Structures for the co-created city

This project seeks to stretch the limits of housing policies and explore new flexible design solutions. It explores how we think about the design process and policies. If we developed an innovative dynamics of dealing with ownership we would broaden our possible contribution and economical adaptability in a more adaptive and diverse city where both the city and the dwellers have responsibilities for the design process and development.

BY ANDERS BERGSTRÖM
BERGEN

Bergen lies at the centre of Hordaland, at the heart of Norway’s world famous fjords, and is the second most populous city in the country, with 271,949 inhabitants as of 2014. The city is one of North Europe’s oldest port cities, established as a centre for trade by the 12th century. Greater Bergen Region is home to some 400,000 people. The region is currently undergoing a rapid growth, with the latest forecasts from the County Municipality showing an expected rise of 140,000 citizens in the coming 15 years. This will create the need for more houses and workplaces and will influence transport demand.

The region of Bergen is growing fast and densification around existing centres is happening rapidly. Plans for introducing new urban development in the district of Møllendal are already being implemented with the newly finished student housing, a promenade park leading to the city centre, the new art academy by Snøhetta scheduled to be finished by 2017 and a future stop for the light rail. The site represents the need of developing publicly owned land this close to the city core.

The project site in Bergen has a unique location on the south side of Lungegårdsvannet, by the Møllendal River outlet. Located just outside the historic city centre, the site has a long history as an industrial area, including milling back to the Middle Ages, and storage for the city’s technical department in recent times. Much of the Møllendal area has for decades been inaccessible and unsuited for public use. Now, however, a transformation is on its way. Bergen municipality wants to explore new ways of urban living through developing a pilot project for housing at Grønneviksøren.
If inhabitants have the mandate to spontaneously decide how the public and green space between the buildings are to be used. Will the space be used as playground or a place for gardening, urban gardening or tennis field?

Development is a process and not a project. That means that the neighbourhood should grow organically over time. Different plots can be used temporarily for pop-up uses until a developer buys or rents the space.

By respecting the neighbouring density, a common character is created that ties the area together. The project should therefore steer to become diverse but framed to be united.

A center for exchanging ideas and design proposals during the development of the new area should be the starting point for the project. It is a place for negotiation, discussions and visions.

Connect urban areas

Steer not direct

Process not project

Unity not uniformity

Make people meet

Shared responsibility

Active participation

Creative networks

Choose sharing

Participate in design

Connect urban areas: The surrounding neighbourhoods need to be connected to unify the waterfront of Storebyggebeværdet. Green wedges should connect and the surrounding pathways should be linear.

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Shared responsibility: If inhabitants have the mandate to spontaneously decide how the public and green space between the buildings are to be used. Will the space be used as playground or a place for gardening, urban gardening or tennis field?

Active participation: With temporary building solutions active participation take place on site. Before constructions of new buildings, plots should accommodate possibilities for temporary activities welcoming people to start processing the site.

Creative networks: Developers and other stakeholders should have the opportunity to connect and share interests in forming groups and ideas on how to build on the different plots.

Choose sharing: A communal meeting place where people can share goods, create, gather and exchange ideas for the public space should be established early in the process. People should feel inspired to share and become ambassadors for a new sustainable way of living.

Participate in design: With temporary building solutions active participation take place on site. Before constructions of new buildings, plots should accommodate possibilities for temporary activities welcoming people to start processing the site.
The building has two faces. One facing the rural public green and the other the urban streets. Both have urban qualities but in different scales and expressions. Business can develop in the bottom floors towards the street and small hobby rooms and non-residential activities can establish in the flexible buildings in the rural part.

By offering a set of house typologies with a flexible structure, adaptable house schemes are supported which supports changes in the need for space.

Instead of creating large private courtyards, the space in between buildings becomes co-owned and part of a bigger system of public spaces.

The plots are divided in thin but long areas, 15m x ca 80m with a flexible public space in the middle that can be pushed and pulled by actors to create a suitable sized plot.

The FSI number is negotiated within the block. This will stimulate a mixture of scales and include more developers as the FSI can be bought and sold among different actors within block.

Before a new building is set on the site, flexible initiative can use the space to successively urbanise the place, and try out different identities.

Armed with colours, people can use the hard surface to draw the outline of the new site on the ground. Where should the pathways be, where can the pop-up gardens establish?

The garden offers many possibilities. It is a place to appropriate, to meet, gather, and play, but also a place for sharing goods and service exchange.

How can a new street become a connecting public place? With a strategic location where business can establish in ground level the street becomes vibrant.

Inside the public green

FRAMEWORK

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The public space between the buildings is for the people to engage in, shape, design and create. The old brick building will act as centre for ideas and materials, but actions are made by dwellers them self, supported by the city.

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Mixed use

Multiple actors

Maximize public space

Flexible plot sizes

Adaptable typologies

Negotiated FSI

Flexible

Co-own the garden

Urban and rural accessibility

Become the designer

Make change

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The site consists of multiple storing facilities, a helicopter platform and an old brick building saved from the second world war. The site has unclear borders between the existing green area and the hard surface. It is possible to walk through the area, but the lack of pathways makes the walk inconvenient.

Møllendalsveien is modified to create a crossroad with a new street, which connects with the existing area and the waterfront. This will generate better flows through the area and also define the site in a more clear way and in the same line make the waterfront a public space for the city of Bergen.

The connections have cut out new blocks in the urban mass where new buildings and green spaces will develop. The cemetery has high natural values, which needs to be introduced to the site to create a sustainable habitat but also to include the recreational benefits it brings. A town park is established and wedges of green grow into the site.

Every plot should have a maximum FSI of 3.0 and 1100 sqm GFA and every block a maximum of 2.0 and an average of 750 sqm GFA. This is the start of negotiation about the FSI for the individual plot.

The old brick building is refurbished and acts as a public facility where negotiations about the development and the future design are held. It is the catalyst, and starting point of the project.

Since the plots differ in size and are bigger towards the waterfront a mixture of typologies and heights will accrue. The bigger plots will have capacity for larger and higher buildings and the smaller will have a lower scale.

What is not built remains public. The green public spaces are for the dwellers to claim and make change in. Collaborations for developing urban gardens, playgrounds, sport fields will create a diversity of usage and expressions. The old brick building is a communal hub where discussions can be held, visions shared and material support collected.

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Every block is divided into several oblong plots reaching for the waterfront.
FLEXIBLE
Small pop up elements can from the very beginning start to colonize the public space. They are initiated by the new inhabitants and are dynamic, changeable and easy to move.

GARDENS
The public space and garden is for the people to make actions in. As the private property is minimized there are lots of space for public initiatives creating urban gardens, flowerbeds, playgrounds and places to relax.

PLOTS
Every block is divided into several long plots, which can be built with several different types of forms and scales.

TOWN PARK
The park serves the whole neighborhood and can used for festivals, concerts etc.

TWO FACES
The buildings always facing a street creates a urban side and a more porous side facing the green public space.

PUBLIC
What is not built remains public. This becomes the public core, stretching through the blocks.

PRIVATE
A 2-meter private land divides the public space from the private building. This creates a defined border, which helps the public to remain public and also allows small terraces in front of the buildings.

VARIATION
The buildings vary in heights between 2-5 floors, with a maximum of FSI 3.0 and an average of FSI 2.0 in every block.

COMMUNAL HUB
The old brick building starts as a catalyst for the development and becomes a permanent communal hub, which guarantees the qualities of the neighborhood and coordinates different interests. It is also a public place for sharing, workshoping and inspiration.

ONE OR TWO
Every building uses one plot or maximum two plots in a row.

DYNAMIC
With flexible solutions, where a three story house can be divided into one, two or three apartments, enables changes over time.

FLEXIBLE
4 meters of land on each side of the pathway allows for small non-residential flexible buildings.

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