

From April 28 to May 3 I had the pleasure of visiting the great city of Hamburg, Germany to explore the planning and redevelopment of the city's port and industrial area, HafenCity. Known as the "Gateway to the World," the district has been a leader in international trade for centuries. The 155 hectare area has been Germany's principal port of trade containing space for shipping and storing of goods. However, with decreased importance of free ports and increased use of large container ships, the amount of land required for industrial, warehouse, and port related uses decreased. In 2000, the Hamburg Senate approved the Master Plan to redevelop the derelict industrial area into a mixed use community. With the exception of a few new buildings, HafenCity is expected to be fully developed around 2025-2030. With the City of Toronto undergoing preliminary planning processes to redevelop its own port lands, I was keen to learn about Hamburg's experiences and to see the outcomes. I was particularly interested in how the plans were integrating creative and cultural industries. I used an evaluated criteria I developed for my master's report to audit the area's built form, urban design, and creative activities.

My first day in Hamburg was likely my most memorable. I took a ride on Hamburg's subway (U-Bahn) to get to HafenCity. I was amazed that direct subway service was provided to the area, even before it was completely built-out. I got out at the Überseequartier Station, which is regarded as the commercial heart of HafenCity. I found that this area had the beginnings of an urban feel to it. The area consisted of a variety of commercial uses, ranging from office to cultural and entertainment related uses to bars and restaurants. The built environment consisted mostly of midrise buildings and provided a public realm that was to human scale and supported and vibrant street life.

I then walked along Überseeallee Street into the Elbatorquartier, HafenCity's "New Knowledge Quarter." I quickly spotted HafenCity Universität. This vast five storey modern designed building is located on the southern most boundary of the district along the river Norderelbe, providing a bird's-eye view of the entire port area. I learned that the university has programs in civil engineering, geomatics, urban planning, metropolitan culture, and architecture. I was fortunate to meet with professors from HafenCity Universität, who provided me with an understanding of Hamburg's history, and planning related challenges and lessons surrounding HafenCity. I learned Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft is helping with the planning of the cultural quarter. Specifically, they are tasked with promoting and supporting cultural and creative industries in Hamburg as well as providing real estate assistance, business consulting, and start up services. Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft has been involved in the initial phases of the planning process of the Oberhafen Quarter.

Over the next couple of days, I managed the visit the rest of the historical area. What I found most fascinating is how the area integrates industrial heritage. Many of the old buildings and warehouses are preserved and converted for museums, art related uses, multimedia agencies, and various other cultural and creative industries. The Maritime Museum-Hamburg is an excellent example of adaptive reuse. Considered the oldest warehouse in Hamburg, this 10 storey Neo-Gothic building documents the city's history and houses a range of notable maritime artifacts. Public spaces also included industrial heritage items like anchors and propellers. Public accessible boardwalks lined the dockwall giving pedestrians a view of ship channel and harbor

areas. The various industrial, shipping and other maritime activities that exist directly adjacent to the new developments provide locals a reminder of the area's significant historical past.

Visiting HafenCity was a planners dream. Although the redevelopment is not complete, my experiences proved why HafenCity is considered one of the best examples of waterfront redevelopment in the world. I have no doubt that this experience will shape my future career in planning. Thank you SURP!



Picture 1. Example of public space and mix use development adjacent to dockwall.





Picture 3: HafenCity Universität on the Norderelbe river.