

SWEDEN

URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PROPOSAL

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Resurrecting Norrköping: Infrastructural Redevelopment of a Post-Industrial City

Located along the banks of the Motala River in eastern Sweden lies Norrköping, the country's 10th largest city, with an estimated population of 84,000. Once known for its booming textile industry, Norrköping suffered through the same kind of deindustrialization and environmental degradation characteristic of other blighted mill cities until the turn of the 21st Century, when forward thinking city planners introduced adaptive reuse strategies that recalibrated its post-industrial landscape towards a brighter future for its inhabitants.

The beginning of Norrköping's story is a familiar one: a city is built on a river's edge, the river is dammed and channelized, and water power is harnessed in the name of industrial progress and capital gain. The city grows exponentially, jobs are created, and for decades people prosper. Then overseas competition creeps in and takes its toll. Jobs disappear, local confidence is lost to an uncertain future, and the once robust economic backbone of the city finally collapses. The river that fueled the city's rise to fortune lies battered and lifeless and the legacy of the once industrious factory buildings becomes one of economic and environmental ruin.

However, the latent potential hidden among Norrköping's long-empty facades did not go unnoticed by the city's innovative planners who, in the late 20th century, decided to realign the post-industrial landscape towards a new sense of purpose built around the educational and cultural sectors. Following crucial environmental remediation, the first of the redevelopment's substantial efforts materialized with the establishment of The Museum of Work and The Louis De Geer Concert Hall, followed shortly thereafter by the expansion of Linköping University into central Norrköping. The alterations of the post-industrial infrastructure required to accommodate these functional changes were handled in a design conscientious manner that skillfully preserved the old mill heritage while promoting a newer, more modern aesthetic indicative of a new social and economic order. This is exemplified in other Norrköping redevelopment projects such as: the redesign of the riverfront by Thorbjörn Andersson, a prominent landscape architect and frequent contributor to the international landscape architecture journal, *Topos*; the construction of an award-winning transit center by White Arkitekter; an award-winning mixed-traffic redesign of the busy Skvallerstorg plaza; and the reuse/structural expansion of historic mill buildings into, among other things, a state of the art 3D visualization/simulation center.

Norrköping's extensive urban redevelopment and design innovation is unique among post-industrial mill cities and makes it a particularly exciting model for me to study. My intention is to focus my research and attention on these redevelopment efforts and examine the impact they have had on the quality of life of Norrköping's current inhabitants. I am also interested in what decision-making strategies, such as official city planning priorities, community involvement, developer/university influence, and degree of assistance from national government, led to their realization.

In order to identify and gain an understanding of the city's planning priorities, such as historic preservation, transit-oriented development, civic identity/pride, job creation, local business development, tourism, and environmental health, and their relative roles in the success of the redevelopment efforts, I will focus my research on the infrastructural considerations. I intend for the "umbrella" topics of riverfront renewal, public transit improvement, vehicular traffic rerouting, and adaptive mill reuse to form the bulk of this focus, but I will remain open to the possibility of adding to or modifying this focus as I become more familiar with the city and its own interpretation of the relative impact these redevelopment initiatives have had. This approach will also allow me to gain an understanding of the specific design strategies that were initiated for each project to fulfill or reinforce the city's planning priorities.

My research will be overseen by Professor Bengt Erik Erikson at Linköping University's Department of Cultural Studies and Professor Josefina Syssner at Linköping University's Centre for Municipality Studies, which features "Urban Planning and Infrastructure" as one of its core fields of study. I have also been in contact with Dag Johansson, the city architect for Norrköping's planning office, to request access to their records and resources and to receive an introduction to the Nordic City Network, a Scandinavian city planning think-tank group.

Part of my intention with this project is to build upon and reinforce essential skills that I have learned and developed while

studying landscape architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design, such as historical research, site analysis, mapping, and diagramming. During the first phase of my study, I will contextualize and map Norrköping's industrial rise and fall through review of written and photographic historical records. I will supplement this research through personal interaction with the broader post-industrial landscape, examining how the general populace functions in and utilizes the recovered landscape, and gather information through interviews with residents, planners, and city officials who are willing to share their thoughts on and opinions about the transformation of the city and the challenges they faced.

The next phase will be spent documenting this research in a series of site-specific, analytical maps and diagrams that illustrate the design strategies employed by each project. Emphasis will be placed on the progression of important urban characteristics, such as spatial dimensions, circulation patterns, water quality, land use, foot-traffic volume, and new business creation. I will also connect each set of maps and diagrams to the larger context by writing accompanying text to explain how each project fits into the greater city planning strategy.

Finally, I will compile my maps, diagrams, and text into a visually-rich, printable document for my own use and for anyone who wishes to learn more about this unique approach to mill city revitalization. I will strive to conduct interviews in Swedish with the understanding that my language abilities will improve with practice. The written documentation and resource materials I understand are recorded primarily in Swedish. Therefore, I will improve both my reading and speaking abilities by enrolling in at least one Swedish language course at Brown University prior to the start of the grant period.

Because I am particularly interested in the challenges faced by post-industrial cities, having an opportunity to study Norrköping's innovative approach to urban redevelopment will help me better understand the underlying issues and competing priorities that exist in this realm. Through this project, I will obtain an invaluable and highly relevant knowledge base that I will be able to rely upon when addressing the challenges of other post-industrial cities in my future career as a landscape architect.