

Jürgen H. Breuste

EUROPEAN CHALLENGES - URBAN LANDSCAPES IN TRANSFORMATION LINKING THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT

Urban landscapes in the general transformation process of cultural landscapes

Urban landscapes are understood as the existing landscape of urban settlements and its surroundings specially marked by urban land use forms, often call urban and peri/sub-urban or metropolitan landscapes. World wide, these landscapes occupy more and more space. Furthermore, in an in-stoppable process, an increasing number of people are becoming urban dwellers. Even in Europe where this process is not very fast, urban landscapes today cover a great deal of former agricultural and forest landscapes in the surroundings of cities and towns, creating a patchwork of large, often connected areas. Between such areas with a strong urban influence, cultivated landscapes under modern agricultural use are often found. So urban landscapes cannot be reduced to the limits and administrative borders of existing towns and cities, but include about a 10 or more kilometre wide zone surrounding cities or towns - the sub-urban zone (Breuste 1996).

Figure 1 shows the distribution of urban landscapes in Germany where the daily total growth rate of urban land use forms (settlements and traffic areas) is very high - 70.4 ha per day.

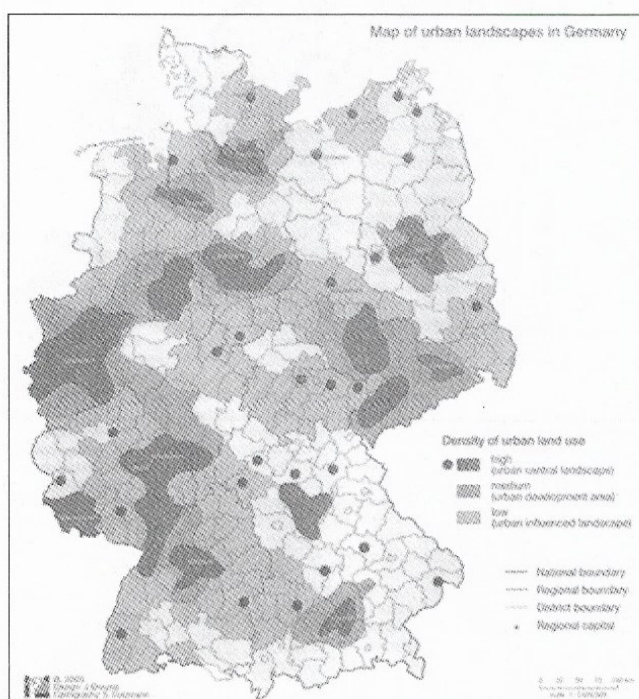


Fig. 1 Urban Landscapes in Germany (Breuste 2000)

Urban landscapes consist of a mixture of land use forms; typically urban ones such as residential estates or industrial areas, and cultivated ones such as the remains of former agricultural and forest landscapes. The comparison of these kinds of landscapes is not easy because they differ in the density of built-up areas, the elements of the land use mixture and the remains of the pre-existing landscape (Breuste 1995).

The land use forms are located where the development conditions are optimal under specific time and financial constraints for the property owners and developers. Thus, in this regard, an urban landscape is an economically optimised landscape in that it is created to work effectively and properly in its parts - the different land use forms - but not as a whole landscape (Sieverts 1988a, b). This means that urban landscapes cause various kinds of problems. Some of these problems include insufficient living conditions for many people, denaturalisation, pollution of water and air, and the destruction of former landscape elements and historical remnants and their replacement by new landscape elements.

To frame the past with the present landscape it is necessary to understand the forces on the processes of urban growth, as well as the ongoing landscape changes by agriculture and forestry, and how to deal with this transformation of landscape. It has to be mentioned that transformation of landscapes is not new and not generally a "dangerous" process. Transformations have taken places in all times but currently these transformations are much faster than in earlier decades and very much focused and visible in urban landscapes (Sieverts 1988b).

One driving force of urban growth in developed countries in Europe is the concentration of economic power and efficiency of organisation (life, education, communication etc.). Although this process is not new, it is linked with a much larger and faster land occupation than 50 years ago by the mostly unlimited and wide spread use of automobiles for everyone (Hesse & Schmitz 1997, Mäding 1997). This therefore allows the location of residential areas 10 - 20 kilometres away from one's workplace - often in a more natural environment near forests, lakes and rivers than would have been possible in the central city. So the city grows, and indigenous vegetation - often the only remains in a highly cultivated landscape - comes under urban pressure for destruction by increased building and recreation purposes. In the following fields in particular, research is still necessary to make us understand urban development as landscape processes changing the ecological conditions of specific landscapes of concern:

- Urbanization as a landscape changing process,
- Land use as an indicator,
- Duration and intensity of changes,
- Location of urban development in different biomes, natural landscapes etc.,
- Speed of urbanization and
- Structure of land use patterns (Breuste 1996).

Two German case studies can show different perspectives in the transformation process.

The Greifswald case: Identification of landscape values

The identification of values depends on the orientation, knowledge and acceptance the evaluators have to different approaches. The approaches are interrelating but it makes sense to structure them separately. In the whole development process of the 90th clearly three main values of the landscape were visible:

- Value of selected sites/properties in relation to specific economic or functional demands
- Value of identity, tradition and singularity of the landscape
- Ecological, scenic and recreational value.

The first step of development as well as preservation is usually the identification of the values represented by places, objects, elements and sites in the landscape. This selected mapping and registration is not without danger to lose the connectivity and character of the landscape out of view. It is mostly done by scientists as ecologists or historians and archaeologists.

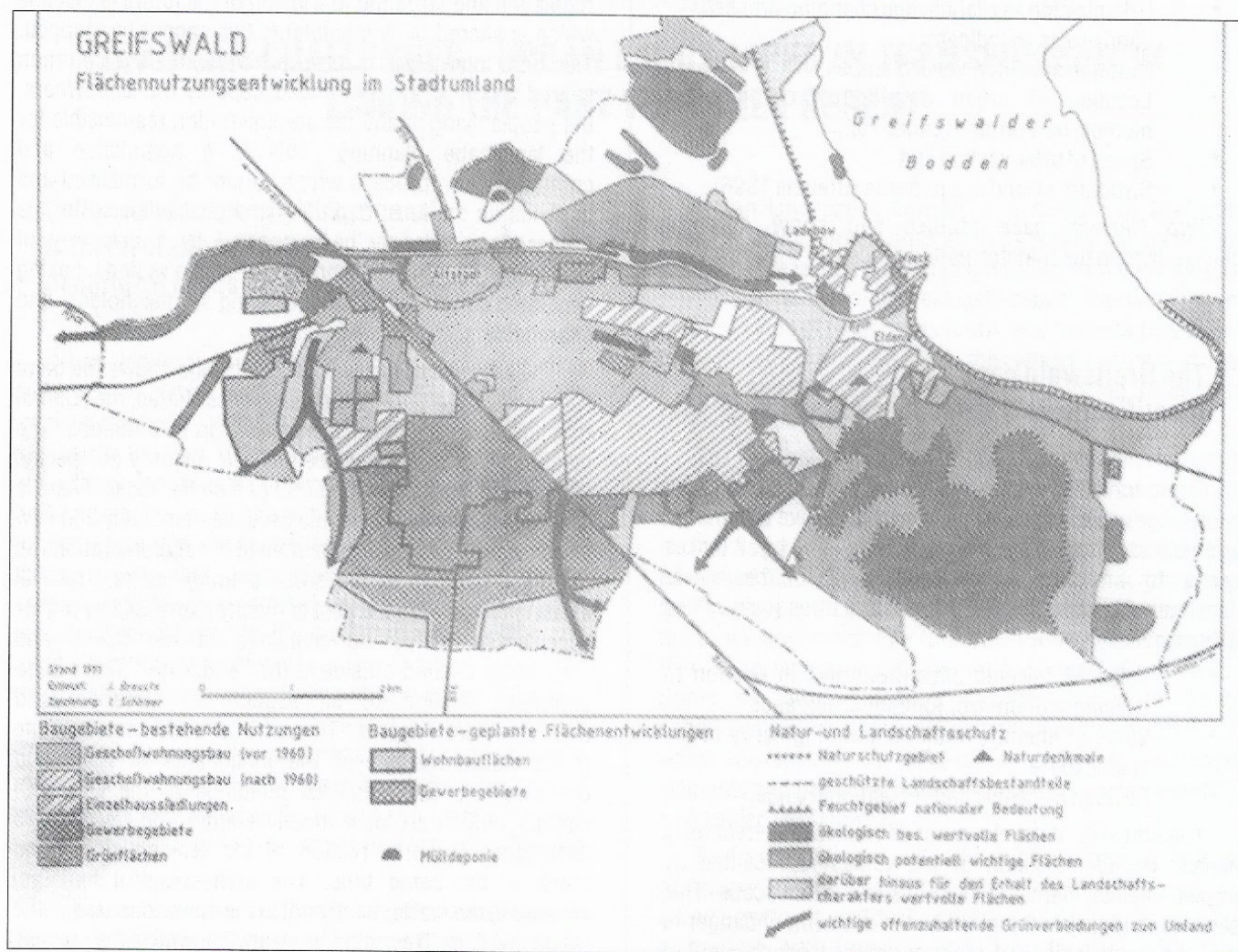
The clear task is to bring these values together into linked approaches and to connect it with the socio-cultural and scenic values of the landscape to get a holistic approach.

There was and is still a tremendous loss of landscape elements by urbanization, modernization and even simply destruction without any purpose. But most destructions or transformations are linked with urbanization and building activities or with increased technical agriculture. This leads to more sealed and built-up areas instead of former open land, directly on the built-up fringe or even as patches in the open agricultural landscape. The remaining agricultural landscape loses its valuable, structuring and typical elements as hedges, trees, line of trees, mills, former agricultural buildings etc. But the main influence is the standardisation of the remaining landscape following the economical rules of a profitable (short term) economy. This leading idea to use the landscape cuts all singularities and remains of former landscape development which are now without new utilization functions or which hinder the economical utilization of the present landscape. As far as the owners of the landscape patches make their decisions only on this basis and as far as there is no less common

regulation and targeting to a vision of the future landscape which is shared by its inhabitants this cannot be stopped. The only alternative is the development of a common shared vision of the future landscape by the landowners, the people living in and the administration responsible for the landscape planning. This is a negotiation and communication process which cannot be formalised and depends on the local traditions and possibilities. But this process can strongly be supported by a new way of landscape planning, by working for whole regions, linking separated communities and involving all stakeholders and shareholders.

The example of the town of Greifswald shows that there was and is still a strong relation over centuries, the cultural tradition and relation of the population to traditions. The inhabitants of the region feel in their majority as specific (Pomeranians) and protectors of their heritages. There is a loss of identity by the people because of mobility and new life styles. This can be more often in the agglomerations as Halle-Leipzig than in the small country towns. The still existing relations to the past are mostly expressed by higher acceptance to historic buildings in the towns and sometimes located outside in the "landscape". There is no complete relation to all aspects of historical and archaeological remains. This can be documented in the much lesser relation of the inhabitants of Halle and Greifswald to the industrial buildings of the late 19th century (which are now mostly empty) and much more acceptance for preservation of the residential building stock of the same time. The archaeological heritage, covered in the soil is mostly not in the consciousness of the urban dwellers. This could be clearly shown in the process of opening the surfaces during new building activities in the 90th during the urban renewal. The interest in these remains was generally limited and nowhere these former covered parts of older not any more existing buildings etc. in the ground could be secured after its scientific documentation. This can be interpreted that much more the still visible and in the process of life include historical elements of the former landscape are accepted. Therefore the recommendation could be to give these landscape elements a relation to the people by giving them a use and explaining them to the people as part of their cultural identity and heritage instead of only to "display" them.

All the time of the socialist regime only selected parts of the historical roots and remains were by the administration secured and maintained. This was because of ideological aspects but also because of lack of economic power. In the historical city centre of Greifswald the administration started destruction of old houses to replace them by new prefabricated buildings. This destruction of the old town centre was never tolerated by the people who saw that as a shame and a loss of tradition. During the collapse of the socialist regime one of the first newly acting political groups in Greifswald was the "citizen movement for the old town centre". They stopped the demolition and started a broad discussion about the future of the old town.



The history and tradition had been "new invented" and linked to a new identity of the region and to a lot of further activities to identify the historical elements and remains of the town and the surrounding landscape which started after the political changes. Together with the scientists of the University of Greifswald a catalogue of important landscape elements could be elaborated and a strategy of protecting the landscape was worked out.

This strategy of protecting the landscape could be a beginning of a new planning of the landscape. The only missing link was to the established planning authorities and to the new framing political powers. Their interest was much less framed and more oriented to a spatial development, not much reflecting historical aspects. The prepared planning not linked with the planning and decision power failed. Only partly the targets which were never clearly communicated and agreed between the stakeholders could be reached.

Fig. 2

Proposed protection of landscape elements of the Greifswald urban landscape of 1990 as part of proposals of intellectuals of the university and the town administration to secure the landscape values during the transformation process 1990 (J. Breuste, unpublished)

The new Greifswald urban and sub-urban landscape got the same additions as everywhere: commercial strips, new housing estates without any tradition, new infrastructure dividing the landscape into separated patches and had to carry a lot of loss to preserve landscape. Especially the landscapes of highest scenic and ecological value, the edges of the forests and water bodies (rivers and coast) were effected by new building activities. Even linkages between the parts of the landscape could not be secured when they meet the interests of further development. The important archaeological sites as the former monastery Eldena of the 12th century remained untouched. Excavations had been made on the places which came by surprise on the surfaces during building activities. Other archaeological aspects were not even reflected by the landscape developers.

The value of the scenic aspects of the landscape as identification "stage" became during the 90th more and more importance and can be found in a lot of activities of the people to preserve the landscape (seen as a "picture", not as a whole in scientific and planning sense). This can be expressed by the painting of Caspar David Friedrich which all people from Greifswald know and understand as "The Greifswald Landscape", which they have in their mind when they want to improve or reconstruct the landscape. Their "ideal landscape" is a backwards oriented idyll (Stadtverwaltung der Hansestadt Greifswald Umweltamt 1993).

The Halle case: Urban Landscape protection - new tasks, new targets

- There had been several traditional nature and landscape protection targets in use as: Rarity and endangerment, vulnerability, naturalness as a degree of human impact, representation of ecological potentials, re-establishment ability, ecological functions as connectivity.
- These targets were mostly insufficient to secure landscapes in its complexity and could only protect limited areas within cities. Especially those selected areas have to be secured from stronger utilization by the people. This is not possible and working in urban landscapes and does not raise acceptance by the people. These purely scientific targets of landscape conservation have to be completed and, in special

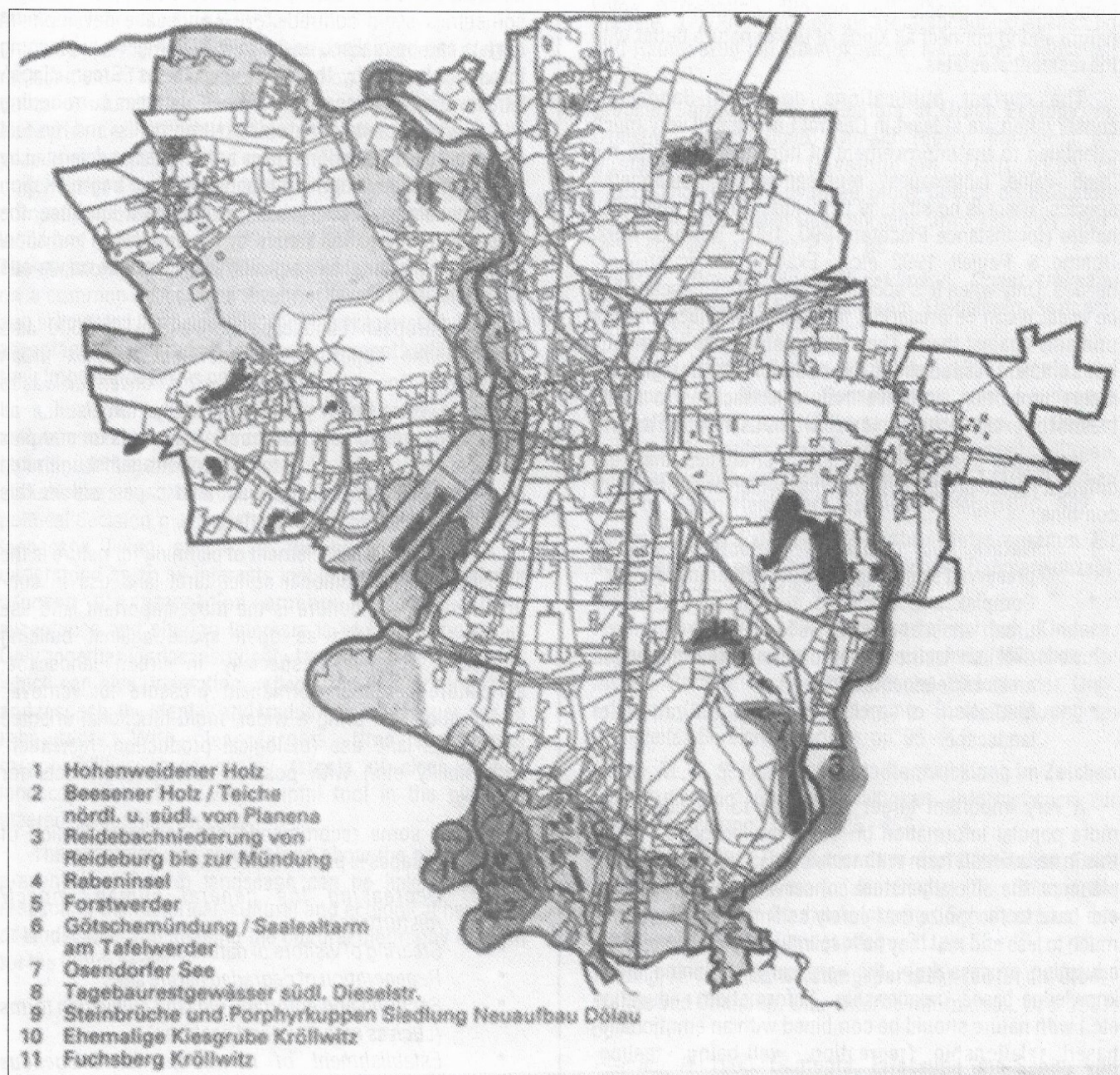


Fig. 3

Protected Landscapes in the Landscape Development Plan of the city of Halle/Saale 1995 (first draft) (Stadt Halle 1995)



cases, replaced by: Ethical responsibility, usability, recreation, possibility to enjoy nature, scenery and sense of well-being.

The investigations in Halle/Saale show that it will be not easy to improve urban landscape protection strategies and will not fast have a measurable output. The studies show clearly that there is still a lack of understanding of "urban wilderness" as additional and valuable aspect of urban green. On the other hand there is a need of more green in urban landscapes and the people intensively use the existing well maintained green spaces. May be much better information on urban nature and education could support a more proper use of different green areas adapted to the sensitivity of the sites. For instance Fischerlehner 1992 and Kowarik 1992 already recognized the problem without recommendations for adequate solutions. A better involvement of people (but not only children) to enjoy nature and to connect all kinds of urban nature better with the residential estates.

The current publications on urban landscape conservation are at least in Central Europe still very much orientated to the improvement of information and to the "high value landscapes" represented by endangered species. There is no strategy to include scenery and enjoy nature (for instance Plachter 1990, 1991, Kowarik 1992, Duhme & Pauleit 1992 etc.). Exactly this is strongly needed. Only when it is accepted that urban landscape can be used, it can be preserved for human activities and not primarily against them. The existing strategies are mostly not sufficient, especially if the adoption of strategies for nature protection from near-nature landscapes to urban means the exclusion of human activities as the basic axiom.

In searching for alternative future strategies, there are different nature protection strategies which are possible to combine:

- Nature and landscape protection only on preserved selected sites, but in different degrees,
- Complex and complete analysis of the whole urban landscape as a basis for decision,
- Creation of networks of connected protection areas and elements and
- Mediation of protection and utilization of landscape.

A very important target should be to provide much more popular information on urban landscape and to do this in an adapted form with wide spread used media. The planners, the officially nature conservation administration etc. have to recognize that purely scientific information is much to less and that they have to influence and to steer the education process from the very early beginning on. A knowledge-based relationship (information, education etc.) with nature should be combined with an emotionally-based relationship (recreation, well-being, feeling, esthetical aspects etc.).

The responsibility for the landscape should be concentrated in the administration of cities and towns and the influence of these administrations on policy should be improved. It is not very effective to plan landscapes by dividing it into different departments (responsible for environment, nature protection, education, traffic, building etc.). In such cases contradicting decisions on the same subject, urban landscape, are usual and can't change urban dweller's mind. The option of the people should much more estimated for decisions on urban landscape. This can be done by forms of citizen participation in decisions on urban landscape and by involvement of citizen groups in the general planning (Breuste 1998, Breuste et al. 1998, Breuste & Wohlleber 1998).

Strategies of planning for landscapes in cities and its surroundings should vary depending on the urban landscape and the social-cultural contexts, even if it might sometimes seem contradictory. Landscape development targets can be realised and embedded in general planning ideas as showed by the often used terms "Green Rings", "Greenways" or "Green Belts". These are areas surrounding cities, which contain natural environments and protect against urban expansion. These areas must be defended by planning and development practice against fragmentation and consumption for urban development because the "Green Rings" are high valued by the population and allow recreation in natural surrounding and education on various forms of nature as well.

The European Landscape Convention of 2000 also provided the opportunity to develop complex urban landscapes. One of the tasks set by this convention was to introduce into town planning, quality targets for all landscapes, and to use them as strategic tools for complex developments, and not just for protection against unlimited urban development. The urban landscapes are in this regard of especially high importance.

Another important element of planning for nature is the stabilisation of traditional agricultural land use in sub-urban zones. Agriculture is the most important land use which secures land as open space against building purposes. However, especially in urban landscape, agriculture is under permanent pressure for removal. Stabilisation can bring a wider, multi-functional-oriented agricultural land use (biological production, recreation, accessibility etc.) with positive economical effects for farmers.

Finally, some recommendations for rehabilitation of urban landscapes is presented below:

- *Decreasing the general human impact/ disturbance*
- *Steering of visitors of nature sites*
- *Regeneration of degraded nature sites*
- *Securing and enforcing old land cultivation forms (such as meadows and pastures)*
- *Establishment of new sites for indigenous vegetation (especially wetlands)*

(Breuste 2001).

Conclusion

The investigations in Halle and the Greifswald showed: Only those landscape elements of the past landscape could be secured and protected which were valued and to which new functions were given. Utilization is an important factor for linking the past with the present and for further development in landscape planning.

Historical elements of the landscape are symbols of identification by the people. This is not a given situation but has to be developed by information, education and people's involvement into decisions. Those landscape elements are not only buildings but also open spaces and natural elements of the former landscape. The new and future landscape consists in extended parts of the former landscape. The land use and the utilization of the landscape are the key elements of a working connection.

The implementation of new landscape elements and the replacement of former ones depend on the competition of utilization functions in the space and again on the acceptance of utilization by the owners of properties/spaces and the people. The planning itself can only work in a position moderating the interests. There is a competition between the different landscape elements but in form of its relevance, importance and utilization aspects. The decision to replace landscape elements by others base on a common acceptance level not every time expressed and articulated by the people, often only tolerated. To raise acceptance for historical landscape elements will improve their importance in this competition.

Landscape is shaping itself without any targeted maintenance into new landscape forms. The process of steering of this development can be shared into different stakeholders as landowners, economic developers, political decision makers, moderating planners and in the landscape living people. If the shaping process is understood as an all interests including process than the process of competition among interests, raising acceptance and sharing interests is of high importance. Only together landscape quality targets can be developed which can give orientation, reflects the different interests and respects the identity and tradition of landscapes and its inhabitants. With clear targets, time scales and responsibilities these quality targets of clear defined landscapes can be a very helpful tool in the planning steered moderation process.

The examples and conclusions show the past and the present (and future) landscape can be linked together respecting the historical, cultural and ecological heritages of landscapes and shaping the cultural biography of them for the future needs.

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