

# Georgswall

AURICH



POBA



*The old harbour where ships used to dock became a road. Cars would move around there instead of ships. It happened so fast! The view didn't become more appealing at any rate. So they dug out the edges of the port basin again and filled it with water. When the people in the surrounding houses look out of their windows they look out on the water. Water with floating letters that tell stories of sunken cities and old times. In Low German, about yesterday and tomorrow. And while the people are listening to the stories in the harbour, they hear the bells of the Pingelhus at the Georgswall. But that's a different story.*

The redesign of the Georgswall in the heart of the town of Aurich has brought this park area to a new bloom and made it into a green destination between the townhall and the marketplace. A place has been created where traces of time can be seen, thus making history tangible, visually and spatially: the former mightiness of the rampart, the former port basin, the man-made canal. The goal wasn't reconstruction but identification, the identification of Aurich's citizens with 'their' Georgswall and its history. The overall goal of the competition entry was to create a turbulent mingling of space and time visible and an emotional experience.

Today, four pools trace the historic outline of the buried port basin, and the square makes the shape and proportions of the harbour recognisable. The name of the adjacent Harbour Street (Hafenstraße) makes sense again. On the bottom of the pools are written the words "Oll Haven Auerk", which means "Old Harbour Aurich" in the local East Frisian dialect. The dialect is closely tied to the regional identity, and efforts are made to promote it, for example by means of bilingual road signs.

By the old harbour stands the Pingelhus where the harbour master would announce the departure of ships by sounding a bell (East Frisian 'pingeln' means 'to ring'). The historic buildings of the local government association "Ostfriesische Landschaft" and the affiliated "Brandkasse" insurance company are also located here, framing the square.

A belt of walking paths and play structures marks the course of the historic rampart, emphasising it by gentle shaping of the lawn. A field of fountains is located at the intersection of the green belt with the townhall passage, acting as a hub between park and town. The Bürgermeister-Hippen-Platz transitions into the Rathausplatz which sits on top of the structure of the townhall basement.

















## Project data

**Project** Georgswall

**Location** Aurich, Lower Saxony, GER

**Client** City of Aurich

**Partner** Oliver Haag (Planning Phase 1-2)

**Planning period** 2009-2012

**Construction period** 2012-2014

**Completion** 2014

**Services** Planning and construction management (Phase 1-8)

**Size** 1.2 ha

**Costs** 2.7 million € net

**Competition** 1. Prize, 2008

**Award** Nomination for the Building Culture Award, 2015

**Images** Martin Mai



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