

THE THIRD SPACE

A line where Risøy can celebrate its contrasts

Third places “host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home (first space) and work (second space). Third places are the heart of a community’s social vitality. The space where everything comes together. A space which brings together extremes without losing their differences.

From car orientated infrastructure towards a social infrastructure

Risøy is an island full of contrasts; not only in its public space and program but also through its users and architecture. Precisely this rich coexistence gives the island its unique character. The different areas of the harbour, the cruise pier and the residential district are currently lying with their backs against each other. The infrastructure in between these spaces, that was once conceived to connect functions, has in many places changed into a barrier, both spatially and socially. Within this structure, Garpeskjaervegen/Jens Risoens gate (south side of the Risøy Bru) has a strategic position. The north-south connection forms the buffer between the port, the residential area and the cruise pier, which results in a space of emptiness and concrete in the heart of the island. Third Space transforms Risøy’s in-between zone from a border and non-place, to an inclusive space where a productive mix of harbour, residential and tourism activities is created. Here, the contrast between these differences is encouraged, without losing its own identity.

Momentum for change: using Risøy’s challenges for a sustainable future

Risøy is on the verge of many challenges. These include sea level rise (including danger of floods in the North of Risøy), the end of the fossil era (transformation of the port into a new industry), demographic changes (aging population and an increase in single-person households) and a growth in tourism (to 400,000 tourists a year in Haugesund). It is important to look at these big challenges as opportunities and use them as ‘drivers for change’ to address Risøy’s local issues. These issues include the lack of qualitative public space, vacancy, no reason for tourists to stay and the barrier between the port, cruise pier and the residential area.

Productivity of conflict

Third Space builds further on the rich mix of users and spatial identities that the island knows. We distinguish three time layers that together form the current image of Risøy: the underlying landscape (1775), the connection to Haugesund and the urban grid (1920) and the expansion of the island by the arrival of the harbour (1980).

These three layers are related to the three types of users the island has: tourists come to Risøy to experience the unique Norwegian landscape, residents inhabit the grid and harbour workers work in the harbour. All three users use their own space and facilities on the island and therefore hardly meet each other. There is a need for an inclusive space for inhabitants, harbour workers and tourists. A mixed zone, which can cope with different uses, quantities of users, rhythms of use, meanings and target groups.

The Third Space brings these users and functions together in the heart of the island and divides this zone into roughly three places, corresponding to the three time layers and users. In all three places, a spatial mix of landscape, urban grid and harbour is formed to create a Risøy specific identity. However, one aspect always prevails: the Norwegian landscape in the north, the urban grid in the middle and the industrial harbour in the south. In this way we cherish the existing qualities of Risøy and gradually build further on them.

The shown ambition is great. In order to stay realistic, we therefore made a development strategy over time. We have divided the development of Risøy into roughly three phases. The first phase is designed in such a way that it can be realized without being dependent on stakeholders, policy changes or major investments. In practical terms, this means that it can start tomorrow. The drivers for change (which will be described in the next chapter) are the engine that forms the starting point for the second phase. This phase is always an elaboration on the previous phase. Together with developers and investors, the final phase (3rd) can then be given shape. In this way, placemaking is started immediately and the users of Risøy are given the time to think and work together on the development of their island; a quick start, with permanent impact.

Tollbugata Bukt

Spatial: On the north side the project is an elaboration on Tollbugata Lekeplass, which is one of the few qualitative public spaces on Risøy where people can experience visible height differences of the original Nordic landscape. The park will be expanded and transforms the stony quay into a scenic public shoreline. The design reacts on the sea level rise and provides both safety and a unique tidal landscape for all of Risøy.

The existing dockers' houses will be mixed with new functions for both residents and tourists, such as an extension of the existing museum, a hotel and a restaurant. Existing and new buildings will all be surrounded by the typical green Nordic landscape with rocks, moss and native trees and vegetation. A robust boardwalk creates an exciting route that connects the different functions together and at the same time makes sure the landscape has time to develop and fragile vegetation and animals have a quiet and safe spot.

The growth of tourism is an opportunity to turn the northern edge into a "EnterNorway" location, where tourists can get a glimpse of the unique Norwegian landscape and have reason to stay. After all, our conversation with Emma Jemli of VisitHaugesund reveals that 80% of tourists have to wait between 3 and 4 hours for their bus to leave for their final destination. More tourists on Risøy contribute to a vibrant atmosphere and a boost for the local economy.

Process: The first step in Tollbugata Bukt is the construction of the boardwalk, which connects the cruise pier with the existing museum. The path meanders along and through the existing buildings and at the same time creates a place to stay at and on the water. After the expected doubling of the number of tourists arriving at Risøy, the opportunity arises to realize new facilities such as a hotel and restaurant. These developments make it possible to invest in the unfolding of the landscape and the construction of the scenic shoreline. In the third phase, residential buildings will be added and the park will take its final shape.

Risøy Torget

Spatial: Risøy Torget, at the heart of the island, creates a new space around the existing kiosk and Risøy Bru. By placing a new pedestrian bridge between Asbygata and Risøy's pleasure port, an interesting loop is created from the centre of Haugesund to Risøy. The two bridges together connect the existing shopping street Haraldsgata with Risøy Torget. In time, when the harbour transforms to a new industry (end of fossil era) this loop can even be expanded as a public route towards the harbour. With waste heat of the harbour a steam bath can be created that can provide a unique place in the middle of an industrial setting with a view on the open sea. The central plaza provides a place to meet with a scale for both everyday activities and one-time events. As a basis of the design lies the grid, which forms a square for gathering, a place for densification and a stage for the International Jazz festival, film festival and local markets. The grid is spatially strengthened by adding a diverse palette of native tree species along the different axes which are grown in the courtyard of the Municipal block.

Process: The first phase of Risøy Torget is the wooden folly that marks the beginning of the central plaza. During this phase, trucks can still drive under the construction and there is space for pop-up activities on weekends when the harbour parking lot is partially empty. The folly forms the link between the future square and a park-like zone on the north side of Risøy.

Risøy Torget can develop further when the new pedestrian bridge is realized. The loop from Haugesund shopping street to the island will give more reason to downgrade the parking lot and create more space for the square. The adjacent buildings will also be transformed and densified. The final step is taken during the transition of the harbour, where, in collaboration with Aibel, the options are explored to create a unique public place in the harbour. This last step will enlarge the loop, making the harbour part of the whole city of Haugesund.

Haventorg

Spatial: The future access to Risøy for truck and car traffic will take place via the new bridge on the south side. To make sure that this new connection, just like the Garpeskjaervegen/Jens Risoens gate, won't act as a barrier on the island, we propose to turn this new connection into a place. We do this by creating a skatepark under and a Mobilityhub attached to the bridge. The position of the Mobilityhub makes sure that the majority of the cars will park at the south side of Risøy, leaving space for qualitative public space on the rest of the island. The Garpeskjaervegen/Jens Risoens gate (only the south side of the Risoy Bru) will function from now on as a public space, the cars can drive via Sundgata road. The HarbourHub is a hybrid building that functions as an energy producer and also accommodates shared cars and bicycles as well as small-scale facilities such as a repair shop or coffee to go. The construction is flexible and can easily adapt to different needs. In this way the Hub functions as an activator of the south face and as a meeting place in itself.

The dominant character of this location is the harbour, which is reflected in the large, flexible buildings and raw public space. The skatepark underneath the bridge fits seamlessly into this decor. The project proposes that the harbour gets space here to expand further, so that they can experiment with a transition now that the fossil economy is coming to an end. This spot also provides space for new housing for harbour workers in order to free up space in the Tollbugata basin. These new docker's buildings will better meet the new demands of the harbour workers and will have a mixed character where other types of housing also can be provided.

Process: At Haventorg, the construction of a skatepark will mark the first phase. After the construction of the new car bridge, the opportunity arises to develop the HarbourHub. In the final phase, the port will have the opportunity to expand in order to shape its transition towards the future. The quay will always remain publicly accessible and will provide several sun decks with views over the water.

Special: Municipal block as adaptive space

The interior space of the Municipal block will have a very central location on the island in relation to the connection to Haugesund centre and will literally become part of the Third Space. We believe that this space plays a crucial role in the development of Risøy and can have a flexible programming. The courtyard garden will be maintained as a public space with the existing youth centre as a central spot. The strategic location and the unique situation of entirely municipal ownership, give reason to preserve the courtyard as a collective space.

We plea for an experimental attitude for programming across the three phases of the project: In the first phase, the municipal block provides space as a workshop where the entire island can work together to build the future of Risøy on the installation for the plaza, the boardwalk in the park or objects of the skatepark. In the period that follows, the courtyard can be transformed into a tree nursery where native plants and trees can grow that can be given a place in the park, the square or the harbour in a later stage. The youth centre can play an important role here, by involving young people and providing education. In the third phase this space will be transformed into a collective inner garden for the residents of the adjacent houses. In this way it forms a logical part of the green space in which the Municipal Block is now located. An adaptive grid of columns that is constructed in the first phase ensures that the interior space of the municipal block can continue to transform over time. In this way the intervention of the interior space connects to the adaptability of the buildings of the Municipal block that have been there for a long time and have been transformed over time in architecture and (some) in program.

From ego to eco

Sustainability, both socially and environmental, is, in our view about creating a resilient structure that is about more than one purpose. When the world changes and expected and unexpected developments occur, the city should be able to adapt to these new situations. In time the three locations described above will be connected through a green connection from north to south. In this way, the Garpeskjaervegen/Jens Risoens transforms not only into an inclusive space for everyone to meet, but also into a healthy place where trees and vegetation can thrive. Within the planting scheme we will always aim for native species that can handle the sea-wind and that add to the local biodiversity.

In the project we use landscape interventions to create a logical and pleasant living environment for people, animals and plants. With trees and vegetation in front of every door, smart orientation and natural ventilation, energy costs will drop. Sustainability without a plug is preferred over technical solutions. An example of this is Tollbugata bukt where the park not only provides an answer to the rising sea level, but also adds a new quality to the existing dwellings (and thus to their value), enriches local biodiversity and adds a pleasant and public place to stay.

Gesamtkunstwerk: for everyone, by everyone

Strong support of the development of Risøy from residents, harbour workers, municipality and tourists contributes to the bond with each other and the island. In addition, it is important that every stakeholder feels a sense of ownership of the future of Risøy. The gradual development of the plan ensures that users of the island have the opportunity and time to make the project their own. This can only be achieved if users can participate in the process of decision-making. Collaboration is necessary to make development possible. At the moment, further expansion or change has become virtually impossible for the different stakeholders. Land position and development space seems to be stuck between the harbour, residents, the city and the tourist-sector. A strong collaboration between the port, tourist industry and residents is necessary to further develop the island, not only spatially but also in its organization. Therefore we propose to establish a fund in which the various stakeholders can work together on a common vision for the future. By exchanging money, land positions and/or services where necessary, room for development is created, where everyone benefits from the joint success. The fund's goal is to work towards a vibrant island where different needs coexist and reinforce each other on an equal basis.

Who are we?

Multidisciplinarity is the starting point for both our approach and team composition. We are used to working on international assignments from our roles in the offices we work in.

Our team has experience from creating regional visions to detailing outdoor spaces. Integrating and switching between these scales ensures an integral design and process.

We focus on adding value and increasing the quality of life: for the resident, employee, tourist, street, island and region. We design robust places that follow the language and identity of the environment and have a subtle individuality that surprises. This is in the material, program, and relationship with the existing and flexible use of space. We look forward to meeting you and working together on the future of Risøy.

Sincerely,
Team Third Space