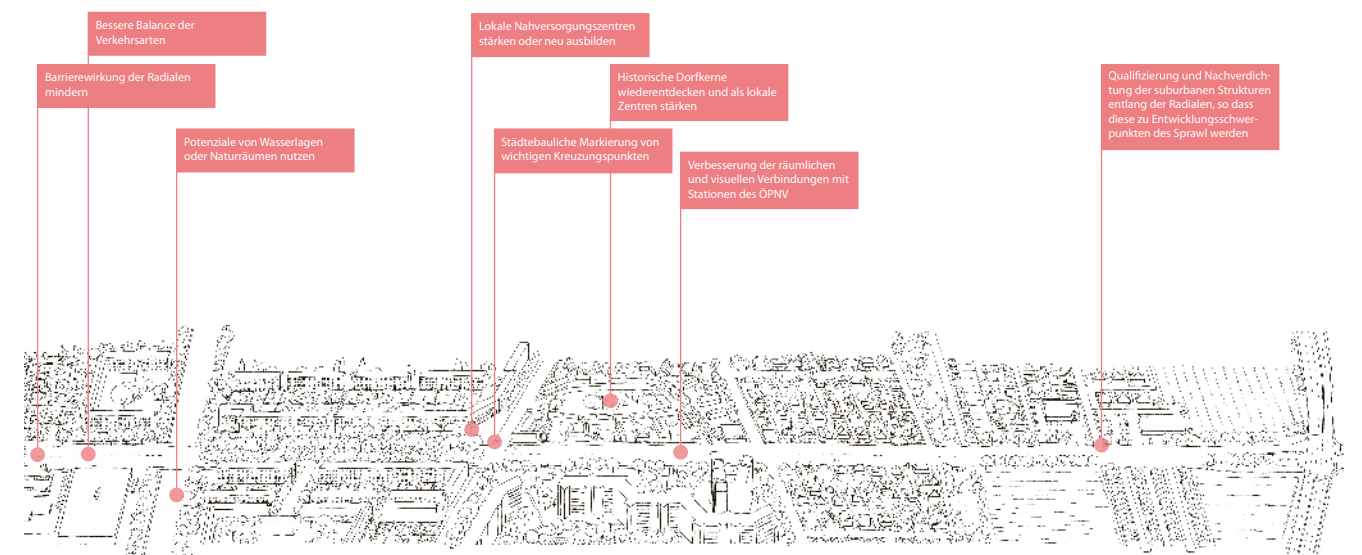
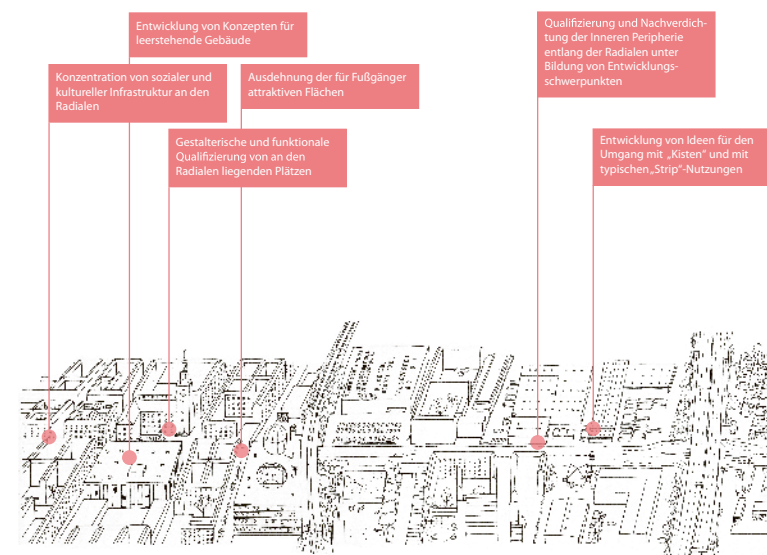
A08 Schematic representation of a Berlin radial road: potentials and measures.

Source: Think BerlIn /
Drawing: Thomas Hauck

A07



A08

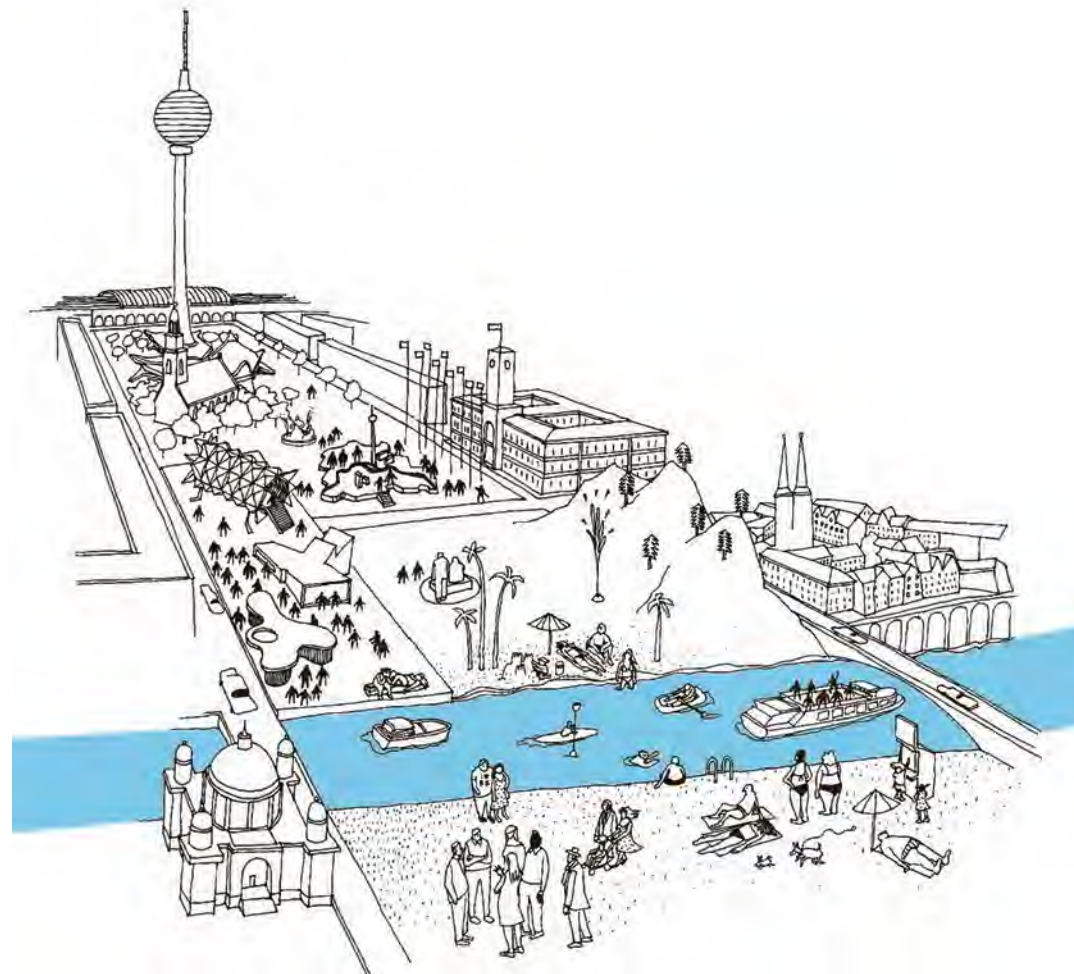




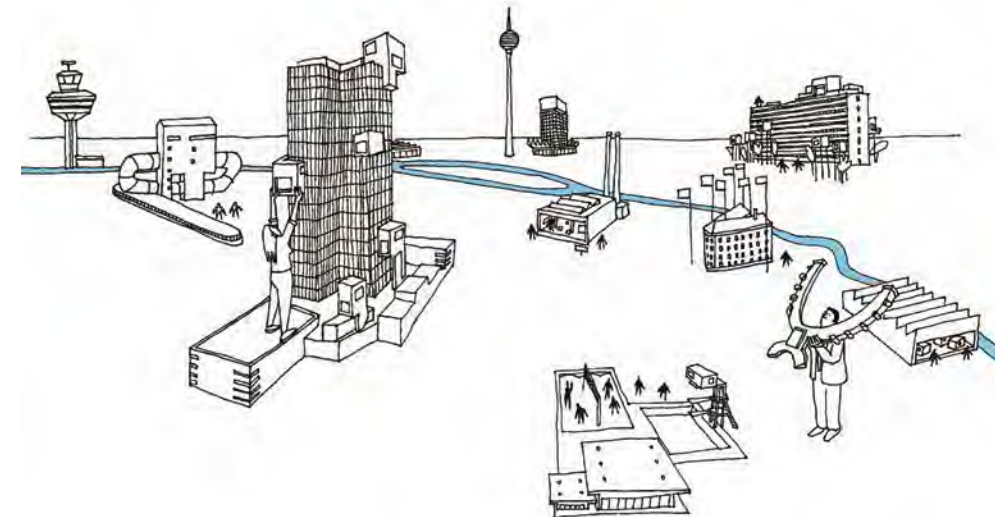
2011: IBA “HAUPTSTADT. RAUMSTADT. SOFORTSTADT.”

In September 2010, the Senate Department for Urban Development appointed a seven-member pre-IBA team to develop a preliminary concept for IBA 2020. In February 2011, an “IBA studio” opened in the old customs garage of Tempelhof Airport, where IBA dinners, discussion sessions and workshops took place over several months – a deliberately open, experimental process. The concept “Hauptstadt. Raumstadt. Sofortstadt.” (capital city – spatial city – instant city) interpreted Berlin’s “spatial capital” – its more than 1,000 brownfield sites, vacant lots (voids) and residual spaces – as the basis for sustainable, participatory urban development. The “Sofortstadt” idea built upon the city’s reputation as the “capital of meanwhile use”. The IBA was deliberately designed to be city-wide. The concept identified “search areas” intended to reflect Berlin’s urban diversity, including Tempelhofer Feld and the airport buildings as the centre of the IBA – the original “ur-void”.

A09



A10



A11



A09 Search area Humboldt, Marx-Engels and Rathaus Forum as a democratic centre.

“Forum 3” was intended to use a variety of approaches to demonstrate how “nationally shaped pasts and urban needs for the future can be brought into an attractive tension”.

Source: Senate Department for Urban Development. Eine IBA für Berlin 2020. Berlin 2011, leaflet with inserts.

Source: Senate Department for Urban Development. Eine IBA für Berlin 2020. Berlin 2011, leaflet with inserts

A10 IBA theme: “Qualification of large-scale structures in science and industry”.

The aim of the IBA was to bring large buildings that are no longer in use back into service: airports, department stores, public baths, etc. Experiments, artistic projects and temporary architecture were to play a key role in this.

Source: Senate Department for Urban Development / Pre-IBA Team: IBA Berlin Zwanzig

A11 Logo of the planned IBA Berlin 2020: “Hauptstadt. Raumstadt. Sofortstadt.”

The logos were intended to illustrate the key principles of the IBA.

Source: Senate Department for Urban Development / Pre-IBA Team: IBA Berlin Zwanzig

2012: IBA “DRAUSSENSTADT WIRD DRINNENSTADT”

The coalition agreement of November 2011 stated the following regarding a new IBA: “The former Tempelhof and Tegel airports are key elements of the International Building Exhibition (IBA) ‘Knowledge, Economy, Housing’ in 2020.” This statement was narrowed down to the topic of “housing” by the new Building Senator, Michael Müller, without any public debate.

The IBA deliberately shifted its focus to areas outside the S-Bahn ring, but also addressed locations that were stigmatised as “outside” in the public perception, even though they were geographically located inside the city. The aim was to develop exemplary solutions for the themes of “Diverse City”, “Housing as a Driving Force” and “Building the City Ourselves”. A study on the “The Guiding Principle of ‘Urban Mix’” was also created in this context.

However, this proposal also failed to mobilise the necessary political majority. The budget crisis at the time, internal disagreements within the SPD and conceptual ambiguities ultimately led to the 2014/2015 biennial budget, which was adopted by the Senate on 18 June 2013, not including any IBA funding.

A12 Export report on “Urban Mix”, commissioned from Freie Planungsgruppe Berlin, Dr. Nikolai Roskamm, February 2013.

This report was produced as part of the IBA project “Draußenstadt wird Drinnenstadt” (outside city becomes inside city) on behalf of the Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment, Berlin, SBD-IBA, Joachim Günther.

Source: Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment: Das Leitbild von der “Urbanen Mischung”. Berlin 2013

A12



2013: IBA “STADTMITTE”

In April 2013, to everyone’s surprise, Jan Stöß, state chairman of the SPD since 2012, called for the reconstruction of the historic centre to be made the focus of a new IBA. How should a major “Stadtmitte” (city centre) of the 21st century be designed? According to Stöß, 4,000 new dwellings in contemporary architecture could be built along restored streets in Berlin’s old town, for example, by building cooperatives and federal-state-owned housing companies. The proposal was highly controversial and was soon shelved, and with it, the entire IBA process was put on hold for many years.

2020: IBA BERLIN-BRANDENBURG INITIATIVE 2020-2030

In autumn 2020, the Berlin and Brandenburg Chambers of Architects (chaired by Christine Edmaier and Christian Keller) launched an initiative for a cross-state IBA. A multi-stage process was proposed to establish a joint concept. In April 2023, both Chambers of Architects (now chaired by Theresa Keilhacker and Andreas Rieger) once again called for a focus on the urban region, this time under the title: IBA “CLIMATE Region Brandenburg-Berlin”.

2021: IBA “KLIMA”

After a long hiatus, the IBA programme gained momentum again. The process began with the concept for an IBA “Klima” (climate), developed on the initiative of Governing Mayor Michael Müller (SPD) and presented in early 2022. This was preceded by an intensive dialogue with experts. The aim was to find “the best ideas for (re)developing [Berlin] into a climate-neutral and socially just city”. Further goals included “cooperation between Berlin and the region” and international exchange with “metropolitan regions such as Paris, Jakarta and Singapore”. The process lost its significance under the new mayor, Franziska Giffey (SPD), who was elected at the end of 2021.

A13



A15



A13 Berlin city centre, created by Christina Kautz for Planungsgruppe Stadtkern. Here, “city centre” refers to old Berlin and old Cölln. Also important are the transition points to the rest of the city. These locations connect the major radial roads that structure and unify the Berlin metropolitan area.

Map: Christina Kautz

A14 Berlin Region: Buildings and Waterways, published in 2024 in the journal of the Chambers of Architects. The star-shaped spread of housing estates from Berlin into the surrounding Brandenburg region is clearly visible.

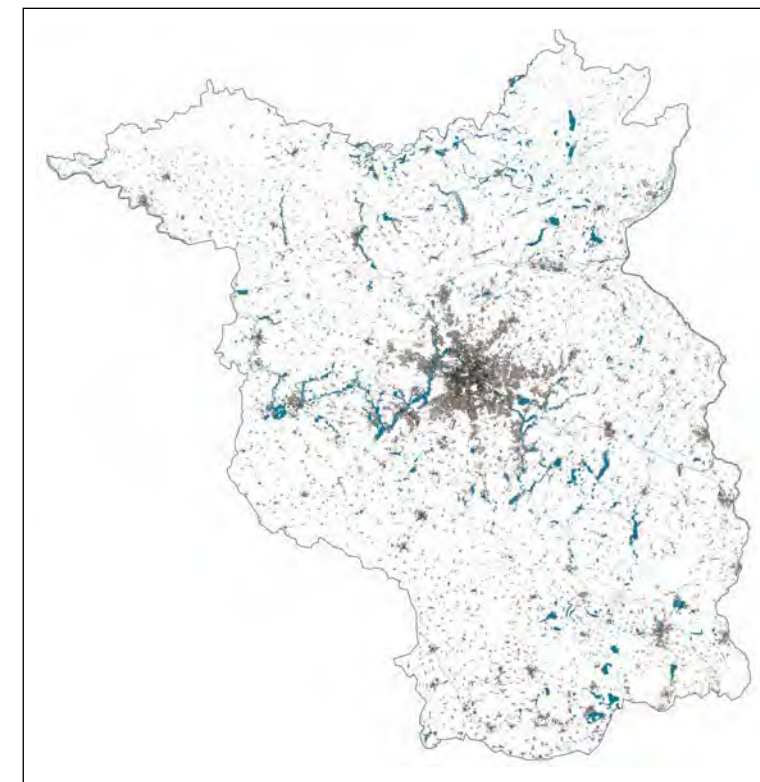
Source: DAB 01-02/24, Berlin regional, cited there as: Architekten- und Ingenieurverein zu Berlin-Brandenburg e. V. 2020

A15 IBA KLIMA. Cover image of the draft concept published in January 2022 and drawn up by the Senate Chancellery.

The foreword states: “The concept aims to be concrete enough to outline potential priorities and structure the process going forward, whilst simultaneously opening up space for new ideas and approaches from political, professional, and civil society spheres. It is intended as input to kick-start a process.”

Source: Senate Chancellery

A14



SUMMARY

The numerous attempts to establish a new IBA demonstrate a keen interest in addressing current urban development challenges through innovative approaches within the framework of a building exhibition. Every project began as if it were the first of its kind and no one else had ever given it a second thought. And every attempt was highly controversial, both politically and professionally, so much so that no project really made any headway – a reflection, too, of the widely differing visions and interests. The cancellation of a project was often due to a political shift within the Berlin Senate.

The focus was not solely on housing construction, but also on how to address the existing urban development stock – including vacant buildings, brownfield sites and obsolete structures. The projects “Radikal Radial”, “Hauptstadt. Raumstadt. Sofortstadt.”, “Stadtmitte” and “Klima” offered a broader urban planning spectrum. Spatially, “Hauptstadt. Raumstadt. Sofortstadt.” and “Klima” had a very expansive scope – encompassing the entire city or even extending to include Brandenburg. The projects “Tempelhofer Feld”, “Neukölln-Tempelhof” and “Stadtmitte” were focused on the city centre. Overall, a wide range of very different topics and locations were covered.

The numerous, tireless efforts underscored the strong commitment of many stakeholders to contributing to Berlin’s sustainable development. All these contributions have enriched the IBA process.



LAUNCH OF IBA BERLIN 2034-37

It is impossible to miss the changes taking place in Berlin. Affordable residential and commercial space is becoming scarcer, existing neighbourhoods are under pressure and new neighbourhoods are emerging. At the same time, infrastructure that was built under different conditions, especially in the post-war period, is showing signs of wear and tear: dilapidated bridges, schools in need of re-furbishment, burst pipes, failing public transport, transport facilities that are no longer fit for purpose.

Climate change is exacerbating the situation – with increasing heat stress, heavy rainfall and urgent need for more green spaces, water and shade. Added to this are demographic change, the necessary energy transition and a restructuring of the economy, which is placing new demands on residential buildings, commercial premises, educational establishments and public infrastructure. All these challenges are interlinked – and can only be tackled through cross-departmental, cross-border and integrated efforts, with a long-term perspective.

The House of Representatives’ draft bill on IBA Berlin 2034-37 (document no. 19/3097, March 2026) states the following: These challenges, “given their interdisciplinary nature, can only be only be addressed to a limited extent using the existing tools of urban development”. The IBA should therefore focus on “the urban transformation of the built city”. The existing buildings will form the starting point for a city that is fit for the future.

The strategic foundations for this have long been in place. What needs to be speeded up is the implementation. IBA Berlin 2034-37 is intended to close precisely this gap – as a temporary state of emergency that makes it possible to experience how strategies are transformed into the urban future.

In August 2025, in order to establish a sound basis for the spatial framework of the IBA, the Senate Department for Urban Development commissioned the planning office Forward Planung und Forschung to carry out a comparative study of various scenarios: the South-East Corridor – a linear development axis stretching from Ostkreuz via the Adlershof science and technology park to BER Airport – and the S-Bahn ring as a circular, connecting framework between the inner and outer city.

In October 2025, the decision was made: The Senate Department came out in favour of the Ring scenario – impressed by its strong narrative quality, its thematic diversity and its compatibility with existing plans. The ring is therefore the central spatial feature of IBA Berlin 2034-37.

A16 Key Visual for IBA Berlin 2034-37

Source: Senate Department for Urban
Development, Building and Housing

A16



BERLIN AND ITS RINGS

The stage is set for an IBA! In terms of urban development, every German city has been and continues to be shaped by three key structural features: its centre, its ring roads and its arterial roads (radial roads). Beyond the centre, the rings and arterial roads meet at key urban locations: formerly at the city gates and later at the intersections of traffic rings and arterial roads. These places have always been – alongside and in addition to the city centre – of great central importance, serving as secondary centres and hubs of intensive urban development.

For centuries, the city wall was the defining feature that determined the city’s extent and focal points. In the 19th century, the city walls lost their purpose of providing protection, and other rings came to the fore: Transport infrastructure – initially rail rings, then, in the 20th century, motorway rings. Where they were elevated, the rail rings were largely permeable. With their stops and stations, they established new focal points for urban development. In contrast, motorways generally formed insurmountable barriers; their junctions, with no stopping points, tore huge gaps in the city’s urban layout.

Berlin, too, cannot be understood without its rings. The rings and nodes form the city of Berlin and indeed the entire metropolitan area. The medieval city wall, with its five gates, was of exceptional importance to medieval Berlin. This was followed by the fortification ring, built between 1658 and 1683, which featured six gates, and the Akzisemauer, or Customs Wall in English, erected between 1734 and 1737 for a significantly expanded royal capital. This wall had no military significance, but served to collect taxes (“Akzise”) and make it more difficult for soldiers to desert. This wall now has 18 gates.

Today, it is primarily the Ringbahn and the inner-city motorway ring road which, in addition to the city centre, together with the radial arterial roads, give the city of Berlin its structure.

A17 Map of Berlin showing the Customs Wall, built between 1734 and 1737, shortly before its demolition in 1850.

In the mid-19th century, Berlin was still constricted by a wall. The gates along the wall mostly led to the major arterial roads, which then, on the basis of the “Hobrecht Plan” of 1862, became inner-city main roads and even linear district centres. In the centre of the city, you can make out the course of the mediaeval city wall and the fortification ring built between 1658 and 1683.

Source: Berlin State Archives, F Rep. 270-01, 487 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Delius_Plan_von_Berlin_1850.jpg)

A17



RAIL RINGS

In the mid-19th century, a new era began for Berlin: Within a few decades, the royal capital was transformed into a huge, world-class industrial city that expanded far beyond its city limits. Initially, it was still enclosed by the Customs Wall. However, the dawn of a new era was already on the horizon – not least thanks to a largely forgotten (partial) ring line: the Berlin Connecting Railway, built in 1850–51, which was intended to link the new stations together. This partial ring ran largely along the Customs Wall. It was not until 1867–1870 that this wall was demolished – a fact that is also little known today. This was a crucial prerequisite for Berlin’s continued growth. Almost at the same time as this demolition, a new ring line was built between 1867 and 1877, forming a key part of the city of Berlin’s urban infrastructure: the Berlin Ringbahn – at that time still situated a long way from the built-up city.

The Berlin Ringbahn was a new type of ring that embodied a new mode of transport – the railway – which quickly became a key driver of urban development. It was no longer just the arterial roads, but also the radial suburban railway lines that came to play a significant role in the city’s further development. What began as a ring railway far outside the city became a backbone of the metropolis, which – albeit not entirely clearly defined – encircled the densely built-up inner city and served as a link between it and the sparsely built-up outer city.

The Ringbahn stations, located at the intersection with a main road, now gained great importance, as these developed into central commercial streets within the ring. However, the junctions with the radial suburban rail lines were also important. These radial railways gave rise to a new type of urban development, which no longer encircled the existing city in a ring, as had been the case since 1862, but instead radiated outwards, forming the “star-shaped settlement” model.

In the 20th century, the Ringbahn was followed by its bigger sister, the outer railway ring, which was completed in 1956 but has yet to realise its full potential for urban development, even after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

A18

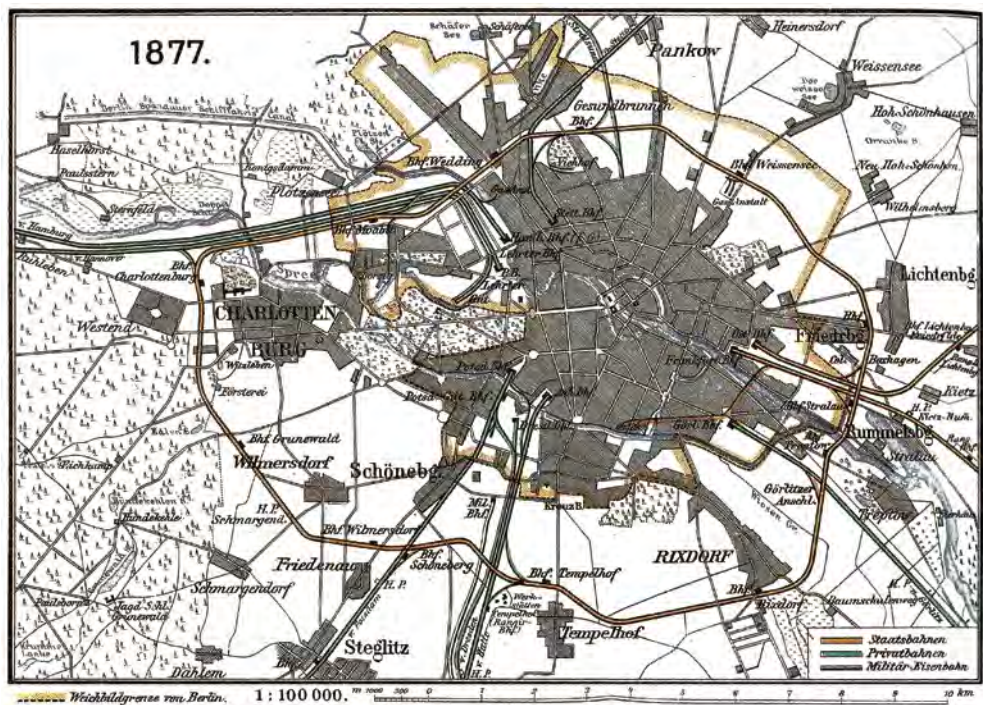


A18 „Königliche Bahnhofs-Verbindungsbahn zu Berlin“ (Royal Railway Link to Berlin), 1861.

As late as the mid-19th century, the compact city was still of modest size. However, the connecting railway line (marked in red), which ran alongside the Customs Wall, was already a sign of the city’s future growth. It operated until 1871, but was then found to be completely inadequate.

Source: Helmut Zschocke: Die erste Berliner Ringbahn. Berlin 2009

A19



A19 Ringbahn in Berlin, situation around 1877.

For the most part, the Ringbahn still ran well outside the built-up area of the city. However, in the north and east, it was significantly closer to the city centre than in the south and, above all, in the west, where the stately neighbourhoods began to take shape.

Source: Berlin und seine Eisenbahnen 1846–1896. Published on behalf of the Royal Prussian Minister of Public Works. First volume. Berlin 1896, panel 8

A20



A20 DGDR overview map of Berlin’s S-Bahn network with outer railway ring, 1959.

The ring road also served to bypass West Berlin. To the east, it ran within the boundaries of Berlin.

Source: s-bahn-galerie/Sammlung O. Hoell

ROAD RINGS

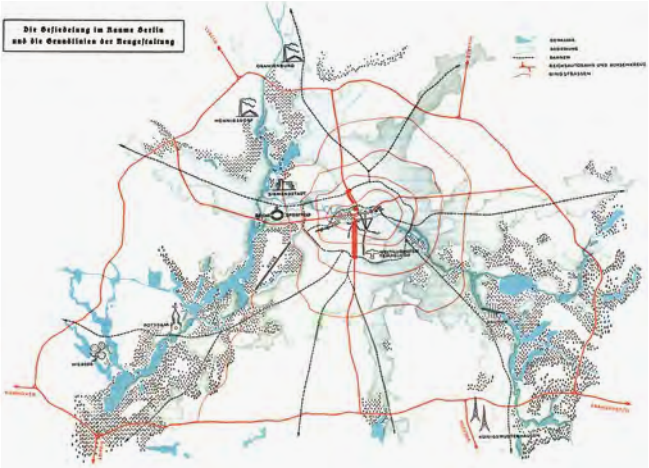
Towards the end of the Weimar Republic, systematic planning began, with a view to replacing the ring and radial railway system, which was vital for the existence of the city, with a car-orientated expressway system. Of particular significance was the motorway and expressway planning carried out during the Nazi era, which envisaged an outer motorway ring road for the Greater Berlin area. This was partially constructed between 1936 and 1939 and then completed during the GDR era between 1972 and 1979. This outer ring shows a clear imbalance: In the south, east and west, the distance to the centre of Berlin was much greater than in the north.

Ultimately, the inner motorway ring road proved to be of crucial and long-term significance for urban development in Berlin. Planned in 1955 as part of a wider motorway network, it was only partially completed in West Berlin between 1956 and 1979. Following the construction of the Wall, the ring road operated by East Berlin played only a minor role in West Berlin and was partially discontinued. It seemed that, just as in Los Angeles, cars were displacing trains. The car-friendly city increasingly replaced the rail-friendly city. The partially elevated or sunken motorway ring road (A 100) had entirely different urban development consequences to the Ringbahn: It formed a hard barrier in the urban layout, devalued the adjacent areas, and did not create any new central locations at the intersections with the radial roads; on the contrary.

A21



A22



A23

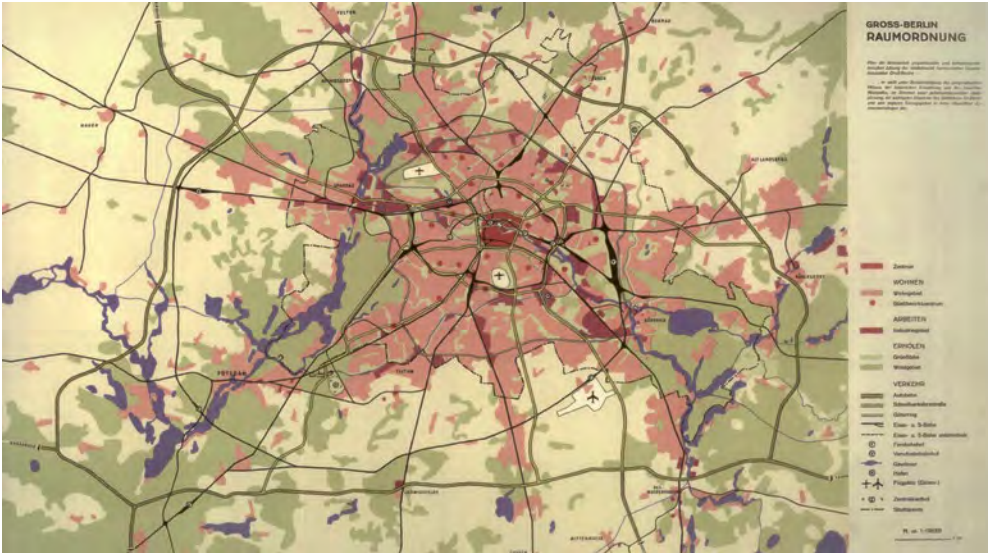


A21 Greater Berlin competition: Contribution by Hermann Jansen, awarded first prize, 1909. The results of the competition were presented at the “Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung” (universal urban development exhibition) in Berlin in 1910.

Jansen’s contribution demonstrates extraordinary foresight in terms of urban planning: Two decades before the official urban planning process began, he proposed organising the rapidly expanding Berlin metropolitan area into a ring and radial pattern using both transport systems – railway lines and new arterial roads. The purpose of the 50-60-metre-wide arterial roads is to “transport the vast crowds of a metropolis from the heart of Berlin to the outskirts in a short space of time”; they terminate at the city and ring railway. The Ringbahn itself is supplemented by further railway rings: a northern suburb ring and a southern suburb ring, then 15 km from Berlin Mitte the 1st belt line, 30-35 km out the “2nd belt line” and finally at a distance of 65-70 km the city railway, which connects Frankfurt an der Oder, Eberswalde, Rathenow, Brandenburg an der Havel and Jüterbog among other places.

Source: Reichshauptstadt Berlin. Berlin 1939

A24



A22 Planned motorways and expressways for the Greater Berlin area during the Nazi period, as of 1939.

In addition to the outer ring road, the most impactful structural legacy of the Nazi era in the Greater Berlin area, it was above all the north-south and the east-west axes that were intended to reshape the imperial capital.

Source: Reichshauptstadt Berlin. Berlin 1939

A23 System of expressways and motorways planned for West Berlin, “final layout”, as at 1957.

Within this comprehensive road network, which took no account of political divisions, the inner motorway ring road – like the Ringbahn – formed a kind of dog’s head. Further inwards, you can see the four tangents that were intended to enclose the centre.

Source: Senator for Building and Housing (ed.): Verkehrsplanung. Verkehrsbauten. Berlin 1957, p. 15

A24 System of expressways and motorways planned for East Berlin, shown on the planning map of Greater Berlin, as at 1958.

In addition to the ring-radial expressway system, the outer railway ring is also clearly visible.

Source: Municipality of Greater Berlin, City Planning Office, September 1958

S-BAHN RING

The fact that the S-Bahn ring is far more than just another S-Bahn line is evident not only at election time, but also in the wider public debate. Voting patterns within the ring road, in the inner city, are strikingly different from those outside the ring road, in the outskirts. Debates on urban policy tend to focus on areas within the Ringbahn and often overlook the problems and opportunities facing the outer city. The difference in urban development is also strikingly apparent: very dense development with a continuous network of urban streets and squares in the inner city and sporadic urbanity in the outer city, which is more open and green, characterised by housing estates and large-scale housing developments, and more reliant on cars. Other European cities, such as London, Paris and Rome, have also experienced such spatial and political differences between their inner and outer districts.

The Berlin S-Bahn ring still serves not only as a vital transport infrastructure, but also as a psychological—and, to some extent, physical—barrier between the inner and outer city. Along the ring there are numerous areas that embody this barrier, particularly, though by no means exclusively, where the Ringbahn and the motorway run parallel to one another. This double ring – the railway ring and the city motorway – stretches from Treptower Park to the Rudolf-Wissel bridge.

A25



A25 Rings scenario from the Senate Department for Urban Development, presented in March 2026.

This map is included in the House of Representatives bill on the “Implementation of the International Building Exhibition Berlin 2034–37”. It says: “The results of the selection process for potential IBA sites reveal a clear clustering of areas requiring action on both sides of the S-Bahn ring and along intersecting radial roads. This led to the development of the “extended ring scenario”. The strategic relevance of this scenario is heightened by the overlapping of the intersecting radial roads, which act as connecting axes from the inner city beyond Berlin’s state borders. The potential IBA sites identified are located within the clusters on either side of the intersections where the radial roads meet the S-Bahn ring. They share the potential for connection between the inner and outer city that can be achieved through conversion, expansion and new builds. The potential IBA sites under consideration concentrate key problem areas that require targeted urban transformation. As a transition zone between the inner and outer city, they also mark the urban threshold where different lifestyles, mobility patterns and urban planning situations converge.”

POTENTIAL

The Berlin S-Bahn ring is not a homogeneous area – it is a mosaic of very different urban development situations, each characterised by its own challenges and potential. Three distinctive types of space can be found along the entire ring:

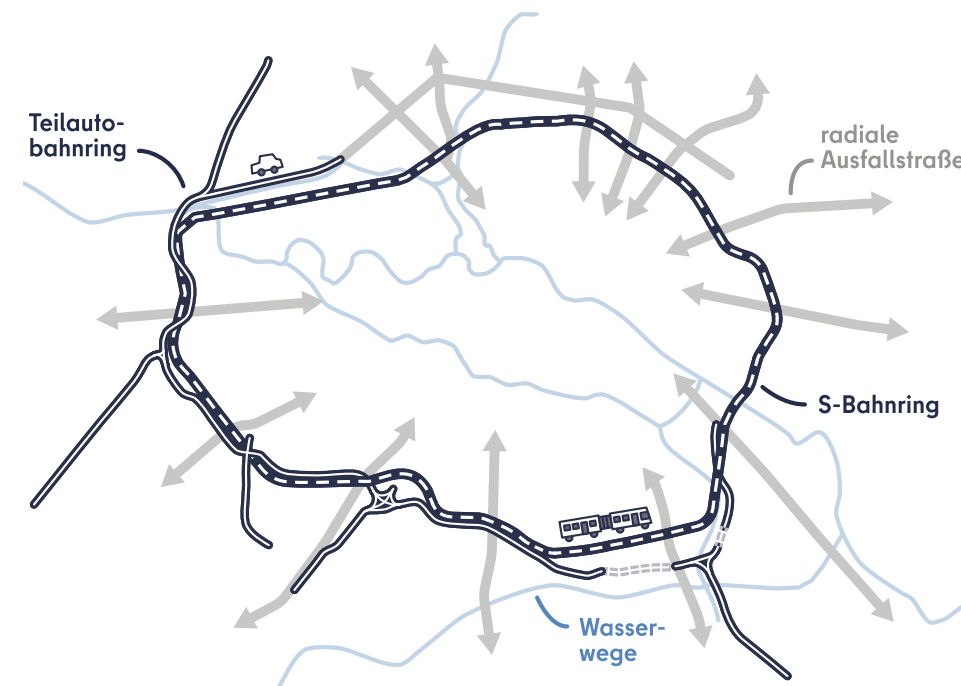
Urban interfaces: The greatest potential for development lies where the ring road and radial arterial roads meet. There are already established centres at these junctions – but oversized transport facilities are hindering their development. By reallocating street space, transforming dysfunctional retail structures and implementing targeted new build projects – including for housing – these centres can be revitalised and become attractive hubs linking the inner and outer city.

Islands and barriers: Motorways, railway lines and waterways have cut off areas from the urban fabric and formed “islands”. Barriers can be overcome through structural interventions, new road connections and climate-resilient open space design – and isolated islands can once again become vibrant and versatile parts of the city.

Along the radials: The major arterial roads connect the centre with the outskirts – and are now heavily congested. They have the potential to become green boulevards with urban amenities, new opportunities for intensification and climate-resilient open spaces.

Examples of such areas include those around the Westkreuz, Bundesplatz, Innsbrucker Platz, Tempelhof S-Bahn station, Sonnenallee S-Bahn station and Nordhafen. An area with particular potential stretches along the (former) A 104. After all, there are areas along the ring that have already undergone urban redevelopment – such as the EUREF Campus and the west side of Südkreuz station. The potential along the Ringbahn has not yet been tapped in the slightest.

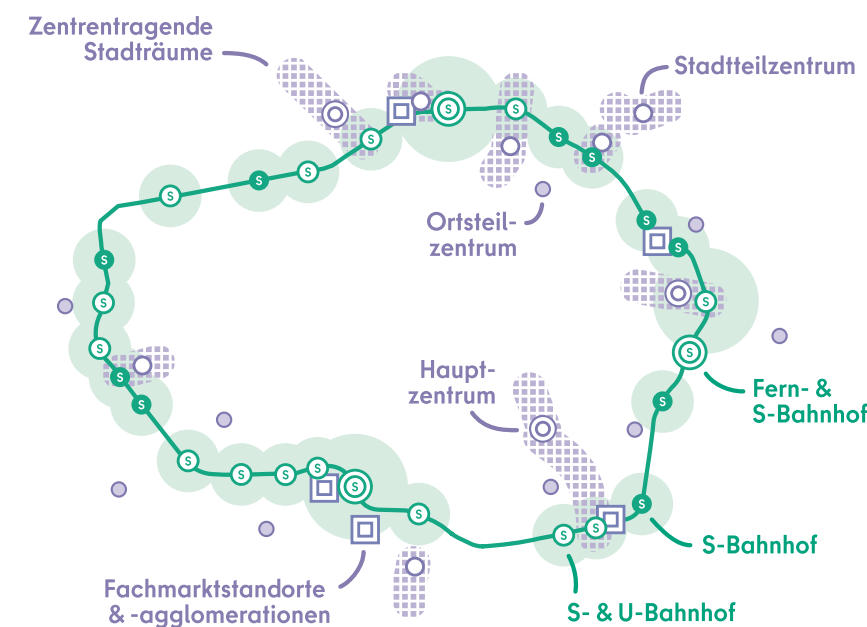
A26



A26 barrier.

The S-Bahn ring line separates the inner city from the outer city, but that is not the only factor: Tangential rail links, the section of the A 100 urban motorway and waterways reinforce the separation and create a multi-layered barrier. The result is a physical and psychological barrier that many Berliners experience on a daily basis.

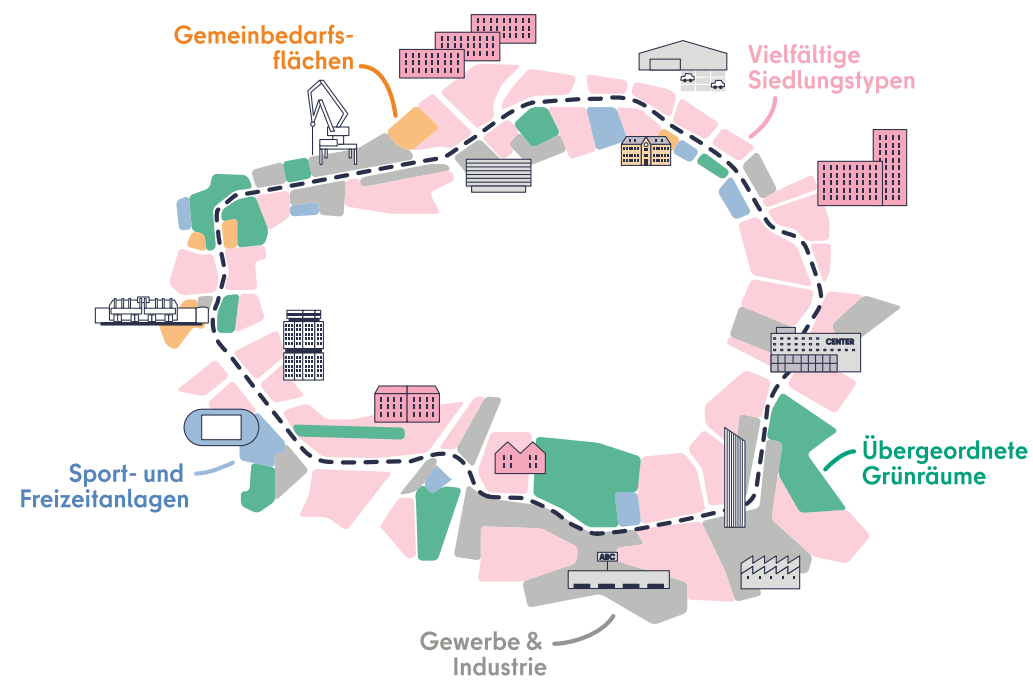
A27



A27 transit area.

Along the S-Bahn ring, the tram system, underground, long-distance rail services and the urban motorway converge to form the backbone of urban mobility. The junctions along the ring are among the most accessible locations in the city – and yet many of the main roads, neighbourhood centres and local centres that flank them, as well as retail parks, are now among Berlin’s most underdeveloped areas. Herein lies the paradox: maximum accessibility, minimum quality of life.

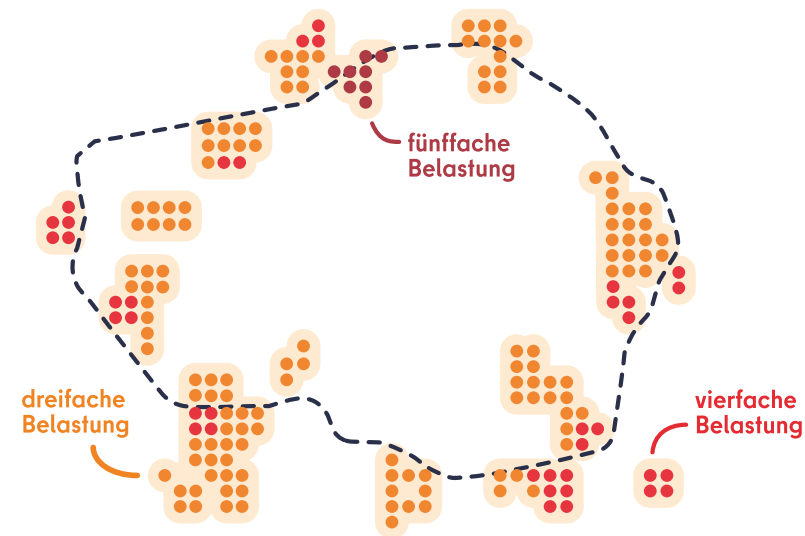
A28



A28 spatial islands.

The urban landscape along the S-Bahn ring line is anything but uniform: Large housing estates next to allotment gardens, an industrial unit next to a Wilhelminian style residential building, a high-rise office block next to a shopping centre. The result is a city of islands and fractures – fragmented, lacking cohesion, and often difficult to make sense of.

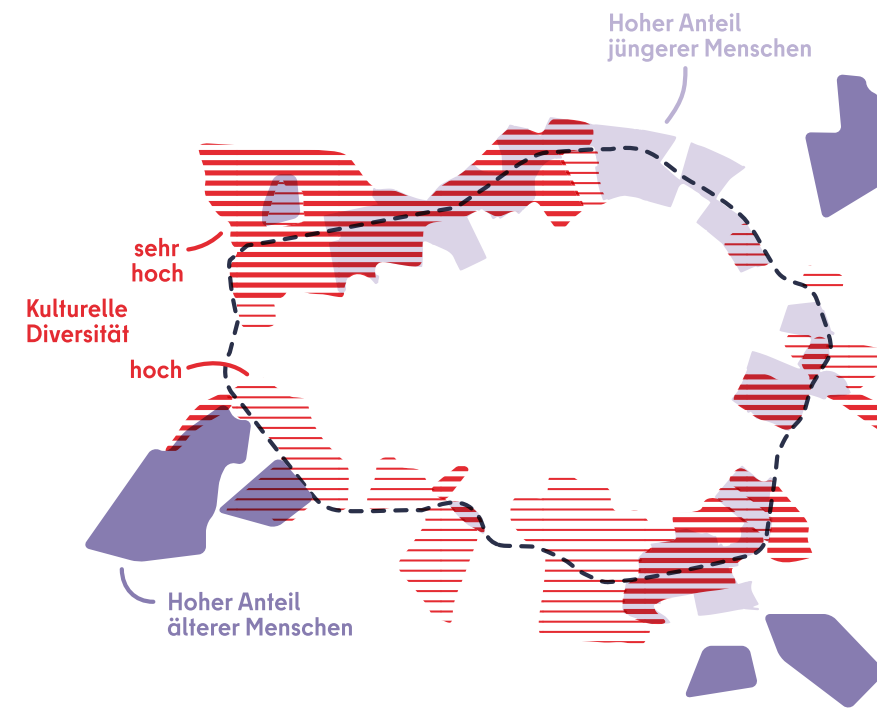
A29



A29 stress area.

Along the S-Bahn ring line, noise from the railway and motorway, air pollutants from traffic, and heat due to extensive impervious surfaces combine to create multiple environmental pressures. Where there are green spaces, they are often fragmented by transport infrastructure.

A30



A30 cultural area.

Am S-Bahn-Ring konzentriert sich eine Vielfalt an Herkunftsgeschichten, Sprachen und Alltagskulturen. Alteingesessene Milieus und Zugezogene, subkulturelle Szenen und bürgerliche Nachbarschaften, kreative Pioniere und seit Jahrzehnten verwurzelte Bewohnerschaft – sie alle leben und arbeiten entlang des Rings.

Source: Forward Planung und Forschung for the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

IBA SEARCH AREA SOUTH-WEST

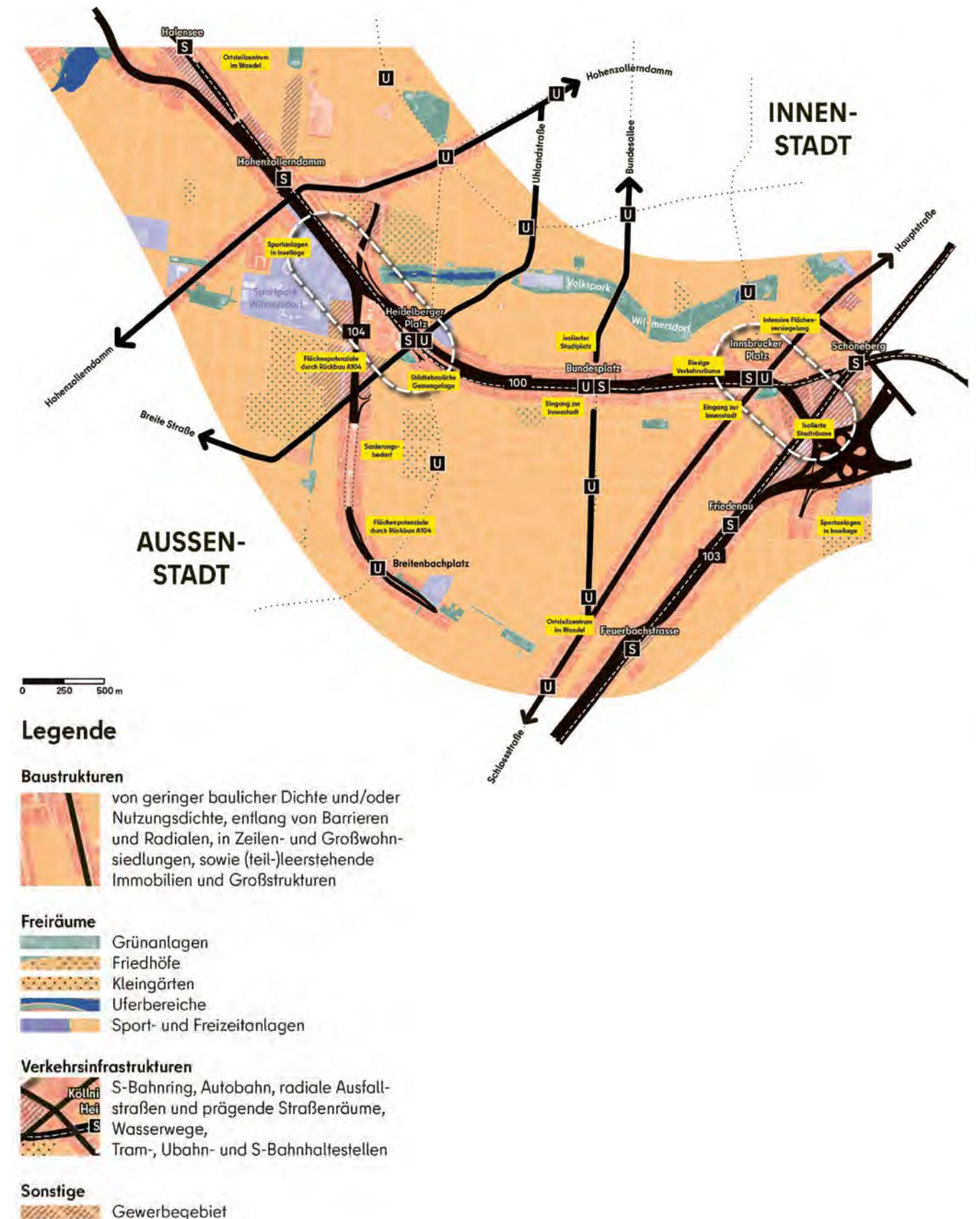
The south-west search area is the area around the Berlin ring where the car-centric city reveals its most extreme side – and where parts of it are already being concretely overcome.

For decades, the former A 104 urban motorway has severely fragmented the urban landscape between Schöneberg and Wilmersdorf. Together with the A 100 and two major motorway junctions – Kreuz Wilmersdorf (A 100/A 104) and Kreuz Schöneberg (A 100/A 103) – it has cut entire neighbourhoods off from one another and degraded areas into hard-to-reach remnants: single-purpose, isolated and cut off from urban life. This is exactly where the historic opportunity lies: The former A 104 is being dismantled for technical reasons. What began as a practical necessity can become an urban development vision: for the area around the Resurrection of Christ Orthodox Cathedral, the section of road between Berliner Straße and the Schlangenbader Straße motorway overpass, and Breitenbachplatz, one of Berlin's most significant squares from the Weimar Republic era, which was severely marred by the motorway bridge.

Innsbrucker Platz, an interface between the S-Bahn ring, the Westtangente and the B1, is now more of a transport hub than a civic centre. To a lesser extent, this also applies to Bundesplatz. Here, the IBA can demonstrate how car-orientated hubs can be turned into vibrant gateways to the city centre.

The search area encompassing the Ringbahn stations Südkreuz, Schöneberg, Innsbrucker Platz, Bundesplatz, Heidelberger Platz and Hohenzollerndamm is embedded in an area that has already undergone significant change: for example, through the EUREF Campus innovation centre and the area around Südkreuz station. What is achieved in this urban space sends a signal far beyond Berlin – serving as a benchmark for all cities grappling with the question of what comes after the car-centric city.

A31



Source: Forward Planung und Forschung for the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

IBA SEARCH AREA SOUTH-EAST

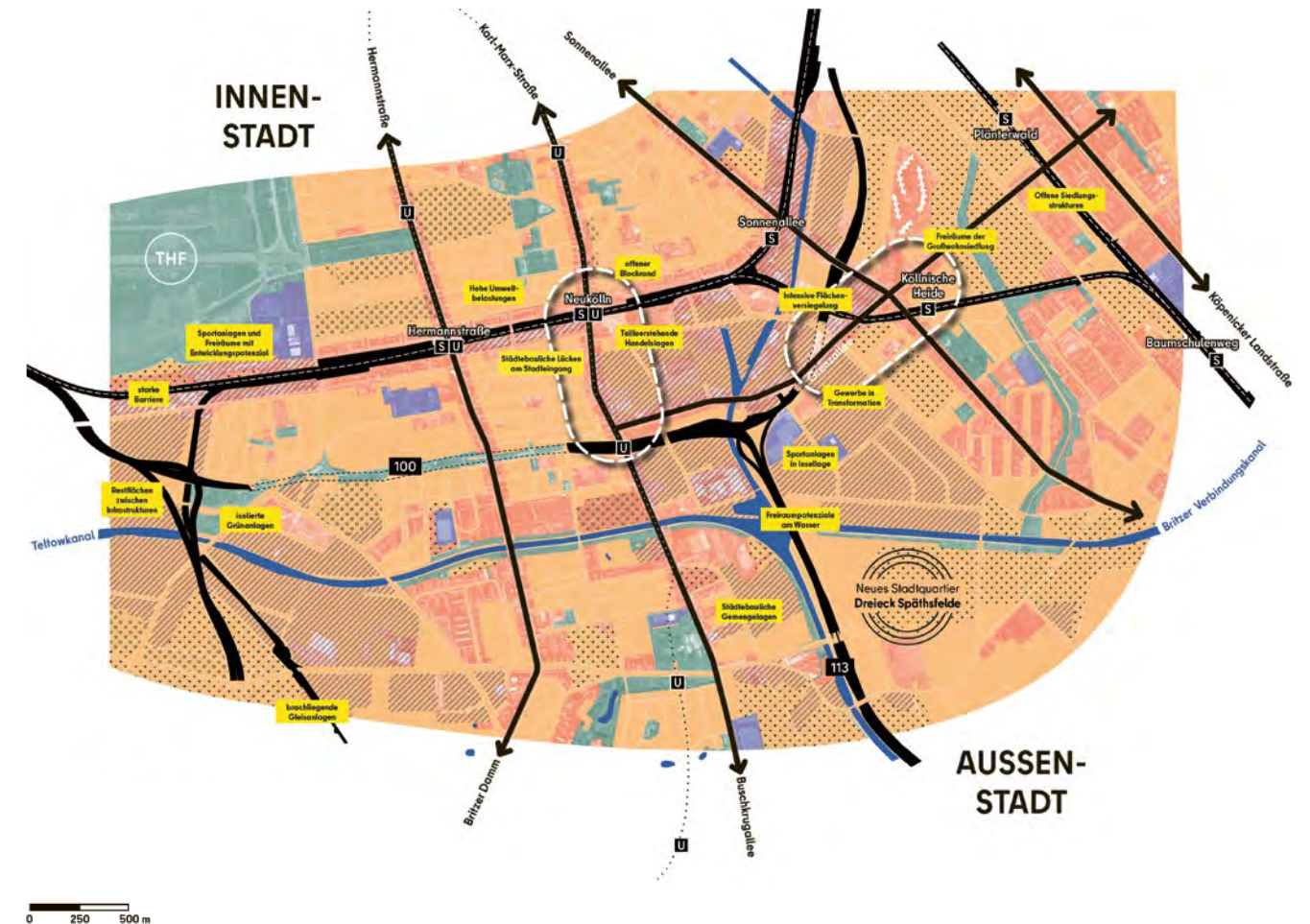
The south-east search area is one of the most complex and contradictory urban areas in Berlin – and therefore an ideal testing ground for the IBA.

Of particular importance are the intersections of the Südring and the radial roads – Tempelhofer Damm, Karl-Marx-Straße, Sonnenallee and the area around the Treptower Park S-Bahn station. This is where the inner and outer city meet; transport-dominated nodes can be transformed into vibrant neighbourhood centres that combine local amenities, social interaction and multimodal mobility.

Large-scale infrastructure such as the expanded A 100, the S-Bahn ring and extensive waterways fragment the area and create island locations that prevent communication between the isolated neighbourhoods. Commercial areas, sports facilities, allotments and green spaces sit side by side here, without really coexisting. In the immediate vicinity are densely built-up, impervious neighbourhoods that suffer from heat and noise. The pressure of gentrification and a lack of land for affordable housing construction exacerbate social tensions.

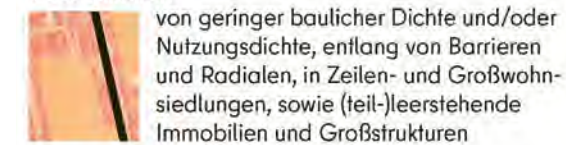
At the same time, this area is home to an exceptional concentration of resources: Many commercial premises offer space for future technologies and new ideas. Large-scale retail and service properties are waiting to be put to more efficient, sustainable use. The location between the River Spree, the canals and the Treptower Park opens up potential for water-based, climate-resilient urban spaces as well as sports and recreational uses.

A32



Legende

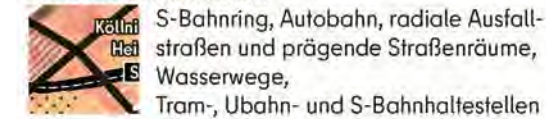
Baustrukturen



Freiräume



Verkehrsinfrastrukturen



Sonstige



Source: Forward Planung und Forschung for the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

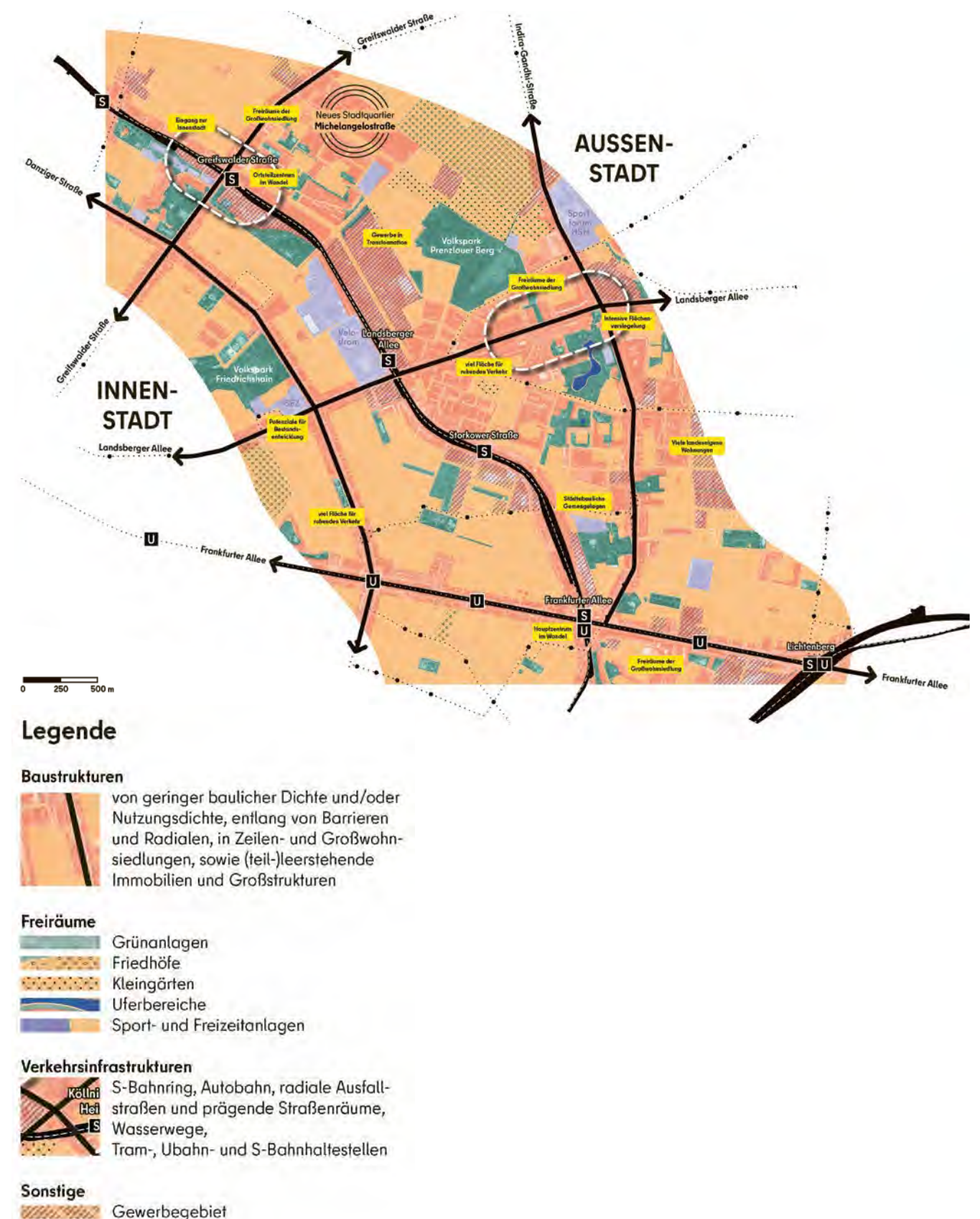
IBA SEARCH AREA NORTH-EAST

The north-east search area has a special feature that distinguishes it from all others: Here, the S-Bahn ring is not just a piece of infrastructure – it is a visible divide between eras. On one side are the densely built-up perimeter-block neighbourhoods of the imperial era, on the other the open large housing estates and pre-fabricated buildings of the GDR era. Nowhere else on the ring do two such different urban planning models meet so abruptly.

This is the key IBA question for this search area: How can these different types of city – small-scale and large-scale, closed and open, Wilhelminian and socialist – be productively linked with one another and made fit for the future, whilst retaining their respective characteristics?

The junctions between the ring road and the radial arterial roads are the key levers here. Greifswalder Straße, Landsberger Allee and Frankfurter Allee intersect the ring, forming established neighbourhood centres. Today, these hubs are dominated by traffic and are performing well below their potential – partly because the retail activities that once defined these centres are under considerable pressure to change. The IBA can demonstrate how these areas can become a network of vibrant neighbourhood centres that strengthens the north-east as a whole.

A33



Source: Forward Planung und Forschung for the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

IBA SEARCH AREA NORTH-WEST

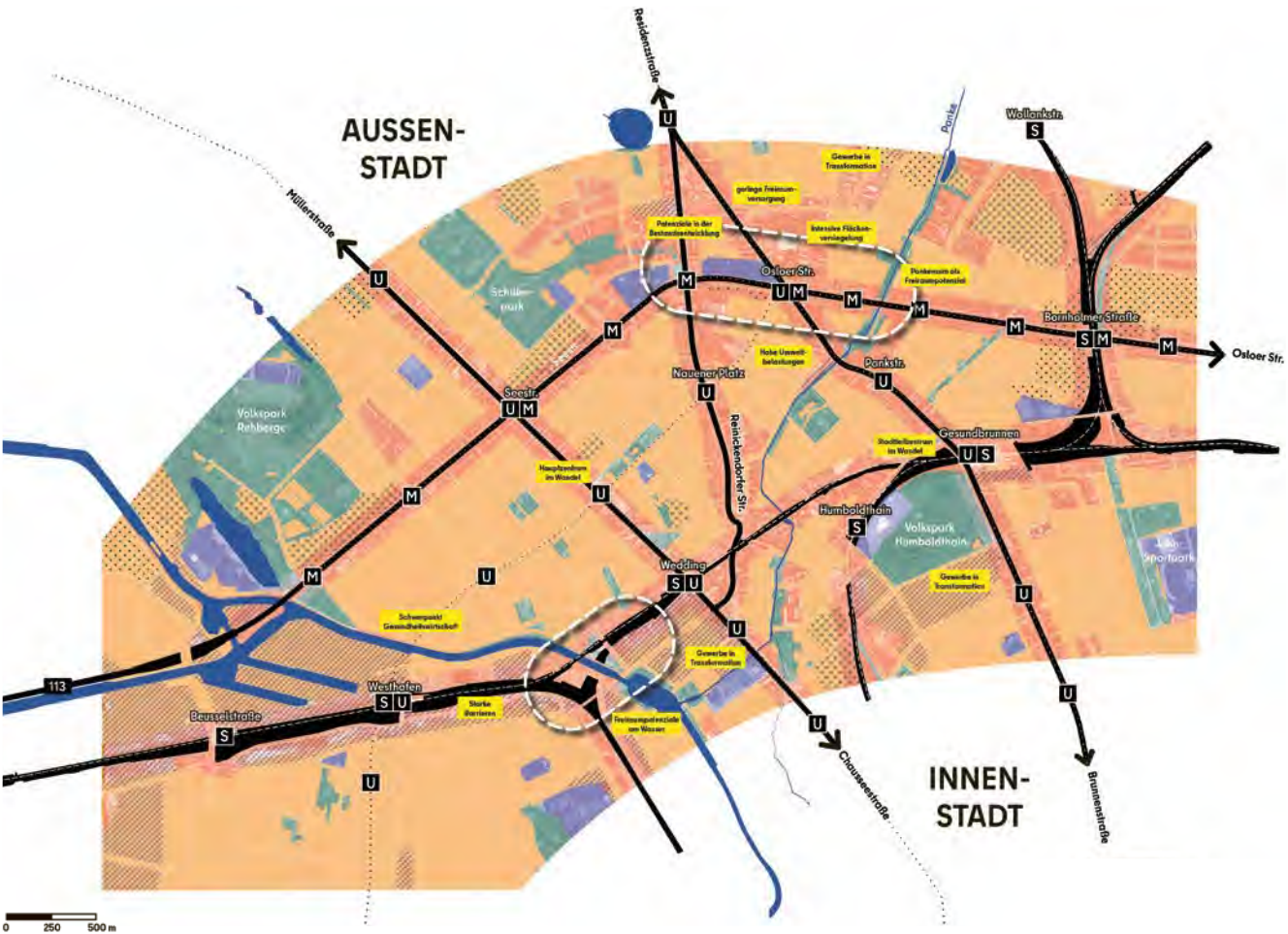
The north-western part of the ring is an urban area full of contrasts: imperial-era perimeter block developments and row housing, global corporations and allotments, academic excellence and a need for social action. What burdens the search area is not so much its heterogeneity as the lack of connections between its parts. The railway, S-Bahn, motorway feeder roads and canal create an isolated structure in which key locations – Europacity, the Bayer Campus, Virchow Hospital and Humboldthain Technology Park – exist side by side without connecting.

Müllerstraße is the central urban radial road with a central character in the north-west. As a historic north-south axis, it connects the Wedding district with the city centre – and crosses the S-Bahn ring.

The Panke plays a special role in the search area. The small river runs through the north-west as a natural north-south axis, connecting neighbourhoods that are separated by infrastructure barriers. With the planned Panke Trail – an 18-kilometre-long express cycle route from Karow to the city centre – the river can become a central hub for movement, combining rapid everyday mobility with experiencing the landscape. As a corridor of open space, the Panke can link nature and the city, history and everyday life, production and neighbourhoods.

The north-west search area is a key area for integrating work, research and living in dense urban areas. The IBA can develop models for how the existing development islands can be effectively linked – in terms of space, function and transport.

A34



Legende

Baustrukturen

von geringer baulicher Dichte und/oder Nutzungsdichte, entlang von Barrieren und Radialen, in Zeilen- und Großwohnsiedlungen, sowie (teil-)leerstehende Immobilien und Großstrukturen

Freiräume

- Grünanlagen
- Friedhöfe
- Kleingärten
- Uferbereiche
- Sport- und Freizeitanlagen

Verkehrsinfrastrukturen

S-Bahnring, Autobahn, radiale Ausfallstraßen und prägende Straßenräume, Wasserwege, Tram-, U-bahn- und S-Bahnhaltestellen

Sonstige

Gewerbegebiet

Source: Forward Planung und Forschung for the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

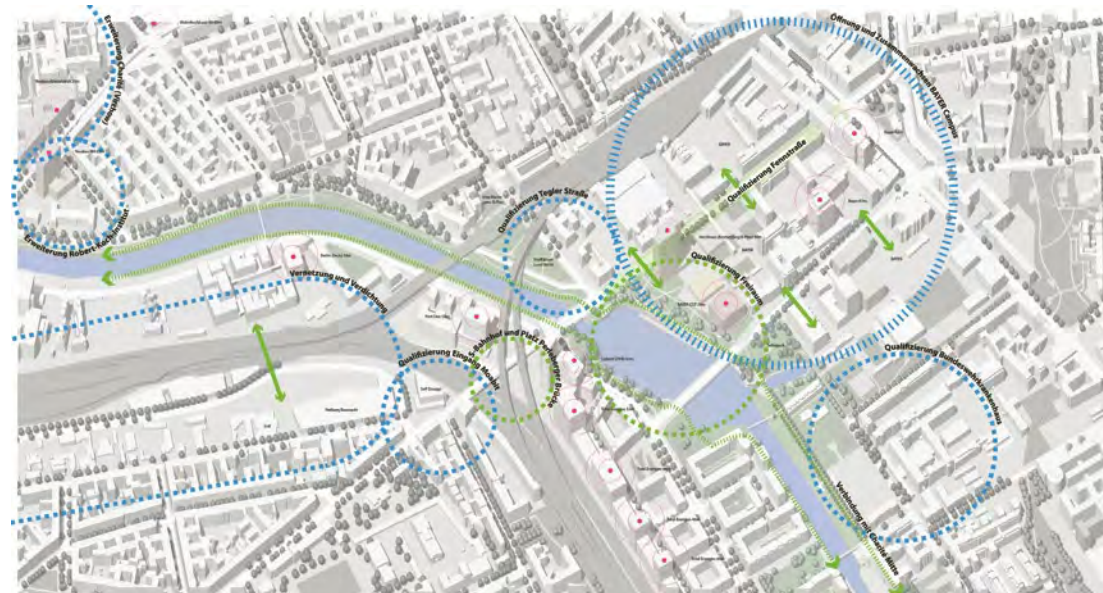
IBA SEARCH AREA NORTH-WEST – NORDHAFEN FOCUS AREA

The area around Nordhafen is largely structured by transport infrastructure. There are both small-scale and large-scale commercial areas.

Thanks to the appeal of Europacity, the surrounding area has developed into a dynamic growth region for the service and healthcare sectors. New construction projects from Bayer AG, the Robert Koch Institute, Charité, the Bundeswehr Hospital and private developers are either under construction or in planning.

The Berlin-Spandau Ship Canal and the Nordhafenpark are important green spaces and provide a scenic contrast to the surrounding areas. Overall, however, the area lacks an urban development concept that could help transform the current transit space into a cohesive urban space with its own identity.

A35



A35 Nordhafen sub-area: potential of the focus area

Senate Department for Urban Development,
Building and Housing

A36 S-Bahn ring at Nordhafen, viewed from the north-west.

Senate Department for Urban Development,
Building and Housing

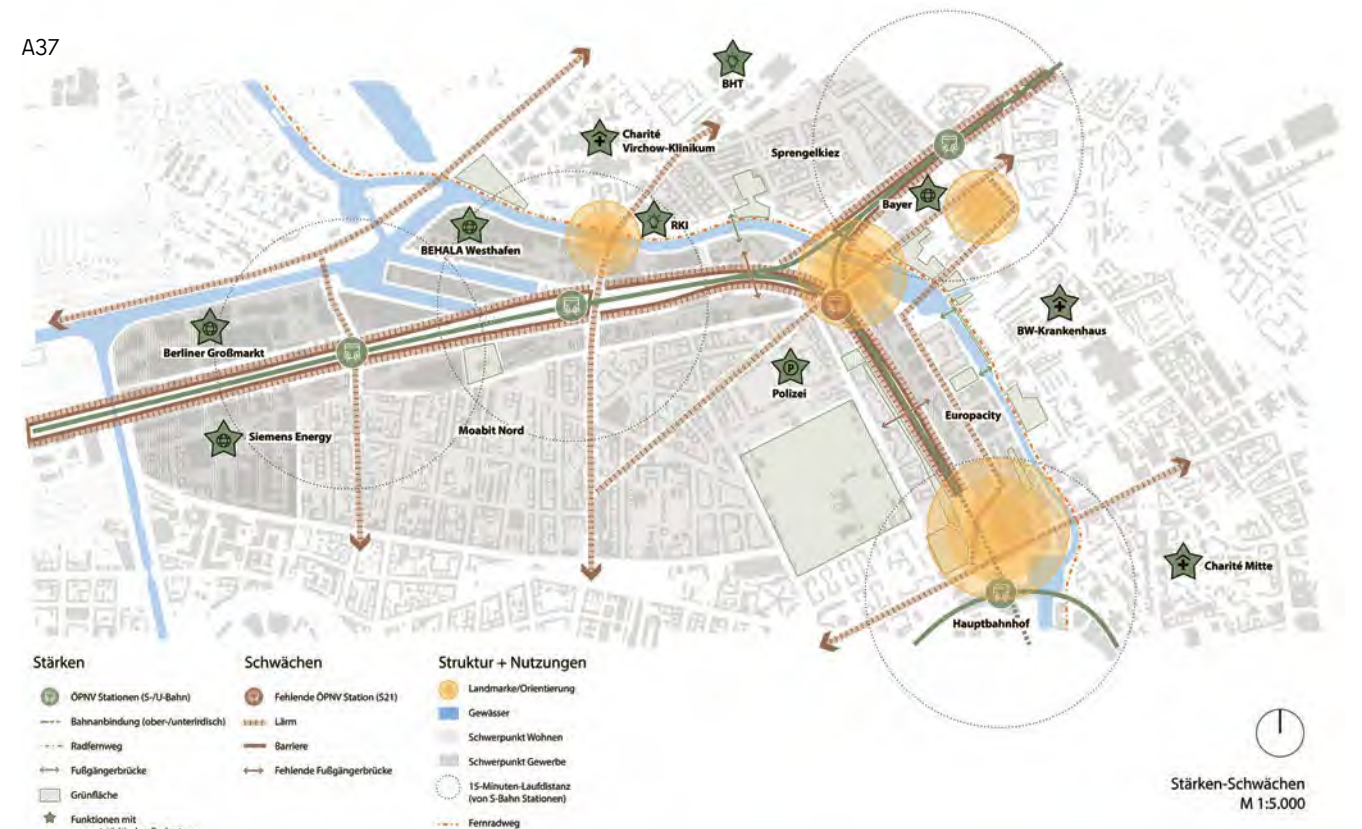
A37 Nordhafen sub-area: strengths/weaknesses analysis.

Senate Department for Urban Development,
Building and Housing

A36



A37



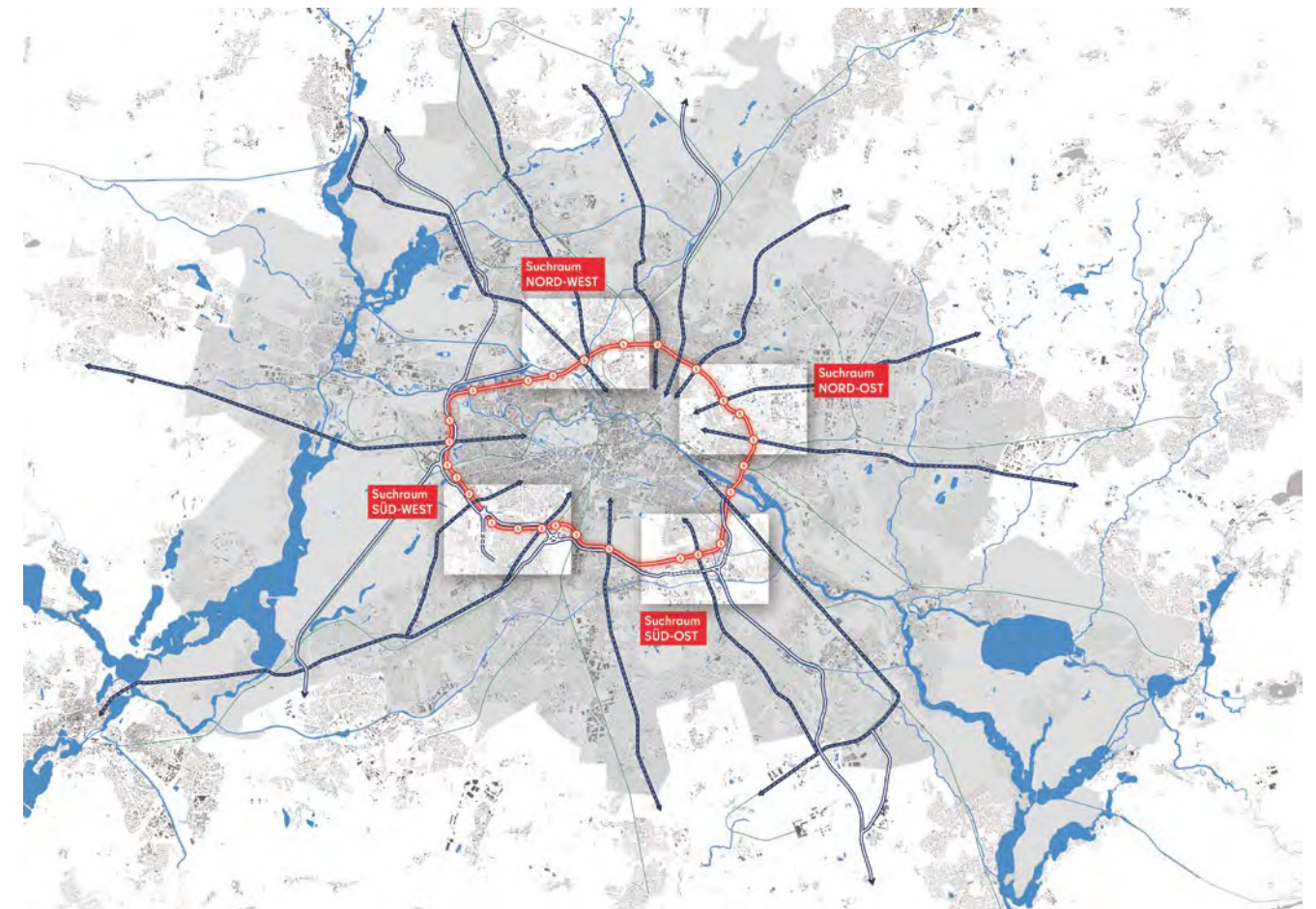
INTERIM SUMMARY

The study areas presented here are examples; they by no means cover all possible redevelopment areas along the S-Bahn ring. They are also not IBA areas, but areas in which IBA projects are possible. In these areas, the need for action and the scope for action converge. The IBA projects to be selected also cannot cover the entire spectrum of urban development themes offered by the S-Bahn ring; they need to have a thematic focus: the development of “bridge centres” at the junctions where the S-Bahn ring meets the major arterial roads, i.e. at the intersections of the Greater Berlin area’s structure.

It is along the S-Bahn ring and its junctions with the major radial roads that we find the locations where Berlin’s urban development can set the course for a sustainable urban transformation of the built city. It is there that the ring can best fulfil its central role of acting as a bridge between the city centre and the suburbs. There, the polycentral structure can be systematically strengthened like nowhere else. This can lead to the creation or enhancement of neighbourhood centres, which can be developed through new uses, green spaces and refurbishment – and in some cases new construction – to create an attractive urban environment.

This focus builds on many of the considerations developed during previous IBA approaches and formulated in the current civil society debate. It also addresses the two overarching challenges that the Senate has formulated for the IBA: climate protection and climate adaptation on the one hand, and careful management of urban land on the other. This is a city-wide transformation strategy that can demonstrate models applicable far beyond Berlin.

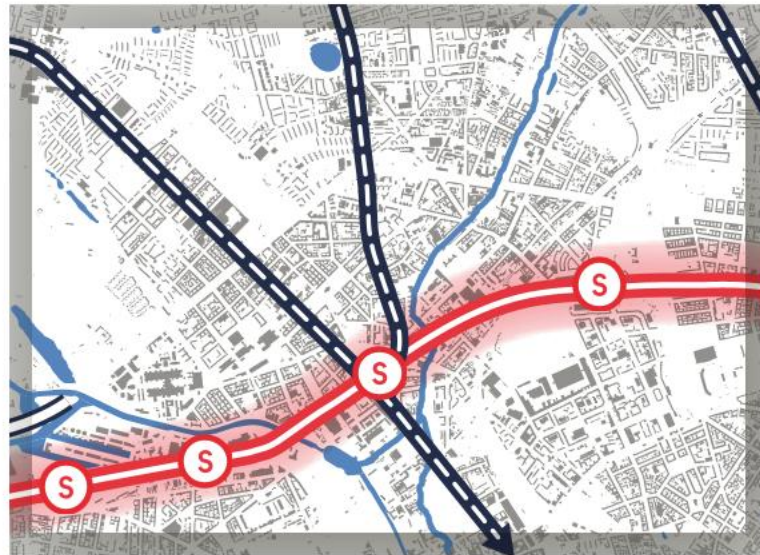
A38



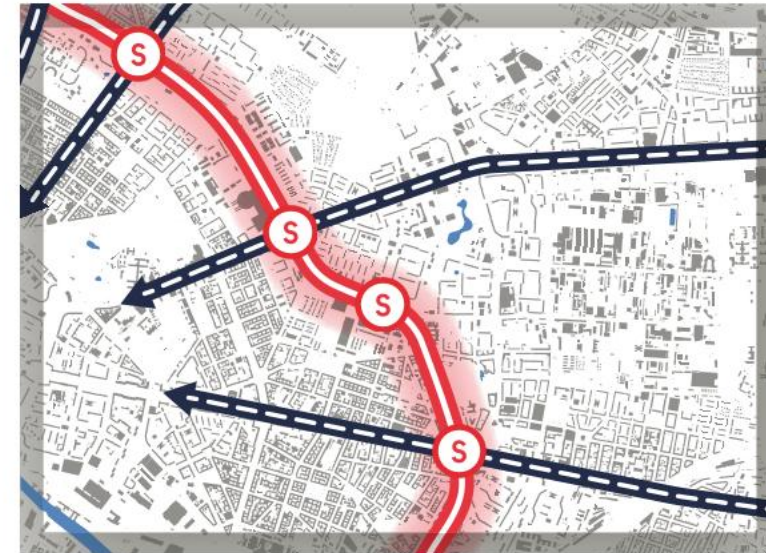
A38 Plan of the IBA “extended ring scenario” setting with radial roads and search areas, March 2026: The ring is invoked as a central urban planning element between the inner and outer city. It harbours great potential for Berlin’s future urban development, especially at the intersections with the radial roads: strengthening existing urban subcentres and creating new ones by dismantling oversized transport infrastructure, designing public spaces and constructing new buildings on reclaimed land – including for housing construction. This will also improve connections between the city centre and the outskirts. It will also strengthen the so-called “15-minute city”, which is one of the city’s strengths thanks to Berlin’s polycentric structure.

Source: Forward Planung und Forschung for the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

IBA SEARCH AREAS

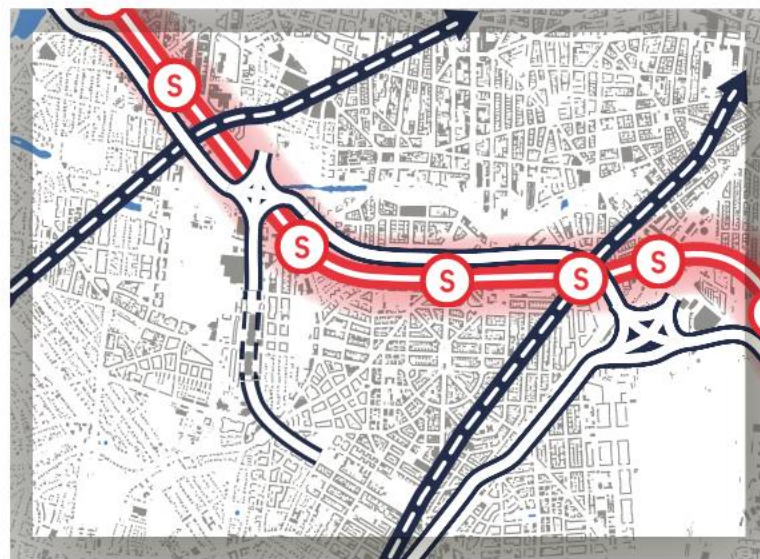


**IBA SEARCH AREA
NORTH-WEST**



**IBA SEARCH AREA
NORTH-EAST**

**IBA SEARCH AREA
SOUTH-WEST**



**IBA SEARCH AREA
SOUTH-EAST**











RETRO- SPECTIVE



Berlin is regarded as the capital of international building exhibitions. This refers primarily to Interbau 1957 and IBA 1987 in West Berlin. However, significant international building exhibitions had already taken place in Berlin in 1910 and 1931, albeit not featuring buildings, but rather drawings, plans, photographs and models. Explicit reference was made to these earlier exhibitions in 1957 and 1987. And of course, we must not forget the GDR building exhibition in 1987.

1910

B01



Towards the end of the German Empire, in 1910, the Academy of Fine Arts in Charlottenburg hosted the “Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung” urban development exhibition. This internationally focused exhibition aimed to demonstrate how the rapid growth of major cities can be effectively managed.

B02



A year later than originally planned, at a time when the Weimar Republic was in crisis, the “Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin 1931” opened its doors on the exhibition grounds. Its argument focused on the sub-urban sprawl of the city during the crisis of 1931. Although it was called the “German” building exhibition, it also featured a major international exhibition for urban development and housing, in which no fewer than 23 other countries took part.

1931

B03



1957

Twelve years after the Nazi dictatorship, again a year later than initially planned, West Berlin hosted Interbau in the midst of the Cold War – and this time, it truly was an exhibition of buildings. In this context, international meant that renowned architects from abroad were involved. The exhibition focused on a radical departure from the city of yesterday and served as a resounding rebuke to the new Berlin in the socialist East.

B04



1987

West

A few decades later, a drastic change of course in urban development took place in West Berlin, brought about the International Building Exhibition Berlin 1987 (IBA 1987). The agenda was no longer to demolish the tenement city in favour of an entirely “new Berlin”, but rather to critically reconstruct and carefully regenerate the old Berlin in terms of its buildings, plots, public spaces and urban layout.

B05



East

Although largely overlooked in the West, the “Bauausstellung der DDR” (GDR building exhibition) also took place in 1987, coinciding with Berlin’s 750th anniversary, at the Dynamo sports hall in East Berlin; it was a showcase of the entire construction industry in the GDR, with a particular focus on Berlin. This exhibition also presented socialist Berlin as having undergone a postmodern transformation.



URBAN DEVELOPMENT EXHIBITION IN BERLIN IN 1910

From May to June 1910, the most significant urban development exhibition the world had seen to date took place at the Academy of Fine Arts in Charlottenburg, near Berlin. The general secretary of the exhibition was Werner Hegemann, an active advocate of new urban development worldwide, and its chairman was the architect Otto March. The exhibition was based on the competition for Greater Berlin, in which urban developers from abroad, such as Léon Jaussely and Charles Nicod, had also taken part.

The initiative for both the competition and the exhibition came from experts in the field who wanted to demonstrate that their profession could make a significant contribution to the organisation of a rapidly growing city. They received support from political and business circles. The exhibition attracted a great deal of interest from the public – far beyond the professional public. It also featured exhibits from abroad and gained international recognition. Thanks in no small part to international exchange, the exhibition was able to establish the field of “urban development” locally, nationally and internationally. In the autumn of 1910, parts of the exhibition were presented in London at the International Town Planning Conference.

B07



B06



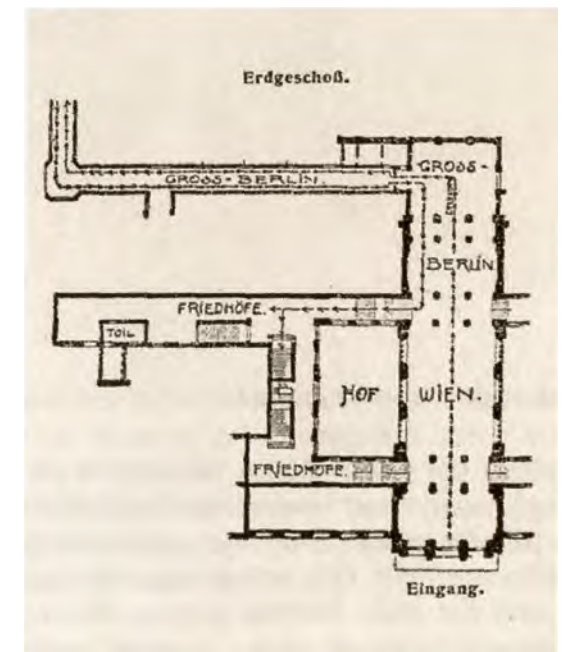
B06 | B07 Greater Berlin competition, entry from the first-prize winner, Hermann Jansen, 1910.

Proposal for a local building plan for the western Tempelhofer Feld (left), bird's eye view of the proposed development of the western Tempelhofer Feld (right). Jansen based his design on a four-storey perimeter block development, which allowed for side wings in only a few cases, but no transverse wings.

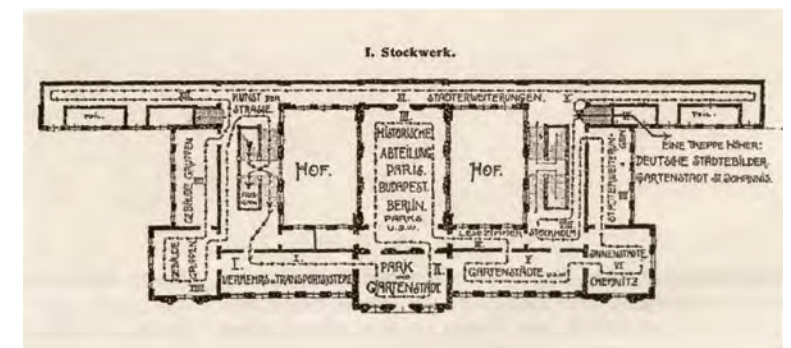
Source: TU Berlin Museum of Architecture, Inv. no. 20533, 20563

B08 Floor plan of the exhibition at the College of Arts, ground floor and first floor, 1910

Source: "Führer durch die Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung in Berlin 1910" guide to the exhibition. The high status of Vienna is clearly evident in the exhibition. Berlin 1910, pp. 3



B08



GERMAN BUILDING EXHIBITION BERLIN 1931

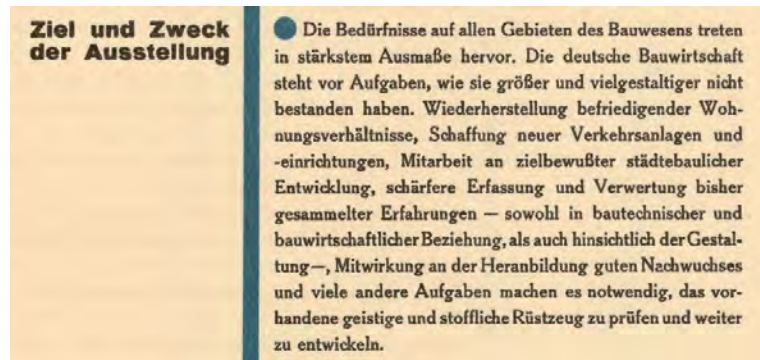
In 1931, at an extremely difficult time politically and economically, a “German” building exhibition, originally scheduled for 1930, was held on the exhibition grounds. However, this name masked the fact that a large international exhibition for urban development and housing was also on display there, the “largest Berlin event with an international dimension since 1914”. According to Wasmuth’s monthly journals for architecture and urban development, this was “the first major urban development exhibition in Berlin since 1910”. In his foreword for the official catalogue, Mayor Heinrich Sahm emphasised the great importance of “international cooperation” for Berlin.

The exhibition was organised by the “Verein Bauausstellung e.V.” and the city of Berlin. The fact that Hans Peter Riepert, a member of the executive board of the Reich Association of German Industry, served as chairman of the building exhibition association, underlined the explicitly construction-focused nature of this exhibition and the key role played by the construction industry associations. The chairman of the international exhibition was Robert Schmidt, the well-known director of the Ruhr Coal District Housing Association; his deputy was Martin Wagner, Berlin’s city planning officer. In addition to the workers’ associations of the construction industry, the “interested architects and engineers’ associations” and the German Werkbund were also involved in the difficult and complex preparatory process.

B09



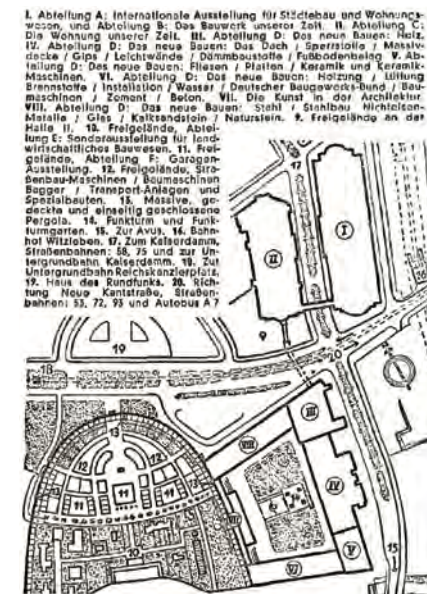
B10



B11



B12



B13



B09 Title of an official advertising publication, n.d.
The exhibition space covered 130,000 square metres.

Source: Library of the University of Kassel, <https://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/fullscreen/1747822262756/1/#topDocAnchor>

B10 | B11 From the official advertising publication “Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin”, n.d.
Wasmuth’s monthly journal for architecture and urban development wrote about the message of the international exhibition: “It will open the eyes of countless people to the fact that Berlin’s tenement block system is outdated: modern decentralisation in urban development requires only very limited city centre and high-rise districts; modern means of transport and the economically necessary relocation of industry make it possible to open up our cities and enable hundreds of thousands of people to live in low-rise buildings [...]” (1931, p. 199)

Source: <https://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/fullscreen/1747822262756/8/#topDocAnchor> and <https://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/fullscreen/1747822262756/10/#topDocAnchor>

B12 Map of the exhibition
B13 Postcard from the 1931 building exhibition
The text on the postcard translates as: “A view inside the large Exhibition Hall II. It showcases ‘The Home of Our Time’, based on designs by renowned German architects”. Mies van der Rohe was the curator for this part of the exhibition.

Source: Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst und Städtebau 1931, p. 196

INTERBAU 1957

Interbau 1957 marked a demonstrative farewell to the Nazi past, a beacon against the tenement city as well as against the Stalinallee in the east. At least that was how it wanted to be understood. When it was officially opened on 6 July 1957, a year behind schedule, visitors stood in awe before a “picture book of modern architecture” that made a “global impression”. The building exhibition was accompanied by numerous smaller exhibitions and conferences. 993,000 people, more than a third of whom were from the GDR, visited the exhibition. The patron was Federal President Theodor Heuss.

By 1957, Interbau had already had a turbulent history. When Stalinallee was built in East Berlin from 1951 onwards, West Berlin was not yet in a position to mount a major response. One of the first responses was the Ernst-Reuter-Siedlung, a showcase housing estate built in Wedding between 1953 and 1955 according to plans by the architect Felix Hinssen.

The second response came in the form of a major urban development competition for the redevelopment of the heavily damaged Hansaviertel, which was put out to tender in 1953 and called for a radical break with the urban structure of the 19th century and a significant reduction in the building density. The competition was won in late 1953 by Gerhard Jobst and Willy Kreuer. The jury’s report praised the “truly innovative, grand composition”.

However, as plans for an building exhibition in 1956 began to take shape, the award-winning project no longer seemed appropriate and was abandoned. According to the explanatory statement, the proposed, relatively uniform buildings would be unable to “create architectural individuality” as might be achieved by “renowned architects from Germany and abroad”. Architecture before urban development! This marked the start of a period of feverish, gradual revision of the concept.

B14



B15



B16



B17



B14 Berlin’s first major urban development project, Stalinallee in East Berlin, postcard 1954, constructed from 1951.
B15 An initial response from West Berlin to Stalinallee: Ernst-Reuter-Siedlung, constructed between 1953 and 1955, developer: Thomashof A.G.

This rather modest project comprised 423 new dwellings, but was given considerable publicity, for example through the presence of Federal President Theodor Heuss at the inauguration ceremony in the summer of 1954.

Source: Postcard, HB collection; Berlin State Archives; Press Office of the Senate of Berlin in cooperation with the Senate Department for Building and Housing

B16 second, much more detailed answer: competition for a new Hansaviertel, winning design by Gerhard Jobst and Willy Kreuer, 1953

The designers highlighted the “effortless naturalness” with which the residential buildings were arranged around two curves in the Tiergarten, thereby expressing a “contrast to buildings with a rigid, regimented layout”.

Source: Postcard, HB collection; Berlin State Archives; Press Office of the Senate of Berlin in cooperation with the Senate Department for Building and Housing

B17 Supplement to an early information brochure from Interbau GmbH

The exhibition grounds are already reduced to the southern Hansaviertel district, but extend far into the Tiergarten. A monorail is also planned. Several national pavilions are planned along Straße des 17. Juni, and exhibition halls are indicated near the Victory Column. The site still contains many tall residential blocks, quite unlike the ones that were later built. The main entrance is at the Zoologischer Garten station. At least a date for the exhibition has already been announced: July to September 1956.

Source: HB collection

GALA OF INTERNATIONAL MODERN ARCHITECTURE

In the Hansaviertel, as the writer Karena Niehoff poetically wrote in a book entitled “BERLIN” by the Senator for Building and Housing in 1957, “architects from all over the world were able to compose in free rhythms on a site that had been made virgin again by war and a few subsequent explosions.”

The Hansaviertel was the centrepiece of Interbau 1957. But there were also exhibition projects in other venues in West Berlin: the Congress Hall in the Tiergarten (architect: Hugh A. Stubbins, USA) and the Unité d’habitation “Typ Berlin” south of the Olympic Stadium (architect: Le Corbusier). The exhibition was to include 53 architects from 13 countries. Among those who contributed to the international nature of the event were Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer Filho, Hugh A. Stubbins, J. H. van den Broek, J. B. Bakema and Pierre Vago. A total of 1256 new dwellings were created in the Hansaviertel, 21 of which were in small detached houses and 545 in high-rise blocks. Landscape architects were prominently involved in the Parkstadt project, including Hertha Hammerbacher and Hermann Mattern; Walter Rossow played a key role.

In addition to the residential buildings, several religious, cultural and commercial buildings were constructed: the Protestant Kaiser Friedrich Memorial Church and the Catholic Church of St. Ansgar, a library, a primary school, a nursery and a complex comprising a cinema, restaurant and a row of shops. Furthermore, the new district was excellently connected to the public transport network with the Hansaplatz subway station. Interbau also served as a platform for the construction industry, which was able to showcase its products in the Hansaviertel district and on the exhibition grounds.

B18



B18 Aerial photograph of the southern Hansaviertel, 1962, shown repeatedly

To the right of the centre is the detached housing complex, in front of it the Evangelical church and in the background along the S-Bahn, the high-rise blocks. Altonaer Straße above the centre of the picture cuts through the neighbourhood.

Source: Landesarchiv Berlin

B19 The Congress Hall in the Tiergarten, architect Hugh Stubbins (USA), collaborators Werner Düttmann and Franz Mocken

B20 Unité d’Habitation “Typ Berlin” southeast of the Olympic Stadium, architect Le Corbusier
With 530 housing units, this house alone offered almost half as many dwellings as the entire Hansaviertel. Postcards, 1959.

Source: HB collection

B19



B20



EN ROUTE TO THE “CITY OF TOMORROW”

Interbau 1957 was – as was to be expected at the time – a tribute to West Berlin’s most important protector, the USA. Above all, however, it promoted a new, distinctly American urban model: a loosely structured, low-density city characterised by high-rise buildings set amidst green spaces, with roads reserved exclusively for cars, devoid of pedestrians and other buildings.

The book BERLIN, published by the Senator for Building and Housing, stated: “There is no doubt about it: this living machine, which appears perfect from an aesthetic, sociological and physiological point of view, offers little in the way of conventional comfort. [...] There is simply no longer any sense of one’s fellow residents, or indeed any sense of ‘household community’ at all.” It continued: “If, one morning, suspecting nothing, you go to step out onto the street – it’s gone. As a consolation, a little later your suspicious, searching eye spots a new, much wider, much straighter, much longer street. [...] And the pedestrians? The new road has no time for incorrigible Neanderthals. Anyone with a destination should be in a car, and anyone without one is a pedestrian and should head straight to the nearest park.”

And what about the old Hansaviertel, with its strong Jewish influence? It was eliminated almost without a trace. Federal President Heuss himself undertook the necessary cultural devaluation: “[...] the so-called Hansaviertel, the complete destruction of which made way for a unified solution [...], is one of those neighbourhoods of the rapidly growing young imperial capital that contained absolutely no buildings of any artistic or even local historical interest.” In contrast, the Mitte District Office’s website regarding the Hansaviertel now states: “Almost all important architects of the imperial era left their mark on the Hansaviertel, including Ernst von Ihne, Hans Grisebach, Alfred Messel and Johann Emil Schaudt.”

B21

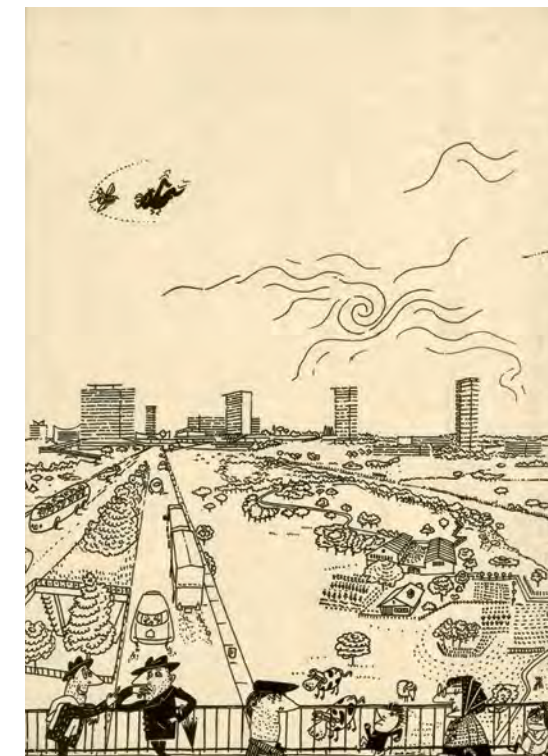


B21 | B22 From the Interbau GmbH brochure “Die Stadt von morgen” (the city of tomorrow), illustrations: **Oswin, Berlin (Oswald Meichsner)**

A comparison of the old and new city. The street is being reimagined: in future, it will have no surrounding buildings and no pedestrians. The brochure was intended to “inform non-experts about the necessary redevelopment and renewal of our cities”.

Source: Interbau GmbH (ed.): Die Stadt von morgen. Berlin, 1957. HB collection

B22



FORGOTTEN BACKGROUNDS

Many visitors to Interbau 1957 were unaware of the complex organisational and financial processes that had to be put in place long before an architect could even be commissioned.

At the end of 1954, the “Aktiengesellschaft für den Aufbau des Hansaviertel” (Hansa AG – a public limited company to develop the Hansaviertel) was founded. It was funded by DeGeWo Berlin, Deutschbau and the Sozialwerk für Wohnung Hausrat social welfare organisation. The Chairman of the Supervisory Board was Rolf Schwedler, Senator for Building and Housing. Hansa AG was responsible for the land consolidation, the fiduciary reconstruction of the Hansaviertel and reprivatisation. Land consolidation meant “first uniting all plot of land under a single ownership in order to then carry out a redistribution” – an extremely complex process. In 1954, Interbau GmbH was established for the actual building exhibition. The Chairman of the Supervisory Board was again Rolf Schwedler. An advisory committee chaired by Otto Bartning was then also set up. Of all Berlin’s building exhibitions, Interbau was the only one that, from the outset, was exclusively a project “from above” led by the Senator for Building, initially Karl Mahler and then Rolf Schwedler. And, as was typical of the time, it was male-dominated.

Even before construction began, a great deal of public money had to be spent: on purchasing private land, demolishing the remaining old buildings and relocating tenants and traders, on removing basement foundations, building roads and laying pipes. Added to this were the construction costs (funded by state building loans, Interbau loans and federal funds), which were significantly higher than for five-storey buildings due to the high-rise structures. Rents for Interbau social housing were also higher than for standard social housing and much higher than for flats in older buildings with stove heating. The construction of the new Hansaviertel was one of the most expensive public building projects in Berlin’s history. In this respect, it was not something that could be repeated.

B23

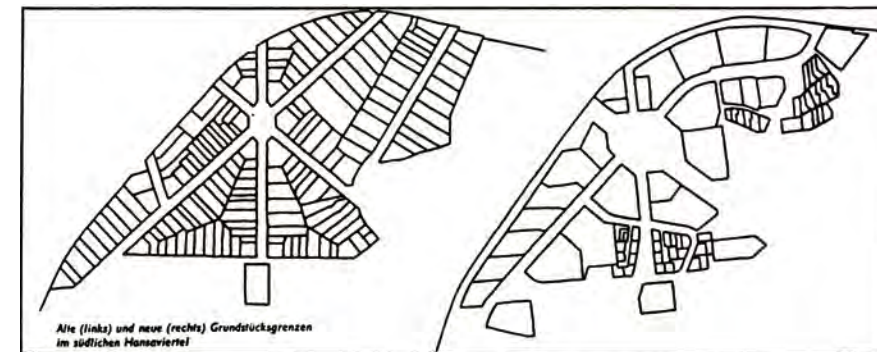


B23 The old Hansaviertel, circa 1930

The predominantly Jewish neighbourhood was built between 1879 and 1890 for wealthy citizens, senior civil servants and military officers. Hansaplatz was at the centre. The land was divided into small plots, the streets were lined with trees, and the light rail line cut through the residential area, but also provided access to it. There had also been a synagogue since 1898, which was burnt down in 1938. During the Second World War, the neighbourhood was largely destroyed; only 20 of the original 160 buildings remained in the southern Hansaviertel, comprising 283 dwellings, 741 residents and 22 businesses. The underground pipes were far less damaged, and the fragmented structure of land ownership remained virtually unchanged: Of the 164 plots of land, 146 were privately owned after 1945.

Source: Interbau Berlin 1957. Official catalogue. Berlin 1957, p. 24

B24



B24 Land reorganisation in the Hansaviertel, published in 1957

Not only was the layout of the plots radically altered, so too was the ownership structure. As part of the land consolidation scheme, 159 plots of land were to be reorganised into 20 large plots of land and around 50 small plots of land. This marked the first and last time that an upmarket, middle-class residential area was replaced by a completely new neighbourhood within the park. The new owners of the Hansaviertel were primarily legal entities, companies, corporations, as well as the state and the federal government.

Source: Bauwelt 37/1957, p. 1005

B25

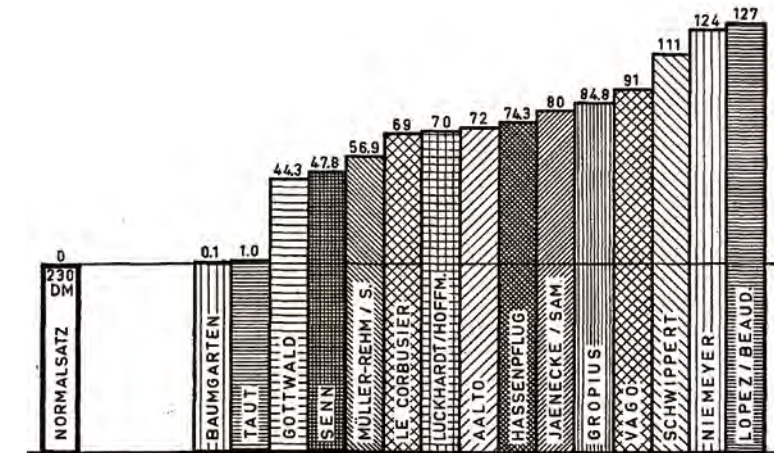


Bild 8. Das Mehr an öffentlichen Darlehen bei den Hansabauten in v.H. gegenüber dem normalen sozialen Wohnungsbau

B25 Interbau special subsidies for residential buildings, published in March 1959

Source: Kurt Enderlein: Number of storeys and cost-effectiveness in housing construction, with comparative figures from the Hansaviertel. Berlin 1958, p. 17

IBA 1987

Even after Interbau 1957, West Berlin continued to rely on federal subsidies. These public funds were also used for the construction of motorways and housing – primarily, from the early 1960s onward, for building large housing estates on the city’s outskirts. In the city centre, urban renewal policies from 1963 onward focused on demolition: entire neighbourhoods dating back to the Imperial era were torn down and replaced with social housing. The consequences were devastating – the destruction of social networks and established neighbourhoods, and the loss of small businesses. Added to this were considerable costs incurred through the acquisition of properties, the relocation of tenants and businesses, demolition, new construction and the substantial subsidisation of rents in the new buildings.

Following the Four Power Agreement of 1971, West Berlin’s policy was geared towards a permanent division. Plans for the capital were abandoned, as were the ambitious motorway plans; the economy and the population stagnated. The inner-city districts along the Wall lost all prospects. New builds had fallen out of favour, not only on the city’s outskirts. It was not until the European Year of Monuments in 1975 that a shift in urban policy was initiated against the backdrop of large-scale social protests in the city’s neighbourhoods: The tenement districts, demonised for decades, were rediscovered as an urban development asset, and the car-centric city lost its appeal. When, between 1979 and 1982, the squatters’ movement – supported by broad public sympathy – took the crisis caused by the demolition policies to the streets, a change in policy was inevitable. The future of the city centre became the central theme. The groundwork for an IBA had been laid.

B26



B27



B26 Competition for the capital city of Berlin (West), 1958

Plans for a motorway network, which were maintained until the 1970s. The radical overhaul of West Berlin’s transportation planning was of particular significance for the IBA areas. The plans for an oversized motorway network – which, following the US model, were intended to divert traffic around the city centre via a southern and western bypass – were abandoned, as was the planned widening of main roads such as Kochstraße and Wilhelmstraße. A number of areas, which had already been relegated to the margins by the division of the city, were left to face an uncertain future – the Senate department simply had no plans for them. All these areas were transferred to the IBA, from which the city authorities hoped to gain innovative and viable ideas.

Source: AIV zu Berlin (ed.): Berlin und seine Bauten. Berlin 2009, Teil I – Städtebau. p. 225

B27 View of the Kulturforum (Cultural Forum) looking east, 1969

Large areas of wasteland characterised the areas around the sector boundary.

Source: AIV zu Berlin (ed.): Berlin und seine Bauten. Teil I – Städtebau. Berlin 2009, p. 366

B28 Demolition of tenement blocks on Stralsunder Straße, Wedding Brunnensstraße redevelopment area (n.d.)

The large-scale social protests of the 1970s and early 1980s were directed against the “first urban renewal programme”, which was implemented through demolition and redevelopment. Its aim was to revitalise the city centre: eliminating courtyards deemed hostile to people, improving traffic conditions to favour cars, replacing old buildings with new social housing. However, the term “social housing” is misleading – it referred to a funding programme, not the quality of the product. The rents for the new buildings could hardly be called “social”: they were up to three times higher than the rents for unrenovated flats in older buildings with coal-fired stoves.

Source: Rainer Autzen et al.: Stadterneuerung in Berlin. Sanierung und Zerstörung vor und neben der IBA. Berlin 1984, cover

B28

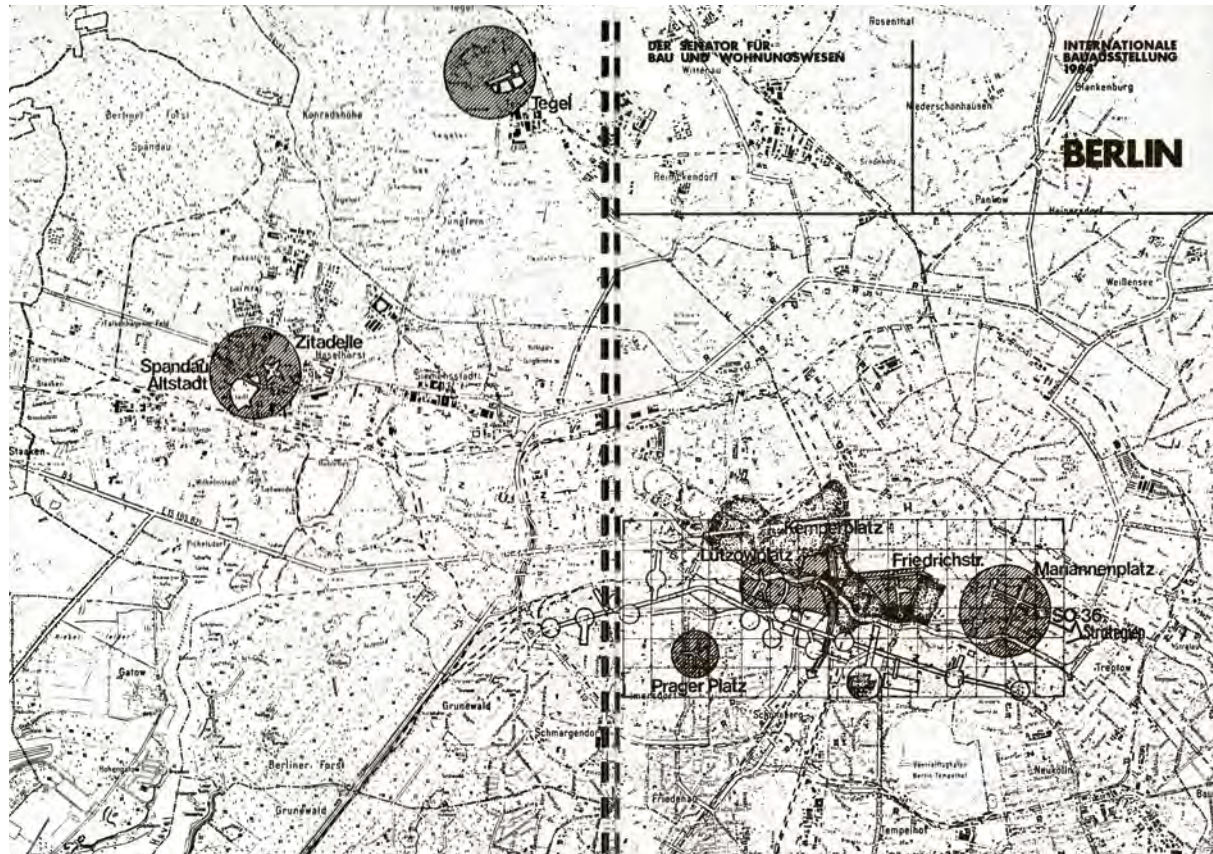


THE IBA AS A SPECIAL INSTITUTION

In 1978, Bauausstellung Berlin GmbH was founded to organise what was initially intended to be only a minor shift in urban development policy. The IBA organisation brought together a wealth of expertise – architects, urban planners, social scientists and specialists in public engagement and research. Its range of tasks was broad: According to the Senate bill, it was to refine the framework concept, develop solutions for the demonstration areas, call for tenders for urban development competitions, oversee accompanying research, organise conferences and exhibitions, and carry out public relations work. But it proved to be a “paper tiger”: lacking planning authority and influence over funding or permits, it remained dependent on cooperation with the Senate, boroughs and the non-profit housing sector. However, it had a strong ally in civil society, which was active in numerous groups and had emerged from the major conflicts of the 1970s.

After a difficult start, two assertive men emerged as the frontrunners: Hardt-Walther (Gustav Hämer (IBA Altbau) and Josef Paul Kleihues (IBA Neubau). When financial and organisational problems brought the IBA to the brink of collapse, Jürgen Nottmeyer was appointed managing director in 1981 – he had previously overseen the completion of the ICC on schedule. Politically, the IBA was always at risk: initiated as an SPD project, it was continued rather reluctantly by the CDU from 1982 onwards.

B29



B30



B31



B29 Senate bill submitted to the Berlin House of Representatives regarding the 1984 International Building Exhibition, 1978

The rather unattractive, blurry, and difficult-to-read map roughly depicts the initially designated IBA demonstration areas. It makes it clear that the initial focus was primarily on a new build IBA, specifically in southern Friedrichstadt, the southern Tiergarten district, Tegel and Prager Platz. The area of old buildings in Kreuzberg earmarked for redevelopment was limited to the blocks around Mariannenstraße. The aim there was to create a perimeter block development involving extensive demolition work (“gutting”). The inclusion of individual projects in the SO 36 area was also promised. Urban renewal was initially also planned for Spandau’s old town, but was later not pursued by the IBA. The general objectives were formulated as “the city centre as a place to live” and “saving the dilapidated city”.

Source: HB collection

B30 Title of the IBA brochure for the 1984 reporting year

Source: HB collection

B31 Criticism of the IBA

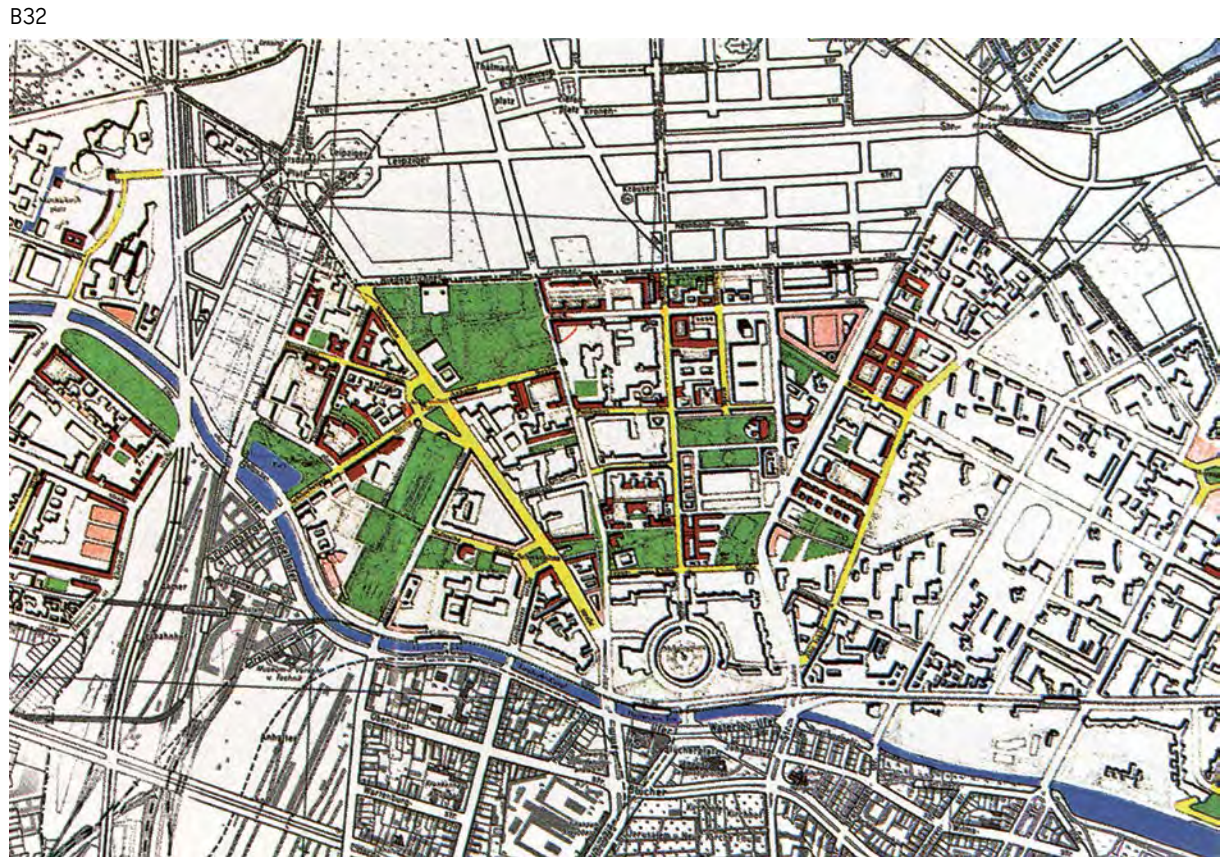
The IBA 87, too, was repeatedly subjected to harsh criticism, both from “above” and from “below”.

Source: HB collection

CRITICAL RECONSTRUCTION - THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF IBA NEUBAU

The focus of IBA Neubau was on new build developments in the heavily damaged neighbourhoods along the Berlin Wall - based on the historic urban layout. Josef Paul Kleihues, a pioneer of a new appreciation of the existing urban structure since the early 1970s with his studies for the “Berlin Atlas,” formulated the guiding principle of critical reconstruction: Blocks, streets and squares should be restored as fundamental elements of urban development, with a view to engaging with the history of the place.

In the southern Friedrichstadt and in the Tiergarten district, as well as in Spandau and at Prager Platz, the demonstration areas of IBA Neubau, many German as well as international architects such as Peter Eisenman, John Hejduk, Hermann Hertzberger, Rob Krier, Charles W. Moore, Gustav Peichl, Aldo Rossi and James Stirling designed new buildings that were stylistically diverse but subordinate to the urban planning framework. With new forms of inner-city living - such as the townhouses on Rauchstraße - IBA Neubau specifically targeted the urban middle classes and encouraged their return to the city centre.



B33



B32 Project overview IBA 1987 - Neubau: Southern Friedrichstadt
The critical reconstruction of the city was a West Berlin initiative of the new build IBA under Josef Paul Kleihues. The aim was to rehabilitate the historic city - corridor streets, town squares and block developments with their distinction between public, semi-public and private spaces. “Critical” in this context meant that the approach to historical elements was not schematic, but was instead seen as a stimulus for creative development.

Source: Durth, Werner/Sigel, Paul: Baukultur. Berlin 2009, p. 595

B33 EA bible of critical reconstruction: cover of the publication “Modelle für eine Stadt” (Models for a City) edited by Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani
The cover graphic shows a collaged version of the painting “View of Oranienburger Straße. House construction in Berlin around 1730–40”. The programme for IBA Neubau was as follows: priority of urban development over architecture, subordination of individual buildings to a framework that respects and reinterprets the history of the place - not as a rigid dogma, but as a flexible guiding principle.

Source: Series of publications on the International Building Exhibition Berlin. Die Neubaugebiete. Dokumente. Projekte. Issue 1, Berlin 1984. Cover illustration

B34



B34 Postmodern veduta, which combines urban development and architecture in one illustration, shown at the IBA exhibition “Idea - Process - Result” in 1984
The IBA Neubau and IBA Altbau areas were shown on the map. The drawings around the outside showed IBA Neubau projects.

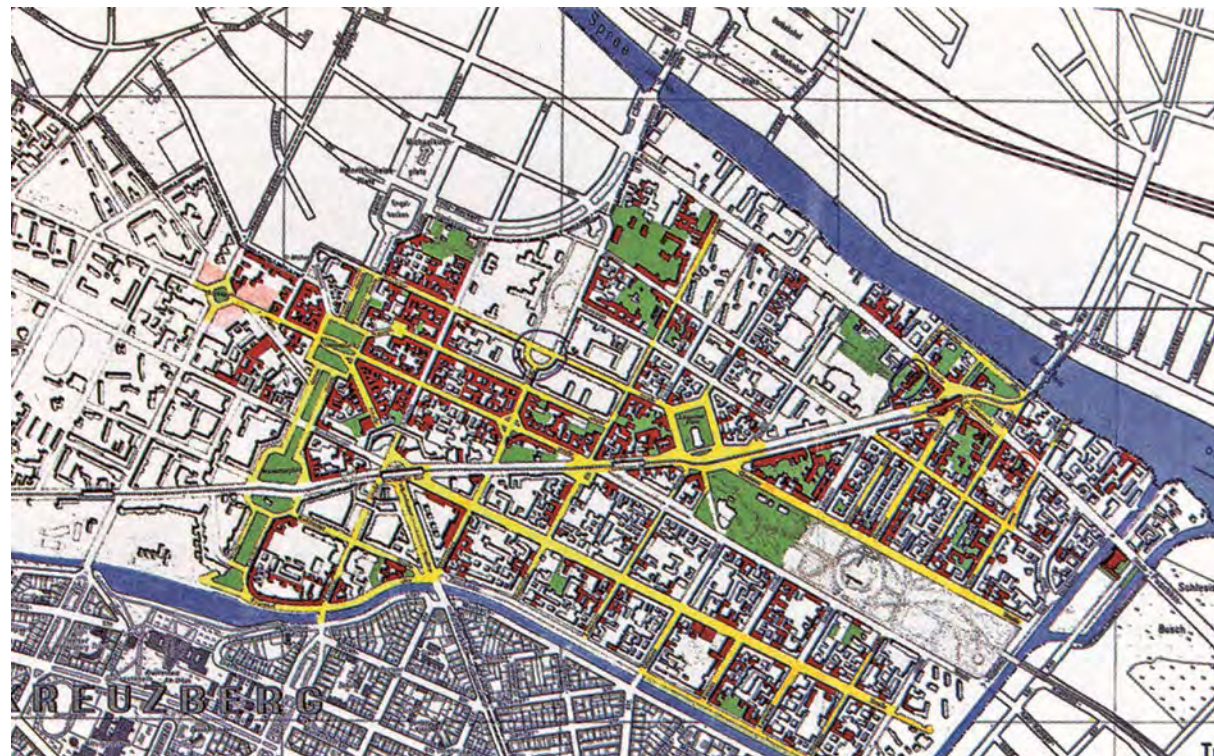
Source: Pirovano, Carlo (ed.): La ricostruzione della città. Milan 1985, p. 106

CAUTIOUS URBAN RENEWAL – THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF IBA ALTBAU

The IBA Altbau approach represented a radical alternative to the policy of demolition: renewal not in opposition to, but in partnership with the residents; not without, but in harmony with the existing buildings. The protagonist of this approach was Hardt-Walther Hämer, who had already been testing alternatives to demolition renovation since the late 1960s – first in Wedding, then with the Block 118 model project in Charlottenburg.

In 1982, the mission statement was supplemented by a set of guiding principles: the “12 Principles of Cautious Urban Renewal”, which was approved by the House of Representatives in 1983. The focus was on preserving the existing structure, gradual modernisation and strengthening of stakeholder participation. The Luisenstadt and Kreuzberg SO 36 became a laboratory: Instead of demolishing entire blocks – or, as initially planned, gutting them, old buildings were renovated, courtyards were landscaped, and day nurseries were incorporated into the blocks. Streets, squares and courtyards were rediscovered as vibrant spaces for community life, and the lack of green spaces and open areas in the neighbourhood was alleviated by the creation of Görlitzer Park and other smaller green spaces.

B35



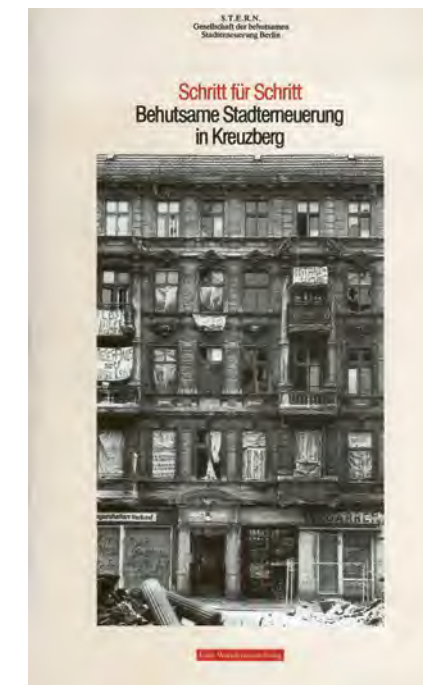
B36



B37



B38



B35 Project overview IBA 1987 – Altbau

In the 1980s, Kreuzberg was a unique place: home to a wide variety of marginalised groups – people who lived on the fringes of society, either by choice as “alternatives” or by necessity as migrants. Sensitive urban renewal gave these marginalised residents the opportunity to preserve, improve and shape their environment according to their own ideas. Despite all the setbacks, it thus became an internationally recognised model not only of preservation-oriented renewal but also of a socially sustainable integration policy.

Source: Durth, Werner/Sigel, Paul: Baukultur. Berlin 2009, p. 595

B36 Dresdener Straße 14 before the redevelopment (1982) B37 After the conversion into a day nursery (1986)

The IBA radically challenged established norms – even beyond core architectural issues. For example, the minimum size of day nurseries was significantly reduced so that they could be accommodated in residential blocks close to where people live, such as in coach houses or former stables, and even in a former multi-storey car park. Strict guidelines on fire safety and escape routes had to be reinterpreted through a painstaking case-by-case review – paving the way for further changes.

Source: Senate Department for Building and Housing (ed.): Stadterneuerung in Berlin. Berlin 1990, pp. 64

B38 A bible of cautious urban renewal: cover photo of the publication “Schritt für Schritt – Behutsame Stadterneuerung in Kreuzberg – Eine Wanderausstellung” (Step by step – Cautious urban renewal in Kreuzberg – A travelling exhibition), Berlin. 1990

The cover shows the building at Admiralstraße 15 before its renovation (1982).

Source: HB collection

MORE THAN JUST HOUSING CONSTRUCTION – ECOLOGY, SOCIAL ISSUES AND PUBLIC SPACE

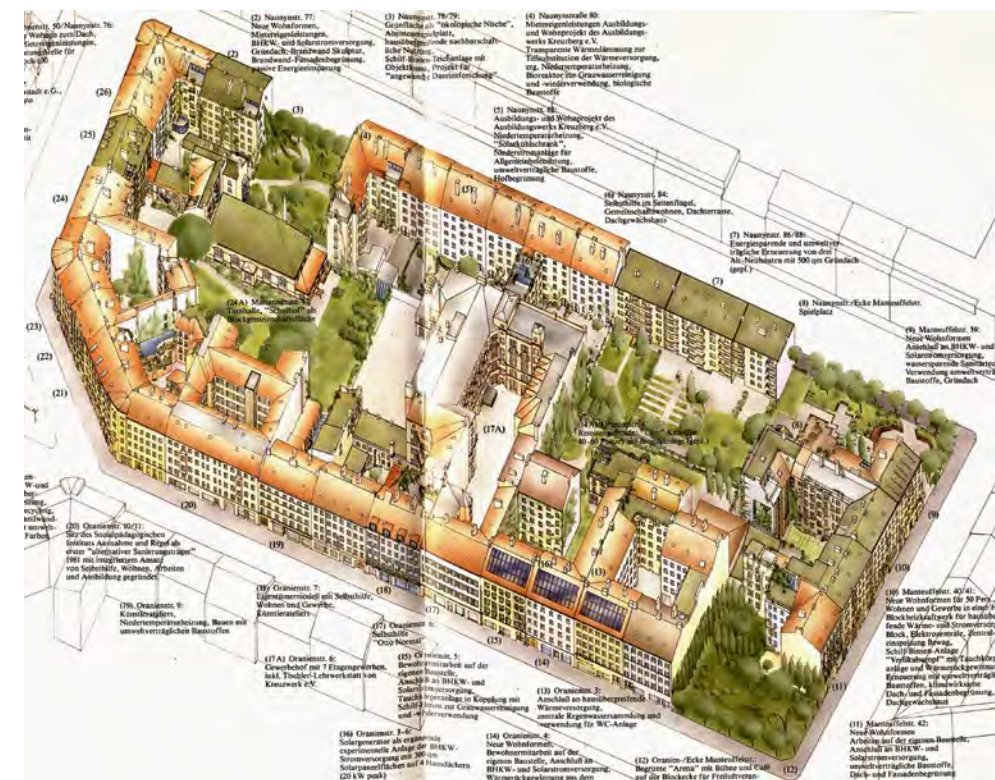
The IBA was much more than just a construction programme. For the first time, environmental issues were systematically integrated. In the southern part of the Tiergarten district, an eco-house, a solar-powered house and energy-efficient homes were built. In block 103 in Kreuzberg, environmentally friendly regeneration measures were trialled. Courtyard greening transformed hundreds of backyards into green open spaces. The foundations for certain standards that we now take for granted – such as organised recycling – were laid during the IBA.

The social agenda was equally groundbreaking. Publications were produced in Turkish, and migrant residents were involved in planning and community work, although not always to the desired extent. The Schokofabrik women’s community centre set new standards for gender-equitable planning. Self-help projects offered squatters a path to legal housing and vocational training.

The “Kreuzberg mix” of residential and commercial space was held up as an ideal – but proved almost impossible to achieve in new-build projects, as the funding guidelines only provided for housing construction. In contrast, visible successes were achieved in public spaces: traffic calming measures, pocket parks and the conversion of Görlitz railway station into one of the first large inner-city neighbourhood parks. A public square was created once again at Prager Platz.

The IBA had, in fact, already addressed the issue of how to deal with the post-war housing stock. A key project was the conversion of a former car park behind the Neues Kreuzberger Zentrum into a nursery. In the central exhibition “Idea – Process – Result”, an entire room was dedicated to the renewal areas of the future.

B39



B39 A comprehensive approach to environmentally friendly building renewal: drawing of block 103

The plans included a green roof, solar panels, water-saving plumbing fixtures and an “eco nursery” in a converted coach house.

Source: S.T.E.R.N. Gesellschaft für behutsame Stadterneuerung Berlin (ed.): Schritt für Schritt. Behutsame Stadterneuerung in Kreuzberg. Catalogue for the travelling exhibition. Berlin 1990, p. 63

B40 Demonstration for social diversity in Kreuzberg: “Die Bürgerin und die Punkerin” (The bourgeois and the punk) during a discussion on squatting

Representatives of the city authorities, the Kreuzberg borough and the Protestant parish sat on the podium at the event in St. Thomas Church; on the right of the picture is the then Councillor for Building, Werner Orłowski (Alternative List).

Source: Tages Anzeiger 35/1983, front page

B41 Rainwater management – a project for ecological urban development

The photograph shows the courtyard of Block 6 in southern Friedrichstadt, with the constructed wetland, in 1990.

Source: Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987: Projektübersicht – Aktualisierte und erweiterte Ausgabe (International Building Exhibition Berlin 1987: Project overview – Updated and expanded edition), Berlin 1991, p. 103

B40



B41



TOOLS AND FINANCING – INNOVATION IN THE RIGID SYSTEM

The IBA projects were financed almost entirely through social housing construction funding programmes – totalling around three billion DM. However, its rigid funding guidelines placed severe restrictions on its creative and social ambitions. The IBA stakeholders explored creative possibilities regarding dwelling sizes and layouts, but there was often a discrepancy between the initial designs and the final outcome. The “Kreuzberg mix” of housing and commercial use, which was championed in the plans, proved almost impossible to achieve – funding for shops and workshops had simply not been provided for.

As a key procedural innovation, the IBA developed the client competition: a transparent tendering process for public plots of land that combined architectural quality, cost control and tenant involvement. The model had an impact far beyond the IBA and, following German reunification, became a model for allocation of land. Another key tool was self-help – an instrument that reduced costs whilst fostering a sense of ownership of the neighbourhood.

But this also had its downsides. It was not possible to secure the rents agreed under the IBA in the long term. The withdrawal of follow-up funding in 2003 led to significant rent increases and a high turnover of tenants. Above all, however, it became clear after 1989 that the IBA had operated under circumstances that cannot be replicated: Around three billion DM in public funding – urban development policy no longer has such resources at its disposal.

B42



B42 Zaha Hadid’s “Emanzipatorisches Wohnen” (emancipatory housing) project in Stresemannstraße

The IBA sought to respond to the diversification of household types and family structures by introducing innovative forms of housing – for students, single parents and women. The high standard of design was only possible thanks to the generous budget, but many innovative ideas came up against the outdated regulations governing social housing construction, which could not be changed quickly enough.

Source: Senate Department for Building and Housing (ed.): Wohnungsbau für Berlin. Berlin 1994, p. 86

B43 Title of an IBA leaflet on self-help, 1983

“Self-help” – residents’ active involvement in the construction work – became a central instrument for socially responsible neighbourhood renewal of the IBA Altbau approach. Tenants’ initiatives against demolition gave rise to cooperative housing projects, the lack of infrastructure led to the creation of child-care centres and community centres, and citizens’ initiatives resulted in the first squatting actions.

Source: HB collection

B44 Revival of a historically proven type: residential and commercial building at Friedrichstraße 32/33, architect Raimund Abraham

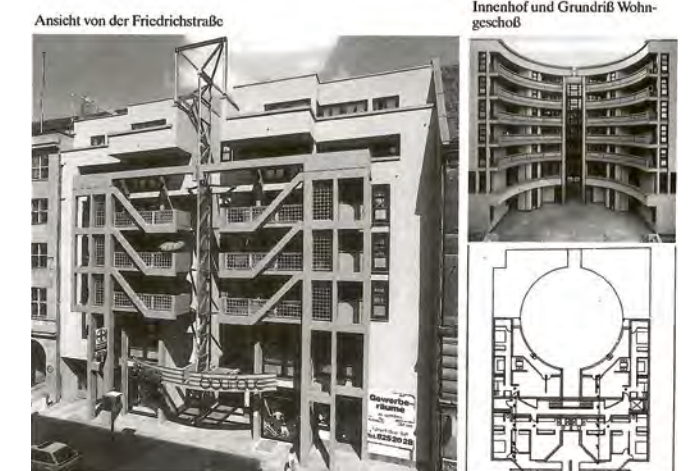
The “Kreuzberg mix” was the programmatic ideal of the 1987 IBA – but the concentration of state subsidies on housing construction placed severe restrictions on the mix of uses. Commercial spaces in new buildings would have had to be let at full market rent and would have been virtually impossible to let. Thus, despite all the ambitions, the mixed-use city remained limited to exceptional cases.

Source: Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987: Projektübersicht. Aktualisierte und erweiterte Ausgabe. Berlin 1991, p. 172

B43



B44

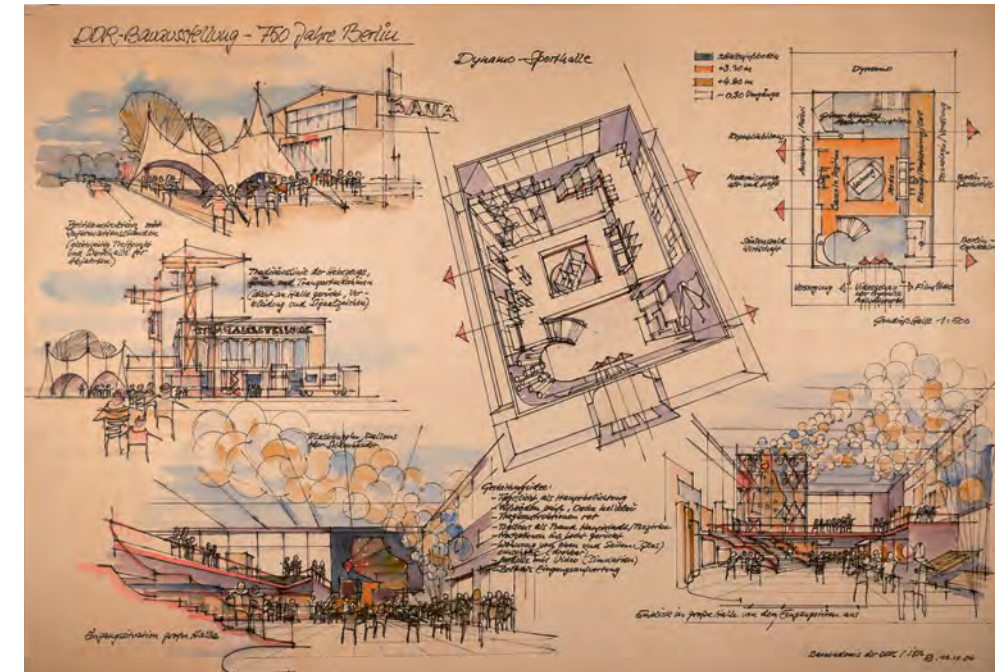


GDR BUILDING EXHIBITION, 1987

To mark Berlin's 750th anniversary in 1987, the GDR building exhibition was held at the Dynamo sports hall on Ho-Chi-Minh-Straße (renamed Weißenseer Weg in 1992). Opened by Erich Honecker himself and the entire construction elite of the GDR, it was regarded as the “most comprehensive exhibition of the construction industry in the history of the socialist workers’ and peasants’ state”.

Spanning 31,000 square metres, the exhibition showcased “the dynamic development of the construction industry in the GDR” – featuring examples from all boroughs and primarily from the capital. A large model of East Berlin's centre, between Alexanderplatz and the Brandenburg Gate, proved particularly popular with visitors. The model also featured the postmodern Nikolaiviertel district, completed just a few days earlier. The model is now housed in the building of the Senate Department for Mobility, Transport, Climate Protection and the Environment at Am Kölnischen Park 3. After the exhibition closed on 1 September 1987, the newspaper “Neues Deutschland” reported “over 500,000 visitors”.

B45



B45 Achim Felz: Design ideas for the GDR building exhibition, produced at the GDR Building Academy in 1986.

The drawings convey a colourful, cheerful and dynamic architectural style.

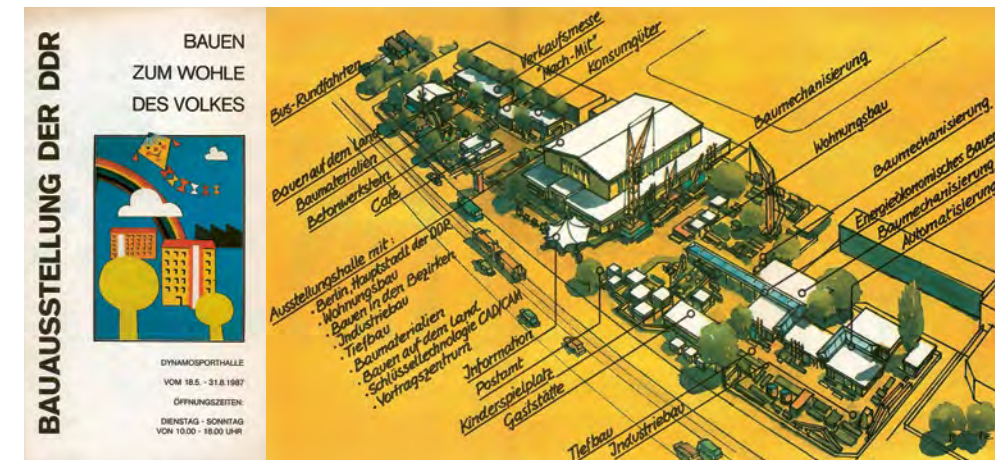
Source: IRS Erkner

B46 Advertising flier for the GDR building exhibition, 1987

The image on the left shows two renovated old buildings, with a factory in the background. The other side of the flyer proudly presents the Nikolaiviertel, followed by Ernst-Thälmann-Park and Marzahn, with the village in the foreground. The postmodern reorientation of architecture and urban development was unmistakable. The view of the exhibition grounds shows the great importance of construction technologies for the GDR's self-image.

Source: HB collection

B46



B47 Prominent figures from the GDR's political and construction sectors in front of a large-scale model of East Berlin's centre, published on 19 May, 1987 in the “Neues Deutschland” newspaper

Source: Neues Deutschland, 19 May 1987

B47



Ein Bild der gewaltigen Veränderungen, die das Zentrum Berlins zwischen Alexanderplatz und Brandenburger Tor in historisch kurzer Zeit erfuhr, so mündet dieses großformatige Modell. Bauleute aus der ganzen Republik gaben und geben in der Hauptstadt glanzvolle Beweise ihres Könnens

FIVE CONCLUSIONS

1/ The most distinctive feature of almost all the building exhibitions in Berlin was their international focus. This was more than just marketing: Berlin not only acquired international expertise, but also opened up channels of communication that carried Berlin's expertise out into the world.

2/ Each exhibition had its own profile, its key messages, its theme. And – as far as buildings were concerned – also their distinctive locations. This profile has always been, and always will be, a matter of professional debate.

3/ Each building exhibition focused not only on individual buildings, but above all on urban development, as well as the political, economic and legal framework conditions of urban development.

4/ Every building exhibition requires not only a socially relevant key theme, but also strong institutions and individuals who are fully committed to ensuring the success of an IBA. When it came to actual construction, these stakeholders also needed leeway – in terms of policy, financial resources and planning law.

5/ Looking back from today's perspective, the IBAs of the past were, unsurprisingly, certainly open to criticism in some respects. But critical discussion also helps us move forward – far further, at any rate, than hagiographic admiration or fanatical demonisation.



POSITIONS



On 25 March 2026, the Berlin Senate approved the “Holding of the International Building Exhibition Berlin 2034–37”. The statement read: “Against the backdrop of global challenges and those specific to Berlin, the planned IBA Berlin 2034–37 will focus on the urban transformation of the built city.”

The draft resolution was drawn up by the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing (SenStadt) in close co-operation with other Senate departments. SenStadt received support in terms of content from associations, experts, representatives of civil society and other stakeholders. Based on the studies by the Forward office on possible spatial settings for the IBA (2025), studies by the Raumlabor office on “Urban Option Areas” and “IBA Labs” (2021–2024) as well as study projects by the Chair of Design and Building Planning at the Berlin University of the Arts, the Senate decided in favour of the “extended ring scenario” as the IBA setting.

At the same time, the professional bodies, associations and other institutions committed to planning and construction were exploring the opportunities presented by a future IBA. Their contributions to the debate focused primarily on the consideration of fundamental principles of urban development which are relevant beyond Berlin and should serve as guidelines for all urban development: conversion over new construction, climate protection and adaptation, social integration, affordable housing, conservation of resources, redevelopment of streets and squares, mobility transition, mixed-use development, culture, preservation and enhancement of green urban capital, sponge city, biodiversity, fair management of land, circular construction industry, adequate infrastructure, as well as inclusive and participatory processes, co-operation between the public sector, the private sector, urban society and specialist planners. The metropolitan area extending well into Brandenburg is frequently cited as a reference area. The role of artificial intelligence in urban development is also important.

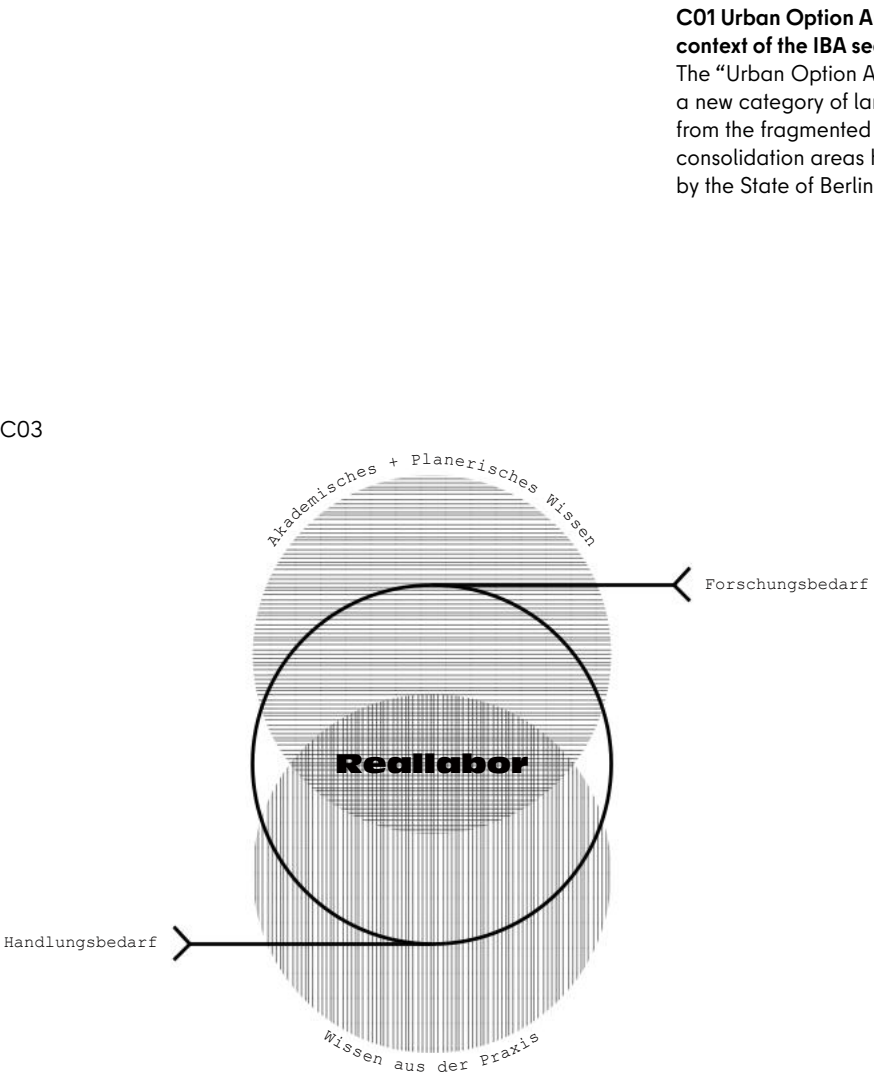
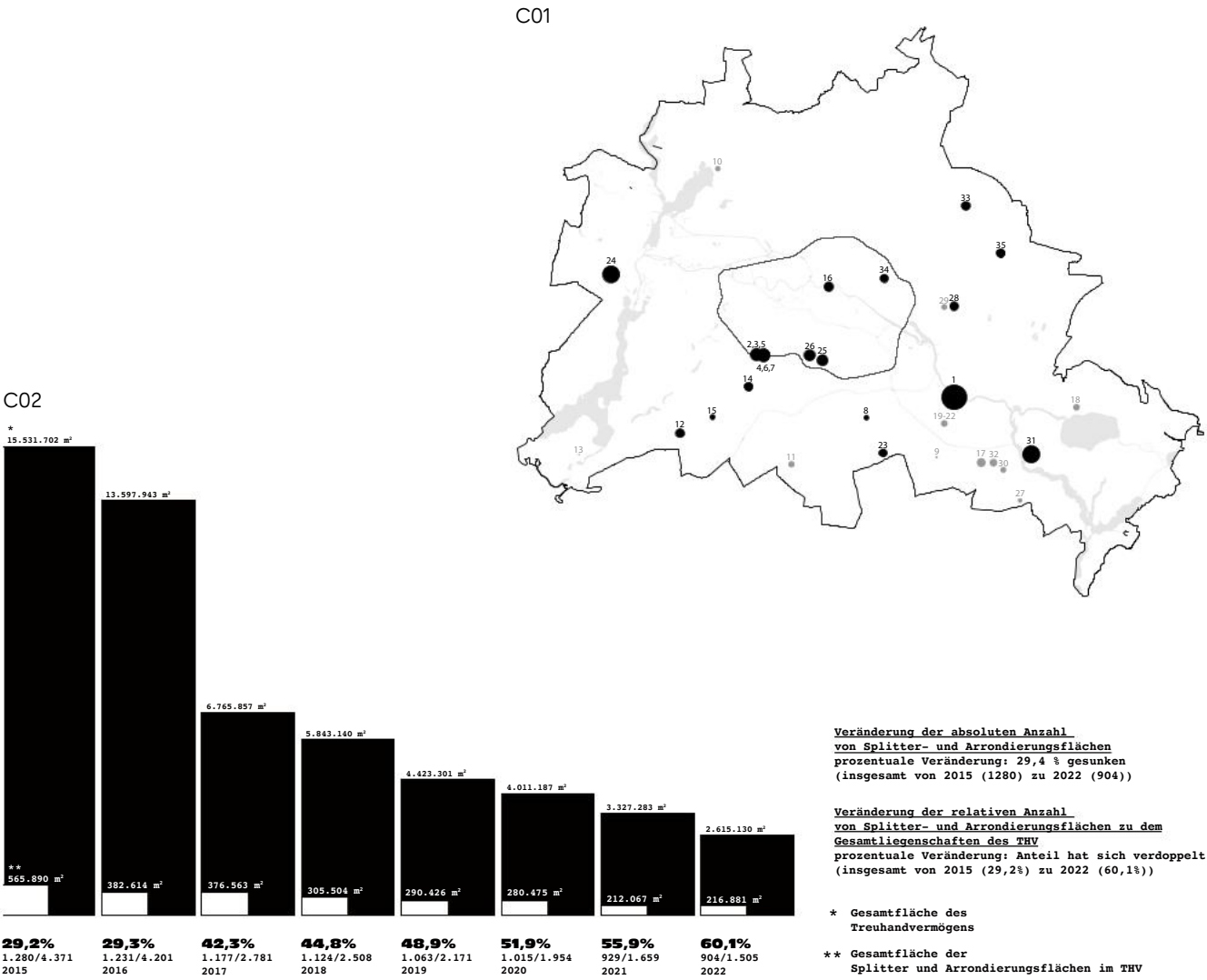
Expectations are high, varied and still very general. They reflect the interest and commitment of civil society and the professional community. It is not that parties are either for or against the IBA, but about defining its objectives and the specifics in terms of exactly how and where. The following section provides an overview of the commissioned studies, as well as statements from the associations and other institutions.

RAUMLABOR BERLIN

Seven percent of the total area owned by the municipalities consists of fragmented and consolidation plots, which, due to their nature, cannot be allocated to a specific use. In light of a parliamentary resolution passed in 2019 to take these areas into account when assessing federal-state-owned real estate, and with the support of the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing and the Senate Department for Finance, the studio representative at the cultural centre of the professional association of visual artists Berlin (BKK Berlin) worked with Raumlabor to produce a study on these areas. As a result, an additional evaluation category was introduced: the urban option area. Urban option areas provide opportunities to test out key questions relating to future urban development in “living labs”.

The IBA Labs are to be seen as a possible experimental format for the IBA 2034–37. They combine spatial potential with specific project approaches, develop scenarios based on these and translate them into transferable action plans. The overarching goal is to develop sustainable long-term strategies to utilise these areas, to safeguard them over the long term and to integrate into the city-wide planning.

This study was produced as part of the exploratory phase for IBA Berlin 2034–37 and documents the current state of the work, with no conclusions. An accompanying brochure provides a more detailed insight into the comprehensive study.

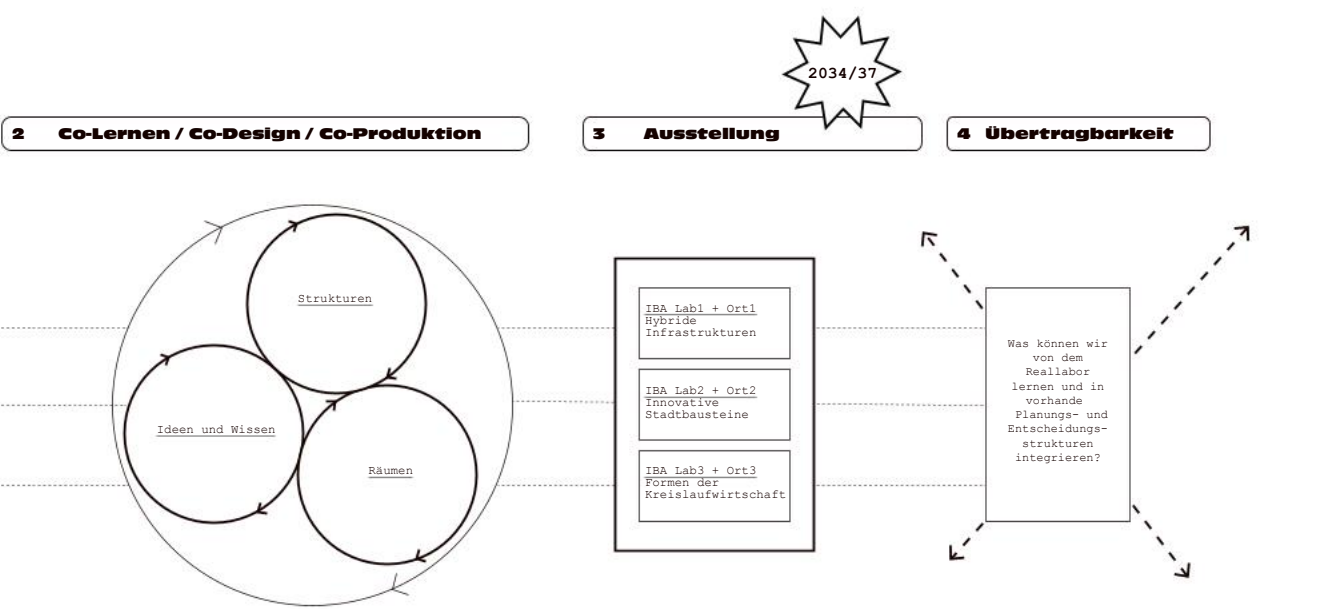
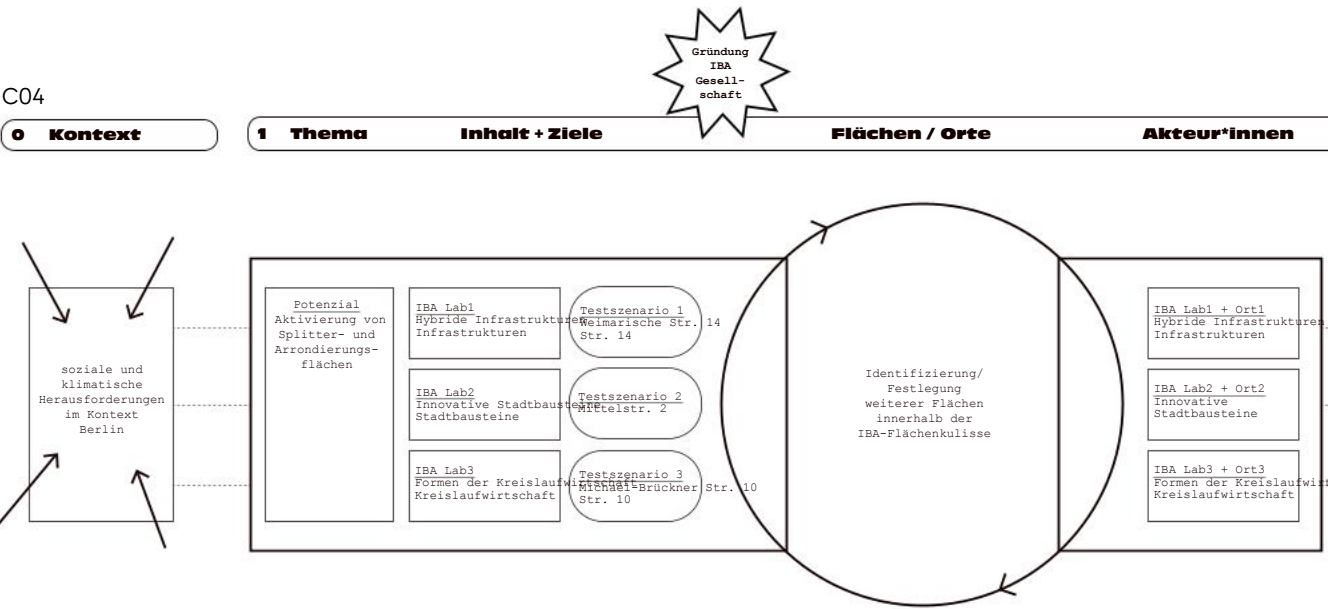


C01 Urban Option Areas in the context of the IBA search area
The “Urban Option Areas” are a new category of land derived from the fragmented plots and consolidation areas held in trust by the State of Berlin.

C02 Fragmented and consolidation area in relation to the trust assets of the State of Berlin
The analysis of changes in the trust assets makes it clear that whilst these sites have so far had little strategic visibility in urban development, they offer considerable potential as an urban land resource. This is particularly true given that further comparable sites are owned by federal-state-owned companies or by the municipal authorities of Berlin’s districts. The data covers the period up to and including 2022, as BIM Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH has not published any more recent figures.

C03 Living labs as a methodological approach help to build a broader knowledge base on urban option areas.

C04 The findings serve as a sound basis for decision-making by policymakers, public authorities, planners and civil society stakeholders.



IBA LAB 1 / HYBRID INFRASTRUCTURES.

As part of IBA 2034–37, the “Hybrid Infrastructures” (Hybride Infrastrukturen) living lab offers the opportunity to demonstrate, in specific instances, how climate adaptation, the enhancement of open spaces and social uses can be integrated. As part of a blue-green infrastructure, research is being conducted into how ecological and social functions can be spatially integrated and safeguarded in the long term.

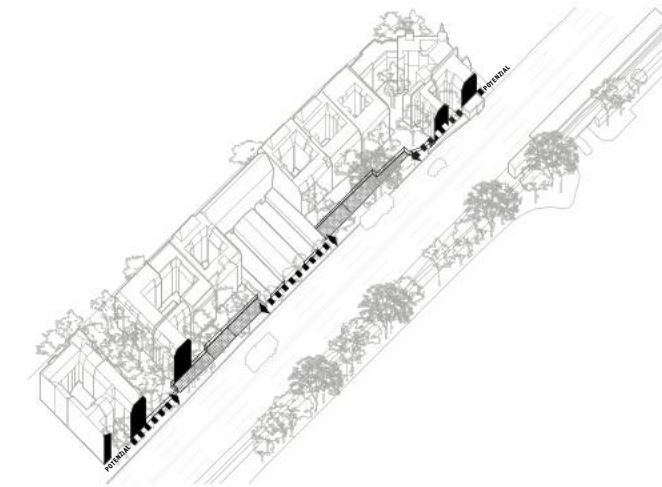
IBA LAB 2 / INNOVATIVE URBAN BUILDING BLOCKS.

As part of IBA 2034–37, the “Innovative Urban Building Blocks” (Innovative Stadtbausteine) living lab offers the opportunity to develop and test small-scale intensification within existing buildings under real-world conditions. This means it is possible to test, by way of example, how new housing, work or community facilities can be developed in a way that is feasible in terms of planning law, urban development and construction, even on difficult sites, and how these approaches can be transferred to other locations.

IBA LAB 3 / FORMS OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY.

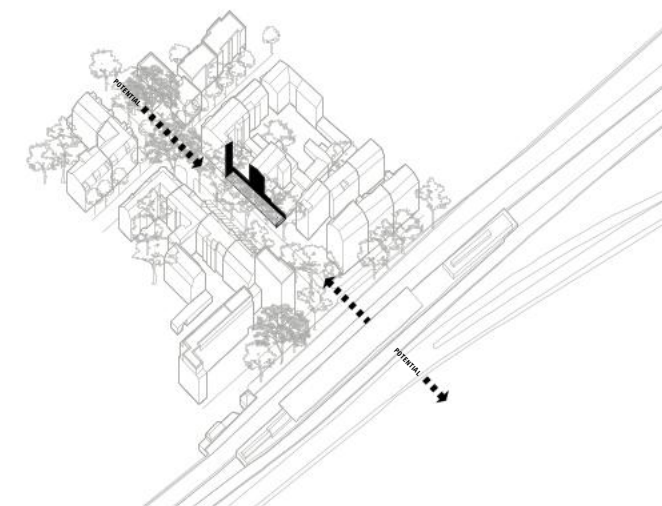
As part of IBA Berlin 2034–37, the “Forms of the Circular Economy” living lab provides the opportunity to bring together building stock development and circular construction in a practical way. This enables examples to be shown for how the preservation, conversion, reuse of building components and alternative materials can be translated into viable spatial concepts and thus set new standards for resource-efficient urban development.

C05



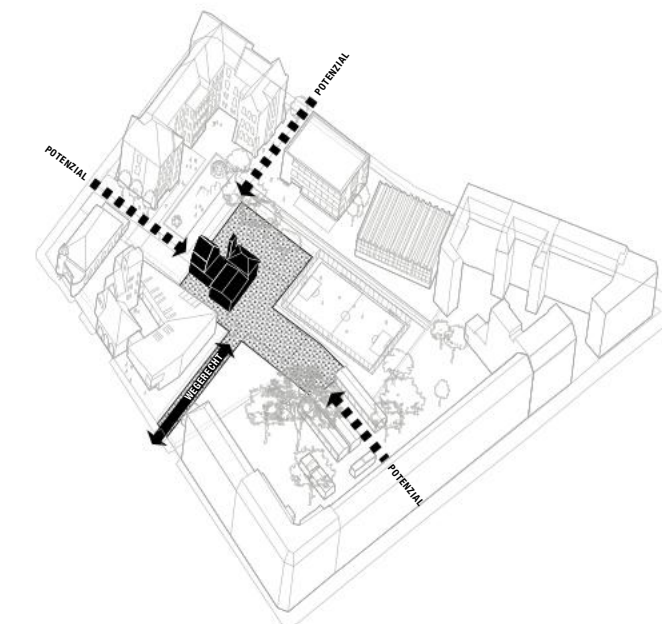
C05 Potential space, IBA Lab 1, Urban Option Area nos. 2–6.
The three adjacent individual plots are located in the transition area between the A100 and the adjacent perimeter block development. They offer considerable scaling potential for testing new functions of infrastructural frameworks.

C06



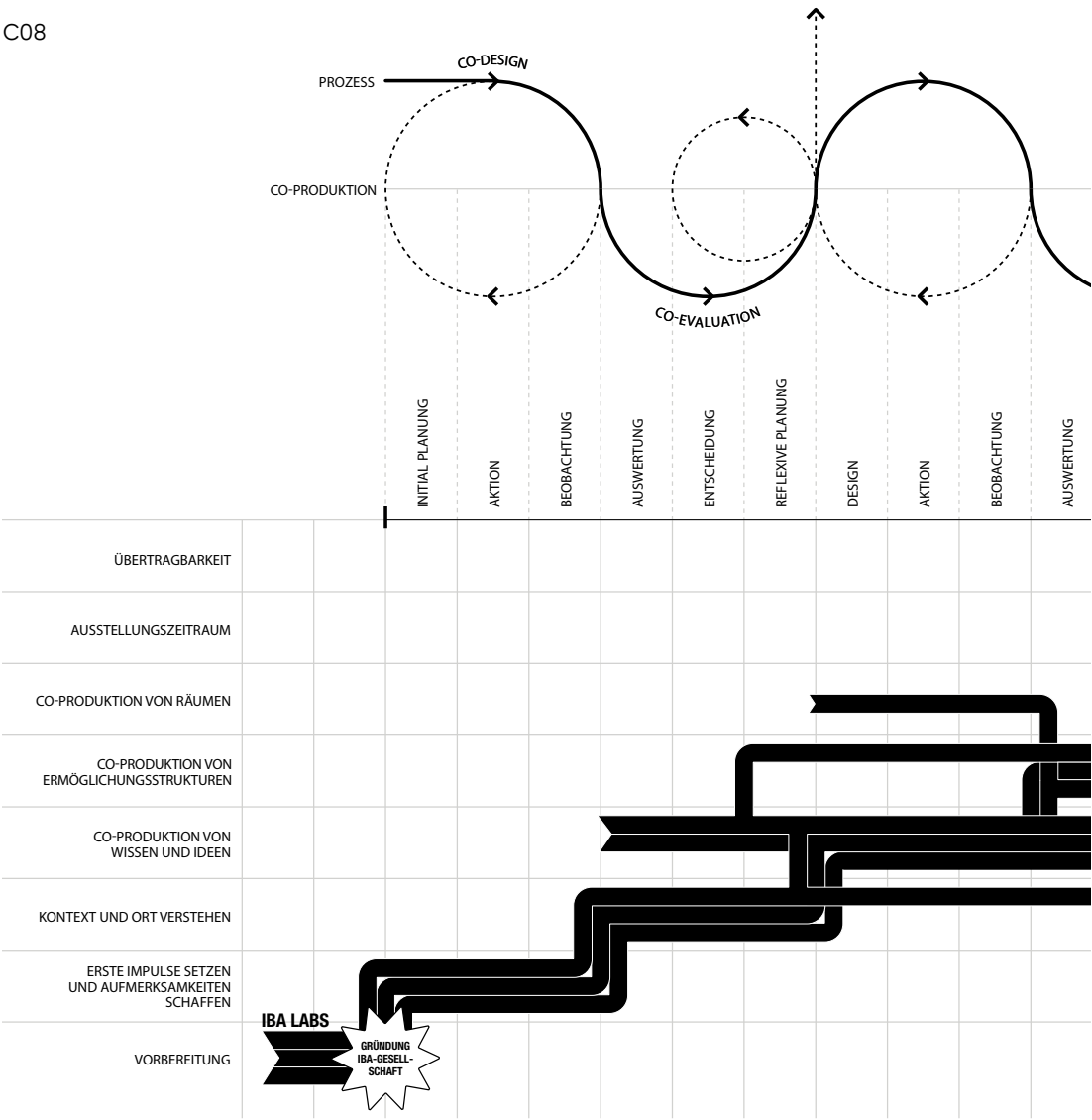
C06 Potential space, IBA Lab 2, Urban Option Area no. 14, 34.
Small-scale post-intensification is being discussed on this site as an example due to the high density of the neighbourhood, existing potential for green space and good connections to the Steglitz S-Bahn station

C07

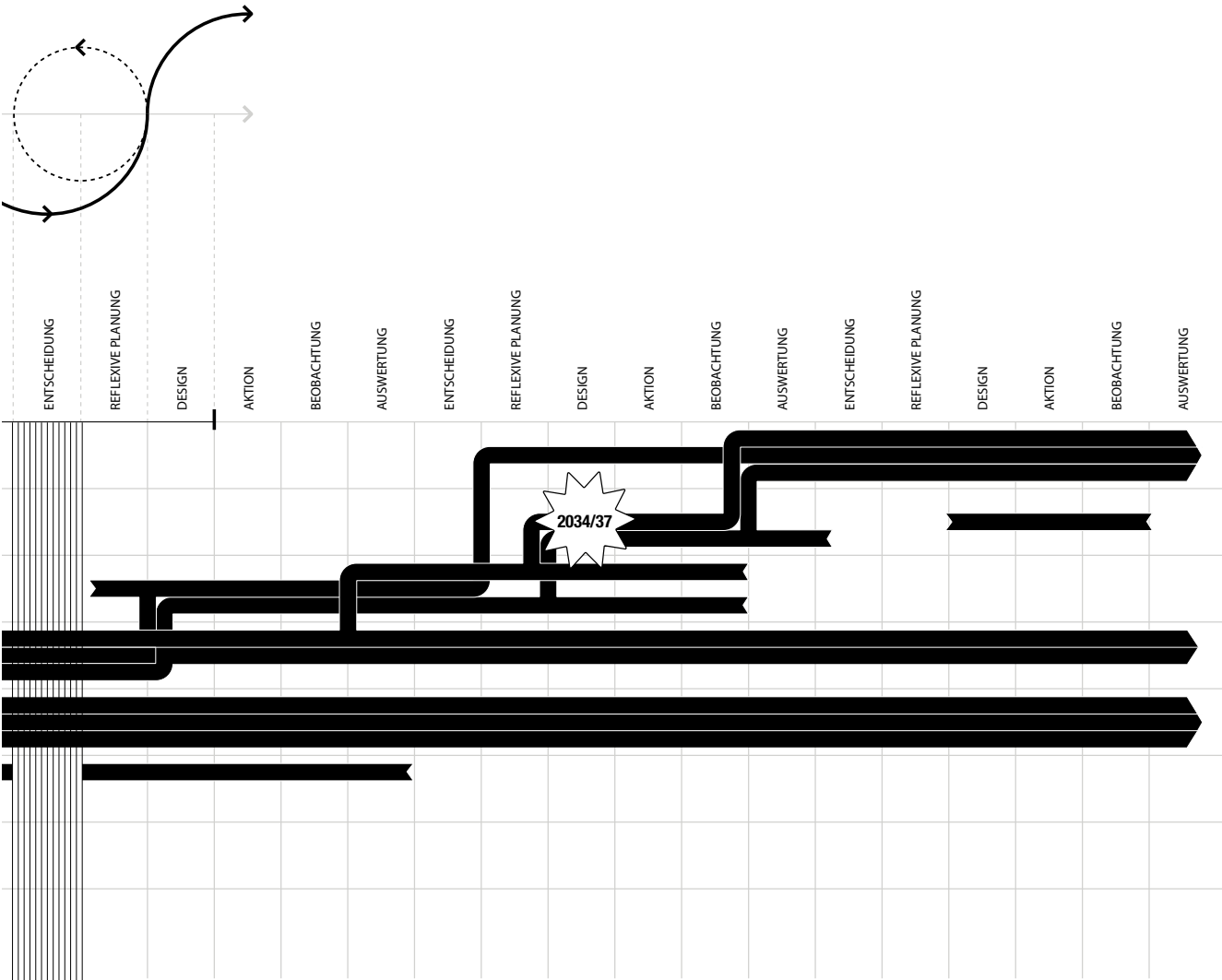


C07 Potential space, IBA Lab 3, Urban Option Area no. 1.
This potential area serves as an example of how urban option areas form part of heterogeneous city blocks and, in this case, present additional challenges and potential, for instance due to existing buildings

C08



C08 Process phases of the three IBA Labs, synthesis
The diagram shows the action protocols of the three IBA Labs as iterative development processes. Scenarios serve as a speculative space in which to test content-based and methodological approaches and translate them into transferrable action protocols. The living labs are presented in their various phases - from initial planning, to co-design and co-evaluation, to reflective planning. This is important for IBA Berlin 2034-37 because it highlights a learning process that not only tests findings on site, but also makes them transferrable to other areas, projects and contexts.



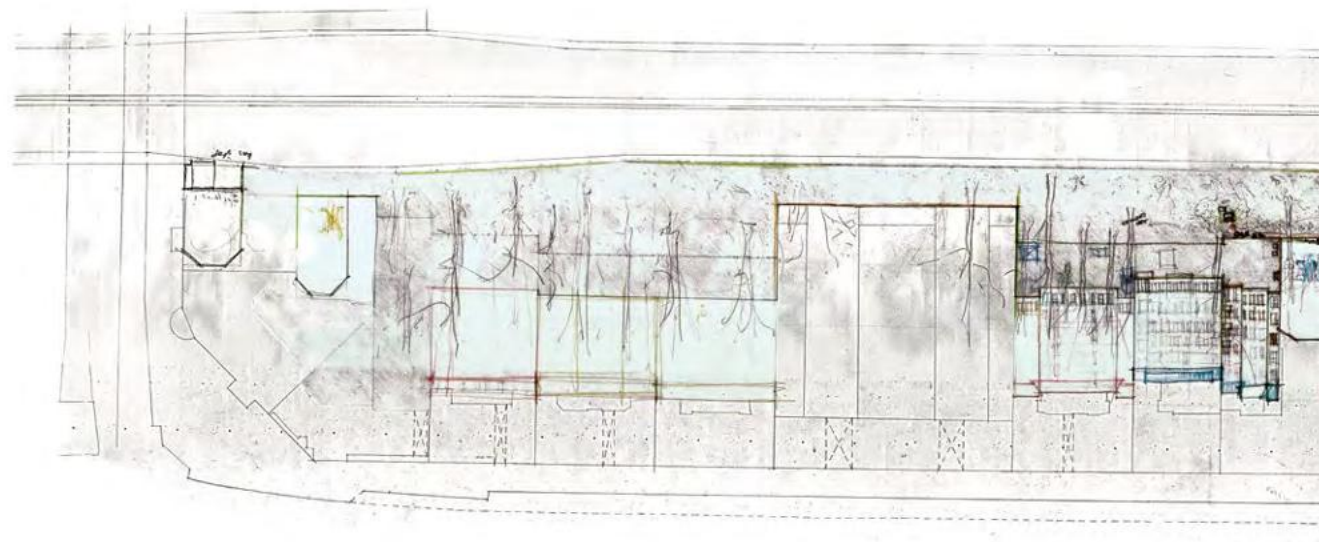


UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, DESIGN AND BUILDING PLANNING

The project “designing transformation – how about fake estates!?” carried out by the Building Planning and Design Department is to be regarded as an IBA Lab, as an open student research and experimentation format that also examines urban option areas.

Within the framework of the design project, research and studio work were understood as a collective, phased process in which three locations were explored and described through drawings, diagrams, models and interventions. This resulted in a complex picture of different interpretations and descriptions. Such an experimental approach may become an important approach of IBA Berlin 2034–37. Through the phases explore, mapping, analyse, narration & playtest, the student studio applied methods designed to reinterpret these places narratively and spatially. This sequence may also prove useful for IBA Berlin 2034–37, as it gradually uncovers the hidden potential of everyday urban spaces, makes it open to public discussion, and translates it into ideas for possible projects for IBA Berlin 2034–37.

C11

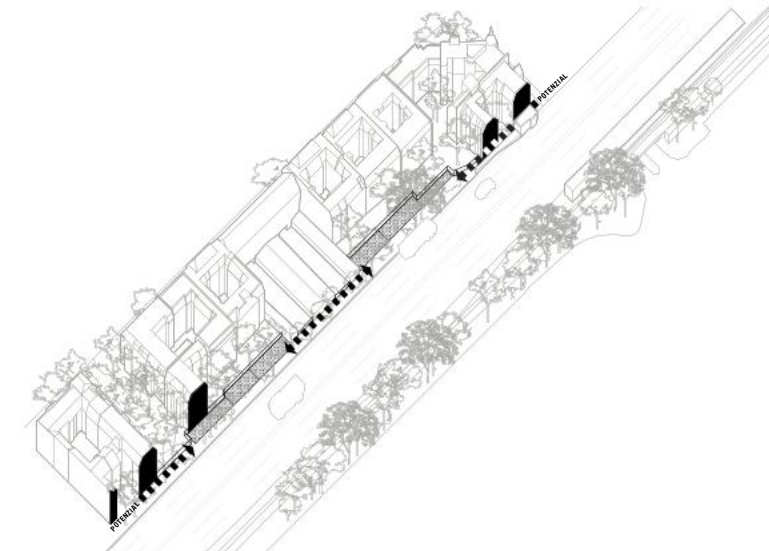


C09



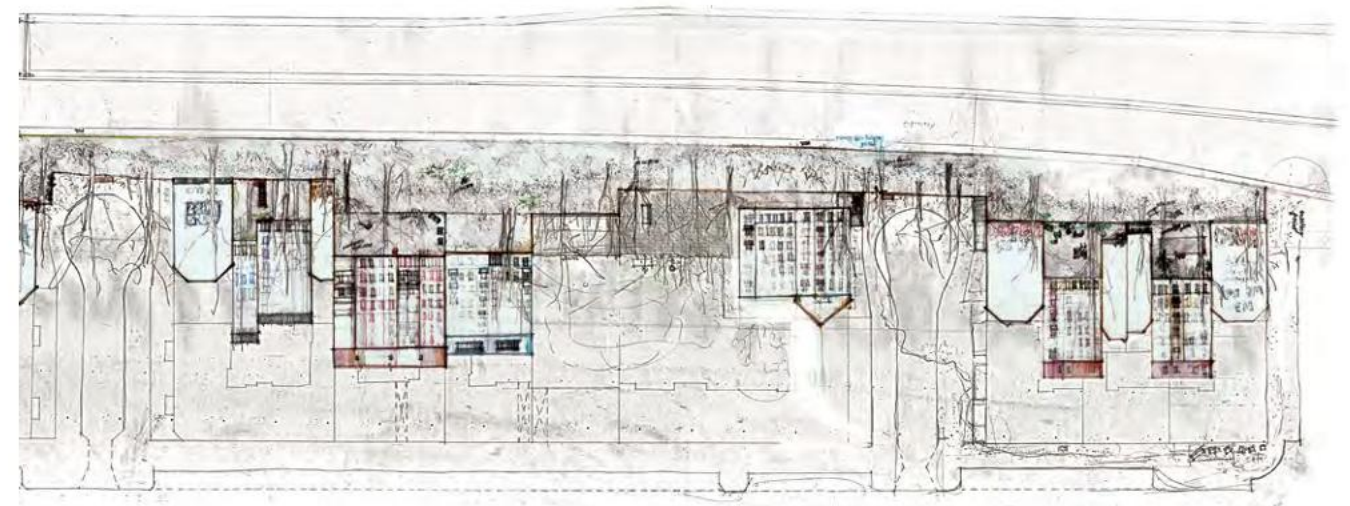
C09 Sketch, walk, Weimarische Straße: explore
A wilderness next to the motorway. Traces of appropriation and informal use of space. Lush green life in stark contrast to the harsh motorway above the embankment. With your pencil in hand, take a close look and take these places seriously, just as they are.

C10



C10 rings of noise, Weimarische Straße: mapping.
The location: a green idyll bathed in the noise of traffic. The drawing shows the proximity of the residential buildings, the noise pollution and the narrow strip of greenery between them. The layering of the spaces becomes just as apparent here as the particular quality of the space: confinement and emissions.

C11 The place becomes ours, Weimarische Straße: analysis
Observations on site are compared with the database from Berlin's geodata portal. Knowledge that is gleaned meets location-based data, the abstract and the concrete come together. Along the motorway, a chain of residual spaces, fragments of land and overwritten former habitats comes into view.

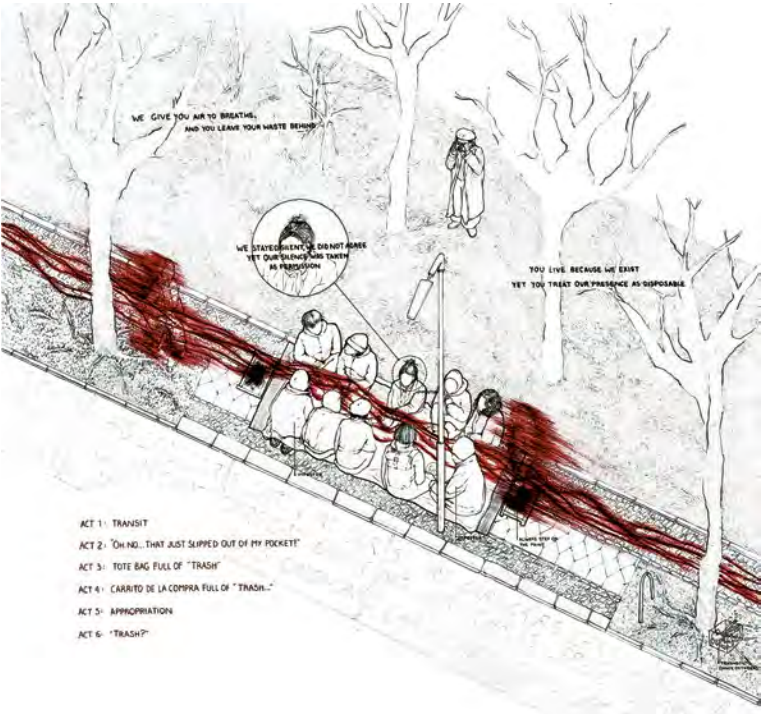


The works were created during the 2025/26 winter semester as part of the design project “designing transformation - how about: fake estates !?”, led by Markus Bader and Silvia Gioberti as well as Juan Chacón and Lilian Waldmüller. Projects by Benjamin Baar, Claudia Kessler, Enrico Popp, Gloria Berthold, Inês Lema, Leo Rolshoven, Malea Noll, Martina Sopranzi, Matteo Spazzi, Tomer Bourlas, Zora Behr.

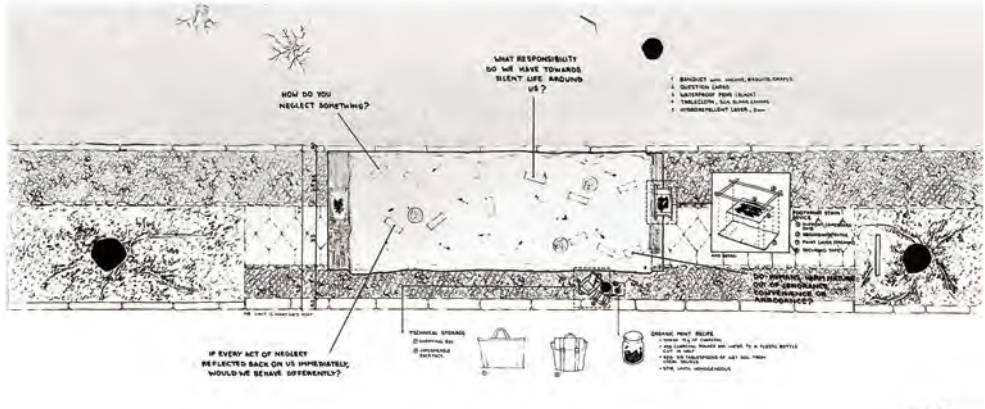
C12



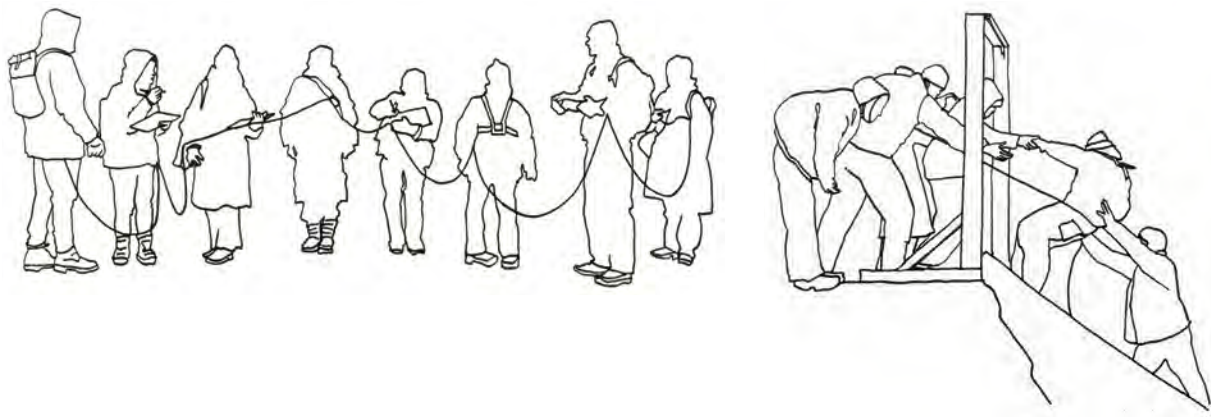
C13



C14



C15



C12 The city as a collective narrative, Bundesring - narration.
Storytelling opens up imaginative spaces and broadens our perception. In this way, existing interpretations shift and new possibilities open up. You continue to shape the place in your mind. In doing so, you highlight aspects that offer new perspectives on the place and spark initial ideas for future transformations.

C13 Dynamics of irritation, Mittelstraße - playtest
intertwines the narrative with the location. In Mittelstraße, spatial potential, casual beauty, urban coldness, ignorance and neglect all coexist. A pavement becomes the setting for a shared picnic. Collisions happen, are registered and intensify the moment.

C14 Transformation space, Mittelstraße

C15 Playtest Weimarische Straße and playtest Bundesring 2
The images show stylised photographs from the playtests, thus incorporating the students' own perspectives. They reveal how the places were used, walked through and experienced. For example, in the case of the Weimarische Straße, people walked across various plots of land alongside the motorway.

TU BERLIN, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSFORMATION

The urgency of climate change calls for an architectural approach that places our existing building stock at the centre as our most valuable resource. It should be made fit for the future through appropriate refurbishment and expansion and be viewed holistically. Simple strategies for repurposing buildings and repair practices are becoming the defining features of urban development focused on the public good. This radically reduces the use of space, energy and materials. Acceptance and awareness of the aesthetics of the process-oriented approach is emerging. The knowledge and tools from research and practice are intertwined. This is our vision for IBA 2034-37: an opportunity for revised planning, redevelopment and use - to improve the quality of the social environment.

C16 Redevelopment of the building at Kastanienallee 12 in Prenzlauer Berg

Source: Berlin @ Hütten & Paläste

C16





BERLIN CHAMBER OF ARCHITECTS

The people involved in planning the IBA are shaping the city of tomorrow.

This is both challenging and a shared responsibility. Climate protection, climate adaptation and the equitable use of land are not options, but necessities. Building upon existing structures, repurposing, circularity – these must be the binding guiding principles of all IBA projects. Living labs and model projects offer real innovations – provided that building culture, climate impact and social integration are consistently considered together. This requires binding quality criteria, interdisciplinary planning and participatory processes.

An IBA will only have an impact on Berlin and the wider metropolitan area if it makes measurable contributions to affordable housing, biodiversity and social justice. That is the only way that an IBA of our time can also become international!



The Chamber of Architects' positions

C17 The red A logo highlights diversity, urban renewal and quality in the urban environment

C18 The “A wie” campaign from the Berlin Chamber of Architects unites the entire expertise of a diverse profession

C17



C18



BAUKAMMER BERLIN

The Berlin Building Chamber – Baukammer Berlin – welcomes the Senate’s initiative for an International Building Exhibition 2034–2037. For us civil engineers, this is an opportunity to play an active role in shaping the structural transformation in the construction industry. The focus is on sustainable engineering, the circular construction industry, intensification, adding further storeys and conversion before new construction, where appropriate. Building on existing structures means creatively developing them further instead of demolishing them and erecting new buildings.

We call for the IBA to be innovative not only in architectural terms, but also from a technical perspective. Structural engineering must conserve resources, minimise embodied energy and prioritise the use of recyclable materials – from wood and steel to recycled concrete. Decentralised rainwater management is another issue. We rely on digital planning methods (BIM), digital administration (building records archiving) and resilient infrastructure, e.g. for the sponge city. IBA Berlin 2034–2037 must set an example for sustainable, affordable renovation of existing buildings. Unlike the last IBA in the 1980s, the infrastructure must be considered in close cooperation with Brandenburg.

C19 Demolition of the AOK building in Schöneberg

Photo: Urs Füssler

C19



ARCHITECTS’ AND ENGINEERS’ ASSOCIATION OF BERLIN-BRANDENBURG

IBA 2034/37 offers the opportunity to develop innovative responses to the pressing issues of our time. It can serve as a laboratory for visionary urban development – from urban climate adaptation to the sustainable use of land resources and innovative mobility concepts to new ways of living together in affordable housing.

The key to success will be to view the IBA not merely as an exhibition, but as an effective tool for forward-looking architecture and urban development. The curated projects must be exemplary, internationally transferrable and effective in the long term in order to set standards for urban development. With the exhibition “Always modern! Berlin and its streets”, the AIV has made it clear that the redevelopment of streets and squares is a key objective of urban development.

C20 As part of the open-air exhibition “**Always Modern! - Berlin and its Streets**”, “Great Streets of Today” explored how these urban spaces, which shape Berlin’s image and in which we live today, came into being. In the second part, “Great Streets for Tomorrow”, renowned architects and engineers outlined how ten currently uninviting streetscapes in Berlin and Potsdam could be transformed into pleasant places to live.

Photo: Maximilian Meisse

C20





BAUHAUS EARTH

IBA 2034–37 offers an opportunity to demonstrate in concrete terms how the regeneration of existing buildings is a key issue for the city’s future. The planned development of the Bauhaus Earth site already demonstrates how regenerative building practices can be implemented in an exemplary manner within the existing built environment. The three pilot projects are designed as a complementary extension of Bauhaus Earth and create new spaces for research, material innovation and public engagement.

Experiment (1): The existing transformation laboratory in Tempelhof is being further developed into an open location with a workshop and event programme – integrated into the public Atelier Gardens campus.

Prototype (2): At the Lewin House site in Zehlendorf, an international scholarship centre is to be created through the redevelopment of a listed Bauhaus building (1929/30, Peter Behrens), its extension to include a climate-positive pilot building and the revitalisation of the garden.

Scaling (3): The Max Volmer Institute of the TU Berlin in Charlottenburg offers sufficient space for the future growth of Bauhaus Earth. As part of the redevelopment of the listed existing building, plans are in place to add a new storey using an experimental timber construction method.

C21

Geplante Forschungs- und Programmstandorte in Berlin



C21 Planned research and programme sites of Bauhaus Earth in Berlin:

(1) Bauhaus Earth Transformation Laboratory: Experiment, Tempelhof/Ring;
(2) Haus Lewin International Scholarship Programme: Prototype, Zehlendorf/Radial;
(3) Bauhaus Earth Think and Make Tank: Scaling, Charlottenburg/Radial. Background image: Illustration of the extended ring scenario with intersecting radial lines.

Source: Collage based on material from the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing, Berlin.

ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN ARCHITECTS (BDA), BERLIN REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

As a testing ground for alternative urban development, IBA Berlin is formulating local responses to international challenges.

The key question “How do we want to live together?” invites us to rethink urban development: Cohabitation – the city and its inhabitants, climate, biodiversity, transport and participation – requires living spaces that are both clearly planned and open to adaptation.

The city, which has grown organically, is facing a necessary change of course: Climate change is forcing profound changes to the urban space and its infrastructure. What is needed is a scientifically sound IBA concept that sets standards for architectural quality as well as functional and social requirements.

Architecture, urban development, open spaces, transport, climate and social infrastructure must be considered from a cross-departmental perspective. Competitions serve as a key means of involving architects as experts. The IBA should be situated within the context of the Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan region and should explicitly take into account and integrate the region’s common development areas. In this context, an active urban community remains just as essential as a clear political commitment to implementation.

C22 Oswald Mathias Ungers,
housing construction at
Lützowplatz in Berlin, built from
1979–1983 as part of IBA 1984,
demolished in 2013.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:IBA-87-Berlin-016-O-M-Ungers-Luetzowplatz-Wohnbebauung-a.jpg>

C22



ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (BDLA) - BERLIN-BRANDENBURG

An IBA aims to identify forward-looking solutions to current and foreseeable future problems. In Berlin, this includes combating climate change and adapting to its already unavoidable consequences. Implementing the Berlin Climate Adaptation Act and the Nature Restoration Regulation are key priorities here. To achieve this, we need to create blue-green infrastructures, promote environmental justice and develop sustainable maintenance concepts. We need viable proposals for reform to develop and maintain green structures in order to preserve and enhance the city's green capital, thereby ensuring a liveable urban environment. To this end, outdated standards need to be changed by experimenting with sustainable landscaping methods and maintenance practices.

C23 Contribution to the „Masterplan Bad Godesberg“ competition from hochC Landschaftsarchitektur as an example of forward-looking solutions for open-space design: The Theaterplatz will feature a green-blue central zone with seating areas, retention basins and planting beds with new plants (2021).

Source: hochC Landschaftsarchitektur GmbH, Bad Godesberg competition

C23





GERMAN ACADEMY FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL PLANNING (DASL), BERLIN-BRANDENBURG REGIONAL GROUP

A decline in self-efficacy and a lack of spaces for dialogue are contributing to today's social and political crises. Looking back, the squatters' movement secured a number of inclusive lighthouse projects during IBA 84-87; today, broad civil society initiatives only sporadically have a significant impact in times of crisis, such as when the influx of refugees or natural disasters prompts action.

The Haus der Statistik neighbourhood and the floating university demonstrate, within the existing fabric and in a scalable, low-threshold way, how civil society partners (ZKB, floating) are helping Berlin shine as a creative metropolis through challenging collaboration with federal-state-owned companies (BIM + WBM or Tempelhof Project). By adopting the term citizen resource – as civic community spaces were known for a long time in the 19th century – IBA 34-37 can take up and build on such approaches to self-efficacy and open discourse.

C24



C25



C24 Innovation partnership for neighbourhood development: **Haus der Statistik**

Source: Senate Department for Urban Development

C25 Former squatter's house at Zelle Straße 3

Source: Wikimedia Commons

C26 Innovation partnership for infrastructure and education: **floating university**

Source: Gil Shachar, Floating 2025

C26



HERMANN HENSELMANN FOUNDATION

A new IBA for Berlin has big shoes to fill. The expectation associated with IBA 34-37 is that Berlin will continue to build on its innovative potential. In addition to promoting polycentricity and mixed-use development, this primarily involves the targeted involvement of community initiatives and the resulting processes of cooperative urban development.

For the Hermann Henselmann Foundation, an appropriate IBA would be focused on existing buildings and on processes. Climate resilience, sustainable mobility and social urban development go hand in hand and must be reflected in all projects; this also applies to the goal of urban regeneration without displacement. The city is essentially built-up. Projects should therefore focus on transforming obsolete sites with urban appeal and social value.

C27 Team KOOP5 in front of the Haus der Statistik (House of Statistics) in Berlin Mitte
 KOOP5 refers to the constructive collaboration between the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing, the Mitte borough, WBM Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Berlin-Mitte mbH, BIM GmbH and ZUSammenZUKUNFT Berlin eG (ZKB).

Source: Hermann Henselmann Foundation

C27



ASSOCIATION OF TOWN, REGIONAL AND STATE PLANNING (SRL), REGIONAL GROUP BERLIN/BRANDENBURG

IBA Berlin 2034–37 is coming at just the right time. The city needs solutions to climate change, the pressure on housing and the growing social divide between the inner city and the suburbs.

It will only bring about change if it breaks new ground: in the co-operation between the public sector, civil society and specialist planners, in how it deals with existing infrastructure and in involvement that really makes a difference.

The SRL Regional Group Berlin-Brandenburg is committed to an IBA that ambitiously renovates existing buildings, reconciles the energy transition and mobility transition, brings nature, water and heat supply into the neighbourhoods – and views affordable living as being for the common good. And which organises governance and co-operation in such a way that ideas from the urban community are actually taken on board.

An IBA that takes this seriously can set standards – for Berlin and far beyond.

C28 Participation is the key to success

Source: Berkah1789 – stock.adobe.com

C28

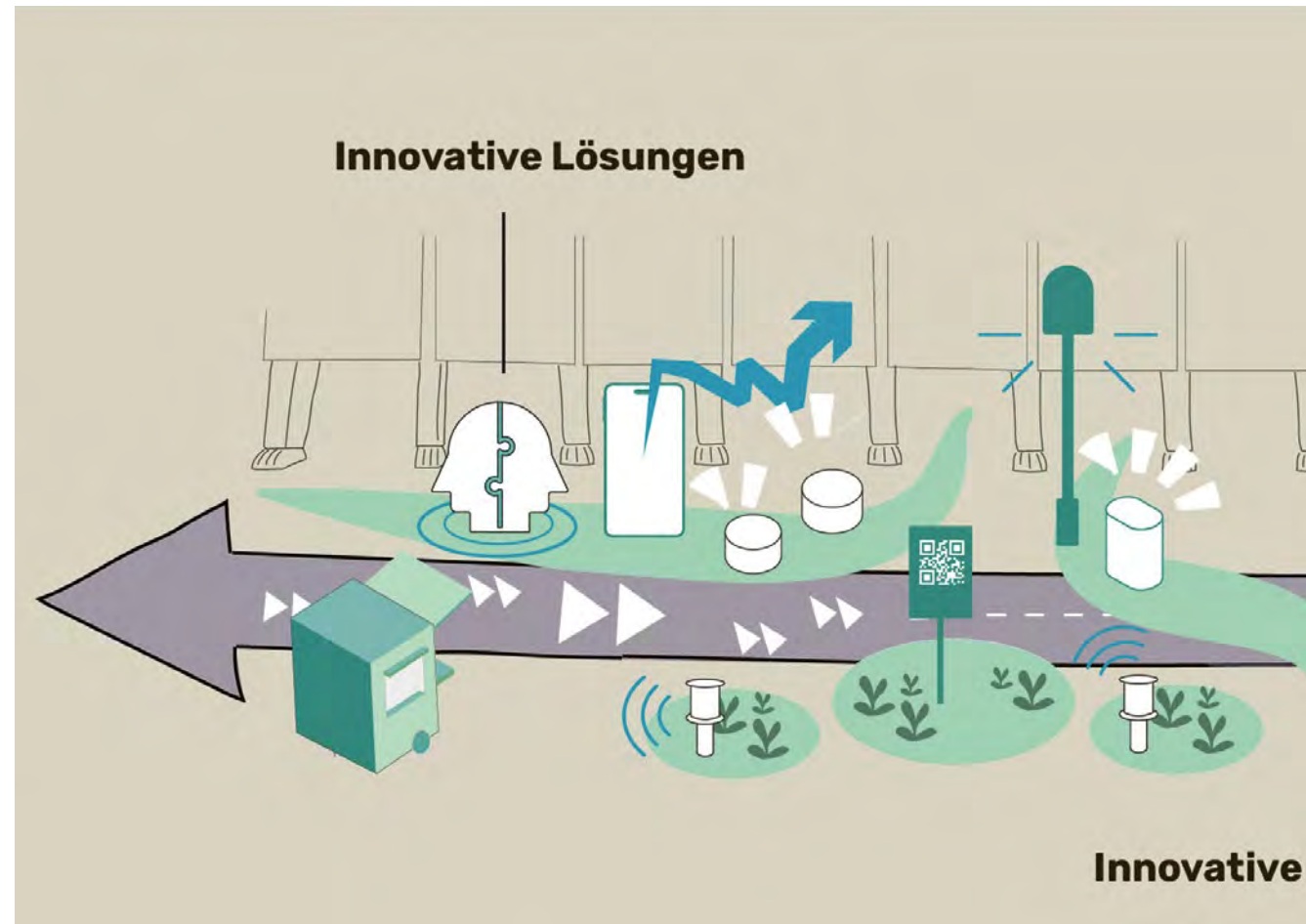




BERLIN CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (IHK)

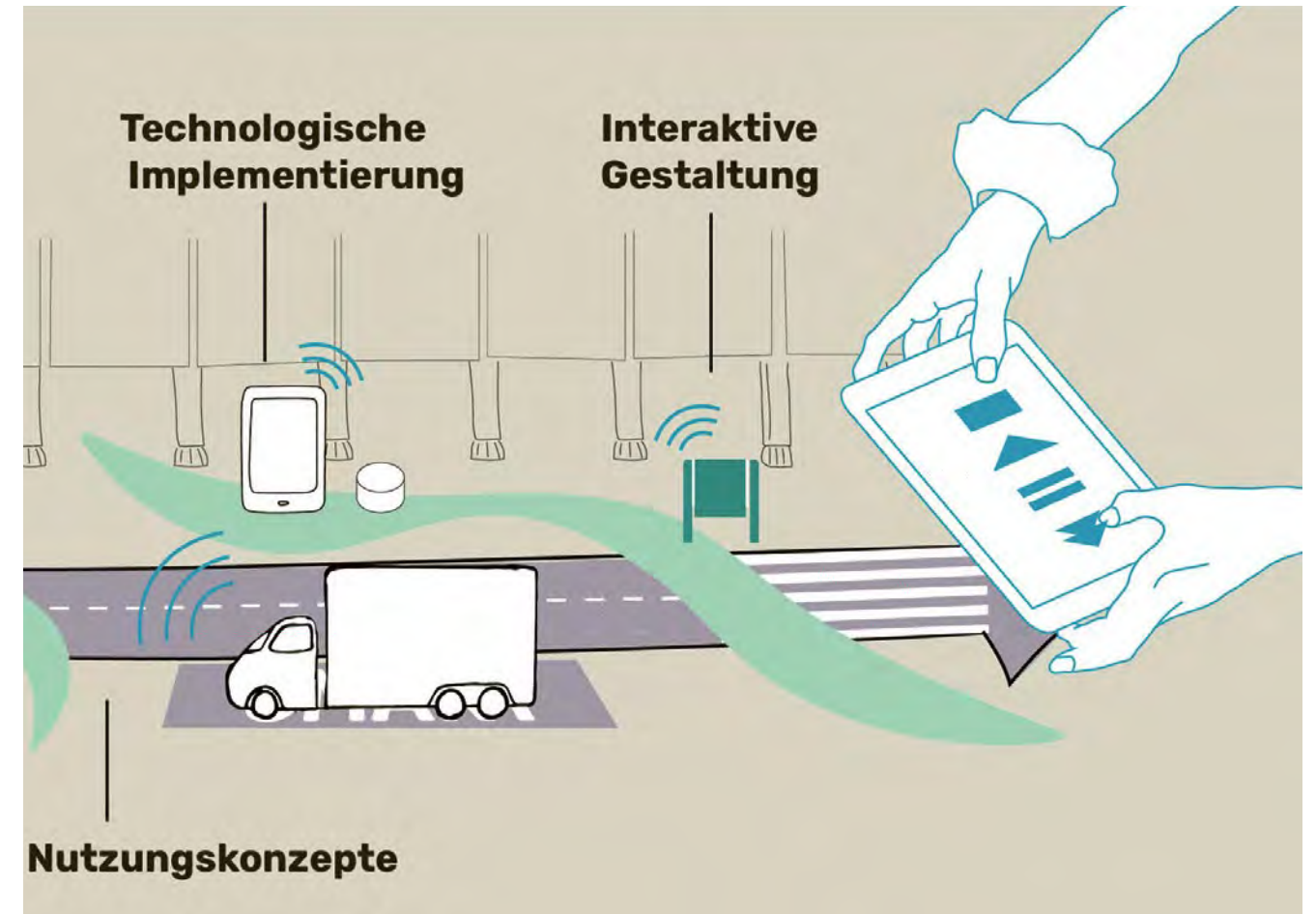
An IBA for Berlin must be more than an architectural showcase. It must create spaces in which urban transformation has a tangible and internationally visible impact. IBA 2034-37 should test mixed-use urban models that link residential, commercial, and productive neighbourhoods in new ways. This requires concrete transformation sites, iconic architecture in an urban context and a temporary special planning regulations. Equally important is the courage to embark on new negotiation processes between the public sector, the business community and urban society – with an open-ended outcome. An IBA can shift ways of thinking, break down taboos and reshape alliances. This is the only way to create a momentum that extends beyond Berlin.

C29



C29 Living lab “100m Future” (100m Zukunft):
As part of an urban pilot scheme, the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Industry is planning a model street on Fasanenstraße to showcase specific structural, social and ecological innovations from 2026 onwards. A real-world laboratory, for an IBA that is rethinking the city whilst it continues to operate.

Source: Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK)



BERLIN CITY MUSEUM

Berlin is a city of rings. Well within today's S-Bahn ring once stood the ring of the Baroque fortress wall. The Märkisches Museum has been located on the site of Bastion VII for almost 120 years. There, and in the Marinehaus, the story of what makes Berlin special is told in a modern way and negotiations are taking place about the future direction to take.

Although the area is characterised by culture, the creative industries and educational opportunities, the urban space along the banks of the Märkisches Ufer feels isolated, not least due to the ill-advised decision in 1960 to demolish the Waisenbrücke bridge. One of the IBA's visions would be to create a vibrant and green "cultural quarter by Kölnischer Park" here on the Baroque inner city ring road: well-connected, sustainable and developed in collaboration with a neighbourhood network that is brimming with potential.

C30 „Uferpromenade“, (waterfront promenade)

J. Diestel and A. Hättenschwiler
2022, collaboration with the TU
Berlin - model and design as
part of the Master's programme
in Stage Design and Scenic
Space, photo: M. Setzpfand.
The model places the Märkis-
ches Museum, together with the
Marinehaus and Kölnischer Park,
on the modelled banks of the
River Spree. There is consider-
able potential for an attractive
cultural quarter at this location.

© Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin

C30



BRANDENBURG: THE GOLDEN CIRCLE OF SECOND-TIER TOWNS

A network of towns known as the “Golden Circle” is emerging around Berlin, extending beyond the urban sprawl. Places and municipalities such as Premnitz, Rathenow, Milower Land, Wiesenburg (Mark), Lindow (Mark), Luckenwalde, Perleberg and others are joining forces to form independent players within the metropolitan area.

The basis is the heterotopic concept (Brenner/Wagner): targeted urban planning “acupuncture points” that activate local potential and create new identities. As a blend of countryside and towns, these places bring together nature, culture, industry and innovation.

As part of IBA 2034, they can become laboratories and innovative hubs for sustainable development and for new urban-rural relationships that interact closely with the metropolis of Berlin.

An initiative of the towns and municipalities of Premnitz, Milower Land, Rathenow, Lindow (Mark), Wiesenburg/Mark and Perleberg

C31 Brandenburg’s guiding principles: Quo Vadis - a future of coexistence?

The golden circle of second-tier towns in Brandenburg and the IBA 34 ring in Berlin.

Design and image: Sebastian Wagner

C31





OUTLOOK



WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE HISTORY OF THE IBA?

Factors contributing to the success of international building exhibitions

International building exhibitions (IBA) have traditionally served as laboratories for urban development and social innovation. However, views and perceptions of what an IBA is and what it should achieve can vary greatly. The Deutscher Werkbund Berlin, a German association of artists, architects, designers and industrialists, takes the following view, which is also intended to be a recommendation to the Berlin Senate for the further preparation and planning of IBA Berlin 2034–37.

An IBA in Berlin is a commitment

As the venue for major international building exhibitions – in 1910, 1931, 1957 and 1987 – a new building exhibition in Berlin must also set international standards. An IBA is not a party manifesto, an urban development plan, a sectoral policy, a competition for urban design ideas, nor a battleground for party disputes. We don't need an IBA simply because it's time to hold one in the capital again. We only need an IBA if we can identify compelling themes and the locations to go with them.

An IBA is not the same as an urban development plan

Climate protection and adaptation, social justice, the housing shortage and integration – these issues cannot be left for an IBA alone, but must form the basis of any urban development policy. An IBA focuses on specific aspects from the broad spectrum of urban development; it can neither cover the whole field nor replace it. However, an IBA must address more than just a single sectoral issue, such as housing construction or transport. It must – particularly in Berlin – take a holistic approach to sectorally interlinked issues, starting from a specific location, which the existing administrative structure is unable to tackle in this way.

Not everyone has to agree with the theme of an IBA

An IBA addresses pressing social issues that are controversial, touch on people's interests, and are uncomfortable, but which are sustainable in the broader sense. Solutions to such problems have yet to be worked out in detail. They should not merely react to current circumstances, but lead the way into the future. The IBA serves as a platform for this. There is no need for an IBA for a subject on which everyone agrees and for which the solution is already largely clear in methodological and conceptual terms. An IBA must leave room for debate. A constructive debate, of course – about a sustainable city.

An IBA requires a participatory planning process

International building exhibitions (IBA) are usually initiated by political or institutional bodies – in other words, from the top down. However, in order for them to have a meaningful impact on society and remain relevant in the long term, they must also be supported from the bottom up. A multi-year “pre-IBA process” provides the necessary scope to involve both experts and civil society. Within this framework, topics and locations can be explored through open, public discussion. In this way, the IBA establishes a strong local presence, fosters a sense of belonging and builds up a network of partners and investors from an early stage. For even though decisions are made deductively, an IBA thrives on the concrete solutions that arise inductively from real places and the challenges they present.

The themes of an IBA must be derived from the local areas

International building exhibitions must not be abstract attempts at strategy or mere reactions to the latest trends in urban planning. They are at their most effective when they develop concrete solutions to genuine, complex problems. Climate neutrality, the transition in construction and mobility, and social and cultural diversity are important issues; however, they only become truly relevant when they arise from specific urban development or social contexts. The link between the place and the theme is crucial: Strong places give rise to strong themes. History shows that IBAs are successful when they act as problem-solvers.

Strong curatorial leadership is essential

The quality and coherence of an IBA succeed or fail based on its curatorial leadership. What is needed is an independent, expert and visionary body that is capable of developing content, connecting stakeholders and communicating narratives over many years. The curatorial director is not only a guiding force in terms of content, but also a facilitator, mediator and communicator – both internally and externally. For this role to be fulfilled effectively, it must have organisational, financial and substantive independence – free from the influence of day-to-day politics, yet with a clear connection to the public interest. Quality assurance bodies such as advisory boards, boards of trustees and a strong executive board increase resilience in the face of political opposition and public criticism.

An IBA needs open spaces for experimentation – but also for failure

As living labs for urban development, IBAs must be allowed to break new ground – and to do so by taking calculated risks. Experiments are not merely an afterthought, but a central feature of any building exhibition. They make it possible to challenge routines, open up processes and try out innovations. It is perfectly acceptable if not every project is a complete success. Partial failure is, in fact, a sign of courage and progress. What matters most is a willingness to learn from experiments. An IBA is successful when it not only presents results but also highlights the process as a learning experience. In order to carry out experiments and innovative projects, it is essential that an IBA has its own budget for initiatives and the expertise to develop projects.

An IBA must raise the bar

There are no mandatory standards for an IBA that are verified by any institution. This is not entirely an advantage, however, as Germany's wealth of experience means there are unofficial standards that must be strictly adhered to in order to avoid embarrassment. The bar is set high for every new IBA, particularly in Berlin, and every new IBA must help to ensure that, once it has been successfully completed, the bar is raised even higher.

The international nature of an IBA must not merely be a title, but must also be a programmatic ambition.

As many major cities and metropolitan areas around the world face the same problems (e.g. the consequences of climate change, housing shortages, social segregation, suburbanisation), the international character of building exhibitions stems primarily from the – internationally relevant – issues that the IBA resolves in an exemplary and model manner at the local level. An international perspective is also essential for understanding the benchmark or best practices and for keeping these in mind when developing one's own projects. An IBA must not fall short of these standards, but must strive to exceed them. Furthermore, an international dimension acts as a catalyst for an IBA and boosts its public profile.

An IBA requires a specific governance structure

Building exhibitions are complex, long-term projects involving a large number of stakeholders. In order to remain capable of taking action whilst also being open to co-creation, they need their own governance structure on three levels. Their organisational structure must be transparent, participatory and decisive at the same time. It should clearly assign responsibility, enable participation and ensure that the relationship with the administration is cooperative and based on an equal footing. Their decision-making structure must enable efficient, conceptually independent action, open up opportunities for participation of all kinds, and be able to resolve conflicts constructively. Their process structure is not a rigid system, but a flexible framework – stable enough to provide guidance, yet open to innovation and learning processes. The governance structure of an IBA is both a philosophy and a practice; it can serve as a model for modern administrative practice even beyond the duration of an IBA.

Conclusion

International building exhibitions are not “business as usual” – they require courage, vision, an openness to participation and a commitment to progress. IBAs are initiated from the top down, but they must grow from the bottom up. The visions must be relevant both locally and internationally, and must be able to be translated into concrete action plans and tangible projects. IBAs must have strong curatorial structures, project development expertise and scope for experimentation.

Berlin, 25 April 2025,
Deutscher Werkbund Berlin e. V.

PERSPECTIVES OF IBA BERLIN 2034-37

The distinctive features of IBA Berlin 2034-37 relate to the locations, the public spaces within them, the local dimensions of the culture of redevelopment, the opportunities presented by bridges of all kinds and the involvement of the entire urban community. In light of the many divisions and rifts, IBA Berlin 2034-37 has adopted the following central theme: Let's build bridges!

The location: ring meets radial

IBA project spaces are created where the S-Bahn ring and radial roads intersect. These nodes are not just geographical locations, but rather an urban type: a transition zone between the inner and outer city, between different types of neighbourhoods, forms of mobility and social structures. They are interfaces of the metropolis, centres of a special kind. The IBA thinks from the perspective of these urban interfaces – along the ring and along the radial roads – and thus develops spatial centres that radiate outwards from the intersection point into the urban space.

Public space: the foundation

At each of these nodes, the public space is at the heart of an IBA project: roads, squares and open spaces, which are currently dominated by traffic, are to become designed urban spaces – blue-green, climate-adapted and attractive to pedestrians. These are not merely accessories, but a fundamental prerequisite: only when the public space is well designed and functional can a centre develop.

Conversion, repurposing, additional new construction: an active culture of renovation

The IBA works on three levels simultaneously: existing buildings are repurposed and upgraded, underutilised structures are converted and new buildings are constructed where appropriate – to strengthen the centre's function. This also results in new building types, such as a residential and commercial building that combines affordable living space with an active ground floor zone and mixed uses, making the polycentric Berlin of the 21st century spatially visible.

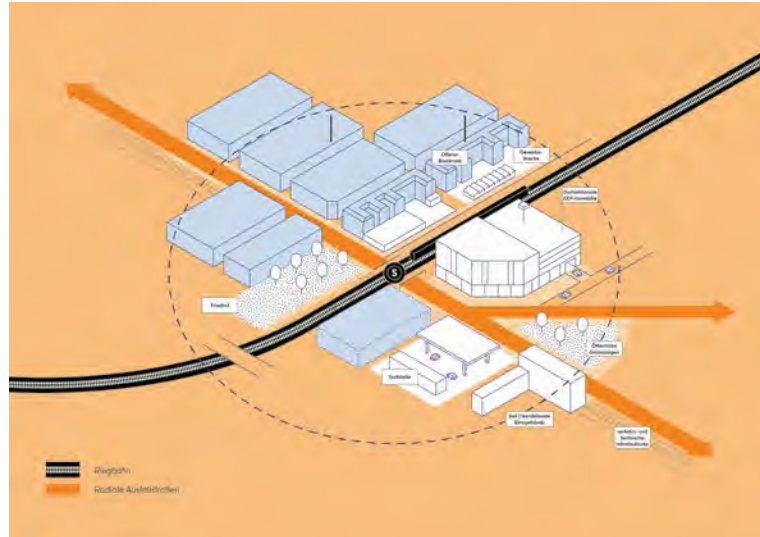
Bridges of all kinds: spatial and social

Today, the nodes still represent barriers that separate the inner and outer city. Through IBA renovation projects, they become bridge spaces of the metropolis, in which different urban planning worlds and social lifestyles meet and connect. Various challenges also converge here: energy transition, mobility transition and infrastructure transition. Bridge projects with Brandenburg would be desirable.

Commitment from all

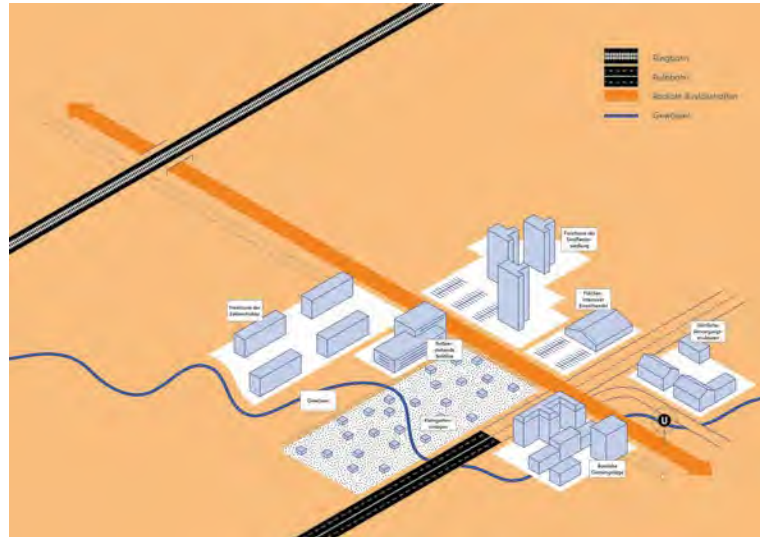
All these challenges can only be overcome together, through cooperation between different stakeholders, collaboration across various specialist disciplines and consultation between different public administrations. The prerequisite for an IBA project is a local alliance consisting of civil society, local business and the borough(s), which aims to implement a project with a strong impact at one of the nodes between the ring and the radial roads.

D01



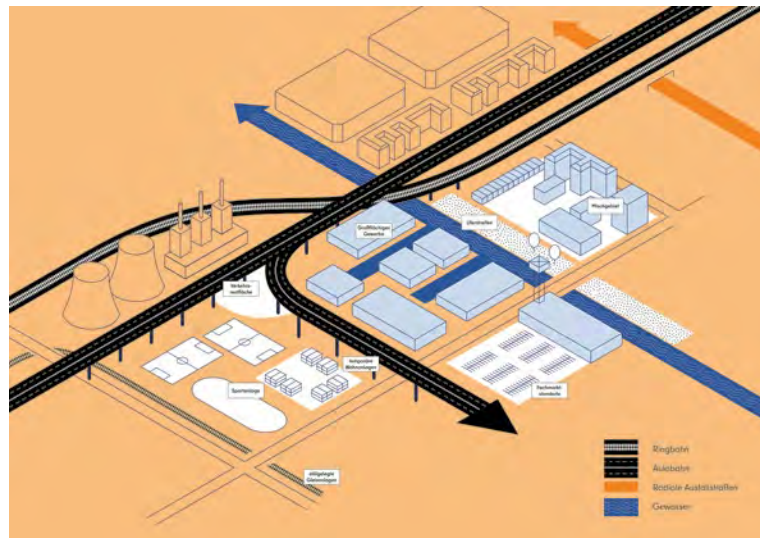
D01: Example of an urban interface: where the S-Bahn ring and radial road intersect, the inner and outer city meet. This urban space shows the characteristic situations of the ring zone – brownfield sites, dysfunctional retail properties, petrol stations, vacant buildings and underutilised green spaces. The railway line separates, car traffic dominates, and different uses exist side-by-side without any cohesion. At the same time, the greatest potential is concentrated here: proximity to public transport, brownfield sites, public green spaces and the radial roads as connecting axes into the city make this intersection the ideal place for integrated urban transformation. The IBA asks: how can this interface become a centre – with designed streetscapes, new mixed-used spaces, climate-resilient open spaces and affordable housing that strengthens the centre's function rather than displacing it?

D02



D02: Example of an urban interface: a radial road is more than just a transit space – it is the connecting axis between the outer and inner city, along which the epochs of Berlin's urban development over many decades have been inscribed. Large housing estates with underdeveloped open spaces, space-intensive retail trade on the path to dysfunctionality, ribbon development, allotments, bodies of water and a fragmented structural landscape with no clear centre all line up here. This is precisely where the untapped reserves of inner urban development lie. The IBA focuses on this transitional zone between the inner and outer city: it strengthens centres, addresses shortcomings in terms of climate and open spaces, and exploits the potential of targeted intensification. The "sleeping giants" of the space-intensive retail trade are transformed into vibrant, mixed-use urban building blocks – as gateways into the inner city and as new anchor points for the neighbourhoods of the outer city.

D03



D03: Example of an urban interface: the urban space along the Ringbahn is neither inner nor outer city, but rather a linear corridor in which large-scale commercial areas, retail parks, temporary housing complexes, sports facilities and disused railway tracks overlap to form a fragmented, functionally indecisive urban fabric. Riverbanks and waterways run through the space as a blue infrastructure – spatially present, but rarely experienced as tangible quality. It is precisely here that there is considerable potential for development. The IBA examines how disused railway tracks, car parks for the space-intensive retail trade and the open spaces of ribbon developments and large housing estates can offer potential for targeted intensification: for encounters, for living, for recreation, for education, for exchange and for services. Green and blue infrastructures are thus transformed into alternative radials: as axes of local mobility, climate adaptation and the networking of neighbourhoods.

Image: Forward Planung und Forschung for the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

ORGANISATION OF IBA BERLIN 2034-37

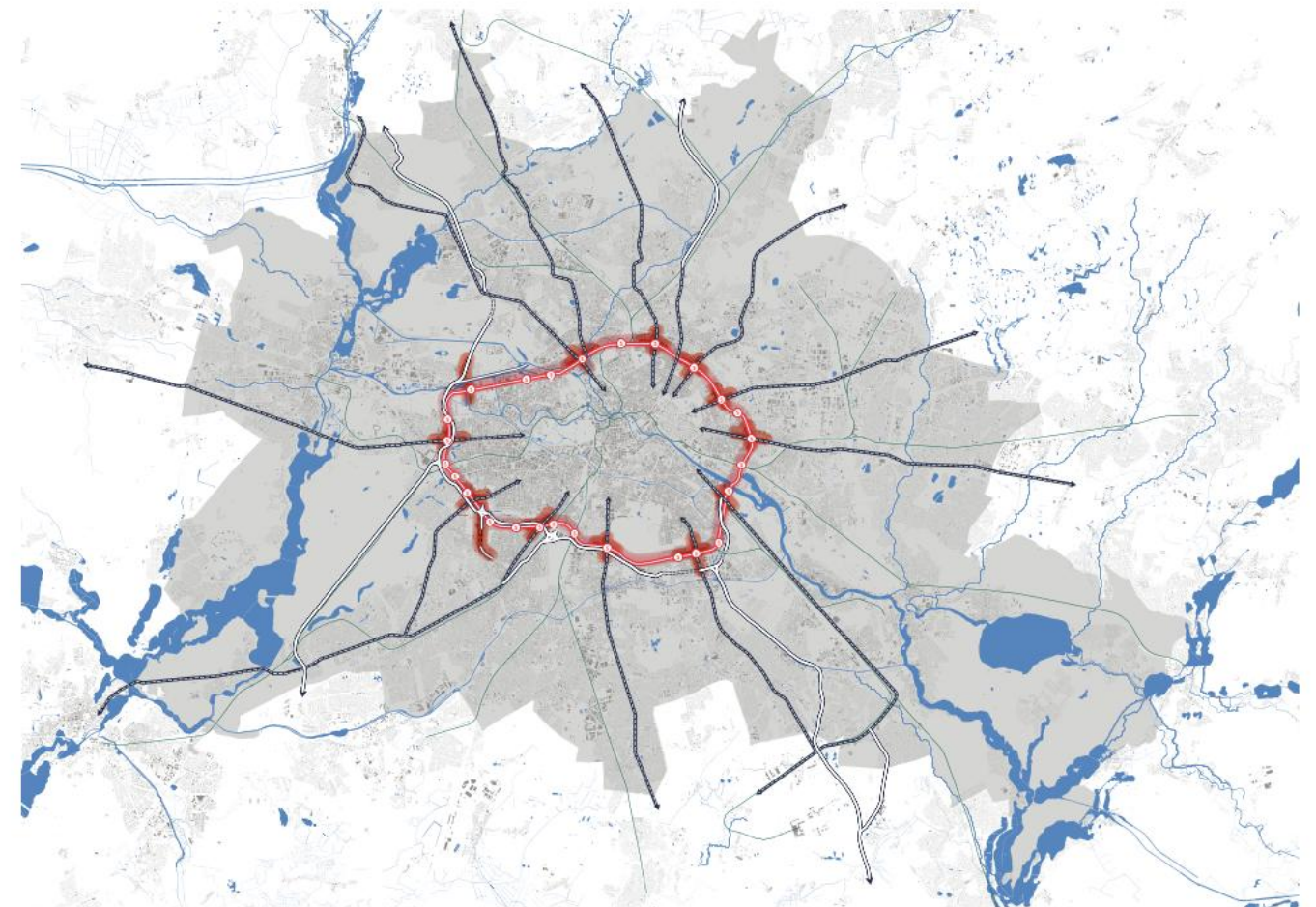
IBA Berlin 2034-37 is managed by a newly founded IBA GmbH – a temporary, public-interest company with curatorial leadership and a political mandate. This structure with a supervisory board and executive management, accompanied by a board of trustees and advisory committees, creates an independent, professionally competent and effective organisation that acts across departmental boundaries, actively supports projects and mediates between administration, civil society, science, business and politics.

The financing combines state, federal and EU public funds with private investments. As an investment-based format, the IBA provides upfront funding – and thus achieves a leverage effect: every public euro spent is expected to generate manifold returns – in the form of urban quality, accelerated construction projects, simplified approval processes and international visibility. The IBA thus becomes a showcase for future-orientated planning and construction – not only for Berlin and Germany, but with international appeal.

IBA Berlin 2034-37 sees itself as a learning, transparent and inclusive process. It strengthens interdisciplinary cooperation within administration and at the same time opens itself up to the local economy and civil society – intergenerationally, interculturality and promoting gender equality. Berlin's civic engagement and the vibrant culture of co-production are key resources in this regard. Thus, IBA Berlin 2034-37 aims to strengthen social cohesion and democratic processes.

CORE MESSAGE OF IBA BERLIN 2034-37

Berlin has many centres – not only in the historic Mitte and City West, but also at the intersections where the S-Bahn ring and the major radial roads meet. These central locations connect the inner and outer city. Many of them are currently underdeveloped, dominated by car traffic or spatially fragmented. This is especially true of the A 104 corridor. IBA Berlin 2034-37 makes these intersections its central field of action – and, together with alliances from local civil society, local business and the affected boroughs, develops new centres: attractively designed, climate-friendly, mixed-use and accessible to all. It thus fosters Berlin's greatest urban development potential: its polycentric structure and the associated 15-minute city, in which living, working and services are all within easy reach.



D05: Plan of the IBA spatial setting with a focus on the intersections of the Ringbahn and radial roads. The ring is invoked as a central urban planning element between the inner and outer city. It harbours great potential for Berlin's future urban development: strengthening existing urban centres and creating new ones.

Image: Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing

EXCERPTS FROM THE SENATE BILL

The Senate is submitting the following document to the House of Representatives for consideration.

International Building Exhibitions (IBAs) have been transforming cities and regions sustainably for more than 100 years. As a special format for urban development, IBAs facilitate close cooperation between politics, administration, academia, the construction industry and the general public. Previous IBAs (such as IBA Hamburg, IBA Vienna and IBA Emscher Park) have demonstrated their ability to address current urban development issues across the entire city and implement sustainable solutions tailored to specific needs through exemplary developments. Berlin has also had previous positive experiences with International Building Exhibitions. INTERBAU 1957 and IBA 1987 provided important urban planning and economic impetus and promoted sustainable rethinking of urban development. INTERBAU focused on a more open and modern urban landscape. IBA 1984/87, on the other hand, saw itself as a corrective to “modernism” and concentrated on careful urban renewal and, above all, on urban repair. The preparations for the new IBA Berlin 2034–37 aim to build on this and provide ideas on how urban development can position itself for the future. Against the backdrop of global challenges and those specific to Berlin, the planned IBA Berlin 2034–37 will focus on the **urban transformation of the built city**.

A. BACKGROUND

The Guidelines of Government Policy 2023–2026 state that “the Senate [...] will swiftly devise a concept for staging an International Building Exhibition in the metropolitan region and subsequently discuss and refine it with the city community”.

The Berlin-Brandenburg capital region faces profound urban planning, ecological, and social challenges that demand innovative strategies for action. Berlin’s unbroken growth momentum, the shortage of affordable housing and commercial space, the need to adapt urban infrastructure to changing conditions, the effects of demographic and economic structural change, the necessity of climate-resilient adaptations and climate protection, the biodiversity crisis and the need to act in a resource-efficient manner all call for the implementation of new, integrated and sustainable approaches to urban development. These complex challenges affect both social cohesion and individual well-being, and, given their interdisciplinary nature, can only be addressed to a limited extent using the existing tools of urban development.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING EXHIBITION BERLIN 2034–37 (IBA BERLIN 2034–37)

IBA Berlin 2034–37, as a comprehensive urban development tool, addresses this challenge city-wide. The focus is on the **urban transformation of the built city**. IBA Berlin 2034–37 will develop approaches to forward-looking urban development in the context of the two overarching transformation priorities of **climate protection and climate adaptation**, and the **management of urban land**. The aim is to further develop what already exists. In this context, the existing stock – buildings, infrastructure, open spaces and materials – is seen as the starting point for a city that is fit for the future. Underutilised spaces and building structures, as well as areas whose use is set to change as a result of foreseeable social trends, are seen as potential areas in which the city’s further development can be tested in an exemplary manner, implemented as model projects and vividly demonstrated. IBA Berlin 2034–37 is guided by the premise of preserving existing built structures and places greater emphasis on projects that focus on reconstruction, restoration, repurposing and sensitive renovation, rather than new construction, demolition or replacement.

IBA Berlin 2034–37 combines instruments from architecture and building culture exhibitions, in which aesthetic and technological aspects are realised and showcased in exemplary fashion, with social, economic and ecological considerations accompanied by accessible opportunities for public participation. At the same time, the quality and effectiveness of forward-looking, results-oriented processes are tested and evaluated.

During the planned exhibition period from 2034 to 2037, projects implemented in Berlin will be presented internationally. These projects are intended to serve as models for future developments in terms of their conception and implementation. Accordingly, an ongoing, scientifically supported evaluation of the projects and their outcomes will be conducted as part of IBA Berlin 2034–37. IBA Berlin 2034–37 sets standards for the day-to-day work of planning authorities and planners alike, and provides important impetus for the worlds of politics, business and academia.

C. CONCEPT OF IBA BERLIN 2034-37

The format of the International Building Exhibition provides a unique tool for planning, urban and regional policy in the development of Berlin. IBA Berlin 2034-37 builds on the successes of previous International Building Exhibitions held in Berlin and develops these further in light of current challenges.

Precisely because every IBA has to constantly reinvent itself and adapt to specific local requirements, the experiences gained from implementing IBAs is of particular value. The existing strategic guidelines of the state of Berlin form the basis for the concept of IBA Berlin 2034-37. The Senate's guiding principles for city-wide development (Berlin Strategy), the urban development plans (UDP), the Berlin Energy and Climate Protection Programme (BEK 2030) and the Climate Adaptation Act represent the starting points for the IBA concept.

On the one hand, IBA Berlin 2034-37 sees itself as a catalyst for the practical implementation of existing strategies, concepts and projects. On the other hand, however, it also involves the systematic testing of innovative procedural and implementation strategies with a model character and the identification of areas where changes are needed through a critical review of existing concepts.

Within the framework of IBA Berlin 2034-37, suitable experimental clauses, accelerated procedures and processes are therefore being ambitiously tested and further developed. Lasting standards are derived from the implemented projects. Real-world laboratories and model projects connect research and practice and create transferable models for administration and planning. Global urban development challenges are addressed in an exemplary manner within the local context, thus positioning Berlin as a pioneer in the field of sustainable urban development both nationally and internationally. Projects implemented within the framework of IBA Berlin 2034-37 are primarily subject to the principle of additivity. The projects should go well beyond the minimum legal requirements in terms of their environmental quality, particularly with regard to climate protection, adaptation and resource conservation.

A central component of IBA Berlin 2034-37 is the development of diverse, site-specific approaches, ranging from the sensitive expansion of existing neighbourhoods and the conversion of underutilised spaces and buildings to new construction sites previously used for other purposes. Exemplary projects are being developed at these three levels, demonstrating how Berlin can be further developed in a resource-efficient and sustainable manner. Through the integration of sustainable materials and construction methods, IBA Berlin 2034-37 will become a key driver of Berlin's ecological transformation.

Sustainability within the framework of IBA Berlin 2034-37 is reflected in clear (target) commitments on the part of project planners to prioritise ecological and circular building materials and methods. This means, for example, ensuring the durability of the built environment, taking flexibility of use into account from the outset, reducing material intensity and prioritising the use of secondary raw materials, the absence of harmful substances and the ability to dismantle structures, whilst maintaining permanent (digital) traceability in accordance with scientific standards.

D. LOCATION

To increase the effectiveness of the IBA measures, the locations are tailored to those areas of Berlin where the greatest need for action in terms of the urban transformation of the built environment is concentrated.

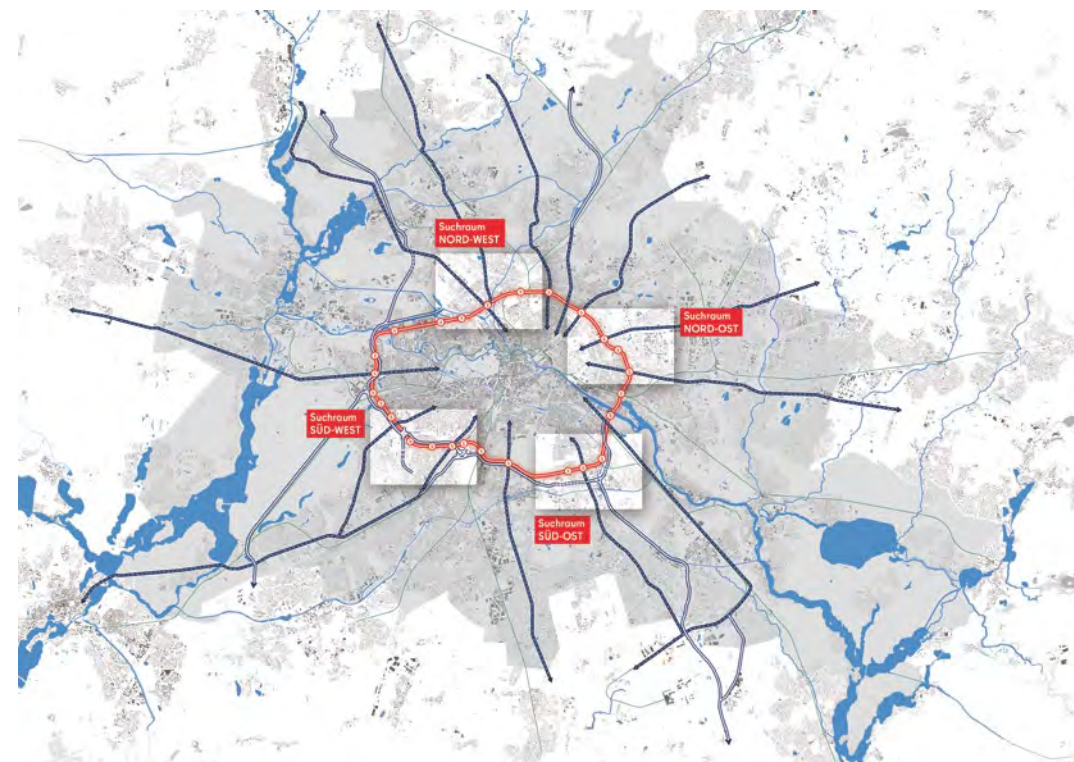
The basis for the current spatial positioning is provided by Berlin's urban development plans, which were used to examine potential locations and appropriate spatial relationships. The developed scenario does not serve as the final, definitive scope of the IBA, but rather as a starting point and strategic guiding principle. The proposed spatial location for concretisation was developed through a methodical selection process. Based on the two overarching transformation needs, climate protection and climate adaptation and the management of urban land, analyses were conducted at three levels of scale:

- IBA Berlin 2034-37 connects Berlin and the capital region
- IBA Berlin 2034-37 transforms underutilised spaces
- IBA Berlin 2034-37 awakens sleeping giants

The results of the selection process for potential IBA sites reveal a clear clustering of areas requiring action on both sides of the S-Bahn ring and along intersecting radial roads. This led to the development of the "extended ring scenario".

The strategic relevance of this scenario is heightened by the overlapping of the intersecting radial roads, which act as connecting axes from the inner city beyond Berlin's state borders. The potential IBA sites identified are located within the clusters on either side of the intersections where the radial roads meet the S-Bahn ring. They share the potential for connection between the inner and

Graphical representation of the extended ring scenario



outer city that can be achieved through conversion, expansion and new builds. The potential IBA sites under consideration concentrate key problem areas that require targeted urban transformation. As a transition zone between the inner and outer city, they also mark the urban threshold where different lifestyles, mobility patterns and urban planning situations converge. The social transformation that accompanies the symbolic bridging of this divide between different social spheres, whilst preserving Berlin's unique mix, is equally essential to the success of the sustainable transformation of the built environment.

By overcoming these urban barriers, IBA Berlin 2034-37 will develop model urban spaces that connect and bring people together. Different city types, uses and social contexts enable a broad spectrum of spatial transformation:

- **Conversion** of existing buildings
- **Expansion** of existing infrastructure
- **Targeted new construction** to strengthen the existing city

The selected scenario provides the operational framework for specifically addressing the existing implementation deficit. The ring's prominent location and the fact that it runs alongside large parts of the city ensure that it is highly visible and noticeable. Successful projects have a positive impact throughout the entire city and establish reference points across district boundaries. The result is a robust, scalable transformation model that connects the different parts of the city.

Furthermore, the "extended ring scenario" offers a powerful testing ground for climate-resilient urban development. Along its radial routes, green and blue infrastructure can be strengthened and further developed into a coherent system that improves cooling, biodiversity and quality of life, while simultaneously promoting environmental justice.

G. PARTICIPATION

At the same time, IBA Berlin 2034-37 is designed to foster connections and intensify exchange. To this end, interdisciplinary processes within the administration are being strengthened to promote cross-departmental and integrated working. Simultaneously, it is intensifying dialogue with stakeholders from the worlds of politics, civil society, academia and business to facilitate joint and targeted action. IBA Berlin 2034-37 is designed as a transparent, inclusive and learning process that relies on broad participation from urban society and the professional community. It is designed to be intergenerational and intercultural, while also promoting gender equality.

IBA Berlin 2034-37 aims to strengthen social cohesion and democratic processes. In doing so, IBA Berlin 2034-37 intends to harness Berlin's wealth of civic engagement and co-production as a valuable resource within the city's society. The binding framework set out in the Guidelines for Citizen Participation in Urban Development Projects and Processes (LLBB) forms the basis for discussion and the refinement of the IBA processes. These guidelines ensure transparency, diversity and an open-ended approach, and serve as the benchmark for all participation formats of IBA Berlin 2034-37.

Participation takes place at several levels:

- Professional: involvement of Senate departments and Berlin Boroughs, professional associations and scientific institutions.
- Social: formats for citizens, initiatives and civil society groups. Intergenerational: accessibility for all age groups, with a particular focus on participatory processes and methods that are suited to engaging as broad a cross-section of all age groups as possible. Accessible and intercultural: participation in accordance with the standards of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and taking into account Berlin's cultural diversity. On this basis, the IBA company is developing a participation concept that fleshes out the LLBB, sets out standards for IBA Berlin 2034-37 as a whole and defines site-specific requirements for individual IBA projects.

Public participation formats will continuously accompany the IBA process. These will commence with a series of events in 2026/27, which will present the key ideas and themes, provide information and initiate dialogue with the city's residents - in line with the coalition's mandate to further develop IBA Berlin 2034-37 through public discourse.

An inaugural exhibition will take place in June this year, documenting the process of identifying potential sites and offering a glimpse of what lies ahead. The already established professional exchange with Berlin universities and trade associations as well as the cross-departmental working group of the Berlin administration will continue as a matter of course. Following the establishment of the IBA company, both formats will be taken over by the company in cooperation with SenStadt. The exchange with civil society, initiatives and citizens will begin in spring 2027. From spring 2027 onward, the Berlin business community will be more closely involved through a separate framework for dialogue.

H. INTERNATIONAL

As part of IBA Berlin 2034–37, the aim is to strengthen international links with all of Berlin’s twin cities in order to intensify cooperation in tackling shared urban challenges. Engaging with other major cities that are undergoing similar stages of development will unlock synergies for sustainable development.

Berlin’s network of twin cities is being specifically involved in order to reflect on best-practices, promote collaborative learning and jointly develop projects – known as IBA satellites – in the twin cities. The involvement of the twin cities will be phased in, taking into account the degree of innovation in current approaches, priorities in urban development and their relevance to IBA-relevant topics. The aim is to give all twin cities the opportunity to participate in IBA Berlin 2034–37.

The international, professional dialogue is being strengthened through collaborations with universities, research institutions and industry partners. Further formats, such as international conferences, specialist publications and digital platforms, will help to raise awareness of the insights gained from IBA Berlin 2034–37 beyond the German context. In addition to networking with Berlin’s twin cities, promoting understanding within the already international city of Berlin represents another dimension of IBA Berlin 2034–37. This exchange actively strengthens social cohesion and contributes to the promotion of democracy and integration within the city’s society.

I. OUTLOOK

The following phases are currently planned for the preparation and implementation of IBA Berlin 2034–37:

Exploratory phase	2024-2026
Start and experimentation phase	from 2026
Project phase	from 2030
Completion phase	from 2032
Exhibition phase	2034-2037

K. INTEGRATION OF BOROUGHES

The boroughs with the greatest potential for IBA sites were involved through ongoing consultation meetings. The current planning for IBA Berlin 2034–37 was presented at the city council meeting in October 2025. Following Senate’s adoption of this proposal, even closer structural integration of the affected boroughs is planned.

Cost impact on private households and/or businesses:
IBA Berlin 2034–37 will contribute to a shorter planning and implementation phase through streamlined planning processes and the use of the latest building regulations. This will help to reduce construction costs.

Impact on cooperation with the state of Brandenburg:
IBA Berlin 2034–37 offers an opportunity to improve cooperation between the two federal states and with municipalities in Brandenburg. Under a franchise model, towns and local authorities in Brandenburg will be given the opportunity to participate in IBA Berlin 2034–37 with outstanding projects, provided they can demonstrate that they have secured independent financing and that the projects are consistent with the objectives and approach of IBA Berlin 2034–37.

IBA BERLIN 2034-37

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OPENING EXHIBITION THE STAGE IS SET FOR IBA BERLIN 2034-37

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