

# Anonymity in Public

## Architectural design of anonymous and intimate spaces for an inclusive public condenser

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### 1 Abstract

The proposed research aims to answer the following question: *“How can architectural design, focused at creating a variety of anonymous and intimate public spaces, lead to the design of a healthy and inclusive public condenser?”* By researching and designing for the relation between anonymous and intimate oriented spaces the expected result is to create a design that attracts both the individual and the community and create social exchange in new innovative spaces.

Keywords: Inclusion, health, identity, anonymity, intimacy, public condenser & sense of place.

### 2 Introduction

The design area of Sundholm in Sønderbro consists of a historical site with an identity that is strongly linked to its institutional heritage. In the 1900's the area of Sundholm was built to create a place where people that struggled with life in society could work and learn how to behave properly. This included people with criminal backgrounds but also people who just could not fend for themselves.

The institutional identity of Sundholm is still very active as the area now houses many different homeless shelters, social housing, a municipal office, a youth detention centre and a volunteering centre for the entire area of Amager. The former fences, moat and forced labour have made place for individual barriers, blockades and an overall indifference to other residents in the area. In figure 1 is this anonymity between stakeholders shown, based on an interview with a volunteering office and local data. Thus the negative heritage of Sundholm lingers in its reputation and identity.

Because of this identity, and other reasons such as lack of financial resources and the physical accessibility of the area, the residents of Sundholm struggle to meet and connect with each other. Outsiders, for instance the artist who work in Sundholm and stu-

dents of the university next to Sundholm also lack a reason to connect with the area. What remains is a neighbourhood of indifference that lingers in its heritage, which is not a positive memory.

The municipality of Copenhagen have already, together with many volunteers, taken the first steps to try and lift some of the pressures at play in Sundholm. From 2012 to 2014 the *‘Integrated urban renewal plan’*<sup>19</sup>, has been a first approach of bottom-down urban renewal. Together with volunteers and local residents the municipality identified the following themes for further improvements: identity, health, accessibility, ecological sustainability & economical sustainability and community<sup>6</sup>. The design for a public condenser in the area of Sundholm might form the following step in an ongoing process of improvement and should address the above stated themes in its program and design.

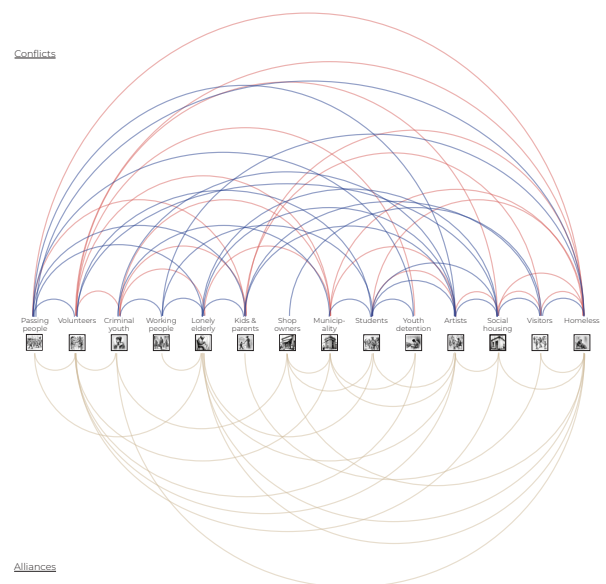


Figure 1. The social conflicts (red) and alliances (brown) of stakeholders in Sønderbro as a result of the degree of anonymity towards other stakeholders (blue).<sup>31,32</sup>

### 3 Goals & relevance of research

The aim of the research is to design a public condenser that contributes to a positive change in the neighbourhood of Sundholm. This proposed change is of a dual concern. Firstly the design of the condenser aims to impact the negative reputation that the historic identity of the neighbourhood has caused. Additionally will the design for a public condenser be focussed at creating space where people meet each other who in other places would not necessarily interact.

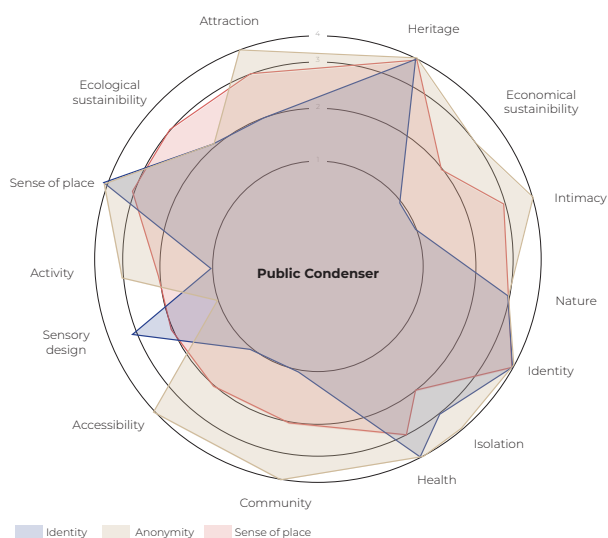


Figure 2. Themes for public exchange that are essential drivers for the design of the public condenser 1.11, 1.15, 1.16, 1.20

The first aim of the design relates to the identity of the neighbourhood and to the matter of the connection local and outside users experience with the neighbourhood. Yi-Fu Tuan relates the experience of space to place, he explains the relation individuals feel with places and objects. These feelings can relate place to a smell, sound or even a ritual, place is sensitive<sup>1,16</sup>. To change the experience for users of Sundholm the condenser might follow the narrative of creating a 'place', which might be created by designing with the themes as shown in figure 2. A place which resonates differently with users through program but also through a more personal connection.

Another influence on sense of place is given by Richard Sennet in *'The Public Realm'* and concerns the degree of anonymity versus the degree of intimacy people experience in the public realm<sup>120</sup>. Anonymity in the public realm enables people to step out of the social expectations that are experienced in communities and private spaces. Intimate spaces thus offer a preset social expectation of behaviour. The degree of anonymity that is experienced also relates to the connection people feel to

the places of the condenser. A variety of anonymous and intimate spaces might offer different individual and communal connections to building. In figure 3 two diagrams showcase how functions oriented at anonymity and intimacy might form hybrid spaces of social exchange. In figure 4 are these themes related to possible functions.

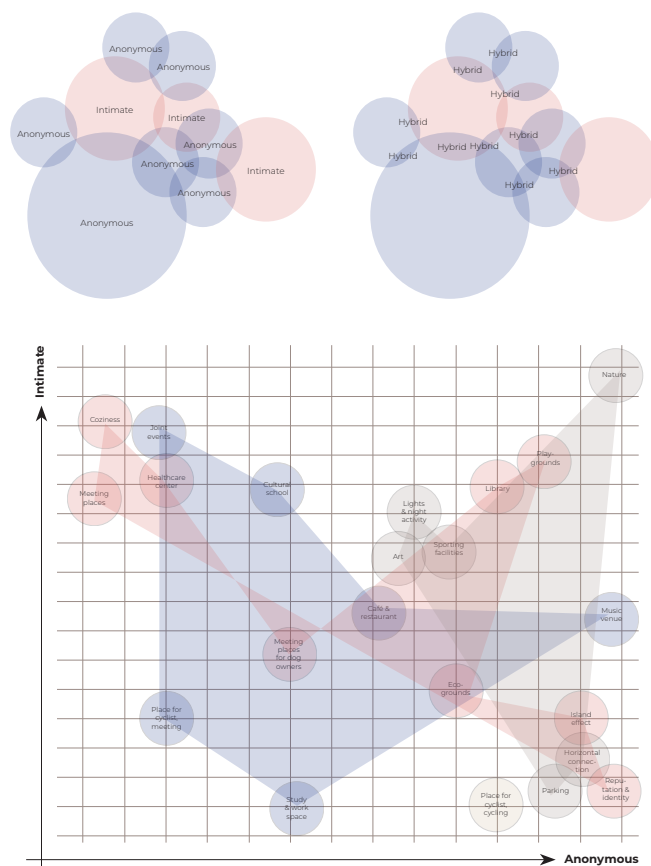


Figure 3. Program oriented at anonymous and intimate spaces and the hybrids that form between them.

Figure 4. Stakeholder needs related to anonymity and intimacy in Sønderbro. <sup>31,32,33</sup>

The connections between various anonymous and intimate spaces can be made physical through the architecture and program of the public building. The program should be aimed at functions that invite individuals to participate. In 'Sense of place' Charles Spence explains how architectural design might offer a connection between the user and a possible sense of place between the user and the public building<sup>124</sup>. Feelings that resonate to the individual, comforting them, encourages them to form an connection with the places of the public condenser, which Yi-Fu Tuan describes as motivators for social exchange<sup>118</sup>. By encouraging individuals to connect the building could form as a breeding spot of communities instead of just housing already existent communities. The functions within the building must resonate with the attraction of the building to individuals. The two interviews with local institutions

give insight into the local needs<sup>3.1,3.2</sup>. Compared with psychological needs for social life as described by Maslow and Lang<sup>1.6</sup>, shown in figure 5, the attraction of anonymity might form a basis for a healthy and inclusive condenser

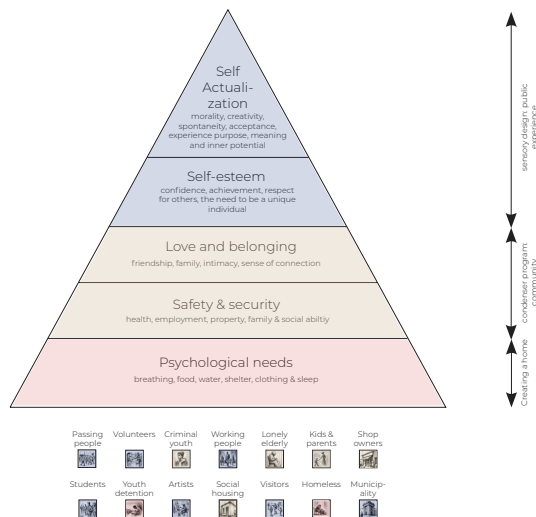


Figure 5. Hierarchy of needs related to stakeholders of Sønderbro.<sup>1.6</sup>

## 4 Theoretical framework

On the basis of the design themes and challenges as stated before the research aims to offer insight into the relation between health in architecture, public identity, sense of place and social inclusion. The research will be done according to the following research question and sub questions:

*“How can architectural design, focused at creating a variety of anonymous and intimate public spaces, lead to the design of a healthy and inclusive public condenser?”*

The research will further be divided among the four subquestions:

1. What is the public condenser?  
*“Which challenges and themes define the impact that the public condenser aims to bring to Sundholm?”*
2. Why in Sundholm?  
*“How can architectural design aid in the formation of a new identity and create a relation of sense of place for individuals and communities with the public condenser in Sundholm?”*
3. Why create a healthy & inclusive program?  
*“What social and physical program are of importance for a healthy change in Sundholm and how can this program be made available for all stake-*

*holders: local and outsiders?”*

4. Why create spaces for intimacy & anonymity?  
*“How can a variety of anonymous and intimate oriented spaces attract a broad audience with the aim of creating a common meeting grounds and a broad experience in the condensers program?”*

## 5 Methods

The proposed research concerns the design of a public condenser that revolves around the hybrids between anonymous and intimate spaces. The goal that is to be reached starts with setting up a program for the public condenser that is both accessible and inclusive. The research will be matched with a design process as the result of both should be a design for a public building. The demands for the program of the building are derived from Danish data and interviews that have been conducted with a select group of stakeholders. These interviews also consist of data from a participation event with local residents. Additionally multiple literary sources are used in creating an understanding of certain design themes and challenges such as inclusivity and healthy architectural design.

## 6 Annotated bibliography

### 1. Literary sources

1.1 Architectural design as a catalyst for social inclusion, Governor Mamuzo and Fadairo John. 2024  
Examples of community buildings in Lagos, investigates the nexus between social inclusion and architectural design.

1.2 The architecture of community, Leon Kier. 2009  
A research into the authenticity of communal and public architecture. Positioning of building in relation to public life.

1.3 The architecture of the city, Aldo Rossi. 1982  
General understanding of public life and public, city architecture. What drivers are there to be found designing for public.

1.4 Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet, Angelika Fitz & Elke Krasny. 2019  
A dive into the relations between power, development and urban architecture.

1.5 The death and life of great American cities / The economy of cities, Gilles Duranton. 2017  
Review of the work of Jane Jacobs, modern comments on her ideas and ideologies of the public realm.

**1.6 Defining social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An ecological model of social networks and community participation, Stacy Clifford Simplican, Geraldine Leader, John Kosciulek & Michael Leahy. 2014**

Research into the drivers of social inclusion and exclusions. Relevant for the design of a condenser that aims to mix multiple stakeholders from different backgrounds.

**1.7 The endless city, Kees Boersma. 2010**  
in Copenhagen.

**1.8 How to study public life, Jan Gehl. 2013**  
General understanding of how to design for a public function and what the drivers of social life in cities are.

**1.9 Integrated Urban Renewal, Copenhagen municipality. 2012**

Review and vision of municipal and local development in various neighbourhoods in Copenhagen.

**1.10 Life between building, Jan Gehl. 2011**  
Understanding of public space and design.

**1.11 The Naked city, Japonica Brown-Saracino. 2010**  
An understanding of the relation between citydwellers and the build environment.

**1.12 Neighbourhood Built Environment, Perceived Danger, and Perceived Social Cohesion, Eileen Bjornstrom and Margaret Ralston. 2014**

Another source on the topic of how to design for a safe climate in order to enable a proper social inclusion.

**1.13 The new urban crisis, Richard Florida. 2017**  
A review on Florida's own first text, reflecting on how to, less positively, design cities for the general public and different social classes.

**1.14 New space for living, Michiel van Driessche a.o. 2021**  
Study on how to develop liveable streets and public spaces in Groningen, the Netherlands.

**1.15 New urban spaces: urban theory and the scale question, Neil Brenner. 2019**  
Research and review on how to scale urban development plans.

**1.16 The non-places of migrant cinema in Europe, Sandra Ponzanes. 2012**  
Relating the journeys and connections of refugees to cinema. Relation of the treatment of immigrants in Europe and social classifications.

**1.17 The pains of freedom: Assessing the ambiguity**

**of Scandinavian penal exceptionalism on Norway's Prison Island, Victor Lund Shammas. 2014**

A study of Norse prison systems, inmates experience freedom whilst being in prison: bound to a physical place.

**1.18 Place, Yi-Fu Tuan. 1975**

A study and definitions of how people relate to objects, places and experience. How to design for identity.

**1.19 Public space: Lost and found, MIT program in art, culture and technology. 2017**

Study of new, ecologically based, urban commons. How can sustainability drive for social cohesion.

**1.20 The public realm, Richard Sennet.**

Definitions of an approach to the public realm, how is the relation of power in the public build environment.

**1.21 Radical Cities, Justin McGuirk. 2014**

The history of modernism in Latin America and its social effects.

**1.22 Relationship between Participation and Social inclusion, Louis Nwachi. 2021**

Participation as a motivator for inclusion in community settings.

**1.23 Sense of place, Kengo Kuma. 2009**

The designs of Kengo Kuma as an inspiration for designing identity based on anonymity and heritage.

**1.24 Sense of place: architectural design for the multisensory mind, Charles Spence. 2020**

The relation between architectural design based on sensory experience and the result to the individual perception.

**1.25 The public realm of cities and urban design, Taylor & Francis. 2000**

A general understanding of the function of public space in cities and social life: in the build environment.

**1.26 Urban commons shared spaces, Jens Kimmel, Till Gentzsch and Sophie Bloemen. 2018**

A study describing and defining the commons of social life: community buildings.

## 2. Reference projects

**2.1 Animalab, Agrocité & recyclab, R-Urban**

Multiple examples of community centres that revolve around ecological relations.

**2.2 Hut-to-Hut, Rintala Eggerton Architects**

A study of a design using local resources, materials

and principles. Revolves around the non-place that forms a public connector.

### 2.3 Kampung Admiralty, WOHA

Project that combines high and green spaces for the creation of multiple building levels for social interaction between elderly and others.

### 2.4 Masanari Murai Museum, Kengo Kuma

An art museum that exhibits in an intimate space, creating many anonymous yet intimate relations with the visitors.

### 2.5 National museum of African History and Culture; Ajaye Associates, Freelon Ajaye Bond & Smithgroup

An example of architecture that is visual and conceals a delicate interior.

### 2.6 Sendai Mediatheque, Toyo Ito & Associates

Public condenser that uses its construction as an architectural element for combination of multiple floors.

### 2.7 Shipyard 1862, Kengo Kuma

A public mixed-use building that transformed heritage into an attractive public building, shaping a modern identity.

### 2.8 Substrate Factory Ayase, Aki Hamada Architects

A community building that is based next to an existing factory, the spaces are reshapeable and can be used for different purposes.

### 2.9 Värtan Bieonergy CHP-plant, UD Urban Desing AB & Gottlieb Paludan Architects

Architecture that blends into the existing surrounding. Conceals an unwanted activity in an aesthetic manner.

### 2.10 Yien East Archipelago, Kengo Kuma

A combination of architecture for anonymity and architecture based on heritage. A complex for relaxation.

## 3. Interviews & Data

### 3.1 Interview data from municipal office & conversation with architect Rasmus Andersen. 2024

A conversation with a local stakeholder aiming to bring bottom-up development in Sundholm. Data contains a session of his office with local residents concerning challenges, needs and solutions.

### 3.2 Interview with Teddy Rasmussen from the Amager Colunteering Center. 2024

An interview with a local volunteer to gain insight into the character and identity of Sundholm.

### 3.3 Street interviews with local people in and around Sønderbro, including; artists, students, teachers and others. 2024

Local residents.

### 3.4 DK data of Copenhagen, municipal data. 2012

Data concerning local monuments, movements, infrastructure, cultural facilities etc.