



**Colloquium Borkum on 8 May 2023****Launching day of the competition  
27th of March 2023****Organiser****European – German Association for the Promotion of  
Architecture,  
Housing and Urban Planning  
in cooperation with the City of Borkum****Contact:****European Deutschland**

Nele Zareh / Lola Meyer

Friedrichstraße 23A

10969 Berlin

Germany

phone +49 (0)30 399 185 49

e-mail mail@europand.de

**Stadt Borkum****Volker Hosemann**

Stadtbaumeister

Neue Straße 3, 26757 Borkum

Tel. : +49 4922 303 - 216

E-Mail: Volker.Hosemann@Stadt-Borkum.de

Start: 12:30 p.m., End: 1:30 p.m.

Report written by: Lola Meyer, European

Attending for the city of Borkum: Hr. Hosemann, Municipal Architect of  
the City of Borkum, Borkum

Hr. Sell, Managing Director of Nordseeheilbad GmbH, Borkum

Date: 8.5.23

Introductory words by Mr. Hosemann and Mr. Sell and European (Lola Meyer): The most important goal of the competition is to make new proposals that benefit the islanders and the guests. We need improvements for the hosts as well as for the guests. As hosts, we especially need young people to come to Borkum (or stay on Borkum) to work and live here – the island must also be attractive for them. The lack of living space for islanders is particularly worth mentioning.

In summer, Borkum already has a lot of guests; the primary goal here is to extend the season – in other words, to create offers that make the island attractive from October to April as well. In addition, the island is to be made attractive for new target groups. For example, for young families or for people like you and me: What would it take for them to consider taking a holiday on Borkum? There are three main uses that need to be accommodated: 1. The event space (described in the competition brief), 2. The information centre (see competition brief), and 3. Housing – long-term living as well as short-term living if necessary (which can also mean hotels). In addition, submissions can propose and envisage any possible use that is considered sensible in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals. Things like a cinema or library have already been mentioned in the competition. Uses should be combined/integrated.

The 3 building sites are available for the implementation of the uses – project area 2 with the current car park, project area 1 with the tennis court area and the tennis hall on the one hand, and then the area including the current culture island and its surroundings. Of course, not all three areas have to be built on. From the point of view of climate protection, for example, it can make sense to leave areas open or to establish them as open spaces. The aim is to achieve a mixture of functions – and tourist facilities and culture should be thought of in an integrated way. Accommodation ideas could also be part of the concept.

**1st Question: What attractions are there in winter? What happens here from November to March? Are the restaurants open? During the winter, where are the people that work here in the summer?**

Answer: That is exactly the problem. At the moment there is only a kind of basic services, except between 26 December and 7 January, when it

is very busy again. But then the seasonal workers leave again, and many of the residents have very little to do. It is not worthwhile, for example, to start a sauna for just a few guests, as the (energy) costs are the same regardless of whether there are 5 or 50 people. Many restaurants are closed, but bakers, for example, also coordinate their opening times. That is exactly why it is important to make the island as attractive as possible for people who want to work here – if possible, all year round. This is especially important in times of a shortage of skilled workers.

**2nd Question: Is there another type of employment during the winter months? Can suggestions be made about this in the competition?**

Answer: Proposals are welcome. Basically, it is enormously important to make the island attractive for residents and workers – the summer currently consists mostly of 6-day weeks. But the younger generation no longer wants that – they would rather have 4-day weeks. Of course, that is also possible, but then we would need even more living space, and there is already a shortage.

**3rd Question: What did the Covid pandemic change?**

Answer: The island was completely closed as of March 2020. No one could get on the island. It was only the year before last that this changed and we immediately had fully booked accommodation. Everyone wanted to get out.

**4th Question: Are there already more people who say they could live and work here part of the week – in other words, people who could work from anywhere? Like a tax consultant?**

Comment by Lola Meyer: Since this summer, I have increasingly had the feeling that people understand they are no longer tied to the office and think to themselves: I could also spend part of the week sitting in the countryside. I am curious to see whether new trends will emerge here. But is that attractive for Borkum? Or, for example, would such people just come and use the infrastructure but pay their taxes elsewhere?

Answer: Daily commuting to Borkum is not possible because of the distance between the island and the mainland. In this respect, a job offer is also needed for the partner of a person who wants to work on

the island, e.g., in tourism or in the health sector (clinics). Therefore, non-local job opportunities are very relevant. This is currently a problem on Borkum, where about 70% of the companies (and owners of holiday homes or second homes) pay their taxes elsewhere. So, please do not provide any holiday homes – we already have enough of them, they take away living space and they stand empty for 2/3 of the year. This is not the way to create a lively city.

**5th Question: Are there any expert opinions/forecasts on how the climate will change here? And won't the season automatically be extended as a result?**

Answer: Indeed, it is predicted that the temperatures here will rise overall. What we are already seeing is that many guests are now coming from Bavaria or Baden-Württemberg – while they would otherwise go to the Adriatic, for example, it is now too hot for them there. What is problematic here, apart from the rise in sea levels, are the increasing storm surges. There is a document on climate change that can be made available (European note: it already uploaded to the server in the folder called „New Documents after Launch“).

**6th Question: Is there a document pertaining to the question of the island's identity and future development?**

Answer: There has already been a document on this in the competition downloads: Borkum 2030. Now there's a new document that has recently been adopted: Borkum 2030+. This can also be made available (European note: It already uploaded to the server in the folder called „New Documents after Launch“). In contrast to other islands, Borkum's identity is strongly defined by its history as a former island for whalers.

**7th Question: Is there a roadmap to climate neutrality?**

Answer: As described in the competition brief, there is a plan to generate heat and electricity via deep geothermal energy.

**8th Question: Why isn't wind energy being used or tidal power plants being built?**

Answer: We are in the middle of the Wadden Sea National Park and Natura 2000 bird sanctuary, so such large installations are unthinkable.

**9th Question: What are the restrictions on building heights in the project areas?**

Answer: These are shown in the development plans (see competition documents and online). In addition, the buildings in the first row must not obscure the lower beam of the lighthouse.

**10th Question: Is erosion a problem here?**

Answer: It is a big problem. Looking ahead over the next 20 years, we are particularly concerned about protecting the freshwater lens in the interior of the island. This is the island's drinking water reservoir and is also an important habitat for animals and plants. If storm surges cause salt water to spill into the lens, the ecosystem can be destroyed. This is another reason why the protective dunes are so important.

**11th Question: Are there structural measures for responding to erosion?**

Answer: As I said, we are in the middle of a protected area, so no large concrete structures should be built.

**12th Question: Like everywhere in Germany, demographic change will lead to an ageing society. What about schools and plans for a „generation change“?**

Answer: There are schools up to grade 10. Then there is an „island boarding school“ on the mainland where pupils who want to attend a secondary school can go, along with pupils from other nearby islands. About 2/3 of the pupils leave the island after school (10th grade). We also have a – very small – vocational school on Borkum. That's another reason why it's important to make the island attractive – so that young people stay here and/or come here.

**13th Question: The proximity to the Netherlands – Does that still have a big influence today? Economically or in terms of tourism, for example?**

Answer: Well, we are neighbours. Economic proximity is not a big factor, but gastronomy, for example, is supplied to a good extent from the Netherlands. As for tourists, of course we get visitors from the Netherlands, and we also have a direct ferry connection. Historically, there have been many ties, as can be seen in the many Dutch surnames on the island.

[www.europas.de](http://www.europas.de)