Volume 1
The Model Project: Initiative and Vision
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50,000 sqm vacancy in the middle of Berlin...
Volume 1

The Model Project: Initiative and Vision
The Haus der Statistik offers the possibility...
...to create a model of a diverse city
Model Project Haus der Statistik

The city as a place of social diversity is in danger. In Berlin, the growth pressure is particularly evident: a rapid increase in the value of land, increasingly scarce affordable residential and commercial space as well as increasing displacement pressure on actors from the fields of art, culture, education, small-scale commerce and social affairs. Even the Berlin administration, after years of misguided urban development policy, is victim of gentrification mechanisms. The fact that land is irreproducible and indispensable makes it clear that there is a need for a cooperative urban development of our cities that is oriented towards the common good.

The Haus der Statistik, located in the immediate vicinity of Berlin’s Alexanderplatz, offers the possibility of exemplarily putting this demand in practice. For 10 years, the 50,000 sqm building complex in the middle of Berlin has remained empty. As a result of high-profile actions by the Haus der Statistik initiative, a group of committed artists, architects, cultural workers and politicians, the previous plans for selling to investors and the planned demolition were prevented in 2015.

The initiative’s demand to secure the Haus der Statistik in a cost-effective mix of uses as a common good was finally accepted by the administration and politicians. At the end of 2017, the Federal State of Berlin acquired the Haus der Statistik from the Federal Government.

Vacancy as a Resource

Since 2008, the Haus der Statistik, built in 1968-70 in the middle of Berlin, has been empty. The former seat of the State Central Administration for Statistics (SZS) of the German Democratic Republic became federal property with the reunification of Germany. After the fall of communism, the Haus der Statistik was used, among other things, by the office of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service that grants people access to all Stasi-files that concern them. Since the authorities moved out in 2008, the approximately 50,000 sqm building complex has been unused. The land belonged in part to the Federal Government and the Federal
State of Berlin. These unusual property boundaries prevented a development oriented towards the common good after the abandonment of administrative use, either in the existing buildings or as new construction potential. Both were not planned anyway, but the maxime of selling out prevailed with federation and State. The existing building was considered non-marketable, the entire building complex was to be demolished and rebuilt with commercial uses such as retail, hotels, office space and apartments by private investors. This is what the winning design of the urban development competition launched in 2009 and the resultant draft of the land-use plan provided for. The construction of a further 110m high skyscraper based on the Kollhoff Plan was also discussed at the Haus der Statistik site.

But to find interested investors for the proposed development was at this time no self-runner, the entire building deteriorated further. Nothing happened at first, except that the condition of the buildings deteriorated further.

An artistic protest campaign at the Haus der Statistik got things moving in 2015: During Berlin Art Week, the Alliance of threatened Berlin studio buildings (Allianz bedrohter Berliner Atelierhäuser – AbBA), formed by a group of committed artists, attached a large poster in the style of an official building sign on the façade. This raised public awareness concerning the discussion about the future of the building complex.

Shortly thereafter, the Haus der Statistik initiative was founded, an alliance of various Berlin actors: social and cultural institutions, art collectives, architects, foundations and associations supporting the goal of creating affordable spaces for displaced user groups in the city centre.

During a press conference in December 2015, the initiative, supported by the then district mayor Dr. Christian Hanke, presented the first concept for the derelict building: a “centre for refugees – social – art – creatives” at the Haus der Statistik. It planned to convert almost the entire building into affordable living space as well as workspaces for art, culture, social affairs and education and to expand them with new buildings of a similar size. In 2015, the support of the concept of the initiative was decided by votes of all parties in the District Assembly (BVV) of Berlin-Mitte. Also in the press, the concept generated consistently positive response.

In the course of the search for suitable areas to accommodate refugees, as well as the urgent need for additional space for the Berlin administration, the Haus der Statistik once again came into the focus of the Berlin Senate. A growing city as well as the consequences of having sold land during times of austerity policy in the 2000s, resulted in an urgent need for spaces for Berlin’s administration. After years of vacancy, two concepts, initially mutually exclusive due to different uses, faced each other.

1 In 1993, an urban planning competition was launched for Alexanderplatz to rearrange the square. The winning design of the Berlin architects Hans Kollhoff and Helga Timmermann provided for up of thirteen skyscrapers, each 150 meters high, on the adjacent streets. The draft was reduced during a revision to ten skyscrapers. The “Kollhoff Plan” was born, which is, in diluted form, still today basis for further urban development at Alexanderplatz.

After increased public attention and closer networking within the urban society, the initiative’s proposals were also discussed at the political level. The first support by the mayor of the Berlin district Mitte, Christian Hanke, was followed by almost an unanimous resolution of the District Assembly Berlin-Mitte. Among other things, they stated: “A one-sided focus on high-yield real estate development leads to a monocultural and unattractive dead end, boredom and substitutability. Innovative, lively and open production centres for art, culture and social affairs, but also small businesses, should be taken into account when planning new projects at Alexanderplatz (and elsewhere).”

The project also received an official positive assessment from state politics at the latest after the elections in autumn 2016. Informal consultations had already taken place during the election campaign. They were aimed at reconciling the two contradictory concepts of use, instead of developing them against each other. The coalition agreement of the new Berlin government (Social Democrats, Left, Green Party) stipulated that the Haus der Statistik should be developed as a model project for administration, culture, education, social affairs and affordable housing, and that the area should be re-municipalised. In addition, it was decided to ensure broad participation of the urban society in the further development process.

The concept and the demand of the initiative was thus politically anchored. As a result, until January 2017, a potential study was compiled, which unified the two usage concepts and pointed out feasible urban planning variants. The foundation stone for further implementation...

From campaign to concept

The concept of the initiative was awarded. With the participation of Berlin’s Senate Building Director Regula Löscher, a jury selected the initiative’s proposal for the Haus der Statistik from among 150 submitted international works and awarded it the Berlin Award. This prize is awarded by the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing to honour innovative projects that contribute to improving the quality of life in urban areas.

Support of the district

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Political change

After the Berlin Award, the urban society organised itself through the Haus der Statistik. The initiative was founded, an alliance of various Berlin actors: social and cultural institutions, art collectives, architects, foundations and associations supporting the goal of creating affordable spaces for displaced user groups in the city centre.

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By founding the ZUssammenKUNFT Berlin eG – Cooperative for Urban Development (ZKB), in April 2016, the initiative became capable of action and legal capacity. The occasion was the invitation of the Senator of Finance to the initiative to present the concept and its feasibility to him. The feasibility study prepared by ZKB reveals more in-depth solution options for a mixed use of the Haus der Statistik as well as a participatory organisational structure. Strategies for the step-by-step reinstatement of the buildings as well as principles of project development based on partnership were developed. Within a few months, an initial idea became an implementable concept.
Kick-off of the Akademie der ZUsammenKUNFT

At the first networking council:
Discussion and development of ideas

Invitation to the neighbourhood party

The city gets in

At the first networking council:
The current status is presented

Awarding the concept with the Berlin Award

Model project ZUsammenKUNFT in the emergency shelter Stresemannstraße 95

"An offer to Berlin": Feasibility study for the Haus der Statistik

The ZUsammenKUNFT brought together a variety of groups
Cooperation at Eye Level

The Haus der Statistik project was included in the coalition agreement 2016 – 2021 following the parliamentary elections in September 2016. The aim is to create a “place for administration as well as culture, education, social affairs and affordable housing”, which is a model project of the new coalition. The agreement includes the provision of space for administration, affordable housing and a new city hall for the Berlin-Mitte district. The intended uses resulted in a new constellation of actors, which has been working cooperatively on the development of the Haus der Statistik since January 2018.

Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing (SenSW)
The Senate Department accompanies the process because of the special significance of the place and the project for the whole city. SenSW is particularly active in the implementation of the urban planning process.

District Berlin-Mitte
The district is responsible for the creation of the planning law and is in charge of the overall process. Furthermore, the district will erect the new city hall Mitte (approx. 25,000 sqm) on the site.

Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Berlin-Mitte mbH (WBM)
The WBM, Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Berlin-Mitte mbH, plays a special role among the state-owned housing companies with the highest number of apartments in Berlin’s sought-after inner-city locations of Mitte and Friedrichshain and a pronounced commercial expertise. The WBM is to provide 300 affordable apartments (approx. 26,000 sqm in the new building projects) in the Haus der Statistik quarter.

BIM Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH (BIM)
Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH (BIM) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Federal State of Berlin. It is responsible for the administration of the state-owned real estate on behalf of the Federal State of Berlin. The BIM will accommodate administrative uses on 80% of the areas of the existing buildings of the Haus der Statistik.

ZUsammenKUNFT Berlin eG (ZKB)
The ZUsammenKUNFT Berlin eG – Cooperative for Urban Development sees itself and acts in the development process of the area as an administrator of interests, suggestions and demands of the Haus der Statistik initiative. The ZKB will occupy 20% of the existing space and 15,000 sqm in the new building for use in the fields of art, culture, social affairs, education and integrative living.

The ideas and concepts developed during the networking council were implemented early on. As a prototype, the planned mixture of uses and variety of actors was to be tested on site and in other places in the city. Thus, among other things, the Akademie der ZUSammenKUNFT and the model project ZUSammenKUNFT were launched.

The Akademie der ZUSammenKUNFT is part of the activities of the Haus der Statistik initiative. The Academy was established in 2016-2017 as part of a grant from the Senate Department for Culture and Europe. It served as a content-related platform to test how the interdisciplinary competencies of artists, initiatives and potentially future residents of the Haus der Statistik could be bundled internally through art, discourse and educational formats and passed on to the neighbourhood and urban society. Within the framework of the programme implemented by the independent scene in a participatory and cooperative manner, a variety of artistic actions, seminars, lectures, walks, workshops and discussion events were created. Since 2018, the concept has been reorganised with a focus on collaborative and experimental work processes.

Analogous to the project development for the Haus der Statistik, the programme development process of the Akademie is also participative and cooperative. Some of the ideas developed here were tested in a pilot project. Under the name model project ZUSammenKUNFT the two empty upper floors of a hotel converted into a refugee shelter were filled with life. In coordination with an expert advisory board, cultural and social projects, initiatives, artists’ collectives and NGOs were set up whose content dealt with the subject of flight and migration. Activities were developed to promote the mutual exchange of new and old residents inside the building, as well as within the urban society. Beyond the pure shelter, a process unfolded in the ZUSammenKUNFT, in which all participants learn from each other and thus successful integration was promoted.

In this way, ideas of a plural and open city were modelled and their feasibility studied in situ. In addition, important experiences were made in these concrete activities and new actors were involved again and again.
At the heart of the Haus der Statistik initiative’s demands was the desire to expand the urgently needed range of apartments and commercial premises in the lower and middle price segment. For this purpose, the further development of cooperative potentials was seen as a viable approach.

The KOOP 5

The so-called Koop5 began its work when the will of the new coalition government to take over the Haus der Statistik from the Federal Government substantiated. The five cooperation partners – Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, the District Office Berlin-Mitte, the state-owned companies WBM Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Berlin-Mitte mbH and BIM Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH as well as the ZUsammenKUNFT Berlin eG – work together in a spirit of joint responsibility for the development of the quarter, oriented towards the common good.

The joint responsibility for the success of the whole should not end with building rights or the start of construction, but rather the cooperation should continue until the use phase. Through joint cooperation agreements, Koop5 communicate their common goals and cooperative working methods to each other and to the public. In particular, ensuring equality between urban and civil society partners is not a matter of course.

A culture of openness and mutual trust runs as a common thread through the process and cooperation. Different skills, experiences and roles find their way to productive cooperation in mutual respect. This type of decision-making body and cooperation is unprecedented in Berlin. It resolves the conflict between administration and civic urban development and can thus become a model for similar constellations in other places.

Consequently, in April 2016, the active core group1 of the Haus der Statistik initiative was constituted as a registered cooperative in order to become part of the further development process as a legally competent partner.

The initiative made itself capable of action and, above all, legally compliant by a “friendly takeover” of the Development Cooperative Tempelhofer Feld (Entwicklungsgenossenschaft Tempelhofer Feld – EGT) in April 2016 and converting it into ZUsammenKUNFT Berlin eG – Cooperative for Urban Development (ZKB). The EGT was founded in 2013 and started to facilitate the participatory development for the Tempelhofer Feld.

The ZKB acts as the guardian of the interests, suggestions and demands of the initiative. The ZKB will occupy 20% of the existing space and 15,000 sqm in the new building for use in the fields of art, culture, social affairs and education. It was important to the initiators that the initiative continued to exist alongside the Development Cooperative; it remains open to all interested parties and bundles many supporters. As a legally competent construct, the Cooperative has rather assumed an operational role in order to shape the process of project development of the Haus der Statistik at least up to a building application.

The aim of the ZKB is a high-quality project development that provides impetus for mixed neighbourhoods and a city based on solidarity. It is important to permanently withdraw land and heritable building rights from speculation and to develop the respective projects as sustainably effective, economically stable, socially just and environmentally friendly building blocks of a sustainable city. In dialogue with politicians, the framework conditions for further projects oriented towards the common good are developed. The Haus der Statistik will become a model project in the sense of a broad, cooperative approach.

The model project Haus der Statistik:

A lively coexistence of affordable housing as well as commercial, cultural and social uses is to be created in the quarter.

These uses are not planned against each other, but together in a joint project development.

To achieve this goal, a novel, very constructive constellation of actors was formed – the Koop5.  

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1 AbBA, Atelierbeauftragter, raumlabor, Die Zusammenarbeiter, carpaneto.schoeningh, ZK/U
Phase 0 of the Neighbourhood Development

With the signing of the first cooperation agreement by the partners involved, the so-called phase 0 of the Koop5 cooperation began in January 2018. This laid the foundations for further cooperation, created structures and designed the subsequent urban planning process.

The joint workload covered a wide range of activities – from taking stock of the situation to drawing up a mission statement. Another important concern was the development of a planning process, supported by all partners, to work towards the preparation of a land-use plan for the Haus der Statistik. Here it was necessary to enable a broad participation of the urban society. For this purpose, a further networking council was organised, which brought the wishes and demands of the interested urban society into the process. In the summer of 2018, at the end of Phase 0, the actors involved in Koop5 as well as delegates from the urban society and other experts met in a concept workshop in order to jointly design the subsequent urban planning process.

A second co-operation agreement, in which Koop5 agreed on a common framework for the implementation of the so-called “integrated workshop process”, formed the central result of phase 0. In this way, the broad participation of the urban society could be ensured for the further process.


What Is the Model?

Exemplary for the Haus der Statistik project is, on the one hand, the cooperation between the administration, state-owned companies and urban society, who, as (prospective) clients, are jointly and equally responsible for the development of the Haus der Statistik quarter.

Above all, the involvement of urban society is special. In the form of ZUSammenKUNFT Berlin eG, which was founded from the core group of the Haus der Statistik initiative, it is involved in the process as a permanent, equal cooperation partner. In this way, the involvement of the urban society in the project acquires a different binding character, since it is an implicit and practised component of a cooperative urban development process. Hence, the project is met with great interest among the specialist public both nationally and internationally. In addition, it is characteristic of the model project Haus der Statistik that the site will be transformed into a quarter oriented towards the common good with a special variety of uses: affordable housing, administration, art, culture, education and social affairs.

The cooperation agreements by means of which Koop5 commit themselves to a joint neighbourhood development that continues into the use phase can also be seen as a success with a correspondingly model character. These regular agreements maintain both common values and real obligations (plot division, cost sharing, etc.) for further project development.
In the self-defined objective of Koop5, the model project Haus der Statistik stands for:

the common and mutual responsibility, which continues into use

the obligation to realise the common good

and to integrate the broad involvement of the urban society in the process

a neighbourhood development with a variety of uses from residential, administrative, social and cultural spheres

the use of the site and its exceptional location within Berlin

the creation of own sustainability standards
Future Mix of Uses

Ateliers
Social counselling
Art
Neighbourhood square
Experimental building
gathering
Affordable housing
Daycare
Neighbourhood square
Integrative living
appropriate
Social affairs
Education
Administration
Culture
Canteen
City hall
Affordable housing
In order to create a balanced mix, a mission statement for the selection of future pioneer uses was developed:

**Activation**

Pioneer uses contribute to the activation and visibility of the quarter during the reinstatement work and construction phase. They can have an audience-oriented character and thus become a centre of attraction of the urban society, in addition to encouraging learning and participation.

**Diversity**

Pioneer uses fulfil the utilisation programme of the Haus der Statistik initiative, show the diversity of the urban society and test the interplay of different actors and different uses.

**Urgency**

Spaces for pioneer uses are allocated to uses that find no, or only with difficulty, space in the city, are threatened by displacement or have already been displaced. The district Haus der Statistik aims to become a place that counteracts the precarious situation of inner-city cultural and social uses.

**Experiment**

Pioneer uses test new things – not least by shaping the process together and taking new ground on how to make a city together.

**Context**

Pioneer uses link the quarter spatially and programmatically with the surrounding neighbourhood, Alexanderplatz and the urban society – but also with projects from the supra-regional and international context of cooperative urban development.

**Cooperation**

Pioneer users are open to the idea of sharing spaces and resources. Experience gained during use is incorporated as a learning process into the ongoing development of pioneer uses.

**Feasibility**

Pioneer uses must be self-sustaining and capable of acting.

**Added value**

Pioneer uses create lasting added value for the quarter and the surrounding neighbourly context. Irrespective of their duration and scope, they leave behind material or non-material traces that can contribute to their circular further use by follow-up projects.

**Mixture of established and newcomers**

Pioneer users differ in their expertise, financial strength, legal form and visibility in order to enable a broad spectrum of actors as well as mutual learning from one another.

**Space-specific distribution**

Spaces for pioneer uses are allocated according to their specific qualities. Area, extension, room height, location in the building, daylight or other characteristics can represent the basis for an allocation, which is based on the concrete needs of the uses.
Outlook
Pioneer Use & Participation

2019
experiment

2020
plan

2021
consolidate

Project management
Start of reinstatement work of existing buildings
Urban planning process
Participation
Start of pioneer use
The existing Haus der Statistik will be the starting point for the development of a new urban building component with special programmatic diversity. In the coming years, a lively coexistence of affordable apartments, administrative as well as small-scale commercial, cultural and social uses will emerge here.

By 2021, the urban design of the planning offices Teleinternetcafe and Treibhaus landscape architects will be transferred in building law by means of a land-use plan. Parallel to this, the existing buildings are gutted by the BIM and the ground floors will be revitalised by the first pioneer uses. Residential construction is being prepared so that the construction of 300 affordable apartments can begin in 2022. The new city hall for the district Mitte is to be occupied by 2028 – this is also the year of expiry of the lease agreement for the existing city hall Mitte.

From the current development to later operation, the quarter’s orientation towards the common good is to be secured in the long term. To this end, Koop5 is aiming to develop new strategies in the further process. The aim is to link instruments of civic self-organisation and municipal services. An example could be the founding of a joint legal entity for the further management of the quarter. As an operator, this could promote the links between the various uses and promote the new urban building component as a whole.

Koop5 adopted the motto of the coalition agreement and makes a contribution to the goal in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility: “Shaping Berlin together – solidly united, sustainable, cosmopolitan”. New cooperations and a broad participation of the urban society are ensured in the development of the model project Haus der Statistik.

The so-called integrated workshop process ran from September 2018 to February 2019. Much has been done differently than usual: planning experts, everyday experts, process controllers, residents and open space lovers exchanged and discussed ideas and took advantage of different ways of getting involved. This should be continued in the further planning process in order to realise exemplary and innovative uses, oriented towards the common good. More information: in Volume 2 “The integrated workshop process”.

Since autumn 2018, the Werkstatt Haus der Statistik has been the first information and participation centre for the development of the Haus der Statistik quarter. Even after the completion of the urban planning workshop process, short- and long-term formats of participation will continue to take place here. At the Café Statistik you can regularly inform yourself about the current status of the project and learn about ways to get involved in the ongoing development. The networking council that have been implemented since the beginning of 2016 will also be continued on an ongoing basis. They serve the integration of actors and provide retrospectives and outlooks on current development steps.

As a further working format, partially public quarter labs are being established. This is where interested parties from the urban society meet with Koop5 for concentrated working meetings in order to pick up on the content-related requirements of the ongoing project development of Koop5 and to link these with the level of participation.

Ongoing Participation
Phase 2: Pioneer Use
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Model Project

Haus der Statistik