In Germany, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collateral damage resulting jointly from modern urban development and globalisation has come to a head. Urban traffic continues to destroy the fabric of the inner-city environment as well as the surrounding urban areas. Ongoing reconstruction in the metropolitan conurbations makes it difficult to find integrated or holistic solutions because issues of economic development and daily life are dealt with separately, and because ‘the city’ and ‘the region’ are considered as separate domains. It has become obvious that we need to apply models of ‘late-urbanisation’ to the structure of our neighbourhoods. This would include bringing aspects of living and working closer together, in this way shortening distances, improving social cohesion and encouraging the use of public transportation. However, creative competition around the best ideas for this concept is limited. The real estate industry is fixated on the separate concepts of life + leisure and work + transport. The spread of digitisation in all areas of everyday life distracts from our ability to critically examine the neighbourhood as the main unit for solving these urgent problems.

This chapter forms an extended case study of a new self-build urban quarter in the small university city of Tübingen, where living and working were integrated, creating a model of design and resident-led development that departed radically from the contemporary norms of developer-led housing. The site of this new ‘living laboratory’ was to be a former military barracks area on the southern edge of the city, which the French army garrison had vacated following the reunification of Germany in 1991. However, during the initial phase of planning, it became clear that local real estate developers were not interested in
co-operating to realise this unusual development model. Yet it was evident that the scheme had strong community support, and households were ready to adopt the mixed-use concept, provided that the city, as the future owner of the existing barracks, would be willing to sell building plots for them to develop through self-building in groups or Baugruppen (see also Hamiduddin, this volume).

The conversion of the barracks site into a model for integrated living and working was, in practice, the result of an accidental encounter between two movements that would otherwise seem unlikely: a desire by city planners to create genuine mixed-use quarters, and the appetite and energy of citizens to construct them. In view of the current and widespread trend towards a ‘return to the city’, a link between urban life and work needs to be established to reduce traffic and increase socialisation. The business community does not (and cannot) support the creation of a lively neighbourhood, so city dwellers who are willing to take the matter into their own hands will have to create it for themselves. This ‘encounter’ led, in the early 1990s, to results which no one initially thought possible but which in practice were successfully implemented.

Although few serious attempts to repeat this experiment were made, one thing became clear: if we do not start to focus more on the importance of the neighbourhood for integration, social cohesion and everyday life, we will have difficulty tackling the upcoming challenges for our cities and regions. It has become normal for us that the business industry decides where work is required. Clearly, there is a big difference between whether work is required within the neighbourhood or only off-site in the industrial area, the office park or in a technology centre.

The challenge of (re)integrating living and working

Separation

Across Europe, urban and regional planning authorities focused on the relationship between living and working in the reconstruction of war-damaged cities. To avoid interference as much as possible and to create a ‘healthy’ living and working environment, strict separation of residential and industrial areas was maintained. Based on the famous Athens Charter, and also on the philosophy of the Bauhaus (Ludwig Hilberseimer), architects Johannes Göderitz, Roland Rainer and Hubert Hoffmann published their book *Die gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt* (The Articulated and Relaxed City) in 1957. Shortly after, the West German state adopted the
Land Utilisation Ordinance (*Baunutzungsverordnung* – BauNVO). This, in the context of a strong city growth, led to decades of ongoing structural loosening and socio-spatial separation. It soon became clear that this process caused the loss of the main characteristics of the city. However, no systematic review of the mechanisms that were set in motion took place. The separation not only marked the outward sprawl of cities into their surroundings, but also the transformation of urban neighbourhoods. A good example of these changes is Berlin’s Kreuzberg district. A selection of 14 blocks in the district were documented in 1886, consisting of 519 factories covering 75 different industries. In 1910, the number had risen to 829 companies. Twenty years after the new planning law was introduced in 1961, only 117 companies covering 30 industries were left, and today not even one of those companies exists (the shops on the ground floors of the front houses are not counted in the documentation provided).

Businesses have not only emigrated; many simply ceased to exist when they were absorbed by industrialisation and later technological change, despite the aim of the ‘social market economy’ not to discriminate against the smaller or neighbourhood-embedded companies. Indeed, Hausmann and Soltendiek (1986: 87) note that:

> The mix of functions, such as residence and production and distribution of goods in a manageable area (block, street) ensured an urban character, which is referred to as the concept of urbanicity. It is associated with nuisance through noise and emissions, but also contains a high level of diversity of experience and quality of living, especially for people who are not yet or no longer involved in the development process.

The dangers for social cohesion that have been linked to such urban changes have been described in detail by Jane Jacobs in her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. A German translation of this book was published in Germany in 1963. But the conservative city governments with their non-profit housing associations were supported by urban sociology in their view that the social question primarily concerned the housing shortage and that increasing state-subsidised social housing was the solution. Over the following decades, the construction of large residential settlements played a decisive role, which left little room for private self-initiatives.

Although in some older city centres attempts were made to maintain a remaining spatial combination of life and work, the cities with their
agglomerations kept developing into ‘Fordist cities’, fuelled by technological advances in transport and communications. As in Berlin, 90 per cent of the population of Germany’s larger cities may be assumed to live in an environment that is largely functionally separated.

Since the 1990s, the environmental (land use, climate change, species loss) and social (separation, loss of balancing work and family life, the loss of incidental social contact and polarisation) effects can no longer be considered to have been solely generated by society. The link between these patterns and the spatial loosening and separation that are now considered normal in urban planning must be addressed as core matters of sustainability. Stefan Siedentop (2003) identified the following symptoms resulting from the growth of agglomerations: increasing resource intensity, increasing traffic congestion, continuing socio-spatial separation processes, increasing infrastructure intensity and increasingly fragmented open space structures.

Although ‘smart growth’ and ‘compact city’ planning strategies (Daniels, 2001; Dieleman and Wegener, 2004) have been developed to address these issues, a question remains whether such compression is, in itself, sufficient for creating diverse and vibrant new neighbourhoods. An alternative approach is to address separation directly through a ‘late-urbanisation’ approach extending beyond the inner cities to the suburbs, outskirts and margins of cities. This was the approach pursued on Tübingen’s fragmented southern fringe.

The French Quarter

The French Quarter in Tübingen, briefly mentioned in the introduction, may be one of the earliest projects attempting to create a small-scale and diverse functional mix in a new urban quarter, a counterbalance to the trend towards separation of living and working. Essential to this story was the fact that Tübingen had its own urban renewal office, a remnant of the era of urban renewal in the 1970s. This office had long-term experience of urban renewal and competence in urban development law. It also had experience of those affected by urban measures and of planning in co-operation with the Department of Social and Cultural Affairs. Early on, it became apparent that the unusual aim and objectives of this project had to be well founded and had to have broad political applicability. In the event, initial targets for housing and employment were accepted by the public and the municipal council without debate. The planning objectives were defined in local legislation as follows:
Planning objectives: creating mixed-use neighbourhoods with a wide range of living arrangements, work and public facilities; complementing the large-scale barracks structure with smaller townhouse developments as a prerequisite for the intended variety of uses; designing new public road spaces that can be used for the adjoining dense development as an area of everyday life; producing an attractive mix of old and new between existing permanent barracks architecture (to show its historical origin also in the future) and added city architecture. (*Gemeinderatsprotokoll* 4.3.1991)

From the outset, the French Quarter neighbourhood concept featured functional diversity and the ‘city of short distances’ concept, involving a combination of new small (partially incomplete) block developments, a number of old buildings from the existing barracks in need of major improvement, and various public spaces, with a focus not so much on motorised traffic but on providing quality space for pedestrians. This ‘hybrid’ structure is a prerequisite for accommodating a diverse mix of homes, small to medium-sized enterprises in the services and production sectors, and social and cultural institutions. Self-build or *Baugruppen* was a critical mode of development for the new buildings of the French

![Figure 12.1 Model of the project in its environment](image)
Quarter. The first Baugruppen started construction of their buildings in 1993, using freelance architects to design and supervise construction of the buildings. In Tübingen the use of this small-scale approach to building design and construction was something of a revolution within the development industry.

**Figure 12.2** View over the rooftops of the French Quarter

**Brief project description (Master Plan 1993)**

Total area = 64.50 hectares / neighbourhood area = 43.66 hectares, of which French Quarter = 13.27 hectares / expected inhabitants = 6,110, of whom expected for French Quarter = 2,390 / planned jobs = 2,490, of which planned for French Quarter = 500 (realised 700).
A new approach

During the 1990s, various publications and announcements calling for small-scale mixed-function developments and for a ‘city of short distances’ appeared in the political and academic arenas. Of particular note is the final report from 1993 of the commission Zukunft Stadt 2000 set up by the Federal Ministry of Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development with the following core statements:

A focus on internal development and extension as well as adding to existing neighbourhoods will hardly do justice to foreseeable needs. There is a need for regional development concepts and more regionally oriented planning decisions. Here, ecological and economic considerations suggest ‘cities of short distances’ and diverse mixing in polycentric areas. This requires new concepts of control. It is not enough to merely formulate images and design models of a future city. Changes applied to a built city must go hand-in-hand with changes in the production structure, the traffic conditions and everyday life. … Cities are characterized by dense transport networks, intensive spatial division of labour, and exchange of goods. They need efficient mobility systems. However, subsidising mobility in any form is contrary to the aims of a compact, mixed city of short distances. The excessive spatial division of labour and the extensive mobility that characterize urban regions can, for the most part, be attributed to the lack of allocation of mobility costs. … Cities of functional separation and thus high dominance of car traffic are now mostly cities for regular users or cities for users with average or normal needs. Irregular users, especially children, the young, the elderly, single women with children, users with atypical lifestyles and people belonging to minorities encounter various obstacles, risks or even threats. We are a long way from having cities conveniently usable without threats for vulnerable minorities. … High density and mixed usage can help to provide or strengthen safety and control, contact and stimulation. … An ecological urban development is successful only if the ‘polluter pays principle’ is taken seriously.

The content of this report alone did not lead to the creation of fair policies. But neither can the issues raised be ignored. Indeed, different stakeholders began to voice their support for the principles outlined above, notably in the 1996 national report on the international conference Habitat II
and in the German government’s subsequent report on the ‘Protection of Man and the Environment – Evaluation Criteria and Prospects for an Environmentally Acceptable Development’. This included specific guidance by the German Association of Cities to prioritise the reuse of urban brownfield land to ‘avoid social separation’ and to ‘reduce traffic problems’. The urban sociologist Hartmut Häußermann (1998) illustrates this relationship between the urban structure and social outcomes at the neighbourhood level:

Where profit can be made by the revaluation of property, there will be a social redeployment that results in social separation. Thus, the great good of a relatively less separated city structure is lost. … The complex, functionally and socially diverse, interdependent urban areas, which may differ in their building age, are the ideal terrain for immigrants and those with low incomes to avoid complete dependence on transfer payments. Much empirical evidence exists here. In the socially homogenous, mono-functional residential areas on the outskirts, without redundant spaces or areas that could be used for unplanned activities, the percentage of unemployment and welfare recipients among Germans and non-Germans of the same social status is five times as high as in the inner-city historical building areas.

What this makes clear is that existing urban areas that contain a mix of old and new buildings, providing a variety of tenures and affordability for different income groups, are gravely under threat.

Construction site implementation

Effective strategies for creating urban diversity have been implemented only in a very limited fashion so far. This is due to several factors:

1. There are too few attractive examples that create demand to convince developers to engage with a potentially lucrative market.
2. Neighbourhood effects (examples include reconciling work and family, integration of immigrants) correspond to the social effects of mixed-use neighbourhoods, which are generally neglected and underestimated, and insufficiently discussed in social sciences and the media.
3. The increasing trend of returning to the city, and the associated increase in urban housing shortage, makes housing so lucrative in
the inner-city development context (keyword: ‘concrete gold’) that decision-makers avoid investing time in planning diverse mixed neighbourhoods.

4. A mixture of residential, retail, leisure and entertainment is – if possible in conjunction with a ‘social mix’ – a concept that can easily be offered as a solution to these problems, also because it reacts well to the needs of the consumer and leisure society.

5. There has been very little critique of current policies within the realm of public policy.

Officially, hundreds of so-called mixed-use schemes have been developed in the last few years, yet very few of them meet the framework set out in the Zukunft Stadt 2000 report, and the criteria subsequently laid out by Häußermann are met in only a few cases. The conclusion therefore is that if the federal and regional governments provide no strategies for the development of neighbourhoods and transport that meet the requirements for genuine environmental and social sustainability through integration, urban development will remain locked in limbo between attempted ‘late-urbanisation’ and continuing functional and social separation.

**Living and working: Tübingen’s French Quarter**

**A mixed-use concept**

The mixed-use aim of the French Quarter project was clearly defined at the outset: ‘In all conversion areas life and work should be mixed. (Commercial) Industrial and professional uses are expressly supported, insofar as they “do not significantly disturb the residents”’ (BauNVO, § 6). Since the city owns the conversion area, it can enforce the mixed-use target in the resale of land and buildings if there is demand from suitable candidates. Indeed, it wasn’t entirely clear at the outset what types of company would be suitable for the mixed-use zone or would opt to be located there in preference to an industrial site (see Läpple and Walter, 2000). It also became apparent at the outset that many of the old barrack block buildings would to be reused to encourage both a diverse economy and building diversity. Some buildings were in rather a dilapidated condition, meaning that their restoration had to be factored into development plans, causing interference with the planning regularity of the initial overall designs. These older buildings were quickly taken up by artisans and small-scale producers, as the buildings...
proved particularly suitable for the diverse needs of the manufacturing sector. Indeed, an important lesson here is that uniformity of planning tends to encourage uniform land use and less attractive public spaces. In the new-build Baugruppen residential schemes, block-style perimeter developments with green courtyards were found to be an ideal model for connecting the public realm of streets and squares with the private domain of the home environment. Overall, the variety of land use across the neighbourhood, together with the structural compactness of the built forms, encourage high use of public space and pedestrian movement as well as lower automobile use. These parameters are consistent with Hans-Henning von Winning’s (2016) recently developed criteria for late-urbanisation:

[The late-urban neighbourhood] embodies personal experience, accessibility, children space, integration and identity, and the proximity to footpaths – not forgetting the distance from public transport. Urbanity can best be described using three criteria, all are individually imperative for diversity, freedom of choice, accessibility and efficient transport – i.e. mobility in the strict sense:

• For pedestrians and cyclists, urban density means that many destinations are close by. For users of public transport, density around all stops means many destinations in the whole network, a prerequisite for a qualified public transport network.
• Functional and social mix means variety, diversity and integration. It prevents the formation of rich/poor ghettos and parallel societies. It incorporates non-residential uses. And, in particular, it ensures the utilisation of all (traffic!) infrastructures during the day, week and year.
• Public vs. private means a narrow web of streets and squares open on all sides; incorporated into the urban scheme for all modes of transport; with traffic moderated in main and side streets; designed and lively and with an urban, street-oriented design. This is also necessary for local mobility and public transport accessibility.

Developing a diverse urban environment

Although it is difficult to define an ‘optimal’ mix of land use for a new urban quarter, it should be noted that lively public spaces and street life require as diverse a mixture as possible, with an intimate relationship between
buildings and streets and public spaces (see Jacobs, 1961). Diversity is itself a product of allowing flexibility and openness that in turn encourages the engagement and participation of residents. Planning alone does not and cannot lead to diversity; rather, it requires the involvement of prospective customers, investors, architects, consultants and so forth. In the development of the French Quarter, collaborative self-build through Baugruppen was a critical element in achieving diversity in both land use and architectural style. An important prerequisite for allowing this resident-led development approach was the ability of the City of Tübingen to obtain the right to purchase the redevelopment area, allowing it to make the important strategic decisions governing the important qualities of a place and to sell individual building plots directly to the Baugruppen on a competitive basis.

In the French Quarter, diversity in the built environment was developed through an iterative process, in the first instance through the development of a strategic planning framework covering the whole development area, and then through detailed proposals for each building plot created by small development groups, or Baugruppen, of prospective residents. The city planning authority developed the rudimentary strategic plan, a structural and spatial framework that set out objectives for the different areas of the French Quarter development area. Working with this outline plan, more detailed plans were developed for specific sites within the development area, using sketches which were then presented to the public. Prospective residents were invited to form co-operative groups or Baugruppen of prospective group self-builders. The groups were able to view the outline proposals for the site, to voice their wishes and ideas, and also to demonstrate what they could potentially contribute to help achieve the desired land-use mix of an area. The Baugruppen would develop plans for a specific building plot (or a part of an old building) on which the city would issue a purchase option. In this way, a preliminary concept of the mixture was created, then developed collaboratively in a further planning phase by a range of further stakeholders, including the city (for public buildings including schools and nurseries), other public bodies including the university (for student accommodation), prospective small businesses (studios, craft shops, workshops), and the Baugruppen. In the French Quarter, each new building was obliged to have non-residential activity on the ground floor, intended to generate tight integration between different land uses. Reflecting on the aspiration for a mixed, diverse and integrated neighbourhood at the French Quarter, Roskamm (2013) notes that:
It was always emphasized in Tübingen that the optimal mixed city can be achieved, above all, by being open to new and different lifestyles. Other planning priorities included co-operation among business, media, science and cultural institutions, as well as the restoration of public spaces for communal everyday use. The focus has therefore been expanded by complementing the model of a mixed city with the notion of solidarity. From the outset, it was not only about the fair distribution of residential areas, but also about group affiliation in an urban neighbourhood within a ‘randomly diverse society’ (Feldtkeller [2001], 278). The yardstick was to explore ‘in particular what children and youth’ would make of our plans. Overall, as expressed with great conviction in Tübingen, a mixed city would need structures that can be fully integrated, robust, able to manage conflict, largely self-regulating, designable and changeable (ibid.). The interpretation of the term mixture in the South of Tübingen differs crucially from most of the other mix projects of the 1990s. The focus is less on mixing (mischen), and more on getting involved (mit-mischen). The (structural) establishment of this mixed urban construction, probably viewed as the most successful example of its type in Germany, is far less important than its focus on concepts such as openness, enabling and providing as well as the establishment of public spaces (architectural-spatial but also discursively-organizational).

Roskamm goes on to add:

It is also clear in Tübingen, however, that such a form of co-mixing is only possible under certain circumstances. Prerequisites for success in Tübingen included, among others, the presence of vacant buildings, the power to dispose of land, the use of significant financial resources, a strong will and an ability to work against existing legal planning restrictions, the inclusion/integration of diverse players and not least an administration that is willing and able to withdraw at certain points during the planning process.

Public engagement is an activity that is strongly interlinked with public relations. It must be remembered that functional diversity only arises during the implementation process – as an outcome of dialogue and development. It may therefore be clearly stated that ‘mixed use cannot be planned’. Planning is only possible in an iterative (learning) process. Experience shows, however, that the process and the results are not as
fragile and unpredictable as it may at first seem – because it is in the interests of all stakeholders to achieve a physical environment and functionality of the highest possible quality.

Conceptual issues

The generally perceived wisdom is that the market is against mixed-use development. In reality, however, when we say ‘the market’ we are in fact discussing the ‘established’ market as it currently performs. The established market is based on planning laws in conjunction with land utilisation ordinances and other regulations, developed to separate incompatible land uses during industrialisation. Acting in opposition to functional diversity, orthodox planning separates residential districts – in which only non-disruptive commercial uses are permitted – from commercial areas, which primarily serve to accommodate commercial enterprises that, in reality, are hardly disruptive. When we consider that cities and communities are in competition to attract investment for the economic growth of their communities, we can see how small consumer-oriented businesses have been replaced by larger enterprises that have settled in purpose-built industrial parks. Neighbourhoods with a truly diverse mix of functions will only prevail in future if, with the support of local planning authorities and civic bodies, they promote those businesses that thrive on close proximity to residential areas (see Nordbüro der norddeutschen Handwerkskammern, 1993; Läpple and Walter, 2000), and if the use of space by housing and transport through regional planning is limited more predictably and even more drastically in the future than previously. A mixed-use zone can only compete with a commercial area if it is very well connected to the public transport system. Therefore, it is important early on to integrate new mixed urban quarters with high-quality public transport infrastructure.

Self-build development

Baugruppen

Single-use areas, such as residential districts, industrial parks and shopping malls, tend to be developed speculatively, to address demand that is latent or assumed rather than actual. This speculative investment and development model is difficult to apply to schemes where functional diversity forms the overall objective, and which requires the reuse of old buildings in varying states of dilapidation. In Tübingen, the local
development industry opted not to get involved with the redevelopment of the French Quarter site, fearing that residential properties in a mixed-use area would be difficult to market, and particularly where car use and car parking would be restricted. It was not the original intention to redevelop the French Quarter site through Baugruppen; rather, these prospective resident groups emerged during public consultation over the outline development proposals undertaken by the urban redevelopment office.

The Baugruppen development process is rather different from the pathway followed by a typical developer, and at the French Quarter typically involved the following steps:

- The development agent (urban redevelopment office) attracts interested self-builders through the marketing of potential development plots for groups.
- In general, housing follows quite a simple development pathway, but it is rather more difficult for businesses that wish to locate to a mixed-use zone.
- Therefore, candidates are sought who, while seeking a residence for themselves, are also prepared both to accommodate a commercial business on the ground floor of their (as yet) undesignated site and to identify an appropriate business to collaborate with the group as a joint consortium.
- A proposal is developed incorporating both residential and commercial aspects of the build, and the outline development options generated by the consortium are presented to the public.
- Several consortia may be interested in developing a particular plot; negotiations are undertaken to identify the most appropriate group.
- Each consortium is invited to submit an outline plan, including the proposal for a commercial enterprise in their scheme, which is coordinated by a ‘competent person’ – typically a professional such as an architect or project manager – who makes the application for development.
- A local authority steering committee reviews the different bids and assigns plots to the consortia, which are obliged to purchase the plot and to proceed with their development proposal.
- The purchase price for the land property is determined by an expert committee of the city and is based on actual current value plus associated costs rather than a speculative value under competitive market conditions.
• Detailed design work and costing are commenced by the Baugruppen – the development process is professionally managed.
• The Baugruppen undertakes to contractually secure the commercial use of the allocated non-residential space, either for purchase or rent.

This model was established back in the early years of the project planning and has now become an established method of development across the city and surrounding localities. Although there were initial doubts about the usefulness of this unusual procedure, it has become a relatively common practice in southern Germany and in other cities (see Wirtschaftsministerium Baden-Württemberg, 1999). Over the longer term, households are not obliged to remain in the scheme. Household turnover is modest but significant, although such is the popularity of these schemes that vacancies are usually seized quickly. Wholesale resignations by an entire building are very rare.

Self-build construction and public space

In the French Quarter, mixed-use development has been achieved through the collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders, including private small and medium-sized enterprises (typically situated in the buildings of the former barracks), public institutions of the city (running nurseries, youth clubs and student accommodation) and the Baugruppen – which incorporated smaller craft and manufacturing businesses, service providers such as GPs or bicycle repairers and offices into the ground floors of their buildings. However, not only has self-build provided the means to achieve genuine mixed-use development, but in turn these small, diverse and mixed-use buildings can also be seen to encourage street life, attracting activity and movement, and providing natural surveillance. Such activity, in turn, encourages incidental social interaction and mixing, including between groups who may not ordinarily do so. In this way, self-build as a construction method has opened the door to a continuous process of neighbourhood mixing and reshaping. In this respect, chance is given its own role just as it is when rolling a dice: mixing creates the basis for random encounters.

Baugruppen: the motives of members

Why has the Baugruppen model proven to be such a good investment model? A systematic survey on the motivations of Baugruppen members has not yet been undertaken, but it is possible to make the
following assumptions, based on the experiences of some residents both in the French Quarter and in other comparable schemes in other parts of the city:

1. The motives for participating in the Baugruppen largely result from Tübingen being an attractive university town with a continuous stream of incomers despite the high cost of housing. In all likelihood, many French Quarter residents would initially have preferred to acquire a home through a different means, such as via a housing association rather than in a mixed-use zone, but such is the city’s long-term housing shortage that this has often not been an option. Nearby towns and villages have also failed to build sufficient, or sufficiently high-quality, new quarters to deflect interest away from Tübingen itself.

2. Baugruppen provide an attractive alternative to the mainstream development route. This is partly because they allow households to shape their own living quarters and because of the responsibility given to members for managing their schemes, which has been stripped away in a market-driven system that may be described as ‘city-planning Fordism’ (Hoffmann-Axthelm, 1993). The Baugruppen approach allows members to exert a measure of direct control over the built environment.

3. There are significant cost advantages in self-build construction, particularly because the Baugruppen acquire undeveloped land from the city and the land transfer tax is payable only on the purchase of land and not – as it is for developers – on the total construction costs. In addition, Baugruppen avoid the charge based on the developers’ profits from marketing the property. Finally, each member of the Baugruppen enjoys greater freedom of choice in aligning the allocation of construction costs with personal wishes of the building design and construction.

4. Although the opportunity to relocate to a development with short distances and small-scale mixed-use planning is not a significant motivator for all Baugruppen members, it does seem to be for some of them, such as those wishing to reconcile work and family life or those seeking employment close to home for other reasons.

5. Other motivations may include the social opportunities that come from participating in a development project, although this is likely to vary considerably between schemes.

6. Lastly, the special car reduction measures (limited and expensive car parking) implemented across the French Quarter and the wider Tübinger Südstadt might be seen negatively by some. But others may regard the ‘city of short distances’ planning approach to be very positive – especially for children, the disabled and the elderly.
Outlook for the future

Do we have to learn to think constructively in terms of neighbourhood structures?

The term ‘late-urbanisation’ means creating diverse, mixed-use spaces, at high urban density and within short distances. But we have not yet entered this new paradigm. Indeed, the problems that could be alleviated, or even avoided, by mixing different functions, are still not being tackled by changing neighbourhood structures. Rather they are tackled only in discrete, professional ways: transport problems by traffic measures; social problems through social action; ‘social integration’ through language and integration courses. Indeed, we may view a wide range of society’s problems as stemming from separation, for which the segregationist principles on which many Western planning systems are founded must share some of the responsibility.

But has this situation really become more complex in the last two decades? The concept of a greater functional mix tends to be viewed as if the idea were to replace the previous models with a new one, rather than a return to a speculative built environment model. At present, there is no political and planning consensus to ensure that, in future, in the big cities and their agglomerations, urban mixed neighbourhoods will be located next to areas that will be specialised for specific tasks. To achieve this, the network for future urban cores – especially in the agglomerations, not only in the cities – needs to be defined and expanded in a targeted manner, in conjunction with transport infrastructure. Urban, mixed neighbourhoods would then have the chance to mature in their use, and to take on important tasks of inclusion. Currently, we are far from such a conception of urban development. It seems there is no party, group or discipline that would be willing to initiate the necessary discussion.

What are the goals?

In the national report of the German federal government at the 1996 Habitat II conference the social objectives of the small-scale mixed-use zone were clearly spelled out:

Mixed usage is an urban vision that includes the functional mix of neighbourhoods (interweaving of living and working, as well as supply and leisure), social mixing … as well as structural and spatial mixing (design). … A rather small-scale mixed-use zone at neighbourhood level can (!) create the conditions for urbanity,
promoting neighbourhood life, promoting urban diversity, reducing separation and improving the living conditions of disadvantaged groups.

The objectives mentioned here include a certain idea of quality of life that is not shared by all in a multicultural and largely materialistic society. The 2007 Leipzig Charter, formulated ten years later, summarises the common goal differently:

An important basis for efficient and sustainable use of resources is a compact settlement structure. This can be achieved by spatial and urban planning, which prevents the sprawl of urban neighbourhoods. In doing so it must be assured that the land supply is monitored and speculations are being curbed. The strategy of mixing housing, employment, education, supply and recreational use in urban neighbourhoods has proven here to be particularly sustainable.

At the present time, the priority for planning is no longer on tolerance and justice, but on an efficient use of non-renewable resources and protection of the natural environment. Mixed usage would be a successful method to make economic use of space by incorporating different functional uses in the existing, largely separated settlements to establish a balance (a mosaic) between the two models of separating and mixing.

Even in the once small-scale mixed-use downtown neighbourhoods such a balance no longer exists. Policy and planning unfortunately missed out on the opportunity to establish new dense and functionally mixed neighbourhood models in the newly developed city sectors resulting from late industrial economic reorganisation. This is due to the fact that in politics the idea still prevails that there is still sufficient developable land available. However, the current sustainability strategy pursued by the German federal government sets a limit of 30 hectares per day for new building, housing and transport nationwide from 2020. Once a similar date has been set for the end of landscape consumption, the illusion that there is still enough space to be profligate with land will be erased.
Turning the theory into reality

Ted Stevens

Like millions of other people, I had dreamt of building my own home for decades – ever since I started out as an architectural journalist in my twenties. I eventually managed to do it in my early fifties. It took many years of relentless detective work to find an affordable site, two years of negotiations with the planners and then 18 months of hard work managing my contractor to ensure the house was built to the right standard. The end result was great, but it was a gruelling process.

A couple of years after I completed my house, a friend phoned me. He had just bought a publishing business, and one of the titles he had acquired was a specialist self-build magazine. He knew nothing about self-build so he asked me to spend a few months working out how the magazine could be developed and made more profitable. The first thing I tried to do was unearth some information about the scale of the self-build industry, but very little data was available as there was no trade organisation or professional body that represented the sector. So, I called a meeting of a few of the key individuals and several of the larger companies that were active in self-build, and I argued that we needed to set up an organisation to encourage the government to make it easier for people to self-build.

Because I did most of the talking I ended up being voted in as the chair of the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA). That was in 2008. It is only now, after years of lobbying, that there is evidence that the sector is beginning to grow. The length of time it has taken has been hugely frustrating and is partly due to the economic downturn.

With hindsight, it probably isn’t that surprising, especially if you compare it with the timescales that were involved in developing the