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Emergent Urbanism: structural change and urban planning and design

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In response to the structural changes of recent decades, many European cities and towns have invested in production, consumption and transportation infrastructures, marketing and branding measures, and urban design schemes, in order to manage and stimulate urban regeneration. This paper contributes to a discussion of urban planning and design in the context of structural change, emphasizing the consequences that such change has had for urban heritage and the sense of place. The paper addresses two cases from Swedish infrastructure planning practice to construct a conceptual framework for the discussion and analysis of contemporary theory and practice in urban planning and design. Throughout this paper, we argue that the urban landscape should not be seen as solely resulting from deliberate planning and design measures. Rather, understanding the regeneration of that landscape requires a deeper consideration of decisions related to infrastructure planning, as well as emergent processes of economic, social and spatial processes of structural change. We put forward the term Emergent Urbanism to describe this expanded understanding.

Keywords: urban planning and design; structural change; space and place; urban heritage

Introduction

Globalization, European integration, increased mobility, de-industrialization and the growing importance of service sectors have transformed urban and regional economies in Europe into post-industrial knowledge-based economies. Corresponding to these structural changes, the construction of place is a characteristic of urban transformation, as cities shift from being centres of production to centres of consumption (Pacione 2005). This has led to the loss of industrial jobs, as well as jobs within the public sector (for example, through the closure of military bases). In some cases, however, the result has been new possibilities and even an increase in population.

Structural change is evident in motivating initiatives to develop new infrastructures for production (e.g. investments in the education system and re-location of public institutions), transportation and communication (e.g. investments in roads, railroads and mobile telephone systems), and consumption (e.g. development of Internet-based shopping and external shopping centres). It is investments in transportation infrastructures which have explicitly aimed for urban regeneration and regional integration, by linking cities together and thereby integrating local labour markets. Regional policy, and much of the previous research concerning investments in regional transportation infrastructures, has been therefore preoccupied with understanding regional demographic change and regional economic

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development. How transformation at regional and national levels affects local places through the development of built structures and the social use of local urban landscapes has not been studied explicitly to the same extent (Olsson et al. 2010).

The alteration of infrastructure can produce positive and/or negative impacts from the perspective of local places (Graham and Marvin 2001). It can strengthen the regional connections of some places, but it can also degrade local urban heritage and sense of place. Advances in technology have influenced urban activities in a way that has led to a fragmentation of urban space (Madanipour 2008). In fact, transformation in many cities and towns has resulted in deteriorated urban environments that have lost their use and function, evidence of which can be found in housing areas, industrial structures and public institutions. These cases demonstrate the way in which the transformation of urban form is most probably followed by a change in direct and indirect use, as well as by broader shifts in the perception and understanding of the urban landscape.

To address transformations of this type, a number of theories, approaches, paradigms, models and ideologies – ideals – have directly or indirectly influenced the practice of urban planning and design (Krieger 2006; Fraker 2007; Kelbaugh 2008a, 2008b; Carmona et al. 2010) where specific strategies for urban regeneration have also included place marketing and city branding efforts (Saunders 2005; Ashworth 2009; Haas 2009; Klingmann 2010). The task of identifying the specific ideals that dominate today's urban planning and design practices has been addressed in diverse ways using various theoretical and practical approaches, but never in a comprehensive way. A stimulating theoretical and practical conundrum lies in the possibility of using urban planning and design measures to revive cities, communities and neighbourhoods and achieve associated prosperity, status and financial gains. Can urban planning and design be viewed as an effective measure for the reinvention of cities and towns that experience structural change? Or are the current planning and design proposals exacerbating the problems that such change poses for local communities? The conceptual framework is developed in response to two illustrative cases from Swedish infrastructure planning practice, as well as an analysis of current discourse in the field. The paper constitutes just one step forward, not a final solution. Further research should investigate in greater depth the theoretical roots, analytical tools and design practices of the urban planning and design ideals addressed by the conceptual framework, as well as their effects on the urban landscape.

Theory of space and place and urban heritage

A deeper understanding of the characteristics of place is crucial to sustainable urban planning and design, a field which we extend to include infrastructure planning and heritage management. Conservationists, heritage managers, planners and urban designers in particular need to revisit the theoretical underpinnings of the terms and concepts that they use, in order to fully understand the potential contributions of a sense and spirit of place, authenticity and character (Jiven and Larkham 2003).

The complexity of current structural change experienced by urban and regional economies calls for a wider definition of *urban heritage*. A fundamental task for urban management is to understand the consequences and meanings of structural change in society, and to use that knowledge to positively shape present and future urban structures. Urban heritage and identity are important parts of urban management, and we argue that the field of urban management needs to better understand the intricate relation between space and place. We can look at space as an overall system of places, posing that places

aggregate permanent features, connecting those features by causal relations that are independent of the subject and are arranged in space and time (Norberg-Schulz 1988). Place thereby becomes synonymous with identification and is an ordering of understanding and experience (Relph 1976; Norberg-Schulz 1983) posing three main constructs in relation to the psychology of place: ‘place attachment’, ‘place identity’ and ‘sense of place’ (Steele 1981; Hummon 1992; Finch and Goksenin 2004; Williams 2004; Lynne 2006).

Place attachment occurs at the moment that a person distinguishes a place from a space (Altman and Low 1992). The relationship between space and place, the creation of a sense of place, thereby occurs when space feels thoroughly familiar to us – it is then, and only then, that it becomes a place. The distinctive atmosphere of a place holds profound implications for place-making (Norberg-Schulz 1983), regardless of whether the place-making is deliberate or results from processes of economic, social and physical change. Kevin Lynch correlated a sense of place with *identity*, whereby a sense of place describes the extent to which an individual person can discern a place as possessing a character of its own, an attribute closely knitted to the feeling of identity (Lynch 1984). Identity and the sense of place in any town or city represent a specific segment of a ‘spatial continuum’ that is filled with meaning and history.

In Relph’s thinking, *identity of place* forces us to admit to *identification with place* (Relph 1976). Relph elucidated a twofold understanding of the belief in the power of place. First, he posed that places are anchors defined by unique locations, landscapes, histories and narratives, and the communities inhabiting them. Second, he argued that communities concentrate their experiences, intentions and everyday modes of habitual existence onto particular localized settings – onto places. When those two strands meet and merge, we begin to encounter places of identity and spatial continuum. In addition, Canter, expanding upon his earlier models, proposed four *aspects* of place: functional differentiation, place objectives, scale of interaction and aspects of design (Canter 1997).

The dialectic relation between space and place manifests itself with particular intensity in towns and cities where in the past it was meaningful to describe the human everyday environment in terms of stable places – places such as marketplaces, workplaces, transportation nodes, neighbourhoods or houses. However, we live in a different world now, a world permeated by digital technologies and transport infrastructures, where ubiquitous information, mobility and access to a range of intangible products is essential. In a more mobile life, we tend to free ourselves from stable-immobile structures (Mitchell 1999; Graham and Marvin 2001; McCullough 2004). Simultaneously, there is a tendency towards a loss of attachment to place. Even in a globalizing mobile world, a sense of place is of real importance in people’s daily lives because it furnishes the basis of our sense of identity as human beings (Pacione 2005).

A commonly held notion about cultural heritage is that it consists of material remains from the past – especially historical buildings and areas – which carry narratives and, therefore, potential immaterial meanings. Traditionally, public heritage management is organized around the management of specific objects and areas that are defined by heritage experts as having historical value. Focus has therefore foremost been directed towards the conservation of the material aspects of heritage objects, rather than their immaterial meanings. In essence, heritage management is foremost concerned with space, rather than with place.

In contrast, the primary interest in contemporary conservation theory has gradually been shifted from ‘objects’ to ‘subjects’, acknowledging that an object’s meaning depends on and is produced by subjects (Viñas 2005, 147). Smith (2006) argued that heritage is

not a material ‘thing’, but rather a social process of various interests or actors valuing and using the past – a processes which has material consequences (see also Graham et al. 2000; Harvey 2008; Storm 2008; Gibson and Pendlebury 2009).

According to Jones, landscape “is concerned with the immaterial meanings and values people attach to their material surroundings” (Jones 2007, 622). The urban landscape is a complex system of recognized monuments, modest buildings and other built structures which make up a spatial continuum. Most features in the urban environment have not qualified as monuments or conservation areas. These features can therefore be referred to as the ‘general urban landscape’, which includes a diverse set of artefacts that are spatially and/or socially linked together (Olsson 2003, 2008). The view put forward here is that *it is the interplay between different features in the spatial continuum, and their relational meanings, that characterize the urban landscape as heritage*, rather than separate material objects and areas as defined by heritage experts. Urban heritage and the sense of place are therefore crucial for sustainable urban planning and design in situations of spatial, social and economic structural change.

Contemporary ideals in urban planning and design

Urban design is not a straightforward concept, and there is no commonly accepted definition of urban design in academia or in practice. In its simplest interpretation, urban design can be described as architecture on a larger scale and within a broader context, or as a bridge between architectural design and urban planning (Haas 2008; Krieger and Saunders 2009). Urban design connects many disciplines: architecture, planning, landscape architecture and engineering. “The process of urban design is to resolve the political, economic, and social vectors with the goal of arriving at urban forms that works” (McCullough 2008, 4), and as such urban design can be understood as a deliberate action to shape urban form, upon the basis of political, economic and social considerations (Cuthbert 2006).

Urban planning is defined here as a political, economic and social ‘framework’ that has direct and indirect consequences for technical and political processes. It is primarily concerned with the welfare of the citizens; with water and land use management; with shaping and composing – designing – the urban environment, including transportation, (tele) communication networks; and with ecology, through the protection and enhancement of the natural environment (Levy 2000; Hall and Tewdwr-Jones 2009).

Planning can be distinguished as a process-oriented activity and design as a product-oriented activity. Therefore, urban planning and design is a cross-border field specializing in static and dynamic urban conditions. Dynamic processes are characterized by flows of people and their interactions, as well as the infrastructure arteries that give kinetic energy to the environment. The dynamic defines the way we look at our spatial landscapes and the manner in which we experience a particular urban condition and context. Static processes are defined by their permanence of assemblage, i.e. the creation of stable built forms and shapes – the streets, buildings, squares and open spaces that define the environment in order to provide a stable reference system and a structure of performance. One cannot exist without the other and both permeate space, place and time.

Throughout the last three decades, a number of theories, approaches, models and ideologies – ideals – have influenced the practice of urban planning and design. The effects of these ideals can be seen in the form of our built urban environments. Dominant ideals within today’s urban planning and design discourse have been examined and

defined in various ways – as territories of urban design (Krieger 2006), as urban design force fields (Fraker 2007), as integrated paradigms in urbanism (Kelbaugh 2008a, 2008b), as urbanist cultures and approaches to city-making (Talen 2005), as new directions in planning theory (Fainstein 2000), and as typologies of urban design (Cuthbert 2006). In our investigation, we build upon these ‘classifications’ and structure five ideals/trends: *Re-Urbanism*, which could be described as being oriented towards constant urbanity, in particular addressing the repair of the urban fabric; *Green Urbanism*, which is focused on ecological sensibility; *New Urbanism*, which, among other things, is based on a neighbourhood concept and walkability; *Post Urbanism*, which could be labelled as generic hybridity, with a focus on reinvention and restructuring; and, finally, *Everyday Urbanism*, which could be described as vernacular spatiality with a bottom-up approach.

This by no means represents the final word in describing and labelling contemporary urban planning and design theory and practice (approaches such as temporary city, DIY urbanism, the spontaneous city, etc. are emerging at the moment). What is needed is a systematic classification which describes categories and subcategories of the elements that compose these ideals. To synthesize contemporary urban planning and design principles into a ‘stable’ agenda can be beneficial both for research and practice, and for better understanding the phenomenon of structural change within the spatial continuum. As such, we contribute an urban planning and design taxonomy (‘division of elements’), which is at once a catalogue, a conceptual framework for discussion, and a guideline for practice.

To establish a stable, context-based framework we use three parameters: *Space*, *Place* and *Urban Heritage*. We understand urban planning and design to be an amalgamation of *Context* (the specific urban setting and its development characteristics), *Process* (processes of structural change and of planning and design), and *Product* (the urban landscape that derives from these processes). In table 1, we describe the five ideals/trends from the perspective of context, process and product. In table 2, the ideals/trends are positioned vis-à-vis space, place and urban heritage.

Emergent Urbanism – analysis of empirical findings from Swedish infrastructure planning practice

The analysis of two illustrative cases from Swedish practice, which both concern investments in railway infrastructure, provides a further foundation for a discussion of contemporary urban planning and design ideals/trends, and urban structural change. In particular, the empirical findings are presented in order to further support our argument that urban regeneration results from an Emergent Urbanism – that is, not from deliberate planning and design measures, but rather from a complex amalgamation of those measures, infrastructure planning and development, and processes of structural change.

The first case concerns the relocation of a railway station in the town of Söderhamn in the north of Sweden (see also Olsson 2004; Olsson and Haas 2005). The other case concerns the building of a new railway line and station outside the small town of Mariefred; approximately 70 km west of the Swedish capital of Stockholm (see also Fröidh 2003; Olsson et al. 2009). Both cases constitute examples of structural change within local urban landscapes, resulting from infrastructure investments that primarily aim at regional integration and development. The first case – Söderhamn – constitutes an example where societal development is leading towards *contraction*, whereas the other case – Mariefred – provides an example characterized by *expansion*.

The analysis of the two cases is performed from the perspective of contemporary urban planning and design ideals, and includes both descriptive and interpretative parts.

Table 1. Establishing an urban planning and design framework: context, process and products

| | Re-Urbanism | Green Urbanism | New Urbanism | Post Urbanism | Everyday Urbanism |
|----------|---|---|--|--|--|
| Context | The city is seen as a constant urban fabric with an existing building stock and a new one that produces density and stable forms throughout the space of the urban grid. | Cities and regions are seen as environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and economically independent, wherein inhabitants adopt a more ecological lifestyle. | Cities, towns and villages are amalgams of traditional neighbourhood patterns and sustainable transportation links with urban, suburban and regional outlooks. | The city is not seen as a clearly localizable spatial unit, but more as a transmutable urban arena, with constant restructuring and change in urban form. | The city is not solely decoded in terms of physical form but more in the sense of lived experiences, where narratives and daily life are the means of transforming urban form. |
| Process | Classical approach with planning undertaken from above and certain elements of civic involvement in terms of alternatives. Strong emphasis on the developers and the city structure as a whole. | Holistic approaches and the involvement of citizens at all levels. The nature of order, with small-scale catalytic interventions, done in aggregate with pressure on legislation and change in behaviour. | An attempt at semi-public involvement and decision making through the process of Charrettes, but a strong sense for the markets and developers. Legislation and the political realm are fundamental. | A purely market, elitist, developer's view whereby citizen input and public participation have no significant role. Global city branding via media and IT; corporate views on urbanism become crucial. | A pluralistic, bottom-up, grass roots approach with elements of planning advocacy where people are trying to influence the planning process in a micro way, i.e. through lived experience shared by urban residence. |
| Products | Urban revival and regeneration of fabric in terms of compositions and ensembles and solidification of urban planning and design procedures. | Holistic transformations at all levels with green design. Changes in practices and legislature with a potential for new technological solutions and advanced systems models. | Neo-traditional styling and progressive attempts at social reform contained in urban, rural and suburban developments. Legal codes, planning instruments and research models in focus. | Large-scale buildings that hijack urbanism and create place branding nodes; and the creation of manifestos for a dystopian, heterogenic, and futuristic shaping of cities and regions. | In scale, modest solutions that could be contained on a sidewalk; human and social discourse; material and immaterial solutions that can lead to social change. |

Table 2. Establishing an urban planning and design framework: space, place and urban heritage

| | Re-Urbanism | Green Urbanism | New Urbanism | Post Urbanism | Everyday Urbanism |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Space | Understanding of cities as parts of spatial structure with their anchored dimension through sequence of places. | Seeks to understand and manage the complex interdependence of man and nature. | Adaptation and coalescence with the spatial gradient, but a strong drive towards shaping space into place. | Attempt towards spatial hybridity and creation of generic trans-urbanism markers in space, not anchors in place. | Ambiguous in-between spaces represent zones of social transition that are potential for new social arrangements. |
| Place | Leaning on the existing elements of fabric and place formation to complete the elements and density of the present. Places are constant and stable elements. | The 'greening' of urban open-space types. Ecological processes as a functional and aesthetic design generator for community at large and existing places. | Re-creation of lost places and creation of new ones through historical and cultural sensitivity by having human-scale, stable, urban traditional forms. | Emphasis on cardinal nodes in the city where 'starchitecture' defines the context and puts places in focus with little regard to history, culture or context. | Focus on unofficial, skid row, informal, hidden, marginalized urban sites. Opening of places by narratives and people's surrealist spontaneity. |
| Urban Heritage | Adaptation to the existing urban environments. Restoration and interpretation. Grapheme: Buildings-fabric-people-context-time-density. | Past and present subdued to a healthy and sustainable future. Focus on the Nature of Order. Grapheme: Nature-gradience-connectivity-accessibility-preservation. | (Re-)Creation of the past as a dynamic reference for the present. Physical structures more important than objects. Grapheme: History-human scale-density-accessibility-fabric-urbanity. | The past is irrelevant. Monuments. Objects more important than structure. Built environment as a backdrop. Grapheme: Transformation-hybridity-time lapses-self formation-reconfiguration. | Everyday culture more important than physical features. Focus on the present. Reproduction of existing urban environments. Grapheme: Continuity-kineticism-grounded reality-hidden dimensionality. |

The descriptive analysis addresses *context* – the specific urban setting and its development characteristics; *process* – processes of structural change and urban planning and design efforts; and *product* – the resulting urban landscapes, deriving from the processes of structural change and relating planning and design efforts in the specific context. An interpretative analysis follows, which is tentatively linked to the conceptual discussion of *space*, *place* and *urban heritage*.

The relocation of the railway and station in Söderhamn

Context

The town of Söderhamn was founded in the year 1620. In the second half of the nineteenth century Söderhamn was one of the most expansive forests and sawmill industrial centres in Sweden. In the first half of the twentieth century the industry declined, leading to unemployment and a decreasing population. A new expansive period started in the late 1940s with new basic industries (including, in particular, LM Ericsson) and an expansion of the public sector, including the location of an air base in the town in 1945. Nevertheless, the development that has occurred from the early 1970s onwards has been characterized by structural change within the urban economy and the loss of jobs and workplaces in both the private and the public sector. The population has decreased from 32,000 inhabitants in the mid-1970s to fewer than 26,000 in 2010.

According to the National Heritage Board, the central part of the town is of national interest for its historical values, including the historical town plan, wooden architecture and cultural buildings, and districts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The railway – first established in the second part of the nineteenth century – has been a physical barrier in the town, but has also given it a distinct identity, with the track partly situated on a viaduct close to the town hall square (see Figure 1). The viaduct and vari-



Figure 1. Railway viaduct adjacent to the town hall in Söderhamn. Photo: Krister Olsson (2005)

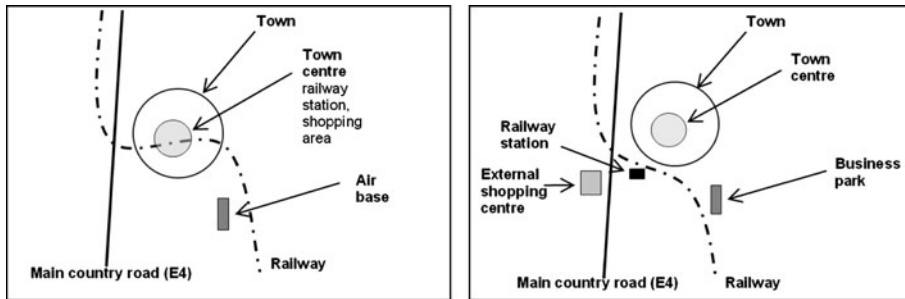


Figure 2. Schematic representation of Söderhamn before the 1990s (left) and in the beginning of twenty-first century (right). Source: Olsson and Haas (2005)

ous buildings around the marshalling yard were identified as having a substantial conservation value in the 1980s. The railway station was designated as a national monument in the year 2000.

During the course of the 1990s, the closure of the air base and its transformation into a business park, the opening of an external shopping centre, and the construction of a new railway and a railway station outside the town changed the local infrastructures of production, consumption and transportation. The overall urban structure of Söderhamn therefore changed significantly during the 1990s (see Figure 2).

Process

In the 1990s, the National Railway Administration in Sweden started to plan for renewal of the railway which runs through Söderhamn. In order to prepare for faster trains, the Railway Administration proposed that the existing railway, which traversed the town centre, should be substituted with a new railway south of the town. A new railway station outside the town would also be built, oriented towards the external shopping centre. The town council expressed a positive attitude toward this development early on, since it was expected to contribute to widening the local labour market. According to the Railway Administration, the development was not expected to have any significant impact on the cultural heritage in the town centre. On the contrary, it was expected to improve the urban environment (for example, reducing noise from passing trains). The new railway and station was opened in 1997.

The decision made by the Railway Administration put a great deal of pressure on the town council, and time limitations forced the council to neglect necessary comprehensive planning considerations. This was most apparent in the development of the existing marshalling yard, and in particular the railway viaduct in the town centre. During the planning process, due to economic and technical reasons, it was decided that existing rail tracks should be removed completely. The relocation of the railway thus resulted in a large empty area in the core centre of the town (see Figures 3 and 4).

In the early stages of the process, planning considerations were foremost directed to the question of how to visually connect the new station with the town. It was only later in the process that issues of the future development of the existing marshalling yard, as well as conservation activities concerning the old railway in the town centre, were first stressed. From the perspective of sector heritage management, i.e. the County Board, it



Figure 3. Söderhamn, the marshalling yard and railway station in 1900. Photo: Nybergsska samlingen, Sveriges Järnvägsmuseum, Gävle. Courtesy of (CC) Michael Lindgren (2008)



Figure 4. Söderhamn, the old marshalling yard and the old station in 2005, after the relocation of the railway in the mid-nineties. Photo: Courtesy of (CC) Peter Sandström (2005)

was important to keep at least one track in the town centre, even if it was not in use, and to preserve the viaduct. However, at first neither the town nor the Rail Administration or heritage sectors were willing to take on the costs associated with such conservation activities. For the town, keeping one track was first perceived as a restriction for future devel-

opment of the area concerned. After a series of negotiations a compromise was reached, through which one track was kept and the viaduct was proposed as a national monument and as a future foot and bicycle path.

Product

Along with the closing of the air base and the establishment of an external shopping centre, the relocation of the railway and railway station has substantially changed the urban structure of Söderhamn. The location of the railway station and the external shopping centre contributed to the fragmentation of space, and left a physical gap that demanded new built structures (see Figure 5) and stimulated a competitive situation between different development areas in the town. However, with a decreasing population, demand for new development was insufficient at the time and is unlikely to rise in the near future. In any case, if the conditions for expansion had been present at the time of the demolition, it is likely that new development would have contributed to a further displacement of the urban structure in Söderhamn, locating near the new railway station and shopping centre in the south.

Space, place, and urban heritage

The railway development dramatically altered the urban structure in Söderhamn and the traditional spatial continuum was interrupted by a physical gap between important urban functions and the core centre of the town. In particular, the relocation of the railway and the establishment of the external shopping centre affected the town centre, and, hence,

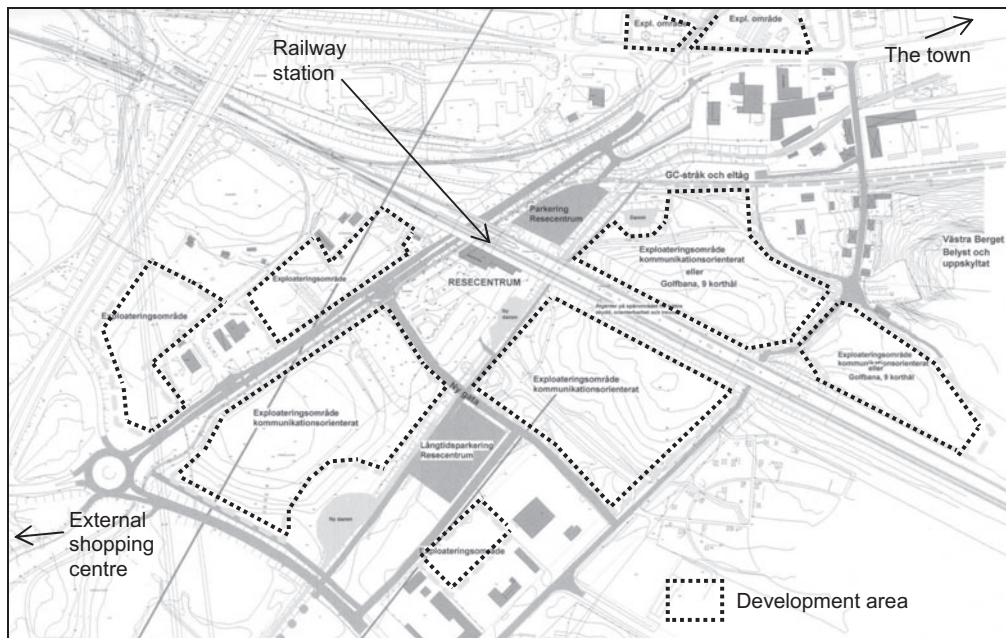


Figure 5. Plan sketch for new development areas with the purpose to fill the gap between the external shopping centre, the new railway station and the town. Source: Revised from Söderhamn Municipality (April 2002)

the way in which the town and its centre is used and understood. Peripheral places in the town centre have become even less attractive, and the new railway station is perceived as an anonymous place in the middle of nowhere, which fails to provide travellers with a sense of place. Since the old railway area in the town centre lost its function, the town centre is also perceived as having lost its true meaning. As such, the single rail track that remains is seen as necessary for future understanding of the historical meaning of the area. As a result of various urban planning and design actions in Söderhamn in the last two decades, the town centre has changed from an everyday living area into an environment reserved for special occasions. As urban heritage, the town centre has primarily become a backdrop for festive scenes and commercial cultures rather than the core centre in a spatial continuum consisting of spatially and/or socially linked urban features. The old railway station is typical of this shift: it is preserved as a physical monument, but almost completely detached from local urban everyday life.

The construction of a railway outside Mariefred

Context

The town of Mariefred was established in the early seventeenth century. It developed around, and provided services for, the sixteenth century Royal Castle of Gripsholm. For many years, Mariefred was a very small town, which only changed slowly. Today, the town is part of a greater functional urban region and labour market. In the last decade, the town has attracted a stable but modest number of in-migrants and hence has seen some population growth. In 2008, the population had little more than 5000 inhabitants. Many housing development projects are, however, planned in Mariefred. If they are all implemented, Mariefred will double in size in coming decades.

The crucial factor in the ongoing and anticipated development of the town is the good transportation infrastructure, including a regional railway and motorway, connecting the town to Stockholm and to other major cities in the region. The motorway opened in 1996 and the railway a year later. The railway station is located close to the motorway, approximately 3 km outside the town. According to the National Heritage Board, the town centre (i.e. the historic part of the town) and the castle of Gripsholm are both of national interest for their historical value. Urban areas surrounding the historic town centre mostly consist of single-family houses from different periods. In relation to its size, the town has much to offer in terms of commercial services, with the grocery store located close to the town square acting as the main magnet, attracting customers to other shops in the centre.

Process

The regional railway passing through Mariefred was built to make it easier for people to live in one place and work in another, thereby integrating local labour and real estate markets in order to spread Stockholm's economic growth to the larger region. As expected, the railway has contributed to substantial growth in commuting between the cities of the region, in particular to Stockholm. The location of the railway station on virgin soil a few kilometres outside of Mariefred has led to expectations of further development in the area close to the station (see Figures 6 and 7) and in total almost 1000 dwelling units, as well as commercial and social services, have been planned in the station's sur-

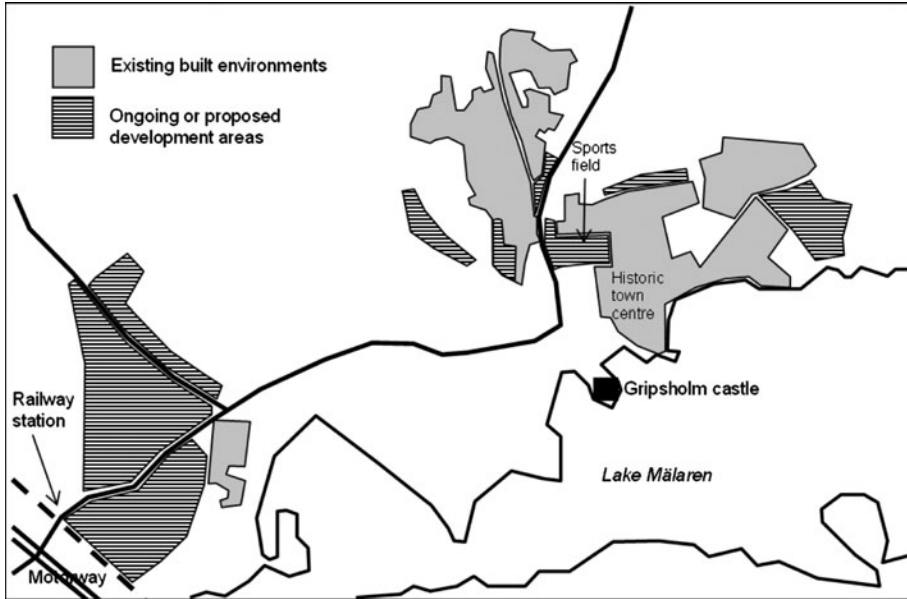


Figure 6. Schematic representation of ongoing or proposed development areas in Mariefred

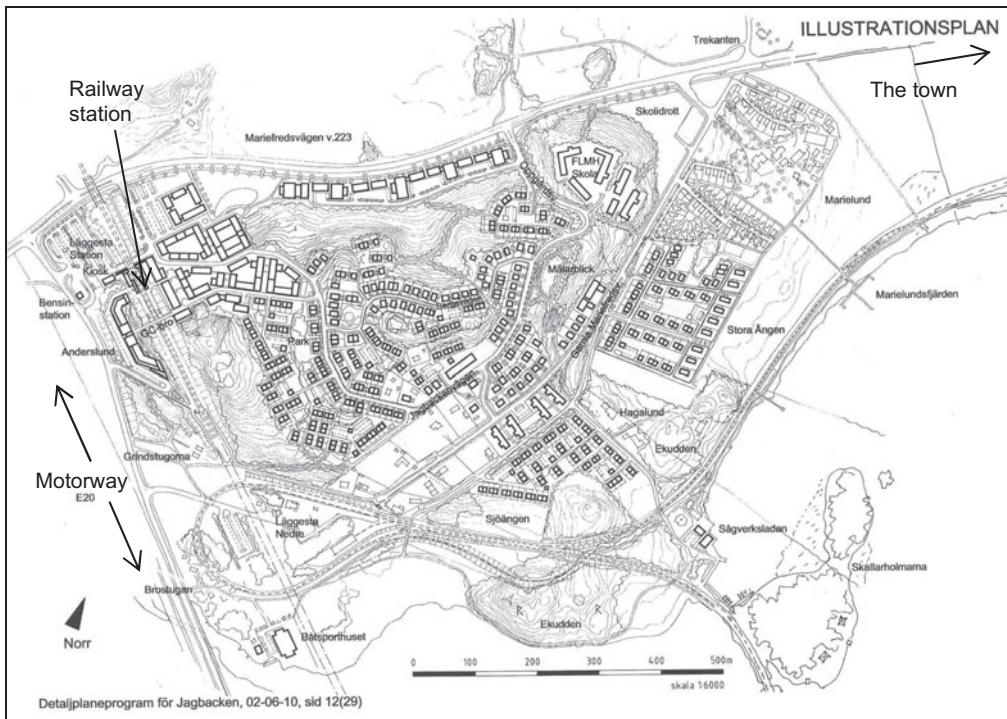


Figure 7. Early plan sketch for developments around the railway station outside Mariefred. Source: Revised from Strängnäs Municipality (2002)

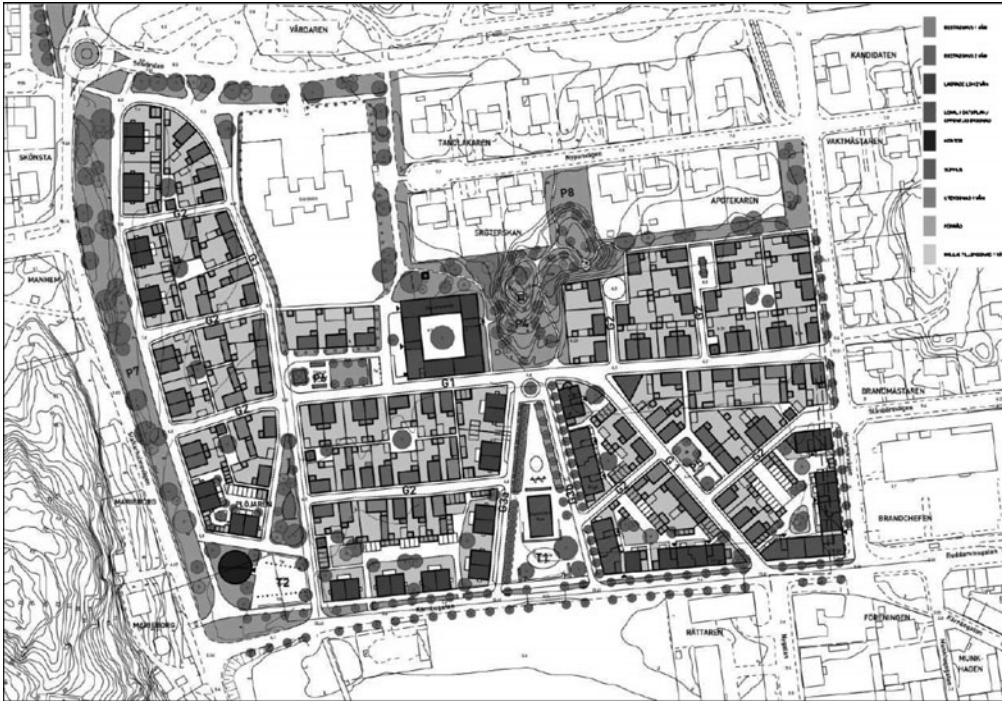


Figure 8. Proposal for new development on the sports field in Mariefred. Source: Strängnäs Municipality (2010)

rounds. Current local urban planning and design plans also include several hundred new units in the town.

The numerous development projects, especially those close to the town, have caused political controversy and debate. The comprehensive plan for Mariefred from 2007 resulted in over 100 written objections from local citizens and organizations. Some people objected to the number of building projects proposed in the plan, which they felt would change the character of Mariefred from an idyllic small town to a metropolitan suburb. In particular, there has been heated debate about the local sports field. The plan suggested that the field should be relocated from its current location close to the town centre in order to provide land for a new housing area. The consequences of the planned development for the local urban, social, economic and physical fabric have not been studied or discussed in a comprehensive and systematic way within the area's planning.

Product

The new railway and new motorway have dramatically altered the preconditions for urban planning and design in Mariefred. As a result, many housing projects are currently underway, albeit in different stages of their planning. Some projects are moving forward in a concrete way, whereas others are still under consideration. Nevertheless, in the long run the overall development will most probably necessitate considerable change in the urban structure and function of Mariefred. For example, in the currently ongoing project, the traditional sports field is planned to be replaced by between 150 and 200 dwelling

units (see Figure 8). The relocation of the sports field will have many implications for local everyday life, e.g. for the school and the local sports association.

According to a draft development plan, the design scheme for the development of the existing sports field includes small-scale houses, streets, squares and parks. Hence, the intention is to adjust to and follow the urban form that has developed in the historic town centre over a long period of time. From the perspective of traditional heritage management, the existing sports field is not considered to have any significant preservation value. On the contrary, a relocation of the sports field and its facilities in association with the developments of the site represents an opportunity to enhance the cultural value of the area, particularly considering its spatial relation to the Royal Castle of Gripsholm and the historic town centre.

Space, place and urban heritage

All ongoing and proposed development projects in Mariefred are, more or less, consequences of investments in transportation infrastructure in recent decades. The area around the railway station was previously unexploited and thus an extensive exploitation will naturally change the direct character of the area. The same is true for the numerous development projects within the town. However, questions remain with regard to the way in which, in aggregate, these development projects will affect people's use and understanding of their local community, in both the short and the long term. For example, the grocery store in the town centre does not have the capacity to expand in its current location. A growing number of potential customers supported by an increased population may result in the possible relocation of the store closer to the railway station and might, according to local observers, drain the town centre of services in the long run.

The Gripsholm castle is a national monument, and will thus also in the future be preserved as material remains. This represents a chiefly traditional view of cultural heritage, i.e. as a set of objects and well-defined areas. However, developments in the immediate surroundings of the castle will affect the relational meaning of the castle and the town. Moreover, and possibly more importantly, the castle is not necessarily important to local citizens in their everyday life. Instead, the sports field, for example, seems to be more important for everyday activities and as a meeting place for children and young people, as well as for many adults. The central location of the existing sports field and all activities that take place there contribute to the animation of the whole town. According to this reasoning, the castle could be interpreted as space, whereas the sports field could be understood as place.

Concluding discussion

The development projects in our two cases provide examples of economic and social entropy, whereby the usual path that leads from the indefinite nature of space to the specific nature of place has actually been reversed. In Söderhamn and Mariefred, and in Sweden for that matter, traditional ideas of belonging, attachment and localness are increasingly challenged by the economic and social consequences of globalization – the development of new infrastructures for production, consumption and transportation; and the concrete urban space transformations that follow. The strong sense of local identity that characterizes cities and, in particular, small towns is diminished by the realization that remote and faceless non-local forces increasingly shape the way we live.

Locating a fine balance between the private and public realms becomes one of the important, and at times central, issues in urbanism (Madanipour 2008). It is important to acknowledge how place occurs – and, ultimately, the significance of place attachment vis-à-vis traditional views of cultural heritage. In many cases, urban heritage (conservation) projects focus on making contributions to a sense of place and dealing with issues of authenticity through the material conservation of monuments, objects and well-defined areas. Consideration of urban transformation in the larger sense of economic, social and/or physical change allows for a more complex analysis. Shifts in the relationship between a sense of place and everyday activities that result from structural transformations can trigger destructive processes that affect the public and private realm, that affect space and place. Analogous degenerative phenomena can be observed in, for example, economic changes that lead to labour fragmentation, diminishing population and instigating demographic imbalance. Such changes threaten the future viability of long-established urban settlements.

In our two empirical cases, certain planning and design measures or activities related to specific urban planning and design ideals; the proposed development for the sports field in Mariefred can be directly associated with New Urbanism ideal, whereas the external shopping centre in Söderhamn can be linked to Post Urbanism. Despite the presence of such ideals, the overall development of the urban landscape in the two cases clearly resulted from spatial (e.g. infrastructure planning), social (e.g. patterns of migration) and economic (e.g. restructuring of local labour market) structural change, rather than well-considered planning and deliberate design efforts. Thus, the development of the urban landscape cannot only be understood from the perspective of specific urban planning and design ideals. Efforts to understand such development must also take into account the Emergent Urbanism that shapes the landscape in specific contexts and through particular processes of structural change and planning.

What we need to see and understand, in the context of our short analysis of contemporary urban planning and design ideals/trends, is that the urban landscape – with its physical and social qualities – is situated on a spatial continuum. Urban heritage in our understanding, as the interplay between different features in the spatial continuum and their relational meanings, therefore becomes an important value category in the contemporary urban planning and design ideal that we can call *Emergent Urbanism*. As urban planners and designers we must be cognizant of the way that the urban landscapes and structures that we provide, and the built objects that we design, affect people and spaces directly and indirectly. Such interventions form habits and create ways of life; they give the user a chance to pursue individual happiness and to create relations to other people when embedded in space and time. However, we must equally recognize how forces of structural change contribute to shaping the urban landscape. The resulting Emergent Urbanism affects people's urban experience, either stimulating or limiting how people live their everyday lives.

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