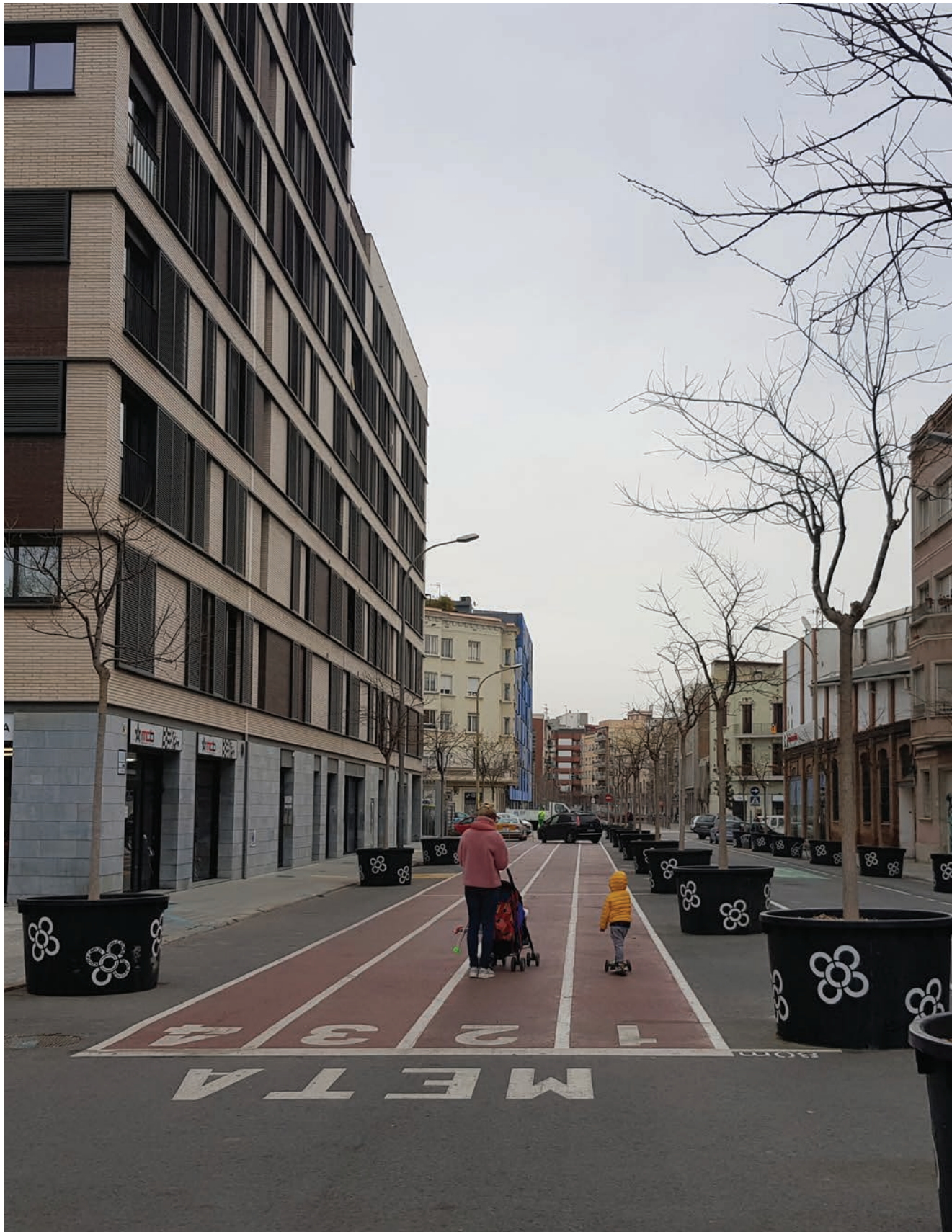# Engaging with the Politics of Architecture

Hannah Bolitho

Byera Hadley
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Hannah Bolitho was awarded the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship in 2018 and undertook the travel in 2019

Cover image: Pilot Superblock in Poblenou Barcelona
Photo by Hannah Bolitho

How could our profession benefit from a broadening of architectural practice? How would this change our ability to input into projects? How do we move from a focus on invention to reinvention?

"The core expertise of architects-that distinguishes us from project managers, engineers and planners-is the ability to draw together disparate needs, to resolve or reconcile diverse interests into a compelling idea that can then be implemented by others...architects could have a role in not only the spatial design, but also the design of the delivery and governance systems."

Rod Simpson, 2019

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Executive Summary

The practice of urbanism has long been confounded by the conflicting demands of the various stakeholders. Such conflict is not unexpected given that space is often equated with potential financial profit, which is an inevitable political paradigm. If architects are to take the role of custodians of the city, they must broaden their practice to become better advocates and mediators between the community and politically driven design processes. They must demonstrate their finely tuned skills to ensure they are included in the design and planning decision making process and governance systems. The value of research must be elevated and research, practice and policy making must each inform the other.

Three European case studies provide opportunities for learning. They each illustrate different design and planning processes with different levels of architectural involvement. Common to the three contexts is a need for a refocusing of the role of the architect, from the traditional role focusing on invention towards re-invention. The projects are King's Cross in London, the Superblocks in Barcelona and Nordhavn in Copenhagen. Observations are made on the case studies through the lens of four key themes: culture, risk, process and skills. These themes have been identified through interviews with a number of local Sydney based architects.

In contexts where there is an embedded strong value placed on design culture, the perceived value of architecture is increased. Common to the three case studies is the changing nature of government and a shift towards project management led processes for large urban projects. In our local context, project managers are often seen as agents of developers. Depending on the value placed on the culture of design, the appetite for innovation and the governance processes in place, is a sliding scale of involvement and influence by architects in the design and planning process.

Architects are often left out of the design and planning process altogether. There is a lack of demonstration of the value we can add to economic performance and

societal wellbeing. This can result in a lack of trust in our skills by decision makers. Onerous design review processes, broad terms of reference for design reviewers, 1 and a focus on pure aesthetics are identified as risks to project time lines and costs. A lack of government led design stewardship with the power to make decisions, is identified as a risk to project quality.

Design processes for major city making projects should be open, iterative and collaborative. Processes enabling a 'stand and defend' outcome often prioritise project expedience and this should be weighed against the potential for innovation and greater public benefit outcomes. Enabling risk through iterative design and, where appropriate, using pilot projects to test ideas, can result in better outcomes.

Development models that establish long term partnerships between public agencies and private developers can enable innovation. In a 'develop and manage arrangement', where long term ownership is maintained by government, uplift can be used to pay for essential infrastructure for the benefit of the public, and the financial benefit of the developer. This model favours economics over finances. It acknowledges that public project delivery is not just about delivering the highest return to government, but is also about delivering good public benefit.

Part of the broadening of architectural practice should include a reconsideration of the traditional output of architecture. The pure product of invention must be reconsidered to respond to the changing social and environmental demands of our cities. The perceived value of architecture, and the skill of the architect needs to be demonstrated more clearly. Research must be considered integral to all processes. Educating architects, urban designers, landscape architects and planners together could help. Promoting involvement or at least an understanding of the politics driving decision making is essential.

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Introduction

The scale and speed of change has accelerated exponentially in New South Wales (NSW) where the stakes are high for major city making projects. This should be a motivational force for action within the architectural community given our input into the decision making processes driving these large projects is often seen as a risk to a project's expedience and we are often left out of the urban design framework phase. This phase is critical as it sets the objectives against which the project will be assessed and measured over the long term.

This study seeks to understand how the role of the architect changes in different policy environments to understand if our profession could benefit from a broadening of practice. While it focuses on the role of the architect, it acknowledges that the role of architect and urban designer are frequently interchangeable. It seeks to understand how to capitalise on our inherent skill set as enablers, facilitators and champions of good design. These are roles that we have historically shied away from, especially when political agendas are involved.

As well, the study seeks to better understand other factors that affect decision making to determine if there is a policy or process model that makes it more or less likely that decisions will be made on the basis of well researched long term outcomes, or if it is in fact dependent on how embedded good design is in the cultural fabric of each place. It is concerned with the integrity of the design process.

Three city shaping case studies are investigated to understand what processes are facilitating different design input and outcomes. The three projects are King's Cross in London, the Superblocks in Barcelona and Nordhavn in Copenhagen.

Given the broad scope and the extensive information gained through my research, this report will provide an overview of the study and the key lessons learned. More detailed analysis of the projects and interviews undertaken will form the basis of future study.

The original intent of the study was to also include an analysis of the Grand Paris process but for the purpose of focusing this report on built interventions, my research on Grand Paris will form the basis of future study.

It is also noted that the research was undertaken before the impacts of the global pandemic of COVID-19.

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Project Structure

The structure of this report is twofold. The first part synthesises the discussions had with key members of our local, Sydney based, architectural and urban design community. Each interviewee was given a series of questions to focus on, around the topics of the role of the architect, the role of supporting policy and what improvements could be made to facilitate better access to the urban political decision making process.

The responses were sorted into key themes and these themes were used as the lens through which to view the case study investigations.

The initial questions were:

- What does it mean for our role as architects to focus more on advocacy?
- What skills do we have that are underutilised?
- What are the factors affecting decision making?
- How can we shift from the individualistic to be more collective and collaborative?
- How does the culture of a place affect good design outcomes?
- How does government policy, governance and delivery processes affect good design outcomes?
- How important is the role of a Government Architect?
- How independent are the key stakeholders in large scale local projects?
- What part does education play in different contexts in terms of the role of the architect?
- How do we facilitate a better understanding of urbanism?

The second part of this report provides a summary of the investigations in London, Barcelona and Copenhagen. It includes a summary of the interviews I undertook with key members of the architectural, urban design and planning teams and a general discussion of my observations, structured around the themes identified in Part One.

"We as a profession have been far too passive in our custodianship of the city, we are not inside the tent."

Philip Thalis, 2019

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Themes

Four key themes emerged from my conversations in Sydney relating to culture, process, risk and skills. Before analysing these themes however, it is important to understand the political landscape underpinning the design process for large city making projects in our local context, as well as the complex ministerial reporting lines. The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) is responsible with managing the planning and development of State Government owned land within NSW. The Government Architect NSW (GA NSW) is within DPIE. DPIE reports to the Minister for Planning.

Each local council is responsible for managing the planning and development of land within their local government area, except for land identified as under State Government control. Local councils report to their elected Councillors. The Greater Sydney Commission was modelled on the Greater London Authority and it is charged with tying together the arms of local and state planning systems. It also reports to the Minister for Planning.

State Government agencies with land holdings are responsible for overseeing the management of their assets. This includes agencies such as the Land and Housing Authority and Transport for NSW and they may act as developer for their land. There are also specific State Government developer organisations such as Urban Growth, the newer Urban Growth Development Corporation, Infrastructure NSW and Property NSW. All of these organisations report to different Ministers than the Minister for Planning.

The following section identifies the four key themes that emerged from my discussions in Sydney:

Culture
There is a strong relationship between embedded design culture and the relationship between the individual versus collective. It was acknowledged in many of the conversations that a shared cultural value of design directly affects placemaking. Helen Lochhead is an architect and urban designer and was the Dean of the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of NSW at the time of my interview. She made the point that there are more architects in Barcelona than in all of Australia, noting that "*...it is about the culture of the place too... for example, we don't have the shared cultural value and appreciation of architecture and the city that they do in Barcelona where architects play a key role in city making*" (H. Lochhead, Interview, 2019).

Similarly in Paris, it is very politically charged, a small country with a strong collective understanding of the importance of design culture. Lochhead noted that we don't have that kind of shared cultural value and that this affects project priorities which in turn affects the structure of design process.

Peter John Cantrill is the Program Manager of Urban Design at the City of Sydney. He made the point that 'embedded culture' ebbs and flows with time and place. He suggested that of more importance is a general culture that values many different skills and approaches, noting that *"...if you have a narrow general culture, only a narrow group of skills can influence." (*PJ. Cantrill, Interview, 2021).

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Graham Jahn is the Director of City Planning, Development and Transport at the City of Sydney. In our discussion he took this concept further, noting that "...*in cultures that value the collective above the individual, there is a tendency to value economic wellbeing over financial return... they go beyond the short term period*" (G. Jahn, Interview, 2020). This is clearly apparent in the project objectives for both King's Cross and Nordhavn where the objectives were focused on long term, broad economic benefits by establishing long term partnerships between the government agencies and private developers. In Nordhavn, it was considered important that essential infrastructure such as the rail, was delivered before the development. This benefited the community and increased the land value. In Sydney the priority is often quick financial return, to the benefit of the private developer with cheaper land without rail, and cost to the community.

Peter Mould was a previous NSW Government Architect. He discussed the issue of culture in relation to government, noting that in NSW, "...*there is almost a righteousness for people within government to make money for government, and that honorable endeavor often disguises the worst behavior... People don't recognise a bad public outcome because it delivers a good return to government.*" (P. Mould, Interview, 2019)

Jahn also expressed concern over the focus on content by our local architectural community, noting that the culture driving the concept of 'hero architects' is over. He discussed the issue of what he termed 'Sydney shaming', a default position for commentators, noting that "..*it's*

brought out of an individualism, an appreciation of the ordinary, we tend to go for the isolated genius..." (G. Jahn, Interview, 2020). Jahn wasn't as concerned with the lack of historical design culture in our context, noting that cultural tradition comes through from all areas of influence, it is not just about embedded history, and that there is an exciting generational change on the way.

London, Barcelona and Copenhagen all have strong histories of design culture, what lessons can be taken from these contexts in terms of embedded design culture and are there other influences that equally impact on a greater value placed on the collective over the individual?

Process: Design Governance and Policy
Good design process is critical for innovation. It is important to get the process right from project inception, to ensure an iterative, collaborative and open dialogue. Cantrill is a champion of targeted design processes. He discussed that "*Too often in Sydney the design process is not iterative, it is 'stand and defend'. A design proposition is developed to support a financial obligation, to support a business case and this is given as the primary objective in a consultancy brief. It is developed quickly and lacks the complexity of design thinking. The design is only exposed to review too late in the process to inject innovative architectural and design thinking. This 'stand and defend' process delivers the least risk to project timelines, and also the least opportunity for innovation.*" (PJ. Cantrill, personal communication, 2021).

Design governance plays an important role in the process. Peter Poulet is the Central District & Southern

"We must be able to locate research at the heart of our work…to establish the knowledge base so the value is demonstrated and upheld."

(Peter John Cantrill, 2021)

District Commissioner with the Greater Sydney Commission, and a previous NSW Government Architect. He oversaw the restructuring of the NSW Government Architect's Office (GAO) to where it now sits, within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). Our discussion focused on the new structure of the Government Architect's (GANSW) work in terms policy making and design review.

Critics of the former GAO noted that there was not enough focus on policy, and its project capacity could be better transferred to the private sector. The Government Architect has however always made policy, as part of committees and review processes and the loss of project capacity is seen by some as enormous loss.

Philip Thalis is an architect and City of Sydney Councilor. He spoke of the restructuring of the Government Architect as a *"loss of collective memory and a diminution of a position which has served Sydney"* (P. Thalis, Interview, 2019). Thalis strongly believes that policy is best when made in conjunction with projects noting that *"…the positive agency of making projects is where you test the policy"* (P. Thalis, Interview, 2019). Cantrill furthered this, noting that *"we must be able to locate research at the heart of our work…to establish the knowledge base so the value is demonstrated and upheld." (*PJ. Cantrill, Interview, 2021).

It is a time of adjustment for the GANSW. The changing nature of government has resulted in a diminution of power given to the Government Architect and this is also common in London, Barcelona and Copenhagen. Thalis referred to the GANSW and GSC both having only 'soft

persuasive power' in the determining of city making decisions. Thalis also discussed the overlap and discord between State agencies, noting a lack of clear directive for the GANSW and the GSC. (P. Thalis, Interview, 2019). It is important to note that this has led to a need to embed good design in government policy and this has recently happened in NSW.

The role of design review is also important, but design review processes, driven by governance structures results in design review that is instigated too late in the process and then held up as the key to ensuring proposals create good design. Lochhead noted that *"…good architectural thinking too often gets "diluted to the point where the process becomes more focused on project delivery than the project outcome."* (H. Lochhead, Interview, 2019). In our local context it is frequently considered too great a risk to model a different design process where design review is integrated into the process informing a business case.

Jahn made the point that the Government Architect now has an assurance role and that while product quality control is an important role for them to be undertaking, design review is only as good as the reviewers and the power they are given. Reviewers must have the agency to conclude and provide a way forward even if this results in a project changing course. Jahn noted that *"design assurance is limited by the number of skillful people that can perform that function"* (G. Jahn, Interview, 2019).

Rod Simpson is an architect and at the time of our discussion, was the Environment Commissioner of the Greater Sydney Commission. He furthered this, stating

"Sometimes you [the architect] have to learn to give way a little bit so you can gain something else and we are not very good at that. Some architects are great negotiators and some are too precious in that the design quality is more fundamental than anything else."

Peter Mould, 2019

"...there is almost a righteousness for people within government to make money for government, and that honorable endeavor often disguises the worst behavior... People don't recognise a bad public outcome because it delivers a good return to government."

(Peter Mould, 2019)

that "*urbanism is not architecture, and urban quality is not simply the aggregation of 'design excellence'*" (Simpson, R., 'The City as a System of Systems', Architecture Bulletin, 2019).

The three case studies in London, Barcelona and Copenhagen are all examples of different development processes, models, and design governance systems. Design review plays different roles in each. Which aspects of each project exhibit innovation, and what are the processes enabling it?

Risk: Invention, re-invention or innovation
There is an intrinsic link between risk and innovation that plays out as political risk, risk to project priorities and risk to the architect's integrity. Political agenda sets project priorities, and risk is assessed against these priorities.

The political system in NSW is such that the imperative of the two major parties is often short term decision making that ensures electoral success. This inevitably results in decisions that are politically expedient and less concerned with long term planning. Decisions are often made that reflect the power and agendas of individuals or groups with vested interests rather than reflecting the demands of social need and urban reform. Short term decision making rarely reflects and responds to a long term policy agenda and strategy. Short term decision making is risk averse, and risk aversion often equates restricted innovation.

The involvement of architectural expertise in the planning decision making process for large scale projects is often seen as a political risk because it may mean a predetermined option is not endorsed. The difficulty is

that this predetermined option has often already been used to inform the business case and this business case has set project objectives, which may now not be met if a different design is promoted.

Cantrill noted that it is too simplistic to only consider risk in terms of short term political agenda when there is a difference between the bureaucratic and political arms of government. He noted that we [the architect] need to understand clearly the needs of the society we are designing for, and demonstrate the value we add, so that if the culture of government is driven by one economic perspective, then demonstrating the value add to that perspective is how we must influence. *(*PJ. Cantrill, Interview, 2021).

Risk was also identified in terms of the identity of the architect. There is commonly a fear within architects that compromise undermines integrity, but also that challenging a project brief may compromise the engagement. Mould commented that "*...sometimes you [the architect] have to learn to give way a little bit so you can gain something else and we are not very good at that. Some Architects are great negotiators and some are too precious in that the design quality is more fundamental than anything else*" (P. Mould, Interview, 2019).

Jahn also spoke of this conflict for architects in relation to involvement in commercial development, noting that they historically acted as risk averse marketing agents of their clients, but "*to really gain any traction in the political world, we [the architect] have to step outside the service paradigm, and beyond concerning ourselves primarily with those clients serving features*" (G. Jahn, Interview, 2019).

"Many architects have a very significant blind spot in terms of how cities are made and how complex decision making is, they disempower themselves...We cannot keep thinking about architecture as purely artefact when it is shaped by a plethora of regulatory, financial and political considerations."

Helen Lochhead, 2019

"Urbanism is not architecture, and urban quality is not simply the aggregation of 'design excellence'"

(Rod Simpson, 2019)

Jahn spoke of needing to understand where project objectives fit in the "leadership value chain", either as champions of risky projects, that are likely unfeasible, advanced negotiators, where chances of success are increased, or as advanced negotiators but only within the practical and feasible. He noted that this third position is generally where most people sit, where the chances of project success are high, risk is low, and chances of improvement or innovation is low. He noted that there is a role for architects in all three areas. (G. Jahn, Interview, 2019).

The involvement of an architect in the design process is often deemed a risk to project expedience. Historically, architects were lead negotiators in design processes, but this role has been eroded, and with it an deeper understanding of the complexity of property deals and management processes by the design profession (G. Jahn, Interview, 2019).

Project Management led processes and procurement has affected the hierarchy and the influence of developers, agents of developers and builders. Where historically the architect had direct access to the client, in the project management model the architect is shielded. Poulet believes this is a result of significant scepticism and cynicism about the capacity of architects to be strategic. He noted that having good design embedded in policy will help to bridge this divide, but he also noted that policy is only as good as the local planners who implement it. (P. Poulet, Interview, 2019)

Thalis and Lochhead both brought up the issue of contract

management. Thalis noted that the full administration of contract documentation should be the responsibility of the City or State, and not the private developer (P. Thalis, Interview, 2019). Lochhead noted that the issue with contracts is that they push projects to focus on risk mitigation, rather than looking at what the best outcomes may be, and then managing risks that may happen as a result (H. Lochhead, Interview, 2019).

Skills: Where does/should the architect fit?
If architects take on the role of custodians of the city, they require skills for the careful management of the competing agendas of political will and community needs in design governance and procurement processes that are often led by developers and agents of developers and geared towards private profit.

This is an important skill set to facilitate open debate on the "right to the city". According to Thalis "*We as a profession have been far too passive in our custodianship of the city, we are not inside the tent*" (P. Thalis, Interview, 2019). This requires a different set of skills than those traditionally practiced, but skills that are inherent in our education (R. Simpson, personal correspondence, 2019).

There was a general acknowledgment in my discussions that our skill set is broader than what is utilised. Simpson discussed the role of the architect as innovator, generator, enabler, mediator, advocate or interpreter. Lochhead noted that "*Many architects have a very significant blind spot in terms of how cities are made and how complex decision making is, they disempower themselves... We cannot keep thinking about architecture as purely*

"Why would architects take on a more political role? Serving what exactly? In order to even consider that, you have got to be a disciple of a set of principles about what makes a healthy and inevitable city."

Graham Jahn, 2019

"Our architectural community should be strong and self-reinforcing, with a strong, cohesive common purpose and broad support with many diverse thought leaders."

Peter John Cantrill, 2021

"…an architect is well-placed when design expertise is complemented by knowledge in real estate and development processes, the risk and reward which drives them, and the impacts of regulatory conditions"

(Anita Morandini, 2019)

artefact when it is shaped by a plethora of regulatory, financial and political considerations." (H. Lochhead, Interview, 2019).

Jesse McNicoll is the Urban Design Coordinator at the City of Sydney. He noted that the range of skills has changed, and much of what used to be the domain of the architect has now been claimed by other professions. He also noted that a big issue is the lack of agreement about what is important within design practice. Cantrill furthered this by noting that *"Our architectural community should be strong and self-reinforcing, with a strong, cohesive common purpose and broad support with many diverse thought leaders." (*PJ. Cantrill, Interview, 2021).

What is the role of education? Urban design traditionally bridges the divide between planning and architecture, but for effective city making, cross education is essential between architecture, urban design, landscape architecture and planning plus an understanding of the economic and political context in which one will operate.

This is common practice in Barcelona and Copenhagen, where planners are educated in architecture, and architects are educated in planning. Simpson supports this, noting that *"The core expertise of architects…is to draw together disparate needs, to resolve or reconcile diverse interests into a compelling idea that can then be implemented by others…Architects could have a role in not only the spatial design, but also the design of the delivery and governance systems."* (Simpson, R., 'The City as a System of Systems', Architecture Bulletin, 2019).

Poulet discussed that in Australia, architects traditionally have portrayed themselves as form makers, disconnecting themselves from the rest of the city making urbanists, but that architecture is contingent on so many other things. (P. Poulet, Interview, 2019).

Anita Morandini is an architect and the Design Excellence Manager at the City of Sydney. She commented in her research that *"…an architect is well-placed when design expertise is complemented by knowledge in real estate and development processes, the risk and reward which drives them, and the impacts of regulatory conditions*" (Morandini, A, 'Byera Hadley Research Report', 2019).

Jahn also argued that architects should take on a more political role to shape our cities. He noted that all city makers should be disciples of a set of principles, reviewed frequently, around what makes a healthy, inviting city. His proposition was that we need to show how society and culture more broadly will benefit and improve by adopting these principles-eventually government will catch up and adopt the principles (G. Jahn, Interview, 2019). Jahn gave the example of the principles behind flexible work spaces, innovative work spaces, integration between indoor and outdoor spaces, collective public transport and understanding active transport.

The role of the architect is different in London, Barcelona and Copenhagen, what additional, broader skills are required to gain the trust of government, and to not be seen as a risk?

King's Cross London
Source: Hannah Bolitho

4

King's Cross St Pancras: London

The former industrial area of King's Cross in London has been subject to a long term urban renewal process and redeveloped into a mixed use precinct, located on the site of one of the most connected points in the UK, and located adjacent to a canal.

Introduction
My investigation in London focused on the King's Cross development. I was interested in understanding the process for delivery and how the culture in London affected design outcomes. My original intent was to also investigate the urban regeneration following the London Olympics with a particular focus on the targeted intervention projects such as the Hackney Wick Arts Precinct. While I visited Hackney Wick, this study will focus on lessons learned from King's Cross and my discussions specifically with Matthew Carmona and Peter Bishop. I have included a photographic record of other projects in the journal section of this report.

It is also noted that London has particular relevance to this study in that The Greater London Authority, charged with developing the Spatial Development Strategy, The London Plan, was used as a model for the Greater Sydney Commission.

Context: Design Governance
The leadership and governance system guiding urban strategy in London has similarities to our local NSW context, setting out a series of frameworks within which there is scope for negotiations. It is also similar in terms of the shift towards project management led processes that drive city making processes, often at the exclusion of architectural voices.

When asked to discuss the culture of design in London, Matthew Carmona noted the importance of understanding the role that was played by the (former) Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and how it fit into the structure as a government

funded body. CABE was created in 1999 and dissolved 11 years later. Its primary purpose was in the promoting of design culture in London. CABE, he said on one hand was instrumental in that it was backed by government, they were well resourced and were influential in terms of changing and influencing the culture of design. On the other hand, CABE had limited power, with no statutory weight given to the design advice and this contributed to its demise, seen as another 'toothless tiger'.

Where do architects fit in?
Both Peter Bishop and Matthew Carmona discussed many similarities between our local context and that of London, in particular in terms of frequent policy changes and governments that "flip flop" on the agenda of design. As well, the importance placed on design diverges the further you go from Central London. They both observed that the value of land and development opportunity in central London makes it different, and that generally developers do understand that good places make better profits. In the case of King's Cross, planning decision making lay with the King's Cross Partnership consortium, with Peter Bishop as planning lead and limited involvement from government architect stewardship. It was lucky that as a planner he valued design quality, and chose a developer that also valued design quality.

Bishop touched on two other key differences in policy direction affecting design outcomes between London and Sydney. His first observation was that in NSW, the ministerial level has much more power, and can step in and take strategic planning away from the local councils. This doesn't happen in London. In the example of King's Cross, the local Borough was big enough and had

Lewis Cubitt Square
King's Cross London
Source: Hannah Bolitho

enough expertise that the Mayor did not get involved. Transport for London (TfL) were also taken out of the project working group as their vested interests were seen as a risk. Bishop noted that TfL has since been more successfully restructured.

His second observation was in terms of government procurement. He noted that the double handling of consultant architects was resulting in a "hemorrhaging" of consultant fees in NSW, and NSW government agencies were having to recover these fees by procuring architects for minimal fees. He noted that fees this low can never produce innovation.

Carmona summarised that individually architects in London have almost no influence, the architectural community does not have a collective voice and the Royal Institute of British architects, the national body is not coherent. He also commented that design review processes are cumbersome. (M. Carmona, Interview, 2019). According to Bishop, design does not effectively sit within the British planning system, and architects have not effectively argued the case for it. He noted that the recent planning policy framework states that planning should be involved in design debates, but planners have been being produced with no design education, and architects with limited planning knowledge. Bishop's key point was that while it is permissible to negotiate on design, there are objective ways of assessing good design, and that is why planners could take the lead. The King's Cross Partnership actively sought to disengage from the design review process. (P. Bishop, Interview, 2019).

Both Carmona and Bishop noted that while CABE was operational, the architectural community responded well, but it failed to create a lasting change in the role of the architect. Carmona wrote that *"CABE failed to tackle the culture of professional silos or the tendency of the built environment professional institutes to revert to type and to the narrow preoccupations of their members once CABE ceased to exist."* (Carmona, M. 2017, p.12).

On the topic of innovation, Bishop noted that *"every city of size should have a small think tank that goes strategically into the point of power."* (P. Bishop, Interview, 2019). He specifically noted that the NSW Government Architect must not be subsumed as an advisory arm of the Department of Planning and that it should be moved closer to cabinet, in order to give it strength.

Project Background

The development at King's Cross covers 27Ha of government owned land on the northern boundary of Central London. It includes the two stations of King's Cross and St Pancras which were, and are gateway stations for greater London. Historically the areas around the stations were low income neighbourhoods.

Plans for regeneration of the station and surrounds commenced in 1984 as a public venture but were thwarted by complex rail technical difficulties, the collapse of the London property boom in the late 1980s and unresolved plans for bringing new rail lines into King's Cross.

In the 1990's public private partnerships were starting to be favoured and the King's Cross Partnership was established between the two local boroughs of Camden

Coal Drops Yard
King's Cross London
Source: Hannah Bolitho

and Islington in conjunction with the two relevant rail companies. The King's Cross Partnership was charged with preparing the first stage of works, the rail infrastructure for regeneration. A significant amount of rail infrastructure work happened between 1996 and 1999 when Argent was selected as the developer of the rest of the land. This work included provision for high speed rail to St Pancras. It also included the Norman Foster masterplanned changes to the platforms and station, and the redevelopment of the hotel and St Pancras Chambers in front of the station.

It is important to note that the process established in this phase of work for the design of the heritage listed St Pancras Chambers established strong collaborative working relationships between the King's Cross Partnership, the developers and English Heritage. This was a critical relationship.

The planning negotiations for the remaining development were undertaken over six years once Argent was engaged in 2000. The Argent proposal was described by Peter Bishop as a single page proposal outlining a process and not a proposal. *"Its proposition was that both the site and the political context were complex, and it would therefore be inappropriate to propose even initial ideas before a comprehensive analysis of site conditions and constraints had been undertaken."* (Bishop, P. and Williams, L., 2016, p.40).

The boroughs of Camden and Islington together contain one of the widest gaps in inequality and in economic affluence in the UK. It was noted that in Camden there was a 15 year difference in life expectancy between a high

income, and low income earning male. In 2000, a new leader was elected to Camden who wrote of a desire *"to be thoughtful, imaginative and unafraid to experiment."* (Bishop, P. and Williams, L., 2016, p.46).

According to Bishop, a long term vision for King's Cross was difficult to comprehend for the local councillors who were focused on short term issues. To move through this block, the strategic long term vision was re-framed to focus on breaking the cycle of economic disadvantage. According to Bishop, this re-frame enabled the start of the political debate around the strategic agenda of the long term King's Cross vision.

A set of key project objectives were established including:
1. Creation of a balanced mixed use community.
2. Significant amount of housing with 50% affordable.
3. Development would make a difference to disadvantaged communities in the immediate neighbourhood.
4. Public realm to remain public.
5. Development to include 2 parks, be permeable and connect to the surrounding neighbourhoods.
6. Be exemplary in its design of architecture, urban design, landscape.
7. Unless impractical, retain and refurbish all historic buildings.

Process
Argent commenced the master planning process with a series of questions and an approach that was collaborative and not adversarial. The first six months were spent consulting with key stakeholders. This included significant and ongoing consultation with

Forecourt to King's Cross St. Pancras London
Source: Hannah Bolitho

English Heritage and Transport for London. According to Bishop it was essential that stakeholders were kept out of the negotiating room, and that there was only one champion leading the process, himself. Where conflict arose, detailed options were investigated, and transport issues were dealt with on an issue by issue basis with Transport for London. The Mayor was also excluded from negotiations to avoid any promotion of single agendas. Bishop noted that throughout the process, he had "*particular concerned that the whole scheme would be thrown off by single issue agendas*" (P. Bishop, Interview, 2019).

The masterplanning process involved the consultant teams, Argent, King's Cross Partnership and English Heritage. The core idea was to develop a scheme that could work over 10-50-100 years. This would allow the site to continuously develop individual buildings without erasing the whole. This was a sustainable solution, both environmentally and economically as the phasing could be changed. The key design objectives were to use the existing morphology of London, including scale, streets, blocks, square, skyline and use. Different to Nordhavn on Copenhagen, King's Cross was not 'design coded', there was not a set of rules established for the design of the development.

Economic model

According to Bishop, one key driver in the project's success was the establishment of a long term owner for the whole site, who would 'develop and manage', as opposed to selling each building with a model of 'develop and dispose'.

Having a long term financial investor elevates high quality public spaces in the order of planning priority. According

to Bishop, a key innovation in this project was a shared understanding between borough and developer, that the big development profits would come in the future. Bishop describes this as "*great placemaking being about not only urban design, but the deal.*" (P. Bishop, Interview, 2019).

Discussion and Lessons

Even in a more established European context such as London, there are similar issues in terms of identifying the future role of the architect within design governance processes, to ensure they are not seen as risks to project successes and as a result excluded from the process.

It is difficult measure what impact more architectural design thinking would have had on the outcomes for King's Cross but it is lucky that the planning lead valued design. The key lessons from this case study relate to the themes of risk, innovation and process.

1. Long, meaningful, iterative optioneering with key stakeholders such as English Heritage reduces risk and enables innovation. This would not happen with a stand and defend model.
2. A long term public private model, to develop and manage versus develop and dispose, values economics over a short term financial model, which in turn enables opportunity for innovation.
3. Collaborative processes that are not adversarial enable innovation.
4. Time building up trust is important.
5. Strong design stewardship is required, but architects must adapt and broaden their skill set to effectively engage in the process, or risk being be left out.
6. Architecture and Planning education should be combined.

The Granary Building and canal-side steps
King's Cross London
Source: Hannah Bolitho

**Superblock in Poblenou
Sant Antoni**
Source: Hannah Bolitho

5

Superblocks: Barcelona

"Let's fill the streets with life" **A strategy is being implemented in Barcelona to reduce traffic and increase land for public use. It has been termed the Superblock, or Superilles in Catalan and Superillas in Spanish. The core idea of the Superblock is to merge nine blocks into one, with interior streets for people, cyclists and resident vehicles, and a perimeter street to act as a ring road for through traffic. The objective is to change the role of the car in the hierarchy of the city.**

Introduction

My investigation in Barcelona focused on the Superblocks project. I was interested in understanding the process for delivery and the role of the architect in its realisation. I was also interested in understanding the role of the architect more generally in this context. The integrated nature of the strategic plans for the city sets a standard for collaboration between city making disciplines and I was interested to understand if that level of collaboration was integrated in this project's process.

My original intent was to also investigate both the planning for the 22@ Innovation District and the social housing project at Terrassa. While I visited both of these projects and interviewed key people involved in their processes, this report will focus on the Superblocks only. A photographic snapshot of these projects is included in the Journal section of this report.

The interviews undertaken in Barcelona included practitioners, architects within City planning, architects in politics and the director of the Urban Ecology Agency, and driver of the Superblock project.

Context and History: Design Governance

Before analysing the Superblock project in detail, it is important to understand the strong design cultural tradition in Barcelona and its history. My interview with David Martinez, CEO of the Urban Development Institute and Architect in the Barcelona City Council, focused on understanding the context and history of urban governance in Barcelona, starting with the social movement of the 1960's and its promotion of public space.

In 1977 the first democratic government was elected and in the 1980's many architects and urbanist from the 1960's social movement moved into government. This started a strong tradition of architects working across fields, in universities, within government and as practitioners. This is the period where the public space program for the city was established under the strong leadership of Oriol Bohigas as City Architect. This public space program still exists in the City's strategic plans. According to Martinez, this strong tradition of interweaving practice, education and politics is essential, and sets the context through which any project in Barcelona should be viewed: "*a great connection between the way the city and the metropolitan city is thought, taught, defined and designed...the strong relationship between the school and the managing structure of the city.*" (D. Martinez, Interview, 2019).

My interview with the Jaume Barnada, the lead architect in the Barcelona City Council, focused on the strategic planning system. The strategic planning system in Barcelona exists within three levels of urban governance, equivalent to the neighbourhood, the infrastructure and the State. The General Metropolitan Plan is the highest order strategic plan and it is still being modified today. The Strategy proposes two systems of work. Firstly to recognise the neighbourhoods where people live, and secondly to recognise the city as a central system, the centre of the metropolitan system. In the first system of work, the proposal is for 30-50 year visions. In the second system, new areas are proposed, 'new centralities'. These are the strategic plans, and within these are smaller strategic plans.
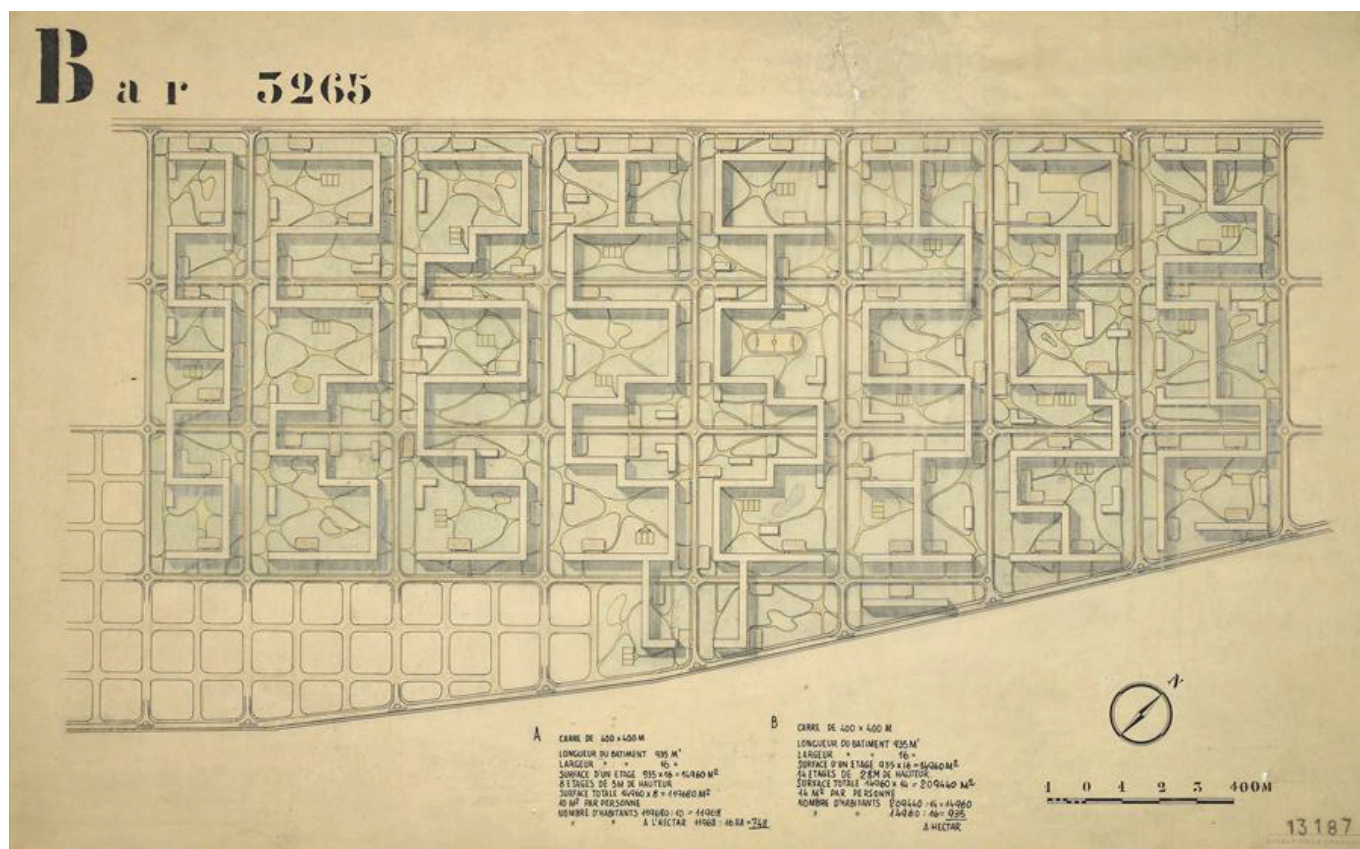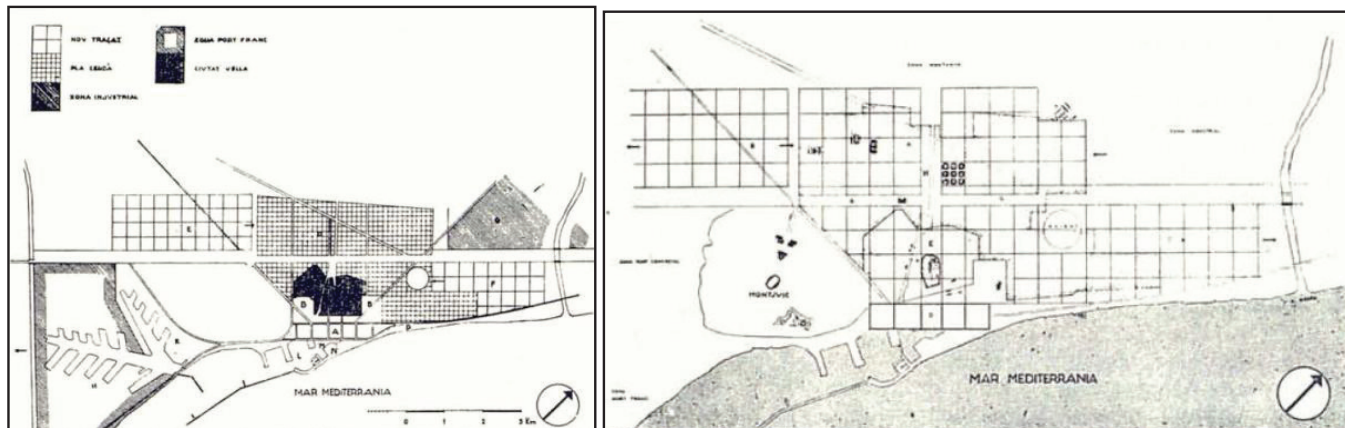
Figure 4. Macià Plan

Macia Plan
Source: 'A new urban cell for a functional and urban city model'
(Agency d'Ecologia Urbana de Barcelona)

"a great connection between the way the city and the metropolitan city is thought, taught, defined and designed...the strong relationship between the school and the managing structure of the city."

(David Martinez, 2019)

• 23

This second system is where the Public Space Policy still exists, set up in 1980s by Bohigas, called the PERIs-Special Plans for Interior Modification. The plan established a system for the acquiring of privately owned interstitial spaces by the Municipality as a mechanism to create space in an overcrowded city. It represents the antithesis of large scale urban regeneration projects requiring large economic input and private investment. The PERI plan defines three levels of intervention, firstly the limits of the neighbourhood, secondly small interventions, and thirdly public buildings and public spaces and how each should be detailed. It is a form of design coding. The term urban acupuncture came about to describe targeted, small interventions in key pockets and critical junctures of a city's fabric, the "pressure points".

A Plan da Vias- a strategic plan for roads and streets, is the strategic plan that connects the two systems, and it is structured in threes scales. The first focuses on how people move in the neighbourhood, the second is how people want to move and the third scale is how the city is connecting to the broader metropolitan area. According to Barnada, a city should be thought of as two levels of use. One level is civic in nature, and the other concerns activity, mobility and movement. The combination of both levels result in the neighbourhood spaces, it is using this planning model that the Superblocks have come about (J. Barnada, Interview, 2019).

Context: City structure
As well as understanding the strong cultural history of design governance in Barcelona, it is important to understand the context set by Cerda's original plan for the blocks structure in the city, as this informs the Superblock project.

Cerda's original plan for the blocks in Barcelona were to be short, legible and easy to navigate, to enable walking and street life. The uniformity of the grid was rigid, but flexible in use. The original intent was for each block to be built out on only two or three sides in order to occupy less than half the area. The interior space would be garden courtyards and the height of the buildings would be restricted to 20 meters to allow solar access with narrow building depths to maximise natural ventilation. Cerda's plan is said to have aimed to solve three major social conflicts: hygiene, equity and mobility (Rueda, S. 2019).

The plan was not implemented in its original intended state and many fundamental elements were subsequently modified, including building height, the enclosure of four sides of the perimeter clock and the removal of parks. This resulted in poor amenity conditions in many areas in the city.

In the early 1930s Le Corbusier and Josep Lluis Sert's Macia Plan for Barcelona (1931-1938) aimed to respond to these amenity issues, with the core idea of pushing traffic out of residential areas as quasi-ring roads. It was a rational modernist plan to renew the problem areas of the city by completely rebuilding the city structure and dividing activity uses (housing, commercial etc) into separate compartments. Sert's plan was never realised as a result of the impending civil war.

While the Superblock concept by contrast does not propose to modify the existing city structure, what is common to both is the size of the proposed block and the core priorities of health and liveability.

TODAY'S STANDARD MODEL

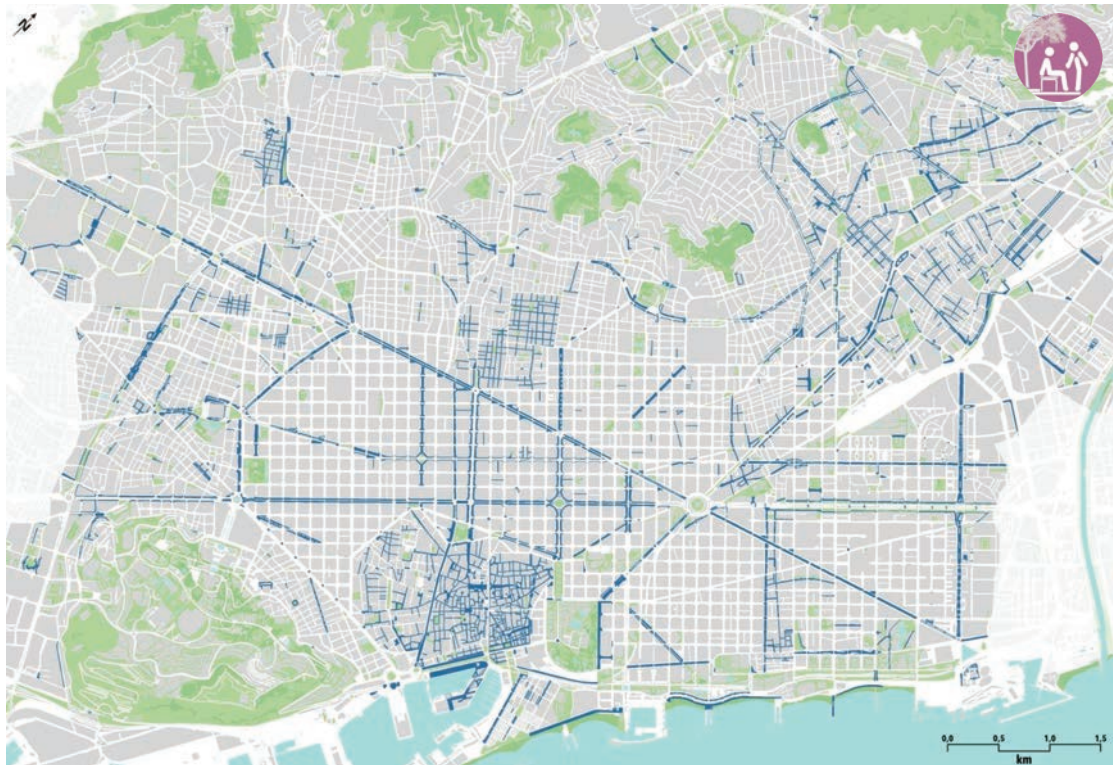**39,92%** **31,92%** **26,66%** **1,51%**
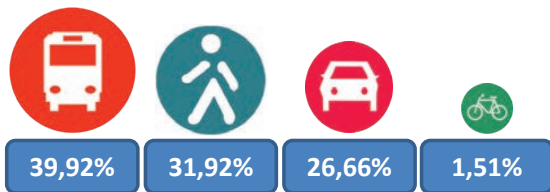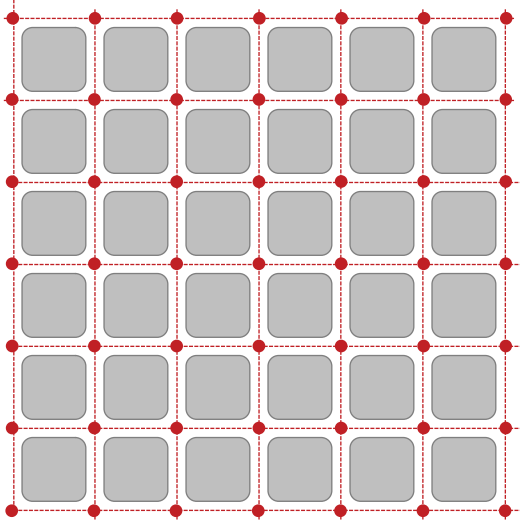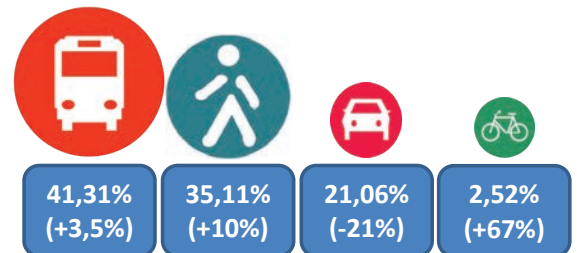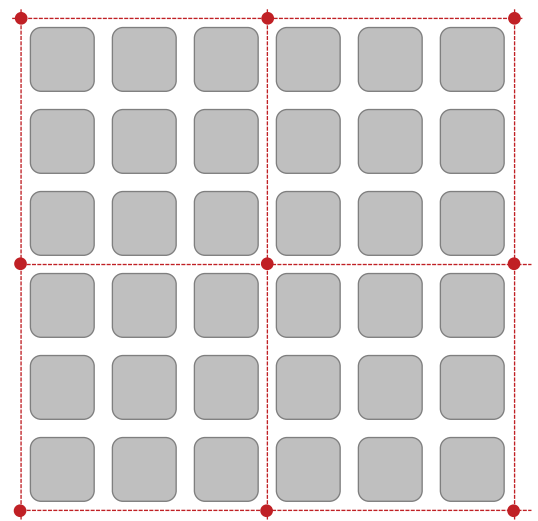
Percentage increase in space for buses, people and bicycles from existing condition to the Superblock condition

Source: 'A new urban cell for a functional and urban city model' (Agency d'Ecologia Urbana de Barcelona)

SUPERBLOCK MODEL

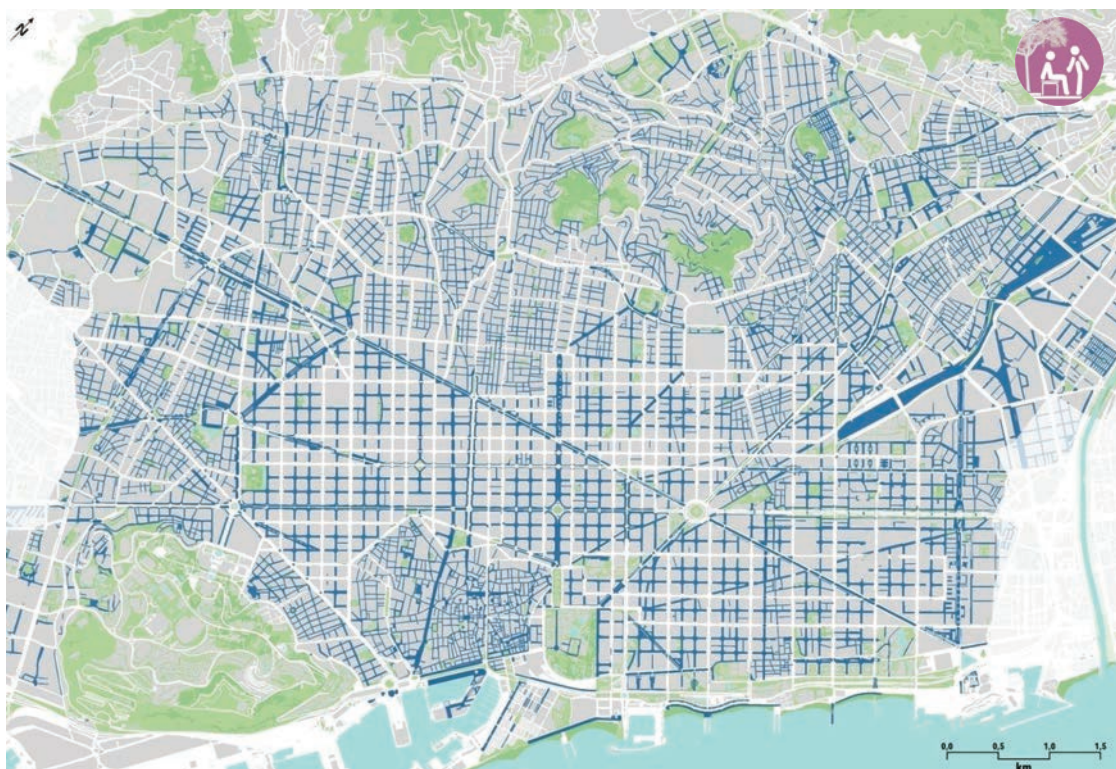**41,31%** **(+3,5%)** **35,11%** **(+10%)** **21,06%** **(-21%)** **2,52%** **(+67%)**

Pilot: Superblock in Poblenou Barcelona
Source: Hannah Bolitho

Current Living space
74,5 ha aprox.

8

Living space with superblocks
750 ha aprox.

9

Space for people in the existing and proposed street conditions
Source: 'A new urban cell for a functional and urban city model' (Agency d'Ecologia Urbana de Barcelona)

Road hierarchy in the new Superblock model

CURRENT SITUATION

400 meters
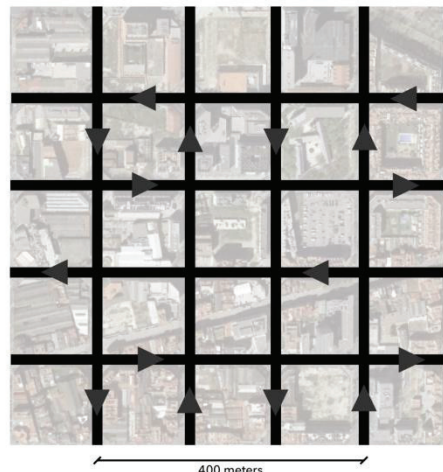
■ Basic network: **50 km/h**

SOLE RIGHT IN STREET SPACE: **MOBILITY**
HIGHEST AIM: PEDESTRIAN.

SUPERBLOCK MODEL

400 meters

CIRCULATING VEHICLES DO NOT PASS THROUGH
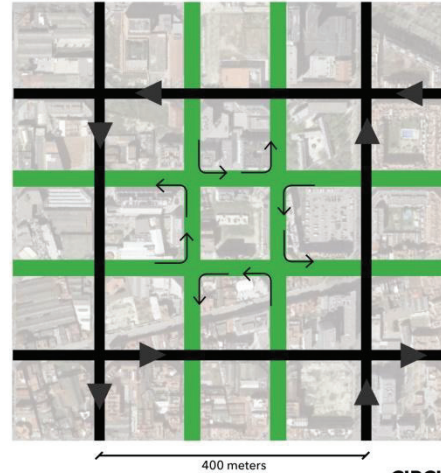
■ Local network: **10 km/h**

EXERCISE ALL THE RIGHTS THAT THE CITY OFFERS.
HIGHEST AIM: ACTIVE CITIZEN.

The Superblock Concept

Saldadore Rudea is the director of the Urban Ecology Agency, and driver of the Superblock project. The most recent iteration of the 'Superblock' was conceived in 1987 when Rueda (then manager of the technical Services of Environment in Barcelona City Council) was undertaking a study of the effect of vehicle noise on health. It is noted that Rueda's background is in psychology and environmental engineering. He determined that to reduce the day noise in streets to <65 dBA (criteria for acceptable noise), the best solution was to pedestrianise the street and simplify the complex bus network, the network has been reorientated orthogonally as a result. These two challenges together resulted in a solution that has been termed the superblock.

The core idea of the Superblock is to merge nine blocks into one, with interior streets for people, cyclists and vehicles who reside within the Superblock, and a perimeter street as a ring road. No infrastructure changes are required in terms of road modifications.

Rueda describes the Superblocks as requiring two phases of implementation. The first phase is functional, where the street cell is modified to combine nine blocks into one Superblock, 400x400m. The only traffic allowed in the Superblock is that of origin or destination at 10km/hr and the traffic at the perimeter is kept at 50km/hr. The aim is to create a more functional neighbourhood with less congestion. The second phase is what he called "urbanistic" and this is where activation occurs. This is the re-purposing of the reclaimed space.

Four pilot Superblock projects were implemented in different neighbourhoods as part of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan of Barcelona City Council (2015) and the interventions have measurable, tangible results.

The first was implemented in the neighbourhood of La Ribera in 1993 and at this time the neighbourhood was struggling. There was significant push back from local businesses, claiming that reduced vehicle traffic would affect business, but it is now widely accepted and appreciated. This pilot is completed and is functional and 'urbanistic' but it is also true that intervention did result in significant gentrification in the area.

The next two pilot projects were built in Gracia in 2006. These are both completed and are also functional and 'urbanistic'. Again, there was significant push back from the local community and businesses, but today the streets are active both day and night. "*The quality of life achieved in the built Superblocks is such that today [it] would be materially impossible to revert it and go back to the starting point with cars all around*." (S. Rueda, Interview, 2019).

The Superblock in Poblenou is the most recent project, the first phase of work has been implemented so it is only functionally complete. It sits in a much less dense neighbourhood, with relatively low vehicle usage. According to Rueda this pilot is important as it can be tested without significant impact to the traffic in terms of speed and level of service. The implementation of this pilot without the second 'urbanistic' phase is criticised
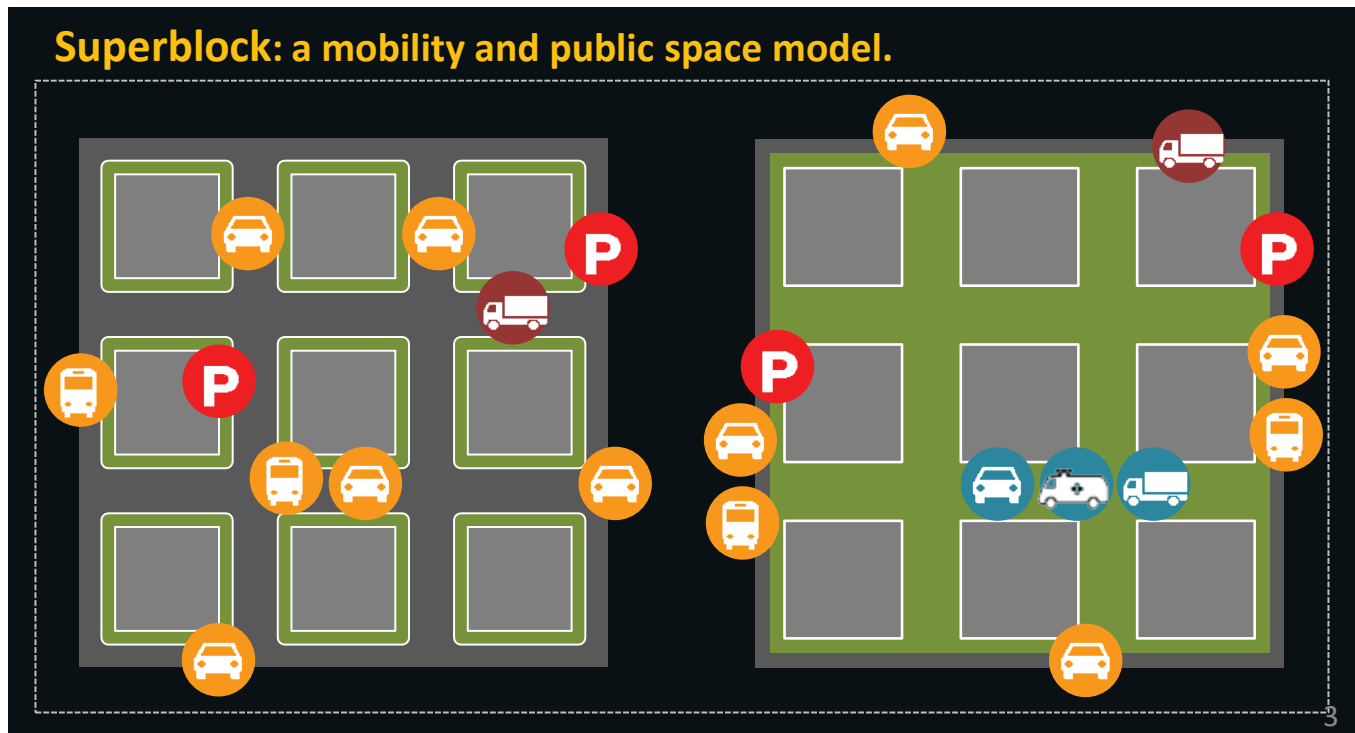
Superblock model
Source: 'A new urban cell for a functional and urban city model' (Agency d'Ecologia Urbana de Barcelona)

widely including by Daniel Modol who is sceptical of the hype, noting that … "*any pacification of the street is a Superblock (and that)…it is better for the mobility but the public space design is poor*." (D. Modal, Interview, 2019.

It was impossible not to be affected by the way that Rueda spoke about the urgency to address the environmental and climate issues affecting our cities globally, and the frustration felt by the inability of the architectural community to be driven by this urgency and not so inwardly focused.

According to Rueda, the pilot Superblocks result in 70% more space for people. Barcelona has significant climate commitments and it is understood that the 21% decrease in local traffic will result in a reduction of CO_2 emissions by 159,100 metric tons per year. The additional open space can be used for vegetation to reduce heath island. In terms of public transport usage, in the neighbourhood of Vitoria Gasteiz (where it has been implemented), Rueda states that public transport use is > 100% and cycling has increased from 3%-14%. (S. Rueda, Interview, 2019).

The measurable health benefits include:
• 94% of people exposed to admissible levels of pollution (from 56%)
• 73.5% of people exposed to admissible levels of noise (from 54%)
• 30% reduction in the number of fatal and major accidents

Project Challenges
Opposition has been considerable in the implementation of the Superblocks. The main challenges are identified as:
1. reduced level of service
2. potential gentrification
3. insufficient consultation
4. less patronage of shops within the Superblock
5. poor design of the resultant public space

In terms of the reduced level of service, the network of Superblocks identified in the strategic plan will reduce the length of traffic streets within Barcelona by 61%. According to Rueda, a 13% reduction of vehicles in the city would maintain the current level of service (speed).

In terms of potential gentrification, Rueda concedes that improved urban amenity can generate a process of gentrification, but that is reduced when the model is rolled out across the entire city. The Superblocks must be implemented as a network system and not in isolation.

In the case of Poblenou, the temporary changes were implemented in 2 days, over a weekend and at a very low cost. It is estimated that the total implementation cost of functional Superblocks throughout Barcelona will be less than 100 million Euros.

Using a pilot means that residents can see the Superblocks and begin to envisage what their local barrio will look

"Maybe the most radical aspect of the proposal is the reconversion of most part of the urban space, today devoted to mobility, to dedicate it to the multiplication of uses and rights. I say radical because it goes to the roots of the meaning of public space...

Cities start to be a city when there is public space, because it is the "house of all", the place of encounter for interchange, leisure and entertainment, culture, expression and democracy and, also, displacement. The public space makes us citizens and we are so when we have the possibility of occupy it for the exercise of all the mentioned rights.

Today, the impossibility of exercising the citizen rights relegate us to be only pedestrians which, as it is told, is a way of transport."

Salvadore Rueda, 2019

"The future of urbanism is less invention and more reinvention"

(Daniel Modal, Architect and Politician, Barcelona City Council, 2019)

"Each project becomes something in the middle of a longer discussion."

(Ricardo Flores, 2019)

like with less cars. This view is contested by others in the architectural community who raise concerns about the poor design of the resultant public space including the previous City Architect Vincente Guallart who said *"The big mistake done with the test was to build without a budget and without discourse with the citizens… The approach to Poblenou was too dogmatic. Planners need to make adjustments for each neighbourhood…"* (Guallart, Urban Land Magazine, p.4)

In terms of the issue of consultation, Rueda's philosophy was that it was better to quickly implement a temporary version that would be understood and experienced by the local people, supporting capacity building and better interaction between people.

In terms of patronage, the criticism was that the removal of cars would stop people from coming. According to Guallart however the opposite is true, *"Historically, the idea is remove cars from the streets and people will not come. What we have found is exactly the other way around*." (Guallart, Urban Land Magazine, p.5).

Where do Architects fit in?
Even with the strong, shared culture of design and clear governance direction setting the urban agenda in Barcelona, the future role of the architect in the city is contested. The role of the architect has historically been primarily to deliver the government agenda that is clearly laid out in the strategic planning instruments (Simpson, R., Correspondence, 2019). In terms of the future role of the architect though, according to Daniel Modal *"…there is a need to think more socially and more ecologically."* (D. Modal, Interview, 2019).

It is interesting that even with integrated education across design disciplines, where there is one faculty of planning and architecture and architects and planners have the same training, there are still issues with defining the direction of urbanism. Modal talked about the changing role of the architect and the need for the urbanism of the future to respond to the changing nature of the job. He discussed the need to focus less on urban invention and more on urban re-invention. He noted that this change in culture was starting to come through in the attitudes of university students, but less so in the established architectural community. This was producing conflict, seen in the Superblock process and subsequent criticism.

Modal also discussed the issue of a loss of design culture as a result of a streamlining of design governance. Modal was particularly critical of the political decision to change the name of the government department from "Urban Habitat" to "Urban Ecology". He noted that "…*the role of government should be to protect and administer the public realm, not give it up. Their (government in power) belief in technology, 'smart cities' and 'clusters' was separating people from the physical reality of the city- from their very ownership of the public realm*." (D. Modol, Interview, 2017). The result of this, from Modal's perspective, is that *"Barcelona is producing the worst public space in its history… the quality of public space has lost its importance, and Barcelona is losing its design culture. We have lost the tradition of architecture from within the city council."* (D. Modol, Interview, 2017).

Pilot: Superblock in Sant Antoni Barcelona
Source: Hannah Bolitho

Modal also discussed the role of the City Architect in Barcelona, noting that Barcelona had a City Architect until five years ago when the position was removed. When Modal was invited to be elected as Councillor, he wanted to reinstate the position of City Architect, he championed the establishment of a commission of architecture but this was not supported by the Mayor.

According to Eva Prats, Partner of Flores & Prats Architects, the agency of architects was strongest in Barcelona when there was strong leadership from the City Architect Oriol Bohigas, who pushed the design agenda and brought about cohesion amongst the architectural community. (E.Prats, Interview, 2019)

Prats also noted that there were issues with coordination within the Council with no clear direction from the top, noting that *"technicians are more concerned with risk and cost."* (E.Prats, Interview, 2019). When asked about how best to access the decision making, Prats commented that *"it's our attitude that defines our position."* (E.Prats, Interview, 2019). Prats talked about approaching each project as a piece of research and not a piece of art, commenting that this is the philosophy of their practice, where *"each project becomes something in the middle of a longer discussion."* (R. Flores, Dezeen interview, 2019).

Lessons
It is difficult measure what impact more architectural design thinking would have had on the outcomes for the Superblock project, but it is clear that even with a culture of multidisciplinary design education, the project was still clearly separated into two phases- functional and 'urbanistic' (place), and this was a key criticism of the pilots.

On the other hand, the shortcutting of the process, implementing pilot projects quickly to test the environmental outcomes, has resulted in measurable environmental results, only gained through taking this risk. It is a form of the 'stand and defend' model, and is not dissimilar in process to using incentives embedded in policy for a period of time, to set a standard, and then removing the incentives once they have been adopted.

It is also clear that the architectural community are grappling with a changing focus of their work. The key lessons learned through my investigations in Barcelona relate to the four identified themes of culture, process, risk, and skills.

1. Architects and planners should be educated together
2. Architects must change the focus from invention to re-invention. Until the changing role of the architect becomes the norm, there may be a case for pushing the 'stand and defend' model in a pilot situation, to test projects and enable innovation.
3. Research and practice must inform each other and practitioners must be embedded in education.
4. Projects must not be thought of in isolation, but as part of a process and a longer story.
5. Pilot projects produce innovation by enabling risk.
6. Architectural stewardship from within government is essential.

Length
912 km

Surface area
1483,6 ha
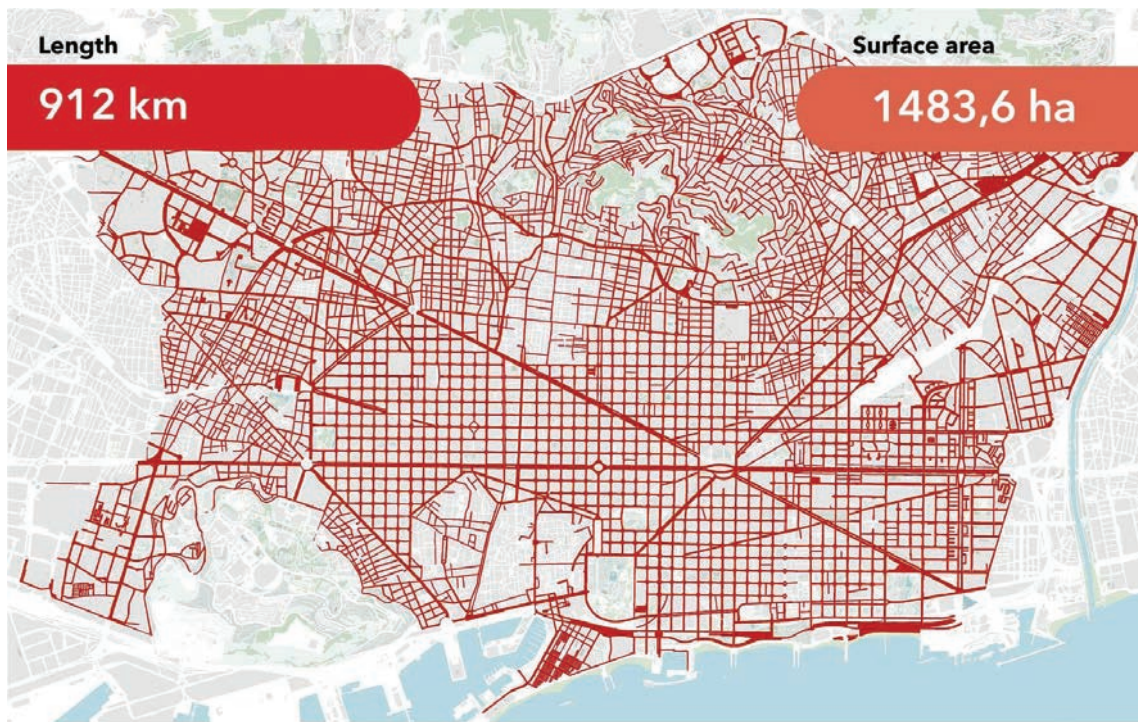
Barcelona road network (streets and sidewalks)
CURRENT SITUATION

Length
355 km (-61%)

Surface area
815 ha (-45%)
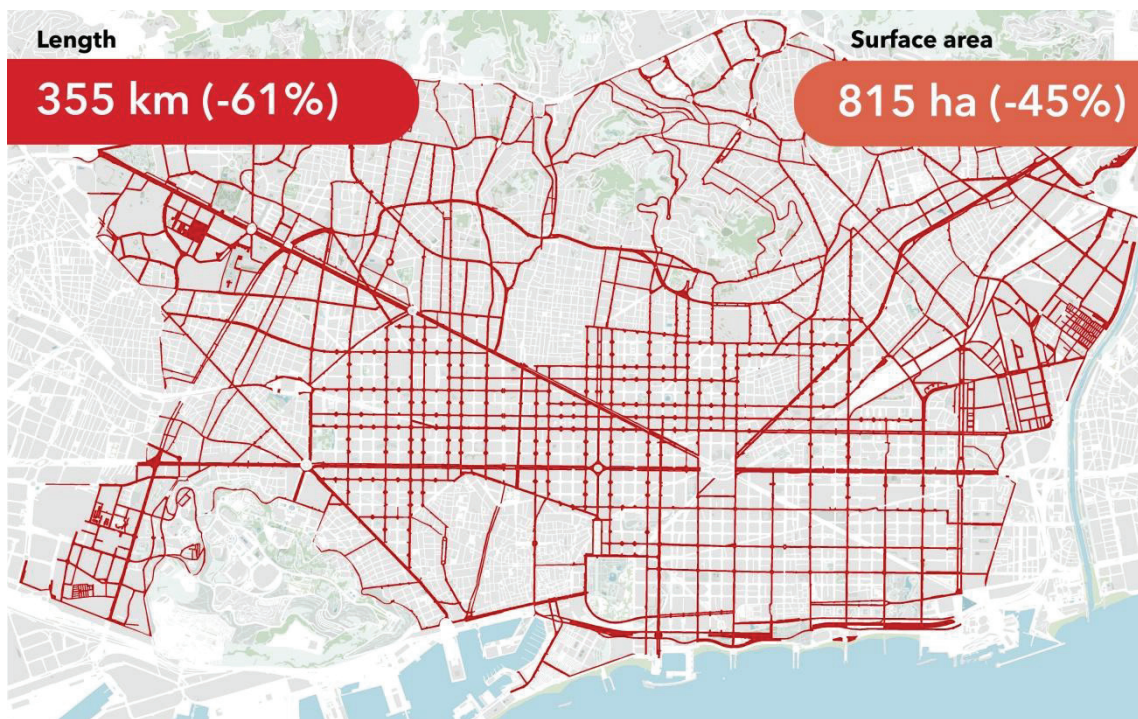
Barcelona road network (streets and sidewalks)
FUTURE SCENARIO WITH NEW SUPERBLOCKS

Current network of roads and proposed network of roads Barcelona
Source: 'A new urban cell for a functional and urban city model'
(Agency d'Ecologia Urbana de Barcelona)

Four Superblock Projects
Source: 'A new urban cell for a functional and urban city model' (Agency d'Ecologia Urbana de Barcelona)

Plaça del Diamant

Crossroads in urban fabric
L'Eixample = 1.916 m²

Plaça del Sol

Crossroads in urban fabric
L'Eixample = 1.916 m²
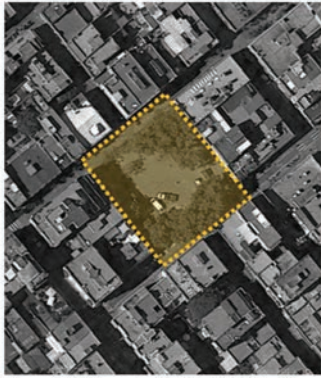
Plaça del Diamant, Gràcia (1.641m2)
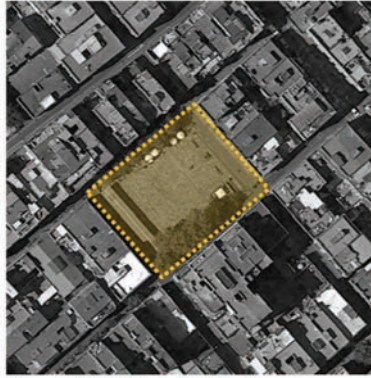
Plaça del Sòl, Gràcia (1.493m2)
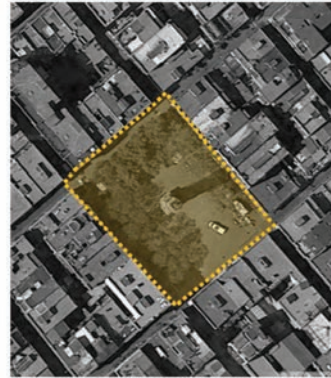
Plaça de la Vila de Gràcia (2.035m2)
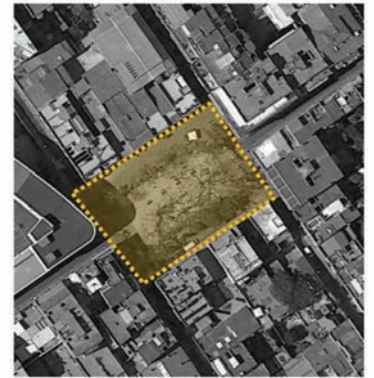
Plaça del Nord, Gràcia (1.807m2)

Plaça Vila de Gràcia
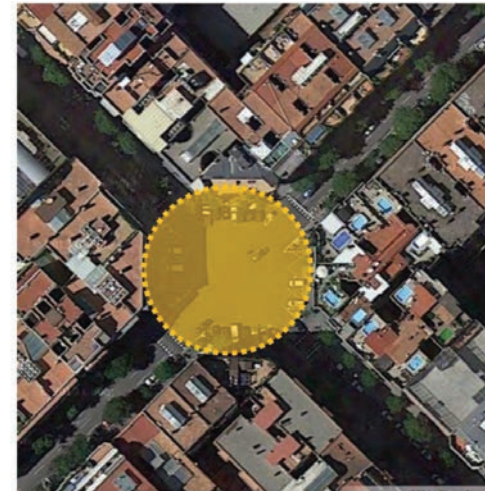
Crossroads in urban fabric
L'Eixample = 1.916 m²

Plaça del Nord

Crossroads in urban fabric
L'Eixample = 1.916 m²

15

Nordhavn Waterfront
Source: COBE

6

Nordhavn: Copenhagen

The former industrial area of Nordhavn has been subject to a long term urban renewal process and redeveloped into a mixed use precinct, as a public private partnership with infrastructure delivered first.

Introduction

My investigation in Copenhagen focused on the Nordhavn development. I was interested in understanding the process for delivery, the governance context and how the historical culture of design in Copenhagen affected design outcomes. The following is a summary of my observations and conversations with key people.

Context

Copenhagen has a reputation for design culture, craftmanship and liveability. Long term urban policy provides a strong and supportive governance platform from which architects and urban designers can be both innovative and display integrity. In Copenhagen, bottom-up urbanism has effectively been incorporated into overall planning and design policies and processes enabling architects to be visionaries. (Simpson, R. 2019)

In order to understand the process behind the development of Nordhavn in Copenhagen, it is important to understand the model used to develop public land. In the 1980s Copenhagen set up a structure for developing government land using partnerships between the government and the private sector, where the land is not sold. The government holds the asset for the long term to get the development uplift and they use the funds from this uplift, including borrowing against it, to fund essential infrastructure. In our Australian context, a more common public private partnership would see the government sell the land off immediately, at a short term financial benefit to government and long term benefit to developer.

Copenhagen places a strong emphasis on the provision of public service. The taxes are high, and in return, the public sector is strong, educated and focused on producing good social policy outcomes. Where public private partnerships are the main mechanism to deliver large scale urban renewal projects, the design capacity within the government is strong and the stewardship is clear, so control is maintained.

Design and Planning Governance

Danish policy is founded on principles of citizen involvement in the design of the city. The Danish Architectural Policy 2017 (The Policy) includes a section on Architecture and Democracy with objectives for ongoing, continuous collaboration. The policy also sets out the model of public private partnerships. According to Anita Morandini, "...*one big lesson that came out of my research was that the Danish Architectural Policy was about influencing behaviour.*" (A. Morandini, Interview, 2019) She discussed the devolution of government, highlighting one aim of the policy was to build design literacy and capabilities in the private sector to take on responsibilities which were once seen as those of government. She also noted that without translation of policy intent into legislative tools, mechanisms and good governance, there is no leverage to achieve the right outcome. (A. Morandini, Interview 2019).

By & Havn is the organisation responsible for the delivery of Nordhavn, discussed further in the next section of this report. According to Rita Justesen, Chief of Planning and Architecture at By & Havn, what makes a good place is the infrastructure, and this is embedded in the culture of city making in Copenhagen (R. Justesen, Interview, 2019).

"when I say we are developing in a holistic way, it is because of our tradition in design and architecture, and it is also because of the kind of democracy we have... Buildings alone do not make a city, it is all the surroundings and how it works together, and also the connections from one neighbourhood to another, sustainability and reuse."
(Rita Justesen, 2019)

Justesen says that "*when I say we are developing in a holistic way, it is because of our tradition in design and architecture, and it is also because of the kind of democracy we have...Buildings alone do not make a city, it is all the surroundings and how it works together, and also the connections from one neighbourhood to another, sustainability and reuse.*" (R. Justesen, Interview, 2019).

Design Leadership
Design stewardship is embedded in the strategic planning framework. As in other cities, the role of government is shifting from that of delivery to one of facilitator. The Danish Architectural Policy focuses on cross government stewardship, and this intent is evident even in its authorship, authored by ten different ministries within government as well as by embedding collaboration and partnerships between these ministries throughout the process. This Policy and The Copenhagen Architectural Policy 2010, both use language to prioritise and "*consider urban life before urban spaces, and urban spaces before buildings.*"

Copenhagen has two levels of city architects, at state and local levels. A city architect leads at a strategic level in the Municipality, supported by a large team of planners who are almost all architects. This public agency has the role of municipal and statutory approvals for buildings and public spaces. Given this convergence of planning and architecture, it is interesting that in Denmark there are two architecture schools but planning and urban design are still generally taught separately to architecture. In addition to the city architect, there are also local 'chief'

architects, of which Rita Justesen is one for By & Havn. In the case of By & Havn, the agency commissions the design competitions, and the Municipality then transforms the masterplan into guidelines and detailed plans. Before submitting a development application to the Municipality, approval must be sought back from By & Havn first. This system of checks and balances is clear, streamlines the process and results in less risk to timelines.

Project Background
Nordhavn is a former industrial harbour area to the north of the city centre in Copenhagen. It is being delivered by a partnership established in 2001 between Copenhagen City and Port Development. In 2007 the Orsestand and the Port of Copenhagen merged to make City and Port, By & Havn. This agency manages port operations and acts as a development company, it is a public-public partnership owned jointly by the local Copenhagen municipality and the Danish State. The ownership percentage has changed over the duration of the delivery of the project and now the City of Copenhagen owns 95% of By & Havn and the national government owns 5%.

The first imperative of By & Havn was to improve the public transport from the city centre to the port areas to the north. Three million square meters of new development was used to finance the new city circle metro line. The idea was to take the former harbour industrial area and develop it into urban districts, this was the start of the Nordhavn proposition.
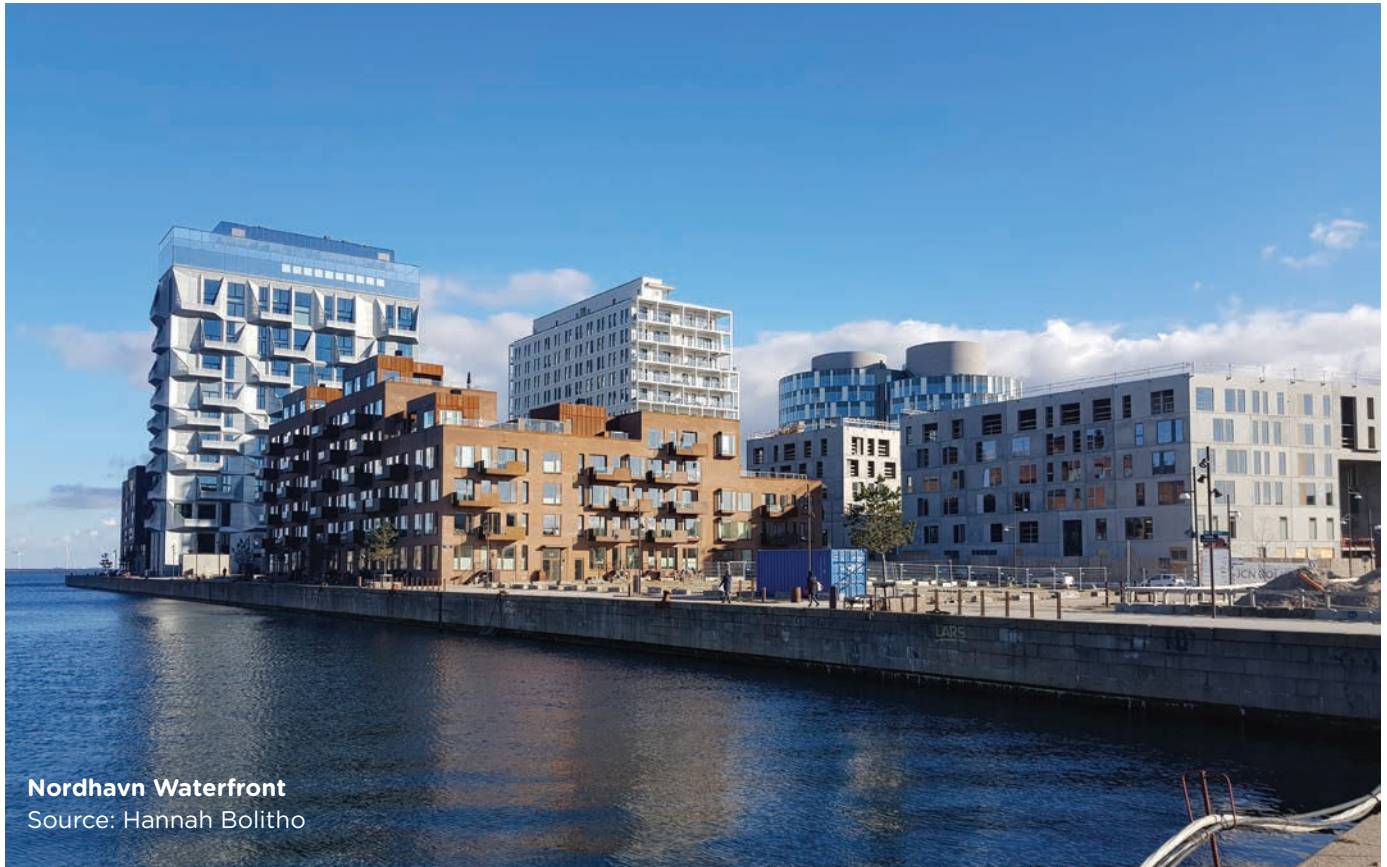
Nordhavn Waterfront
Source: Hannah Bolitho

Design Process

In 2007 an open competition was launched for a structure plan for the area and more detailed masterplans for specific areas. The winning entry was seen as the most similar to the Copenhagen style, seen as the closest parallel with the existing city (R. Justesen, Interview, 2019). The competition was won by COBE and the ongoing masterplan process is managed by By & Havn.

Once the masterplan is complete, the Municipality converts it into detailed design plans and codes.

The codes stipulated minimum parameters with the following objectives:
• residential and commercial uses to be a minimum of 40% each, with 20% flexibility for market drivers;
• a percentage of lots to be offered without land use zoning requirements;
• each lot is to be sold individually;
• each buyer has the option to preference a land use depending on the split of uses at the time of purchase. This means that the first buyers have the most choice. It has resulted in 20 investors and 19 different architects so far in the first quarter of the overall masterplan in Arhusgade;
• scale to match the adjacent and surrounding harbour settlement structure;
• small, staggered block to create a fine grain;
• perimeter blocks designed with multiple ground floor entrances and frequent intersections;
• no private carparking associated with buildings. Carparking can be leased in above ground parking structures;

• slow speed limits to all shared zones;
• 20% affordable housing targets- noting that this was not legislated and was subsequently reduced in the first masterplanned area. It is also noted that a national policy came into effect in 2015 giving local governments the power to demand 25% affordable housing in new local plans, this will be adopted in future masterplanned areas;
• social diversity in employment- noting that this was also not legislated and the result in the first masterplanned area is a narrow rent range.

Nordhavn as it looked before the extension began in 2008.
Source: COBE

Nordhavn as it will look when fully expanded.
Source: COBE

**Nordhavn Waterfront**
Source: Hannah Bolitho

Ownership

In a similar way to the King's Cross development in London, the public private development model used for Nordhavn sees the city maintain long term control of the land, it is not sold off the most immediate profit.

In terms of project ownership and financing, the land in Copenhagen is sold plot by plot. By & Havn develop the infrastructure including parks, streets, public spaces etc. Each resident or worker in the area must be part of a local association and once the infrastructure works are completed, ownership is passed to the association to own and manage and maintain, a large scale version of what our Australian context would refer to as a 'Body Corporate'.

Activation Strategy

The government recognised early in the process that the high street, Arhusgade, would not reach critical mass immediately and the ground plane would not be activated. By & Havn purchased the entire ground plane, funded by federal government money and where they strategically wanted activation at street level, they leased out the spaces for cheap rent such as artist studios, until the critical mass of commercial arrived and then they sold it off. This is not an approach that is seen in our local context, except from local councils with the finances to be able to. It is important in the case of Denmark to note that the federal government only governs five million people, a similar size to that of Greater Sydney. This strategy has also enabled the By & Havn authority to curate the main high street.
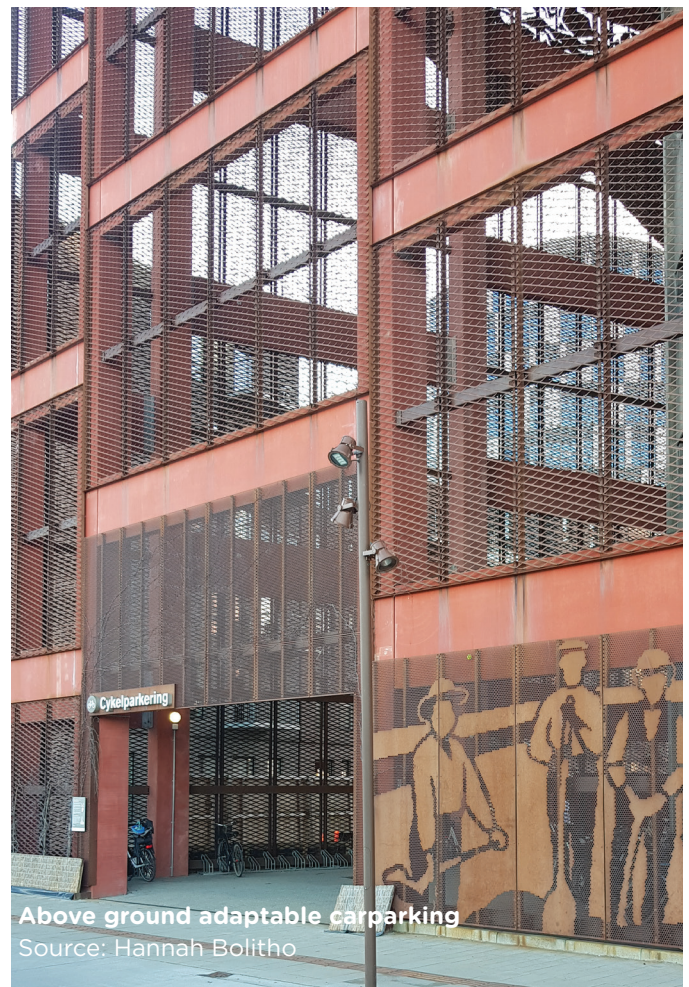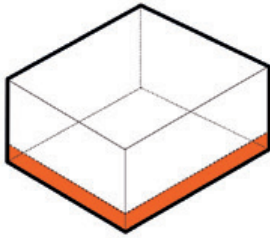

Above ground adaptable carparking
Source: Hannah Bolitho
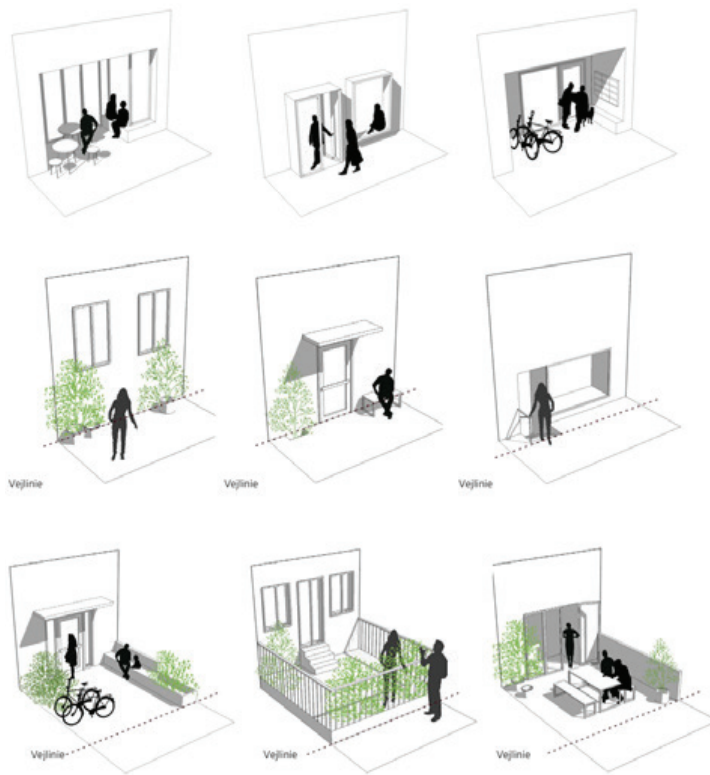
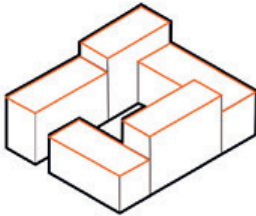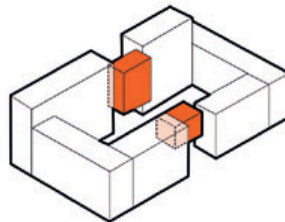**Nordhavn and the Århusgade Quarter**
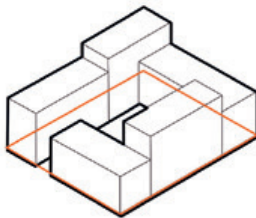Source: Harris, M. (2018)

HIGH GROUND FLOOR LEVELS WITH A WEALTH OF DETAILS
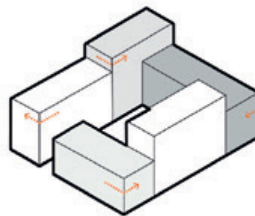HØJE STUEETAGER MED STOR DETALJERIGDOM

DIVERSITY THROUGH DIFFERENT BUILDING HEIGHTS
DIVERSITET GENNEM SPRING I BYGNINGSHØJDER

CONNECTIONS ABOVE TERRAIN CREATE PASSAGES
SAMMENBYGNING I HØJDEN GIVER PASSAGER

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UNINTERRUPTED BUILDINGS
WITH GATE OPENINGS ALONG EDGES
SLUTTET RANDBEBYGGELSE MED PORTÅBNINGER

VARIATION BY MEANS OF DIFFERENT FACADE DESIGNS
VARIATION GENNEM SKIFT I FACADEUDTRYK

"We wanted North Harbour to be like Copenhagen because we live here and we like it. The success of Copenhagen is based on the quality of life you can find in a city like this. The ease of bicycling and the ease of living, the common, everyday social interactions and the relative small scale. We didn't want to change this, we wanted to evolve it. Not try to come up with something completely foreign or strange or new."
(R. Boserup, Interview with Mike Harris, 2015)

Discussion

While it appears that many of the aspirations of the Danish and Copenhagen Architectural Policies are achieved in the first masterplanned area of Arhusgade, one major criticism has been that it has failed to achieve the objective of "a city for everyone." This is a result of the lack of affordable housing and lack of rent diversity, and general gentrification. On one hand it is described as "*a successful development, particularly in regard to reconciling significant upfront development costs. However, the Arsguade Quarter has also been described as a "liveable city for the wealthy"- human scaled, spatially diverse, socially inviting, yet truly inhabitable only by those that can afford the high price tag*." (Harris , M. 'North Harbour Copenhagen', 2019). These can be lessons learned for the future masterplanned areas.

As stated by Frank Jensen, Copenhagen's Social Democratic Mayor, the new areas in Northhavn will "*... be developed into a real mixed town where people with money and people with ordinary incomes live next door to each other and where their kids can go to kindergarten and school together, in keeping with my social democratic vision for Copenhagen*." (F. Jensen, Interview, 2017)

Lessons

In terms of the role of the architect, the importance of design culture is embedded in the design policy in this city. But even with two levels of government architect stewardship, it is still identified as a problem that the State architect does not have real power. According to Henriette Vamberg, Partner at Gehl, similar to in our context, the City Architect is primarily an advocate and design champion. Vamberg also identified, that even in Copenhagen, there is an issue with a gap between the voice of the community and the voice of the architect. She described that the methodology established by Jahn Gehl and used in their practice, of measuring and establishing targets was a way of responding to the community's frustration at the endless 'conversation' of architecture by the community "...*more conversation, more thinking and guessing, and not enough measuring*." (H. Vamberg, Interview, 2019)

The key lessons learned through my investigations in Copenhagen relate to the four identified themes of culture, process, risk, and skills.

1. Architects and planners should be educated together.
2. Cross government cooperation and collaboration should be embedded in policy.
3. Open dialogues across levels of government reduces risk.
4. Esoteric, open-ended discussions are inaccessible by the community.
5. Measuring results and setting tangible standards allows participation by the community.
6. Architectural stewardship from within government is essential.
7. Public private partnerships where long term ownership and control is maintained by the government, facilitates innovation.
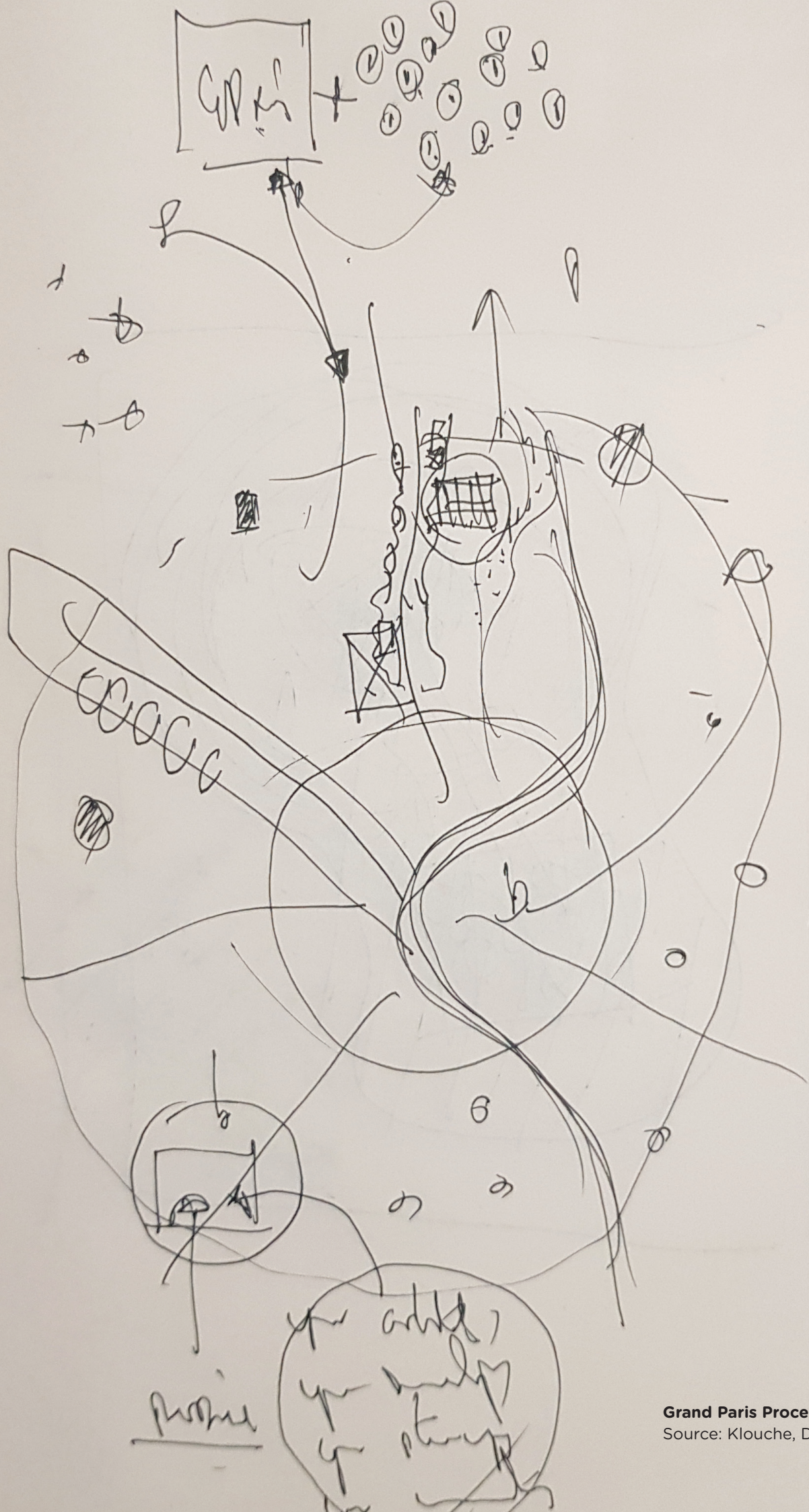
Grand Paris Process Diagram
Source: Klouche, D. (2018)

A note about Le Grand Paris

"Let's reinvent the Grand Paris Metropolis" (Sarkozy, 2016) A visionary 'think tank' was established by then French President Nicolas Sarkozy comprising of ten teams of architects charged with re-imagining Paris.

Paris has a complex political structure with significant economic inequalities and complex social and class structures. Issues of spatial inequity are significant with the divide between the affluent inner ring and less affluent outer suburbs. Former President Sarkozy's vision to expand the political boundary of Paris from the capital into the greater metropolis was the plan for "Greater Paris." The aim was to respond to and provide solutions to the growing inequities within the wider city using an innovative 'think tank model'.

My research in Paris aimed to understand the political landscape which underpinned the "Plan for Greater Paris" in terms of governance and the complex government tiers of government, as well as the multidisciplinary teams of architects, planners, economists, transport engineers and social scientists. I was fortunate to be able to interview Tim Williams, who spent time working in Paris and authored a Byera Research paper on the Grand Paris process. I was also fortunate to interview Beatrice Mariolle, Djamel Klouche and Jean-Pierre Pranlas Descours.

This investigation will form the subject of a future piece of research.

Journal

22@ Innovation District Barcelona

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal

Social Housing
Terrassa Barcelona
Flores & Prats

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal

Parc Central
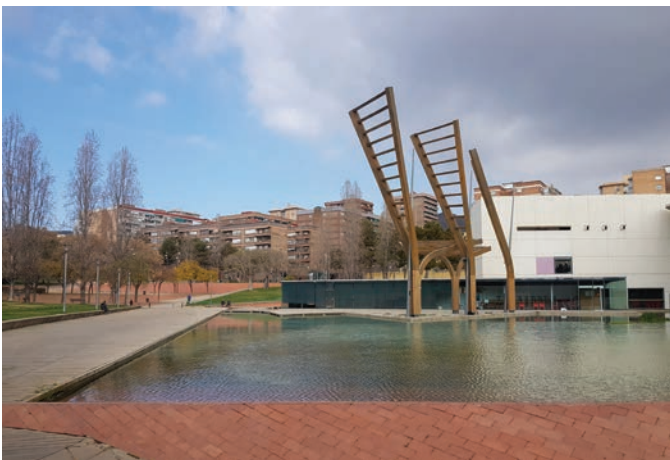# Barcelona
Arriola & Fiol

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal

Sala Beckett
Barcelona
Flores & Prats

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal

Carlsberg
Copenhagen

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal

Maersk Tower
Copenhagen
C.F.Moller

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)
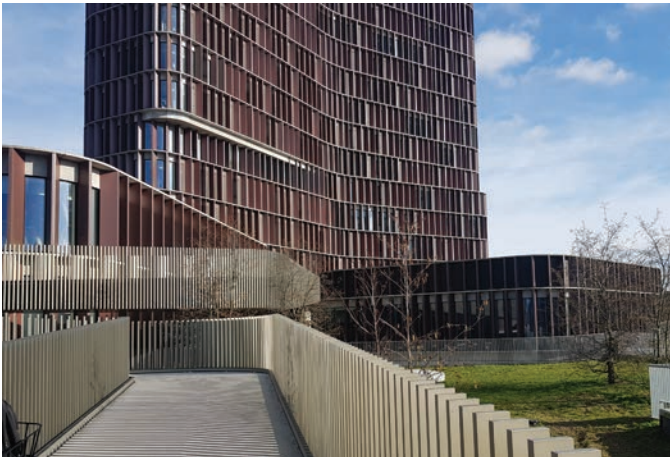
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Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal

Hackney Wick
London

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal

Bercy Paris

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Source: Hannah Bolitho (2018)

Journal: Case Study Interviews

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UNSW - Landscape Architect - Dr Mike Harris

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Greater Sydney Commission - Central City District Commissioner and previous NSW Government Architect - Peter Poulet

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Flores & prats Architects - Partner - Eva Prats

Mayorga & Fontana Architects - Partners - Maria Pia Fontana and Miguel Mayorga

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Hannah Bolitho

Hannah Bolitho is an architect and urban designer. She is currently working in the Strategic Planning and Urban Design team at the City of Sydney. It is noted that views shared in this report are those of her own.

She has over fifteen years of experience working on projects across all scales of architecture, urban design and strategic planning. She is a registered architect with the NSW Board of Architects and has a Master of Urban Design, including time in Barcelona focusing on sustainable urbanism in developing countries.

Prior to working at the City, she worked for over ten years as both Architect, then Urban Designer at the NSW Government Architect's Office.

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