

## **AGE-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT OF A DISTRICT FROM THE 1950's**

### ***The Südstadt in Hattingen***

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#### **1. Background and Relevance**

Climate change, the change in work and lifestyles as well as demographic shrinking and aging trends with varying degrees of intensity within the different regions of Germany present the built environment with great challenges and require significant changes to the existing built structure. Cities must become more energy efficient, better at coping with the needs of older people, and more accessible to other cultures and lifestyles.

Current forecasts often paint a negative picture of age, depicting the slowness of the elderly as a burden to economic progress that forces up the costs of an aging society (Süd-deutsche Zeitung, January 29, 2007). Taking a positive look at future demographic and social developments can, however, provide important insight into the following truth: the trends of a shrinking and aging population within the various regions of Germany, varying in their intensity, force the affected regions and municipalities to address topics that they had often avoided in the past. Relevant fields include a focus on the renovation of existing residential areas instead of designating new land for development as well as a corresponding revitalization of problematic urban structures through qualitative measures.

The present article also views age as a chance for the long-term strategic improvement of spatial structures. Increasing and diversified demands on elderly living require new offerings in living conditions and provide impulses to municipal and real estate planning and development. The competition between municipalities that exists within the context of urban shrinkage and aging leads to deliberate action and demands new, innovative and high-quality projects.

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Here, not only the age of a society is of central importance, but also the “old” built stock itself. German neighborhoods from the early post-war period in the 1950s are also burdened by a poor image. However, they represent an important focus for future municipal planning. Integrated, centrally located and green, they hold great potential in shrinking and aging regions. Examining both of these “problems” – societal aging and urban districts from the 1950s – presents a chance for the future activities of municipal planning.

The empirical study area is Hattingen’s Südstadt, a typical district from the 1950s. Hattingen is a mid-sized city in Germany’s Ruhr region. The analysis of this neighborhood takes into account both challenges to the built structure and the residential environment as well as future social tasks. The intent is to show the responsible actors (municipalities and the housing industry) which possibilities exist to sustainably adapt the built stock in districts from the 1950s to the evolving demands of their inhabitants.

Regarding changing demographic and social trends, these districts represent a housing stock that must be strengthened for the purpose of preserving the built structure and fostering development in the cores of cities.

The central questions of the study of the district are: Which adaptation strategies need to be taken in order to achieve integrated urban planning in German residential districts from the 1950s and to allow the elderly a self-determined and independent life within these neighborhoods? Which conceptual approaches arise in the three fields of action “dwelling”, “residential environment” and “social”?

The two theoretical blocks of this work help to define the goal and answer the central questions. The first block describes the requirements of older people for a self-determined and independent life. If these requirements are defined, the next block identifies opportunities for action at the neighborhood level as well as the responsible stakeholders. The following questions are then to be answered: Which requirements of older people are imposed on a self-determined and independent life in residential districts? Which stakeholders oversee which responsibilities?

The second theoretical part illustrates post-war residential districts from the 1950s in Germany. The deficits and potentials of these neighborhoods are emphasized. The guiding question of this chapter is: Which deficits and potentials exist in the districts from the 1950s and what does this mean for the role of portfolios in the housing market?

## **2. Focus: Demographic Change**

There are no guiding models for Germany’s future demographic development. The decrease in the birth rate in the age cohort of those who are presently younger than 30 will first lead to a rise in the absolute number of older people in the forthcoming years. As soon as these older people begin to reach their mortality phase in the 2030s, the corresponding result will be a strong process of demographic shrinking. By the year 2020,

the senior cohort will have grown up to 25 % in comparison to today. A drop in the age group over 65 and a sudden juvenescence of the population is not to be expected until 2040. (Statistisches Bundesamt: July 21<sup>st</sup> 2015)

Apart from internationalization and ethnic and cultural heterogenization, societal heterogenization processes can also be noticed in household sizes. In this context, heterogenization refers to the diversity of household and lifestyle types owing to trends toward individualization in society, which make clear the effects of demographic and social change. Singles (including older single persons) will make up the largest household group. As the second-largest group, married couples with children will be well behind, showing that the control function of the 'marriage and family' institution [...] as well as the behavioral pattern known as 'getting married and having kids' is weakening (BIB 2004: 70). The portion of married couples without children (about 25%) is evidence of this. The structure of private German households will be defined by reductions in average household size.

## **2.1 Challenges for Municipalities**

The phenomenon of demographic aging and its consequences will not only occupy politics and the media. Their effect goes beyond political topics as well as the spheres of social security and national debt, encompassing all relevant sociopolitical realms right up to individual municipalities, companies and families (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2003: 5). It is nearly impossible to fully display the complexity of the effects and account for all elements, relationships and interactions. This diversity requires focusing on the factors that are relevant to the study, which is why this paper can only elaborate on the results of an aging population and the shift of the age classes onto the municipal areas of finance, social infrastructure and the housing market.

In the future, municipalities will be faced with new tasks. With spatially varied intensity, societal aging requires new fields of action in municipal planning. This should be seen as a chance for sustainable urban development over the long term. The topicality of the issue can especially be seen when considering the finances that enable municipal action: according to current municipal bylaws, each municipality with a shrinking population loses €3,000 per inhabitant per year (Göschel 2004: 27). Retaining residents and compensating for finances place the cities in competition with one another. If this is recognized in time, a confrontation with "new" political topics in urban development can allow for fruitful and sustainable action.

Regions and municipalities have to face issues and developments which were often avoided in the past. Among others, it is important to focus on improving existing residential areas instead of focusing on greenfield development. Another opportunity is the development of new types of cooperation between municipalities on the one hand and between stakeholders on the local level on the other hand.

The prospective demographic age structure leads to new demand-driven markets in the housing sector. In the service sector, new demand-driven markets appear due to the

high wealth of current and future elderly people. This process can also be observed in the consumer goods industry. Moreover, life experience and the increasing level of education of older people can be used in various ways – politically, voluntarily or charitably. This demand is growing not only because of the wealthy groups of seniors (qualitative), but also due to generally strong birth years (quantitative).

## **2.2      *The Spatial Demands of Older People***

Increasing and diversifying requirements for habitation and life in old age present new opportunities and give impulses to the municipal and housing industry for the planning and development of existing residential areas. The competition between municipalities in the context of urban shrinkage and aging leads to deliberate strategic action and provides new, innovative projects and cross-stakeholder approaches.

“Today, there is no uniform ‘senior’ phase anymore. Not infrequently, this age encompasses a timespan between 20 and 30 years and more. And this time is colorful, diverse and as individual as the people who experience it” (Schobert, cited in LAG Wohnberatung 2004: 27). A growing life expectancy prolongs the senior phase of life; the growth of the older population and the pluralization of lifestyles makes this phase multifaceted and unique. The senior phase of life now encompasses a relatively long timespan that is defined by leaving one’s occupation and that continually expands thanks to the growing life expectancy of older people. The economic situation, social network relations, mobility and health in advanced years as well as daily planning and the conditions of local amenities differentially influence the way in which older people shape their lives and determine their needs. Differences between individuals become greater with age during the prolongation of this phase of life, and each person ages in a unique way: therefore, one person’s “old” is not the same as another person’s “old”. (BMFSFJ 2002: 64; Niederfranke et al. in: Niederfranke et al. 1999: 25).

Regarding the planning of residential areas by municipalities and the housing industry, this differentiation must be clear before need-based plans can be made. Actors must explore limitations in order to reduce these as much as possible; they must also foster and strengthen capabilities. Only in this way can self-determined and independent living be enabled.

## **3.            *Focus: Residential Districts from the 1950s***

Not only is the age of a society a focus, but also its “old” built fabric. Districts from the post-war period in the early 1950s are often afflicted with a poor image. A monotonous urban structure, an ailing built fabric, dull facades and unpopulated open spaces often characterize the image of these neighborhoods.

In accordance with the terminological definition of Durth and Gutschow, this study’s stylistic and historical understanding of the 1950s encompasses urban planning and

architecture from the immediate post-war reconstruction period from 1945 until the beginning of the 1960s in the Federal Republic of Germany (Durth et al. 1990). An exact point in time at which the quality of urban and architectural spaces indeed changed cannot be determined, since construction only reacted slowly (and differentially) to changing conditions, influenced by regional circumstances, such as the need for living space owing to immigration. For this reason, the central characteristics of the post-war substance include on the one hand material qualities, such as reused building rubble, and on the other hand technical qualities concerning the footprint and layout of a building (Jacobs et al. 2005: 11). Based on the case study, the focus is on the districts that were built and publicly funded during the early 1950s.

### **3.1 Historical Outline**

The districts are evidence of immense achievements in rebuilding German cities during the post-war period. After the Second World War, the purpose of urban planning and the housing policy in Germany was the creation of new housing for more than 26 million people who had become homeless due to the destruction of, or eviction or escape from their dwellings. At that time, experts estimated the need at 6.5 million new homes.

Directly following the end of the Second World War, urban planning meant rebuilding and the creation of new housing. Altogether, the war led to the destruction of 2.34 million dwellings in the Federal Republic and in West Berlin, equating to about 22% of the housing stock from 1939. On the other hand, around 26 million people (40% of the population of Germany at that time) were left without housing. For the following years, continually high housing demands were expected due to the flood of post-war refugees. According to estimates, the cities that had been affected the most by the bombing raids – including Hamburg, Bremen, Hanover, Cologne and Frankfurt – housed about half of their population in emergency accommodations such as bunkers, basements, attics or arbors. In the first half of the 1950s, this great housing emergency forced the creation of a large amount of apartments. The estimated total need of 6.5 million dwellings meant an annual construction of 400,000 to 450,000 units over the course of 15 years (Mutschler 1987: 43; DNKDS 1997: 126; Petsch 1989: 209).

In order to solve this housing issue, parties demanded the quick reconstruction and new construction of small apartments with socially appropriate rental prices for a broad range of population groups. The destruction of housing, especially in metropolitan areas, also meant that a quickly growing demand for labor could not be fulfilled (Stapelfeldt 1993: 3). The main topics of the housing discussion at the time were, among others, the determination of minimum standards, appropriate methods of financing and the creation of building plots. In 1950, these tasks and goals were fed into the First Housing Act (1. WoBauGe). The Bundestag declared the creation of social housing “for the displaced, war-damaged and other population groups who had lost their homes through no fault of their own” as a most urgent public assignment (Jacobs et al. 2005: 9). With this act, the foundation for the comprehensive funding of social rental housing was created and the intended total production of 1.8 million housing units in six years (increased to 2 million units in 1953) was given a legal basis (Edinger et al. 2003: 12).

### **3.2 Urban Character**

While planning measures in the various cities during the post-war period were subject to different parameters, uniform basic trends that were pursued during post-war reconstruction, and especially in the development of housing, became apparent. All planners and actors responsible for reconstruction shared their rejection of the misery and grievances that emerged in large cities during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Under the moniker of the “structured and open city”, a model put forward by Göderitz, Rainer and Hoffmann, many settlements were built with gable-ended continuous rows of houses mostly interspersed in a green landscape and often connected with residential paths. Following the Charter of Athens, the functions of working and living were strictly separated from each other in these designs, with the exception of the few jobs that arose in rudimentary infrastructure in nearby settlements.

Residential areas were separated into community-building, neighborly units for about 4000 to 6000 people located close to open spaces, and the “straightforwardness” of these settlements was seen as a prerequisite (DNKDS 1997: 21). This model – like the idea of “loosening up” the city using an urban structure with planned green spaces, lower densities and an open block structure as well as the observation of minimum light, sun and open space standards – was nothing new. It contains elements from almost the entire urban planning oeuvre that had preceded it: from Howard’s Garden City to the settlements of the 1920s, Feder’s “Neue Stadt” to the English New Towns. Their advantages were obvious: a limited population with a community-building effect, an urban unit and a concept embedded in green that fulfilled the demand light, air and sun.

### **3.3 Today’s Challenges**

Today, the districts of the post-war period are still an important category for municipal planning. Integrated, centrally located and with a green character, they present a potential in the context of urban shrinkage and aging. However, they harbor significant challenges due to their built form and urban structure. Increasing their energy efficiency to modern standards is only one aspect. In recent years, many settlements in reasonably good locations that allow for an increase in net rent were renovated to improve energy efficiency (through facade renovation, roof insulation, new windows, new heating, etc.). In particular, the in part poor construction quality of the (early) post-war buildings as well as the small apartment sizes no longer meet the standards required today. Given demographic and social changes, more differentiated lifestyles and relaxed housing markets in many places lead to an increased need for a stronger differentiation of mixing the types. This would especially be reached by changing the layouts, by merging apartments, or through reconstruction. Layouts which are neutral in use could afford more scopes and personal development for different target groups.

In addition to housing and property-related measures, social measures are also becoming increasingly important due to aging residents. Care and services, the organization of neighborhood activities and ensuring the participation of older people are just a few examples. Ideally, in addition to measures concerning property, corresponding concepts

and projects are often implemented in the neighborhood. Analogous to a consistent networking in the local community, as it has become generally accepted in the analysis, conception and implementation of “social” issues in the broadest sense, the neighborhood as space to live and develop has also become more important in the context of the housing industry.

Urban development and measures related to the residential environment play an important role in the development of settlements of the post-war period. Supplementary buildings, the addition of stories and the construction of new housing on vacant plots can contribute to the diversification of the housing stock. In the residential environment, the removal of barriers and the provision of seating, communication and common leisure areas can help on the one hand to overcome the classic impression of “greenery used to create distance” that “wraps around” the houses, but also to create new qualities.

Besides the architectural and urban development of the settlements as well as the social and infrastructural planning component, the dialog with owners and stakeholders is also to be considered in terms of a sustainable development of these settlements. Corresponding integrated concepts can help all parties make joint plans for the future of the settlements.

### **3.3.1 Residential Environment**

The design of the open spaces within the districts largely corresponds with the idea of clearances. Even on larger parcels within groups of buildings, a qualification as well as a clear allocation of uses is missing. The green spaces have a semi-public character; they are only appropriated within the immediate vicinity of the residential buildings through arranged plots. Direct access between the dwellings and the green spaces does not exist; the balconies often “float” a half story above the surface.

Only seldom have parcels been laid out as rental gardens. A zoning into individual areas for different uses takes place very infrequently. The amenities are often limited to scattered benches, sandboxes, garbage cans and carpet-beating bars. Detailed zoning, new playground equipment, lighting systems for safety and orientation and designed green spaces such as plots or smaller gardens can only be found in the settlements that have already experienced comprehensive investment in their residential environment. A defining element of the open spaces is the tall, attractive tree population that originally served the purpose of fostering a green urban landscape and today reaches or even exceeds the height of the buildings. This in parts very lush vegetation, supplemented by ground cover and bushes, considerably mitigates at least the optical deficits in the usability of the open spaces (Mutschler 1987: 146). However, the spaces usually lack spatial division through greenery and trees as well as a visual guidance along the streetscapes. The resulting spaces are indifferent and can be attributed to neither the public nor the private sphere (Mutschler 1987: 147).

### 3.3.2 *Apartments*

In most of the housing stock, the original layouts from the time at which the apartments were built can be found. In terms of size, Mutschler shows that the dwellings in the greater Stuttgart area are with an average of 56.9 m<sup>2</sup> much smaller than comparable values for all of Stuttgart. With limited living spaces and inconvenient groundplans, much of the stock of post-war dwellings is no longer suitable for today's demands on living quality and the differential demand of resident groups. Small two-room apartments that were originally built for families are today often seen as unacceptable, even by two-person households (MSWKS 2003: 7). The mixture of apartments itself is also quite homogenous.

Often, tenants have arranged themselves or have carried out smaller renovations within their apartments themselves. In many housing stocks, however, balconies were added at a later point, improving the overall quality of the apartments. Their design and size as well as their structural condition is, however, in comparison to today's demands, unsatisfactory.

In general, it can be stated that the technical standards – which are mostly not at today's level, but are at least not as they were in their original structural condition – are less in need of improvement than the layouts, which no longer correspond with today's qualities and demands. On the whole, the stock still consists of small, cramped apartments (apart from the stock that already had more spacious groundplans at the time of construction).

### 3.3.3 *Resident and Social Structure*

The publicly funded apartment buildings of the 1950s still house many original tenants from the post-war period. These once young families with children have transformed into single, elderly parental units. Because of natural fluctuations owing to death or relocation, a considerable shift in the tenant structure is expected to take place in the coming years. Oversupply within the municipal housing markets and a negative image that burdens these "old" districts also result in high levels of vacancy (Edinger et al. 2003: 9). The dwellings that become free as a result will be or have already been taken over by younger renters. This group of residents is, however, either to be qualified as lower-income or is in the process of founding a household and is beginning with a more affordable apartment (Mutschler 1987: 175).

Apart from the advanced age of the tenants, the image of the residents of districts from the 1950s is also characterized by a weaker social structure than in other districts. In addition to the issue of structurally maintaining the districts, a need to strengthen the tenant structure through rejuvenation and intermixing therefore also exists (Edinger et al. 2003: 9).

The prerequisites for the positive development of the districts can only be created after a sweeping refurbishment has taken place. Examples show that, despite massive rental price hikes owing to changes to groundplans as well as technical renewal, new residents – families, high-income households – can be gained for districts in especially attractive and central locations (Jacobs et al. 2005: 38).

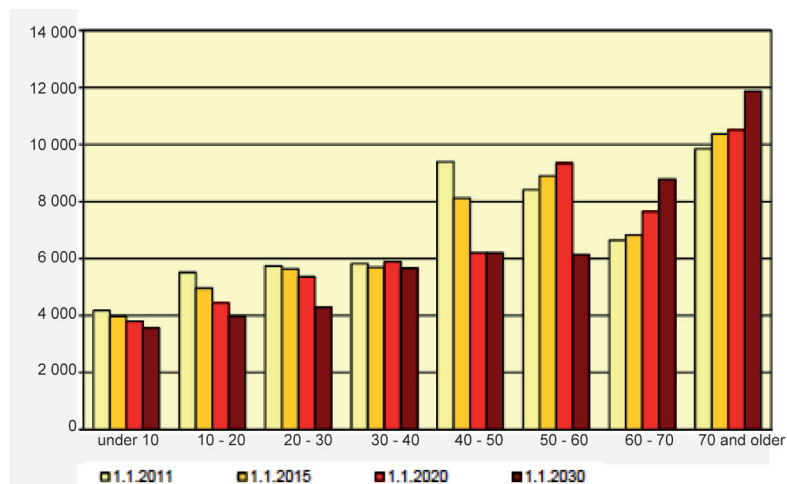


#### 4. Spatial Focus: Hattinger Südstadt

The mid-sized city of Hattingen is located at the boundary between the former industrial Ruhr region and Bergisches Land, which is dominated by agriculture and small and medium-sized businesses. Because of its location at the midpoint between the regional centers of Essen, Bochum and Wuppertal, the city has an attractive setting: while the northern part of the city is influenced by the Ruhr region in terms of its settlement structure and industry, the southern parts of the city can rather be classified as rural.

The growth in the number of older people is no new topic for Hattingen. 25% of the city's 55,510 residents (as of 31 December 2011) are over 65 years of age. Over roughly the past ten years, this age cohort has experienced clear growth in relative terms. The city has recognized this trend as well as, among others, the adaption of the urban infrastructure, a needs-based provision of dwellings and topics dealing with the integration of foreigners as interdisciplinary fields of action (Stadt Hattingen 2006: 4; Stadt Hattingen 2011: 6-18)

Fig. 1: Population Forecast in different age groups  
(Source: IT.NRW: 9  
(<http://www.it.nrw.de/kommunalprofil/l05954016.pdf>))



##### 4.1 The Image of Südstadt

Südstadt is a district which is adjacent to the inner city of Hattingen and is characterized by a typical 1950s style of architecture and open spaces. The district has deficits, especially for the main resident group of the elderly and residents who will enter this age in the near future, exacerbating problems in the everyday life of this age group. Due to the high quality of its open spaces as well as its integrated location, the district has great potential which needs to be activated and strengthened through the concept. The stakeholders, especially the "Hattinger Wohnstätten eG" (HWG, housing cooperative of Hattingen) as the owner of the social housing in the district, face various challenges related to housing, the residential environment and society.

With the housing promotion, a housing policy instrument was created in the course of the first law of housing development by which the HWG – as all housing associations at the time – developed a previously unknown capability in construction activity. However, they soon saw themselves confronted with the fact that the traditional settlement zone of Hattingen hardly provided space for the housing demand of the members of the association and new inhabitants.



Fig. 2: Figure-ground-plan of the Hattinger Südstadt  
(Source: own graph, based on land register Hattingen)

Therefore, the previously agriculturally used and – due to unsafe building ground – not yet developed area encompassing 150,000 m<sup>2</sup> south of the old town was developed as a new district. In 1952, the building program for the “Südstadt” was presented, and in the same year, the cornerstone for the first construction phase, comprising 80 housing units, was laid. In spite of adverse circumstances, the residential building cooperative was able to complete 500 flats in the first two years. Due to urban planning and design, the new district corresponded to the guiding architectural and urban planning principles of the 1950s. According to the ideas of the Charter of Athens, the district was only designed as residential area.

#### 4.1.1 Social-Spatial Criteria

Südstadt is a district with a comparatively old population. With the proportion of tenants over 60 years of age at nearly 60 percent, the age structure is rather one-sided. More than 40 percent of tenants have already lived in the neighborhood for over 30 years and have aged alongside it (BIB 2004: 50). In the long term, dangers of over-aging and corresponding natural fluctuations are evident. People with a better social position do not favor the neighborhood, but rather look for alternatives on the real estate market of Hattingen or in neighboring municipalities. The need of families for dwellings with a spacious layout can often not be satisfied with the existing residential offering.

#### **4.1.2      *Criteria Related to the Residential Environment***

The main potential of Südstadt is its generous open spaces that intersperse the residential blocks but do not significantly differ from one another. These spaces are neither separated in terms of design, nor are they qualified into different use zones. Their appropriation can only be seen in certain areas through the use of gardens near the apartment buildings. Opportunities to stay within the direct vicinity of the buildings – for example, seating accommodations – are only present in a few locations within the district. There is little enticement to linger or play within the area, since the parcels are visible from all around.

The surrounding streets, which carry little traffic and feature separate pedestrian routes, enable safe travel on foot throughout the district. The residential paths, on which, for instance, children can play, also improve the situation of the buildings. These streets and paths are, however, not designed for full accessibility. Important crossing points can therefore present a dangerous obstacle for older persons, but also for wheelchair users and children.

Equipped with different uses, the open spaces – together with the district's existing social facilities – can be established as places to communicate, meet and linger. The relatively low density based on a floor-space index (FSI) of 0.63 and a site occupancy index (SOI) of 0.21 results in a densification potential of around 58 percent (assuming an FSI of 1.0), which can be exploited – in a way suitable to the design and image of the settlement – to establish new buildings and residential forms.

The built stock of Südstadt presents obvious flaws in terms of technical and structural equipment. Because of the lacking refurbishment of dwellings, a renovation backlog has accumulated over the years. The apartments are no longer modern in terms of their substance and technical equipment. Obvious deficiencies are visible on certain roofs: the growth of moss implies that the subsurface is permanently moist and that the buildings have poor drying because of lacking insulation. Only about three quarters of buildings were heat insulated according to the technical standards of the construction time.

#### **4.1.3      *Criteria Related to Dwellings***

Within the buildings, the layouts of the apartments present a large shortcoming. The analysis indicated a very one-sided offering of dwellings that, in its present form, offers few possibilities for new groups of residents to move in or for new residential forms to be developed. Three-room apartments with an area of 50 to 65 m<sup>2</sup> make up half of the total stock. This one-sided residential stock as well as the lack of larger apartments supports the unattractiveness of Südstadt for the important resident group of families. However, especially the small and one-sided layouts can be changed and merged with adjacent small apartments to create a new offering.

Only by directly fostering of a mixture of resident groups through various residential offerings as well as by strengthening the residential environment can the future of Südstadt as a lively and attractive place to live be secured. In addition, deep incisions need

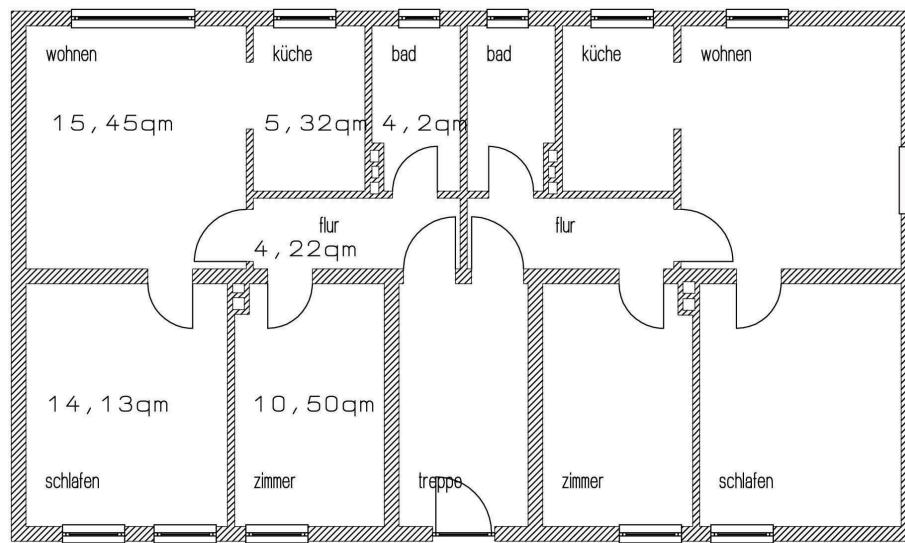


Fig. 3: Typical apartment in the Südstadt (Source: HWG)

to be made into the built stock. Today's largely older population needs to be supervised in advance in order to be alleviated of certain fears and given a voice. Only in this way can the settlement achieve long-term acceptance and create new offerings that serve not only older residents, but also other small and large resident groups thanks to a generation-friendly design.

The results of the analysis, which are visually displayed in Fig. 4, lead to conceptual building blocks that incorporate aspects related to the residential environment, the dwellings themselves as well as society at large into the age-friendly development of Südstadt.

Fig. 4: Results of the analysis (extract) (Source: own graph)

DEMAND OF OLDER PEOPLE	SITUATION IN DISTRICTS AND BUILDINGS FROM THE 1950S	ADAPTION STRATEGIES AND MEASURES
<b>Apartments:</b>		
Accessibility	Lack of Accessibility in buildings	Constructional changes and modifications (building of ramps)
	Lack of accessibility in flats (narrow ground plots)	Constructional changes of the ground plot, (e.g. opening in walls, combination of rooms)
<b>Residential Environment:</b>		
Spots for Communication and Meeting Points	Generous open space	Zoning of different parts
	Lack of uses and design of the open space	Implementation of offers for different demands and users (e.g. playgrounds, gardens)
	Neighbourship and existing social bindings	Support by offering common rooms and activities
<b>Social:</b>		
Activation of potentials and self-help	Neighbourship and existing social bindings	Support by offering common rooms and activities
	Property of housing cooperative	Organization of neighbourhood activities
		Services by contact persons
		Participation in Social land-use planning

## 4.2 An Age-Friendly Neighborhood Concept

For the purpose of a comprehensive concept, the requirements of older people are placed in the middle point, although the neighborhood concept for Südstadt also displays ways through which the district can be made more attractive for other resident groups as well as urban revitalization. This includes the “relationship between living within the dwelling and participating in happenings outside of it [...] such as the social relationships between older people and between generations” (BMBau 1995: 14f). In the following, three of the conceptual building blocks are described as examples.

Fig.5: Neighborhood Concept for the Südstadt (Source: own graph, based on land register Hattingen)



### 4.2.1 Conceptual Building Block: Public Space

Apart from structural measures, the qualification of public space is a significant conceptual building block. This links open spaces that are qualitatively differently equipped with places as locations for meeting, communication, sensory experience, play and relaxation. Additionally, apart from improving the accessibility of individual spaces and places as well as important locations, the path concept improves orientation within Südstadt.

Various routes emerge that can be travelled according to each person's physical fitness and mobility. On the one hand, a main connective artery between the two important connections outside of the district (Altstadt and Schulenberger Wald) is created, on the other hand, various open spaces within the district are connected by a circular path and paths that branch off from this. The movement radii of older people are quite variable, and the paths can be selected individually according to a person's physical fitness, as only self-chosen destinations lead to actual movement (Wolf 2003: 21).

It is conceivable that the paths could also highlight particular routes through a unified use of materials, illumination of the paths or a linkage of the individual open spaces using typical greenery. An alternative that is more affordable and that would also heighten acceptance is the design of milestones along the path by the residents themselves. Seating should appear along the paths in regular, not too great intervals (maximum 50 m) in order to make the use of the open space attractive for less-mobile individuals (Robischon 2004: 126).

#### 4.2.2 Conceptual Building Block: Intergenerational Living

The building block in the southwest part of the district follows the principle of the "meeting of generations". The current built stock at Südring will be equipped with various apartments through fundamental changes to apartment layouts and by erecting new buildings: family-friendly two-story row houses, accessible apartments in the ground floor and single apartments in the upper floor (see Fig. 6). Furthermore, the potential of this space can be used for densification in order to be able to offer accessible dwellings or large apartments for families in new buildings.

#### 4.2.3 Conceptual Building Block: Social Land-Use Planning

"Refurbishment is a word that very quickly awakens emotions" (Interview, Executive Assistant, HWG). Among older residents, certain reservations and fears exist regarding the refurbishment of apartments. Older tenants can often not understand the need for planned measures, since these residents have become used to the living situation that they have had for decades. They often do not realize the advantages that would emerge through structural and technical improvements, an accessible and safe design of the

Fig. 6: New apartment layouts for different residents (Source: own graph, based on HWG)



apartment, the apartment building and its surroundings. The main worries in connection with a move are the costs of the move itself, the physical and psychological burdens that arise alongside it as well as the fear of having to pay a higher rent after returning to the newly refurbished apartment.

In order to rid tenants of these fears and to bring them on board with future plans, experts (architects, planners, social workers, housing corporation staff and municipal employees) should be acquired according to the “Social Land-Use Planning” concept in order to supervise, communicate with and build trust in tenants. This would not only help achieve a superficially intact Südstadt in terms of structure and design, but also to alleviate fears and foster a positive mood within the district.

“Social Land-Use Planning” encompasses various conceptual phases. Within a preceding planning phase, it accompanies tenants long before implementation. A concluding monitoring phase slowly closes this accompaniment and stabilizes social work within the district as long-term district management. Here, attention should be paid that the entire concept is implemented in individual stages. The individual parts of these implementation stages can indeed overlap each other. If, for example, one stage is already in the advanced implementation phase, another later stage will just be in the planning phase.

## **5. Conclusion**

The recommended, very concrete measures for age-friendly neighborhood design in Hattingen’s Südstadt show how one can react to future demographic trends within the fields of “dwelling”, “residential environment” and “social”. Resulting from the demands of older residents, but also in terms of the needs of other population groups, diverse measures arise in each of these fields. It should be noted that the measures that are planned are always reciprocal with each other and require an integrated approach. This perspective requires a corresponding collaboration between stakeholders.

Integrated and accepted planning, even at the level of the entire city, can only succeed if municipal authorities, politics, charitable and social associations as well as competencies in urban planning, architecture and economics and – not least – the residents themselves are involved. If in this regard proven structures for collaboration cannot be built upon, this is certainly no easy task. Numerous projects show that, presently, integrated concepts no longer just have the character of a model within municipal praxis. Municipal actors are rather paying closer attention to the tasks surrounding demographic change and pointing in the direction of long-term integrated planning.

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