

The Future Shopping Center – In Society and the Local Immediate Environment

HOW ARE STORES TO BE SITUATED in the city and city area in the future? In 8-10 years future shopping centers have to become part of the city area trends shaping future cities today. In that context we can observe that compared to today, we will increasingly be living in the city 10 years from now. The most stable trend in Europe over the past 150 years has – apart from elongation of life expectancy – been the migration from countryside to urban areas and from smaller towns to big cities. The sustained urbanization leads to the growth of cities and compared to today the Scandinavian populations will increasingly be living in the cities. The development is slow but sure. On the other hand it is not definite that populations will only be living in the larger cities. First of all, big cities will spread out and form zones of smaller communities on their outskirts. This is known under the designation of urban sprawl and is a phenomenon known from urban development through the past 200 years – most visible in the past 150 years. Furthermore, there are differences in regional planning, which mean that large parts of northern Norway will still have town communities and growth 10 years from now, while the concentration of the population in larger cities and city communities will be more predominant in Sweden and Denmark.

The big cities and larger cities will have even greater economic significance as centers of knowledge, politics and development of social life. Previously a city

and its surrounding area would constitute an economic region. In the future a big city will be the center of a business region, where a number of medium size and smaller cities will function as the production and residential surroundings for the knowledge center of the region. In the Nordic countries the development is pointing in the direction of 3-6 regions in each country – and it will transgress borders as in the case of the Sound Region (the region of Øresund).

FUTURE CITIES AND SHOPPING

Modern cities have become divided according to functions. Residential areas have been separated from industrial areas, and commercial centers with shops and classical urban trades have been separated from the others. Urban division and the division of neighborhoods into traffic sections was even an ideal in the 1920 and 1930, which, among others, the French architect Le Corbusier intentionally cultivated. He predicted that this would be the future way of living for the urban individual. This is the foundation that generated the massive apartment complexes of the 1960ies and the divided cities. It is really also this line of thinking that created the basis of the first shopping centers, the idea being to gather all types of shops under one roof: The shopping function was to be centralized in one area.

Throughout quite a few years this approach has been challenged in relation to urban planning. The division of the city created monotonous zones, where the buildings were much too similar. It is not interesting to go through these areas. As a breakaway from this development the functions of the cities are now being thought of as folded into each other. Future cities are created as a mix of functions in the same areas. This is happening because the division according to functions is no longer necessary or beneficial. Modern corporations no longer pollute and may often be placed within residential areas or commercial districts. New urban areas – e.g. the waterfront – are developed as a mix of business, housing and leisure. Golf courses are integrated in residential and business areas.

The different classical functions fold into each other in modern city life. Rather than having the sharp division of the urban environment into separate

city functions that many big and medium sized cities are planned in accordance with, the future trend will be to accommodate the folding of functions through urban planning. Today we increasingly move through several spaces simultaneously. With the new technologies of communication, first and foremost the cell phone and the internet, we are present in several places at the same time. The development of new forms like web 3.0 will strengthen this tendency in the years to come. The tendency reflects a changed outlook on life. Our mobility, mentally and physically, has developed so dramatically that we no longer feel confined by the usual spatio-temporal barriers, i.e. limitations in time and space.

Future cities are characterized by increasing heterogeneity. The composition of the population will be more mixed, and the selection of goods, services and leisure activities will be far more extensive. Corporations and institutions will grow increasingly different. However, the big cities in the Nordic countries and the rest of the world will simultaneously be more alike. They will all have the same heterogeneous character and the same global offers. Big cities will be characterized by their homogenous heterogeneity.

In the future we will not be living in different camps on different times; in different monofunctional city zones in different areas of the city. Compared to today, we will not so much be moving in regular collective streams from one sphere of reality to the next, typically from work to leisure and vice versa. The modern life style is flexible, organic and hyperdynamic. City streams are myriads of individual and diverse movements that wrap around each other – ideally in the same area. City functions are already - and increasingly so in the future –

PICTURE OF FOLDING

Three young people meet for a latte in a coffee shop downtown in a big city on a Friday afternoon. They talk to each other and are physically present at the same place. Some co-workers stop by and appointments are made for the following week. At the same time text messages tick in on the cell phones, and two of them also receive phone calls – one gets a call from their girlfriend, the other gets one from their work place. They are mixing leisure and work and are mentally present in several spaces. During the afternoon they will change their direction and orientation because of a party later on, so they might not know where they are going until it is around 8 pm – and perhaps they will end up a third place.

folded in the same areas and cross each other in the city space, in time as the day advances and in the consciousness and choice of life pattern of the individual.

SHOPPING CENTERS AND THE FOLDING OF THE FUNCTIONS

Shopping centers were created as part of the new industrial city, where functions were divided. The spread of the car and other modern means of transportation was part of the reason for the division of the cities. The American shopping center was made for cars and the shopping center arose as a roofed version of the original shopping center. Hence, it is extremely interesting to look at how shopping centers will progress under the urban development that we are currently witnessing.

When city functions are folded, the location of city centers within the cityscape changes. There are different dimensions to these changes, where the placement of the center in the city area is the most important. A center may be placed in the city, in an area of the city at a distance from the actual city center, or in the periphery of the city. Finally, it may also be located as an independent unit outside of the city.

Shopping centers in the city center will increasingly become an integrated part of the cityscape. Situational consumption means that the shopping center has to be viewed as an option you come across on your way through the city. The many currents flowing through the city have to perceive the shopping center as an open option to slide into. Today this already applies to shopping centers close to or as part of traffic junctions and other central city areas. Future shopping centers will increasingly emphasize this and open up to the surroundings, becoming an integrated part of a city area.

Shopping centers in a given vicinity will also undergo a similar change. They too will increasingly become an integrated part of the vicinity that they are placed in. At the same time it is to be expected that they will increasingly be designed along with other functions so that a new shopping center becomes part of the city center of a recently built area, or becomes part of e.g. public functions in the district.

In the vicinities, regional shopping centers will express the altered percep-

tion of the city through their architecture. The shopping centers will have a more open structure and pull the surrounding areas into the shopping center, when it makes architectural sense to do so. In cases where the surroundings do not form an interesting backdrop, there will still be closed shopping centers that are not particularly attractive until you are inside.

For detached shopping centers in deserted fields, the new city development will mainly affect the perception of what a city is. This means that these shopping centers are to express a weaving of functions through their exterior appearance and their interior construction. In many ways the shopping centers have to be a destination in themselves – to be attractive as functional building – and the integration of several functions included in the shopping center will, in its diversity, serve as a crowd-puller. You can go to this type of shopping center for a lot of other things than just shopping. You will go there to spend the day, or at least some of the day, with others and shop, be entertained, get an experience, work out or partake in other physical activities, chat on the web and get some personal care.

Altogether the urban development means that shopping centers have to do more to become attractive destinations in the future. Where they have previously been attractive because of joined shopping functions, they will, in the future, need to be attractive because of the joined city functions that you find in the shopping center or in its surroundings. Consequently, the green field or remotely located shopping center needs to include the functions of an entire city core, while the other shopping centers will either be completely integrated within the city environment or need to constitute a significant part of the functions of the city area. What applies to the detached shopping centers also applies, for the most part, to shopping centers located in a vicinity. There has to be many city functions within the same shopping center or in the immediate surroundings. When driving to the vicinity shopping center, future customers will expect to be able to utilize a variety of functions within walking distance – or possibly with other means of transportation that are an integrated part of the shopping center (cableways, water travel and other new spectacular forms may be part of future shopping centers).

The shift from shopping functions to increasingly include many other city functions is already a current tendency in many new shopping centers. Movie theaters, fitness centers and other city functions are natural parts of contemporary shopping centers. What will make these and many other functions a bigger part of future shopping centers is the development among the youths. Youths increasingly use shopping centers as a place to hang out. Generation Y are the first fun shoppers (presently the age group between 17 and 25). They will continue the trend of using the shopping center as a location for meeting, socializing as well as shopping. A recently concluded study of shopping among youths conducted by Fremforsk in Denmark showed that these youths are the ones who like the shopping centers and their atmosphere the most. They like them because there are more possibilities in the shopping centers and the immediate surroundings to do something other than shopping, and they mention movie theaters, cyber cafes, fitness and fast food.

As they grow older, they will be the first to bring their babies to the shopping center to meet with other moms and babies, in the same way that their predecessors in Generation X do in coffee shops today. Contemporary coffee shops in the larger cities have introduced baby bans during certain hours to avoid that dominant mothers and babies occupy the place, and movie theaters have introduced baby-free showings. Generation X is the current challenge for their regular spots – the movie theaters and coffee shops. Similarly, you will have to be able to accommodate Generation Y at the shopping centers, when they reach the same age in 10 years time.

A future shopping center has to be an attractive destination meaning that place-making will be crucial in the future. Place-making will involve designing shopping centers with the right mix of attractive functions.

PLACE-MAKING

How are places created? Consumption is a journey through life and an eternal process of individual choices.

Place-making implies a focus on the elements of situational consumption such as space, time, mood, season and time of the day and the general construc-

tion of situations that inspires a visit to the shopping center and consumption.

Place-making needs to focus on city functions other than just shopping and create a composition of functions that fit the surroundings and the shopping center's target audience.

In the context of place-making future shopping centers can work according to the same business model as the tourism industry. The tourism industry build up experiences in the following way:

- Before – read about the destination, dream of the holiday, be inspired to buy a vacation.
- During – experience the vacation, participate in activities, see something new, do something pleasurable.
- After – tell about the vacation, show it to friends, bring home products, get a slice of the vacation that you can bring along, tell about and continue dreaming about.

The first part of the tourist experiences has already become an integrated part of functions included in shopping centers today. You send out ads, create an image and invite to experiences beforehand. In the future this area will get even more attention and you will be able to create far greater interest by producing dream material beforehand. The inspiration to visit a shopping center can come via a lot of the new functions in the shopping center or simply by creating a need to be in the shopping center.

The third part is not a very integrated part of existing shopping centers. Purchases made in the shopping center are rarely followed up on. The products constitute the main story after a visit to the shopping center. Showing what you have bought is also a central point and it plays a big role in recommendations to others. It is possible to create further attraction to the shopping centers by focusing on giving the consumer a story to bring home with them. Give them an experience to bring home, which they can share as they would a trip to Thailand. Integrate event making in the shopping centers with something

they can take home with them – physically, electronically and in terms of experience.

The shopping center itself will also undergo changes, where the most significant part will be the development towards integrating the shopping centers even more within the cities or integrating more city functions within the center. Let us look at how the shopping centers are experienced today by the different generations treated in this analysis.

Generation Y considers going to the shopping center the most natural thing in the world. For several reasons they feel comfortable at the shopping centers. Among other things it is an alternative to sitting at home chatting online. You can meet at the shopping centers, hang out, be together with friends, go to cafes or get a quick bite, go to the gym or catch a movie (if the shopping center has a movie theater). Generation Y prefers the shopping centers over pedestrian streets or an outside city core. There is more to do at the shopping center. They like the diversity, the variety of different sounds and the big selection of stores. They are the fun shopper generation to whom shopping is something that you can do all the time, while you are really doing something else. They do not seek shopping centers as design cathedrals and they do not care so much about the building itself. However, they do care about the stores, and they look for unusual shops, new decorations, particular music or staging and they usually spot new shops quickly. A guerilla shop that is only open for a few days or hours is just the thing for this group.

Their successors – Generation Z – will support the tendency to view the shopping center as a place to hang out and the natural place for meeting with friends. For Generations Y and Z the shopping center is a replacement for the cafe. Generation Z is even more group oriented and will also in the future use the shopping center as a place to hang out in groups. Already today you meet a lot of 10-15 year-olds, who go to the shopping center rather than the youth club or clubs for leisure activities. This also means that the location of the shopping centers will be important. The obvious choice for these youths is to seek the shopping centers at the city center or in city areas rather than seek desolate shopping centers in deserted fields.

Today's parents and seniors are the challenge of these tendencies. It applies to both groups, who mainly consist of Baby Boomer and Generation Jones, that they perceive shopping centers as a practical arrangement, rather than a place where you would like to stay for a long time. The parents use the shopping center as a time save, which is also why they are often happy with the combination of supermarkets and stores with sales goods. You can buy the necessities and find a present for your kids or spouse at the same time. But if they were to pick a shopping destination, they would rather be in small, nice streets filled with ambience together with a good friend. When they bring children to the shopping center, the stay is on the children's premises. They do not care for the noise, light and ambience of the shopping centers, but they like the practical aspect of the shopping centers. They would like for the shopping centers located in the city centers to be integrated with the environment of pedestrian streets, so that it would be possible to go freely from one to the other. As the first design generation, Generation Jones would also like for shopping centers to be more neat and exclusive in their design and construction. They would like future shopping centers to be icon-like constructions that stand out.

Seniors look at shopping centers in the same way. They come there to make a day of it and manage several things at the same time. Their focus is also on convenience goods and the possibility of getting everything in one place. When they go to the shopping center, they prefer to come early in the day where there are fewer people. They also visit the shopping centers on the children's premises, when they bring their grandchildren. Seniors like to go to specialty stores in pedestrian areas, and they often miss better products and better service at the shopping centers – as well as in other stores. They like be helped by people who understand them. They prefer the authenticity in the city over the shopping centers, if they have to choose.

In 8-10 years retailers will focus on youths and seniors and to a smaller extent on the group in the middle – the families. This is due to the population development. The two groups are so different in their expectations of the shopping centers that shopping centers will have to be divided into sections focusing mainly on the youths and other sections focusing on seniors.

At the same time it should not be forgotten that seniors and parents also come to the shopping center with children who usually like to stay in the same parts of the shopping center as the youths.

THE DESIGN OF SHOPPING CENTERS IN 8-10 YEARS

In 8-10 years shopping centers will be designed to increasingly meet new demands and provide more of what we have already seen in selected shopping centers:

- Integration with the surrounding environment – city shopping centers opening up towards the city; suburban shopping centers with many city functions apart from shopping, and detached shopping centers providing a merged integrated city function.
- Many new and expanded functions in the shopping centers:
 - *More sport, wellness and relaxation.*
 - *More indulgence, pampering and pleasure.*
 - *Up scaling food and beverages.*
 - *More public functions in the shopping centers.*
 - *Health and wellbeing – for example physiotherapy, aroma therapy etc.*
 - *Art and design as exhibitions – other ways of attracting by integrating cultural life into the shopping centers.*
 - *Actual entertainment venues for young people – night clubs, music venues, scenes.*
 - *Places and facilities for Generation Y with infants and toddlers.*
 - *The shopping center as a meeting place – meeting facilities for Generation Y and Generation Z.*
- More targeted shopping centers, where shopping centers are constructed to meet different groups varying needs. Possible lines of division:
 - *Generations: Youth and senior sections.*
 - *Life phases: Teenagers, parents, seniors.*

- *Elite and middleclass – dividing shopping centers into sections of high end market and middle range market.*
- *Shop types – a division of the shopping center into a changeable and a more stable parte.*
- Far more stimulation of situational consumption in the shopping centers:
 - *Varying themes according to season, weather and moods. Just like the shopping centers adapt to Christmas, the skiing season, summer, fall break and various changes, we will see that shopping centers will lay their wager on creating moods and atmosphere for short periods of time – weekends, Friday nights or Thursday afternoons.*
 - *Design of technologically based temptations.*
 - *Focus on creating dreams beforehand (before the actual trip) and following up with memories, little things and reminiscences to keep after the visit (after the trip).*
- Convenience still matters in 10 years:
 - *For seniors and some parents the easy accessibility of many different stores and the presence of convenience goods still matters in 10 years. But we will also see new shopping centers that wager exclusively on sale goods. Accessibility, parking and public transportation will also be of great importance to the shopping centers in 10 years.*
- The physical design of shopping centers:
 - *It is mostly among seniors and parents of older children that we will meet demands of shopping centers as architectural masterpieces. Youths and newly hatched parents will look at the stores, the pace at which the shop mix changes and the chances of meeting with friends when they evaluate the physical design of shopping centers.*

- *Sustainability in the construction of shopping centers will be taken for granted in 10 years*
- *Until then a green profile is something that will be noted. Over the next 5 years shopping centers can market themselves and become more attractive by being green in the right way.*
- *Path-finding will be part of the future in the big shopping centers. As a visitor you have to be able to pick a route or section of the shopping center that you want to walk through.
Among youths this can be done via GPS and mobile technology.*
- *The international trend of creating unique destinations will also hit Scandinavia. We will have a few shopping centers that are to attract visitors from an entire country and far beyond the borders.*
- *Sound, lights and ambiance will be a significant part of the division of shopping centers into shopping centerer targeted areas in 8-10 years.*