



3 May 2025, Dübendorf

The Accidental Gartenstadt

Imagine a place with a variety of buildings set within rich landscapes where you can walk, cycle, play football, grow fruit and vegetables, live and work. The easy way that interiors and exteriors relate, and the self-evident arrangement of public and private, suggests this place as a paradigm, yet it is never mentioned in those terms. Architecture and urban planning as they are conventionally defined play little part in the evident success of this place that can accommodate so much while making such modest demands, a place whose residents appear quite content.

Dübendorf is an accidental Gartenstadt, a place where gardens are big, and rents are low. Its industrial and agricultural areas, close to Stettbach station, are already being transformed into a typically dense Zurich agglomeration. We can optimistically regard this over-development as an expansion valve for the town, but if the modest scales and rich open spaces of the older parts of town are to remain, there will now have to be some thinking and planning done to sustain the positive spatial and economic qualities that are present today.

We will engage with this special place and work with its existing qualities to make a Dübendorf that can become more socially and physically sustainable. Our plans will consider how education can become a new, complementary programme for this settlement, something to reinforce and work alongside existing economies and communities. The main design phase of the project will involve the transformation and new construction of buildings and landscapes that imagine the future of this accidental Gartenstadt.

We will work with the Chair of Being Alive so that buildings and landscape are given an equivalence in our discussions. We will also collaborate with Newrope in three 'rooms of entanglement', workshops where content, process and place are considered in an expanded forum.

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