



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and
Agricultural Sciences

Real Spaces through Mental Places

- an intuitive design process

Patrik Wallin

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development, Division of Landscape Architecture, Uppsala
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Supervisor: Thomas Oles, SLU, Department of Urban and Rural Development

Examiner: Rolf Johansson, SLU, Department of Urban and Rural Development

Assistant examiners: Gudrun Rabenius, SLU, Department of Urban and Rural Development & Madeleine
Granvik, SLU, Department of Urban and Rural Development

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Summary

In this thesis, I investigate different views on design and design methodology in order to understand a conflict that I have experienced during my time as a student on the landscape architecture program. Looking at how we work with design in our studio courses, there seem to be a belief that design should come from a place and that gathering information about a place is therefore necessary as a starting-point in order to understand a design problem. Personally, I have always thought the idea is problematic because it signifies that places themselves would give an accurate picture of a design problem, which I find far too narrow regarding the complex meaning of place. Moreover, I have always had a hard time with knowing how to treat the gathered information of a place and how to relate it to my design in early phases of the design process.

This conflict gave me reasons to look for and approach alternatives to the design methods that I have come in contact so far. Through literature studies, I was introduced to Kathryn Moore, which compared to many other authors has a focus on a more intuitive side of design. The results of my research show a design process that is much inspired by Moore, where I design intuitively and from only limited information of a place. The results are presented in three phases and demonstrate an intuitive and self-reflective design process, where I explore and develop initial ideas based on my mental picture of a public place. In sequences of sketches, I let ideas frame the investigation of the place and I use interpretation through sketching as a tool to transform different sorts of information into principles and strategies that I can use as a base for the design.

In the reflection, I look back at the conflict I had experienced in education and reflect on how I have been working differently with design in this project. The major differences I found and which I want to highlight in this thesis are the importance of

interpretation and negotiation. I experienced that information and ideas become much more useful when you explore them through interpretation and recognize them as more than just plain facts. Ideas and information need to be weighed against something, to certain criteria in order for a negotiation to take place. It is the negotiation, the iterative process, and the close relationship between analysis and synthesis that help pushing the design process forward.

Sammandrag

När jag ser tillbaka på min tid som landskapsarkitektstudent så har jag haft möjlighet att utveckla min förståelse för gestaltning genom att pröva olika slags metoder och förhållningssätt. Under utbildningen har lärare uppmuntrat oss studenter att testa och hitta alternativa sätt och metoder att arbeta med, men trots det ser jag sällan varken mig själv eller mina kurskamrater försöka oss på detta.

Studiokurserna på landskapsarkitektprogrammet är ofta upplagda på ett sådant sätt att vi jobbar stegvis och tar oss fram vecka för vecka genom att beta av olika steg i processen. Dessa steg innebär ofta att göra inventeringar och analyser som ett förarbete för att sedan börja forma idéer och koncept för själva projektet, för att slutligen börja jobba med själva designen och nå ett designförslag. Jag har med tiden insett att detta sätt att jobba på är problematiskt och inte särskilt motiverande för mig. Det handlar då främst om hur vi inleder våra designprojekt, vilket vi ofta gör genom en slags informationsinhämtning i form av exempelvis inventering. Jag upplever att det finns en föreställning om att informationen om en plats är viktig för att kunna förstå själva designproblemet och att denna information sedan ska vara hjälpsam i designarbetet genom att kunna visa på vad platsen på något sätt behöver. Men för mig har detta steg av informationsinhämtning snarare varit begränsande och tidskrävande, eftersom jag har haft svårt att se hur den ska kunna vara hjälpsam i mitt försök att förstå designproblemet i ett så tidigt skede av processen.

Jag ser flera arkitekter skriva om just denna fixering att samla in information som en alltmer forcerad utgångspunkt i designprocesser och Bryan Lawson, som är en utav dem, menar dessutom att studenter sällan kan visa på hur detta har haft någon som helst inverkan på deras designlösningar (Lawson 2005, s. 34).

Designprocessen är komplex och därför har jag börjat

fundera på vad design egentligen handlar om och hur det fungerar. Jag har börjat fundera på vilken typ av information som är hjälpsam för en design genom att ifrågasätta i vilken utsträckning information från tidiga faser av processen verkligen har en effekt på resultatet.

Jag tycker det är viktigt att fokusera på att förnya de metoder vi använder och hitta nya metoder och sätt att hantera information på genom att veta vad som faktiskt är fruktbart för en design. Av den anledningen ser jag det här examensarbetet som en chans att få sätta mig in i ämnet design och att öka förståelsen för min egen process genom att undersöka de motsättningar jag har upplevt under utbildningen.

Mål & frågeställning

Målet med arbetet är att närma mig ett alternativ till designprocesser som inleds med informationsinhämtning och frågan jag ämnar besvara är:

>> Hur kan en intuitiv designprocess utifrån begränsad information om en plats bidra till design?

Metod

Arbetet inleddes med en bakgrundstudie om design och designmetodik. Genom litteratursökning fann jag ett flertal böcker och publiceringar i ämnet och jag använde litteraturen för att bygga mig en förståelse av design utifrån olika författares synsätt. I ett andra steg letade jag efter alternativa designmetoder och kom i kontakt med de metoder som Kathryn Moore förespråkar i sin bok *Overlooking the visual*.

Demystifying the art of design (2010). I boken ger Moore exempel på en designmetodik som fokuserar på intuition och tolkning. Genom sekventiella skisser från hennes studiokurser visar hon hur praktiskt taget vad som helst kan formas till idéer genom tolkning och skissande tillsammans med beskrivande texter.

Val av plats

För att kunna designa utifrån en begränsad mängd information om en plats, behövde jag fundera på utgångspunkten för projektet. Detta arbete gjordes på ett konsultkontor där jag redan hade ett projekt till mitt förfogande och utmaningen var därför att komma på ett lämpligt sätt att förhålla mig till det. Jag hade en detaljplan att arbeta med som visade byggnads- och vägstrukturer samt schematiska skisser över placering på träd och grönytor. Jag redigerade detaljplanen genom att ta bort all information förutom byggnader och vägar och använde platsen som en bas att utforska mina idéer och tankar med.

Tolkning genom skissande och självreflektion

Designprocessen gjordes mestadels utifrån metoden i *interpreting through sketching* (tolkning genom skissande), vilket var ett försök att använda Moore's (2010) metodik. Jag tog mycket inspiration från avsnitten i boken med sekventiella skisser där Moore visar hur olika objekt och målningar kan tolkas i olika skisser och förvandlas till idéer för en design (Moore 2010, p 105–126). Under skissarbetet användes skisspapper och olika sorters pennor och även kol för att skissa idéer.

Eftersom det mesta av en designers arbete tar plats i dennes huvud kompletterades skissarbetet med metoden *self-reflection* för att på ett systematiskt sätt kunna förmedla min tankeprocess. Metoden bestod av fyra frågor som jag konsekvent använde under skissarbetet för att kunna reflektera över min process. Frågorna var:

- >> What happened during the experience?
- >> How did I feel and what were my reactions?
- >> What insights or conclusions can I draw from the experience? What did I learn?
- >> How can I apply what I learned to improve future experience?

Designprocessen

Designprocessen gjordes i tre faser:

Fas 1

In den första fasen utforskade jag rörelsemönster förknippade med vardagsaktiviteter på torg. Skissandet gjordes utifrån olika sorters tankesätt vilka preciserades i korta textavsnitt under varje skiss. Undersökningen av rörelsemönster ledde fram till tre designprinciper: *dominant*, *stabil* och *flexibel*.

Fas 2

I den andra fasen ville jag utveckla mina tre designprinciper genom att använda information från arketyper. Jag sökte efter

platser som hade egenskaper som skulle kunna beskrivas som antingen *dominant*, *stabil* eller *flexibel* och tog foton och anteckningar om deras karaktäristika och beståndsdelar. I ett senare skede försökte jag tolka informationen i olika skisser genom att beskriva dem i ord och bild.

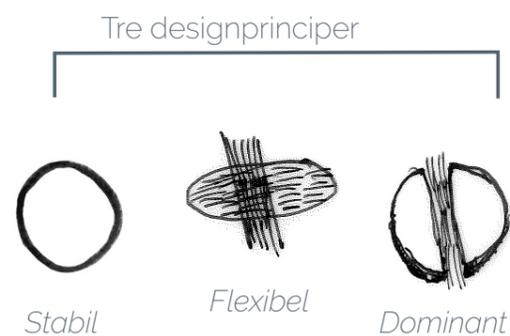
Fas 3

I den tredje fasen återvände jag till att utforska idéer om aktiviteter på platsen vilket ledde till en schematisk skiss som visade hur mina principer skulle kunna fördelas på platsen. Som ett slutskede syntetiserade jag mina designprinciper och designstrategier till ett schematiskt designförslag.

Resultat

Fas 1

Jag inledde skissarbetet med att utforska rörelsemönster förknippade med vardagsaktiviteter på torg. Genom en sekvens av skisser nådde jag slutligen fram till tre stycken designprinciper som speglade olika aktivitetsytor: *dominant*, *stabil* och *flexibel*.



Fas 2

I den andra fasen av designprocessen tittade jag på arketyper för att se om det skulle kunna hjälpa mig att utveckla mina designprinciper. Jag använde informationen om dem som grund för tolkning och skissade vidare på vad de skulle kunna innebära för min design.



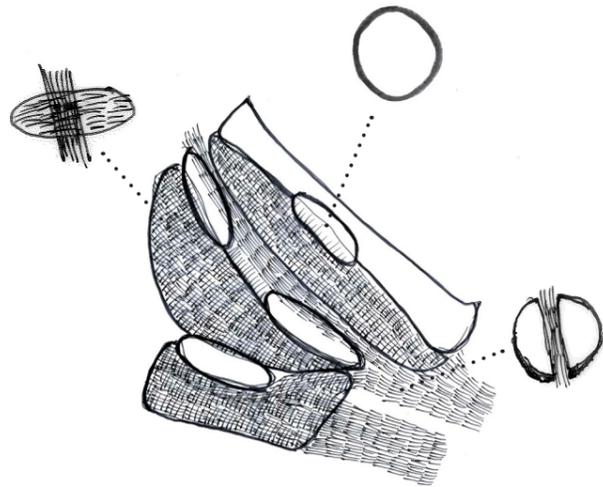
Bilden visar ett exempel på en arketyper som har egenskaper för designprincipen *flexibel*.



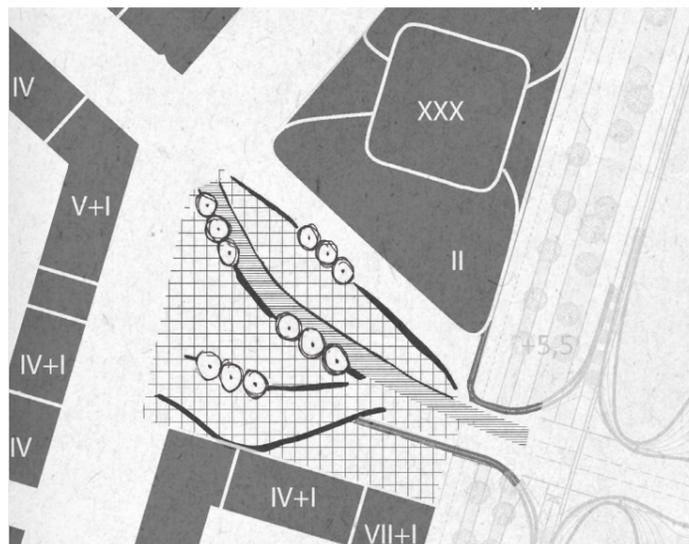
Tolkning av information om arketyper i skisser. I denna skiss undersöker jag information om en arketyper utifrån designprincipen *flexibel*.

Fas 3

I den tredje fasen undersöker jag hur mina designprinciper och strategier kan syntetiseras till ett schematiskt designförslag.



En skiss som visar hur designprinciperna kan fördelas på platsen.



En syntetisering av designprinciper och strategier till ett schematiskt designförslag.

Reflektion

Ingången i detta arbete var att utmana och ifrågasätta en metodik som jag upplevt vara problematisk under min tid på landskapsarkitektutbildningen. Målet var att närma mig alternativ till den metodiken genom att undersöka hur en intuitiv designprocess utifrån begränsad information om en plats kan bidra till design.

Design som ämne är komplext och problemet visade sig inte bara vara en fråga om metodiken i sig, utan om den grundläggande uppfattningen om vad design egentligen är. Designprocessen i detta arbete har fungerat som ett experiment där jag testat ett alternativt sätt att arbeta med design, jämfört med mina tidigare erfarenheter. Detta innebär att istället för att inleda ett designarbete med en informationsinhämtning från en plats, började jag istället med att designa direkt genom att ta tillvara på den kunskap jag redan hade om platsen genom mitt intellektuella bagage (Lundequist 1995).

Resultatet visar en utveckling av en initial idé till tre designprinciper som i sin tur utvecklas och delvis appliceras. Delar av resultatet kan nyanseras och förklaras med hjälp av de begrepp som jag kommit i kontakt med i bakgrundstudien, såsom intellektuellt bagage och modifierande faktorer (Lundequist 1995). Det visade sig att det måste finnas en slags förhandling eller diskussion mellan idéer och särskilda kriterier för att en utveckling ska kunna ske och processen tvingas framåt. Lundequist (1995) beskriver design som någonting mellan just idéer och modifierande faktorer. En annan sak som visade sig vara avgörande var just tolkandet av idéer och information. Genom att tolka information i ord och skisser kan den förvandlas till något som är användbart för själva designen

(Moore 2010, p. 132).

Sammanfattningsvis vill jag med detta arbete lyfta fram och visa på vikten av just tolkande och förhandlande i designprocesser. Det är den nära relationen mellan analys och syntes som driver arbetet framåt, och när olika idéer och information ställs i relation till varandra uppstår just dessa förhandlingar som tvingar processen framåt.

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Introduction

In this chapter I give a background of the subject for the thesis and present the aim and research question. Further I present an overview of the project.



When I look back at my time as a landscape architect student, I have had the chance to develop my design skills by testing different methods and approaches. The teachers have encouraged us students to try out and find new approaches and different ways of working, yet, after all this time, I have rarely seen myself or other students go through with it. Looking at how we work with design in our studio courses on the landscape architecture program, the studio courses are often organized in such way that we work sequentially and make progression from one week to another by completing different stages of the design process. These stages do most often involve work of doing inventories and analysis, forming ideas and concepts for the project and lastly designing and reaching a design solution.

I have come to realize that this way of working is quite problematic for me and sometimes even unmotivating. And this applies more specifically to the way often we start our design projects, for most of the studio courses do require a pre-phase of gathering information. The information about places is supposed to be helpful for the design by telling what the place itself needs. But for me, this stage of the process has rather been more limiting and time-consuming than helpful, for I find it difficult to see how this information would be helpful in my attempt to understand the design problem, at least in such an early phase of the process.

I see many architects write about the fixation of collecting information of a site as a slightly forced starting-point of a design project. Bryan Lawson, which is one of them, even argues that students are often unable to point to any material effect on their solutions for quite large sections of their gathered information (Lawson 2005, p. 34). Further, he refers to design as a way to handle problems rather than solving them, and that design can be seen as a dialog with the situation, where the problem is dynamically formulated with the solution

(Lawson 2005, p. 120). In contrast, his definition refers more to an interactive and iterative process where no pre-stage of gathering information is required in order to define a design problem.

The design process is complex and for this reason, I have started to question what design really is and how it works. I have started to wonder what sort of information is helpful by questioning the extent to which information from early phases of the process really has an effect on my design. These speculations further do pose the question if designers really are dependent on site-specific information in order to understand a design problem and if design really is an impartial act.

I believe it is important to focus on renewing the methods we use and finding new approaches and ways of dealing with information by knowing what is actually fruitful for the design. For this reason, I see this master's thesis as a chance to get involved in the subject of design and to increase the understanding of my own process by investigating the conflict that I have experienced during the education.

Aim & research question

The aim of the thesis is to approach an alternative to design processes that begin with gathering information about a place. The research question I aim to answer is:

>> How can an intuitive design process from limited knowledge of a place contribute to design?

Project overview

The idea

I had experienced a conflict with the way we work with design in our studio courses which I wanted to investigate closer. How could I work with design in an alternative way?

Background study

I read about design and design methodology to get a better understanding of the subject and I started to look for alternative design methods that I could try out.

Choosing place & methods

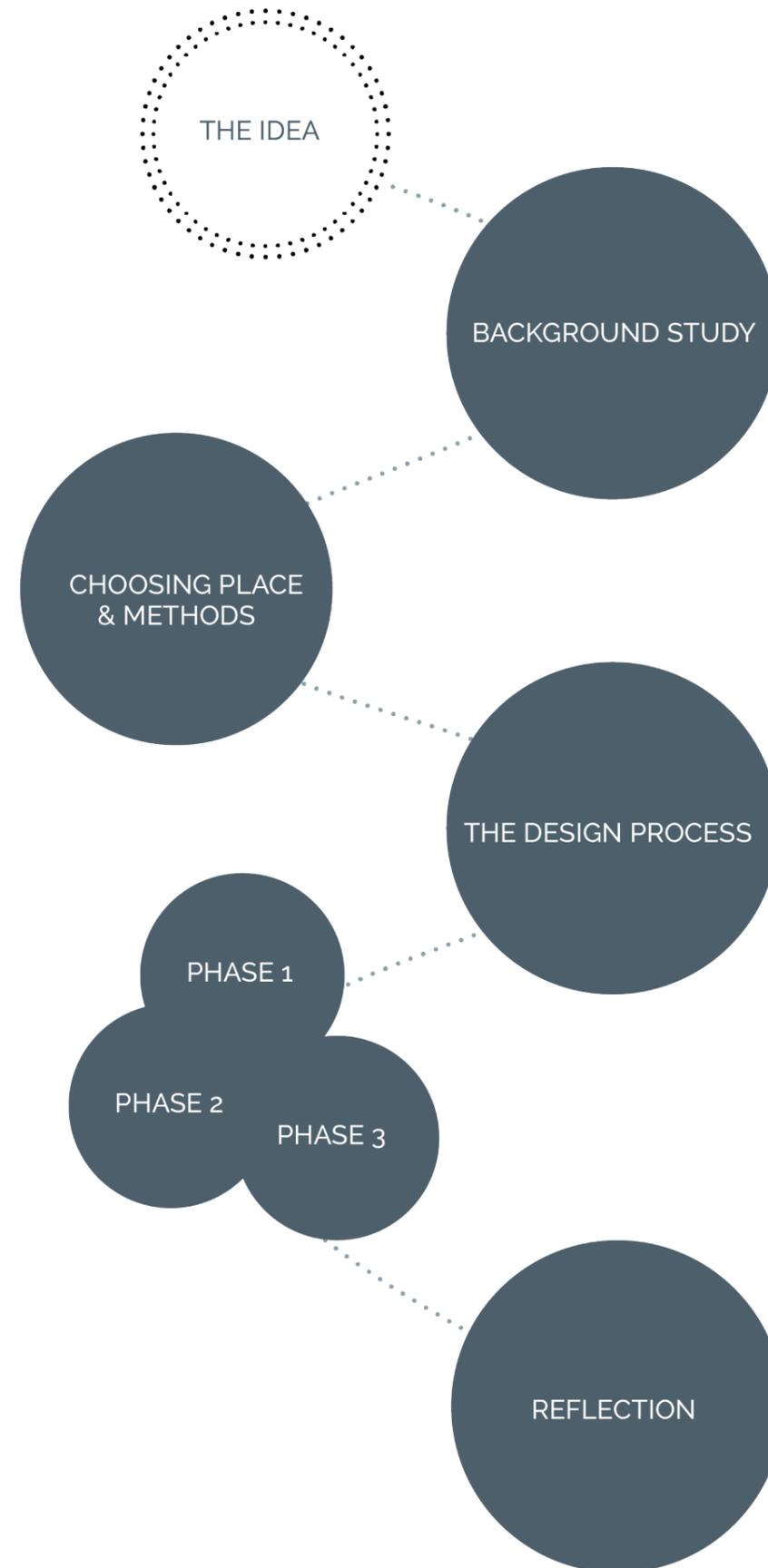
I tried to find a way to use the place I had at my disposal for the project which would allow me to design more intuitively. I chose a design method that I thought was interesting and that I wanted to try out.

The design process

- Phase 1: I used an alternative method, interpreting through sketching, to define design principles.
- Phase 2: I investigated archetypes and interpreted the information about them.
- Phase 3: I used the information from archetypes to develop and cultivate my ideas and principles.

Reflection

I looked back at the design process and reflected on the results with help of literature.



Method

In this chapter I describe how I chose the literature for the background study and how I used it in my research. Further, I clarify which methods I used in the design process and how the process was conducted, in three phases.



Literature study

In order to engage myself more in the subject of design and design methodology, I initiated my project with literature studies. I had been recommended to read the doctor's thesis of Kerstin Nordin (2015) for it had close connections with the subject I wanted to work with in the beginning. In her thesis, I found several sources, books and publications that had much focus on design and design methodology. I used the literature to build a basic understanding of design from different writers' points of view, and to see how design methodology has developed through time.

In a second step of the research, I went to look for alternative design methods and I found the book *Overlooking the visual. Demystifying the art of design* by Kathryn Moore (2010). In the book, Moore (2010) presents her view on design which has much focus on intuition and interpretation. Her view on how design should be conducted differs a lot from what I was used to, which made it more interesting for me to try out. Moore (2010) gives examples of intuitive and interpretative design methods. Through examples from her studio classes she demonstrates how basically anything can be transformed into ideas through interpretation and sketching. In sequential sketches accompanied with captures, she demonstrates how her students have worked with interpretation to transform early ideas into something that can work as a base for the whole design.

Choosing a place

Since I wanted to try to design from only a limited amount of information of a place, I needed to consider the starting-point for the project. This thesis was done at a consultant office where I already had a project at my disposal. The

challenge was to find out how to relate myself to it. The project concerned a design project of a public space and the document I had in-hand was the master plan document of the area. The master plan demonstrated structures for buildings and streets and schematic placements of trees and green areas. The first thing I did was to edit the plan document in Photoshop by erasing any information that could distract me, such as pavements, tree symbols and car lanes. I made the place completely blank and marked out the area I intended to work with. I used the site plan as a base against which I explored my initial thoughts and ideas.

Interpreting through sketching

The main part of my design process was done with the method interpreting through sketching, which was an attempt to try the methods Moore (2010) describes in her book *Overlooking the visual. Demystifying the art of design*. I took much inspiration from the sequential sketches in the book where she demonstrates how objects and paintings can be interpreted in drawings and transformed into ideas for the design (Moore 2010, p. 105-126). I used sheets of tracing paper and different sorts of pens and charcoal, to draw my ideas. The drawing worked as a tool to illustrate my words and words to illustrate my drawings (Moore 2010, p. 132).

Self-reflection

Before I started the design process I felt I needed to find a way to systematically communicate my thoughts during the sketching. I looked at the Website of Hyper Island and found a method called Self-reflection (2018), which was much inspired by the book *The reflective practitioner* by Donald A. Schön (1983). The method Self-reflection consisted of four questions

that would help designers to have a reflective approach on their design by letting them pick apart complex experiences. I consistently answered these questions during every new sketch. The questions were as follows:

>> What happened during the experience?

>> How did I feel and what were my reactions?

>> What insights or conclusions can I draw from the experience? What did I learn?

>> How can I apply what I learned to improve future experience?

The design process

The design process was done in three phases.

1. A process of exploring my initial ideas about the place and further taking these into a process of interpretation through sketching.
2. An investigation and interpretation of archetypes
3. A development and cultivation of ideas

Phase 1

In the first phase, I began to explore the fluidity of movements associated with daily-life activities on squares. The ideas behind the sketches came from different mindsets and approaches which I precise by answering the questions of self-reflection. I chose to present the self-reflection in the form of captures under each sketch for the readability. As one sketch led to another, the drawings became more elaborated and interesting, and I started to see structures and areas which gave further thoughts and ideas. I began to investigate the relationship between different areas of movements and reached three design principles. I used the principles to describe three different levels of activity:

Phase 2

In the second phase, I wanted to see if I could develop my principles by using information from archetypes. I went out to look for places that could represent my three design principles and as I found places that had corresponding traits, I took notes and photos of their characteristics and elements. In the next step, I used this information as a base for interpretation

in order to develop my design principles. It was a case of transforming information from real examples into something useful, through interpretation, by articulating why in both words and drawings.

Phase 3

In the third phase, I returned to sketching on ideas about activity on the place to see how my design principles could be applied in relation to this. This process led to a sketch which demonstrated how the principles could be allocated on the place. Further I used this map of allocation to give examples of how these areas could be constituted through design strategies, by using the information about archetypes. Lastly, I synthesized the design principles and strategies into a schematic design proposal.

Background

In this chapter I embrace my personal experiences as a student, views from leading landscape architects and theory, in order to describe the problem I have experienced during my study time.



Many architects write about the phenomenon of the 'black box', saying that architect students graduate from the school of architecture with design skills that nobody can really explain how they have acquired. A metaphor for a learning curve that unlike other learning curves is not entirely clear and that from one day to another students have developed much more distinguished techniques and approaches to their act of design.

Looking back on my first years on the landscape architecture program, I see this development even myself. Along with increased confidence, I see myself working more intuitively with design and the process becomes more and more endorsed on some sort of tacit knowledge. The background to this development is partly an increased understanding for the influence my design has on places, for the education has not only contributed to my developing of design skills, but also to raising an understanding of the complex meaning of place. The perception of place and what constitutes places are complex questions I need to consider in every design project, for I believe that this is what landscape architects really are about - creating places.

I have now come to a point where I see my design is relying more on personal motivations and beliefs and where decisions are taken more intuitively than before. But along with this development, I also experience a drag, for I feel this contradicts an overall idea of how a designer is supposed to work. When I look at the design methods I have come in contact with during my time on the landscape architecture program, I see that many seem to rely on a belief that information which is directly connected to the physical place is important in order to define a design problem. The design processes therefore often start with a pre-phase of gathering information, in order to build an understanding of the place for the project, but personally, I find this idea very contradictory for many reasons.

First of all, places are far too complex to be understood from only looking at things connected to their physical contexts. Cresswell (2004) sees places as social constructions and scenes for human existence, and Massey (2005) as something that exists in our minds and is always under construction and ever changing (Cresswell 2004; Massey 2005).

The various definitions prove that a physical place cannot serve a trustworthy image of a design problem. Even though people act locally where they are, whatever site, their actions are dictated by many other things which are far too complex to understand by looking at only one example of a place.

Starting a design process with gathering information of a place from the conviction that it will give you an understanding of the design problem is therefore problematic. When I look at my own design process, I have always had a hard time knowing how to relate the information I gathered of a place to my design. The most crucial stage was to move from the first stage of gathering information and to finding out what I wanted to do with it, an idea. In some cases, I had an idea already from the start, but I would not consider it as relevant until I had done the pre-work of gathering information. And along the way, with my head pumped with information from inventories, social surveys and Lynch analysis, the ideas would disappear or be irrelevant.

These experiences gave me reason and motivation to engage myself more in the subject of design and design methodology to get a better understanding of the reasons behind the methodology and to see if there are alternative ways of working.

The act of design

There are many different views on what design really is and many attempts have been made to define it, but the enormous variety of types of design makes it almost impossible to describe by only one definition. According to Lawson (2005), the understanding of design is very much connected with our particular backgrounds and therefore a general definition would lead to a too restricted and narrow view (Lawson 2005, p. 31). The process of designing is different from other processes of research since the design process is a 'subjective' process (Groat, L., Wand D. 2002, p. 104). Traditional research methods are often rooted in a rule-based framework, as a design process rather emerges from other workings that cannot be fully explained. The methodology used in design is often based on heuristic rules, founded in experience-based information, which Lundequist (1995) calls an 'intellectual baggage' (Lundequist 1995, p. 88). This baggage consists of a repertoire of personal experiences from former projects and results that are brought into each project. The designer uses his/her former experiences to find similarities but also differences with the new problem. Seeing the problem as a variant of something you have come in contact with before makes it easier to handle than if it was completely unknown (Johansson 2000, p. 17).

The idea that any analysis or design should come from the site, appears to be very contradictory in this case, because it insinuates that design is an impartial act where every solution is based on scientific evidence and plain facts.

In contrast, Lawson (2005) means that designers develop quite strong sets of views about how their design should be practiced from their own motivations and reasons for wanting to design (Lawson 2005, p. 159). In the same way as Lundequist (1995) writes about the designer's repertoire of experiences,

Lawson also mentions the 'intellectual baggage' which he means is constituted of the designer's different sets or beliefs, values and attitudes.

In design education, Moore (2010) has noticed that students often have a hard time determining where to research and what to look for, as well as knowing how to evaluate all the information properly, from site surveys (Moore 2010, p. 72).

Lawson and Moore has mentioned the same phenomenon that students often have a hard time knowing how to treat and relate information from surveys in their design and this goes very well along with my personal experience of this stage of the process. Moore (2010) also underlines that the intention of creating site-based design serves to an unsolicited homogeneity, for places that in many ways aim to 'fit' and 'blend in' are unobtrusive and invisible and this only contributes to giving blandly generic design solutions than subtle and genuine (Moore 2010, p. 77).

Personally, I never feel I approach a design problem with a blank mind, not even when it is required and that makes me wonder why I spend so much time on activities that impedes the design process rather than capturing my own motivations and ideas.

Alternative ways to design

The perception of how the designer's line of action should be is constantly challenged and many alternative ways are advocated. In this chapter I introduce the methodology of Kathryn Moore which is one of the leading landscape architects who works with, and teaches, different and more alternative design methods. Moore (2010) means that designers have to be able to push the boundaries and start to deal with new concepts and ideas, new ways to describe the landscape, instead of always straining to be contextually

sympathetic (Moore 2010, p. 77).

Moore (2010) suggests methods that have more focus on the designer's subjective and intuitive side, for she has a belief that researching a project and evaluating its potential is more about interpretation and exploration of ideas than gathering information about a site's physical fabric. The research stage of a project is a form of criticism itself and the investigation can equally well be framed by ideas as long as it follows the line of a good inquiry, is observant and analytical, means Moore (2010, p. 132). However, things must be interpreted in order to be useful, as goes for both information and ideas. The subjective act and sheer diversity of interpretations demonstrate that there is no right answer or way to go. There are no permanent truths to discover, but it does not mean the process is without an end, there is just no fixed end destination of it.

Ideas for the research can come from anywhere, whatever grabs your attention, a song, a painting or something discovered on the site. By developing the idea through interpretation in drawings, basic principles can be defined and helpful in order to establish a conceptual framework against which decisions can be made for the rest of the project (Moore, 2010, p. 132).

Premises for the design process

The problem that I experienced in our studio courses was to move from the pre-stage of gathering information to finding ideas for the design. In this project, I will try to work the other way around and give priority to the ideas instead and handle information about the place more cautiously. This means that instead of starting the design process with gathering information about the place, I will try to work from only a limited amount of information. It is a case of protecting myself from too much information and instead letting my intuition play the main role in the process. By doing this, I want to see if the stages in the design process become less clear and therefore easier to move between and make progression. The aim is also to see what information is necessary in order to start forming ideas and what role this information plays in relation to the design.

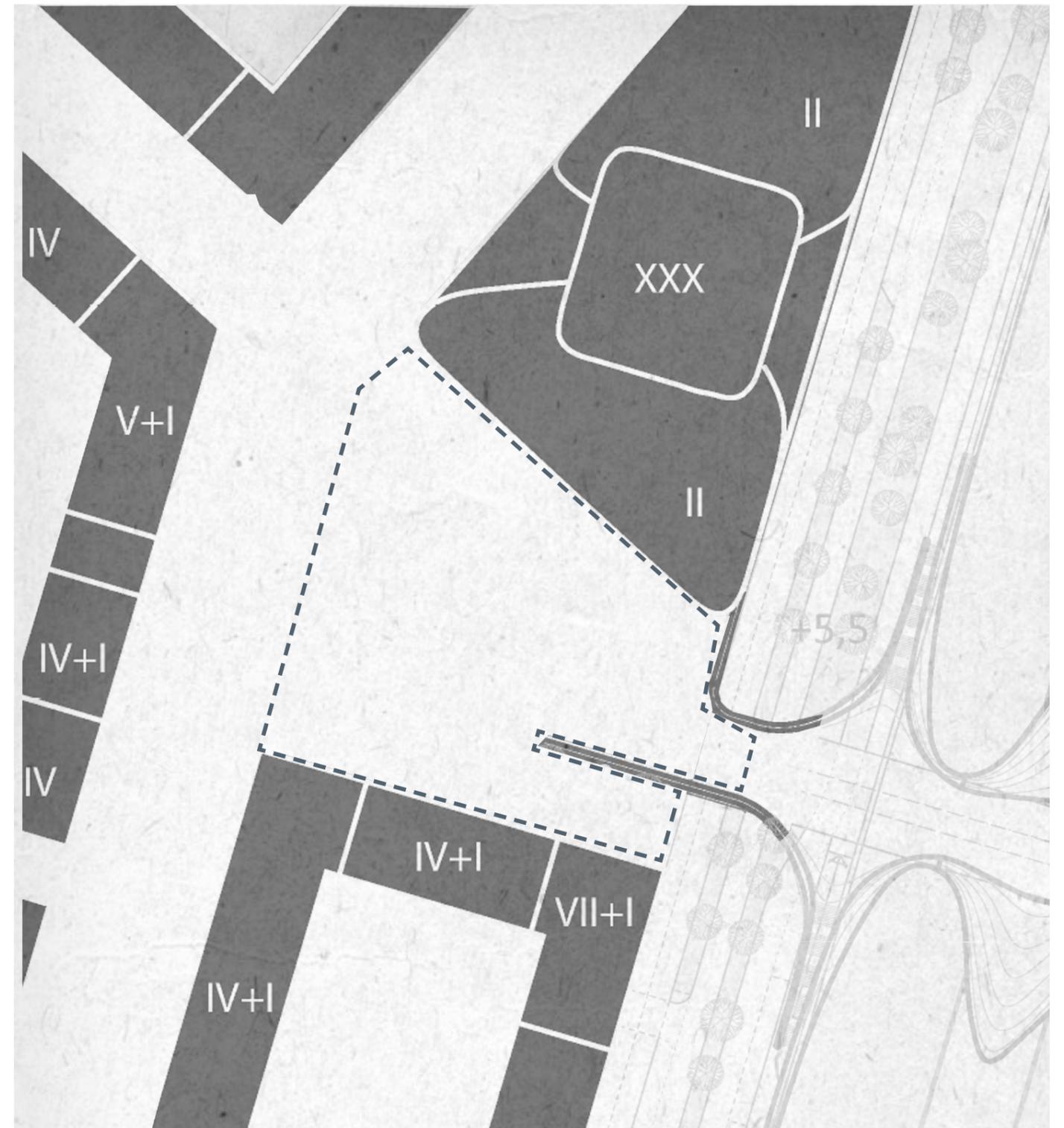


Figure 1.

Figure 1. The place as it is demonstrated in the master plan document. Buildings are marked with black and with the number of floors given in roman numerals.

The design process

The design process is presented in three phases:

Phase 1. A process of exploring my initial ideas about the place and further taking these into a process of interpretation through sketching.

Phase 2. An investigation and interpretation of archetypes.

Phase 3. A development and cultivation of ideas.



Phase 1

A process of exploring my initial ideas about the place and further taking these into a process of interpretation through sketching.

Exploring the fluidity of movements associated with daily-life activities on squares

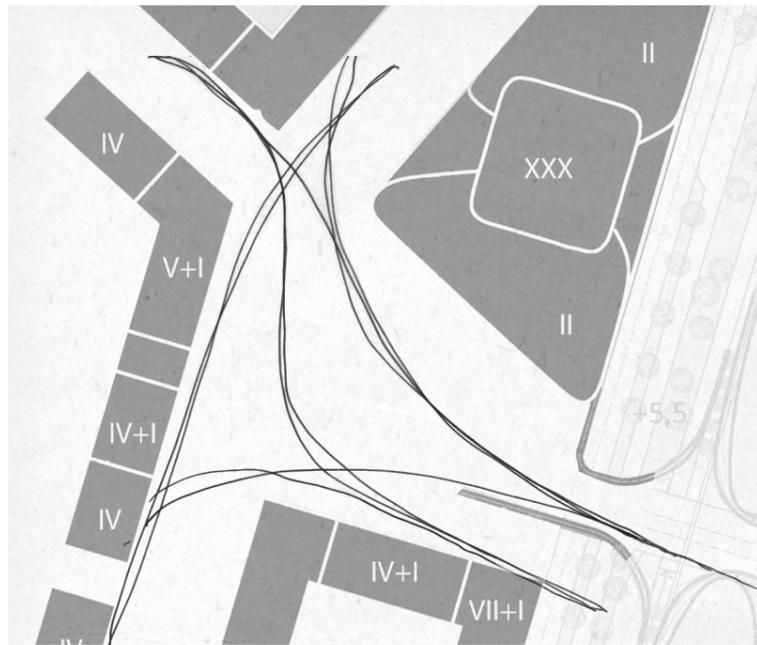


Figure 2.

Figure 2. In this sketch, I decided to draw out possible highways for movements across the place. I drew lines between the different streets and the bridge. The most evident connection seems to be between the bridge and the crossing. If the surface was completely empty, the movement patterns would probably look like this sketch, the most evident ways of crossing the place. During the exercise, a feeling of flow went through my arm and a pretty nice and sweeping shape appeared on the paper. Is this a representative image of the every-day life? What if I think more about WHO might be walking over the place?

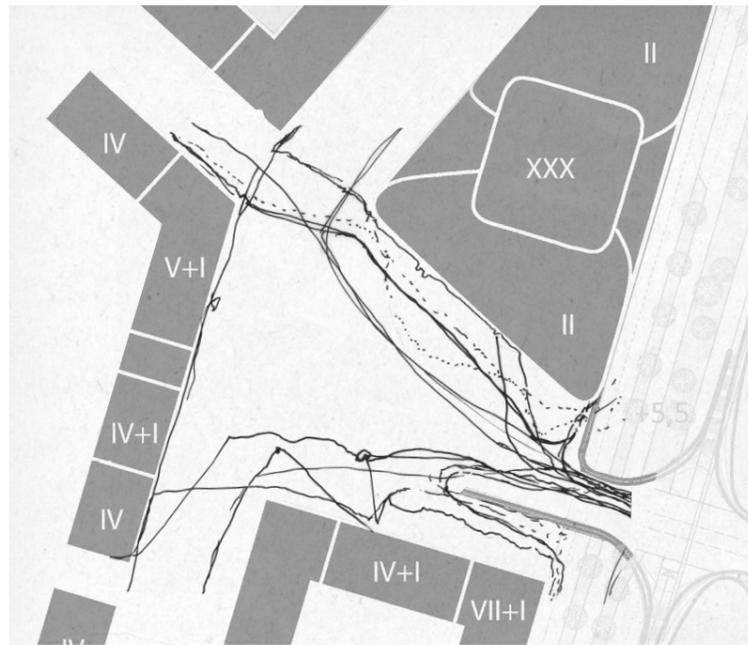


Figure 3.

Figure 3. In this move, I had an imaginary approach. I tried to envision how it would be to walk across the square as if I were: a teenager, an adult, a mom with a baby stroller and a four-year-old kid, an older lady and a bicyclist. All in different moods and on different times of the day. Some stressing to work, some coming back home. Some curious of what happens on the square, some only focusing on their journey to and from work. This mindset was very fruitful. There was a will of exploring and the most evident paths became less evident in this move. Everyone was not in the same hurry as I expected. People come from different directions. Depending on what is in the buildings people would adapt themselves. One word that came to my mind was 'crowd'.

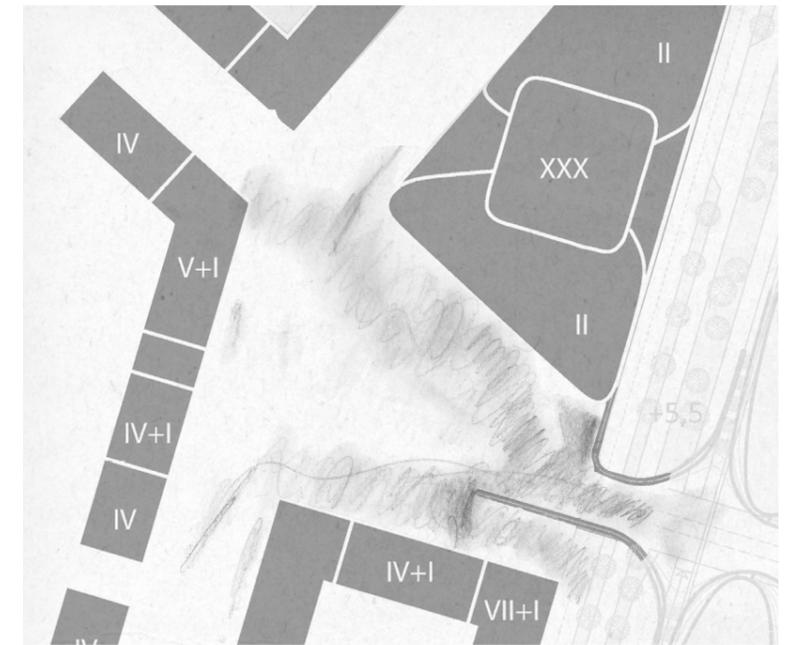


Figure 4.

Figure 4. I used another pen to redraw the lines of the movement patterns on the site. I made the lines fuzziier for them to give a more living and free expression. Areas where the lines are denser, the more activity. Interesting 'tensions' appeared where the lines collided. Regarding the sketch as it looks now, the place could be very active. It also appears to be slightly calmer in the middle parts. Areas I did not see as 'important' earlier, become clearer in this move.

Looking at the relation between different areas of movements

The white areas pop out

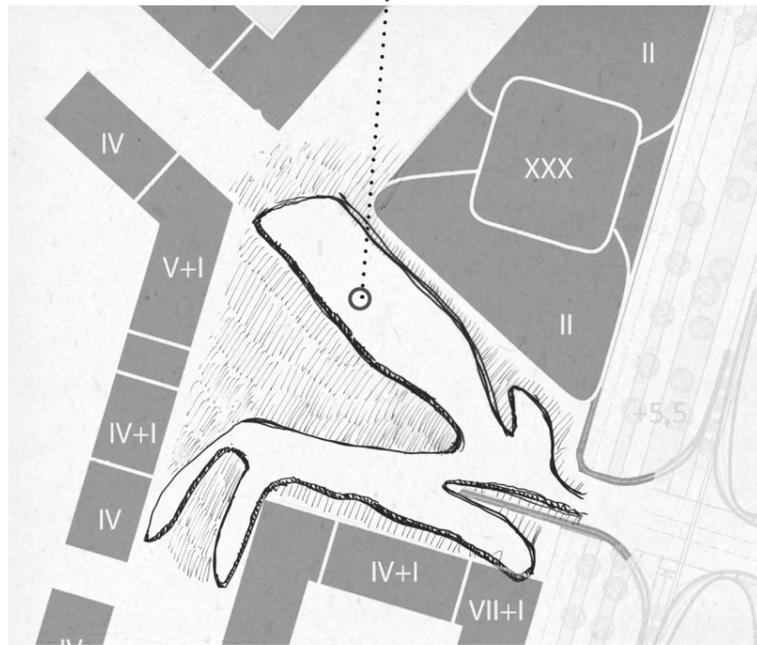


Figure 5.

Figure 5. I gave the areas of movements a volume and crosshatched the rest. Interesting shapes popped out and gave the place a completely different feeling. One can see in this move that the areas of movements became very dominating in relation to other areas. What happens if I invert this sketch?

Barriers

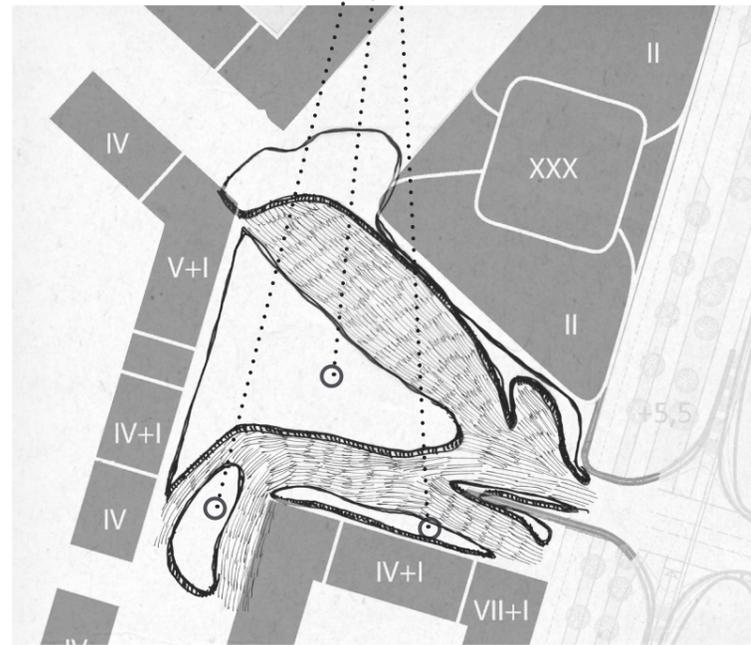


Figure 6.

Figure 6. I inverted the pattern from the previous sketch to see what would happen. In this sketch, some areas appear as barriers and seem quite separated. Sensations as 'up and down', 'flowing and static' and 'in and out'. Can this image say anything about the division of different areas in general? Can they be combined in any way?

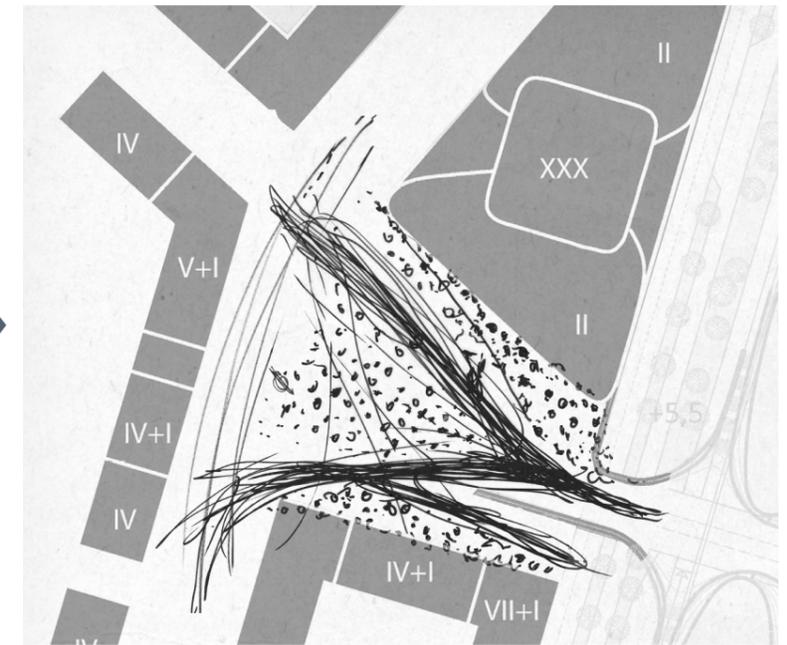


Figure 7.

Figure 7. Lines and dots. Lines stand for movements and dots for residence. The sketch shows my frustration as I had a hard time finding a way to combine activities of movements and residence without one dominating the other. I have to look closer at the transitions between lines and dots.

Working to explore and define design principles



Figure 8.

Figure 8. Taking a closer look at circles and lines. Circles can be superior to lines and lines can cut through circles. In this way, no one is dominant. Also, interesting tensions appear where lines cut through circles and vice versa. A sensation of open and closed, entering and leaving emerges. What happens if circles represent spaces and lines movement patterns?

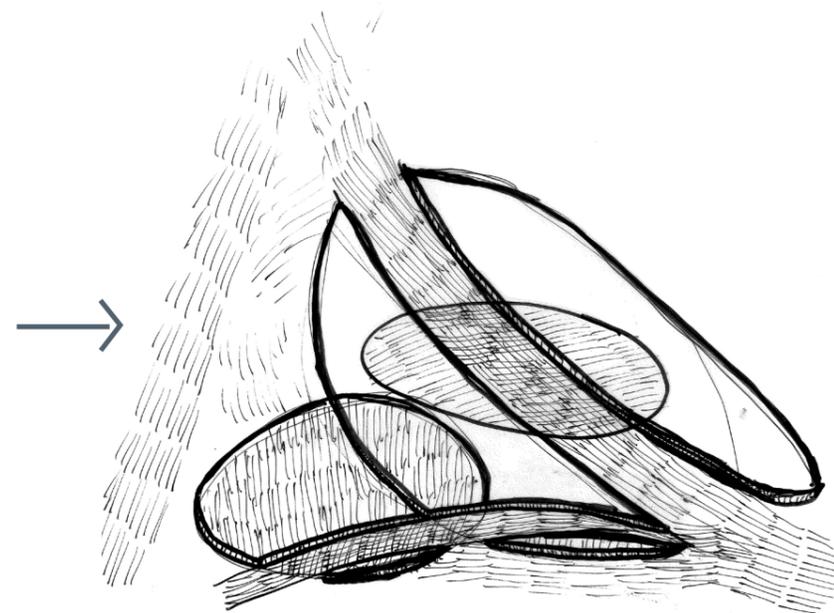


Figure 9.

Figure 9. I started to investigate how lines and circles can be combined. In this sketch I used volumes to see what happens when lines cut through circles and circles lay over lines. The sketch demonstrates three different types of areas: empty areas, crosshatched areas and lines. I decided to crosshatch areas that went across both areas and lines. If lines represent movements and empty areas represent areas protected from movements then might crosshatched areas represent areas of equality between the two?

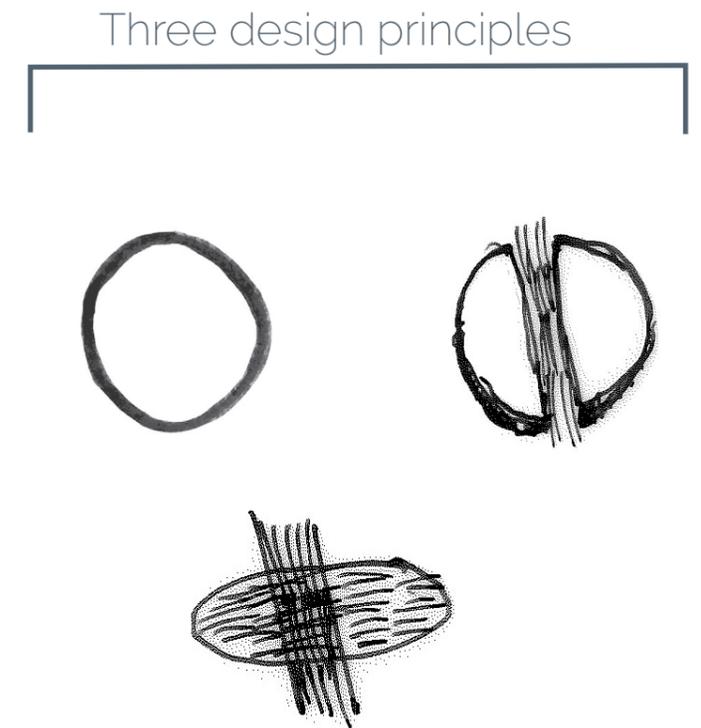


Figure 10.

Figure 10. Solid circle. The circle is not interrupted or threatened by anything. Circles symbolize something that is stagnant and protected, residential. I choose to call this principles *stable*.

Lines cutting through a circle. In this case, lines seem superior to circles as they cut right through and split the circle into two pieces. Since lines stand for movements I choose to call this principles *dominant*.

Lines and circles combined. Here, dominating lines are overlaid with a crosshatched circle which creates an equality between the two areas. Neither of them is dominant in this case. I call this principles *flexible*.

Phase 2

An investigation and interpretation of archetypes.

Investigating general attributes for *stable*



From the study of archetypes, places that represent *stable* seem to consist of activities that are not dominated by movements or transport and that involve activities as staying, sitting, looking around, reading a book, and having lunch.

CHARACTERISTICS

Physical elements:

- Seating
- Shelter supported by vegetation or objects
- Shifting material on the ground such as gravel, paving, concrete slab, grass
- Separation from the environment

Sensory-based:

- Safety
- Control (prospect-refuge),
- Privacy
- Passivity
- Enclosed
- Comfort

Examples of stable



Figure 11.

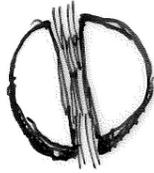
Figure 11. A line of trees with benches underneath. Another ground material in contrast to its surroundings.



Figure 12.

Figure 12. An area in the middle of a square with benches and flower pots that are separating it from the surroundings.

Investigating general attributes for *dominant*



The principle *dominant* exists on places that are dominated by movements or transport. Activities that occur on these places can be: walking, running, biking and driving.

CHARACTERISTICS

Physical elements:

- Hard materials that facilitates movements, such as asphalt and concrete
- Physical boundaries separating the area from the surroundings, such as trees, traffic islands
- Direct and clean form and structure

Sensory-based:

- Speed
- Direction
- Danger
- Easiness
- Flow

Examples of dominant



Figure 13.

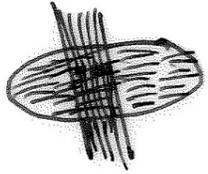
Figure 13. A cycle track of concrete pavers crossing a square. The area of superior movement is accentuated by lines painted on the ground.



Figure 14.

Figure 14. A wide bicycle and footpath of asphalt in front of a building. People need to pay attention every time they walk across it.

Investigating general attributes for *flexible*



I found characteristics for the principles flexible on places that were not dominated by movements or residence. On these places, activities took place under the same conditions and no activity was dominant to the other.

CHARACTERISTICS

Physical elements:

- Accessible materials (in most cases), such as paving, concrete slab and asphalt
- Openness
- Vegetation and objects
- Crowd

Sensory-based:

- Flexibility
- Change
- Spontaneity
- Semi-privacy

Examples of flexible



Figure 15.

Figure 15. The middle area of a square that is kept open and allow for people to move spontaneously.



Figure 16.

Figure 16. A large and empty area in the middle of a square that is open and flexible. No activity is dominant.

Exploring information of archetypes through interpretation

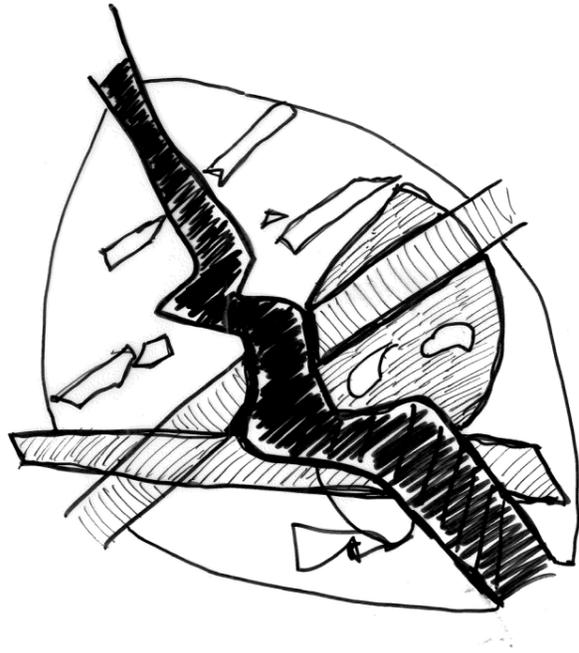


Figure 17.

Figure 17. Investigating the principle of dominant by looking at the relation between different sorts of movements. Movements run over the place unlimitedly. Direct and straight, or curved and abrupt. Different levels of dominance appear in this sketch as some lines cross over others.

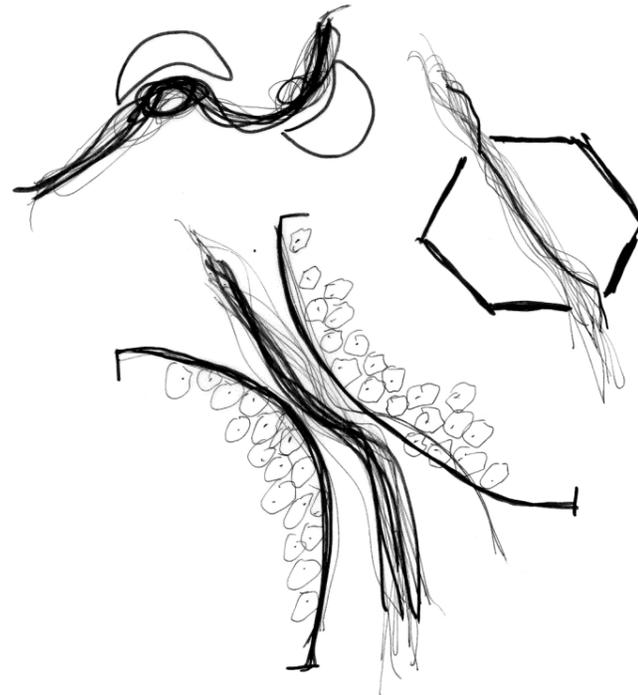


Figure 18.

Figure 18. Exploring the fluidity of movements in relation to the environment. In this sketch movements need to adapt themselves to surrounding objects. Or is the surrounding adapted to the movements? The fluidity is constant and continuous.

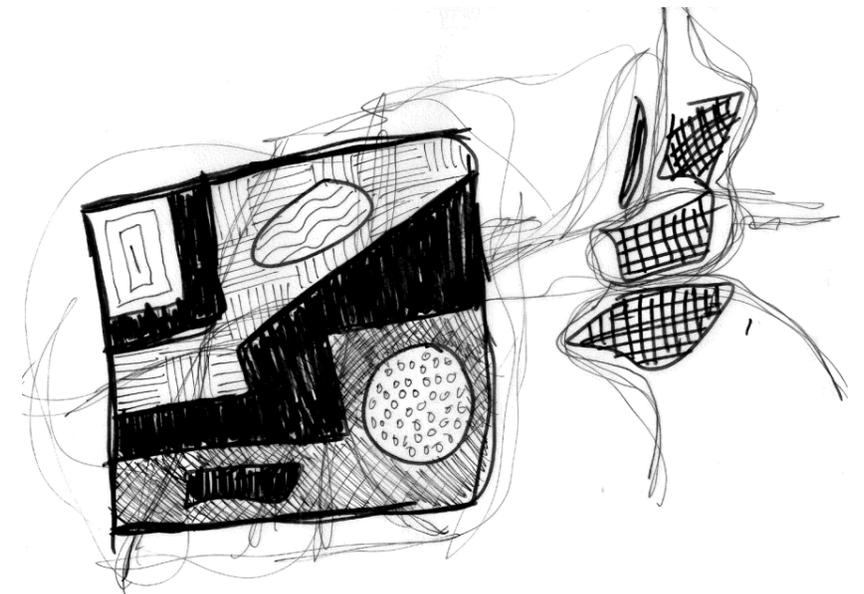


Figure 19.

Figure 19. Investigating the fluidity of movements in situations where the environment is more controlling. In this sketch, movements are not only surrounded by objects, but do also run over different sorts of areas. The fluidity is not interrupted, but very much adapted in relation to surrounding objects. Looking at how movements run over different areas, the lines are more spread and not continuous in the same way as when only in relation to objects. The sketch shows that different areas also can affect the fluidity of movements.

Exploring information of archetypes through interpretation



Figure 20.

Figure 20. Investigating borders and separations of places. In this sketch I investigate the separation of places through clear edges. Movements can run freely on areas that are separated from the surroundings. Other areas become subordinated, at least in direct proximity. But other areas can profit from the separation as well, because clear edges leave no room for uncertainty.

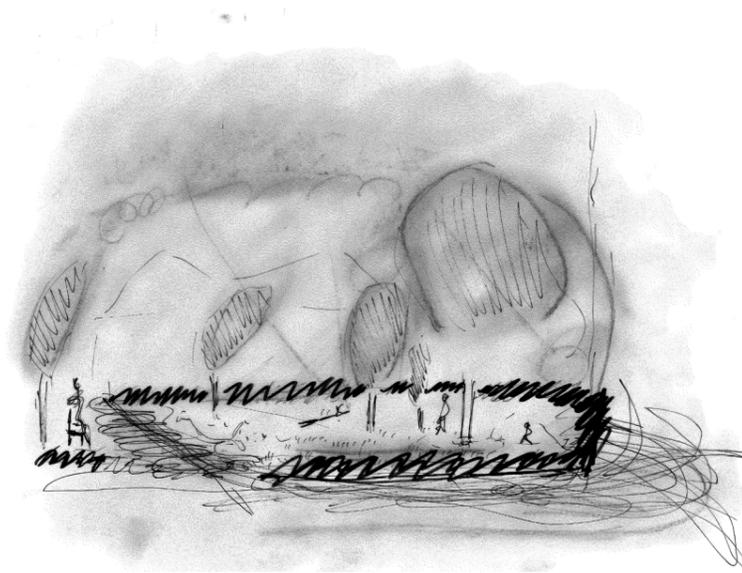


Figure 21.

Figure 21. Investigating the principle of stable. In this sketch I investigate the relation between superior residence and movement in order to see what makes a place separated from another. Entering the place of superior residence gives a sensation of stepping into a new room and 'the outside' becomes less present. The sketch also demonstrates a passage through the room, which is not representing the same sort of movement as the one on the outside. The sensation of entering a room seems to have a big effect on movements.

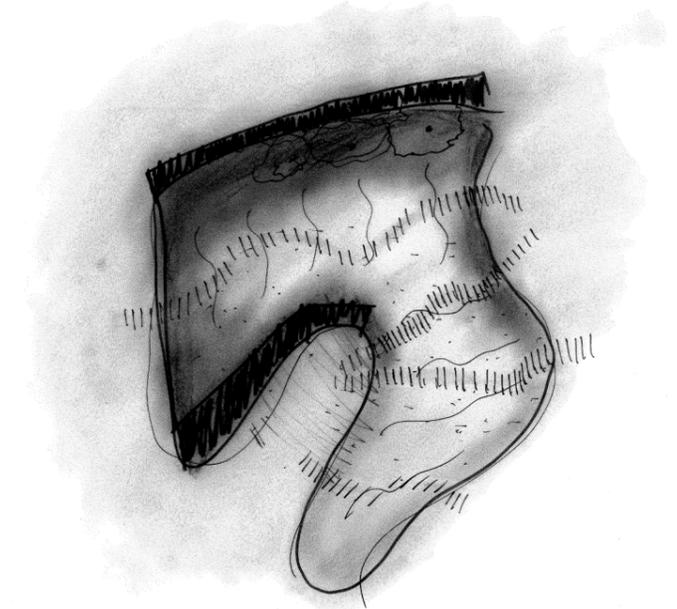


Figure 22.

Figure 22. Subordinated movements. In this sketch I investigate the principle of flexible. Both sensory-based and physical edges can be used in order to control movements. But in this sketch, no activity is completely controlled. The dashed lines that are crossing the place demonstrate more cautious movements. The sketch also demonstrates the sensation of not being prioritized which is quite similar to being undefined or uncertain.

Phase 3

A development and cultivation of ideas.

A development and cultivation of ideas and design principles

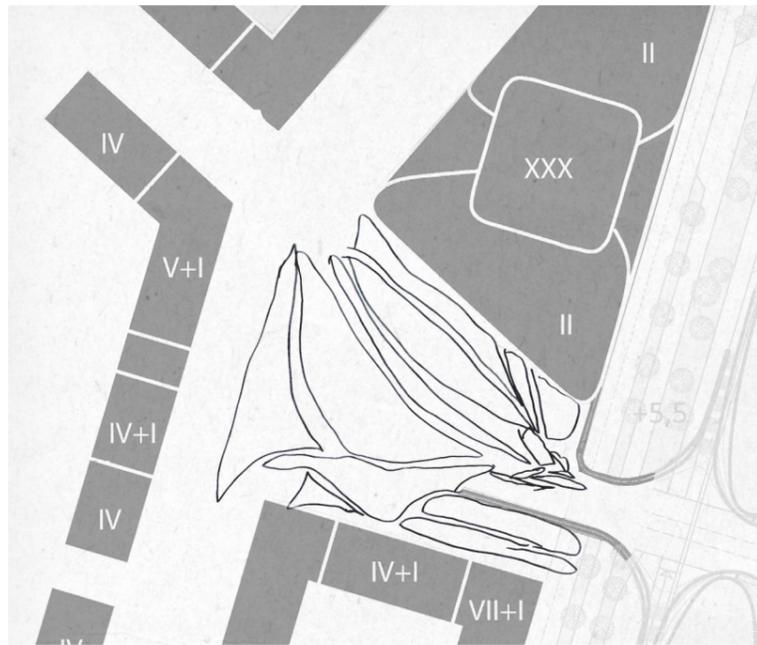


Figure 23.

Figure 23. Activities and areas. In this sketch, the place is divided into different areas of activities. Between the areas are gaps that separate the activities, but also hold them together, almost like glue. Can this idea of something holding these areas and activities together be developed in order to reach a less scattered picture? Could these areas be combined in any way?

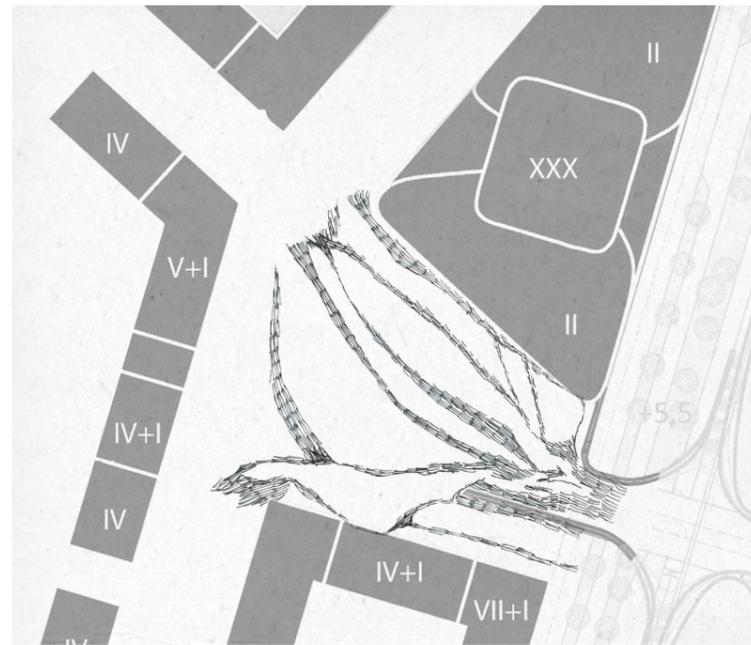


Figure 24.

Figure 24. Taking a closer look at the gaps between the areas in the previous sketch. A very interesting pattern appeared when I drew lines between the areas. This sketch shows a more representative picture of how movements occur on the place. Movements seem to appear all over the place and with some main directions. Could this sketch work as a main structure for movements in general?

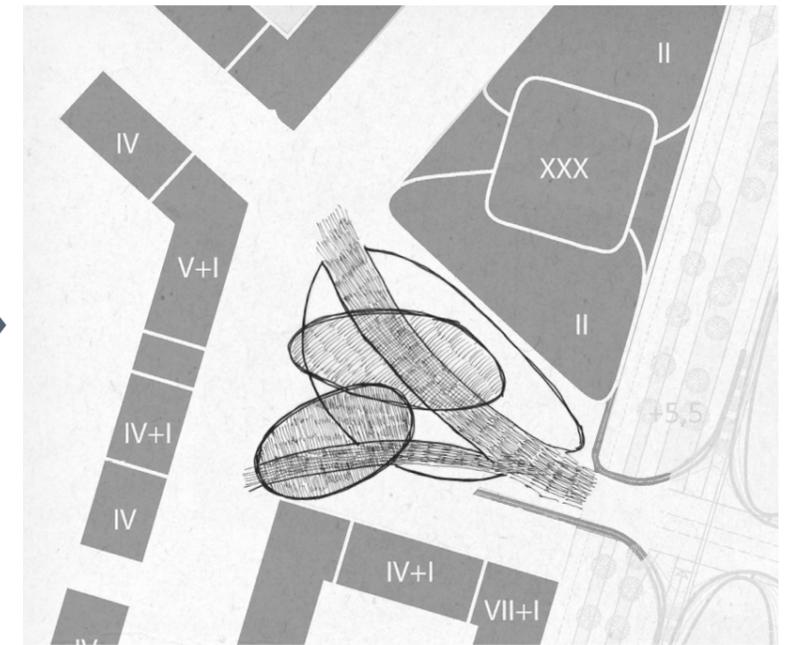


Figure 25.

Figure 25. Combining different sorts of activities. Looking at the design principles, stable, dominant and flexible, can these be a help in order to find an overall combination of activities? This sketch shows a refinement of an earlier sketch where circles and lines were combined. Can this work as an overall idea for the distribution of areas of dominant, stable and flexible?

Allocation of design principles

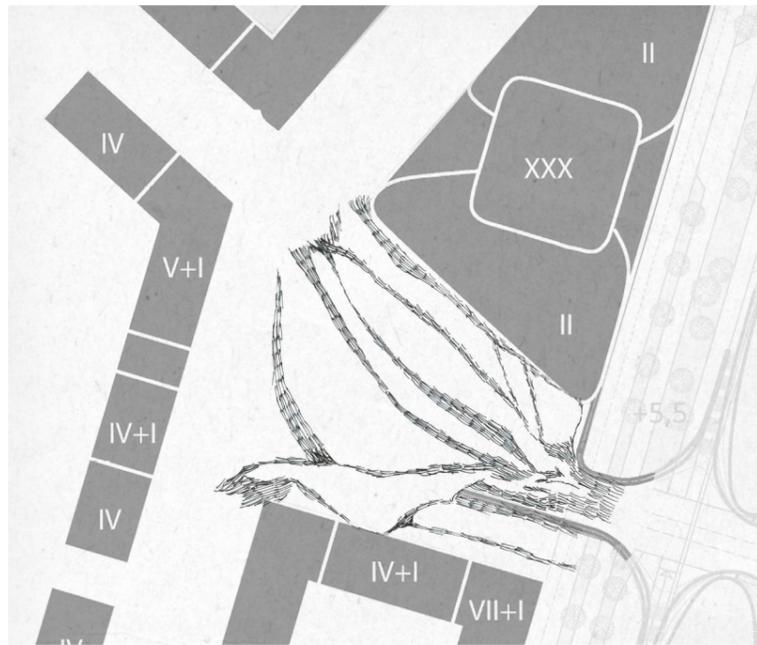


Figure 26.

I decided to use figure 26 which I thought had a very interesting pattern to see what happens if I combine it with the three design principles.

+

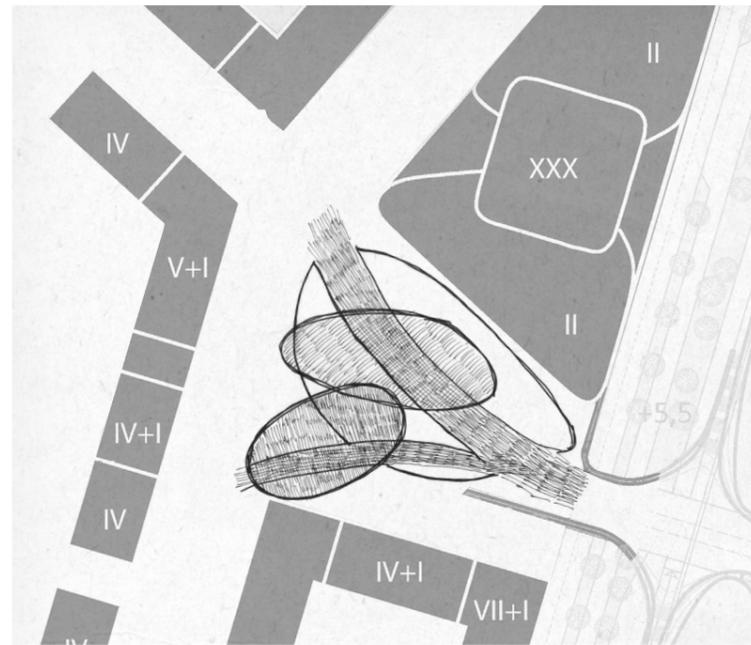


Figure 27.

Figure 27 is a conceptual plan which demonstrates the three design principles stable, dominant and flexible combined.

→

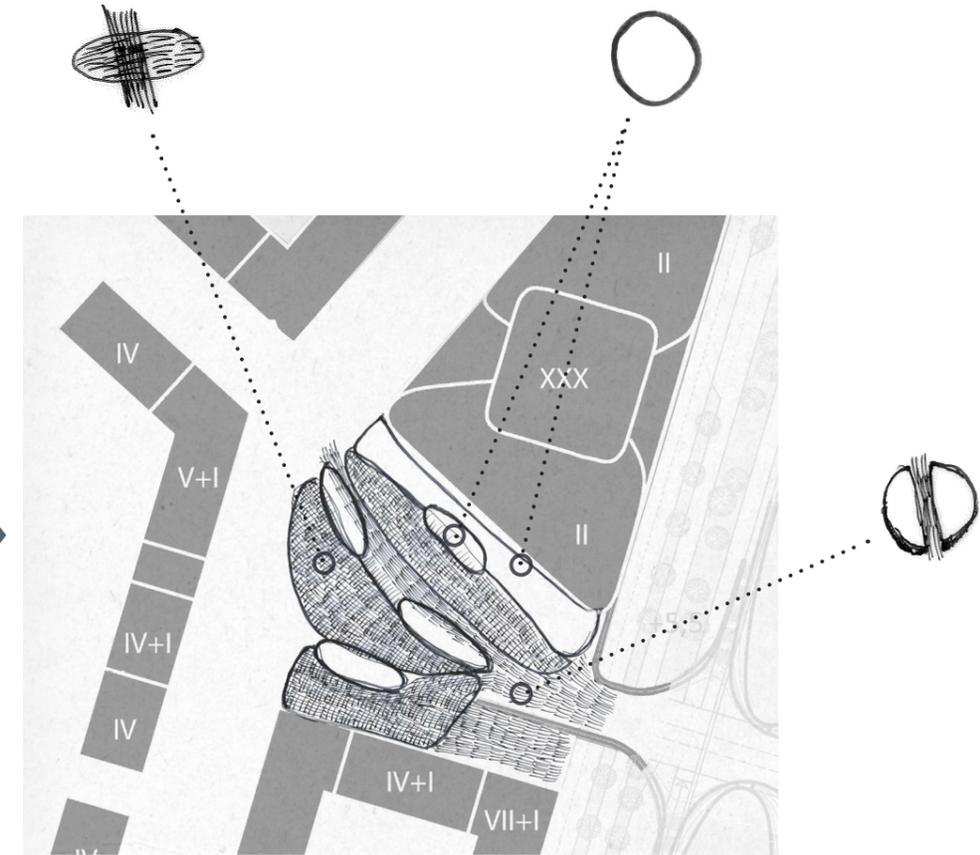


Figure 28.

Figure 28. This sketch shows an allocation of design principles in relation to the structure plan and the conceptual plan.

Design principle *stable*

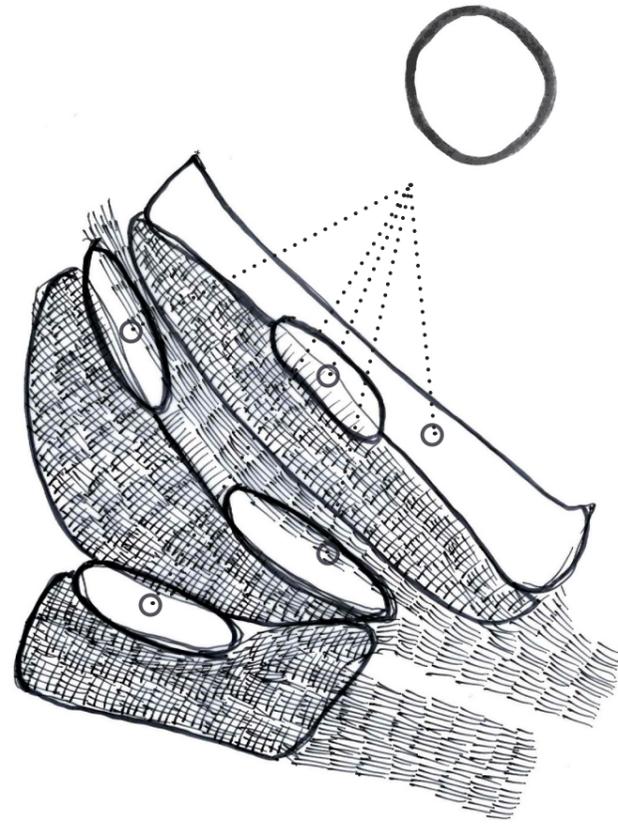


Figure 29.

Figure 29. Looking at the archetypes, places of *stable* involves the sensation of for example safety and control and can be constituted of a separation from the surroundings by shifting materials, shelter and seating.

Interpretation

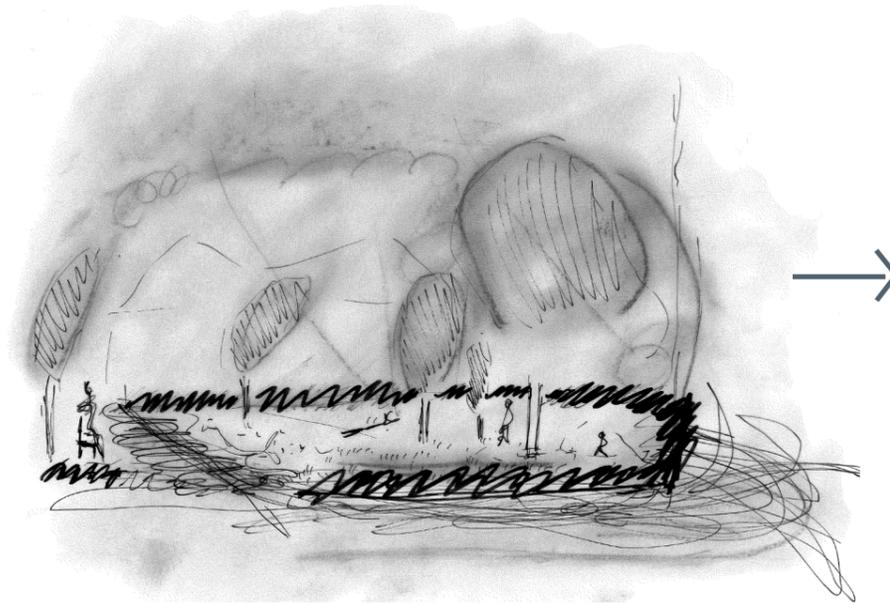


Figure 30.

Figure 30. The sensation of entering a room. Control, safety, privacy.

Design strategy

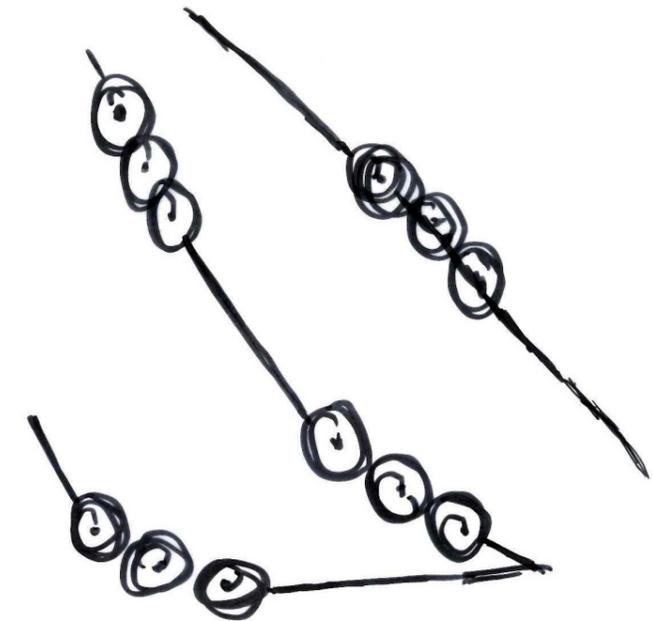


Figure 31.

Figure 31. Creating small areas with the design principle *stable* with trees in order to shield the areas from the surroundings.

Design principle *dominant*

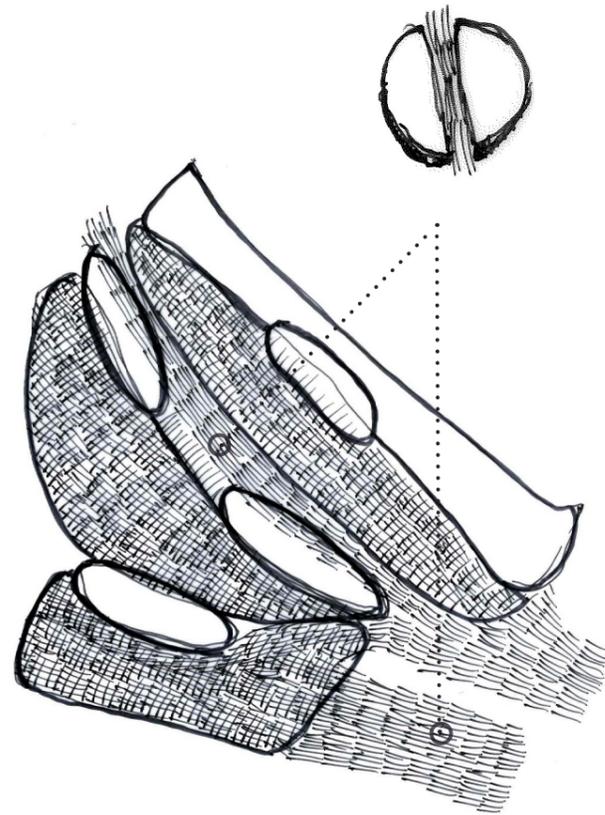


Figure 32.

Figure 32. Places of *dominant* involves the sensation of for example direction and flow and can be constituted of materials that facilitate movements and clear edges.

Interpretation

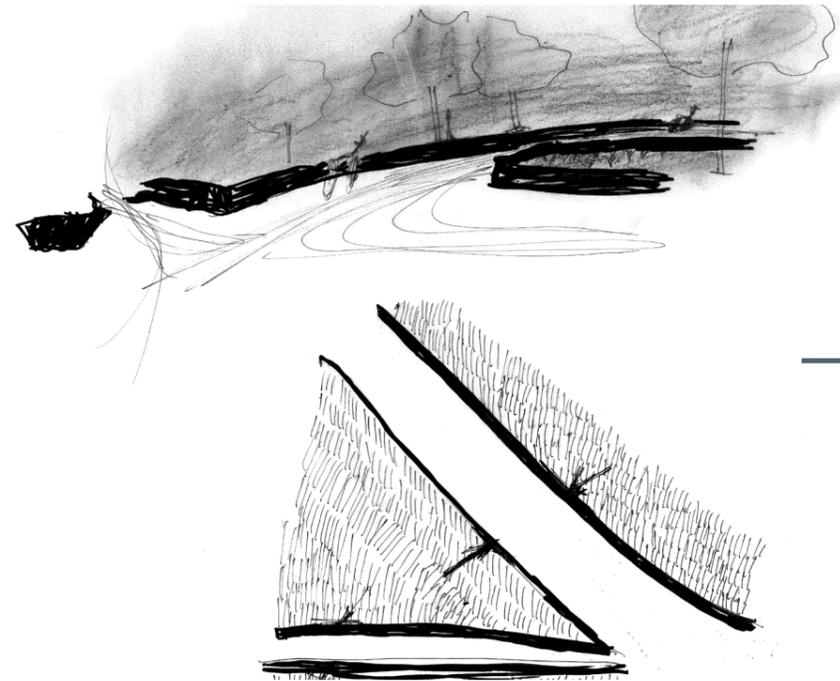


Figure 33.

Figure 33. Design principle *dominant* expressed through clear borders and direction.

Design strategy



Figure 34.

Figure 34. Using clear edges to separate areas from each other. Edges can be both level differences, objects and shifting ground material.

Design principle *flexible*

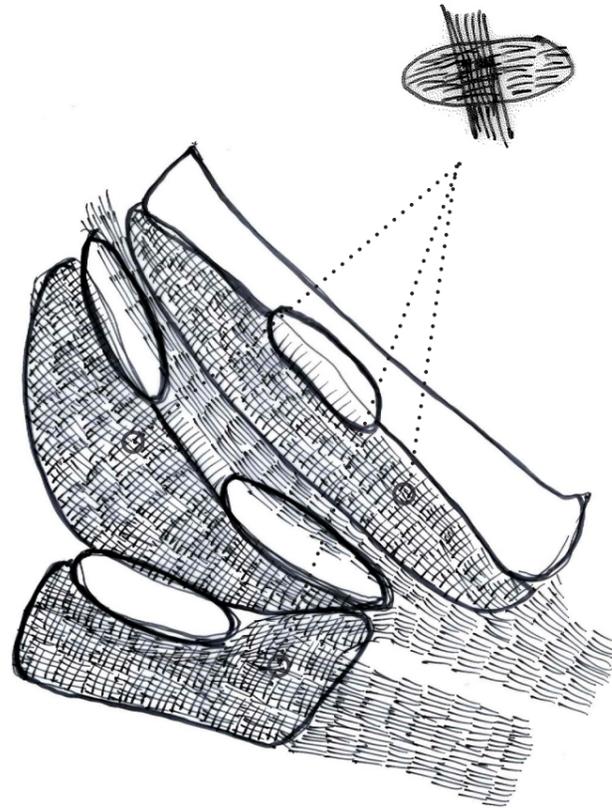


Figure 35.

Figure 35. Places of *flexible* involves the sensation of for example flexibility and semi-privacy and can be constituted of openness.

Interpretation

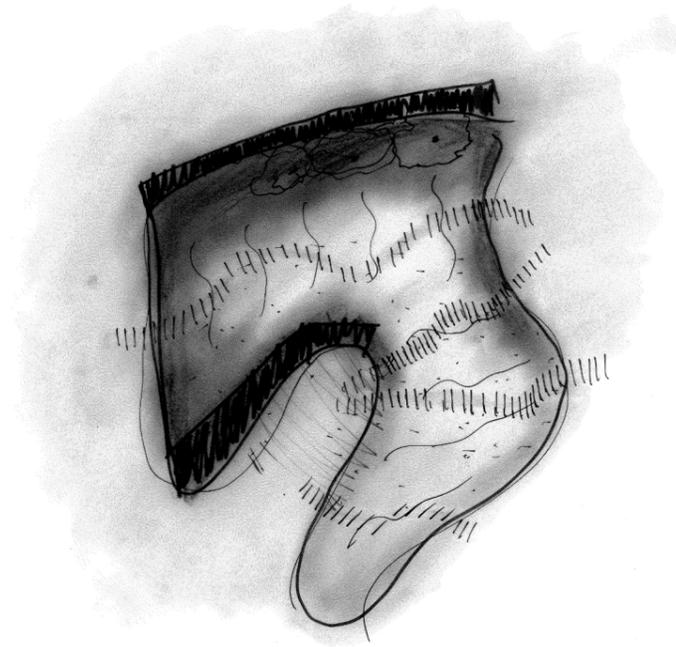


Figure 36.

Figure 36. The sensation of not being prioritized or dominant. Places without a clear purpose, no clear use or direction. Uncertainty, hesitant approach.

Design strategy

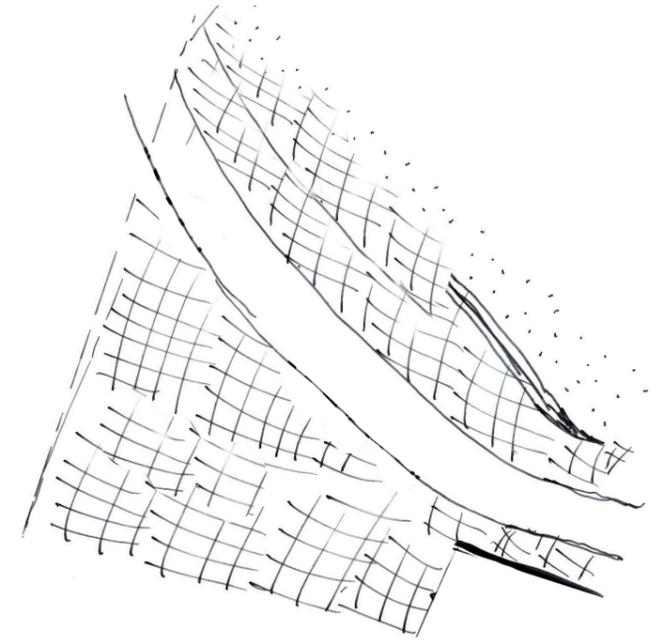
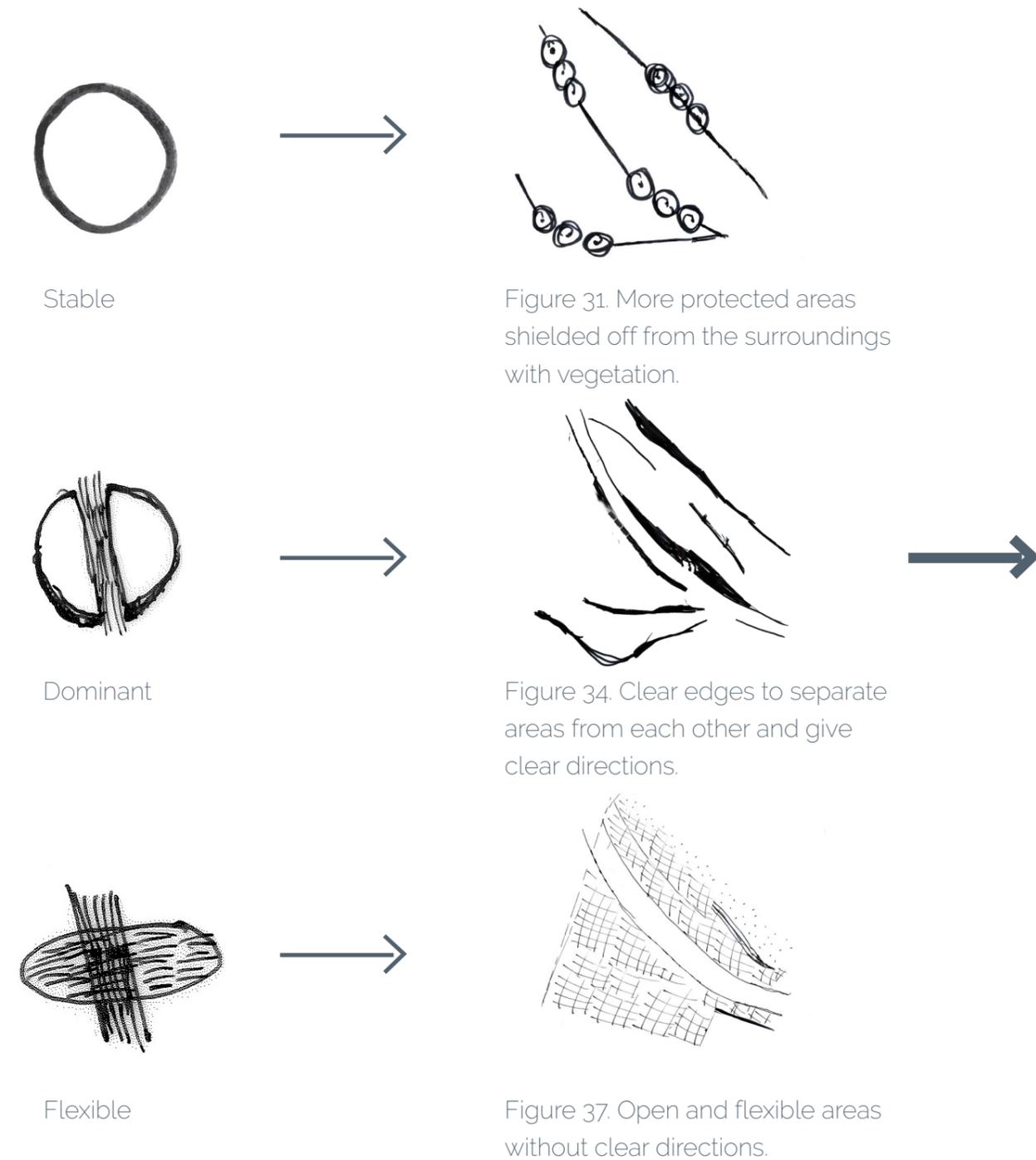


Figure 37.

Figure 37. This sketch demonstrates open flexible areas without clear directions.

Synthesis of design principles and strategies



Areas of stable are protected places with the possibility of sitting. In the proposal these places are created using protective vegetation and clear boundaries that shield off the area from the surroundings.

The design principle dominant can be seen in the main path that runs over the site. The path has clear directions and boundaries which in turn give full prior for movements to run unhindered within the area.

Flexible areas are the open areas without clear directions. These areas are semi-private and allow for spontaneous activities. They consist of available ground material and some seating possibilities.

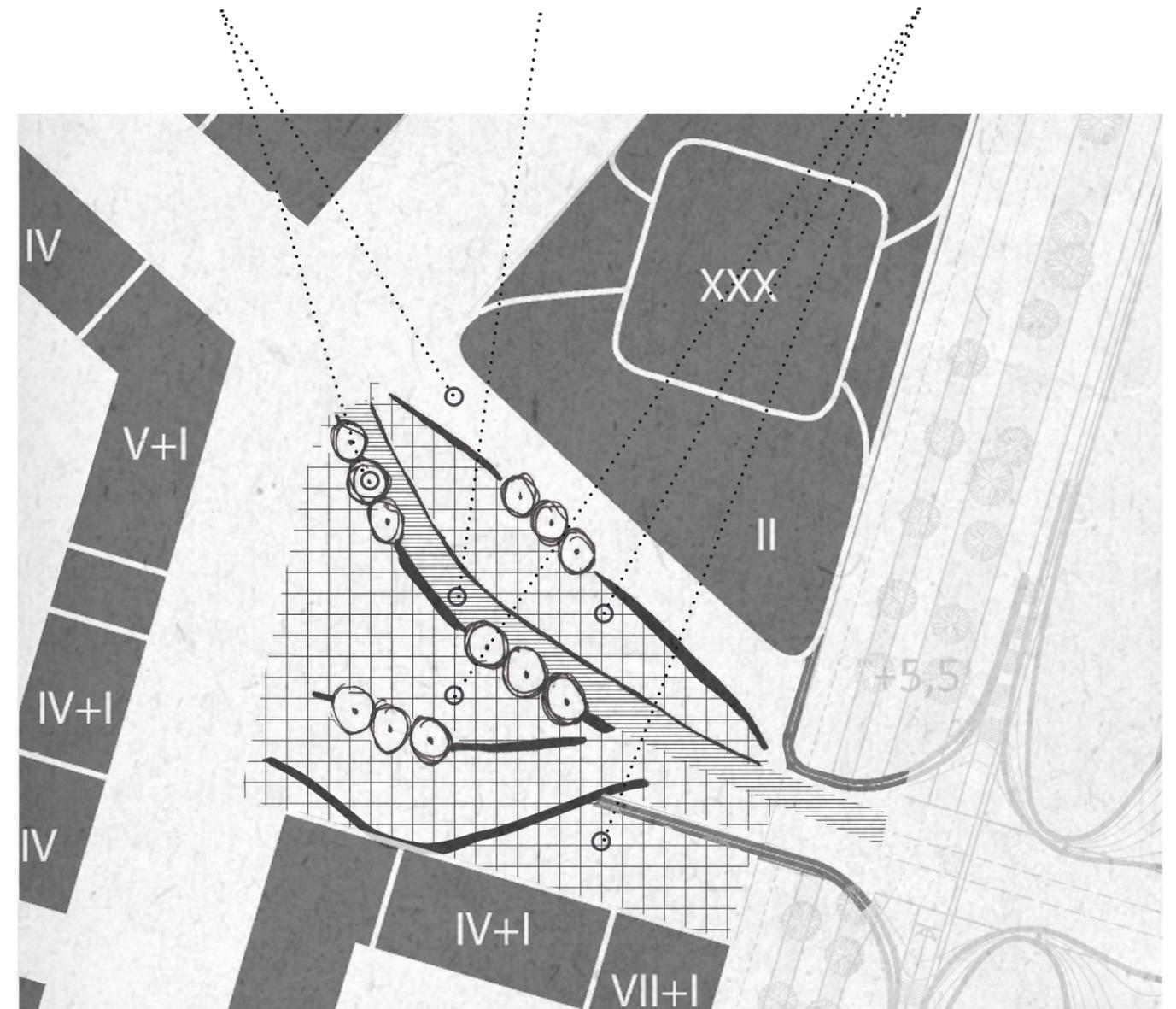
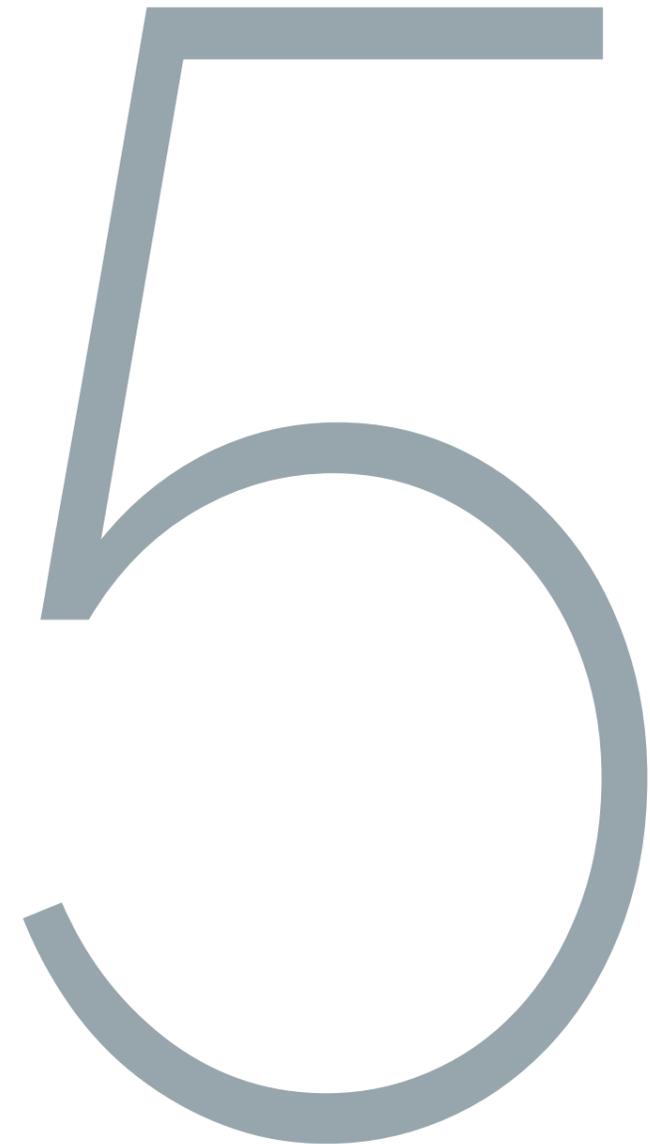


Figure 38.

Figure 38. Design principles and strategies synthesized to a schematic design proposal of the place.

Reflection

In this chapter, I reflect on the design process and the results. I use the literature to analyze and put them in a larger perspective.



I went into this thesis with a will to challenge and question a methodology that I have experienced as problematic and limiting during my time on the landscape architecture program. The aim was to contribute with new perspectives in design processes by testing an alternative design process, but also to increase my understanding of my own design process. As a whole, I think I have achieved with doing this. However, the complexity of the subject of design also confirms that it is not just a question about methodology, but more about the basic idea of design and what it is. The perception of what design really is about appears to vary between different fields.

The design process has worked like an experiment where I try out new ways of working with design, compared to my earlier experiences. The aim was to find an alternative design process by investigating what happens if I conduct design intuitively from only limited information of a place. That means, instead of starting the design process by gathering information of the place as if I saw it for the first time, I began to design by grasping the knowledge I already had about it, based on my earlier experiences, the so called 'intellectual baggage' (Lundequist 1995). By exploring and investigating my mental picture of the place in different sketches, I let the artistic and intuitive side of me lead the process, instead of limiting myself to and only working with information that was found on the actual place.

It is worth to clarify that the three phases of the investigation describe stages of the design process where I try out different ways of working with different sorts of information. For example, the first phase is mostly about using the place as a base to explore my pre-knowledge of it, the mental picture. The second phase is about gathering objective information and developing it into something that can work as a basis for the design. The third phase is a cultivation and application of the knowledge and information from phase 1 and 2.

Phase 1

When I started to explore the place, it turned out that I had enough knowledge about the place to start to investigate it from a certain aspect, the movements. My mental picture of the place in relation to its context in the masterplan gave me enough information to start building an idea of how movements might occur and have an influence on the place. This enabled me to start investigating the movements directly by interpreting my thoughts about them in different sketches. In this way, I moved directly into a phase of trying out thoughts and ideas which helped me to not get stuck and lead the process forward.

The pre-knowledge of the place that I had is much related to the intellectual baggage that many designers write about. It is not certain that movements will occur as I believe they will on the place, but knowing what is 'likely to be' was a good starting-point from which I could begin to form an idea about movements on the place. The ability to form this kind of hypotheses, based on the intellectual baggage, is fundamental for designers because the design process is much about finding out what the problem really is (Johansson 2000, p. 17). The design process can therefore be considered as a dialectical process in which hypotheses are put in relation to a number of set criteria where both the hypothesis and the criteria change gradually and precise in interaction with each other (Lundequist 1995, p. 73). The criteria in my design process was set by the place and its context, things I had to relate my hypothesis of movements to.

Looking at the first phase, I explored possible movement patterns on the place by taking into account the surrounding buildings, streets and nodes (the set criteria). The fact that I did it unconsciously is interesting, because it shows that this information in some way was fundamental for me. Even though

the sketches were worked out from different mindsets and aspects they all had this fundamental information as a basis. During the investigation, the sketches changed and evolved gradually as I explored the fluidity of movements associated with daily-life activities on squares. The idea of movements and how it developed in different sketches in relation to the place, describes a process of negotiation between me, my design hypotheses and the set criteria - a process where arguments were exchanged and weighed against each other iteratively.

In the same way as Lundequist (1995) and Lawson (2005) describe the design process as an iterative process, the negotiation between my ideas about movements and the place demonstrates the very close relation between analysis and synthesis (Lundequist 1995; Lawson 2005). In conventional design methods, this relation was never as clear, which could be one of many explanations behind the difficulties that I had experienced. The issue I experienced with conventional methods seems to be much founded in the lack of negotiation. Without any ideas or hypotheses, the iterative process was doomed and no negotiation would be able to take place. Instead, the only thing that was left to work with was all the gathered information of the place which I never really knew how to treat. But in this case, there was a negotiation between my ideas about movements and the place that further enabled me to reach three design principles which I, in the second phase, decided to investigate closer.

Phase 2

The aim with looking at archetypes was to see what happens if I change focus from exploring mental pictures about movements, to instead analyzing what is behind different sorts of movements by looking at real examples. The intention was also to see if an analysis of objects would be more fruitful if

the purpose with the investigation was clear from the start. However, only looking at archetypes and counting elements and saying what feelings they evoke would not be meaningful, according to Moore (2010). Therefore, I interpreted the information in sketches based on the archetype's composition, as an attempt to transform the information into something that would have the potential to act as a basis for the design (Moore 2010, p. 105-126).

The results show that both physical and sensory-based elements are behind the constitution of different movements and that an interpretation of these elements can contribute to the design by defining their main features. Lundequist (1995) calls them modifying factors and refers to design as something in-between the ideas and the modifying factors (Lundequist 1995, p. 74). But what is the difference between modifying factors and set criteria which I wrote about in phase 1? The information about movements that I gathered from looking at archetypes was something I searched for after that I had formed an idea (the design principles). The set criteria, on the other hand, describe the premises that framed the very beginning of the investigation, where the idea of movements began to be explored and take form. I am not quite sure how to relate my research to these concepts and if there really is a major difference between them (modifying factors and set criteria), but the fact that I have been working with different types of information in different stages of the design process is remarkable. It shows a process where one main idea is being consistently tested, developed and modified in relation to new types of information (Johansson 2000, p. 17). In my process, the very first idea of movements was developed and brought into also the second phase and framed the analysis of archetypes. This made the analysis clearer and more meaningful for me, because I knew what to look for. The information I got from looking at archetypes further allowed me to develop my principles into design strategies.

Phase 3

In the third phase I developed my design principles based on the information I got from the analysis of archetypes and gave examples of how they could be used further in the design. However, I did not want to go any further with the design since the aim was to approach alternatives to conventional design methods and not to give examples of design solutions. At this stage, I felt I had managed to transform an early idea into something that reflected and handled different problems that I had encountered during the design process.

What are the major differences compared to how I used to work before?

First of all, the starting point. I did not start this design process with a blank mind. Instead, I grasped an initial idea and let it frame the investigation where only a limited amount of information about the place was considered. I experienced that by using my own knowledge as a basis, the design process became much more directed and fruitful, already from the start. It also gave me more motivation and reason for wanting to design. This is something that Lawson (2004) writes about, for he means that designers often develop quite strong sets of views of how design should be practiced from their own sets or beliefs (Lawson 2004, p. 159). For this reason, I believe it is important for any designer to feel that they have the possibility to control and determine their own design processes, because why should we pretend that any place we encounter is unique and treat it as if we were totally impartial in our roles as designers? Why not recognize the knowledge you already have? Besides, it is hard to see things without prejudice and even if you manage to, you can never make value judgements without information and knowledge (Moore 2010, p. 72). I think this underlines the importance of the designer's intellectual

baggage and demonstrates that a base of pre-knowledge is necessary in order to sort out and treat different sorts of information properly and to make good value judgements.

It does not seem to be a question about whether information about a place is necessary or not but more about when it is necessary. The challenge throughout my design process was to understand to which extent I could liberate myself from the place and to understand what information is helpful and even necessary for the design process. As I mentioned in the beginning of the process the only information I considered about the place was the surrounding buildings, streets and nodes. This information was enough as a starting-point in order for a process of negotiation to take place between my ideas and the place, and that is another major difference I found compared to how I am used to be working. It seems like, for the process to be pushed forward, something has to be put in relation to the place, to certain criteria, for a negotiation to take place. This was the most crucial stage for me in the studio courses, to move from the stage of gathering plain facts of a place and believing it is bound to be of use, to find ideas for the design. But by gathering facts unconditionally, you will eventually have to find out which facts are useful for the design, which means an extra step of work with scaling it down and sorting out what is truly relevant and helpful. So, instead of starting the design process with collecting an infinite amount of information about a place which you later need to scale down to something useful, you can build your knowledge along the way by looking for information whenever it is needed if you have an idea to latch on.

Another major difference is the case of interpreting information and transforming it into something useful. Letting words describe the drawings and the drawings illustrate the words is something Moore (2010) advocates in her methodology (Moore 2010, p. 132), and it is something that I have been doing consistently in this project. This act allowed

me to get into the very meaning of things, to understand the potential of different sorts of information and to see how they can be related to the design. I have to admit that this was something new to me and sometimes very difficult. For example, in the analysis of archetypes in phase 2, it was not very mentally demanding to take notes about different characteristics and elements that I found. It was when I started to think about what I saw and why, that it became difficult. A bicycle track of asphalt did not seem very interesting from the start, but when I started to investigate it in different sketches, regarding its composition, its position, its use, suddenly new ideas started to come up and it became a source of inspiration rather than just a simple bicycle track.

If I look back at how I worked with gathered information before, I never treated the information as something that would have the potential to give ideas. It was rather just a process of gathering information that I thought would be of use. But ironically, it rarely was.

Method

With this thesis, I wanted to study design and design methodology, much because of the problem that I had encountered in our studio courses. As far as I knew, I thought the problem was much founded in the methodology I had been working with and it also gave me reason to find and try out alternative ways of working. Initially, I started looking for literature about design and design methodology. The literature study was done before I started my design process, partly because I needed to get more engaged in the subject, but also because I was not sure yet what I would do in this project.

The method interpreting through sketching which I used consistently throughout the design process, was the only method used and I decided to stick to only that one. The

reason for that was much due to the matter of time, because the work behind finding a method and making it doable concerning the purpose of my research appeared to be very time-consuming. Another reason for why I chose to stick with that particular method was because it was completely new to me and very different from how I was used to work with design. The method was an interpretation and application of Kathryn Moore's methodology presented in her book *Overlooking the visual. Demystifying the art of design* (2010). The book was not an instruction manual of how to work with design intuitively and therefore much was left for the designer to himself/herself decide about the interpretation and application of the method. This means that the method which I refer to as interpreting through sketching, inspired by Moore (2010), carries a very personal touch. However, I do not see any problems with that since the whole idea behind the methodology is about recognizing design as an intuitive and personal act, in which interpretation is used to make things more useful.

One of the most difficult things in this project was to figure out how to use the place I had at my disposal. The debate went between if the place was relevant or not and if so, to which extent and what parts of it. Because one major part of this thesis was to investigate the relationship between design and place and to question the significance of information from places in early stages of a design processes. I decided to use the place as a base for exploring mental pictures and for being able to do that I wanted to protect myself from too much information because I was afraid that it would distract me and have too much influence on my thinking process. For that reason, I edited the site plan and made the area completely blank before I started the design process. However, the fact that I knew how the original plan looked would turn out to have effects on my thinking, even though the place was completely blank when I started to design. For example, I have a hard time

seeing that the schematic placements of pavements and trees did not have any effect on my mental picture. But that does not mean that the rest of my design was not intuitive, just that my mind was affected and that the results could have looked different in another case.

Another aspect is the type of place I worked with, which in my project was a generic representation of a public space that I used to explore my ideas about. It is difficult to draw general conclusions about the results because the results are much a product of my intellectual baggage and how I related it to a particular place. It turned out that I had many ideas about the place and the design process went on quite easily in this case. I wonder if it would have been different if I worked with another place and how much help I would get from my intellectual baggage. This makes me wonder if places become more important the less you know about them and if this project would have been even more telling if I designed from limited information also regarding my personal prior experiences.

Evaluation of method

>> What happened during the experience?

I tested an alternative design process that involved intuitive design based on limited information about a place. The design process worked as an experiment where I used an initial idea to develop three design principles and strategies to lastly form a design proposal.

>> How did I feel and what were my reactions?

This project has been enriching and inspiring in many ways, but also confusing and frustrating. Working with intuitive design was not easy, especially not since I did it for the first time. The freely but also very inexplicit method can make you paralyzed from not knowing exactly what you are doing all the time. Although, the inspiring and challenging approach motivated me to keep on going. I experienced that the only limiting factor was my own ability to assimilate the new way of thinking and design, which I believe in many ways confirms that designing is an eternal learning process.

>> What insights or conclusions can I draw from the experience? What did I learn?

Looking at the studio courses on the landscape architecture program, I can understand why they are organized in such ways as they are. I can see that a clear structure in many ways facilitates the learning process and maybe the starting-point is important particularly for novice students. With regards of that, a pre-phase of gathering information may not be completely wrong as I was thinking, but the thing I wonder the most is if it actually helps the design.

If I look at the final result of my experiment, the schematic design proposal, it has qualities that responds to problems that appeared to me when I was investigating the place from the ideas of movements. From only a limited amount of information, I managed to build an understanding of the

place enough to form a design proposal with the help of my intellectual baggage. At the same time, I realize that my intellectual baggage is much a result of former design projects that I have done during the education. Maybe, I would not have been able to this project without the basis I got as a novice student.

When I look at the results of this project, I do realize that my design proposal is missing out of much information that is needed in order to determine whether it is good or not; which is the reason for why I call it 'schematic'. It must most likely be supplemented with more information, as for example heights, to become more credible, but I would not let the credibility of the proposal speak for the contribution of this project. I do not consider it as a question about credibility in this case at all, but more about the process in which we gain understanding and motivation to design.

>> How can I apply what I learned to improve future experience? What actions can I take based on what I learned?

This project as a whole has been very fruitful for it gave me many new insights about my own design process. I have realized that finding motivation is crucial for the design and that the so-called intellectual baggage can be very helpful for doing that. Moreover, when it comes to gathering information as a starting-point of a design project, I have now found an alternative to that. Yet, it does not seem to be a question about whether information of a place is important or not, but more about when it is. In this project, I started the investigation with exploring ideas instead as I supplemented with more information when it was needed.

Main contribution & conclusion

The main contribution with this thesis is to emphasize the importance of interpretation and negotiation in design processes. As far as ideas are concerned they need to be weighed against something or set to certain criteria in order for a negotiation to take place. It is the close relation between analysis and synthesis that pushes the design process forward. The negotiation can be based on interpretation and exploration of any kind of information or ideas as long as you find your own motivation for the design. It is from the recognition of your intellectual baggage through intuitive design, that you can make your investigations more motivating and fruitful.

Further research

I believe that it is always relevant to find new approaches and methods in design, it is a discipline that requires critical approaches in order not to become indifferent and give blandly generic design solutions. Therefore, with this thesis, I wish to encourage students, teachers and professionals to put more emphasis on always straining to find new ways of working with design. It is not a case of trying out new methods each time you are about to design, but to question and challenge the methods you mostly use.

I also believe that it is important to find new ways to describe and deal with places. The narrow perception of place, which many design methods seem to be built upon, is problematic because it cannot serve a trustworthy image of a design problem. Designers must be aware of the complexity of places and find legitimate ways to describe them in order to find out what role they play in their design.

An interesting topic to investigate further would be the correlation between design and place more closely and to see if the correlation changes with the society. How do societal changes affect the mental pictures we have of places?

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