

<Movement is the Key>

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AR3AP010 MSc. 3 PB Seminar Research Methods, Fall 2019

Abstract

The project of the graduation studio Public Building is about creating a public condenser for the people of Copenhagen. In Vesterbro, one of the districts of Copenhagen, due to gentrification there is a decrease in groups of mixed people, in their cultures and ages, and there is a segregation between the district and the city. Several factors for this problem are noted in the research on the topics 'City', 'Connection', 'People' and 'Power'. The influence and inspiration of the architect Jan Gehl and Hertzberger will be discussed and will lead to possible design elements for creating a public condenser. That is to say that both of these elements, the factors and the influences, will contribute to finding a solution for solving the issues happening in Vesterbro. With the intention of creating movement in Skydebanehaven (the design site for this project in Vesterbro) the solution of the issues will be solved. Using the design elements and approaches of Gehl and Hertzberger will emphasise and elaborate the solution of increasing the diversity of people and of decreasing segregation between Vesterbro and Copenhagen.

Keywords: movement, public condenser, Copenhagen, Gehl, Hertzberger, segregation

Introduction

The Public Building graduation studio offers a project for a public condenser in the cities of The Hague and Copenhagen. It is up to the students of this studio to choose a city and to create a design for the specific sites. In my personal approach the design will be made for the city of Copenhagen where the public condenser will be situated in Skydebanehaven, a park in the district of Vesterbro. This project is focussing on the public activities for various groups of people: as much for the people of the neighbourhood, as also for the people of Copenhagen, and people from outside of Denmark. To deepen the research into what kind of public activities can be placed in Copenhagen, and especially in the district Vesterbro, research has been done in four topics covering city, connection, people and power (Research book; City, Connection, People and Power 2019). This research led to the discovery of the lack of sport facilities in the Copenhagen and especially in the district Vesterbro. The connection between the district Vesterbro and the city Copenhagen is being improved by opening a new metro line and metro stations that are situated in the district - one station is close by the site Skydebanehaven. As for a better understanding of the opening up of the site Skydebanehaven, it is necessary to know that the current state of the site is a combination of a playground and park which is secluded by surrounding buildings. The site will not be literally be opened up, even so the site will be easier to reach. As for the people of Copenhagen the improvement of health is important, both mental and physical health are issues to be improved. Another note for the district is the decreasing of groups of mixed people in their cultures and ages, resulting in a segregation of the people in the district of Vesterbro and in the city of Copenhagen as well. The national government has as a policy to create 'an even better Copenhagen', which aims to improve the city as a whole, and has, for example, the policy to transform grey areas into green areas. The grey areas mean that these spaces have for example more asphalt than greenery, meaning a lack of trees or hedges. So in a conclusion of these topics it is to say that there is a need for activities that help improve sports and health and to create more greenery. The problem of the area is the lack of movement to create a better health environment. Translating this into a theme of the design concept for the public condenser it is the movement that will bring life back into this area. The question of how architecture can influence bringing movement into the area therefore arises. Is architecture a factor in decreasing segregation and encouraging (various, mixed) people to come together and move? In this paper the influence of Gehl and Hertzberger will be described and case studies of these architects will be shown. To follow, a possible solution for increasing the diversity of people and segregation on a basis of architecture will be discussed.

Gehl and Hertzberger

To start off the inspiration and influence on the design process of the project of creating a public condenser, Jan Gehl was introduced at the very beginning researching Copenhagen. Gehl is a Danish architect and urban design consultant and is founding partner of Gehl Architects. After Gehl graduated at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (KADK), he focussed on the style of designs. When Jan met his wife Ingrid, who is a behavioural psychologist, she questioned "Why are you architects not interested in people?" The shift of designing with priority to style went to designing for the people. The couple discussed the core reasons behind why human behaviour should be considered and used as the starting point for architecture (Gehl People n.d.).

After the couple researched 'how people interact with cities in Italy', the book 'Life between buildings' was published in 1971. Between the years of 1973 and 1997 Gehl worked as a professor at the School of Architecture. Together with his students they develop a methodology with Copenhagen as the urban laboratory. The urban policy implemented Gehl's work by introducing public space and improving the area for pedestrians (Gehl Story sd). Helle Sørholt is the co-founder of the company Gehl Architects, who encouraged Gehl to publish his ideas on designing for people, because the methodology should not only be documented but has to be applied in cities. As Gehl says in his book 'Life between buildings' the focus is on people: "Take good care of the people and the precious life between the buildings" (Gehl 2011). In his book Gehl describes three outdoor activities and the need of contact, which gives the opportunity for meetings and daily activities in public spaces of a city where people can see and hear others. The same element of activities occurs in the approach of the architectural firm Gehl Architects, where the starting point of designing starts with observing people and their activities. Combining people's needs, values and principles with beautiful, usable and intelligible spaces that will help people can create and engage in a type of line that they want to see flourish in their city (Gehl Approach n.d.).



Figure 2: New York Times Square before (Gehl Architects n.d.)



Figure 2: New York Times Square after (Gehl Architects n.d.)

In the example of New York Times Square the mayor promised to create a better place to live, the greenest and greatest city. The department of Transportation wanted to reduce traffic and increase walking and cycling (see figure 1 and 2) (Unrolling a welcome mat for the people of New York n.d.). Gehl introduced activities between the buildings on a pedestrian scale, where all three types of outdoor activities come together. These activities conclude a necessary, optional and social activity, meaning an everyday task, an activity that depends on exterior physical conditions, or a spontaneous activity. The contact between people that arises by creating an environment with all these activities is the connection between various people. It is movement that brings people together to connect, as Gehl says: "As we are inspired by seeing others in action" (Life Between Buildings Using Public Space 2011, 21).

Hertzberger is a Dutch architect who became internationally known for his contribution to the movement of structuralism, in Dutch architecture known as the geometrical forms connected to the human scale. He also was a professor between the years of 1965 and 1999 to students of the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam and at the Technical University of Delft. Besides that, he provided lectures as a guest professor to various universities in America and Canada. The vision of his architectural firm AHH (Architecture office Herman Hertzberger) is about life within the building, it is about the interaction of form and users, to what they communicate and produce and how they take possession of each other (AHH Bureau 2020). The returning element in their,

AHH, designs is the central space, where people return to and where paths cross. It is a space where people can connect, a space where activities between people will take place. With bringing people together in a building and movement as a theme, the thought of Hertzberger's *Centraal Beheer* in Apeldoorn (Netherlands) came to mind (see figure 3). This building had an office function for the insurance company *Centraal Beheer*, which currently does not have the same function. The building is being transformed into housing, so the multiplicity of the building will be tested. The design in 1972 was revolutionary for its time where the structure of the building offered spaces for small meetings, offices and workplaces. The structure provided open communication, both horizontally as vertically, where it made the interior look informal. The space in between the 'cubicles' (as they are not mentioned like that by Hertzberger and will be named like this due to the shapes of the offices in this paper by me) is a transition area, one where connections take place. The 'in-between' space as Hertzberger calls it, a divergent territorial space, a place in its own right where the spatial condition is meant for the meeting and dialogue between areas of different orders (*Lessons for Students in Architecture* 1991, 32). It offers a space in several connections, for example in the design of the *Montessori School* in Delft, the entrance must not be only an opening where children can enter (see figure 4). The entrance should be a welcome to children, a meeting place for kids to play and communicate with each other, as they too have their meetings and appointments (*Lessons for Students in Architecture* 1991, 33).

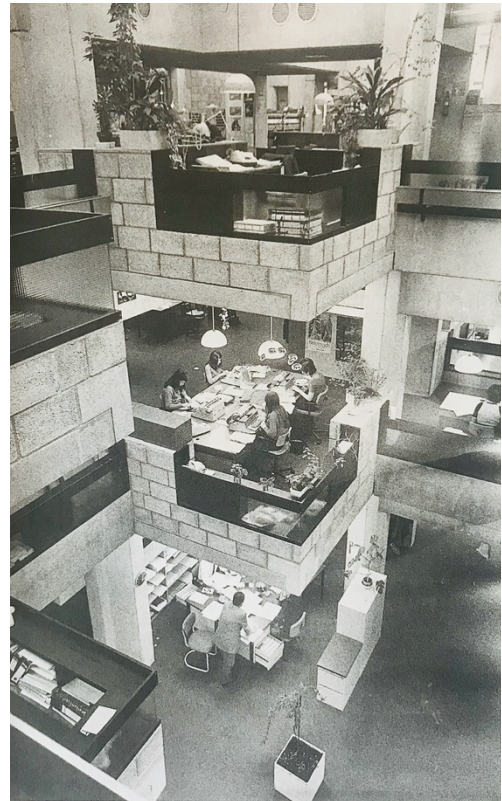


Figure 3: Centraal Beheer Apeldoorn, Hertzberger 1972 (Hertzberger 1991, 23)



Figure 4: Montessori School Delft, Hertzberger (1952-195) (Hertzberger 1991, 33)

The human scale in this particular case is focussed on the children of the school, showing low walls that can be sat on. As structuralism is Hertzberger's ideal to follow, it is not only about the structure itself of the building, it is about the life that goes on inside the building. In the Montessori school in Delft, the common hall is referred to as a street where the classrooms are houses, and as this collective space can be seen as a living-room of the school (Lessons for Students in Architecture 1991, 62). The street is seen as a place where social contact between people can take place, again to be seen as a common living-room (Lessons for Students in Architecture 1991, 48) .

Movement

Both architects have similar ideas about designing for the people. Gehl uses social studies to create activities in public spaces by observing people in their city, Literally using the street as the public space to be participating in for making social connections, while Hertzberger uses the street metaphorically within a building instead of an urban design: a central space in the design that acts like a living-room, where social connections and activities take place. Despite this, Hertzberger considers urban design, not only using the street as a metaphor. For example he refers to arcades in the chapter of 'Public Accessibility of Private Space' where the open interiors are connected to the streets. In this case of arcades it is seen as a shopping street, a passage to walk through, where there is no traffic except pedestrians (Lessons for Students in Architecture 1991, 74). Using examples as the 'Galerie Vivienne' in Paris or the 'Eaton Center' in Toronto (see figures 5 and 6), where these passages are intertwined with the network of covered pedestrian routes while also having the feeling of being inside and outside due to the glass roofing. Compared to Gehl's ideas about the urban design it contains the same amount of 'spatial in-between'. Both architects design public spaces in which people can meet and do activities, even when it comes



Figure 5: Galerie Vivienne, Paris (Hertzberger 1991, 75)

to buildings that are not permanently open or buildings that are both a public accessible space and a closed building, thinking of a passage that is an open space connected to buildings that are not permanently open.

Gehl designs with an approach of 'life in between buildings' as Hertzberger designs with a vision of 'returning to a central space'. It is to say that movement, as in the intensity of various activities, physically or mentally, will encourage people to a social connection, as activities take place in a public space, literally, between buildings, as well as activities that take place in a central circulation space where people cross paths. To translate this into a theme for the design concept for the public condenser it is 'movement'. And as there is a lack of sport facilities, a need for improvement of health and transforming grey areas into green areas in Skydebanehaven, while the district will be opened up more by new connections of the metro

lines, movement and activities will be a possible solution for the area. Movement can be divided in two simple elements, to wit physical movement and mental movement. These movements can be seen as physical activities and mental activities, for example basketball is a physical activity while playing chess is a more mental activity. Movement can also be seen as people talking or walking together and in this way it does not have to be connected to a certain function. Even when movement is noticed by people it will conduct movement.

Movement is the key

Creating a public condenser for the people of the district Vesterbro, the people of Copenhagen and potentially for people coming from outside of Denmark will have a lot of demands. As the research points out, lack of sport facilities and improvement of health are important issues in the district, and the best possible solution is to act with those issues.

Thus, by creating life between the buildings, in this case within the secluded area of Skydebanehaven, and by creating movement in the public condenser, as in the building itself, the activities within the area will encourage people to do something. The movement of doing something is a move already, moreover introducing sport facilities in Skydebanehaven will intensify activities. Additionally, by introducing sport facilities in the building as well as in the surrounding area, movement will be encouraged both inside and outside the building. With movement in the building and in the secluded area, 'life between buildings' will take place (Gehl). To connect functions within the public condenser, a central space where people return to will provide movement on its own (Hertzberger).

To conclude with the introduction of movement into the public building and its secluded area, the solution of the issues mentioned earlier is valid. The proposal of movement in terms of sport functions and activities will solve the lack of sport facilities. Initiating mental and physical movement and activities will improve health, and turning the secluded area into a greener space combined with outdoor activity will also be an advance of health. While movement turns the area into a place where people can interact and make new connections, the new metro line connections of the district with the city will create movement from outside Skydebanehaven. All together the possible solution of introducing movement in combination with the approach of Gehl and Hertzberger in designing for people will advocate for a decreasing segregation and for decreasing the decreasing group of mixed people, in their cultures and ages, in Vesterbro, Copenhagen.



Figure 6: Eaton Center, Toronto (Hertzberger 1991, 78)

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