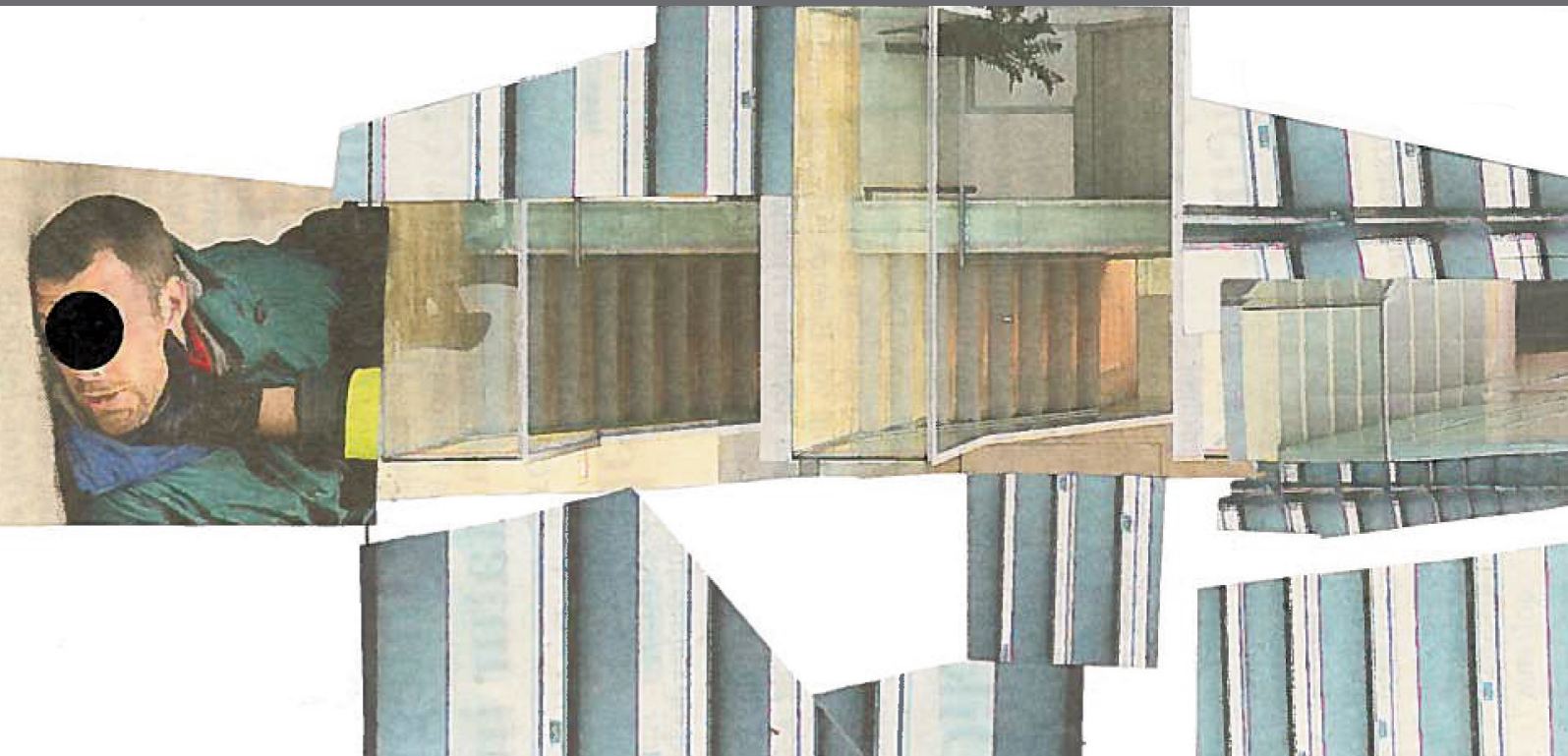


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1.2011



- Second homes - another life in another Suburbia
- Det urbanas syntax
- Building a culture of doctoral scholarship in architecture and design
- Bokanmeldelser

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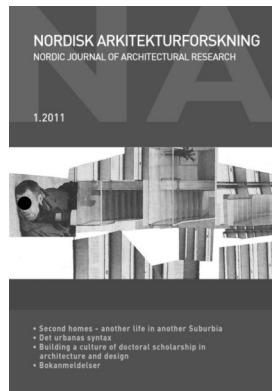
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NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING – NORDIC JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

		<u>VITENSKAPELIGE ARTIKLER</u>
CLAUS BECH-DANIELSEN AND KIRSTEN GRAM-HANSEN	7	Second homes – another life in another Suburbia A study on architectural design and cultural ideals related to Danish “summerhouses”
SARA WESTIN	23	Det urbanas syntax
		<u>FORUMARTIKLER</u>
FREDRIK NILSSON OG HALINA DUNIN-WOYSETH	41	Building a culture of doctoral scholarship in architecture and design. A Belgian-Scandinavian case
		<u>BOKANMELDELSER</u>
CATHARINA DYRSSEN	57	Emma Nilsson: Arkitekturens kroppslighet. Staden som terräng
JON PLØGER	60	Hilde Haslum: Det socio-spatiale og byen

Second homes – another life in another Suburbia

A study on architectural design and cultural ideals related to Danish “summerhouses”

Claus Bech-Danielsen and Kirsten Gram-Hansen

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Abstract:

This article focuses on second homes in Denmark - the 'summerhouses'. The objective is to gain an understanding of the concept and the basic qualities of summerhouses.

First we describe the concept of second homes and summerhouses as a modern phenomenon. After this follows a description of the cultural background of the historical development of second homes and Danish summerhouses, and we point out that the architectural ideals of the summerhouses as well as the planning concept of the summerhouse-areas have been based on the same ideals that are found in the 20th century suburban housing areas: Summerhouses are the uncompromising version of the modern

house, and summerhouse-areas can be considered as another version of the modern suburb. In this light our intention is to find out, what specific qualities and what alternatives to everyday life, are sought in a Danish summerhouse? Why do people - living their everyday life in a detached house in a suburban area - travel back and forth to a summerhouse in 'the other suburb' in weekends and holidays?

Keywords:

Architecture of second homes, meaning of home, suburban qualities

Introduction

Let us start by clarifying one important point: Owning a second home designed for leisure and situated in a rural setting away from the permanent residence is a modern phenomenon.

When the early modernists developed modern architecture in the beginning of the 20th century, they focused on recreational qualities and new activities of leisure - sunbathing, sports and games. With Le Corbusier's 'Radiant City' as an example, the English architectural researcher, Peter Buchanan showed that swimsuits, camping furniture, outdoor activities, fresh air and brilliant sunlight are important elements in the modernist project, and he pointed out the paradox that we now flee as tourists from the modern city and the bustle of modern life, which is inspired by the Mediterranean atmosphere, by travelling to holiday destinations along the Mediterranean Sea (Buchanan, 1997).

A similar paradox appeared in the current research project that focuses on ideals of summerhouses among Danish architects and owners of summerhouses. While urban development throughout the 20th century primarily took place in urban peripheries in the form of suburbs with light, air and green surroundings as proclaimed qualities, the summerhouse areas were developed even further away from the urban centres - with the same qualities in mind.¹ Now one would think that a part of the urban population would have moved into detached houses in the suburban areas, while another part stayed in the city - gaining access to recreational qualities by purchasing a summerhouse. This is not the case. A part of the summerhouse's paradoxical success is that owners of detached houses are over-represented among owners of Danish summerhouses (Andersen, 2009).

Thus, there has been a 'double movement' toward the horizon and the rural settings; like in many cases it was the same people who made both moves. Does this mean that the idea of creating green and recreational qualities in detached suburban neighbourhoods has failed? Or is something else at play? Are the green surroundings and the experience of the landscape not fundamental qualities of the summerhouses? Or do other motivations cause a lot of Danes to leave their permanent residence on weekends and holidays? What quali-

ties are they looking for in the summerhouses? These are some of the questions that have been instrumental in the current research project.

Method

The background of this article is a research project that focuses on the architectural design of Danish summerhouses and summerhouse areas as well as focusing on attitudes and expectations to life in summerhouses as manifested by the owners of these summerhouses. The first was done through typological analysis of a number of typical Danish summer houses, and through comparisons of sizes and spatial relations to those in typical Danish primary residences. The expectations to life in summerhouses were studied through qualitative interviews with house owners in four Danish summerhouse areas. In parallel, another project has described the summerhouses and their owners from a quantitative perspective (Andersen, 2009).

The quantitative descriptions formed the basis for the selection of summerhouse areas and summerhouse owners involved in the qualitative study. We wanted to include some of the most important summerhouse areas (meaning the municipalities having most summerhouses) in the study. These areas were identified through the quantitative study. We also wanted different types of qualities represented. Thus one of the selected areas was situated in the rough landscape at the Danish Westcoast, and another area was situated in suburban areas in Ebeltoft. Finally we selected areas which appealed to different social groups (see Figure 1).

We conducted 12 qualitative interviews with summerhouse owners in four districts. Together these 12 interviews represented a reasonable reflection of who the Danish summerhouse owners are - according to the quantitative study. The majority of Danish summerhouse owners are older people. They live in detached houses (without children) and with a relatively good economy (Andersen, 2009).

Most interviews were conducted with both the man and the woman present. One of the interviews was conducted with two generations of summerhouse owners - here the daughter had just bought the house from her parents and both parties participated in the interview. Another interview was conducted with parents and their children aged 12 and 14 as active participants in the interview.

The interviews took place in the summerhouses during the spring holidays and the summer holiday of 2009. Each interview lasted approximately two hours. The interviews were recorded and subsequently partially transcribed. The summerhouse owners were contacted either by phone or via address information or by contacting them directly in person in selected areas during the holiday season. In both cases a selection was made, as interviews were only conducted with residents who were present during those parts of the holiday season, when the interviews were conducted.

Definitions of 'second homes' and 'summerhouses'

First let us define the meaning of the notion of 'second home'. Second homes are properties owned or rented on a long lease as the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere (Shucksmith, 1983). While second homes in other Scandinavian countries are often located far inland and were often built in the past for another purpose (eg the Swedish country summerhouses, which originally housed a poor rural population), the Danish summerhouses are typically situated close to the sea and built for recreational purposes (Tress, 2009). These houses are called 'summerhouses' (sommerhuse), and they are the focal point of this article.

Danish summerhouses are usually grouped in areas of a few houses up to several thousand houses. Since the mid-1970s, Danish regional planning authorities has divided the country into different zones - urban zones, rural zones, and recreational zones,² and construction of summerhouses is only allowed in the recreational zones.³ In Denmark you are not allowed to stay in your summerhouse for more than 180 days per year, but in recent years senior citizens who have owned their summerhouse for more than eight years have been allowed to use it as a permanent residence. Hence the house is no longer a second home in regard to the above definition.

Nevertheless, the house is still called a summerhouse, and when it is later sold and taken over by new owners, the house can again only be used as an occasional residence. Thus, it is crucial for the definition of a Danish summerhouse that it is situated in a recreational zone.

The architecture of summerhouses differs in several respects from permanent homes. For example, they are generally smaller than permanent homes and typically they are constructed in wood (though not always). The architectural tradition and the cultural conventions around the summerhouses have roots in a historical development that is briefly described in the following.



Figure 1:

Area 1: Situated close to the Northsea, in a landscape of dunes and marshes. The landscape is protected through conservation, and the architecture of the summerhouses is strictly regulated.



Area 2: Situated on a hillside close to the town of Ebeltoft. Lots of the houses have a magnificent view towards the bay. These houses are quite expensive.



Area 3: Situated 16 kilometers from the coast, far from urban areas. Most houses are modest and quite small.



Area 4: Situated at the coast of North Zealand, 1 hour's drive from Copenhagen. The houses close to the beach are more than 50 years old, but the further you get from the sea, the newer the houses are.

The summerhouse – a modern phenomenon

The literature on second home begins the historical descriptions at different points in time, but there is consensus that the phenomenon has existed for centuries. Some begin with the ancient Romans (Tress, 2009; Dirckinck-Holmfeld and Selmer, 2007; Selmer, 2005), while others go even further back to the Egyptians (Coppock, 1997). However, all agree that a great deal of the values and ideals that permeate the current life in a summerhouse is to be found in Marie Antoinette's romantic gardens at Versailles, where the Queen and her court followed Rousseau's ideals of a simple life in close contact with nature.

In a Danish context these ideals were expressed beautifully at Liselund, a famous country house at Møn, built in 1792-1795 as a present from Antoine de la Calmette to his wife Lisa (Dahlkild and Skude, 1998; Dirckinck-Holmfeld and Selmer, 2007; Vadstrup and Martensen-Larsen, 2008; Jørgensen, 1979). The landscape at Møn was ideal for creating a romantic experience of nature: The basic natural elements were present in the sea meeting the cliffs, and behind this savagery 'the lonely wanderer' could immerse himself and pass the streams and lakes in the woods. Scattered around in the landscape were cottages and in these the simple life close to nature could be experienced.

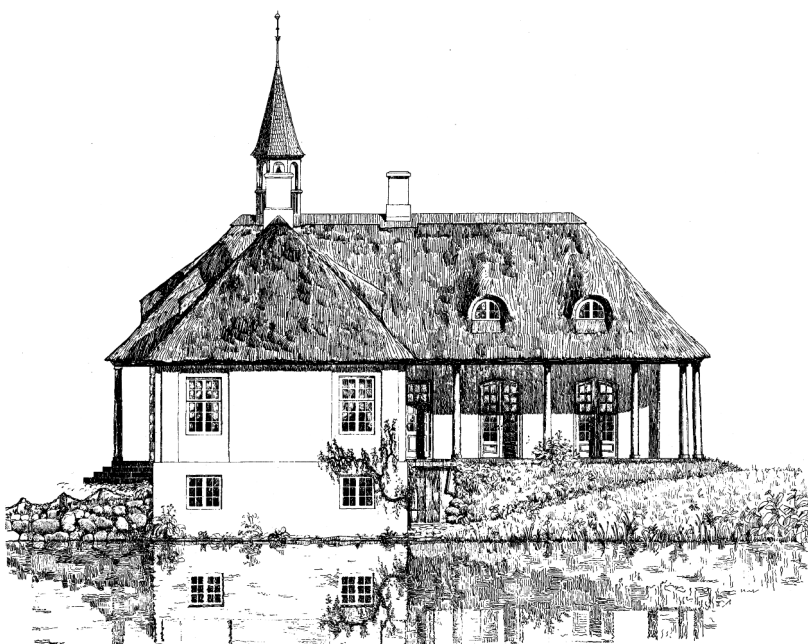
In the surroundings of Copenhagen similar country houses were built for other noble families, and common to them was the close relation between landscape and buildings. Another important dri-

ving force behind the development of Danish summerhouses goes back to the health ideals developed among the bourgeoisie in the mid-1800s. It was expressed in 'Cottage Park' at Klampenborg (1844-45) initiated by the physician Jon Hjaltalin and designed by Gottlieb Bindsbøll (Dahlkild and Skude, 1998). Also Cottage Park, which consisted of fifteen cottages, each one different, was inspired by romantic ideals of landscape, but where the landscape and the rippling streams at Liselund should lead the visitor to a spiritual affinity with basic nature, in Cottage Park the fresh air and the running water in spas is seen as a healing power (Dahlkild and Skude, 1998).

A few years later another physician, Claus Jacob Emil Hornemann (1810-1890) initiated another of Bindsbøll's settlements, and again health was part of the programme. It occurred when the great cholera epidemic broke out in 1853. Hornemann had warned about the city's health problems for years (Lützen, 1998; Bech-Danielsen, 2004), and he was now given a leading role in the fight against cholera. As part of combating the disease, he moved the inhabitants of the most endangered properties into tent camps outside the city walls, and subsequently he hired Bindsbøll to replace the tents with more permanent housing financed by the Danish Medical Association. Already in the autumn of 1853 the construction of 'The Houses of the Medical Association' began. With these buildings the demarcation line of Copenhagen was broken, and the city had begun to spread into the surroundings - as it subsequently happened in the suburban development.

The ideal of health, which led to the Cottage Park, was further updated when cholera broke out in Copenhagen, and the events led to a new view of the city - and a new view of nature, which has influenced the development of Danish recreational zones. Previously, the city had always been regarded as a safe place where people sought safety and protection against external danger. Now, this picture changed radically when it became apparent that it was within the city walls that the risk of infection was highest, while the hope of prevention against cholera was linked to the fresh air in the tent camps outside the city. In the following years there was a discovery of Danish landscapes, which were idealised and interpreted by contemporary poets and painters - and artists looked towards the Danish coasts and moved to fishing villages in order to find the right motives.⁴ Viggo Johansen, P.S. Krøyer, and

Figure 2:
One of the summer cottages in
the romantic landscape of
Liselund designed by architect A.
Kirkerup. [Source: Jørgensen
1979, p.27]



Holger Drachmann were among the first artists to settle along the coast (Tress, 2009), but soon after the bourgeoisie followed and copied the lifestyle of the artists. At first they rented local accommodation, but soon they began to construct private summer villas where their families and servants spent the summer. They enjoyed the sun and the beach life, which was considered healthy and healing, and inspired by artists and as part of beach life, they developed an informal and outdoor lifestyle that still characterises life at Danish summerhouses.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Danish newspaper, Politiken, initiated architectural competitions⁵ in order to make summerhouses affordable to a wider population (Dahlkild and Skude, 1998). The competition programme from 1917 claimed that the summerhouses "were built for a modest sum without expensive construction materials" and that residents' lifestyle should be "as little complicated as possible." (Dahlkild and Skude 1998). The development of the summerhouse can thus be seen as a forerunner of the social engagement as well as of the mental-hygienic ideals that demanded a peaceful and harmonious life surrounded by simplicity (Bech-Danielsen, 2004); this subsequently came to dominate modernist architecture.

However, mobility is an important prerequisite for the dream of summerhouses to become obtainable, and therefore it was not until the post-war period and with the car and the growing prosperity that the number of Danish summerhouses really grew. And this gives summerhouses an environmental bias in common with the detached houses in the suburbs: dependence on the car. Both the summerhouse and the detached house have been designed with life in a hurried and noisy city as the counterpart. In light of the above historical description, the summerhouse can be regarded as a forerunner of the suburbs: Here the bourgeoisie tested the life in green surroundings during summer, decades before the suburbs were planned or even thought of, and when the suburbs were built in the 20th century, very often the early summerhouse areas were converted into permanent housing. In several Danish cities contemporary suburban housing often have roots in summer residences and some of the most attractive suburban neighbourhoods has a past as a holiday area. Holiday areas were the outpost of the suburbs.

We have been focusing on the development of summerhouses in the pre-modernistic period. In



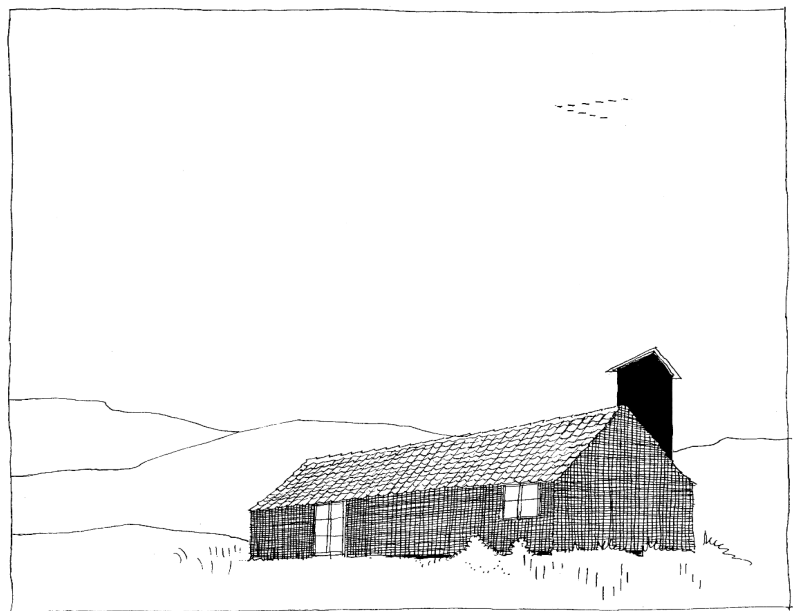
Figure 3:
The Houses of the Medical Association designed by Gottlieb Bindesbøll – as a result of the cholera epidemic in 1853. The outlines of the subsequent development of the suburbs are seen.

the following we examine four specific themes related to summerhouses. We describe architectural and cultural tendencies in the modernistic period, and we mirror these tendencies in the residents' ideals of and expectations to summerhouses as they are expressed in our qualitative studies.

Theme 1: Liberated form - informal life

As described, a liberated and informal lifestyle was introduced when artists and next the bourgeoisie enjoyed bathing from the beaches and socialising in the countryside at the end of the 1800s. The informal way of life was in keeping with the idiom, which was subsequently developed by the modernist architects. They dreamt of an architectural liberation - a liberation from traditions, conventional thinking and ornamental snobbery (Bech-Danielsen, 2004), and in this respect the

Figure 4:
Kay Fiskers winning project in Politiken's competition in 1917. With simple shapes and facades without ornamental decoration, the proposal was at the forefront of architectural development.



design of summerhouses and other types of second homes were obvious tasks to become intensely interested in (Jetsons and Helamaa, 2007). Or, in the words of Buchanan: "Nowhere was this liberating ideal more enjoyable and inspiringly realised than in an unbuttoned, informal holiday lifestyle." (Buchanan 1997, pp. 26-27).

Modernism's pioneer grew interested in second homes, where new forms and ideals could be tested. In Denmark, Arne Jacobsen designed a summerhouse for himself in 1938, in Sweden Gunnar Asplund built a cottage for himself in 1937, and in Finland Alvar Aalto had already entered the field of leisure in 1928 when the culture magazine, *Aitta* launched a competition for development of a new type of summerhouse. The young Alvar Aalto, who at that time had just been hooked on the modernist idiom, was inspired by this design task that differed from the normal ideal for architectural experiments (Jetsons and Helamaa, 2007). In the design of summer cottages, Aalto was free to experiment with new forms and he won two of three contest categories. In the summer cottage 'Tuli' from the early 1930s, he used the triangular space for the first time, which

he returned to for several subsequent projects, and when he designed a summer cottage for himself in 1952 he titled it "Experimental House".

Also Bauhaus' form-related experiments fit well into the development of second homes (Gordon, 2001) and some of Le Corbusier's most important and epochal projects are second homes. In these he could explore the possibilities of a design and release the conventions and cultural limitations inherent in permanent housing. Villa Savoye, which was designed as a weekend home for a Parisian family, is known as the most iconic expression of Le Corbusier's architectural ideals, and the 'Maison de Weekend' can be mentioned as another and very different example of a weekend home designed by Le Corbusier. The earlier modernist experiments have the 'expression of personal freedom' in common (Gordon, 2001). It is, among other things, reflected in the architectural ideal of the 'open plan', which in modernism reflects a free life without limitations. In practice, the vision of the open plan often met functional obstacles, but in the summerhouses with its more informal use and lower demand for comfort, it was within reach (Selmer, 2005). "The looseness of the open plan was perfectly suited to the informal lifestyle of a new breed of active, sun-worshipping summer residents." (Gordon, 2001). In fact, the ideals of the open plan make sense in the summerhouse - the open kitchen was an early part of it's interior, partly due to the limited space, partly due to holiday lifestyles, where housewives would prefer not to cook in a closed kitchen.

In our qualitative interviews with summerhouse owners, several interviewees told us that a free and informal lifestyle was an important part of life at the summerhouse. And the described architectural/interior ideals were important to them. Several women for example, noted that they preferred to cook at the summerhouse as the 'open kitchen' was directly connected to the living room. A woman who had an open kitchen in both her summerhouse and her permanent house, also spoke delightedly about the kitchen in the house, because she could keep up with everything that went on - not only because the kitchen, the living room and the terrace were closely linked in the summerhouse, but also because the relatively small summerhouse made it easy to follow what went on from the kitchen.

Another reason that more women expressed a greater pleasure in cooking at the summerhouse was that expectations were different there. At the

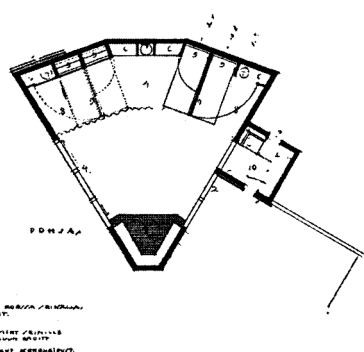
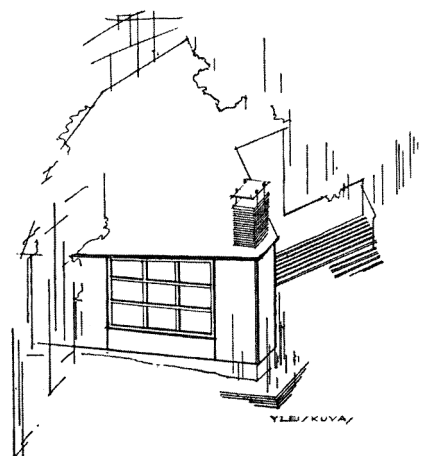


Figure 5:
In the summerhouse 'Tuli', designed by Aalto, the whole house is constructed around the fireplace. The triangular space has a functional reason - the thermal radiation from the fireplace, which is situated in the corner of the triangle.

summerhouse we 'let our hair down', one woman said, and gave as a reason that it was rather relaxing to have guests at the summerhouse. Almost all our interviewees said that they had significantly more guests at their summerhouse than they had at their permanent home, and when we asked a woman whether it was easier to have guests at the summerhouse than in the permanent home, she replied: *"It is indeed. It is less conventional, I think. There, people can even begin to make their own lunch if they are hungry. I would probably get a bit surprised if they did that back in my home, right?"* In the informal lifestyle of the summerhouse deadlocked conventions and habits broke down. Almost all our interviewees felt less committed and obliged as a host in the summerhouse, and likewise they expected to be waited on less when they visited friends at their summerhouse. Roles - here as host and guest - are different at the summerhouse.

Also the relationship with neighbours and passers-by may be different at the summerhouse. Several times we were told that at the summerhouse it was perfectly all right to go out on the lawn in pyjamas and a bathrobe although neighbours and others could see you, and several of our interviewees said that the clothes worn at the summerhouse were more used and less presentable than in daily life. *"We look a bit more worn when we're here,"* one man said in his summerhouse. Good friends from his permanent setting owned a summerhouse close to his own, and we asked him whether the worn clothes embarrassed him when he met them in the summerhouse area: *"Well, they will look worn, too"* he laughed, and explained that it was part of the relaxed life in the summerhouse.

There was more room for spontaneity at the summerhouse than at the permanent home. Guests might drop by uninvited, and the interviewee found it nice and unproblematic precisely because he felt less obliged as a host. And the relaxed social life was supported by the furnishings. Almost all the visited summerhouse owners agreed that the furniture at the summerhouse was cheaper than in their permanent home - just as LCD television, antiques and pieces of art were reserved for the permanent home. One of the reasons given repeatedly was that expensive furniture just led to burglaries.⁶ Others mentioned that the furniture should not be too fine and delicate, because the relaxed lifestyle at the summerhouse should be reflected in its interior decoration.

Expectations to cleanliness were also different at the summerhouse. *"You are not in such a cleaning frenzy,"* one woman said about life at the summerhouse, and like other interviewees she had no doubt that the permanent home must be cleaner than the summerhouse. At the summerhouse it did not matter if there were some pine needles on the floor - it was a part of life at the summerhouse, we were told. Personal hygiene would also be a little more relaxed at the summerhouse, a mother of a family said and she explained that there was not the same queuing up for the bathroom in the morning, as there sometimes was at the permanent home. Not that she thought of herself as dirty at the summerhouse, but *"it's just not what is essential"*.

Theme 2: Simple form – basic living

In their book on Danish summerhouses Vadstrup and Martensen-Larsen begin with a description of the Danish poet, Johannes Ewald (Vadstrup and Martensen-Larsen, 2008). When at an early age (in 1775) he had health problems, his mother sent him away to spend the summer by the coast at Rungsted north of Copenhagen. The intention was to move him away from the unhealthy conditions in Copenhagen. It led to one of Danish literature's most famous poems, The Bliss of Rungsted. In the poem Ewald highlights the beautiful landscape - wildlife, smell, peace and quiet: indeed the very same qualities that many Danes associate with summerhouses today. Thereby the authors link the move to the countryside and to summerhouses with the unhealthy conditions in urban areas (and thus indirectly with the suburban development, as already done earlier in this article). And again it could be pointed out that the development of summerhouses had close ties to modernism's architectural and planning concepts that were closely linked with the contemporary hygienic movement.

Just as Ewald in his poem describes a relationship between physical nature and spiritual harmony, the modernists focus on both physical and mental health (Bech-Danielsen, 2004). Similarly, just as the new industrial cities in the early 1900s were dominated by pollution and unhealthy housing conditions, urban life was associated with psychological and mental problems (Zerlang, 2001). In a few decades Copenhagen developed into an industrial city, and the anonymous city life, the rational production and the teeming traffic led to stress in a population that for the most part were settlers from the country. According to Zerlang it was very much this kind of mental illness that led to the contemporary move to a rural setting (Zerlang, 2001).

This was also reflected in the architecture. Not least in the Villa Savoye, which was (as earlier described) built as a weekend home for a Parisian family in 1928-29. Throughout its layout the house expresses the intention of purifying physically as well as mentally (Bech-Danielsen, 2004). A washbasin is placed just inside the entrance door. Here the visitor must wash his hands before entering the house, but as the Danish artist Jacob Jacobsen pointed out, the washbasin also has a symbolic meaning (Jacobsen, 2002). The entire building is built with the idea of a transformation - a ritual process of purification, which aims to restore the visitors as humans. At the entrance the visitor is washed free of the old world, and via ramps he walks to the roof, where a sun terrace is furnished for sunbathing and spiritual recovery.

Modernism's emphasis on 'physical health' has thus been closely followed by a focus on 'mental health'. Among other things, this led to the architectural ideal of simplicity. With the words, "*no ornamentation is a sign of spiritual power*", Adolf Loos (Loos 1962, p. 283) stated that modernism's un-decorated facades and simple shapes are not exclusively motivated by the desire to make inexpensive construction. By creating an architecture that is reduced to an absolute minimum, it should be possible to focus on the essentials.

In many ways those architectural and planning ideals focusing on physical and mental health as well as on simplicity and harmony reminded us of the statements given by summerhouse owners in the qualitative interviews. Although we described in the previous section, how many residents expresses relaxed attitudes to cleanliness and personal hygiene at the summerhouse, it appeared that they focused on the essentials - basic qualities of life.

Several families explained that they connected their lives in the summerhouse with physical recreation and health. The fresh air was described as such an essential quality in a summerhouse area and several interviewees mentioned it as a key reason why they slept much better at the summerhouse than in their permanent home. A family laughed at their new daughter-in-law who had just visited the summerhouse for the first time. She woke up at lunchtime and had been quite surprised as she would always wake up at 7 o'clock. The appetite was also better at the summerhouse, allegedly because of the fresh air and walks. A family had even bought the summerhouse because their son suffered from asthma. Their

doctor had recommended them to buy a summerhouse on the West Coast and according to the parents the boy was markedly better when they were there.

And then, of course, it was not surprising that many interviewees emphasised the summerhouse as a place to unwind. In this context, according to most interviewees, silence and tranquillity was essential to their summerhouse area. "*It is really incredible that it can be so quiet*," a summerhouse owner said. However, it was a special kind of sound that must be absent for silence to occur "*There is of course the birds, but the silence is very clear*," a woman said. Other highlights were the very dark nights in the neighbourhood, and in this context they called the electric light 'false light'. It was sounds and traces from the urbanised life that must be absent.

Also the many sports activities and other organised activities for kids were absent. Therefore it was more challenging for children to entertain themselves, explained some interviewees - and they all considered it to be positive. The children in question were similarly enthusiastic, and a boy said that he played completely different games at the summerhouse. He was currently building a fitness centre out of the cord and branches in the backyard - it would never have happened back at the permanent home, he says. And similarly, also the adults considered it a quality when they were forced to come up with other pursuits than at their permanent home. "*There is really not much you can do besides sit down with a book*," a woman explained contentedly.

Life in the summerhouse is 'basic living'. This does not necessarily mean that life must be primitive (in the form of cold showers etc.), but it's about living a life consisting of basic qualities without distractions. "*There is no laundry and there is no cleaning*," one woman said and virtually all interviewees voiced the opinion that an important part of the trip to the summerhouse was about escaping the duties and chores that awaited you in your permanent home. In the summerhouse you can relax with a good conscience.

We asked a man what he considered the main attraction of the summerhouse area, and he responded: "*But the main attraction, it is the peace and quiet*," and he continued that what was really important was that nothing happened. Thus, an essential quality of the summerhouse consisted of absences. The absence of noise, the absence of space, the absence of entertainment, the absence of telephones, the absence of computers, the absence of duties - the absence of everyday life.

Theme 3: Exterior space – outdoor life

Proximity to green areas and landscapes were essential elements of the modern concepts of architecture and planning. In the Athens Charter it is for example stated that urban growth has led to increased distance to the landscape, and it is required that green and recreational areas are spread about town, so that everyone can enjoy them (Le Corbusier 1985, § 11). The closed blocks of inner-city housing should be replaced by open settlements in parks, flat roofs should be turned into gardens and the dwellings should have a view of the landscape.

At the same time a new spatial concept was developed. At the end of the 19th century, industrialism set up two new demands to architecture and space. Classical architecture was not suited to the industrialised society, which called for new requirements with respect to construction. Building bodies of considerably larger dimensions were needed (storehouses, market halls etc.), as well as new building types such as railway stations, convention halls etc. This led to the erection of the industrial exhibitions' huge glass palaces. The Chrystal Palace at Brighton, England is the best known of these structures. With the huge construction covered in glass, a new spatial concept was born. There was a fluid interplay between the interior and the exterior, and as something very new, plants became part of the interior environment.

In constructions like the Chrystal Palace the classical space literally vanished into the air. No longer was the building's delimitation in relation to the surroundings – the culture's delimitation with respect to the nature – clearly marked by heavy walls, and thus a new view of nature was expres-

sed (Bjerregaard 2005). Regardless of subsequent results in modern cities, the original architectural ideal was to create buildings and cities in harmony and balance with nature. (Bech-Danielsen, 2005).

It is expressed in a very concrete form in the architectural design of summerhouses, where the ideal of getting close to the landscape is self-evident. In her analysis of 10 summerhouses designed by Danish architects over the last century, Ofri Earon shows (Earon, 2009), how the relationship between interior and exterior is essential, and that the exterior is often integrated as part of the summerhouse. Earon gives Erik Korshagen's summerhouse from 1960 as a particularly fine example. In this house, the rooms are only connected by an exterior balcony. Thus the experience of the surrounding wood becomes very present within the house.

We would like to show yet another example, a summerhouse built in 2002 with Pernille Poulsen and Michael Christensen as architects (see Figure 6). The simple design of the house emphasises that the exterior is a part of the interior, and vice versa. The architectural section consists of a folding, where the private rooms are located along the rear of the folding while the open space left between floor and ceiling is, in principle, a terrace. Part of the terrace is framed by glass, which creates the living room. The living room is therefore in principle a part of the terrace, which is stressed by the fact that exterior materials continue in the living room where the materials have just been treated more carefully. It cannot be expressed more simply: Life at the summerhouse is lived in the open air.



Figure 6:
Summerhouse in Asserbo. The house consists mainly of a covered terrace. Part of the terrace is framed by glass, and this way the living room appears (Architects: Poulsen and Christensen)

The same trend is reflected in the industrially constructed summerhouses. While manufacturers of pre-fabricated houses usually leave it to owners to build a patio outside the living room windows in houses meant for permanent use, a covered terrace on a level with the living room is often an integrated part of their pre-fabricated summerhouses. In the summerhouses that we visited during our qualitative interviews, this was also the case, and the interviewees said that it was part of why the family life and the social life with all the guests could unfold at the summerhouse with its relatively small size. Outdoor spaces were a part of the house.

"*We are more outside at the summerhouse,*" a man said as he tried to clarify the difference between life at his summerhouse and at his permanent home. All our interviewees agreed and several observed that they were more often outdoors - whatever the weather was like - when they were at the summerhouse. "*You are not as sensitive to cold at the summerhouse, as back home,*" a woman said who also explained that if it was a little cold in the summerhouse she would just wear a sweater and get out anyway. For outdoors she must. The outdoor life at the summerhouse is not the sedentary life of a tourist in a hammock. Life at the summerhouse is active - you take a walk, you swim, you play, you cut trees and you maintain the house. "*You can always come up with something to do*", a man said and gave the example of cutting firewood. He also had a stove at home, but there he did not cut his own firewood. The same man said he and his wife almost always ate outside at the summerhouse. Again, he noted that they could actually do the same in his permanent home (a detached house) - but they did not.

The interviewees agreed that close contact to outdoor space was an essential quality of the summerhouse. "*As soon as you open up the patio door, well then you're out in nature, right,*" a man said. By 'nature' he and several other interviewees meant wildlife. One spoke of badgers and hares, others spoke enthusiastically of swans, pheasants and traces of deer, and a woman told that she had had the company of a seal on a swim. There was consensus that it was nice ('hyggeligt' in Danish) that the animals were there.

To other interviewees it was the experience of open skies, which was the most important experience of 'nature' at their summerhouse. Several times we were told that the sky was very present in the house, and a woman said that she and her husband might well count shooting stars if lying on a couple of mattresses on the lawn a late summer evening. Other stressed a view of the

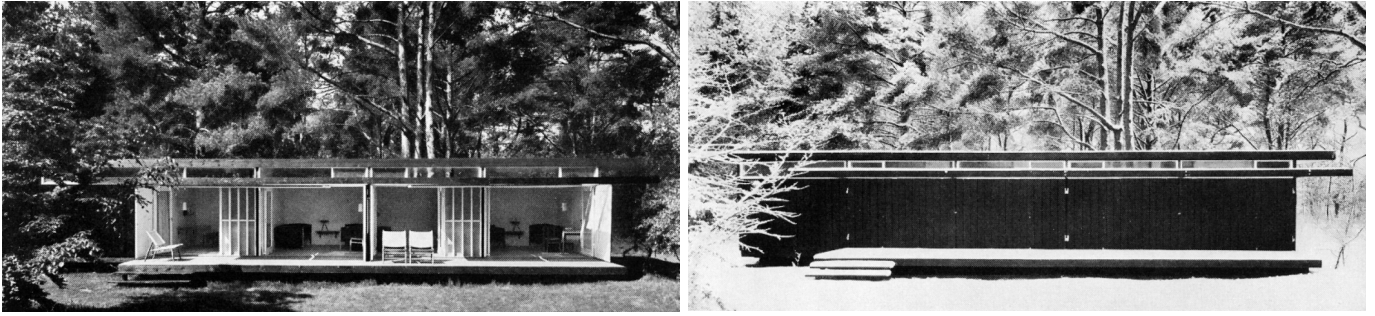
sea, as the great nature experience. Not surprisingly, the view was most often mentioned in Egsmark - an area with a fantastic view of Ebeltoft Bay. Here the seasons and weather were also mentioned as important nature experiences. A married couple expressed their joy at being able to follow the seasons and the sun's changing course over the sky. Especially nice in wintertime: "*It is incredibly beautiful to see a snow storm over the bay,*" they said.

In several of the summerhouses visited as part of the study, a barometer decorated a wall in the living room. Only in one of the cases, the owner also had a barometer in his permanent home, and the owner told us that he only used the one in the summerhouse. Other items that often featured on the walls of the summerhouse, were maps and charts. In a summerhouse, where we again saw maps and charts, we asked what they were used for. The chart was never used, we were told, but the map was used when the family wanted to find new bicycle rides. "*We explore the area,*" the man said. We asked if they also hung maps on the walls in their permanent home? They did not.

Thus there was much evidence that summerhouses were inhabited by people with an open and inquiring mind. At the summerhouse the surrounding landscape was seen as a source of pleasure. In the summerhouse, walls were often decorated with images by a local artist or by posters with local motifs. And on the shelves and on the window sill stones, shells, amber, crooked branches and cones were among elements from the surroundings often to be found. We bring the surroundings inside - we embrace our surroundings.

Theme 4: Two zones - two lives

Use of landscape for recreation and leisure is a modern phenomenon, the Norwegian author Niels Marius Askim writes (Askim, 2003), and we might add that leisure itself is a modern phenomenon. As already Weber (1864-1920) pointed out, rationality rapidly becomes an important part of life in the urban areas of industrialism as a means of controlling and managing the complexity of modern society. With rational thinking different functions and elements were separated, and just as there was a separation of public and private spaces, there was a separation of work and leisure. At the new plants, the employees were wage earners, and thus a distinction between work and leisure was precisely defined. During working hours attention centered on production,



while recreation was the focal point during leisure time .

This was expressed in the cities by the planning concept of modernism that required the division of cities into functional zones (Le Corbusier 1942, § 77), and working time got its physical territory in the business districts, while leisure time was to unfold at a distance from noise and pollution - in zones for habitation and recreation respectively. As previously described, a corresponding zoning was reflected in the Danish Planning Act of 1978, which divided Denmark into urban zones, rural zones, and recreational zones.

One of the intentions behind the layout of recreational zones in the Danish Planning Act is that animal and plant life in these areas, which often contain special wildlife qualities, are protected. It takes place through periodic use: The areas are partially populated during weekends and holidays, but are deserted the rest of the year. This creates a special rhythm in the recreational zones that periodically changes its character. This rhythm has been interpreted in several summerhouses where architects have stressed the changing character of the design - the house is opened and closed almost as a ritual act. This is particularly significant in a guest house designed by Vilhelm Wohlert for Niels Bohr in 1958. The south facade consists of glazing and wooden panels. When the house is left, the wooden panels are shut down and the house looks like a buttoned box. On arrival, the wooden panels are lifted and serve as a shelter for the terrace and large sliding-doors of glass give direct access to the exterior. The closed-up box has changed into an open space. Closed - open - closed....

Several of our interviewees found the periodic interaction to be a special quality connected with the life at the summerhouse. It was not expressed in similar architectural expressions, but several interviewees described small details as being important for reading the house's changing character of being inhabited and uninhabited. For instance, a woman explained that their flag was always raised when they were at the summerhou-

se. That was the first thing they did on arrival, she said and it was the last thing they did when they left. Similarly, she could keep an eye on whether the neighbours had arrived: Was the flag raised? Was smoke coming from the chimney? Was the garden furniture in use?

The special rhythm of the summerhouse was complemented by a modified perception of time. "At the summerhouse we eat when we are hungry", some interviewees said. A woman observed that she felt 'in a time warp' at the summerhouse, and another woman believed that the time at the summerhouse was 'fluid'. A man said that he was very conscious of taking off his watch, as one of the very first things when he arrived at the summerhouse, and he explained that he had a tough time schedule in his everyday life. "It is certainly a part of working life. I think that is what I get rid of it" he said. To be independent of time was part of the relaxed life at the summerhouse. At the summerhouse you are allowed to be ineffective, Selmer writes (Selmer, 2005), and to some extent he is right. An academic gave this as an explanation why books were altogether absent from his summerhouse. In his permanent home the walls were covered in books from floor to ceiling, but he would not like this in his summerhouse, because the books would remind him of work. This did not mean that life at the summerhouse was about lounging in the sofa. Many interviewees explained that construction activities in the garden or in the house could certainly be part of the relaxed life at the summerhouse. A man, who in his professional life held a managerial position primarily consisting of administration and HR, said that he relaxed when he did physical work in the summerhouse. A regular part of the family luggage to the summerhouse included a trailer filled with tools. At the summerhouse the man unfolded a second side of himself - that of a craftsman. You may be working at the summerhouse, if only the work is different from everyday work.

A trip to the summerhouse included not only physical travel. The trip also implied a mental move.

Figure 7:
The guesthouse of Niels Borhs in North Zealand. The seasonal use of the house is expressed in the southern façade: It opens up in summertime, and in wintertime the house is closed like a wooden box. (Architect: Vilhelm Wohlert).

This was a temporary shift from one state to another, and several interviewees observed that it could be hard to make this shift. One woman described it as a 'mental switch', which it might require some time to do. Any anthropologist would argue that it requires a ritual to change your state of mind, and many of our interviewees had actually more or less conscious rituals which they performed on arrival at the summerhouse. One had to see the sea, another would sit in a special place in the house with a glass of red wine, while a girl of 14 told us that the trip to the summerhouse started with a family pizza. One woman said that she needed to smell the place: *"On arrival I take a walk around the site, and smell the woods,"* she said. It is her way of settling in at the summerhouse, she explained.

Some of our interviewees were talking about life in the permanent home and the summerhouse respectively, as if talking about two different lives. For example, a woman thought she lived two very different kinds of life in the two houses. Another said that once the luggage was unpacked, life from two weeks ago could continue. Finally, a woman with 45 km between her permanent home and her summerhouse found it great to have access to two such different lives within a short distance.

In our interviews, we repeatedly focused on the distance between the summerhouse and the permanent home. An interviewee with a distance of 65 km, found the distance a bit long, but she stressed as important that the summerhouse must not get too close to the permanent home - otherwise it would be difficult to establish the other way of living. At the same time the road trip would help her slow down and adapt to the slow time of the summerhouse. A man explained how he and his wife enjoyed the 3-hour ride in the car: *"It's rare to have one another 3 hours in a row,"* he said.

Even when you had arrived at the summerhouse, the distance was essential. It kept you from driving back and forth. A man considered it important that there were more than a 30-min drive to the summerhouse, because otherwise it would be too easy to drive home. *"Now, when you are finally here, then you are fucking here ..."*. Another man declared that the whole idea of the summerhouse would disappear if he had only a 10-min drive, and in a family both children and adults agreed that the family gathering function of the summerhouse (described in an other article from the same research project - submitted 2009) would evaporate if the distance was too short. The parents would be trapped by obligations, the daughter would visit her friends and the son

would play football. The distance created a condition where the family was isolated from daily life. The distance to the summerhouse ensured that you got away from your familiar neighbourhood. That was essential. According to several of our interviewees they would find it almost comical, if the summerhouse shopping was done in everyday stores. *"I would like to see something different, that this is a different city, then some other stores,"* one woman said. Life at the summerhouse must be different and this was emphasised when the physical environment was different. In the permanent home one's life unfolds, in the summerhouse another life unfolds, and the interchange between the two lives was essential. The same interchange could not be established between two summerhouses, a man told us, and he explained that to him the shift between town and country was essential. Others focused on other differences, which partly had to do with the summerhouse's architecture and the character of the landscape, and with a different rhythm and a slow pace. Something had to be different. At the summerhouse space and time should be different.

Conclusion

In this article we have described the historical development underlying the current ideals of Danish summerhouses. We have described the concept of having a summerhouse as a modern phenomenon, and we have demonstrated that summerhouse areas have been developed based on exactly the same ideals that formed the basis for the 20th century suburban housing areas. Summerhouse areas can be considered as 'another suburb', and our intentions have been to find out, what specific qualities and what alternatives to everyday life, are sought in a summerhouse? For instance, why do people - living their everyday life in a detached house in a suburban area - travel back and forth to a summerhouse in 'the other suburb' in weekends and holidays? As pointed out in the section 'Exterior space - outdoor-life' the access to recreational landscapes and a close link between architecture's inner and outer spaces, were crucial for the development of modern architecture. This has been particularly evident in the architectural development of summerhouses and many fine examples can be found where the exterior of the summerhouse is integrated as a part of the house. Also pre-fabricated summerhouses are equipped with direct access to an outdoor area, and as the house is relatively small, the architecture this way 'forces' the residents to use the outdoor space. This was one of the reasons why the family life and a lifestyle with many guests was possible on

the limited area - outdoor space was integrated as an important part of the summerhouse.

However, there were other qualities of life related to summerhouses, which were at least as essential as the open-air life in outdoor spaces. In the section 'Liberated forms - informal life' we describe how the architectural ideals of free forms and undecorated facades had similarities with the lifestyle of the summerhouse. Life in the summerhouse was informal, relaxed and spontaneous, partly because the expectations to cleaning, cooking and hosting differed from those at the permanent home. Old habits and traditional conventions were not brought to the summerhouse, and thus, the residents could take on other roles - for example in relation to guests. The social rules were different.

In another thematic section 'Simple forms - basic living', we reminded ourselves that the ideals of both physical and mental health had been decisive in the 20th century architectural and suburban development. In describing Villa Savoye we gave an example of a modernist 'weekend home', where ideals of physical as well as mental health were indeed very present. These qualities were also expressed by our interviewees. The physical health in the form of fresh air, good sleep, physical activity etc., and the mental health in the form of the relaxed life in peaceful and quiet surroundings with no disturbances. We noted, however, that not all sounds and not all activities were unwelcome. Only sounds from urbanisation (cars, machines, telephones, etc.) were meant to be absent - like duties, entertainment and rules of everyday life that should be left back home. An essential quality of the summerhouse consisted of absence: The absence of everyday life.

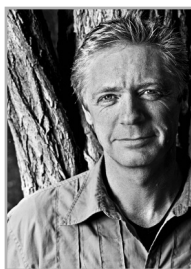
In the last theme 'Two zones - two lives', we first described the separation between work and leisure in modern society, and we pointed out that it finds physical expression in spatial planning where the ideal of zoning has divided cities into recreational zones, industrial zones and residential zones. This has led to the occasional and periodic use of the summerhouses, and the character of the summerhouses therefore repeatedly

change between opened and closed. This has been expressed in architectural interpretations, giving the changing character of summerhouses an almost ritual significance. Also residents have rituals that they perform on arrival at the summerhouse, and some of our interviewees believed that they made a 'mental switch' when they went to the summerhouse - from one state to another. By staying at the summerhouse they established a time warp where they unfolded another side of themselves - a second life. It was therefore vital that the summerhouse offered a different scene, where another life could flourish.

On this background, it was surprising that Danish summerhouse areas tended to look like smaller copies of the detached houses in suburban areas. One explanation could be that it was primarily city dwellers, who were attracted to the detached summerhouse-like areas and that it was therefore their dream that flourished in the summerhouse.⁷ Another explanation could be that the summerhouse would not have to be very different for the residents to experience the house as being different. Some mentioned the landscape as what distinguished the summerhouse, and others mentioned the size, the design, the furniture and the materials of the summerhouse as being different compared with their permanent home. For the average summerhouse owners these differences are perhaps enough to maintain the idea of being different.

Finally, there could be a third explanation, namely that the summerhouse owners lived in an image of 'the good summerhouse', and that this ideal image was so strong and the owners held so firmly on to it that they did not notice the realities around them. We got this suspicion a couple of times during our interview, when a summerhouse owner, for example spoke of the quietness of the summerhouse, while an airplane prepared for landing at a nearby airfield and while the neighbour went ahead with his chainsaw. Or when another interviewee talked about the many deer in the area, and subsequently told us that it was more than a year since a deer had been seen. It leaves a question: how do mental images influence our perception of the physical environment?

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NOTES

¹ The Main part of both the detached houses and the summerhouses has been built simultaneously, mainly from 1960-1979 (Hjartlager 2009).

² This happened with the introduction of a regional planning law (Lands- og Regionplanloven) in 1974. One of the motivations for this law was to limit exploitation of landscape for the construction of summerhouses.

³ This implies, that the number of summerhouses are limited. We have in Denmark approximately 200,000 summerhouses, og the number of sites for construction of new summerhouses are very limited.

⁴ Interest among contemporary artists for 'the unspoiled nature' was international. For example the American poet John Gilmer Speed wrote: The advantage of living in such a place is that all an artist has to do is take out his easel and set it up anywhere, and there in front of him is a lovely picture" (Gordon 2001).

⁵ The Danish newspaper 'Politiken' initiated these competitions in 1912, 1916, 1917, 1928 and 1931.

⁶ Without being asked, the risk of burglary often been mentioned by the interviewee. This happens rarely in interviews with homeowners in their permanent house. Statistics says that each year there is a burglary in 5% of the Danish summerhouses. Thus, the risk of intrusion into summerhouses is almost twice as big as in the permanent houses. [Source: http://www.dkr.dk/det_kriminalpraeventive_raad/emner/indbrud/i_sommerhuset/composite-57.chtm].

⁷ Some of our interviews actually indicates this – for instance a owner of a summerhouse in the dunes of the North Sea says, that he might have an summerhouse with a proper garden, if he didn't have a garden in his permanent house. Again – the summerhouse has to be 'different'.

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