

# European 12 - minutes of site visit in Copenhagen April 4th, 2013

## Participating

Tina Saabye, City Architect of Copenhagen

Mette Willaing Zeuthen, 'Område fornyelse Vesterbro' (Neighborhood renewal Vesterbro), Copenhagen

Karin Bakhti, Department for Urban Design, Municipality of Copenhagen

Katja Lange, Dybbølsgade Gadelaug (Street Guild)

Eva Fabricius, Danish Architecture Centre/European 12

## Starting point and the local Street Guild

Presentations from Jacob Tamsmark, Settlementet Vesterbro

The site visit tour started at the square Yrsa's Square at the corner of Dybbølsgade and Ingerslevsgade. Approximately 22 young participants was attending, one quarter of them coming from other European countries than Denmark.

The tour started with a walk through Dybbølsgade where the president from Dybbølsgade Street Guild, Katja Lange, presented the initiative and talked about the ideas and the work behind creating the green spaces in the street.

The Street Guild is an approximately 15 years old occupant initiated project with the aim to curb traffic and create more green spaces for the residents, as many court yards are in the shade most of the day.

The original intention was to include the all of the street area on Dybbølsgade, but ended up with being only one side of the street has been redesigned. The street today consists of 4-6 green raised beds, which is frequently used by residents when the sun shines, when drinking coffee in the morning or by students studying for their exam. The green street areas are also used for larger gatherings like when one of the residents throughs a private birthday party.

The Street Guild pays an annual amount of money which, inter alia, goes to the maintaining the raised beds. The Street Guild wish to have more green areas and are working one establishing it with money from a pool of money from 'Områdeløft Vesterbro'.

## Presentation and Coffe

The tour continued to the end of the street where the group gathered at the cafe at 'Settlementet' on Dybbølsgade 42. Here the presentation was started by Jacob Tamsmark, one of the people of the initiative 'Settlement'. He described about 'Settlementet's history and work in Vesterbro, which primarily is to help disadvantaged young people and the elderly in the area.

After this the City architect of Copenhagen, Tina Saaby, told about the visions and desires that the municipality of Copenhagen has to the competition. She described how the municipality within the last 20 years has gone from being a municipality with severe financial difficulties to a municipality in growth with a strong focus on sustainability, CO2 neutrality and an increase of a 1000 new citizens to the municipality each month.

Tina Saaby advertised for new ideas for sustainable initiatives - ideas that are not yet thought of. She asked the participants to think of sustainability in a broad context including the great human resources in the area, how we can live closer together, what we can share etc., and not only on low energy and insulation.

She incited the participants to keep in mind that the initiatives has respect the existing buildings in the area, the specific character of the area and the residents. She asked to bear in mind that the sustainability must be understood broadly, both technically, economically and with the perspective on humans. It is also important to take into

account that it is primarily the residents' that are going to support the initiatives individually, which means that the solutions has to make sense for the residents themselves to invest in.

The city of Copenhagen has a vision to become a metropolis for people and Tina Saaby urged the participants to think of the urban life before urban spaces which again goes before the buildings. This on the other hand does not mean that architecture is low prioritized. The projects designed for the area has to be build on the history of the buildings and it is important to bear in mind that not all buildings has to be iconic buildings, but that is important to be aware of the specific character of the area.

Tina Saaby mentioned that it is important to have a diversity in the urban life which requires that the spaces available are designed based on the existing urban life in the city and on the demands and wishes for the urban life. The city of Copenhagen has in recent years made a counting of the urban life, gathering information about how many people that are walking and spends time in the urban spaces and for how long they stay for. In 2010 the municipality of Copenhagen became aware of the lack of quiet places - spaces for relaxation. Another thing the city has become aware of is that the multifunctional playgrounds activates both children and their parents and not only the children like the traditional playgrounds does.

Every day 55% of the citizens of Copenhagen are biking to either work or school/university. This means that there are a lot of bikes in the city, which again, as Tina Saaby point out, means that the municipality are in a search for new ideas on how to solve the parking of the many bikes.

### **Guided tour on project site and study site**

After the presentation by Tina Saaby and the time for answering questions from the participants the group continued through the study site to the project site. On the project site the participants had the chance to go inside and see the court yard of the building on the project site. After the visit in the building the tour continued through the study site through Sommerstedgade and Skelbækgade and completed ended at the Yrsa's square.

## **Questions and Answers.**

### **Q: How high is the groundwater level in the area?**

A: In most of the project site and study site the terrain-water table is over 3 meters (see the map newly added document on the European-Europe.eu)

### **Q: Can/Should the apartments in the building be merged?**

A: Not necessarily. Over the past years, our consumption of m<sup>2</sup> has increased - we could ask ourself if that is the path we want to continue following?

### **Q: Should we design for only large families?**

A: No, it is important that there is a diversity within smaller units as well. You could bear in mind the possibilities of flexible areas.

### **Q: Should all the mentioned challenges be solved in the proposal?**

A: It is not expected that you solve all the challenges in your proposal, but it is expected that you give an scheme/vision for the whole area, plus large and/or small ideas/visions that can be used on the specific site and in parts of the rest of the city.

### **Q: How much can we change the facades?**

A: There are no answer book for this, but what you should be aware of is that the architecture and the specific character of the building is not destroyed and that the amount of daylight is not reduced.

### **Q: Why is the block on the project site selected?**

A: It is a distinctive residential property from the turn of the century as there are many of in Copenhagen and has three very different sides. The sites are facing the narrow Krusågade, the facade with shops on Dybbølsgade and the significant site facing the railway terrain, where the building are being a strong and highly visible architectural element in the surroundings.

### **Q: Have the residents been involved in the project?**

A: No, the municipality of Copenhagen have not had a close dialogue with the residents, but one of the properties has applied for renewal support and the municipality have had contact with the others regarding sustainable initiatives in general.  
(Have a look at the map: København-DK-PS-M4)





Meeting point on Yrsa's Square



Tina Saaby and participants



Walk on Dybbølsgade



Presentation by Katja Lange



The court yard in at the project site



Presentation by Tina Saaby



Participants at the 'Settlement'



Project site - Dybbølsgade/Krusågade



The court yard in at the project site