Most planning discussions on a common level end up with the agreement that planning is directly related to power and money or more generally related to globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. With that, planning has moved over to a case of moderation/governance or to a mood of a total laissez-faire in recent years. With that planning direction spatial qualities are disappearing more and more.

If opening the black box of planning on a microscale the reality of planning changes totally. Further questions about the interaction and the effect of planning in relation to for example the world of commercial enterprise cannot be answered until the specific local background information with respect to the production of the urban reality can be identified.

The method used to explore this subject is based on the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and the “local urban development practice” (Eisinger 2004) research concept, which can be used to identify the social and spatial transformation processes underlying the origination of urban design concepts and their manifestation in the built reality. With this concept it is possible to decipher specific local conditions which help in developing a better understanding of the social processes with respect to the development of space. These findings in turn can serve to pinpoint empirically the interrelation between urban planning and corporate real estate development in the context of urban landscapes.

The proposed paper uses the example of a historical study of the Hilti AG headquarter development at Schaan – Liechtenstein. Today, Hilti AG is the largest employer in the alpine Rhine Valley region and is an international market leader for measuring, drilling, demolition, anchoring and installation systems. At its headquarters in Liechtenstein the company currently employs over 1700 persons in production and administration. Every day, 660 persons from Switzerland, 663 persons from Austria, 55 persons from Germany and 388 members of staff from Liechtenstein commute to the headquarters. The headquarter is located just outside the municipality, along the main road from Schaan to Feldkirch. The precinct can be described as a cluster that comprises various production and administrative buildings, the individual parts of which have been added successively in the course of time. Its obvious that the spatial developments of the Hilti AG headquarters in Schaan have contributed significantly to the spatial reality of the alpine Rhine Valley where the contrasts between town and country as well as spatial quality have disappeared.

With the help of empirical analysis and comparison of the respective master plans with the ongoing transformation and growth processes of the company Hilti AG it is possible to demonstrate the effects that planning activities had on the physical development of the company estate and, conversely, the effects the physical
development of the company estate had on planning activities. In the full Paper five themes will be developed further in the context of the reconstructed history of the Hilti AG as following:

- The actor involvement time in the urbanscape
- The position of planners/designers and entrepreneurs as players in a societal negotiation process.
- Parallel system-based non-understanding
- The role of planners and company representatives in negotiation processes
- Failure of planning as a question of timing and activity

So far we can say: Viewing the city as a side product of company decisions as mentioned in the call for paper lacks differentiation. It can be seen that urban landscapes with their industrial and commercial estates result from negotiating processes within society, e.g. between company representatives, developers, landowners, neighbours, planners, architects, administrative bodies, politicians, etc. In order to improve the chances of realising their objectives, it is most important for each player involved in the process to create win-win situations or alliances. Strategically and tactically this means that in future planners will not only have to ask the question “how can cities be planned?” but will also have to ask “how can the necessary alliances of relevant actors be created?” Otherwise planning intentions will fail as they do today.

In this context it can clearly be said, that synergies between corporate logic and urban planning strategies can be built up. As it can be showed in the research case along the Hilti AG Headquarter there is a sociotechnical dependency of the local players. That means for future planning processes demands for example for the qualification of urban landscapes have to be negotiated with the corporate representatives. That for planning laws as well as the attitudes of the planners have to be changed. Planning discussions should no longer be kept on the level of quantitative measures and hard facts than much more on a qualitative level of negotiating measures to get quality.

And an investigation of the built reality shows that neither out-of-control globalisation processes nor the respective companies can be held responsible for the lack of spatial quality. The responsibility lies with those actors who have developed an awareness of and sensitivity to spatial quality and related questions and who demand such a spatial quality. Therefore the design and planning disciplines should become active and adapt their professional knowledge and strategies to the societal conditions of the urbanscape.