

# TOWARDS A POST-ANTHROPOCENE PERSPECTIVE ON THE WELFARE CITY: PUBLIC LANDSCAPES AS GREEN HERITAGE

‘WILD CARD’

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The welfare city with its humanistic, anthropocentric and progressive design ideals of the good life and egalitarianism usually signifies the post-war welfare state’s tabula rasa suburbs with evergreen public landscapes as common ground for public happiness. Inspired by the recent discourse of the anthropocene, we examine the welfare city’s materialisation in a wider perspective, as a relational assemblage of culturally significant landscapes, organised and administered by various institutions, legislations and vocabularies, to structure and stage a national vision of the good life. We coin this as ‘the green heritage’; an umbrella term bridging the gap between perspectives of the anthropocentric, the anthropocene and a possible post-anthropocene era, both challenged and driven by climate change and urbanisation.

## PRELUDE: HERITAGE-BASED BRANDING VERSUS CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

The new town Albertslund in Vestegnen near Copenhagen is often described as a heritage vacuum: a tabula rasa masterplan erasing previous signs of memory and identity during the 1960s. In 2009, just seven buildings were listed in Vestegnen where 250,000 of 5.4 million Danes reside. Only one building from the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Arne Jacobsen’s Rødovre Town Hall, no buildings within Albertslund’s municipal borders and not one landscape was mentioned. Influenced by the rational, modernist landscape gaze, Albertslund’s planners aimed to add new qualities in a controlled network of zoned islands, dispersed like an archipelago across Vestegnen’s pancake-flat plateau that they judged empty. It was formerly cultivated as farmland and now contains green spaces, housing areas, industrial districts, sports fields, and more. It is divided by unintentional in-between-spaces, enriching the landscape quality. In the vein of the welfare state’s anthropocentric, bio-political agenda of regulating citizens’ spatial behaviour from cradle to grave, Fordist analyses of work routines guided the organisation of urban spaces. Access was measured according to the metres or minutes it took residents to move from dwellings to playgrounds, schools, etc.



Figure 1: Albertslund Syd viewed in Google Earth showing the canal as the main structuring East-West going element.

Forming part of Copenhagen's *Finger Plan* (1947), Albertslund's development was determined by Vestskoven's giant state-supported afforestation. Without embeddedness in the pre-existing agricultural landscape, the planners envisioned a generic green lung for social interaction. They copy-pasted Dyrehaven's recreational space, north of Copenhagen, as a border between town and nature and as a monument within the *Finger Plan*'s preservation elements. In Ole Nørgaard's landscape plan for Albertslund Syd, vegetation and architecture form an ensemble, interweaving plantation and urban spaces within the housing areas. Echoing egalitarian ideals of the socially empowering welfare state, Albertslund is structured horizontally and 'democratically'. Everything has the same validity, yet the enormous horizontal extension, branched infrastructure, open spaces and green carpet form a welfare monument in its own right.

Compensating narratives such as 'historical blank' or non-place, both counterproductive for Albertslund's present-day identity and residents, the development plan *Syd2020* (2009) became a test case for finding and founding heritage in the post-war welfare city - still resembling a generic plan more than an inhabited place. Collaborating with the local museum Kroppedal, Albertslund Municipality initiated a branding campaign stating: 'Albertslund Syd is heritage.' The initiative intended to spill over positively to Albertslund's image, attracting new inhabitants, visitors and investments. In the process of establishing a heritage where heritage did not yet officially exist, the public landscapes turned out to play a major role in knitting together the cultural history of the local residents, houses, neighbourhoods and the bigger context of regional Copenhagen and the Danish welfare state. Organised as a mapping project, reflecting how heritage and storytelling are part and parcel of urban development; informal cafés, video stalls and display boards popped up to inspire residents to share stories of their neighbourhood. Publications with historical information, walks, lectures and exhibitions in public spaces stimulated people to generate ideas and discuss topics such as: 'What does local history mean to you?' 'What should the future bring to the area?' 'Is Albertslund Syd open towards people from the entire world?' (Kroppedal & *Syd2020* 2009). Curiously, neither the museum nor the municipality canonised certain objects as heritage. Instead they recognised heritage as an ongoing process of becoming between material and immaterial aspects.

Just as plans are adjusted and landscapes or architecture are reprogrammed, the stories about these phenomena alter and mix with unplanned narratives of local experiences, memories and urban discourse. As a microcosm of the current refurbishment of the Danish welfare state, Albertslund has witnessed dramatic changes since the first pioneers moved in from slummy Copenhagen tenements, to the current population with a much more diverse social mix, producing various narratives of the good life and the site-specific values associated with it. *Syd2020*'s inclusive, participatory process of 'doing

heritage' reminds us how heritage takes place in dynamic renegotiation processes between several stakeholders involving political, social, environmental, cultural etc. aspects (Bøggild and Bruun Yde 2011).



Figure 2: Footage from the *Syd2020* campaign, documenting an event taking place in the public domain, 18 February 2009. *Syd2020* invited the residents to identify local qualities and share ideas and desires for their neighbourhood, especially related to recreational conditions and ultimately green heritage. Courtesy of *Syd2020*, Albertslund Municipality and Kroppedal Museum.

Simultaneously Albertslund is subject to many changes, manifested in a number of architectural competitions and urban renewal projects. The prominent *Albertslund Canal Area* competition (2014) addressed climate adaptation of the whole urban district, Albertslund Syd, by means of remodelling Albertslund Canal, already functioning as a rainwater reservoir, and reactivating the canal's edge – making it the open space backbone of the neighbourhood – an icon of Albertslund. Unfortunately, the findings of the *Syd2020* effort, embedded in the local community and public landscapes, were not taken to the next step of 'founding' the further process. Although posters of Kroppedal museum's exhibition *Albertslund Syd is cultural heritage*, shown along the canal, were enclosed with the competition programme, *Syd2020*'s findings of local qualities and narratives remained oddly absent in the canal competition, with the sustainability-sounding subheading: *Town, Water, Life*. The competition was promoted by Albertslund Municipality and HOFOR, Greater Copenhagen Utility, and facilitated by an engineering company, Orbicon - excellent in stormwater issues but unfamiliar with architectural competitions and heritage. Some of the five proposals, submitted by preselected teams, focused on developing hubs along the canal, while others aimed to strengthen the canal's unitary character. Both winning entries focused on the canal as a whole; one maintaining the urban atmosphere, the other introducing the notion of biodiversity. While the first phase included judges with an architectural or heritage background, including





Figure 3: The winner project of the Albertslund Canal competition, adding a green promenade and recreational areas next to the water level and diversifying the plantation scheme. Courtesy of Møller & Grønborg.

one of the authors of this paper, the second phase, weighing 80 percent of the total result, was undertaken by the organisers, the engineering company. Economy and construction tipped the scales and finally the biodiversity entry won.

The spill-over effect from *Syd2020* to the *Albertslund Canal Area* competition was limited, if anything. Yet, the canal was appointed Albertslund Syd's most remarkable element, and the potential of the two approaches working together hold great future promise. These experiences in Albertslund highlight the difficulties when making public administrative bodies work together and considering agendas of climate change adaptation, cultural heritage management and urban development in tandem. Albertslund Syd's canal epitomises the fragmented field of open space in terms of heritage being lost between different professions, administrative units, vocabularies etc. Simultaneously, the need for negotiation, interdisciplinarity and collaboration on landscape issues becomes obvious. The future of cities and citizens relies on us learning how to integrate these aspects, cross borders of professions and administrative units, and develop appropriate methods and languages, reflecting changes of reality. But how and on which premises?

#### GREEN HERITAGE – BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Our paper examines the welfare city's materialisation as a relational assemblage of culturally significant landscapes in order to understand the shifts and dilemmas, as evident in Albertslund. The character, meanings and values of the fragmented field of green heritage as a present phenomenon and a product of the welfare state – particularly the post-war welfare city's newly designed landscapes. We intend to set up a programmatic discussion of green heritage, (re)assembling this complex field by focusing on its common features and challenges rather than on its current administrative segregation and perceptive dissonance. Using Albertslund as stepping stone, we reflect on the perspectives of the anthropocentric (past), the anthropocene (present) and a possible post-anthropocene (future) of the welfare city, challen-

ged and driven by climate change and urbanisation. Acknowledging the embedded political dimensions, we introduce the overarching concept of 'green heritage', simultaneously addressing physical, administrative and discursive facets of open space. Aiming to overcome dichotomies of Modernism like urban/rural and nature/culture, we are searching for third ways to approach landscape heritage, beyond the usual divisions of preservation and development. Lastly, we present a survey that we conducted in 2013 among present-day Danish heritage managers as an empirical basis for testing approaches to handling 'green heritage'.

The theoretical background of green heritage spans planning history, cultural studies and theories of the designed landscape, and forms the foundation for our *Green Heritage Survey*. The post-war Danish welfare state's materialisation extends beyond urban areas; historically, it constituted a national coast-to-coast land use regulation, balancing development and protection. Despite the post-war period's transcendent transformation process of rapid urbanisation, the welfare state managed to encompass cultural heritage and historic landscapes, such as medieval fortifications and royal parks, in the overall national coast-to-coast planning framework. In parallel, the welfare state itself created public open spaces of generic green as an integrated aspect of contemporary development, in the sense that 'public' means 'commonly accessible' and 'open space' in everyday language is referred to as 'landscape'.

Structures, institutions, vocabularies and practices for managing the welfare city and its landscapes are currently changing and contested by new hybrids between urban and rural, nature and culture, and not least by changing paradigms within the heritage discourse itself. Most important in this context, the process-oriented democratic 'New Heritage' paradigm emphasises relationships between people and places like in *Syd2020*, guided by an inclusive ethic of participation of local users, and renegotiation of ideals or values that the welfare state used to formulate in the singular as a Grand Narrative of the WE. Therefore landscape as discourse, materiality and management object is pivotal, forming a framework for integrating issues that are often dealt with individually, such as heritage management, climate

adaptation and urban development. This is what we are aiming for by introducing the umbrella term green heritage, drawing theoretically on the two Anglo-American researchers Robert Melnick and May Cassar, and New Heritage with its social and political perspectives of mobilising the notion of heritage and local history for climate transition in a possible post-anthropocene future with the potential for social sustainability and recognition implied in ‘doing heritage’.

Our focus is on examining the socio-culturally active or performative aspects of ‘heritage’ as a future-oriented mediator between natural and cultural generations, and as agent in processes of climate adaptation. Taking the turn from general object-oriented typologies to a more process-oriented approach to open space as point of departure, we are describing a shift from an anthropocentric past favouring planning, politics and heritage management on national scale, to an anthropocene present and possible post-anthropocene future, emerging in the dynamics of the local and global. Applying a “retro-active” cultural historical perspective between past, present and future, we are addressing distinctions, paradoxes and dilemmas of the fragmented field of green heritage: Between the anthropocentric and anthropocene, between a biologically defined generic green and a composite ‘inherited’ green, between an identity-based and a process-based approach to the environment, between idealising and demonising imaginaries of nature, between preservationist and progressive approaches – ultimately to pave the way for third-way approaches, more adequate and sustainable to meeting future challenges such as climate change and urbanisation.

Many Danes are aware that post-war planners and politicians used urban planning as social engineering, a biopolitical tool to frame and regulate the welfare state’s utopia, formulated in the Social Democrats’ welfare program *DENMARK OF THE FUTURE* (1945). Highfalutin ideals of egalitarianism, justice, and redistribution constituted the basis of this policy, where production of public landscapes and open spaces formed social arenas for societal changes and urban expansion (Nielsen 2008; Albertsen & Diken 2004; Avermaete et al. 2015). Fewer people know that preservation initiatives followed this development as an undercurrent, underpinning the welfare city and welfare state’s bedrock. On the one hand, Denmark, like its Scandinavian siblings, resembled a progressive welfare state, guaranteeing actions, discourse, and legislation of heritage. On the other hand, heritage played a leading role in instituting state politics of progress (Arrhenius & Otero-Pailos 2010). Hence, Copenhagen’s regional *Finger Plan* (1947) not only constitutes an urban development plan, but also a natural preservation plan, encompassing open spaces of cultural historical significance. Still, the Danish welfare state’s materialisation exceeds urban areas: *the Land Laws of 1963* and the 1969 *Urban and Rural Law* constituted a coast-to-coast land use regulation, distinguishing between development and protection.

Today, the progressive welfare city itself, understood as this national entity, is being candidate as a potential object of preservation. Generic landscapes of progress, underpinned by modernist anthropocentric design ideals of distance, progress and control, are turning into heritage landscapes of resistance, affect and imaginaries in the hybridising, pluralising age of the anthropocene. Both planning and heritage, especially the ‘green heritage’ of culturally significant landscapes, are gaining new practices and meanings as several stakeholders renegotiate value. Moreover, design competitions, as seen in Albertslund, aim to change the existing – our cultural heritage and natural basis.

As the welfare state is currently pressured by recession, new ideals, lifestyles and demography, the physical welfare city with its green heritage is challenged by further urbanisation (rural-urban migration, urban shrinkage, deindustrialisation, urban densification etc.) as well as climate changes (extreme precipitation, rising temperatures, flooding, etc.). Mapping dynamics between progress and preservation of the welfare city, we concentrate on the open spaces, not only as generic post-war public landscapes in new towns like Albertslund, but also as a system of nature preservation areas, sustaining the welfare state’s national vision of universal welfare. Open space, and in this context, ‘green heritage’ constitutes a key feature of the welfare city with its bureaucracy of power/knowledge and core welfare rights including equal access to nature and ‘greeneries’.

## SHIFTING PARADIGMS

Our working hypothesis is that we have moved from a post-war situation where urban planning, heritage and citizenship generally unfolded on a national, universal scale in the welfare state’s modern(ist) youth, to a present-day focus on the local, specific scale of the city and local citizenry, intersected by the global scale of inter-urban competition. This shift is symptomatic of the welfare city’s inherent rupture between dichotomies of ideal/reality, utopia/heterotopia, function/aesthetics, expert/user, nature/culture, urban/rural, preservation/development, top-down/bottom-up, social/physical, material/intangible, regulation/deregulation, plan/place, past/future, etc.

These changes are visible in the New Heritage paradigm, underlining international heritage conventions like the Council of Europe-convention of Faro (2005) and the European Landscape Convention (2000), promoting diversity and coexistence in a post-Cold War world. New heritage indicates a shift from a ‘preservation of objects attitude’ where professionals canonise heritage, to a more democratic and process-oriented examination of the relational construct of a landscape or *place*, flexible towards transformation and negotiation of viewpoints as in Albertslund’s *Syd2020* project. According to the archaeologist Graham Fairclough, heritage is interwoven with placemaking (Fairclough 2014).

Thus, the fragmented field of green heritage is more elaborated in Anglo-Saxon contexts. In *Climate Change and the Historic Environment* (2005) British architect May Cassar divides ‘the historic environment’, landscapes of significant cultivation, into three subcategories: 1) archaeology beneath the ground, 2) historical buildings and 3) historic landscapes (Cassar 2005). American landscape architect Robert Melnick analyses landscape heritage in relation to climate change and urbanisation, using the term ‘cultural landscapes’ and formulating a question also guiding our research on green heritage: ‘We must first understand what we have and value, recognise the ways in which these resources are being impacted by climate change, and then find answers and solutions that look within preservation practice as well as to the larger environmental context.’ (Melnick 2009).

Both Cassar and Melnick accentuate the rural rather than the urban, referring to protection of iconic heritage categories such as historic parks and gardens. However, observing landscapes through the lens of New Heritage, preservation is but one option. Preservation and development are mutually enforcing rather than excluding forces that seem crucial to integrate to mitigate climate change and un-controlled urbanisation. Pure preservation blindly follows the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s infatuation with progress. Static preservation of some landscapes as ‘authentic’ nature legitimises tabula rasa developments elsewhere.

Green heritage also has a sustainable potential. Sustainability generally denotes a triangular balance between environmental, economic and social aspects that rarely match reality. Roughly, environment means ecology e.g. water, biodiversity and similar unquestionable, calculable values; economy often equals developers’ interests, rather than the integration of materials and how people care about things; finally, the social is formulated more or less transparently, e.g. inclusion and power. Accordingly, Fairclough perceives landscape as the most interdisciplinary field – a common ground, open to rethinking sustainability: - ‘[a]ll the practical concerns of sustainability collide in the nexus of human agency.’ (Fairclough 2012) Although such values underpin conventions like *Faro* or the *ELC*, new methods and vocabularies are needed to integrate and respond to these issues.

Introducing the ‘green heritage’ concept, we want to encompass this set-up to overcome some of the subject field’s dichotomies and paradoxes. First, in the context of New Heritage, perceived as an open category that exceeds instituted objects and instead focuses on social processes and relations between people and places. Second, in the context of the welfare city’s public landscapes which are often perceived as non-places, although they are constitutive for the duality of progress or preservation. These considerations motivate *The Green Heritage Survey*. In the next section, we outline some of these issues and relate them to our survey of how Danish heritage managers approach the green heritage.

## THE GREEN HERITAGE SURVEY

In 2013, we conducted a survey among 80 Danish heritage managers (Braae & Bøggild 2015) within the framework of the campaign *Bygningskultur 2015* (Building Culture 2015). The respondents represent a cross-country selection of municipalities and museums – today’s heritage managers. Their educational backgrounds vary, but over half are architects. The idea of ‘green heritage’ was presented as a ‘photographic matrix’, compiling twelve designed landscape typologies, divided into four categories: city, suburb, provincial town/village, and rural area. These categories epitomise the geographical and built up diversity of Danish municipalities. We count all these landscape typologies as potential ‘green heritage objects’; we examine a renaissance park or a fortification on equal terms with a suburban open space or a drainage landscape.



Figure 4: Matrix from *The Green Heritage Survey* depicting the 12 green heritage typologies, presented to the 80 participating heritage managers to assess potential green heritage. Courtesy of Ellen Braae.

*The Green Heritage Survey* was carried out as an Internet-based questionnaire, focusing on two issues: 1) Approaches to the landscape typologies (importance, inherent values, vulnerability towards climate change and urbanisation). 2) Practices for managing various green heritage objects (registration, use of value, assessment methods). This information was related to the respondents’ local municipal context, i.e. the physical and demographic structure affecting the types and conditions for each green heritage object and its state of climate change adaptation.

## PARADOXES AND DILEMMAS

As a relic of the welfare state’s specialised bureaucracy, post-war public landscapes are contained within various administrative contexts, disciplines and vocabularies. Today, this segregation seems old-school, considering common challenges of urbanisation and climate changes. Similarly, the respondents of the *Green Heritage Survey* wished to establish new interdisciplinary collaborations to anticipate these risks. Beyond apparent differences, the juxtaposition of landscape typologies, examined holistically as green heritage, has the potential of transgressing barriers such as municipal borders, linguistic binaries, disciplinary divisions, administrative segregations – urban/rural and nature/culture. But thinking outside the box is hard. Many respondents inter-



preted drainage landscapes as being a production facility, although drainage has cultivated the Danish landscape since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, several drainage landscapes are 'renaturalised' via *The Danish Water Environmental Plans* (1987, 1998 and 2004) and are hence considered as natural heritage.

The in-betweenness of landscapes, potentially both natural *and* cultural heritage, due to their culturally defined interaction with the site-specific soil, water, topographic and climate conditions, unites with green heritage as a common denominator. The mixed landscape family is comprised of highly dynamic features, shaped by encounters between the materiality, our understandings, practices and our uses of landscapes. This caused confusion among the survey's respondents about how to treat heritage within the present dual framework of the Agency of Nature - managing natural heritage, and the Agency of Culture - managing cultural heritage. A segregation echoing UNESCO's division between natural and cultural heritage. The nature/culture dichotomy permeates Western myths, narratives and ideologies, traverses Christianity (Haaning 1998) and affects law and administration. The schizophrenia between idealisation of Nature as something authentic that Man should (re)find harmony with, and fear of nature as something wild or *Other* that humanity should civilise. Heritage and landscape protection were instrumental in the construction of tropes such as 'Modernity', 'the modern nation state', 'the national', and 'the national citizen', while still appearing 'controlled'. Heritage and landscape became synonymous with 'patrimony', rubbing shoulders with Modernity and progress, feeding on history and aesthetics.

The responses to *The Green Heritage Survey* testify a shift from the scale of the national and universal, as during the welfare state's prime, to today's priority of the local and specific. Repeating the 1966 municipal reform, fusing 1,000 municipalities into 275 to establish unities capable of managing more skilled obligations, the structure reform (2007) merged 275 municipalities into 98. The latter shift was underlined by the relocation of the responsibilities of planning from state/county-level to municipality-level like other welfare bastions. Municipalities became responsible for identifying and protecting local values via local planning schemes, and thus became responsible for heritage management. This was prepared for by the Ministry of Environment's 1995 introduction of 'kulturmiljø' and 'kulturmiljøråd' ('cultural environment' and 'cultural environment councils'), foreseeing needs for relating issues of heritage, urbanisation and climate changes. Operating on county-level, these councils were dismantled by the 2007-restructuring. The accumulated expertise spread across municipalities – often without reaching the critical mass, skilled in green heritage management. *The Green Heritage Survey* also mirrors how methods and criteria vary from context to context. While heritage is dynamic and negotiated by numerous stakeholders, identity, ideals, values, etc. are more relative than in the utopian welfare state, with a national planning, heritage and

management culture that could be contained in ONE Masterplan and Grand Narrative. The present condition of utopia becoming heterotopia requires new tools and questions like Albertslund's *Syd2020* initiative.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century's hasty urbanisation evoked efforts of landscape protection. In 1917, Denmark adopted the first *Nature Conservation Act*, however previously listing natural environments by law. The *Report on Copenhagen Area's green areas* (1936) aimed to protect metropolitan Copenhagen's open spaces from construction. Translating landscape preservation into an urban development plan, it formed *The Finger Plan's* backbone: Urbanisation would evolve along infrastructure - the 'fingers', while the 'Green Crown's' wedges gave citizens access to nature. *The Finger Plan* anticipated the *Town and Land Zone Law*, intending to prevent



Figure 5: An initial version of the Regional plan for Greater Copenhagen (1936) underlines the importance of the green wedges between the fingers in the iconic Finger Plan (1947), focusing on the urban development areas.

construction in rural areas, while impeding urban development beyond zones programmed for such. Besides defending recreational interests and landscape values, this law subdivided Denmark into rural and urban zones, impacted by concerns for utilisation of materials and land. Resources became scarce as the welfare state expanded, due to high demand for green field areas for settlements (Ministry of Environment and Energy 2000).

The last important legal event in this context is the possibility since 2012 of listing landscape architectural

works independently. Previously, this was only possible when associated with the listing of buildings. This upgrading of landscape from appendix to (art)work echoes today's discourse on the premises, aims and perspectives of green heritage. Further relating to the nature/culture dichotomy, this emphasises the shift from the generic green to the local, site-specific turn, observed in *The Green Heritage Survey*.

The Janus-headed ethos of function/aesthetics and development/protection pervading the *Town and Land Law* is emblematic for the aspiring welfare state. The philosophers Theodor Adorno and Joachim Ritter assign aestheticisation of nature a decisive role in Modernity. Ritter describes how the development of an aesthetic approach to nature is Modernity's companion: a process where humans gain power and domesticate nature (Ritter 1963/89), paving the way for contemplating it as an aesthetic object. Adorno elevates nature to utopian promises of a redeemed, reconciled world (Adorno 1969/98). Both recognise aesthetic encounters with nature, i.e. landscapes as contemplative affairs – steered by disinterest in the object (Braae 2015), stressing the modern(ist) perception of nature as generic green.

#### ARE WE BECOMING URBAN BY NATURE?

Cities become increasingly important in adapting to and mitigating effects of climate changes. A clean cut between nature/culture and urban/rural is impossible – we are far beyond the distanced approach to 'greenery' and we have to pay interest to the specific. It is hard to separate 'natural heritage' from 'cultural heritage' and maintain the vocabularies and structures associated with these categories, inherited from the post-war welfare state.

Although some lament how nature/culture and urban/rural overlap, the future probably belongs to the cultivated landscape and 'one of the biggest and most visible hybrid forms on earth: the urban landscape.' (Sijmons 2014). The relational assemblage of landscape typologies, subsuming under 'green heritage', forms part our natural basis that is mutating and subject to the same market forces – not naturally given, although possibly naturalised. Global climate changes also affected dinosaurs and Neanderthals, yet for the first time, geologists argue that we are entering the anthropocene era where one species – humanity – alters the global ecosystems and climate through technologies. According to landscape architect Dirk Sijmons, Earth's environmental problems can only be solved if the city becomes a 'tool' in a green transition, acknowledging the world as anthropocene:

*'The simplistic arrangement of the past, in which we had placed city and nature in opposition to each other so that they excluded each other, is no longer valid. Perhaps we humans are 'by nature' inclined to live together in expanding settlements – perhaps we are urban by nature. That insight liberates us from a lot of moralistic brooding about 'good' and 'bad' in the relationship between nature and city.'* (Ibid.)

This process of becoming urban in the anthropocene era curiously continues modernist utopias, combining elements of town/country and nature/culture in the footsteps of modernist, anthropocentric planning paradigms like Howard's Garden City, Mumford's neighbourhood planning or Doxiadis' *ekistics*. Deriving from optimistic blueprints, underpinned by strong ideals and concepts of how (sub)urban communities should meet happily in public landscapes, human innovation counted among the welfare city's key characteristics.

Today, many criticise the post-war welfare city because it is too planned, too artificial; an instant city with landscapes of generic green, emerging from human intention and a tabula rasa condition, rather than growing 'organically' or 'naturally' like an urban palimpsest, superimposed by cultural layers throughout centuries. We apparently value the historical city, but hesitate to include modernist neighbourhoods. Yet, values and aspirations attributed to the welfare city's materialisation comprise highly dynamic phenomena. Accordingly, some of the *Green Heritage Survey*'s respondents disliked post-war open spaces, while others respected their visions: – '[Recreational areas] tell the story of the common – with emphasis on public housing in between outdoor spaces and apartment buildings – the English garden cities.' Others wanted more open spaces: – 'You have redeveloped large parts of Copenhagen due to lack of open spaces. It is like this is already forgotten, you have not learned the lessons.' (Braae & Bøggild Op. cit.)

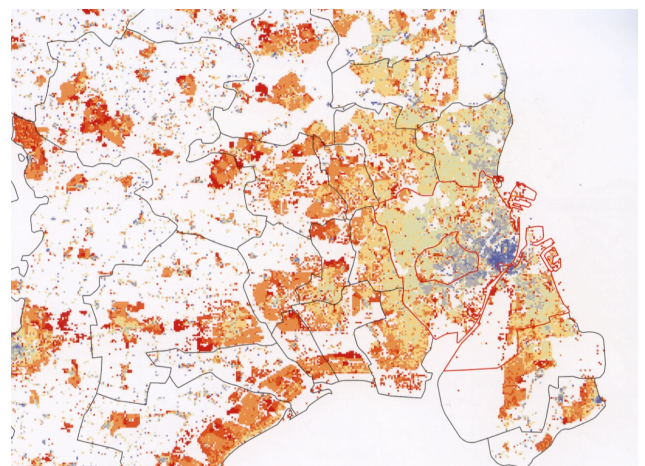


Figure 6: More than half of Denmark's urbanised areas are constructed after WWII. This modernisation process has marked the landscape deeply within few decades. Map illustrating the Copenhagen-region's expansive growth from 1945 – 1989. Yellow, orange and red areas are built after 1945. Courtesy of Dansk Bygningsarv.

#### PUBLIC LANDSCAPES OF YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

The public landscapes of the post-war welfare city's utopia framed narratives of future happiness. Not the home's privacy, but a community's 'public happiness', taking place within the public domain. These icons were designed to shape people's minds, encouraging citizens to realise the grand prospects. Exposed to cultural con-

ditions and political contexts, the icons became stories: Urban landscapes signifying happy ideals and ideological discourse (Wagenaar 2004).

Today, large quantities of the welfare city have celebrated the 50-year milestone, marking the official ‘limit of listing’ in Danish planning and preservation law. This opens the question of what future awaits these areas on the basis of past experience and repair. Today, ambitious architectural competitions and urban regeneration projects incarnate how suburbs, built when the welfare state entered its infancy, are undergoing dramatic metamorphoses, triggered by densification, climate adaptation, migration and branding agendas. While post-war architecture is debated as an object of preservation, home, ghetto, dystopia, non-place, etc., the public landscapes between the buildings, harbouring ideals of collectivism and progress, are often defined negatively and paradoxically: On the one hand, the welfare city is praised for an open spatial character where large-scale continuous spatial sequences embrace the buildings. On the other hand, lack of attention on the welfare city’s public landscapes is glaring: they are described for what they *could become* instead of what they *are*. Rather than appreciating their possible architectural, cultural, functional or ecological values, we tend to reduce them to blank sheets for future development. Echoing post-war strategies, we risk repeating previous mistakes of tabula rasa planning. This became apparent in architectural competitions and regeneration initiatives such as *Greve Midtby* (Greve City Centre) (2009), *Fremtidens Forstæder* (The Suburbs of the Future) (2011-2013) and *Forstædernes Tænk tank* (The Think Tank of the Suburbs) (2011-2012).

Beginning to excavate the welfare city’s ‘terra incognita’ like in Albertslund Syd we must assume that these public landscapes contain qualities that are worth preserving, strengthening or learning from in future urban development. In the wake of WWII, the landscaping of the 1940s and 1950s’ Danish public housing areas was highly appraised among peers in England and Holland for the elegant location of the buildings in the subtly modelled terrain, the generous spatial layout and the couplings between individual plots and public open spaces (Woudstra 1995). Likewise, the comprehensive planning system with the *Finger Plan* and later the *Urban and Rural Zone Law* was regarded as tomorrow’s practices. Notable landscape architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Ole Nørgaard in Albertslund Syd were devoted to extending cities with suburbs like pearls on strings along S-train lines, facilitating access to welfare goods for everybody. They designed the welfare city and its public landscapes as a composition of buildings and in-between-spaces with a materiality of water, soil, plants, roads, pathways etc. Today, the planting in public open spaces, constituting the suburb’s main characteristic, has reached a considerable size. More than before, they create strong spatial units and identity (Riesto & Braae, 2012).

On a short-term basis, regeneration efforts like demolition and densification may make sense today when rural-urban migration, segregation, housing shortage, etc. stress the city, as they did when the post-war new towns were planned. Potentially throwing out the baby with the bathwater or lacking contextual embeddedness however, such strategies risk becoming reductionist and unsustainable in the long run: socially for the locals, culturally for the history, identity and aesthetics of the area, economically for not re-using the existing, and environmentally for densifying green spaces that could mitigate the effects of climate change.

Concomitantly, *the Green Heritage Survey* indicates that tools to integrate agendas of heritage, urbanisation and climate change are still inadequate. Asking the heritage managers about their assessment of the welfare city’s public landscapes, it became obvious that post-war open spaces were granted little attention as potential heritage. One argued that: ‘*[Post-war open spaces] are a historical misunderstanding. The few good ones deserve attention in line with the parks. The surviving ones should be included in new contexts.*’ Another claimed that: ‘*No doubt recreational areas are important! But not for their cultural history. It is by virtue of their function and the value and in the future probably also for solving the climate adaptation.*’ Paradoxically, the same respondents regarded these open spaces as the potentially most vulnerable to climate change amongst all the landscape typologies (Braae & Bøggild Op. cit.).

At this historical threshold it seems important to pause and examine *what* we are changing. What characterises the welfare suburb’s diverse city? Knowing that we don’t know everything, which qualities hide within the existing? What happens if we redirect focus to the multiplicity of open spaces, connecting the buildings that normally dominate?

## FINDING AND FOUNDING HERITAGE

Judging post-war open spaces as cultural history, *the Green Heritage Survey*’s respondents emphasised function, their character as collective memory places, and aesthetics. These discrepancies testify ongoing negotiations of the value, meaning and role of these landscapes, framed by competing agendas in the anthropocene age. As a microcosm of the ‘heterogenisation’ of the welfare city, underpinned by ideals of community, egalitarianism and fairly homogenous understandings of the user; the respondents outlined various future scenarios for the welfare city facing social, environmental, economic and cultural challenges. These disagreements reflect how green heritage constitutes a fragmented field where different planning aspects converge in new complexities that are necessary, yet complicated to integrate.

Such conflicts became apparent as the survey pinpointed missing links between efforts of heritage and climate management. Interestingly, municipal planning initiatives for adapting or mitigating effects of climate change in post-war open spaces are pretty far developed. On the other hand, cultural heritage initiatives are rare in these



'young landscapes' where only around half of the recreational areas are registered via known methods: SAVE (survey of architectural values in the environment): 14.8 percent, KIP (cultural environment in planning): 3.7 percent and LKM (landscape character method): 3.7 percent. Despite such bias, 62.1 percent of the respondents argued that post-war open spaces constitute an important future frontier as heritage for the municipalities, 34.5 percent attributed it less relevance, while nobody considered it as irrelevant (Ibid.).

Although modernist public landscapes are still often regarded as cultural blanks, they are gaining interest – but how, according to whom, and why? As cultural heritage, the areas are under-described; the respondents requested more adequate methods than SAVE, KIP or LKM to examine larger environments and identify local values. This requires adjusted criteria, values and approaches to dealing with this kind of heritage, further complicated by the short time since the welfare city, intertwined with Denmark's newer history as welfare state, and with the locals' everyday life and memories like evident in Albertslund's example.

Many pioneers growing up in generic new towns like Albertslund still live there, possibly in their second or third generation. As public open spaces, the public landscapes of these new towns are dynamic; marked by cultural uses, urbanisation, climate change etc. Recognising these young neighbourhoods as inhabited places rather than the tabula rasa plans they started as, and following Melnick's request for understanding "what we have and value" before we change them, it becomes crucial to conduct a critical, qualitative, cultural-historical examination of landscapes. A dynamic mapping process, with the inclusive concept of green heritage in the vein of New Heritage. Such non-hierarchical mapping processes can potentially add value to suburbs, criticised as non-places void of history or identity. We are only just beginning to learn to appreciate these areas as places rather than plans, and to manage them in local planning initiatives that are sensitive, adaptable and resilient to dynamics and changes, while revealing a potential of social recognition and sustainability. The last decade has nurtured projects that experiment with finding and founding heritage in the post-war welfare city's public landscapes. One 'third-way project' seeking to bridge the preservation/development gap is Albertslund Syd, however it also reveals dilemmas of today's planning practice and theory highlighted by the survey: Rethinking landscape as heritage and integrating this reconsideration with other drivers, affecting the landscape.

#### FUTURE PROMISES OF 'GREEN HERITAGE'

Open spaces play a key role in the materialisation of Denmark's post-war welfare state's vision of equal access to nature and green areas. The landscapes of the welfare state constitute both a physical phenomenon and an administrative apparatus, tailored to manage the various types of open spaces in segregated realms.

Today, the situation differs somewhat. Many of the welfare city's landscapes of generic green are approaching the 50-year limit, administratively allowing them to be rethought of as cultural heritage. Ideals, values and criteria of heritage are historically dependent as well as dynamic. The national management of open spaces in general is partly dismantled in favour of a local, specific perspective, and now resides on a municipal level. A liberalised competition perspective, equalling local identity with branding value or real estate, replaces the egalitarian national distribution of welfare goods.

In order to (re)assemble this vulnerable and fragmented field of culturally significant landscapes, we have analysed their inherent discursive and administrative potentials and challenges, revealing their interrelations, dualities, common grounds and contradictions. *The Green Heritage Survey* conducted among present-day green heritage actors demonstrates the needs and difficulties in upholding the perspectives and managing the challenges. As we are confronted by urbanisation and climate change, the potential and need to take a broader, more holistic look – even from an anthropocene perspective – at challenges of open spaces become apparent in order to reassemble a fragmented field, finding and founding green heritage also in 'heritage vacuums' like Albertslund. The embedded interdisciplinary character of these landscapes entails administrative and methodological challenges; requiring experiments, adjustments and openness for them to be 'solved'. Particularly and paradoxically the welfare city's suburban generic green spaces appear to constitute a challenge of their own, based on the fact that the responding heritage managers seem to have a highly ambivalent attitude towards these open spaces that are still regarded as generic green rather than specific cases of green heritage – plans rather than places. The third-way approach of Albertslund's *Syd2020* project proves the potential of social recognition and sustainability in terms of finding and founding heritage. On the one hand, the potential and need for reassembling the fragmented field of green heritage is obvious. On the other hand, the current multiplicity of local issues, contexts and methodological frameworks create new discursive and administrative tensions. 'The anthropocentric' and 'the anthropocene' are played out against one another. Yet, despite the increasing awareness of the need for top-down instruments, we have seen the opposite taking place since the reform of the Danish municipal structure, handing over responsibility and coordination to the local level. Originating in the post-war welfare state's anthropocentric modernist period of enlightenment and progress, the design of the bureaucratic apparatus managing the public landscapes is not geared to face the challenges of the anthropocene age or the possible post-anthropocene future. If this insight has not changed the world, then it has certainly changed our worldview. What we have previously taken for granted as human and nonhuman aspects, are intertwining in increasingly complicated ways: what once counted as the cultural world and the natural world are now completely entangled.

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