Fact–finding mission Parkhaus Blankenese

Thursday 17 September 2009 00:47

Tuesday evening I attended the meeting about Blankenese's city centre. Important part of the city centre is what is happening around the refurbished area near the S–Bahnhof and some plans involving a parking under the market place. Given the amount of bullshit I heard during the meeting I decided to investigate. The line of reasoning some people followed was that the current parking at the REWE isn't used that much, so there is no need for another parking under the market place, but there are still parking and traffic issues that need to be resolved.

But I think it's still to early to evaluate how successful Parkhaus Blankenese is. Development in the area hasn't finished yet, and if the only argument against a parking under the market place is the currently perceived failure of the parking near the REWE, it will be a nasty surprise for some if that parking concept suddenly turned out to have gotten successful.

The first issue with Parkhaus Blankenese is that the area still looks like a construction site. The stores are already open for over a year, but for some reason the construction here does soft launches: Parts are finished and fully functional but some details are only wrapped up years later, and there is no big opening so there is no point after which everyone realizes it's all finished. That gives the whole place the look and feel of a construction site, and people get used to behaving like it's a construction site.

Which means they ignore traffic signs because those usually don't mean anything while things are under construction.

So it's easy to park outside in front of the REWE.

The second issue is that Parkhaus Blankenese is not a single entity, but a complicated set of multiple parkings. There's a parking for the people living there to park their cars and two seperate entries to parkings for shoppers, which isn't all that straightforward.

Then there is the usability of the entrance. For Parkhaus 2 you need to do a U–turn, Parkhaus 1 is one of three choices next to each other, the others being the entrance to the deliveries area and a temporary entrance to a construction site.

If you want to enter there are 4 red circles to make you think twice about going in. Combine that with the limited height of 2 meters and you'll get a high bounce rate of people who don't know what to think of all that and don't enter. Of all the people driving those big SUVs around Blankenese, how many of them would realize you'll need something huge like a Hummer H2 to actually exceed the maximum height of 2 meters? Most of them are driving SUVs with a height of only 1.8 or 1.9 meters, but probably just don't know the exact height or don't want to risk anything close to that, and just park outside in front of the REWE.

Parkhaus Blankenese has potential, and every now and then there are incentives to park there and shop at the REWE. But that is where it get's complicated. There are paper print–outs that contradict other messages and the look and feel of the whole system doesn't make it appear reliable, or very understandable. You'll be juggling two or three separate cards just to get out of the parking?

Once you get into the system it appears to be something that has some though behind it. You can enter the parking, take the elevator up to the REWE, do your shopping there, get your ticket validated, take the

shopping cart in the elevator down to your car and leave the parking? That's why there are three elevators to provide enough capacity.

But things are complicated. The parking should still be accessible when the REWE is closed. You're not supposed to enter the parking without having your car parked there, and the stairs lead to the emergency exit of the REWE which can't be used to enter the REWE. Closed doors aren't the best thing in combination with the claustrofobic cellar the underground carpark is.

And there are even two parking levels. The bottom one currently totally deserted. What is also strange is that the parking is next to the S−Bahnhof, but not connected in a way that makes it convenient to walk from the parking to the Bahnhof. The whole situation seems rather sub−optimal, but also a big opportunity to turn into a solution for the parking pressure in the area.

by Roland van Ipenburg
http://www.xs4all.nl/~ipenburg/blog/posts/dull/2009/09/17/fact−finding−mission−parkhaus−blankenese/