

Scheme for the banks of the Volme, Hagen

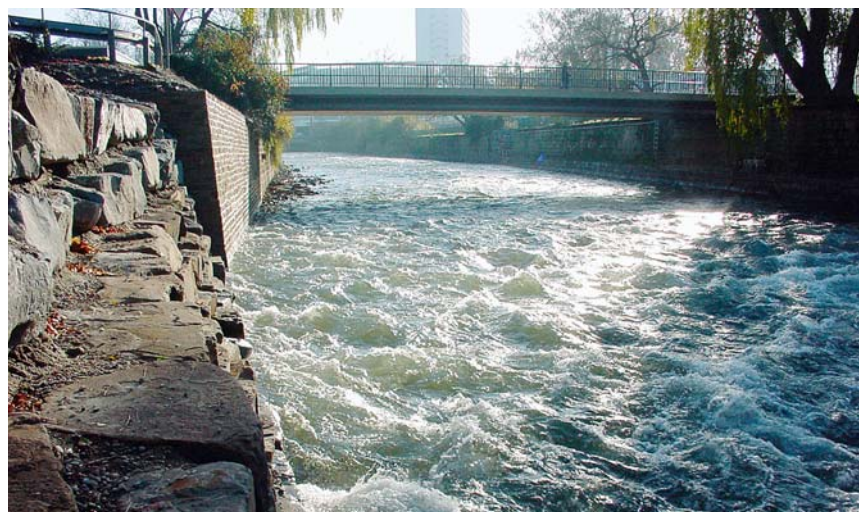
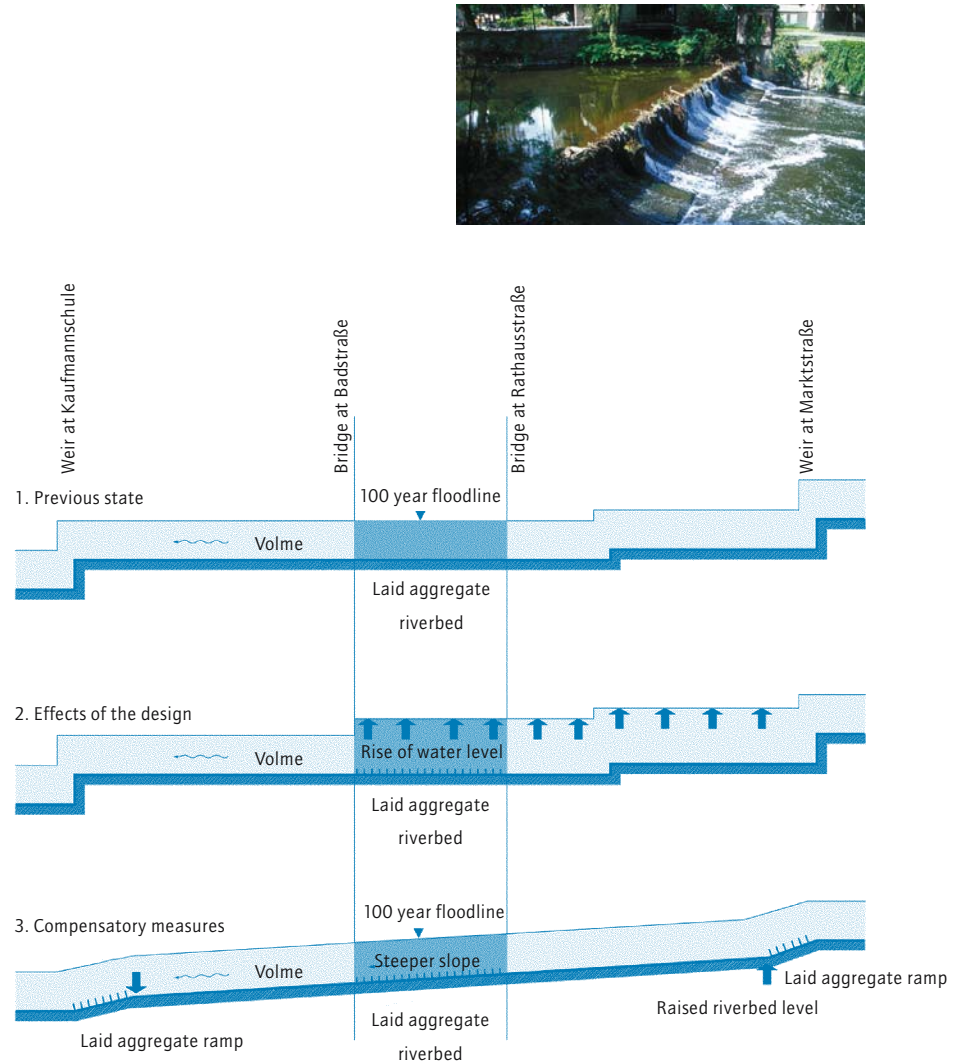
The Volme inside the town of Hagen was constrained within a box profile with embankment walls 3 metres high. As the concrete bed slowly crumbled away, a complete change of direction was envisioned.



There are some towns that have a considerable number of inhabitants and whose names are familiar, but do not trigger any associations. For example, you've heard of Hagen, but it's unlikely that you can describe more than the platform on the ICE train line. It's the same with rivers. The Ennepe is familiar enough, but how many people know that it flows into the Volme, which is a tributary of the Ruhr? Only people who live in Hagen, you might think. Anyway, the rivers come together just outside the town gates, and the Volme runs through the town centre.

But in the case of Hagen's inhabitants you can't even be certain about the Volme. As in many other places, this town with 200,000 inhabitants at the southern gateway of the Ruhr has treated its river somewhat shabbily. It was downgraded to a canal in the past 100 years, polluted with industrial waste and hidden away behind factory halls. The municipal backyards are all on the Volme. For this reason the town brought its angry citizens into the equation when it was choosing a site for its new town hall on the Volme. The people voted to dump these plans in a local referendum – until they heard in autumn 2000 about the idea of making the river and above all its banks attractive to the population at this point. At the same time the open-space planners wanted to lay the foundation stones for a waterway redevelopment that was to be continued in the long term. For example, the bottoms of the waterways were to be roughened, two weirs were to be removed or at least lowered, and banks arranged to impede the water or to allow it to flow.

Hydraulic assessment of the previous state of the Volme and projected effects of a new design



Since restoration, the river Volme has regained the diversity of its river structure. Natural shorelines alternate with urban ones. Stepped terraces in front of the Town Hall restore river access to the citizens.