

Borkum (DE)

Spa and Wellbeing: Health City

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The North Sea island of Borkum

Team composition: architect/urbanist/ landscaper

Location: Borkum, Kurviertel

Population: 5.160 (2022)

Study site: 45 ha

Project site 1 (south): 18 ha

Project site 2 (north): 4,5 ha

Site proposed by: City of Borkum

Actors involved: City of Borkum, Nordseeheilbad Borkum GmbH

Owner(s) of the site: City of Borkum,

Commission after competition: In the on-site workshops after the competition, the results are to be discussed on site and adapted if necessary. The next planned step is to commission the winning team(s) with urban planning studies.



INHABITED MILIEU'S CHALLENGES

The North Sea island of Borkum, located in the Wadden Sea Nature Reserve and with an area of 31 km², is the largest of the seven East Frisian Islands and consists of three districts: in the east, there is the «Reede» with its port area, in the west the district «Borkum» with the most important tourist offers, the town hall, and most of the island's inhabitants. In between, there is the district «Ostland», which is characterized by nature and has extensive dune areas with a diverse flora and fauna, making Borkum the most species-rich island in the region.

Around 5,000 residents live on Borkum all year round, and in the summer months, around 300,000 visitors (2.4 million over-night stays) come to the island, making tourism and its related businesses a strong economic factor. At the same time, tourism poses great challenges: it requires a correspondingly variable infrastructure, as well as many seasonal workers. This results in a shortage of housing - for islanders, but especially for seasonal workers.

Further challenges include the backlog of development and renovation, especially in the «Kulturinsel» (cultural island) located in the project site 1, as well as in the public spaces and the historic spa park. In addition, Borkum has set itself the ambitious goal of becoming an emission-free island by 2030 and must make adjustments to the impending climate change in the coming years.

The spa district, with its historical and culturally significant spa architecture from the 19th century, houses the most important spa and cultural facilities as well as hotels and leisure activities and is the flagship and unique selling point of Borkum.

SHOW US MIXED USES, BULDINGS AND OPEN SPACES THAT OFFER ADDED VALUE FOR VISITORS AS WELL AS FOR ISLANDERS



Project site / I: The building «culture island»

QUESTIONS TO THE COMPETITORS

How can Borkum continue to develop its tourism and create structures, uses, buildings, and open spaces that offer added value for visitors, health resort guests, and residents alike?

The European task is to develop a new programmatic and spatial perspective for the spa district that does justice to the importance of the place and offers a multifunctional mix of uses that is inclusive of guests and residents.

How can recreation, leisure, and healthcare be developed in a future-proof manner for all? This requires a spatial and content-related restructuring in project areas 1 and 2, which includes various types of housing as well as hotel and cultural and spa offers both indoors and outdoors. How can the range of leisure activities be expanded, even for the off-season and bad weather days? Where could event spaces, the visitor center of the national park, an information center of the city, and a small library be housed - and how can these be thematically and spatially linked? Mixed and flexible structures must be provided that can be adapted to different needs and are thus future-proof.

How can the two project areas be better connected to the spa district and the rest of the city?

What does the future hold for the «culture island», which dates back to 1977 and is in need of renovation? Will it be revitalized, expanded, renovated, or completely rethought? In this context, life cycle costs and recycling of building materials should also be considered. How can the underutilized Kurpark (spa park) be made sustainable and attractive for visitors?

What do open spaces look like that are attractive to different groups and contribute to climate adaptation? What contribution can the project areas make to improve the climate balance?

HOW CAN MONOFUNCTIONAL LARGE ARCHITECTURES BE MADE FUTURE-PROOF?

