THEME ISSUE:
TRANSFORMING
SITE METHODOLOGIES

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CONTENTS

UNDERWAY:
SITES AS PLACES OF BECOMING

TINA VESTERMANN

Abstract

This paper shows that sites in relation to time – understood as places of becoming – provide a useful frame for understanding the way "temporary use" acts as a transformative tool in urban design. This argument is presented in three points: one, that existing ways of describing and understanding temporary uses via the dichotomy of temporary versus permanent give a false impression of their long-term potential; two, that a static understanding of the site of intervention falls short in describing real-life processes; and three, that a foregrounding of time and temporality resulting in a dynamic understanding of site and place as becoming is useful when unfolding how these processes create difference at a site spanned out between past, present, and potential futures.

1 Introduction

This paper contributes to the ongoing discussion of how we should understand and ultimately design for those urban sites being actively transformed through different kinds of temporary uses. The paper unfolds how "temporary uses" of and in the city make necessary a concept of site that is linked to time. This linking of site and time is both operational and fruitful as we seek to understand how "temporary uses" fit into a wide planning and architectural practice as a method for transforming sites.

"Temporary uses" of the city have become an increasingly popular strategy within urban design. For instance municipalities are initiating the integration of temporary use intentionally in order to activate un-used urban spaces in the hope of instilling identity and ownership (see the following section 4 unfolding a particular case scenario and Olsen, 2017). Also temporary use strategies are requested in competition briefs (Aalborg Municipality, 2016) and have taken centre stage in several large scale transformation processes that brand themselves on precarious strategising (areas such as Fredericia C, Køge Kyst and Musicon). As temporary uses are generously applied in planning practice in the hope of initiating growth, revitalisation, and cultural and entrepreneurial production (Hentilä and Lindborg, 2003; Jensen, et.al., 2008), we are left with an urban reality continually unfolding, conditioned by an interplay between a particular site, the nature of the intervention, and the sometimes differing intentions. Thus, adopting an understanding of site as a static physicality and outlined area on various maps misses the full potential of what is actually occurring. Thus the task of directing attention towards which underlying understanding of site best enables a productive and realistic application of "temporary use" in urban planning processes is an important one. This is the central research question of this paper: which understanding of place and ultimately site best substantiate and enable "temporary use" as a transformative force in urban design? Furthermore the question is also based on an interest in conducting research with potential for direct application in future practice. Initially the paper searches for an understanding of place and site that is operational in relation to temporary uses, while eventually also daring to state that in this understanding lies the potential for general applicability to all sites.

The paper addresses this research question in three sections. The first section seeks to define the key concepts: temporary use, place, and site. This section contains a discussion of what these temporary uses are and how they relate to the sites they transform. Also included is a deciphering of the parameters that constitute the sites under transformation. This section presents an argument for understanding place and site as relational and interpretative. The following section includes a foregrounding of time in relation to site, thereby introducing a more pro-

cessually founded view of the world. This leads to the dismissal of the dichotomy of permanent and temporary and a (re)focus on the concept of temporality. The final section contains a case study that exemplifies the applicability of the above-mentioned positions. The case included is based on the preliminary findings from a research project at the Aalborg University Institute for Architecture, Design and Media Technology concerned with the strategic utilisation of temporary uses in planning. The article is grounded in a predominantly qualitative research tradition, including qualitative interviews, observation studies and document and process analysis. The presented argument will be based on the discussion of a case study and theoretical concepts pertaining to the key issues (Flyvbjerg, 2004; 2006). The case study will be described by drawing on empirical material covering all methods mentioned above, and the analysis will be shaped around a model constructed on the basis of the theoretical discussion.

2   Key concepts

In order to begin, it is necessary to introduce the key concepts central to addressing the research question. Hence, the following sections will introduce the concepts of temporary use, place, and site.

2.1 Temporary use

Bishop and Williams (2013, p.5) define temporary use according to the underlying intention of temporariness by the user, developer or planner. Adopting this understanding seems to be an important step that ensures a common denominator of temporariness; however, it is necessary to simultaneously note two particular reservations. Firstly that the dichotomy of temporary versus permanent is overly simplistic missing interesting aspects held by the span between them. Secondly, defining temporary use only as intent does not engage actively with the specificities of for instance site, user(s), programme and duration that also co-conditions possible outcomes. A comprehensive explanation of these reservations would obscure the key purpose of this paper, which is the presentation of a dynamic and time-dependent understanding of site and place. The inclusion of these reservations, however, establishes a direct basis for listing themes for further research (see section 5).

Firstly in order to proceed, we must linger a bit on temporary use in relation to its opposite. Temporary uses occupy a building, a public urban space or a neighbourhood only for a while. By definition, the phenomenon of temporary use gains value when contrasted with its opposite, namely those uses understood as permanent.[1] The dichotomy of temporary and permanent is prevalent (Bishop and Williams, 2013); however, the implication of adopting this dichotomy as a final and true description is wrapped up in the "lure of simplification", which ultimately leaves out other truths. For example, as a user of a city development area in Helsinki that was previously temporarily activated points out in

1   One might argue that nothing is actually permanent, but the fact is that the nature of architecture has long been the creation of beautifully sustainable, long-durational structures. For now, let us play along and see how "permanent", as well as "temporary", can be defined by intention.

a short online article:

> I remember my initial few days in Helsinki when I went along with my college mates to paint the walls in Kalasatama with spray cans. All these happenings are stored in my memory. Similarly, all the events that have ever happened here are well documented, have been written about and have gotten a lot of media limelight as well, besides being etched in the memories of the people who were involved. A simple Google search of Kalasatama makes hundreds of images pop up. If this is all true how can this project be called 'temporary'? Friends have been made, similar interests have been identified, and spaces and stories have been shared. Aren't all these forms of permanency? (Baradwaj, 2012)

Here, the relation between what is understood as temporary and what is perceived to be permanent does not apply to how these processes are experienced and the difference that has been produced. A difference can have a physical expression, through architectural structures (buildings or spaces) and different uses (e.g. leisure activity, education, business, or art), but can also be created in a person's (either a user's or an instigator's) lived experience. In the 'temporary' lies only an understanding that the given physicality is temporarily there, but leaves out the possibility that the actual experience and difference could in fact be permanent. This important aspect is also emphasised in the book *Second Hand Spaces*: "the term temporary use omits the numerous qualities that cause second hand spaces to stand out by highlighting only the limited duration of the use" (Ziehl, et al., 2012, p.300).

By extension, temporary use defined by intent is thus a somewhat modest definition that does not critically engage with identifying which kind of use or object in the city it is, that is being used in a temporary manner, nor the potential difference for those involved. The temporary use strategies put forward by Misselwitch, Oswalt, and Overmeyer (2013) unfold these aspects more fully by presenting a range of uses that are temporary to varying degrees, with open-ended futures, all depending on the underlying strategic intent. Some of these temporary use strategies are even based on the desire for the use to cement itself and become permanent. These are necessary spans to recognise, and reality embraces this mixture, especially when investigating the role of temporary uses in urban planning strategies. So although this paper takes defining temporary use by the intention of temporariness as a starting point, there are some necessary further clarifications of the nature of temporary use that could be fruitful in future research endeavours.[2]

Nevertheless, reality and practice[3] have quickly latched on to the popular phenomenon of temporary use, described in a surge of publications flooding the shelves of bookstores and the internet (Realdania By, 2013; Urhahn Urban design, 2012; Per and Mozas, 2008; Bishop & Williams, 2013;

2   This subject is worthy of an entire independent article. For reference, see also a short article in the publication 'Use Space' (Vestermann, 2013) advocating turning towards the particularities of the projects and processes that are being labelled 'temporary use'.

3   See Køge Kyst, Frederica C, and Musicon as three examples of planning processes strategically utilising temporariness as a driver, instigator and tool for participation and communication.

Ferguson, 2014; Baum and Christiansee, 2013 – to name a few). So, for now, let us recognise that both in general and across different typologies, temporary use effects the transformation of a site – it is a trigger enabling a change.

Thus, in relation to site, temporary use is firstly defined by the intention of temporariness (although the use may open up unanticipated futures), and secondly by the general understanding of temporary use as a tool for transformation in urban design processes. Having established that, let us direct our attention to the concepts of place and site.
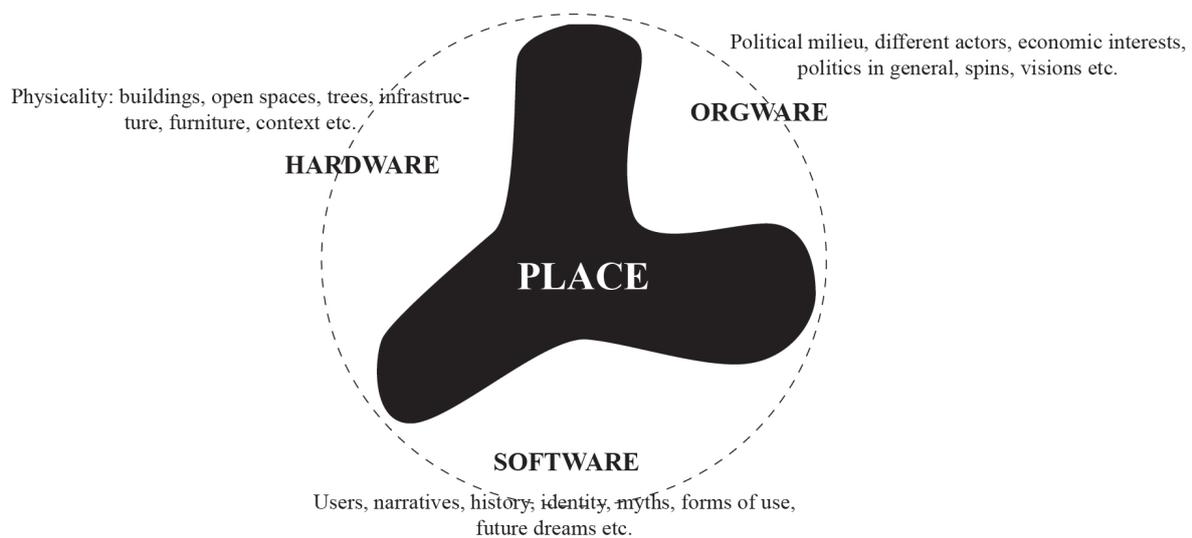
2.2 Place and site

"There is no pure place, self-resting, homogenous and timeless. The place is in a constant exchange with the world around it" (Ringgaard, 2010, p. 31. Own translation).

The constitution of place has been a widely debated subject. One of the central discussions has concerned what actually constitutes place. Is it (merely) what is objectively physically there, or do we need to go a step further and recognise a complexity that goes beyond the physical? Within architecture and urban design a necessary and important question is whether the focus should be predominantly on the end product as the built environment, or also engage actively with other aspects, such as the social and the organisational (Crimson, 1998; Andersen, et. al., 2012; Lehtovuori, 2010; Jensen, 2004). Going further, another important element of the concept of place is that place can be said to be an urban milieu that the user is particularly attached to and personally invested in (Cresswell, 2004). In such a reading, place carries more than physicality, and actively puts into focus relations to both other objects and other subjects.

The way the difference between place and site is understood in this article, is that as a place is pointed out as an area for architectural intervention, it becomes a site. Thus, site is an expression representing a profession's objectification of place (Beauregard, 2005). As such, the discussion concerning the constitution of place has (or should have) direct implications for how we understand site. What this article wishes to argue is that the place, and thus the site, for a strategic temporary use is not merely a surround, outlined by a dotted line defining quantitatively how many square meters we are dealing with. It is, in fact, a social condition seething with a number of complex aspects, of which physicality is only one. As presented by Burns and Kahn in the book *Site Matters,* no border divides site from situation (2005); this is also firmly established by Beuregaard: "Place is never empty" (2005, p.39). This is key when looking into the processes of temporary use strategies, where there is as much focus on participation, ownership, and cooperation as there is on the physical manifestation. This understanding involves a necessary break with other perceptions of site and place, foregrounding a more holistic, relational approach.

This approach has been presented by several theorists and practitioners; often mentioned are material by Doreen Massey (2005; 2003; 1994) and Tim Cresswell (2004). Creswell emphasise personal attachment as the decisive component needed to make a "place" (2004), while Massey advocate an understanding of place as "outward-looking" and "progressive" (1984, p.147) rather than static and locally bound. This position is elaborated on in later contributions (2005; 2003) that pursue "multiplicities" (2005, p.5) and "stories-so-far" (ibid. p.12). Also interesting, however, is the article "Orgwars", by Crimson Architectural Historians (2005), which draws these debates into the context of architecture and urban design by relating them to practice. Crimson introduces three facets in their description of the urban: hard-, soft- and orgware. Each represents an aspect of place we as planners, urban designers, and architects need to pragmatically recognise and be inspired by when dealing with processes, buildings, or landscapes. (See figure 1, which illustrates a translation of these three concepts.[4])

4 An early version of this figure was part of the publication "Kortlægning af hverdagslandskaber" by metopos (metopos, 2009a).

Physicality: buildings, open spaces, trees, infrastructure, furniture, context etc.

HARDWARE

Political milieu, different actors, economic interests, politics in general, spins, visions etc.

ORGWARE

PLACE

SOFTWARE

Users, narratives, history, identity, myths, forms of use, future dreams etc.

Figure 1
A simple (but static) model of what constitutes a place, in relation to a more dynamic model of becoming.

The actor-network-theory (ANT) further destabilises our understanding of the urban to the point where the city is no longer taken for granted (Farias and Bender, 2010). On the basis of a "radical relationality" and "generalised symmetry", everything is thought to be mutually constitutive as well as equally important – subjects and objects alike. Also interesting here is Kim Dovey's book *Becoming Places* (2010), which in its title gives away its main point: that places are anything but static and enclosed. Both Dovey and Farias and Bender describe what they call an assemblage theory drawing on Deleuze and Guattari. Farias and Bender describes it as that "Assemblages do not form wholes or totalities, in which every part is defined by the whole, but rather emergent events or becomings. Urban Assemblages designate thus the processes through which the city becomes a real-state market, a filmic scene, a place of

memory; it is the action or the force that leads to one particular en-actment of the city" (Farias and Bender, 2010, p. 15). Thus ANT, non-rep-resentational theories, and assemblage theory advocate a relational and dynamic reading of the world and its entangled networks of both subjects and objects, which enable each other to be and act in the world (Anderson and Harrison, 2010; Blok and Jensen, 2009; Farias, 2010).

In an overly generalised manner, one can illustrate the maturation of a line of thought concerned with a dynamic understanding of place in the following way: starting out with the understanding that place is mere physicality defined by architects or planners as dotted lines on maps, go-ing on to a more holistic and embracing concept of place that deals with a wide range of meaningful aspects, leading to a web-like understanding of entangled aspects that overlap and mutually constitute each other's possibilities (see figure 2). As a result, it is becoming increasingly diffi-cult to ignore the complexity of other aspects of place that influence and overlap with the physicality with which designers are intent on and dedicated to engaging. This dominating theoretical discussion however, leaves also difficulties related to putting the theories into practice and act (and design) accordingly. A fluid reality that is continually in flux de-mands new ways of understanding, analysing, mapping, conceptualis-ing, and ultimately designing for place and (its professional derivative) site.

Place as site is the area defined by a dotted line within which the architect engages. Physicality is in the foreground.

A relational and holistic approach to place and ultimately site that introduces the importance of other intangible aspects.

Here place is exemplified by hardware, orgware and software. It is not understood in an either/or dichotomy; instead, it always entails elements of all three groups.

Place is depicted as an assemblage of meanings, concepts and imaginations. It is a web of overlapping and entangled narratives making it impossible to meaningfully seperate one from another as they are all each other's constituted or derived possibility.

Describing site and place as part of a fluid reality continually in flux leads us to a closer scrutiny of how we have come to focus on "becoming" rath-er than merely "being". In order to elaborate on this, a foregrounding of time in relation to site and place is the first step. In doing this, attention is directed towards how events – including temporary uses – unfold in time as interlinked pluralities and not autonomously free singularities.

Figure 2
The unfolding of a dynamic understand-ing of place, from static to holistic to a mesh of entanglements.

3 Time and temporality

"Production and processes by definition 'take their time'. Time must be considered to be equal to space, and space, place and the city alike must be radically conceptualized as space-time" (Lehtovuori, 2000, p.403).

Time has long been of interest in fields such as philosophy and anthropology. Two positions on how time is understood can be traced throughout a range of writings (Urry, 2000; Gell, 1992; Massey, 2005), and are often referred to as A-series and B-series. The two positions differ with respect to their way of understanding how time operates in the world, how it connects and disconnects events, and which elements best represent its passing (Gell, 1992). A simple recount draws on Gell's description of either adopting an A-series version of 'past-present-future', where events are embedded in and are dependent on each other, or a B-series version of 'before-after', with events understood as separating independent slices of time.

Put a bit differently by John Urry, here unfolding the A-series, "The past is not simply back there but is incorporated into that present... In the A-series, events can be differentiated in terms of their pastness, presentness and futurity; that is, time depends upon context" (Urry, 2000, p.115). In an A-series understanding of the world, places are thus not only quantifiable objects to be identified and potentially measured (a discussion previously outlined), but they also represent ranges of multiple futures, embedded narratives, and historic lineages. Key here is the understanding that a certain place is in constant process and possesses a latent potential for becoming different always carrying with it the heritage of what has been (Farias, 2010; Kwinter, 2002).

In this way, place is put into a *dynamic relation* with time and not detached from it. This is mirrored by Doreen Massey (2005), May and Thrift (2001), and Kim Dovey (2010), who in the introduction to his book *Becoming Places* writes, "Places of becoming are constructed and sustained by their connections and it is towards an understanding of this open sense of place ... that this book is dedicated ... the task for place theory is to move from conceptions of place as stabilized being towards places as becoming" (Dovey, 2010, p.xi, 13).

Staying in this line of thought while also reintroducing the concept of temporary use raises the question of how temporary uses can be inscribed into this dynamic understanding of how everything is in the process of becoming. One philosopher often linked to the A-series is Henri Bergson, who has been drawn into architectural debate by Sanford Kwinter (2002) and Kari Jormakka (2005). For Bergson, the concept of change defined as 'novelty' is central. The 'act of becoming' thus has to do with newness being brought into the world. As described in the words of Sanford Kwinter, "Time always expresses itself by producing, or more

precisely, by drawing matter into a process of becoming-ever-different – to this inbuilt wildness – we have given the name novelty" (Kwinter, 2002, p.45). This can be related to Mark Vacher's (2010) more contemporary reading of the transformation of Prags Boulevard from 2010 onwards, where temporary use is understood as a tool for change. With a certain kind of temporary use, difference is created across those characteristics that constitute place and site: hard-, org-, and software making immediately concrete the act of transformation. Thus, the temporary becomes a part of the continued construction of places, emphasising the act of transformation.

3.1 A foregrounding of temporality

By extension, planning can be understood as a practice of continued place construction, with the temporary being an 'event in time' including a before and an after. Time becomes the vehicle for change and temporary uses the articulation of this change. In general, this way of thinking implies a foregrounding of temporality, including looking back and ahead instead of focusing on the fixity of place in a way only possible via gross simplification (for this argument, see chapter 1 in *Urban Assemblages:* "Gelleable spaces, eventful geographies", by Tironi, 2010, and also Massey, 2005). Also central to the foregrounding of temporality is the acceptance of the links between before, now, and after: what was before enables a certain now; what is now enables a range of futures and so on. The result is a landscape of potential futures with the temporary use as enabler.

Adopting the understanding that places and ultimately sites are always being constructed (are becoming), and that they bring with them past *and* potential futures, has consequences for the appropriate methodological approach.

Figure 3
Places develop over time. One might argue that a place and site continually unfold over time in a chronological diachronic manner and a temporary use can be seen as an event in time triggering a transformation and altering the future. The assemblage of complexity is divided by synchronous sections. The sections are a construct made by a designer or analyst setting a specific event in focus.

A particular event as synchronous section in time...

Orgware

Hardware

Software

Diachronic time line
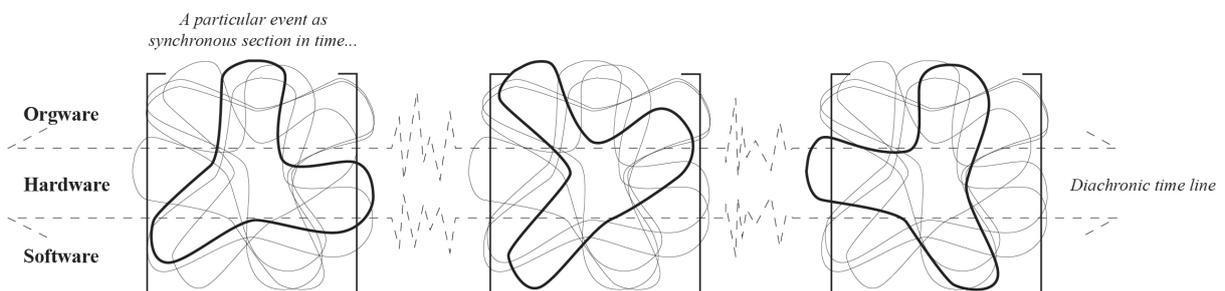
To understand the way temporary uses are part of a construction of place, case studies of temporary use projects would entail a series of snapshots (illustrated by synchronous sections in figure 3) as the site is enacted – momentary glances into a particular now, which bears meaning and importance for those involved at the time: "urban reality does not exist, it happens. In this situation, the 'design method' or 'simulation' is, instead of a map, a game. It cannot be drawn, it must be played, in the real world with real people in real time" (Lehtovuori, 2000, p.414). The diachronic view in turn represents the relations between past and present in a chronological timeline divided by synchronous sections that emphasise a particular point in time.

In order to make the connection between the presented dynamic understanding of how places (and sites) continually become and how temporary uses act as a transformative force in the process, the following section unfolds a story rooted in the case study from the eastern part of Aalborg. The case study serves as an illustration of the presented theoretical framework. The model for place construction (see figure 3) frames the presentation and analysis of the empirical material, exemplifying the application of the model both as a way of understanding (and of analysing) and as a theoretical lens framing one's view and focus.[5]

4   Learning from Aalborg: Temporary use in a process of transformation

The case study of Aalborg outlines a continued transformation of the site "Østre Havn" ("Eastern Harbour"), linked to the closing of its industrial functions in 2006. Three specific events in time and their interrelation have been chosen to represent the transformations. First, in 2007, the initial debate regarding the future of the Østre Havn was begun. This instigated further cooperation among Aalborg Municipality, Aalborg University, and the new site-owner, A. Enggaard A/S. These discussions included dialogue about the possibility of temporary uses at Østre Havn that ultimately lead to the establishment of the network Platform4[6] in 2008, which is the second event that will be elaborated. Thirdly, the year 2012 entailed the significant relocation of Platform4 from Østre Havn to Karolinelund and the introduction of new temporary initiatives. The three moments in time can be understood as synchronous sections in a larger diachronic narrative consisting of meshed hard-, org-, and software, synchronous sections made in order to operationalize an analysis of a messy reality of past, present, and future (see figure 5).

5   The static model of place construction has long framed the author's understanding of the reality with which urban designers engage. Here, politics and organisational structures are unavoidable aspects of the reality that is constructively engaged with and potentially changed. With the project, 'Mental Byomdannelse' and the preliminary case studies related to the PhD, the aspect of time and continual change spurred a redefinition of the initial model into a more dynamic and resilient version.
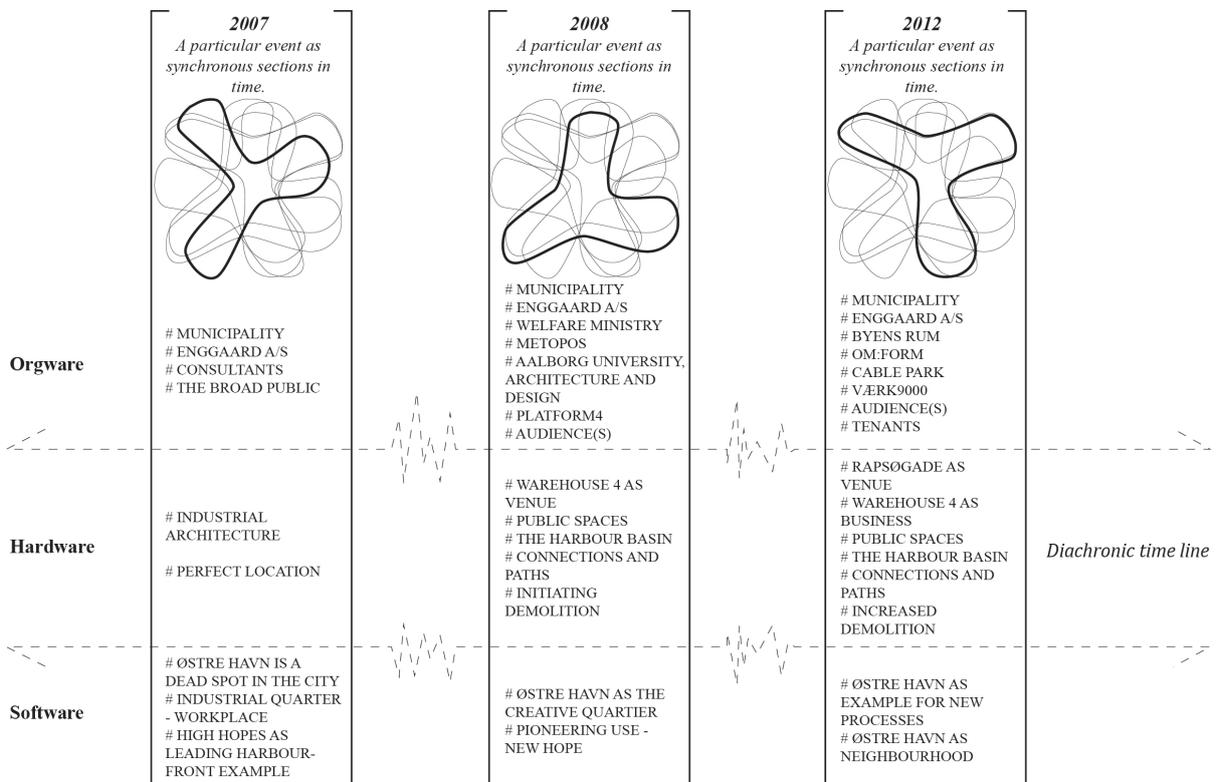
6   See more in section 4.2.

Figure 4
Aerial photo of Aalborg from 2011: the Eastern Harbour.
PHOTO: AALBORG MUNICIPALITY.

Figure 5
A particular explication of Østre Havn, Aalborg, Denmark. Three chosen synchronous sections are analysed in relation to org-, hard-, and software, forming the basis for the narrative related in sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

4.1 2006

In 2006, Aalborg Municipality and the site owner A. Enggaard A/S held a public workshop at Østre Havn, in which five different invited studios presented ideas for the area. Gehl Architects and metopos[7] presented visions in which temporary uses and experiments were to drive the development. As illustrated via a made-up persona contemplating the proposed development strategy by Gehl Architects: "Now a couple of city life catalysts have arrived at the harbour front on the basis of our and the architects' ideas; some are only temporary while others are permanent, but they already transform Aalborg harbour into a place in Aalborg! and oh, what a nice place!" (Gehl Architects, 2007, p.4. Own translation). As a starting point for the planning process, the workshop and presentation of the proposals introduced a new software agenda. This agenda came to dominate due to the close cooperation between the Municipality and A. Enggaard A/S, serving as the organisational orgware-background for the debate. At the time, the site was still dominated by its industrial past, and its 170,000 m² were taken up by structures ranging from 2-storey warehouses to 107-meter-high chimneys, while the ground level was covered by criss-crossing railroad tracks (Aalborg Municipality, 2006). Several buildings were deemed worthy of preservation, one being Warehouse 4, the venue for the workshop. As it turned out, this building was also to play a leading part in coming developments.

As a direct result of the workshop, the municipality continued cooperating with the studio metopos, funded by the Welfare Ministry through the pilot project "Mental Byomdannelse" ("Mental City Transformation"). This project investigated how temporary use can be understood as a starting point in city transformation processes (metopos, 2009b). In parallel, Aalborg University was conducting research into the experience economy and creative entrepreneurs, and had already, in collaboration with the Business Department of Aalborg Municipality, described a project called "Techne", centred on 1:1 experimentation with art and technology:

> One might imagine several concrete physical interfaces in the area already within the coming year. The area of the eastern harbour, with its raw architecture, should be utilised, with a possible interface in a warehouse where large-scale art and technology projects can be tested and simultaneously stage the industrial culture, which is transformed towards the future culture and knowledge-based city (Andersson, 2009, pp.177–178. Own translation).

These coincident initiatives and overlapping interests created a window of opportunity for an orgwarian merger, resulting in a more formalised collaboration in April 2008.

Underlying the actual event of the initial workshop was a more general debate in the city concerned with the future of the area of Østre Havn:

7   The author worked at metopos (bought by Bascon in 2011) from 2007 until 2013, first as an intern and later as project leader. As such, the author has deep insights into the proposal for Østre Havn as well as the pilot project 'Mental Byomdannelse', where 1:1 experiments and interviews with the actors involved were conducted.

What role should this old industrial area in close proximity to the city centre play in the future? The software was thus characterised by people and politicians who were curious and contemplative. As illustrated here through a personal entry into the debate suggesting preserving the cultural heritage:

> The eastern harbour represents the last fresh remnants from the cultural heritage pertaining to the harbour industry. These remnants should be preserved and written into a new plan for the area. Not as supports for shame related to pollution and hard work, but as the conveyors of the link between past and future (Hansen, 2007. Own translation).

This idea of preserving the uniqueness of the site was supported by the formal statement from the alderman at the time:

> It can become Denmark's finest waterfront, but we only have one shot... In 10 years I hope we will have a nice harbour basin, which will be used for many exciting things, so there is life on the harbour front and some beautiful buildings with attractive residences (Mortensen, 2007. Own translation).

This first synchronous section, made in 2006, illustrates that the correspondence of factors across the hard-, org-, and software categories paved the way for new initiatives of a temporary character. This demonstrates the legitimacy of understanding site and place as not only physicality, but rather as physicality intertwined with other elements rooted in metaphysical circumstances such as organisational priorities and personal affiliations. When it comes to the aspect of time and temporality, one can clearly find reasons to link present with past and future(s) across hard-, org-, and software, thereby drawing on an A-series understanding of time. The industrial past of Østre Havn had left both concrete physical remnants and personal memories and opinions associated with it. In describing the events of 2008, these points are made even clearer.

4.2 2008

In 2008, the overlapping interests crystallised into a temporary use agreement between site owner and developer A. Enggaard A/S, Aalborg Municipality, Aalborg University, and Platform4, a group of volunteer entrepreneurs interested in the fields of art and technology. The arrangement included permission to use Warehouse 4 at Østre Havn free of charge for up to four years (Andersson, 2009, pp. 174–210). The network of Platform4 created a venue for experiments, and in the summer of 2008, a beach bar opened, taking advantage of the location of the warehouse in a sunny corner of the harbour basin. The beach bar defined a new public space at a formerly unused location, which instigated a new line of uses and also affected perceptions of what the future could be.
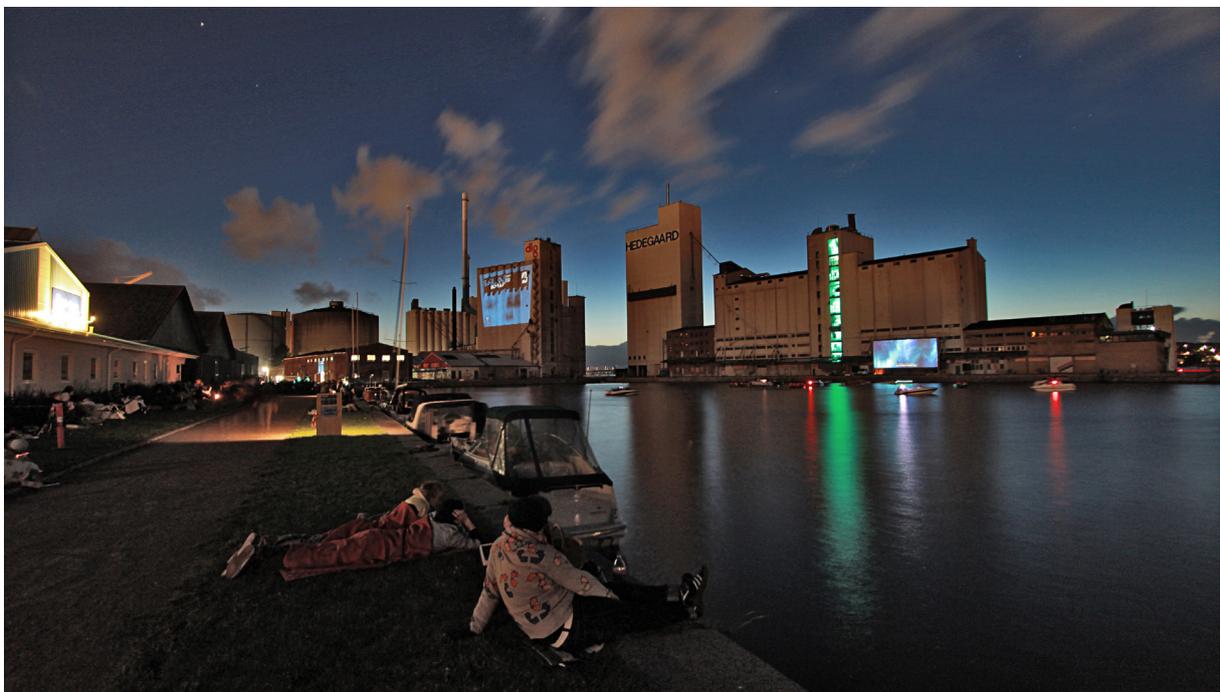
Figure 6
"Strandbar" at Østre Havn in 2008.
PHOTO: AALBORG MUNICIPALITY.

Figure 7
Sail-in movie theater at Østre Havn in 2010.
PHOTO: SIMON ANDERSEN.

Other events, such as a sail-in in 2010, further utilised the site's specific physicality – a closed-off water basin, surrounding buildings and a liminal and derelict character – to reintroduce the concept of a drive-in to the context of a fjord. This cemented the potential for creating attractive public spaces initially demonstrated in 2008.

Concomitantly, the debate about the future of the area persisted in the local media, but with a slightly more positive strain, emphasising the potential of the new creative forces with headlines such as: "Mid-town shall bubble with life" (Nordjyske, 2008c. Own translation), "Eastern harbour as a new city centre" (Nordjyske, 2008b. Own translation), "Young people receive Culture House" (Rørth, 2008. Own translation) and "Street art moves inside" (Nordjyske, 2008a. Own translation). The actions of Platform4 placed these discussions into the actual urban site and made real one potential future scenario in which Østre Havn was a worthy background for new experiences that highlighted (at least some of) the potential of the site. Both the physicality and people's general opinions, formed by history and memories, were activated and ultimately altered; software and hardware united as the hardware enabled changes in software and vice versa. Before long, the network boasted a large number of volunteers, or 'Platformers', and the eastern harbour hosted workshops arranged by the university, culture nights, and a series of events from "Streetart" to "Apart".

What made these varied uses possible was the initial cooperation among municipality, university, owner, and Platform4, who first came to hold the same vision through *Mental Byomdannelse*. Through this project, personal as well as project resources were allocated, enabling the municipality's involvement. The joint collaboration was an experiment driven by different interests, such as economic and city life benefits, as the attractiveness of a whole area increased: "If it becomes a success it will make this entire part of the harbour more attractive, and then we will have made a good business" (Søren Lundby in Rørth, 2008. Own translation). Also, the enhancement and bolstering of an entire local grassroots environment, which was ready for new challenges at the time, was a significant motivational factor for those who got involved on a volunteer basis. The following quote testifies to the underlying ambition of the initiators if Platform4 of truly making a difference in people's lives:

> *It is an ambition to create something, which is cool for the city and for us – cool for that part of the city, which we represent. There is a motivation which is hidden and extremely strong if you are able to get it involved. Not just within us, but within a lot of people. In a way, one disregards personal gain because the true satisfaction lies in making it happen* (metopos, 2009b, p.14. Interview with entrepreneur from Østre Havn. Own translation).

Mental Byomdannelse ended in 2008, but as the business department continued to support the idea, so did the involvement of the planning department of the municipality related to this project. However, the immediate success and buzz surrounding Platform4 cemented the idea of strategically utilising temporary uses as a tool in further site transformations. This was codified into formal policy, as it became part of the municipal plan approved in 2009:

The City Council emphasises that the waiting is utilised actively through an activation of vacant city areas through temporary uses. The starting point for a successful activation benefitting Aalborg are those potentials that the particular place entails and those driving forces and networks that can be brought into play. The aim is to develop city life and initiate the formation of identity for those urban landscapes still undeveloped. (Aalborg Municipality, 2009, paragraphs "Byomdannelse og Byudvikling"/"City transformation and city development" and "Midlertidig brug af ledige byarealer"/"Temporary use of vacant city areas". Own translation)

The particular doings of Platform4 set the precedent for new policy and the changing of the status of the area from a derelict leftover to a popular scene attracting a lot of young students, while also increasing the public's curiosity about what was to come. Foregrounding a focus on temporality in relation to planning and urban design thus becomes constantly more relevant, and the notion of temporary uses as mere temporary doings set in opposition to permanent initiatives becomes increasingly unfruitful and irrelevant. The linkages between the past, present, and future situations are key here, and although the temporary use has a limited lifespan, the potential effects should not automatically be defined in the same way. This is evident in the precedent set by Platform4 inspiring also further temporary use in the same and neighbouring areas that have in fact been instigated by people also previously active in Platform4. This points to how effects are potentially enduring (see also Olsen, 2017). This further strengthens the position of the A-series understanding of time, requiring appropriate reflections from the planner and designer. These reflections should address the relationship between creating a difference now (in terms of a qualitative design of a building or other element) for users to experience and understanding that this now changes over time while still enabling (and maybe disabling) other futures.

4.3 2012

From 2008 to 2012, Platform4 influenced the tangible physical setting of the Eastern Harbour as well as its public image. Platform4 instantly claimed both the harbour basin and the immediate surroundings of the warehouse, transforming them into vibrant public spaces. In the summer of 2012, a new initiative joined Platform4 at the site. Aalborg Cable Park

was formed and began enlivening the water basin with leisure activities. Aalborg Cable Park was permitted to use the harbour basin on a temporary basis through an arrangement with A. Enggaard A/S and Calum (Brauer, 2012). In parallel with the continued activation of the area, the municipality continued working on future plans with the publication of planning principles for the area (Aalborg Municipality, 2010), with a specific local plan published in March 2012 joined by a quality programme describing the links between the imagined development and the municipality's strategic aims (Aalborg Municipality, 2012a; 2012b).

From August 2012 onwards, the hardware of the site began undergoing drastic changes as A. Enggaard A/S was given permission to start tearing down buildings not deemed worthy of long-term conservation. Several other developments occurred simultaneously: the agreement with Platform4 to use the warehouse temporarily ended and A. Enggaard A/S started further restoration of the warehouse in order to prepare for new leases. Other organisations with new project ideas began to show interest in the eastern part of the harbour, resulting in new collaborations among A. Enggaard A/S, the municipality, and other entrepreneurial networks. Thus, in early summer of 2013, the projects OM:FORM (the transformation of an old ferry into a cultural platform) and ByensRum (a user-driven network offering affordable space) found their niche in an area under heavy transformation with a strong (but still young)

Figure 8
A wakeboarder from Aalborg Cable Park in the water basin, with the ferry Plagen from the project OM:FORM in the background.
PHOTO: AUTHOR.

history of experimentation and temporary use. Each project initiative can be placed within a different type of temporary use, though their intentions and ambitions do overlap to some degree.

This is exemplified by the ponderings of one entrepreneur involved in OM:FORM when asked about hopes for the future and the potential of the project idea in general: "We hope that within five years, we can be part of changing Østre Havn and become part of what it will be in the future" (Interview, July 2013. Own translation). A statement from an entrepreneur involved in ByensRum parallels this expression: "To me it is about creating a place for the population, presenting the possibility to create a more direct democracy. Where people can show the governing powers in city development – the matadors of planning – they can show those which kind of city they believe is ideal" (Interview, September 2013. Own translation). Both statements have strong normative ideals concerning changing the future of the area and of creating a platform for alternative voices. Both ambitions can be placed in a borderland of experimentation, with potential longevity – mental, physical, or otherwise – as a final result. As these ambitions and driving forces meet more pragmatic ways of thinking represented by other agents involved, ruptures and fissures between approaches arise: "You are depending on some people's feelings about something. It is anxiety-provoking that your success is dependent on feelings. If they do not think it is cool, the plan dies. You must relate to some people's irrationality" (conversation with director of the business department, 2013, Aalborg municipality. Own translation).

This final synchronous section illustrates the beginnings of rupture as one temporary use initiative (Platform4) ends its course even as others are initiated. Seen from an overall perspective, the popularity of Platfrom4 created motivation and drive in an entire potential growth layer in the city. Discussions related to critical mass, the difference between the initiatives (in terms of programmatic content and audience), and the coordination of temporary uses paralleled by site preparation and actual construction were instigated. This created the need for the municipality to describe and negotiate the developments and for all to see – and ultimately agree with. In 2013, the strategy paper "User-driven City Development" (Aalborg Municipality, 2013. Own translation) was released, which in maps, text, and pictures described the future initiatives, intentions, and relations to other of the municipality's planning strategies.

4.4 Discussion

The case described in sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 exemplifies how the hard-, org-, and software of a site change over time, and more importantly, how they are interrelated and intertwined with each other – influencing each other and creating new possible futures for an area. It also illustrates that the involvement of different events in time makes necessary a planning endeavour foregrounding temporality (of before-now-after) instead of falling into a trap of short-sightedness that allows only for the categories of temporary and permanent. Presented as a diachronic timeline containing each aspect, the process is unfolded via three synchronic sections describing a certain timeframe of significant events making possible new futures while building on past possibilities. As such, this holistic view is made operational as a way of analysing, deciphering, and understanding the transformation of a place/site. The timeline included in this article could be unfolded even further, and there are important events and developments hiding in between the sections described here. The chosen synchronous sections should never be understood as exhaustive, but are indeed the conscious construction of the analyst – as are all mappings (Corner, 1999).

As stated in the introductory paragraph, this paper focuses on finding

Figure 9
The interior of "ByensRum", Summer 2014.
PHOTO: TINA VESTERMANN

an understanding of site that is most operational as temporary uses are applied in planning and urban design. Therefore, the case was chosen to include a whole range of temporary uses continually transforming the physicality, associated policy, and public image of the site in question. The findings are based on a single case study. Any generalisations made on this basis should be seen as derived directly from a real-life situation and process exemplifying the possibility and plausibility that this could, in fact, be the case in other situations (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This, of course, complicates the reality with which we as designers are dealing. At times, it may even require simplification, as many design tasks are extremely concrete and revolve around a particular 'now' and its future, with the physical parameter as the driver for change. Although the focus has been on temporary uses, it is an interesting exercise to find a development process in which this line of argumentation does not apply. Such a discussion would be welcome in the future.

Asking the question, "Which understanding of place and ultimately site best substantiate and enable temporary use as a transformative force in urban design?" does not entail the question of *should we* or *can we*. One might argue that this is an omission; however, the focus (for now) has been on searching for an operational, applicable understanding of site that renders possible temporary use as transformation of the urban.

5   In conclusion

To summarise, this paper presents an understanding of place and site as dynamic, continually unfolding, and fluid. Furthermore, it stresses the fact that we do not make places from nothing; they are always embedded with something before they are appointed as sites, thereby becoming a task for somebody to change (again). A place may be a physicality that can be described and designed (and it is), but places are also influenced and marked by their organisational content – how they are decidedly so through legislation, etc. Finally, they have value defined by how people regard them personally that deals with memories, or as shown in the case, "feelings", and general opinions formed by media.

Understanding places as being underway and sites as "becoming" makes possible incorporating "temporary use" as a transformative force in urban design. Temporary use as transformation is operationalized in the direct modification of relevant theory into a model that can be used to decipher on-going or completed processes. Issues of who and when have not been answered, though one might argue that these issues should be directly included in any efforts claiming operationality. In this way, there are no to-the-point recommendations for future practice to be found here, but rather an outline for a foundation from which to move ahead. A temporary use may exist for a limited time, but has potential effects that go beyond that limited time span.

In order to understand and scrutinise these processes, an assemblage of aspects that are not (only) physical, and that develop over time, has proven itself operational. Whether this understanding has any relevance and applicability for sites in general – utilised on a temporary basis or not – is a tempting question to pose. Leaving dichotomies of temporary vs. permanent behind, however, the question seems to originate from a tradition this article wishes and strives to leave behind. With this paper, a first step has been taken by illustrating operationalization and applicability through a case of a temporary use process. Here the temporary uses make concrete the general temporality of all places and sites, as they are always underway.

Seen from a general perspective, the contribution of this paper to the field of research related to temporary uses is, at its core, quite modest. To regard temporary use as a tool for transformation to be inscribed in a larger development process demands a respect for temporality, not an uncritical tribute to temporariness. Regarding planning as process is not a new idea; however, it needs to be made increasingly operational. The application of temporary uses in practice makes this need blatantly obvious. Further research endeavours ought to continue down this path, perhaps venturing deeper into the dynamic relations among the categories of hard-, org-, and software, while also critically engaging in sharpening the understanding of the concept of temporary use. This would necessarily include the outlay of different kinds of temporary uses and the varying strategies, which underlie and render them possible.

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