

Google abandons planned Berlin office hub

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Campaigners in a bohemian district of Berlin celebrated Wednesday after Internet giant Google abandoned strongly-opposed plans to open a large campus there.

The US firm had planned to set up an incubator for start-up companies in Kreuzberg, one of the older districts in the west of the capital.

But the company's German spokesman Ralf Bremer announced Wednesday that the 3,000 square-metre (3,590 square-yard) space—planned to host offices, cafes and communal work areas, would instead go to two local humanitarian associations.

Bremer did not say if local resistance to the plans over the past two years had played a part in the change of heart, although he had told the Berliner Zeitung daily that Google does not allow protests dictate its actions.

"The struggle pays off," tweeted "GloReiche Nachbarschaft", one of the groups opposed to the Kreuzberg campus plan and part of the "Fuck off Google" campaign.

Some campaigners objected to what they described as Google's "evil" corporate practices, such as [tax evasion](#) and the unethical use of personal data.

Some opposed the gentrification of the [district](#), pricing too many people out of the area.

A recent study carried out by the Knight Fox consultancy concluded that property prices are rising faster in Berlin than anywhere else in the world: they jumped 20.5 percent between 2016 and 2017.

In Kreuzberg over the same period, the rise was an astonishing 71 percent.

Kreuzberg, which straddled the Berlin Wall that divided East and West Berlin during the Cold War, has traditionally been a bastion of the city's underground and radical culture.

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