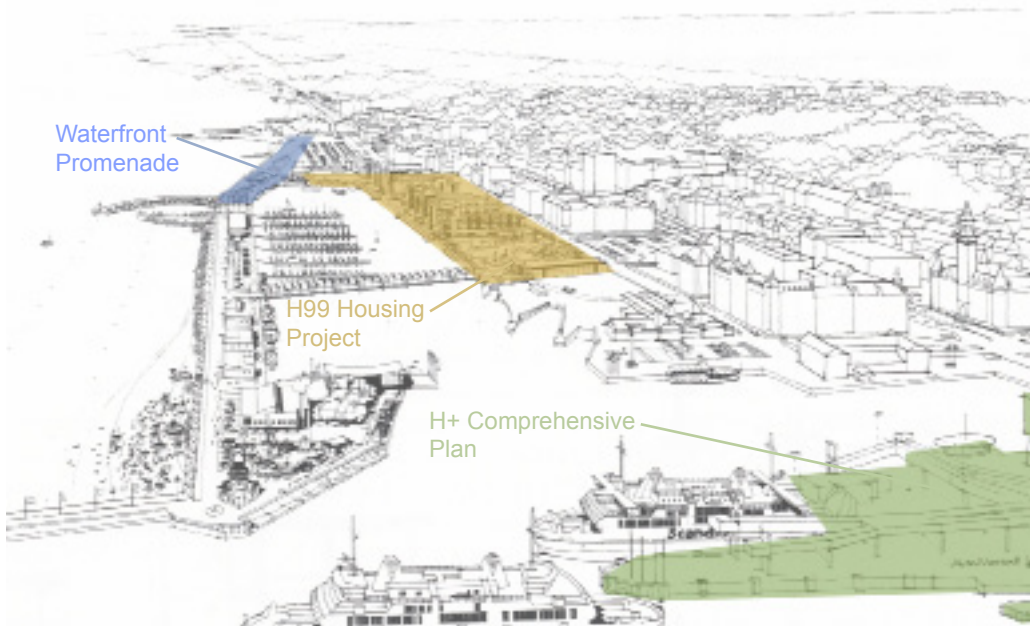


Helsingborg Waterfront

Julia Levitt & Joseph Swain



THREE PROJECTS:

H99 HOUSING PROJECT

Tegnestuen Vandkunsten (CPH)
Design 1999, Completed 2001

WATERFRONT PROMENADE

Katherine Brandt, Brandt Landskab
Design 2003-9, Completed 2010

H+ COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

20-Year Urban Renewal Project
Competition 2010, Begin 2012

H99 Housing Project Sketch
Alan Morall 1999

The Helsingborg waterfront is changing rapidly in anticipation of rapid population and an increasing place of prominence in the Oresund region. Our project outlines three major projects that have and will impact public life along the waterfront in Helsingborg's north, central and southern harbors:

- H99 Housing Project (created for H99 Exhibition, 2009)
- Waterfront Promenade, built 2010
- H+ Comprehensive Plan, developed by the City of Helsingborg as a vision for a 38-mile district and vicinity extending south from the harbor

HISTORIC POINTS OF HELSINGBORG:

- Originally a Danish city, founded as a strategic military location
- Kronborg Castle has regional power
- 1600-1800: Swedish-Danish wars
- Helsingborg became Swedish in 1658; area was badly damaged by wars
- Starting in the late 1800s, Helsingborg grew rapidly due to railroads and industrialization
- Strong socioeconomic stratification
- 1955: H55 Housing Exhibition establishes Helsingborg in arts and design
- 1960s: Car culture becomes dominant
- 1999: H99 Housing Exhibition
- 2008: Population = 95,444
- 2035: Population (expected) = 160,000



City of Helsingborg

Population

95,444 (2008 est.)

160,000 (2035 est.)

Projected growth = +60%

Major Industries

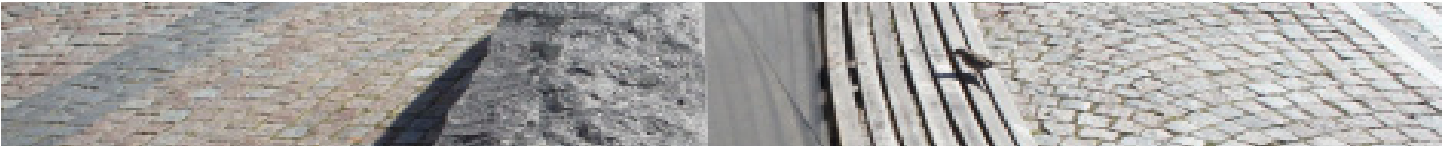
- trade
- transport
- business
- higher education

Commuter Relationship:

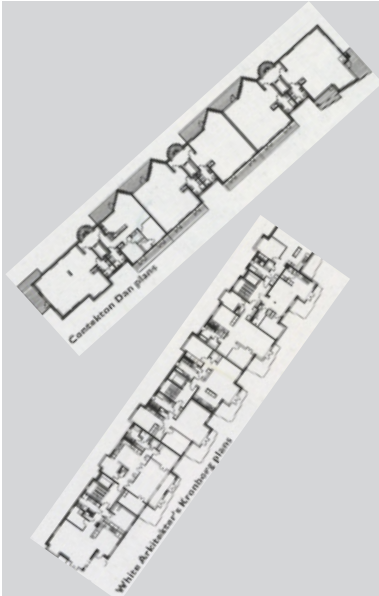
Elsinore, Denmark

Urban Identity:

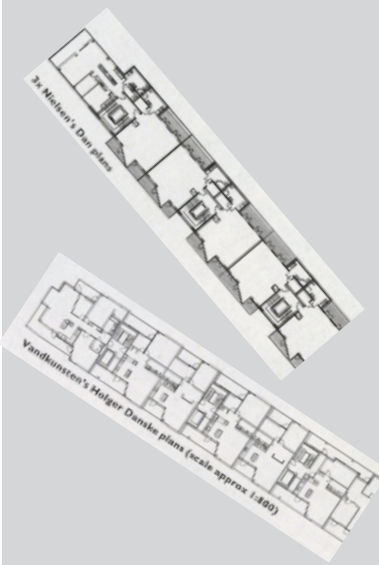
- architecture & design
- natural beauty
- arts and culture
- industrial waterfront



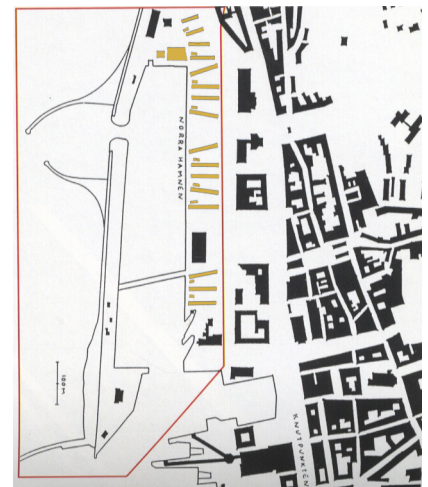
H99 Housing Project (2000)



To avoid a homogenous, visually stagnant urban texture, Helsingborg commissioned buildings by eight different architecture firms from Sweden and Denmark, with each developing a pair of residential buildings. Although firms were held to formal and programmatic guidelines, they were able to develop their own schemes and languages. The result is a variegated but consistent texture along the quay.

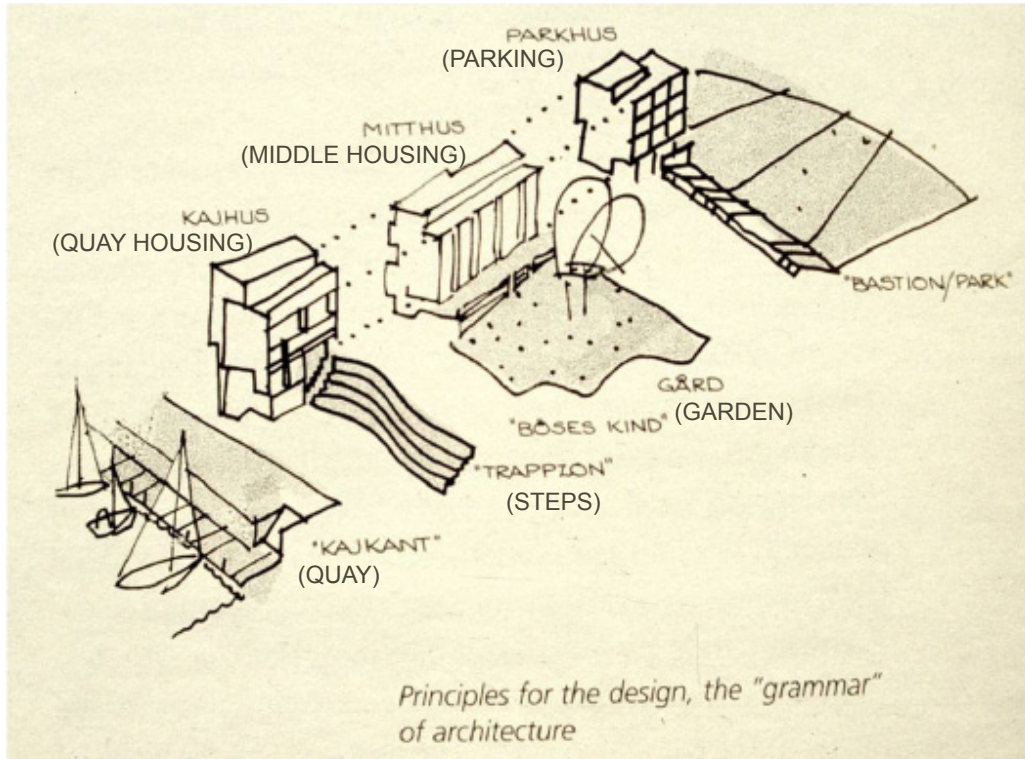


The H99 Housing Project is the result of a competition held in 1999 to generate ideas for improving the state of Swedish housing and reviving the area between historic, downtown Helsingborg and the northern harbor (Norra Hamn). The name is a reference to the Helsingborg housing exhibition, "H55," which was held in 1955. The site was formerly a part of the city's industrial port, but plans for a cultural center, ultimately designed by Danish architect Kim Utzon, and a concert hall directly adjacent to the parcels made it an important link between the waterfront and other public spaces. The Danish architecture firm Tegnestuen Vandkunsten won the competition with a proposal for a series of thin bands of housing, running east-west from the downtown area to the quay. The bands are connected by a waterfront promenade, and the spaces in between them are semi-public gardens or public plazas.





Helsingborg Waterfront

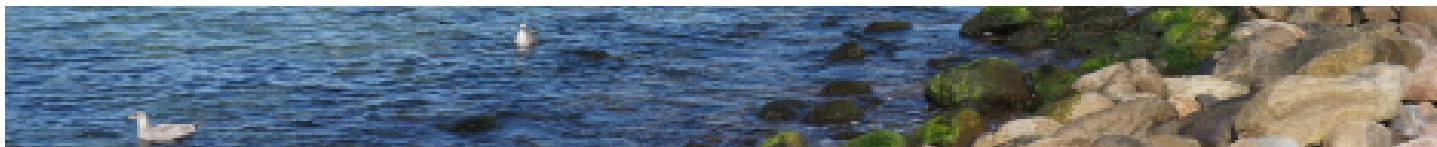


Each housing block is oriented to the water, with four stories of parking on the city side and eight stories of housing on the quay side. The ground floor is given to public use, typically cafes, retail or other services. On sides facing the semi-private gardens, amenities such as mailboxes and bike storage open onto meticulously manicured landscapes. Between each pair of buildings designed by a single architect, a small, free-standing building bridges the slope from the promenade to the gardens. These buildings are used as retail spaces, art galleries or cafes, and add a scale closer to the pedestrian level than the eight-story residential blocks. Living units range from studios to three-bedroom apartments, and by Vandkunsten's master plan, each has a view to the water. Some critics, however, have pointed to problematic layouts in some buildings that result in awkward spaces, or bathrooms as far from the bedrooms as possible.

Works Consulted

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- Brandt, Katherine. "Die Strandpromenade in Helsingborg." Garten + Landschaft, November 2009.
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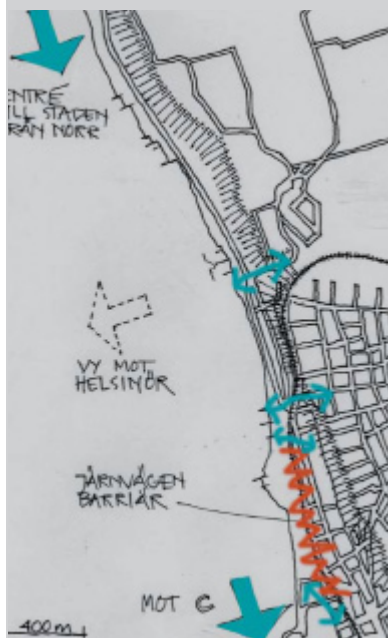
Waterfront Promenade (2010)

The waterfront promenade was designed by Katherine Brandt of Brandt Landskab, who was selected via a competition issued by the City of Helsingborg in 2001. The project was completed in 2010.



Sara Schlyter

Diagram showing the range of neighborhood characters lining the waterfront before the Promenade construction

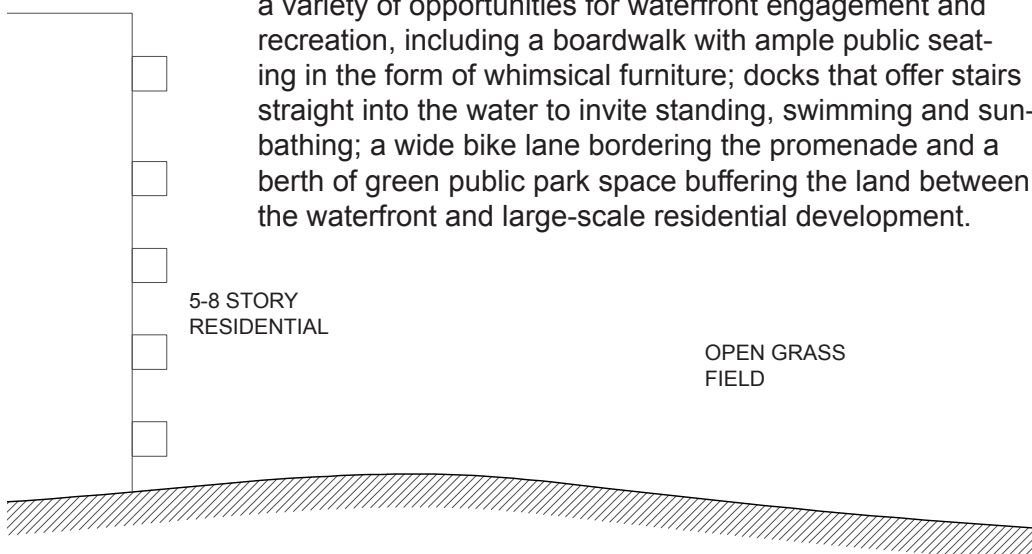


Sara Schlyter

Diagram showing the barriers and connections to the existing urban fabric addressed by the project.



The project uses a variety of materials and textural elements to transition from city and harbour through public space. Though sparingly programmed, the waterfront offers a variety of opportunities for waterfront engagement and recreation, including a boardwalk with ample public seating in the form of whimsical furniture; docks that offer stairs straight into the water to invite standing, swimming and sunbathing; a wide bike lane bordering the promenade and a berth of green public park space buffering the land between the waterfront and large-scale residential development.

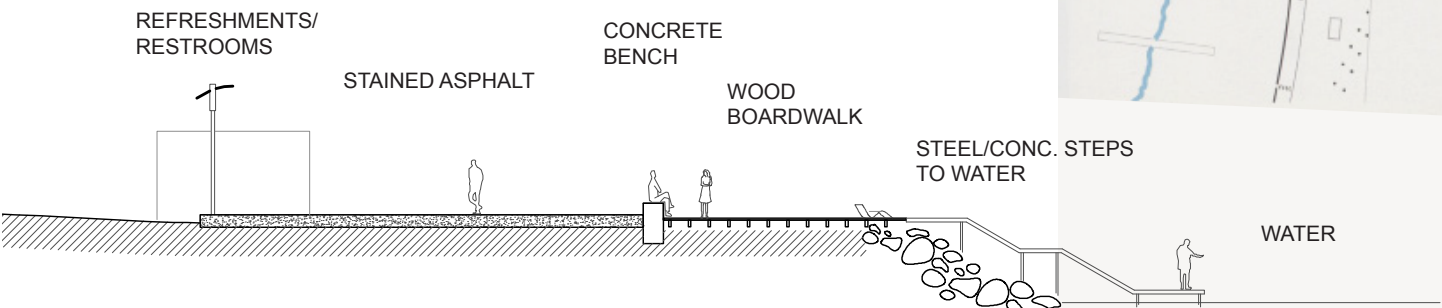




Helsingborg Waterfront



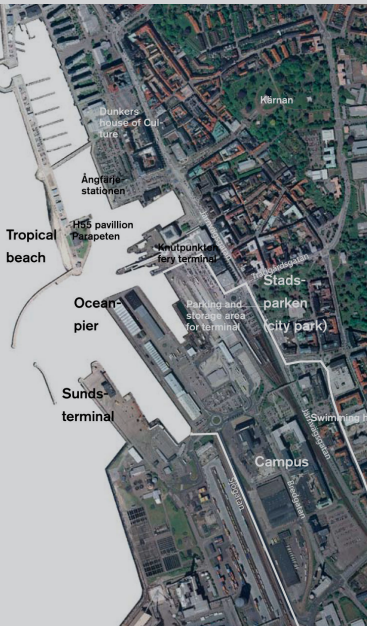
“There is a lot of pressure on the beaches, green areas and parking lots during the summer, and the waterfront is a popular destination year-round. Nevertheless -- or perhaps because of this -- the [waterfront] area as a whole is perceived as run-down and inconsistent.”
 --Sara Schlyter, Institutionen for Landskapsplanering, Alnarp, Sweden.
 (2006, before the waterfront promenade was built)



Challenges identified by the H+ Plan (taken from design competition brief, 2008)

Watercourses have carved out ravines through the plateau. Today, these link the lower parts of the city with the areas on the plateau.

As a consequence of the topography, the structure of the streets in Helsingborg have strong north to south zones that run parallel to the shoreline.



City of Helsingborg
Partial H+ Masterplan Scope

There are fewer structures running east to west. These are sometimes problematic but have a dramatic effect with great differences in height.

There are sheltered squares within the city...of good quality, but very much the same in terms of content. ...A continuous pedestrian precinct runs through the city centre from north to south.

H+ Comprehensive Plan

New Values for the Future:

1. Proximity to the sea
2. Place in the Oresund region
3. Honor Helsingborg history
4. Create a “meeting place” for people
5. Attractive place to live
6. Sustainability

“I want a city that resembles New York, but without all of the emissions and danger.” – H+ Plan

Precedent Study Conclusions

Relevance to Seattle:

- Expectation of large population growth and continuous importance of the city in the region and the world
- Vision emphasized reunifying an area currently divided by busy auto traffic and a major railway
- Presence of a working harbour and major commuter infrastructure
- Challenging topography creates divisions and barriers to the water that needed to be overcome
- Design creates new connections to the water from the land and incorporates a variety of activities along the water (swimming, observing, biking, walking, playing, working, living)
- Residential-dominant area along the waterfront risks feeling “privatized” but is successfully “publicized”

Successes

- Promenade attracts people to the waterfront with an appropriate amount of programming
- Explicitly programs “touching” the water with sundial stairs, changing rooms, diving docks
- Promenade uses materials skillfully to define space and create textural variety
- H99 housing activates and personalizes public space at the ground floor with storefronts, variety of details in courtyards and invitations to walk, sit and stay.
- Boxy black commercial buildings between housing projects, bring human scale to the large dominant housing structures while adding a variety of non-residential uses
- Memorable and effective intimate spaces within public space (lounge chairs, variety of seating opportunities for both groups and individuals)
- Innovative and visible stormwater treatment infrastructure
- Waterfront activity is protected from traffic

Missed Opportunities

- Abrupt changes in scale between cozy human scale and large housing blocks, looming buildings in the background
- Demographics are very homogenous and upper-class
- Waterfront remains separated from the existing urban fabric because of the road and system of parks
- While promenade includes inviting details at an intimate scale, green waterfront park is a relatively empty and unbroken space with little to attract or inspire use