

# MALMÖ

From blue-collar city to knowledge and culture city

**During an educational trip of students of Landscape Architecture and Planning from Wageningen University in 2006, Göran Rosberg gave a lecture about the development of Malmö in the context of the Öresund region.**

**Taking the economic crisis of 1990 as point of departure, this article will elaborate on the strategy of recovery that has turned Malmö into what it presently is, a beacon for the region. Mats Olsson and Göran Rosberg, from Malmö City Planning Office, present the municipality's perspective.**

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Malmö has moved from being an industrial city in the nation-state of Sweden, to being a knowledge city in a global economy. Up until the 1980s, the city's basic prosperity came essentially from the industrial sector. During the 1980s, changes occurred in Sweden and the rest of the world which led to Malmö's major crisis around 1990. The industrial society collapsed, and 30-40,000 jobs disappeared, with 6,000 of these being from Kockums Engineering. Malmö was paralysed by shock and experienced an identity crisis.

During the 1990s, the foundations were laid for the knowledge city of Malmö. Efforts were made to attract highly-educated people, create attractive city and residential environments, further develop the city's urban atmosphere and establish Malmö University College. With the construction of the Öresund Bridge, Malmö was ready for new opportunities in a new, regional context. We will explore the approach taken by the municipality of Malmö to rescue the city from crisis, highlighting important events and projects that contribute to Malmö's present

position as an economic and cultural beacon in the Öresund region.

Afterwards we will take a brief glance into the future. To further develop Malmö as an attractive knowledge city, some major steps towards a more multicultural and integrated Malmö have to be taken.

## **Vision Malmö 2015**

The crisis in Malmö highlighted the need for a development strategy. Faced with competition from cities such as Copenhagen and Lund, we found it difficult to assert ourselves. The road from former industrial town to modern knowledge city was long and arduous. Therefore, in January 1995, the Municipal Executive Board took the initiative to create an extensive vision (Project Malmö 2000), carried out by officials without political control. Working parties were created, operating partly independently and partly jointly with each other in workshops and seminars where experts were invited to give lectures. The result was 'Vision Malmö 2015', a strategic vision with two main components; to establish a University College in central Malmö and to create an attractive new city environment in the Västra Hamnen harbour area, next to the University. This would change Malmö from an industrial city to a lively, future-focused city where cultural diversity, a young population and the abandoned industrial areas become opportunities and strengths.

## **The vision of a University**

The thinking behind the city having its own university was to find a long-term development instrument and a motor for the city, a replacement for the lost business years based on textiles, shipbuilding and the automotive industry. The idea became reality through a combination of strategic clarity from politicians and officials, along with extraordinarily good timing with the government's education package, which resulted in 9,000 student places going to Malmö by 2005. In one study form or another, the University College now has

more than 22,000 students. It is located in one of Malmö's most attractive waterside areas, which was given the name Universitetsholmen. It is in fact, a twin-nucleus area, with the other leg in the University Hospital area, MAS, enabling future synergy effects with the business sector in the new Västra Hamnen district, Malmö University College and the innovation environment at MINC, Malmö Incubator, a kind of *hot-house* for innovative companies.

### Development of Västra Hamnen

Particularly crucial in the transformation of the former industrial area was the hosting of the international home and lifestyle fair 'Bo01' at Västra Hamnen. This contributed greatly to the creation of the new city district. The area covers 140 ha and easily fills the whole Old Town area and more. The home and lifestyle fair was financially a drain, but as far as sustainability, architecture and the urban environment is concerned, the new district is a success. In particular, the breadth of sustainable technologies is still attracting large international crowds to the area. In addition, the exhibition area became the city's new meeting place and promenade area. Now, around 1,600 people live in the waterside development at Västra Hamnen. 300 Companies operate at Västra Hamnen, with a total employment effect of more than 6,500 people. The engineering industry has been replaced by information technology and experience-focused companies. The latest additions are the IT company, Teleca and World Trade Centre – two important indicators for business in Malmö. With 650 employees, Teleca is Malmö's second largest private company. When the new district is complete, we estimate there will be 10,000 residents and 20,000 work and study places.

Through the overall environmental approach of Bo01, of an ecological society, sustainable in the long term, the Swedish government has highlighted Västra Hamnen as a national example

of urban sustainable development. If eco villages and home and lifestyle fairs were the first and second generation of urban sustainable development, the city of Malmö is offering a chance to participate in the third generation of urban sustainable development – the Building homes dialogue, the vital conversation. The new model was a starting point for the manifold approach to urban sustainable development, not just "once in a lifetime" phenomenon, like a homes and

lifestyle exhibition.

The Building homes dialogue also focuses on continuing urban sustainable development at Västra Hamnen, but instead of close and detailed control through quality programmes, the starting point has been dialogue through the "vital conversation". For a full year, thirteen property developers worked in partnership with the City of Malmö to develop a plan, and jointly define quality standards. The process involves making more





players participate at an early stage. The Building homes dialogue is a collaboration between construction companies, materials producers, the municipality and central government. The Building homes dialogue (bodialogen) is an example of both economic and social sustainability. An example of social sustainability is the creation of meeting places, such as bathing places, skateboard tracks, and the new dance theatre. These are important elements in creating an attractive city district, but also serve the city as a whole.

Malmö has two innovation environments – Medeon and Malmö Incubator. Medeon is the oldest, and is connected with the University Hospital, UMAS, and has a clear medical focus. Malmö Incubator (MINC) is located on Universitetsholmen and is only a few years old. Development during this period has, however, been very positive. Over twenty companies are now linked to the innovation environment. The fundamental idea is the establishment of creative environments, where students and researchers have the opportunity to develop ideas and projects.

### **An inspiring approach**

By strategic and well thought-through planning, we created the conditions for

good urban development. Behind the success factors was, above all, the vision project (1995), along with political foresight and drive. The result is particularly striking, in view of the difficult starting point the city found itself in during the early 1990s. Other success factors are the Öresund connection and Malmö's participation in the new regional context, the Öresund region, along with a positive and expanding economic development in the world in general. The establishment of the University, the Bo01 international home and lifestyle fair, the Building homes dialogue, and MINC are all examples of *urban governance*. Furthermore, throughout the dynamic development period from 1995 to the present, considerable focus has been directed at the construction of a strategic infrastructure base, which is also a precondition for economic growth. Our traditional approach to work and our administration structure is based on the linear and zoned approach of an industrial society. This suits neither the work of a knowledge society nor the young workers who are now replacing those born in the 1940s. The work of creating the vision itself but, in particular, the implementation of the two major strategic projects, Bo01 and Malmö University College, required a new approach to work. The ideas from the work on

the vision were communicated through an open and extensive dialogue process. The City Planning Office's Information Department was expanded, and played a key role in establishing a more widely accepted "development culture" which, over time, replaced the trauma of the death of the industrial community. Many new or extended initiatives were taken, including contacts with the press and other media, the publication of dedicated newsletters and information material, films and videos, hearings, workshops, seminars, discussion meetings and exhibitions.

An important feature of our communication strategy was the 'vision images', i.e. we invested in exciting images which could communicate our ideas for the future in a simple way. At a later stage, the City Planning Forum was created. It acted as a creative meeting place for the discussion of planning issues. The role of the city as an initiator and catalyst works best if the meetings are held out in the City, on 'neutral' ground not dominated by a major stakeholder. If a meeting is held in the City Hall, it is frequently assumed that it will be held on the municipality's terms. A democratic development process has to be fuelled by information, and it is the city which has to initiate a transparent communication process. A culture of growth arises from open discussions.

At a political level, 'paperless' Municipal Executive Board meetings were introduced, and time was set aside for a radical development discussion without the traditional decision data issued by the administrative departments. In addition, Malmö put substantial effort into EU collaboration, and became a member of Eurocities and the Union of Baltic Cities. The exchange of ideas with other European cities provided inspiration for our own development strategy. Southern European cities, such as Barcelona, Bilbao, Turin and Lyon, were particularly influential in providing us with ideas on

how to adopt innovative working methods to handle complexity and a holistic approach.

Just over ten years after the work on developing the vision, we can clearly see the major changes which have taken place in Malmö and its surroundings.

The principal aims of the strategic projects, Bo01 and Malmö University College, were to improve Malmö's competitiveness in the region, i.e. what we now call 'to make Malmö a long-term sustainable and attractive city in the Öresund region'.

The work on the vision focused on economic growth and jobs, and our ideas of using attractive housing and new educational opportunities to create new types of jobs have borne fruit. For example, more people are currently working within the old shipyard area than when Kockums was at its strongest, and we have 22,000 students at the University College. The urban milieu, particularly

in central Malmö, has been improved, and the City of Malmö has received national and international awards for architecture and public spaces. Now, attention is turning to imbalances in other aspects of Malmö – demographic, social, economic, commercial, educational et cetera.

#### **Sustainable city**

Malmö is the most important employment centre in Skåne, and, along with Lund, is to act as a motor for business, employment and growth in southwest Skåne, Skåne and the Öresund region. The business sector must be given good development opportunities to strengthen the economic base for prosperity.

Above all, it is the city businesses in corporate services, the visitor industry, education and research which are expected to expand in the future. The development of Universitetsholmen, Västra Hamnen and the UMAS area as research and innovation environments will sup-

port the reorientation of the business sector towards more expanding and profitable operations.

Since Universitetsholmen is now firmly established, we have started developing a second university area, UMAS. A programme group is working on developing the idea of "Medical Malmö", with the aim of developing the potential of the medical area. A partnership has been set up between the University Hospital MAS, the Medeon research park, Medicon Valley Academy, the medical faculty at the University of Lund, the City of Malmö and other stakeholders.

In the area of ecology, the City of Malmö has achieved international recognition, not least as a result of Bo01. To continue this development, we are now establishing a 'Centre for sustainable urban development' in partnership with Malmö University College and the Region Skåne organisation.



In parallel with the positive ecological and economic trends in Malmö, the social area is becoming increasingly problematic. Vålfärd För Alla (Welfare for All) is a political initiative which has given all administrative departments the task of developing ideas and implementing measures aimed at social welfare and economic growth. If Malmö is to continue to be an attractive city in the region, the large number of immigrants in the City of Malmö must become involved in and integrated into the positive development we are now experiencing. This is now our greatest challenge.

#### **How do we progress?**

The knowledge society is placing new demands on cities. How are we to create new conditions for developing knowledge cities and experience-focused knowledge cities? The creation of new educational platforms is not sufficient. They are now a precondition. Cities must

also be able to offer an attractive and experience-rich urban environment. Cultural input plays an important role in this. The creation of meeting places is another. Diversity also requires a wide selection of different residential alternatives.

Openness and tolerance are two key concepts which must permeate and be given greater scope in the future planning of Malmö. Openness and tolerance towards new profiles or unusual qualities, marginal operations which normally have no initial profitability, but which in the long run, along with other profiles or activities, can create synergy effects. Creating scope for these operations is just as important as continuing traditional urban construction. It is the diversity of what can be called “different subcultures” which creates the informal contacts that can in turn generate new knowledge, research areas, commerce,

new jobs etc. Of course this is not an approach limited solely to Malmö, but one which can/must be applied to other places in the region.

To support such development, the existence and creation of new meeting places are an essential condition. Meeting places in public spaces are just as important as private and institutional meeting places. In Malmö, we are, at the moment, planning the layout of the new district of Hyllie. Hyllie is to be developed in the same way as Västra Hamnen – the sustainability concept must set the standard, high architectural quality in design and major investment in the public city environment. The Arena will become a new meeting place, and also an example of social and economic sustainability. It will be an institutional cultural manifestation that can host different activities, part of a multi-faceted cultural life. The future development area of Norra Sor-





genfri is another location which should be able to support a development of sub-cultures, i.e. consciously creating conditions for unusual activities, side by side with traditional activities.

There is great potential in various forms of cooperation among municipalities. The level of corporation among municipalities in the region must be improved, both as regards municipalities in Skåne and also across the water in Denmark. We have previously mentioned the initiative from the City of Malmö in terms of urban governance. What we are now promoting may be called regional governance.

### Summary

Malmö has moved from being “an industrial city in the nation-state of Sweden”, to “a knowledge city in a global economy”. The crisis in Malmö, during the 1990s, highlighted the need for a development strategy. A vision for the development was created by an open and extensive dialogue process, which resulted in many new or extended initiatives. An own university was realized to create a long-term development instrument and a motor for the city, a replacement for the lost business. The creation of a new city district, Västra Hamnen, was as well crucial for the development of the city and became a national example of urban sustainability due to the environmental approach of Bo01.

Just over ten years after the work on developing the vision, we can clearly

see the major changes which have taken place in Malmö and its surroundings. Malmö is the most important employment centre in Skåne, and, along with Lund, is to act as a motor for business, employment and growth in south-west Skåne, Skåne and the Öresund region.

But the knowledge society also places new demands on the city. In parallel with the positive ecological and economic trends in Malmö, the social area is becoming increasingly problematic. Openness and tolerance are two key concepts which must permeate and be given greater scope in the future planning of Malmö. To support such development, the existence and creation of new meeting places are an essential condition. Meeting places in public spaces are just as important as private and institutional meeting places.