

# Is urban densification a reachable goal?



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Master Thesis – Urban Planning and Management

Aalborg University – Spring 2014



# **Is urban densification a reachable goal?**

The case of Eternitten

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10<sup>th</sup> Semester

Urban Planning and Management

#### 4 | Is urban densification a reachable goal?

Title:

Is urban densification a reachable goal?

Project period:

24<sup>th</sup> of February to 4<sup>th</sup> of June 2014

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ECTS: 30

Supervisor:

Enza Lissandrello

Numbers printed:

3

Total pages:

75

Appendix:

2

#### **Abstract**

Urban development has come under increasing pressure to accommodate for growing threat of global warming. Emphasis on urban densification has been put on the political agenda to alleviate this pressure.

At the same time urban politics and the market continue to shape urban development. As there is on going pressure to accommodate urban growth. This puts environmental issues on the back burner.

Eternitten seems to exemplify this trend that urban politics and the market have had free reign in deciding the outcome regarding urban densification at the cost of environmental concerns.



# Preface

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This report has been written in connection to the 10<sup>th</sup> semester at the Urban Planning and Management program, at Aalborg University. The research and writing was conducted from 24<sup>th</sup> of February until the 4<sup>rd</sup> of June 2014.

The references are cited according to the APA style (author, date) within the text, with a full bibliography found at the end of the report. Photographs in the thesis marked without a reference are made by the author. Furthermore have all translations (from Danish to English) been undertaken by the author, therefore any errors and oversights are completely my own. Sources with no date of publication are listed as (n.d.).

The aim with this thesis is to investigate how urban politics and the market have come to shape the urban development in regard to urban densification. This thesis will contextualize this urban issue by looking into the concrete case of Eternitten in Aalborg, a brownfield development area, that has been redeveloped for the past decade. As such this thesis will contribute to the debate concerning the implications of implementing sustainable strategies in the 'real world' context.

I would like to give warm thanks to my supervisor; Enza Lissandrello for her generous feed back but more importantly her extraordinary patience and understanding. I would further like to thank Mario Hasse, Annette Rosenbæk and Bo Vagnby for giving me their time of day. Special thanks to my family who has stood by me through all these 'wonderful' years of studying. Finally I would like to thank all of the students who have travelled with me on this journey (you know who you are), without you I wouldn't have made it.

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Fridrik Bergsteinsson

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# Introduction

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*Since sustainable development came onto the political agenda in 1987 with the report Our Common Future, the term has managed to infiltrate all aspects of society. One of the key aims of sustainable development is addressing the threat of global warming. Cities have been identified as key element where both reductions in automobile dependency and land use can take place. The Compact City ideology has been hailed as the ideal strategy to contribute to a more sustainable urban form. This is based on its core values of promoting high levels of densification and functional mix use, which in return is said, can contribute to the reduction of automobile dependency.*

## The urban densification as means to address global issues

The promotion of urban densification first begins to emerge on the political agenda with the publication of the United Nations 1987 report Our Common Future. The report highlights the role that cities and urban form will come to play in the fight for a more sustainable future. Since then supra, national and local authorities all over the world have begun to implement strategies that emphasis the compact city ideology. At the core of this ideology lies urban densification. The experiences with implementing such strategies in practice have displayed the complexity of addressing urban problems (Jenks, Burton, & Williams, 1996).

## Urban densification levels

The literature concerned with urban densification has soured in recent times. One of such works has been the Compact city – Danish examples (Kvorning,

Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009), written for the Environmental cabinet in Denmark, by the Centre for Urban Planning. The report, which takes point in departure in 10 different urban environments in Denmark, investigates the correlation between urban densification levels and reduction in automobile dependency. The result of the research show that in order to fully optimise the benefits of urban densification the levels of building density need to be approximately 80% (Kvorning, Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009).

## Complexity in urban development

At the same time as sustainability begins to infiltrate policy discourse the effects of the structural changes following increasing globalisation begins to affect most aspects of political life. Urban planning practice is one of the domains that become heavily affected as their traditional governing practices where questioned were both citizens and the market began to demand for more inclusive planning processes. Consequently, the market are increasingly influential in the planning process of cities. During this time cities have also come increasingly autonomous over local issues. This can be seen for example in the transfer of planning authority to the local level. Furthermore have the affects of globalisation changed the traditional hierarchical relationship between cities. Cities have come to compete on the global level for everything from investment opportunities to highly skilled workforce.

Urban planning's ability to address and implement sustainable criteria have

been argued, where parts of the academic community have pointed to the increasing influence of the market and urban politics as barriers. It is therefore acknowledged that sustainable strategies are highly complex and often most difficult to solve (Jenks, Burton, & Williams, 1996).

### Problem field

It appears that urban developments have become greatly influenced by the sustainability discourse, where the promotion of urban densification has become prominent objective. The emphasis on sustainability can be seen as representing new societal goals that shape urban development. At the same time, cities are in fierce competition to attract investment and employment opportunities, which have resulted in increasing dominance of the market as an actor in the development. This sets the question to what extent urban politics and the market can really accommodate to the demand set by sustainable development when it comes to urban densification.

Looking into the concrete case of Eternitten in Aalborg, it seems that the traditional drivers of politics and economics have almost exclusively shaped the outcome of development resulting in inadequate levels of densification in Eternitten. The focus of this thesis is

therefore to understand how urban politics and the market have come to influence this outcome.

The main research question becomes:

**What has been the role of the 'market' and urban politics in shaping the development of Eternitten regarding sustainable development?**

**In order to answer this question, several sub-questions need to be operationalized and answered. These are:**

1. What are the key characteristics of the Market and urban politics in shaping contemporary urban development?
2. What is the link between Sustainable Development and Urban Density?
3. How is building density shaping contemporary urban development and does it matter?

*In this thesis the term sustainable development refers to the aim of reducing automobile dependency through urban densification*



Picture 1 An example of the Compact City. Taken from the future development area Nordholmene in Copenhagen where the expected benefits of densification will result in 20% less automobile dependency (Plus Mood, 2010).



### Terms and definitions

In this thesis the central term of investigation is 'urban densification'. It is therefor essential for easier navigation through the rest of the thesis to create a basal understanding of what the term contains and how it should be understood.

#### Urban densification

Urban densification is a term made up of two separate parts. Urban according to Merriam-Webster dictionary it can be traced back to 1619 and refers to the Latin *urbanus*, meaning city (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Densification on the other hand is defined as to make denser (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Urban densification can therefor be understood as to make a city denser. This however does not give a full description of the complexity associated with this term. Urban densification can refer to multiple objectives. It is therefore necessary to account for the most prominent ones relating to urban development and the reason for delimiting the study to just one dimension.

The most important objectives of Urban densification relates to aim of creating a denser urban form (that is higher building density, referred to as people per hectare) between existing urban spaces of the city. This means the urban growth shall be directed at areas within existing limits of the city. Urban densification can take many forms. It can take place on derelict industrial areas, also referred to as brownfield areas, through the demolition and recreation of exist-

ing areas or through optimizing existing spaces.

Urban densification can also refer to aims of increasing the mix use of functions such as primary and secondary services as well as businesses. By incorporating mix use of function it can potentially promote peoples use of greener modes of mobility and thereby reducing automobile dependency.

In this thesis the objective is to focus purely on the urban densification as means to address increasing denser urban form.

#### Building density

Building density refers to the level of building density within a given area. Building density is calculated by dividing the total area space with the total floor space also referred to as people per hectare.

## Project structure

The report is structured into 7 chapters spinning from the introduction to the Reflections. Chapter 1 as already seen illustrates the contextual problem and the main research questions.

Chapter 2 will introduce the methodological approach to the study. There the research design will be listed and how it will assist in answering the main question of the thesis.

Chapter 3 will present the theoretical part of the report. The first section will address what characterises urban politics and the Market in the input towards current urban development. The second section will outline the link between sustainable development and urban densification. The last section will account for to what extent urban densification is shaping contemporary urban development and if it matter?

Chapter 4 will outline the empirical data gathered from the case in Eternitten. First it will give account for the planning development in Eternitten from its start in 2001 until today. Secondly a description will be given of the planning documents that have been operationalized in Eternitten.

Chapter 5 will serve the purpose of analysing the case in Eternitten. Ther the conceptual framework will be operationalised to see to what extent the same trends identified in the theoretical part stick.

Chapter 6 will conclude by addressing the main research question.

Chapter 7 is the final chapter and will close the thesis by listing some critical reflection on the case in question.

## Methodology

*This chapter outlines the methodological approach utilized within this thesis in order to answer the main research question. It argues for an applied research strategy, including argument for applying single case study, research design, collection of empirical data and final considerations about the methodological limitations.*

### Research design

The following section will present the research design applied to answer the main research question. First, the research question is contextualised to the compact city paradigm and the need to reduce energy consumption and automobile dependency. Next, it is argued for the choice of a single case study as the main research method. The final section will account for the research design.

### Research Question

The aim of this master thesis is to reflect on planning in practice and to gain an understanding why urban densification strategies do not seem to get fully realised despite ideal location. In particular, the thesis aims to gain a deeper understanding of how different drivers influence the planning process, in a way that forms a barrier to sustainable development. Today, planning practice is conducted in a setting where multiple interests need to be accounted for and where some interests do not necessarily comply with overall sustainable urban planning objectives.

It appears that current urban politics have become greatly influenced by the

sustainability discourse. The emphasis on sustainability can be seen as representing new societal goals that are shaping urban development. One of the key emphases of these goals is addressing the need to reduce automobile dependency through high-density urban development. At the same time, cities are in growing competition with each other to attract investment and employment opportunities as well as promoting a more inclusive planning processes. This sets the question to what extent urban politics and the market can really accommodate to the demand set by sustainable development.

Looking into the concrete case of Eternitten in Aalborg, the traditional drivers of urban politics and the market seem to have almost exclusively shaped the outcome of Eternitten. The focus of this thesis is therefore to understand how the relationship between urban politics and the market has influenced the outcome of urban densification in Eternitten.

In order to answer this the following research question has been formulated:

**What has been the role of the ‘market’ and urban politics in shaping the development of Eternitten regarding sustainable development?**

In order to answer the main research question, several sub-questions need to be tackled. The three sub-questions are:

1. What are the key characteristics of the Market and urban politics

in shaping contemporary urban development?

1. What is the link between Sustainable Development and Urban Densification?
2. How is Urban Densification shaping contemporary urban development and does it matters?

These questions will first be addressed theoretically, where subsequently the first sub-question will be utilized to form the conceptual framework that will be operationalized in the case of Eternitten.

#### Single Case Study

As the previous section has presented, it is the objective of this research to understand a planning phenomenon. Urban planning has increasingly become a multi-actor domain where complex interactions between various actors seek to solve societies' problems. The single case study enables a way to understand such a process by allowing the researcher both to investigate the decisions and the context in which they are taken. In-depth case study is furthermore ideal method as it gives the opportunity to investigate how theoretical concepts and professional practices correspond with the natural world (Yin, 2009). One of the benefits of utilising case study, as a method, it allows for variety of information to be utilised, such as document analysis and interviews. This allows for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Yin, 2009).

#### *Critiques towards the case study*

The largest critique to the case study as a research method has been towards its ability for validation. Critics say that it is

meaningless to try to externally validate single case studies for further generalisation. These assumptions are contested by Bent Flyvbjerg in his paper *Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research* (2006), where he claims that case studies have great value into the "*collective process of knowledge accumulation in any given field*" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, s. 227). Flyvbjerg further maintains that continuous use of single case studies, which are bound by the same theoretical study, can either strengthen or refute existing theory (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

#### Data collection

The following section will account for the chosen methods to answer the research question. The primary data used in this research originate from expert interviews and document analysis.

#### Document analysis

The majority of the work set into this project has been reviewing planning documents. This has been essential in order to conceptualise the planning framework that was applicable at the time of the development in Eternitten. This has been done by analysing documents that cover both strategies from the national and municipality level and to what extent they reflect back towards the importance of increasing building density. Regarding the case in Eternitten, the municipality framework, the redevelopment strategy and local plans and other documents concerning the planning process been analysed in order to account for how the development of Eternitten took place as well as their relation to urban densification.

*Official white papers, which will be analysed:*

National planning strategies

2002 – 2013

Aalborg's municipality plans

2005 – 2012

*Case documents, which will be analysed:*

The workshop debate regarding the future potential of Eternitten

The redevelopment strategy for Eternitten

The local plan for area 4.2.B8 in Eternitten

The debate of Eternitten

The Industrial workshop, Eternitten

The Midway evaluation of the planning of Eternitten

### Interviews

During the course of this thesis semi structured interviews were chosen as interview method. The semi-structured interview is considered an appropriate form for investigating a phenomenon that the researcher already has theoretical and practical knowledge of (Andersen I., 2013). This therefore presents a way to gain a deeper understanding of the planning process in Eternitten as well as individual perception towards building density.

The interview guide that was written takes point of departure in the case of Eternitten, the planning process, level of urban densification etc. The following people were contacted during the writing of this thesis:

**Bo Vagnby**, Architect and a part time lecturer at Aalborg University. He was consulted for his extensive contextual knowledge concerning urban planning both in Denmark and Aalborg. He has written extensively on redevelopment efforts conducted in Denmark as well as supervised projects that relate to Aalborg. He was therefore used primarily as an inspiration to the project.

**Annette Rosenbæk**, Urban Planner, works in Aalborg Municipality's planning department. She holds the position of Project Manager of Eternitten. She has an extensive knowledge of the planning process in Eternitten, as well as account for Aalborg's stance regarding building density in the case.

**Mario Hasse**, Architect, works for COWI A/S. He was the project leader for the redevelopment strategy of Eternitten since its start in 2005 until its publication in 2006. Mario contributes with expert knowledge the local planning process as well as the framework for in which the decisions were taken regarding building density in Eternitten.

Furthermore an attempt was made to get an interview with representatives from Søren Enggaard A/S and ENG Architects.

Getting in touch with an representative from Søren Enggaard A/S could have been really interesting as they are one of the key property owners at Eternitten. As such they have been involved in the case from its early stages. They however declined participating in an interview on the basis of language problems.

Tinna Rita Engqvist, Architect, co owner of ENGARKITEKTER was another actor that could have been interesting to talk to. Tinna co-wrote the Midways Evaluation Report concerning the planning process in Eternitten.

### Methodological Limitations

The most obvious limitation concerning this project is the fact that it only addresses building density, when the compact city paradigm stresses the need for a holistic approach where mix use is of equal importance. The re-

searcher argues that the strategic location of Eternitten at the borders of Aalborg's city centrum as well as planning aims within current planning strategies for the area imply mix use. This limitation is primarily thought of as means to focus on the study of analysis so it could become more attainable concerning time limitations.

### Reflections on methodology

The applied research design emphasised the use of interviews as empirical tool for data gathering. In this thesis three interviews have been conducted all with the aim of acquiring knowledge about the planning process in the case of Eternitten. Reflecting back on the interviews it comes clear that perhaps too long time had past since the actual

planning processes took place. This could be 'sensed' in all interviews, as people seemed to need time to think back on what happened. This fact puts new questions on the validity of information gathered in this thesis.

Reflecting on the part of document analysis and its impact, the thesis, further needs acknowledging that as non-native Dane, my language skills leave room for interpretations, which potentially influence the quality of the data presented in the thesis.

## Theory

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*The purpose of this chapter is to theorise the three sub-questions posed within this thesis. The chapter will start by present theoretical discussions of how urban politics and the market shape contemporary urban development. Followed by a theoretical discussion of the link between sustainable development and urban densification. Lastly, a theoretical discussion takes place on to what extent urban densification is shaping contemporary urban development and to what extent it matters. The chapter will end with by presenting the conceptual framework, which will guide the analysis of the case of Eternitten.*

*“The major countervailing force to these trends derives from the fact that in an age of increasingly mobile capital, cities (and their governments) must compete to survive” (Gordon & Richardson, 1997, s. 107)*

### **What are the key characteristics of the Market and urban politics in shaping contemporary urban development?**

The contemporary urban development bears the flavour of complexity as all facets. Michael Pacione (2009) has identified what he considers as the main drivers of urban development: economics, politics, society, demography, culture, the environment, technology and finally globalisation. He claims that all these drivers are interrelated and their interrelations influence urban development and as each driver “operate on various geographic scales ranging from

*the global to the local”* (Pacione, 2009, p. 3).

As it is the objective of this thesis to look into the concrete case of Eternitten in Aalborg, the following review will take as point of departure what the project considers, as have been the major drivers for the development in Eternitten reflecting respectively on urban politics and urban economics.

### **Urban politics**

In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a new urban political agenda was implemented as due to a rapidly changing economic development of cities, increasing effects of globalisation as well as the emerging sustainable development discourse (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005). During this period, a demand for a new policy framework emerged, one, which could address both the need to attract urban growth and competitiveness of cities (Sehested, Bypolitik mellem hierarki og netværk, 2003). This also brought a radical change in the way people perceived the role of the city (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005). Previously the planning focus had been on functional separation and continuous urban expansion, but now the promotion of mix use and urban densification through urban redevelopment projects took over (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005).

Urban development strategies had until the middle of 1980's primarily been focused on addressing continuous urban sprawl and the expansion of peripheral towns to accommodate the demand for growth away from the city centre and to



increase healthier cities (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005). Dynamics of expansions of the city continuum and the consequences of post-industrialisation have left empty brownfields in cities as well as areas for urban redevelopment possibilities and densification. The paradigm shift occurred when authorities attempted to address social and environmental consequences of increasing urban sprawl and the idea of 'The Compact City' taking examples of other European cities. With this followed increasing emphasis on dissolving the strict functional divide between residential and businesses communities and the reintroduction of mix use development (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005). However, in all European cities, shopping malls have continued expanding in urban peripheral areas.

According to Sehested (2003), post industrialisation with influence of globalisation, EU's development and technical progress focused the attention on the economic development of cities (Sehested, Bypolitik mellem hierarki og netværk, 2003, s. 12). Under these influences, a new world condition emerged that has further changed the geographic landscape among cities, with new differences among location, position, and size of cities. In current times, cities rely on their own economic 'locomotives' as they can no longer rely on former industrial heritage as a catalyst of growing in population and economy. Cities, in turn are required to compete globally, nationally and regionally/locally in order to attract crucial investments and opportunities that can drive the city forward (Sehested, Bypolitik mellem hierarki og netværk, 2003).

### *Sustainable development*

As noted by Thorkild Ærø and Getrud Jørgensen (2005) became sustainable development one of the objectives of the new urban politics during the 1980's (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005). Urban densification came under the spotlight as means to stop urban sprawl and reduce its negative environmental impact (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005).

This development can be seen in the way Danish national planning strategy begins to take urban densification into account. The following sub-section will give a review of the national planning strategies that have been adopted during the period of the case in Eternitten

### *The National Planning Strategies 2003 to 2013*

The national planning strategy for Denmark gives the overall vision regarding physical planning on a national, regional and municipality levels; for the aim of this thesis, it is interesting to review the emphasis on urban development especially regarding the directions for achieving 'the compact city'.

The National Planning Strategy from 2003 acknowledges the need to address to negative consequences of urban sprawl. The strategy stresses the need for new urban development projects to be placed strategically so the benefits of reduced automobile dependency can be achieved. The redevelopment of brownfields is highlighted as important step in attaining that objective. However, car use is also acknowledged as being a crucial element in everyday life, while bicycling and walking are considered only an option for short commutes. The strategy on the other hand also stresses the need to secure that peoples housing preferences is met through offering a

variety of housing options. The argument being that by offering a wide variety of housing options, municipalities are in better conditions to attract high-quality workforce (Miljøministeriet, 2003).

The 2006 National planning strategy begins to address the need for increasing densities within cities as it for the first time mentions the compact city as an objective. The strategy promotes a clear distinction between cities and the open land, where emphasis should be made to avoid unnecessary urban sprawl. The strategy emphasizes utilizing derelict brownfield land as means to attain that objective of halting urban sprawl. It is stipulated that future urban development shall be in accordance to the compact city paradigm. It is furthermore argued that cities with certain building density will be in better condition to attract new residents and businesses to the city, in addition to yielding higher architectonic and cultural values (Miljøministeriet A, 2006).

This line of vision is further emphasized in the 2010 National planning strategy, where it is emphasized and acknowledged that there is a need to supplement the rather open urban form of Danish cities with more compact city districts. The strategy emphasizes that future urban growth occurs primarily within existing boundaries of cities. It also highlighted the importance of utilizing derelict brownfield land within the city for this purpose (Miljøministeriet B, 2010).

The national planning strategy from 2013 emphasizes the need for sustainable urban development, where cities should grow from within as a 'main rule'. The strategy raises the concern that since

2000 the urban expansion of cities has grown on average around 18% or approximately 430 km<sup>2</sup>. The focus should therefore be on redeveloping existing land within the city in order to slow down the current sprawl. Increasing compactness is seen as a way to support greener modes of transport that can benefit the environment.

It is worth noting that the common issue in all these three-policy documents is that cities need to act as drivers of investment and growth. To attain this growth cities need to increase their competitive edge.

### **Summary of key strategic aims regarding increased compactness of the urban environment**

The review above demonstrates that there is a growing political will to reduce urban sprawl. The following points make a remark on this development;

- Even though the national strategy in 2003 doesn't take a direct stance regarding densification it still highlights the externalities of increased urban sprawl.
- The 2006 strategy identifies the compact city as an ideal for cities to strive for in attempt to reduce urban sprawl.
- The 2009 strategy still advocates the compact city as means to reduce automobile dependency.

The 2013 strategy promotes the compact city, trying to mark it as the benefits of increasing usage of greener modes of mobility.

### *Branding the city*

*"Perhaps the biggest challenge is to foster increasing productivity, giving the city a competitive edge, but at the same time to devote attention to social and environmental issues"* (Andersen & Kempen, 2003, p. 78).

This increasing emphasis on competitiveness among cities has, according to Sehested, shaped urban politics and the political agenda. In order for cities to compete and to activate every resource available within the city, Sehested defines this effort as a proactive political initiative that cities undertake to survive. During the 1990's, a new approach to deal with the effects of globalisation emerges. Instead of standing idealised by, urban politics are promoted as means to address the revitalization of cities. Changing national discourse of social welfare towards the aim of the growth politics takes as a point of departure public investments necessary to stimulate business growth. The characteristics of growth politics occur in cities offering private investments a variety of options as tax breaks, new infrastructures, attractive housing projects and privatisation of public services. The development of brownfield projects represents a kind of option (Sehested, Bypolitik mellem hierarki og netværk, 2003). Gaardmand (1996) describes this kind of development as urban entrepreneurship, which is typified by increasing coalition between political and business elites (Gaardmand, 1996) in (Sehested, 2003).

As the state started to decentralise its power to the local level, municipalities have been empowered to manage their own developments. This could be seen when the national government transfer or delegate its authority to the local lev-

el. An example has been in the last reforms in Denmark on the responsibilities of education, employment, social affairs, urban planning. Cities' self-ability to mobilise different section of society in order to facilitate urban growth and competitiveness has become imperative. In order to pursue for urban growth, cities have found it increasingly necessary to brand the city for its 'unique' identity. In the interest of attaining investment capital, cities resolve to offer various convenient case processing. Cities are therefore the loci to secure future investment opportunities (Andersen & Andersen, 2004), as unpopular urban planning policies had a past tendency to have been swiftly punished by the movement of investment capital, often resulting in loss of both jobs and investment opportunities (Gordon & Richardson, 1997).

### *Governance as means to address local problems*

Urban politics distinguishes itself from the conventional politics in the way it focuses specifically on the physical and geographical perspectives of cities. Urban politics consider an integral and spatial approach as the optimal solution to problems, which can be addressed across political lines. This requires the involvement and the cooperation among a plurality of actors included local authorities, citizens, business companies and NGO's. By promoting such inclusive planning process, the idea is that cities need to become better equipped to deal with local and global problems (Sehested, 2003).

The traditional urban planning project, which promoted general solutions to cities' problems, is in some extent seen as obsolete; projects are now being required to respond to specific contextual

problems (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005). In order to strive for desired, shared objectives, the strategic dialogue with relevant policy actors is seen as a means to achieve a direction of development rather than to increase or implement existing regulations and controls (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005).

As noted by Andersen and Kempen (2003) governance processes in which actors' involvement is generally addressed, should be driven with the aim of increasing both individual benefits as well as societal benefits. Governance processes are normally characterised by "*mutual interests, exchange of resources and commitment*" (Andersen & Kempen, 2003, p. 80). These authors further note that within such governance processes the power between actors is not always equally balanced (Andersen & Kempen, 2003, p. 80). In order to minimize the power tension between different actors, Andersen and Kempen (2003) point towards strategies that are focused on empowering local citizens to participate in the planning process. This requires that authorities reevaluate their attitude towards citizens from being considered passive participants over to serious actors in the planning process (Andersen & Kempen, 2003). Despite the fact that this could alleviate the power tension between actors in the planning process it still leaves that question open to what extent can it be guaranteed that these section of citizens are willing to promote the environmental values that are need in order to reduce automobile dependency. As Andersen & Kempen self point towards there is a risk that communities interests can easily go against the common good where instead they can follow their own self interests (Andersen & Kempen, 2003).

While Andersen & Kempen give credit where credit is due in regard to the benefits of governance processes, they also highlight that such deliberations can have produce a negative consequence (Andersen & Kempen, 2003). We will highlight the four that are considered most relevant in to this thesis:

#### Planning process semi closed

This refers to the fact that participants in the planning process are not appointed to that process in official elections they are either chosen by an organization or are 'self promoted'. This often leads to planning processes that are either semi closed or completely closed to outside influence. Furthermore are participants often non-accessible to outside influence. Those who get heard are normally those that hold some sort of power or resources that are relevant to the planning process. Here Andersen & Kampen stress that to exclusive planning processes can lead to much focus on special interests as these interests are generally the only ones that come on the agenda (Andersen & Kempen, 2003).

#### Blurring responsibility

The partnerships that are formed between public and private actors in the planning process are, like mentioned earlier often, grounded within fuzzy authoritative recognition. Andersen and Kempen refer to this a operating "in a political no mans land" (Andersen & Kempen, 2003, p. 81). This is further muddled when local commitments are being transferred to private actors. This relationship between public and local actors can result in falling sense of "*accountability and transparency in politics*" (Andersen & Kempen, 2003, p. 81).

#### Planning process conflict ridden

As actors are driven by self-interest, there is bound to be conflict of interests in any given planning process. These conflicts can if they are severe enough create conditions, which can compromise the quality of the plans, in question (Andersen & Kempen, 2003).

#### Lack of holistic strategies

Andersen & Kempen (2003) question the capacity of networks and partnerships to act holistically (Andersen & Kempen, 2003). They stress that such governance processes have only capacity to address self-interests, where this narrow focus can easily lead to the lack of holistic approach where outside influences are not accounted for (Andersen & Kempen, 2003).

#### Power relations within governance networks

According to some scholars, governance and the intervention of various actors in urban planning processes has resulted in weakening public authority. Urban planning processes are increasingly influenced by private investors. Private interests have begun to both initiate and control the urban planning process often by the principles of the free market. Bent Flyvbjerg in his provocative piece on Rationality and Power (1998) demonstrates how private actors through sources of power came to influence what seemed to be on the outset a democratic planning process. Flyvbjerg's study of urban redevelopment of downtown Aalborg had shown that the issue of power had latently dictated the way outcome of the development process. The latent use of power determined how rational decisions were interpreted. Correspondingly power was not only limited to governing the way interpretations and reality

was thought of, but more importantly how power was governing what constituted reality (Flyvbjerg, 1998). He criticises the normative use of rationality as being blind to the issue of power and as a consequence it can too easily become vulnerable to its influence. He therefore stresses that too much dependency on the normative use of rationality will continue to implicate our ability to address society's biggest threats be it social, demographic or environmental (Flyvbjerg, 1998).

#### Market lead planning

*The following sub-section will review the key characteristics of the market in shaping urban development.*

#### Housing preferences

As the text above has indicated, the gradual structural changes in society has left cities fighting a new battle focused on how cities can become able to compete with other cities to attract new investments and people. Urban development is not excluded to such influences. Gordon & Richardson for example stipulate that people's housing preferences tend to shape and influence urban development projects to a large degree (Gordon & Richardson, 1997). They further specify that developers tend to keep a good eye on the housing market as they view it as a way of decreasing the risk of delivering products that have no mass appeal (Gordon & Richardson, 1997). Housing preferences in Denmark have for example for the last 3 decades shown steady interest in single-family detached housing (Kristensen & Andersen, 2009). According to Kristensen & Andersen (2009) are suburban lifestyles still the main preference among the general public (Kristensen & Andersen, 2009). This popularity of detached housing can



therefor help explain the continuous sprawl of Danish cities, which have grown about 420 km<sup>2</sup>, or 18% since the millennium, despite national focus on urban densification strategies (Miljøministeriet C, 2013). There are however positive signs, which give hope for high-density urban projects, as there is a decreasing popularity of suburbia. Living in more densely populated town centres has become a new trend in citizens' preferences (Kristensen & Andersen, 2009).

In what Hans Lind (2002) refers to as the New Nordic style planning, the planning process is strongly influenced by the market (Lind, 2002). Lind describes this New Nordic Style of planning as characterised by municipal vision basis that is grounded in a strong legal framework, but because of limited financial resources they have become to relay on the market to fulfil these visions. This has form for governance has been labelled as a form of public private partnerships. This means that the planning process have become influenced by the inclusion of developer interests. This kind of planning process is further characterised as being restricted and where developers have an increasing power over the design of various elements in planning documents. An example of this kind of planning style is the building of the Stockholm's Globe Arena. The municipal government in Stockholm saw potential to compete with Gothenburg to attract international events but as they lacked the financial resources to develop plans on their own, they looked for private investors. A deal was settled that would allow private investors to build offices, hotels and shopping centres in proximity of the arena. In this case, investors would

finance the building of the Globe and hand it over to the local authorities for ownership (Lind, 2002).

Bo Vagnby (2013) in his review of urban redevelopment and transformation strategies in Denmark has argues that recent urban redevelopment strategies have become gradually induced by private developers regarding the sequence but also the direction of urban development (Vagnby, 2013). Vagnby furthermore demonstrates that urban redevelopment and transformation strategies all have in common the same underlying theme of competitiveness and branding of the city (Vagnby, Danish Downtown Redevelopment and Transformation Strategies, 2013).

### Conceptual framework

It is evident that urban politics, the market and environmental are all objectives that shape urban development. Urban politics have both set sustainability and competition as top priorities that cities are trying to accommodate. The market on the other hand has become a key actor in this interplay as it offers investment opportunities within cities with a financial capacity to steer urban development Environmental protections through high-density urban projects have furthermore come on the agenda as national planning strategies account for.

The table 1 gives an overview of the key characteristics that have exemplified how urban politics and the market are shaping contemporary urban development.

The key drivers of urban development	Key characteristics
<b>Politics</b>	Competition between cities Attraction of investment Deregulation of planning Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Planning process semi closed</i></li> <li>- <i>Blurring responsibility</i></li> <li>- <i>Planning process conflict ridden</i></li> <li>- <i>Lack of holistic strategies</i></li> </ul> Power relations within governance networks
<b>The market</b>	Housing preferences
<b>Sustainability</b>	Urban densification Promotion of greener modes of mobility

Table 1 The key drivers of urban development



### What is the link between Sustainable Development and Urban Densification?

The notion of sustainability first springs to the surface in the book *Limits to Growth*, which was published in 1972, in which its authors argued for the halt to the growth paradigm, as it would ultimately lead to global disaster. Roughly a decade later Sustainability becomes an international concept, used by politics, administrators and planners alike, when the Brundtland report 'Our Common Future' from 1987 concretise it (Næss, 2009). The term sustainability is there defined as *"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"* (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The term is further includes a three dimensional framework that entails economics, social and environmental dimension. According to Næss (2009) has the environmental dimension become *"one of the competing rationales for planning in Western democracies"* (Næss, 2009, p. 507). An important contribution of the term sustainability in urban politics was it asserted the need for urban development to be seen in the long perspective rather than in the short term as well as the promotion of thinking holistically and in cycles rather than in end-goals (Kvorning, Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009).

The role of urban politics and planning start gradually to have greater influence towards the debate around sustainability during the 1990's (Kvorning, Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009). A key trigger to this change is the book *Cities and Automobile Dependency* written by Peter Newman and Jeffrey Kenworthy in 1989 (Kvorning, Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009).

The book, which is a compilation of studies of urban form and automobile use, displays a correlation between high urban densities and reduced automobile dependency (Kvorning, Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009). Politicians as well as planners embrace this research in way that makes urban densification firmly set on the political agenda (Kvorning, Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009).

### How is Urban Densification shaping contemporary urban development?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to address it in two ways, first through reviewing how urban densification has begun to infiltrate urban policies and then by reviewing the debate about the potential benefits of urban densification to the overall objective of reducing automobile dependency and the promotion of greener modes of transport.

We have established that urban densification has become an intrinsic element in sustainable urban development discourse (Næss, 2009). As sustainability can first and foremost be seen as a political statement there came a need to create a strategic action plan that would help operationalize the objectives. Several key action plans have emerged that all have in common the objective utilising urban densification as objectives towards reducing automobile dependency and the promotion of greener modes of mobility. An example of such initiatives can be found within Aalborg Commitments section 5:

*"We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and cultural issues for the benefit of all.*

*We will therefore work to:*

- 1. re-use and regenerate derelict or disadvantaged areas.*
- 2. avoid urban sprawl by achieving appropriate urban densities and prioritizing brownfield site over greenfield site development.*
- 3. ensure the mixed use of buildings and developments with a good balance of jobs, housing and services,*

*giving priority to residential use in city centres.*

- 4. ensure appropriate conservation, renovation and use/re-use of our urban cultural heritage.*
- 5. apply requirements for sustainable design and construction and promote high quality architecture and building technologies. "*

The Aalborg commitments since its constitution in 1994 seen over 2500 local authorities declare allegiance to its cause (Aalborg Municipality, 2014).

The following sub-section will try to thread through the debate concerning urban densification and to what degree in reality it matter.

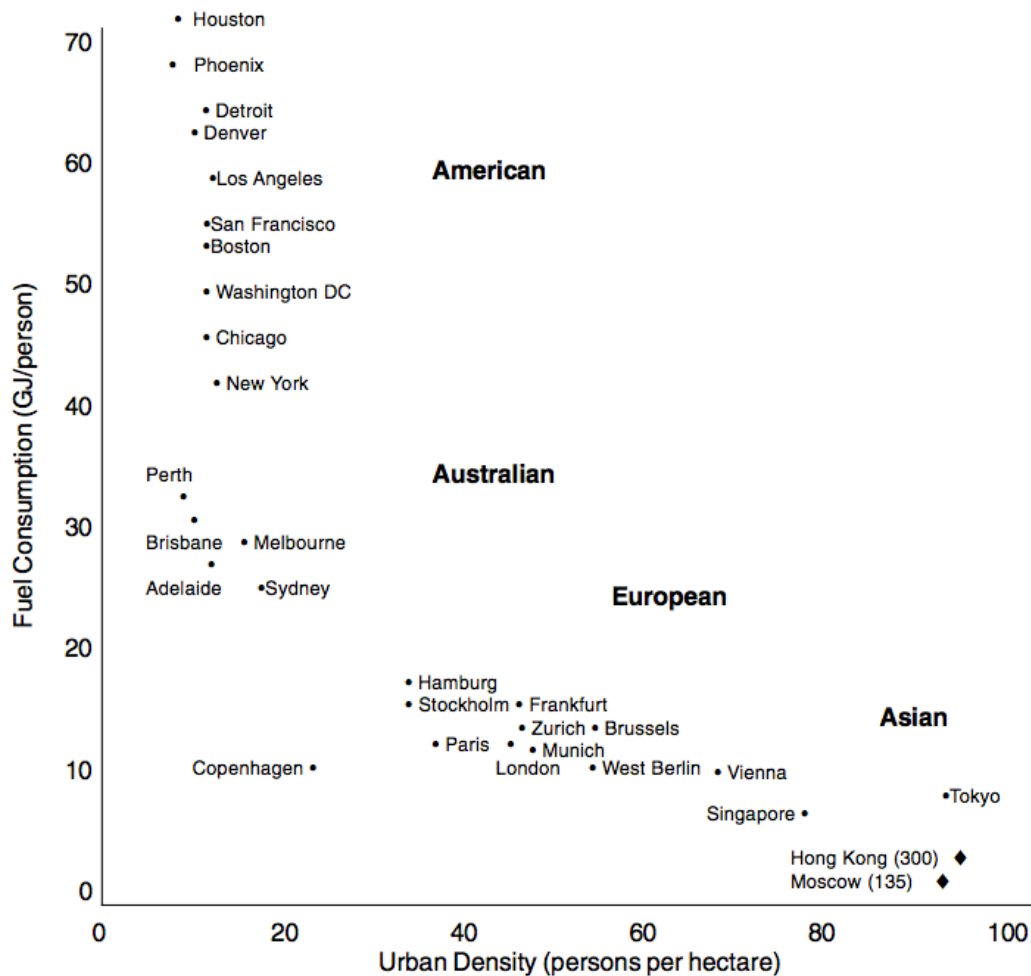
### Does it matter?

Asking such a question is for the first part maybe is to demanding per se as there are multiple things that come to influence how people behave in real life. There is however possible to estimate the potential consequences of urban densification and thereby seeing if their contribution will come to contribute or not. As the objective of this research is on urban densification and its correlation to decreasing automobile dependency, it is argued that it the analysis by related to that specific area. It is however acknowledged that urban densification can have various benefits such as increasing the quality of life through introducing various urban facilities and creating a cleaner environment as a consequence of reduced automobile dependency.

As already mentioned did Newman and Kenworthy in their research of the connection between urban density and automobile use display a strong correla-

tion (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). In their book “Sustainability and cities: Overcoming automobile dependency” they study the relationship between energy use of private transport and cities building density by gathering empirical

evidence from various cities around the world (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). The following graph shows the main results:



**Figure 2 Population density against petrol consumption per person (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999).**

As the figure 2 presents are the US cities that display both the lowest urban density as well as the highest energy use to private transport. European cities on the other hand display both higher urban density and less than half of the energy use than in the US, Asian cities however stand out both in regard to high urban density and relatively low energy use (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). This correlation between density

and reduced car travel has been further supported in research conducted by the UK government from 1993 see table 3. The table shows quite clearly that people living in lower density areas travel almost twice as much by car as than those living in higher density areas (Breheny, 1996).

Density (Persons per hectare)	All Modes	Car	Local bus	Rail	Walk	Other
Under 1	206.3	159.3	5.2	8.9	4.0	28.8
1-4.99	190.5	146.7	7.7	9.1	4.9	21.9
4-14.99	176.2	131.7	8.6	12.3	4.3	18.2
15-29.99	152.6	105.4	9.6	10.2	6.6	20.6
30-49.99	143.2	100.4	9.9	10.8	6.4	15.5
50 and +	129.2	79.9	11.9	15.2	6.7	15.4
<b>All areas</b>	159.6	113.8	9.3	11.3	5.9	19.1

Table 2 Density and distance travelled per person per week mode (km): UK 1985/1986 (Breheny, 1996).

It is generally accepted by academics that urban density as a concept is very context dependent and as such it is impossible to overlay a specific model to every case (Kvorning, Tournay, & Poulsen, 2009).

The promoting of high-density development instead of low-density suburban lifestyles has long history urban planning. The main driving force for high-density urban environment has been linked to the quest of making the city more liveable through reducing automobile dependency and thereby more pedestrian orientated. Plans to promote a greener way of living, long predate the sustainable development discourse started in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Le Corbusier became the first planner/architect to actively introduce high-density housing projects, which became known as “radiant cities” (O’Toole, 2009). His efforts became a huge inspiration for planners all over the world that lasted well into the 1960’s (Pacione, 2009). The high-density urban form was further embraced by plans to accommodate the ever growing

middle class as well as slum-clearances of cities. The plans to redevelop inner cities with high-density housing met increasing opposition from the public. Jane Jacobs becomes an iconic figure of public discontent to urban redevelopment strategies of the city. She comes one of the first real advocate that speak for the existing quality of the inner city. Her book the Life and Death of the Great American cities starts a debate that ultimately leads to an overhaul of they way planning was conducted and by which principles. Her advocating for mix use, medium density developments where embraced by planners which could be seen in the publication of the compact city in 1973. The writers George Dantzig and Thomas Saaty declare that the problems of urban development are too important to be left for developers. They stipulated that developers main concern is to realise the wishes of market driven, which would ultimately lead to expansion of low-density suburbia (O’Toole, 2009).



# Eternitten

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*The purpose of this chapter is to give account of the case area of Eternitten and the planning process that took place there and to what extent it focused on urban densification. Furthermore the chapter explores also the realisation of future plans for the area and the physical outcome with the purpose of critically evaluate how this development has been related to the aim of urban densification. The chapter is composed by five independent sections for a better overview of the case. The first section gives a description of the geographical, physical and historical aspect of the case. The second section will review Aalborg's municipality plans that were adopted during the course of the planning of Eternitten. The third section will account for the planning process from its start in 2001 to present day. The fourth section will review the local plan made for area 4-2-105 and to what extent visions and plans have been focused on urban densification. The final section will conclude with a review of the midways evaluation that was done on the planning process in Eternitten as part of the Nordic City Network STRAKKS project.*



Aalborg lies in the northern part of Jutland and serves as a commercial, administrative centre of the region and serves as an important transport junction between Europe and Scandinavia. It is Denmark's fourth-largest city with approximately 128.500 inhabitants (Aalborg Kommune, 2013). Aalborg has in the past been primarily known by its industrial heritage, which has been characterised by shipping port and cement industry. Aalborg has, like most other western cities, felt the influence of globalisation, where its industrial heritage has been gradually outsourced to more competitive countries. As a result has Aalborg been consciously been shifting its focus towards the knowledge city, where Aalborg's university has played a major role. This has most notably been seen in the rapid growth of student housing as well as the acquisition of Aalborg's new University hospital.

## Urban development trends in Aalborg

Despite the fact that Aalborg is one of the largest cities in Denmark, its status has not always been linked to prosperity and recognition. During the 1960's and all the way up until the end of the 1980's the city aura had been linked to rough industrial production such as concrete, tobacco, hard spiritus and shipyards (Therkelsen, Halkier, & Jensen, 2010). Another characteristic of Aalborg during this time period was consistent unemployment condition, which many considered exemplified the decline of Danish industrial production ability (Therkelsen, Halkier, & Jensen, 2010).



The rise of the postmodern movement at the beginning of the 1970's together with the recession marked by the first global oil crises saw a paradigm shift occur in urban development of Danish cities. This was marked when the growth discourse that governed city development up until that time gets replaced by calls for better quality of life through urban redevelopment of existing districts (Galland & Hansen, 2012). This emphasis on better quality of life does however not seem to improve the overall employment conditions within Aalborg. The city's ability to fight the affects of globalization seem to no avail as increasing number of industries are shut down. This forces Aalborg to

reevaluate their future strategies as calls are made to revive the city through increase job opportunities and liberalization of the planning approach (Kjærdsdam, 1995) in (Galland & Hansen, 2012). At the turn of the millennium, sees cooperation between with local authorities and private stakeholders on creating a branding vision for the city to attract both investment and human capital (Jensen O. B., 2007). What follows are urban development strategies that are grounded in *"density, variety, urban qualities, and street culture"* (Jensen O. B., 2007, p. 222)



Picture 2 Overview of Aalborg with the area (Sandberg, 2011).



### Aalborg's Municipality plans – overall vision regarding urban densification

*The following section analyses to what extent Aalborg's Municipality Plans from 2009 to 2013 have addressed the need to promote urban densification as objective. The aim is to create a better understanding of the planning framework that was adopted at various periods during the planning process in Eternitten.*

#### Aalborg Municipality Plan 2009

The guidelines set forth by the 2006 National Planning Strategy regarding urban densification as means to decrease urban sprawl is prominently followed in the 2009 municipality plan. The general structure, which outlines the overall objectives of urban development and land use in Aalborg, stipulates that the urban development until the year 2020 should strive to contribute to ‘... the development of vibrant and sustainable cities and communities’ where agricultural land are preserved as much as possible. To achieve this objective, the municipal plan stipulated that all the physical development within the municipality should be based on a balanced, sustainable urban development. Furthermore, all future urban development in Aalborg is to be organized for the purpose of density, variation, urban qualities and culture (Aalborg Kommune, 2009).

In order to secure sustainability within urban development, the plan points towards urban densification as one a key objective. It is argued that urban densification will result in better utilization of the cities resources and furthermore will enhance the quality of the urban environment. An essential part of the objective is that all the major development projects have to be connected to

the city's public transport infrastructure (Aalborg Kommune, 2009).

The future population growth is calculated by looking back at the development for the last 10 years. The estimate therefore predicts that around 700 new residents will move to Aalborg each year. To accommodate this population growth the plan estimates that there is the need to develop about 1.232 hectares within the next 12 years. It is worth noting that these numbers are for the whole of the municipality and not just for the city. To adapt to this demand, future urban development projects will be primarily be located within existing boundaries of the city, preferably within current and future brown-field sites or already planned expansion areas. The plan however articulates that there is a consistent demand for single-family housing in the city. In light of this interest, the plan deems that it is necessary for the city to accommodate this interest in future plans. The plan therefore stipulates the need not only to focus on urban densification as means but also on traditional urban development pattern of low-rise housing (Aalborg Kommune, 2009).

#### The 2013 Municipality Plan

The compact city is firmly put on the agenda in Aalborg 2013 municipality plan. Urban redevelopment and urban densification are identified in the plan as preconditions for urban growth. Similar to the objective four years earlier, urban growth should occur within the existing city limits. Urban Densification is supported by the urban sustainable development principle. Urban densifi-

cation areas are furthermore clearly marked (Figure 3), which correspond to the desired growth axis identified in the plan. The 2013 plan stipulates that the outcome of urban densification can both reduce urban sprawl and enhance the availability of green spaces. The further objectives linked to urban densification is creating bigger potential for the use of greener modes of transportation, as well as providing the necessary critical mass, which can support the arrival of Aalborg's first light rail.

### Conclusion

It becomes quite clear that urban densification has been cemented as a key objective in the 2013 Municipality Plan. Clearly stated objectives with well-defined mentioning of the potential benefits of urban densification are also stressed. The future will only tell if these objectives will materialise in the future.

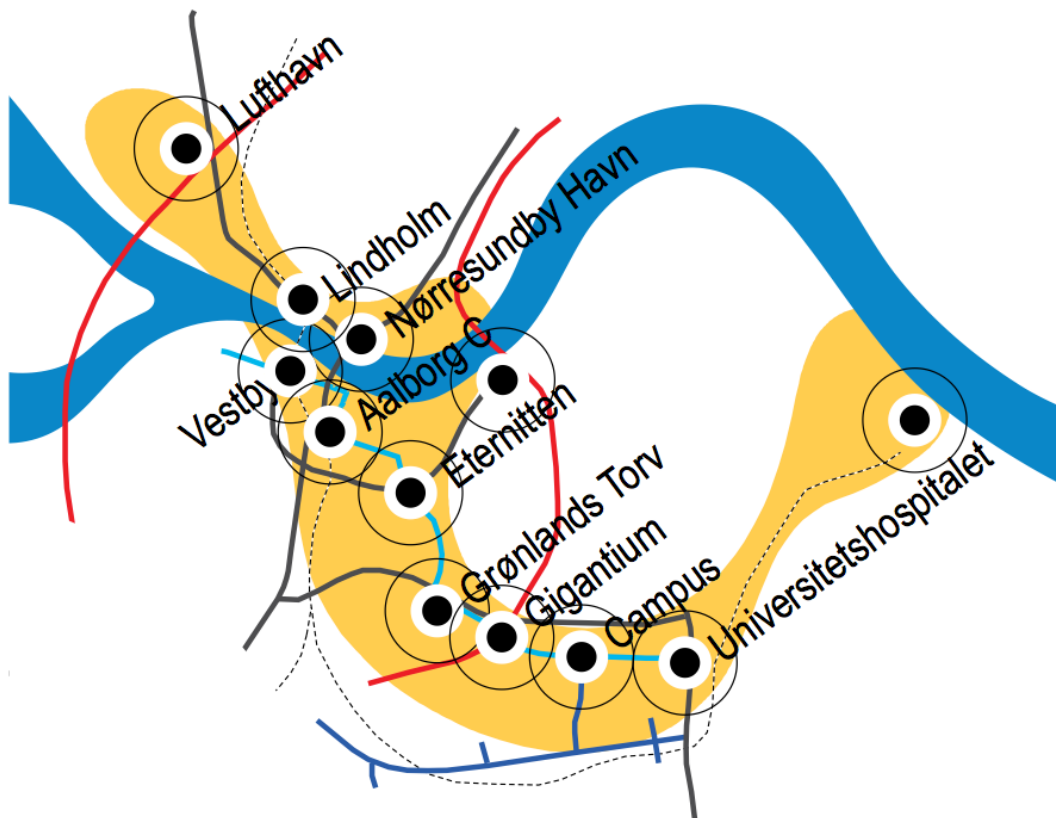


Figure 3 The key areas identified in the 2013 Municipality Plans that are to be strategically made more dense in character with the area of Eternitten as one of those places (Aalborg Kommune, 2013).

# Eternitten

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The affects of Post industrialisation resulted in outmigration of many prominent industries within Aalborg. One of these industries that have closed down and moved abroad is the Cementfabrik Eternitten A/S. The strategic placement of Eternitten on the borders of the inner city can be seen as giving Aalborg an excellent opportunity to follow the guidelines set in the National Planning strategy, which stipulates that future urban growth shall come from within.

Eternitten was established in 1927 where it through the majority of its lifespan produced building material. The Eternitten fabric had its peak during the 1960's but due to increasing affects of globalisation started the company's endurance started to slowly fade.

In 2004 the company was sold abroad and its production line was closed down and exported abroad (COWI A/S, n.d.).

The area of Eternitten is located at the fringes of the city centrum in the south-east part of the city. The area is approximately 363.000 m<sup>2</sup>, which is approximately the same size as the inner city of Aalborg (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006). The area is bound by Østre Alle to the north, Sohngårdsholmsvej to the east, Sønderbro to the West and finally Vandværksparken and Blegkilde Alle to the north. The physical terrain is extensively marked by the former industrial usage as well as the considerable height difference between the lowest point in the northern section and the eastern section, which is the highest.



Picture 3 Eternitten at the start of the redevelopment process (ARKIVFOTO, 2013)





Picture 4 An overview of Eternitten (ENG arkitekter, 2012).

### The redevelopment of Eternitten

The following section will account for the development saga of Eternitten. It will go through the chronological accounts from where it began in 2001 until present day. The featured revision of the planning process is largely based on the report written by ENG architects in relation to the evaluation of Eternitten in 2012.

The saga begins in 2001 when FLSmidt (FLS), the owner Eternitten, approached the mayor of Aalborg, concerning potential alteration of usage to the Eternitten area. These talks resulted in a roughly drafted plan where among other things the potential clean up and timescale of future developments was decided. In 2002 FLS employs Nybolig real estate

and COWI as consultants to draft initial planning considerations for Eternitten. The draft draws up potential zoning of the area as well as future road layout and possible usage. Later the same year FLS state officially the aim of selling Eternitten. The director of Cowi convinces FLS to reconsider arguing that FLS will gain more financially by splitting the area into different plots of land (ENG arkitekter, 2012).

The following next couple of years FLS, Cowi and Nybolig real estate continued developing plans for Eternitten. Nybolig through financial evaluations of the property, propose three key points which future plans should strive for; high utilisation of land, great number of

building options and high building density. Aalborg's planning department subsequently rejects these plans but instead reach an agreement with FLS to construct a holistic plan for the Eternitten area (ENG arkitekter, 2012). In 2004, FLS try to convince Aalborg to buy Eternitten but to no avail. Aalborg's mayor Henning G. Jensen evaluates that such venture is too financially risky for the city and therefore not a viable option. The decision to reject the proposal is on the other hand controversial. One of those looking favourably to the purchase was Aalborg's planning department. They saw it as potential for the city to profit from sales of land as well as an excellent way to control the development of the area so that future-planning aims would have a better change of getting realised. Private investors and developers also rejected interest in Eternitten at that time due to uncertainty regarding development costs (ENG arkitekter, 2012).

The same year Aalborg is officially drawn into the saga when Annette Rosenbæk from Aalborg's planning department is made project manager, with assistance from Knud Tranhold Aalborg's Municipality head architect. Later the same year FLS decides to do a parallel assignment when hires three architect firms, C.F. Møller, Jan W. Hansen and Sven Allan Jensen, to draw up potential plans for Eternitten. FLS in cooperation with both COWI and Nybolig real estate decide to go with C. F. Møllers proposal. C.F. Møllers new plan proposes a decreased building density in the area, opposing the drafts made in the original plans for the area. The plan takes a point in departure in the surrounding landscape and the industrial heritage value of existing buildings (ENG arkitekter, 2012). According to

Mads Møller, partner in C.F. Møller, any proposal made for Eternitten in the end is judged by the willingness of investors to finance the development (Carstensen, 2005).

In marts 2005 Aalborg hold an 8-week public debate concerning the future of Eternitten, where citizens are encouraged to voice their opinion regarding future potential of the area. The introduction material to the debate, proposes a Tuscany mountain village as one potential planning option for part of the area. The outcome of the debate however gave indication that the general public was not particularly interested in the development of the area (ENG arkitekter, 2012).

In april 2005, Aalborg in cooperation with FLS Real Estate, ArkitekturForm Aalborg and Aalborg University hold another workshop that also debates potential usage of the area. The focus of the debate relates to a large extent to what buildings should be preserved as well as coming up with suggestions regarding the planning process regarding public participation. The featured participants were mainly architects, planners and Architecture and Design students. During the introduction to the workshop both representatives from FLS and Aalborg explained their main views on future development potential of Eternitten. Knud Tranholm, the chief Architect of Aalborg, spoke of the potential that Eternitten could potentially best serve as a single-family housing area that could offer an alternative to suburbia (p. 13). FLS on the other hand stressed that future plans for Eternitten will have to be both coherent and attractive development project that is financially feasible. FLS further emphasized that any future development tak-

ing place at Eternitten should avoid the mistakes made with the development of “Godsbanearealet” and Kennedy-arkaden (ArkitekturForum Aalborg; Sven Allen Jensen A/S, 2005), on the other hand it isn’t specified what exactly he means by that statement. The result of the workshop led to a general consensus among the participants that public participation in the planning process would be of limited success as only professionals will be interested in the case. A further agreement is made regarding the potential target group for the area, where the creative class becomes the most prominent choice. The workshop highlights the wish to construct a unique place that can capture the aura of Eternitten. It is furthermore agreed that the southeast section of Eternitten should primarily serve as a residential area and that development should commence there (ArkitekturForum Aalborg; Sven Allen Jensen A/S, 2005).

Subsequently, work begins in forming a holistic redevelopment strategy for the whole of Eternitten. The work is conducted in cooperation between Aalborg’s planning department, FLS, C.F. Møller architects and Cowi. The final strategy sees the light of day in 2006.

#### The development of 4.2.B8

On July 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, Søren Enggaard and Svend Pepe reach an agreement with FLS to buy plot 4.2.B8 within Eternitten (Søren Enggaard A, n.d.). A subsequent agreement is made between Søren Enggaard and Aalborg that makes COWI responsible for overseeing the development of a vision and building plans for the area that will serve as the foundation of the coming local plan. Three years later or in May 2009, Aalborg city council accept the local plan for the area. Søren Enggaard shares his content-

ment with the plan, citing the plan as an ideal example of future-lasting settlements that are designed in perfect harmony with the landscapes unique terrain (Søren Enggaard B, n.d.).

It becomes evident however that the global economic condition at that time had resulted in stagnation of the housing market, which in return meant that no investment was taken place in Eternitten. Søren Enggaard displays concern with the stagnation within the housing market to Aalborg authorities. Søren Enggaard’s concern gets favourable response within city council as it is decided that Aalborg will give a quota to subsidized housing that can be used to facilitate a process that will lead to development. According to Annette Rosenbæk, project manager over the Eternitten project, resulted this intervention in a totally different development then Aalborg had hoped for in the beginning (Rosenbæk, Aalborg Planning department, 2014).

In 2010, Nørresundby Housing Association reaches an agreement with Søren Enggaard to build 50 residential units within B1 area of 4.2.B8, with financial support from Aalborg. Of these 50 residential units, two thirds are to be traditional terraced houses. According to Sigvart Sigvartsen director for Nørresundby housing associations, represents this location an ideal placement for future urban growth within the city. Sigvart maintains that it has been far too long since terraced houses have been built so close to the city centre and argues that such development will attract a lot of interest, especially from families with children (Nordjyske.dk, 2010). On August 26<sup>th</sup> 2010 the groundbreaking for the new residential units is performed (Søren Enggaard C, n.d.). The

estimated construction time is just under a year as the first residents are ex-

pected to move in during the summer 2011 (Søren Enggaard C, n.d.).



## Byomdannelsesstrategi

Redegørelse til kommuneplanrammer for Eternitten



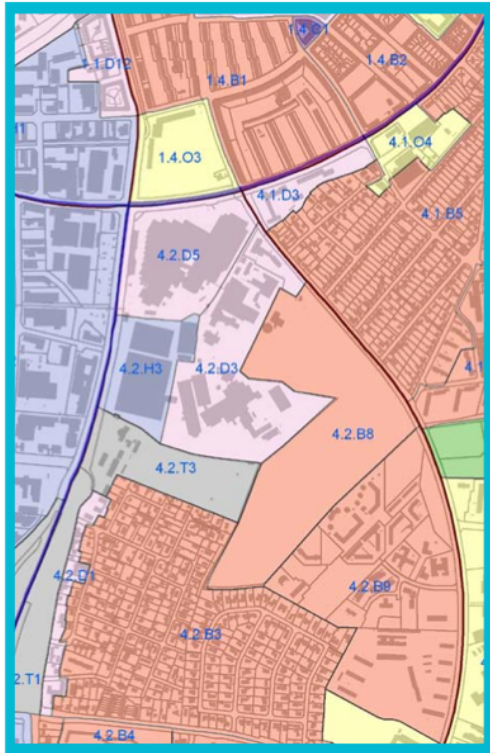
AALBORG  
KOMMUNE

### Redevelopment strategy

As stated above was the construction of the redevelopment strategy for Eternitten done in cooperation between Aalborg's planning department, FLS, C.F. Møller architects and COWI. The redevelopment strategy has the status of a supplement document to the current municipality framework where it concretizes Aalborg's vision for the area. The strategy pays homage to the debate that took place over the future vision of Eternitten and acknowledges that many of the proposals put forth in the workshops have acted as inspiration to the final output of the strategy.

The strategy outlines the urban intentions for the area, including building

density, the outline of what kind of housing will be allowed, historical/culture and guidelines regarding both environmental and traffic conditions. The strategy splits the area into distinct framework sectors; two areas marked mix use (section D), industrial area (section H), and finally a residential area (section B) (*see map 1*). According to the strategy is the future usage of each section calculated from structural consideration, architectural coordination and evaluation of the landscape context. Sections D and B are designated to promote the compact character found in the centre of the city while the H section is designated as dens-low character (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006).



Map 1 The framework of Eternitten  
(Teknik- og Miljøforvaltningen, 2009)

In the introduction to the strategy, Eternitten's strategic location is identified as possessing a unique potential for the city and as a result stretch the ambitions for the area beyond the location itself. The main goals and visions put forth in the strategy stress the will that the development will further assist in distinguishing Aalborg from other comparable cities. The strategy specifies the wish that the redevelopment of Eternitten, will push Aalborg towards a modern and future-orientated city;

*"Aalborg will be the antithesis of the traditional city. Bigger in heart, smaller in scale - and closer to the sky. We will utilize the contrasts and create space for diversity. Grabbing the world. And through knowledge, collaboration and empowerment provide the framework for life in progress"*

(Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006, p. 4)

The redevelopment strategy for Eternitten highlights six strategic goals that should ultimately lead to this desired aim; first the development of Eternitten should contribute to new assets that can benefit both Aalborg and the area it self, second, the redevelopment should promote a variation in urban use, third, Eternitten's central placement and its aura should be promoted as much as possible, forth, the green connection in the city should be strengthened, fifth, there should be potential to enable creativity, experiments, entrepreneurship and unforeseen possibilities to flourish in the area, and lastly, the industrial heritage of the area shall be preserved (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006).

To realize these aims the strategy stipulates the need for flexible municipal planning framework as well as the need to take into account the role of the market as projects of this multitude generally take years to materialize. To compensate for the expected time factor it is emphasized that any future plans for the area will not be too rigid. The key thought with these considerations is to secure a dynamic planning process, which will enable the area, the necessary possibilities to flourish (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006).

According to the ide catalogue set forth in the strategy it is acknowledge that Eternitten with its considerable size can very well be viewed as distinct city district. The strategy proposes that three specific groups should be targeted as future residents in Eternitten; the "creative class", the young generation, and finally the "the modern city family" (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006).

Sequential strategy	Focus points:
<b>Phase 1</b> – <b>Activation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area activated and opened to the city</li> <li>• Existing buildings, space and landscapes utilized to new temporary uses</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2</b> – <b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary uses: Existing buildings, space and landscape adapted to new use that should enable growth from within</li> <li>• Bigger projects: Local Plan process frames the investors wish with regard to the whole area</li> <li>• Investments in the whole initiates new sub-areas into play</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3</b> – <b>Consolidation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary uses: Can temporary permits renewed, or collide application example on environmental issues in relation to other application wants?</li> <li>• Major projects: LP process aligns investors' interests with the interests of the whole.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 4</b> – <b>Adjustment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation and potential adjustment to the municipality framework and redevelopment strategy</li> <li>• New temporary and permanent uses, new projects</li> </ul>

Table 3 The sequential strategy for Eternitten (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006)

#### Urban densification within Eternitten

The strategy specifies that the average building density within the area of Eternitten shall be 50% (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006). The strategy specifies that required building density is expected to vary from plot to plot, stating that other factors, for example parking spaces, can form a barrier towards this goal. Maximum building height is to

be grounded in the balance between existing buildings in the area and surrounding neighborhood. The argument is based on the request that the future building height within Eternitten shall not block the view of surrounding communities (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006).

## The Local plan 4-2-105



Figure 1 An overview of the proposal made by C.F. Møller to the local-plan 4-2-105 (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006).

*By examining the development of plot 4.2.B8 within Eternitten it is possible to follow how the overall plans and strategies have come in realisation in relation to urban densification.*

Local plan area 4-2-105 lies in the eastern part of Eternitten traditionally known as the “Kridtgraven” and was the first section of Eternitten that became built.

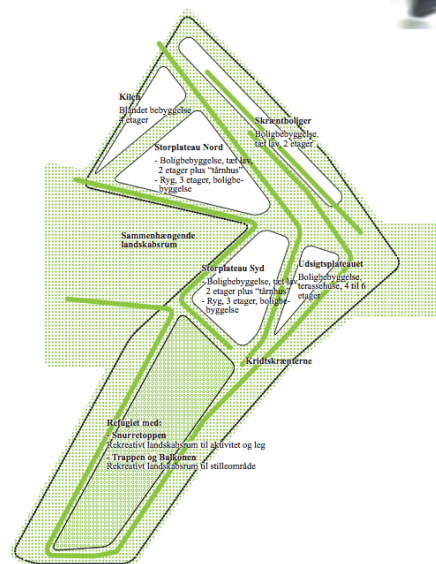
The local plan 4.2.105 concretizes the vision set forth in the redevelopment strategy for Eternitten described above and the overall municipality aims for the area. The local plan area is approx-

imately 15 hectares in size and is located in the southeast part of Eternitten where it lies between Vejgaard to the east and Grønlandskvarteret to the south. Former industrial usage of the land creates strong contrasts in the landscape, mainly steep slopes and bare plateaus. This variation in landscape is valued as giving great potential for excellent views over the rest of Eternitten. The area is furthermore ideally placed concerning public transport as Sohngårdsholmsvej is serviced with high frequency bus routes (Teknik- og Miljøforvaltningen, 2009).



### Urban densification within 4.2.B8

Section area A: 15.800 m<sup>2</sup> - Section area B1: 12.500 m<sup>2</sup> - Section area B2: 9.200 m<sup>2</sup>  
Section area B3: 6.700 m<sup>2</sup> - Section area B4: 4.600 m<sup>2</sup> - Section area C1: 0 m<sup>2</sup>  
Section area C2: 2.400 m<sup>2</sup> - Section area C3: 0 m<sup>2</sup>



Section A is primarily targeted as an mix use area, with section B1-B4 listed as residential area and finally section C1-C3 which is listed as recreational area but can also serve as a common purpose

area where either institutions or housing can be built (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006).

**Dispensation from the Municipality framework for 4.2.B8**

In the middle May 2009 a supplemental statement was created that altered the content of the municipality framework for 4.2.B8 concerning building density. The area marked A, identified as mix use area got merged into section 4.2.D3. The argument for this alteration is that it will help enable area 4.2.D3 to fulfil the overall planning aims for the area

set in by the Redevelopment Strategy concerning building density. In order to compensate 4.2.B8 this change, area B3 is given the potential to increase its density by allowing 4-6 storey high buildings. The alteration meant that average building density within 4.2.B8 increased from 25% to 32% (Teknisk Forvaltning A, 2006) (Aalborg Kommune, 2009).

### Reflection on the planning process – The midways report

In May 2012 a report was published called the midways report of Eternitten (ENG arkitekter, 2012). The Report was made as part of the Nordic City Network STRAKKS project. The aim with the project was to test new methods in within urban planning with special emphasis on medium-sized cities in Northern Europe. The aim with the report was to give an evaluation or momentary picture of the redevelopment process in Eternitten. Two main research questions were set out as the foundation for the report;

*“What factors shall the actors be aware of, when the redevelopment of Eternitten will be fully developed – how do we secure a desirable goal?”*

*How can the Municipality take an active approach to the development of a large urban area when the municipality doesn't have the financial or political will to develop?”*

(ENG arkitekter, 2012, p. 5)

The empirical evidence for the report was based on qualitative interviews, document analysis and what they refer to as the STRAKKS analysis, which evaluates the built environment.

#### The main findings of the report

The report divides the evaluation between five main topics, which are vision and strategy, organisation, process, planning documents and the role of the planner and finally additional suggestions.

According to the report, it is evident that the Eternitten case had exemplified the complexity of the relations between

various actors in planning process. It further highlighted the difficulty in balancing the long-term goals setting of the Municipality and the short-term financial goals set by developers. It is argued in the report that this tension between different objectives requires that the city be handed *“a simple and precise management tool that can accommodate these challenges”* (ENG arkitekter, 2012, p. 16). What this management tool contains and how it should work is not specified in the report.

Further critique was aimed at Aalborg's handling of the planning process. This sprang out of the fact that the initial planning process had called for the inclusion and participation of all departments within the city but had failed. Only the Planning Department and the Mayor's Office actively took part in formulating the vision for the area. This lack of coordination is evaluated as having reduced the efficiency of the plans. A potential solution is set forth that implies that acquisition of land would solve this lack of coordination as would it secure that any future vision that the city has for the area is fulfilled.

Here is a summary of the key suggestions regarding the future planning process in Eternitten:

- *“Strategic land acquisitions can facilitate the achievement of specific essential elements of the vision.*
- *The municipal role as a developer should be thought through, both for the realization and economy”.*

(ENG arkitekter, 2012, s. 17)

Regarding evaluation of the visions and strategy for Eternitten it comes evident



that the complexity that follows such a large project is something that many are concerned about. The main concern is aimed at the magnitude of documents that are produced as part of various fundamental issues regarding the project. This magnitude of plans and documents is seen as hindrance that needs to be overcome by simplifying the overall planning procedure for the area.

A critique to the overall strategy of Eternitten is further displayed. The critique is aimed the lack of connection between the vision set forth by the planners and what the city really has use for. The following citation describes this critique well:

*"... The planners think that life takes place outdoors. I have further missed that people from the start would actually go out and look at what the city of Aalborg really needs. The planners think too fast in solutions / drawing houses instead of finding out where we shall. The ideas have come from the developer and not from the municipality. There is a special culture in the public planning system, which results in reduced ability to think holistically ... "*

(ENG arkitekter, 2012, s. 19)

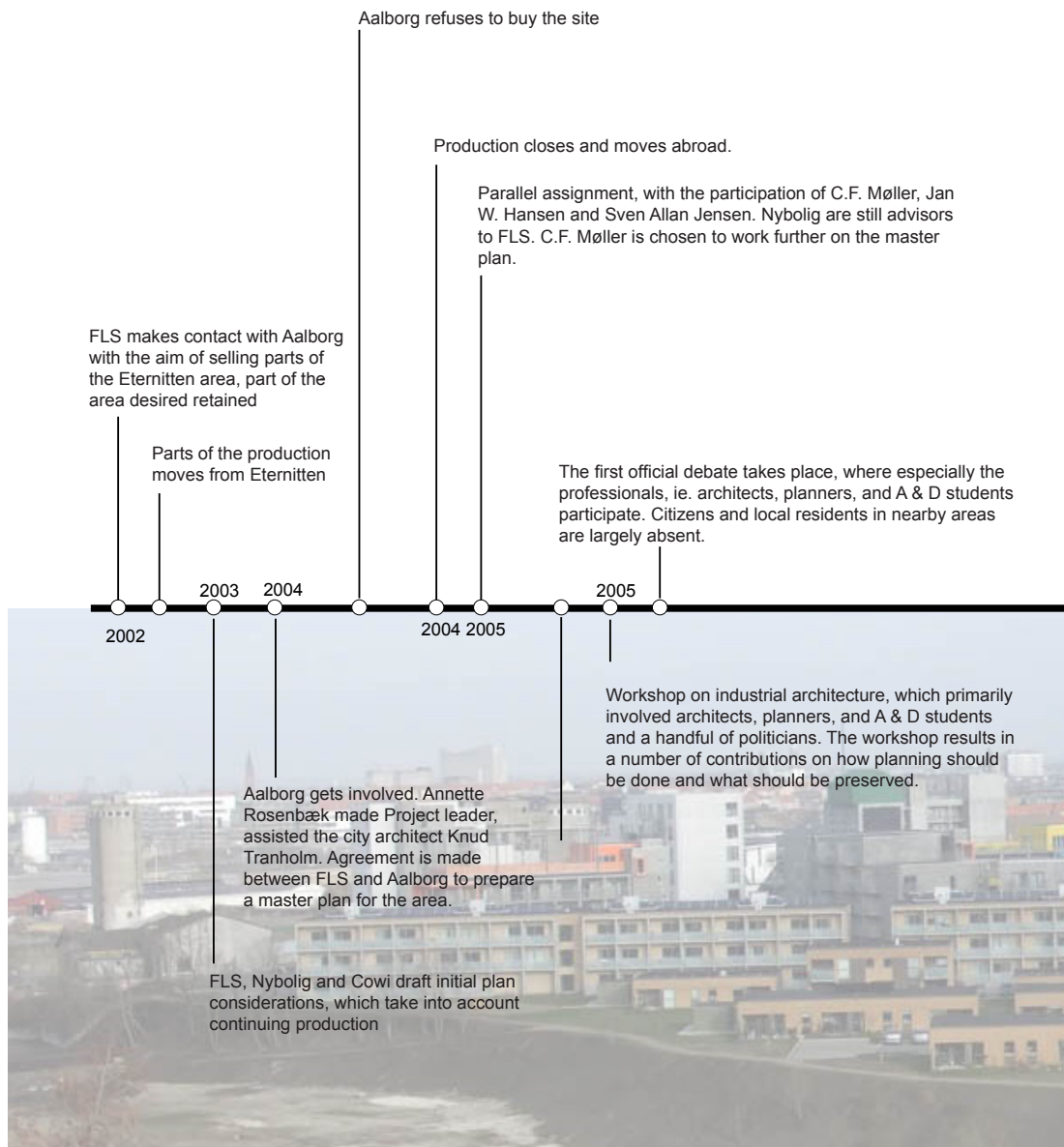
Regarding an interesting point was further made regarding the planner and the planning process. The participants

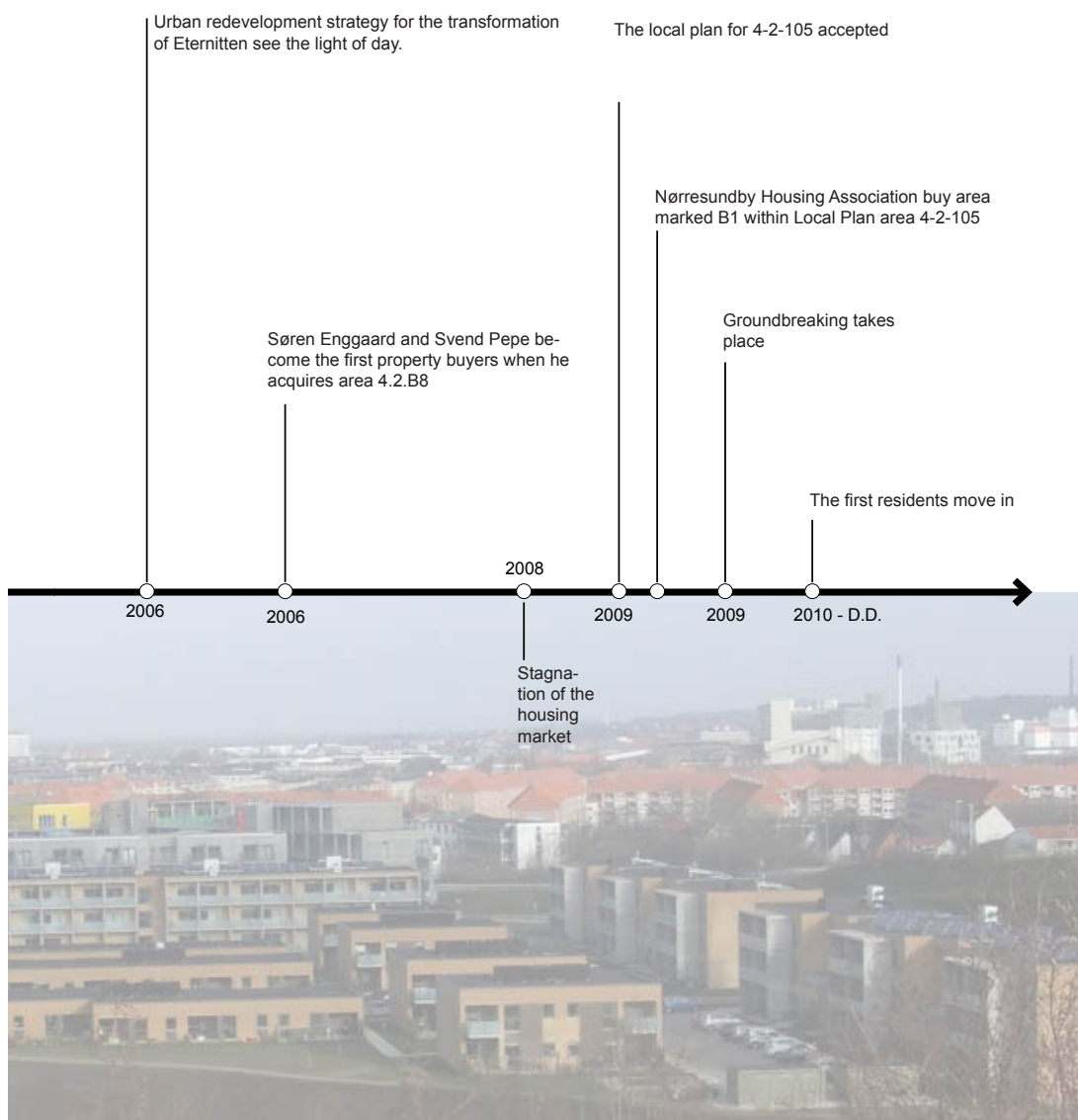
stressed that the project missed the imperative ownership part for the development. The number and detail of the planning documents caused this lack of ownership, where the solution was seen on transferring the focus of plans over to the planning process. To enable this shift of focus the role of the planner needs to be altered towards facilitation instead of detailed planning tasks. Additionally, prioritizing of the planner's resources is needed to secure a smoother planning process. The further entails a more proactive role of to stimulate outside drivers and collaboration in the planning process.

#### Evaluation of densification in Eternitten

Discussions for the level of densification within Eternitten are marked in the section of the report dealing with environmental assessments of the development. The midways report mentions that the level of densification had been increased by 2.500 m<sup>2</sup> and that potential increase could be on its way in the 'Trekants' area, which is currently being worked on by Cowi and Aalborg (ENG arkitekter, 2012).

## Timeline of events – Eternitten







# Urban densification an objective?

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*The following chapter analyses the case of Eternitten operationalizing the first sub-question: how urban politics and the market have influenced the contemporary urban development in the context of Eternitten. The conceptual framework presented in the theory chapter will serve here as a foundation for this analysis.*

The key characteristics of urban politics and the market identified in the theoretical part of this thesis will now be operationalized on the empirical case. Subsequently the key characteristics within urban politics and the market will be addressed according to the questions raised within the theoretical chapter of the thesis. The theoretical part displayed a complex set of variables that all are interrelated and which all contribute to urban development. It has therefore been necessary to split these characteristics up in individual sections to render the analysis will become more simple and understandable.

## Urban Politics

*“Urban planning is always a reflection of social, economic and political decisions”* (Hasse, 2014)

The urban politics began to emerge on the political agenda as a consequence of increasing demand for providing cities the necessary policy framework that could assist in addressing the need for urban growth and competitiveness between cities and environmental concerns (Ærø & Jørgensen, 2005). The project in Eternitten has been strongly affected by the paradigm shift that followed new emphasis in urban planning. The urban politics in Aalborg have to a

large extent been focused on transforming the city away from its industrial past towards the modern city. Aalborg has been like so many other Western cities, hard hit from the consequences of globalisation, which best could be seen in the transfer of traditional industry away as well as migration of competitive labour force. The structural changes have been also replaced with new working possibilities – university, hospitals, etc. – therefore followed by radical changes in the form of the city.

## Sustainable development

Urban densification is praised both on the supra and national level as effective means to address the dire need to reduce automobile dependency (XXXX). This has been followed up within Aalborg municipal plan all the way back to the beginning of the initial planning process within Eternitten in 2004. These objectives state that urban growth shall happen within existing boundaries of the city preferably on existing brownfield land, like for the Eternitten area. It is evident through the case study that urban densification as proposed in this introduction have not been met. The overall level of densification for the area amounts to 50% building density.

During the interview with Annette Rosenbæk, the project leader of the development of Eternitten, it became evident that sustainability had not been on the top of the agenda during the planning process. When discussing the benefits of urban densification and how higher levels could have yielded increasing benefits to reducing automobile dependency she replays:

*"... if we really wanted to increase densification levels in the city we shouldn't do this, but we find urban development to be more complex than just talking about levels of densification, there are other aims as well that we want to go for. And I think this area is an example of a clash between different things that we want at the same time."*

(Rosenbæk, 2014)

This lack of consideration for higher level of urban densification and the potential benefits of reducing automobile dependency is quite clear in the Eternittens redevelopment strategy. This is evident as no mention is made to reduce parking areas in the strategy. The cause of this lack of willingness to reduce parking within Eternitten is highlighted in the interview with Mario Hasse. Asked about the parking norms for Eternitten he replays:

*"The parking within this area is done in line with the regulation set by the municipality, there is no political backing concerning reducing the amount of parking for the area."*

(Hasse, 2014)

He further argues that there is a need for generating traffic flow in within Eternitten:

*"An advantage that I see is that of course its generating more traffic but car traffic is the source for urban life. This is not Copenhagen."*

(Hasse, 2014)

The issues raised here represent the complete opposite of the core idea of the compact city and the goals of urban densification. However, in the view of Mario Hasse this only represents realistic planning. He explains that develop-

ers want to maintain ample parking for their customers; when looking for apartments people look at parking possibilities and this is because developers are keen to fulfil the desires. However if there would be a serious attempt to reduce parking in an area like Eternitten, then the city needs to step in during the initial phase of the planning process and buy the whole area themselves (Hasse, 2014).

### The branding of Eternitten

The branding of place serves different objectives for a city. According to Jensen (2007) these objectives are mainly related to the need to attract investors, companies, and human capital (Jensen O. B., 2007). According to Jensen (2007) there was a consensus among key stakeholder in Aalborg that the city needed to create a new image, one that could attract both finance and increased human capital (Jensen O. B., 2007). Such initiatives are further noted within the national planning strategies as they promote the aim of cities to act as locomotives of their own development, which means that cities need to compete to attract investment. Branding the city is one of these aims (Miljøministeriet A, 2006). In the case of Eternitten, it is clear that branding has played a key part in the outcome of the plans. By branding the project as 'Architectonics experimentarium' the objective was to attract both investors and the right human capital to the area.

### Governance networks

According to Sehested (2003), the emergence of urban politics has meant a shift away from the traditional top-down urban planning regime towards a new vertical process, which is characterised by inclusivity of private interests (Sehested, 2003). Andersen and Kempen

(2003) highlight however, that these governance networks also can contribute to a more critical outcomes, which are analysed in the following key points:

#### *Planning process*

In Eternitten, the planning process gives indication of being open to various stakeholders and citizens and democratic. There were at least two workshops organised open to citizen participation. But it is also equally clear that the main decisions were also taken between the city officials and major stakeholders without further involvement of the public. This was confirmed within the Midway Evaluations Report, which criticizes the lack of public involvement. This is however potentially explained by the very contextual case of Eternitten, as both its industrial history and its geographically enclosed location as it does not influence directly the nearby districts.

#### *Public private partnerships*

Further characteristic of this new form of governance is the increasing cooperation between actors, known as public private partnerships. These partnerships have seen the construction of both strategies and detailed plans under the responsibility of the developers themselves. These tendencies for new forms of governance where all tangible within the planning process of Eternitten. Most notably, the construction of the planning framework fell into the hands of Cowi consultancy. This could be seen both in the construction of the redevelopment strategy as well as the local plan for 4-2-105. Despite that fact that it is impossible to evaluate to what extent the plans in the end reflected the aims set forth by the developers, will it always give a potential for materialising in their favour. This has on the other

hand reflected the harsh economic reality of many cities.

#### *Planning process as sign of consensus or conflict ridden*

In terms of governance, one central issue is about consensus building. During interviews for the Eternitten case it emerged that it was a general consensus concerning the level of urban densification within Eternitten areas. According to Annette Rosenbæk this consensus about what level of urban densification should be in the area has been there since the beginning of the process.

#### *Lack of holistic strategies*

The case of Eternitten concerning urban densification illustrated signs of lack of an holistic planning thinking. This conclusion is based on the lack of emphasis on urban densification to the levels appropriate to maximise the potential benefit.

#### *Power relations within governance networks*

Bent Flyvbjerg's paper on Rationality and power (1998) had demonstrated that within governance networks the issue of power could play a key part in the outcome of an urban planning process (Flyvbjerg, Rationality and Power, 1998). Despite the fact that the issue of power had not been directly addressed during the interviews there was still indication that the use of power was being utilised in the case of Eternitten. This became evident in the interview with Mario Hasse when he was asked about the level of consensus among the actors regarding the level of densification for the area. His reply was that there had always been confrontation between developer interests, which traditionally try to aim high for perfect disposition of the area. This was however refuted by Annette Rosenbæk



when she was asked the very same question, as she did not acknowledge any conflicts regarding the level of densification to Eternitten. This seems to indicate that the overall municipality vision concerning meeting the demand for single detached housing in Eternitten instead of high urban density had come out on top.

### The Market

*The market is a decisive figure in shaping urban development. The following subsection will account for its key characteristics*

### Housing preferences

It has been well established that majority of Danes prefer to live in single detached houses. This popularity of suburban living was confirmed by the National planning strategy from 2013 that urban sprawl continuous to be a factor in urban development patterns, as since 2000, 18% increase have been noted in expansion of the urban core during this period (Miljøministeriet C, 2013). In the 2009 Aalborg municipal plan it is highlighted that urban development within the city should not only take account for densification strategies but also need to accommodate for the interests towards single detached houses (Aalborg Kommune, 2009). These same thoughts were brought forth by Knud Tranholm the chief city architect when he expressed the desire that parts of Eternitten could potential best be served as single family housing (ArkitekturForum Aalborg; Sven Allen Jensen A/S, 2005). This perspective that the housing preferences should guide the development is further confirmed in the interview with Mario Hasse as he declares that the market has always governed development within Eternitten; *“During this planning process there was demand for*

*this kind of development”* (Hasse, 2014). Further confirmation of the impact of the housing market was also stipulated in the interview with Annette Rosenbæk. According to Rosenbæk, the municipality conducted evaluation of what potential there was for this area. This was done by analysing the housing preferences at that time and they pointed towards development that would accommodate families with children who both wanted to live close to the city as well as having access to small garden (Rosenbæk, Aalborg Municipality, 2014).

### The concrete case of area 4.2.B8

In the concrete case of area 4.2.B8 in Eternitten not all of the above parameters could be operationalized. This was primarily caused by a narrower focus in that case.

### Sustainable development

In the concrete case of area 4.2.B8, the local plan specifies that the level of urban densification shall be 32% (Teknik- og Miljøforvaltningen, 2009). This number however is not linked to the aim of sustainable development of the area.

### Planning process

As grounded in the Danish planning law it is guaranteed that an 8 weeklong public hearing session will take place, where all parties can express their concerns around any project. To what extent there were made remarks about the content of the local plan remains unknown.

### Public private partnerships

The case of 4.2.B8 took similar directions as within the development of the redevelopment strategy of Eternitten. There was agreement made between Søren Enggaard and Aalborg that Cowi consultancy would oversee the writing of the local plan. Because of the same

handling process as in the redevelopment strategy it also applies here that there is concern that development could be more oriented towards the wishes of the developer.

#### *Planning process as sign of consensus or conflict ridden*

The same goes for the concrete case of 4.2.B8 as with the redevelopment strategy regarding consensus between different actors concerning the level of densification.

#### *Lack of holistic strategies*

The local plan for 4.2.B is further concretisation of the redevelopment strategy therefor it is in the same way displaying the same lack of holistic planning approach to reducing automobile dependency through increased levels of urban densification.

### **The Market**

#### **Housing preferences**

It became quite clear that in the concrete case of 4.2.B8 the main driver for the outcome in the area was the housing market. Both Mario Hasse and Annette Rosenbæk confirmed this during the

interviews. Annette Rosenbæk had already declared that Aalborg had conducted evaluation of what kind of development. The primary focus group for the area were identified as families that wanted to be located near the city centrum (Aalborg Byråd, 2010).

#### **Conclusion to the analysis**

*The following sub-section summarises the key findings within the analysis.*

The role urban politics and the market in shaping the development of Eternitten concerning urban densification are undisputed. What this analysis has shown is that the aims of attaining urban densification are clearly a complex process with many interrelated variables. An example of this is the lack of focus on sustainability and the drive to please the market as can be seen in the lack of will to increase urban density at the same time as the plans for Eternitten are highly car orientated. Table 4 further describes the key findings from the analysis.

The key characteristics of	The case of Eternitten	The case of 4.2.B8
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Urban densification not on the political agenda at the time of the initial planning of Eternitten. Building density only 50%. The plan highly car orientated.	The aims with the area not linked to achieving the levels of urban densification. Building density only 32%. No aim of reducing parking.
<b>The Branding of Eternitten</b>	Branding strategy utilised to attract both investment and human capital	
<b>Governance Networks</b>		
<i>Planning process</i>	Sign of a closed planning process where decisions regarding the level of urban densification taken by key stakeholders.	There was an 8-week public hearing process that took place as required by Danish law. Other ways a closed planning process.
<i>Public private partnerships</i>	Evidence of public private partnerships as Cowi consultancy is given the task of writing the strategy	The planning of 4.2.B8 showed further prove of public private partnerships as Cowi consultancy is given the task of writing the Local Plan for 4.2.B8
<i>Planning process as sign of consensus or conflict ridden</i>	Planning process seems to suggest that there had been consensus between stakeholders regarding the level of urban densification in Eternitten	
<i>Lack of holistic strategies</i>	The case of Eternitten displays a lack of holistic visions, as the consequences of lack of urban densification are not taken into account.	
<b>Power relations within governance networks</b>	Regarding the notion of power it is sensed that forms of power utilisation had taken place during the planning process.	
<b>Housing preferences</b>	Housing preferences are a key element in the outcome regarding urban densification. The market is the driver for the plans.	Housing preferences are a key element in the outcome regarding urban densification. Dense-low housing the aim.

Table 4 The summary of key findings of the analysis.

## Conclusion

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The purpose of this chapter is to give an answer to the main research question.

**What has been the role of the 'market' and urban politics in shaping the development of Eternitten regarding sustainable development?**

It has become clear through the analysis of the case in Eternitten that the market and urban politics have each played a substantial part in shaping the outcome of the area. It is however difficult to determine if one or the other has had more influence as both are closely related. This interconnectedness can be contributed to the massive transformation that Aalborg has been going through for the last decades, which is exemplified in the transition from its industrial past towards a modern 'city of knowledge'.

The need for Aalborg to attract investment and human capital has without doubt taken the front seat in this development. At the same time, environmental concerns have been put on the back burner. When during the interview with Annette Rosenbæk, the author asked about to what extent this project had been driven by the principles of sustainable development, she acknowl-

edged that other things have been more important to address for the city. This implies that more important objectives have been prioritised before the need to focus on urban densification.

The case therefor exemplifies the complexity of both urban politics and urban planning. Even though environmental concerns are becoming ever more visible in the public discourse it is still disregarded when it comes to economic 'issues' and it even seems that it is only taken into consideration if it can serve as an economic argument. Furthermore, the investigation has suggested that, the planners were not able to affect the environmental outcome of this case.

This is however odd in light of the publicity that Aalborg had gotten since the Aalborg Commitments put sustainable development on the urban agenda in cities across. This lack of sustainable issues brings several issues that need to be further addressed. First, does this case highlight the deep tension between sustainability and the constant pressure of economic growth? And can this tension ever be resolved by urban planning?



# Reflections

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The case of Eternitten has highlighted the eternal tension between attaining increasing economic growth and more sustainable development. The aim of the city to fulfil the expectations for future growth promoting both financial investments and economic prosperity seems to respond to global expectation but to less sustainable development orientations. Despite the fact that the discourse on sustainable development is becoming increasingly visible in both politics and urban planning it has also been evident that sustainability seems always to take the back seat when it comes to promoting growth in the city. What is interesting regarding this dilemma is the predicament that planners are set in. Who's values should a planner follow?

During the interview with Mario Hasse I asked him to what extent he thought it would be possible to promote the values of sustainability in urban planning. His response did not give hope for optimism, as he claimed that in 'the real world' of planning if you cannot give economic arguments to environmental issues, the developers would most likely never go with it.

*"The praxis will show you what arguments are working. If you cannot connect economics to your argument then it will be hard. You can't convince a developer... lets use trees and*

*water because they are beneficial to the environment, you can't say that... However, if you argue, that by using them then your housing prizes will be more valuable and that your project will have more efficient solution in regard to rainwater then... You don't have to make calculations but you have to have arguments."*

(Hasse, 2014)

The research done by Karina Sehested on the different roles of planners take within the planning process, displayed an ethical dilemma for planners (2009). The ability of planners to promote their own values has changed dramatically from the past dominance where the planner was seen as the technical expert who controlled the planning on his own, over to be constrained by the political establishment (Sehested, Urban Planners as Network Managers and Metagovernors, 2009). Advocating and promoting values that are not consistent with the authoritative powers are not allowed (Sehested, 2009).

What then? Is this a doomed battle to promote and implement strategies that bear the flavour of sustainability or is there a way forward? Can it be that a better education of planners can move things more towards a sustainable future? Without a doubt can better education can help, but more importantly planners need to collectively stand up for the

good principles for people and the future even in the face of political power.



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## Appendix A

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Interview guide Annette Rosenbæk, Project leader, Aalborg Municipality

*What is your role in Eternitten?*

I have been the head of this Redevelopment project on behalf of Aalborg since it started 11 years ago. I have been responsible to be a driver in the process and oversee the cooperation with the owners and dialogue with the owners in how they see the development of the area, their aims and visions and our aims and visions and how they go together. I have also been the planner for this redevelopment strategy.

Within a year all of Eternitten will be planned for.

Local plan process takes a lot of time, as the developer never wants to build the way the plans state.

*Asked if the developers are not part of the local planning process (trying to understand why developers never want to build the plans are)?*

Yes they are but times area changing. The economic situation is different and one example is this area here (talking about the blocks in B8).

*Why was it necessary to merge the blocks in area B8 into D3?*

Why was that... couldn't remember... its still a part of the local plan (B8), the reason was that in the MP it started like this... maybe one or two years after the city council decided we are going for this. The economic situation changed... no it wasn't ... They were starting to look at this area and how are we going to build in the area. And as part of the planning process

A couple of years after this we decided to make this area a mix use area.

Then after they made the local plan the economic conditions changed and they couldn't see how they could get this area started. And they actually couldn't see at all how they could get anything started in the area. Then the city council decided to give a quota to subsidized housing (støttet byggeri) for some family housing over here (B8) and for some student housing.

The area developed quite differently than Aalborg expected... with a lot of financial support from Aalborg

21:00 talking about the asbestos problem in Eternitten



28:06 Søren Engaard decides to grow grass and plant trees in the area to put peoples minds at ease. But the bottom line its still going to be built..

30 they are starting to believe in building again for the open market

### **the redevelopment strategy**

*What is the rationality behind choosing 50% building density as an average for the whole of Eternitten?*

I understand your point. But to understand why 50 you have to think of this as a process that has been going on for a lot of years. It started out like 12 years ago and this redevelopment strategy was made in 2006 8 years ago. At this time the densifying of the city, we where not thinking about it at that time, as we do now it was two years ago we made an evaluation of the process going on (midtvejs report) one of the conclusions in this work was that the maybe we should have made this area more dense. If we want sustainable development within the city. So you can say that the way we look at the area today has changed a bit, compared to how we looked at it 10 years ago. Because the rationality is behind this density was analysis that said that we got an area that is between the city centre and the suburb and its kind a part of both. And in the area closest to the centre you can talk about high density but when we get here (eastward) closer to the surrounding areas, kind of a suburb in the way they are single family housing one or two storey high (parcel hus). And that was one point and the other was that the green connection from outside the city and into the city (østeråparken, golfparken). And this area was kind of like a black hole within these connections and we had this aim of making a stronger green connections to the Eternitten area. And having this aim, that was part of the background thinking density like this. To say that we have to higher density here (closer to the centrum) then gradually decreased it as it goes further into the surrounding area. Point is then you get more space for the green.

**Me** *one of the arguments of the report the compact city is that you can have higher density without compromising green spaces.*

One other point is that we looked at this area and especially this part and we asked what is the potential for this area, when it comes to housing and we saw a possibility for housing for families with small gardens and access to common green spaces. At the same time making these small communities that is nice to live as a family and this is actually a unique spot for this kind of housing. Located so close to the city centre. And that is what we thought at that time.

*That was excetly what was stated in the municipality plan that suburbia could be moved towards the city. That seems to be contradictory to the aims of the compact city and sustainable urban development. Is this a classic case where the housing market wants one thing and sustainable urban development another...*

I understand your point and if we really wanted to densify the city we shouldn't do this. We find urban development to be more complex than just talking about densifying,

there are other aims as well that we want to go for. And I think this area is an example of a clash between different things that we want at the same time.

*Was there a consensus about this development? Where there at any time different visions for the area?*

We had some discussions about it, especially in the last years, where there has been this wish of building more at some spots. Then we had some discussions about it, and if we feel that there are some good arguments for increasing the current density factor (of 50, the 25 and so on) and if we can see that the projects that are presented are good then we look positively on such applications and we create a dispensation. So even if the kommunplan states its 25 then I think it is closer to 30.

The thing is in the process that we are in the middle of now which concerns the southern area of Eternitten we are actually looking at possibilities to increase the density in the area. And this is a volume study of the area

We would never accept this kind of density (with all those parking spaces) if it would sacrifice the green spaces between the buildings.

### **Ownership of Eternitten**

FLSmidt owned the whole area. They started out owning all. FLS started out in the planning process and then they drew themselves out they didn't want to be part of it. We do building materials we don't do planning processes. They tried to sell the area as a whole, but they couldn't. They asked Aalborg if they weren't interested in buying, but their where to many things that were unclear (there was a lack of research into the area regarding pollution) so nobody wanted to buy the area. What do you buy? A polluted area that you can never use? In the municipality plan at that time it was marked as an industrial area.

The only way to get rid of this area was for Aalborg to step in and create the redevelopment strategy and create the kommuneramme for the area. During that process the discussions were about what kind of use this area could attain.

After the plans were realised FLSmidt sold first the B8 area to Søren Engaard and Pepe. Later on they sold the D5 area part of this C3 area to Calum. Half a year ago they sold the rest of the area Søren Engaard as well.

*Was the municipality still not interested in buying Eternitten after the clean up and the plans had been made for the area? What was the initial stand from the planning department regarding Eternitten was this an area that you would want to acquire?*

Yes we did we proposed that Aalborg should buy but the city council didn't have the guts to go through with it. It was too much of a risk, in addition they had this political vision that the redevelopment of the city should be in private hands. And that is not how we see our role (Aalborg Kommune). That's a discussion (debateable) but that's how they saw it.

*If you look back to this area what are your thoughts area you happy with it?*

NO! I'm not happy with it not at all. I think this area is awfull (talking about B8).

*How do you argue for your concern that the area could turn into a Ghetto if the architecture and housing will become to homogenous?*

That's was at a point where it looked like the whole area would be owned by a public housing association. Then we saw this area developing into Aalborg East.

Potentials of increasing density beyond current plans is difficult because that will entail that FLSmidt will need be combensated in return. He has sold the property with certain conditions. If higher density is allowed he would have gotten more money.

## Appendix B

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Interview guide Mario Hasse, Project manager, Cowi consultancy

Starts with an introduction to the thesis and my overall inquiry of the reasons for the level of urban densification in the case of Eternitten

As you say 50 that's the densification factor, but basically there are different levels of density on the Eternitten ground.

*In the beginning where you involved in the planning process?*

I was involved all the time in the process.

*Where did the proposal for the density factor emerge?*

The byomdannelsesstrategien (the redevelopment strategy) it emerges from a competition for the area. I can not point it out precisely but it was based on a competition. The density factor is based on the competition.

This was a competition with three proposals it was done to help the municipality make the overall decisions and overall planning rules for the area and as I remember this graduation of density was already in this strategy. The current municipality plan still regards this area as a industrial site (south part of Eternitten) so there is no overall planning law that applies to this area. The only thing that we have that we can base our design on is the redevelopment strategy for Eternitten and we will operate with a kommuneplan tillag to enable this realisable. The redevelopment strategy says something about overall structures. As a consequence the area will require a municipality supplement that will enable this area to be realisable. The redevelopment strategy is really a planning document that states how particular elements should work. There is a green connection that needs to be integrated into the design which we made especially in the last stages of the development here. Last but not least there is a description of density and there was always this kind of confrontation between developer interests, which traditionally try to aim high for perfect disposition of the area.

*This is what I have been trying to figure out don't developers try to capitalize on higher density?*

There have always been some situations where we have discussed higher buildings because the overall strategy... but for me as a planner when sometimes when you are doing the overall strategy you don't have the detailed design for the area so this is a process so the strategy in this case is it is also a process tool actually. Cowi always worked actively with it. There are some general things that we had to respect like xxxx and son and density. But we had discussions on how to make this entrance here and so there

where some overall traffic planning involved and we had to respect that. We were forced to re-plan this area quite often actually (4.2.B8). Because this was the first step in realising the 35 hectare area. So here in the living room area, focus was on the very intense and beautiful landscape, very special landscape, like plateaus lying on different levels. We tried to draw these plateaus in line with the buildings and we tried to make some, this is a kind of a planning process where we try to create communities (some fællesskaber) as we say in Danish and we try to find we try to find a good size for that. There are some design elements which I am not sure you are interested in. How we design the plan in regard to the city and landscape and so on. But if you want to focus on density and this was ah... urban development is always a reflection of social, economic and political decisions. In Eternitten everybody is acting. At this stage of development there was a demand for this kind of development

*when I read the municipality plan from 2009 it is stated that development should meet this demand, but then I am wondering if an area like that with a potential to densify when you have a market that is going in another direction, and how do you as a planner, do you try to argue for more sustainable approach vs a market approach?*

You have to see this section of the city as a district. The most sustainable city in my point of view is the mixed city and the compact city, with short distances and a lot of mixed use and also mixed population. There was a (midtvejsreport) midways evaluation report on the development of Eternitten, which pointed out very precisely what we actually new, which was that if we continue with these kind of settlements (housing associations) as these could lead to Ghettoization. I can't exactly remember what the redevelopment strategy states but I seem to recall that there doesn't need to be multilevel houses (etageboliger) /

I think this was actually interesting for you... It was the developer who asked how can we integrate multi level housing into the area because he has the housing association which was a potential buyer for this area and they have this kind of want these kind of housing types and as the primary living units and this is what they have and there are plans for this but it's not yet constructed.

*How can you argue for a different development than the developer is aiming for?*

This is what I believe in and this is the mixed city and put it on this layer and on this landscape and industrial history this is what urban design is doing and putting these layers together then it's okay to say that the density is lower here because you have a better connection to the landscape over there. There is a park and so on, and as you can see here (south) we are working with a higher density.

*That's interesting what changed during the time of the first plans to this one?*

This kind of this design is based actually following/respecting the redevelopment strategy but it's not saying too much about this area actually. Probably there could be single housing there as well .... I never read it like that because it's actually governed by the market. So we expect customers will go in for this kind of living or multi-storey kind of housing. With high quality urban and green areas which is basically and rainwater man-

agement and so on. From the urban planner point of view it is important that we have a city that is generating flow and generating amount of people. That you have a critical mass, which can generate the basis for all the urban living that, we have suggested for this street here. If we get peoples into the area than the theory states that we get the urban life. And we these possible areas that thought of to serve many purposes. We also don't exactly know who is going to live here. The area (south) could it be a campus area with many young people elderly the development will primarily will be started up by the investors that come first. The profile that we have given the living area is for mixed range of households; young and old. But again its driven by the market and I am sure the investor know exactly what the market wants and it is the mixed use city if we want to succeed with it. We don't have like in Hamburg where you are selling the plots with regulations that state specifically the usage of the houses. Here is the kindergarten here are the elderly and so on. There is a strategy how the social life is going to be and how many housing association you are going to have and so on.

*Are you saying that kind of planning is to rigid?*

Yes,

*In the new plans for the south section of Eternitten, car parking shall be located primarily in a special parking facility. At the same time the developer is demanding surface parking.*

Well that reality. It's pretty simple actually. Our investor is saying that from his point of view it's not possible to build underground parking as it has disadvantages as you have the cars underneath. I would support an argument stating this as unsafe concerning crime. You don't have any social surveillance there are no eyes on the street. Many people are afraid to park underneath.

*I would think that the cost of underground parking would be the biggest obstacle for not choosing underground parking.*

I don't disagree on that point. And this is surely one of the main reasons why we have to work as a planner with the developer and the community how can we integrate parking (surface parking) while still having a high quality of living. And then we made the concept and green plan boulevard with the cars on the outskirts of the built environment. There is a huge difference if this is asphalt or if this is going to be permeatable parking.

This is how we work with this pretty 'real'... The parking within this area is done in line with the regulation set by the municipality; there is no political backing concerning reducing the amount of parking for the area. We are following the guidelines set in the existing municipality plan. The residential area of the southern part of Eternitten is solely solved by surface parking.

I am really happy with how the planning is going with this area. An advantage that I see is that of course its generating more traffic but car traffic is the source for urban life. This is not Copenhagen. Just imagine, how do people travel to Fotex? How many go by car, bicycle or walk? How many people go to work by public transport, car or bicycle?



But we need to reduce traffic...

In this part we have investors that we have people that want to live here and they say we need to have a parking spaces otherways there will be no costumers. This will be an disadvantage. Other companies will say the same. But we still af the idea that it would be great if we could reduce the parking amount but there are no politician that has stated that Aalborg is going to reduce car parking by 50% for the next 20 years. This is what I call a realistic planning, if we want to have development here. As you can see the development for the last 10 years, how many square meters where built in Eternitten? This kind of showing the we have someone making prioriation here in relation to how fast development should be and who is going to ... if the community wants a car free city then my suggestion would be to (and I hope no politicians will be disappointed) get the municipality to buy the area them self's and develop it.

*Are you saying that without that market there won't be any development?*

Yes there is, and I don't have any research to back me up but this is something that I would say as an answer for your question. To generate some idea I think its important that you make a decision on what kind a development we want have? Do we want to have a city that is under development or do we want to risk a still stand. If we have this area that is not constructed yet, people are telling me there is a large section still missing here, but there is project for all those things. The faster you will get these projects realised the faster will the area develop.

38:05

*It's like a domino affect?*

Yes and if you take one part out of this domino game its going to be hard to get the others to join. And I think that this pretty much all the learning in this area

Discussing the outcome of the midtvejs evaluation report, and how Annette found the current development within B8 not adequate...

The answer to that is the architecture fails, I think there is nothing wrong with the plan. Vandkunsten ... if you see these two buildings then (I have to be calm, being sarcastic) they are not nice. If you have the sudhavn here it would be a completely different neighbourhood. As you see in this area here (B8) we made the realisations for that it would be a completely different thing. There is nothing wrong with the plan (I must say that as I am the planner of the project). I was talking to others due to the midtvejs evaluation and we where discussing the plans and if there would be more activated terraces on the roof it would be a completely different city.

Urban development is a picture of economic, social and political reality...

I think that a mixed city there should be places for people that do not have the ability to pay this kind of rent. And this is generating another kind of architecture. Isn't the mixed city also the city of mixed architecture?

Could the explanation for the be that the municipality had to step in and facilitate a planning process?

The municipality has this strategy that tells all about the architecture

*Asked about if potentially the state of the architecture was due to limited finances...*

These are not cheap kind of buildings they are brick houses

Higher level of restrictions within the local plan would yield higher density, but then I cannot answer if there would be any development.

And as I said it there are so many parts in this (speaking about the complexity of the process)

But I would still say that this area is going to be a success.

*Do you recall there being oppositions to the plans for the beginning?*

There has been pretty intense public participation in the process up to the plans.

If we want to make a plan here we have to be realistic, that is how I see it.

Its important to remember that this is the first local plan made for Eternitten that started the rebuilding of the area. We made a pretty complex document (we now realise), which is quite detailed analysis, and the level of description of how the public space should be like and then we met reality and then it was up to two players. The developer coming with his project and ... The questions would be... if the community administrator on the ....

Should this been made to simple or like saying should everything be white or more restrictive and I am not sure that the midtvejsevaluation is taking this into consideration. It's the same boring architecture why? And now we area working with this area

I am so unhappy with the architecture for this area because that boring façade. This is a question of quality and realisation. You will realise an absolute mismatch between the redevelopment strategy and what was actually built.

*The education of planners. To what extent can planners argue for a different outcome than the developer wants?*

The praxis will so you what arguments are working. If you cannot connect economics to your argument then it will be hard. You can't convince a developer... lets use trees and

water because its so beautiful, you cant say that... If have to argue, that if you are using this then your housing prizes will be more valuable. Your project will have more efficient solution in regard to rainwater and you will have the ability to ... You don't have to make calculations but you have to have arguments.

You then tried to apply these tactics in your project on the southern part of Eternitten?

Yes we did and we did also in the other project as well (B8).

I don't know who's to blame for this (B8) if it was the politics, the planner, the developer, you wouldn't know. However, it goes to show the complexity of urban development. There are so many actors involved.

All the planning for the area was made with the best intentions possible from every part.