



Life in the inner city

Western Hafencity is already an urban place, home to about 2,500 people. Despite their very different backgrounds and lifestyles, neighborly networking is working



The city district has attributes to appeal to everyone - whether families, young couples, single people or seniors (© Daniel Barthmann)

Housing in Hafencity is a core use which, with around 7,000 homes planned, offers a very multifaceted choice. It includes a smaller scale mix of apartments to rent or to buy in different price brackets, although the spectrum ranges from publicly subsidized rental housing through to the luxury segment and also takes in the special requirements of groups such as musicians, designers, artists' collectives, seniors as well as the physically disabled or chronically sick people of all ages. Building cooperatives and joint building ventures have played a special role in the development of living in Hafencity, catering for a mid-price segment of the newbuild market and often acting as an important catalyst in forming a neighborly culture. They were able to take on this role from the start, since the majority of apartments (e.g. in Dalmannkai) were put out to tender between 2003 and 2010 at fixed prices. In addition, because of sharp rises in the cost of rental and owned homes in Hamburg's inner districts, 20 percent of residential building plots in Hafencity have been put out to tender for subsidized housing since 2010 - the proportion has risen to one third since 2011. At the same time a modified bidding procedure was introduced in Hafencity, in which the concept accounts for 70 percent of a bid and the offer price for the plot for 30 percent. Putting the emphasis on the concept is sure to enhance the diversity of the range of housing offered even more, making way for rentals in the subsidized sector of EUR 6.20/sqm (housing subsidy scheme 1) and EUR 8.30/sqm (second tier subsidy) in the lower price segment.

The wide spectrum of living concepts, price levels and architectural styles available attracts many people to live in Hafencity. After all proximity to workplaces, shops for daily needs, kindergartens, schools, public squares and leisure facilities make for much lower mobility expenses. A better work-life balance is more feasible here, since it is easier to combine children or the care of relatives with employment. This also explains why some households are prepared to accept higher direct housing costs in favor of much lower indirect costs (e.g. mobility).

Family-friendly housing

The profile of residents is thus in line with a definite trend: the proportion of households with children registered in Hafencity continues to grow. It is currently 18.4 percent which means that Hafencity is way ahead of other popular inner-city districts such as Eimsbüttel (12.7 percent), Winterhude (12.9) or Neustadt (11.4).



In comparison with longer established residential areas of the city, this family orientation will increase in coming years as the effects of the role of special concepts kick in, also through the many apartments built by joint building ventures and subsidized housing construction. To continue to meet the needs of the many children and teenagers, social infrastructure is being continuously expanded. So far four kindergartens with around 350 places are open. Planning of another two in Baakenhafen and on Grasbrookpark are in an advanced stage of planning. The inclusive kindergarten in Am Lohsepark opened temporarily for two years in December 2016 is equipped for 120 German and refugee children.

Complementing Katharinenschule school, another primary school for 460 children will probably be opened by 2019 in Baakenhafen, and in central Lohsepark by 2021 there will be a secondary school comprising gymnasium and comprehensive departments, with a three-court sports hall. Special importance attaches to the three planned play-cum-community houses in Grasbrookpark, Lohsepark and Baakenhafen, as well as KinderKulturHaus children's arts center and Märchenwelten on Strandkai, expected to be opened in 2021.

Families are also attracted by the short distances, well connected routes and public open spaces of HafenCity. Squares, parks and promenades offer a great variety of recreation and play possibilities. For instance, apart from playgrounds and fitness apparatus outdoors, there are also two basketball courts and a temporary soccer kickabout area. In Oberhafen work will start in 2018 on a nine-a-side pitch and athletics track suitable for junior competitions which will also be available to clubs and schools. In Baakenpark an artificial pitch and street-ball field will be built from 2018.

In addition to young families, another very prevalent group found in HafenCity is of couples aged over 50. Often they have taken the chance to reorient their lives after their children have moved out and have pinpointed Hafen-City as the place to live. In the desire to open a new (residential) chapter in their lives, they have chosen a place to live which offers cultural events, a socially alive environment and proximity to neighbors including young, career-driven couples and single people. Residents are also particularly attracted to HafenCity by its emotionally positive waterfront situation, individual home types, and good transport infrastructure.

At 46.9 percent, the quota of one-person households is lower than the Hamburg average of 54.4 percent and significantly below the average in inner-city districts, where it is often already more than 60 percent.

Encouraging initiative and dialog

Whether for families, sports cracks or the culture-inclined, a stimulating social community has already developed in western HafenCity. Many residents are active in the community, organizing the digital residents' forum hafencity-leben.de, for instance, or the HafenCity-Zeitung run by locals, or the initiative Friends of Lohsepark. In addition there are regular local get-togethers, special occasions such as a flea market or neighborhood parties. While Störtebeker SV sports club offers a wide range of sports, Spielhaus HafenCity e.V. looks after the interests of HafenCity's youngest residents.

In future self-organization by residents, business people and proprietors will be supported by a special quarter management, for which principles are being established. An appropriate body is to be set up, to be financed by small contributions from all owners and users. The revenue will be used to run the community houses and to financially support other neighborhood functions.

HafenCity Hamburg GmbH actively nurtures residents' identification with the new district, supporting initiatives and regularly seeking dialog with residents, whether through direct contact or through regular information and discussion events, for example. It sees it as a responsibility not only to establish a diverse mix of uses and social milieus, but to ensure that even where friction arises, equilibrium is maintained. Proactive impulses include promoting social neighborliness and offering advice during the process. Thus the first playground was developed in conjunction with resident parents.



While a students' committee at Katharinenschule primary contributed ideas to the planning of Grasbrookpark and Lohsepark, primary school children in grades 1 to 3 also even attended a participation camp in 2015 for Baakenhafen, giving them a say in the design of open spaces in HafenCity.

The Netzwerk HafenCity association has been a force in sharing responsibility for Hafen-City's development since 2009, involved in finding cooperative solutions to everyday issues for all HafenCity residents. In addition, it initiates events and festivities, increasingly also in cooperation with surrounding districts, thus making a real contribution to neighborly coexistence - in HafenCity and beyond. In May 2013 a business community of interest (IGG) came into existence under the aegis of the network. It aims to bring all business operators in Hafen-City into an efficient network to promote communication between them which will further strengthen the location.