ACTIVATING architecture and urban planning

50 Examples of Development of Attractive and Active Urban Spaces
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The recommended strategies are based on current evidence, research and Danish law.

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and Sports Confederation of Denmark

Ministry of Social Welfare

The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts
School of Architecture
Centre for Sports and Architecture
ACTIVATING architecture and urban planning
50 Examples of Development of Attractive and Active Urban Spaces

Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture
Preface by the Ministry of Social Affairs, 2009

The combination of an increasingly overweight population and infrequent physical activity affords a range of problems for our society. Consequently, it makes sense to focus on prevention by creating good physical settings that are conducive to physical activity and movement.

The need for more physical activity in everyday life can be met by increasingly integrating movement in the architecture and design of the urban spaces we use in our daily lives. Traditionally, spaces for sports and movement have been separated from the urban setting, relegated to sports halls. Yet studies of our exercise habits point to the fact that more spontaneous and self-organised sports are gaining ground. This indicates that planning for public spaces should focus on creating good settings for sports and movement.

For several years, urban renewal legislation has granted experimental and developmental funding for the continued development and adaptation of our towns and cities. In 2007 the Ministry of Social Affairs, earmarked funding for a series of experimental projects focusing on health and movement in urban spaces. The objective was to promote attractive and well-functioning cities that also support an active lifestyle. This publication, Activating Architecture and Urban Planning, is the result of one such experimental project.

The publication comprises concrete recommendations and inspirational material from Denmark and abroad concerning the transformation of existing urban spaces into active urban spaces that promote movement. We hope the publication can serve as a concrete planning tool for municipalities, for example when urban planning in connection with an area renewal scheme seeks to support an active lifestyle.

We hope the publication will inspire municipalities to work with the activating city, facilitating access to physical activity for the individual citizen.

Ministry of Social Affairs
Preface by the Sports Confederation of Denmark, 2009

Although the Sports Confederation of Denmark currently organises approximately 1.6 million members, we would like to see even more Danes experience the joy of sports and physical activity.

With this manual, we take a look at the preconditions for drawing more participants into organised sports. We make recommendations as to how access to sports and physical activity in Danish urban spaces can become a natural part of municipal urban planning and development in the future.

The Sports Confederation of Denmark believes that Danish towns should be our largest sports facilities, allowing Danes to engage in sports and be physically active every day within the urban space. And from our perspective, the math is simple: The more Danes who are accustomed to using their bodies for sports and physical activity, the more members our sports associations will have.

Finally, with the examples highlighted in this context, the Sports Confederation of Denmark seeks to show Danish municipalities and architects that city planning of the future must necessarily incorporate sports if the objective is an active and healthy city. Preferably, municipalities would be obliged to account for the impact any given urban development would have on access to sports and exercise.

We would like to raise awareness of the fact that, provided new and creative thinking is applied in urban planning and architecture, the urban space can become an appealing sports facility within the city and can activate thousands of citizens. In the manual Activating Architecture and Urban Planning we seek to promote creativity and to inspire new combinations of sports and urban planning.

We wish you an enjoyable reading experience and hope that you will be inspired.

Niels Nygaard
President, Sports Confederation of Denmark.

Preface by the Centre for Sports and Architecture, 2009

A large article in the British newspaper The Times called attention to the fact that thoughtless urban planning kills many people every year. Factors such as cities designed for car traffic, the lack of bicycle paths, insufficient public transportation, scarcity of parks and squares, monofunctional neighbourhoods, decentralised and poorly maintained sports facilities and unsafe roads combine to claim more lives than the disasters we normally associate with death and destruction. Type 2 diabetes, physical inactivity and pollution-related diseases that can be directly linked to poor urban planning, constitute a far more dangerous killer than for example war, terror, earthquakes or the subsequent tsunamis.

In Denmark we know that motivation for exercising and participating in sports increases with proximity to a sports facility. Consequently, planning cities with greater care will allow us, with relatively simple measures, to promote ‘the good life’ characterised not only by increased possibilities for physical activity but also by greater social interaction and cultural exchange. This is a type of planning referred to as urban medicine (U-Med). But couldn’t municipal architects and planners simply double the 1,500 standard sports halls we have in Denmark, for example, thereby adding years to the average life expectancy of the population? Not necessarily, because the standard sports hall does not reflect the current activity pattern of the Danes. We are far more active in spaces that are found right outside our front doors: roads, sidewalks, bicycle paths, parks, city spaces, forests etc. And if we shift our focus for a moment from the health related argument for physical activity in a sports hall close to home, we find that sports today must be understood as part of much broader concept of culture. ‘Survival’ is an argument in favour of moderate physical activity that often takes a back seat to the desire for experience and involvement.

For many years, the Centre for Sports and Architecture has contributed to developing new planning tools. We hope the publication at hand will be a success in this respect also.

René Kural, PhD, Associate Professor, Architect MAA, Director, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
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UPGRADE TABLE
Reader’s Guide

Activating Architecture and Urban Planning comprises presentations of fifty individual cases from Denmark and abroad. The cases include planned and realised examples that can inspire the development of physically active spaces in the city. The fifty cases are grouped in chapters. Each case can be read independently allowing Activating Architecture and Urban Planning to serve as a reference tool.

The first chapter provides a rough outline of our use of the city and of how architecture and planning influences city residents in terms of physical activity. The next chapter, Activating Urban Spaces, describes the multiple functions of the city and the need for spaces and places for physical exercise within the city.

The upgrade icons that have been developed are presented in the Planning Principles chapter. These can be used as concrete tools in connection with developing activating architecture and urban planning. The icons can be used as a development strategy conducive to the promotion of ideas and opportunities for the development of activating urban spaces. A general methodological guideline is presented, offering assistance in the process of selecting location and activity, and suggestions are given for developing an overview that can serve as the foundation for specific selection.

Subsequently the cases are presented, divided into sections according to themes that illustrate specific projects and ideas that have been developed. The case pages begin with the simple cases and progress toward the larger more complex projects.

Each section comprises an introduction to the theme, for example the park, followed by a series of examples of park projects. The case itself contains a brief introduction, a description of the specific projects and a series of recommendations. A number of upgrade icons are listed for each case, illustrating the specific qualities of the project as well as strategic potential. At the end of each section is a series of summarising general recommendations associated with the corresponding upgrade icons.

Finally, a table containing selected upgrade icons has been developed. The table illustrates a range of general conditions that can be utilised as operational tools when developing and designing activating architecture and urban planning. As such they can contribute to assuring the quality of the appealing active public space in the city.
ACTIVATING architecture and urban planning
Activating Architecture in Urban Spaces

The city is more than just a place to live. It is also a place for experience and activity, a place in which we spend much of our time. We move between our various daily destinations, we go for a run along the water or we play ball in the park. The healthy city provides a setting for our working day and our spare time, and we have developed ways of using the existing setting for a range of different recreational and active pursuits.

At the same time, participation in organised sports has declined, particularly for the younger population that is turning away from the traditional sports clubs in favour of other forms of activity. The traditional sports club is losing ground, not because of declining interest in physical activity but rather due to different needs and wants concerning physical exercise. Studies show that the Danes want to be physically active, but in a flexible and casual way. This indicates that exercise and sports need to be easily accessible, convenient and fun. Consequently the city should be as conducive as possible to varied expression and physical activity.

As the demand and need for more and novel sports and exercise activities is on the rise, methods must be developed for structuring and managing sports facilities at municipal and local levels. We need to develop even better urban spaces, in order for them to meet the demands of inhabitants when it comes to physical activity. This can be achieved, for example, by paying attention to the possibilities for pause in the area, to access to green spaces and activity areas and to the places we navigate daily, trying to develop these based on some basic settings for physical activity.

Bicycle use in everyday life is increasing, and activities like hiking and jogging are among the most popular with adults. For children and older people, there is a rising tendency primarily to engage in outdoor activities and play within the local community, and proximity is a significant factor in the choice of physical activity. By seeking to accommodate these forms of movement and expression within the local community and by securing good settings and conditions for regular movement and activity, urban spaces can become a natural and secure setting for such activity and can additionally contribute to raising the level of activity.

Sports and physical activity can be more easily incorporated in our everyday lives because the demand and need for more new sports activities and movement opportunities is increasing. Consequently methods need to be developed to structure and handle these facilities at the local and municipal levels. One way to accommodate this is to focus on ease of access to and between the daily facilities that support pleasurable activities in the local community.

Everyday Activity Areas

The first step toward accommodating this new trend and getting people to walk or run is to create welcoming surroundings that people enjoy and want to use for physical expression. This presupposes that the urban spaces, places and facilities that we navigate in our daily lives are appealing and inviting enough for urban residents to want to use them and exercise in them. This can be achieved, for example, by paying attention to the possibilities for pause in the area, to access to green spaces and activity areas and to the places we navigate daily, trying to develop these based on some basic settings for physical activity.

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1. Tendenser i danskernes idræts- og motionsvaner og idrætsforeningernes forhold til den selvorganiserede idræt, Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences, University of Copenhagen, 2005


3. Voksnes sports- og motionsaktiviteter efter kulturaktivitet og køn (procentdel af voksne), Statistics Denmark, 2004


Outdoor area in connection with a primary school in Berlin. The surface is designed as a running track, and several different demarcated areas serve as flexible fields for play and ball games. Heinrich Roller Primary School, Berlin. Photo: Karen Thorkenholdt
It must also be ensured that good sports and exercise opportunities are offered within the local environment in order to secure bodily development and to create the framework for lifelong movement.

This can contribute to making physical activity a natural part of citizens’ lives – both in everyday life and in their spare time. Provided they are considered and integrated in planning and development in the same way as other public functions in the city, movement, exercise and sports can become a natural part of our daily surroundings. It is no longer enough to simply locate and develop sports and exercise in certain zones. Instead this needs to be done in correlation with our everyday lives and daily activities. It can be advantageous to think of the local community as an arena for physical activity, play and sports. In this context, focus will be on participation itself and on social encounters. By developing and upgrading urban facilities, opportunities and spaces based on a number of general urban qualities, spaces and places can be created in the city and will be able to flexibly accommodate a variety of activities.

The Informal Activity Areas

Today, the physical setting for sports is not limited to the traditional sports hall. Danish towns and cities are exhibiting a clear tendency toward using and consuming city spaces. This is true for those who are active in sports and for citizens who are not. The activities have made their way into the street and are now referred to as lifestyle activities. Sports have become a defining factor, showing the world who and what you are. This has contributed to changing our definition of the public space. New sports activities, new user groups and altered forms of togetherness all contribute to expanding the framework of the city. Many places in the cities are drawn into public use and an increasing group of citizens makes use of city spaces for daily play and movement.

A large part of the expression that takes place in the street, the square and the park comprises spontaneous and often informal activities that are creative and unpredictable by nature. Consequently, they are difficult to define and qualify. Sports such as jogging, mountain biking, roller-skating and Nordic walking are on the rise, precisely because they can be practiced anywhere. Other activities like gymnastics, swimming and basketball as well as skating and parkour are increasingly taking place in the public space. Many new sports activities are characterised by the lack of rules and can in principle be carried out anywhere because they do not necessarily require certain locations, costly equipment, specific timing or fields of a specific size.

Therefore it is important for the city to have room for various places and areas that support physical expression, activity, play and sports. This can be achieved by defining flexible settings that are based on a specific expression yet permit a broader range of use. The public spaces and the more free and dynamic city life in which sports and various activities can take place, must be understood as a significant element in the city, one that can contribute to generating vibrancy and diversity and provide a natural contribution to public health.
Informal activity area on Islands Brygge in Copenhagen. The area comprises a wide variety of spaces including a recreational area for petanque, a children’s play area, a skate area, a pier and a harbour swimming area.

Islands Brygge, Copenhagen. Photo: Laura Munch
Activating Urban Spaces

The term urban space covers a broad range of large and small spaces, gaps, corridors, compartments, green spaces and empty spaces as well as larger connected urban areas. Ideally, cities should seek to comprise a wide range of all types of space, each with its own specific character. The city can no longer be understood simply as the physical delimitations between indoor and outdoor functions, but needs to be seen as an arena for political, social and cultural processes in close interplay. The city is about the places in which we move, work, live, exercise and recuperate. When we make our way through the streets and use the urban space, we sense and experience it. We interpret it through our use of it, thus understanding it. The city as a whole can thus be perceived as a sports facility in itself.

The City Is a Success
Urban space is used for daily commutes, recreation and physical expression. This combination makes some very specific demands on city spaces that must be versatile, accommodate multiple functions and offer a range of experiences. We use urban space for running, playing hockey and roller-skating in the parking lot, and we use it for ball games in the courtyard. Many spontaneous activities such as basketball, skating and mountain biking have already become an inherent part of the city, while others like parkour and street golf may be on their way. This development ought to be complemented by elaboration of corresponding planning that can contribute to securing a broad range of activities and possibilities for expression integrated in the development of the fundamental opportunities offered by the city, rather than, as is currently the case, adding them to an area at a later time.

In the municipalities, we can find many good examples and intentions concerning the creation of diverse and active urban spaces. Architectural competitions also demonstrate a clearly defined desire to illustrate and describe the dynamic and diverse city life that encompasses a variety of social, cultural and sports activities. It is important that these good visions of public space are given priority and that they remain integral to the projects when they are realised.

Diverse and Active Urban Spaces
Every city is unique in composition and organisation. Each has its own role in regional development and its own specific identity, capability and development potential. Every city area and neighbourhood has its own specific appearance and atmosphere that allows the formation of individual and personal impressions of the area. Individual projects must be adapted to the terms of the city, the site and the assignment, such that different city scenes maintain their individual character. A trip through the city should ideally be a colourful strip rather than a monotonous grey line. This can contribute to creating the active city. Planning and development can benefit from a point of departure in regional and local objectives and strategies, but must be grounded in the identity and potential of the particular area.

A vibrant city with appealing activities and areas for sports and movement can be created by establishing an open, flexible and welcoming setting that takes into consideration the character and entirety of the space. Location, choice of function and implementation itself are all factors that combine to determine the ultimate success of a project. The conditions for individual activities and functions should be worked through in detail, in order to ensure optimal location, design and implementation.

One of the challenges of planning is to generate development methods that can yield new urban spaces capable of accommodating these novel forms of sports and movement and incorporate the unfolding and changeable self-organised and organised sports within the existing urban structure. The more sports and movement rendered possible at the street level, the more likely people will be to participate and the more varied forms of sport and physical activity will arise in the urban space.
Many of the new activities have become a natural part of the urban space and take place on many different levels. Guangzhou, China. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen
Can we imagine areas in the city that expressly welcome activity and physical expression rather than attempting to limit them?

Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture
Planning Principle

Successful implementation of urban activity areas presupposes the development of specific methods and tools capable of securing qualitative and active public spaces in the city. In this context, a series of icons have been developed for work with planning and designing activating urban spaces. The icons can serve as operational tools in the process of upgrading city spaces. Collectively, the icons can be understood as a development strategy that purposefully contributes to promoting opportunities for the development of activating urban spaces.

Upgrade Icons

There are two types of icons, each representing a specific or strategic measure that can be of singular importance for the development of an attractive and active urban space.

Specific Qualitative Icons

The specific qualitative icons in orange illustrate concrete conditions that can contribute to creating a qualitative space or area that is conducive to physical activity and sports. The icons represent specific physical, spatial conditions that may be appropriate to take into account, for example dimensions, varying street space, flexible forms, accessibility and lighting.

Strategic Planning Icons

Strategic planning icons in green illustrate possible process strategies and planning methods. The icons represent strategies, methods and approaches applicable in planning and programming, for example using the type of physical activity as a point of departure, varied connections, and compartmentalisation or establishing a city space for every 800 meters.

The icons developed here can be used as a complementary planning tool in the development of spaces and places that promote physical expression and activity.
What:
The icons can be perceived as value icons that can be added for example to a corner square, a parking lot or a harbour area. The icons allocated to the project thus help to define a series of particular conditions and frameworks based on which the project can be developed, thereby contributing to an upgrade of the existing space to an attractive and active city space. Hence the title Upgrade Icons.
In this publication, the icons are activated in relation to the specific cases in order to emphasise the specific qualities and particular planning potentials of the projects.

Purpose:
The upgrade icons represent a series of conditions that may be appropriate to take into consideration in the process of developing the public space. They illustrate how physical activity and movement can be incorporated in architecture and planning, thereby contributing to heightening the quality of city spaces. Collectively, they can be used as a development method. The green icons indicate various strategies and methods for planning, whereas the orange icons draw attention to specific initiatives that can engender an attractive and active space, for example securing a good microclimate, making it possible to orient activity in relation to sunlight and view and the creation of several varied levels for sports and physical exercise. Thus the icons contribute to professionalising the projects and to assuring the quality of the public space.

Use:
Naturally, activation of the strategic planning icons can take place in several ways, depending on interpretation and project type. The individual icon illustrates a general idea or vision to be realised through the project, thus serving as a guideline in the planning process. In this way, the strategic planning icons become a planning tool, a general strategy or method that can be used in the development of the project.
The specific qualitative icons can be used by allocating select icons to the project, thereby imbuing it with significance and contributing to defining the project framework. Accordingly the icons become conditions and frameworks that it is advisable to physically integrate in the project. Hence they constitute a tool that can be used in the design process. The concrete manifestation of the icon can of course be carried out in different ways.

The icons can be used in a variety of ways, individually or in different combinations. Adding many icons to a project can serve to broaden the scope of possibilities, which may in turn lead to unexpected and interesting results. Furthermore, the icons can be used as a method for analysis of the developed projects, shedding light on project qualities and helping to identify any additional needs, thereby assuring the quality of the city spaces.

The upgrade icons presented constitute a concrete planning tool capable of contributing to a serious and goal-oriented effort in the Danish towns. They can serve in conjunction with existing planning methods, as a complementary tool to be used as inspiration for development strategy and realisation itself. The specific activation and manifestation of the planning tools is limited only by the creative capacity of the project team.

Table
At the very back of the book there is a table with select icons grouped in urban architectonic categories. These illustrate general efforts that can have an activating impact. Certain icons can appear in connection with the case presentations without being represented in the table. The table can serve as a point of departure for analysis and as a guide in relation to strategies for inspiring the approach, programming and design of an activating architecture and urban planning.

On the next two pages, all the icons are presented along with a brief descriptive text, beginning with the specific qualitative icons (orange) and followed by the strategic planning icons (green).
**Ease of access** to relevant areas with a variety of opportunities that create different experiences and accommodate broad use.

**Adaptation of courts to the context** can create small activity areas for use by 2-4 people.

**Open welcoming character** through emphasis on access, creating comprehensible spatialities.

**Small niches** that create a comfortable microclimate facing surrounding vibrancy, offering the opportunity to pause.

**Lighting** of areas and junctions permits evening use and promotes a sense of security.

**Visibility** of activity areas and junctions through location, design or specific character.

**Dimensions** of buildings and city spaces that correspond to the body at street level.

**Small spaces** in the city that provide a setting for informal activities.

**Mixed functions** serving social and cultural purposes contribute to creating social encounters, new communities and a vibrant city and activity area.

**Flexible use** of city spaces that can change character in accordance with function, season and event.

**Direct connection A-B**, connecting relevant everyday destinations.

**Connecting areas** between housing linked together by a path of movement.

**Play/exercise** accessible within a 3-5 minute radius of housing, in the form of smaller green spaces or activity squares.

**Green space** accessible within a 5 minute radius. Park or courtyard areas or common green spaces that lend themselves to physical activity.

**Multiple uses** that allow several different types of activity to take place at the same time within the same area.

**A simple shelter** that serves as protection from the rain while allowing sunlight and fresh air, creates good conditions for a wide range of activities.

**Flexible design** or composition allowing the activity space to be used in different ways by different users.

**Scenic** nature areas or vibrant cityscapes that create visual and experiential views.

**Various levels** that permit broad use and create a variety of experiences.

**Social meeting place** in which different social and cultural groups can meet and interact informally.

**Public ground floor** addressing the street and opening up in relation to building functions.

**Surface graphics** can contribute to generating new conduct and to vitalising the sports surface.

**Varied street spaces** in which buildings with open facades create smaller spaces and compartments and interesting courses of movement.

**Varied surface character** accommodating a wide range of users such as cyclists, roller skaters and wheel chair users.

**Trail systems** through vibrant housing and school areas. Lighting and activity areas in specific places can expand use.

**Multiple programmes** for activities, hanging around, shopping and housing within a cohesive sequence.

**Informal activities 5 minutes.** Square, park space, courtyard space or activity area that allows active expression.

**Recycling** of elements or structure activated by renewed staging or use.
Borders/delimitation that provide basic conditions for movement, for example surface, shelter or lighting

Point of departure in the specific basic requirements for the type of activity, regarding for example dimensions and materials

Smaller disparate units or spreading of activities and recreational areas over a larger or smaller area

Flexible design that considers and incorporates possibilities for change allowing the place to accommodate new body cultures and activities in the future

Affiliation of square or city space with a local area through use of specific materials or reuse of recognisable design

10 % activity in relation to the total site ratio or the total site size

Utilisation of facade and roof surfaces in order to create new layers and experiences in the city through mixed functions and by adding activating functions to the surfaces

Remote parking makes room for recreational and active functions in close proximity to the building

Keep certain areas clear of building, allowing their inherent potential to be activated by simple initiatives

Varied networks and trails through green spaces and other special places engender visually vibrant sequences making the physical distance seem shorter

Continuous landscape as a coherent green structure with connections that create cohesive character for an area

Scenic landscape such as rolling surfaces, hills and varied levels as the foundation for overall design of an area

General landscape cohesiveness uniting a housing or city area through pervasive green structures and landscaping efforts

Larger activities 400 m accessible from housing in the form of actual playing fields and courts for soccer, tennis, rugby or the like

Multiple uses. Area planning based on different forms of activity and a broad appeal

Mobile units that can facilitate sports and activities in the local community with the possibility of storing equipment

Sports/exercise 200 m. Development of city spaces in order that inhabitants have access to sports and exercise facilities within a 200 m radius

Social meeting place by creating a setting and functions that generate a sense of community and have broad appeal socially and culturally

Facing the sun. Activity and relaxation zones located and optimised in relation to the sun

Density, by working with density of function and building programme

Varied contextual conditions can determine selection and location of sports and recreational activities

3D planning of public movement and life in the city in the shape of public functions imbued with several levels in the city

Green space 5 min. Planned and located in connection with recreational areas

Junction. Development of connections in order to generate social encounters leading to an increased sense of security

Connections between relevant areas in the city, in close association with housing, business districts, schools and recreational and activity areas

Topographical elements like stairs, steps and staggered levels creating a variety of experiences

Green space 15 min. Accessible from housing in the form of park areas, coastal areas or smaller park enclaves

City space 800 m. Qualitative city space within an 800 m radius with opportunities for recreation, carried out in good materials
Municipal Analysis

In the preliminary phase of developing the active city, it is advisable to develop an overview that illustrates the various recreational and active opportunities present in the city areas. The overview should also detail connections and unused spaces and should indicate areas of specific potential in relation to sports and physical activity. The city comprises neighbourhoods and areas of varied composition and character. The different city areas do not all offer the same functions and opportunities, nor should they. However, it is advisable that individual areas and neighbourhoods provide opportunities for informal recreation and expression as well as sports and physical activity that can stimulate area residents.

In this selection process, municipalities can choose to focus on the areas and neighbourhoods with a deficiency of recreational and activity offerings. An advisory group with various city representatives spanning administrative branches can be given the task of prioritising areas in need of upgrade efforts on the basis of the preliminary overview.

Selection Strategy

A prioritised selection is required in order to ensure that activity opportunities are distributed among city areas in a way that allows the maximum number of residents to participate and benefit. This can be achieved, for example, by elaborating a map that illustrates the existing opportunities in the respective city areas. The material can also indicate squares that are run-down and neglected as well as streets and areas that possess specific potential for transformation and implementation of sports activities. City neighbourhoods with poor access to green spaces and activity spaces can for example be given first priority. Run-down corners and nooks can be transformed into attractive, active areas capable of accommodating activities such as ball games and play. They can be transformed into local meeting places with room to dwell and allow spontaneous activity to occur, thus providing a neighbourhood upgrade.

Focus on accessibility, for example, can be a decisive factor in selecting a particular area to work with based on the preliminary overview. Goals can be set concerning the desired proximity of housing to green spaces, squares or activity areas. Planning can, for example, seek to ensure that all city residents have access within ten minutes to a qualitative public city space that provides opportunities for sports and physical activity. This would specifically entail that at least one public city space within an 800 meter radius must be suitable for sports and physical activity. This type of approach can be helpful in illustrating a given situation and can indicate areas that may require the development of new city spaces for sports and physical activity.
Recommendations

- Development of city area and neighbourhood overviews that indicate facilities, opportunities and recreational and active possibilities, can contribute to locating new initiatives in the areas of greatest need. In addition, the overview material can be utilised in the process of prioritising areas, thus qualifying a specific location.
- Developing an overview of opportunities in a given city area can contribute to securing distribution and diversity in the selection of focal areas.

- Bringing activity opportunities to the areas of greatest need can serve to make even more people physically active as the opportunities for and access to activity areas become better.
- In particularly densely populated urban areas, municipal planning can incorporate principles that ensure use of select street corners, squares and areas for public recreational purposes. This type of approach can contribute to creating a multitude of small attractive city spaces dispersed across the city for the benefit of a great number of people.
Development Methodology

A variety of factors, including access to green recreational areas, number and accessibility of sports facilities, area composition of housing, commercial and industrial areas and infrastructural connections, determines the possibilities for integrating physical movement in our daily lives. In order to clarify the appropriate type of activity for city spaces, analysis can be carried out.

In general, it is recommended that all types of projects begin with thorough analysis and study of the context and the project area itself. By analysing the basic conditions of an activity, for example location, orientation, and surface, optimal conditions can be established for the expression of this particular activity.

In the following pages general guidelines are presented using three steps that can ensure correct choices of activity and location.

1) An overview of facilities, functions and activities already present in the area can serve as a point of departure for project development. This provides a map of area composition, structure and function.

2) Based on the overview, decisions can be made regarding the type of activities that can be added to the area. In this phase, referred to as the programming phase, the collected data is processed and used to determine function and content.

3) The last step pertains to the actual design of the project, i.e. the implementation itself and the choice of surface and materials. In this phase, it is important to realise that every function and activity type has certain parameters that must be taken into account in order to ensure optimal functioning. This applies in relation to surface, frames, materials and weather conditions.
Development Methodology

Mapping, Programming and Impact Diagram

1. Mapping
- demographic composition
- infrastructure
- spatialities
- area facilities
- green spaces
- area flow
- materiality

2. Programming
- programming in relation to local qualities
- movement parameters as a point of departure
- the meeting place as a point of departure

3. Impact
- selection and location of activities
- location of recreational areas
- establishing Connections

The three steps in the development methodology described above and their relationships illustrated by icons. Mapping local conditions can serve as the basis for programming that leads to design of impact.
1. Mapping

Mapping of the area can be based on an inventory and analysis of the demographic composition, infrastructure, spatiality, facilities, green spaces, flow of movement and materiality of the area. The analytical elements are further described below.

- **Demographic Composition:**
  An analysis of the demographic composition of the area may comprise registration of area composition in terms of age, behaviour, consumption and use of locations.
  - What is the population structure of the particular area?
  - Who uses the area and in which way?

In order to evaluate the use of an area, residents and users should be involved, and their wants and needs should be clarified. This can be achieved, for example, through interviews and workshops. In addition it may be an advantage to involve interest groups, educational institutions and other relevant parties.

- **Infrastructure:**
  An analysis of area infrastructure may include an inventory of large access roads, small roads, bicycle and pedestrian connections, smaller trails and public transportation possibilities.
  - How accessible are bicycle and pedestrian connections?
  - What are the available connections for subway, bus, train and other traffic hubs?
  - How can optimal accessibility to the area be established?

- **Spatialities:**
  An analysis of area spatialities may include an inventory of dimensions, sizes and distribution of the area’s open spaces as squares, courtyards, green spaces and interspaces.
  - What are the dimensions and spatial character of the open areas?
  - What are the dimensions and spatial character of the built structures?

The dimensions, limits and surfaces of the space can be used to assess selection and placement of activities by drawing on the existing qualities of the location.

- **Area Facilities:**
  An analysis of area facilities may include an inventory of sports facilities, playgrounds, green spaces, meeting places and public buildings like libraries and schools.
  - Which facilities and opportunities already exist in the area?
  - What is the distribution of workplaces, educational institutions and housing?

Existing activities in the areas can contribute to clarifying which type of activities function well and which type might be added.

- **Green spaces:**
  An analysis of green spaces may comprise an inventory of area parks, open green spaces, marsh areas as well as coastal and water areas.
  - What is the overall structure of green spaces, parks and recreational areas?
  - How are green spaces in this area accessed?

Green spaces have a naturally activating effect and can contribute to structuring and designing the area.

- **Flow of Movement:**
  An analysis of movement in the area may include registration of where and how residents and users move within and through the area.
  - What is the flow of movement through the area?
  - Which types of movement and activities take place within the area?

Current use of an area can help indicate advantageous locations for recreational areas, movement through the area and activity spaces.

- **Materiality:**
  An analysis of the materiality of the place may include registration of colours, surfaces and textures.
  - What particular potential does the site possess, providing input for choice of program?

Analysis of the character of the place serves to uncover and describe its particularities as well as the landscaping and architectural possibilities. The distinctive characteristic of a given place could be its social diversity, the topography, its use, the planting or the surfaces.

Based on the factors outlined above, mapping of an area can contribute to creating a fundamental understanding of the area and can render visible the inherent qualities and potentials that could be used in the process of turning the area into an attractive and active urban space.
2. Programming

Mapping can serve as the basis for programming which involves a precise selection of necessary functions, their optimal placement and their individual parameters. Programming should be understood as a form of coding of urban space by adding functions that contribute to defining it and determining its use. When the individual functions and their preconditions are in place, work may begin on location based on area qualities, infrastructure, spatiality, hard surfaces and green spaces. Knowledge of the area and its use can indicate local qualities and potentials that may serve as the point of departure for locating both recreational areas and areas for physical and other activities.

In order to ensure local ownership it is advisable to involve local and city residents. Representatives of all involved parties can be included on a steering committee that participates in the development process, maintains the general overview of the project and communicates concerning the project.

Recommendations

- Many types of sports do not require extensive measures, but can take place in a simple setting established on the basis of the very fundamental requirements of a given activity, for example improvement of paving and mounting of lights.

- In general, it is important to render the area accessible by tying it to the local area and to the pedestrian and bicycle connections of the city. It is also important for the area to have a certain visibility.

- Recreational opportunities for both users and passersby can be incorporated in the process by paying attention to perspective on the area and orientation towards the sun.

- Possibilities for change must be considered and incorporated, rendering the place capable of accommodating a range of body cultures and forms of activities around the clock and throughout the year.

- In 25 years, needs, sports and ways of using the city will have changed. Consequently, the planner needs to be very user conscious while simultaneously looking forward.

3. Impact

Mapping and programming of functions in the area can point to an activity and a location that can be adapted and designed based on the parameters of the activity and adjusted to the local conditions and possibilities. Based on an understanding of the space requirements, paving, orientation, delimitation and user groups for the each activity, choice of activity and location can be viewed in relation to the possibilities present in the area.

All forms of movement including walking, playing, running, biking, and skating have a set of fundamental parameters of speed, paving, material and perception that entail a scale and certain spatialities. A qualitative adaptation of these factors can lead to the creation of very special spaces for exercise and activity in the city.

In order to accommodate a wide range of activities, the fundamental conditions for movement and recreation can serve as a point of departure for design. This can be carried out by letting the preconditions for and requirements of the activity such as dimensions, paving, orientation and delimitation serve as a starting point.

Seating areas carried out in good materials should be placed in the sun and should allow an overview of the area and the surrounding activity. Seating possibilities invite people to stop in the area, generating life along with a heightened sense of security. Very basic requisites can be established, for example edges and half walls for support, planting and shelter from the wind, encouraging people to stop in the area. The area should serve as a comfortable zone within which one can withdraw from surrounding activity while maintaining visual contact and outlook.

Recommendations

- The aesthetic quality of the setting should generate a sense of well-being and be conducive to both stopping and being physically active.

- Seating areas established around the area and the activity naturally attract passersby who can be drawn into the activities.

- Lighting is an important element in making sure that the area is used and at the same time serves to generate a sense of security.
CASES
The Square

Most town squares were established in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and many are characterised by a large, open and hard surface designed to be a town gathering place. Throughout history, the square has typically been located in connection with large public buildings. Today the square is usually a symbol of the old town centre and is therefore traditional in design, maintaining the illusion of the medieval town.

Many modern squares are open in appearance and may be freely interpreted and used. However, this is not equally effective in all areas. A square that is open and devoid of specific function does not necessarily encourage stay or activity, but can on the contrary appear cold and empty.

Danish town squares have great potential, and with a series of relatively modest modifications they could be transformed into active and attractive places. The squares often have very mixed functions and must therefore accommodate many different groups and types of people at the same time. This requires a combination of sturdiness and flexibility in order to encompass changing functions, which in turn necessitates exact planning of the space: An exact yet flexible framework that allows a variety of activities and a range of use, in order to benefit as many citizens as possible.

The square is to be used by all town residents. The square is a town surface to which many connections lead. Thus it has the potential for becoming an active meeting place. The open surface and the possible functions on the square should, to the extent possible, encourage people to stop and perhaps even sit down. The square should be the place where anything can happen.

Squares should appear open and welcoming, offering a setting conducive to various social and cultural activities. The square has inherent qualities that can profitably be linked with activities like street soccer, street basketball, roller-skating, roller hockey and parkour. This type of square can promote social encounters, new communities and a vibrant area.

Creating a square that encourages physical activity need not only involve larger features. Careful consideration of paving, lighting, dimensions and design can lead to qualitative, aesthetic city spaces and squares that encourage and invite physical expression and play, making it possible also for spontaneous activities to arise.
The Beetsplein square in Dordrecht is designed as a meeting place for all area residents. The activities are linked together in a large orange concrete ring that combines the various activities and creates new alignments. Beetsplein, Dordrecht, Holland, 2001. NL Architects, Amsterdam.
The Emergent Square

Play and activity arise in settings that do not necessarily need to include fancy and expensive materials. The city also needs completely informal spaces that are open in appearance and can be utilised by children and residents for play and games. Many ball games require only a surface and a delimited setting in order to work: A simple setting for the activity that also permits flexible use of the area.

In order to secure a variety of spaces and places for activity in the city, city planning can work with the reservation of certain sites for specific activities and can keep smaller city spaces and special places clear.

The de Salvio Playground, New York City

New York City suffers the lack of possibilities for expansion and the price of land is astronomical. In spite of this, the city elects to keep select sites clear for activities like basketball and handball. This is due to the self-evident qualities a space like this brings to the area, city vibrancy, entertainment, activity, security, physical wellbeing and health.

The de Salvio Playground in New York City is shaped exclusively by the unused facades of the surrounding buildings. The wall surfaces are ideal for a variety of ball games. A basketball court has been placed at one end of the playground, while another wall is used for handball that is played with a squash ball but without a racket. Photo: Jakob Rolver
The de Salvio Playground in New York City is an example of a play area adapted to the dense urban structure. In principle the playground comprises only two wall surfaces and a base, each of which has been assigned a function. Recreational possibilities have been established in the sun along one wall surface, while handball, played like squash but using hands instead of rackets, takes up the other wall. The third surface in this space, the foundation, has been marked with different play and court areas. An attractive playground has been created by working almost exclusively with the wall surfaces.

Recommendations

- Very simple surface treatments can transform a city space into an active square capable of accommodating a wide range of informal activities.
- Leaving parts of the square relatively untouched suggests a use of the square that can appear more open, flexible and inviting.
- Use can be made of the rough character of a certain place by drawing on its durability and making room for tougher activities.
- Reserving unused sites and keeping special places clear of comprehensive new building programmes can release and activate areas through smaller spontaneous sports activities that may develop over time.
- Empty city sites can be used for active and recreational purposes.
The Temporary Square

A good city space should be able to accommodate the processes and the life that contributes to shaping them. The city space should to a certain extent be conceived and developed with a measure of flexibility in its design, allowing it to encompass and absorb varied functions and activities. Temporary activities can serve as a method for quickly bringing life to an area.

Historical town squares can be static in appearance and may primarily be perceived visually. However, they can still be assigned temporary functions and contribute to creating a setting for an active city life.

Play or Rewind, Siena

Play or Rewind was a temporary activation of the historic squares in Siena, Italy. The squares, seemingly frozen in time, were revived in June 2001 by means of a temporary activation. Their often primarily visual function was activated by movement and experience of the squares in new perspectives. The project sought to create a series of new playgrounds in the public spaces of the town, interplaying with the historical rhythm of streets, alleys, buildings and squares. Traditional courts for soccer, volleyball and bowling were drawn up on the historic squares and thus placed in very untraditional contexts. This led to a different form of use and a different set of rules. The size and shape of the courts had to be deformed in order to fit into the urban space. This means that court lines had to run across objects and facades, creating different playing fields. This confrontation of sports and city space created unique playing fields that led to new interpretations of the game. All demarcations were carried out so that activities remained easily recognisable and appeared open to everyone. There was no need for rules or instructions, but the squares encouraged random and informal play with random passersby and with the structures of the square.
The court is adapted to the dimensions and conditions of the urban space, which thereby becomes an integral part of the game.

Urban soccer field, Play or Rewind, Siena, Italy, June 2001. CLIOSTRAAT, Italy

**Recommendations**

- Different interpretation and design of an activity can activate buildings and squares in a new way, reinventing the rules of the game.
- Temporary sports activities can quickly and easily be established and can address many different user groups.
- Activation of an urban space can help bring out the hidden potential and qualities of buildings and spaces, which may in turn help to determine the activity opportunities that can be established.
- Temporary activities can allow city life to develop rather than subsequently attempting to add it.
- The temporary square can serve as a testing site for new methods, ideas and functions in the public space.
- By reserving a percentage of a building or an area for changing use and events, a varied and changeable environment can be created, generating new activities and functions and securing a vibrant area.
The Elements of the Square

The architectural elements of the urban structure comprise a series of spatial and social realms of possibility visualised by architects, planners and citizens. This can lead to behaviour that attracts us, encouraging us to examine the place more closely or perhaps guiding us on our way. Looking around the city, it is clear that the design of spaces is not always used in accordance with its intention.

Skateboarding culture arose in the street. Skaters and BMX riders began using city spaces by recognising the possibilities in the rearward sides of the city and in other unused areas. Previously self-organised sports took to the streets by necessity, whereas today city streets and spaces are an integral part of this sports culture. The city holds countless opportunities and is interpreted by the skater as one huge skate park. There are no borders or rules, merely free and continuous movement. The city spaces challenge the skaters, who in turn challenge the city spaces. Organisation of the city space and its elements can be turned into an active part of the activities by paying attention to their mutual relationships and dimensions.

Palais de Tokyo, Paris

The Palais de Tokyo in Paris was built in 1937 as a museum. A square with pools and elements for planting was laid out in connection with the museum. The paving, dimensions and the distance between the elements render the space ideal for skateboarding. The square becomes part of the cohesive landscape with various elements that are all incorporated in a continuous series of tricks from the rectangular stone elements and grass areas to the edges along the old pool.

The dimensions of the stairs and the distance between elements on the square create ideal conditions for a sequence of skateboarding tricks. Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen
The area is challenged by virtue of the activity, while the activity in turn is challenged and developed by the area. Above the skateboarding area is the gallery with adjoining bookstore and café. Customers are seated outside sipping lattes and watching the energetic display by the skaters. The sunken pool that is now empty sets the scene for ball games and bicycle polo.

Recommendations

- The monumental architectural dimensioning of the elements of the square, their placement and the distance between them combine to create spatialities that are ideal for accommodating the skater’s velocity of movement. A good flow is generated and the elements often allow the execution of a series of tricks.
- The location of elements on the square can be considered in relation to the activities that take place in order to facilitate movement opportunities for those who are simply passing through and for those who are practicing their sport.
- Stairs, steps and edges of varying heights and different widths call for many different types of movement and can also serve as a recreational zone.
- Establishing seating areas around the area and the activity naturally attracts passersby who can in turn become involved in the activities.
The Square on the Street Corner

A city should comprise a certain measure of diversity. Ideally, city spaces are a series of different experiences and opportunities through which citizens move. The city should project a varied urban image comprising many different types of areas, neighbourhoods and experiences. City spaces should be planned with an overview capable of ensuring that correct efforts and actions are taken in the right places in order to benefit as many residents as possible.

Several European cities use the strategy of focusing on the unused areas of the city, such as smaller squares, abandoned areas, rear sides and smaller streets. New York, however, is also the stage for planning based on the action plan, ‘A Greener, Greater New York,’ in which a central tenet is precisely to generate qualitative public outdoor areas for all city residents using simple means and measures.

Pearl Street Plaza, New York City

The Greener, Greater New York plan has, for example, led to the transformation of a corner in Dumbo, Brooklyn, New York. Through simple efforts, the area which previously served as a parking lot has been transformed into an attractive plaza by painting the surface green.

The colours, plants and seating areas create an inviting setting. Benches have been placed along the sides making it possible to sit in the sun, and trees in large planters create smaller intimate spaces while preventing cars from entering.

Before its transformation, Pearl Street Plaza was a parking lot. Now the corner has become an informal recreational and meeting place for area residents. Pearl Street Plaza, 2008, Dumbo, Brooklyn. NYC. DOT. Photo: Ryan Russo.
Recommendations

- “Removing” the streets and street markings and laying out a new uniform surface, offer cohesion to the surface. The surface resembles a carpet in the city space, making it appear welcoming, intimate and unifying.
- Placing concrete benches along all sides of the surface provides seating while preventing cars from entering the space.
- Large plants have a sheltering effect and can serve to divide the space into smaller more private seating areas.
- Simple measures such as upgrading paving, establishing seating areas and adding plants and trees can revitalise many smaller and overlooked areas in the city contributing to a neighbourhood upgrade.
- Many smaller squares around the city can contribute to creating a cohesive city, built on the many different stimulating spaces each characterised by its own inherent experience.
The Asphalt Square

Planning of city spaces should be based on an overview that allows the creation of a series of different experiences and opportunities through which users can move. Spaces that are the results of an overly thorough design can dictate where users should sit, play etc. These types of spaces have certain limitations. Instead efforts should be made to develop aesthetic and qualitative settings that allow the space to be used by many different people.

Maselake Sports Park, Berlin

The Maselake sports park in Berlin is located on a reserved site next to a new park. Until a school is built here, the site is on loan for experimental activation of the space. As a former industrial area, the soil is somewhat polluted. Consequently, the entire square has been paved with an asphalt surface that seals in the contaminated soil while a cleansing process takes place.

The unprogrammed surface of the square has an open and inviting appearance and is used both by children and older people. Maselake, Berlin, Germany, 2006. Topotek1, Berlin. Photo: Hanns Joosten.
Sweeping yellow lines have been painted on the asphalt surface, creating a wavy landscape and an almost topographical effect. The lines throughout the entire square seem to draw you into a gentle course of movement. The wavy lines of the square integrate a series of low metal barriers that are normally used as crash guards to protect from trucks in larger transportation layouts. Along with the basketball hoops, these barriers constitute the only vertical elements. The low metal barriers can be used by skaters for slide and grind tricks but can also serve as court boundaries and balance beams. Slightly sunken grass surfaces surround the square, allowing water to run off the surface.

Recommendations
- An even paved surface can accommodate many different types of movement.
- Graphic adaptation of the surface encourages informal and free play and can contribute to the creation of new games and activities.
- Variation of graphics and colour can contribute to dividing the square into smaller more manageable spaces that are easily put to use.
- By choosing to intervene with simple measures in many smaller places in the city, a large percentage of residents gain access to a quality public area that encourages an active lifestyle.
The Square as a Connector

The square can be interpreted as a connective space through which people move, sometimes accepting the invitation to sit down and stay. By virtue of their visual qualities and durability, sett paving or cobblestones are often used in Danish and European cities. Yet these stones are not necessarily the most accommodating and can make for an uneven walking or biking surface. Adaptation of connections to surroundings and selection of paving both have great impact on the ultimate use of the square.

Mikado, Copenhagen

Mikado was a temporary square established in Ørestad, Copenhagen in 2005. Mikado existed until 2008. The intention was to create an urban space capable of changing in accordance with the shifting needs of its users and capable of generating interaction between the people who live, study and work in the area. Mikado comprised three blue gravel paths and one blue asphalt path criss-crossing a green space. Every path band constituted an activity space with a particular theme. The paved path lent itself to sports, basketball. The remaining paths had more recreational programmes such as a barbecue area with concrete blocks and a chill-out area with lounge chairs and meeting places. Between the programmed blue connective paths green, spaces are created with various degrees of privacy and interaction.
Recommendations

- Creative adaption of the surface of the square can contribute to emphasising the square itself as well as its particular qualities and opportunities for expression.
- Paving can help to distinguish the square from the street, thereby making it feel safer and more delimited.
- The square can be divided into smaller zones by using a variety of surface materials of different colours and textures. These create changeable texturalities and patterns in the surface, variations that accommodate different types of activity.
- Patterns on the surface can indicate direction, movement, parking areas and specific seating areas.
- Establishing seating areas that are in the sun and provide an overview of the area invites residents to stop and use the area. Plants and trees can be used to create a pleasant atmosphere and can also offer shelter.

Variations in both material and spatialities create opportunities for recreation as well as play and activities. Mikado Square, Copenhagen (established temporarily 2005-2008). MUTOPIA Architects, Copenhagen.
The Square As a Stage

The surface has significant impact on movement on or through a square, and the choice of paving is a decisive factor in the success of a given activity. When making choices concerning paving the desired type of activities must be carefully considered. Cyclists and wheel chair users will prefer an even surface that is easily negotiable. The skater on the other hand will prefer a hard even surface interrupted by intermittent obstacles, whereas children are better served by a softer surface for riding bicycles and scooters. Consequently, it may be advantageous to focus on desired forms of movement in addition to the ones that already exist on the square.

Schouwburg Square, Rotterdam

Schouwburg Square in Rotterdam is an example of a square that seeks to incorporate various types of movement and activities. The centrally located square is a long open surface devoid of borders. It is activated by the use of different types of paving that conjoin to create various sequences and spaces capable of accommodating a range of spontaneous activities. The fundamental project idea has been to create a large stage for use by city residents. Design of the square revolved around the forms of movement that take place throughout the day in relation to the sun.

Perforated paving allows water to pass through it. In another area, incorporation of water in the paving is pleasing to a great number of children. Schouwburg Plein, 1996, Rotterdam, Holland. West8, Rotterdam.
The square looks like an urban stage rising above the surrounding city. Materials and lighting combine to create a welcoming urban space capable of accommodating informal activities and large organised events such as markets and concerts. Schouwburg Square, 1996, Rotterdam, Holland. West8, Rotterdam.

The square is divided into sun zones, visible in the varied mosaic created through the use of different paving materials. The western side of the square comprises a hard rubber surface that remains uninfluenced by the climate, whereas the eastern side which receives more sunlight has a surface comprising warmer materials like rubber and wood. The square changes appearance during the day as the light changes and people come and go. Fifteen meter high ventilation towers emerge from the underground parking below the square. They have been designed as sculptural elements with light-emitting diodes containing every colour in the rainbow. In the evening they are backlit spreading a soft filtered light. In addition, the square has four huge hydraulic light elements that users can set in motion.

Recommendations

- The surface can be used as an indicator of use and activities.
- Large rocks 80x80 cm, with a smooth and even surface, for example granite, can be used to create large surfaces that lend themselves to ball games and spontaneous play. In addition, granite paving is durable and low-maintenance, making it suitable for large events such as theatre, concerts and ball games.
- Big, even concrete surfaces can be used for large and more fluent forms of movement like biking and skateboarding.
- By using materials with varying degrees of hardness, the entire city can become a mosaic of paving that encompasses a range of activity and movement.
- Differentiated paving in terms of materials and levels can contribute to a more vibrant city.
The Hquare Close to Home

Squares abound in the city, offering different settings and conditions for movement. The square close to home is the place where everyone can meet and hang out. Consequently the square needs to be integrated in the local community and be supportive of development of the area by catering to the needs of both older and younger generations. It may be beneficial to think of the square as a multifaceted and experiential activity space that should also serve as a recreational sanctuary for area residents. The square that is located in proximity of housing areas should seek to encompass all area residents and users, an objective that can lead to complex conflicts between users. However, with a creative approach based on an understanding of various needs and activities it is possible to provide room for everyone.

Beetsplein, Dordrecht

Beetsplein in Dordrecht, Holland is a square that serves as a meeting place. All area residents can come and relax or be active in this setting. Many different needs and functions, such as playground, sports facility and more private areas for hanging out, have been collectively considered and have led to the creation of entirely new spatialities. The square comprises a concrete ring with a 30 m diameter. The ring has three parts, each of which has a specific function. Facing southwest, large stairs serve as spectator seating and a place to hang out. Another set of stairs addresses younger children, and a slide, cave and small scale climbing wall have been integrated in the concrete ring. The third part of the ring is a long bench that can also be used for bicycles and skating. The square itself contains actual sports facilities in the middle while still being open to spontaneous play and activity. Soccer, basketball and volleyball courts have been marked on the paving. The green ring comprises three grass mounds that rise to a height of 2.2 m toward the interior of the square. These create gentle hills on which children play.
**Recommendations**

- The square should be integral to the local community and should seek to meet the needs of all age groups.
- Mixed functions can serve a variety of social and cultural purposes, generating social encounters, new communities and a vibrant sports area.
- Welcoming and open settings of high quality encourage physical activity and have a good motivational effect on citizens.
- Conjoining different activities can create new spatial configurations, which in turn can lead to new games, sports and forms of community.
- A landscape adaptation can encircle the square and its activities thus creating a safe setting for users by generating an interior square that securely encompasses play and activities.
- Wherever possible, activities should have a certain degree of visibility. Having an overview of the square instils a sense of security in users.
- Lighting of the entire area can serve as a safety measure and can promote extended use of the location.

Seating areas, grandstand, playground, climbing wall and bicycle track have all been built into the ring. At the same time the ring and the surrounding green mounds constitute a protective barrier around the activities. Beetsplein, Dordrecht, Holland, 2001. NL Architects, Amsterdam.
The Inner City Square

When the built environment no longer meets our needs, it must be adapted to new forms of use. In order to promote use of the square and a sense of ownership in the local community, the adaptation process can incorporate existing local initiatives and projects. It can be beneficial to draw upon local knowledge of place, users and residents in the project development process. Involving residents and citizens from the very beginning generates a sense of local project ownership.

Matrikel No. 8, Copenhagen

The square on Nansensgade is next to ‘Kulturhuset Indre By’, a community centre administered by the City of Copenhagen. The square is divided into three parts: a sunken activity area bordered by a jagged white concrete landscape on one side and a more traditional cobblestone square on the other side. The sunken area has basketball hoops and street soccer goals, but can also accommodate other activities like roller hockey. On the south side, the square is bordered by wide concrete steps with mobile wooden slats for seating.

The square constitutes a challenging landscape for younger children, who run and ride their bicycles through the pointed shapes. Matrikel No. 8, square by Kulturhus Indre By, 2008, Copenhagen. 1:1 Landskab and Morgen Arkitektkontor, Copenhagen. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.
Along one side of the square, white concrete surfaces turn and fold creating a jagged sequence. The angular concrete landscape has a broad spectrum of use: Smaller children climb up and down and ride their bicycles between them, while skaters use the edges for tricks. The angular white landscape provides an impressive contrast to the dark asphalt square.

At the southern end of the square, jungle gyms between the trees offer an unhindered view of the entire square. One of the building facades framing the square has been turned into a small climbing wall over a softer surface.

**Recommendations**

- Partitioning by virtue of form and material can make many different simultaneous activities possible.
- Seating areas in the sun with ample views invite passersby to stop for a while.
- An aesthetic adaptation that alternates between hard and soft elements has a welcoming effect on a range of user groups.
- By establishing room for different age groups, the square can serve as a local meeting place for area residents.
- Trees and plants on the square provide seasonal variation and a gentle contrast to the jagged white concrete.
The Sports Square

Different levels naturally lead to movement, and by incorporating different levels in the design it becomes possible to create fun and interesting spaces and places for play and more formal activities.
The square can be laid out in several levels of various heights and depths. Of course it is necessary to consider the entirety of the city space in order for the square to fit into the context. Size and partitioning must be related to the context and to the dimensions of surrounding buildings.
Lowering a section of the square 60-100 cm, for example, can create a contained space that can encompass ball games, roller skating and ice skating during the winter, all within a secure setting at a safe distance from any surrounding traffic. Larger variations in level of 80-150 cm will provide gaps for skaters to jump across and edges that can be used for slide and grind tricks. In addition, creative execution of edges and borders can make room for recreation, strength training and stretching.

Gasværksgrunden, Fredericia

Gasværksgrunden, the gas works site in Fredericia, comprises a raised surface 70 cm over the surrounding streets. The square has a series of sunken levels that constitute different smaller spaces for recreation, ball games and play. The surface, carried out in smooth pale concrete, is traversed by a winding blue asphalt trail that offers cyclists, scooters and roller skaters the run of the entire square.
Artificial materials, artificial field grass, rubber and asphalt, have been used in the lower levels that can be turned into an ice skating rink during the winter. The sunken level in the blue asphalt sets the scene for street hockey, soccer, handball and ice hockey during the winter. Yet another sunken level has a hard red non-skid plastic paving that is suitable for example for dancing.
Recommendations

- Variations in level do not necessarily dictate certain activities, but can be open, flexible and inviting in appearance, providing a setting that can be freely utilised for physical activity.
- Alternating the size of spaces within the square will create varied life through different uses. Smaller spaces can be used by families, mid-sized spaces can be used for sports activities, and the largest space can accommodate large sporting events and summer markets.
- Skating rink can be established for use by younger and older residents.

- Variations in level offer flexibility of use and can serve as a stage with a grandstand. In the wintertime, an ice rink can be established for use by younger and older residents.
- Sunken levels create natural seating areas and delimit activities by allowing the sides to serve as stairs and spectator seating.
- By working with the topography of the square, it can be separated from the street and become a safe setting for the activities.
Inherent flexibility should be sought for the squares in order for them to accommodate a wide range of activities and to serve through changing seasons. Different levels in soft shapes can provide a setting for and encompass many different forms of physical expression.
Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture
General Recommendations

- It is advantageous to place recreational/seating areas in the sun with an overview of the area. Trees and plants can divide the space into more private areas.

- The area should be easily accessible and paths through the area should be well-lit, particularly around the activity areas. This makes evening use possible and promotes a sense of security.

- Mixed functions can serve a variety of social and cultural purposes and can generate social encounters, new communities and a vibrant activity space.

- Simple surface solutions, for example an even asphalt top layer capable of accommodating many different types of movement, can transform a city space into an active square encompassing a wide range of informal activities.

- Lighting may be integrated in activities as small lights in the paving that designates a court or as larger light poles that serve as goal posts.

- An upgrade of small, dispersed city spaces will create a series of specialised spaces in the city, capable of accommodating specific programmes while encompassing spontaneous activities. By focusing on the qualities of existing active areas in the city, high construction costs can be avoided.
The Park

Denmark has many green areas and many Danes have assumed the green spaces as a venue for movement, sports and play. Many of the parks and green spaces established in Denmark between 1870 and 1940 are for the most part precisely that: a green space. In the early 1900s, for the first time in history, parks were laid out for movement rather than merely for aesthetic experience. These were large open spaces referred to as people’s parks.

The park provides breathing room in the city and serves as a common foundation for everyone in the city. All kinds of user groups are welcome and both formal and informal physical activity can take place here. Although the qualities and possibilities in the park and nature areas are plentiful, there are benefits to be gained from utilising them even better and by upgrading them with active and recreational opportunities and experiences.

Exercising and engaging in sports outdoors is a tendency that is on the rise. Carrying out activities outdoors is of great importance to many, but the nature experience is also of significance. Activities like running, Nordic walking, mountain biking and gymnastics combine exercise with the nature experience. Fælledparken in Copenhagen is a good example of a people’s park that today accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, joggers, gymnasts, frisbee players, sun bathers, running events, playgrounds, soccer clubs, protest marches, festivals and concerts.

As cities expand and their density increases, it becomes necessary to develop the green spaces of the city. Access to parks, green spaces and forests encourages residents to be physically active in their spare time, provides fresh air and creates a sense of well-being. The fact that the city is growing and consuming the green spaces does not prevent the green spaces from resurfacing in the city. Our understanding of the park concept has become broader, now including typologies like harbour parks, coastal parks and street parks that serve as activity strips. Recreational and natural elements are combined in a course of movement containing different activity niches.
Fælledparken in Copenhagen is spacious and flexible, accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, joggers, gymnasts, frisbee players, sun bathers, running events, playgrounds, soccer clubs, protest marches, festivals and concerts.

Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.
Hills, Valleys and Spirals

Natural landscape elements, like soft hills and curves, can lay the ground for and invite many forms of activity. By using these shapes as a point of departure, the entire park area can be held together by a comprehensive landscape adaptation comprising different forms such as smaller hills, valleys, clearings and brush that create varied spatialities. The different scenarios scattered across the park can be intensified and activated by adjusting them to different forms of activity like running, biking, performing and playing ball. Each of the landscaping elements attains a unique form and is optimised in relation to a desired function and activity.

Hasle Hills, Aarhus

Hasle Hills, located in Northern Aarhus in Denmark, has been developed by Transform Architects and the Sports Association of Aarhus and constitutes a different green space in the city. Based on 1,000,000 m3 of surplus soil, a landscape rich in experience has been developed. The project addresses all area residents and other citizens of Aarhus. The project comprises three main areas, the plateau, the spiral and the mountain ridge, each with its own specific characteristics. Based on the shape and identity of the individual hill and on the collective identity of the area, each hill has been assigned a series of activity programmes. The mountain ridge may be accessed by a series of trail systems. Large areas on the west side of the ridge are used for skiing, mountain biking and trail running. The surface of the plateau, a mosaic of different paving materials, has a wide range of use.
Recommendations

- Multifunctional design with landscaping elements like hills, corridors, valleys and spirals can meet the movement needs of both children, adults and the elderly as opposed to the traditional playground that appeals primarily to younger children.
- Sloping and hilly surfaces varying in size from 60 to 180 cm can be used for sliding and playing tag by the smaller children while large hills, 2-3 m, can be used by mountain bikers and runners.
- Hilly landscapes with a variety of slopes, inclines and heights create a visual and cohesive park offering an abundance of experiences. Different categories, including the surface, the hill, the forest, the ramp, the bubble and the cave, appeal to a variety of activities.
- A scenically designed area may be able to develop and change in accordance with use and the needs of the area residents. Furthermore, the natural landscape is not worn down in the same way as the traditional playground that requires maintenance of its mechanics and materials.
- Activity programmes can advantageously be located in a way that makes use of the specific qualities and possibilities of an area, thus creating optimal conditions for the activity.
The Thematic Park Destination

The park space should be used by everyone and in a multitude of ways. Therefore the park should ideally accommodate relaxation, exercise, play and exploration. By focusing on the various forms of movement and creating different paths and routes through the park, it can naturally be divided into smaller activity zones. A general landscape division can be used to structure and regulate park activities. Thus the various divisions can contain activities like ball games, play grounds, teenage hangouts, petanque courts, jumping pits, and volleyball courts. The entire area may be interpreted as a scenic obstacle course, with connection systems that alternately pass through or go around the various activity zones.

Governors Island, New York City

Governors Island in New York is a competition proposal still being developed. The project is a good example of a park in which existing qualities have been successfully conjoined with new activity opportunities. The project has been developed on the basis of an overall landscape coherence that respects and incorporates the 400 year history of the island. The project revolves around a division of the area into sections corresponding to inherent characteristics. Based on these, various themes have been generated.
The themes are: Summer Park, The Great Promenade, The Historic District and The Marsh. Each of these areas has been assigned activities appropriate to the context and theme. The design comprises characteristic hills that can be used for biking, play areas, sports and amphitheatre. The park will become a naturally active landscape of experiences throughout the island and serves as an untouched jungle waiting to be explored. The existing structures on the island will provide good contact with the recreational green landscape on one side and the water on the other side.

Recommendations

- Dividing the park into themes according to park qualities can help create varied spaces and activities that appeal to a wide range of citizens.
- Planning park and buildings at the same time can ensure accessibility and trail systems laid out in a way that naturally connects specific areas in the park to relevant places in the area.
- By considering park and buildings together, the park can become an active connecting area and an integral part of the building plan.
- Wide, direct, evenly surfaced and well-lit paths through the park are suitable for accommodating people on bicycles, roller skates and in wheel chairs.
- For pedestrians and joggers, smaller, winding scenic trail systems with a softer surface like gravel, soil or small rocks can be chosen, serving to connect internal park destinations.
The Harbour Park

Park typology in peripheral areas of the city can assume atypical or hybrid forms as these areas represent a different type of urban landscape than the historical town centre. Consequently, it is possible for them to accommodate other types of city spaces. The edge effect of city, park and water creates new and exciting possibilities for combining functions in a way that leads to new types of public spaces. The harbour park is one of the newer park typologies to appear, often structured around an active course of movement from which a variety of activities is possible.

South-East Coastal Park, Barcelona

South-East Coastal Park in Barcelona is a 50,000 m² urban coastal park, primarily designed to accommodate big concerts and events. The park is composed of a gentle organic geometry that reinterprets the natural shape of the landscape. The fluent landscape in the form of waves creates a varied set of spaces designed on the basis of an analysis of different sports and leisure activities. Different activities have been placed on plateaus and in smaller gaps in the billowing landscape, and the hilly landscape takes shape around the activity areas.
All paving in the park is carried out with crescent shaped paving stones that create the foundation for the entire design. The shape of the stone makes it adaptable to various lines and geometries. The paving pattern follows the slope upwards, becoming a seating area, and continues further in order to form a tilted wall surface. The surface is hard and can accommodate heavier traffic in connection with concerts and big events, but it can be used for many types of movement including biking and skating. The hilly landscape shelters visitors, and storage facilities have been established in various places in the hills. All the activities are joined together in a complex network of paths for walking, biking and skating.

**Recommendations**

- Wide connections through the park, capable of accommodating many different types of movement, can be established by developing the entire park as a continuous gentle landscape.
- Play areas for small children should have a visible location that provides an overview. Adjoining seating areas can be placed in small niches.
- Large, wide connections through the park can create a number of plateaus and niches with spatialities that can encompass various activities.
- By drawing the paving pattern up onto vertical surfaces, exciting zones are created for mountain bikers, skaters and children at play.
- The gentle shapes are flexible in use and allow many different forms of expression.
- By analysing the basic conditions of an activity, i.e. location, orientation, paving and other factors, optimal conditions can be established.
The University Park

The university park is the unifying structure in the university area. The park is a concentrate of area vibrancy and must serve as a recreational and rest area, an activity zone and a connective network between the various local facilities and the rest of the town. Many different types of life unfold in the university park setting. The park offers students the possibility to study, relax or be active outdoors between classes and throughout the day. In addition, the often central location of the park renders it attractive for other area residents who also use it for recreational purposes and pass through it on their way to other destinations. The many different types of activity and uses must be considered in the development of the park.

Campus Walk, Puerto Rico

Campus Walk, by Field Operations, links the outdoor areas of Rio Piedra that are part of the University of Puerto Rico. The area comprises university departments, libraries, student housing, sports facilities and a museum, all of which are linked together by a highly characteristic paving pattern. At the same time, three new public squares are established in the area, each with its own specific identity. With a defining move, a former road is transformed into a pedestrian zone that connects the entire area and is wide enough to encompass pedestrians, cyclists and seating areas. The paving has a smooth character and a pattern that intensifies every time it approaches a building. Seating areas have been placed along the entire walk in coordination with planting and lighting. The outdoor zones adjoining the respective buildings have been adapted by employing different planting strategies that lend individual character to each of the areas.
The distinctive paving connects the various areas of the university park. The paving pattern indicates an approach to a certain building or function.

Campus Walk, 2006 (ongoing development), San Juan, Puerto Rico. Field Operations, New York City.

Recommendations

- A wide range of use can be achieved through variations in size and type of space, for example small niches for concentration, meeting areas and larger areas for physical activity.
- The paving can become an indicator of an approach to different areas by working with differentiation in the paving pattern. The paving pattern thereby contributes to creating clearly defined and distinctive types of outdoor space that render the area recognisable and contributes to the formation of a collective identity for the area.
- Planting around seating areas can provide shelter from the elements, thus creating protective microclimates that offer a sense of safety and security.
- Planting may be used to frame certain functions, opportunities or places. A lower and more open planting can increase visibility of activities in certain areas.
- When locating public functions and activities, distributing them and connecting them in an attractive sequence can ensure that activities are spread throughout the area and that empty areas are avoided.
The City as a Park

Access to nature and green spaces promotes and even triggers physical activity in the spare time of city residents. Green spaces have a stimulating effect and are used for recreational walks, frisbee, gymnastics and ball games. Development of green spaces in the city should therefore focus on providing access for as many citizens as possible. Green areas should be accessible within a reasonable time span.

Consequently, smaller green spaces in connection with housing should be accessible within 10-15 minutes, while larger areas that are destinations in themselves with landscapes and wild nature offering an abundance of experiences, should not be more than 30 minutes away.

Green Niches, Idea Proposal

Neglected street corners and city spaces can be transformed into green niches, and existing green spaces can be densified. Little green pockets can be established in the nooks and crannies of the city without ever having to tear anything down. This can be carried out, for example, through local initiatives and associations, as has been the case with the Community Gardens in London, Seattle and New York. Here, local volunteers have created new green spaces in their areas, bringing plants to unused land and densifying existing green areas by adding large plants and bushes. Empty sites are transformed into green city spaces for ball games and play.

This type of approach can contribute to the goal of providing all citizens with access to green space for informal play and recreation within 10-15 minutes of their home.

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5. De bolignære områders betydning for sundhed, Jens Troelsen, University of Southern Denmark, 2007
Green Corridors, Idea Proposal

All Danish cities comprise many green spaces, although some are private and reserved for specific groups. The city may choose to open the green areas and create green urban corridors. In this way the city will be held together by green connections independent of motorised traffic. The green spaces will become safe and active connecting routes throughout the city, areas that will also be able to accommodate various forms of activity. This creates an entirely new city composition and can allow new patterns of movement to appear.

Recommendations

- Intensifying green city spaces will strengthen the green and healthy profile of the city.
- By creating a green movement grid associated with certain sports activities, residents will naturally be drawn to the green spaces that invite Nordic walking, running, soccer, picnicking and kite flying.
- Development of new park typologies can lead to parks that can serve, for example, as a continuous active sequence making its way through the town.
- The concept of the park as a connection can serve as a planning strategy in which green spaces can become determinant factors and a recursive element in the city. The green spaces will serve as green corridors that, by virtue of their size, connect the city physically and visually.
- Making urban green spaces, playgrounds, schoolyards, renovated courtyards and sports spaces accessible, ensures that many people benefit from the existence of these areas, which also give the appearance of a singular interlinked urban structure.
Summary
The Park

Densifying existing green spaces and neglected areas through landscape adaptations can have an activating effect. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
General Recommendations

- Efforts should be made to ensure that the park is easily accessible. Consequently, the trail systems should be planned in order to naturally connect specific park areas and relevant city areas.

- Design that incorporates multifunctional landscape elements in the form of hills, corridors, mounds, valleys and spirals can meet the expressive needs of children, adults and older residents as opposed to the traditional playground that primarily appeals to younger children.

- Evenly paved, wide, well-lit and direct connections through the park are suitable for accommodating those on bicycles, roller skates and in wheel chairs. Those walking and running are best served by smaller winding scenic trail systems of softer material like gravel, dirt or smaller stones. The latter can constitute internal park connections.

- Activity areas and the trail systems connecting them should be lit in a way that allows sports and physical activity around the clock and in a way that promotes a sense of security.

- Planting can be used in the park to create smaller more private areas and can create green pockets in the city that can be used for yoga and gymnastics. Children and youth can play in the dense wooded areas that will also be a visually attractive element in the street scene.

- A cohesive park, visually rich and offering an abundance of experience, can be created by developing the park as a continuous gentle landscape with an overall landscape programme comprising different categories that are conducive to a wide range of activities.
The Blue Space

Denmark has 7000 km of coast line and a great number of canals. Many Danish towns are located on the water. This proximity to water is a significant quality that can provide many benefits.

Danish harbour areas are currently undergoing great change, and much attention is being paid to transforming them into attractive areas and places along the water. The harbour areas can provide new ways of using city spaces. Here, it is significant to consider the development project in the context of the entire area and specifically in relation to contact with the water. Access to water is an important quality, with an inherent recreational and activating effect. Consequently, efforts should be made to ensure easy and simple access to the water. It should be possible for those wanting to swim, row, sail or simply sit and enjoy the view to get right down to the water.

The quality of the water has been greatly improved in many Danish towns, allowing areas rich in experience to be established right on the water, in turn helping to connect the town and the water.

Swimming, a sport for all age groups, is on the rise in the city. Water has an almost magical appeal, particularly to children. This can be utilised by creating small harbour baths and swimming facilities in town. This will give children and young people the opportunity to maintain and develop their joy of moving in water, and create the foundation for lifelong enjoyment of the opportunities water has to offer.
The harbour park serves as one long activity strip with areas for basketball, skating, climbing, petanque, swimming and diving. At the southern end, a long wooden promenade juts out beyond the edge of the wharf offering proximity to the water and possibilities for swimming and sailing. Islands Brygge, Harbour Park, Copenhagen. Photo: Laura Munch.
The Harbour as an Activity Space

Cities are constantly changing as buildings are torn down, renovated and reconstructed. This change generates new urban constellations in which certain areas are given higher priority than others. Ultimately some areas are left unused, areas that could advantageously be used for or adapted to temporary activities. The old harbour areas are replete with unique elements that are not found elsewhere in the cities: abandoned warehouses and factories, houseboats, barbed wire fences, overgrown sites and small alternative businesses. Temporary activities often arise in the transition zones that appear when an area shifts from one function to another. The temporary activities are dependent upon these redundant areas, as they are attracted to the empty lots and generally low rental costs. New users find new ways of using old buildings and spaces.

Refshale Island, Copenhagen

Many of the activities that are now permanently established on Refshale Island in Copenhagen began as smaller temporary projects. Today there is an abundance of activity among the old buildings. The old B&W shipyard has been transformed into an indoor golf centre, and an open air cinema and paintball centre can also be found in the area. A 6000 m² wharf area has been turned into a beach area with space for mini golf, frisbee and volleyball by adding sand, plants and wooden plateaus. Access to the water has provided opportunities for swimming, canoeing and kayak polo. On weekends, other parts of the island are home to motorcycle stunts, downhill mountain biking and a range of other activities that can easily take place due to the rough character of the place.
Recommendations

- The unique character of the harbour can be used in the transformation process that should revolve around qualities and spatialities specific to the area.
- Efforts should be made to maintain the diversity of the harbour as well as the varied nuances of landscape and city life.
- Empty lots and buildings may be used to attract new and spontaneous ways of utilising the space.
- Activation of select abandoned areas can help indicate new possibilities in urban space.
- City space can be temporarily reserved in order to accommodate seasonal and delimited sports activities, for example.
- Life and activities in the area generate attention that may lead to a renewed perspective on the surroundings.
- Temporariness may be used as a generator for development.

The artificial sand beach offers opportunities for playing soccer, volleyball and frisbee.
Refshale Island, Copenhagen. Photo: René Kural.
**Floating Activity Spaces**

In many areas, water access is less than ideal because the height of the quay prevents people from reaching the water. Accessibility is the first step toward activating the water and could be established, for example, by using floating modules that connect the quayside to the water. The basic module would simply be a floating surface to which club and storage facilities could be added. In order to meet the needs of as many inhabitants as possible, the floating module can be designed in a way that allows easy transformation to a variety of functions such as swimming, diving, lounging and volleyball, while also housing various functions such as locker rooms, gym, sauna, snack bar and restaurant. Special modules for children with several smaller pools could also be envisioned.

**Floats, Idea Proposal**

Floats is a project proposal based on the line of thought outlined above. The project proposes a series of floating prefabricated and modulised elements that provide the harbour with a range of different recreational city spaces. The elements consist of a simple concrete base upon which, for example, a clubhouse, an urban square or bathing facilities can be placed. Every module is adapted to a specific function and the changing light conditions have been utilised as a parameter of design, rendering the form of each module unique.

The idea of Floats is to use the new floating spaces in a given city in order to test new activities and programmes that are normally seasonal or temporary.
The floating modules can be moved to different locations in the city and used where the need arises. The varied form and character of the elements permit a wide range of possible uses including swimming, café and exhibition.

**Recommendations**

- An activating approach to the water should seek to meet the needs of as many inhabitants as possible, offering many people access to the water.
- The design of simple, mobile basic modules for a floating harbour pool make it possible to move modules to different locations in the city, benefitting different areas and users.
- By incorporating flexibility in the floating modules, they can meet the needs of a range of different users in many different ways.
- Floating modules can also be used as activity surfaces for gymnastics, dancing and other temporary activities when the season is not appropriate for swimming.
- Buildings, squares and sequences along the water can contribute to creating a union of water and city by ensuring good access and activity opportunities.
Floating Clubhouses

Establishing or expanding water sports activities like canoeing, kayaking, kayak polo, rowing, sailing and surfing requires storage facilities, clubhouses and bathing facilities, facilities for which many cities may have difficulty finding room. One way to solve this could be to establish smaller facilities that support water sports in the form of mobile floating storage units.

Clubhouses serve as active and social gathering places and can thus help to vitalise the area.

Kayak, Idea Proposal

Kayak is a proposal being developed for a clubhouse designed primarily on the basis of the needs of kayakers, but with the possibility of supporting other sports activities such as running, Nordic walking, fitness, yoga, optimist dinghy sailing and winter bathing. The club house actually comprises two distinct houses placed at an angle that creates a flexible outdoor space between the two houses.
Cut-outs in the surface create two pools. The kayaks are stored visibly within the interior building facades, constituting an aesthetic element. The roof surface of the clubhouse is a public area on the same level as the edge of the quay from which people can make their way all the way down to the water via large wide stairs. The clubhouse has a broad range of use with activities for the elderly offered in the morning, while afternoons are open to school children and youth. This ensures that the house is active throughout the day. In order to emphasise the social aspects of the various functions, they have been located such that activity areas can be used freely while still maintaining an overview of the other functions.

**Recommendations**

- Water in the city possesses many both recreational and active qualities that can be activated and utilised by laying out paths and surfaces as close to the surface of the water as possible. Accessibility to the water may be optimised by creating ramps and connections from the quayside.
- By turning the roof surface into an open public space, an informal meeting place is created for residents and passersby.
- Floating elements are flexible in terms of location and can be brought right into the city.
- Design and function can be planned such that the clubhouse can serve as a gathering place for area residents.
- Bringing together many varied functions enables social encounters and extended use of the clubhouse.
**Winter Harbour Bath**

For many people, swimming remains a seasonal activity. When the weather changes in the wintertime, only a few people go swimming outdoors. But winter bathing is a tendency on the rise, and in Denmark estimates indicate that there are approximately 11,000 winter bathers organised in clubs and at least as many outside the clubs (www.badesikkerhed.dk). Winter bathers rely on good clubhouses with lockers, showers and kitchen facilities. Existing harbour and winter bathing sites primarily serve only a specific season. In order to make better use of such facilities, attempts could be made to develop new types of harbour baths that can accommodate swimming in the summer but also have facilities for winter use. The harbour baths could be developed so that they could be covered during the winter with an interior swimming area while giving the winter bather the possibility of swimming outdoors.

In Berlin a simple solution has been developed, allowing use of the harbour bath during both summer and winter.

**Winterbadeschiff, Berlin**

Winterbadeschiff is a floating harbour bath located in the river Spree in Berlin. The harbour bath consists of three floating units comprising lounge and bar, sauna and an 8x32 m swimming pool. These three units are connected by smaller units containing locker rooms, showers and toilets. During the summer, all units are open whereas in the wintertime they are covered using simple wooden structures. Mounting the cover is easy and can be done manually.

Light materials create a pleasant interior atmosphere. The light passes beautifully through the membranes, creating air pressure changes that also have an insulating effect, in turn creating a pleasant indoor climate.

The wooden structures covered in the light membranes are open at both ends, providing impressive panoramic views of the entire city from the lounge area and the swimming pool.


The structure consists of a number of elliptical wooden beams that stretch across each of the units. A double membrane is suspended between the beams. By using a semi-transparent membrane, contact is made with the surroundings, and the light is allowed to enter. The floating elements have been created from adapted cargo vessels, and the swimming pool itself is a large sunken pool that floats on the river itself, creating a very special experience.

Recommendations

- Covered, floating swimming facilities can accommodate users summer and winter, thereby offering citizens the possibility of swimming all year long.
- Developing good winter bathing facilities or covered swimming pools along harbours and canals, can help bring life to an area in the winter time.
- The floating elements are relatively easy to create from old barges, adapted cargo vessels or other recycled material.
- By developing flexible structures, covers can be created for winter use and can be removed again during the summer.
The Beach as Park

Denmark is surrounded by the sea, which means that practically all Danes have the possibility of getting to the beach fairly easily. The beach offers fresh air, waves and a wide range of activities. Of course most activity takes place during the summer, and some beaches are practically deserted for the remainder of the year. However, new types of beaches are beginning to appear, combining traditional beach activities with those that typically take place in parks and squares. This development makes it possible to use the beach area practically all year round.

Amager Beach, Copenhagen

A large artificial island has been established facing the old beach by Amager. The island is almost 2.5 km long and encompasses many formal and informal activities. The old and the new beach are connected by three bridges. In this way, a beach is created on both sides separated by an interior lagoon. The side facing the coast naturally has more shallow water and appeals to families with small children. Kayaking, including kayak polo, is also possible here, and there is a 1000 m lane available for swimmers.
The entire island is made up of dunes that help to divide the island physically and visually. A concrete trail system runs between the dunes throughout the island. The trails are wide enough to accommodate those on foot, bicycles and roller skates. From the concrete trail smaller winding trails make their way toward the water. At the southern end of the island, the concrete trail widens to create a promenade bordering the green areas with room for play, ball games, frisbee, flying kites and picnics. Three to four different places on the island bunker-like landmarks house restrooms, showers, facilities for the disabled, life guard centres, ice cream stands and small squares that allow seating, dancing, play and skating.

### Recommendations

- Establishing a barrier island provides a shallow body of water facing the coast, a good place for families and novice surfers getting to know the sport before they move into the open sea.
- Landscape adaptation can create varied, smaller intimate niches and spaces that also offer shelter and more privacy, making it possible to lie down in, on and around the dunes, creating an abundance of experiences.
- A wide through-going concrete trail can be designed to appeal to a variety of users.
- Establishing squares with even paving in connection with snack bars and rest rooms makes many forms of activity possible. Wide edges make it possible to sit down and watch surrounding life, and steps create jumps for skaters.
- An overall adaptation of sand dunes, squares and wide connections between these provides users with many recreational and active opportunities for use of the area.
Summary
The Blue Space

Efforts should be made to utilise the many fine qualities of the water by creating a close connection between water and city by means of good connection possibilities to and along the water, enabling a variety of activities and sports.
Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
General Recommendations

- Good access to the water can be created by means of bridges, ramps, promenades and floating elements that bring people close to the water.

- A varied approach to the water can create a range of experiences and accommodate broad use.

- Wide trails with an even surface along the water can accommodate many different users.

- Small facilities for water sports, in the form of small mobile floating units for storing equipment, can serve to promote activity on the water.

- Floating elements can be created from old barges, cargo vessels or other recycled material.

- Developing good winter bathing facilities or covered swimming pools along harbours and canals can contribute to bringing life to an area in the wintertime.
Connections

The planning of industrialisation was concerned with creating fast and direct transportation connections between towns and important trade locations. The results of these efforts remain tangible in many towns and cities. The car has had considerable impact on city planning, and in many cases cities have been planned and designed with respect to the car and its space requirements, just as roads and networks have been laid out in accordance with automobile passability.

When the planning process gives priority to the car, the result may seem devoid of human scale. As a result, those moving around the city on foot or on a bicycle may find urban spaces monotonous, with long straight lines and corresponding buildings. When road width and building height are adapted to the scale and speed of the car, streetscapes can appear noisy, hostile and even dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists.

For many people, car travel remains the preferred method of transportation for commuting to work. However, more and more people are choosing to walk or ride their bicycles to work, particularly if the conditions are favourable. This trend can be promoted by optimising the bicycle networks and pedestrian trails in order to create an even, safe and direct path between daily destinations, an attractive alternative to car travel. Although many new forms of movement like skateboarding, roller-skating, free-lining and land-surfing, are primarily used for recreational purposes, they are also used as an actual means of transportation. By paying attention to these forms of movement and developing appropriate networks and trail systems, more people may be encouraged to use them. They might one day serve as an everyday means of transportation just as the bicycle does today.

Our daily lives and tasks take us to a number of different destinations, and we spend a great deal of our day in transit between them. Consequently, it makes sense to attempt to incorporate exercise in our daily transportation routines, by providing ease of access between everyday destinations like work, home, day care, shopping and school.
Experimental project on Nørrebrogade in Copenhagen: Bus lanes and wider bicycle paths increase safety for the 30,000 people who pass through Nørrebrogade on bicycles every day.

Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.
Green Trails

Although the car may dominate the urban landscape, it does not necessarily preclude other forms of movement. Many children are driven to school by their parents today, because traffic is too dangerous in many areas. Simple improvements of city bicycle networks could counteract this tendency, contributing to greater everyday bicycle use. Riding a bicycle to school would be a natural way of getting daily exercise while helping to establish a spatial understanding of the city. When planning and situating bicycle and pedestrian connections, it may be advantageous to consider facilities in the city areas in order to create links between housing areas, schools, places of employment and relevant sports facilities.

Efforts should be made to optimise existing trail systems between schools and relevant daily destinations with the goal of creating a consistent and continuous network of trails throughout the city with elements providing security along the way.

The Green Trail, Frederiksberg, Copenhagen

The Green Trail is part of larger bicycle network connecting the municipalities of Copenhagen and Frederiksberg. The trail is 9 km long and comprises both bicycle path and pedestrian trail. The path serves as a fast yet pleasant route that cuts through the two municipalities and connects the city. The connection is continuous, seeking to bypass large intersections and bus stops in order to create an uninterrupted course that serves as a convenient and fast alternative. The bicycle bridge across busy Ågade makes it possible to ride a bicycle all the way from Emdrup to Valby without encountering motorised traffic. The trail passes through the green spaces of the city, Mjølner Park, Nørrebro Park, along the Life Science Garden of the University and Solbjerg Cemetery.
**Recommendations**

- Direct and even connections through the city offer ease of access between daily destinations.
- The trail system is rendered safer by taking the trail through green areas and detaching it from motorised traffic.
- Bicycle networks that cross green areas and parks provide visually attractive sequences and make it possible to combine the bicycle ride home with a ball game or gymnastics in the park.
- Networks and trail systems should naturally and rationally lead and connect through the sports facilities and activity zones of the local area.
- Establishing good and accessible trail systems can in many instances make it more advantageous to ride a bicycle causing even more people to choose this form of transportation.
- If improvements are made such that the trail systems combine transportation with pleasure, more people will be likely to leave their car at home and ride their bicycle.
Planning and design of urban connections should be coordinated with the various city areas so they can be reached within a reasonable time frame, thus making the networks and systems for soft transport more attractive to use.

**Direct Trails**

Overall urban planning should focus on development of direct bicycle connections that offer a connecting grid across the city. Relatively direct routes help to connect the city effectively and create fast and convenient transportation options. When possible, paving should allow varied traffic and use, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to use the trail systems in the way they prefer. This could be done, for example, with large 8 x 4 m asphalt elements, that create a safe, smooth and unbroken surface for movement. The trail thus becomes wide enough to encompass varied life with pedestrians, runners, skaters, baby carriages and wheel chairs. Diversity and vitality can be achieved by establishing grass and gravel trails for runners, stone and tile paths for pedestrians as well as smooth asphalt surfaces for bicycles, skates, and skateboards.

**Thematic Trails, Idea Proposal**

Direct bicycle connections can be planned as trails that encircle the respective city areas, thus playing the role of area landmark. The individual trail will run through an area and lead to and around specific places, special buildings in the area or sports facilities that are thereby emphasised as check points. Every trail will link to the bicycle networks of the adjoining areas. In this way, the soft transport connections can be developed thematically as direct paths of different lengths leading through the city and connecting with various areas like the forest, the university and the sports facility. When bicycle networks and pedestrian trail systems incorporate interesting elements, pavilions and facilities along the way, a psychological division of the journey takes places. This makes the trip seem more manageable and more enjoyable, as well as making it feel shorter. The elements along the way serve as check points and propelling agents and thus seem to have a purpose. Smaller elements may also be placed along the path allowing exercises and stretching and perhaps containing lockers and drinking fountains.
Recommendations

- Bicycle networks can be laid out around particular city areas, thus contributing to an understanding of the path and the city. Developing local bicycle maps and maps of walking and running trails in the city, can promote an understanding of the city context.
- In order to make networks and trail systems more accessible and visible to local community, it may be advantageous to locate them in conjunction with housing, schools and sports facilities.
- The connections can be carried out as a recognisable urban element that contributes to visibility and branding of the path through the city in the same way as the coloured lines of the subway map.
- Actual travel time can be reduced by dividing the path into manageable sections that are marked by drinking fountains, lockers or exercise elements.
- Differentiated routes can be established by letting trails pass through areas with different functions, i.e. schools, shops and sports activities.
- When trail systems are good and full of experiences, children and adults are more likely to use them and thus more likely to get daily exercise.
Exercise Trails

Movement in the form of biking and running is associated with a visual experience that can help make the ride or run a pleasant and interesting experience. Consequently, trail systems merit a certain aesthetic and qualitative adaptation that can add an extra layer to their functionality. Planning and implementation of bicycle networks and pedestrian trails should be thought of as more than establishing a simple path and should in themselves contain a certain added value that can make the journey rich in experience or perhaps turn the trail into an attraction in itself.

The Exercise Serpent, Nykøbing Falster

The Exercise Serpent, Motionsslangen, is an exercise trail system that winds its way through Nykøbing Falster. It consists of three different trails that all travel through nature areas, woods and along the water. The main trail around Nykøbing Falster is 20.5 km long. The northern route is 10 km long, and the southern route is 14.5 km long. The trail is marked along the way by wooden poles with the Exercise Serpent logo. The yellow trail accommodates bicycles and foot traffic while the smaller blue diversion trails are for pedestrians only. Information boards have been placed along the route with trail maps and suggestions for walking, running, biking and Nordic walking practice.
The trail makes its way through town and forest and along the sound. Information boards along the way provide area and trail maps and offer training suggestions for walking, running, biking and Nordic walking. The Exercise Serpent, Guldborgsund Municipality, established in 2005 in collaboration with the Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

### Recommendations

- Walking and running trails can be established in winding and curved sequences combined with grass, trees and water.
- When extending and expanding the soft transport connections, social encounters should be a focal point in order to promote a sense of security.
- Lighting and seating areas along the way permit extended use of the trails.
- Trail systems may be combined with outdoor experiences, for example by leading trails through attractive green areas and along the water. Part of the trail can even be established over the water, allowing runners to view the coast while running above the water.
- If the trail system runs through large open areas, the area can be brought down to human scale by placing recreational areas along the way and establishing planting that provides various forms of shelter.
- Setting up mile markers can help individuals keep track of the distance they have travelled.
Experiential Paths

Street spaces and connections get people from A to B but also serve other purposes. We spend a significant part of our lives in the street, moving between the opportunities the city has to offer, and our movements bind the city together. Streets, roads and corridors are among the most frequented public spaces today. Connection systems facilitate encounters between people and can be used for casual strolls and biking for exercise. The street is a stage for meeting, waiting, biking, greeting, skating, flirting, running and waving. Bicycle networks and pedestrian trail systems can thus be conceived as more than simply functional transportation systems.

Varied Trails, Idea Proposal

Different types of movement have different parameters and make different demands concerning slope, surface and paving. These variations can serve as the foundation for planning and designing connections. By using the types of movement as a point of departure, a range of trails can be established for the different forms of physical activity: a trail primarily for walkers, one for slow biking and one for fast biking, a running trail and a skating trail.
A hard and completely even surface is preferable for direct bicycle connections, while a different trail with various slopes can be laid out for mountain bikers. Runners prefer a gently winding course with varied slopes and a softer surface such as sports rubber paving or gravel. A third trail can be established with even concrete offering a range of slopes and yet another in soft asphalt that invites running and play.

Every trail thus attains its own theme and is designed in a characteristic material that is linked to certain places according to the type of connection.

**Recommendations**

- In order to accommodate the many different forms and ways of transport, development of networks and trail systems can focus on certain types of movement and their needs, for example in terms of surface character.
- Establishing several trails adapted to a specific type of movement, can expand use of the trail system while creating varied and visually stimulating courses of movement.
- The standard and the experience of transportation itself can be raised by planning trails and bicycle networks in a way that creates varied connections and paths that are visually stimulating.
- Combining the route with different experiences and visual stimulation can make the physical distance seem shorter.
Connecting Along the Water

Many urban waterfront areas have been transformed from traditional industrial areas into areas with a concentration of business and office construction. The central challenge in recreating an active waterfront is to attract people and to ensure that more people are led through the area. This can be achieved by developing interesting connections. Rethinking connections along the harbour area can attract more people and the often prominent city locations that may have been forgotten between the office buildings can be turned into activity and recreational areas.

Kalvebod Wave, Copenhagen

Kalvebod Wave is a project developed by JDS Architects and KLAR Architects for an urban recreational zone at Kalvebod Brygge in Copenhagen. Today, the area is characterised by large office buildings and workplaces, rendering the area empty and lifeless in the evening and over the weekend. Whereas Islands Brygge on the other side of the channel is a housing area with a well-established green and blue public space for use by the
entire city during the summer months, Kalvebod Brygge can become a recreational space characterised by movement and metropolis. Functions placed here can be more closely related to and are in need of the good traffic connections offered by this quay. In addition, the design language at work here corresponds to the large traffic plans and solitary buildings in the area. The project is designed in accordance with the sun and the wind and the desire to create new connections through the area in conjunction with various water activities. Kalvebod Wave is a modern interpretation of the quay, an urban and aesthetic recreational zone realised in a dynamic new promenade that encompasses experiences in and on the water. Kalvebod Wave moves out into the harbour and down to the water surface while simultaneously creating a series of varied urban spaces for recreation and movement.

Recommendations

- By allowing planning of the area to revolve around soft traffic conditions, good and different connections can be created through the area, engendering natural activation.
- A protracted path sequence that is drawn out above the water creates new spatial variations and new ways of moving through the city.
- In some places, the path is drawn right down to the water surface creating close contact with the water that seems to merge with the city.
- Squares and recreational spaces provide the people who use the area daily with opportunities for pause and short breaks.
- Flexible design of paths, surfaces and squares can create exciting experiences and spaces that lend themselves to recreation, water activities and other functions like café, exhibition and concerts.
- Public bicycle networks and pedestrian trails that naturally make their way along channels and connect throughout the city can add vibrancy in and around the water.
Connecting Corridor

Housing areas, squares and parks are part of an overall urban structure held together by various physical and spatial connections. As we move through the city, we pass through different areas. Some areas in the city can appear less cohesive and less accessible than others. This may be due to the fact that the area lacks public function, recreational opportunities and activities that can draw people and new life to the area, thus activating the outdoor areas. These are urban problems faced by a great number of cities. One possible solution is to increase accessibility. Upgrading streets and city spaces can create good connections within and through the area and to the other areas and opportunities available in the city.

Syracuse L, Syracuse, New York

Designed by Field Operations, Syracuse L is a connecting corridor that encompasses a range of functions between Syracuse University and central Syracuse, New York. The project proposes revitalisation of the previously neglected and rough area by creating a delimited connective network comprising bus, car, bicycle and pedestrian lanes that tie the area together with the rest of the city. Cafés, restaurants, gardens and sports and activity areas are established in conjunction with the connective network. Each area is established with its own characteristic paving, planting, lighting and furnishing. By regarding the whole project area as a connecting corridor to the city and by developing recreational facilities, the project becomes more than simply a transportation strategy. The Syracuse L becomes an active, urban park sequence.
The proposal comprises paths carried out with distinctive red paving throughout the area with characteristic elements that contribute to a unifying identity for the area.

**Recommendations**

- A characteristically designed sequence with recognisable elements throughout can contribute to creating a unifying identity for the area.
- A carefully planned overall connection strategy with various functions, recreational possibilities and lighting can contribute to creating well-arranged and cohesive outdoor areas that have broad appeal and promote a sense of security.
- Good and attractive connection possibilities through a rough city area can draw people and life to the area.
- Recreational opportunities and sports activities placed in conjunction with the connection and oriented toward the sun can draw attention to area opportunities and help to attract people.
- Adding a variety of facilities and functions can contribute to attracting a range of users, creating more differentiated life in the area.

A more differentiated surface in the city, in the form of various types of connections laid out in different materials and levels can help to create more life. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
Generelle anbefalinger

- Direct and even connections through the city can create easy access to and between everyday destinations.

- When developing soft transportation networks, efforts should be made to encourage social encounters between people. This has an activating effect and can lead to a greater sense of security.

- It may be an advantage to establish networks and trail systems in close affiliation with housing, schools and sports facilities in order to make the networks more visible and accessible within the local area.

- Bicycle networks through green spaces and parks provide visually attractive paths and make it possible to combine the bicycle ride home with a ball game or gymnastics in the park. The physical distance may seem shorter when the route is combined with different experiences.

- The connections should promote a sense of security, which can be achieved by leading the paths through vibrant areas, establishing seating areas in certain places and incorporating lighting that allows extended use of the connections.

- Good lighting also helps to promote a sense of security and an overview of the area for users. Lights should be placed so the path itself is constantly visible and so that recreational areas, junctions and curves are also rendered visible.
Redundant Areas

As cities and life styles have changed, the public space has expanded and taken over new places in the city.

Urban space can be roughly divided into two categories: built and unbuilt space. The unbuilt space is that which is found between the built spaces. Most cities naturally comprise many unused and abandoned areas. These areas have previously had a specific function that has since been moved or terminated. These areas are found around industry and transportation systems as well as in the random gaps that appear between planned spaces. These unused and empty spaces in the built environment inevitably arise in the urban development process, and it is within this process that their greatest potential is found. Because they are unprogrammed, these areas are rule-free. They are urban spaces with specific qualities that make them potentially different public spaces in the city.

The city needs these places because they serve as creative catalysts that can help to promote various events and can serve as the foundation for future development of the space. These spaces have the ability to attract people who may, for example, have found it difficult to find a place to practice their sport and people who may discover the potentials of the area. In this way, these people contribute to generating vibrancy and to drawing attention to the space.

Self-organised sports and parts of organised sports reside in the street and live here all year long. Lacking spaces and places to accommodate a given activity, self-organised sports are often seen using covered bus stops and stations and the space under bridges. Although these are not spaces specifically designed for a certain activity, the users know how to make optimal use of them for their particular sport. The objective is to spot potential and make use of the qualities of a given place as a generator for sports and urban development. Redundant city areas can be activated by employing a perspective that focuses on qualities and potential, an approach that can be advantageously applied as a generator for a simple area upgrade. When upgrading redundant areas, it can be beneficial to focus on how a few simple measures can provide the minimal setting and conditions necessary for a given sports activity to take place. It is important to maintain some of the gaps in the city in order to accommodate spontaneous sports activities and to give new cultures and activities the opportunity to develop.
The spaces under bridges can be used in many different ways. Here, a shuttlecock is in play while gymnastics and tai-chi take place in the space next door. Guangzhou, China. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.
Space under the Bridge

Some cities suffer an extreme lack of space and find it difficult to create a place for active spaces. This means they have to find room within the existing city setting. In principle, activities can take place anywhere and do not necessarily need large fancy facilities in order to exist. Very simple spaces can provide more than adequate settings for an activity. In many places, citizens are occupying squares, places and spaces with potential for a particular activity, even though they were originally conceived and designed for another use.

Urban Fitness, Guangzhou

Chinese politics and economy have not given high priority to spaces and places for sports and exercise in Chinese cities. Urban development has taken place with such force and speed that public spaces have been usurped. This has cultivated the practice of specific forms of physical activity in Chinese cities. Being active in city spaces is viewed from an entirely different perspective. Vacant street corners, spaces under bridges and unused squares are used as activity and meeting places.
The urban space is quite naturally utilised by the young and the old for strength training, martial arts, tai chi, qigong, dancing, gymnastics, and different stretching exercises carried out all over the place in parks and in smaller squares around the city. The spaces are primarily created with different surfaces, planting and lighting. Although often rough in design and quality, the possibility of activity and of meeting people is what matters.

**Recommendations**

- With minor improvements, covered spaces like parking facilities under bridges and large buildings can be transformed into alternative recreational spaces that can accommodate dancing, gymnastics and yoga.
- Establishing some very basic conditions for movement, such as surface, shelter and lighting, can create flexible spaces with a wide range of function.
- A good and inviting setting can be created by setting up lighting, creative adaptation of materials using soft, light materials and the addition of a softer surface with a stage-like character.
- Covered areas can be used for a wide range of activities, irrespective of changing seasons.
- The possibility of change must be incorporated so the space can accommodate new body cultures and activities over time.
Qualities under the Bridge

Many different activities take place in the urban space in places that were originally designed for a different purpose, for example playing ball against a wall, skate boarding under a bridge and strength training in the park. When a given activity arises somewhere in the city, it can often be attributed to a certain set of qualities inherent to the place, for example a specific type of surface, a sunken area, a framework around the space, a form of shelter or a particular city location that is not noise sensitive. These types of places must be viewed as being dynamic and changeable, urban spaces in the city that are constantly developing. An upgrade of this type of space must therefore be based on the inherent qualities that originally attracted and generated life.

Simple and creative measures can improve activities where they already exist. The specific measures that are necessary will of course depend on the activity and its basic requirements. But in general, the objective is to create a very basic setting and framework for the activity. Small courts for foot tennis do not require much space and need only an even asphalt surface and a metal fence to serve as a net.

A8, Amsterdam

The A8 project is a 40 m wide and 400 m long strip located below an elevated highway. The space below the overpass is monumental in character by virtue of the huge columns providing an axial frame. The protracted area below the overpass is divided into smaller spaces with individual themes according to which each space has been adapted. Moving from West to East below the overpass, you will find love seats, a skate bowl, a break dance stage, a foosball table, soccer and basketball courts, parking areas, street intersections, a covered square with a supermarket, a fish shop and a flower shop, a light fountain, ‘letter columns’, a sculptural bus stop, a mini marina, a panorama deck and a river.

Every space has been upgraded materially and developed according to a theme, thus achieving an individual character. The spaces are simple in appearance and an intelligent use of form and material secures flexible use of the individual space. The spaces are capable of accommodating a wide range of activities and seem inviting by virtue of their material expression. A central square is created using an even orange asphalt surface upon which structural columns have been clad in reflective material that draws the light in below the bridge.
**Recommendations**

- It may be advantageous to focus on the redundant areas of the city and to make improvements to the ones already being used for physical activity and sports.
- Focusing on some of the informal places already being used by children and young people for ball games, parkour or skating, and employing simple measures to improve conditions for the activities, can avoid high facility costs and prevent faulty investments.
- By focusing on the character of the place, exciting and characteristic spaces that encourage recreation and movement by virtue of their material expression can be developed.
- Choosing to upgrade an already active area has the advantage that area residents have already grown accustomed to the activity and thus do not find it disturbing or bothersome. In fact, residents often interpret such an upgrade very positively and feel that interest is being shown in them and in their area.
The distinctive surface creates a spatial delimitation, making it seem easier to utilise the surface. Mounting lights is necessary to create a sense of security in the area and can also allow activity around the clock. Seating areas should be located such that they allow an overview of the area. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
General Recommendations

- With minor improvements, covered spaces like parking facilities under large buildings and bridges can be transformed into alternative recreational spaces that can accommodate gymnastics and yoga. Simple covered spaces in the local area can create good conditions for a wide range of users.

- Providing some very basic conditions for movement like surface, shelter and lighting, can create flexible spaces with a wide range of function.

- Establishing seating areas around the space and the activity naturally attracts passersby who may thus be drawn into the activities.

- The possibility of change must be considered and incorporated in order to accommodate new body cultures and new forms of activity with changing seasons.

- Focusing on some of the places in the city already being used by children and young people for ball games, parkour or skating, and employing simple measures to improve conditions for the activities, can avoid high facility costs and prevent faulty investments.

- By focusing on the character of the place, exciting and characteristic spaces can be developed, inviting recreation and movement by virtue of their material expression.
The Parking Lot

Cities need parking spaces for residents, customers and visitors. Parking areas are therefore a natural part of the city and take up quite a lot of space in the urban landscape. But there should also be room for people and for city life, and a parking lot does not necessarily preclude this. Parking areas take up a lot of space and appear in connection with both commercial and residential areas. Consequently, it may be relevant to perceive the parking lot as a public urban space that may also serve purposes other than merely parking. Many mid-sized and large stores comprise a specific parking area, typically hidden away behind the store itself and designed solely for parking cars. These parking lots are often dominated by big signs, road markings and large flood or spot lights.

One of the problems with these parking areas is their monofunctionality. The areas by the stores and shopping centres are used only for parking and are thus left completely empty in the evening and on weekends. On the other hand, local parking in residential areas is left empty during the day.

A natural flow of shoppers and passersby, on foot and on bicycles, passes through the parking areas. The parking lot can be interpreted as a local meeting place where people meet coincidentally and stop to talk for a short while. Thus there are many reasons to add an activating layer to these spaces, one that can support and develop the activities that are already taking place.

Parking areas have great potential in the large even surfaces that are frequently used only at certain times of day.
Parking area with spatialities and opportunities for activities, play and exhibition.
Asphalt Spot, Tokamachi-shi, Japan. R&SIE Architects.
Graphic Activation

The frequently grey and dreary parking lot surfaces can be activated through creative use of colour, road markings and simple surface treatments. This can imbue the large asphalt surface with more human qualities and dimensions, qualities that actually make people want to use them and spend time in them. A large parking area can be divided into smaller more comprehensible units, for example by adding a visual layer in the form of sports court markings or directional movements. Placed on top of the functional layer of the parking lot, this visual layer can be adapted in a variety of colours and materials.

Market Square, Köpenick

The multifunctional parking lot in Köpenick, Berlin is a well-functioning example of graphic adaptation of the surface. Previously, the corner lot facing two roads was unofficially used for parking. In order to bring greater complexity and urbanity to the area, additional functions, a market and physical activity, were added to the parking lot. The existing asphalt paving was transformed into an urban red carpet upon which market place and cars alternate around the clock. A geometric system, based on the size of the individual parking spaces, has been painted on the surface, adding refreshing and different use to the area. The individual parking spaces are indicated by large white numbers and minor variations in the basic red colour. On weekdays, cars dominate the area that turns into a buzz of activity on weekends. On market days a huge parasol is opened, creating a market pavilion that indicates the alternating use between cars and activities.
**Recommendations**

- A layer of graphics can divide the parking areas into smaller areas or spaces, some of which can be used for specific sports activities.
- Simple surface markings can contribute to generating new behaviour and bringing the surface to life for sports when cars are not parked on it.
- The dually programmed parking surface will allow activities to take place in the evening and on weekends, thus creating life in the area around the clock.

- Multifunctional squares contribute to city rhythm and life throughout the day. Local city parking can serve as a market square in the morning, a play area for day care and kindergartens during the day, a skating area in the afternoon and a residential parking area in the evening.
The Multifunctional Parking Lot

The frequently regular rhythm of parking lots can be utilised by adding functions to the area that can be used by area residents and other citizens in the evening and on the weekends. By adapting the large parking surface in an untraditional way, for example using varied paving and simple surface treatments, motorists can be made aware that the area comprises other users who require a large even surface, for example children playing ball, skaters and hockey players. Some of the greatest potential of the parking lot lies in the large, even surface.

Centrumpladsen, Ringe

In Ringe on Funen, parking lot and sports have been united. The parking spaces have been divided into four areas for recreation and experiences:
1. The youth square/night square that is about spending time together, hanging out and kissing goodnight.
2. The sports square/sports playground for ball games, play and street sports.
3. The cultural square for music, concerts, markets and shows.
4. The people’s square with parasols and seating areas.
Many different types of materials are at work here, and the four squares stand out from the remaining surface through differing materials such as tiles, granite, red asphalt and a metal paving developed specifically for Ringe. A sports court marked on the parking area can be used for ball games and play in the evening and on weekends when there are no cars.

A connecting line crosses the entire area, moving across the parking spaces and through the embedded activity areas. The line is made of aluminium and serves to provide power, water, net stands for the courts, seating plinth, flagpoles, posts for covering a small stage, lighting and a digital information board indicating when a different activity can take place.

**Recommendations**

- Simple measures and adaptations can make a parking area accessible for residents and a range of activities.
- A basketball or a skate hockey court can easily be accommodated on most parking lots and can be used in the afternoon and evening. A larger parking lot could perhaps serve as a speed skating rink or a bicycle track.
- The courts and tracks do not necessarily need to conform to international standards. Smaller, more intimate court areas can also be used by 2-4 people.
- Unused wall surfaces can be utilised for active purposes like squash or basket ball.
- Embedded diode lighting can be used to indicate specific areas, for example goals.
- When activities are brought into the parking lot and placed right in front of the motorists, attention is generated around the events, making an impression.
Configurative Activation

Parking lots are typically large surfaces with markings adapted to cars. The parking surface could for example be adapted based on parameters other than those of the car and could be activated through a more untraditional design. By working with the topography, the parking area can be designed for example as a biking and skating landscape with hills and valleys. Minor inclines of 6-12% do not prevent cars from driving or parking on the surface. Of course a certain structuration of function is necessary in order to avoid unfortunate collisions. This can be done, for example, by assigning functions to certain times of day or by setting up minor fencing.

Asphalt Spot, Tokamachi-shi

Asphalt Spot was originally an outdoor exhibition area within a parking area. The area encompasses 20 parking spaces, 300 m² exhibition space and public functions. The asphalt surface curves and rises at the corners in order to accommodate the exhibition spaces below the elevated parking surface. The parking area is laid out like an undulating landscape with hills and valleys. Differentiation between hill size and slope creates a smaller space for play, skaters and bicycles. A sculpturally active surface in the evening with room for ball games and exercise. The hilly landscape invites informal play and exploration. The parking lot becomes a fluent landscape that encourages activity.
The parking lot, treated like a landscape element, is deformed to create a range of surfaces and hills.

**Asphalt Spot, Tokamachi-shi, Japan. R&Sie, Paris.**

**Recommendations**

- An undulating surface is capable of accommodating a wide range of activities, such as play, roller-skating, cycling and ball games.
- Small children are almost magically attracted to gentle and curving mounds and hills that can accommodate different types of movement.
- On rainy days the landscape will change when water accumulates in the depressions, pleasing small children who can play around the water.

- Certain elements can serve as landmarks for cars that can park around the various activity zones.
- Location of courts and activities must necessarily be planned in relation to traffic. Specific activity spaces can be kept entirely free of car traffic by raising or lowering them 30-40 cm, making them inaccessible to cars.
Summary
The Parking Lot

Durable, robust, low-maintenance materials should be used, for example fine asphalt, large concrete tiles or smaller granite stones. A warm, soft stone can be selected for recreational areas and a harder and more durable material for activity areas. In addition an even material should be used for the connections that lead through the area. This will serve to create smaller more intimate zones that seem more inviting. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture
General Recommendations

- A basketball or roller hockey court can easily be accommodated in most parking lots and will be available for use in the afternoon and evening. A larger parking lot could perhaps be used as a speed skating track or bicycle track.

- Court design does not necessarily need to conform to international standards. Smaller, more intimate court areas can also be used by 2-4 people.

- A division of the parking area can be carried out by adding a graphic layer that can create a framework for the activities and indicate when and where parking is permitted.

- Simple surface markings can contribute to generating new behaviour and bringing the surface to life for sports when cars are not parked on it.

- Multifunctional squares contribute to creating a rhythm and life throughout the day. The local parking lot in the city can be used, for example, as a market square in the morning, a play area for day care during the day, a skating area in the afternoon and residential parking in the evening.

- Unused wall surfaces can be invoked for active purposes by using them for squash or basketball for example.
Former Industrial Areas

Former industrial areas are full of development possibilities. Areas with great potential for transformation into new active urban spaces are liberated. These rough industrial areas often comprise large structures that would be very time-consuming to remove. Thus it makes sense to try to recycle the buildings and the areas for different and perhaps temporary use.

Industrial areas that have not yet undergone transformation into new urban and residential areas have great potential for creating interesting areas with unique identities and activities.

Many former industrial areas and abandoned or empty lots can be revitalised and reconceived in the city as new and different activity areas. The rough character and often remote location make these areas relevant for noisier activities that require a great deal of space. In many places we are witness to how abandoned areas are taken over and used for informal activities and thus contribute to developing new ways of using city spaces.

These spaces offer new scenarios that can create unique functions and experiences. For this very reason, this rough clash of urbanity and industry appears to be a success due to the ability to create unusual spaces that can be used in new ways. Creative meeting places can be established here, and a creative exchange can take place between business, art, culture and sports. The events, the activities and the place can contribute to concrete connections between users and to a mental connection between the industrial area and the city.
The old factory buildings are seen in a new perspective with green planting and the addition of active programming. Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park, Duisburg.
Industry as Park

Industrial areas and buildings have a very particular scale and character that contributes to a special atmosphere. Therefore it can be advantageous to try to add something that will emphasise existing expression, materialities and spatialities.

The qualities of the tough, rough environment and the behind the scenes location can be utilised, for example by transforming a former industrial area into an urban playground that revolves around the hard industrial elements like the large concrete structures, cranes, steel pipes, tracks, walkways and ventilation systems.

Efforts can be made to integrate the inherent potential of the place with urban qualities that render the area inviting. Activities can be selected and planned in order to reflect the specific characteristics of the place in question. All urban spaces do not necessarily need to resemble each other or offer the same commercial activities. Thus it may be advantageous to develop former industrial and harbour areas based on an understanding of the areas and their specific character. This ensures diversity in the urban landscape and specificity in the individual areas.

Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park, Ruhr

Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park in Germany’s Ruhr District is a former industrial area that has been transformed into a multifunctional landscape park. The typically industrial structures and elements that exist in the area have been used in development of the landscape park and interpreted in new ways through the assignment of new functions. The former industrial buildings have been transformed and now house a range of different cultural functions. A gas container has become the largest artificial diving centre in Europe, and the huge old storage bunkers have become climbing gardens. Lighting has been added to the entire area making it safer and easier to achieve an overview. Industrial lighting illuminates activity zones from above in attractive colours, while smaller lamps are used as guiding connection lights.

Mountain track is a climbing trail that leads through, around and on top of the old structures of the area.

Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park. Photo: Uwe Niehuus.
The qualities of the old structures are utilized and serve as climbing walls, diving tank and BMX track.

Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park, Duisburg. Photo: Uwe Niehuus.

**Recommendations**

- Rethinking old buildings and assigning new functions can generate new sports experiences and perceptions of the location.
- Making use of existing buildings and elements reduces construction time and saves resources.
- Expression and use in industrial areas can be upgraded by altering building function and creating a setting for activities between the building structures, for example squash courts, climbing, gymnastics and a dirt track for BMX.
- Rugged and loud activities are a good match for the coarse industrial areas.
- Industrial areas tend to exhibit an abundance of visually impressive clashes between various materialities and textures that can serve as inspiration for adaptation of the area. Grass growing through cracks in the pavement and building fronts that are gradually becoming greener and greener can be reinforced and constitute an appealing contrast.
- Paving can be maintained in rough asphalt, while areas in which grass and gravel have pushed through can be intensified and reinforced such that the rugged landscape comprises smaller soft islands for children’s play and climbing activities.
The Harbour as Urban Space

Urban spaces are continuously changing and currently a great number of harbours are being transformed. Harbours possess very special spatialities and characteristics that it may be wise to recognise in the process. Many Danish cities face the question of how to incorporate abandoned harbour areas in the city in new ways. The former industrial areas along city canals and harbours have huge potential by virtue of their size and their proximity to both water and city. When rethinking the harbour as part of the city, it may be advantageous to combine the harbour areas with cultural and sports facilities capable of activating the area. Attempts can be made to integrate the privileged qualities of the harbour in the city, making the water a part of the urban landscape. Access to the water is a very significant element in this process. In order to activate the water, many different ways of getting close to the water can be established, for example marinas, small bridges, wooden decks, floating plateaus and promenades along the water.

Aalborg Harbourfront, Aalborg

The vision for the transformation of Aalborg Harbourfront by C.F. Møller is to tie the water and the city together through accessibility and versatile activities. The proposal comprises three main elements: Strandboulevarden, a boulevard along the water for cyclists and pedestrians, urban gardens and a promenade that serves as a pervasive element unifying the different functions. The harbour promenade is laid out in even asphalt lowered ½–1 m in relation to the road surface. A series of steps of varying heights leads all the way down to the water and offers seating and recreational possibilities, benches and viewing platforms. The entire harbour promenade is conceived as one protracted space for movement containing various opportunities for activity as well as for pause and recreation. Wide paths on both sides provide accessibility for cyclists, skaters and other soft traffic. The area is designed to attract various target groups by offering a range of activities that incorporate seasonal variation. The activity areas are laid out with ball fences, basketball hoops, goals and holes in the pavement for setting up nets.
Recommendations

- Good and varied access to the water should be ensured in order to generate different encounters with the water that can be used in different ways.
- Making use of variations in surface elevation can subdivide a large area and create a range of spatialities that contain recreational activities and opportunities for pause.
- Dividing a lengthy promenade sequence into smaller activity zones and areas with steps can create small, clear compartmentalisation comprising different functions.
- Level differences of ½-1 m can provide a secure framework for activities while offering visibility.
- By carefully assessing program, extent, reach and relations between volumes and openness, an appropriate location of sports activities can be established, thus revitalising redundant urban space.
- Implementing activities in harbour areas can contribute to developing urban life and draw attention to the qualities and potentials of the area, which in turn can serve as the foundation for future development of the area.
Sports and cultural activities can contribute to developing and refining use of the location, serving as the foundation for potential further development of the area in accordance with the needs of current and future users. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
- Implementing activities in harbour areas can contribute to developing urban life and draw attention to the qualities and potentials of the area, which in turn can serve as the foundation for future development of the area.

- By carefully assessing program, extent, reach and relations between volumes and openness, redundant urban space can be revitalised.

- Expression and use in industrial areas can be upgraded by altering building function and creating a setting for activities between the building structures, for example squash courts, climbing, gymnastics and a dirt track for BMX.

- Making use of existing buildings and elements reduces construction time and saves resources.

- Dividing a lengthy sequence into smaller parts such as activity zones, green spaces and areas with steps creates compartments capable of accommodating various sports activities.

- Working with variations in surface elevation can create a range of spatialities that contain sports activities and opportunities for pause.
The Roof Surface and the Facade

Constant urban expansion continues to conquer new territory. Cities are becoming increasingly dense, calling for a corresponding development of public spaces. A building is a multifaceted structure within a specific context, and the exterior building structure influences life around it. The built framework influences our behaviour via location, proportions, materials and the like and can thus stimulate spontaneous and unorganised sports. Consequently, it is necessary to consider how building affects the surrounding city.

The urban space comprises a great number of unused facades and roof surfaces. These urban surfaces have interesting potential that can be utilised in connection with development of new public spaces in the city. In addition, urban density makes it clearly advantageous to consider these surfaces. By adding an extra layer to roofs and facades, new urban spaces and sports experiences can be created.

In Denmark roof surfaces often remain an untouched landscape of ventilation systems inaccessible to those who use the city. Yet the roof surfaces are rich in development potential that can be used for new public spaces in the city. Innovation and creativity are required in order to activate this surface. Isolation of the roof surface above the hustle and bustle of the street provides it with certain obvious qualities that it may be beneficial to examine and activate. Good spaces can be established here. They will always be in the sun and can provide new ways of experiencing the city.

To begin with, activation of the roof surface requires accessibility for all age groups. Careful selection is necessary in order to avoid detrimental effects on life in the streets, but in certain select locations in which the roof surface houses specific potential, new possibilities for use can be explored.
The net suspended above the entrance to a parking lot connects the urban space and becomes a big urban play area.

The Roof as Playing Field

Because of their density, many large cities lack spaces for sports and physical activity and are forced to place and adapt activities wherever space can be found. Density and a multitude of redundant sites can be viewed as positive qualities as they have contributed to developing certain types of sports in many places. New synergies arise in the confrontation between sports and the specific urban space. Simple measures can transform redundant spaces and places in the city into attractive public spaces that hold active opportunities for urban citizens.

Roofball, Tokyo

In Japan, due to lack of space and the exorbitant price of land, smaller playing fields have been established on roof surfaces around the city. Court measurements are flexible and can thus be located in a number of places; on top of shopping centres, businesses and metro stations. The game is removed from the hustle and bustle of the street and is surrounded by light, air and views. The different locations have led to varied court dimensions and to an integration of context and court. Thus playing fields across the city differ in design and qualities in relation to their surroundings. The surrounding buildings that constitute the outer court boundaries become spectators for the game. The courts are large open and informal spaces, and the game is played by all groups and both genders. The most successful courts in Tokyo are the ones found close to public transportation hubs that link the activities to everyday life.
Activities on roof surfaces can contribute to creating an active and vibrant city with a multitude of active layers.

Adidas Soccer Field, Shibuya, Tokyo. Photo: René Kural.

**Recommendations**

- Using soft paving and flexible delimitation by means of a net structure, smaller activity settings can be established relatively quickly and easily.
- By varying field dimensions and adjusting them to the local context, many different locations become possible and each playing field becomes unique in terms of design and special properties.
- Choosing locations close to daily destinations such as shopping centres, schools and public transportation hubs can naturally attract passersby and render the area a natural part of everyday destinations.
- Smaller playing fields on commercial roof tops can be rented by sports clubs and teams that want to play ball on top of the city.
- Activation of the roof surface will constitute qualitative use of surplus sites in the city.
The Roof as Public Urban Space

In order for the roof of a building to function on top of the city, activities and opportunities, preferably of an informal and playful nature, should be available to everyone. In addition, good seating areas should be established so that views of the city can be enjoyed. Of course it is important to pay attention to surrounding buildings with respect to noise and views in order to avoid disturbing area residents.

In the United States, the concept of Shoppertainment has been in use for years, referring to the attempt to draw more customers to shopping centres by offering dynamic entertainment. The basic idea is to entertain and animate customers. However, thoroughly planned local solutions are required for the concept to be successful.

A natural vibrancy is associated with large stores and shopping centres, and from this perspective it seems to make sense to provide opportunities for physical activity for people shopping, waiting or passing by.

Høje Torv, Copenhagen, Idea Proposal

Høje Torv is a proposal for a roof top plaza on top of the Magasin department store, developed by PLOT (now JDS & BIG) in 2004. The project proposes transformation of the roof surface into an active green urban space. The plaza is conceived as an urban oasis that will combine the properties of the public space with open air and amazing views of the city.

By adapting the roof surface based on the various existing levels, four different areas are created. The levels comprise their own specific activity but remain flexible in use. The large sloping surface can be used for ski jumps and sledding in the wintertime while serving as a sun deck and open air movie theatre during the summer. All levels are interconnected creating a large singular activity surface capable of accommodating a wide range of sports activities. By incorporating a stairway in the façade, a connection is made all the way down to the street, securing unhindered access to the plaza.
**Recommendations**

- By using the roof surface, an extra layer is added to the shopping experience that may be combined with recreation or sports.
- Activation of the roof surface can provide new urban layers with sunlight and views, closer to the sky and the open air.
- Efforts should be made to provide sports activities and opportunities for play and informal games for all age groups, and seating areas should be established where views of the city can be enjoyed.
- The roof surface can serve as a testing ground for new types of sports, thus clarifying urban interests.
- In addition, a green roof surface can reduce heating/cooling costs, while providing an active and green brand for the building that will generate attention.
- Activation of the roof surface can help to attract customers, generating income for commercial companies residing in the building. In addition this activation can be a way of including businesses in the process of transforming an urban space.
The Facade as an Asset

Buildings today are primarily designed from the inside out as a framework for specific internal functions. This can turn the facade into an inactive element with the singular function of drawing in light. In certain places this monofunctionality can be challenged with ensuing activation of the building and the area.

Activities like parkour, skating, gymnastics and ball games all use the vertical surfaces of the city in their own way and could in principle be integrated in the facade. In dense urban areas it may be difficult to find room for new spaces for activities, and it can make good sense to use some of the unadapted facades and wall surfaces that naturally occur in the city to accommodate various forms of activity.

Das Netz, Berlin

Das Netz [the Net] in Berlin is an urban play structure between two unused house ends. Due to the Second World War, the urban structure of Berlin has a number of gaps. These gaps have enormous development potential as illustrated by NL Architects with the creation of a rectangular net structure that connects across an empty site between two house ends.
Using square steel frames, the net is suspended between the two house ends. Forces appear to pull the net towards the house ends, deforming it in a way that raises the centre section. This creates an arch below the net, framing the area and inviting passersby to enter. The net structure itself, a footbridge that offers views of a nearby lake, is an enormous play structure.

Daz Netz is an urban hammock, a trampoline and a climbing net for relaxing, jumping, crawling, climbing and playing. An exterior fine mesh net delineates the footbridge while an interior net with larger mesh size is used for play.

**Recommendations**

- Sports activities within the local community should seek to accommodate a range of groups by creating informal activity spaces that allow different types of activities, for example children’s play, teenagers hanging out and older people stretching.
- Building exteriors can serve as informal activity spaces that double as introductory areas for the more formal sports activities.
- Activities can be integrated into dense urban structures by making use of redundant facades, thus creating sports activities and activity opportunities in the local community.
- An upgrade of neighbourhood spaces can have a positive effect on area residents and area image in addition to creating a gathering place in which social meetings can take place.
Summary
The Roof Surface and the Facade

The roof surface can be used in many different ways that can benefit residents and businesses, for example roof park, roof plaza or the creation of small club houses for activities. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
General Recommendations

- Easy and good accessibility to the roof surface can be established by creating good and visible connections via the facade or within the building to ensure use of the roof surface.

- Efforts should be made to provide sports activities and opportunities for play and informal games for all age groups, and seating areas should be established where city views can be enjoyed.

- Ball courts/fields on the roof surface require only paving and some form of flexible delimitation, for example with a net, and can thus be established relatively quickly and easily. Varying field dimensions according to local context offers many different possibilities for locations.

- A green roof surface can reduce heating/cooling costs, while providing an active and green brand for the building that will generate attention.

- Activities can be integrated into dense urban structures by making use of redundant facades, thus creating sports activities and activity opportunities in the local community. Building exteriors can serve as informal activity spaces that double as introductory areas for more formal sports activities.

- An upgrade of neighbourhood spaces can have a positive effect on area residents and area image in addition to creating a gathering place for residents in which chance meetings can take place.
Residential Areas

In the early 1900s there were great expectations concerning architecture. The architectural and housing ideal was to create social well-being, health and equality for all. Architects wanted to spread welfare and improve public health for all population groups in Denmark by developing better town models and housing for the broader population.

Housing areas were to be combined with air, light and green spaces, and the objective was for housing areas to contribute to improved conditions and health for all social classes. However, the ideal has not been realised in the same way in all areas, some of which are monotonous in appearance and offer a paucity of experience.

Modernist intentions concerning light, air and the combination of housing and green spaces have many qualities that remain relevant today and can be used in new ways through adaptation to current cities, desires and demands. Current ideals can be described as ideals of diversity and multiplicity, and housing must therefore be created based on alternative principles and conditions. This can point toward the development of new urban contexts and housing typologies developed within the existing urban framework, comprising diverse areas with a range of different functions, green areas, sports and recreational opportunities.

Today, more and more people are moving back to the city and forecasts indicate that cities will become larger and more densely populated. Spaces and places for activities and recreation will be in even greater demand, and it is necessary already at this point to incorporate recreational opportunities and qualities as well as activity possibilities in urban planning and in the development of residential areas. A natural correlation must be secured between housing, outdoor areas and sports and activity opportunities in the area by means of easy access and overview.

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This basketball court, located in the middle of the street area, is squeezed tightly into the dense urban structure of Hong Kong. It leaves just enough space for pedestrians and cyclists to pass. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.
Local Infill

Efforts should be made to incorporate green spaces and places for physical activity as a natural element in the planning and revitalisation of housing areas. Dense urban structures often make it difficult to add activity and recreational opportunities. Here it may be advantageous to work with integration of activity spaces and small club facilities within the existing spaces that surround housing areas: courtyards, parking lots and open areas.

Activities can be treated as forms of infill or add-on elements that are linked with housing and the surrounding area. In this context it is important to consider the open spaces and the relative proportions of the open spaces and buildings. The area can be developed in a way that creates an overall landscape cohesiveness throughout the area and an even distribution of green spaces and areas for sports and activity.

The Sports Courtyard, Guangzhou

In Guangzhou, China, an apartment building courtyard has been transformed into an activity area comprising three activity levels connected by protracted stairs that cross the courtyard. The levels divide the courtyard area into three smaller spaces allowing it to accommodate different activities and users at the same time. A ramp along one side of the stairs makes it possible for children and youth to cycle and skate between the different courtyard levels. The wide stairs offer seating but can also serve for running, games and various skater tricks. The courtyard has been transformed into an active sports arena, turning the surrounding apartments into spectators.
Recommendations

- Efforts should be made to establish small spaces and places for informal expression, in the form of various activity possibilities that can be reached in less than five minutes.
- Activities and facilities specifically aimed at activating children should be established within the local community and should also accommodate children who, for financial reasons, may not be able to join any sports clubs.
- When activity areas are rendered easily accessible from housing, it increases the possibility of residents making use of available opportunities.
- The simple urban qualities of the dense urban structure can contribute to generating random social encounters and sports activities in the area, providing a sense of security and a feeling of belonging.

Courtyard in Guangzhou, China, transformed into an actual sports area with opportunities for playing badminton and other racket sports. The surface is soft, and the wide stairs invite people to sit down. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.
The Sports Path

Within the local area, green areas with small facilities for play, recreation and physical activity should be accessible within a walking range of approximately 3-5 minutes. This can have a naturally activating effect, particularly on children and older people who prefer to exercise within their local community.

This approach to planning can be implemented through an understanding of the social infrastructure that comprises area users and residents. The soft infrastructure can be the primary organisational element, serving as an urban sequence connecting the entire area and creating green recreational spaces, good path systems and activity areas.

Allotment Athletica, Idea Proposal

With the idea proposal Allotment Athletica, the Belgian architectural firm 51N4E outlines the athletic track as the central and structuring element. The athletic track is located next to single family suburban homes such that some homes are placed within the track and others along the outer edge of the track. The homes thus become closely associated with the recreational sequence and are oriented in relation to the open areas.

The four interior tracks are reserved for pedestrians and cyclists, whereas the outer track is for car traffic. The athletic track constitutes a functional, physical and visual connection through the entire area. The track allows area life to arise as random meetings occur and planned activities take place.

Pedestrian, bicycle and car lanes become a cohesive surface for movement. Surface graphics strip the car of its dominant status. Allotment Athletica, Oigem, Belgium, 1998. 51N4E, Switzerland.
Recommendations

- Connections in the residential area can be designed as activity spaces that not only accommodate movement from A to B but also draw users into the surrounding life and activities, allowing participation in these activities while getting from A to B.
- Establishing a distinctive pervasive connection can promote contact between housing areas and other relevant places in the area such as schools, cultural and arts institutions, sports facilities and activity areas. This contributes to creating a multifunctional area with a diverse and vibrant community.
- Green spaces, parking lots and play areas can be conjoined into an active movement sequence comprising various thematic activity pockets such as the square, the track, the cage and the stage for dance and theatre.
- Activity areas should preferably be visible from path systems and should appear as open and inviting as possible in order to promote accessibility and desire to use the area.
The Open Housing Area

Activating architectural approaches can have a positive effect on residents in areas with high crime rates, poor integration, high unemployment and restless youth on street corners. By carrying out an overall planning that improves outdoor areas and provides facilities that make physical activity possible, social integration can be promoted and informal gathering places established for area residents. An overall area facelift and good public facilities can attract new residents and help the area break out from a vicious circle.

The Route, Tingbjerg, Copenhagen

A Danish example of this is Ruten (the Path) in Tingbjerg northwest of Copenhagen. Ruten is the arterial neighbourhood trail in a social housing area that is home to a relatively high percentage of immigrants and unemployed people. The holistically oriented revitalisation effort of Ruten has been realised as part of a larger revitalisation effort for the Tingbjerg-Utterslevhuse area carried out with support from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

One objective of the project has been to improve and beautify the mall area on Ruten, the arterial path and shopping area, while increasing safety for pedestrians and cyclists. These groups are accommodated by a range of measures along the way, for example a wide reserved bicycle lane separated from the road by a belt of grass, a narrowing of the road, expansion of existing grass areas, a wide informal area with trees, and the creation of five safe crossing areas. In addition, a zone is created with variation between grass, hedges, plinths, stairs and a basketball court, all inviting residents to stay longer in the area.

A trail that encourages play and activity winds its way through the entire area with pedestrian and bicycle connections on both sides.

Ruten, Tingbjerg, Copenhagen, 2006 - 2009. GHB, Copenhagen.
South Albertslund, Copenhagen

As part of a holistically oriented urban renewal process in South Albertslund outside Copenhagen, financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, six new activity squares were suggested in 2006 for development with input from area residents. The central project idea is to establish one large activity area, a town park, and five smaller activity squares. The project focuses primarily on upgrading existing facilities, for example remarking asphalt on the existing multicourt with room for soccer, handball, basketball and volleyball and mounting lights around the court in order to make the area feel safe and secure also in the evening. Picnic tables and play structures for children are added in several areas, and stationary fixtures for board games and foosball are set up. In the largest square, referred to as the town park, trees are planted, and a workout pavilion is added along with an asphalt square for a market place, music and ball games. The project generally seeks to establish informal meeting places across cultures, generations and social status.

Recommendations

- Good lighting conditions should be established around the activity squares in order to make the area feel pleasant and safe all the time.
- Setting up tables, play structures and stationary table tennis and foosball table encourages young people to stay outside for longer periods of time, increasing chances of activity within the informal meeting place.
- Simple improvements to existing facilities (such as new court markings) can indicate the beginning of something new and make area residents begin to use the space again.
- Wider bicycle paths, separated from the road by grass belts, and the creation of safe crossing areas can make cars reduce speed and thus improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Grass and trees make the area more pleasant and invite residents outside.
Landscape Design

Many studies have shown that the design of areas in close proximity to housing is significant in relation to an active lifestyle. Play and physical activity help generate a sense of belonging and community and are of great significance in relation to the social networking of young people. Consequently, efforts should be made to establish informal opportunities for sports activities in the street, the courtyard and around the housing areas. Car traffic and parking can be kept away from the areas in front of buildings in order to create green spaces that create close connections between residents and the outdoor areas. In order to attract a wide range of users, the activity spaces can be designed based on the needs of various age groups.

Social Meeting Places, Idea Proposal

Activity areas are often primarily designed for children or young men, leaving a large group of people outside the target group. Therefore, efforts should be made to establish open areas that welcome all area residents for a range of activities. One sports area can be viewed as a social meeting place in which residents, visitors and users can meet and form communities. The social element is an important aspect of playing sports and the interest in sports is highly increased by securing a socially supportive environment. Consequently, the activity areas should comprise a wide selection of activities that make it possible for different users to engage in activities while ensuring that no single group monopolises the area. Therefore efforts should focus on making room for both formal and informal activities for all age groups in order to mix users and promote social diversity.

7. De bolignære områders betydning for sundhed. Jens Troelsen, University of Southern Denmark, 2007
Recommendations

- Carrying out simple landscaping adaptations to outdoor areas that previously had few opportunities to offer adds value in terms of experience and activity.
- Outdoor areas in housing areas can be regarded and designed as common sports areas and can serve as the most important social meeting place for area residents.
- Sports clubs in the local area should strive to be open and accessible making it possible to use facilities after school and work.
- Safe and familiar settings for physical activity can be provided by locating smaller activity possibilities in conjunction with clubs or institutions in the local community that can assume some of the responsibility for running these activities.
- Proximity to schools, youth clubs, associations or cafés can make it possible to borrow equipment like nets, balls, roller-skates and rackets. This can emphasise the playful element and encourage family sports activities.
- Activity areas and facilities should ideally address a wide range of users in order to make sure that opportunities for physical activity are available to all age groups, the objective being to remain physically active throughout life.
Connective Network

The tendency toward monofunctional planning and concentration of certain forms of housing in certain areas has changed over the last couple of years, and planning for urban areas now tends to focus on more mixed functions and various housing typologies.

The soft urban connections need to be cohesive, as do city spaces in order for the body to serve as a natural means of transportation between them.

City of Tomorrow, Bo01, Malmo, Sweden

City of Tomorrow, Bo01 is a relatively new city area in Västra Hamnen almost 2 km south of the centre of Malmo. This part of the city has approximately 500 homes bound together by a cohesive pedestrian and bicycle network that runs through the entire development. Effective public transportation in conjunction with good bicycle and pedestrian trail systems make it possible to live here without owning a car. The adaptation and character of the surface seem inviting and it serves as an active connective network comprising a range of activity programmes.

The many different housing typologies create varied and interesting urban spaces along canals, wide promenades and between the interior courtyard spaces. Efforts have been made to distribute and organise programmes that are used daily in a practical and easily accessible network system that reduces the extent of necessary daily transportation. This makes it easier to access a series of different facilities as part of a single journey and thus encourages walking and cycling.
**Recommendations**

- When daily destinations are easily accessible from home, residents are free to choose between different types of transportation and chances of the bicycle being chosen before the car are increased.
- A variety of direct, winding and undulating paths and trail systems through the area creates an abundance of experience that can contribute to a sense of belonging, security, social meetings and activity.
- An urban structure with a high population density means that many people live close to each other, and the short distances between them in turn make it more natural to walk or ride a bicycle. In addition mixing building programmes with business, public institutions and various housing typologies leads to social diversity in the area.
- Dense urban areas conserve resources in terms of transportation, heating, materials etc. At the same time densification creates the foundation for urban life and urban spaces in which people wish to spend time.
Active Outdoor Areas

Buildings greatly influence their surroundings, and careful consideration should be given to the manner in which a building meets its surroundings and affects the local area. Development of the built environment may equally concern its effect on the non-built environment. Thus in the meeting of building and context, an outward orientation is necessary along with a local perspective.

The areas that surround housing developments are often overlooked. These areas should be integrated in the planning, development and actual design of an area. The current function of open areas as gaps between built elements can be transformed into a more positive one by letting them become an active part of the area.

Valby Sports Park, Valby

Valby Idrætspark, developed by SLA architects, is a proposal for a sports park that integrates sports and housing and develops new urban environments. The proposal provides a plan for the creation of a vibrant and physically active urban area. Activities and housing are oriented in relation to the sun and in terms of visibility. Location and dimensions have been determined in order to allow room for a diversity of outdoor activities between the buildings, for example jogging, ball games, playgrounds, boule, cycling and spontaneous activities.

The outdoor spaces around the buildings have been planned as one cohesive sports space offering a wide range of sports activities along with beautiful views of the park. The asphalt surface comprises various forms of paving including thermoplastic, rubber and concrete, all catering to different types of activity. An activity surface, that is visible from the housing units, encircles existing playing fields and invites spontaneous movement.
The proposed design for outdoor spaces makes it easy to combine functions, for example running and beautiful views of the park, playground and development of motor skills, and ball courts for young people and boule for older people. Valby Idrætspark (proposal), 2005, Copenhagen. SLA, Copenhagen.

**Recommendations**

- Outdoor areas can be used as an active planning tool by providing them with aesthetic and scenic qualities that give them a cohesive function as active and recreational sports elements.
- Recreational and small sports facilities benefit from local affiliation which can be secured by locating them in close proximity to housing and by engaging users in the design of the area.
- Housing areas can be developed with a certain openness and flexibility in the area, allowing a wide range of sports activities for children, youth, joggers and older people. The area should comprise opportunities for running, roller-skating, ball games, gymnastics etc.
- Building volumes, the spaces between them and their surfaces should be designed in order to create spaces, gaps, niches, walls, surfaces, paving, passages, pedestrian zones and squares capable of accommodating varied sports and spontaneous activities.
- Variations in the built structure can contribute to providing different experiences, from the small, almost private space that is easily used and offers more personal experiences related to the body to the open square that allows groups and communities to meet.
Summary

Housing Areas

The housing area should ideally include a wide range of activities and recreational possibilities for all age groups. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
General Recommendations

- Planning should incorporate small spaces and places offering a range of informal physical activities accessible within a five minute walk from housing.

- Ideally sports areas and facilities should address a broad user group, ensuring that opportunities are provided for all age groups and making it possible to be active throughout life. Activity choices in the local area should strive to be open in character and easily accessible making it possible to use them after school and work.

- Smaller sports facilities can be located in conjunction with clubs and schools. Flexible form and an open expression invite a range of use and interpretation.

- Housing areas should be developed with a certain openness and flexibility in the area, making a wide range of sports activities possible for children, youth, joggers and older people. The area should ideally comprise varied opportunities for running, roller-skating, ball games, gymnastics etc.

- Establishing a distinctive direct connection can create contact between housing areas and other relevant places in the area like schools, cultural and arts institutions, sports facilities and activity areas. This contributes to creating a multifunctional area with diversity and a vibrant community.

- Planning an urban structure with a high population density brings many people together with minimal distance between them. The short distances may in turn make it more natural to walk or bicycle. In addition, mixing building programmes with business, public institutions and various housing typologies can create social diversity in the area.
Business Areas

In recent years changes in business structure have led to an increase in office space and a corresponding increase in work commutes. Business areas assume a large part of the urban landscape, making it seem relevant to add sports facilities and activities that integrate these in the city.

Many business areas consist of various buildings with individual adjacent parking lots. Due to the focus on individual sites rather than the entire area, business areas often seem disorganised and poorly arranged, lacking consistency of structure and identity.

Each building often has its own architectural design reflecting business image. Buildings are often relatively large, scattered across great distances and surrounded by parking lots. Their scale can contribute to distancing people from the buildings, many of which seem introspective and devoid of local context and environment, thus offering no contribution to life around them. When the buildings have no public function and are surrounded by monofunctional parking spaces, the area becomes devoid of vibrancy and is left deserted and empty.

Development of business areas requires coordinated planning efforts. Businesses and office buildings no longer face the environmental issues that previously necessitated the separation of residential and industrial areas. Consequently, new and existing business areas can advantageously be combined with active and recreational functions between the buildings. The area can thus gradually assume other functions, incorporating for example educational, administrative or larger sports buildings.

The monofunctional programming and introspective nature of business structures needs to be challenged.

Combined Outdoor Areas
A small square created in the space between Nykredit buildings. Steps make their way down toward the canal area and offer employees the possibility of enjoying light and air. Nykredit, Copenhagen. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.
Many business areas contain large unused areas capable of housing new functions and recreational activities. The spaces between office buildings can accommodate small playing fields and activity areas comprising, for example, squash courts, gymnastics equipment, and walls for climbing or playing ball.

The open green areas between business buildings can serve as part of a regulating element, creating a cohesive quality for the entire area by holding it together with a large public park loop encompassing all structures. This can be achieved, for example, by connecting and coordinating the outdoor areas of individual sites such that each business is required to address and incorporate the green spaces and recreational possibilities of the neighbouring site.

Vibeholm Business Park, Copenhagen

Unusual road markings strip the cars of dominance and make the area seem more welcoming to pedestrians and other people. Vibeholm Business Park, Copenhagen. Schønherr Landskab, Copenhagen.
The entire business area is held together by the homogenous surface that flows between all buildings. Vibeholm Business Park, Copenhagen. Schønherr Landskab, Copenhagen.

Recommendations

- By coordinating landscaping efforts between individual parcels, business areas can be given a well-arranged and cohesive appearance rendering them more accessible.
- Untraditional surface adaptation strips the cars of dominance and creates an inviting surface on pedestrian terms.
- A surface with even paving can accommodate many different sports activities.
- Adding opportunities for physical activity and recreation in open spaces can activate dreary and overlooked urban spaces.
- Green areas can be connected to existing green spaces in the area, thus linking the business area to the rest of the city.
- Soft traffic networks can run through the area, connecting to central places in the city and surrounding residential areas.
- Parking lots can be located in smaller niches slightly removed from the buildings themselves, and wide well-lit paths can lead to building entrance areas.
Densification

Zoning and functional divisions still remain very visible in Danish cities today. Older business and harbour areas are often adapted to particular logistics and thus appear to be relatively large. Many business areas comprise buildings that are only marginally utilised and open spaces that are often relatively large. These factors combine to make densified urban development possible. Overall planning and programming may find it advantageous to mix functions such that individual areas encompass a wide range of functions and opportunities benefitting area employees as well as residents.

Mixed Infill, Idea Proposal

The open spaces in business areas have great potential. It may be possible to densify and renew the existing business areas with various types of sports and recreational activities. Large business sites, for example, can be divided into smaller lots where other functions, such as cafés, shops, and cultural and recreational facilities, can be established. Design of the ground floor is particularly important for life in the street. Densification can be created through minor extensions, small niches with planting or by setting up activity spaces. This generates rhythm in the facade and creates smaller niches for seating areas, in turn providing a more pedestrian-friendly environment in front of the building that can be used by employees for informal sports activities.
Recommendations

- By making the ground floor of the building pedestrian-friendly and by adding soft connections, the business building can take hold of the area.
- Building scale must be broken down in order to ensure a more human scale. The ground floor of the building can be divided into small segments either recessed into the facade or extending beyond it.
- Open and active building fronts naturally generate more street life around the facade. People move more slowly and pause along the way, and possibilities arise for various street activities.
- Expanding use of the area by adding new functions can contribute to opening the area to a wider use for sports and physical activities.
- Area planning must incorporate bicycle and pedestrian connections in order to create good and easy contact with other city and housing areas.
- Recycling business areas for new functions and for sports and movement, cuts the costs of laying out new urban areas.
- By working with a range of different materials like loose stones, gravel, grass, sand and wood surfaces, a wealth of experiences can be created in the area that can also become capable of accommodating different types of sport activities. The area can contain a stream or a fountain, recreational areas and smaller activities such as petanque and permanent table tennis fixtures.
The area should have human scale and house mixed functions capable of generating activity in the area throughout the day. Good connections should be established through the area and to surrounding areas. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
General Recommendations

- Adding sports activities to business areas extends the daily rhythm that normally plays out from nine to five, creating life in the area in the evening and on weekends. Residents can use the area actively around the clock, and employees can grab a workout during the lunch break.

- By coordinating landscaping efforts between individual parcels, business areas can be given a well-arranged and cohesive appearance rendering them more accessible. Green spaces in business areas can be connected to existing green spaces nearby, thus linking the area to the rest of the city.

- Soft traffic networks can run through the area connecting it to central places in the city and to surrounding residential areas.

- The business building can grab hold of the area by making the ground floor pedestrian-friendly and adding soft connections. Open and active building fronts naturally generate more street life around the facade. People move more slowly and pause along the way, and possibilities arise for various street activities.

- Building scale must be broken down in order to ensure a more human scale. The ground floor of the building can be divided into small segments either recessed into the facade or extending beyond it.

- Adding mixed functions and sports activities to the business area will lead to better utilisation of urban areas while bringing new vibrancy to the area. Residents can use the area actively around the clock, and employees can grab a workout during the lunch break.
Urban Space Inventory

Urban architectural elements contribute to providing opportunities for city residents. New sports cultures have demonstrated that urban space inventory can be used and interpreted in several ways, and thus differently from their intended use and interpretation. While a bench, for example, may be interpreted as an invitation to sit down by most people, not everyone will see it as a seating area. Different urban users challenge our perception of urban functions by interpreting passive elements as active. The urban space and its inventory comprise many opportunities for activity and play. We just need to learn to see the possibilities. Urban space inventory is often reinterpreted in order to serve new functions. Consequently, it may be advantageous to address urban space inventory in a different way, aiming to design multifunctional elements that reach beyond traditional frameworks.

Urban inventory and furniture do not necessarily need to be as monofunctional as they appear to be in some places today, but can rather be challenged by a creative approach. Of course this requires attention to and consideration of different users, and decisions must also be made with regard to the location and consequently the desired function of such elements.
Here, play and informal activity are integrated in the public sphere in the form of a swing at a busy bus stop. Play as you go..., London, 2008, Bruno Taylor.
The Bench as a Goal

Design of stairs, edges, lighting and other inventory contributes to the creation of a qualitative outdoor space and greatly influences the way in which an urban space will be used. Inventory in urban spaces can be adapted to wider use, creating a range of usage choices. Combining various elements can lead to exciting design structures and social encounters between users.

The desired activities in a given location can be advantageously integrated in the design and can help determine appropriate furnishing of the space in order for the activities to be easily decoded in the urban space. The urban space can serve as a continuous landscape with a variety of effects that create opportunities for countless activities.

Bench + Street Soccer Goal + Skate Ramp, Idea Proposal

The combination of different functions, such as a bench and a street soccer goal, generates a flat element with a seating area at one end rising into the form of a soccer goal at the other end. The gentle design idiom in which the seating elements glide upwards to form the top of the goal creates a structure that can also be used by skaters and kids on kick scooters. The surface and urban space inventory can be correlated, thus integrating square, surface, movement and activity. The surface can bend upwards to create different levels that lend themselves to seating, play, skating or street soccer.

Similarly, other elements can be conceived around the city, combining functions for other user groups, for example a park bench that also serves as an exercise bench.

Recommendations

- By combining traditional urban elements in new ways, a variety of sports and activity possibilities can be created within a single location.
- The presence of several functions makes it more likely that the elements will be used by different groups.
- Concrete surfaces with varied slope, width and height can accommodate seating and a range of sports activities. The concrete surfaces can comprise lengthier courses for use by skaters and smaller more private spaces for seating and play areas for smaller children.
- Steps 20-40 cm high can be used for play by smaller children. Taller steps with sharper edges and 40-60 cm between levels can be used for skate tricks.
- A surface at a height of 90-120 cm can serve as a street soccer goal but can also be used for seating.
- A more stage like character can be created for street dance by raising larger steps and surfaces.
Multifunctional urban space element for recreation, street soccer, skating, cycling and play.
Multifunctional urban space element, 2008. DashMark Architects, Copenhagen.
The Active Bus Stop

Play and physical activity often take place in specific places frequently targeting children. Play is relegated to specific locations and does not naturally occur in the public space. Very informal games and play can be promoted within the public space by integrating elements that encourage movement and play, particularly in areas that are frequented by many people. Bus stops, for example, are found in great numbers in all Danish towns and cities. People waiting for a bus sit or stand in line if all that is provided is the bus sign. However, the bus stop can be combined with the possibility of movement by activating the exterior of a bus stop shelter or by hanging swings or mounting wall bars within the shelter. These functions can complement the basic functions such as seating and shelter from the elements.

Bus Stop + Climbing Wall + Bicycle Path, Idea Proposal

The idea proposal comprises three variations of the bus stop with traditional seating and shelter. The exterior can be activated in a variety of ways using slope and incline to accommodate a range of different activities. Allowing the shape to fold upwards from the paving can form a gentle transition creating soft curves on which children can run and bicycle. In some place, the relationship between bus passengers and cyclists can be complicated. Potential conflicts can be solved by rethinking the context, for example by leading the cyclists above the waiting passengers. A soft and gentle incline leading upward to a steeper descent provides speed for the cyclists. Of course railings are necessary, like on all bridges, to prevent cyclists and other users from falling. Development of additional elements can be envisioned; swings, balance bars and pull-up bars.

Recommendations

- Creative design of urban inventory can help accommodate a wide range of physical activities.
- New hybrid elements are created through the combination of different elements of urban space, some potentially offering solutions to relevant problems.
- Integration of informal play and games in places frequented by large numbers of people draws sports activities right into everyday life and thus reaches many people.
- Adding sports activities to the bus stop can make waiting an active and enjoyable pastime.
- Providing a setting for activities or exercises that can be carried out by two people can generate social encounters.
- Upgrades achieved by providing possibilities for activity and qualitative recreational spaces can similarly have a preventive effect with regard to vandalism.
- Shelter from wind and rain should be designed with a certain degree of transparency in order to render sports activities visible and safe.
Versatile bus stop design providing opportunities for activities like climbing, skating, playing and cycling. Multifunctional urban space element, 2008. DashMark Architects, Copenhagen.
Summary

Urban Space Inventory

Our use of public urban spaces has changed as the rise of new activities has led to new perceptions and new ways of using public spaces. By adapting the urban space inventory to the activities taking place in the city, broader use of urban spaces can be encouraged. Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
Generelle anbefalinger

- Urban space inventory can be designed as an urban space hybrid capable of accommodating a wide range of functions and sports activities.

- By combining functions like seating and street soccer goals, new and different opportunities for activity can be developed. The urban space inventory can also be designed in order to create shelter for sports activities.

- A creative approach to design, for example incorporating levels of various widths and heights, can serve to integrate different sports activities in the urban space inventory.

- Urban space elements carried out in a gentle idiom can accommodate play and the more fluent activities like cycling and skating.

- Adding sports activities to places frequented by large numbers of people draws sports activities right into everyday life and makes daily exercise fun and active.

- Upgrades achieved by providing possibilities for activity and qualitative recreational spaces may also have a preventive effect with regard to vandalism.
The School

Children and youth spend a great deal of time in and around school, rendering it a significant element in their everyday life. School serves as a social meeting place where children learn to interact with each other. Thus schools contribute to creating frameworks for social communities and experimental play. Interest in learning develops here, but the motivation for movement, play and sports is also established at school.

In many places, the traditional formal school yard has developed into an informal meeting place that is also used by children and youth outside school hours. The school and the school yard have become part of the local community and play an important part with regard to the opportunities and possibilities for activity available to the children.

If the objective is for children and youth to engage in more physical activity, the school is an obvious place to begin developing stimulating environments that encourage play and movement. The motivation to be physically active must be integrated as a natural part of the everyday life of the children at all levels. Children are usually full of energy and can easily and actively entertain themselves. This spontaneous activity can be encouraged and motivated by the physical environment so that children continue to develop healthily, happily and actively. It is advisable to consider planning, location and development of school environments as an active centre for youth, contributing to their physical development and to an understanding of their own body.
The varied landscape at Trekroner School can be used year round in many different ways. Trekroner School, Roskilde, 2002. SLA, Copenhagen. Photo: Søren Nagbøl.
The School Yard as Urban Space

The school yard is often a large open area with smaller sections for play and ball games. There are often a number of open sheds or covered areas with room for seating or play. However, the school yard should strive to accommodate activities for everyone and not just for those who want to play ball. There should be a multitude of activities that allow everyone to be included.

The school yard is a large area for movement that has room for many school games. It serves as a central gathering place for children and youth in the area and is increasingly being used as a meeting place and for self-organised sports activities outside school hours. The school yard is an informal activity space in the local community and plays a significant role in giving children opportunities for physical activity.

Sct. Annagade, Aarhus

The school yard at Sct. Annagade School in Aarhus is located by a quiet intersection. The corner of the school yard opens up toward the intersection and becomes a natural part of the urban space. The area by the road is designed as a skate landscape with wide stairs that connect to the street level. The school yard also contains a basketball area that can also be used for roller hockey and street soccer.

Behind the school building itself there is a more natural green area that appeals to younger children. Small green hills and varied planting allow for smaller niches and cozy areas with seesaws, balance bars, ropes and swings. There are also playing fields, a volleyball court and an area for keeping animals.

The outdoor areas of the school are not behind lock and key but relate naturally to the rest of the urban space.
The various elements of the school yard are used by children of all ages and in different ways. The school yard also comprises a (basketball court that is also used for roller hockey. Sct. Annagade School, Aarhus. Photo: Rasmus B. Andersen.

Recommendations

- Planning the school yard as an open space flowing into the city can render it part of the urban space and make it possible to use the school yard at any time of day.
- By using existing school access roads and paths as a point of departure, optimal accessibility and visibility can be achieved.
- Because the school yard serves as a social meeting place, it is a good idea to include sports activities for children and youth as well as possibilities accommodating local needs for physical activity and sports.
- Lighting is important, allowing late afternoon and winter use and creating a sense of security. Lighting solutions can be developed to provide constant dim lighting in certain areas, while motion sensors in other areas can provide lighting when the area is in use.
- Encouraging children to participate in sports activities from an early age, builds muscle and motor skills. This in turn reduces the risk of injury and increases the probability of continued exercise and sports activities during the teenage years.
The School Yard as Landscape

Children sit still in school for a large part of the day. As a result there is a need for physically challenging and inspiring playgrounds and play structures that can stimulate the children’s physical and fine motor skills between classes. The school yard is a different type of space than the square. The school yard constitutes the setting for informal play, and it is youth territory, a place in which they feel secure, in control and in charge. When designing the school yard, desired or existing types of movement can serve as a point of departure, for example walking, running, cycling, moon cars, skating etc. These activities have different requirements in terms of area size and surface, and some may require some degree of fencing. This can divide the space into sections containing various activities that can be planned according to age group, type of sports or themes.

Trekroner School, Roskilde

Trekroner School in Roskilde is designed around a scenic play landscape. The school itself has no interior corridors, and as a result all movement must take place via the outdoor areas. The school yard contains several different landscapes offering a range of materialities to accommodate all kinds of play. Smaller niches, surfacing and functions are linked together by a continuous winding path. A sunken area can be filled with water in the summertime or used as a moon car track. The sand garden with tree trunks and big rocks invites imaginative play. In addition there is a hilly landscape with striped rubber paving, gentle green hills and a sand area. The school yard is large space filled with opportunities space for play to unfold freely.

The gentle shape of the asphalt surface can be used for moon cars and bicycles, but can also be filled with water during the summer. Trekroner School, Roskilde, 2002. SLA, Copenhagen. Photo: Søren Nagbøl.
Recommendations

- School yard planning and design can incorporate smaller more intimate spaces that can accommodate smaller activities.
- In order to accommodate many types of movement, the school yard can be laid out based on the fundamental requirements of the sports activities with regard to surfacing, materials and orientation.
- Outdoor school areas should face the sun, and recreational and activity spaces should be located in relation to the sun. Ideally the area will comprise a large open surface, semi-covered areas and smaller areas with shade structures and shelter.
- Softer surfacing such as rubber, wood chips or sand can be used under climbing and balance structures for small children, thus giving them the opportunity to develop motor skills, fine motor skills, balance and coordination.
- Winding foot and bicycle paths through the school yard can accommodate more free movement and can contribute to dividing the surface into smaller areas for different sports activities.
School yard design can revolve around a simple informal framework that welcomes different types of movement. Planning should strive for versatility and room for diversity by ensuring variations of experience, quality and space.

Illustration: Rasmus B. Andersen, Centre for Sports and Architecture.
General Recommendations

- Planning the school yard as an open space flowing into the city can render it part of the urban space open to use at any time of day.

- In order to accommodate many types of movement, the school yard can be laid out based on the fundamental requirements of the sports activities with regard to surfacing, materials and orientation.

- Where possible, outdoor school areas should face the sun, and recreational and activity spaces should be located in relation to the sun. Ideally the area will comprise a large open surface, semi-covered areas and smaller areas with shade structures and shelter.

- Because the school yard serves as a social meeting place, it is a good idea to include sports activities for children and youth as well as possibilities accommodating local needs for physical activity and sports.

- Lighting is important, allowing late afternoon and winter use and creating a sense of security. Open sheds and covered areas allow activities to take place in all weather conditions.

- Softer surfacing such as rubber, wood chips or sand can be used under climbing and balance structures for small children, thus giving them the opportunity to develop motor skills, fine motor skills, balance and coordination. Fine-grain asphalt appears softer and warmer than traditional road asphalt and can accommodate ball games, tag and hopscotch. Harder concrete may be selected for roller skates, skate boards and kick scooters.
Literature:


Dimensioner relateret til kroppen.
Åbne og offentlige funktioner placeret tilgængeligt. Mindre rum og steder til ophold, der tager hensyn til klima.
Gode jævne overflader i ubruided forløb, dimensioneret så der er plads til gående, barnevogne og mødet på gaden.
Planlagt således, at der skabes synlighed omkring forbindelserne.
Der bør være en god udsigt og liv at se på, placeret i forhold til sol, udført i indbydende materialer og med en god belysning.
Opholdssteder bør tage højde for de vejrlige omstændigheder som blæst, regn og sne.
Levende byrum med blandede funktioner medfører et liv i området, der giver en tryghedsfølelse.
Varierede facadeforløb giver et interessant oplevelsesforløb. God belysning.
Inden for 3-5 min gang bør der i nærmiljøet være adgang til et areal til rekreation og leg.
Inden for 5 min gang bør der være adgang til et grønt areal med plads til, at børn og voksne kan udfolde sig fysisk, og som kan rumme begivenheder i kvarteret.
Udendørsarealerne bør tilsigtes en sammenbindende karakter og skabe gode forbindelser, der kan anvendes på mange måder og tilknyttet særlige aktivitetsområder.
Aktivitetsområder og faciliteter bør optimalt set henvende sig til en bred brugergruppe, så der sikres udfoldelsestilbud til alle aldersgrupper, og så det bliver muligt at være aktiv gennem hele livet.
In conclusion, a table containing a number of general upgrade icons is presented. The icons have been grouped according to urban and architectural themes and are presented on two pages beginning with the specific qualitative icons and followed by the strategic planning icons. These provide an overview of conditions, qualities and strategies that can contribute to securing attractive and active spaces in the city.

The following table may be used as a point of departure for analysis and development of active public spaces. The table does not represent a singular model, but rather a comprehensive guideline concerning conditions and strategies that can inspire approaches, programming and design of activating urban spaces that invite and promote physical activity.
ACTIVITIES
Activity areas and facilities should ideally target all age groups, making it possible to be physically active throughout life.

RECREATION
Good views of the area and surrounding life should be available along with shelter from the elements, all carried out in welcoming materials and with ample lighting.

SCALE
Dimensions related to the body. Open and public functions are accessible. Smaller spaces and places for recreation with appropriate consideration of climate.

URBAN SPACE
Vibrant urban spaces with mixed functions bring the area to life and create a sense of security. Varied facade sequences offer interesting experiences. Good lighting.

PATH SYSTEMS
Good even surfaces in unbroken sequences dimensioned to allow room for pedestrians, strollers and street meetings.

LANDSCAPE
Outdoor areas should strive for a cohesive character. They should create good connections for multiple uses with adjoining specific activity areas.

PROXIMITY
A recreational and play area should be accessible within a 3-5 minute walk in the local area. A green space should be accessible within a 5 minute walk, providing room for children and adults to be physically active in a setting accommodating a range of different activities.
ACTIVITIES
Activity requirements can serve as a planning parameter and can be incorporated in the initial planning stages. Activity areas and facilities should be placed and oriented in order to be visible.

RECREATION
Outdoor areas should be integrated and located with a view to achieving close contact with the local community, allowing them to serve as a meeting place.

SCALE
Dimensions related to the body. Urban spaces of different sizes appear well dimensioned and allow for an overview throughout the area, contributing to a sense of security.

URBAN SPACE
Varied and unbroken urban space sequences with a dense and open character with overlapping functions. Variations in type and character of urban spaces. Visual and experiential variation.

PATH SYSTEMS
Continuous connections link relevant destinations and urban areas. Different types and forms of connections that promote social encounters.

LANDSCAPE
Landscape design capable of accommodating various activities. Outdoor areas should be given flexibility that allows for use all year round.

PROXIMITY
A 10-15 minute bicycle ride should provide access to a sizable green space with room for children and adults to be physically active in a setting that can accommodate a range of different activities. It should be possible to reach a larger nature area within 30 minutes.
ACTIVATING architecture and urban planning addresses the development of attractive and activating public spaces in the city. Using 50 Danish and international examples, the book describes how physical activity and sports activities can be integrated in the development and design of Danish urban spaces. The book also outlines how the activating urban space can provide inhabitants with new opportunities for fitting sports activities into a busy week.

By way of the examples, the author illustrates how the use of creative design and simple measures can transform a space in the city into an attractive and active urban space capable of accommodating a wide range of physical and mental activities.

A good space in the city can accommodate a wide range of activities and can be adapted to various activities, events, users and weather conditions. The 50 examples in Activating Architecture and Urban Planning show how the good urban space can be achieved and integrated in urban planning.