



Place-keeping in practice

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There is too much emphasis on the *place-making* and not **place-keeping** (or long-term management) of open space.





Malmö



Seoul



Chicago



Portland



Shoreditch, London



Regent's Park, London

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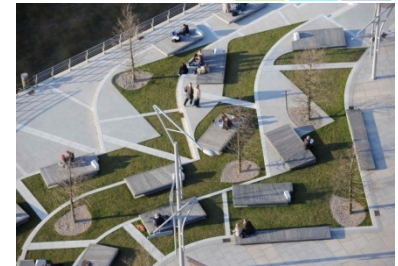




MP4 examines innovative approaches to planning, designing, maintaining and using public places for **the long term**.

Case studies include:

- Aarhus, Denmark.
- Business Improvement District, Hamburg, Germany.
- Bürgerpark, Bremen, Germany.
- Craigmillar, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Emmerhout and Zwartemeer, Emmen, the Netherlands.
- Gårdsten, Göteborg, Sweden.
- Green Estate, Sheffield, England.
- Grassmarket, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- HafenCity, Hamburg, Germany.
- Hailes Quarry Park, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Intergovernmental Rural Dialogue, Flanders, Belgium.
- Langthwaite Grange, West Yorkshire, England.
- Poeke Park, Aalter, Belgium.
- River Stewardship Company, Sheffield, England.
- Steilshoop, Hamburg, Germany.
- Telford and Wrekin Council, Telford, England.
- Temalekplats, Malmö, Sweden.
- Woesten, West Flanders, Belgium.



Malmö: Temalekplats



Source: Liv Sonntag; Malmö City Council Streets and Parks Department

Malmö: Temalekplats

- 1960-70s run-down playgrounds in need of renewal
- Council-led project in mid-1990s
 - Landscape Architect
 - Limited consultation with residents
- Re-thinking the playground
 - Shift from 'space' to 'place'
 - Playgrounds have a unique theme
 - Fairy tales/ Africa/ outer space...
 - Some include natural play



Malmö: Temalekplats

- High quality equipment
- A total success
 - Very well-used
 - Families come from all over Malmö
 - ...but this comes at a high price
- Playgrounds are reaching end of their life-cycle
 - 12 yrs, not usual 33



Malmö: Temalekplats

- Much more maintenance required than expected
- Place-keeping not adequately considered at outset
 - No place-keeping budget in place
 - Reduction of maintenance costs favoured through higher capital costs
 - i.e. higher quality/ more expensive equipment should have been selected in place-making stage



Edinburgh: Grassmarket



Source: Simon Williams and Marilyn Higgins

Edinburgh: Grassmarket

- Important open space in Old Town of Edinburgh
 - Tourist destination (inc. stag/ hen parties)
- Paved area surrounded by housing, shops, pubs, restaurants and hotels
- Character changes at night
 - Lots of young people attracted to bars and pubs
 - Problems of anti-social behaviour
 - e.g. late-night noise



Edinburgh: Grassmarket

- Place-keeping was considered from beginning of regeneration
 - Not incidental
 - Drove the design (v. low maintenance)
 - ECC responsible for the place-keeping
- Strong process of consultation and debate
 - Condition of planning consent
 - Grassmarket Forum: local interest groups (inc. residents and businesses)



Edinburgh: Grassmarket



- Consensus was not achieved
 - some residents felt they were not heard
 - residents' association (GRASS) emerged in opposition to plans
- Stakeholders with competing interests make consensus difficult to achieve
- The 'please most of the people most of the time' approach was widely supported
 - But residents were disappointed with the outcome



Pictorial Meadows



Pictorial Meadows

- Developed by Dr Nigel Dunnett, UoS
- Low-cost, low-maintenance
- Use in variety of site types
 - housing demolition/ parks/ amenity green space/ roundabouts...
 - tends to be mixed with amenity grass
 - crops can also be in flower mix
 - located to achieve high visual impact
- Provides seasonal change + interest
 - which mown grass cannot do



Pictorial Meadows

- UoS researchers examined 5 Green Estate-managed sites
 - Mainly ex-demolition sites
 - Sheffield/ Leeds/ Wakefield
 - Measure residents' perceptions of the planting
- Residents (50-90%) like the sites
 - 'lovely', 'beautiful', 'wonderful', 'green', 'open'
 - Housing is missed by some



GREEN ESTATE

Pictorial Meadows

- Majority say sites are better than 3 yrs ago
 - ‘the flowers’, ‘tidy’, ‘pretty’, ‘nice’, ‘colourful’
- Consistently positive feelings in the sites
 - happy, safe, calm and relaxed
- Benefits of planting
 - visual and biodiversity
- Most residents say sites are well-maintained
 - but don’t know who does it: council mostly cited
 - some perceive the intervention to be high-cost



Concluding thoughts

- Focus in urban design needs to shift...
 - **From** place-making alone
 - **To** place-keeping from the outset
- Place-keeping is about more than the physical space
 - Urban design process must include users in a real and meaningful way



Concluding thoughts

- Residents/ users love using these places!
- Place-keeping retains (and can enhance) their character and quality
- Long-term maintenance makes sense...
 - ...but it's not exciting!
 - But then everyday life isn't always exciting either!
- Such places have to stand up to everyday use over the long-term
 - And so place-keeping must be an essential part of the urban design process





For more information:
<http://mp4-interreg.eu>

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