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*) This is an interview. It has not undergone the same review-process as the scientific papers.

Photo on the front cover: Shelley Smith. *Relief – plaster and pigment*, Shelley Smith.

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EXPLORING LANDSCAPE URBANISM IN TWO DANISH SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

TINA MARIA RODEN

Abstract

This paper investigates the incipient orientation towards landscape and ecology as vectors for design in Danish (sub)urban development projects. It addresses the return to urban commitments seen in contemporary landscape architecture, variously described as *landscape urbanism*. The hypothesis is that the increased awareness of landscape's role as a viable framework for the contemporary city can help the urban practices to meet the uncertainties of contemporary urbanism already in the conceptualisation of projects. This assumption is based on practical experiences, obtained from scrutinising two projects for suburban residential development in Denmark, i.e., Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled. By superimposing landscape urbanism theory onto the empirical findings, this paper argues that Danish landscape architecture tradition, combined with landscape urbanism's emphasis on systemic thinking, is a key issue in defining a Danish landscape urbanistic practice.

Keywords:
landscape urbanism, landscape architecture, urban design, methodology, Danish practice

1 Introduction

Globalisation processes and factors such as extended mobility, improvements in means of communication, altered urban hierarchies, and changes in business and industrial structures have widened the possibilities for human settlement and localisation. Normally, an urban area was identified by its historical central city. Today, this understanding is in transition. Built environments are no longer simply a city in its traditional sense; they are increasingly larger urban conurbations, which are made of development clusters and linked by continuous networks and transportation routes. The inhabitants must accustom themselves to a more dynamic life than before. People move around, live in one place, eat in another, and look for entertainment and recreation in the entirety of the urban conurbation. Business and production partners are spread all over the world, and employees settle outside the urban centres. Even though the historical city still exists as an urban typology, the attractiveness of the city, as a concentration of economic activity and human settlement, is in state of transformation. To a wide extent, the city must offer something else in order to survive and to attract taxpayers and businesses. Here, the attractiveness of the city is no longer only subject to traditional urban facilities, e.g., jobs, manpower, infrastructures, and services. The experience of urban life, e.g., cultural activities, sport, recreation, and shopping is increasingly important. Cities must provide suitable frameworks for settlement and business by offering meaningful environments and experiences for both people and companies. As the urban complexity increases, the premises for designing the urban environments change. Overviewing the development within the urban practices, it seems that the understanding of landscape and its role in urban development and transformation is evolving. The way the urban practitioners understand and treat the relationship between built and unbuilt is changing. According to Charles Waldheim (2006b, p.15), "landscape has become a lens through which the contemporary city is represented and a medium through which it is constructed". Here, landscape is to be understood as the interplay between humans and nature through time. As such, landscape is not associated with something original or untouched but as an accumulated totality that is shaped by the local culture (Braae, 2013). This broadened notion of landscape can, on the one hand, be used for describing the state of contemporary urbanisation; on the other hand, landscape has the ability to re-engage issues of site and ecological succession in the formative role of urban projects rather than simply giving form to already defined projects (Reed, 2006, p.269).

The idea of landscape's role as a viable framework for the contemporary city and the return to urban commitments in landscape architecture have variously been described as *landscape urbanism* (e.g., Corner, 1999a; Czerniak, 2001; Reeser and Shafer, 2002; Mostafavi and Najle, 2003; Waldheim, 2006c; Czerniak and Hargreaves, 2007; Mostafavi and Doherty, 2010). Usually, the term is directed to Charles Waldheim, who coined

the term in 1996 to describe the emergence of landscape as the most relevant medium for the production and representation of contemporary urbanism (Waldheim and Santos-Munné, 2001, p.110). Others would agree that since Waldheim's introduction of the term in 1996, landscape urbanism has taken various forms, which again makes it difficult to trace exactly. Australian landscape architect, Peter Connolly (2004, p.77), claims that landscape urbanism generally "was in the air" in the mid-1990s, and he himself coined the term two years earlier. Further, a number of Europeans have recently contributed to this emerging discipline. According to Shannon (2006), Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre's terming of *critical regionalism*, which was popularised by Kenneth Frampton in his 1983 essay *Towards a critical regionalism: Six points for an architecture of resistance,* as well as Sébastien Marot's writings on the changing role and revival of landscape, and his attempt to revive landscape through a renewed commitment to public urban spaces[1], may be viewed as a European preamble to the contemporary interest in landscape urbanism.

1 Cf., Marot (2003).

2 Perceptions and inventions

In theory, landscape urbanism unites the landscape and urban disciplines, and it shifts the landscape architectural project from an art of making beautiful places to one of interdisciplinary negotiation. Landscape urbanism compresses the polarisation between design and planning in an effort to combine the strengths of each. Further, it exceeds the professional boundaries between architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, and planning towards a shared form of practice in which landscape replaces architecture as the basic building block of contemporary urbanism (cf., Weller, 2008; Corner, 2006; Waldheim, 2006a). As an "ethos", landscape urbanism celebrates indeterminacy and systemic thinking; in practice, it conjoins the methods and scales of planning and design. Landscape urbanism focuses on the landscape as an infrastructural system, it appreciates the contemporary city as a hybridised and denatured ecology, and it aims for structural influence over contemporary urbanism (Weller, 2008, p.263). It is almost two decades since the term landscape urbanism appeared. In the meantime, many professionals have begun calling themselves "landscape urbanists". Paradoxically, as landscape in urban design and planning has become subject to considerable attention (in particular in relation to brownfield transformation and suburban development projects), and landscape has changed status from being background to foreground, the discourse surrounding landscape urbanism still maintains its academic and enigmatic allure. Despite impressive amounts of publications and debates nobody quite knows what landscape urbanism involves in practice. While the academic and theoretical discourse has flourished within the academic environments there is still a lack of constructed examples certainly outside of parks and other territories dominated by nature and conventionally

belonging solely to the landscape architecture profession, e.g., claimed landscape urbanist icons such as Fresh Kills Park Project, NY and Downsview Park, Toronto[2]. Hence, the written material on landscape urbanism methodology and working methods also remains relatively inconsistent. In *Embracing openness: Making landscape urbanism landscape architectural*, Connolly (2004, pp.76–103) focuses on the "default" conceptualisation of landscape urbanism, as defined in North American academic milieus and represented by writings of, e.g., Charles Waldheim (2002, 2006b; 2006c), James Corner (1999b, 2001, 2003, 2006), and Alex Wall (1999). Connolly (2004, p.214) claims "landscape urbanism lends itself to methods simply being repeated, such as 'programming the urban surface', as that is what you do. To program, to organize, to make flow and to map seem almost reasons themselves". In the 2012 essay *Grounding landscape urbanism*, Levy continues Connolly's discussions in a search for landscape urbanist methods.

> *Waldheim and Corner seem invested in a perception of their work as a break from past practices, as a unique praxis poised to address new urban situations. This emphasis on newness allows their work to be appreciated as emergent, in connection with the same ecological spontaneity landscape urbanists hope to nurture in practice. Stressing the newness of their approach, however, isolates it as an intellectually autonomous body of thought, rather than a flexible, historically integrated working method* (Levy, 2012, p.2).

According to Levy (2012), there is a need for the field to be developed as an "ism" linked to a particular practice rather than an open set of principles that can guide the current urban practices. Over the past years, an emergent discourse of "ecological urbanism" has been proposed to more precisely describe the combined landscape urban practice, c.f., *Ecological urbanism* (Mostafavi and Doherty, 2010); *Ecological design* (Rottle and Yocom, 2010); *Landscapology* (Van Beek and Vermaas, 2011); and *Formerly Urban* (Czerniak, 2013). These new writings continue to elaborate on a desired – or maybe even hypothetical practice. As I see it, the environmentally modified form of urbanism (be it landscape, ecological, infrastructural, or other) has emerged as a meaningful critique and as a relevant framework for addressing the complexity of contemporary urbanism, unfortunately, without proposing a concrete practice or working methods. I will briefly return to Kelly Shannon's 2006 essay *From theory to resistance: Landscape urbanism in Europe*. According to Shannon (2006, p.146), "the landscape urbanism discourse that has developed in Europe has on the whole emerged less as a theory than as a way to innovate at the level of design practice". As such, the European discourse surrounding landscape urbanism may possess, not only, a key to defining the landscape urbanism practice but also the original inspirations to the emergence of landscape urbanism? Even though this is an untested allegation, it opens up for some interesting possibilities for

2 The Fresh Kills project and the Downsview Park project have been extensively discussed and documented, e.g., Czerniak, (2001); Waldheim (2001), pp.80–85; 98–99; Reeser and Shafer (2002).

describing a particular landscape urbanist practice as a *landscape architecture landscape urbanism*, rather than the current open set of principles that primarily serve as insubstantial guidelines to the urban practices (cf. Connolly, 2004; Levy, 2012). The idea of European landscape architecture as a point of departure for describing landscape urbanist practice and methodology also comply with Diedrich's (2008, p.9) assertion that the problems of contemporary urbanism have been at the centre of landscape thought and practice for so long that Danish and European landscape architecture already includes urbanism. Here, Diedrich refers to landscape architects like Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier (France), Leberecht Migge (Germany), and groups of professionals like those surrounding C.Th. Sørensen and Steen Eiler Rasmussen (Denmark) as their works were moving away from the ideal of the pleasure garden towards green urban systems. According to Diedrich (2008, p.9), "[t]he particulars of landscape influenced the creation of metropolitan systems, and these in return engendered new concepts and formalizations for the landscape and its particulars".

3 Methodological aspects of landscape urbanism

Several theorists, practicing architects, and landscape architects have sought to characterise the landscape urbanist practice from overall classifications and frameworks (e.g., Corner, 2003; 2006; Marot, 2003 to concrete design principles (e.g., Waldheim and Santos-Munné, 2001; Reed, 2006; Smets, 2002; and lately Van Beek and Vermaas, 2011). In the following, I intend to give a short introduction to Corner's (2003) taxonomy, as discussed and concretised by Bach (2008), and Waldheim and Santos-Munné's (2001) four-stage *decommissioning* principles, and finally Smets' (2002) *Grid, casco, clearance and montage*.

Surface strategies

In *Landscape urbanism*, Corner (2003) describes five general themes of landscape urbanism as a practice: *Horizontality*, *Infrastructures*, *Forms of Process*, *Techniques*, and *Ecology*.[3]

> *[The] structuring of the horizontal surface becomes a predominant concern for landscape urbanism, for the surface is the organizational substrate that collects, distributes and condenses all the forces operating upon it. Land division, allocation, demarcation and the construction of surfaces constitute the first act in staking out ground; the second is to establish services and pathways across the surface to support future programmes; and the third is ensuring sufficient permeability to allow for future permutation, affiliation and adaptation* (Corner, 2003, p.60).

3 In Terra Fluxus, Corner (2006, pp.21–33) elaborates on four provisional themes instead of five.

In *"Surface strategies" as landscape urban method*[4], Bach (2008, p.53) argues for a possible landscape urbanist method by focusing on the three "layers" of Corner's (2003, pp.59–60) first theme, "horizontality", i.e., demarcation, infrastructure, and adaptation. According to Bach (2008), the two first layers are analogous to conventional spatial planning: a site is parcelled out and registered for future use, and infrastructure is established to support the desired development. Both layers are amplified throughout Corner's (2003) description of the five themes. Of the third layer (adaptation), Bach (2008, p.53) says, "constitute the extra dimension that [...] embraces the landscape urbanist approach as it holds both the ecology and process thinking and call for the dynamic and flexible development model". The third layer can be characterised as a more conceptual layer that holds the very essence of landscape urbanism. Whereas the first two layers establish boundaries and prepare the site, the third layer adapts, moves, and dismantles original limits and demarcations over time. The difference from conventional planning is that these three surface strategies incorporate and activate adaptation possibilities on a structural level, which directly influence the shaping of the specific project. Here, the criteria of success of the landscape urbanist project lies, not only, within the changeability of the plan over time; its future possibilities have to be integrated into the original project proposal from the beginning. From this, the primary challenge is to handle the relation between the three surface strategies with a distinct focus on the third "adaptive" layer. Here, conventional thinking in relation to "parcelling" and "infrastructure" is not possible, Bach claims. Adaptability and permeability have to be considered already in the conceptualisation of the two first layers in order to avoid a fixed and inflexible framework (Bach, 2008, pp.54–59).

4 Original Danish title: *"Surface Strategies" som landskabsurban metode*. Translated from Danish to English by author.

Landscraping[5]

Waldheim and Santos-Munné's (2001) proposal for *Decamping Detroit* seeks to appropriate the vacant land of Detroit by "the staging" of ex-urban landscapes of indeterminate status. Waldheim and Santos-Munné's project proposes a four-stage "decommissioning" of land from the city's legal control i.e.: *Dislocation* (disconnection of services), then *Erasure* (demolition and initiation of native landscape ecology by release of wildlife and insertion of plants), followed by *Absorption* (ecological re-constitution through woods, meadows, marshes, and streams), and finally, *Infiltration* (the recolonization of the transformed ex-urban landscapes with new (urban) programmes). By acknowledging and setting free the forces of nature, albeit in a managed and intentional way, and ultimately suggesting a series of "re-programming proposals" each making a virtue of the zone's dismantling by opportunistically occupying the physical residue of Detroit's ex-urban landscapes, Waldheim and Santos-Munné constitutes an open-ended and long-range solution to the indeterminacy of the ground.

5 Landscraping is the title of Corner's (2001) review of Waldheim and Santos-Munné's proposal for Decamping Detroit.

Grid, casco, clearing, and montage

In *Grid, casco, clearing and montage,* Marcel Smets promotes the landscape tradition in relation to configuring today's urban spaces. By defining a "taxonomy" of spatial design concepts, Smets suggests how contemporary urban practitioners can work with the condition of "uncertainty", which is not to be confused with lack of clarity – but as indeterminacy in relation to future development and the incapacity to shape it into a fixed form. In the outlining of four design concepts, i.e. *Grid* (a man-made and superimposed form that establishes an underlying structure for pre-established regulations), *Casco* (derived from the local landscape, reflecting its constitutive form), *Clearing* (landscape as unifying backdrop, voids determine the specific character of the development)[6], and *Montage* (radical superimposition of programmatic and compositional layers), Smets promotes a landscape orientated urbanism that grounds projects into concrete physical and geographical settings by rendering what is already there and incorporating the particular site and project into the larger coherence of the urban landscape (2002, pp.89–101).

From overviewing Corner, Waldheim and Santos-Munné, and Smets' specifications for the landscape urbanist practice, it appears that the three described approaches all have a distinct focus on systemic thinking. The urban is treated as if a natural system, and landscape comes to define the changeability and adaptability of an urban project. Corner/Bach's idea of surface strategies seeks to reflect the changeability and flexibility of ecological systems, though on a relatively abstract level. In this context, the very idea of landscape and ecology constitutes the framework for proposing specific interventions. In *Decamping Detroit*, Waldheim and Santos-Munné (2001) point more specifically to a landscape urbanist method. By setting free the forces of nature in order to re-programme existing (or depleted urban areas), ecological processes are used to generate a specific development. Also, Smets seeks to concretise landscape urbanist methods. Smets enhances the existing landscape in order to shape a site-specific and context-dependent solution that can embrace the uncertainty of contemporary urbanism. In these writings (many other examples can be found), the landscape comes to play the leading role in urban development. The landscape plan emerges as the foreground, and the landscape comes to define a common denominator to fundamental design aspects, i.e., form (the constituting role of open spaces, new landscape hierarchies), process (ecology and changeability, urban processes and "ecosystems services"), and practice (differences and cultivation, context-orientation) (cf., Braae, 2013, p.4).

6 According to Smets (2002, pp.96–97), OMA's entry for the Melun-Sénart competition (1987) clarifies the essence of "clearing". The landscape is defined as a unifying backdrop, and the "Chinese drawing" underlying Melun-Sénart's open spaces (voids) will ultimately determine the specific character of the area.

4 Practical challenges

In practice, it is hard to reconcile land's ecological systems with urban systems; ecological systems are organic and infinite whereas urban systems are mechanistic. In designing with ecological systems, every site has to be carefully scrutinised and analysed in order to produce a highly nuanced and flexible response. In opposition to urban systems, which often are standardised and generic, ecological systems are indisputably site specific. Hence, most urban typologies are inflexible and governed by regulations that determine the layout of housing and its related infrastructure (Ben-Joseph, 2005). This inflexibility derives from the complex integration of many products and the fact that developer, municipal authorities, service providers, and ultimately the consumers all operate within a narrow financial scope. Even if landscape urbanists claim to have a holistic perspective, the urban landscapes represent a complexity where much is beyond their control and outside their expertise (Weller, 2008, pp.254–255).

In the following, two projects for (sub)urban development will be presented and the (landscape) architects' way of thinking and working will be introduced. Ullerødbyen (SLA) represents one of the first (early 2000s) Danish urban development projects (designed by landscape architects) with a distinct focus on landscape as vector for urban design. Bellinge Fælled (Schønherr) represents a later (2010s) more sustainability-orientated project with its specific focus on defined sustainability themes. Here, the Bellinge Fælled project is an example of the development in Danish landscape-orientated urban design by illustrating how the landscape architects respond to current trends and tendencies.

4.1 Ullerødbyen

The structure plan for Ullerødbyen is the result of an invited competition (2002). The main purpose of the competition was to design a plan that could serve as a structuralising framework for the development of an area in relation to Ullerød (village north from Hillerød). The project area is approximately 155 hectares, and it is expected to house 1.500–1.700 homes of various types. The client, Hillerød Municipality, had a primary vision to re-think the suburban typology and to focus on sustainability, community spirit, amenity values, and long-term thinking in relation to alternative housing forms (Hillerød Kommune, 2002; Hillerød Kommune and SLA, 2006).

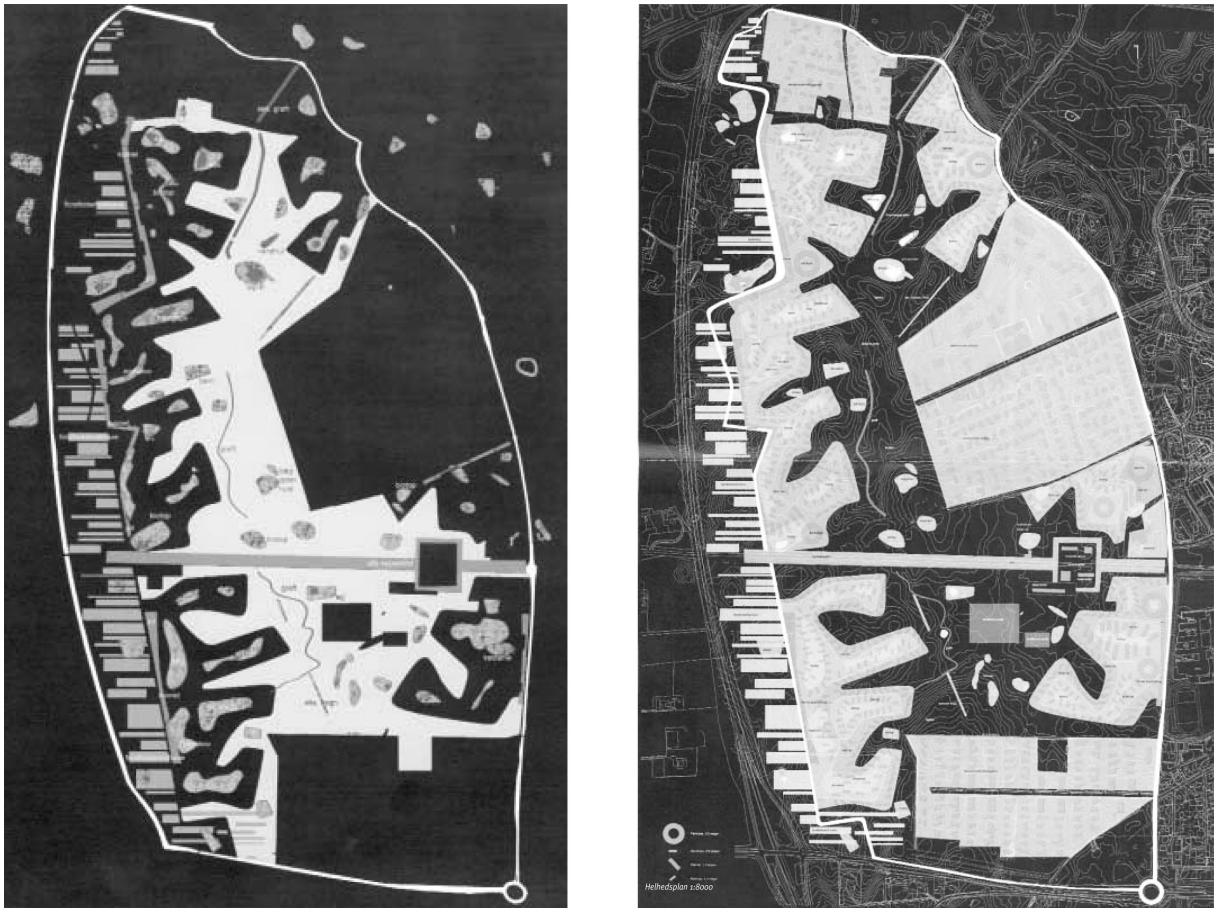

Figure 1
SLA (2003). Ullerødbyen. Landscapes (left). Structure plan (right).

Project overview

SLA's winning entry organises Ullerødbyen around an inner open landscape. The existing terrain and biotopes constitute "tie points" for a winded and inter-connected mesh of built-up areas. This pattern provides an extended meeting line that allows the built-up areas to exchange freely with the landscape. The built-up areas frame the large landscape, and the landscape dictates the form of the urban frame. The project enhances the landscape as the foreground for the development. Hereby, the project challenges the traditional hierarchy between built and unbuilt, between urban and landscape. The landscape and the terrain come to replace buildings and housing structures as organizing principles, and the open and built areas communicate into a negotiated form by adapting the buildings to the terrain. As such, the terrain comes to dictate the topography of the entire area (SLA, 2003; DAL's Competition Secretariat, 2003).

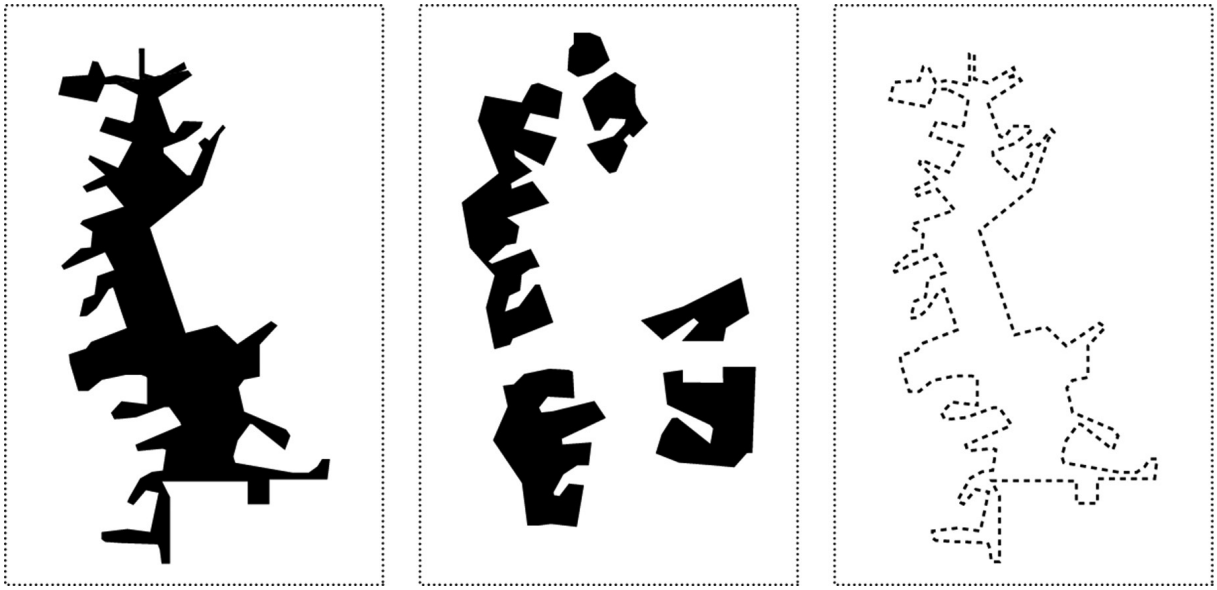

Figure 2
Figure by author. Ullerødbyen diagrams. Unbuilt (left). Built (middle). Contact surface (right). The meeting between built and unbuilt dictates the design and dynamic of the proposed plan for Ullerødbyen. Organisational, the built and the unbuilt are equalised; the built and the unbuilt weave untroubled together and appear as equal design elements.

SLA's project for Ullerødbyen emerged as part of the incipient discourse change in Danish urban design and planning. According to Stig Lennart Andersson (2013)[7], landscape professionals are gaining more and more influence in designing urban projects. Previously, building architects and urban planners sketched out the framework for urban developments. Today, landscape architects are increasingly being involved already in the initial phases. For many years, Andersson claims, there has been a deep-rooted delusion (in Denmark at least) that only building architects can solve urban problems, and that urban problems primarily relate to the built. According to Andersson, this is problematic. Municipalities and developers could reach even further if those who are trained in thinking with complex systems were engaged instead. In Andersson's optic, it seems more relevant to understand the city as a kind of organism, a complex system, where all parts are interconnected. Nevertheless, Andersson does not consider landscape urbanism as the answer to this problematic. According to Andersson, landscape urbanism is a method to solve some of the technical problems. Landscape urbanists identify the city as having various problems (e.g., pollution), and that nature possesses a way to handle these problems. The only problem, Andersson argues, is that landscape urbanism is not orientated towards design but towards the utility value of landscape. As such, the aesthetics and amenity values become coincidental, more or less. This is why Andersson refers to "process urbanism" (cf. SLA, 2010) as an alternative to landscape urbanism.

> *Process urbanism is about how to design processes, and how to consciously work towards an expression that can generate a new value in the city. On the one hand a utility value (this is landscape urbanism) and on the other hand an amenity value. This amenity value should not be accidental. It should be designed* (Andersson, 2013).

7 Extract from interview with Professor Stig Lennart Andersson. Stig Lennart Andersson is landscape architect (MAA, MDL), founder and creative director of SLA.

According to Andersson, it is no use to understand the composition of a city – or to solve problems by separating its parts. In this context, Andersson argues, landscape architects should concentrate on what they are good at, complex systems and design.

4.2 Bellinge Fælled

The structure plan for Bellinge Fælled is the result of a vision formulated in Odense Municipality's Environmental Policy (Odense Kommune, 2008). The ambition was to design a sustainable residential area of minimum 500 homes (freestanding single-family houses and row housing). An area north from Bellinge (village south from Odense) was selected for the experiment (Odense Kommune, 2008). In the spring 2010, Schønherr a/s was given the assignment to design the structure plan for the development. The result was developed in close corporation between the municipal administrations and the landscape architects from Schønherr a/s via a series of dialogue-based workshops. Here, the workshop participants agreed on five sustainability parameters that should define the structure plan. The first parameter was to minimise paved infrastructure; the second focused on local rainwater drainage; third parameter was to increase biodiversity and optimise ecological environments for plants and animals; the fourth parameter dictated that the terrain must be preserved as intact as possible in order to avoid extensive transportation of soil away from the area. Finally, it was the intention to densify the built-up areas and intensify the green/blue areas[8] (Rasmussen, 2013; Odense Kommune and Schønherr a/s, 2010).

8 The density of the area will be identical to Bellinge village (= 22) (Odense Kommune and Schønherr a/s, 2010, p.4).

Figure 3
Schønherr a/s (2010). Bellinge Fælled, structure plan.

Project overview

The hills and valleys of the moraine terrain define the overall organisation of the structure plan. Two ridges define a valley and separate the area in an eastern and western part. By keeping the western high point and the low areas clear, a coherent landscape appears. This open landscape then defines the extent of the three sub-areas for housing. As such, the green/blue structures and the terrain come to constitute the defining "backbone" and organisation of the entire area (Odense Kommune and Schønherr a/s, 2010).

Figure 4
Figure by author. Bellinge Fælled diagrams. Built vs. unbuilt (left). Terrain dynamic (middle). The unbuilt and the terrain define the overall structure of the plan. The green/blue areas, rises, and hollows draw the visual profile of the area (right).

According to Nina Jensen (2013)[9], the thorough "reading" of the terrain was the key to minimise infrastructure (lower construction cost and maintenance cost and minimum paved surface) and to adapt the building structures to the most appropriate locations. Also, the local rainwater drainage had to be the result of natural flows and wet basins in the area, she argues. Further analyses of the area revealed existing wetlands and swampy areas, and slowly the idea of constructing a lake took form, Jensen says. According to Jensen, the entire plan is dependent on the landscape, and the landscape imposed the overall structure. Even though landscape and water flows replace built structures as structuralising elements in Bellinge Fælled, as proposed by landscape urbanist thinking, Jensen seems not convinced when it comes to landscape urbanism as a concrete practice. "We consider the site. What does it tell us?", she says. According to Jensen, landscape architects have a different approach than, e.g., building architects. Landscape architects are constantly thinking the terrain and ecological structures into their design proposals. "We consider the integral whole, and by doing so, the idea of sustainability is integrated already from the beginning", Jensen finishes.

9 Extract from interview with Nina Jensen. Nina Jensen is partner/CEO of Schønherr a/s, landscape architect (MAA), and building economist MDB.

5 Discussion

The understanding of landscape and its role in urban development is clearly developing. The way the urban practitioners conceive and work with the relation between build and unbuilt is changing, and landscape architects work their way into the urban domain. From being background to foreground, landscape to a wide extend replaces the built as the primary organising trait in urban development and transformation projects. Increasingly, landscape becomes relevant – not only as picturesque background – but also as a fellow force that helps shape the contemporary city and as a framework for understanding its complexity. In this context, landscape urbanism merges the traditional alliances between architecture, urban design, and planning and combines it with ecological thinking. Hence, landscape urbanism can be considered of as an ecological and flexible approach to designing the contemporary city.

The many open spaces that characterise today's urban territories are often considered as surplus areas and as part of urban fragmentation. In landscape urbanism's reverse optic, these open spaces become the very constituting trait of the city. By focusing on the open landscapes (not the fragmented urban developments), new coherences can be found at various scales. In this way landscape represents a physical material, a place for intervention, and a way of conceptualising the city. On the one hand, the inherent dynamic of landscape illustrates the unpredictability of urban development; on the other hand, landscape holds the potential to integrate nature's processes in urban contexts as 'ecosystems services'. In this way of thinking, the understanding of local nature, culture, and cultivation forms plays an important role, and landscape architecture and local landscape tradition come into focus when shaping and transforming contemporary urban landscapes (Braae, 2013). Unfortunately, it can be argued that landscape urbanist thinking (so far) primarily responds to specific urban typologies and situations, i.e., suburban development and transformation of obsolete industrial areas. This reduces its potential considerably and makes it non-operational in other urban situations, e.g., in relation to pre-existing urban structures (cf., Shane, 2006, p. 63).[10]

Looking at Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled, it is clear that landscape urbanism's reversal of traditional order is unfolded and conceptualised in the respective plan proposals. Both projects reflect a type of spatial order that contributes to the connection of various opens spaces, and they both enhance the spatial potentials of ecological systems. In Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled, landscape plays both a design and utility role; it (in)forms the emerging built-up areas, it helps create spatial coherence within the respective areas, and the landscape connects to the neighbouring areas. Further, local ecologies are integrated in the developments as ecosystems services (e.g., local rainwater drainage in Bellinge Fælled and local environmental effects from the large landscape in

10 According to Grahame Shane (2006, p. 63), "The recent discourse surrounding landscape urbanism does not yet begin to address the issue of urban morphologies or the emergence of settlement patterns over time […] The problem of this approach is its amnesia and blindness to preexisting structures, urban ecologies, and morphological patterns".

Ullerødbyen). Finally, landscape as practice appears in the projects as a profound knowledge and respect for local landscapes (e.g., terrain, existing biotopes, landscape types, etc.) as well as a desire to reveal contextual possibilities via design.

Superimposing the practical aspects of landscape urbanism (as described in "Methodical aspects of landscape urbanism") onto Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled, it appears that the ambitions of Corner's "Surface strategies", Waldheim and Santos-Munné's "decommissioning" principles, and especially Smets' idea of "clearing" generally overlaps with the ambitions and agents of Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled. As such, Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled come to represent genuine examples of practiced (Danish) landscape urbanism. Nevertheless, neither Stig Lennart Andersson nor Nina Jensen consider themselves landscape urbanists. They consider themselves landscape architects working in urban design and planning (Andersson, 2013; Jensen, 2013). This seems paradoxical as both Andersson and Jensen enhance systemic thinking and ecological processes as essentials when designing and understanding the contemporary city and its development. Despairing of landscape urbanism's lack of aesthetic and design considerations, Stig Lennart Andersson and his team have formulated "process urbanism" as an alternative approach that holds both the essence of landscape urbanism and a consciousness of good design. Jensen suggests a similar approach, though she does not intentionally involve landscape urbanism as a theory. Instead, Jensen enhances the holistic approach, good design practice, i.e., thorough site research, cross scalar practice, focus on the integral whole and interconnections, and not least of all aesthetics. After interviewing (only) two Danish landscape architects, it is not possible to conclude that all Danish landscape architects reject landscape urbanism as a notion, but considering the general tendencies seen in Danish urban design, it is hard to reject that the ideas behind landscape urbanism must have affected the urban and landscape practices in some way. While academics search for new and more suitable explanations and frameworks for understanding contemporary urbanism via theories, the urban practices use ecological thinking and landscape as a way to innovate at the level of design practice (Shannon, 2006). From this, it can be argued that the current discourse surrounding landscape urbanism as an "ism" indirectly affects the urban practices just as numerous other isms have done before. This reciprocal influence, I argue, is part of defining and describing a locally founded Danish version of "landscape urbanism". The notion of landscape urbanism may/may not have a direct link to what happens in Danish urban and landscape practices, but it certainly is part of the general reorientation towards landscape and natural processes as vectors for design seen in Danish urban development projects. But as always, which came first, the chicken or the egg?

6 Conclusion

This paper investigates the increasing interest in landscape and ecology as vectors for design seen in contemporary Danish suburban development projects. By discussing landscape urbanism theory in relation to two landscape-orientated projects for suburban residential development in Denmark (Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled), this paper suggests that the incitements and ideas of landscape urbanism, essentially, are identical to the motives and design initiatives presented by the two landscape architects (Stig Lennart Andersson, SLA, and Nina Jensen, Schønherr a/s). Both Andersson and Jensen approach their respective urban design projects by the means of landscape and landscape architecture. They both operate on the urban scale; they are driven by ecology, and they prefer to ground their design process in systemic thinking. As such, Ullerødbyen and Bellinge Fælled could represent two Danish examples of practiced landscape urbanism. Nevertheless, in defining landscape urbanism as a concrete practice in Denmark, Jensen and Andersson do not refer to the theoretical-methodical aspects of landscape urbanism (as defined in the North American context). Instead, they point to good design practice, amenity values, and utility value. In their approach, utility value is not only about the ecological effects, which often are enhanced by landscape urbanism, but is also about the recreational and social values for the users and residents of an area. The reason why Andersson and Jensen do not recognise themselves as landscape urbanists is, presumably, that landscape urbanism primarily (or at least in Denmark) is cultivated and discussed within the academic environments. Obviously, academia inspires practice and vice versa, but as a notion landscape urbanism still remains relatively theoretical and intangible in relation to a concrete practice. Additionally, others would claim that landscape urbanism can be (mis)used as a way of profiling or validating urban projects by associating open/green development plans (normally considered as urban diffusion) with this specific way of thinking. Here, landscape urbanism becomes more of a “brand”, which again can be associated with many controversies. By avoiding the controversies surrounding landscape urbanism, Andersson and Jensen can concentrate on the practical aspects of a more landscape architectural approach to urban design. They see that landscape architecture is implementing and developing new thoughts and methods (also coming from landscape urbanism) within the Danish landscape architecture tradition and field but without giving the credit to a specific “ism” or defined theory. As such, Andersson and Jensen unfold their “landscape architectural” approach to urban design within the local Danish landscape tradition into a more locally founded practice. In this way, the loftier ambitions of thinking and processing the city as a landscape combined with the local Danish landscape tradition come to constitute a Danish version of landscape urbanism that considers local conditions and the uncertainties of contemporary urbanism already in the conceptualisation of urban projects.

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