



City Councilor Edwin Schwarz:
know-how transfer between
the construction and real
estate industries.

What aurelis is doing for the sustainability of a city district

Awareness of sustainability has increased now that climatic change is no longer a scary future possibility but instead scientifically proven reality. Acting in an environmentally, economically and socially compatible way is not only a sign of responsibility – it is becoming an economic necessity. This also impacts, in particular, the development of our cities and their districts. Frankfurt is therefore setting an example. Frankfurt joined the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen – DGNB [German Society for Sustainable Building] in the summer of 2008, the first municipality in Germany to do so. As Edwin Schwarz, Frankfurt City Councilor, says, "Membership in the DGNB stimulates knowledge transfer between the construction industry and the real estate industry, providing Frankfurt additional knowhow for sustainable building."

The results are a higher quality of life for residents and an image boost for the entire city. With its projects, aurelis is also making its contribution to sustainable urban development – and will create the basis for a "green" city district in the Europaviertel.

Investors and occupants revise their priorities

Heating and electricity costs are becoming decisive factors for tenants and buyers. Others include the urban environment, shorter travel routes, convenient access to public transportation and good social infrastructure. A new consumer group has formed, the LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability), for which high standards of quality of life go hand in hand with environmental and social conscience. Members have a higher than average standard of living and are becoming increasingly important in the market. At the same time, they are setting a trend that is spilling over to other consumers and milieus.

Developments are even more dynamic in other segments of business. International conglomerates in particular are focusing on the sustainability debate and orient their management principles accordingly, adjusting their real estate strategies. A growing number of conglomerates only rent certified real estate.

But it is not only the tenants who are revising their priorities – investors are as well. Nearly all leading investors in Germany are currently working on sustainability strategies for their investment decisions.

Frankfurt, with its strategic position as a key city in the finance and services sector, as well as the headquarters of many corporations, plays a leading role in the German market.



Inward Expansion

The Europaviertel is emerging on a plot of urban vacant land about 90 hectares in size and thus closes an area between the fairgrounds, the city and the southwestern city districts. aurelis laid the foundation for a sustainable district development with the preparation of the building plots for the following projects. This includes preserving green space in suburban areas and optimally exploiting existing urban development potential by converting a vacant area. "Conversion" instead of "grassland" – the most ecological way to urban development.

Responsible land development

Land development follows a fixed concept from the first stage onward. The process is designed according to clearly delineated specifications, implemented and documented, and then approved by the relevant environmental authorities and all other parties involved: from the demolition and disposal of old buildings, disposal of the debris by rail, environmental-technical studies of the area in several stages, up to defined soil-usage or disposal routes for earth works and excavation.





Plenty of green space

The Europaviertel is remarkable for its large amount of public green space. About one third of the total area, some 222,000 m² in all, is landscaped; the lavishly designed Europagarten occupies around 60,000 m². Approximately 30,000 m² connect the new park with the existing Frankfurt green belts and the adjoining city quarters. These areas add varied flora and fauna to the city, function as large seepage areas, support CO₂ reduction with their vegetation, counteract heat islands and act on the microclimate as an air-exchange channel. And there have already been a few small winners: the common wall lizards that previously lived in the track fields were relocated. In close collaboration with environmental authorities, aurelis created new habitats for them on land at the western edge of the Europaviertel dedicated to species protection.

Textbook Urban Development – fulfilling the Leipzig Charter requirements

For many years aurelis has worked with the office of Albert Speer & Partner GmbH, certified specialists for sustainable urban development. This cooperation led to the design for the Europaviertel Frankfurt. It follows the specifications of the classical European city with a mixture of living, work, local retail shops, recreation and social infrastructure. Short routes reduce vehicular traffic, integrate a pedestrian and bicycle path network and link the new district to the public transit network. The urban development concept for the Europaviertel West thus meets the requirements of the Leipzig Charta for the sustainable city, formulated in May 2007 by the European Construction Ministers.



Sustainable heating supply

The Europaviertel is also equipped for renewable energies. The distances between buildings and their orientation are designed so that solar panels can be mounted atop them. It is possible to use block-type thermal heating stations for particular construction plots and prerequisite conditions for using geothermal probes exist.

The entire terrain of the Europaviertel can also be supplied with district heating. Since the district heating principle of coupling power and heat production makes it possible to achieve efficiencies of more than 90 per cent of the employed primary energy, it allows for reducing CO₂ emissions by 70 per cent in comparison to conventional use of natural gas.

Relative to the total area of the district, this reduces the burden on the environment by about 6,100 tons of CO₂ annually. The favourable primary energy factors for district heating furthermore make it easier for investors to fulfill the requirements of the Energy Saving Ordinance (EnEV). This will pay off especially when the Ordinance becomes stricter again in 2012.

Best qualifications for sustainability certificates

The American LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and the British BREEAM-System (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) were established internationally to measure the sustainability quality of real estate. Many international companies and investors increasingly base their rental and purchase decisions on these measurements, making these certificates an important marketing vehicle for developers. This is true especially in markets such as Frankfurt, which is aimed at an international clientele. The concept for the Europaviertel West provides the project developer with the best qualifications for a positive assessment. According to early analyses, the quarter can contribute 35 per cent of the maximum numbers of points achievable for the "LEED New Construction Certificate" and 30 per cent of the "BREEAM Office 2006" certificate even before the developer breaks ground.*

We have laid the foundation for a sustainable urban and area development. Now we invite our clients – project developers, builders and investors – to contribute their knowhow and their ideas. Together we can responsibly shape the future of the Europaviertel and develop a city district that will be an example for the whole country.

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