Gateway to Tallinn

An architectural representation of genius loci
Colophon

Master’s Thesis Gateway to Tallinn. An architectural representation of genius loci

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1. Introduction

The redevelopment issues of the Old City Harbour of Tallinn have been in the centre of attention for more than two decennia now, since Estonia gained its independence from the Soviet Union. Many different urban visions have been proposed for the area since then, but unfortunately, due to different problems, the realisation of the plans has been impossible. When making acquaintance with the proposed visions it was interesting to see that among many different views none of the plans was handling the area from the perspective of a ‘gateway’ to the city. This is an important factor gone missing, which in my opinion, is a defining element in the redevelopment of the area. The lack of an attention for this issue caught my eye and interest while choosing my theme for the graduation project. My motivation was to find out how to create a gateway to the city that will, in some way, represent the city and its people. How to make this gateway unique so that upon arrival people know they have entered Tallinn?

Why unique, one may ask? Because it seems like nowadays, due to the globalization, the cities are only able to develop in accordance with uniform thinking and traditions of global market concepts. The world is increasingly seen as one market which is adaptive to one method and therefore one solution. “The tradition of mass-thinking has yielded a lot, but does not seem capable of offering an effective response to the increasing need for ‘individuality’ which, ironically enough, it has itself brought about. (...) While public increasingly wants choice, diversity, distinguishing features and depth in order to enrich their own individuality and connect emotionally with its environment, what is on offer seems to be heading energetically towards monotony and predictability.” (Florian, 2002, p.20, in City Branding) The cities are in danger of losing their power to differentiate themselves.

To celebrate the local culture, the spirit of the location (genius loci) and the authenticity of the city it is needed to create a gateway that will offer an unique experience for the people. To make Tallinn stand out in this Global Village it is necessary to find the ingredients that create the city image of Tallinn and form the local spirit in order to be able to integrate these elements into contemporary form of urban and architectural language, and therefore enhance the continuity of local building tradition.

In addition to offering an unique experience to the people on urban and architectural level, the project also follows an user-centered design approach, that focuses on the usability of the area and spaces. In that light there are a couple of elements that have played an important role in the design process: connectivity and pedestrian-centered design, successful public spaces and mixing of functions, and hierarchy of the urban structure as a basis for design. During the process it was important to bear in mind how different groups of people will use the area and what will attract them to the area. These elements are researched further in paragraph 3 “Creating the Gateway to Tallinn”.

The graduation thesis is divided into four main parts. The first chapter “Introduction” is an introduction to the graduation theme. In that chapter I will describe the background of the project and develop the framework for the research in the form of research problem, goal, questions and methodology. The first chapter will set the basis for the following two chapters.

Chapter two “Discovering the Context” will research the context of the graduation project. The first part of the chapter looks into the historical development of the city of Tallinn and the harbour in relation to the city in order to understand the current form and situation of the harbour. The second part analyses the urban form and content of Tallinn today in the form of urban analysis and interviews with the citizens and visitors. It continues with the analysis of the current situation of the harbour.

Chapter three “Creating the Gateway to Tallinn” is the most important part of my thesis. In this chapter I handle the theories that helped me in the urban and architectural design of the Gateway to Tallinn.

The thesis ends with the reflection on the research and design process, where I reflect on my graduation year by analysing the successes and missteps throughout the whole process and try to explain my vision on the wider meaning of the project in a social context.
1.1. Research framework

1.1.a Research theme

The redevelopment saga of the Old City Harbour begins with the fall of the Soviet Union, when Estonia gained its independence. By the end of the World War II Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied by the Soviet Union and underwent a period of sovietization. During that period a large-scale industrialisation was carried out in all of the Baltic States. Large investments were made for energy resources and manufacture of industrial and agricultural products. Also militarization played an important role during the sovietization. Large parts of Estonia, especially the coastal areas and the islands were closed to all public access. These areas were declared “border zones” and were occupied by the Soviet military. The same applied for the coastline of Tallinn. The citizens of Tallinn could only guess what was going on in these areas. The coast was heavily guarded day and night. The city was cut off from its waterfront and in many ways people lost their connection with the outside world.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, when Estonia gained its independence, the waterfront was finally opened up to the public. In a way the struggle to connect the waterfront with the city continues also today. There are still discussions going on about different development plans along the coastline and many competitions have been held for finding an appropriate vision for these areas. The Old City Harbour, the area with important historical and economical influence to the city, has been the most discussed of them all.

Just like other areas along the coastline in Tallinn, the Old City Harbour has, for a long time, been secluded from the rest of the city. In 1996 the first steps were taken for restoring the access to the sea by opening up the harbour area for the public. The redevelopment plan for the harbour area was seen as a “project of the century” and foresaw the harbour as a new city centre. (Ojari, magazine “Maja” 12.07.1006) After 15 years of different development proposals and architectural competitions, Ojari argues in her article that these endless discussions have forced the area of harbour ironically in the role of suburban area, a sort of amusement park without any relevance to the location. Also the public has difficulties with envisioning the area as a dense urban centre, after being closed for all these years.

The harbour in Tallinn has made through the same development pattern as most of the port cities in the world. The industry and the cargo transport have been gradually moved out of the city and the territory released from that will be redeveloped
and connected to the rest of the cityscape. The 1960’s was a period of the transformations of former commercial ports in the United States and Europe. The ideas about multifunctional urban environment and city’s historical values were in the centre of attention. The industry was replaced by consumerism and entertainment. Also the city branding theories were implemented in the war against the globalisation, in order to put the city back on the map with the help of redeveloped area or an iconic building. In the same way the new development plans of the Port of Tallinn envisage the Old City Harbour being converted fully into a passenger port. Therefore the cargo handling has been gradually moved out from the Old City Harbour and relocated into the other harbours. As of today, the Old City Harbour terminals are handling predominantly Ro-Ro cargo (rolling stock) and to an extent also some break bulk cargo. The territory released from under the cargo handling is associated with the creation of a multifunctional urban environment that forms an integral part of the rest of the city. This newly developed urban environment should have a character of a representative gateway to Tallinn.

1.1.b Research problem

At the moment the Old City Harbour has a lack of character as one of the important gateways to Estonia. The monotonous program with a couple of supermarkets and the chaotic connectivity with the city make the area more of a transitional zone that an attractive place to stay. The passengers leaving from or arriving to Tallinn pass the harbour area only to reach their destination whether it is boat they are catching or Tallinn they are visiting. The inhabitants in Tallinn rarely visit the area for entertainment or leisure reasons. Although there are more public functions appearing last couple of years, it still needs a better mix of various functions, that will attract people and will keep the area alive during a day and night.

Another important issue is the connectivity with the city centre. The harbour area is cut off from the rest of the city by a broad and busy motorway, Mere avenue and Ahtri street, which forms an obstacle for the slow traffic from and to the centre. In the current situation it is difficult to find your way through the harbour area to the city centre and back. Although the panorama of the old town, which is visible from the harbour, gives you the sense of direction, there is no clear routing that leads into the city. The crossing of Mere avenue and Ahtri street is very problematic.

In the current state, there is a lack of high quality public space in the Old City Harbour area. Most of the public space includes traffic zones and parking lots. Only the limited area around the marina is sometimes used for the entertainment reasons or as a seasonal marketplace. The rest of the area is just empty no-mans land, without any function or closed for the public access.

Not less of a problem is the issue of representativeness. The harbour plays an important role in creating the first and last impression of the city to the visitor. In a way it is like a business card of Tallinn. The harbour should be a representation of, or introduction to the city it is part of. Currently, the Old City Harbour has an image of a industrial and transitional zone, with low quality public spaces, lot of car traffic and no place for a citizen or a visitor to spend their quality time in.
1.1.c Research goal

The focus of this research lies on the revitalisation of the Old City Harbour. The current research and design project tries to find an optimal way to redevelop a specific part of the Old City Harbour into an urban area that has a good connection with the rest of the city from the pedestrian viewpoint, has a variety of successful public spaces and mix of functions, and which represents the local spirit (*genius loci*). The area has to form an integral part of the city so that the life from the city centre will spread to the waterfront. With its’ functions and character it serves as a satellite to the city centre of Tallinn, offering an introduction to the city. The focus lies on the user of the area, a visitor and a citizen. Through the design process it is important to bear in mind different user experiences when moving through the area.

Transform the harbour into representative gateway to Tallinn

1. By integrating the harbour with the city
2. By creating an attractive multifunctional area

Figure 1.1.6 Views to the Old City Harbour showing the current situation (Läkk, H., 2012)

Figure 1.1.7 Research and project goals (Läkk, H., 2012)
The research will therefore try to find an answer to the question "How to transform the area of Old City Harbour into a representative gateway to Tallinn in a way that it will improve the connectivity with the city and will create attractive public spaces?"

The sub-questions are:

How to design an area that is safe, usable and comfortable for the pedestrians?
How to connect the harbour with the city?
What kind of program has to be present in this area?
How to create successful public spaces?
How to represent Tallinn on an urban level?
How to represent Tallinn on an architectural level?

1.1. d Research methodology

The research began with a literature survey. Various books, journals and reports were used to learn about theories that would serve as a basis for the project. The main topics included (city) branding, city image and identity, sense of space and space making, gestalt theory, authenticity of a place and local spirit (genius loci). As the research and project design evolved a couple of topics were added to the list. Knowledge was gained about the connectivity and design of a pedestrian area, about mixing of functions and creation of successful public spaces. As well the background information about the development of the city and harbour was needed in order to place the project into a bigger context and understand its’ situation today. Various reference projects for waterfront redevelopments and designing of public spaces were use to get inspiration for the current project.

An extra research methodology was needed in order to study the perception of the city image. Ethnography proved to be an effective way for it. In that way a number of citizens and visitors were interviewed in Tallinn to learn about the individual and collective city image. Analysis about the similarities and differences between the individuals and the two groups gave a lot of information how Tallinn is seen through the eyes of different people and groups.

An urban and architectural analysis were used for the recognition and understanding of the architectural elements, their technical, functional and morphological characteristics and of spatial and functional relationships in the urban environment. Different kind of analysis were carried out by direct observing, photographing, filming and producing graphic material.
2. Discovering the context

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the main goal of the project was to create the gateway to Tallinn that will represent the city’s identity and its people. The best way to learn about the city and its identity is to study its historical development. This chapter gives an overview about the course of the most important events that influenced the development of the city. The story of Tallinn, its role and image throughout the history, was also an important inspirational factor for the design of the gateway. In the same way the reader should get, with the help of this chapter, a better understanding of Tallinn and its people, and therefore should understand the result of the design project better.

The second goal of this chapter is to put the Old City Harbour into a bigger context, into a context of the city, in order to understand its role in the relation to the city, and make a statement about the future vision of the gateway. The history of the harbour gives an overview about the development of its structures and area, so that it would be clear how and why it has got its current form and function.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first two parts handle the history of Tallinn and the Old City Harbour. The following two parts analyse the city and the Old City Harbour as they are today. In the part about the city today an urban analysis is presented to understand the structure of the city through its different layers and elements. In that way various maps show the division of the functions, green and blue areas, infrastructure, morphology etc. The fourth part describes the redevelopment saga of the Old City Harbour and presents a number of masterplans that are made for the area in those year by many different architects. At the end of the chapter a reader gets a picture about the situation of the harbour today that served as a starting point for the design project.
2.1 Historical background

2.1.a Historical development of Tallinn

The area of Estonia was already long ago an important nodal point for the trading routes between the east and west due to its favourable geographical situation. Along these trading routes many settlements with permanent harbours and markets were created. One of the most important settlement was by the Gulf of Tallinn. With the growing sea trade the settlement and harbour needed to be protected from the enemies. Somewhere in 10th or 11th century a citadel was built on a natural height of land, Toompea, nearby the Gulf of Tallinn and that marked the beginning of the city of Tallinn. This natural height of land afforded a great protection from the attacks on sea and land. The gulf that was surrounded by islands and peninsulas, and rarely froze over, made a perfect place for a harbour.

Early Tallinn was inhabited by craftsmen and tradesmen. As an important trading centre, Tallinn in the Middle Ages was already rich in ethnic diversity. While Estonians and Germans were the most represented, Swedes, Finns and Russians contributed to the diversity of the city. Trade with Finland was very active, as coastal Finns got most of their goods from Tallinn. Tallinn’s privileged trading relationship with Finland dates back to a 1326 peace treaty, foreshadowing economic relations today.

In the early 13th century, the Baltic peoples were among the last pagans in Europe. A papal decree led to a crusade against pagan Estonia from 1208-1227. Tallinn and northern Estonia were conquered by Danish troops in 1219-1220, despite the reinforcing support of military forces from the Russian towns of Novgorod and Pskov. Legend has it that Estonian troops were away from Tallinn at the time, but were able to liberate the city upon their return. Nevertheless, the city fell in turn to Germany, to the German military organization the Order of the Knights of the Sword, and to Denmark over the next few decades. The following centuries brought Swedish, Tsarist Russian and Soviet colonists; even Scottish mercenaries attacked the outskirts of the city in 1573.

In 1285, Tallinn joined the Hanseatic League, a union of trading cities centred on northern Germany. Tallinn and northern Estonia remained part of the Hanseatic League for two centuries. At that time Tallinn had a dominant role over the connections with the Russian trade centres such as Novgorod. German merchants dominated the city through the privileges of class. Conflicts between native Estonians and the German nobility were ongoing during this period, as Germans attempted to subjugate Estonians. Ethnic Estonians were subjected to increasing restrictions: losing the right to work in preferred professions and even, eventually, to trade with gold. Estonians were not allowed to participate in certain trades, and restrictions were placed on inter-

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**Figure 2.1.1 Development of the Old Town of Tallinn (Läkk, H., 2012)**

Before 12th century → 12th century → Begin 13th century → 13th century → 15th - 16th century

**Figure 2.1.2 The Old Town on a map and aerial photo (Bruns, D. 1993; Google Maps, 2012)**
The Lutheran Reformation arrived to Estonia on 14 September 1524. The guild system in Tallinn declined in the late 1500’s. During the Livonian War (1558-1583), Tallinn attempted to block trade with Russia, effectively breaking from Germany and the Hanseatic League in 1559. Finally, Tallinn swore allegiance to Sweden in 1561. Under Swedish rule, Tallinn lost importance as a trade city but became Sweden’s centre of colonial power in the Baltic. The democratic ideals of Lutheranism contributed to Estonia’s growing sense of national identity, and also led to mass literacy once the Bible was published in Estonian. However, Christianity began to root out the pagan customs only in the 1700’s. Largely due to the influence of Lutheran Protestantism, the literacy rate in Estonia reached 97% in the 1890’s. In 1726, only about 10% of peasants could read.

The population of Tallinn, however, continued to increase, reaching 10,000 in 1688. Tallinn’s suburbs grew rapidly due to Estonians arriving from rural areas, and Germans, Swedes, Finns, Dutch sailors, Russians, and Jews migrating to Tallinn. While plague and famine contributed to general economic decline, the period of Swedish Rule was afterwards nostalgically referred to as the Hea Vana Rootsi Aeg (Good Old Swedish Time). Swedish rule took steps to root out feudalism and to improve living conditions for peasants.

The war between Sweden and Poland (1600-1629) imposed a new duty on Tallinn, that of housing of Swedish soldiers. Soldiers housed by local residents were sometimes cruel and violent. Quarrels between the Tallinn City Council and the Swedish state increased, and townspeople were burdened by the additional requirement to participate in the construction of more fortifications around the city. Furthermore, plague broke out in the Baltics in 1710, as the Tsarist Russian army of Peter the Great besieged Tallinn – bringing an end to Swedish rule in Estonia.

Plague, famine and war reduced Tallinn’s population to 3,000 by 1718. Thirty years earlier the population had been over 10,000. The Baltic German nobility had considerable influence even in the Russian court and living conditions for peasants worsened rapidly under Tsarist rule.

Industrialization and the foundation of the Central Baltic Railway Works, however, turned Tallinn into an industrial city. Tsarist Russia built thousands of kilometres of rail lines from 1866-1876, and the expansion of industry provided new jobs for peasants. Industrialization in Tallinn occurred at the end of the period of Tsarist rule, and was most rapid in the second half of the 1880’s. The opening of rail communication with St. Petersburg increased Tallinn’s export trade tenfold, and medieval craft guilds were...
abolished. Construction exploded in the 1890’s, leading the city to commission a town plan in 1894. Plans from 1828-1897, however, covered only parts of the city. The number of workers increased rapidly, from 9,800 labourers in 1871 to 30,000 factory workers in 1917. From 1913-1917, Tallinn’s shipyards attracted skilled labourers from Russia’s interior, and consequently Tallinn housed 30,000 industrial workers for 1917. The Russian Revolution (1917) and the Estonian War of Independence (or Estonian Liberation War, 1918-1920) interrupted industrialization.

A coalition of Estonians and Russians beat Baltic Germans out of the Tallinn town council for the first time in 1904. Finally empowered to shift the focus of municipal attention away from the German-centred Old Town, the city council made rapid infrastructure improvements in the suburbs. A second building boom emerged in 1908-1909. While paving roads and installing sewage lines, gas pipes and street lamps, the city commissioned a survey of the city in 1910 and a plan for a new town hall to reflect the emerging spirit of democracy.

While Tallinn rapidly evolved from a provincial town to an industrial city, the idea of an independent Estonian republic entered political discourse. A Baltic German society was founded to investigate local folklore in 1838, and in the 1850’s, a small elite began to use the term Eesti (Estonia). The period from 1860-1917 is known as “Ärkämiseaeg” (the Time of Awakening). Before then, Estonian peasants had referred to themselves simply as “maarahvas” (country people).

The publication of Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald’s epic poem “Kalevipoeg” (The Son of Kalev) in 1861 helped promote a sense of national identity. The metaphor of resistance to foreign rule is clear in the poem. The first Song Festival in Tallinn in 1869, that followed the publication of Kalevipoeg, attracted 10,000 people and foreshadowed the so-called ‘Singing Revolution’ that helped Estonia regain its independence in the late Soviet period. Over a hundred years after the 1869 event, the song festivals in the post-Soviet period drew a lot of singers (34,000 in 2004) and spectators (100,000).

Under Tsarist rule, such demonstrations were not tolerated. In a 1905 demonstration, the Russian military opened fire on labour movement demonstrators in Tallinn where 90 people were killed and over 200 wounded. Civil war broke out in Tsarist Russia from 1918-1920. The February Revolution triumphed early in Estonia on 15 March 1917. Like the other Baltic countries, Estonia first demanded autonomy then declared (and fought for) its independence. The left-wing cultural movement Noor Eesti (Young Estonia) urged its proponents to “remain Estonians but become Europeans. One day before German occupation forces entered Tallinn on 24 February 1918, Estonia became officially independent. The German occupation, which quickly followed, failed to resolve conflicts with Russia and brought the large scale industry in Estonia to a stand.

During the Estonian War of Independence (1918-1920), Estonia fought successfully against Bolshevik Russia’s new Red Army, and neutralized other threats. The first period of Estonian independence dealt with post-war economic hardship and political instability. Progress, however, was rapid, and industry revived through the expansion of home markets. By the 1930’s, industry generated nearly a third of Estonian national income, remaining, however, less important than agriculture.

In August 1939, Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin negotiated a secret agreement, as part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, to divide Eastern Europe between their two dictatorial regimes. There was a massive exodus, under Hitler’s orders, of the Baltic Germans from the ‘Soviet sphere of influence.’ Many German families had forged strong cultural and historic ties to the Baltic, and most were both wealthy and well educated. The departure of 20,000 Germans from Estonia within a few months was, socially and politically, problematic. In September, the Baltic States were forced to allow basing rights to 25,000 Soviet troops. By the summer of 1940, 66,946 Soviet troops were based in the Baltic.

During the Soviet occupation that followed, Estonia’s borders were closed, trade was restricted, and a puppet government was ‘elected’. On 14 June 1941, more than 10,000 Estonians were deported to prison camps or exile in Siberia. This unforeseen action surprised and terrorized the populace, and resulted in mass flight. Soviet occupation ended cultural autonomy in Estonia, and 400 Jews were deported to prison camps in 1941. The population loss from the first Soviet occupation rose up to 44,400.
On 22 June 1941, the Soviet-German War broke out. Retreating Soviet and German armies destroyed or ‘evacuated’ industrial equipment, leaving behind a trail of destruction. World War II “destroyed the normal development of Tallinn as well as that of entire Estonia.” Half of Tallinn and a tenth of Old Town were destroyed during World War II. Isolated from the West, Estonia relied on the Germans as the only military force that could realistically oppose the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany occupied Estonia from 1941-1944. Estonians were refused their demands for restored independence, and continued destruction and devastation followed. Because of the German occupation, the Soviet army bombed Tallinn on the night of March 9, 1944. Soviet bombers destroyed 10% of the buildings in Old Town. This was one of the most visible traces of Soviet impact on the old city. Altogether, Estonia lost 25% of its population from 1939-1945. This loss of population left dramatic marks on Tallinn, and the dark history of WWII can be still felt today in many parts of the city.

The stubbornness with which the “Metsavennad” committed to their resistance movement manifested also at a civilian scale, in the careful protection of Estonian cultural traditions and symbols throughout Soviet occupation. The KGB’s brutal treatment of the resistance movement did little to win over Baltic loyalties, and rather only repelled the general populace further. Altogether, Estonia lost 25-30% of its population in 1940-1955. Estonians, like their Baltic neighbours to the south, were targeted as being anti-Soviet. From 25-26 March 1949, Soviets deported another 20,000 Estonians to Siberia. Luckily Finnish TV was widely pirated in northern Estonia so the Estonian capital was never completely isolated from Western (particularly Scandinavian) fashions and trends.

Despite centuries of occupation, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian cultures persisted because of strong national identities, high literacy rates, the preservation of languages and consistent ‘habitat.’ Because of their superior economic performance in the Soviet context, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were deemed “model republics.” Estonia became a testing ground for economic policy, and free market elements were included in its planned economy. Soviets built huge blocks of housing, districtized heating, prioritized industry and military interests over environmental and cultural concerns, and systematically imposed a pro-Soviet agenda on public space. Soviet planners also nationalized Tallinn’s infrastructure of highways, harbours, and airports.

During the Singing Revolution (1986-1991), the Baltic States regained independence through nonviolent methods. Spontaneous youth protests precipitated the movement, averting the danger of violent conflict. Acts of resistance included graffiti, singing national songs, and rewriting prayers. Public protests from August 1987 – February 1988 resulted in rapid change. On 4 June, a group of young people with flags congregated in Old Town, singing patriotic songs, and then marched to the song festival grounds. Along the way, about 100,000 people gathered. The march happened nightly for weeks, and the ‘Singing Revolution’ was born. Song became a strong symbol of cultural resistance. The 1990 Estonian Song and Dance Festival in Tallinn drew half the Estonian population. On 23 August 1989, several million people formed the Baltic Chain linking the three Baltic capital cities to draw international media attention. The Soviet block had started to fall apart in 1989, and was dissolved in December of 1991. On 21 August 1991, after 54 years and 75 days of Soviet-Nazi-Soviet occupation, Estonian independence was reestablished.

2.1.b Historical development of the Old City Harbour

The arrival of the German merchants to Tallinn has been considered as the first written confirmation of Tallinn’s seaport. It can be seen as a proof that Tallinn was already at that time an important trading node in the Baltic Sea region. As the maritime trade increased, the moorage at the foot of the Toompea slope (located in the Old Town) started to expand into a bigger harbour. The main road to the harbour, that ran along Vene Street, soon needed an additional sideroad to the new German settlement, which is today known as Niguliste Street. Tallinn was also a starting point for many different trading routes on land connecting it with the rest of Estonia, Livonia, Latvia and Russia. The tree most important routes are nowadays known as Tartu, Pärnu and Narva streets. The Chronicle of Henricus de Lettis and the Liber Census Daniae both claim that Tallinn was located at the intersection of several major highways. Tallinn’s importance as a long-range trading centre predated its 13th century membership in the
On May 15, 1248, the Duke of Estonia and King of Denmark confirmed the permit to implement the Lübeck Law in Tallinn. From that time on Tallinn had the rights of a city. In addition to administrative and legal regulations, the Lübeck Law also included regulations on civil, commercial, and maritime law, which guaranteed the privileged status of the local artisans and merchants, established a strong basis for maritime trade in the towns of Northern and Eastern Europe, and promoted the development of ports.

In 1285, Tallinn joined the Hanseatic League, a union of trading cities centred on northern Germany. The agreement specifies the water as the only route for the transport of goods. For Tallinn that meant, among other things, more structured construction and maintenance of the seaport. The landing places needed to be adapted for the Hansa cogs, trade vessels with a greater draft. As a result, Tallinn enjoyed considerable autonomy as a centre of trade between Europe and Russia for the next 200 years. The most prized architecture in Tallinn’s Old town dates back to the 14th-16th centuries and therefore serves as a monument of that prosperous period of close economic and cultural ties with Germany.
For 1380 the modernization, or more correctly the “medievalisation” of the Tallinn seaport had ended. In the northwest, the defensive stone breakwater provided protection against storms and two new wharves built on timber stakes rambled into the sea bottom. Maritime trade provided the town of Tallinn with the greatest source of income and it had to be protected, which meant reinforcement expansion of the harbour in following decennia. Adapting to the times and conditions, the port of Tallinn bravely pushed forward into the 16th century. A serious organisation and maintenance of the waterways started with the placement of buoys and construction of lighthouses. Before that time, the steeple of St. Olav’s church (located in the Old Town) was used as a landmark for voyages to the Tallinn seaport. Already in the thirteenth century, St. Olav’s Church had acquired its present shape and dimensions, and at the turn of the century, a spire 159 meters high was erected which was one of the highest in the world at that time.

During the Swedish rule, from 1561, the first notation is made of the travellers visiting the Tallinn seaport. Until then, only warriors and merchants had sailed in those waters. On a copy of a map of Tallinn from the year 1634 we can see a single long breakwater stretching east from the shore. At the end of the breakwater, the location of a watchtower is marked. The tower would have been already a hundred years old at the time.

An overseas postal connection was instituted between Estonia and Sweden in 1638, and since the mail ships also carried those interested in travel, this meant scheduled passenger travel. The postal route to Stockholm ran across Porkkala, Turku, and land, and some year later (1647), a direct route to Stockholm was established. Both routes were discontinued after the Great Northern War broke out in the next century: the postal route together with the fall of Tallinn in 1710, the direct route was discontinued already in 1700 when the war started.

On the map of Tallinn compiled by Paul von Essenin 1683, the seaport is shown as a straight jetty stretching into the sea, which started at the Coastal Gate and ended near the current Sadama (Harbour) Street, and of a stone breakwater running parallel to the west of the jetty. This map is the oldest surviving original document showing the Tallinn seaport.

On the map of Tallinn produced by Swedish engineer Samuel Waxelberg in 1688, the port is shown as a single jetty extending into the sea. Instead of the western breakwater, only the blockhouse (blockhouse) is shown. The town map itself is distinguished by details included the eight water-powered mills and workshops on the Härjapea River. On the map prepared by J. Holmberg includes both, the blockhouse and the breakwater. Apparently, the breakwater existed, because the watchtower would never have been built in the sea, and the jetty had to be protected from storms. On his map, engineer Waxelberg simply did not include the dilapidated structure, which might have only been supported by stones strewn in the sea, and had therefore partially sunk below the water with the breakwater. Most likely the blockhouse was no longer in use, since the watchtower guarded the harbour since 1532.

As if a continuation of the foreboding New Year’s greeting, a war started, which has written itself into history as the Great Northern War (1700–1721). Everyone, who were against the supremacy of the Swedes in the Baltic Sea, confronted the Kingdom of Sweden. Russia, Saxony, and Denmark had already concluded an alliance in the previous year, and they were joined by some of the Livonian aristocracy, led by Johann Reinhold von Patkuli (1660–1707). Later Prussia and Hanover also joined the group.

The archive documents of the Maritime Ministry show that Peter the Great had the west coast of Estonia from Tallinn to Pärnu, as well as the Western Estonian islands surveyed to find a suitable location for a naval port. The advantages of Tallinn attracted the attention of Peter, and he started plan the construction and reinforcement of the port needed by a serious strategy. Peter the Great saw the Baltic’s ice free ports as a “western window to the world.” The port in Tallinn is deep enough for even the largest passenger ferries to dock there today. The only larger port on the Baltic is St. Petersburg, Russia. Peter started building in Tallinn before his Great Northern War with Sweden was over. The Admiralty workshops (marina) that had been created on the orders of Peter the Great, with their 250 workers, had become the first larger industrial enterprise in the town. The 1797 town
plan shows that quite a lot had been achieved in the harbour during Peter’s era. Military barracks and Admiralty buildings had been built on the banks of the Admiralty canal, and a cannon battery had been established on the shore near the end of the breakwater, in the sea south of the jetty, to protect the harbour.

In the Tallinn port, which after Peter the Great’s death had only been repaired bit by bit, a defensive dam, which called the western breakwater (Western bulwark), was built to the north of the cargo bridge (Merchant’s Bridge). Then it still formed a whole with the southern breakwater that were later separated from eachother. The top structure of the breakwater together with the breastwork for wave protection rested on log cribwork filled with stones, some of which were already installed during the time of Peter the Great. The western breakwater was intended for warships, since the existing jetty did not have enough room or shelter for this. The cargo port was next to the naval port near the Merchant’s Bridge. The latter was a log and board structure built on stakes, which was 150 fathoms (320m) long, the average width was 6 fathoms (12.8m), and the height was 1.17 fathoms (2.5m) above the average water level in the Baltic Sea. In the following couple of years the naval port’s basin was dredged and new batteries were built on the shore.

For the years from 1801 to 1825, Alexander I, the son of the Czar, came to the throne, and among his other activities, he ordered the construction of batteries and fortifications, while the dredging of the naval port was also continued. In 1806 a new project was compiled for the naval port of Tallinn, and the next year, construction based on the project started at the port. In November, maritime trade was being hindered by the land blockade against Great Britain imposed by French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1804–1815), which Russia also joined. One hundred and fifty cargo ships sailing in foreign waters arrived in the port of Tallinn this year, but the number started to decrease during the state of war in the following years.

In the harbour of Tallinn, a separate sea wall was constructed in 1807, extending northwest from the end of the western breakwater, which was connected to the western breakwater in mid-century, when the breakwater was reconstructed. For the protection of the port, a battery with 24 cannons was constructed and the fortifications were thoroughly renovated. The near future proved that it didn’t make sense to scrimp on defence expenditures. During the year, 82 cargo ships sailing foreign waters arrived in the port of Tallinn. For the 1818 the northern breakwater was completed that sheltered the new naval port on the edge of the western breakwater from the north. The bulwark offered shelter with a high breastwork from both storms and enemies. To deter the latter, cannons were placed on the upper part of the breastwork.

In 1844 finally, the eastern breakwater (East Bulwark), which had been under construction for a long time, was completed. Now there were already two naval ports at the gate of Tallinn: the new naval port in the grasp of the northern and eastern breakwaters and the old naval port in the shelter of the western breakwater. The commercial ships got use of the western breakwater and from that time, this part of the port started to be called the commercial port.

The separate seawall was connected with the western breakwater in 1850, and in order to facilitate the passage of ships, an 11-fathom-long piece was demolished from the latter from behind the juncture. In this way, the curved end of the western breakwater was separated off and it became the southern breakwater (Southern Bulwark). The reconstructed and expanded western breakwater had received a new shape, which, with only some minor changes, remained in position for a long time. A couple of years later also the 320-fathom-long Victoria breakwater was completed, and thereby, the harbour basin between the Merchants’ Quay and the new breakwater (current basin no. 2) was created. The basin was shallow, only 1½–5 feet, and thereby could only be used for coastal transport (cabotage). A cabotage quay was built on the landward tip of the Victoria breakwater.

The shipping company, Sydfinska Angbätsbolaget, started voyages on the Helsinki–Tallinn–Lübeck line with the steamships Alexander and Nikolai in 1858. The latter had previously run on the Helsinki–Tallinn–St. Petersburg line. The Helsinki–Tallinn–Stettin (Szczecin) line started up, which was closed in 1940. The Aura, built in Sweden, travelled on the Stockholm–Turku–Helsinki-Tallinn–St. Petersburg line until 1886.
Tallinn’s old naval port was developing into a cargo port, and it was depicted under this name on the town maps. A passenger ship wharf was built on the Merchants’ Quay. Tallinn had lost its military importance as a naval fortress, and thereby lost its status. With the financing and authorization of the Tallinn town council, the Merchants’ Quay was extended 35 fathoms in the north-easterly direction. In this way, the curved Merchants’ Quay took on a zigzag shape and remained so until the beginning of the next century. Between the western breakwater and the Merchants’ Quay, in front of the customs headquarters, a customs wharf was built. This granite block structure on rows of pegged plank piles was apparently completed somewhat later, because this part of the port had not changed on the 1865 town plan in comparison to the 1801 plan, but later the seaward side had been expanded. The Merchants’ Quay (currently wharves no. 10, 11 and 12) has the longest history in the Tallinn seaport. The first breakwater in the Bay of Tallinn, which started near the Coastal Gate, aimed in the direction of its future location, and the portion of the breakwater constructed by the Swedes already extended to the location of the Merchants’ Quay.

At the beginning of May in 1869, the construction of the Baltic Railway was started. On November 20, the first locomotive arrived in Tallinn and made the first trip on the section of track between the port and the Baltic Station, which was originally intended to be a horse railway. In practice, it turned out otherwise. The Eesti Postimees wrote: “It was 3 o’clock in the afternoon, when the steam engine “Peter the Great” blew its whistle for the first time, and the people gathered from all around, to see the new marvel, the likes of which Old Tallinn, or any of its people had never seen.” The new cargo transport in the port had been named Peter in honour of the Russian Czar and port builder.

A new basin was completed next to the Victoria breakwater in 1884. The width of the basin was 31 fathoms, the depth 25 feet, and the length of the wharf 138 fathoms. The New Port, built next to the Old Port was completed together with its wharves a year later, and of the five planned basins, two were not built.

On the 1st of April in 1891, at the initiative of Swedish sea captains, Svensson, and Gronholm, and the support of the Stock Exchange Committee of Tallinn, a seamen’s house was opened. Unfortunately, the one-story building at Vana-Sadama 3 was already too small when it opened. Only a few seamen could find shelter there.

In the port of Tallinn, the Baltic Railway Association established a railway branch to the Victoria bank and started to build a grain elevator there, with a capacity of 5,264 m³. During the next few years, the entire complex of grain storehouses was completed. A couple of years later, on the southern breakwater of the port of Tallinn, also the building of the Yacht Club was completed.

The construction was started on the Ship Repair and Metal Works (Admiralty) basin. Until this time, the Admiralty canal from Peter had serviced paddle- and steamboats of the Great’s period, which started at the wooden jetty (later the revolving jetty).
and ended at the boat yard’s slipway.

The era of light had arrived in the port of Tallinn in 1905. Fifty-two electrical lights were lit, which received current from the electricity station near the factory.

On the 29th of February 1912, the town fathers of Tallinn announced an international competition for a town plan, and naturally, the port stood in the focus of the planning. From among five plans, the first prize was won by Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen (1873–1950). The project envisaged the expansion of the port eastward to the Russalka, and westward to the fishing harbour. The length of the quay line was 6,700 meters, three new basins and breakwaters had to be built. Increased cargo transport required a new railway terminal, which was planned for the location of the current electricity station. The only criticism for his plan was that the port and the electricity station separated the centre of the town from the sea. The beginning of the war cancelled the realization of the plan. On 28th of November 1918, the Red Army, together with Estonian Reds, captured Narva. The War of Independence started and the Estonian Government transferred the ports and all maritime affairs to the war authorities. Fifteen years later, in November 1927, the Central Directorate of Maritime Affairs announced a new international competition for the development project for the port of Tallinn.

In 1936 a modern passenger terminal had risen on the foundations of the old storehouse on the Merchants’ Quay in the Old Port. In the building furnished with steel furniture, the construction of which cost 60,000 crowns, everything was of primary importance: special rooms for the police and customs control, a spacious waiting room with a café-buffet, a newspaper counter and ticket offices, a baggage storage room, and men’s and ladies’ rooms. As well the improvement of the connecting breakwater in the New Port was completed. The 304-metre-long stone breakwater was now usable in its entire length, and ships docked there for either repairs or winter storage.

On 18th of October 1939, when the Red Army marched in Tallinn the port was closed to cargo ships and fishing boats. In the New Port of Tallinn, a 9.8-hectare area of water and 1.4 hectares of land were given to the Soviet naval forces to use, around which the Waterway Service built an almost 400-metre-long fence. In December, regular ship traffic between Tallinn and Helsinki was discontinued as well. In 1941 the Maritime Trade Port of Tallinn, lighthouses, beacon ships, and buoys were handed over to the Hydrographic Service of the Naval Fleet of the USSR. In the same year Germany attacked the Soviet Union. The Soviet troops left the port of Tallinn, having previously, to fulfil Stalin’s appeal, sunk ships, destroyed portal cranes, refrigerated warehouses and grain elevators, and burned now the crude oil tanks and some of the warehouses. The revolving iron jetty, which led across the State Port Works canal, was also demolished. Only the wharves survived.

The same repeated when the Red Army, in turn, forced the Germans to recede. In 1944 the German troops started to prepare for the destruction of the harbour structures upon the withdrawal that had already become a reality, when the Red Army started a quick march toward Tallinn. They blasted the structures of the port of Tallinn and this continued for the next several days. The air was filled with the fumes of burning oil stores. The most of the port structures were destroyed. The restoration work took about twenty years. The architectural ensemble that decorated the northern breakwater— the lighthouse and beacon at the mouth of the port – can today only be seen in old photos.

In March 1979 a customs pavilion was inaugurated at the Maritime Trade Port of Tallinn and in July, a new terminal (A-Terminal) was opened at Sadama 25-2. Many years later, in 1993, a new terminal, built by the Swedes, had been completed in the port, which people started calling the Swedish Terminal (B-Terminal).

In June 1996, the D-Terminal in the Old City Harbour that had been completed and was ready to be opened for operations. Together with the terminal, quays nos. 7 and 8 were built on the Victoria and Baikov’s shores.

Figure 2.1.17 Historical view to the Old City Harbour (Google Images, 2012)
2.2 Situation today

2.2.a Tallinn today

“In general, the larger the project, the greater its scope to control or create its own context. Nevertheless, whatever their scale, all urban design actions are embedded within and contribute to their local context. All acts of urban design are therefore contributions to a greater whole.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 36) Carmona et al. (2003) argue that each place is unique and this uniqueness should be considered as its most precious design resource. Although not all context or places require the same degree of 'contextual' response. Areas with a specific and unified character require more careful and respectful response than the areas with low environmental quality. The latter offer an opportunity for the creation of new character. But most of the areas fall between these two extremes. The context can be valued for its historic or aesthetic quality, but not less important role play also its social and cultural qualities. According to Buchanan (1988, p. 33) the 'context' was not just the 'immediate surroundings', but the 'whole city and perhaps its surrounding region'. It was not 'narrowly formal', but included 'patterns of land use and land value, topography and microclimate, history and symbolic significance and other sociocultural realities and aspirations - and of course the location in the larger nets of movement and capital web'.

“In any one place and time, an ‘urban environment’ is part of a particular terrestrial context inhabited by a diverse animate community, incorporating multilayered social interactions producing a distinctive local culture, and forming one among a proliferation of distinctive and complex urban context.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 37) The considerations of context are not just concerned with the place in a physical sense, but also with the people who create, occupy and use the built environment. So it is important to understand local sociocultural context and cultural differences in order to ‘read’ and understand urban places and culture that created and maintains them. Carmona et al. (2003) discuss further that given the naivety of assuming that principles of good urban design are universal and transferable between culture, urban design requires sensitivity to cultural diversity. As globalisation processes threaten to overwhelm cultural diversity, it is increasingly important to respect that which continues to exist.

Considering the foregoing, this chapter therefore will explore the context of Tallinn where the design location, the Old City Harbour, is located. The analysis will focus on the physical elements as well as the sociocultural aspects of the city.

Location and climate: Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, is situated in the north of Estonia. The coordinates of Tallinn are 59.26 of latitude and 24.46 of longitude. Tallinn is located on the east coast of Baltic Sea, next to Gulf of Finland. Estonia is surrounded by Finland in the north, Russia in the east, Latvia in the south and Sweden in the west.

Tallinn is evolved around the historical settlement with the propitious location for trading and fortification. Gulf of Finland was perfect for establishing a port. Already long ago Tallinn became one of the centre of the trading routes between Finland, Russia and Livonia.

Estonia lies in the northern part of the temperate climate zone and in the transition zone between maritime and continental climate. Because Estonia is continuously warmed by maritime air influenced by the heat content of the northern Atlantic Ocean,
it has a milder climate despite its northern latitude. The Baltic Sea causes differences between the climate of coastal and inland areas. Estonia has four seasons of near-equal length. Average temperatures range from 16.3 °C on the Baltic islands to 18.1 °C inland in July, the warmest month, and from −3.5 °C on the Baltic islands to −7.6 °C inland in February, the coldest month. Estonia is located in a humid zone in which the amount of precipitation is greater than total evaporation. The average precipitation in 1961–1990 ranged from 535 to 727 millimetres (21.1 to 28.6 in) per year and was heaviest in late summer.[2] There were between 102 and 127 rainy days a year.[2] and average precipitation was most plentiful on the western slopes of the Sakala and Haanja Uplands. Snow cover, which is deepest in the south-eastern part of Estonia, usually lasts from mid-December to late March.

Size and population: The total area of Tallinn is 14 895 ha including lakes Ülemiste and Harku, and Aegna Island within its administrative border. Most of the land is used for the residential purpose, with 3128 ha, followed by land without purpose (2422 ha) and public land (2198 ha). According to the Statistical Yearbook of Tallinn 2011 30% of the population, that is 409 342 (annual average) residents of Estonia, lives in Tallinn, what makes it the biggest city in the country. Tallinn is multinational city: 52% of the population are Estonians, 38% are Russians, 4% are Ukrainians. The average population density in the city is 2571 residents/km². In Tallinn the most of the population is between the age of 15 and 64 (69%), 15% of the population is 0-14 and 16% is 65+.

The average size of a household in Tallinn is 2,3. The percentage of one- and two-member household is together 63%. 92% of the population lives in an apartment houses and 80% of the population owns a dwelling. 75% of the households in Tallinn have internet access.

| Rahvastik | Population | Index [km²] | Area [km²] | Asukud \\
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Figure 2.2.2 Urban region residents (Population Register, 2011)

Figure 2.2.3 Territory, districts and population of Tallinn (Population Register, 2011)
**Districts:** Nowadays is Tallinn divided between eight districts: Centre, with the Old Town in its core, Kristiine, Northern Tallinn, Mustamäe, Lasnamäe, Haabersti, Nõmme and Põhja-Tallinn. There are three districts where the percentage of non-Estonians is bigger than the percentage of Estonians: Haabersti with 49% of Estonians, 41% of Russians and 10% of other nationalities; Lasnamäe with only 28% of Estonians, 59% of Russians and 13% of other nationalities and Northern Tallinn with 44% of Estonians, 47% of Russians and 10% of other nationalities. Centre, Northern Tallinn, Lasnamäe, Kristiine and Mustamäe are the most dense districts with 3001 - 6000 residents per km2. Lasnamäe district is also the most populated area with 115 654 residents, whereas Põhja-Tallinn is least populated with only 15 567 residents. The most dense district is Mustamäe with 7926 residents/km2 and the least dense is Põhja-Tallinn with 833 residents/km2. According to the area size, Centre district is the biggest (30.60 km2), followed by Nõmme (29.16 km2) and Lasnamäe (27.42 km2). The smallest area has Kristiine district (7.87 km2).
Urban areas with cultural-environmental heritage: Tallinn is an assemblage of smaller city districts with a distinct character. Many of these areas have an important historical value due to unique architectural ensemble and/or urban planning and therefore have been included into cultural-environmental heritage list. These areas are called Kadriorg, Kalamaja, Kassisaba, Kitseküla (Tallinn-Väike), Laevastiku, Nõmme, Pelgulinn, Raua, Tatari, Torupilli, Uue-Maailma and Veerenni (encircled with a red line on the map). Many of these areas are filled with old wooden architecture that is becoming increasingly unique in the world and therefore need a lot of attention and care in preservation. In many bigger cities these kinds of districts are long replaced by modern housing or in lot of cities these districts were never even built. The districts with cultural-environmental heritage in Tallinn are established during the era of industrialization at the outskirts of the city centre, that is nowadays known as the Old Town. The housing in these districts was usually meant for the factory workers and followed same style and construction methodologies, which gave the whole area a distinct architectural image.
Transport and infrastructure: Tallinn has become one of the largest passenger and trade centres in the Baltic Sea region. The key role in that holds transit comprising 2/3 of the turnover of Tallinn ports. The railway junction with international passenger train connection is the largest in Estonia. Tallinn has also the only airport in Estonia that has international importance and is able to receive almost all types of airplanes.

The most of the turnover comes from the harbours in Tallinn region. In 2010 it was 7,915,100 passengers and 151,969,000 tons of cargo compared to 1,384,831 passengers and 11,960 tons of cargo of Tallinn Airport. Boats and ferries depart from the Old City Harbour to Finland, Sweden and Russia. Also the harbour is a starting and ending point for various cruise lines. Tallinn Airport busiest flight connections are between Tallinn and Helsinki, Riga and Copenhagen. The international train connection is with Moscow.

The most important roads in Tallinn, Paldiski mnt., Pärnu mnt., Tartu mnt. and Narva mnt. are due to historical development directed towards the Old Town. Long ago these roads were main trading routes connecting the port and markets of Tallinn with the rest of Estonia and with foreign lands. Nowadays these roads lead to, as they name says, to the cities of Paldiski, Pärnu, Tartu and Narva.

![Figure 2.2.8 Turnover of passengers and goods in harbours and airport of Tallinn](image1)

![Figure 2.2.9 Map showing green and blue spaces in Tallinn](image2)
**Green and blue spaces:** Tallinn has in total 57.05 km² (about 22% of the total area) of green spaces in the form of greeneries, parks, cemeteries, forest-parks and forests. In the centre of the city there are more greeneries, smaller parks and playgrounds. Bigger parks, cemeteries, forest-parks and forest can be found towards the outskirts of the city. Nõmme is the most greenest district with 13.06 km² of green spaces, followed by Pirita (10.82 km²) and Centre district (10.39 km²).

Tallinn has five beaches, Pirita, Pelgurand, Harku, Pikakari and Kakumäe, and three lakes, Harku, Ülemiste and Raku. The whole northern border of Tallinn lies on the coast of Baltic Sea. The percentage of bodies of water is 8% from the total area of the city. (Valt, Tallinn)

**Landmarks:** The most known landmarks are concentrated in the area of the Old Town. It could be said that the whole area of the Old Town is a landmark. Outside the Old Town many other important landmarks can be found. That includes churches, a zoo, monumental parks, architectural landmarks, monuments, cemeteries and a botanical garden. The most of the landmarks are situated in the centre part of the city.

A couple of examples of landmarks in the city centre:
Distribution of functions:

Culture: On the map it is to see that the cultural life, with cultural centres, theatres, cinemas, concert places, galleries and museums, are concentrated in the centre of the city, especially in the Old Town. Only a couple of cultural facilities can be found on the outskirts of the city.

Sport: The sporting facilities, on the other hand, are distributed quite evenly throughout the city, with the exception of Haabersti district and east side of Pirita district. The sporting facilities include sporting fields, tennis and badminton courts, aerobics halls, sport clubs, ice arenas, stadiums, sporting halls and outdoor sport structures.

Healthcare: The healthcare facilities are located in the centres of the districts with most population: Centre district, Kristiine, Mustamäe and Lasnamäe. The facilities include dentists, specialists, hospitals, pharmacies and healthcare centres.

Education: The education facilities are most concentrated in the Centre, Mustamäe and Lasnamäe, followed by Nõmme, Northern Tallinn and Pirita. The education facilities include libraries, hobby schools, higher education, general education and kindergartens.

Authorities: The authority facilities are mostly concentrated in the city centre. A couple of facilities can also be found on the outskirts of the city. The facilities include municipal police, ministries and city offices.

Food, drinks, nightlife: The food, drinks and nightlife facilities are located mostly in the city centre. A lot smaller but quite even distribution of the facilities is also between Kristiine, Mustamäe and Lasnamäe districts. The least facilities can be found in Haabersti, Nõmme, Northern Tallinn and Pirita districts. The food, drinks and nightlife facilities include restaurants, cafes, pubs, and nightclubs.

Accommodation: Also most of the accommodation facilities are located in the city centre. The facilities include guesthouses, hostels and hotels.

Commerce: The commercial facilities are distributed quite evenly between Centre district, Mustamäe and Lasnamäe. A lot less commercial facilities can be found in the other districts. The facilities include shops and markets.

Total: In total can be concluded that the distribution of facilities follows the number of population. The districts with bigger number of residents have generally also more functions.
2.2.b The Old City Harbour today

16 years ago, in 1996, on the area of the Old City Harbour a watertower was demolished and the mayor at that time, Jaak Tamm, gave hope that soon the hoarding surrounding the area will be demolished as well so that the citizens of Tallinn can experience again that they live in a city by the sea. The development of the Old City Harbour area has been complicated, especially in the 1990’s when the interest for that area had its’ heyday. According to media it was a “building project of the centuries” and the area had to become a new urban centre of Tallinn. (ojari)

The port cities around the world have followed a quite similar development story. In post-industrial cities, the industry and cargo transport was moved outside the city and huge areas in the city became free for new developments. This offered an opportunity to expand the active city life to the new areas with a lot of potential. These areas were often used to fight against the globalization by exhibiting the authenticity of local culture and, in that way, ensuring the place on the map. There are quite many examples of success stories about the redevelopment of the waterfronts, like Baltimore in the States, Kop van Zuid in Rotterdam, Netherlands, Cardiff in Denmark, Barcelona and Bilbao in Spain.

The Old City Harbour in Tallinn is following the same development pattern. The cargo transport is being moved outside the city and the areas freed under the cargo handling will need a new function. The discussions about the redevelopment of these areas have been never-ending. In 1993, the city architect at that time, Irina Raud, organised an international workshop to discuss the future development possibilities of the Old City Harbour. Based on that workshop, Irina Raud will finish the development plan of the central city port area. The plan foresaw an establishment of two public buildings: a new city hall next to the marina and an opera theatre in the south-east corner of the harbour. Due to the political changes the plan of Irina Raud stayed unaccomplished.

In 1996, the Old City Harbour area was divided in smaller pieces and on the most attractive area around the marina, next to existing city hall (Linnahall) and area between Ahtri, Lootsi and Paadi street a competition will be held for the best housing ideas. The winners of this competition were Meeli Truu, Raul Kõllamaa and Nord Project especially due the openness and sparse housing in their plan. They proposed establishment of commercial and residential buildings around the marina and a connecting bridge from one side to the other, over the neck of marina. The place for the new city hall from the plan of Irina Raud was kept intact. Next to the existing city hall a circulae residential building was planned with a yacht marina in the centre.
In 2000 also the Union of Estonian Architects joined the discussion about the development plans of the harbour area. They proposed a new competition for the whole harbour area. The winners of the competition, Villem Tomiste and Veronika Valk, proposed with their winning entry ‘TRM’ to link different functions and ground levels together with green areas and boulevards. A tramway passes through these areas providing a fast connection along the coastline. These would result with bigger flows of people towards the waterfront developments. The second place was divided between “ränd” by Illimar Truverk, Indrek Järve, Mattias Agabus, Tiit Sild, Karri Tilgioso, and “I ja Ü” by Toomas Paaver and Lauri Saar. Entry “ränd” was an assemblage of different places, each with their own character and function. On the area there are three focal points that will trigger new activity and life on the coast. Project “I ja Ü” also used the idea of three main areas that will boost the activity on the area. But their approach was more pragmatic, taking account the current situation, established detailed plans and transportation schemes. The third place was given to the entry called “AQUA” by Ivar Lubjak and Maria Pukk. This complicated project envisioned a lifted green structure that covered all the underground service areas on the area.

The competition rules were left quite open which resulted with the entries that were very conceptual and didn’t really help the development of the area any further.
In 2002 the Union of Estonian Architects made another attempt. They organized a competition for the area around the marina (Admiralty Basin). The winners, Villem Tomiste with his “Park City” and Jan Verwijnen, Toni Kauppila, Heikki Määtänen with “ABC” shared the first and second place. Tomiste’s plan was based on twelve rules for the design and development of the park on that area. According Tomiste’s description these rules where:

R1. The area is covered by six-storey structures. The ground floor ([foyers, galleries; retail space can be made into two lower-ceiling floors, if necessary) will be 5 metres in height and the second floor 4 metres; the third through sixth stones will each be 3 metres in height.

R2. On the north side of the Admiralty Basin, the second floor level crosses with the falnway that offers an open view of St Olaf’s church. Tallinn’s strongest axis, Viru Hotel - Linnahall, blocks off the top two stories and, in the direction of Kai Street it cuts off four stories. A clerestory spans up through all of the stories within the quarter.

R3. The buildings on the west side of the Admiralty Basin are cut in a north south direction, thus forming the Hommiku plats (Morning Square) in front of the buildings; the sun should shine on the square in the morning hours though noon. The facade to the south of Admiralty Basin is cut parallel with and at a 30-metre distance from the basin. The passage extends to Ahtn Street and lets in the sunlight which illuminates the facade at the end of the workday (5 p.m.).

R4. The morning Square is full of light and activity in the early part of the day when stands and counters will be open for selling fresh produce, plants and flowers. In the afternoon, activity will centre around the cafés on the Evening Square.

R5. The various levels of the area along the “L/-u”-Linnahall axis will be fresh and green.

R6. Existing buildings have been taken into consideration as much as possible in the design of the network (see R7), and possibilities for future development have been laid out for the property owners.

R7. A grid covers the entire site, dividing the area into plots of approximately 200m². Dividing the area and building in accordance with the grid (see R8) enables many scenarios to be developed simultaneously, while the rules give reassurance of a harmonized milieu.

R8. The buildings are formed maximum of 12 plots; parts of a building located at different levels need not all be positioned in the same place. Blocks of structures with different levels must be separated by at least one grid space.

R9. The corners of each quarter must be built up through all stories.

R10. A bridge will be built at the neck of the Admiralty Basin to create more space in the area.

R11. Laeva Street will be moved from the edge of the basin to a route between the houses. The windy trajectory of the road ensures pedestrian safety and makes vehicle movement more suited to the general milieu of the quarter. Public transportation will also operate in this area of slower traffic. No ground-level parking will be permitted on the site.

R12. The general design foresees the tramline as entering the quarter from Hobujaama Street at a higher (second storey) level, thus crossing over the North Fairway as not to disrupt it. The tram continues travelling at the raised level until reaching the buildings along the Admiralty Basin, and then turns to the right reaching the next stop on the route. Pulling out of the stop, the tram follows along a 4% decline toward the bridge, where it joins the coastline route.

Figure 2.2.24 1st/2nd prize prize “Park City” Villem Tomiste. 12 rules for design (“Maja”, Feb. 2002)

Figure 2.2.25 Bird’s-eye view to “Park City” Villem Tomiste (“Maja”, Feb. 2002)
Entry “ABC” developed two concepts: an urban design concept that defines a series of zones as plan and a sectional concept that delineates a differentiated public space. It translates the urban design ambition into horizontally separate atmospheres. The area is divided by the new road running East-West and the underground river flowing North-South that we propose to bring to the surface again. It allows introducing three parallel zones and a cross zone as a viewing corridor to the tower of Oleviste church - no building is higher than +10 in that corridor.

The different zones are:
1 a hotel-office zone east of the river, in which the buildings ‘wiggle’ across the zone;
2 a town house zone at the edge of the basin;
3 a difficult middle zone for which we propose an introverted town house scheme covering an open public area that functions as a market and bazaar
4 a cross zone consisting of the road and the viewing corridor flanked by office buildings. It is a public zone that via a large ramp leads up to a footbridge across the heavy trafficked Mere pst

Sectional concept;
To avoid the atmosphere of either a street between ‘corporate’ office buildings or a generic covered shopping mall we wanted to create the public space as a spacious field of free, almost floating objects, more like a bazaar or an Arabian city. To get the most out of the proposed urban pattern - a field of differentiated objects - and the above mentioned aspects we propose a horizontal split:
Above: from 10 meters upwards housing, offices, hotel They have an own open space at+10 independent of what happens below. It means the houses can have gardens and the offices quiet lunch spaces
Below: A continuous zone of 10 meter high public and semi public space for shops, restaurants, hotel lobby, fitness, entertainment (casino, multiplex cinema, disco], market etc, enhanced by water and green.
Car parking underground for about 1400 cars.

We understand this sectional concept as a sort of infrastructure for a continuous quality of public space throughout the whole project. The advantages separating A and B are not just the independence of use, but the increase in synergy. The management and programming of activities and events at the shop/lobby level needs not to interfere with the real estate management of the office and hotel room floors. (Jan Verwijnen, Toni Kauppila, Heikki Määätänen)

The third place in the competition was given to entry called “ALBATROS” by Teemu Vuori/ Evata. The author explains his project like this:
The aim is to create a timeless, multi-layered city structure that will combine different functions, services and needs of the city into a fabric that will pulsate independent of the season or the time of the day. The residential blocks have been placed on commercial podium of one or two stories. All residential units have either a view of the Admiralty Basin and the sea beyond or an urban view to a terraced and landscaped pedestrian square. A marina and a yacht club will be the main entertainment features of the basin. The yacht club will be connected to a larger entertainment centre feature that will act together with a science centre, as an magnet at the eastern tip of the site. The massing of the development allows for deliberate openings and long vistas in the city structure. At the same time the Admiralty Basin is lined by an urban setting that creates a series of shorter views within the site. Public access to the waterfront has been provided all around the basin.
The main parking facility in the site is proposed to be built as a deck structure. The edge of the parking deck, at first floor, is lined with commercial functions. Top of the deck will be at +6.80 m from the sea level and will become a series of squares, parks and pedestrian shopping and entertainment streets.
Pöhjavail Street has been realigned to pass between the new Admiralty Basin development and the Rotermann Salt Storage Architecture and Art Museum. This provides the Salt Storage with a location as the pearl of the old Rotermann industrial quarter.
In the summer, the same year, another competition was held that was organized by the Port of Tallinn. The architects had to propose, again, a development plan for the whole harbour area. There are three winners: Villem Tomiste with “Peatänav”, Tiit Sild, Maarja Kask and Indrek Järv with “Magnet” and Indrek Pottisep, Lembit Tork and Erik Konze with “Oaas”. The three projects continued in the second round where the most attention was paid to the idea of Pottisep, Tork and Konze to establish a landmark building in the North-West corner of the harbour.

The central idea in Tomiste’s “Peatänava” was a green boulevard that will meander through the harbour area and will become the main street in the city. The public functions are located next to the boulevard together with the tramline. On the north-east part of the harbour there are two axes with the direction to Oleviste church in the old town. These axes will connect the harbour area visually with the old town.

Entry “Magnet” focused on six main points: valuing the potential of the sea and the waterfront, creating one entity and connecting it with the city, using cultural-, tourist- and leisure zones to enliven the area, developing a network that will serve as a basis for the future development of the lots, broadening of “Russalka” park zone and creating of green boulevards, building of yacht marina.

Next to the landmark building, in the form of a concert hall, project “Oaas” proposed a new building for Estonian Academy of Arts with student campus and hotel. South part of the harbour area is filled with housing, parking areas, conference center and a hotel that reaches to the sea. In the centre of that U-shaped building is a place for marketplace and the highest floors are reserved for the apartments and offices. On the north of the U-shaped building are located buildings that reach several tens of meters above the sea. In these buildings on the ground floor are commercial functions, like shops, cafes and restaurants, on the higher floors luxury apartments. An atrium surrounding all of these buildings would secure an optimal climate throughout the whole year.

In 2006 a proposal for the urban development plan of the Old City Harbour area was created in collaboration with developers, urbanists, architects and financiers. The plan was based on the strong-points of different competition entries and plans for the area. It stated that “The port area will become a new, modern, innovative urban centre whose primary function is to serve the community. The new centre will be a place worth coming to for Tallinners, tourists from elsewhere in Estonia and foreign visitors. Great emphasis will be placed on youth activity. The area will be linked to the existing city, the centre and the Old Town by way of locational and effective connections, with pedestrians having right of way. This will be a multifunctional area where public, commercial and residential functions are represented in equal measure. The urban development model of the centre district must be followed. Creation of monofunctional neighbourhoods and quarters is to be avoided.”

Next to the various competitions also smaller proposals were created for the different parts of the harbour area, most of them not yet built. (see appendix)

![Figure 2.2.30 Urban development plan for the Old City Harbour area, proposal (“Maja”, Feb. 2006)](image-url)
For today the Port of Tallinn has become as far as ordering a strategic masterplan for the Old City Harbour area from an international sustainable engineering and design company Sweco. In their introductory statement they claim that “Redevelopment of the harbour is an opportunity for the Port of Tallinn and the City of Tallinn to open up boundaries and to interoperate in a living symbiosis. The benefits are striking; the city grows closer towards the harbour with public access to the waterfront while the harbour can operate more efficiently with larger capacity and with ensured possibilities to future expansion.

Real estate opportunities follow as a consequence to the development. As a whole, visitors and residents of Tallinn will be served a much more qualitative environment that offers green and blue environments, recreational open spaces, social meeting points, spectacular sightlines, beautiful living, flexible land use, efficient management of energy, waste and water public transportation, connective bicycle and walking network, easy access for all modes of transportation and logistics to/from the harbour. Creative, sustainable solutions call for an integrated holistic systems approach and multi-disciplinary working methods.

Sweco has developed a unique methodology for strategic planning and design led by Prof Ulf Ranhagen, Sweco and KTH. This methodology is part of the SymbioCity concept which has been applied to the combined planning and design of harbour functions and logistics and city development.

The sustainability approach to this project has required three Planning Rounds. The Cyclic Planning Process has also been used within each Planning Round. For each phase and stage of the planning process, our methodology will provide for interaction and connection of all relevant aspects of the project and facilitate for cooperation between all parties involved.

Our conceptual master plan depicts a number of ideas and options that can be applied to achieve the development goal "to design and establish an integrated multifunctional city district into the busy harbour area taking into consideration the specific requirements characteristic to the port", and how we can achieve "smooth transition between the harbour and the city scope and successful interoperability and interaction between these two "colossi" (Tallinn Development Plan)." (Sweco)

The current research and design project is made in collaboration with the Port of Tallinn. Based on the strategic masterplan of Sweco there were three design locations with a priority importance to choose from. These locations got less attention in Sweco’s masterplan and required in depth analysis and architectural vision. The location chosen is located on the west and north side of the marina (Admiralty basin). The reason for this choice was that the area has the most importance and potential for the city and the harbour. Located in the centre of the harbour area and next to the Old Town, it needs careful urban and architectural planning in order to integrate the harbour with the rest of the city.

In discussion with Ahto Ader, responsible for the Real Estate development in Old City Harbour and Industrial Park, a short list of requirements was created for the design project:

- the location has to be a integral part of a pedestrian routing through the harbour
- the location has to be multifunctional with the focus on entertainment and leisure
- the location has to have a high urban quality with clear connections, room for pedestrians, mixed functions, clear and dynamic public spaces
- the housing on the location has to have a high quality architectural image

The location of the design project is show on the revised masterplan of Sweco below:

![Figure 2.2.33 Design project location on Sweco masterplan for the Old City Harbour area (Läkk, H., 2012)](image-url)
2.3 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to place the current design project in the Old City Harbour into a bigger context and see which role it has played and still plays in relation to the city of Tallinn. It helped to discover the city and its different layers, its development story into a city it is today and to get a clearer picture of the identity of Tallinn. As already mentioned before, the best way to learn about the city and its identity is to study its historical development. This chapter gave an overview about the course of the most important events that influenced the development of the city. The story of Tallinn, its role and image throughout the history, was also an important inspirational factor for the design of the gateway.

By putting the Old City Harbour into a into a context of the city the role it has in the relation to the city becomes clear and a statement could be made about the future vision of the gateway. The history of the harbour gives an overview about the development of its structures and area, so that it would be clear how and why it has got its current form and function.

The historical story of Tallinn showed that the city has been known as an important trading city and trading node in the Baltic Sea Region for a long time. That aspect has been the most important support for the growth and expansion of the city. The position as a trading node has brought many foreign influences to the country and has therefore formed its culture. Although influenced and occupied by different foreign rules throughout the time, Estonians have been able to keep their own cultural traditions and beliefs strongly rooted in the society. The city of Tallinn has seen many rough times and a couple of prosperous ones and that has left a strong mark in the structure of the city. In that way, Tallinn has become an assemblage of different cultural influences combined with the local traditions that can be seen in many spheres of everyday life. The heritage of these foreign influences is perhaps most visible in the urban planning and architecture of the city.

The harbour in Tallinn has played a keyrole in the development of the city. It has been and still is one of the most important income sources for the city, not only because of commerce but also because of the people who visit Tallinn. The harbour has been a long time one of the gateways to the outside world, the uniter of different countries and cultures. During the war it has played a keyrole in defence of the country. The harbour has been a key element in shaping the history of the city and will continue to do so in the future.

The structure of the city today is as chaotic as its history. The small city, with around 450 000 citizens, is become a patchwork of different districts with distinct characters, from different eras. The connection between these districts is often unclear, or filled with undefined green and grey spaces. Tallinn has a clear centre, a core that is encircle by the rest of the districts. For manhy citizens the everyday life is somehow connected with the centre district, whereas the other districts function more as residential areas. This also logical when considering the distripution of the functions throughout the city. On the map there was to see that most of the cultural, leasure, commercial and sporting functions are concentrated in the Old Town and in the Centre district around it. In that way the centre of Tallinn is like a magnet attracting people from other districts making it a lively and sociable place.

After the fall of the Soviet Union the harbour has seen many different redevelopment plans come and go. Many urban and architectural competitions has beel held in order to find a best vision for the area, but for the various reasons the realisation of these plans has been impossible. Many of these projects concentrated on the whole area and the connections between the city and the harbour. Smaller projects focussed on the neighborhood around the marina in the centre of the harbour. Most memorable idea of these projects is a creation of a green zone that would be only accessible to pedestrians and that way would give some space back for the citizens. This green area in the form of a park or a boulevard could then connect the harbour with the rest of the city. This idea was also an inspiration for the current design project and found its output in the creation of structure of the bridges, described in the following chapter.
3. Creating the Gateway to Tallinn

The creation of the Gateway to Tallinn began at the scale of the city, by placing the design location into the context of the city, discussed and analysed in the previous chapter. The goal of that step in the design process was to define the role and function of such a gateway in the relationship with the context - the city. From the analysis it became clear that the gateway plays three primary roles in that relationship. First and most of all the area is a gateway to the city. In that perspective it forms an introduction to the city, to its unique local spirit and its culture. Upon arrival in Tallinn a visitor gets the first image and feeling about the city when moving through the area towards the city and experiencing the urban and architectural expressions of genius loci. The visitor has two choices; either to stroll through the area on the ground floor, by visiting small shops, cafes, restaurants and galleries providing and exhibiting local products, art and design, or taking the “expressway” on the second level to quickly pass the gateway and enter the other parts of the city.

Second of all, the area forms a sort of a getaway from the busy city centre to the seaside. In that sense, the location functions as a place to come and relax, meet your friends, walk along the waterfront and enjoy the view. The people can spend their time by shopping or having a coffee or a bite in a cafe or restaurant. When the weather allows, the cafes and restaurants can have their terraces outside in the courtyards, or a seasonal market can be organized along the waterfront. The central square in the form of an amphitheatre provides a place for performances, concerts and outside theatres. The courtyards can even be used as extensions for the exhibition places for the galleries.

The third role of the gateway is to connect the surrounding areas together and provide a better flow between these areas. In that way it connects not only the city with the sea, but also connects both sides of the Old City Harbour with each other and with surrounding districts. In the harbour area the gateway connects the north and south part of the harbour with each other, forming in that way a missing link between the different separated waterfront boulevards.

The idea of the gateway as a connector between the different surrounding parts was also an inspiration for the concept of the project at the scale of the design location - the knot. The idea of the knot formed a base for the urban structure of the area. The location is connected with the city around it by four bridges stretching over the busy motorway between the location and the city. These bridges come together in the middle of the location forming a central square in the form of an amphitheatre - a knot. This structure of the paths gave form to the building blocks in-between them, providing the area with various functions, such as apartments, shops, galleries, cafes/restaurants, and offices.

The connecting factor of the gateway can also be seen from a social and cultural perspective. The area is in its sense a meeting point where different cultures (visitors) and groups of people are brought together. The area, with its possibilities for various activities, attracts different type of people and makes the integration of social and cultural groups possible.

The focus of the design project lies on three main themes: connectivity, public spaces and representation of local spirit (genius loci) from the perspective of a user. In the following paragraphs the research shows how to create safe, attractive and comfortable pedestrian area when designing the paths that connect the gateway with the city, how to create successful public spaces that encourage different activities and attract therefore different people, and how to represent the local spirit in the architectural and urban language of the area in the way that visitors and citizens get a feeling of being in Tallinn.

At the building scale the representational character of the gateway got a lot of special attention. The research for the city identity began with the interviews with visitors and citizens. During these interviews the subjects were asked to draw a mental map of the city as they now it based on a number of questions. The analysis of the interviews made clear a pattern in the image of Tallinn from those two groups. The outcome of this pattern defined the inspiration for the architectural and urban language of the area, supported by a theoretical framework. In that way the Old City of Tallinn became a source for inspiration that provided the design project with a number of architectural principles and elements to implement in the design of the gateway.

On a subconscious level the inspiration was drawn also out of the other surrounding districts. The different elements of the design make a visual connection not only with the Old Town, but also with the number of wooden houses districts from industrialization era, that border the Old Town the same way the current design project does. In the way the gateway closes that circle.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part “Theoretical framework” looks into the theories that will form the fundament of the ideas for the design project. The second part “Implementing the theory in the design project” discusses how these ideas are put into the use in the design project and what is the result of that in the final proposed solution.
3.1 Theoretical framework

3.1.a Connectivity and pedestrian-centred design

The decision to create a pedestrian zone requires an understanding of the reasons why similar projects have been undertaken and a familiarity with the various approaches to establishing and maintaining traffic-free streets. The goals of traffic-free zoning may vary from situation to situation, but the intentions, problems and aspirations behind them are all interconnected, argue Brambilla and Longo (1977). They bring out ten good reasons for creating a traffic-free zones:

- To attract people. More people means more opportunities for shopping, socializing, business, and fun. More business means more money for both the citizens and the city.
- To provide a sense of place that strengthens community identity and community pride. This improves community relations and reduces feelings of alienation, while creating a place for all types of people to congregate.
- To reduce noise and air pollution.
- To provide a safe and attractive environment in which children can play and senior citizens can meet and rest.
- To improve the visual environment. Signs, lights, spaces, colours, and textures can be designed to relate to the person on foot, rather than to the person on wheels.
- To promote urban conservation, environmental preservation, building restoration and renewal.
- To increase property values and, consequently, the city’s revenue from real estate taxes.
- To special rights-of-way to be reserved for bicycles and public transportation vehicles. This improves mobility through the city centre and helps save energy.
- To decrease the number of motor vehicle-related accidents, saving lives, police work, and judicial time.
- To promote citizens’ participation in the inception, management, monitoring, and improvement of the pedestrian area. Thus, the project becomes a lively instrument for public education in urban life.

“If we are to improve the form of our cities, we must first remove cars from urban areas, so that other needs can regain the primacy they once had. Only in this way can we build cities that meet human needs while minimizing the impact of human activities on Earth’s ecosystem.” (Crawford, 2000, p. 53)

Designing for the pedestrians it is essential to know what kind of activities are going to take place in that space. Pedestrian activities can be grouped into six primary actions: walking, standing, sitting, lying, running, and playing. “A distinction can be made between the actions that are ‘necessary’ and those that are ‘optional’. Examples of necessary actions include walking to buy groceries, standing while waiting for a bus, and sitting to rest after a long walk. These actions take place throughout the year under practically all conditions and independent of weather or space arrangements. Optional actions include strolling, standing to enjoy the view, sitting in the sun, and watching a passing scene. In most cities, for example, only necessary actions occur during the winter, but as the weather improves during spring, a growing number of optional activities take place.” (Brambilla, Longo, 1977, p.48)

People prefer direct routes and shortcuts and tend to avoid steps, slopes and long stretches. Therefore it is important to consider the effect of physical limitations in the pedestrian zone. When strolling through the area, pedestrian like to have a possibility to sit and rest on the way. Providing adequate seating is essential to the creation of a high-quality space. Important criteria for the seating areas are orientation toward the sun, view, weather protection, dimension and form. View is possibly the most important factor of them and the seating area should be designed to provide as much as possible view to the surroundings.

“For Hiller (1996a, p.161), the main fault in many contemporary public spaces is the prioritising of a sense of enclosure over visual permeability into them. The key quality with respect to pedestrian use of public spaces is their ‘connectedness’ - in Hillier’s term, integration. Hillier (1996a, p.161) argues that if design is overlocalised (i.e. not well integrated), the natural movement pattern is disrupted, and the space tend to be underused.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p.173)
“You can judge the accessibility of a place by its connections to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a space are important as well: For instance, a row of shops along a street is more interesting and generally safer to walk by than a blank wall or empty lot. Accessible spaces have a high parking turnover and, ideally, are convenient to public transit.” (PPS internet)

It is important that a design of a car free zone will focus on the following aspects in the process: safety, visibility, legibility, reachability by public and private transport, continuity, accessibility.

**Living Streets are Walkable Streets**

3.1.b Creation of a successful public place

“Personal or group engagement with space gives it meaning as ‘place’, at least to the extent of differentiating it from other places. Sense of place is, however, more than this.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p.98) For Lynch (1960, p.6) ‘identity of place’ is simply something that will provide it ‘individuality or distinction from other places … the basis for its recognition as a separable entity’. Relph (1976, p.45) argues that the identity of places is constituted by ‘physical setting’, ‘activities’, and ‘meanings’. But the sense of place is more about the human interaction with these elements. Aldo van Eyck emphasises this in his description of a places: “Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more. For the space in the image of man is place, and time in the image of man is occasion.”

Based on Relph’s work, Canter (1977) defined places as functions of ‘activities’ plus ‘physical attributes’ plus ‘conceptions’. Punter (1991) and Montgomery (1998) took these ideas a step further and located these components of a sense of place within urban design thought. They created diagrams (figure 3.1.3) that illustrate how urban design actions can contribute to and enhance sense of place.

![Figure 3.1.2 Living Streets are Walkable Streets (Living Streets, 2009)](Image)

![Figure 3.1.3 Urban design actions which contribute to and enhance sense of place (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003)](Image)
Carmona et al. (2003, p.99) explain that successful public spaces are characterised by the presence of people, in an often self-reinforcing process. Public spaces are essentially discretionary environments: people have to use them and conceivably could choose to go elsewhere. They are to become peopled and animated, they must offer what people want, in an attractive and safe environment. “Great public spaces are where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges take place, friends run into each other, and cultures mix. They are the “front porches” of our public institutions – libraries, field houses, neighbourhood schools – where we interact with each other and government. When the spaces work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives. Jacobs (1961) argued that bringing people onto the street created animation and vitality: “We may fancifully call it the art form of the city and like it to a dance - not to a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en masse, but to and intricate ballet in which individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce on another and compose an orderly whole.”

In evaluating thousands of public spaces around the world, PPS has found that successful ones have four key qualities: they are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. PPS developed The Place Diagram as a tool to help people in judging any place, good or bad.” (PPS internet)

Carr et al. (1992) argue that a public place has to be meaningful by allowing people to make strong connections between the place, their personal lives, and the larger world. It also has to be democratic by protecting the rights of user groups, being accessible to all groups and providing for freedom of action. But most of all, a public space should be responsive by serving the needs of the users. There are five primary needs that people seek to satisfy in public space: comfort, relaxation, passive engagement with the environment, active engagement with the environment, and discovery. (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p.166)

Comfort is a prerequisite of successful public spaces. It influences for how long people stay in a public space. Comfort of a place is measured by environmental aspects, like the amount of sun, wind, rain, physical aspects, like the design of the place, social and psychological aspects, like the ambiance of the place.
The need for relaxation is satisfied in a place when the body and mind will come to an ease. This is usually achieved by implementing natural elements, like trees, greenery, water features, into the design. Also the separation of the place from vehicular traffic will help to achieve this. 

Also passive engagement with the surroundings can help to have a sense of relaxation. People have a need to encounter with the place without becoming actively involved. That is usually done in the form of people-watching: Whyte (1980, p.13), for example found that what attracts people is other people and the life and activity that they bring. Because of that, the most used sitting places are generally adjacent to the pedestrian flow, allowing observers to watch people while avoiding eye contact. (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 166)

Active engagement, on the other hand, involves a more direct experience with a place and the people within it. Successful public spaces provide opportunities for varying degrees of engagement, but also for disengagement from contact. According to Whyte (1980, p.94) some external stimulus is needed in order to create a linkage between people. In that way, the arrangement of different elements in a public space, benches, sculptures, fountains, coffee carts, can be more or less conducive for social interactions.

The people have a desire for spectacles and pleasurable experiences. Discovery of new things is influenced by variety and change. In a public space, this may simply be influenced by the cycle of time or can be a result from the management in the form of exhibitions, concerts, theatres, festivals, markets, etc. The place has to provide a person something unexpected that will provide a break from the routine.

Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell (2003, p. 169) argue that its is important to consider how people use the space. In order to create a sociable space, it has to possess the following features:

- A good location, preferably on a busy route and both physically and visually accessible
- Streets being part of the ‘social’ space - fencing off a space from the street isolates it and reduces its use
- Being level or almost level with the pavement (spaces significantly above or below this were less used)
- Places to sit - both integral (e.g. steps, low walls); and explicit (e.g. benches, seats, etc.)
- Movable seats, enabling choice, and the communication of character and personality

“The design and use of public space can also usefully be considered in terms of the ‘centre’ and the ‘edge’. Alexander et al. (1977, p.606) assert that a public space ‘without middle is quite likely to stay empty’. They recommend that between ‘the natural paths which cross a public square… choose something to stand roughly in the middle: a fountain, a tree, a statue’. As well as providing a sense of identity and character, such features can also prompt social contact.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 173)

The most important element in the design of a successful public space is its’ edge. Alexander et al. explain that the life tends to form around a public square. ‘If the edge fails, then the space never becomes lively … the space becomes a place to walk through, not a place to stop.’ This edge of a public place should be treated as a separate zone. Also building facades can be a part of that edge. “The facades should be designed so that buildings reach out to the street and offer an ‘active’ frontage onto public space, adding interest and vitality to the public realm.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 173) The border between indoor and outdoor should be as transparent as possible. This transparency has a double effect: on one side the view to inside provides interest in passers-by, on the other side the view to the outside will contribute to the safety in the public space. The more doors and windows in the facades, the more interactions between the indoors and the public space. The buildings should house activities that benefit from interaction with the public realm and contribute to the vitality there.

An essential part of designing a successful urban space is the microclimate. Carmona et al. (2003, p.185) argue that design decisions have an important influence in modifying the impact of the microclimate to make spaces more comfortable. relevant factors at his scale include:

- The configuration of the proposed development, and its effect on and relationship to buildings and other influences at the site boundary
- The positioning of access roads and pedestrian paths, trees and other vegetation, walls, fences and other obstructions
- The orientation of internal and external spaces and facades with respect to the direction of sunlight and shade
- The massing, grouping, and space between buildings
- The wind environment
- The positioning of main entrances and other openings acting as transitions between inside and outside conditions
- Landscape, planting and pools/ fountains to enhance natural cooling
- Environmental noise and pollution

When creating a lively and well-used public realm the spatial and temporal concentration of different land uses and activities is a very important aspect to consider. In response to the sterility produced by the functional zoning policies and practices of much post-war planning and urban development, the mixing of uses has become a widely accepted urban design objective. “The most successful downtowns, waterfronts, town centres and commercial hubs present a rich array of places where the life of the community plays out. What these communities have in common is a network of streets, paths, parks and squares that hold the neighbourhood together and provide the stage on which public lives are played. The ground floors enjoy a tight, symbiotic relationship with the public spaces, forming a seamless transition between indoors and out.”(PPS internet)

Areas may have mixed uses in either or both of two ways: by having a mix of single-use buildings or by having buildings which
each contain a mix of uses (e.g. living over the shop)." (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 180) "... the conditions that generate city diversity are quite easy to discover by observing places in which diversity flourishes and studying the economic reasons why it can flourish in these places. Although the results are intricate, and the ingredients producing them may vary enormously, this complexity is based on tangible economic relationships which, in principle, are much simpler than the intricate urban mixtures they make possible" (Jacobs, 1992, p. 150)

Jacobs (1992, p.150) described the vital neighbourhood as an area with overlapped and interwoven activities. According to her understanding cities requires dealing with combinations and mixtures of uses as the ‘essential phenomena’. There are four conditions for the diversity in streets and districts:

- The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.
- Most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent
- The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones so that they vary in the economic yield they must produce. This mingling must be fairly close-grained
- There must be a sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purposes that may be there. This includes dense concentration in the case of people who are there because of residence

"All four in combination are necessary to generate city diversity; the absence of any one of the four frustrates a district’s potential" (Jacobs, 1992, p. 151)

Llewelyn-Davies (2000, p. 39) brings forth the following benefits of mixed-use developments:

- More convenient access to facilities
- Minimising travel-to-work congestion
- Greater opportunities for social interaction
- Socially diverse communities
- A greater feeling of safety through more ‘eyes on the street’
- Greater energy efficiency and more efficient use of space and buildings
- More consumer choice of lifestyle, location and building type
- Greater urban vitality and street life
- Increased viability of urban facilities and support for small businesses

One important factor that influences the use of places it the cycle of time. Carmona et al. (2003, p.193) argue that facilitating and encouraging the use of urban spaces requires and understanding of the effects of the cycles of day and night, the seasons and related cycles of activity. At different times of the day and night, the urban environment is perceived and used differently. “Cycles of activity are also grounded in the changing seasons. During the winter in northern temperate climates, for example, even at noon, the sun is low in the sky. Days are typically grey, wet, windy and cold. People may use external spaces only when necessary. In the spring, leaves start to appear on trees, and people begin linger in urban spaces, enjoying the warmth of the sun. In summer, the trees are in full leaf, the sun is high in the sky, days are long and light, and people opt to stay longer in urban spaces. In the autumn, the leaves turn to rich reds and browns and eventually fall from the trees. People may linger in urban spaces to enjoy the last warmth of the sun before the onset of winter.”

Urban designers have to understand the patterns of time cycle and how to encourage activities through different time periods, and how to achieve synergies from activities that are happening in the same space and time. Lynch (1981, p. 452) argues that although ’activity timing’ is as important as ’activity spacing’, it is less often ‘consciously manipulated’ : 'We have tended towards
a greater precision of activity timing, and greater time specialisation: weekends, office hours, peak travel, and the like. Many spaces are used intensively for certain periods, and then stand empty for longer times. That is why it is important that in 24-hour society buildings and spaces are ‘poly-chronic’. (Krietzman, 1999, p. 146) The animation of the public spaces is naturally influenced by the everyday businesses of people, but Montgomery (1995, p. 104) argues that it can also be stimulated through planned programs of ‘cultural animation’ across a range of time and venues, encouraging people to visit, use and linger in urban spaces. He continues that attention to ‘soft’ infrastructure of events, programs and activities is as important for successful urban animation as the ‘hard’ infrastructure of buildings, spaces, street design, etc.

Providing places with 24-hour activities will contribute also to the safety of the urban space, because peopled places are often safer places. “A widespread problem is lack of activity in the public realm during the evening and at night, with few uses and activities to attract a broad range of social groups. A particular issue is the ‘dead’ period in city centres between the end of the typical working day and the start of the night-time economy when people return to the centre in search of recreation and entertainment.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 195)

One more thing influences the use of the space: the division between the private and public functions. Based on the public/private interface, all developments should have a ‘front’ onto public space. In terms of layout, the public fronts should face onto other fronts and onto public space, while the private ‘backs’ should face onto private space and other backs. It means that public functions should be in the close relationship with public spaces and private functions with private places. In that perspective the privacy levels of functions should grade from the most accessible related to the public space, usually on the ground level or at the front, to the most private, related to the private spaces, usually on higher levels or at the back of the developments.

3.1.c Perception of the city image

“Awareness and appreciation of environmental perception, and, in particular, of perception and experience of ‘place’, is an essential dimension of urban design. ... An initial concern with environmental images has been supplemented by work on symbolism and meaning in the built environment. The interest in environmental perception has also been reinforced by a body of work focusing on the experiential ‘sense of place’ and ‘live-in’ experiences associated with urban environment.” (Carmona, Heath, Oc, Tiesdell, 2003, p. 87) Perception concerns more than just seeing or sensing the urban environment. It refers to the more complex processing or understanding of the stimuli. Often non-visual dimensions of sensation and perception are underdeveloped and underexploited, although they contribute to the richness of experience, argue Carmona et al. (2003). Ittelson (1978) identifies four dimensions of perception, which operate simultaneously:

- Cognitive: involves thinking about, organising and keeping information. In essence, it enables us to make sense of the environment
- Affective: involves our feelings, which influence perception of the environment - equally, perception of the environment influences our feelings
- Interpretative: encompasses meaning or associations derived from the environment. In interpreting information, we rely on memory for points of comparison with newly experienced stimuli
- Evaluative: incorporates values and preferences and the determination of ‘good’ or ‘bad’

Carmona et al. (2003) argue that the ‘environment’ can be thus considered as a mental construct, an environmental image, created and valued differently by each individual. Images are the result of processes through which personal experiences an values filter the barrage of environmental stimuli. Lynch (1992) and Montgomery (1998) similarly thought of ‘identity’, what a place is actually like, and ‘image’, a combination of this identity with perception of the place by the individual. According to Lynch (1992), the mental image of the city is strongly influenced by the ‘legibility’ of the cityscape, meaning the ease with which its
parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern. “A legible city would be one whose districts or landmarks or pathways are easily identifiable and are easily grouped into an over-all pattern.” (Lynch, 1992, p. 3) “There seems to be a public image of any given city which is the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there is a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens. Such group images are necessary if an individual is to operate successfully within his environment and to cooperate with his fellows. Each individual picture is unique, with some content that is rarely or never communicated, yet it approximates the public image, which, in different environments, is more or less compelling, more or less embracing.” (Lynch, 1992, p.46) For Lynch, the cities that are easily identifiable and easily grouped into overall pattern, have a high ‘imageability’, that is a quality on a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer. He tried to identify the city’s public, collective image and its key components. He argued that environmental images had three components:

- Identity: an object’s distinction from other things, as a separable entity
- Structure: the object’s spatial relation to the observer and other objects
- Meaning: the object’s meaning (practical and/or emotional) for the observer

Lynch concentrated in his research on the form of the city, since meaning was less likely to be consistent at the city level and across different groups of people. He therefore explored the imageability in terms of physical qualities relating to identity and structure. By using mental mapping exercises, he managed to identify 5 key elements of environment that left a strong image in observers’ minds. These were:

- Paths: paths are the channels along which observers move (streets, transit lines, canals, etc.). Lynch noted that paths were often the predominant elements in people’s images, with other elements arranged and related along them. Where major paths lacked identity or were easily confused with each other, the whole image would be less clear
- Edges: edges are linear elements that are either not used or considered as paths and often form boundaries between areas or linear breaks in continuity (e.g. shores, railroad cuts, edges of development, walls, etc.). The strongest edges are visually prominent, continuous in form, and often impenetrable to cross movement. Edges are important organising features, particularly when they hold together generalised areas
- Districts: districts are the medium-to-large parts of a city which observers mentally ‘enter’, and/or which have the identifying physical character of ‘thematic continuities’ in terms of texture, space, form, detail, symbol, uses, inhabitants, maintenance, topography, etc.
- Nodes: nodes are point references, the strategic spots in a city into which are the intensive foci to and from which a persons is travelling. Nodes may be primarily junctions, or simply ‘thematic concentrations’ of a particular use or physical character. Dominant nodes, however, tend to be both ‘concentrations’ and ‘junctions’, with both functional and physical significance, for example, public squares
- Landmarks: landmarks are point-references external to the observer. Some (towers, spires, hills) are distant, typically seen from many angles and distances over the tops of smaller elements. Others (sculptures, signs, trees) are local, visible in restricted localities and from certain approaches. Lynch argued that a landmark’s key physical characteristic was ‘singularity’: some aspect that is unique or memorable in the context

3.1.d Architectural representation of the local spirit (genius loci)

“The modern day environment shows increasingly evident signs of the fracture with the past. While there was a time when European landscapes presented quite distinct identities on the interior of a common framework, often they now appear to be chaotic and devoid of character. Buildings of all sorts are scattered in the most haphazard manner. The unity of nature breaks down and the settlement loses its coherence, to the point that upon arrival it is no longer possible to distinguish it as a figural unity. I have defined this condition as a ‘loss of place’ and I have stated that this loss tends to coincide with alienation.” (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, p. 309)

Norberg-Schulz (2000) argues that in the past the vernacular architecture and architecture of styles, which he accordingly calls ‘custom’ and ‘style’, were indissolubly linked: in vernacular architecture there dominated relatively stable types of custom, while in urban architecture and monumental architecture the general qualities were always interpreted in new ways, within the context of style. This mix of vernacular and style was a manifestation of European culture as the art of place. Norberg-Schulz sees vernacular architecture as a purest form of the art of place, as a response to the question of local form of living, or inhabiting. He says that being in a place entails the comprehension of the existing environment as an interaction of quality. “Trier attributes the origin of vernacular architecture in what he defines as ‘necessity and activity’, i.e., a world in which every action is essential, and which consists of the unification of ‘sky, earth, mortals, and deities’. This unification is manifested especially in construction and therefore serves as the foundation of a ‘tradition of building’. Heidegger likewise indicates a link between the terms ‘construct’ and ‘inhabit’ which involve the action of sojourning, i.e., being in place. To construct and to inhabit express therefore the way in which man is in the world.” (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, p. 231)

Norberg-Schulz discusses further that the building tradition manifests itself in two fundamental way: from a distance, farms and villages appear as distinct figures that is caused by a specific way of grouping and the essential form of the units, while the roof serves a fundamental role. From close up, the building type appears as a structure, i.e., as tension and rhythm. “It is with this image that people have identified for centuries; and even though the use of the place might be different, unconscious
The groups we see are:
1 + 2 = as one group
3 + 4 = as another group

Similarly, on the left, three groups of dots in three lines. What happens with the evenly spaced dots?

The principle of proximity or contiguity states that things which are closer together will be seen as belonging together.

Similarity means there is a tendency to see groups which have the same characteristics so in this example, there are three groups of black squares and three groups of white squares arranged in lines.

The principle of similarity states that things which share visual characteristics such as shape, size, color, texture, value or orientation will be seen as belonging together.

Suppose both principles of proximity and similarity are in place - then a movement takes place - the dots begin to move down the page.

They appear to change grouping.

Seeing things as whole lines (sequential) is clearly important. But 'being in wholes means' that few interruptions change the reading of the whole lines.

A to O and O to D are two lines. Similarly, C to O and O to B are two lines.

The principle of continuity predicts the preference for continuous figures. We perceive the figure as two crossed lines instead of 4 lines meeting at the center.

Related to principle of good continuation, there is a tendency to close simple figures, independent of continuity or similarity. This results in an effect of filling in missing information or organising information which is present to make a whole.

In the circle at the top its seen easily. In the other to figures it's a little more complex. The second figure can be read as two overlapping rectangles (the gestalt) whereas it can also be seen as three shapes touching: a square and two other irregular shapes.

The final shape can be seen as a curve joining three squares or as three uneven shapes touching.

The principle of area states that the smaller of two overlapping figures is perceived as figure while the larger is regarded as ground.

The principle of the symmetrical figure is that it is seen as a closed figure. Symmetrical contours thus define a figure and isolate it from its ground.

The principle of symmetry describes the instance where the whole of a figure is perceived rather than the individual parts which make up the figure.
Identification endowed the inhabitants - through this figure - with a common identity, to the point that they could say: "I am from Puglia," or "I am from Tuscany." (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, p. 232)

Styles, on the contrary to vernacular architecture, are endowed with mobility, while vernacular is relatively static and confined to a place. Stylistic architecture is present everywhere, and it renews itself in accordance with the spirit of the period to which it belongs. It seems that while the same styles of architecture is to be found in different places of Europe, it can not be called the 'art of place'. Norberg-Schulz argues that the architecture of styles is the art of place in another manner. It is the art of place in a universal sense. The architecture of styles do not appear everywhere in the same manner though. They adapt to fit the local character by establishing a relationship of interaction with vernacular architecture. "It would therefore be safe to say that the architecture of styles is doubly then the art of the place. As a general and as a local expression, it at once unifies different places and regions, communicating the idea that the world is everywhere the same, even though it is never identical." (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, p. 269)

The main difference between vernacular architecture and architecture of styles manifests itself in the different use of the language of architecture, i.e., the aspects of use that are connected to it are not directed toward the same purpose. While the relatively constant types of vernacular architecture depend upon certain necessities, of unvarying use, of a specific geographic unity, and of development of adequate forms of expression, the architecture of styles tends to free itself from these typologies, in order to manifest a ‘use’ of general validity, reflecting changing fashions, beliefs and religions or the emergence of new ideas and technology.

"This cooperation (of custom and style) continued even after the fracture in theoretical understanding, since architecture was based on what was already in loco, and naturally took into account the local character, even though that was not included in textbooks. Beginning in the nineteenth century, however, under the influence of the academies, the architecture of styles was used freely without reference to its roots, and the art of the place lost as a result its essential contact with everyday life. (...) Moreover, the ‘devaluation of symbols’ resulted in the reduction of architectural figures into wordly markers of success. All of these concomitant factors, indicators of the break with European cultural tradition, led to the disappearance of vital building traditions and meanings of style, which is as if to say they caused the 'loss of place'. (...) Our global and pluralistic situation cannot be subjected to a preordained system, but must realize itself as multiplicity and change, which in any does not presuppose happenstance and chaos." (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, p. 309, p. 353)

Norberg-Schulz (2000) brings out three components in order to manifest the genius loci. According to him, every settlement has its own precise localization in a landscape and a specific spirit of place to be respected, so custom must therefore make reappearance in a different way. We can no longer base ourselves on fixed types of settlements and it is therefore necessary to create some sort of thematic tonality, that is capable of unifying the manifold. This tonality is influenced by the built form of a settlement, an architectural language that will unite different parts to one whole.

The second important component is a historical context of the location and how the new will fit into that context respecting the existing. As he puts it "(...) most of the settlements have a history that over the course of time has been subjected to a series of interpretations of the spirit of the place. The new that comes to join it must enter and form part of the whole without paralysing it, indeed it should cast another light on that which already is, since in the original various possibilities are still hidden that unveil themselves only with the use of that which is present." It is important to figure out how this spirit of the place could be interpreted again and again in the present time so that it will respect the dynamic and openness of a place and at the same time connect with the old. In this interaction Gestalt laws play an important part.

As a third element, Norberg-Schulz argues that every settlement should have a comprehensible interior structure that will assemble the parts of the settlement into bigger whole as a distinct unity with its specific identity. This should be attained through the use of identifying interventions which would be capable of structuring the environmental interaction. These interventions could be in the form of linear structures with character of ‘links’ or punctualisations, which draw close to the openness of squares and monuments of past.

Places are constantly evolving and changing. Therefore it is important to bear in mind that a place will preserve its’ identity while creating a new art of place, i.e., it will stay the same even if it is never identical. This continuation of manifesting the genius loci could be achieved through the use of Gestalt laws. It is necessary to define the original Gestalten of the location and implement them in the new art of place, without copying the old. It should be an interaction between ‘inspiration’, ‘atmosphere’ and ‘construction’ based on the spirit of place.

Gestalt (unified whole) theories, developed by German psychologists in 1920’s, help to explain how people tend to organize visual elements into groups or unified wholes when certain principles are applied. These theories explain how patterns and balance are perceived by people, how different parts of the whole interact with each other by creating a unity or a totality. These principles can be used to define the identity of a settlement or even a building. Although these principles are not implemented even strongly in every case. That explains why some settlements or individual buildings are perceived more as a unity with a strong identity than others. The principles of Gestalt are proximity, similarity, common fate, continuation, closure and area/symmetry. Gestalt means when parts identified individually have different characteristics to the whole e.g. describing a tree - it’s parts are trunk, branches, leaves, perhaps blossoms or fruit. But when you look at an entire tree, you are not conscious of the parts, you are aware of the overall object - the tree. Parts are of secondary importance even though they can be clearly seen.
Tallinn is currently coping with the same problem as many other western cities, as Norberg-Schulz put it, ‘the fracture with the past’. Architectural language is becoming more generic and international, and it is losing its connection with the local environment. The regional differences are fading away, making space for monotone stylistic architecture triggered by different trends and trend setters. In order to preserve the continuation of the genius loci of a place a connection has to be reestablished with the origin of it. It has to be done in a manner that will manifest the art of place in a way that it will carry forth the essence of the spirit, the custom, and at the same time will be in tune with the current time, the style.

In Tallinn the best example of a manifestation of the genius loci is the Old Town that exhibits the interaction of a custom and a style of a certain time period. The Old Town is the only part in Tallinn where the urban architecture has such a strong connection with the local environment and atmosphere. It is why the Old Town is strongly perceived as a whole or unity with a distinct atmosphere and identity. It is a composition of the elements that manifest the custom and style, the spirit of place and the time, all in their own way, by interacting with each other and creating a bigger whole. The Gestalt principles play an important role in defining how this unity is created and therefore the following research tries to establish which Gestalt qualities the buildings and urban spaces in the Old Town have. This abstraction of the Old Town with the help of Gestalt principles is needed in order to discover the essence of architectural language that is able to manifest the genius loci in a new way. “In general, we can say that every appearance has an indicative function, and when we consider an appearance, we should ask what could be eliminated without the figure losing its identity.” (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, p. 137)

### 3.2 Implementing the theory in the design project

#### 3.2.a Connecting the design location with the city

One of the most important problems of the harbour is its’ insufficient and confusing connectivity of the pedestrian routes with the rest of the city, and the connectivity between the north and the south part of the Old City Harbour. The most of the traffic on the area is occupied by private cars and public transport. The pedestrian routing hasn’t got a lot of attention. It is unsafe and uncomfortable for the pedestrians to find their way through the area. Therefore the area of the design location will be reserved only for pedestrians in order to increase the attractiveness, safety and comfort of the harbour. As mentioned already in a previous chapter about pedestrian-zones (see 3.1a), the most important reasons for choosing for the car-free area are:

- To attract people. More people means more opportunities for shopping, socializing, business, and fun. More business means more money for both the citizens and the city
- To provide a sense of place that strengthens community identity and community pride. This improves community relations and reduces feelings of alienation, while creating a place for all types of people to congregate
- To reduce noise and air pollution
- To provide a safe and attractive environment in which children can play and senior citizens can meet and rest
- To improve the visual environment. Signs, lights, spaces, colours, and textures can be designed to relate to the person on foot, rather than to the person on wheels
- To promote urban conservation, environmental preservation, building restoration and renewal
- To increase property values and, consequently, the city’s revenue from real estate taxes
- To special rights-of-way to be reserved for bicycles and public transportation vehicles. This improves mobility through the city centre and helps save energy
- To decrease the number of motor vehicle-related accidents, saving lives, police work, and judicial time
- To promote citizens’ participation in the inception, management, monitoring, and improvement of the pedestrian area. Thus, the project becomes a lively instrument for public education in urban life

Being able to walk to a mix of shops, restaurants, coffeehouses, various cultural spaces, offices and open-air markets within car-free neighbourhoods delivers the highest quality of life, and adds great variety and vitality to an area.
In the beginning of the design process an analysis was conducted about the pedestrian routing within the area of the harbour and the possible connections with the city. As a result of that, a concept of a ‘knot’ was developed as a basis for the urban structure of the design project. This ‘knot’ connects different pedestrian routes with each other by leading the traffic flows from the harbour to the city and from the north-harbour to the south-harbour through the hart of the ‘knot’ on the design location, and vice versa. The four ‘arms’ of the ‘knot’ that reach over the streets with busy car-traffic connect the area with the city in the form of bridges. The bridges were chosen as the best alternatives to the pedestrian connections instead of tunnels or pedestrian crossings due to a number of reasons:

- safety:
- attractiveness:
- comfort:
- accessability:

The bridges enter the area from the second level. When passing through the openings in the ‘wall’, which surrounds the area, a beautiful view opens up onto the interior of the area with the central square and marina. The bridges run inbetween the buildings and join each other in the centre of the area, where they transform into an amphitheatre. The amphitheatre makes a connection with the central square on the first level, which in turn is connected to the network of public spaces and streets that surround it. The second level is connected to the first level also through the stairways and elevators that are placed in the corner spaces of the buildingblocks. In that way people are given more options for the routing and there is no need to walk a long way to make a switch between the levels. The stairways on the corners connect also the galleries, which surround the apartments on the second floor, with the streets and public spaces on the ground floor.

When entering the area from the ground floor, one finds himself on the street inbetween the building blocks and under the bridge that enters the area from the second level. The bridge above functions in that case also as a protective element from the weather and provides pedestrians with comfort while moving through the area. From the streets inbetween the building blocks pedestrians are led to the courtyards of the blocks or to the central square (amphitheatre) and marina.

### 3.2.b Public spaces and mixing of functions

In the current state the harbour has a lack of various program in order to be seen as an attractive destination for different groups of people. The harbour is primarily focused on the harbour functions and therefore it is more as transitional zone than a place to stay and spend your time in. In order to transform the design area into a vital multi-use destination, which provides visitors with different 24-h activities throughout the seasons, a number of important aspects were considered in the design project. The urban structure, described in the previous chapter (see 3.2.a), that was based on the idea of a ‘knot’ binding the north and the south of the harbour together with the city, dictated also a network of public spaces on the area. The point of gravitation is the ‘hart’ of the ‘knot’ that joins the streets on the first and second level together forming an amphitheatre. The amphitheatre functions as a vertical connection between the levels and as a central square providing the visitors with different activities, like meeting point and sitting, performances, open-air theatre, concerts, etc. From the steps of the amphitheatre there is a beautiful view to the marina and the waterfront in front of it. On the east side, the central square (amphitheatre) transforms into a waterfront-boulevard around the marina, which, according to the seasons, changes its’ function as a bearting place for the yachts, a market-place, a sitting area, etc. On the north, west and south side, the central square is connected to the network of courtyards, each with its different character and/or function. The courtyards in the interior of the building blocks are semi-public, meaning that the space is divided between the different tenants of the ground floor spaces in the building. The spaces are reserved for retail, horeca and different cultural functions.
Every tenant has the right for a piece of space outside that can be used as an extension of their inside space. In that way every courtyard gets its’ own specific atmosphere according to the different functions that occupy the ground floor. These atmospheres are emphasized by the use of different materials and furniture. Various characters of the courtyards in the interior of the building blocks add variety to the network of public spaces attracting different groups of people and movement through the area. In the night-time the courtyards can be closed with the gates from the public access for the safety.

On the street side of the building blocks, there is a main access to the retail, horeca and cultural functions on the ground floor of the buildings, that in turn are connected to the courtyards through the back entrance. In that way the ground interior and exterior spaces are all connected to each other and add some amount of transparency when moving through the area. The mix of busy streets between the building blocks, quieter courtyards inside them and the viable central square and waterfront will give the each visitor an opportunity to choose a suitable setting to spend their time in.

The relationship between private and public spaces changes also from the ground floor to the fourth floor of the building, transforming gradually from the public functions to the private functions. When moving from the ground floor to the first floor via the stairways on the corners of the blocks, one enters a floor with office spaces. The entrance to the offices is through the galleries that surround the courtyards and that are connected to each other with the bridges between the building blocks. This connectivity provides different offices with easy interaction, cooperation and exchange of ideas.

The floors on top of the offices are reserved for apartments of various kinds. On the second floor there are apartments about 90m2, with the balcony to the courtyard. The apartments have an entrance on the street side through the galleries, that are connected to the second level bridges inbetween the building blocks, which in turn connect the area with the city. From these galleries also the apartments on the third and fourth floor can be entered, via separate stairways. There is a mix of smaller apartments and maisonettes that in some cases occupy both, the third and the fourth floor, forming one bigger dwelling.

In that way there is sufficient mix of functions on every scale level: the area, the building blocks and within the buildings that will attract different businesses and people of different types, ages, income levels and cultures. This mix also assures the 24-h activity in the area that will provide it with safety and liveliness. “Discovering an identity for a waterfront has not been easy for many cities. In fact, it is here where the debate over the soul of cities is perhaps most magnified. The void left on many urban waterfronts attracts the full array of claims on what a city is about and what it most needs. Some waterfronts are being privatized with one dimensional commercial activity, others with housing. Some are being limited to passive use or structured recreation, and many have been reserved for automobiles. Each of these forces is vying for these under performing spaces, and each time one particular use is allowed to dominate it degrades a waterfront’s long-term potential. Waterfronts need to not only draw on a dynamic combination of activity to succeed, they must also become greater than the sum of their uses.” (pps internet)

3.2.c Tallinn through the eyes of visitors and citizens

Kevin Lynch introduces in his “The Image of the City” (1960) urban designers and planners a new way of thinking about the urban form of a city. An effective way of learning about the city, instead through professional maps and plans, is to discover how people in the city actually use and perceive their physical environment. Lynch argues that every person possesses a mental image of a city: “Every citizen has had long associations with some parts of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings.” (Lynch, 1960, p 1) Lynch claims that “Most often our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial, fragmentary, mixed with other concerns. Nearly every sense is in operation, and the image is the composite of them all.” (Lynch, 1960, p 2.) The creation of a mental map relies on memory as opposed to being copied from a preexisting map or image. In The Image of the City, Lynch asks a participant to create a map as follows: “Make it just as if you were making a rapid description of the city to a stranger, covering all the main features. We don’t expect an accurate drawing- just a rough sketch.” (Lynch 1960, p 141) Lynch used three disparate cities as examples (Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles). He reported that users understood
their surroundings in consistent and predictable ways, forming mental maps with five elements:

- **Paths**, the streets, sidewalks, trails, and other channels in which people travel;

- **Edges**, perceived boundaries such as walls, buildings, and shorelines;

- **Districts**, relatively large sections of the city distinguished by some identity or character;

- **Nodes**, focal points, intersections or loci;

- **Landmarks**, readily identifiable objects which serve as reference points.

The mental map is just one form of expression of these personal memories and descriptions. But although it is called a map, it has two fundamental differences. It has no scale and no objective direction assigned to it. The drawing lives of its elements and may only stand in this context, e.g. there is no assumed direction pointing towards north unless the author of the map assigns it with an arrow.

Participants are asked to draw a sketch of how they remember and would describe the space they are using on a daily bases. This personal view/record has the focus on perception of space based on memory, experience, personal circumstances and current concerns. The sheet given to participants to draw on is blank. Participants are completely free on how to draw a “map”. The instructions to draw a mental map are simple. The focus lies on the content and not the beauty of the sketch, there is no right or wrong. The key is that the sketch is not copied from a map or image but rather drawn from memory.

In the same way a research was conducted in Tallinn with two groups of eight people, visitors and citizens. For the both group the subjects were chosen randomly from the street. The subjects were a mix of male and female and average ages from 20 to 70 years. After the subjects agreed to the interview they were asked to draw a mental map from scratch, based on their memory of the city. The only guidance for the interview were the questions that the subjects had to answer with their drawing.

The interview questions followed a clear structure of three phases to stimulate subjects memory and to help them in their drawing process. The first was the skeleton phase, it contained most of the important information: the outline/border of the city, division in districts, names of the districts and most important paths.

The second phase put the flesh on by linking between memories with information and description. This phase often triggers some more memories and makes the map rich and representative. In that phase subjects filled the map with the description of the districts, the landmarks, marking their home, work, supermarket, sporting/hobby facilities and their daily route between them.

The third and last phase was for some extra background information about the likes and dislikes about the city. In that phase the subjects were asked in which part of the city they most often spend their time and why, where they like to spend their time and why and where they don’t like to go and why. In that phase couple of questions were also asked about the Old City Harbour, its’ location, the likes and dislikes about the area, and what the subjects would like to see on the area in the future.

**The questions for the citizens:**

- Age, name
- Draw the city border
- Locate the districts, draw their borders and give a description
- Mark the important paths
- Describe and draw you everyday journey to work, school, shopping, hobbies
- Landmarks
  - Which places do you visit often and why
  - Which places do you avoid and why
- What kind of image do you have of Tallinn
- Can you locate the harbour
- Can you describe the current situation of harbour
- Do you know something about the history of the harbour
- How would you like to see the harbour area in the future

**The questions for the visitors:**

- Nationality, age, name
- Draw the city border
- Did you arrive by boat, plain or bus
- Locate your accommodation
- Reason for visit
The subjects would like to have more leisure activities brought to the harbour mixed with green spaces. They were missing the unclear connection between the city and the harbour was also seen as a barrier. It is now only a transitional zone and not a nice place to spend your time in. The waterfront was found unattractive because there were no functions that would provide activities which would let people spend their time at that area. Mustamäe and Lasnamäe were described as dull, unattractive and communistic monofunctional suburbs with no other functions than residential. Very positive associations had subjects with Nõmme, Pirita and Haabersti districts that were seen as new upcoming attractive place to live and for leisure activities. The mix of green spaces, nearby beaches and old industrial and stalinistic architecture is more and more valued among the citizens.

For the most of the visitors the only place they had visited in Tallinn was the Old Town and therefore could draw the mental map only about that. It was also the reason why most of them used more words in describing the city than drawings. There were a couple of younger subjects who had been also outside of the Old Town, but not far from it. These subjects had been mostly in the Centre and North-Tallinn districts and the waterfront area in the north-east of the Old Town. Because the most of the visitors had never been outside the Old Town they had also no idea what shape the city border was and where the Old Town was exactly located within the city. For the reasons why they haven’t been to other districts most of them answered that they didn’t know any interesting attractions there and therefore had no reason to go there. Also most of the subjects found that the Old Town offers them everything they need from their vacation. The outside of the Old Town was associated with “gray” or “countryside”.

The most of the visitors didn’t know anything about Tallinn before the visit or had very common prejudice that it would be poor city with strong communistic influences and big differences in income. After the visit the city was found more vibrant and modern than expected, perfect small city with hospitable environment for weekend city trips. It was also associated with high living standards and European Union. In contrary to the visitors, the citizens had a bit clearer idea about the shape of the city and its’ most important paths. The most common image of the city was a patchwork of different areas with distinct atmospheres, a mix of old and modern with occasional green areas and bodies of water.

For most of the subjects it was difficult to name all of the eight districts, mark their locations and draw their borders. It was easier when was asked to describe the districts. It became clear that every district had a strong image which was shared by almost all the subjects. In that way the Centre district was seen as having an old core in the form of the Old Town, which was surrounded by the modern city. That was also the centre of the lives of the subjects. One element in their daily routines was usually connected with that area. Mustamäe and Lasnamäe were described as dull, unattractive and communistic monofunctional suburbs with no other functions than residential. Very positive associations had subjects with Nõmme, Pirita and Haabersti districts that were seen as elite villa district, green, with lot of space, quiet and safe. Interesting was to discover that North-Tallinn district was seen as new upcoming attractive place to live and for leisure activities. The mix of green spaces, nearby beaches and old industrial and stalinistic architecture is more and more valued among the citizens.

As well as the visitors as citizens knew the location of the Old City Harbour in relation to the Old Town. The area of the harbour was found derelict, industrial and grey which has no room for pedestrians and only favours car- and cargotraffic. The harbour was found unattractive because the were no functions that would provide activities which would let people spend their time at the waterfront. It is now only a transitional zone and not a nice place to spend your time in. The unclear connection between the city and the harbour was also seen as a barrier. The subjects would like to have more leisure activities brought to the harbour mixed with green spaces. They were missing the connection between the city and the sea.

3.2.d Improving the architectural image of the design location

In Tallinn the best example of a manifestation of the genius loci is the Old Town that exhibits the interaction of a custom and a style of a certain time period. The Old Town is the only part in Tallinn where the urban architecture has such a strong connection with the local environment and atmosphere. It is why the Old Town is strongly perceived as a whole or unity with a distinct atmosphere and identity which became clear by conducting the interviews with visitors and citizens of Tallinn in the previous paragraph. It is a composition of the elements that manifest the custom and style, the spirit of place and the time, all in their own way, by interacting with each other and creating a bigger whole. The Gestalt principles play an important role in defining
how this unity is created and therefore the following research tries to establish which Gestalt qualities the buildings and urban spaces in the Old Town have that could be applied in the design of the gateway. This abstraction of the Old Town with the help of Gestalt principles is needed in order to discover the essence of architectural language that is able to manifest the genius loci in a new way. “In general, we can say that every appearance has an indicative function, and when we consider an appearance, we should ask what could be eliminated without the figure losing its identity.” (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, p. 137)

The inspiration from the Old Town works on three scales, on the urban scale considering the whole area belonging to this unity, the building block scale considering the collection of buildings forming one block that is shaped by surrounding streets, and on a building scale considering one building within that block. After defining the elements that play an important role in creating a strong unity of the Old Town a description is given about how these elements are incorporated in the design project in a contemporary way creating a new art of place.

On urban scale the most clear element that creates the unity in the Old Town is the citywall. The wall runs around the building blocks and streets binding them together and separating them from the rest of the city. The wall is a clear border between the inside and outside world of the Old Town giving it a certain shape when looking on a urban map. It marks the beginning and end of that architectural and urban entity protecting it from the outside influences.

Within the citywall the streets give structure to the town. They form a continuous flow from north, from the sea, to the south, to the old market in the town. The streets are formed organically following the trading routes of a historical settlement. These streets, therefore, give structure to the building blocks in between them. The building techniques of that time have defined the structure and approximate size of the blocks within the limits of the wall. These similarity of the building blocks is more recognisable when walking on the streets of the Old Town and experiencing that they are part of the bigger whole.
On the building block level the street forms a clear border and binds the separate buildings in a block together. The facades on the street side form a formal front encircling the block. The back facades inside the block form an informal back surrounding the courtyards, small gardens and passageways through the block. There is a clear architectural difference between those two sides manifesting its' unity. Every building block within the limits of the Old Town follows the same principle of formal front and informal back.

The houses within the block have a distinct form that repeats itself, with some variations, throughout the Old Town. The repetition of quite small, vertically shaped facades that are covered with sharp red gable roofs, unite the whole block due to similarity and continuity together. There is also a maximum height that the buildings can’t cross which keeps the approximate proportions of the facades intact.
On the building scale the unity in the Old Town is created through the construction techniques, use of materials, planning of the buildings and architectural styles. In that way the houses have a massive wooden load bearing construction with a typical massive stone facade in many various colours. In the facade there are occasional openings for the windows. The windows follow the planning inside and sometimes seem somewhat chaotically placed. The windows also have a certain size that is almost the same in every building.

The typical planning of the houses is as follows: on the ground floor there use to be historically a formal entrance halls for merchants’ houses where they used to meet with the visitors. The ground floor is therefore more grand qua size and design. It makes a direct connection with the street. On the floors on top of that are living spaces for the merchants’ families covered with the storage spaces for the goods under the roof. Nowadays new functions have caputer the buildings. The ground floors are usually reserved for the commercial, leasure and cultural functions such as shops, cafes, restaurants, galleries, museumss, clubs, bars, theaters, etc. Some of these functions have occupied the whole building in the need of space, others are combined with residential functions, offices and hotels on the top floors. Also the courtyards of the building blocks have found a new use for example as a place for performances or terraces of cafes and restaurants.

Stylistically the whole Old Town dates back to 15th and 16th century when it got its’ image as it is now. Later on also many changes have been made for a couple of buildings but it hasn’t changed the whole image of the Old Town very drastically.

The following image show how these elements described above are integrated in the design project:

**The area has a distinct character**
The wall as a clear border

Unity through construction, form of house and roof, aesthetics of facades, materials, colours

Formal front and informal back
Public functions connected to the streets and backyards, upper floors more privacy
3.3 Conclusion

The current chapter discusses the theoretical framework that forms a basis for the design project. The focus of the project lies on the user-centred design approach, meaning that throughout the whole design process a close attention is held on how the people use and experience different spaces in order to create an attractive and welcoming environment. The chapter began by discussing the creation of pedestrian areas were users feel themselves comfortable, safe and that are easily navigatable. Important is that the place is designed for different pedestrian activities which are based on six primary actions: walking, standing, sitting, lying, running, and playing. The good pedestrian zone is designed to be safe, visible, legible, reachable by public and private transport, continuous and accessible for everybody. Those were also the keywords that guided the design of the pedestrian area in the current project.

The other important focuspoint was the creation of successful public places on the area. It became clear that successful public spaces are characterized by the presence of people, in an often self-reinforcing process. If the public spaces are to become peopled and active, they must offer what people want, in an attractive and safe environment. The successful places have following key qualities: the space is comfortable and has a good image, it is a sociable place, one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. A sociable place has a good location, preferably on a busy route that is both physically and visually accessible. The streets of such a place are being part of the ‘social’ space. The places have to be level or almost level with the pavement and have to have many palces to sit. The seats should be movable in order to enable choice and the communication of character and personality.

In creating a lively and well-used public realm the spatial and temporal concentration of different land uses and activities is a very important aspect to consider. The research showed that the most successful places presented a rich array of places where the life of the community plays out. What those communities have in common is a network of streets, paths, parks and squares that hold the neighborhood together and provide the stage on which public lives are played. The ground floors have a tight, symbiotic relationship with the public places around it, forming a seamless transition between indoors and out. In the creation of lively public spaces a sufficient mix of functions has to be present in the area. These functions have to provide different activities for various groups of people in a 24h circle throughout a year. These must ensure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes. In that way it is also important that a designer understands the patterns of time cycle and how to encourage activities through different time periods, and how to achieve synergies from activities that are happening in the same space and time.

For the creation of a successful place an area has to have a good image. For improving the image of the current project location a research was done for how to represent the local spirit (genius loci) through the architectural and urban language of the area. The representation of local spirit is important for the continuity of the local identity, because the modern day environment shows increasingly evident signs of the fracture with the past. European landscapes used to present quite distinct identities while nowadays the cities are starting to look and feel the same, chaotic and devoid in character. The same architectural styles are copied and established everywhere without consideration of the location of the place and its cultural context. For the manifestation of genius loci three components are necessary: thematic tonality, that is capable of unifying the manifold, historical context of the location and how the will fit into that context respecting the existing, and comprehensible interior structure, that will assemble the parts of the settlement into a bigger whole as distinct unity with its specific identity.

The chapter continued by discussing how the previous theories are integrated in the design of the gateway to Tallinn starting with the connectivity between the city an the harbour, and pedestrian areas. It then moved on to the creation of successful public places and architectural and urban representation of the spirit of the place.
4. Reflection on the research and design process

4.1. The project in the context of Explore Lab studio

The current graduation project “Gateway to Tallinn. Architectural representation of genius loci” was created in the framework of Explore Lab studio. Explore Lab is a research driven graduation-laboratory for students with a unique fascination which cannot be explored in any of the ‘regular’ thesis labs. The students who enter the studio have therefore many different research themes related to various locations all over the world. The students compose their own curriculum including workshops, lectures, excursions and visiting critics, based on their research fascinations. It is expected of a student to take responsibility and initiative in structuring their own graduation year from the research phase to the design phase in collaboration of other students in the studio.

The students begin by creating a study plan that will serve as a basis for the rest of the graduation year. The study plan includes the program, goals, deadlines and the explanation for choosing Explore Lab as a graduation-studio. The next step is to find the tutors that are active on your research field and ready to guide you throughout the graduation process.

During the graduation year the students work along two lines: the personal line that includes defining and working out own research theme, and a collective line that will unite and inspire the students by working together in a team for organizing the workshops, lectures and excursions.

Figure 4.1.1 The structure of the graduation year in Explore Lab studio (Explore Lab)
4.2. Research process

The begin phase of the research process was somewhat chaotic. I started by formulating the main goal of the research which was to find out how to transform the current Old City Harbour into representative gateway to Tallinn, and how to create an attractive and lively area that will become an integral part of the modern cityscape. At first it seemed like a clear goal to follow, but it fast turned out to be more complex of an issue than imagined. I had to dig deeper for defining the key elements in my story, the “representativeness” and “attractive and lively area”, by formulating subquestions that would help me to reach the core problems of my research. It became clear that I wanted to find a way how to recreate the “feeling” or “experience” of being in Tallinn through the use of urban design and architecture on that area. The questions about the city representation in urban design and architecture lead me to the complex theories of “city branding” and “city identity”. I had come a step closer to clarifying the research issues.

By making myself acquainted on these fields by literature study I learned how important the issues currently were based on the amount of discussions and various perspectives on these subjects. Soon I realized that there exists no consensus on these issues and that these were problems difficult to define. Although I had gained a lot of new and useful knowledge I still hadn’t found the way how to achieve my goals. I decided to go one step at a time. The first thing was to try to define the identity of Tallinn based on the methodologies and theories that best suited with my goals.

In the search for the identity of Tallinn I planned to use three different methodologies: literature study about the history of the city and the issues of “city branding” and “identity”, ethnographical research by interviewing the visitors and citizens of the city and architectural and urban analysis. The preliminary planning for the research process was as follows, with the goal to have an idea of the identity of Tallinn for the P2 presentation:

September 2011:

- Make a structure for the research and design process
- Prepare P1 document and presentation
- Make a beginning with the research (literature survey)

October 2011:

- Continue with the research (literature survey)
- Prepare the next step of the research - interviews and questionnaires (ethnography)
- Make a beginning with the design process and site analysis, first ideas

November 2011:

- Visit Tallinn to carry out ethnographical research and collect information for architectural and urban analysis
- Continue with the research (literature survey)
- Make an architectural and urban analysis for the site and its surroundings
- Work on the design

December 2011:

- Complete the research process as much as possible
- Visit Tallinn for the information needed to finish the research
- Prepare P2 presentation

January 2012:

- P2 presentation (16.01.2012 - 23.01.2012)

The actual course of the process was somewhat different. The complexity of the theory made me stuck in the literature study for a bit too long. I felt a strong need to understand the different perspectives on the theory and find my own way for achieving my research goals within that framework. On the contrary, the amount of information was quite confusing. Due to the lack of a clear focus of my research I was trying
to grasp a too broad of a field of theory. It would have been easier to find a suitable theoretical framework if I had dared to make a decision about the focus of my research in the earlier phase of the process.

The first clarifying movements became during my visit to Tallinn. The method of interviewing the visitors and citizens proved to be very useful in the search for the identify of a city. Already after a couple of interviews a some sort of pattern began to emerge that could bring me closer to the answer of my research. There was a clear difference in the vision of Tallinn between the visitors and citizens. The interviews were an effective way to find out how the city is perceived.

When arriving back to the Netherlands I continued with the search for the identity of Tallinn. I needed to find out what caused the differences in the visions of Tallinn: why is the city perceived in a certain way, why the vision of visitors is different from the vision of citizens. I though that an analysis of the structure of Tallinn will bring me the answer.

The urban analysis was a essential tool in the study about the city of Tallinn. It provided me with an insight about the causes for the differences in perception and at the same time made it clear how the harbour area should be fitted in the context of the city. For the P2 presentation I had a clear view on how Tallinn is perceived by different groups of people and why, but had still no clue how to express this vision through urban and architectural design. At that stage it was difficult to draw a conclusion about the research. The study about the urban structure of Tallinn and a vision of how the harbour area should be fitted into that structure provided me with the next step in my research and design process.
4.3. Design process

The beginning of the design process was made during the visit to Tallinn when also the interviews with the visitors and citizens were conducted. During that time I visited the site many times by walking through the area taking photos and filming. I also had a couple of meetings with the representative of the Real Estate development of Port of Tallinn, Ahto Ader. In those meetings we discussed the current problems and future development plans of the harbour, and he suggested me a couple of strategic areas as a design location for my graduation project. Based on that I decided to use the Masterplan of the harbour, made by Sweco, as a basis for my project and chose a project location within that plan. The central area of the harbour, around the marina, seemed most interesting and important from the perspective of the harbour as well as the city.

As a next step I could formulate my coal for the design project. The design goal of the project was to propose an architectural solution for a specific part of the Old City Harbour area that would represent the uniqueness of Tallinn through architecture. The masterplan of Sweco would be used as a basis for the design. The project will concentrate on a specific part of the masterplan in order to propose an architectural solution for one building. That one building serves as an architectural example of Tallinn’s identity for the whole area. After the P2 presentation a planning was made for the design part of the graduation project:

January 2012:

18: P2 presentation
23-29: work on thesis (architectural design strategy based on research)
30-5 feb: work on thesis (finish the concept version)

February 2012:

6-12: preliminary plans, cross-cuts, 1:200 / 1:100
13-19: preliminary facades 1:200 / 1:100
20-26: preliminary part of the building, plan and cross-cut 1:50
27-4 mar: preliminary façade fragment with hor. and vert. cross-cut 1: 20

March 2012:

5-11: preliminary details 1:5 and preliminary 3D model
To get a better grasp of the area an urban model was made which gave me a good basis for playing around with the first conceptual architectural ideas. The three main concepts were developed and presented at the P3 presentation. The use of an urban model made clear the influences of these three concepts at a bigger scale and helped me choose between them. The model gave me the first ideas of how the area could look like.

The next step was to start drawing the chosen concept in AutoCad, to design a masterplan for the area. The most important element in that process was the issue of connectivity with the city and between the north and south parts of the harbour. I had to find the way how to connect different destinations with the central area of the harbour. The created structure of the paths on two level served as a basis for my masterplan. The inbetween spaces of these paths were filled with the building blocks, each with its’ own courtyard.

From that point on I had to zoom in into a defining part of the area. I chose to work out a corner building block that would serve as an example of an architectural solution for the rest of the area. Because of the two-level structure of the paths it was needed to make a model of the corner building block in order to get a sense of the complicated form and spaces inbetween the structures. The model provided a good overview of the structure and made clear the questionable parts of the design that needed further research. It was clear that I had to switch back to literature study about the issues the model had presented to me. These issues helped me also to define the structure of my research. I based the research on three main themes: the connectivity, the public spaces and the representativeness of the area. While doing the literature study about these issues I also continued with the design for which the literature study gave a good direction. The scale of the project forced me to switch between the urban level, architectural level, and the theoretical research many times until I had...
a clear vision for the design. The important decision in this process was to use the Old Town of Tallinn as an inspiration for the urban and architectural design. It took me while to make this decision because I wasn’t sure if it was the right way to go. After finding interesting theories about “genius loci” I had enough support to make this choice.

In this phase I could finally see how the identity of Tallinn could be represented in the architectural language of the area. I did some more literature research to back up my argumentation and continued with the architectural analysis of the Old Town based on the principles of “gestalt theory”. The architectural analysis helped me to find the essential elements that build up the image of the Old Town. These elements I could use as an inspiration for my architectural design. This was an important stage in my project for defining the character of my design. I played around with various ideas of how to interpret and apply these elements until I had more or less satisfying image. From here on I dived deeper into the technicality of my design to develop this image even further.

Soon I learnt that it was needed to go through this design circle again in order to give the project the final image I was aiming for. I zoomed out on to the whole area in order to apply the elements, I had defined while focusing on the design of the corner building block, to the parts of the project. I was missing the image of the whole and had to still design a couple of essential parts of the area, like the central square and the waterfront. After that I could concentrate on the smaller scales again.

4.4. The project in the wider social context

The project addresses in the wider social context the issues of globalization on the field of urbanism and architecture. Globalization has shrunk the world by eliminating the borders both physically and culturally. One taste, one language, one entertainment is present everywhere in the world. Although the development of global culture offers exciting prospects it also introduces new problems.

Due to this unification of cultures there seems to exist a kind of contemporary architectural language that is conquering the whole world from east to west and from north to south. This language is everywhere the same regardless of the location and everything connected to this location. It makes no deeper connection with the place than just standing on the ground it was built on and fulfilling its’ function. This architecture is taking over many cities in the world which makes these cities lose their uniqueness and authenticity. While the public increasingly wants more choice, diversity, distinguishing features and depth in order to enrich their individuality and connect emotionally with the environment, these cities are heading towards monotony and predictability. The cities are losing the power to differentiate themselves from each other by becoming impersonal, anonymous and in the end, not an attractive places to live in.

Therefore in order to connect with the public and to stand out in the Global Village, architects need to start thinking how to make architecture that expresses the identity and authenticity of each place. They should think about how to provide the public with unique experience that can be provided by this certain place only. It is necessary that they try to find the essence of that place and the way how to interpret it architecturally in a countless number of new ways.

This project tries to give an example of a one way it could be done. It tries to find the essence of the city which makes it unique and the way how to give it a contemporary expression.

The second important issue this project addresses is the user focused design approach. It is not only important to think about how the urban spaces or the buildings are best designed to fulfil their functions but also how the people are going to use these after they are built. In order to do that architects have to gain knowledge about how people perceive places and spaces, how they act and react, what they like and don’t like, etc. Often it requires a close collaboration with the users themselves in the early stages of the design process. It has to become clear that we are designing for the people and in order to make that design attractive and usable we have to know what kind of people are the users and how they use the space or a place. It can be that this kind of design approach costs more time and money and is therefore not attractive, especially for the developers and planners. But on the other hand it has to be understood that a space or place that is not attractive to users after it is built, will also not make the design a success and will therefore be unprofitable.
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