ULI Europe’s Urban Regeneration Council fosters stronger interaction between city governments, real estate developers and practitioners and major institutional investors. It looks to share ideas and experiences from around the world to help provide insights into best practice in city development and urban regeneration.

At their meeting in Berlin in January 2018, The Council was hosted by Arup. The day consisted of presentations on a number of urban regeneration case studies in the morning on Berlin, Bilbao and Madrid, followed by a panel discussion. In the afternoon, the group went on a site tour at Betahaus and Holzmarkt.
“It's not the architecture that's unique, it's the city that's unique”

Castellana Norte District, Madrid

Flavio Tejada, Arup
Flavio discussed the key drivers for successful urban transformation and the difficulty of predicting the impact of governance, socio-economic aspects, innovation and environment on the future of cities. He shared the importance of learning from other cities and discussed the challenges of re-inventing a city that already exists.

The Castellana Norte District is a key opportunity site in the north of Madrid. This 2.7 million square meter site is a public private partnership including a private sector developer, national rail authority, municipality, regional authorities and the Ministry of Public Works. Taking inspiration from successful regeneration projects around the world, the project focused on sustainability as a design driver and has adopted a framework of eight principles including health and wellbeing, efficiency of resources, mobility and connectivity.

The group discussed the pace of change and the difficulty for design and policy to adapt and keep up.

Key takeaways:
- Developments and territories that are socially, environmentally and economically responsible have become more competitive.
- Human capital, quality of life, environment, culture, entertainment, tolerance, diversity and habitability are key elements for attracting urban potential.
- Creating ‘cities for people’ is more important than designing for the municipality.

• Engagement with local residents was key to the successful continuation of this project — helping it to weather political changes.
• Cities that offer the easiest, most enjoyable places to live, learn, work travel and play are likely to be the winners in the global competition for increasingly footloose international investment, residents and employers.

A Thousand Days in Berlin: Tales of Property Pioneering

Andy Watson
Andy, a qualified chartered surveyor and former property agent, shared with the Council insights on the property industry in Berlin in the early 1990’s, as featured in his book ‘A Thousand Days in Berlin’. Andy spoke about place, people and property at the city in this time of huge transformation after the re-unification of the city.

Andy talked about the ‘heavy, black and white’ feeling in the East of the city and the opening up of real estate opportunities. He shared the problems of severe pollution stemming from coal fuelled district heating plants and mass unemployment in areas of the city and smaller towns around Berlin. He recalled a dichotomy of people in the city – a sense of order in the east versus artistic, alternative people in the West and recounted anecdotes and stories of the property pioneers of that time.

Key takeaways:
- The property industry was like a blank page after the re-unification of the City. A bit like the ‘wild east’.
- Valuation of property was difficult because there were no comparables.
- Rebuilding of infrastructure was a huge job. In East Germany, only one in 15 had a landline phone.
How is Bilbao adapting to the new economy?

Lourdes Fernandez, Azkuna Zentroa

Lourdes presented on the revival and regeneration of the City of Bilbao and its transformation into a city of culture and services. From 1880 to 1980 the city’s focus was on industry, particularly the iron and steel industries, and the Port of Bilbao was one of the largest in Europe. In the mid 1970s, the city went into severe industrial economic decline as a result of the economic crisis. Faced with high levels of unemployment (30%), a rise of emigration and social pessimism by its residents, the City embarked on a rehabilitation plan to revamp the local economy and revitalise Bilbao as a city of services.

In 1992 an agency, the Bilbao Ría 2000, was formed to rehabilitate degraded areas of the city by developing environmental, transport and urban development projects. The city’s underground system, Metro Bilbao, was also a determining factor in the metamorphosis of the city.

Regeneration focused on the rejuvenation of key districts within the city and the introduction of new cultural and business services including the now famous Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry, as well as a conference centre and concert hall, sports arena, technology park and exhibition centre.

Azkuna Zentroa, previously known as Alhóndiga Bilbao, is another key site in the continued renaissance of the city. The site comprised a heritage building, which was previously a wine warehouse. With the help of French designer, Philippe Starck, the building was transformed in to a centre for culture, art and leisure. Containing a multiplex cinema, library, fitness centre, showrooms, shops and restaurants, the building has become a meeting place for residents and visitors.

Lourdes also shared with the Council members information about Azkuna Zentroa’s participation in the SmARTplaces programme – a visionary European project aimed at developing and increasing visitor numbers, in order to revolutionise the ways of perceiving and consuming culture and art, through digital technology and new ways of cultural mediation.

Key takeaways:
• The revival of Bilbao focused on a consistent vision to refocus the city as a centre for culture arts and services.

• The city prioritised exemplary architecture – both retaining and restoring buildings of historic interest, such as the Abastos Market and Arriaga Theatre and engaging international and local architects to design new buildings.

• 90% of the population of Bilboa thinks the Azkuna Zentroa project has had a positive impact on the city. 75% believe that it helps increase tourist and economic activity.

• The operation of Azkuna Zentroa makes a distinction between users, customers and visitors to cater from everyone’s needs.

• The next challenge for Bilbao is to attract tech innovation.
Site visits around Betahaus

Led by Bastian Unterberg, CEO & Founder, Jovoto
Betahaus is a co-working space in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin. It was founded in 2009 by a small group of entrepreneurs seeking more flexible working space. The group now operates buildings in other cities including Lisbon, Barcelona, Sofia and Hamburg.

Bastian talked about Jovoto – a digital platform based approach to product and service innovation fuelled by 100,000 freelance creatives from around the world. The platform facilitates mass collaboration leading to fresh ideas, from product design and marketing campaigns to innovative business scenarios of the future. Bastian shared some of the lighthouse projects who have used the platform including ‘the future of the service station’ and ‘design of a low carbon footprint apartment’.

Key takeaways:
- The city did not drive the Betahaus initiative. It was created by the community. They now have a waiting list 25 pages long and can charge premium rent.
- Berlin does not have any problems attracting talent – as long as you invite them in the summer.
- By 2020, 50% of the working population in the US will be in freelance positions.
- To replicate the template characteristics that make Berlin successful Bastian advised to “Listen to the creative communities.” Creatives moved to the area for cheap rents and development followed.

Site Visit around Holzmarkt

Led by Johannes Husten, Holzmarkt 25 and Mario Husten, Eckwerk
Holzmarkt is an urban village, comprising a theatre, dance club, bar and restaurant, bakery, music studio, and kindergarten. It was developed by a small group of friends who wanted to create a community for artists and musicians in Berlin. They formed a cooperative and in 2012, having secured funding from a Swiss pension fund, bought the land on a 75-year lease and set about creating their vision.

Key takeaways:
- Holzmarkt is about creating value for the majority of people.
- Holzmarkt’s structure includes 15 companies, each focusing on different operational activities, e.g. managing the energy supply, food and beverage, events.
- Urban design is low density, with a variety of styles including self-constructed buildings using recycled materials to achieve affordable urban rents for craftspeople, artists and creative people in the village.
- A ‘blur of uses’ is encouraged within the village. Buildings are constructed to be adaptable.

“Berlin was a magnet for young, creative people. It was cheap to live here, so people had regular jobs, for example, as a bar tender, which would cover their rent, leaving them free time to focus on music, art and entrepreneurship.”
Members and guests of the Council

Nekane Alonso, Azkuna Zentroa  
Iñaki Azaldegi, McKinsey & Company  
Stephen Barter, KPMG  
Olivier Bastin, IMMOBEL SA/NV  
Jacopo della Fontana, D2U - Design to Users  
Sylvia Dinter, SD – Group  
Barbara Epalza, Azkuna Zentroa  
Judith Everett, The Crown Estate  
Mahmood Faruqi, Studio MO2  
Lourdes Fernandez, Azkuna Zentroa  
Jermoe Frost, Arup-Europe  
Henk Gelens, Peter Brett Associates LLP  
Manfred Guenterberg, Wolfsburg AG  
Marcus Hale, PATRIZIA Immobilien AG  
Vanessa Hale, BNP Paribas Real Estate  
Paula Hirst, Disruptive Urbanism  
Ed Jackson, Bank of America Merrill Lynch  
Nicolette Klein Bog, Bouwinvest  
Hugh Lumby, Ashurst LLP  

Donald MacDonald, Hooke & MacDonald  
Donal McDaid, Arup  
Ian Mulcahey, Gensler  
Vanessa Muscara, M&G Investments  
Kevin Nolan, Hibernia REIT  
Frank O’Neil, Hibernia REIT  
Gabriele Pascolini, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP  
Alex Phillips, Grosvenor  
Daniel Ringelstein, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP  
Gerard Schuurman, Young City Gdansk  
Flavio Tejada, Arup  
Philip Tidd, Gensler  
Ebe Trefers, Wonam Organisatie B.V.  
Desirée Ulitzetter, BPD  
Bob van der Zande, City of Amsterdam, City Development  
Jacek Wachowicz, Immobel Poland  
Andy Watson, A Thousand Days in Berlin  
Boy Wesel, Bouwinvest

About ULI Europe

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 40,000 real estate and urban development professionals in 76 countries dedicated to advancing the Institute’s mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. In Europe, we have over 3,000 members.

European Councils are forums for industry leaders to meet, exchange ideas, share best practices and foster thought leadership in their specific sector of the real estate market. Consisting of a genuinely international membership, the councils provide a unique platform to learn from peers in the same sector who are operating in different geographical markets, as well as help shape the future of pan-European real estate.

Join us today

The success of ULI’s Product Councils relies on the active participation of our senior executive full members. If you would like to share your expertise and be involved in shaping the future of real estate in Europe, please contact the relevant Chair or Jacqui Collins at jacqui.collins@uli.org for information on applying to join a Council.

https://europe.uli.org/join