



TRANSCRIPTION PODCAST SIEMENSSTADT CALLING #3

- NEIGHBOURHOOD AND INTEGRATION -

Helmut Kleebank

Yes, many things have to be developed and are simply not yet fixed. But I think at the moment there is actually quite a good balance.

Sarah Tietze

Welcome to Siemensstadt Calling, the Siemensstadt Podcast. A podcast for everyone interested in technologies in the urban environment, urban development and smart building. And for all those who are looking forward to the development of Siemensstadt as a place of the future. I'm your host, Sarah Tietze-Kamya, and together with Stefan Kögl, the General Manager of Siemensstadt, we'll be presenting you with all the background information about Siemensstadt. Stay tuned! Today's episode is about the regional view of the development project. How will the future Smart Campus change the district of Spandau and what benefits can it bring to the immediate neighbourhood in Siemensstadt?

Sarah Tietze

Who better to discuss this with than the district mayor of Spandau, Helmut Kleebank, and the head of the Siemensstadt project, Stefan Kögl? Hello Mr. Kleebank, hello Stefan, nice to have the both of you here today.

Helmut Kleebank

Hello!

Stefan Kögl

Hello Sarah.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Kleebank, my first question is for you. We want to get to know you a little better. As a Berliner, we already know you quite well. I know you are a district mayor and a career changer. You studied physics and mathematics, worked as a teacher, and then as a school principal. And now you are a district mayor. You have a large family and are an absolute Spandau fan. But we want to know more.

We're interested in whether you've really been able to play an active role in shaping Spandau in recent years as district mayor. I am also particularly interested in the choice of Spandau? What is it that makes this district so fascinating for you?

Helmut Kleebank

I'll start with the second question. Spandau is the most beautiful city in Berlin for the people of Spandau. That also reflects a bit of the self-confidence with which we speak of Spandau. And I think the most important thing is the high level of identification with the district. Unlike many other districts, we are not a fusion district; Spandau has existed in its current constellation for many centuries. That is also noticeable. What is particularly noteworthy? Of course, we have an enormous amount of green space, forests, several protected landscape areas, and several green corridors that have been developed across the district over the last few decades. And of course, with the Havel River, we have an incredible number of water sports opportunities, and all of this together makes for a very high quality of life. In addition, of course, there are a few other beautiful spaces like the old town, the citadel or even the park in Kladow, called Neukladow. These are all things that make up a high quality of life. And I believe that this also contributes to the fact that the people of Spandau identify very strongly with their district and therefore, I would say, always try to stay in Spandau, to find their jobs there and many other things. That is the attraction. And that is of course, if I may come back to your first question, the task that one has as district mayor. To maintain this high quality of life, even in spite of all the growth and change processes that Spandau is, of course, also going through. Despite all the crises that we have experienced or are currently experiencing, it is this high quality of life that is extremely important to the people. And I believe that we have succeeded very well in this respect in recent years. We have already talked about growth and change processes, as I briefly mentioned. What matters here is that new neighbourhoods are designed in such a way that they fit in well with the existing ones, that what is appreciated and liked is preserved, and that the links between these neighbourhoods are well established, so to speak, and that any problems that may arise are also solved. Traffic issues are right at the top of the list. And I believe that we have succeeded in doing this well in recent years. As far as new neighbourhoods are concerned, I think we have also succeeded quite well with existing neighbourhoods. We have had the Stadtumbau West program in Falkenhagener Feld for many years. We have just added it in "Heerstrasse North. In each case with about 100 million euros in funding, and we have about 50 million euros in funding for urban monument protection in the old town. This means that we will gradually upgrade all public spaces that are used intensively.

We are upgrading the institutions that exist there. We are making the space barrier-free and with lots of greenery, with seating and much more. And we're also still working on Siemensstadt.

Sarah Tietze

That is, as a principal, you were able to actively shape your school, and in the same way, as a district mayor, you can give shape to the district today?

Helmut Kleebank

That's basically how it can be summed up. But shaping the district also includes, for example, school network planning, i.e. the question: Where are new schools being built? Where do existing schools need to be expanded? And that is already a big task.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, from the design of Spandau to the design of Siemensstadt, also one of your tasks. Siemensstadt is a district of Spandau. So it's a part of Spandau. What does it look like today? Are there areas that are already worth visiting today?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, of course. Well, there is the UNESCO World Heritage Site of housing estates in Berlin, and the Siemensstadt housing estate, which was originally planned and built for the employees and is an architectural icon. There are many houses designed by very well-known architects. And I believe it is currently very interesting, especially for experts. But much more important, I think, is that you see there that the architecture already plays an important role in the quality. Because when you walk through there, you notice a very open, pleasant atmosphere. The standards are right, I would say, you actually feel comfortable there. There's a lot of green when you're out there. And we know from the people of Spandau and Siemensstadt that they also like living there. So the quality of the interior of the houses also seems to be very high. We were able to take a look at an apartment there, but that is of course something different from actually living there. In this respect, there are very, very high qualities, and of course we are also challenged in the project to tie in with this and also to create this openness between these areas. Another interesting topic was perhaps that we looked at old pictures. We also looked at old pictures. We took a guided tour there last week and looked at these old pictures, from over 100 years ago in some cases. The streets are all carless, and what's interesting is that they were already built so large that they still work. But the space was of course different without cars there. Today, the sidewalks are full there and everywhere you go there are parked cars. So there are very, very many cars.

And we are now developing a new district or an addition where there should be few cars. So the interesting thing is really to see what that means. And, of course, this should perhaps make public life even more attractive than it is now with parked-up pavements.

Sarah Tietze

You just said that people already like living in Siemensstadt today. That's a nice attitude toward life that this district also expresses. Is that also an expectation of the project you're helping to shape, Siemensstadt 2.0?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, of course. As I said, of course, our project is now an addition. It's not greenfield, it is something new, but it's a part of it. It is a large part with 70 hectares. But Siemensstadt itself is much larger and is also very much shaped by industry. That has to be said. And they are old, often Siemens administrative buildings from 100 years ago, and very large buildings, also in terms of scale. And when opening up large parts of the area and giving the space back to the city, it is of course also important to create quality. That it also becomes attractive and people want to live there just as much. That's how I would put it.

Sarah Tietze

Yes, we're already at the core of the issue. How do the people of Siemensstadt deal with this development? How do they manage what Stefan Kögl just mentioned, that the development project really becomes part of Siemensstadt?

Helmut Kleebank

Yes, Siemensstadt residents naturally see that the city is changing around them. The Siemensstadt district is already changing, too. And changes of a magnitude that are imminent: The closure of Tegel Airport, Gartenfeld Island, and now Siemensstadt 2.0. Of course, this initially causes uncertainty. I think it's totally normal at first, because there are a lot of question marks. What will it actually be like? What kind of people will come? What impact will it have on me? Will the stores on my doorstep close? What will that do to the cafés or the recreational opportunities that are now available to me? Might we have big groups of joggers running through our park, which is now actually so nice and quiet and suitable for walking the dog? These are the kinds of questions that come up. That is quite normal at first. But of course there is also the expectation that jobs will be secured and that new ones will be created. Well, that is also the pronounced approach, because everyone knows, of course, that without work normal life doesn't work either. It is important that we generate added value - to use the term. And this combination keeps the balance, so to speak - that is the feeling of insecurity.

But there is also opportunity and expectation, I think that's good. And the whole thing is also supported by the diverse public relations work that is being done. So I think that at least everyone feels quite well informed. Always knowing, of course, that this is a work in progress. The project has to be developed further. We can't answer all the questions yet. Mr. Kögl and I make that clear again and again when we are asked about things. Yes, a lot of things have to be developed and simply haven't been decided yet. But I think there is actually a very good balance at the moment.

Sarah Tietze

We have now heard many positive views of Spandau, of Siemensstadt. What are the stumbling blocks in Siemensstadt today? Are there any areas where the development project can provide additional help? Give it a bit of a boost?

Helmut Kleebank

The project has already been given impetus. I will try to give a few examples. Traffic is also an issue in Siemensstadt. Nonnendammallee is regularly congested during rush hour. The announced reopening of the Siemensbahn is a really big issue here. Perhaps a second needs to be briefly addressed here. The districts of Siemensstadt and Haselhorst - Haselhorst is also somewhat affected, so to speak - have suffered a little from the fact that they were not part of the urban redevelopment area. This means that we had few funding opportunities to upgrade public infrastructure, to make it more attractive, to set new impulses or to strengthen existing ones. That is different now. In other words, we actually expect to receive funding for the Siemensstadt 2.0 area, which you can imagine as a semicircle from east to north to west, so to speak. There was also a great deal of citizen participation. We are in the process of drawing up an integrated urban development concept. This will also address the question of which sports facilities can be upgraded or restored. What about the parks and green spaces? Can sports equipment be placed in public spaces? What about youth recreational facilities? So the whole range of urban redevelopment is called for. And, of course, this has a bit of background in that this district as a whole is going to change so much. And I see this as a great enrichment. Another aspect of life is, of course, the fear of displacement. This is a phenomenon that also exists in large parts of Berlin. The rent cap has taken a bit of the air out of that for the time being. We'll have to wait and see how long it lasts. But of course it's also a bit of a feeling: okay, now the district is being upgraded, what does that mean for our rents? Will some real estate sharks come in and buy up the properties? Will they turn them into condominiums or cause prices to shoot through the roof?

And we have to take these fears seriously and find methods to combat this negative development which we all don't want, to some extent. As I said, the rent cap is one such instrument. But it can only be temporary, if at all - we all don't know that yet - it only takes effect temporarily, if at all, which means that the state of Berlin will have to develop methods to counter that.

Sarah Tietze

I would like to pick out the topic of mobility from the many aspects you have mentioned. Stefan, how does Siemens respond to this? What is the mobility concept behind Siemensstadt 2.0?

Stefan Kögl

So, first of all, it is essential that we have already anchored the topic of mobility in the original agreement with the Senate and the district in 2018 as one of the core topics that must be future-oriented. Additionally, this district must also function accordingly. The Siemensbahn was already mentioned by Mr. Kleebank as one of the essential components. The second thing that should naturally always be mentioned, is that we already have a very good subway connection. That is an essential factor for such a location. What is happening at the moment is that we have examined the traffic flows at the present time, have also examined them with an expert opinion, and there are concepts as to how this can work. I can at least say that it will work. So there are also clear changes. It's important to remember that we didn't develop this district with a million square meters overnight, and there are already 450,000 square meters there today. That means it will develop over the next few years. One of the core issues is individual transport, i.e. the entire logistics and everything related to production will not change, but rather be optimised over the next few years. But individual transport is tending to decline... So, of course, we have to calculate the basics according to today's standards and legal situation, and we have also done this and made it available. But if we now look at how this will develop in the next few years, in the next five and ten years, we all know that this will change significantly. And we assume that the demand from the population will no longer be the same in ten years. And basically the concept is also that there will be only very low speeds within this area. So either 10 or 30 kilometres per hour maximum. We are in intensive discussions or developments, it must be said, on future-oriented traffic systems. An important German term here, in quotation marks, is "demand/response shuttle." In other words, you will be able to call a vehicle with an app and it will then be driven there individually. But it can also be buses that pick up several people, which will possibly already be driving autonomously.

I can't say for sure whether this will happen in 10 years. But of course it will go in this direction and the development also shows that it will be possible. And one more sentence: If we then consider that it will take more than 10 years until this district is even finished and we can assume 20 years to say that life will have to function there, then it is an enormous period of time in terms of technological development alone, in which... So that's actually the biggest challenge for us in all places, I have to mention, is answering how things will look in 20 years. And now let's look back 20 years, when there wasn't even a smartphone. So that's a good comparison, to look back into the past. That's why it's an interesting task.

Sarah Tietze

Very, very exciting. What methods are there for looking into the future? How do you build a city today for the world of tomorrow?

Stefan Kögl

So, at least that is my approach. The crucial thing is to analyse the things that you see now very well, and of course also to look at what possibilities there supposedly are. Then, of course, you need imagination, you need intuition, and then you need the will to make decisions and persevere. So one of the core tasks is to make decisions by then and to continue with them. And to tackle things. That is actually a core issue when you look into the future. That is the original task of this project. So you could leave the site as it is, it will work. But we can assume that it will become more and more difficult to produce in these old buildings and that there will be less and less substance that has quality. And the issue is to tackle it, to invest, to think about it and, of course, to change things. And that is one of the core tasks.

Sarah Tietze

Do you have another concrete example of this, Stefan?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, let's take the electric charging stations for cars. Today, the tendency is: I make as many as possible, because the charging time is so long. But the charging times are getting shorter and shorter. Today, we already have cars with very powerful batteries that charge 80 percent in 20 minutes. So now I'm thinking 10 years ahead, and I'm convinced that the cars will be fully charged in just a few minutes. So maybe also inductive. So what infrastructure do we decide now? To roll out charging columns? Maybe in the next few years we will need them for the first square meters. But in terms of the overall project, I'm convinced we won't need them.

And that is the area of tension in which we are moving. Because, of course, it also has to work in the next five years. That is a concrete example that we are working on.

Sarah Tietze

Very exciting scenario, how the future of mobility in Siemensstadt with the Siemensstadt is designed. Mr. Kleebank, you just mentioned the housing market and said that there are also fears and challenges here. Again, very specifically. What is the current housing situation in Siemensstadt?

Helmut Kleebank

Well, quite currently, of course, we have or had a rather relaxed housing situation. We already know about real estate sales, but there are of course sales all over the city. I wouldn't say that this is so special. The important thing is, what instruments can we use to maintain this situation for people, to prevent displacement? The rent cap has at least slowed down and frozen the exorbitant rise in rents. The only question is how it will be extended afterwards, when the rent cap expires, which is an instrument that is always limited in time, whether it can be extended, we will have to see again, but certainly not in the long term. It won't work like that. In this respect, the country will have to think about methods. My favourite option is always to have as much property as possible in the municipal housing companies. I think that is also an issue for Siemensstadt 2.0. Here, too, I think a large share should be placed with one of the municipal companies, with whichever one for the moment. And, of course, one concern that could also be well realised in Siemensstadt would be the integration of cooperative buildings. This is another form of housing that ensures affordable rents in the long term, because the members of the cooperative decide for themselves what the rents should be. And since Siemens will presumably be responsible for awarding the contract, there are also opportunities for control, and we should make use of them. The Berlin model is also to be applied here. I think it's a very sensible agreement that has been in place right from the start, so I assume that there will be a mix that will also fit in well with a mixed Siemensstadt.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, will there be this mixture?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, I can only confirm that fact. We are also in close contact with housing associations.

It also has to be said that we at Siemens are not specialists in housing construction, nor do we want to make that claim. In this respect, we have a great interest in meeting with experts. And now, especially with regard to rent-linked housing, the housing associations are of course the ones who have the experience. And in this respect, it can be assumed that there will be corresponding connections and that these things will also be implemented in that way.

Sarah Tietze

We used it to work on the topics of mobility and housing. I'm still particularly interested in what education looks like in Spandau, in Siemensstadt? We probably couldn't have a better expert than Mr. Kleebank here. What does the education network in Siemensstadt, in Spandau, look like? How many schools are there? Is there need for action?

Helmut Kleebank

There is already a considerable need for action due to a large influx of people. Siemensstadt 2.0 will result in even more, especially in the area of elementary schools. Perhaps we'll come up with a location there as well. But all in all, we will need a total of 16 additional classes in Spandau - I'll just give you one figure - in the area of secondary level 1, i.e. grades 7 to 10, there are about 4 additional high schools. We will also build additional high schools, but we will also upgrade existing ones with additional buildings. All in all, a very ambitious program. I firmly believe that in Spandau we will.... Well, so far we've been talking about investing 500 million euros. I think we're just approaching a billion for investment in schools alone. Those are the figures that I have. In the neighbourhood, too, by the way, the school on Jungfernheide. We want to expand it not only in secondary level 1, we also want to give it a basic level and we even want it to be able to lead up to the end of secondary school. That is certainly quite exciting. That's the eastern side of Siemensstadt 2.0, so to speak. And if you look to the western side, there's the large development area of Gartenfeld Island. A community school is also to be built there, leading from grade 1 to grade 13 and then to the end of secondary school. So there is a lot going on in Spandau. I could name even more locations, but I'll leave it at that at this point. Because I think this shows once again how the educational landscape will change in Siemensstadt, in this broad spectrum. And perhaps one more thing. We also plan to build an additional high school on Rhenaniastrasse in Haselhorst. So I think we're doing everything we can from an educational point of view to enhance both districts enormously. And we are working almost day and night to achieve this.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, the education area in Siemensstadt is also coming. What does that look like exactly? Where is it located in Siemensstadt? When will work start there? How big will it be? Can you give us a little bit of information?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, with pleasure. So the educational area, it must also be said quite clearly, was strongly promoted by Mr. Kleebank who also really invested in the project. In all preliminary talks, whenever the project was discussed, school was an important topic. We were also happy to take this on board. We have our so-called SPE on site. That is Siemens' training, a very large training area currently situated in the switchgear hall building. In this respect, we ourselves have a contribution. And in the urban development competition we have now planned a school area that will be located on the urban boulevard, the new main axis into the area in a position relatively close to Rohrdamm, i.e. easy to reach for students coming from the S-Bahn and in a prominent position. A European school, i.e. an elementary school with an international orientation, so to speak. 576 students will be educated there. This will, of course, include the entire infrastructure, i.e. a gymnasium with a sports field, a cafeteria and whatever else is necessary in terms of infrastructure.

Sarah Tietze

That means a large school right in the entrance area. You can hear that there is very close cooperation between the district and Siemens. Mr. Kleebank campaigned for the school and now it's here. Has this cooperation always been so harmonious? On such a large project, there is bound to be the occasional bitter pill that you have to swallow, Mr. Kleebank. Is that not so?

Helmut Kleebank

There are definitely different views on various points. But anything else would be strange, I'd say. I think that's quite okay. The only important thing for me, and this has been confirmed in the project, is that there is a very strong goal orientation on all sides. There is a unifying goal, and that was very well captured in the first agreement between the state of Berlin and Siemens. And these bitter pills that you mentioned, or the areas where you suspect such things, have not been left out from the very beginning. They were always a core component of all talks and all agreements.

And that, I believe, is now our great advantage. We have been able to address these various issues, i.e., historic preservation is one such issue, environment and nature is such an issue, I don't think we've ever beaten around the bush in these areas. I've always told everyone involved: Don't make any formula compromises. Formula compromises, where the sentence you write down may sound nice for the moment, but where you already suspect that you'll have problems afterwards. That doesn't help anyone, because you have a problem afterwards. So it's better to have a longer discussion, to have a tough debate on the matter, to work together toward the goal and then come up with reasonable solutions that are acceptable to both sides. And I believe that this strategy has proven it's worth. In addition, there are still a few points to be resolved. We are also struggling with the education area. What is the right size? How can a school be positioned to conform with the environment and nature conservation? Are there things that we need to discuss? But in my opinion, they are still supported by this common spirit, and I find that very, very remarkable and totally positive for a project of this size.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, how do you rate the collaboration?

Stefan Kögl

Bitter pills we have. I think less now conversations begin. But perhaps an essential aspect. To put it a little differently, I just think, as Mr. Kleebank has already said, that early dialogue is one of the core issues for good progress or a good atmosphere. We opened the dialogue here - I'll take advantage of that - in a phase where we didn't have a master plan or any prefabricated ideas that would then also be unchangeable. And, as Mr. Kleebank has just said, we plan to formulate this common goal. On the school side: school yes, we are planning schools and I can say that openly. Then we have determined: okay, the areas do not fit. In the detailed view. In terms of urban planning, yes, but in terms of details. But then the cooperation is not such that, I say deliberately, Mr. Kleebank in his function says: what's the point? Why can't you do that? Instead, he immediately talks to his planners in the school authorities. They also approach us, make suggestions, we make suggestions. When you have the common goal, if it doesn't work, it doesn't matter why. Nobody does it with bad intention, you just have to solve it. That is actually one of the core issues for successful cooperation at this point. And perhaps a second fundamental issue is that this project has no blueprint at all in many places, not at the school now, but in many other places. So you cannot now... for example, I sometimes say when new employees apply, if they enjoy stress, problem cases, unsolved or unsolvable, then they are in the right place.

If they don't feel like they're comfortable, then they're not going to make it. The project is just a whole, a whole lot of questions that can't be answered easily. And that's what makes it so great, so interesting. We give, in many places we are allowed to give answers. And you can always pose questions, of course. And there are always people who might question you. But it's a different atmosphere here. People say: yes, okay, then we'll work it out together like this. We decide to go a certain way.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Kleebank. When you look into the future, how do you envision Siemensstadt in 2035?

Helmut Kleebank

I think that it will be a very vibrant district. I believe that what emerged as the winning design in the urban planning competition and what is now being formulated and further developed has the potential, on the one hand, to become a very - as the planners always say - robust structure that will also withstand further development steps, so to speak. And I'm convinced that despite the high density that we have, there is not going to be a life in the countryside now, but it's going to be a very urban life that people can expect there. That this will be combined with a very high quality of life. Mr. Kögl has already said that you can only imagine speeds of 10 or 30 kilometres per hour for individual traffic. You can see that it is also decelerated in itself, so to speak. And I believe that Siemensstadt as a whole will benefit from these various developments. Not only Siemensstadt 2.0, but also the surrounding area. Closure of Tegel, development of Tegel as a research location. I believe that this will correspond very strongly and change the overall attitude to life. And of course we have the subway connection, which is already good. Nevertheless, I'm convinced that the Siemens train will create an additional quality there as well, also for the people who already live there.

Sarah Tietze

That's a very nice vision of the future. If you could make a wish for your Spandau residents, for your Siemensstadt residents. What would be your three wishes for Siemensstadt, for Mr. Kögl?

Helmut Kleebank

Addressed to Mr. Kögl? Ah, okay. Well, the most he can do is help me on one topic. Perhaps also more concretely. I refer to the actual blending into the existing district. So here we go beyond the planning area. It's no longer Siemens property, I'm aware of that. But we still have to make sure that the existing and the new don't just exist side by side, but that there is an active link that can be experienced in some way.

I think that's possible. The second point, I don't know. Maybe Siemens doesn't have as much influence on that. But for Spandau, it is of course incredibly important that the Siemens line be extended to Hakenfelde. That's simply an axis that we have to try to achieve in any case. And the third point is, of course, that we get a grip on the issue of displacement such that we can also eliminate it all together. Of course, this is also an appeal to the state government to take this issue seriously. That's clear, but ultimately it's somehow also important to all of us. I believe that these are the key points that I associate with this.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan. The part that you can actively shape, the integration of the neighbourhood into the project, will that succeed?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, I just wanted to say that this is not just my influence. I think Siemens would be a more appropriate. First of all, the most important statement is that we build cities for people. So, for all the ambitious goals we have in terms of technology and cooperation and partner companies, and all the innovations that are to be integrated.. in the end, people should live and work there. And that is what is written in every headline that we at Siemens have given to this project. And that means that the standards have to be right, the quality of the outdoor space has to be right. So we have also seen from the Corona pandemic that opportunities have to be created. And I agree with Mr. Kleebank, of course, that it is an urban environment, but an urban development, for example, has many spaces. Not just one square and one street, but many sequences of spaces, which are now also accordingly green. I'm having the discussion with the planners right now to create attractive spaces in many places. And not just so everyone has to flock to this square or that park. I need space by my front door. That's really the issue as far as Hakenfelde is concerned. There I can only say that we support it. We have a high interest that the S-Bahn continues to run and certainly does not stop with us. Instead, it should be part of the... something like this is also an expression of integrative urban development. That you are not the end of the line.

Stefan Kögl

Yes, that's right. And what was the third topic?

Helmut Kleebank

The third was the issue of displacement, rents, the rent situation. This is of course difficult for Siemens.

Stefan Kögl

I think we had already mentioned that we are not selling housing construction here freely on the market, or only to investors. We are looking for a dialogue and cooperation with the professionals who are proficient in this and who will also benefit from a 30 percent rent-price link.

Sarah Tietze

We are slowly coming to the end of the podcast. Mr. Kleebank, it's also an exciting collaboration between you and Siemens. One downside remains. You won't be in office for quite so long. Despite being very popular, despite enjoying your job very much, you still decided against it. Will you stay with the project anyway?

Helmut Kleebank

I'll definitely stay connected to the project, let's just say that it's not an everyday project, but of course it has also had a major impact on my second term in office. It was an incredibly important and interesting experience. When do you ever have the opportunity to participate in an urban planning competition of such dimensions, to deal with a total of 17 different urban planning designs, and to sit there with 50 or 60 proven experts? It's like a constant educational event. So in any case, you remain deeply connected to the project. We'll have to wait and see whether we'll be involved in any function or mandate. I would ask for a little patience.

Sarah Tietze

That is definitely good to hear. Stefan, the final question goes to you. Where does the Siemensstadt project currently stand? You also described it in the last podcast. So much is happening. Where do we stand and what are the next steps?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, I would describe it as something that begins when the excavator rolls. But with the size and dimension of this project, there is of course a lot of preliminary work to be done, and it has to be done very, very precisely and very professionally. That's why you can't see anything yet. But the project is not that old. The master plan is half a year old. All I can say is that all the issues relating to the creation of building rights, as an umbrella term, urban land use planning, land use plans and so on, have continued despite the pandemic. We received the normal support from the authorities. With very few ripples, I would now say, because of the pandemic. In this respect, we are on the right track. We have also launched a building construction competition for the first buildings. And in this respect, I can already say that the plan is still to see excavators in 2022.

That's when the first structural engineering measures are to take place, independent of this or as a foundation. Of course, the existing jobs at the production units that are on site, currently being repositioned and relocated to two production hubs, one in the south and one in the north, are essential. That alone is a mammoth task. If only we had this, with considerable investments to secure these jobs for the future - that is really one of the core tasks and that is also the basis - this is what has to work first and foremost, and then comes everything else. For us, of course, it runs parallel, because otherwise it would take far too long. Yes, and there is a third topic. That is the establishment of research topics, universities, partner companies, cooperations. Most people are now familiar with the Werner von Siemens Center for Industry and Science, which is now also starting its first tasks. The funding has been approved for the first thematic blocks. We are in the process of organising areas, i.e. not organising, but preparing where they can establish their production. In many cases we are now, since what is hopefully the last lockdown, actively talking again with many other companies and universities. So, this block is also essential, but it is somewhat downstream, because first of all the foundations have to be created.

Sarah Tietze

Thank you very much, Mr. Kleebank. Thank you very much, Stefan. It was a very exciting dialogue and a lot of information about Siemensstadt.

Helmut Kleebank

With pleasure.

Sarah Tietze

Bye, and see you soon.

Stefan Kögl

With pleasure. Goodbye, Sarah. Bye.

Sarah Tietze

That was the third episode of our podcast about the development of Siemensstadt. Today we showed you what influences the Siemensstadt project will have on the district of Spandau, how it will change and upgrade it. And we learned what the district mayor of Spandau, Helmut Kleebank, expects from our project. At this point, thanks again for their time and interesting answers! If you want to learn more about Siemensstadt, the people who live and work in it, or the projects that are happening around it, tune in again next time. Bye and see you soon.

S-Bahn announcement

Next Stop: Siemensstadt.