



Hamburg ahead

INTERNATIONAL BUILDING EXHIBITION HAMBURG

# World Commercial Park

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# Contents

	Publication Details	2
	Contents	3
A.	INTRODUCTION	4
A.1.	The project and the IBA key themes	5
A.2.	Project outline	6
B.	OVERALL CONCEPT	7
B.1.	Evaluation procedure	7
B.2.	Architectural concept	8
B.3.	Utilisation concept	10
B.4.	Energy concept	12
B.5.	Project development	13
C.	CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS	15
	APPENDIX	
	Further links	
	Picture credits	

## A. INTRODUCTION

The IBA project World Commercial Park is located in the south of Wilhelmsburg's Global Neighbourhood, a multicultural residential district owned by the urban housing organisation SAGA GWG. Lying to the south of the busy Reiherstieg district, in 2007 the Global Neighbourhood had about 1700 inhabitants and was still greatly in need of renovation, but since 2009 it has been remodelled and expanded with new construction. As a result of this extensive work, the quality of life in the district has considerably improved, while rents have remained almost unchanged.

### Diversity of Nations

The multicultural composition of the 2000 people who will be living in the Global Neighbourhood will not be lost after the completion of refurbishment in 2015. All previous tenants were given the opportunity to move back after the renovation of their district, and by mid-2013 people of more than 25 different nationalities had already taken advantage of this offer. Altogether, 84 per cent of the residents have remained on Wilhelmsburg.

### Upgrading Buildings

In the south of this colourful district was a chaotic-looking area used by a few isolated businesses, with few positive qualities as a location and no links with the locality.



Fig. 1: Aerial photo of the Global Neighbourhood to the northeast and the construction site of the World Commercial Park (mid-2013)

In connection with the changes to the Global Neighbourhood, which were begun in 2009, the essential aim of an evaluation procedure carried out in 2011 was to find a concept that could form a lasting contribution to the structural improvement of living and working conditions in the district. Existing small-scale businesses were to be retained and opportunities for new enterprises created, in order to achieve a restructuring of the area and help to strengthen the local economy.



Fig. 2: The site in 2008, before redevelopment

## A.1. The Project and the IBA Key Themes

The World Commercial Park scheme carried out by GMH Gebäudemanagement Hamburg will incorporate all three of International Building Exhibition IBA Hamburg's key themes and can thus be described as truly multi-talented.

### Applying the IBA Key Themes

The carefully arranged public opening, for the neighbouring residential development, of a World Commercial Park that had previously been almost unnoticed and the resulting juxtaposition of living and working make an exemplary contribution to the Metrozones key theme and represent a “both/and” mentality regarding the different uses, in contrast to the “either/or” of conventional concepts. The key theme Cities and Climate Change will be addressed by renewable energy supply through the photovoltaic system on the roof and the connection to the IBA Energy Bunker

project. Finally, appealing to migrant and local businesses as future tenants is an important concept element, which has been actively pursued since 2009 and makes a sizeable contribution to the key theme Cosmopolis. The core targets in the project were formulated in 2011 in the competition documentation: “In 2013 there should be a flourishing commercial park on this site, where various local businesses operate in close proximity to one another and maintain a lively interaction with the adjacent residential development.”

This White Paper sets out in detail the architectural and functional concept as well as the planning process. In addition to the technical details for professionals, the targets we set ourselves at the start of the project will be reviewed, insofar as that is possible just over a year after completion in September 2013.

## A.2. Project outline

Investor	GMH Gebäudemanagement Hamburg
Project partners	LIG Landesbetrieb Immobilienmanagement und Grundvermögen (formerly Finanzbehörde/Immobilienmanagement), Hamburg-Mitte District Office, State Ministry for Urban Development and Environment (BSU)
Architects	dalpiaz+giannetti architekten, Hamburg (first prize in evaluation procedure)
Planning and implementation	Birkholz Stubenrauch Architektur und Ingenieurgesellschaft mbH, Kiel
Open space planning	Breimann & Bruun Garten- und Landschaftsarchitektur, Hamburg
Business support	Beschäftigung + Bildung e.V., Hamburg / Büro für Lokale Wirtschaft - LoWi, Hamburg, in cooperation with Unternehmer ohne Grenzen e.V., Hamburg
PV systems planning	Averdung Ingenieurgesellschaft mbH, Hamburg
Project data	
Site size	approx. 6700 m <sup>2</sup>
Total gross surface area	2740 m <sup>2</sup>
Business units	6 buildings, consisting of 13 basic modules with approx. 35 rental units
Energy supply	Own PV system and connection to local heating network of the Energy Bunker
Total investment	€ 5.8 million net
Subsidies	IBA Excellence support € 380,000, European Social Fund ESF € 350,000, Integrated District Development Framework Programme RISE € 670,000
Rent levels	Between € 3.70 and € 6.50 (average: € 4.40/m <sup>2</sup> ) in the five subsidised modules. € 6.50 to € 8.50 in the independently financed sixth module.
Milestones	04/2008: Global Neighbourhood Urban Design Ideas and Realisation Competition
	03/2011: World Commercial Park Architectural Evaluation Competition
	11/2012: Start of construction
	10/2013: Completion and handover
Current industry mix (Status: October 2014)	Motorcycle renovation, custom bicycle parts, 2 x architectural, urban design, Turkish industrial bakery, stonemason, industrial climbers, insurance, real estate, construction company, Coffee Bags, SPD members' office, restaurant, child/youth service, employment and education service, church association, psychotherapy, heating and ventilation engineers, and 2 vehicle workshops in the immediate neighbourhood

## B. OVERALL CONCEPT

Six buildings of different sizes with industrial units and offices have been erected under a transparent roof, which is intended to protect the work yards between the buildings from the weather. The courtyard-style layout of the buildings under one common roof makes it possible to work out of doors and also promotes interaction and collaboration between the resident businesses.

The various, flexible, one- or two-storey modules can be adapted to suit the requirements of the tenants and businesses. The range of modules was selected at an early stage, in order to ensure a well-balanced mix of commercial sectors and to be able to support start-up businesses during the construction phase. Since mid-2014 all the units in the World Commercial Park have been let.

### B.1. Evaluation Procedure

The design by dalpiaz+giannetti architekten of Hamburg far outshone the others in the evaluation procedure with its power and symbolism, and was consequently awarded the first prize. The particular challenge of combining urban development and social integration with the demand for high quality in line with

the IBA model was successfully implemented through the central idea of a work yard covered by a transparent roof. This innovative interpretation of a covered work yard design and simple, flexible modules also contributes to the much-needed creation of a prestigious address in a long-neglected part of the city.



Fig. 3: Visualisation submitted for the evaluation procedure (2011)

## B.2. Architectural Concept

The architectural and urban development concept of the World Commercial Park can be illustrated by six key elements:

### Typology

With regard to function, the concept moves between the two poles of work and meeting space, whose benchmarks are the “world” (referring to the public) and the work yard (relating to the planned size of businesses). A kind of village structure serves as the model for the organisation of a framework intended to promote the everyday production process and the tenants’ continual interaction with one another and with visitors. “Conventional” commercial yard concepts most often protect the interior space from the outside, whereas here the two functions of living and working are linked.

### Macrostructure

The netlike structure of the development results from the overlapping of the north-south direction of the main development and the east-west orientation of the construction layout of the individual modules.

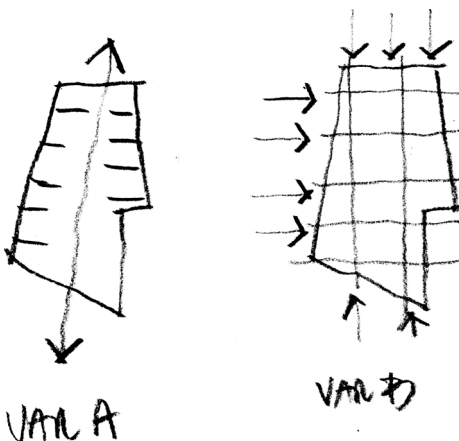


Fig. 4: Sketch for the macrostructure - from the competition

The requirements for light and ventilation, the irregular nature of the ground plan, and the existing buildings that are to be retained result in a number of “empty spaces” with different characteristics in the theoretically continuous basic structure. This fracturing of the system produces a very lively pattern.



Fig. 5: Visualisation after revision (2012)

### Microstructure

The workshop modules are characterised by an alternating pattern, which offers fields of varying depths for the actual workshop surfaces and narrow fields for the service functions, such as sanitary facilities, internal adjustments, equipment rooms, and storage spaces. For each of these functions there are prefabricated modules, which can be assembled and erected to meet the need for a particular use and just as easily dismantled in the event of a change of user. The work yards are exterior surfaces on which there are no workshop or service modules.

### Construction Method and Fittings

The individual modules are constructed from prefabricated wood frame elements,



Fig. 6: Status of construction in July 2013 (the roof cover is not yet in place; the PV system is already installed)

which can be assembled on the construction site within a few days. On the outside, these are evenly clad with wood (ground floor) and polycarbonate sheeting (upper floor); inside they feature solid wood ceilings and wood fibreboard or stone for flooring. Various module types and heights are available for a wide variety of uses: two-storey service and office modules or production areas of 4.10 or 5.20 metres in height, some of which are then equipped with galleries. In the southernmost module there are an additional restaurant area, shopping facilities, and a community room. The fittings of the spaces are kept simple and functional, so they can be flexibly organised to suit the needs of tenants.

### Roofing

While the rooms and yards reflect the variety and individuality of the businesses, the roof acts as an integrating element for the structure as a whole. The 1400 square metre surface offers protection from rain and snow and also to some extent from glare, heat, and cold, thus enabling the construction of the business modules to be simplified. At a height of about 8 metres, the yard areas are covered with polycarbonate sheets; the buildings' roofs have PV elements installed, fulfilling similar protective functions.

### Open Space Layout

The access road, the central courtyard, and the individual work yards are designed as paved surfaces. These can then be used as required for deliveries and as extended production, storage, or break areas and include the necessary parking spaces. The pillars supporting the roof will, in time, have plants twining up them, just as green spaces planted with trees have been laid out next to the adjacent residential areas. However, there are a number of ways in which access to the surrounding district can be increased.



Figs 7-12: Views and sections

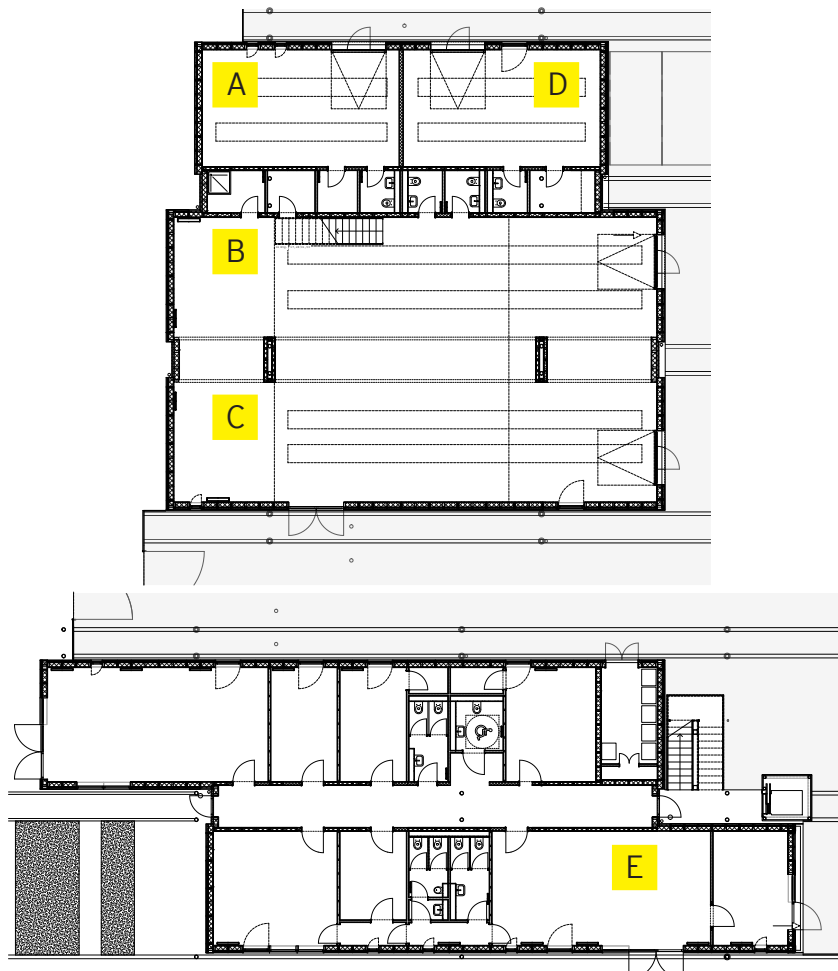


Fig. 13 : South module with restaurant area, offices, industrial bakery, and 2 workshops (see Figs 14-19)

## B.3. Use Concept

The design of the World Commercial Park should not only create new construction and spatial qualities in the southern Reiherstieg district but, most importantly, it should also open up new perspectives for small businesses in the area.

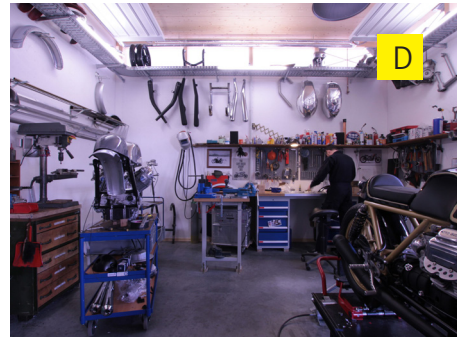
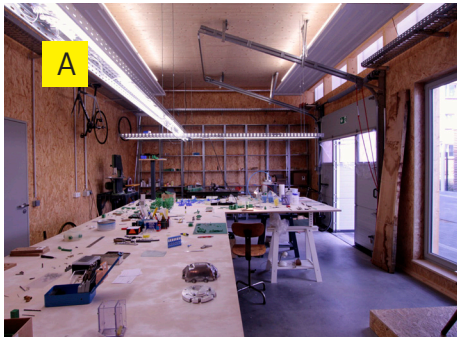
### Strengthening the Local Economy

The aim of the project was to strengthen the economic structure of the district with a new range of suitable, demand-oriented commercial spaces, in which start-ups, small and micro-businesses, and migrant-operated enterprises can find the optimum environment for their economic existence or further development. Many businesses in the district had previously been directed to areas that were rather unsuitable and poorly connected, and noticeably high fluctuations in commercial activity caused the closure of some of the less robust. For this reason, the new park had to be accompanied from the start by professional support and advice

for businesses, to increase the potential for employment and commercial success in the Global Neighbourhood.

### Target Groups

The World Commercial Park's range is generally aimed at small local businesses. We approach small entrepreneurs and those starting up a business in the district, for whom the park offers a considerably improved infrastructure. So that the inexpensive, largely subsidised commercial sites should not create any false economic and structural incentives for solvent or non-local companies, conditions have been laid down for new tenants. They must either originate from the Elbe Islands, be starting up a business for the first time, or prove that they have a migrant background. Because the World Commercial Park is integrated in a mixed residential area, when letting we concentrated on businesses using less noisy or disturbing working methods.



Figs 14-18 : Impressions of the premises



### Diversity Under One Roof

The park is not targeted at a specific sector or a particular commercial cluster - this would not have been possible, because of the sluggish demand for commercial sites in the district. We were more intent on having a mix of sectors and businesses that does not give rise to competition but is better suited to creating cooperation and synergy effects through the shared location and the connecting courtyard structure. This kind of network between tenants is also further supported by a common infrastructure consisting of features like training areas, free offers of advice and qualification courses, as well as a central restaurant zone. The diversity of the actual business modules and sites also appeals to many different users. We

built workshops of various heights and areas, flexible office units, and shopping and eating spaces. With this adaptable concept it will be possible in future to implement any internal changes needed within businesses and to change users without any problems.

### Move-in Management and Business Advice

A good year before the foundation stone was laid, applications started for the new business sites and interested entrepreneurs and residents were informed about the project and the range of business premises on offer. Potential tenants and enterprise owners were then able to get in touch with regular contacts - on site, with the experienced team from the Büro für Lokale Wirtschaft - LoWi, Beschäftigung und Bildung e. V., and Unternehmer ohne Grenzen e. V. It was thus possible to support some of the interested parties in starting up or expanding their businesses, and owners and/or employees in becoming qualified. In addition, the early established tenants and the two existing vehicle businesses could be closely involved in the appropriate development of the business areas.

#### Continuing Care of Tenants

Advisors from the landlords GMH Gebäudemangement Hamburg were entrusted with taking over the ongoing care of tenants. For example, a monthly tenants' meeting is organised for a general exchange of views and/or support for joint projects.

#### Letting Status

The business units on offer and completed have so far triggered high demand. By the time of completion, 18 units had already been permanently let, and the number of parties interested exceeded the number of units remaining. All units have been permanently let since mid-2014. The mix of sectors ranges from

craft businesses to services to shops, professional practices, and restaurants. The average rent in the World Commercial Park was capped by the IBA before the start of construction at € 4.40 per square metre net (without heating), meaning that it is actually below the average Wilhelmsburg level of around € 6.50 per square metre for commercial premises. What is more, so far 70 per cent of lettings have been to enterprises from Wilhelmsburg, 50 per cent to migrant businesses, so the project is fulfilling its claim of improving the local economy, and not initiating any displacement or gentrification processes.

## B.4. Energy Concept

As with all IBA projects, the creation of the World Commercial Park was intended to meet particularly ambitious sustainability criteria, in line with the IBA key theme Cities and Climate Change. The compact layout, integrated urban planning, and flexibility of use comply in a very special way with today's general requirements for space-saving construction, short journeys, and longevity.

#### Local and Renewable Energy

The energy balance of the commercial buildings is also right: despite the simplicity of their construction, the energy consumption of the erected modules is comparatively low. In addition, the energy

supply relies on local and renewable production. The integrated PV system on the roof can itself cover part of the electricity requirement. The energy for hot water and heating is drawn via a local heating network from the neighbouring Energy Bunker, a project also implemented by the IBA, in which heat energy is largely renewably produced (via solar collectors, a biogas-fired combined heat and power station, a wood chip boiler, and the use of industrial waste heat), temporarily and efficiently stored, and supplied to up to 3000 homes in the surrounding area. The World Commercial Park is among the first consumers to be connected to this landmark eco-friendly power plant.

## B.5. Project Development

After the initial idea and basic concept of a new commercial park were developed back in 2007/2008 as part of various IBA participation formats in the Global Neighbourhood Urban Design Ideas and Realisation Competition, in 2011 the project embarked on a crucial phase with the architectural evaluation process for the business modules.

### Diverse Challenges

The design by dalpiaz+giannetti emerged victorious from the evaluation, in which seven architectural practices participated, and became the basis for further development. The partners in the project, IBA Hamburg and investor GMH Gebäude-management Hamburg, then succeeded in meeting the functional, financial, and design-related demands of the project in the course of long decision-making processes. Besides the feasibility of the finances, obtaining planning permissions for this integrated site between residential development and existing businesses certainly made completion on time very challenging.

### Preparation and Construction

As the urban real estate forming the site of the World Commercial Park had previously been sub-let to various existing tenants, these businesses had to be moved before the land could be cleared and building started. Agreements were reached with a very clangorous scaffolding company and another business, and moving options found for them. On the other hand, it was possible for a further existing tenant and another directly adjacent business, both vehicle companies, to remain on the site and be involved in the planning. After clearance and safety checking, construction began in November 2012. The commercial modules were assembled on site from prefabricated wood frame elements. Construction was completed with the final assembly of the roof and, despite the late start, the complex opened in the IBA Presentation Year 2013.



Fig. 19: The south module with covered forecourt, shop area, and restaurant zone



### Financing and Support

The total costs of the project to the investor were around € 5.7 million. For the actual construction of this pioneering development, besides the IBA Excellence funding amounting to € 380,000, support was also granted by the Hamburg Framework Programme for Integrated Urban Development (RISE, € 670,000), and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF, € 730,000). This finally made it possible to achieve a very favourable level of rents for a new-build project. Further support followed via the European Social Fund (ESF, € 350,000), which meant that the professional move-in management and advice to new start-ups were supported by the body responsible for qualifications.



Figs 20-23: From laying the foundation stone to handover of units to future tenants - in 10

## C. CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

With its juxtaposition of living and working, its range of offers aimed at the small, local economy, and the way it is organised with everything under one roof, the World Commercial Park represents a significant project for the Wilhelmsburg district.

### High Architectural Quality

This rather unconventional interpretation of a commercial park close to a residential area displays many advantages, but also required a certain amount of courage on the part of the investor at the start of implementation. However, the quality of the internal organisation, the ability to use the work yards without depending on the weather, and the functional and neighbourly juxtaposition of a wide variety of uses, indicate a successful implementation, of high architectural quality.

### Linking Living and Working

While in many old districts of densely populated cities an “either/or” approach is common in the case of incompatible uses, here we consciously applied a “both/and” mentality to permit a wide variety of activities. It is precisely this creation of residential areas and city-compatible workplaces that ensures a healthy blend of local functions. Unlike the “Munich Model”, here we quite deliberately invested in a small-scale mixture of units for small and micro-businesses, determined by proximity to the residential area and the existing district structure.

### Innovative Concept

The covered work yards, with the associated option for tenants to move some of their production outdoors, and the resulting increase in communication and interaction with their surroundings, are certainly elements that live up to this commercial park concept. Neither were there problems with letting the upper floors, which testifies in favour of the overall design.

### Strengthening the Local Economy

At the time the first leases were agreed, by deliberately letting to migrant, local, and start-up businesses, on the one hand we took account of the existing social structure, while on the other we were able to offer new and favourable incentives for the creation of jobs.

### Local Energy Supply

Local energy supply and the increased efficiency of renewable systems are important elements in the success of the energy transition policy. In practice, however, it is rarely possible to integrate large, highly efficient renewable power plants into the city area. The integrated PV system on the roof and the connection to the neighbouring Energy Bunker mean that locally produced energy can reach the consumer by a short route.

### Transferability and Prospects

At various events and in direct dialogue with professionals, since the opening of the project it has become clear that this

concept can definitely also work in other (including socially deprived) parts of the city and without subsidies. For example, with an eye to the future, an independently financed sixth module was built by the investor, in order to test the market. Its successful completion and the fact that it

is fully let after six months mean that it could also be possible in future projects to create more sites and distribute the offer throughout the city, in order to attract other commercial sectors.



Fig. 24: Linking living and working: the World Commercial Park between the new and renovated buildings of the Global Neighbourhood

# APPENDIX

## Further links

(mostly german)

IBA-project World Commercial Park

<http://www.iba-hamburg.de/en/projects/global-neighbourhood/global-neighbourhood-world-commercial-park/projekt/global-neighbourhood-world-commercial-park.html>

World Commercial Park in magazine »Szene Hamburg«

<http://www.szene-hamburg.de/stadtleben/gesellschaft/209-welt-gewerbehof/>

»Eine Bastion gegen das Gespenst Gentrifizierung«

<http://www.abendblatt.de/hamburg/harburg/article117926432/Eine-Bastion-gegen-das-Gespenst-Gentrifizierung.html>

»Welt-Gewerbehof in Wilhelmsburg eröffnet«

<http://www.ndr.de/ratgeber/reise/hamburg/Welt-Gewerbehof-in-Wilhelmsburg-eroeffnet,weltgewerbehof103.html>

## Picture credits

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