NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING
NORDIC JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH

1

ISSUE 1 2020

NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research

1–2020

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research
ISSN: 1893–5281

Editors-in-Chief:
Daniel Koch
Royal Institute of Technology, School of Architecture, Sweden
Madeleine Granvik
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Division of Landscape Architecture, Sweden
Magnus Rönn
Nordic Association of Architectural Research, Sweden

For more information on the editorial board for the journal and board for the association, see http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/.

Submitted manuscripts
Manuscripts are to be sent to Madeleine Granvik (Madeleine.Granvik@slu.se), Daniel Koch (daniel.koch@arch.kth.se) and Magnus Rönn (magnus.ronn.arch@gmail.com) as a text file in Word, using Times New Roman font. Submitted articles should not exceed 8 000 words exclusive abstract, references and figures. The recommended length of contributions is 5 000–8 000 words. Deviations from this must be agreed with the editors in chief. See Author's Guideline (http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/information/authors) for further information.

Subscription
Students/graduate students
Prize: 27.5 Euro.
Individuals (teachers, researchers, employees, professionals)
Prize: 38.5 Euro.
Institutions (libraries, companies, universities)
Prize: 423 Euro.

Membership for the association
5.5 Euro (for individuals who get access to the journal through institutions).

Students and individual subscribers must inform about their e-mail address in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the e-mail address to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no.

Institutional subscribers must inform about their IP-address/IP-range in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the IP-address/IP-range to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no.

Payment
Sweden pay to plusgiro: 419 03 25-3
Outside Sweden pay in Euro to Nordea IBAN: SE67 9500 0099 6034 4190 3253 BIC/SWIFT: NDEASESS

Published by SINTEF Academic Press
P O Box 124 Blindern, NO-0314 Oslo, Norway.

CONTENTS

EDITORS' NOTES 5
MADELEINE GRANVIK, DANIEL KOCH AND MAGNUS RÖNN

SIGHTS BEYOND ILLUSIONS: TOWARDS COMMENSURABLE COMPETITION PROPOSALS 9
TIINA MERIKOSKI

AALTO THROUGH YOUNG UTZON'S EYES: THE ROLE OF ALVAR AALTO IN DEVELOPING THE ARTISTIC MATURITY OF JØRN UTZON 35
CHIU CHEN-YU, AINO NISKANEN AND NUR YILDIZ KILINÇER

THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN MANOR AND CITY: MANOR LANDSCAPES IN URBAN PLANNING IN HELSINKI 73
HAUTAMÄKI RANJA

ARCHITECTURAL REPERTOIRE AND DAYLIGHT METRICS 99
MALIN ALENIUS AND MARJA LUNDGREN

READING THE IMAGE – ENDORSING CO-CREATION IN PLANNING COMPETITIONS? 127
TIINA MERIKOSKI

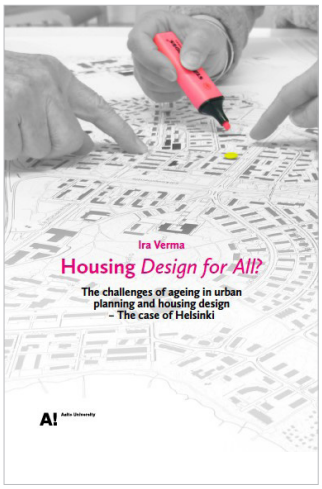
FORUM

DISSERTATION REVIEW
IRA VERMA (PHD STUDENT, AALTO UNIVERSITY):
HOUSING DESIGN FOR ALL? THE CHALLENGES OF AGEING IN URBAN PLANNING AND HOUSING DESIGN – THE CASE OF HELSINKI 147
REVIEWER: MARIANNE ABRAMSSON

Photo on the front cover: An illustration from the winning entry "Kuura" by Eriksson Architects Ltd.
Image: Eriksson Architects Ltd., courtesy of Aalto University

DISSERTATION REVIEW *IRA VERMA (PHD STUDENT, AALTO UNIVERSITY)*: HOUSING DESIGN FOR ALL? THE CHALLENGES OF AGEING IN URBAN PLANNING AND HOUSING DESIGN – THE CASE OF HELSINKI

REVIEWER: MARIANNE ABRAMSSON



Introduction and objectives

Recently Ira Verma successfully defended her PhD thesis titled *Housing design for all? The challenges of ageing in urban planning and housing design – The case of Helsinki* at Aalto University in Helsinki. The thesis, a monograph, is the result of the author's thorough work on the topics of housing, living environment, wellbeing and independence in relation to older people's needs and demands. The over-arching question is if older people's housing situation helps or hinders their well-being and independence, when old age is starting to take its toll by possible impairments regarding mobility, eyesight, hearing and memory. Subsequently, the objective of the study is to gain knowledge on housing design that supports older people in their daily living by exploring design features that support general well-being and independence of older people.

Thus, the thesis deals with issues significantly important for countries with ageing populations, that to an increasing extent live independently well into a high age, such as Finland and several other countries. People live longer and, in the years to come, the proportion of the very old will increase, subsequently increasing the need for different types of support. One of the issues discussed in the thesis is how support can be provided in a more general way, through design, and not

necessarily linked to the shortcomings of each individual. The author relates her results to the concepts of Universal Design and Age-Friendly neighbourhood design.

The focus of the thesis is the environment outside the personal quarters, i.e., common and shared areas within or outside the house where older individuals live, routes to and from the dwelling that leads to other places/activities and how older people can use and navigate in, primarily, their close environment. The thesis is based on three case-studies in Helsinki that were carried out by multidisciplinary research teams and with a high level of user involvement.

Context and framework

The author introduces the Finnish context by providing a picture of how care is organised in Finland, recent changes and the current status of the amount and the type of care older people receive. In addition, a presentation of the housing situation of older people in Finland is presented in this chapter. This provides the reader with a good picture of the situation in Finland and perhaps highlights the importance of understanding the situation on which the thesis is based; more older people that live on their own, independently with limited support from society which in turn calls for new solutions. In addition, the chapter describes the development of residential care units and the needs for support to those groups that are the main residents in this type of housing.

The framework presented is based on the concepts Universal design and its variations, Age-friendly cities and independence (of older people). These are all satisfactorily discussed in the thesis and combined with discussions on equality and inclusion. This framework is related to different impairments connected to old age such as reduced mobility, memory disorders, loss of hearing and eyesight. According to the author Universal design and Age-friendly cities (neighbourhoods) would, if introduced properly, provide older people with easier access to their environment, indoors as well as outdoors, to walkable areas, way finding etc. Referring to earlier research the author describes physical exercise as important also in old age and how architectural quality and the close neighbourhood becomes more important as mobility is reduced.

Methodology

The thesis is based on three case studies conducted in different neighbourhoods in Helsinki and includes older people that live in different types of housing, i.e., in ordinary housing, sheltered and extra care housing. Different, primarily qualitative, methods are used such as art-based workshops, observational walks, observations and pilot constructions together with questionnaires, the latter based on rather small sample

sizes. The most interesting methodological approach is the participatory approach, i.e., the involvement of older people representing either themselves or a relative in need of care. The different methods were used to capture different aspects of the relationship between older people and their living environment. Participants in the study were people 65 years old and older in the designated areas, health care staff and retailers, that is private and public stake holders.

Case studies

The first case study aimed to assess the possibility of ageing in place, to continue to live independently or with assistance at home and in familiar surroundings. The type of housing studied is housing in the ordinary housing market. In this case study focus was on the population structure in the area, the housing stock, access to public transport and local services in order to understand the preconditions for ageing in place in this local neighbourhood. Residents, shopkeepers and care providers participated in the study that aimed to implement participatory methods and this, I find, is the strength of this case study. A questionnaire targeted residents (N=64, aged 65-95) and subsequently three workshops with focus groups were organised, one in the local library, one in a sheltered housing scheme and one in the city hall. At the latter, that had the purpose of disseminating the results, a prototype of a board game with questions about the neighbourhood, the built environment and services (including public transport), was used to discuss the findings of the study. The study also included observational walks, according to the walk-through method, through the neighbourhood. The results highlighted the qualities of the places and services that were of easy access as well as those that proved to be difficult and/or unsafe for older people. Retailers work in relation to older people as customers, as well as access to the public transport system was part of the study.

The second case study aimed to assess which factors in the living environment provided satisfaction and a positive experience to the older residents in sheltered housing. Focus was on the shared and semi-public spaces and how these were experienced by the users. Three sheltered housing schemes undergoing renovations were studied. The immediate surroundings of the sheltered housing were also investigated in order to study the connection between the sheltered housing and the neighbourhood. The results of this study could be directly implemented as the housing complexes were under renovation. Participatory methods were applied to involve residents with a variety of functional impairments and staff. Resident's panels were used for discussions, diaries were collected, including the taking of photographs of the environment and observational walks were conducted. Different methods that would activate different senses were used such as art-based methods where the residents' productions were discussed in focus groups and individually.

In addition, a three-dimensional model of the sheltered housing and its environment was used to facilitate a discussion on issues about the built environment raised in the resident's panels. In addition, semi-structured interviews and observational walks were conducted at one of the sheltered housing schemes, to understand the way finding and navigation among those visually impaired and the shortcomings they experienced.

The third case study aimed to study the features in extra care housing environments that may support rehabilitation and the daily activities of people with Alzheimer's disease, or other diseases that cause a progressive cognitive decline. The study was conducted after a renovation to evaluate the usability of the facility and to assess how rehabilitation and independence among the residents were supported. The particular strength of this study are interviews and observational walks with the residents that suffer from memory disorders. Relatives and staff were part of the study by completing a questionnaire on their experiences of different spaces in the extra care housing facility. Again, the shared spaces were in focus and how these were experienced by the residents.

The findings in all three studies, all based on user knowledge, were discussed in relation to aspects of the universal design concept and the construction of an age-friendly environment. The argument in the thesis is to generally use architecture to improve the living conditions of older people and to construct an inclusive environment that in the long run is socially as well as economically sustainable.

Conclusions from the review

In this review I have mainly focused on the methods used in the different case studies rather than the results, as I find that the methodological approach is the strength of the thesis. Different participatory methods involving residents and different private and public stake holders are used and this makes the study particularly interesting as it highlights the particular needs, wants, possibilities and hindrances these various groups encounter. Overall the thesis deals with an important subject, the ageing population and the need to secure their well-being in a society where monetary as well as human resources are becoming scarcer. As such we need to look for alternative measures to cater for older people's well-being. The thesis contributes to the knowledge needed in this field of research but in addition to the more hands-on work that needs to be done in housing and environments where older people live, in their neighbourhoods and cities. Thus, it should be read by architects, planners, design professionals and others interested in design and planning issues related to the needs of older people.

The thesis is well illustrated and contains several tables, figures, maps and photographs that for the most part, with only a couple of exceptions,

are well accounted for in the text and contribute to the understanding of many of the issues discussed in the different parts of the thesis.

A question that remains after having read the thesis – the author writes on page 92 – is that older people are often not part of the development process or asked to contribute in planning processes that involve their own group. Along with this study, there are examples from different countries of older people being involved in research projects, but the step to involve them in planning in general and the design and development process of various projects is probably greater. The question is how this can be done?