

Rethinking Urban Design Processes in Framing Public Places

The case of Western Harbour waterfront development in Malmö, Sweden

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Abstract

This paper addresses the process of transformation of urban spaces and the contribution of urban design to framing public life. It manifests the multiplicities of interests towards good urban form, and people's experiences and engagements, as outcomes. The study acknowledges places as process and meanings, which require 'relational' and 'contextual' analysis. Reviewing the design processes, and the unintended consequences in associating use value highlights that engagement with place as an experiential quality needs high level of publicness that can be achieved at some levels within 'meaningful urban design'. However, the gap between experiential qualities and spatial aspects, which influence the meanings of places, should be sought in the place-shaping process: intentions and outcomes to find out how public spaces are: intended to be, physically built and socially used and experienced; in becoming places. The study area is the regeneration of the waterfront in Western Harbour, in Malmö, Sweden. By interviewing the key actors in planning and design process, and reviewing documents the paper highlights that the public spaces were not into focus as visual aspects of place. However, the reality of everyday use in public space unfolded other qualities: that public space can be a catalyst for regeneration process. The study revealed the urban design potentials for place-making and suggests rethinking about design practice to act temporal and associated in the long-term process in cities. It highlights that a meaningful design should also concern the 'scale' of relations in space and time; and potentials of planning in place-making.

Key words

Urban design, public space, place-making

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1. Introduction

In recent years, discussions around complex societies and associating life in urban public places have been the interest for many academics and scholars as well as activists and city makers. The question was constantly asking how urban context can solve so many economic, social, political, economic and environmental issues; while not being problematic for its users. Therefore, studying urban form and human behaviour experiences has been central to understanding how material production interplays with social and economic arrangements. Most of the research produced as the result often takes disparate positions. In academic literature, public space has been argued within physical decline, which can no longer provide public life (Sorkin, 1992). Furthermore, new trends in communication expect to take new forms of social life that less matter in public spaces (Banerjee, 2001; Castells, 2001). From urban planning and design perspective, social life in public spaces is interrelated with the quality of spaces. On the other hand, quality of space is framed by social norms and cultural values interwoven with political-economic relations too. The provision of public life by design of urban spaces therefore becomes a provocative topic, and forms critical theories around the relation between spatiality and sociality in different scales (Lefebvre, 1991).

Urban design has an integral role in production of the built environment, yet as a discipline has ambiguous term and broad definitions (Madanipour 1996 & 2014). Urban design practice in positioning public life in urban places was criticized for its limited and partial theories, and detachment from the laws that construct the society (Cuthbert, 2006), as ‘amalgam of several disciplines’ (Inam 2002, 35), and obsessed with the final product (Sorkin, 2009) and with the truth of the experts’ knowledge as power of authority (Foucault, 1967). There is a frustration with the dominating language and the level of interpretations, which may present intentions in the form of ‘valid’ facts or as the most efficient ways of doing things. The tendency of urban design to uncritically adopt, combine and use theories without testing them enough clarifies why Marshall (2012, p.267) positions urban design at least in part *pseudo-scientific discipline*.

One of the reason urban design and its normative theories established was the intention to re-build the lost quality of places in the public realm, which nowadays it is being criticized for its achievements. Urban design should be reinvigorated from within, as Marshall (2012, 268) suggests. Carmona (2014) offers generating of a new knowledge around a unique subject and practice. Recent literature recommends a shift in thinking of urban design towards more ‘pragmatism’ (Inam, 2014), and as an ‘on-going long-term process’ (Inam, 2002). This perspective reflects the critical social sciences perspective, that urban design should seek an open-ended meaning (Sennet, 1990), concerning the urban changes in use and values (Madanipour, 1996). The same threats and potentials stand for place-making, regarding the subjectivity and complexity of sense of places and meanings. Places, in urban design, should be understood within multiple identities and avoid reductionism (Dovey, 2010) and be sensitive to the contextual relations in space and time (Massey, 1994). The socio-spatial relations in places, provided by urban design are therefore not ‘deterministic’ and ‘linear’ (Urry, 2005). As a result, meaningful and responsive urban design is an endeavour to bridge the gap between the theories and practice, and to reflect the reality of everyday life and learning from different experiences (Crawford, 1999, 2004). Madanipour (2014) suggests focusing on ‘urban’ than ‘design’ of urban design; and Inam (2014) proposes a radical shift towards ‘pragmatism’, empowered understanding of urbanism and exploring the potential of inclusive field of thinking and action.

Urban design, not by definition, profession, or responsibilities (which varies in different contexts ¹) but as a field of practice, is facing a big shift. ‘Relational thinking’ is recommended to study public space (Tornaghi and Knierbein, 2014), as the real object of this practice (Cuthbert, 2006), and thinking of ‘place-shaping’ as a process that reviews the post-occupancy of the place and the process of its delivery between ‘design, development, space in use (place) and management’ (Carmona 2014).

Accordingly, place is investigated as ‘material-relational’ (Dovey, 2010), as both ‘product’ with its micro-scale values, and ‘process’, within network of macro-scale values, thus reflecting experiential qualities (Arefi & Triantafyllou, 2005).

Towards the goal of process and relational thinking and to enrich public life in urban spaces, as well as to investigate the gap between design and everyday use in public spaces, this paper examines a contemporary urban transformation project in Western Harbour (Västra Hamnen in Swedish), in Malmö, Sweden; where the production of waterfront public spaces was in nexus. To understand the potentials and limits of urban design and its contribution to place-making, this paper reviews the place by act of wondering about intentions and outcomes: How intentions were formed, how public space was physically built, socially and spatially used and practiced. The outcomes were sought in everyday life of the place, meanings and experiences; if public space becomes a place.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1 *Transforming urban spaces*

Public life, as a value of living together, has been specifically conceptualized in public spaces and regarded in different disciplines with different concerns. In urban design, mantras of urban qualities such as liveability, vitality, attractiveness, and safety are pouring in cities. To achieve these qualities, the modalities of urban design should develop to balance between these – sometimes conflicting-values.

However, in practice, urban design strategies are framed within the purpose/problem they get involved to propose/solve. Due to global economy, cities are adjusted with their markets in particular periods of time. Therefore, urban design in the production of the built environment has become a part of the urban development and central in the economy process that are supposed to be used as goods and services, as economic values (Lefebvre, 1991; Madanipour, 2003, 2014). Regeneration of public spaces is accordingly adapted as a response to such fundamental changes and contextual demands. Creating public spaces is framed by their effectiveness in economic process and its social consequences. Madanipour (1996 & 2003) posed this tension between use value and exchange value rises when economic transition and spatial transformation intensifies. He contends that leisure is the only major function has left in most of European public spaces.

Focusing on the new spaces of leisure and consumption, this is a phenomenon of regeneration of industrial cities (see examples in Melbourne in Dovey and Sandercock, 2002). For the cities in transition, if the market leads the development such as examples in UK, public spaces should be attractive and liveable places where use value is identified by number of activities and consumption and the provision of extra safety and security, and over-managed public spaces to guarantee the long-term investment (Carmona, 2008). In this case, spatial configuration is a tool to address economic demands, to manipulate people’s access, movement or presence in public, as ‘privatization’ and ‘exclusion’ (Madanipour, 2003; Banerjee, 2001) which results loss of meaningful use in public spaces as pseudo-public spaces.

In transformation of the urban spaces spatial planning has an important role in territorializing of values and services and to shape future socio-spatial relation in places (Graham & Healey, 1999). Relational theories have un-linear conception of development and consider multiple time-space and meanings within different network (Healey, 2004).

2.2 Urban design process and place-making

Agreeing on the values of places between the process of globalization and localization, place still matters, though complex and multi-layered, beyond visual aspects and a product (Arefi & Triantafillou, 2005; Dovey, 2010; Arefi, 2014). Meanings of places are formed through time and highly subjective, embedded in people's narratives and experiences and interpreted by cultural and social context. Meanings are multiple and require deep human studies to be detected. The challenge for urban design is then to understand how socio-spatial attributes assign meanings to places, to be perceived and collectively experienced.

Urban design has a history for such contribution with place-making. In micro-scale, it was initiated by Jane Jacobs, praised the lively streets of Greenwich Village as an example of safe and diverse urban environment (Jacobs, 1961). William H. Whyte's Street Life Project, was one of America's most influential on cities, people and public spaces, conducted as pioneering studies on human behaviour in urban plazas in New York. Through deep observation, he showed how built environment contribute to people's different activities and behaviour. Human needs in public space was identified by Carr et al. (1992), as 'comfort', 'relaxation', 'passive engagement', 'active engagement', and 'discovery'. From human perspective, a 'responsive environment' was identified as accessible, connective, permeable and visible (Bentley et al. 1985). A human-scale environment offers a level of satisfaction and comfort, and that 'optional' and 'social' activities can take place (Gehl, 1996). In macro-scale, human needs and experiences were conventionally regarded in cities, where support places if they are well-located, visually accessible without any physical barriers (Hillier, 1996). Lynch (1981) emphasized on city unique image, both through physical elements and people's perception, and applied them in his *Theory of Good City Form*. Gordon Cullen named sense of place as '*the sense of being here- in a particular place*' (Cullen, 1961). Christopher Alexander acknowledged different scale of socio-spatial relationship (Alexander et al., 1977), and '*the timeless way of building*' (Alexander, 1979). In the mid-1980s, Jacobs & Appleyard characterized environmental urban design by 'liveable streets and neighbourhoods, minimum densities, functional integration and proximity, positive urban space, and human scale and variation' (Jacobs & Appleyard, 2000). Such studies admit the contribution of human experiences and narratives to urban design, in both micro and macro scales. Yet, such paradigm shift has been opposed for being utopian in a contemporary social context, and by underestimating the 'epistemological, political and ideological' aspects (Dovey, 1999), or by obsession with the power of architecture and people as objects, and consequently for reduction of complex reality of everyday life.

Urban design should concern place as a 'process' and assign the values it produces within the larger network. Meanings and senses as part of these values should be challenged not only through micro-scale of human perception but within particular relations of the context in macro-scale. The result of other disciplines' findings about sense of place such as human geography and political economy are required for meaningful urban design. Sense of place is an inseparable interwoven relation between physical attributes (material and location), activities (practices- social production and construction) and conceptions (meanings/phenomenological) in space and time (see for example Canter, 1977; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Cresswell, 2004; Agnew, 2004). People's experiences are at the heart of these studies. So, place is both subjective and objective, and the meaning embedded in places, are both produced and producers. It draws the attention of urban designers to manifest the multiplicity of senses and meanings by Looking into people's use of space, their action, perception and experiences. The city design and urbanism is emerged out of the demands of everyday use and realities that does not exist as taken-for-granted (Crawford, 2004).

There are studies that show how urban design in its history has failed because of focusing distinctively on physical aspects while expecting place-making as an outcome (e.g. branding/marketing and re-imagination strategies, Ashworth & Voogd, 1990). Yet, urban design role in place-making should be

discussed as a valid contribution in planning discussion, *if* urban design attempts to apply new methods to study human perception and experiences and pertain them to formal theories; and *if* urban design regards relations as the materials.

In this paper, the process of framing public life in public space is investigated through a contemporary urban design practice, to find out the functions and roles, and responsibilities in assigning values. Together with understanding the context and power relations, this is a systematic study across the entire process of creating and recreating places.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Since contemporary public spaces are built within a larger development, and urban development processes cannot be studied itself as an object; this ‘phenomenon’ should be studied in its ‘context’ (Campbell, 1998:2). Therefore the empirical data about urban design is explored within qualitative strategies and case study to handle complex urban processes. The case is ‘illustrative and exploratory tool that nevertheless cannot easily be generalized or consistently replicated’ (ibid). This case investigates a ‘contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context’ by posing ‘*how*’ and ‘*why*’ questions (Yin, 1994) about the waterfront public space as part of the development of Western Harbour (Västra Hamnen in Swedish) in the city of Malmö, south of Sweden. It is a ‘unique case’ in which the city aims at transforming an industrial harbour to a ‘knowledge city’. The development was initiated by a housing exhibition (Bo01- stands for living 2001) in two phases. The case is characterized as a “best practice”, a “prescient case” (Yin 1994, Campbell, 1998) because it is ahead of its time as national pilot for *sustainable urban development*.

The need of process thinking and analysis, led the research material to be collected by meta-tactics in the two areas of theory and practice (empirical data of the observable events of the cases, as well as literature review). Various sources provided different types of information, which called for ‘triangulating evidence’ (Yin, 1994) and alternative types of analysis and interpretation. It helped observing the establishment of design and development process, while keeping distance of what has been echoed either by designers’ intentions, or reflected in the document, which sometimes not coinciding with the actual practices in place. Qualitative interviews were conducted in the form of *dialogue* and *open* in order to exchange views. To understand the design intentions, interviewing the key actors of the projects in planning office and consultants brought a valuable insight to the research and supported some of the (pre-found) facts, while revealed different levels of interpretation, trades-off and unexpected changes and consequences in the process of development. Online reports or published in [local professional] journals were supplementary sources to find out the challenges of the development, which urban design practice has been able to overcome, criticized for, or appraised by, was studied by reviewing documents, reflected as. To go beyond abstract intentions and to understand the reality of everyday use, this study applied participant observation while documenting realities by photography. The patterns of behaviours, practices and repetitions were studied without expectations, while evaluating them critically as urban design outcome and if there is any unintended consequence.

4. Result: Malmö’s experience in waterfront development

4.1. The Historic and political context

The city of Malmö is Sweden’s third largest city, located at the southern tip of the country with 300,000 inhabitants, which includes a high immigrant population of around 29%. The city’s dockyards formed in reclaimed land in 1840, and Malmö evolved as a thriving industrial town. By the early

1980's, the Kockums shipbuilding industry was in decline and in 1990's vanished completely from the Malmö dockyards. The SAAB factory was replaced there in the 1990s, yet closed down soon. The city's future was in crisis. As a result, the City of Malmö (the municipality) decided the phenomenon of urban regeneration in the industrial area of Western Harbour, within a major strategy for the whole city (Malmö Stad, 2006; Larsson, 2015).

In January 1995 the municipal government initiated a comprehensive vision work 'Project Malmö 2000'. The intention was to formulate a possible positive image for Malmö, for the promotion of immigration and entrepreneurial start-ups (Malmö Stad, 1999), a dramatized journey into the 'knowledge city'. Strategic spatial planning played a vital role for primarily shift and repositioning Malmö. The decision was in line with the establishment of the Öresund link- road and rail bridge- connecting Sweden to Denmark, and to the rest of the Europe, means positioning Malmö in Öresund region, which gave Malmö more opportunities to be re-imagined as the *knowledge city*. The two other strategies were the initiation of the housing exhibition: Bo01 - Living 2001- as part of the European Housing Expo in 2001 and the establishment a new university. Territorializing of both strategies was negotiated by the City of Malmö. Through spatial planning Western Harbour, an industrial site was proposed to be the *place* for new image of the city, close to city centre to get integrated with its potentials (Figure 1).

Malmö's period of industrial decline overlapped with a number of environmental disasters that had a particular impact on Sweden. This was parallel with new political interest in issues of sustainability discussed in 1992 Rio by United Nations, which highlighted the important role for local government in tackling climate change, which Sweden has a long tradition in that. In a climate of increased urban competitiveness, the condition was prepared for Malmö to choose particular 'environmental vision' and 'sustainable development' for the transformation of Western Harbour.

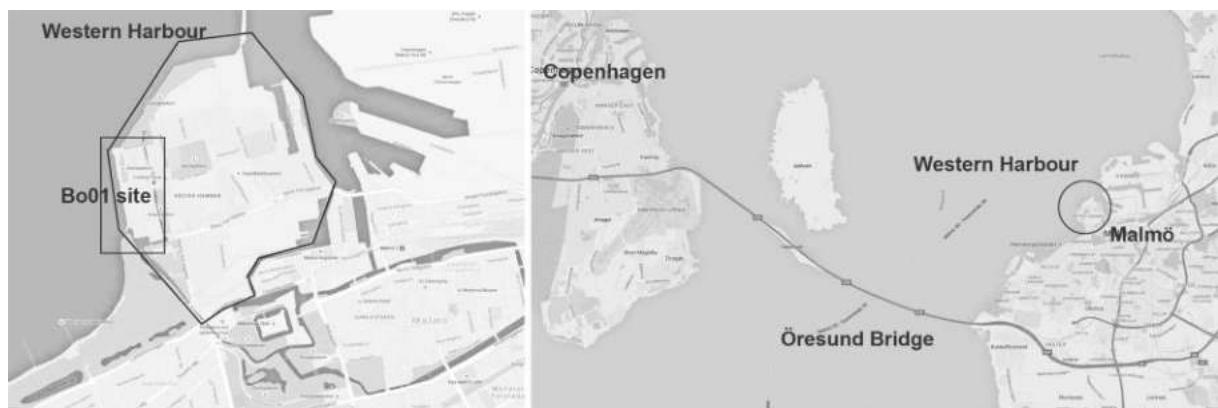


Figure 1, Malmö in the Öresund region, the industrial area of Western Harbour, and Bo01 site

4.2 Design Intentions

4.2.1 Bo01 Vision & Development: City of tomorrow

The design and development of Bo01, named as 'City of Tomorrow', was the first part in the process of transforming the former industrial harbour to a brand new living urban district (figure 2). A determined visionary and strategic work initiated in 1996 for the creation of attractive living and urban environments 'to build an ecologically sustainable information and welfare society' (Malmö Stad, 1999), to draw people's attention to Malmö after a severe emigration.

The site has unique spatial qualities, natural values and proximity to the city centre and to the future university that could invite new businesses and prospective developers for long-term investment to be economically profitable. Urban design had an integral role for regeneration and transformation process, for the provision of sustainable city to be *“more comfortable, economical, secure, and pleasant, exciting and beautiful ... [through urban form which should meet] ... people’s aesthetic, emotional and social needs ... [as]... necessary conditions for tomorrow’s wise buildings* (Tham, 2015).

Such visionary idea established a rational design process and was presented through a master plan, which the natural potentials of the site, climate restraints, and human well-being (biological and cultural needs) were central concepts to form the built environment. The master plan and leading the whole Bo01 project was accomplished by an experienced trustworthy Swedish architect, Klas Tham, who is well-known for his ambition and experiences to shape the environment based on ‘unmeasurable needs: comfort, safety, and environmental experience’ (Tham, 1997). He put particular attention to human-scale environment, aesthetics and visual qualities, inspired by the old European cities to foster ‘small-scale intimacy, awareness, security, complexity, mystique and surprise’ (ibid, p.10). A mutual agreement from all actors involved in the project provided a legally binding document named ‘Quality Programme’, as a common platform between Bo01, the City of Malmö and the developers’ representatives, to ensure the quality and attractiveness of the outcome as a legible and coherent built environment (Malmö Stad, 1999).



Figure 2, The regeneration of Western Harbour, left 1969, right 2001: Bo01Expo opening

4.2.2 ‘Public space’ and Social life as requirements for the ‘city of tomorrow’

One out of ten percent of the Quality Program underlined the ‘public spaces’, yet unclearly categorized, either by the location or by design requirements. What has been highlighted the most in this guideline was to reinforce the ‘coherent urbane and unified identity’ of all public (open) spaces. To achieve this goal, responsibilities were shared between developers, City of Malmö and Local Streets and Parks Department (Malmö Stad, 1999, pp.33-40). Physical legibility and coherency was essentially required through different facilities such as lighting, recycled material, colour and decoration, traffic prioritization, or standards for tree planting (ibid).

The scope of this paper, on public space is on the seashore (figure 3), which was designed through a competition process and by different designers in three parts: Dania Park (Daniaparken) in the northern part of Bo01, Citizens’ Square, (Scaniaplatsen) in the middle of the site, and Promenade (Sundspromenaden) that connects the Citizens’ Square to the marina at the end south of Bo01.

However, restricted guidelines of the Quality Program as well as the Scandinavian’s philosophy about the landscape and nature have caused a uniform and legible outcome. A minimal design with rich and

durable materials arose from the Scandinavian landscape design philosophy for being in the nature and enjoying the view (Andersson, 2014; Anderssen, 2015).

In the quality program, the waterfront public space was intended for ‘public recreation’ as ‘attractive destination where access and publicity are assured’ (Malmö Stad, 1999, p 26). ‘Social life’ and ‘needs for meeting and socialising’ were aimed yet not scrutinized in the quality program. It was identified as ‘safety access to activities’ in public spaces and through services, besides using the technology and local network in the district for better communication’. ‘Meeting points’ were proposed in public places where public activities and services are triangulations for social encounters. Public places, e.g. cafés, library, laundry rooms, playgrounds, were intended to be situated at the entrance of each block, on the ground floor level.

The value of green spaces was described widely through human health, and rich spatial experience, and knowledge of biological diversity. Planning high intention to include vast green spaces along the waterfront was negotiated between the actors and the City of Malmö, which resulted changes in the master plan. Dania Park was intended to be a park, which makes culturally different value in Swedish culture of being out in the nature.

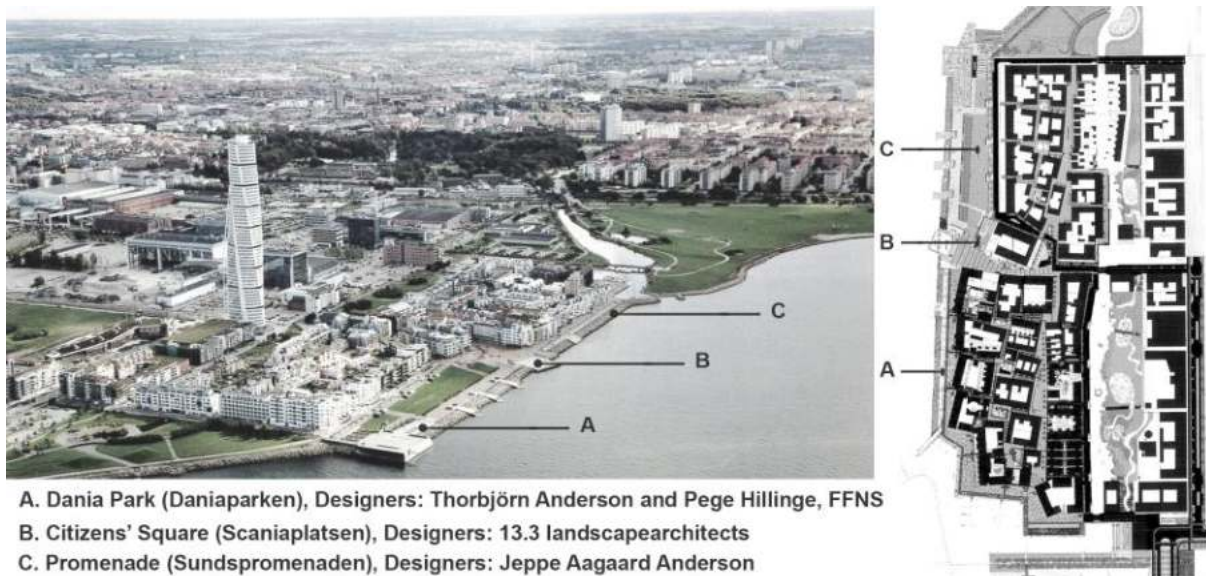


Figure 3, The waterfront public space; right: Bo01 master plan, left: the real image, Arkitektur, 2011

4.3 The Outcomes

4.3.1 Public Life: The site becomes the place

Bathing in cities in some cases have caused by coincidence when people spontaneously started to swim in some part of cities. This phenomenon happened in Western Harbour waterfront after Bo01 was inaugurated. The shoreline public space offered visitors access to the water; the right, which the city and its citizens were deprived for a long time. The stairs, which were expected for sun bathing and enjoying the view, shortly, connected people to the water. It was a challenging circumstance for the City of Malmö, because swimming was banned in this site due to the safety issues. It was recognized that citizens' main interest and the need of this place had been ignored (figure 4&5).

The City of Malmö was about making decision in this particular situation: should citizens be prepared to accept planning ‘reasonable decision’ or if planning should accept social justice and act reasonable

(Campbell, 2006). The public use, as an unexpected outcome, turned to be an opportunity for Bo01 actors, struggling with the gentrified and not affordable development. Therefore, the city adopted approaches to accommodate public use where possible and changed the physical elements as well as the management policies. Paved stairs lead users into new wooden platforms with jetties, which enabled people to get in and out of the water. The popularity of the waterfront increased, and people's use of space gradually influenced their spatial knowledge and perception about the industrial identity of the harbour. They got access to the site where would not be possible unless the new development. They were enjoying an attractive environment at Western Harbour, which aimed at high quality urban form to increase the market value through its new inhabitants.



Figure 4, swimming just happened as an unexpected consequence on the site, photos: Thorbjörn Andersson

The public space, in which the least social values were expected to allocate, exceeded the city and even the urban designer's expectations (Tham, 2015). Accordingly, the 'public space' turned into a place, where public life could develop, and "the drama of communal life unfolded" (Carr et al 1992, p.3).

Another unintended consequence happened at the management and surveillance level. The trees in Dania Park, which aimed to reinforce the sense of place, sense of enclosure, climate protection and seasonal variation, were disappeared after some years (Andersson, 2014 & 2015). The trees did not survive even after a second try planting with an excessive cost. The management responsibility was not clear in the park, where the public access and used the space unexpectedly (ibid) like almost 20,000 people in a sunny summer day.



Figure 5, the gap between vision and reality; trees on the sketch of Thorbjörn Andersson, right: added platforms

4.3.2. Spatial experiences and experiential qualities

The waterfront has four areas that punctuate the edge of boulders and access to the water; three in the park, and one in Promenade. The land in Dania Park has been intentionally elevated to create different 'spatial experiences' in different location. In the middle of the park, three platforms are rebounded on a higher elevation in the form of terraces, looking to both green lawn and allies provide space for individuals and groups. Two large open plazas bound Dania Park. A grand hard platform in the north captures the best view of the site, which is left deliberately empty, as a flexible space. A projected platform out on the water in this point stands as a statue and landmark for the waterfront. All the ledges, stairs and edges are comfortable for seating. It was observed that most people visiting the park walk up to this point and spend some times there. The open square hosts several events and initiated activities by the City (Figure 6). Changes in flooring materials and patterns have high visual and aesthetic quality. The Citizen's Square situated at the middle of the site is the main entrance of Bo01 to the water and opens the view to Turning Torso tower (built in 2005) as the new landmark of Western Harbour, replaced the industrial image.



Figure 6, Various optional and social activities; Both left: Dania Park, right top: Citizens Square, right bottom: Promenade

wooden long steps of Promenade alter seating and stretching out for individual or groups on both sides, either facing the sun and towards the horizon, or facing the promenade and protected from the wind. The whole waterfront is prioritized for pedestrians with extensive and safe walking and biking routes.

The high quality of the physical space encourages people for different optional activities, which are carried out by wish (Gehl, 1996). Taking a walk, standing around enjoying life, watching the view, sitting and checking phone, taking picture and sunbathing in the summer are the most observed activities. Although planners had aimed for more public places on the ground floor level, not the same interest for developers, therefore urban design reconciled developers' interest with limited

implementation of public places. The City of Malmö, perused the strategy for public spaces to be liveable and become meeting places. Following this strategy, the City took the initiative and runs regularly different social and cultural events in this public space, in which people do not only access to this place but can participate and be actively engaged with it. The public space is open to all Malmö citizens who do not necessary know each other, to exercise their interest and to express their feelings. The Waterfront public space became an ideal place for striking up acquaintances increases the possibility for social activities. Citizens' engagement and practices in the public space shaped a new image for Malmö on top of the branded sustainable identity of Bo01.

Bordering buildings, along the public space are relatively higher to reduce the wind; therefore the interior part of Bo01 is perceived more private and secure. For the same reason, permeability of the peripheral blocks along the public space is low and through the narrow internal streets and frequent plot lines (Figure 7). As a result, there is a weak continuous visibility through the blocks, which is less inviting for the regulars. The robust impression of public/private influences natural movement and avoid wandering freely through the blocks; otherwise in some areas there are signs of soft control of the privacy.



Figure 7, left: limited visibility to the public space; right: the privatized neighbourhood inside.

The buildings typology along the waterfront varies in the northern and southern part relatively to the time they were built (figure 8). The physical edge of Dania Park was built during the second phase of the development after the park had been formed and used. All are residential buildings have semi-private interface, in a form of front yards, whereas in the southern part, private doors and windows are directly opened to the public space. The high level of publicness of the waterfront and diverse group of users on one hand, and no interface between public and private in the southern part on the other hand, had made conflict for some local residents who had paid extra money to get the sea view, while other citizens who *'hated'* this gentrified area *'[...] just walked up and pressed their noses against the glass all the time'* says Scott, an American, who lived on a sixth-floor seafront apartment in 2005. He continued that *'[...] if I was on the first level or the ground level, I'd move out, and many people have done just that, six or eight months after moving in. Others have blocked their windows with shades [...]* (Rose, 2005).



Figure 8, left: the semi-private interface of Dania Park; right: the solid edge of Promenade

5. Discussion

5.1 *Towards meaningful places and meaningful urban design*

The case illustrated the rational planning and design process with the aim at identifying high quality sustainable environment, in two main focuses of green living and human-scale form. Development and use of the public space, as part of regeneration process, became a key point and catalyst for an inclusive and liveable environment to stimulate social life. The findings of the study showed that people got the intended environmental qualities gradually through their engagement in public spaces. Their engagement at a certain time - when the Western Harbour turned to be a liveable place- was the result of unordinary public life which was unfolded and turned into formal outcome, like the way everyday urbanism aims to contribute to urban design (Crawford, 2004). The case study showed that the public space became the meaningful place when people's presence made a difference, their practice was repeated and adopted to the physical place; as the process of social production and social construction of space (see more in Low, 2009, p.28).

This study highlighted that places are about urban processes, people, power and institutions. Places and meanings are more complicated object to be finite, they change through time. In addition, other direct or indirect factors and connections in macro-scale network and planning level such as spatializing public good, socio-economic dynamics, and political reasons influence people's knowledge and attitude and accordingly experience of the place. Urban planning and design assessed the social need as an unintended consequence, changed the regulation, facilitated the place by design and upgraded it with initiating more social activities.

The big lesson was that the citizens' voice was heard, and due to high planning ethics they were responded immediately, which fostered a democratic process. Later on, the City proposed new places and facilities for swimming, designed by the same designer and rich material as Promenade, in Western Harbour. Through this process – and following strategies for public spaces- the City is regarded by its simple but powerful definition as 'a human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet' (Sennett, 1977, 39). From planning perspective public space potentially becomes the site where different actors and their influences meet. Place-making then was a post-development effort, based on needs for cultural development, was a big step to rehearse civility where there is lack of friction, togetherness and any deeper reason to communicate (Bauman, 2001). That was a great achievement for Malmö with almost 170 different nationalities to gather a large group of people together. This is as much of the literature on city design and urbanism aims to address at the best of public space development.

‘Towards opens attitudes’, the City of Malmö is strongly aiming at ‘rethinking about public spaces’ for multiple social usages (Larsson, 2015). Place shaping then can be interpreted as production of space for ‘collaboration and dialogue between diverse groups of users’, which is in planning level (ibid). Besides, provision of constructive space in urban design perspective, is through place-shaping for ‘complex forms of freedom’ for individuals and groups, ‘not only as an expression of distance and absence (...) but for connection, presence and mutual support’ (Madanipour, 2014, p.247). To achieve freedom and democracy in public space is an integral point that should be addressed further in multicultural and super-modern societies.

6. Conclusion

Places and people both form meanings, by materials and relations, ‘roots and routes’ (Dovey, 2010): the former is shaped by urban designers’ attempts and knowledge to create physical quality, visual identity and social activities, while the latter is limited by ‘utilizing the affordances that particular material structure offers’ (Cresswell, 2009, p.2). The former is traditionally addressed by standards and necessary criteria required to shape a good urban form, which determine human needs and patterns of behaviour (Kostof, 1991; Lynch, 1981; Alexander et al., 1977). However, this case study revealed that meaningful places are beyond *good urban form*, which is not necessary out-there. Urban design should rethink the approach of *what it would be*, also their attitudes towards provision and evaluation of *meaningful* public places (Crawford, 2004, Inam, 2014). Urban design should be contextually fit for specific culture and time.

Summarizing the major potentials and limits of urban design in framing public life and its contribution to place-making, the points are:

- Urban design has an integral role in solving economic and social problems by production of space but not only through shaping the form (design) but also through the use and management. Therefore, the success of urban design should be through only evaluation the form and outcome, but through the process of shaping, between intentions and outcomes, design and use, actors and users, macro-scale relations and micro-scale perceptions.
- Urban design should have a broad moral vision in solving problems in solving social problems.
- The social and cultural norms and values are reflected through the normative positions and experts’ experiences and preferences in urban design practice.
- Unintended consequences are not necessarily negative outcomes if urban design is positioned within an informative environment with long-term urban planning, and if it has pluralistic approach to alter the solutions.
- Urban design practice involves experts in different scales and diverse roles to materialize planning visions: plans; frameworks and regulation, mediating between different actors and developers, trade-offs.
- Studying contemporary public spaces highlights the power of public authority and their relation in place-making.

I conclude this paper by addressing a critical question: how can urban design better navigate the contextual needs in transformation process, and in which scale the outcomes can be predicted in advance.

7. References

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¹ Urban design (or in Swedish Stadsbyggnad) is described as ‘the methodology of ordering and shaping, composing, designing buildings, streets and public spaces in their entirety’. However, urban design in Swedish context follow special regards to ‘natural and cultural values’ and promotes ‘aesthetically pleasing design of built-up areas, green belts, routes of communication and other construction’ (Planning and Building act: Chapter 2, section 2, Quoted in Loew 2012, p97).