The Value of Uncertainty. Temporality, Indeterminacy and the Post-Socialist Condition in Tallinn, Estonia.Three case studies

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The Value of Uncertainty. Temporality, Indeterminacy and the Post-Socialist Condition in Tallinn, Estonia.Three case studies

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Abstract

This dissertation is a longitudinal study of urban indeterminacy and the impacts of stalled projects on urban processes based on three complex development sites in Tallinn, Estonia. The study proposes that morphology, media representation, design aspiration and exploring everyday uses and rhythms of urban space should be viewed as relevant for understanding the process of urban change in post-1991 Tallinn. A context commonly explored through the lens of post-socialist urban studies is revealed through representations on multiple levels. The core focus here is on representations of three sites that have been in a long-term indeterminate condition and also a subject of several never realised urban visions. These are a modernist concert hall Linnahall; a residential neighbourhood, Kopli Lines; and a coastal development site known as Kalarand. These sites have been contested locations in the middle of a developing planning framework and their use and disuse are seen as relevant for understanding stakeholder relationships in urban development as well as uncovering the process of value creation in post-socialist condition. These sites are unveiled through plans and never finished urban/architectural visions, media representation and site visit documentation between 2013 and 2020. It is argued that exploring indeterminacy, non-change and temporality of space enables us to challenge the relevance of the notion of post-socialism and uncovers a toolbox for understanding transitions on multiple levels – from physical space to ideology and perception. It is argued that there is value in the uncertainty that is characteristic of transitional contexts.

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Preface

Originally from a small town, I moved to Tallinn at the age of 19 in 2006 to start my studies at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Slowly getting to know the city I became more and more curious about its diverse landscape. I wondered why a coastal location, where the coast is just a 15-minute walk from the central ‘Freedom square’, does not have convenient access to the seaside. Why is the inner city coastline a post-industrial wasteland even more than 20 years after the end of the Soviet Union and the demolition of industrial structures? Why does a sparse city with an abundance of inner-city voids pursue the heights and a central business district that makes references to North-American urbanisation? Why do some residential areas stay in an endless limbo of large-scale development plans, but there seem to be no solutions that would consider the needs of the present-day inhabitants? I noticed that there was a distinct difference between plans presented to the public and long-term indeterminate states of the actual physical space. Only later did I start putting these observations into context and thinking about temporality, seeing urban landscapes as being in continuous flux and formulating an interest in how cities could be planned in a way that would adapt to changes (in economy, politics, demographics etc.). I developed further interest in indeterminate landscapes, ‘in-between’ spaces that have lost their initial use and are yet to find a new direction, landscapes that are often considered wastelands or no-man's lands. This PhD project was formulated in 2013 and has developed into a study of the development of urban spaces of Tallinn in recent history, both in the physical space and on the conceptual level and plan form.

The initial aim of the PhD project was to assess whether the analysis of temporary uses of space could provide a basis for a new type of inclusive planning model. Looking back, this initial formulation is a sign of its time. The economic crisis of 2008 that had quite a significant impact on urban development

processes in Tallinn brought alive a new way of looking at urban development, but focusing solely on temporary uses is not the purpose of this dissertation. Since the initial conceptualisation, the focus of my dissertation has developed into a broader analysis of the development of Tallinn's urban landscape and exploration of the developing planning frameworks in Estonia through independent case studies. Central to this is critically unpacking the notion of 'post-socialist' space.

A key element of this PhD is its focus on the process of change (and lack thereof). The dissertation follows urban change that is at the same time continuously taking place. Practically this has meant that my text and thoughts became continuously redundant, and needed constant revision. I started exploring the topic during the high popularity of the concept of temporary urbanism (approximately 2009–2014), but now when temporary practices have become part of the wider urban agenda and the boom of pop-up urban explorations is more and more replaced with a second real-estate boom, these changes/phases seem faster and faster. Exploring how to understand, describe and consider continuous urban change is the central interest of this PhD.

1. Introduction

'Urban blanks are where the change is the most visible'

(Unt , Travlou and Bell, 2013: 12)

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia (a city of approximately 400,000 inhabitants[1]) is situated at the shore of the Baltic Sea, just 50 miles from Helsinki and between the major cities of Stockholm, St. Petersburg and Riga. It is a city where developments influenced by Eastern and Western Europe have created a complex landscape, in which fragmented post-socialist typologies meet earlier historic layers and specific contemporary circumstances. This border-capital has an urban typology that is in many ways unique but also helps to demonstrate the changing character of urban landscapes in transitional contexts. A dominant thread of analysing the present day urban landscape of Tallinn as a post-socialist city can be identified, but this perspective is equally challenged (e.g. Tuvikene, 2014, 2016; Ruudi, 2020), as the city exists also in the middle of global processes and mixed contexts. However, it can be argued that a dramatic change from one regime to another (and in terms of space, from one form of land ownership to the polar opposite) creates an opportunity to clearly identify mechanisms of urban change and uncover how property and architecture are always strongly embedded in politics. Additionally, focusing on the politics of space time could be a basis for more progressive, far-reaching and sustainable development agendas (Raco, et al., 2008). The longitudinal study presented here unfolds the story of urban change in post-socialist Tallinn, but more broadly attempts to bring focus to periods of no formal change, stalled projects and indeterminate conditions as an opportunity to critically reevaluate urban processes, politics and the city as a lived space. This research project seeks novel ways to discuss history, change and temporality, and the impacts of transitory states on the physical design of spaces. It does this while focusing on real-time urban change

1 The population of Tallinn in 1.2.2021 was 445402 (Tallinn, 2021)

during a seven-year project. An alternative conceptualisation of urban change is presented by drawing attention to urban rhythms, everyday urbanism and ordinary cities, and by exploring history, heritage and the development of everyday spaces in a transitional context.

After the end of the Soviet Union, many post-socialist cities were influenced by the decline of industry, rapid suburbanisation, restitution and extensive privatisation. This resulted in scattered urban landscapes in which dense new central areas are contrasted with urban wastelands, border-zones that are left unused or continuously vacant sites where development is on hold. Further fragmentation was caused by changes in the economy and shifting populations after the millennium. Urban development in Tallinn has, since the 1990s, been strongly determined by private actors, with the urban planner situated as an enabler who is mainly focused on identifying development opportunities for private developers, rather than a more sustainable overarching vision for the city. However, alongside this it is possible to witness a rise in self-awareness of local communities and civil society around matters of the built environment and more strategic and visionary approaches to planning. Concepts such as participatory planning and community development have become an increasingly significant concern when developing urban policy in Tallinn, especially since the 2008 world economic crisis.

This dissertation takes a multi-method/experiential/experimental approach to a variety of urban sites in Tallinn in order to understand some of the urban development patterns and approaches that emerged after Estonia regained its independence in 1991, in connection with the development of a new planning system. The dissertation brings together the ambition to explore what effect the drastic change from the Soviet system to a market economy had on the urban landscape of Tallinn over the course of three decades and how this is reflected in the way the city continues to develop. The thesis focuses on the development of present-day identifiable urban landscapes of Tallinn and offers a unique and

timely perspective on their recent history by exploring a variety of urban development models. I suggest that through morphological analysis; observation, documentation and analysis of culturally, socially or economically motivated (temporary) appropriations and temporal states of indeterminate sites; and the mapping of continuous urban change, a basis can be created for developing an understanding of the mechanisms behind the development of the urban landscape of Tallinn. This, in turn, can help redefine the role of the urban planner as well as influence policy making in terms of re-conceptualising the development of private property in relation to the wider urban context. The PhD focuses on documenting and understanding urban change over the last three decades (1991–present) in plan form and on a policy level as well as in media and through the author's personal experience of site visits made over seven years (2013–2020). Focusing on recent history is a conscious choice, but at the same time this perspective will also be informed by the documentation and interpretation of earlier processes.

1.1 Research context and issues

This thesis looks at three urban sites in Tallinn that can be characterised by having been in an indeterminate state for a significant period after 1991. These relatively small-scale coastal sites, a semi-derelict concert hall known as **Linnahall** (Eng.: City Hall), a residential neighbourhood **Kopli Lines** (Est.: Kopli liinid) and a development site **Kalarand** (Eng.: Fish beach/Fishers' Beach) are viewed as spaces impacted by long-term underuse that **exist in the form of a project and a plan, a vision of ideal space and everyday lived space**. Each of these case studies helps to unpack a particular urban situation characteristic of transitional (post-socialist) contexts and especially explore the balance between development and neglect in coastal urban locations.

Following the history, the development process and a personal relationship with each site, a story is uncovered that enables an understanding of the processes

behind urban development, stakeholder narratives and changing value systems. The thesis explores how the transitional nature of these spaces illustrates the development of a planning framework in post-socialist Estonia and presents an ambition to understand what effect the drastic change from the Soviet system to a market economy had on the urban landscape of Tallinn and how this has morphed over the course of three decades. The vagueness of use and future characteristic to these sites helps them to obtain fluid meanings – socially, aesthetically, politically and economically (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). Three case studies tell a story of the development of planning culture in a transitional society, each helping to demonstrate a period and certain aspects of characteristic processes. All case studies are characterised by a number of **stalled visions, long-term indeterminate futures and mixed stakeholder interests** and are in various stages of stagnation or development at the time of the submission of this research project in 2021.

By exploring the three case studies I am essentially asking **how power manifests in space** and what specific spatial patterns and processes characterise a newly capitalist society. How do these processes change during the development of capitalism? (Smith, 1984). Three decades of independence have provided an almost laboratory context for understanding power relationships and mixed stakeholder interest in urban development. The need to quickly develop new frameworks for urban planning has created a transitional situation, where capitalist development is accelerated through extremely neoliberal agendas that turn away from the Soviet past, and in many cases a parallel stalled development. This thesis is an opportunity to explore the nuanced post-socialist condition, challenge some key theoretical assumptions and explore the condition in depth by exploring challenging sites. Each case study unfolds different aspects of processes considered to be characteristic to post-socialist urban transformations – a concert hall, a residential area and a development site on the coast each present the stakeholders with specific challenges related to defining heritage value, specifically when dealing with socialist heritage, understanding the needs of

communities and finding a new identity in conditions where all the rules have changed.

1.2 The research questions and theoretical framework

The central research questions of this dissertation is formulated as follows:

How have the changes from socialism to market economy and the related ownership shifts shaped the (typo)morphology of Tallinn over the course of three decades? Could exploring processes shaping long-term indeterminate landscapes offer a valid context for understanding shifting value systems and be relevant to devising a more inclusive approach to dealing with urban heritage and shaping the future of indeterminate sites?

The core framework for exploring the case studies emerges from contemporary urban theory. This research addresses three sets of focus terms and practices. Core interests in urban theory that are used to frame the research project are **post-socialist urbanisations/post socialist urbanism, temporality/temporary urbanism** and the question and significance of **urban indeterminacy**. (Figure 1).

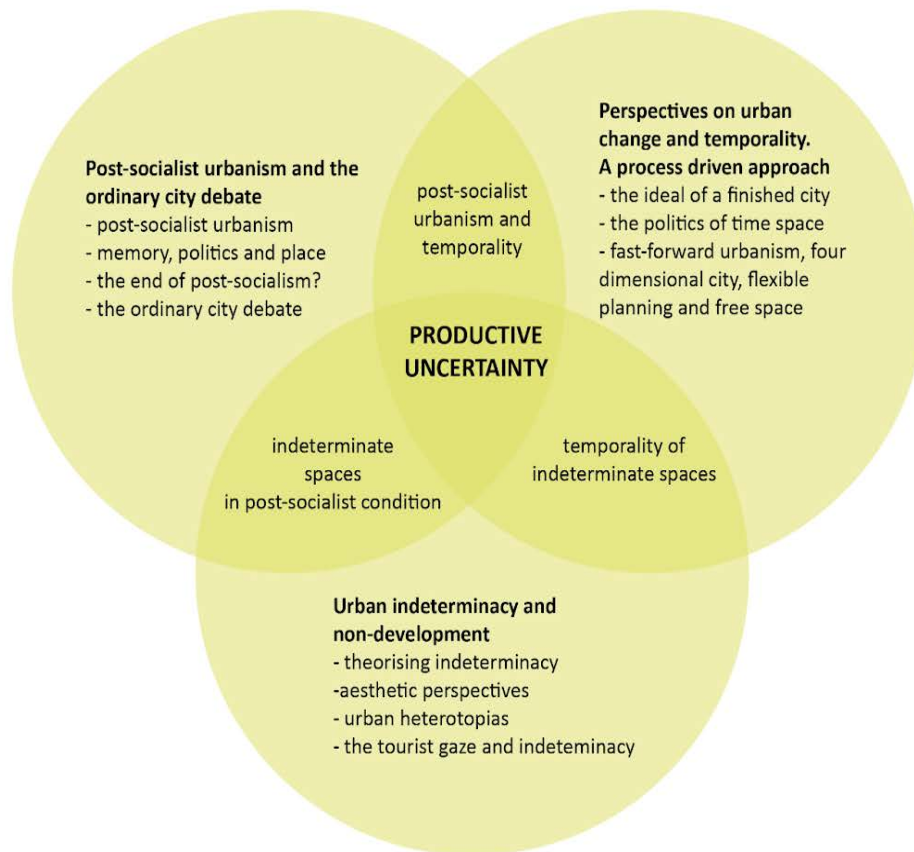


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

Focus theme: Post-socialist urbanism and the ordinary city debate

The theoretical framework emerges from interest in post socialist urbanism and uncovering the significance of post-socialism, by exploring the evolution of post-socialist urban studies and its relevance to contemporary urban contexts. What effect does a significant change in the planning system have on urban development patterns is a question that has interested a number of academics and continues to be relevant.

It is significant that this research project focuses on a specific time period – post–1991 Estonia, a period starting when the country regained independence – and the ensuing urban change (and 'non-change') up to the present day. This context is often framed using theories of 'post-socialist urbanism' (also 'post-communist urbanism'). Post-socialist urbanism has been widely used in literature as a framework for understanding urban space and the development of cities in former Soviet countries, but the concept has been equally challenged and critiqued, more so in recent years. It is often asked whether this framework continues to be relevant three decades after the end of Soviet Union and whether there is truly something universal that continues to characterise the urban space of former Soviet cities (e.g. Ferenčuhová and Slavomíra, 2016; Hirt, 2012, 2013; Pusca, 2010; Tuvikene, 2014, 2016).

It can be argued that while there has been a growth in literature that explores indeterminate spaces in post-socialist contexts, this continues to be a marginal stream of urban studies (Pusca, 2010; Unt, Travlou and Bell, 2013). It can be observed that post-socialist urban studies focus on rapid institutional change and its effect on urban patterns, but less so on long-term processes, including long-term indeterminacy that has resulted from changes in land use, land management and planning practices. Early post-socialist urban theory focuses especially on the wider idea of 'rapid Westernisation' and the politics of de-communisation, but less on what **did not** happen: the legacy of Soviet materialities that continue to be a present and very active part of everyday lives, the everyday experiences of urban change, as well as the limitations of the concept more broadly. Indeterminate spaces are relevant case studies as they exist in a sense somewhere between the past and the future and their temporality can clearly be sensed. The three case studies of this thesis help to unfold different aspects of the debate.

If the concept of post-socialism is abandoned, what might an alternative project look like? Attempts have been made to explore the former Soviet cities through

the lens of the **ordinary city**, a concept that originates from post-colonial urbanism (e.g. Tuvikene, 2014, 2016). Looking at cities as ordinary means focusing on a variety of experiences and the everyday lives of communities that are viewed as case studies. In her article 'Industrial and Human Ruins of Post-communist Europe' (2010), Anca Pusca has proposed an alternative approach to understanding the impact of transition from Soviet space. She proposes that rather than focus on the economic and institutional transition, it is important to create an approach that privileges the aesthetic and human dimension of change. She focuses especially on industrial ruins that are *'forgotten by all but artists and preservationists'* (Pusca, 2010: 240). The transitions that took place in former Soviet environments are relevant to study and theorise. However, they can be challenging, as they involve real-time study, looking at spaces that are undergoing said transition.

The detailed explorations of ordinary and everyday spaces made by De Certeau (2005) and Lefebvre (1996) have animated a widespread interest in the topic that gained momentum in the 1990s, and revealed them as worthy of study as important archives of social experience. As proposed by Amin and Graham (1997), all cities are equally distinctive and can't be argued to function as an archetype (Storper and Scott, 2016).

Focus theme: Perspectives on temporality of space and urban change

The debates around post-socialist urbanism are followed by exploration into documenting urban change. A central interest here is on the question what is the relationship between temporality of space, urban indeterminacy, land ownership and policy decisions.

In recent decades the ideas of flexible planning (Anandam, 2006; Kronenburg, 2007) and the temporal aspect of urban development have become topics that

interest many (including Clancy, 2013; Crang, 2012; Matos Wunderlich, 2013, 2014; Määtänen, 2006; Nemeth and Langhorst, 2014). Theories of temporary urbanism and the temporal dimension of urban development are relevant to urban studies (Groth and, Corijn, 2005; Haydn and Temel, 2006; Hentilä, Bengs and Nagy, 1999; Hudson, 2013). However, despite the fact that ideas of flexibility in planning and temporality of space are not new, they continue to be complex and challenging topics. Incorporating the aspect of urban change in practice is also a challenge yet to be tackled, despite more and more authorities implementing temporary use programmes as part of their planning approach. Largely, cities continue to be planned through long-term master plans that aim for long-lasting results based on the present-day situation with limited long-term consideration of transformative periods and circumstances and value systems changing. In essence, the topic of this PhD is very contemporary, both in theory and practice.

Tallinn, when viewed as a city in transition, offers an opportunity to gain an understanding of the fact that spatial ideals that are often future or past looking demand a constant review – this can be found from trends that shaped the urban space of Tallinn in the 1990s, the boom of temporary uses after the 2008 economic crisis and, following that, what can be considered a second boom, especially reflected in real estate development. This is not to claim that Tallinn is in any great way unique. Very similar processes can be identified in, for example, re-unified Berlin or other newly independent capitals in the former Soviet bloc. Developer-led short-term objectives are similarly characteristic to 1980s Great Britain (Raco, Henderson and Bowlby, 2013) and elsewhere. However, Tallinn's coastal and Northern location, and well-preserved and clearly legible urban typology offers a context where transitional periods have remained clearly legible in space. It is also important to acknowledge the diversity of post-socialist contexts and be careful not to make any sweeping conclusions about cities that have gone through a transition from socialist to neoliberal development models. The temporality characteristic to the sites in focus enables

a clear insight particularly to the Estonian context

The modernist approach to city building viewed planning and architecture as offering solutions to problems of the society. Change wasn't seen as a constant but, as Zygmunt Bauman has put it (2013), a temporary irritant in the move towards a 'fixed' or improved society. This has been fundamentally challenged through critical and often artistic practices, starting from the Situationist International movement and ending with the catchwords of contemporary urbanism (including the boom of 'temporary urbanism' characteristic of recent decades). Surprisingly, the modernist change-oriented approach to development is still a dominant trope, and it can be argued that trends such as 'temporary urbanism' follow the same logic of aspiring towards a change based on novelty rather than process. It is argued that there needs to be a higher awareness of directing and managing change and incorporating temporality in future visions.

This focus theme explores urban rhythms, critical geography and space-time. Reviewing contemporary urban studies literature demonstrates that there is a desire for a new framework for understanding urban change and an approach that would cross the barrier between time and space. The idea that while time is dynamic, urban space is a stable entity should continuously be challenged. Urban politics and planning have to respond to cultural and social changes and to an urban realm that is no longer homogeneous, both in lifestyles as well as spatial practices (Groth and Corijn, 2005).

Focus theme: **Productive uncertainty: Urban indeterminacy and non-development**

The final theoretical interest moves closer to the case studies and explores the context of indeterminate sites in cities. But why focus on indeterminacy and

what does it mean? It is fascinating to note that when exploring architectural or spatial representation it seems that space and architecture are often depicted as solid and permanent, frequently without human presence, almost like something that would exist without us. Moving forward from this, the chapter uncovers that representations of space often struggle to convey the temporal dimension, how space changes and what the forces are behind those changes. And often these representations, for example renderings of unrealised architectural visions, actually shape how we use space and how we plan and design it. The process of change and understanding its logic is crucial, especially in a society in transition. Planning should not be reactionary, only for the here and now (as it often seemed to be in the 1990s); it is observed that seemingly temporary states of space can last for a long time.

A number of researchers (e.g. Haydn and Temel, 2006; Lehtovuori, 2010; Massey, 2005 and Tuan 1977) have made efforts to provide a framework for understanding the relationship between time and space and temporality of space. Indeterminate sites, or sites with no clear long-term use, offer clear insights into the temporality of spaces on multiple levels. Indeterminate conditions are a breeding ground for informal uses, idealistic urban visions and ideological debates. This specific project aims to find out if documenting the urban typology through site visits as well as changes in plans and visions (representation) can be useful for understanding urban change and temporal processes and through that a more evolved planning approach.

By exploring specific sites in Tallinn and mapping the urban change that has occurred over the course of three decades, I am looking at the relationship between the temporality of space, urban indeterminacy, land ownership and policy decisions. By looking at indeterminacy I have an opportunity to ask **what is the value of in-between spaces and how they could be incorporated into planning or creating better cities**. Looking at indeterminate urban spaces as a breeding ground for urban innovations is something that has been done for some

time now (Bishop and Williams, 2012; Haydn and Temel, 2006; Hentilä, Bengs and Nagy, 2002), but what are the specific (land) uses that emerge on these sites? Are they formal or informal? These are questions that warrant further examination. What does it mean for a space to be wasted in a city and how do such temporary urban situations affect the urban experience?

1.3 Contribution to knowledge

This PhD presents a unique interdisciplinary longitudinal study exploring the question of temporality in the urban development process while presenting a review of the processes of creating urban space in post-socialist Estonia. A contribution is made to viewing urban change as a continuous process and bridging the gap between the planning system and urban experience. The question of value (how and by whom value is defined, how it shapes development and redevelopment process etc.) is a key in uncovering transformative processes. It is argued that mid-periods in development have a significance in uncovering patterns of use, defining heritage significance and shaping development processes.

The central contribution to knowledge is twofold: the thesis documents urban development processes in Tallinn Estonia post-1991 and explores urban change from physical, legislative, ideological and personal perspectives.

Approaching urban change through indeterminate landscapes or so-called in-between spaces provides a unique perspective on urban development/non-development. How to understand and document urban change is a question that numerous scholars have battled with (Clancy, 2013; Crang, 2012; Dodghson, 1999; Henneberry, 2017; Hetherington, 2011; Livingstone and Matthews, 2017; Määttänen, 2006; May, Jon and Thrift, 2011; Raco, Henderson and Bowlby, 2008; Wunderlich, 2013). This specific project aims to find out if documenting urban typology on the basis of an evolving representation based on

plans and vision documents as well as lived experience can be useful for understanding urban change and temporal processes and through that a more evolved planning approach. The approach creates a basis for challenging the continuous validity of the notion post-socialist space and for understanding temporality as part of ordinary urban space.

A unique contribution is also made into understanding the recent development of Tallinn in relation to its historical formation. There is limited research into the morphology and recent history of Tallinn, and it is argued that now is a suitable time to look into the developments in the recent history of the city as 30 years have passed since Estonia regained its independence and Tallinn was re-established as its capital. The case study of Tallinn is concrete, but its implications are in many ways at least seemingly universal.

The core focus of this dissertation is on indeterminacy and the context of Tallinn is explored through non-development. It is argued that the urban form of the city – how it is seen today, with its medieval core and extensive districts of wooden housing – has been preserved in its present form largely because of lack of development in key periods. The focus on stalled and never finished projects offers a novel perspective into the value systems that urban development operates within and the attendant development of planning culture.

The thesis explores relationships and contradictions between spaces, order-disorder, construction-destruction, the politics of memory and the rewriting of history. It also considers the user perspective and the expanding list of stakeholders involved in urban development processes.

1.4 The structure

The dissertation is divided into six core chapters and introduction and conclusion chapters. The introduction is followed by a more detailed overview of the urban

context of Tallinn in Chapter 2 and the changing and evolving planning frameworks and stakeholder relationships. This is followed by a literature review focusing on three core theoretical frameworks (Chapter 3). The literature review of this thesis is divided into three sub-themes that focus around a number of research questions. The first subchapter uncovers the theoretical challenges of post-socialist urban studies and explores the specific post-socialist context of Tallinn and challenges the dominant narrative through the perspective of ordinary city concepts. The second and third subchapters focus on urban theories surrounding temporality and indeterminacy.

There is no universally applicable method or a framework for explaining the significance of the temporal dimension of urban development, especially when exploring indeterminate and stalled sites. In this project, I have taken an experimental approach and mixed **methods from urban studies, architectural research, ethnography and urban geography**. A detailed overview of the mixed methodological approaches is given in Chapter 4. This includes a justification of the interdisciplinary approach taken as well as description of sources used as well as uncovers the autoethnographic methods used. The most substantial section of this dissertation are the three case study chapters. Each of these follows the case by exploring its history, its (non)development narrative in a post-1991 context and the space as an ordinary everyday lived space. The case studies are brought together in a comparative analytical conclusion chapter that presents a critical timeline of the emergence of capitalist modes of planning in Estonia and Tallinn.

Maria Kaika has written: *'the production of the urban remains fetishized, since the social relations of its production remain unspoken. The urban environment becomes naturalised, as if it were created smoothly and miraculously, as if it had always been there, distinct and separate from natural and social processes* (Kaika, 2005: 32). This dissertation does not propose well-rounded conclusions or a step-by-step planning guide for a variety of stakeholders. Rather, its focus is

on highlighting the significance of the mid-periods, unpacking the value of uncertainty in explaining the complex nature of urban change, temporality and transitional contexts. This is reflected in the concluding chapter.

A key element of this PhD is its focus on the process of urban change and the change in understanding of what is considered a ‘good city’ based on representations of diverse stakeholder perspectives. The thesis follows urban change that is at the same time continuously taking place. Practically this has meant that my text and thoughts continuously become redundant and need constant revision. I started exploring the issues of urban indeterminacy and temporality whilst temporary urbanism was a popular new strategy and topic (between 2009 and 2014), but now that the boom of pop-up urban interventions is increasingly being replaced by a second real-estate boom, these changes/phases seem to take place faster and faster. Exploring how to understand continuous urban change and how processes of change impact and are impacted by our changing value systems is the central interest of this PhD. This interest is framed around questions of value, heritage and significance of mid periods.

2. Tallinn: A city of sharp transitions and unfinished visions

'I believe a rare opportunity exists right now to really renew Tallinn and its urbanism. Almost anything can happen in a city void of fixed rules, fixed forms, or delivered atmospheres.'

(Lehtovuori, 2001: online)

This opening quotation, written by a Finnish professor and an architect, Panu Lehtovuori in 2001, acknowledges how in the first decades of independence the urban space of Tallinn was seen as 'full of potential', how a decade after Estonia regained independence much was still undecided, and almost everything was seen as possible, including new perspectives in the way urban development is understood. How this 'potential' was used is revealed from a number of urban processes reflected in the case studies of this thesis. The early years of regained independence saw an almost manic desire to westernise (or 'catch up') on every level, but especially in urban space. This was juxtaposed with similar vigour in reestablishing spatial relationships characteristic to the first independence period; parallel intense attention was given to **modernisation and conservation**. Tallinn, when viewed as a city in transition, offers an opportunity to gain an understanding of the fact that spatial ideals that are often future- or past-looking demand a constant review – this can be found from trends that shaped the urban space of Tallinn in the 1990s, the boom of temporary uses after the 2008 economic crisis and a what can be considered a second boom that followed and is especially reflected in real estate development that is presently taking place. This is not to claim that Tallinn is in any great way unique. Very similar processes can be identified in, for example, re-unified Berlin or other newly independent capitals in the former Soviet bloc, developer-led short term objectives are similarly characteristic to 1980s Great Britain (Raco, Henderson

and Bowlby, 2013) and so on. But in order to understand these processes and exemplify them through three chosen case studies, historical, political and economic contextualisation is needed (Brent, Grell and Holm, 2013). The political and social changes related to the transition from a planned to a market economy have had a profound effect on the city. The seemingly sharp change from a socialist economy to neoliberal ideals has created a contested space, and this in turn has been influenced by further developments such as becoming a member of the European Union in 2004 (Ceccato, 2009) as well as the 2008 world economic crisis.

The historic city of Tallinn as it is known today has been shaped by a number of transitional periods over the course of its complex history. These transitions can be read in urban space: in street networks and development sites, as well as signs of stagnation from different time periods that are often reflected in well-preserved layers of urban heritage. Here the dominant focus is on the urban changes and changes in planning frameworks that have taken place since Estonia regained its independence in 1991. Dividing the recent history of the place between the Soviet and post-Soviet periods has been problematised, more recently, for example, by the urban geographer Tauri Tuvikene (2015) and the architecture historian Ingrid Ruudi (2020). The landmark year 1991 is used here to offer a loose framework to mark a change in urban processes, land ownership and policy, but it is acknowledged that spatial and cultural changes happen over a period and visions that never became realised continue to impact the present-day urban landscape. The thesis tracks continual processes of urban change concurrent with the period in which the research was conducted (2013–2021). I argue that city-making has moved from unregulated ad hoc planning to more inclusive and strategic approaches during the three decades of post-socialist change, but there continues to be room for the development of a more coherent and just urban management in terms of accessibility, participation and approaches to heritage and urban futures. While long periods of uncertain futures and stalled sites characterise the process of urban change, the attention given to

liminality by various stakeholders continues to be limited. In what follows I will outline key topics and spatial relationships characteristic to the development and morphology of Tallinn, its present planning and urban change over the course of the last three decades, and lay out the context for the case studies explored in later chapters.

Exploring how understanding and acknowledging continuous urban change and stagnation has value within the planning system is the central interest of this thesis. While I am looking at recent development sites in Tallinn and its open-ended status as a post-socialist city, I suggest that it is also relevant to take a brief look back into the earlier history of the city and the way it has been shaped by different ideologies over centuries and what role indeterminacy, non-development and temporality have played in shaping the urban form as well as everyday lives as we know them today. This chapter gives an insight into the impact of never realised urban visions that continue to shape the urban reality of Tallinn today by highlighting some key examples from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; provides an overview of key processes that have characterised the emerging planning framework since 1991, including restitution, development of master plans and influential vision documents; and concludes with an insight into the question of urban indeterminacy within the opening Tallinn to the sea debates.

Kenny Cupers and Markus Miessen have written about Berlin: *'The architecture of Berlin shows its constant involvement with history. The city seems to be stuck with apparent insecurity that produces the desire to constantly rewrite its history. Continuously reflecting their historical background, 'Germans do not dream of a different future, but a different past.'* (Cupers and Miessen, 2002: 63). Tallinn may be examined from a comparable perspective. Tallinn can similarly be seen as a city of constant fragmentation that offers a continuous stage for intervention and a desire to review its history (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). Architecture theorist Andres Kurg wrote in the mid-2000s that spatial changes in the city

(Tallinn) could be characterised as 'happenstance', where a master plan is not followed, governmental interference is minimal and the decisive role is given to the developer. According to him, the city develops in pieces and space has become a fragmented collage (Kurg, n.d.). The urban space of Estonia was summed up well in the early 2000s by architect Tõnu Laigu: *'Estonian cities are a combination of natural and totalitarian world view. Urban space has developed according to the joining influence of one-time continuous developments, classical, Stalinist or free planned structures, zoning and incidental networks of engineers ... This has resulted in many forgotten areas, illogicalities and spatial conflicts, which are often situated in the heart of the city'* (Laigu, 2003: online). In 2010 a prominent urbanist and an activist Teele Pehk and conservationist Triin Talk criticised the lack of vision in Tallinn´s planning and the limited role the local government is taking in creating sustainable change (Pehk and Talk, 2010). The search for an inclusive vision planning model is ongoing and, in a way, Tallinn can be seen as a typical city characterised by the paradigmatic change from socialism to post-socialism and beyond and the impact of this transition is long-term. However, looking at this transition from one regime to another as nonlinear is becoming more dominant.

Beyond its mediaeval core, Tallinn is not a dense city. The landscape architect and an academic Sirle Salmistu has written that the (abundance of) space could be considered a core value of Estonian (urban) landscape (Salmistu, 2009). The social scientist Sampo Ruoppila has brought out that the main difference in post-socialist context results from the pattern of urban development – after the establishment of socialist regimes, Soviet cities were characterised by outward expansion, not the consolidation of a dense urban core. However, after the end of the Soviet regime, city centres have again become the focus of urban development, but continue to include long-term vacant sites, wastelands and undefined brownfields. According to Ruoppila, since the 1990s many former Soviet city centres have struggled to fill in the existing urban structure and increasing density (Ruoppila, 2004). Post-Soviet urban indeterminacy is in this

context seen not only as something that symbolises the death of a particular utopia but also a breeding ground for new hopes and utopias (Pusca, 2010), whether that is the capitalist ambition, as is the case of Estonia and Tallinn, or something else.

This chapter gives the reader a concise overview of processes that have shaped the urban form of Tallinn in recent decades and how these changes interact with the broader historical development patterns of the city. Key topics of interest are:

- **The morphology of Tallinn is explored through the lens of non-development and unfinished visions.**

I argue, as stated in the introduction, that the urban form of the city as it is seen today – the town's mediaeval core and extensive districts of wooden housing – have been preserved largely because of lack of development at certain times. This in turn emphasises the relevance of exploring stalled sites and never finished projects. Looking at stalled sites enables us to explore spatial relationships, contradictions in development, order-disorder, construction-destruction. Cycles of clearly defined use and indeterminate periods characterised by loose space serve as critical components of the urban ecosystem and enable to highlight the significance of liminality in urban development.

- **Policy, heritage and new value systems**

I view Tallinn as a city that has been impacted by a number of transitions. It is argued that drastic changes in direction reflected in the wish to 'erase the Soviet period' have influenced planning decisions made in the 1990s. Exploring new value systems that emerged enables an understanding of the development of planning culture in Tallinn and Estonia more broadly since 1991. The themes of politics of memory are explored in more depth in the literature review. It is asked if it would be possible to identify similarities between Tallinn during Estonian independence from 1918 – 1940 and the post-1991 situation. Was there a similar reactionary response? Looking at the post-socialist indeterminate spaces as urban

landscapes on which to project ideas is key to this PhD. I argue that post-socialist urban development should be viewed as a process and this process is reflected in changing urban visions and ideologies that become especially visible when projected onto long-term indeterminate sites.

I look at the development of planning culture in Tallinn by identifying three key phases: **ad-hoc planning characterising the early 1990s, the emergence of strategic planning from the late 1990s to mid-2000s and laboratory urbanisms post the 2008 economic crisis.** However, it is also argued later that thinking through ruptures can be seen as problematic and urban change should be seen as a continuous process. The phases blend and overlap: there are elements of urban planning that can be characterised as being ad hoc in 2021 and more strategic practices can be identified from the 1990s.

- **Indeterminate spaces and temporality in Tallinn in the context of opening the city to the sea debates**

The third key interest of this chapter is the user perspective of space and especially indeterminate landscapes creating a framework for understanding the case studies in focus in this dissertation.

This chapter will give an overview of long-term discussions around opening Tallinn to the sea that have been ongoing for more than 30 years and the challenges related to them. Are these challenges spatial, political or cultural, or all of the above?

2.1 The morphology of Tallinn explored through never-finished visions

Tallinn is seemingly an easy city to read – different eras and ideologies are drawn out in space with extraordinary clarity. The mediaeval core is surrounded by later layers that move outwards (simplified: the mediaeval core, nineteenth-century

wooden districts, developments during the period of independence from 1918–1939, large-scale Soviet housing from the post-war period and suburban developments on the outskirts of the city in the 1990s). Tallinn is the most diverse space in Estonia – socially and in terms of the urban landscape. The city is charged with cultural symbols and legacies of different eras (Feldman, 1999). The city is located on a bay on the eastern edge of the Baltic Sea and since the eleventh century has functioned as a trading port between Russia and Europe (Jenkins, 2008). It is often observed that Tallinn is one of the few cities that has maintained a mediaeval urban fabric. For example, Eric Jenkins describes the city's winding streets that lead from the harbour to the town square and the castle beyond as disclosing the city's mercantile tradition and its roots as an important trading centre in mediaeval Eastern Europe (Jenkins, 2008). The origin of Tallinn as a Hanseatic city goes back to the ancient Revalians, whose fort was conquered by the Danes in the thirteenth century. Tallinn gained its city rights on the 15th of May 1248. This supported the development of the harbour and connections with other European cities (Brüggemann and Tuchtenhagen, 2013). Over the course of the following centuries, Tallinn was under the rule of Swedes, Danes, Germans and Russians, finally becoming the capital of independent Estonia in 1918, only to be occupied again by the Soviet Union in 1940. After the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the city stayed behind the iron curtain for 50 years. Tallinn became the capital of independent Estonia again in 1991 (Brüggemann and Tuchtenhagen, 2013). Despite the constant change of powers, the city has had its independent life for centuries. Central Tallinn is full of contrasts. The best-known image of the city consists of The Old Town – a UNESCO World Heritage asset. The waterfront is not far from the Old Town but is a completely different landscape. During the Soviet period, the majority of the coastline was closed to the public (Unt, Travlou and Bell, 2013). This has both mentally and physically disconnected the coast from the urban fabric, and creating new connections has been a challenge for decades.

There are studies of the development of the city in specific eras. For example, the mediaeval period has been covered by Rein Zobel (2014), the early twentieth-century development of the city has been described by Karin Hallas-Murula, (2014), the transition from the Soviet to the post-Soviet condition has been explored by Ingrid Ruudi (2015, 2020) and so on. Recently, more relevance has been given to the fact that places that have been impacted by a number of transitions in powers and economic structures are often shaped by signs of unfinished visions. Some of these key impacts have been covered by Hallas-Murula (2013), Ruudi (2015) and, more, recently a research project conducted by the Estonian Academy of Arts Architecture Department 'Unfinished City' (2021) that culminated in an exhibition at the Museum of Estonian Architecture, 'City Unfinished. Urban Visions of Tallinn'.

While historic maps and photography provide a clear insight into urban development processes, looking at urban history by unpacking visions that have never come to fruition offers an interesting alternative history of a place. Periods of indeterminacy have shaped present-day Tallinn and are not characteristic only of the post-socialist period, but also give insight into the ambitions in urban development characteristic to the period before the first independence and Tallinn's role in Tsarist Russia, as well as the extent of ambitions of expansion characteristic to the Soviet period. In what follows, I will introduce some key never realised visions presented for the city that continue to shape ideas of what Tallinn could have been or should be even today.

Pre-independence (until 1918) – the city of Reval

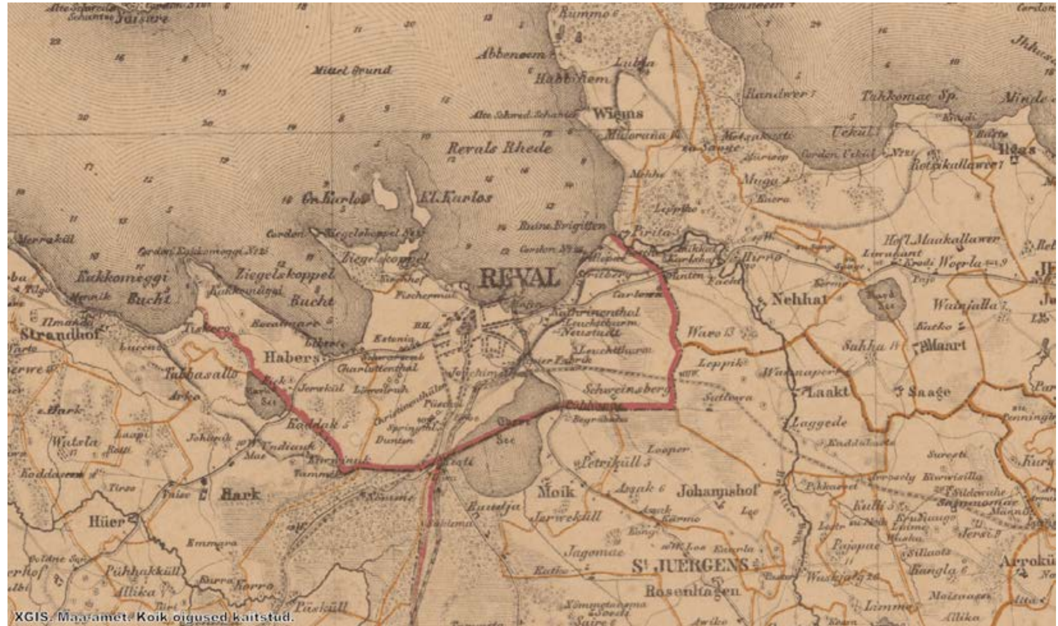


Figure 2:Map of Tallinn in 1884, Schmidt Eestimaa / Rücker Liivimaa (Source: Republic of Estonia Land Board historic maps: online)

Tallinn was known as Reval until Estonia's first independence in 1918. Early twentieth-century Tallinn was a fairly compact city with a population of about 100,000. The predominantly mediaeval old town was surrounded by districts of wooden housing and farmland (Figure 2). Tallinn was a peripheral city of Tsarist Russia and this status explains its slow change, but also the later preservation of historic layers. Maps from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrate the expansion of railway connections and the development of the city beyond the historic and compact old town still partially surrounded by a city wall (Brüggemann and Tuchtenhagen, 2013) (Figure 3 and 4).

Figure 3: Map of Tallinn/Reval in 1915 (Source: Republic of Estonia Land Board historic maps: online)

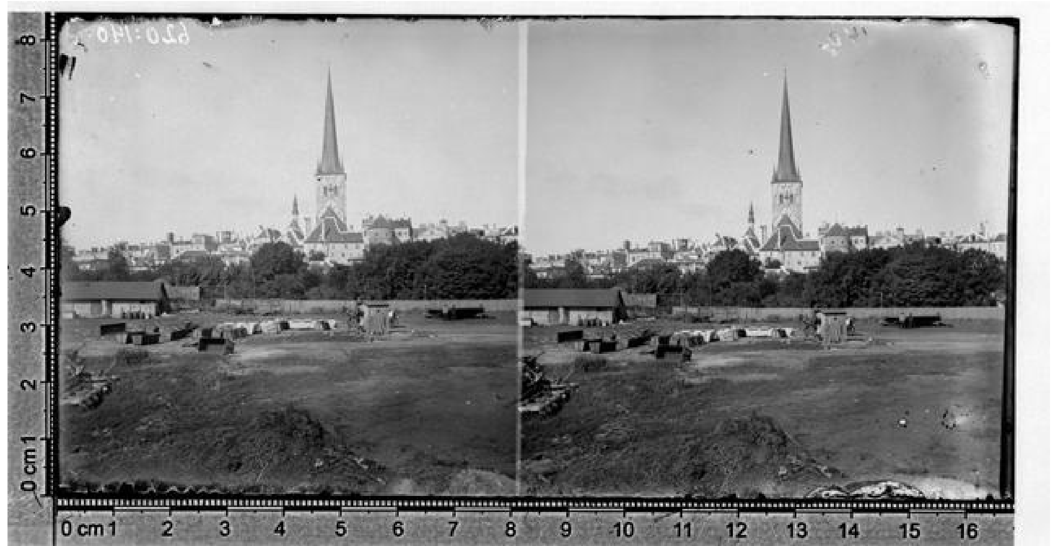


Figure 4: A view of Tallinn (Source: Valdmann, 1898: online)

Tallinn started to develop fast in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. An important connection was the Tallinn–St. Petersburg railway line. A number of factories opened in the city at the beginning of the twentieth century (Juske, 2013) and by 1915 the population of the city had grown to 133,000 (Hallas-Murula, 2014). The rapid development during the late nineteenth century

brought forward a need for a more planned urban development. Architecture historian Karin-Hallas Murula has described late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Tallinn as a booming place. It is thought that the demolitions of the mediaeval town gates in 1870 and 1890 were turning points that enabled the city to break out from its historic boundaries and develop a modern centre. Some of the developments from the period include a stone market building (Figure 5) by Riga-based architect Wilhelm von Styrk and a first stationary cinema 'Metropol' (Figure 6), built in 1908 (Hallas-Murula, 2014)

Figure 5: The historic market building that burnt down in 1944 (Source: Tallinn City Archive: online)

Figure 6: The first stationary cinema 'Metropol'. Photo between 1908 and 1911 (Source: Parikas, 1908–1911: online)

These developments also marked heightened interest in the future of the city. The first decade of the twentieth century was characterised by a building boom and interest in the social, economic and aesthetic development of the city. This is also evident from a number of architectural competitions organised at the time (Hallas-Murula, 2014). Being part of the Russian Empire at that time and according to the law, a city of this size was required to have a master plan. A decision to organise a visionary planning competition was made in 1912 – the results of this competition continue to impact the way Tallinn's potential future is sensed.

Five proposals were submitted to the competition, however, a well-known Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, who had also taken the role of a consultant in organising the competition, achieved an easy victory. His project envisioned a city with a network of public squares and streets comparable to Riga, Helsinki and Paris. The plan was never realised due to WWI (Hallas-Murula, 2014), however this vision of 'Greater Tallinn' (Figure 7) is one of the longest-lasting never-finished visions that continues to impact the way urban history and 'what could have been' are seen and discussed.

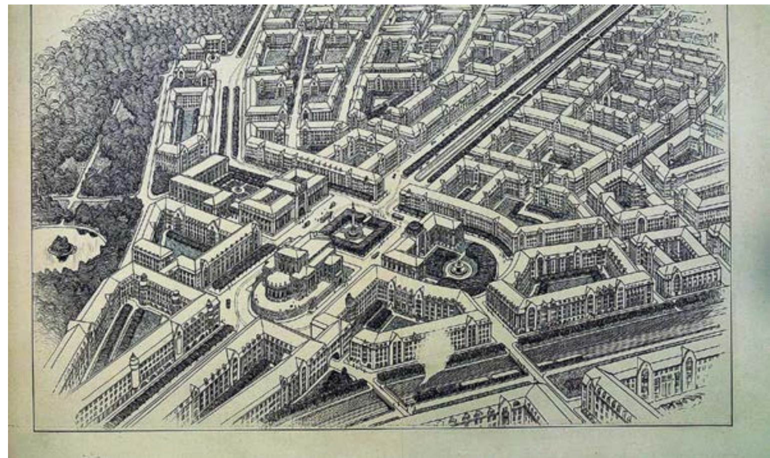


Figure 7: A fragment from Eliel Saarinen's vision for 'Greater Tallinn' (Source: Lapin, 2005: online)

Architecture historians, planners and architects continue to revisit the proposal that tells a story of Tallinn that never happened. The significance of Saarinen´s vision has been summarised in a 2014 book, *Suurlinn Tallinn. Suurkaupunki Tallinn. Greater Tallinn* and is seen as a landmark approach to city planning (Hallas-Murula, 2014). The historian Jaak Juske has described the vision of Greater Tallinn as a city with wide streets with boulevards and squares forming a grand urban landscape, with the tram moving from Lasnamäe to Mustamäe. Saarinen's project envisioned that in the upcoming decades the population of the city would grow up to 300,000 and in the future up to 650,000 (Juske, 2013;

Hallas-Murula, 2014). Though Saarinen's plan was never realised, a building by the architect was completed in Tallinn in 1912 (Figure 8) and this gives a hint to what direction the Great-Tallinn (or the Greater Tallinn) would have aspired towards. Saarinen's predictions about the city's future in many ways did not come to fruition, but they reflect the large-scale development ambition characterising the pre-war period that has emerged again since the regaining of independence. There seems to be a certain nostalgia for what could have been, with limited criticism of the approach proposed. A large-scale vision seemed feasible at the time when Tallinn was, like today, characterised by private property and real estate speculation (Hallas-Murula, 2014). Interestingly, this pre-first independence period vision seems to play into a certain nostalgia that characterises the post-socialist period and possible comparisons with Finnish urban development. Fifty years of occupation are seen to have limited progress.

Figure 8: A building designed by Eliel Saarinen on Pärnu Road 10 completed in 1912 (Source: Estonian National Archive online)

The period of first independence

Figure 9: Map of Tallinn in 1929 (Source: Republic of Estonia Land Board historic maps: online)

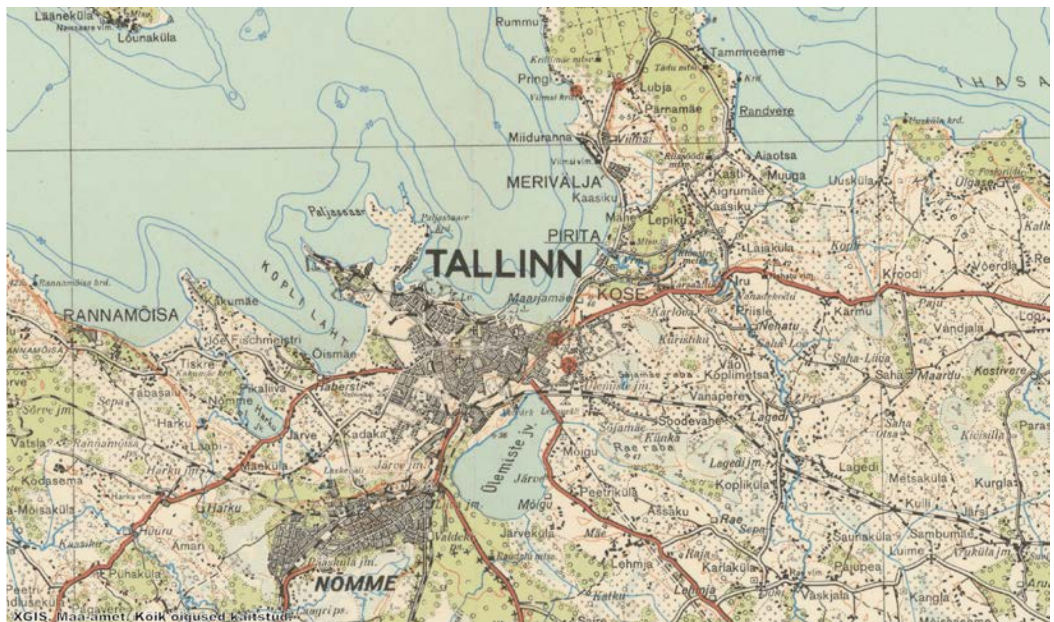


Figure 10 : Map of Tallinn in 1937 (Source: Republic of Estonia Land Board historic maps: online)

Though Saarinen’s vision was never realised the popularity of stone apartment buildings and more classicist urban visions continued into the period of first

independence, when neighbourhoods surrounding the old town continued to develop and expand and middle-class Estonians flocked to the city. Estonian first independence lasted for 22 years (1918–1940) and left a clear mark on Tallinn's urban landscape. (Figures 9 and 10) The architecture of the time was expected to reflect a level of nationalism and traditionality. The period was also characterised by a desire to 'catch-up' with the west (Kalm, 1998). The conservationist Maarja Sarv has described how Estonian architects in the 1930s described Estonian building culture as chaotic, unplanned and individualistic (Sarv, 2008). This enables us to observe interesting parallels between the post-socialist period and explains the struggles characteristic of a newly independent country. Gradually both architectural styles as well as urban planning frameworks became more structured. The layer of first independence period architecture in contemporary Tallinn is clearly identifiable but relatively fragmented. A more coherent whole never emerged due to WWII and the Soviet occupation when the focus of urban development turned more towards the outskirts of the city.

The impact of the Soviet planning model 1940-1991

While Tallinn was in many ways transformed during the Soviet period, as in the pre-war era proposals unfinished and visions continued to shape the city. The Soviet period included a complete reshaping of the urban development patterns and the emergence of large-scale housing estates: Mustamäe, Lasnamäe and Õismäe. Very little development took place in the city centre meaning that historic layers are relatively intact.

The pro-Soviet government came to power in Estonia on the 21st June 1940 and Estonia was incorporated into the Soviet Union in August 1940 as its sixteenth republic. During that time the population of Estonia was approximately 1 million; 19,000 people were deported or killed as *'the enemies of the people and nearly 70 000 fled the repressions of the Red Army'* (Feldman, 1999: 167). By 1945 the population of Estonia was 854, 000 and out of those people another

100, 000 were killed or deported to Siberia. These processes had a significant impact on the way people lived in the country. A large number of people were at the same time re-settled to Estonia, predominantly from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. New workers mainly settled in Tallinn or in industrial towns in Eastern Estonia. According to Feldman, the population grew from 854,000 to 1,566,000 by 1989 (Feldman, 1999).

The specifics of Soviet planning derived from land ownership. All the land was nationalised and architects, the ones who of course were approved by the regime, had quite a bit of liberty in designing large-scale projects with multiple parts. All land and buildings were completely nationalised in Estonia after the Soviet Union took over. The grand visions created for the city pre-war disappeared into history and the 1940s and 50s were characterised by recovering from WWII – destroyed areas were re-developed according to principles of Stalinist planning. Interestingly the general urban structure remained largely the same. This was a conscious approach in terms of preserving the old town, but some other areas stayed the same because there was not enough capacity for change. Soviet urban development focused largely on the edges of cities – in the case of Tallinn this included Mustamäe, Õismäe and Lasnamäe (Ruoppila, 2007). This typical Soviet development pattern is also the reason why Tallinn is a unique city in Europe with large neighbourhoods with one and two-storey wooden houses. Ruoppila explains that this also reflects pre-Soviet Union 'colonialist' conditions that were present in Tallinn between the 1860s and WWI – Tallinn was seen merely as a place of production (Bruns, 1993; Ruppila, 2007). A slight modernisation took place during the first period of Estonian independence, but by WWII there still existed large areas that had not been re-developed (Ruoppila, 2007). The land was managed in the Soviet Union through the right of use and with the right to rent in the case of apartment buildings. In practice these rights were very similar to ownership in Western countries; for example, these rights could be inherited. This didn't apply to renting land. Land and buildings were managed by the public sector (Ruoppila, 2007).

The Stalinist period is characterised by the beginning of urban expansion and the construction of housing estates for new workers. At the time land uses were planned through general plans. These general plans were focused on the future and relatively detailed. Two general plans were approved during the Soviet period, one in 1953 and the other in 1971, both for 20 years (Ruoppila, 2007). More detailed plans resulted from various planning projects. The first general plan saw the importance of Tallinn as a seaside location and looked for solutions to connect the city centre with the coast, and planned a new city centre and mobility solutions. Transport corridors in the city were planned to be radial. The second general plan, the so-called 'The plan of Great-Tallinn' focused more on large scale housing estates – during the planning period the number of inhabitants in Tallinn grew considerably (from 283, 071 in 1959 to 478,974 in 1989). The Soviet period was a time when Tallinn went through the quickest changes and grew the fastest (Kurik and Maran, 2014).

Modernist ideals characteristic to Soviet planning that envisioned a city functioning like clockwork, where everyday life took place in well-organised micro-districts and fast public transport moved masses between factories and home, have stretched the borders of Tallinn towards both the East and West. The building of Mustamäe, Lasnamäe and Õismäe (Figures 11, 12 and 13) within a few decades is an example of the large-scale visions characteristic of Soviet planning, the same could be said about the fairly radical large scale transport planning (Kurik and Maran, 2014). While the impact of Soviet planning can clearly be seen in present urban space, there is a layer of unfinished Soviet visions that were never completed, some of them leaving marks on the present-day urban landscape.

Figure 11: Construction of new residential buildings in Mustamäe, Tallinn (Source: Kuznetsov: online)

Figure 12: A view of Lasnamäe (Source: ETA, 1980–1990: online)

Figure 13: A view of Väike-Õismäe residential area in the 1980s (Source: The Estonian Museum of Architecture, 1980s: online)

When one regime changes for another, a certain permanently temporary state remains. Projects that have not been finished will be replaced with new visions, but ideas that were never realised continue to live on in discussions that tend to resurface again and again and are expressed in the small-scale spatial absurd – a staircase, that leads nowhere, or a design of contemporary architecture that follows the trajectories of former visions. The 1990s were characterised by opposition to Soviet spatial developments, and people wished to replace planning solutions that derived from socialist ideals with more 'Western' spaces. This type of opposition was supported by the very quick growth in private property. Exactly these sorts of interruptions or changes of direction in spatial development create contrasts and shifts, tighten the atmosphere of the unfinished and further emphasise the spatial complexities of Tallinn. The following brief case studies give an insight into Soviet planning through the exploration of unfinished projects and enable us to ask how unfinished transportation networks, a district centre, a central square, a street and radial promenades influence contemporary spatial experience and planning (Kurik and Maran, 2014). In what follows I will highlight some significant examples of how unfinished projects continue to shape urban experience even decades later.

The Rävala Avenue breakthrough

Figure 14: A building on Rävala Avenue designed to accommodate a never realised urban vision (Source:Maran, 2014: online)

Rävala avenue was already designated to become a significant central axis in the first general plan. Together with Teatri Square, which was to be designed in front of Estonia Opera House, it would have become an important trajectory for movement in the city centre. In the second general plan, the avenue was drawn longer towards the west, so that it would connect two radial main roads – Pärnu and Tartu road. This connection was planned to be finished with the building of a new opera house on Tõnismäe. An architectural competition was even organised, but a satisfactory plan was never established and the idea, which would have also included demolishing a significant number of wooden houses, did not find support among the local inhabitants. The plan, however, continues to impact urban processes. The extension of Rävala avenue continues to be in the master plan of Tallinn today as a necessary connection on the East and West axes. In 2014 a building by Pluss architects was erected at the end of Rävala avenue that in its form seems to consider the opportunity of the cut-through being built one day (Figure 14). The project description states *'So that the person moving in the proximity of the building would sense the continuation of urban space from the perspective of Rävala avenue, the main block of the building has been lifted on the level of the 5th floor'* (Pluss, 2011: online). This never realised vision of

restructuring the city centre of Tallinn continues to echo Soviet planning ideals (Kurik and Maran, 2014).

Viru Square: The heart of the city

Figure 15: A view of Viru Square (Maran, 2014: online)

In 1945 Viru square (Figure 15) was designated to be the new main square of Tallinn. The idea continued throughout the rule of Stalin. A competition for the design of the square, however, was only organised in 1962. Although at the beginning of the Soviet period the area was envisioned as a central square for hosting parades and meetings, by 1962 that vision had somewhat changed. Actually, it was even suggested that the area could be partially or fully built up. However, in the project for planning and housing in Tallinn, this solution was set aside. The project saw the area not as built up, but rather as a new centre of public life and business.

In the contemporary urban space Viru square is ‘missing’, however the notion ‘Viru square’ continues to be used while there is no square in the classical sense. With the building of Viru shopping centre in 2004, the area gained a new direction of development. It has become one of the main business and shopping areas in the city. But the motive of a public square resurfaces from time to time

as a guard against building further commercial buildings and increasing car-centric traffic.(Kurik and Maran, 2014)

Mustamäe: the first Soviet 'bedroom suburb'

Figure 16: A green space in Mustamöe (Source: Maran, 2014: online)

The development of industry and the exponential population growth after WWII increased the need for housing. The planning of industrial open-plan suburbs was initiated. The construction of Mustamäe started in 1962 and the vision was to build an open-plan large-scale housing estate combined of micro districts with 4–9 storey housing. Every micro-district would include the necessary public and commercial functions and green spaces. The centre of the district was planned to be in the area between Ehitajate road, Mustamäe road and Keskuse road. In 1970, architect Raine Karp made a detailed plan for the area, but it never reached the stage of a building project. The district centre was seen to include a large cultural centre with a 1,000-seat cinema, library, dance hall, restaurant with 350 places, hotel, café and diner, and a shopping centre. Next to this, an administrative high-rise building would have been built.

This fate is characteristic of a number of large-scale housing projects, in Tallinn and elsewhere. Many public buildings and centres of micro-districts have been left unfinished, foremost because of rushed construction. In conditions of ever-increasing demand for housing, apartments would be built but never the communal functions. Because of this, the image of these districts being primarily bedroom suburbs has deepened.

Today, the planned central area is a green space with playgrounds and sculptures (Figure 16). People have learnt to use the park through initiatives by the local municipality. However, it seems that near where Mustamäe meets Nõmme there is no real need for a green space like this. It is difficult to pin down in space what would be the centre of contemporary Mustamäe – more social focal points are gathered around the Tallinn University of Technology and various shopping centres. Planned micro-districts don't function, especially because of the lack of public facilities.

Lasnamäe and a stairway to nowhere

Figure 17: Steps leading to a never realised tramline in Lasnamäe, Tallinn (Source:Maran, 2014: online)

Lasnamäe is the newest of the panel housing districts in Tallinn built during the Soviet period. The main roads were planned to be excavated into the ground and Laagna road was finished according to that plan. In 1978 the transportation scheme project for Tallinn was approved and this also included a tramway. Construction started in 1988 and even the rails were placed. This was a year before the singing revolution and for various reasons the project was never finished. On Laagna road today the tramway is marked by stairs that in the middle of the road seem to lead nowhere (Figure 17), and the idea of a tramway continues to live on in articles published time and time again, with titles such as 'The high-speed tramway of Lasnamäe will be built in five years' (Roos, 2004) and 'Tallinn promises Lasnamäe tram line and a mono-rail covering the whole city' (2017).

Permanently temporary

Stalled or never-finished projects are not just characteristic of the Soviet period. Similar examples are plentiful even in contemporary Tallinn. In today's space, the unclear faith of these objects is expressed in temporary uses: temporary contracts for petrol stations, car parks or some other ‘flexible’ solution seems to fill the gap. What makes the visions of the spatial planners of the Soviet Union distinct is their scope – unfinished projects include centres of housing estates, large roads, transport corridors, a boulevard and a planned central square. Because of its complex history, the urban landscape of Tallinn is characterised by low density. However, these gaps characteristic of the city are often also seen to incorporate a unique potential for experimentation with alternative uses and modes of collaboration as well as developer-driven temporary utilisation of land, creating a playground for experimentation in the following neoliberal development frameworks.

2.2 Tallinn since 1991: urban policy and emerging value systems

'An improved understanding of urban change in Eastern Europe requires a close examination of the political, economic and institutional frameworks of urban governance specific to Eastern Europe, as well as the variation of these frameworks within the region.'
(Feldman, 2000: 832)

From ad hoc planning to laboratory urbanism

When Estonia regained its independence in 1991 Tallinn had grown to a city with a population of over 500,000, and several new large-scale housing estates such as Lasnamäe, Õismäe and Mustamäe defined the post-Soviet urban landscape. Dealing with Soviet heritage in a neoliberal context created a number of spatial challenges. Additionally, new neoliberal planning models also triggered a process of suburbanisation and the development of 'field villages', spreading the city further.

Post-communist cities across the Eastern Bloc experienced rapid re-development. For Estonia and Tallinn, erasing the Soviet memory became a goal on its own (Unt, Travlou and Bell, 2013; Martinez, 2018). The urban sociologist Francisco Martinez describes what came after 1991 as social amnesia about the Soviet world. It is important to note that post-socialist Estonia did not just become an independent state, but officially regained its independence. Martinez draws a curious 'Back to the Future' parallel wherein Estonian consciousness is necessary to deny the Soviet past in order to return to the first republic. The Soviet past is in a way looked at as an anomaly. History was re-invented for economic and community reasons as well as to attract investors and tourists (Martinez, 2018). Anna Liisa Unt et al. describe how the communist reforms may have taken a remarkably short time – a few weeks for the political

change and a few years for the economic and institutional changes. Built structures, however, have lasted longer. In the case of Tallinn, the Soviet regime had a strong impact on urban space, especially at the waterfront. In urban development, priority was taken by property rights, economic development and improvements in material standards of living and sometimes this was at the expense of the environment (Unt, Travlou and Bell, 2013). Merje Feldman has critiqued an approach to understanding this transition from socialism to capitalism as a process of catching up with the West and the narrative in which institutions slowly conform to 'ideal' and 'normal' (Feldman, 2000). Understanding of this complexity has developed further since with broader exploration of post-socialist urbanism specifically in the Estonian context.

Sampo Ruoppila has critically looked at the development of planning in Tallinn after 1991. He has observed the principal change that took place in planning systems in central and Eastern Europe since the dismantling of the Soviet Union. The transition to a market economy and the re-birth of real-estate markets also demanded creating new planning systems (Ruoppila, 2007). But this process of renewal in planning systems has been controversial in many ways. Ruoppila writes about the 'euphoria of freedom' and resulting support for cuts in the administration that left planning in a weak condition. The early 1990s can be understood as an era of confusion in which it wasn't clear how much validity to give to the limits that had been guiding urban planning until then. Ruoppila refers to Newman and Thomley who claimed in 1996 that Eastern European countries do not have new planning systems (Ruoppila, 2007). Typically two phases are distinguished in post-socialist planning since then. The first phase, which can be observed up to the late 1990s, was characterised by very little political intervention in physical planning. A very liberal attitude to urban development was typical. The purpose of urban planning as such was questioned in the conditions of the market economy; there was no need for long-term strategies or master plans and for this reason this phase is often referred to as '*ad hoc'* planning (Ruoppila, 2007). For example, throughout the 1990s Tallinn was

planned without a master plan. The last master plan was declared obsolete with the fall of the Soviet system (Feldman, 2000). The communication between the public and private sector was weak. The second phase that can be observed from the late 1990s has strengthened planning. Strategic planning became a relevant notion. The first master plan of newly independent Tallinn was adopted in 2000 and defined urban development relatively generally. In its essence it was more of an overview of the urban structure, it was not really a visionary document. The logic behind this was that it enabled flexible reactions to societal changes. At the same time, the plan was also criticised for its lack of guidance (Ruoppila, 2007). However, it can still be observed that physical land planning and related legislation were becoming stronger. Topics of sustainable development became important as laws were increasingly aligned with the European Union. Important landmarks were approval of the master plan and the implementation of building regulation in different areas and neighbourhood specific plans (Ruoppila, 2007; Kurik and Kljavin, 2014). A number of visionary planning documents and strategies have been published since, such as Tallinn Strategy 2025 (Tafel and Terk, 2004), Tallinn development strategy 2035 (2020) and so on.

The first very general strategy document was formalised and published in 2005 and outlines the main development directions that Tallinn should be heading towards in the next 20 years. The strategy is relevant as a snapshot of a point in time in urban development and outlines the main challenges the city was facing. These include a large number of people with low-income security and structural unemployment; issues related to restitution, which has resulted in many properties being left to deteriorate; and health and addiction issues. It was identified that Tallinn's future development will have to happen in close competition with Riga, Helsinki and other nearby cities. But at the same time, the geographic dimension of the city is also important in terms of the wider development of Estonia, Tallinn and its urban region and the city itself. The strategy envisions a fast but balanced development (Tafel and Terk, 2004).

Here it is argued that the third phase of urban planning can be identified in Tallinn. This third phase is mainly characterised by the growth of active citizen participation and stronger collaboration between stakeholders. It can be argued that in some ways urban planning is becoming more inclusive and incorporates bottom-up practices, community-led initiatives and so on, but there continue to be limits to this. The main spokespersons for alternative planning methods including, for example, temporary urbanism in Estonia and Tallinn have been Panu Lehtovuori and Sampo Ruoppila. In 2001 Lehtovuori wrote as quoted at the beginning of this chapter: *'I believe a rare opportunity exists right now to really renew Tallinn and its urbanism. Almost anything can happen in a city void of a fixed rule, fixed forms, or delivered atmospheres'* (Lehtovuori, 2001: online). Eleven years later Lehtovuori and Ruoppila continued to write that the post-socialist city would have enormous possibilities for creative regeneration, for example through temporary uses, especially in former industrial areas and indeterminate sites (Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012). In the ten years since this urban development has clearly intensified with the gradual gentrification of central historic neighbourhoods, a boom of culture-led regeneration and use of historic factory buildings and expansion of large-scale residential development to Kopli and other areas formerly seen as lacking development potential.

2.2.1 Heritage protection and heritage-inspired development

Another challenging field that needed rethinking post-1991 has been the approach to heritage protection, defining what is valuable, what needs to be protected and what needs to be restored. The first master plan of Tallinn (2000) included a policy for milieu-valued areas (*conservation areas*) (Semm, 2013). This city controlled designation identifies neighbourhoods that are considered to have heritage significance in Tallinn. Initially, eight areas in Tallinn were given this conservation area status. These included Kalamaja, Pelgulinn, Kadriorg, Kassisaba, Rotermanni Quarter (2001–2009), Nõmme, Süda-Tatari and

Veerenni-Herne-Magasini streets. An additional four areas were added to the list in 2009.[2] These designated areas surround the historic old town and demonstrate predominantly pre-war architectural heritage.

An additional layer in this debate is the complex relationship with Soviet architectural heritage that is evident in heritage management practices. How to deal with the Soviet heritage became the main challenge for planners and architects in the 1990s. As previous brief case studies demonstrated, it seems like the spatial patterns continue to haunt the city and this affects the decisions made. An initial reaction in the early 90s was to wipe away any signs of occupation (Unt, Travlou and Bell, 2013). The case studies in focus in this dissertation demonstrate the complexity of the debate.

The main difference in physical urban development is its core focus. Since the end of the Soviet era, urban development has mainly centred around re-developing the city centre, in terms of both residential and economic functions. At the same time, so-called 'field villages' became popular residential options on the outskirts of Tallinn. This can be related to an ambition to take over 'western development models' and adapt them to the urban context of Tallinn. An important centre of change in the 1990s and early 2000s was the development of Tallinn's central business district with high-rise offices, hotels and apartments. Vacant spaces to the north of the city centre have waited over two decades for re-development (Ruoppila, 2007). Unt, Travalou and Bell have pointed out that this resulted in many decisions that are questionable today, such as focusing on the commercial aims, which has proved to be unsustainable (Unt, et.al., 2013). Only in the 2000s did the developers start considering Soviet buildings for repurposing or considering their heritage significance. Unt, Travalou and Bell refer to examples of accommodating cultural organisations in former industrial buildings and upgrading former factory buildings into high-end apartments (Unt, Travlou and Bell, 2013). However, even during the Architecture Biennale of

[2] Milieu-valued areas: https://www.tallinn.ee/ehitus/g25210

2013 that focused on post-socialism, it was discussed if it was necessary to demolish structures or buildings that represent Soviet ideology. And on many occasions, this has been the case in Estonia. A well-known case is a cultural centre known as Sakala Keskus that was demolished to make space for a shopping centre (Martinez, 2018). The dominant focus of heritage policies has been on protecting pre-war and pre-occupation layers of urban history. The ability to learn from these mistakes is only a recent development that has led to a rethinking of the initial priorities of the post-Soviet period in planning (Unt, Travalou and Bell, 2013) At the same time, cases of development-related corruption have not fully disapparead, as was demonstrated by the case of the Porto Franco development in Tallinn in 2021. However, practices of adaptive reuse that also incorporate former Soviet industrial spaces are becoming increasingly popular in Tallinn. This is evident for example when looking at the number of cultural factories and hubs in Tallinn that have emerged in recent years, including the success of Telliskivi Creative City,[3] Kultuurikatel[4] and more recently Põhjala Factory[5] that have extended the urban development and to an extent a gentrification process towards the long-term deprived Kopli neighbourhood in Northern Tallinn. These examples demonstrate that some heritage and cultural value is now assigned to these complex layers of history.

2.3 Indeterminate spaces and temporality in Tallinn

This thesis focuses on urban landscapes that have existed in a void state for significant periods of time. This also means that any judgements or analysis made regarding these spaces is only applicable in relation to the moment in time. In the common thought process, these types of spaces exist in the corner of development opportunities. The idea of the continual process of developing the city shows however that there can not be a final perfect city. They mark that the

[3] The Telliskivi Creative City: https://telliskivi.cc/en/
[4] Kultuurikatel: https://kultuurikatel.ee/en/
[5] Põhjala Factory: https://www.pohjalatehas.ee/

city is in a never-ending cycle of growth and decay (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). Cupers and Miessen state in 'Spaces of uncertainty' that in order to map the actual cultural and social geography of the city the smallest moments and memories in the city need to be investigated, the spaces outside everyday urban trajectories. They refer to these spaces as interstitial where public and private experiences overlap (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). Vacant land is a key element when aiming to understand the urban landscape of Tallinn. It enables a constant imagining of new identities and expects active participation from the urban dweller. Temporary use is a term that is most commonly connected with abandoned, non-functioning places and buildings. In Tallinn, as well as in other places, temporary uses became very popular after the economic crisis of 2008. The main goal of these temporary uses was to enliven the urban space and in a way critique the dominant top-down planning model. It was evident that even after the first two decades of independence and a boom in urban development in certain areas, significant sites in the core of the city remained underused or with unclear future visions. Reasons for this were manifold and included complex ownership relationships and lack of development potential, but later also community opposition to private development. These long-term vacant indeterminate sites were often used as car parks or left as wastelands that were in some cases appropriated by the community as community gardens or just informal public spaces. In a complex post-socialist urban context these indeterminate spaces have also gained significant interest from urbanists, architecture historians and architects. Urban wastelands seem to incorporate an exciting potential that enables us to visualise alternative urban futures. From the perspective of an urban planner, the topic has amongst others been explored by Merle Karro-Kalberg whose masters thesis 'Plan B. Regeneration of Wastelands' (2011) and articles in local media have brought the topic to wider attention. Karro-Kalberg has viewed wastelands as areas that are loaded with potential which needs to be found and emphasised (Karro-Kalberg, 2011). Additionally, myself and Keiti Kljavin have explored the topic (2014). The challenges of indeterminacy have also interested an urban theorist Maroš Krivy (2012, 2013,

2020) and urban sociologist Fransisco Martinez (2018) who has more specifically explored the significance of liminality in collaboration with Patrick Laviolette (2016).

2.4 Opening Tallinn to the sea debate

Tallinn is a coastal city but establishing its relationship with the sea especially in the city centre has been a challenge and a focus of debates for decades. All case studies in focus in this thesis are coastal sites and reveal different sides to the challenge. Seemingly, on the coast, urban identities that are connected to the city's Soviet and pre-Soviet heritage are especially dominant. This means that redefinition of these spaces is needed – the coast no longer functions as a border or a barrier nor does it need to solely be in industrial use. However, in terms of infrastructure, coastal development sites have often been difficult to access and are both physically and mentally cut off from the rest of the city. Throughout the Soviet period, the coast was disconnected from the city and not part of the residents' everyday access. Merje Feldman has highlighted that the first plans to connect the waterfront to the city were already compiled in the 1960s and reviewed in the 1980s, but these attempts failed because of Soviet military opposition. When the city of Tallinn became the owner of key coastal sites, they lacked vision (Feldman, 2000). The early post-socialist legal and political environment supported privatisation, but there was also a lack of knowledge and experience for meaningful government involvement.

A master plan for the coastal area between Paljassaare and Russalka was approved in 2004. A proposal was commissioned by the city of Tallinn in 2007 to develop a 27km long seaside promenade that would follow the coastline of Tallinn. The proposal defines the shape, activities, parking, important access sites, cross-sections of the promenade and plans in different sections, and important attraction centres by the promenade. The promenade is divided into eleven sections: Merivälja seawall and Pirita beach, Pirita road, Põhjaväil,

Tallinn harbour, the area between Kalasadam and Miinisadam, Paljassaare harbour, Katariina pier, Neeme (Kopli), Mustjõe (Stroomi beach), Merirahu and Kakumäe beach. The length of each section defines its use: longer sections are planned for bike paths, while shorter sections are more convenient for walking. The total length of the planned promenade is 27 km (OÜ Ars Projekt, 2007). The city council website states that the goal of the master plan is to reconnect the city with the coast and improve Tallinn's reputation as a coastal city (Tallinna Linnavalitsus, 2014). The scale of these vision documents has meant that ambitious projects are taking longer to take shape and beyond changes in infrastructure changes in perceptions have been needed. The coast has continuously been connected to contradictory ideas – the visible dereliction and wasteland status, but also an idea of luxury in development potential.

The debate around revealing Tallinn´s identity as a coastal city came to the forefront of public discussions in 2011 when Tallinn was the European Capital of Culture. This marked a significant change in planning, local community involvement and collaboration. The programme focused on the industrial and working-class districts of Tallinn and the post-industrial wastelands on the waterfront (Krivy, 2012). As demonstrated for example by the examples of Berlin and Helsinki, utilising culture for urban regeneration already started in the 1970s, however, at this point it was a relatively new tendency in Tallinn. The programme titled 'Stories of the Seashore' was the first attempt to create a contemporary narrative around the city´s coastal history.

The first conscious effort to use culture as a tool for creating space can be claimed to be LIFT11[6] projects – a series of urban installations created during the European Culture Capital year 2011. The curator of the programme has written that many of the installations set out to solve the urban development issues of Tallinn, but in most cases, ideas remained too weak to resolve the concerns. The proposed projects however draw a map of problematic areas in Tallinn that were

[6] LIFT 11 Installation festival: https://www.lift11.ee/

surprisingly dominantly coastal sites: the Kalarand beach, the Linnahall building, empty territories in the harbour (Aule, 2011). In addition to pointing out urban issues and aiming to create place identities, the projects brought to the consciousness of the public the idea of urban installations and the possibility of temporary cultural projects. The question was also raised about the relationship between architecture, sculpture and installation. The art historian Gregor Taul has noted that compared to the mostly top-down initialisation of the first two the conceptual space of installation is something different, as installations tend to be more grass-roots (Taul, 2012). The installation festival was explored by a few authors through the concept of right to the city. It was argued that an urban installation as such aims to challenge the top-down implemented illusion of rationality (Tamm, 2012). In the LIFT 11 catalogue Margus Tamm, however, states that Lefebvre didn't look at interventions and installations as productive enough for producing lasting social change (Tamm, 2012). As a first case of its kind LIFT 11 remained in a safe zone in terms of challenging existing norms and it can be argued that it continues to be symptomatic in Estonian activism.

Three decades after Estonia regained independence and a decade after the Capital of Culture programme the coastline of Tallinn remains a complex landscape. One of the most visible examples of opening Tallinn to the sea is a pedestrian pathway known as Beta-Promenade that was opened in Kalarand in 2016 (Figure 18). It is a project that was achieved with very small investment and consisted of opening a coastal pathway that passes through Kalamaja towards Patarei prison and the Seaplane harbour. Though with very basic infrastructure this is significant as it is the first time since the construction of Patarei fort this path has been connected to the coast. Additionally a criticised, but also loved Reidi Road project was completed in 2019 (Figures 19 and 20). This road offers recreational opportunities on the coast, but also increases traffic in the city centre of Tallinn.

Figure 18: The informal 'Beta-promenade' connecting the inner city coastline in 2019 (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Figure 19: The recently completed Reidi Road is creating new public uses along the coast (Source: Visit Tallinn, 2020: online)

The city of Tallinn has been shaped by periods of non-change, urban indeterminacy and temporal processes. The post-1991 period has been characterised by developing value systems, a changing approach to heritage, a number of milestones in planning and an emerging framework for stakeholder roles in urban development. These complex layers of physical, cultural and political heritage continue to define present-day Tallinn and this forms an exciting basis for researching the impact of transition on urban development. The development phases recognised in this chapter as well as the framework of indeterminacy in urbanism are used when exploring the case studies in focus.

3. Post-socialist urban transitions, temporality and indeterminacy re-evaluated

The core theoretical framework of this research project is formed by exploring ideas of temporality and urban change and aims to create a basis for understanding how space is created in the context of a transitional society. The premise for this can be worded quite simply. I am asking if urban change is understood as a constant process, then how can this be reflected in the way we understand and think about space and planning and how this, in turn, could shape urban development in transitional contexts. This thesis focuses on three decades of re-independence and looks at urban change on a number of levels based on three diverse case studies. The temporal nature of spaces is the focus of this thesis and different parallel senses of time are all essential to the story. It is significant that this research project focuses on a specific time period – post-1991 Estonia, a period starting with the country regaining independence and urban change (and 'non-change') up to the present day. This context is often framed with the theory of 'post-socialist urbanism' (also 'post-communist urbanism'). Post-socialist urbanism has been widely used in the literature as a framework for understanding urban space and the development of cities in former Soviet countries, but the concept has been equally challenged and critiqued, more so in recent years. It is often asked whether this framework continues to be relevant after three decades since the end of the Soviet Union and is there something universal that continues to characterise the urban space of former Soviet cities. The further critique focuses on challenging the idea that urban change is led by ruptures (Ferenčuhová and Slavomíra, 2016; Hirt, 2012, 2013; Pusca, 2010; Tuvikene, 2014, 2016).

This literature review will provide a basis for analysing case study sides as well as bring together three strands of contemporary urban theory. I will explore what is unique about the widely theorised post-socialist context and particularly the

case study of Tallinn. I have structured this chapter so that I have a chance to take a step back in exploring the relationship between the ideas of permanence and concepts of temporality, time and space in urban development. A context that is dominantly considered post-socialist is placed in the framework of theories that are not geographically limited. I will explore existing literature and a rich array of concepts dealing with temporality, moving through the modernist planning ideals to post-modernism and the concept of liquid modernism. The modernist approach to city building viewed planning and architecture as offering solutions to problems of the society, change wasn't seen as a constant, but, as Zygmunt Bauman has argued (2013), a temporary irritant when moving towards a 'fixed' or improved society. This has been fundamentally challenged through critical and often artistic practices. Starting from the Situationist International movement and ending with catchwords of contemporary urbanism (including the boom of 'temporary urbanism' characteristic to recent decades that has transitioned from a dominantly bottom-up practice to a marketing strategy). Surprisingly the modernist change-oriented approach to development is still often dominant in our thought processes and it can be argued trends of contemporary urbanism such as 'temporary urbanism' follow the same logic of aspiring towards a change based on novelty rather than process. I explore an alternative conceptualisation of urban change by bringing attention to urban rhythms, everyday urbanism and ordinary city.

Reviewing contemporary urban studies literature demonstrates that there is a desire for a new framework for understanding urban change, and an approach that would cross the barrier between time and space. The predominant questions are whether new forms of urbanism can be given a place in city planning and would they (or have they already) result in paying more justice to the social and cultural complexity that constitutes contemporary urbanism (Lehtovuori, 2010). The physical planning model of master plans has been going through several mutations and responds to the need for more sustainable urbanism (Hague, Wakeley, Crespin and Jasko, 2006). Kevin Hetherington has suggested that new

discourses emerge and become effective in places that are other and heterotopic, and so present new modes of social ordering that contrast with the established sense of order (Hetherington, 2001). In the context of this research project, these are long-term indeterminate coastal sites with definite aspirations for the future. Urban change management in a post-modern and also post-socialist city is complex. It has been argued that the norm resides neither in modernist (fragmented) nor traditional (coherent) urbanisms but in the complex cultural models of urban recombination and everyday society (Liu, 2011). When looking at long-term indeterminacy it seems that the majority of change is happening on a conceptual level – ideals and aspirations transform with unprecedented speeds whilst the sites themselves are subject to entropy. Urban theory is moving away from a narrow focus on the physical form of spaces, and in order to understand the transitional spaces it is important to look at the inherent temporal identity of space (Matos Wunderlich, 2013).

An array of concepts approaching temporality of spaces, the significance of indeterminacy in urban development revealed here and situated in contemporary debates of post-socialist urbanism uncover a toolbox for understanding the development processes characteristic to post-1991 Tallinn. Development processes are relatively separate from urban theory, however it is argued that contemporary discussions assist in providing a thick description of sites in focus. Attempts are made to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

3.1 Post-socialist urbanism and the ordinary city

'Post-socialism' and 'post-socialist urbanism' have formed into complex and polarising concepts/theoretical perspectives which continue to be problematic in many ways, especially within that same 'post-socialist' context (Vukcik and Kurik, 2013). The term, which originates from an uncertain social and political

situation, is continuously used to describe a variety of urban situations in formerly Soviet contexts. Editor and researcher Anca Pusca (2010) has pointed out that looking at ruined spaces (or similarly indeterminate spaces) is not a typical entry point into studying post-socialist transition. She has mainly identified this, to a limited extent, in privatisation literature that considers urban vacancies a result of failing approaches taken to regeneration and corruption characteristic to early transition (Pusca, 2010). It can be argued that while there has been growth in the literature that explores indeterminate spaces in post-socialist contexts, this continues to be a marginal stream of urban studies (Pusca, 2010; Unt, Travlou and Bell, 2013). It can be observed that post-socialist urban studies focus on rapid institutional change and its effect on urban patterns, but less so on long-term processes, including long-term indeterminacy that has resulted from changes in land use, land management and planning practices. The early post-socialist urban theory focuses especially on the wider idea of 'rapid Westernisation', but less on what did not happen, the legacy of Soviet materialities that continue to be a present and very active part of everyday lives, the everyday experiences of urban change, as well as limitations of the concept more broadly. Indeterminate spaces are relevant case studies as they exist in a sense somewhere between the past and the future and their temporality can clearly be sensed.

Post-socialist spaces have been looked at as laboratories of fast change into Western capitalism and the concept has been extended to both physical and policy spaces. Looking at post-socialist spaces as spaces in transition continues to be relevant in urban theory – Sýkora and Bouzarovski (2012) have argued that despite the time that has passed it is still difficult to describe post-socialist (and post-communist) space with a set of stable attributes: *'the defining feature remains the incessant and relentless process of structural transformation that has started to unfold since the end of communism'* (Sýkora and Bouzarovski, 2012: 44) and therefore post-socialist cities continue to be cities in transition. Post-socialist urbanism is characterised by a desire to define previously socialist space by some distinct characteristics and processes.

Sonia Hirt has written that the post-socialist condition offered a ‘perfect storm’ of conditions for extensive privatisation and extreme change (Hirt, 2012). This offers an interesting starting point for exploring the specific post-socialist context of Tallinn and enables us to ask what have been the key forces shaping and stalling urban development. All three case study sites took on a different status when Estonia regained independence, but is their stalled development a sign that post-socialist urbanism is in a sense limited? While the term post-socialism deals with urban change in specific contexts it can be argued that often it is understood as something static or concrete. At the same time the idea of looking at indeterminate spaces as an arena for new ideas has dominated urban studies in recent decades (e.g. Groth and Corijn, 2005, Lehtovuori, 2010). The long-term indeterminacy of the case study sites means that since regaining independence changing ideas have been projected onto these landscapes in focus here – what was imagined in the early 1990s differs clearly from the imaginations of boom time and post financial crisis developments. It is relevant to explore whether ‘post-socialist urbanism’ as a theoretical framework can recognise these continuous transitions with exponentially weaker links to Soviet space.

This subchapter aims to explore the concept of post-socialism in relation to long-term indeterminacy and asks whether this framework continues to be relevant to understanding the urban change of Tallinn or whether we need a new lens for understanding the processes that have emerged in recent decades. The key question asked is if there is anything specific about ´post-socialist´ urban indeterminacy: Is the condition of observed sites somehow essentially post-socialist? Is the post-socialist condition a continuous socio-economic context, or was it a temporary transition? (Hirt, 2013; Müller, 2019). It is argued that looking at post-socialist space as essentially something opposite to Soviet space is over-simplified and it is justified to explore the concept of ‘the ordinary city’ in order to understand the transitions that have occurred in Tallinn and specifically in relation to the three case studies (Amin, Graham, 1997; Hirt, 2012; Keddie, 2014; Robinson, 2006; Tuvikene, 2014). Looking at cities as ordinary is an approach that takes a more holistic view of space and enables us to

argue that the changes in the urban space of Estonia can only partially be described through exploring the patterns of post-socialist transition.

3.1.1 Post-socialist urbanism

Out of this uncertainty of what the future would hold for people in ex-socialist countries, the term 'post-socialism' was born – from the moment of improvisation in an underdetermined situation. In the immediate aftermath of the socialist breakup, there was excitement around post-socialism and the opening it signified. 'Everything we know is up for grabs', wrote Katherine Verdery, 'and "what comes next" is anyone's guess'

(Verdery 1996: 38, ref in Müller, 2019: 534).

The term 'post-socialist' emerged immediately after the end of the Soviet Union to describe an undetermined situation and links to other categories such as postmodernism and postcolonialism that focus on epochal change (Müller, 2019). In the early 1990s, the term 'post-socialist' was often used in inverted commas – geographer Martin Müller identifies this as the provisional nature of the term. He also states that while used already in the early 1990s, the first book with the term in the title was only published in 1997 (Müller, 2019). Next to the term post-socialism, the terms post-communist and post-Soviet were used to describe the transition. Post-communism was usually a term preferred by political scientists and sociologists who focused more on institutional aspects of the transition – e.g. laws, state and party formation. Müller argues that post-socialism (used predominantly here) is a more subjective term – socialism refers to the lived experience, and communism to the ideology (Müller, 2019). In order to move through the theories, I have taken a quite limited definition as a starting point and looked at post-socialist urbanism and urban change as change that occurred after the change to neoliberal models after 1989. This temporal

definition continues to be the most typical and widespread in theory up until the present day. It has been noted that it is important to be aware of additional meanings that have emerged since, namely, post-socialism as a political movement that breaks with socialism and post-socialism as a concept, an attempt to make sense of the processes occurring theoretically (Müller, 2019).

It is frequently argued that the size and speed of urban spatial, economic and social transformation of post-socialist societies and cities has created a specific 'laboratory' context worth researching (Grubbauer, 2012, Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008; Kovács, Wiessner, and Zischner, 2013; Wilson, 2013). Post-socialist spaces are understood as rich arenas for analysing spaces in transition. A typical criticism is that most early texts from the late 1990s and early 2000s that opened the concept are written by Western authors and in contexts that were considered 'post-socialist' the notion was until recently treated with a certain distance. Müller and Červinková critically argue that the term was created by Western scholars to construct post-communist Europe (Červinková 2012; Müller, 2019). Before the 1990s cities in Soviet countries were not considered relevant as case studies in broader debates of urban studies, but from the early 1990s cities such as Budapest, Prague and Warsaw became almost over-represented in academic literature, with Tallinn, Moscow and Sofia joining them in the 2000s (Sýkora, and Bouzarovski, 2012). A significant change in using the term in academic papers by Estonian authors as well as conference themes seems to have happened only sometime after 2010 when the term was more widely accepted. Perhaps the 2000s were a period when Estonian urbanists and society at large were beginning to get over the shame of being seen as 'backward' and started to note the potential offered by an often fragmented 'post-socialist 'urban space (Kljavin and Kurik, 2016). The 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale project asked 'How Long is the Life of a Building?' (Vaikla, Vaikla, Valk, Pukk and Lubjak, 2012) and explored the legacy of socialist architecture. The Tallinn Architecture Biennale 2013 focused on

post-socialist heritage; more precisely it was called ‘Recycling Socialism’,[7] making reference to questions about Soviet heritage and reinterpreting ‘socialist spaces’. The annual Estonian Urban and Landscape Days 2013 addressed the topic under the headline ‘Socialist and post-socialist urbanisations: architecture, land and property rights’ (Vuksic and Kurik, 2014). 2013 also marks the year the proposal for this PhD was put together with an ambition to understand what it means for a space to be ‘post-socialist’, clearly reflecting a specific time in the development of Estonian urbanism. For a period looking at urban space in Estonia as post-socialist seemed to be at the forefront of discussions – key terms of urban studies such as landscape, planning and urbanisation all acquired the almost obligatory prefix of ‘post-socialist’ (Vukcik and Kurik, 2013). Analysing literature on the topic more broadly it seems that this has been the case in many Eastern European countries (Hirt, 2012). Thus, when we talk about ‘Eastern Europe’, some sort of distinctness from the West but also common ground with the rest of the former Soviet countries seems to have been found in ideas of ‘post-socialist landscape’, ‘post-socialist urbanisation’ and ‘post-socialist planning’ (Vukcik and Kurik, 2013). It can be argued that some distance was needed in order to start approaching topics that are common in post-socialist urban development, but also it can be considered an attempt by scholars from the area of the former Soviet Union to adapt to an externally created discourse in order to have a wider influence in debates. It is interesting to observe that in the Estonian context, the term is also treated with a certain irony, for example, Tauri Tuvikene and Maroš Krivy compiled a text for the Estonian Urbanist Review U’s special post-socialism issue entirely from first sentences used in academic literature dealing with post-socialism originating from the 1990s to present day (Krivy and Tuvikene, 2015), making reference to some sort of formalistic approach full of clichés that have quickly emerged.

It is a continuously morphing debate. The way post-socialist urbanism is understood has changed considerably even during the period of writing this

[7] Tallinn Architecture Biennale: http://www.tab.ee/et

thesis. The Eastern European context, more precisely the urban landscape and planning directions of Tallinn, are opened by analysing some points made by Sampo Ruoppila, who was one of the earliest scholars using the term in the Estonian context and has extensively written about the post-socialist condition of Estonia and Tallinn (e.g. 2004, 2005, 2007), and in collaboration with Panu Lehtovuori, the long-term head of the Urban Studies programme at the Estonian Academy of Arts (2012). A special issue of the Estonian Urbanists' Review U was published in 2014 and offers an insight into post-2008 economic crisis debates on the topic in Estonia. A number of articles by Tauri Tuvikene uncover the concept of post-socialism in Estonia and specifically in Tallinn critically and from a more considered distance (Tuvikene, 2014, 2016). Keiti Kljavin and I published an article 'From ad hoc planning to soft urbanism. Searching for Baltic urbanism, as illustrated by the evolution of the Estonian Urban Lab, Urban Institute Riga and Vilnius Laboratory of Critical Urbanism' in 2016 aiming to uncover the processes that have occurred specifically in Baltic urbanism since the 1990s. Texts exploring the Estonian context are supplemented by broader discussions on the topic. The main authors of interest here are Sonia Hirt, especially her book *'Iron Curtains, Gates, Suburbs and Privatization of Space in the Post-socialist City'* (2012) and her 2016 article 'Whatever Happened to the Post-Socialist City' as well as Martin Müller's recent text 'Goodbye, Post-Socialism' (2019), where he argues that it's time to if not let go of the concept at least consider it critically.

Changes that have taken place in perception, policies and approaches since the discussion surfaced more predominantly in the early 2000s are interesting. Early articles on the topic seemingly took a matter of fact approach to the term of post-socialism, looking at it as a clear nominator for the present of former Soviet societies. More recent literature takes a critical view of this. While Sýkora and Bouzarovski (2012) argue that post-socialist cities continue to be in transition, a 2019 article 'Goodbye, Post-Socialism' refers to a vanishing object (Müller, 2019). More and more scholars have been challenging the relevance of the term (Hirt, 2012, Müller, 2019; Ruudi, 2020; Tuvikene, 2014 et al.) and argue that in

order to understand cities more focus needs to be given to the everyday life of spaces (Pusca, 2010). One of the clearest attempts to challenge the term in the Estonian context in recent years has been made by Tauri Tuvikene, who looks at post-socialism as a de-territorialised concept (2014, 2016). I refer to Doreen Massey, who emphasises that space should be understood as something that is always under construction and a sphere of coexisting heterogeneity – space is always being made and never finished, it's a story rather than a solid entity (Massey, 2005). From this perspective, it seems that the concept of post-socialism is intrinsically limited as it is seen to be describing a seemingly solid condition that characterises formerly Soviet environments rather than characterising certain elements of urban change.

The emergence of these debates in Estonia illustrated here are reflected in the approach to the case studies. It is explored through media analyses how changing attitudes in post-socialist urban developments are reflected in planning and redevelopment processes, but also how indeterminate states of these sites need to be looked at in more broader contexts of global capitalism.

3.1.2 Memory, politics and place

The term 'post-socialism' typically indicates multiple social, economic and political changes that took place in East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. According to Young, Sellar and Hirt (2013), the term has been developed to challenge the assumption that there was a clear-cut change from a command economy to a market economy, from socialism to neoliberal capitalism. So, the term refers to how many former Soviet countries embraced and manipulated capitalism and, in some cases, 'Europeanness' according to their own agendas (Hirt, Young and Sellar, 2013). The available literature focuses on both the materiality of post-socialist urban contexts as well as social, ideological and economic changes. In terms of the production of space, the themes highlighted in theory include extensive privatisation, the general decline in state powers, neoliberalism, economic and political globalisation, deregulation of industry,

weakening focus on social guarantees, and ethnonationalism. Luděk Sýkora and Stefan Bouzarovski have proposed that the change characteristic to post-communist environments (they prefer to use this term) can be observed on three levels: the first level of transition includes the institutional change, e.g. privatisation, democratic elections, foreign trade liberation; the second level included social transformations such as economic restructuring, social polarisation and neoliberal politics; and the third level includes urban transformations such as inner-city regeneration, suburbanisation and so on (Sýkora and Bouzarovski, 2012). Piotr Lorens (2012) divides changes that occurred in post-socialist contexts into ones with structural importance – such as the decline of traditional industries (and therefore the emergence of urban vacancy) and ones depending on individual choices – for example, suburbanisation, extensive development of commercial functions and so on (Lorens, 2012). A post-socialist city is described as distinct from a socialist city, mainly because, since the state no longer has a monopoly on urban development, there are no central planning mechanisms that would aim towards ideologically defined space (Hirt, 2013). Changes that occurred were not essentially clearly material but characterise the modes of creating space. In physical space the change could be observed in a focus on inner-city regeneration and gentrification of historic areas, suburbanisation and development of 'field villages', deindustrialisation and resulting increased vacancy rates and the emergence of brownfields, challenges with dealing with the Soviet architectural heritage and adaptive reuse.

According to Lorens, however, former socialist cities were not economically or socially ready for these changes (low wages, lack of professionals on the field). The dismantling of the Soviet Union was followed by a distinct wish to break away from the socialist system and this in many cases resulted in strong enforcement of neoliberal doctrine. In terms of spatial planning this has influenced urban planners, who tend to be limited to fill roles defined by developers and land owners. This limits the possibility of developing an

overarching vision for the city as it deals with general topics such as liveability and sustainability as well as general quality of urban landscape (Lorens, 2012).

Politics

When looking at a change of regime one of the most dominant shifts is in how the land is used. During the Soviet rule, the land of the city was nationalised, and functions determined by the state; after the end of the Soviet Union extensive privatisation has created a significantly different land use pattern. Both approaches to planning are alive today but observing the shift in a post-socialist city enables one to understand the distinction clearly.

Hirt has claimed that the contemporary era in former socialist spaces is marked by the rise of private spaces (Hirt, 2012) Privatisation means that the state becomes less and less involved in social, cultural and public life and public space (Grzinic, 2007). The way urban space is organised is of course tightly connected to power relations. Researchers Craig Young and Duncan Light (2010) emphasise that the form of urban space is an expression of the dominant political regime. This means that all kinds of landscapes can be viewed as ideological – be it socialist or neoliberal. Following that reasoning, it can be expected that changes in political regime often bring with them changes in the organisation of space. Young and Light refer to Sezneva (2002), who has suggested that '*the rush to rename and remake cities signals the centrality of urban space in the construction of post-socialist identities'* (Sezneva, 2002: 48, quoted in Young and Light, 2010). Young and Light also make a connection between remnants of socialist spaces and loose space, liminal space and son. This links to Gil Doron, who looks at indeterminate landscapes as reservoirs of social, cultural and architectural urban history that remain a part of the urban palimpsest (Doron, 2000).

Memory and place

Sonia Hirt has challenged the assumption that post-socialism is a condition after socialism by asking if there ever was something that could be defined as a 'socialist city'. In her article 'Whatever happened to the (post) socialist city?' (2013) she aims to understand if this framework continues to be (or ever was) relevant. She points out that urban geographers argued for decades whether such a thing as a ´socialist´ city existed: Were the spatial features of cities defined as ´socialist´ so clearly distinct from processes happening in capitalist cities during the same period? Was there something especially distinct about the processes these spaces were created with (Hirt, 2013)? The existence of the idea of a post-socialist city assumes that there was such a thing as a ´socialist-city´. Hirt asks: '*Did the features of the "socialist city" disintegrate or endure after 1990? Is the new formation distinct not only from its socialist predecessors but also from contemporary European cities that were never socialist?'* (Hirt, 2013: 29).

It is important to take note of how many cities developed in the Soviet Union: When socialist regimes took over (by 1948) the cities with already existing development patterns started to grow mostly outwards. New housing estates were built on the outskirts of cities, but the city centres remained industrial or underdeveloped. Some of those new housing estates were never finished. Socialist cities were characterised by vast mass-complexes built on the outskirts of cities (in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s) (Hirt, 2013). Post-socialist cities have an enormous built heritage that originates from socialist ideology. In addition to public buildings, this includes socialist prefabricated housing estates. Many post-socialist cities are also characterised by large-scale inner-city brownfields as industrial spaces were over-allocated during the Soviet period, but commercial use was very limited (Hirt, 2013). Looking at post-socialist materialities one clear distinction between Western cities and former socialist cities is the enormous socialist legacy of built structures that in many cases continues to be used. While socialist cities had many similarities with modernist cities the extent of these developments, especially for example the extent of socialist housing

developments, is not comparable (Hirt, 2013). So often it is argued that dismantling socialism has been one of the main goals of nation-states that emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

According to Hirt the initial transformation of physical space was characterised by the proliferation of small-scale commercial uses such as kiosks and bazaars. Over the next decades, however, many post-socialist cities have adopted large-scale Western-style shopping centres – a building type that was completely non-existent during socialism. This took place next to the development of commercial office districts and the opening of foreign business headquarters (Hirt, 2013). Hirt has argued that while the post-socialist city is characterised by the dissolution of key features of socialist urbanism, that is:

1. The emergence of fragmented and spread out urban space

2. Decreased residential and civic spaces

3. Tilting land use balance towards commercial uses

4. Emergence of social contrasts and marginality

5. Mixing of styles

The emergence of development-led planning and privatisation should be in focus; she refers to the post-socialist city as a post-public city (Hirt, 2013). It is argued that post-socialist cities that took a step away from modernist aesthetics and controls over aesthetic expression in combination with the development of private property development have created urban environments with striking stylistic hybridity (Dmitrieva and Kliems, 2010; Hirt, 2013)

However, post-socialism is connected not only to dismantling socialism but also to the new urbanisms that emerge in this context. After the collapse of state socialism, the focus of city centres has again become the focal point of urban development. Ruoppila writes that since the 1990s the development of city centres has been characterised by filling in the existing urban structure with new

buildings. After the end of the Soviet Union, an effort was made to develop former industrial sites into office areas. However, the supply of these sites has in most bigger cities been large and even in the 2010s a lot of them remain underdeveloped. Ruoppila was one of the first to suggest in the context of Tallinn that the existence of large brownfield sites, as well as newly vacant industrial buildings, offers a great opportunity for cultural actors to get involved in regeneration (Ruoppila, 2004). However, at the time this idea found little realisation.

Ruoppila argues that the main difference with the Western European situation was that while for example in Brussels and Helsinki culture has for a longer period assumed a strategically central role in policies dealing with regeneration (after the decline of industries in the 1970s) than in former Soviet contexts, private interests tended to dominate and cultural policy was not in at the forefront of urban development during the early 2000s (Ruoppila 2004). Ruoppila identified challenges compared to Western cities with equal importance such as the fact that since the conversions of for example former factory buildings only started in the 1990s there are considerably more indeterminate sites in Eastern cities (Ruoppila, 2004). Reconsidering the statement made by Groth and Corijn claiming that free zones can't be organised by top-down actors or state subsidies, it was often argued that the post-socialist landscape should provide an interesting field for experimentation with, for example, temporary uses (Ruoppila, 2004, Lehtovuori, 2010; Unt, Travalou and Bell, 2013). However, with no guarantees or support, these uses often remained marginal. An important point they make about free zones is that they must be socially sustainable, but it seems that conscious alternatives to the dominant planning paradigm have not emerged in the post-socialist context.

If post-socialist urbanism is viewed as a process and not as a condition with specific characteristics a need for a timeline of transitions emerges. This aspiration is reflected in the methodological approach to case studies. The chronological uncovering of process, from changing ownership patterns to

development proposals enable to offer a critique of post-socialist urbanism as well as extend the debate. It is argued that while development-led planning is characteristic to the newly neoliberal context, as well as culture taking a backseat in regeneration, there is significance in observing the everyday level of urban developments.

3.1.3 The end of post-socialism?

Almost three decades of post-socialist urban theory demonstrates that there is no such thing as a universal post-socialist experience. The context of this thesis is clearly focused on the case study of Tallinn and universal conclusions that would apply to former Soviet cities would largely be artificial. It can be asked, what is essentially post-socialist about urban processes taking place in Tallinn since 2008? Helen Wilson (2013) refers to Dmitrieva and Kliems, who have stated that post-socialism is *'less a precise concept and more a heuristic category'*. Lumping so-called post-socialist spaces together does not do justice to the unique transformation paths each formerly socialist city and society has taken (Dmitrieva and Kliem, 2010: 7, referenced in Wilson, 2013: 3463). Hirt notes the emergence of several sub-types of cities in the former Soviet bloc and this challenges the idea of post-socialist space. But this also suggests that there is no single capitalist city (Hirt, 2013)

As described before, post-socialist cities are often viewed through the idea of 'laboratory urbanism' and are described as going through 'unparalleled', 'radical' changes and therefore are seen as showcases for a variety of urban processes. But this view of looking at formerly socialist spaces as somehow exceptional has also been criticised. It has been argued by several authors that using the term as a heuristic category is orientalising (e.g. Müller, 2019; Wilson, 2013). While scholars from post-socialist countries have adopted the term, they are increasingly aware of the fact that it supports looking at former Soviet spaces

as 'the Other'. At the same time, the idea of 'returning to Europe' is widely recreated (Müller, 2019)

Martin Müller has referred to the vanishing object of post-socialism, the issue of emphasising rupture over continuity, falling into a territorial trap, issuing from orientalising knowledge construction and constraining political futures. He argues that socialism (the regime) and post-socialism (the concept) emerge from the expectation of epochal change and have lost touch with real lives (Müller, 2019). By the territorial trap, he refers to limiting post-socialism to a geographical place and discounting a deterritorialized view of space. *'Socialism is no longer the prime reference point for people in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, but rather one among many, including neoliberalism, nationalism, consumption, Europeanisation and globalisation'* (Müller, 2019: 539). In the context of Tallinn, this is clearly relevant. As described earlier, 'post-socialism' as a term was largely ignored in the 1990s and early 2000s, went through a brief boom in use in the 2010s and continues to be used (although often criticised) to describe the present urban condition. For a period, it was common for authors from former communist countries to adopt theories produced in Western contexts taking an artificial approach to post-socialist urban contexts and focusing less on empirical research (Ferenčuhová and Gentile, 2016).

Post-socialism and post-colonialism

Müller argues that post-socialist urbanism has not left a lasting imprint on the social theory of cities. While post-colonialism has become a staple, the concept of post-socialism does not have similar intellectual power and it remains at the margins and only deals with regional questions. As mentioned earlier, the concept emerged from mainly Western scholarship and many scholars from post-socialist societies have emerged as critics of the concept *'that they had little agency in shaping'* (Müller, 2019: 534). Much research is permeated by the assumption that post-socialist cities are anomalous and on their way to becoming

‘normal’ (i.e. capitalist), and because of this are not able to inform wider urban theory. This privileges looking at change as a temporary irritant, rather than a continuous process (Bauman, 2005). Secondly, it is often proposed that post-socialist cities are lagging behind. In the 1990s it was seen as unproblematic to argue that post-socialist cities needed to ‘catch up’ to Western cities (Ferenčuhová and Gentile, 2016)

Müller takes quite a radical stance and argues that we should be bidding farewell to post-socialism completely as it has lost its object and comes with problematic conceptual and political implications. He summarises his view as follows: *‘facing the past, post-socialism emphasises rupture over continuity, privileges a territorial geographical imagination and reflects uneven power relationships in knowledge production’* (Müller, 2019: 534). The problem with the concept is that it privileges *‘thinking through ruptures’* rather than looking at urban change as a continuous process (Müller, 2019). But is there an approach that can be relevant at present while considering post-socialist urbanism? Can incorporating more everyday perspectives into urban research offer a fresh perspective on post-socialist spaces?

Linnahall, Kopli Lines and Kalarand are explored on the cross section of these debates. It is argued that while place development needs to be explored in a typomorphological and socio-political level as well as shaped by policies the level of ordinary, everyday, rhythmic city has not yet gained significant attention when attempting to shape urban futures.

3.1.4 The ordinary city debate

If the concept of post-socialism were abandoned, what might an alternative project look like? Attempts have been made to explore the former Soviet cities through the lens of ordinary city debate that originates from post-colonial urbanism (e.g. Tuvikene, 2014). Looking at cities as ordinary means focusing on

a variety of experiences and the everyday life of communities that are looked at as case studies. In her article 'Industrial and Human Ruins of Post-communist Europe' (2010), Anca Pusca has proposed an alternative approach to understanding the impact of transition from Soviet space. She proposes that rather than focus on the economic and institutional transition, it is important to create an approach that privileges the aesthetic and human dimension of change. She focuses especially on industrial ruins that are *'forgotten by all but artists and preservationists'* (Pusca, 2010: 240). The transitions that took place in former Soviet environments are relevant to study and theorise and it can be challenging, as it is a real-time study, to look at spaces that are undergoing said transition.

Sykora and Bouzarovski (2012) have looked at the urban transitions that took place in post-Soviet contexts and argue that they have clearly not followed a single trajectory. But a case is made that after a period of intense change, post-socialist cities return to the realm of 'the ordinary city' (Ferenčuhová and Gentile, 2016). It was in the 1990s that ordinary, everyday landscapes emerged as important and worthy of study as important archives of social experience and cultural meaning (Cosgrove, 1997; Groth, 1997). The notion developed by Amin and Graham (1997) argues that all cities are equally distinctive and can't be argued to function as an archetype (Storper and Scott, 2016).

Jennifer Robinson adopted this idea (2006) and started to look at 'ordinary cities' as a way to look beyond partial manifestations, such as global or post-socialist , and focus on the diverse experiences inhabitants have in cities (Keddie, 2014). She argued that urban studies need to focus on the essential character of cities and their differences. This idea links to everyday urbanism, which gives more attention to the rhythms of the city and proclaims that any meaningful problematic of the urban must focus intently on the essential character of cities as sites of difference (Storper and Scott, 2016).

Sonia Hirt has seconded Robinson (2006) in a call to study all cities as ordinary as this allows exploration of complexity and uniqueness of urban places without forcing them into hierarchical systems and understanding places only superficially (Hirt, 2012). In the Estonian context, a similar approach has been endorsed by Tauri Tuvikene, who suggests that the limitations of post-socialist urbanism can be overcome by de-territorialising the term (2014, 2016). He argues that this makes the concept of post-socialism applicable to aspects of cities rather than a term that covers the entirety of urban experience. He is critical of the term cities in transition and refers to the expectation of a beginning and an endpoint to moving from one condition to another (in this case from socialism to Western capitalism) (Tuvikene, 2014).

Yet, the ordinary city theory has been criticised for including some of the same issues like the idea of post-socialism. While post-socialist cities are often excluded as relevant examples from wider urban theory, the ordinary city concept poses a similar challenge, arguing that there is in a sense no universal knowledge and all conclusions can only be made about local contexts (Ferenčuhová and Gentile, 2016). A more contemporary and nuanced understanding of post-socialist spaces needs to look at these contexts as part of global temporal processes.

Interest in the ordinary city debate, urban rhythms and everyday city has been a basis for the methodological approach taken in this dissertation. It is argued that a level of complexity characteristic to the processes in focus can be observed using autoethnographic methods, mapping and systematising observations. Methodological approach taken is explained in detail in Chapter 4.

3.2 Perspectives on urban change and temporality. A process-driven approach

When viewing spaces that have been predominantly explored through the lens of post-socialist urban theory as ordinary, questions of temporality and indeterminacy become increasingly relevant. Raco, Henderson and Bowlby (2013) have suggested that focusing on the politics of space-time could be a basis for more progressive, far-reaching and sustainable development agendas.

They have written:

'Time is not an abstract concept but is framed through social and institutional practices...The multiplicity of time frames that exist, both procedural and imagined, is highly significant in relation to the broader discourses and practices of urban regeneration and its concern with how places are made and remade and what they should be like, now and in the future. Such discourses and imaginations are in turn dependent upon relations of power and the frameworks through which particular time-frames and spatial needs are prioritised' (Raco, Henderson and Bowlby, 2013: 2655)

A number of scholars argue that more attention needs to be given to the politics of space-time in urban development processes (Clancy, 2013; Crang, 2012; Dodghson, 1999; Henneberry, 2017; Hetherington, 2011; Livingstone and Matthews, 2017; May, Jon, Thrift, 2011; Matos Wunderlich, 2013; Määttänen, 2006; Raco, Henderson, Bowlby, 2008; et al). Joanne Hudson claims that previous theoretical understandings of space and time have typically imposed a distinction between the two concepts (Hudson, 2013): '*Time is understood as the domain of dynamism and progress, whereas space is regulated to the realm of stasis and thus excavated of any meaningful politics'* (May and Thrift, 2001: 1).

I argue in this chapter that the idea that time is dynamic but urban space is a stable entity should continuously be challenged, and this is especially relevant in transitory contexts. Urban politics and planning have to respond to cultural and social changes and to an urban realm that is no longer homogeneous, both in lifestyles as well as spatial practices. It is often argued that cities are more and more characterised by pronounced plurality and fragmentation, **tensions rising from multiple identities.** Planning is moving from 'harder' to 'softer' issues – for example, culture and heritage-led regeneration and development are more prominent in many European cities. It is understood that urban space is in constant flux and cities should not be looked at as fixed and finished entities (Groth and Corijn, 2005).

It seems to be common sense and maybe even simplistic to argue that change is a natural part of urban development and that therefore there needs to be a higher awareness of directing and managing change and incorporating temporality in future visions. The question in focus here, however, isn't if there is urban change or how it should be managed, but more how change and temporality are conceptualised – as an intrinsic part of space and urban development (meaning all uses of space are in a sense 'temporary': whether more focus should be on the temporal dimension of development next to focus on the physical space) or a quick process to achieve an 'ideal' future and how this conceptualisation affects the types of spaces we create and use. The predominant interest here is in finding out what is universal and what is specific about a place and how the ideas of change and temporality have been considered in planning and development processes and how they are revealed from everyday practices.

How to incorporate temporality into our conceptualisation of urban development, planning and architecture is a challenging question, but first it is a theoretically rich field of inquiry. The richness of academic debate demonstrates that the topics of temporality and the relationship between space and time have been in

the focus of many scholars in recent decades. Jaqueline Groth and Eric Corijn have described recent decades as being *'subject to major economic, social, cultural transformations which are gradually affecting changes in urban politics and development'* (Groth and Corijn, 2005: 503). Kevin Muldoon Smith and Paul Greenhalgh have associated this turn with *'increased levels of vacant land and* buildings in t*he post-industrial city, an engagement with DIY and tactical urbanism and an emphasis on temporary uses'* (Muldoon Smith and Greenhalgh, 2017: 221). Joanne Hudson (2013), who has written her PhD about informal spaces in Manchester and Salford, looks at the city as a highly differentiated entity. These scholars believe that it is of course possible to see regularities in urban social and spatial relationships, but despite this, the city is *'concurrently chaotic and in perpetual flux'* (Hudson, 2013). Jürgen Rosemann has expressed the idea that taking change as a premise would help us have a bigger influence on urban processes (Rosemann, 2005). Discussions focusing on temporality in urban theory have more recently been brought together in the book *'Transience and Permanence in Urban Development'* (Henneberry, 2017). The book combines texts from some key thinkers who focus on urban temporality in recent years, including Lehtovuori and Ruoppila (2017), who have also extensively written about urban change and temporality in the context of (post-socialist) Tallinn.

Urban studies and urbanism as a field of study focusing on how people inhabit and live in urban environments, but also as an act of creating urban environments is a discipline that in its essence deals with understanding change as well as creating change. Urban studies' love for complex concepts can easily be overwhelming, and when exploring temporality, one encounters concepts that deal with the process of and approach to urban change, such as both fast-forward urbanism (e.g. Cuff, Sherman, 2011) and slow urbanism (e.g. Turkseven Dogrusoy and Dalgakiran, 2011). These ideas focus on certain desired forms or understanding of change. Contemporary urbanism is also rich with terms that refer to the forms of processes of change focusing on key stakeholders such as

informal urbanism (e.g. Groth and Corijn, 2005), insurgent urbanism (e.g. Sandercock, 1998), makeshift city (e.g. Tonkiss, 2013), laboratory urbanism (e.g. Hirt, 2012, Wilson 2013) and marginal urbanism (e.g. Tonkiss, 2013). These concepts focus especially on periods of vacancy and the new forms of urbanism that emerge in indeterminate spaces. There are concepts that refer to the temporality of use of space such as interim and provisional use (e.g. Groth and Corijn, 2005), interstitial urbanism (e.g. Tonkiss, 2013), spontaneous urbanity (Groth and Corijn, 2005), temporary urbanism (e.g. Haydn and Temel, 2006), weak planning (e.g. Lehtovuori, 2010), ephemeral space (e.g. Toft, 2011) and liminal space (e.g. Zukin, 1988). The majority of these discussions focus on alternative ways of conceptualising and creating space; these terms reflect periods of uncertainty and how these direct the future of urban development. This increased interest in alternative approaches to space and interest in temporary practices has directed the interest of urban studies towards concepts known from sociology and philosophy. Expanding interest in everyday practices has brought into focus the discussion of the relationship between space and time and the concept of time-space. Critical theorists such as Lefebvre (2004), Massey (2005) and May and Thrift (2001) emphasise that time and space are entangled with each other. Spatio-temporal dimensions are also in the foreground of critical geography. The aforementioned authors share a common interest in understanding how cities operate as strategic sites of capitalism (Brenner, Marcuse, Mayer, 2009), as Marcuse notes: '*Critical urban theory emphasises the politically and ideologically mediated, socially contested and therefore malleable character of urban space – that is, its continual (re)construction as a site, medium and outcome of historically specific relations of social power'* (Marcuse, 2009: 185). The critical approach questions the fundamentals of dominant forms of urban planning and insists that another, more democratic, socially just and sustainable form of urbanism is possible – even though these possibilities might not be evident in current conditions, practices and ideologies. Foucault's concept of the heterotopia is often seen as a useful tool for the examination and analysis of the complexity of contemporary urban structure and the resulting everyday

social practice (Liu, 2011, Johnson, 2013, Unt, Travalou and Bell, 2013). Analysis of key themes in Lefebvre's writing in relation to spacetime has been brought together quite comprehensively in the book *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre* (Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgrom and Schmid, 2009) Chapters in the book focus on rhythms of everyday life, dialectics of time and space, difference, hegemony, right to the city - all these concepts become relevant in texts by a number of authors as well as here.

In her seminal book '*For Space'* (2005) Doreen Massey makes several propositions for how to understand space. She suggests that we should recognize space as a product of interrelations, from the global to the local scale. Space should be understood as a sphere of coexisting heterogeneity that is always under construction. Space is always being made and is never finished, it is a story rather than a solid entity. Massey questions why we have so commonly connected space to ideas of stasis, closure and representation and not heterogeneity, relationality, liveliness. She supports the previously made argument that while space continues to be looked at as a negative opposite of time, the ideas of space and time should be viewed together. Temporality has unrealized implications for how we experience spatial phenomena. Massey questions how a number of authors, including Bergson and De Certeau, equate temporality with the change that implies constant novelty**.** Massey extends her view of space in flux into placemaking and community formation. She argues that the definition of a locality is in flux and continually being produced and open to reinterpretation. There is a tension between stability and dynamism in place as this raises questions about which identity is dominant (Keddie, 2014).

The move towards relational conceptions of space and time in geography has been documented by Merriman (2012). Critical geography looks at space and time as linked together. An important question is what kind of time is seen to be interacting with what kind of space – the timing of events in space reveals issues

of power and inequality. Crang refers to Adam (2008), who has pointed out four main concerns in social studies of time – the commodification of time, the control of time, the colonisation of the future and the creation of time to human design (Crang, 2012) Temporality itself is about the process, change and directionality (Schwanen, Tim, Kwan, Mei-Po, 2012). Critical space-time geographies are pleading for a more systematic analysis of how space, time and social differentiation are implicated (Schwanen, Tim, Kwan, Mei-Po, 2012).

As shown in theory, a number of scholars approach urban space as dynamic, but finding a way to include the concept of flexibility in practice or simply acknowledging flexible processes, without a clear beginning and an endpoint and time shaping space and the politics behind it is not always straightforward. Bishop and Williams have asked why both the theory and practice of planning and design are so concerned with permanence when there is an abundance of evidence that cities consist of processes that are in one way or another temporary (Bishop and Williams, 2012). Change in physical space can be observed from a number of scales and viewpoints – starting from the practices of everyday life, rhythms of the city within a day and forms of use to shorter cycles of months and years, to master and scenario planning exercises that look into the future of space often more than 20 years ahead. Urbanism and urban development can often be reactionary, which can be observed especially well in post-socialist cities that made huge efforts to distance themselves from the Soviet spatial legacy in the early 1990s, but urbanism can also be slow and considerate. This is for example visible from trends that emerged after the financial crisis of 2008 and temporary practices that developed thereafter.

A link between post-socialist urbanism and contemporary urban theory framing temporality and flexibility of space is created in case study chapters. It is argued that the ultimate malleable and liquid character of spaces is relevant to observe in exploring value development and ultimately shaping places. It is argued that

places do not have a solid identity, but continue to morph even in an indeterminate and seemingly uncertain state of use.

3.2.1 The ideal of a finished city and the issue with the concept of permanence

'the topic itself presents a "moving target."'

(Brent, Grell and Holm, 2013: 19)

In the present world where the speed and direction of change (considering technology and ecology for example) are clearly unpredictable, it has become increasingly difficult to plan for future needs and observe change while it is happening, while being part of the process. This research project seeks novel ways to discuss history, the post-socialist context, change and temporality, and the impacts of transitory states on the physical design of spaces, and does this while focusing on real-life urban change during a seven-year project. The modernist approach to space, still somewhat dominant in practice, is often understood to be predominantly design-based, and this is where criticism is often founded. Why the idea of permanence is so durable in architecture while our society continues to show faster changes, nomadic lifestyles and unknown futures is an interesting question. The problem with traditional strategic planning is that by searching for permanent solutions the present-day needs of people are not often considered – plans age and they are often outdated even when they are being implemented. Decisions planners make often aim to make an imprint on the social fabric of a city, but social changes are increasingly difficult to predict, and even more so it is almost impossible to incorporate these into planning intentions. Bishop and Williams point out that capitalist development models will always be characterised by boom, bust, decline and growth cycles (Bishop and Williams, 2012). Predictions of indicators such as car ownership, population

size, mobility have historically been flawed (Ward, 2004). While there are global trends shaping cities, for example, the decline of the high street, increasing dominance of leisure uses and so on, the local contexts need to gain relevance. The unpredictability of urban change becomes especially evident in view of the 2020–2021 Covid19 crisis. The impacts of the crisis will continue to have unpredictable effects on the urban fabric and the way we use space.

The predominantly future-oriented approach to change that is characteristic to disciplines dealing with urban space can be explored through the concept of utopics. This term, coined by Louis Martin in 1984, refers to social practices by which societies' desired futures are expressed spatially. Martin calls this spatial play, and it is visible in town planning, modernist architecture and so on. Utopics means essentially that future-oriented ideas about development are expressed through a certain social space surrounding them. This term is related to Foucault's concept of heterotopia. Utopic and heterotopian sites are often oriented to the future, rather than to the present or past. Utopic ideas have their origin in the idea of improvement from the eighteenth century and the concepts of progress and modernisation (Hetherington, 2001). The modernist and socialist city was focused on delivering the best infrastructure, hygiene and mass accommodation (Hain, 2013) – this kind of development is focused on delivering tangible short-term outcomes with long-term social and economic impacts. The modernist perspective on urban change includes in itself an assumption of a certain trickle-down effect. The assumption is that often radical change to the urban landscape will create wider benefits that will eventually trickle down to local communities and the wider society (Keddie, 2014). Trickle-down philosophies became especially popular in the 1980s Thatcher government – where investment and property led approaches were dominant in recapitalising derelict sites, the logic being that the benefits of this will eventually trickle down to the wider population (May and Thrift, 2001) – and Reagan-Keynesian economies more globally. These ideas spread across wider Europe. This trickle-down effect has however rarely been influential in real urban situations.

The approach meant that questions about impact or benefits to present communities were considered to be secondary (Raco, Henderson and Bowlby, 2008). Often gentrification, for example, is considered the dominant process of urban change, overlooking the everyday experiences of communities. The material reality of gentrification is considered more relevant than the subjective experience and understanding of the people to whom it is happening (Keddie, 2014). The example of 1980s and 1990s England shows that property-led development was explicitly concerned with the delivery of visual regeneration in short time frames rather than considering the needs of future communities (May and Thrift, 2001); the same can be said about urban development in 1990s Estonia. Robert Kronenburg argues that the underlying agenda is that buildings are created as an investment and their value directly depends on their stability – so development with predictable outcomes leads to more investment. But buildings created with this agenda do not even always need a user. It is increasingly common to see intense urban development without the end-user in mind. This doesn't mean that these buildings would be open to any kind of user, the type of user is determined by investment potential (Kronenburg, 2007). New buildings are also rarely built with an alternative scenario for future uses. Trends have a way of coming across as something that lasts and this is surprisingly characteristic of contemporary architecture.

The future-looking shaping of space is often contrasted with an intense interest in heritage conservation. It seems that a key premise for any kind of conservation practice is a meaningful direction of the inevitable process of change. This applies both in terms of physical space as well as everyday use and maintaining a sense of place. This works in parallel with the increasingly popular notion of ´placemaking´. While conservation is about preserving existing identities, placemaking focuses on creating place identities and new stories often linked to heritage. Liu links the discussion of urban change with the idea of maintaining a ´sense of place´: he argues that places are constructed of individual stories that leave ´traces´ and this sense is always ´becoming´ (Liu, 2011). This links the

issue of urban change with conservation and what elements and uses of space 'we' deem valuable. The director of the Estonian National Heritage Board, Siim Raie, published an article focused on Heritage Management in contemporary Estonia and more broadly in late 2020 in which he clearly emphasises the importance of the value question – in order to look at space management from a heritage perspective, it's always important to ask for whom and why something is significant (Raie, 2020). Heritage-focused debates become especially complex in post-socialist contexts where dealing with Soviet heritage and understanding its value has been a challenge for decades.

The field of conservation is meaningful as it provides decision-making criteria for urban development. Liu argues that there is always a tension between continuity and change in the city and change management in cities of transition is very complex and should not be approached with only a fragmented modernist view or a traditional coherent development view, but should combine everyday life practices into the process (Liu, 2011). More and more heritage is understood as a process and an experience (Raie, 2020). The frameworks managing the heritage process are, however, inherently political and connected to present-day economic contexts.

Preserving recent (modernist) heritage and defining its value has been in the focus of many researchers in recent years. Raie (2020) argues that in addition to preservation, the role of heritage protection is communicative – to preserve a meaning of a site. In a post-socialist context, this is a question that has intrigued theorists since the end of the Soviet Union. Raie writes. *'As there is no politically neutral culture as such, there is also no politically neutral cultural heritage'* (2020: 105).

The balance between future looking approaches to redevelopment next to

intense, but selective interest in heritage management is seen as a unifying characteristic of case study sites in focus. This interest is further explored in conservation management plans and development plans as well as media analysis revealing a morphing context of debates. It is argued that while discussion is focused on the past and the future, limited attention in practice is given on the present informal condition of the sites in focus.

3.2.2 The politics of time-space

Putting emphasis on the temporal dimension of space gives room for a more sociological understanding of urban development. This perspective opens urban studies and planning up to more diverse theories and adds to the debate. Studies of post-industrial space, post-socialist urban landscape and processes of gentrification intrinsically focus on the temporal element of urban processes. A more holistic or interdisciplinary approach to understanding space should also be reflected in practice.

One of the first movements to explicitly challenge the modernist view of the city was the Situationist International. Simon Sadler (1998) refers to Lawrence Alloway, who already in 1959 wrote in his book *The Situationist City*, that nowhere are permanent formal principles less likely to survive than in cities where the past, present and future overlap in messy configurations. Architects and planners are not able to control all the factors in a city *'which exist in a dimension of patched-up, expendable, and developing forms'* (Sadler, 1998: 15). Modernist visions had seen a future city where people were at ease and could function without complications, but the situationist city was at odds with this Corbusian perspective. The city is not an ideal landscape where the struggle with nature ends (Sadler, 1998). The Situationists were 'opposed to the temporal fixation of cities' and proposed a concept known as 'unitary urbanism' that

looked at space and urbanism as being dynamic, continually evolving, concerned with situations and outcomes of people's actions (Pinder, 2005). The situationists' term psychogeography was defined by Guy Debord as *'The study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of the individuals',* and emphasised the importance of everyday experience of space (Souzis, 2015: 194). Their common practices of drift and dérive enabled them to describe the world through subjective associations, resculpting the city through them (Smith, 2010). New perspectives have become relevant in looking at cities since; these include a focus on concepts such as ordinary city and everyday urbanism, and more attention is given to the rhythms of the city. In addition to this, more spatial modernist practices are countered by ideas of community development and organic city.

Part of this increasing interest in the everyday use of space is also the idea of temporary urbanism. Temporary urbanism, as an approach that became especially popular after the 2008 world economic crisis, aims to offer an alternative to the dominant long-term thinking and deal with the appropriation of space rather than accept the perfect solution as the only solution. Authors of the book *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* Florian Haydn and Robert Temel (2006) look at temporary uses as a symptom of the abovementioned alternative understanding to urban planning: rather than leaving development to government and the economy alone, temporary uses are claimed to explore the appropriation of the city (Haydn and Temel, 2006). Theories dealing with temporary practices claim foremost to derive from the critique of the dominant planning paradigm. Panu Lehtovuori has summed the discussion up as follows: *'the critics question the central tenet of the mainstream planning wisdom – the idea that there exists an objective, universal knowledge about the city'* (Lehtovuori, 2010: 32). According to Haydn and Temel, temporary uses are those that are planned to be impermanent from the start and therefore seek to derive qualities from the idea of temporality (Haydn and Temel, 2006). Haydn

has equated temporary uses with a prototype for future more stable programmes. He understands temporary uses as demand in themselves meaning that the solutions offered are based on existing situations. This approach looks at various opportunities for looking at and using the city – and this is largely based on experiment, trial and error (Haydn, 2006). Temporary uses are seen to start from the current condition rather than from a distant goal and seek to use what already exists; in order to do that they deal with smaller scales and brief time spans (Haydn & Temel, 2006). At the same time, examples exist of temporary uses being used as part of a long-term strategy. Varied approaches demonstrate the complexity of temporary uses: as they can exist as permanently temporary, temporarily permanent forms, a permanent solution can end up being temporary and a temporary solution can last for a long period. Temporary and permanent can be argued not to be notions on completely opposite ends of the spectrum – it is exactly that – a spectrum. Practice has shown that often projects intended as temporary end up being the most permanent and projects planned as lasting often lose their meaning and perish. The two ends of a spectrum encompass a wide range of various cases. Here De Certeau's distinction between tactics and strategy made in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (2005, first published 1984) is relevant. De Certeau looks at strategy as a calculation of the power relations that become possible when one subject of power becomes isolated from their surroundings. Strategy anticipates a location that can be seen as a solid base from which to direct relationship with the distinct outside environment – this is how political, economic and scientific rationality is constructed. Tactics, on the other hand, cannot rely on property or borders that would distinguish the location from the outside. According to De Certeau, tactical approaches operate with no ownership. That means that tactics do not have a base from which to prepare future conquests. Exactly because tactics are, according to De Certeau, not related to ownership issues they are capable of reacting to emerging opportunities. De Certeau has compared tactics to Brownian motions in a system, while strategies rest on their spot in institutions (De Certeau, 2005). Haydin and Temel have opened that approach to the urban context. According to them both

strategy and tactics are military terms. Strategy refers to long-term war planning and tactics in contrast to more short-term battle-planning. Tactics are an approach that emerges from a 'weaker place' (Haydn and Temel, 2006). Haydn and Temel are also among the many urban theorists who have claimed that strategic approaches to urban planning are no longer possible today.

While temporary uses or the boom of temporary urbanism argue to challenge mainstream planning wisdom, the intent of ´pop-up` culture has transformed over recent years and become more of a strategic planning tool for developers and local governments. What the approach did achieve is establish a culture where more attention is given to the rhythms of the city and placemaking as well as the process and a focus on local realities. Lefebvre has analysed the importance of rhythms to our experience of urban space in the collection of essays *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004) and his argumentation has been reviewed and analysed from a number of perspectives. Alongside Lefebvre, the topic of rhythms in a city has been extensively analysed by De Certeau (2005) and Sennet (1990), who look at the relation of space, time and everyday life. Looking at urban space as temporal opens new avenues for understanding change. The development of space is always influenced by local realities and everyday uses of space (Livingstone and Matthews, 2017). Observing the rhythms of urban spaces reveals that space is produced socially out of actions and representations and experiences (Borden, 2014). Filipa Matos Wunderlich has suggested that looking at the rhythms of urban space shows that temporality is the most important attribute of space and should be taken into account when thinking and evaluating urban spaces. Understanding urban rhythms can be useful for understanding places for the purposes of future design and rhythms give us a sense of time in urban places . This is important in terms of this PhD as the focus is on the processes behind shaping three case study sites: '*More than what one can find in spaces, in terms of elements or physical configurations, it is important to observe and understand what actually happens in spaces'* (Matos Wunderlich, 2008: 109). Matos Wunderlich looks at space

temporality as foremost an aesthetic experience – rhythms are connected to our sense of time, the experience of flow. And these are inherently subjective categories that are affected by sensory experiences and cognitive reactions in space (Matos Wunderlich, 2013).

The question of temporality forms a core framework uncovering processes shaping the indeterminate states of case study locations. This is reflected in an overview of the historical process, as well as documentation of temporal, site specific interventions, but also detailed site visit notes and photography. It is argued that site specific proposals offer a significant insight into value systems characterising the moment of time, but this is also the reason why our approach to transitory locations should remain malleable.

3.2.3 Fast forward urbanism, four-dimensional city, flexible planning, and free space

Cuff and Sherman (2011) suggest the concept of fast-forward urbanism. They argue that during the contemporary frenzy of urbanisation across the globe architecture and planning disciplines are failing to manage the process because the profession's definition of design is inadequate to the speed of change. In practice, the city still appears in a stop-action frame and nothing is seen to happen for interminable periods before built results are achieved. Cities seem to have a past and a future, but there is a lack of attention to uncertain presents. Cuff and Sherman write:

'Be it Los Angeles's Grand Avenue, Biloxi, or Lower Manhattan, the city appears as a stop-action frame: nothing happens for interminable periods, when suddenly we arrive at built results seemingly by fast forward, with no clear grasp

of how we got there. Like a series of discontinuous jump-cuts, the landscape transforms in a sequence of disorienting new frames where the destabilisation is never complete since some things have stayed the same. Today, the indifferent backdrop of the city evolves organically, taking the small steps that everyday urbanism endorses. ' (Cuff and Sherman, 2011: 10)

Fast-forward urbanism has some relevant key characteristics. It is a design strategy that uses accumulation catalyse change and it works through radical incrementalism. Fast-forward urbanism also uses a term called plastic ecologies and argues that it is more enlightening to view nature through the lens of culture, to understand it as a product of the political economy (Cuff and Sherman, 2011). Bishop and Williams (2012) have similarly proposed the idea of a four-dimensional city, by suggesting looking at time as an intrinsic dimension of urban development. Bishop and Williams mainly focus on temporary urbanism as a way of placemaking, but also suggest that it might hint at a fundamental change in the way our cities should be described and planned. They refer to sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity. Bauman argues that we are moving from a period that could be looked at as solid modernity (based on the belief in a perfect world) to a phase where we no longer believe in perfection or an end result and come to view change as the only constant. **Liquid modernity is characterised by certain uncertainty** (Bishop and Williams, 2012). In the way we look at space we are at present in a time where the old ways of doing things don't always work but new ways are not yet fully established (Bauman, 2013). Based on this, Bishop and Williams have suggested phased urban development and flexible master planning as solutions for overcoming the gap between time and space in urban planning. Phased development uses a range of temporary stages that move towards a loosely defined end vision (Bishop and Williams, 2012). Contemporary urban theory proposes that there is a need for a more holistic view of how space is used. The requirement for a traditional master plan to be a success (meaning: to be implemented) requires continuity of power, market certainty, availability of land.

Rigid plans envisioning urban change cannot adapt to changes in context (environmental, financial, political). Traditional plans are often idealistic but also wasteful. Flexible master planning suggested by Bishop and Williams would take change as a premise and include implementation in the master plan to a similar extent as the vision is present. Flexible plans aim to use existing social and physical characteristics of an area, not look at the city as a clean sheet on which to vision an ideal new landscape. Flexible plans are derived from 'everyday urbanism', being triggered by unplanned activities that provide diversity (Bishop and Williams, 2012).

Groth and Corijn have offered a more focused strategy for indeterminate spaces and look at places that *'are not coded by market-led urban development'* (Groth and Corijn, 2005: 506) and ask if these could be spots for new kinds of urban development. Such spaces are sites that have temporarily been left aside from the hegemonic visions. In particular these sites are urban residual areas and abandoned industrial spaces, as these spaces have an indeterminate character that enables new meanings to come forward and 'informal' actors to get involved (Groth and Corijn, 2005). Groth and Corijn approach these spaces as sites where clashes in 'urban meaning' manifest themselves, since different pathways of urban development are created by often temporary activities which may eventually alter existing planning prerogatives. These sites are highly important to research as they give new relevance and meaning to the idea of space in contemporary cities being socially constructed.

An important question here is what the actual impact of acknowledging temporality is to urban agenda-setting and policy development in the context of Tallinn. The idea of 'Free Zones' was suggested already in 2005 – another type of public debate. It was argued that we should be encouraging various actors to get involved and create new ways of thinking of planning (Groth and Corijn, 2005). The idea of free zones suggests that there is *'a need for uncontrolled, not*

commodified places that are socially sustainable and capable of integrating a mix of socio-cultural, economic and political activities.' (Groth and Corijn, 2005: 521). More and more we can see that creative projects are subsidised and are taken as part of official urban agendas, but there remains a need for some kind of unplanned freedom.

While the significance of temporality is clearly understood in contemporary urban theory, it can be argued that there are limited expressions of looking at city making as a consciously gradual and malleable process in practice. This hypothesis and an observation is explored through the case study methodology. While all three sites in focus are explored as being impacted by stalled processes and a number of temporal activities can be identified, the question how these often informal uses shape development plans or is there a potential for informal uses to impact the process remain questions that have been explored only in a limited manner. Case studies will be explored in the framework of contemporary urbanism, explorations of informal urbanism, laboratory urbanism, marginal urbanism. Specific interest is focused on provisional and interim uses, spontaneous and temporary urbanism, weak planning and looking at sites in focus as ephemeral. It is observed that the future-looking shaping of space is often contrasted with an intense interest in heritage conservation. Tensions between continuity and change demonstrate both focus on the past and the future, with limited attention to the meanwhile uncertainties.

3.3 Urban indeterminacy and non-development

The temporality of space is felt especially clearly on landscapes that lie fallow on the urban fringes (Qviström and Saltzman, 2007): indeterminate spaces that are seen as waiting for a new use, but during an uncertain mid-period obtain new unplanned meanings or seem to be gradually losing their former meaning and use. This thesis focuses especially on long-term indeterminacy, a condition of

space that can be often full of ambitions and visions, theories and expectations, but that also has a specific impact on the development of physical urban space and everyday experience of space. Looking at underused/ambiguous space is a theoretically rich field and I will give an overview of contemporary theories dealing with the condition. But essentially I will explore the value of indeterminate spaces and how to understand space as temporal, and whether learning from this condition be useful when aiming to understand post-socialist contexts. **The main assumption is that understanding indeterminacy and non-development is key to trying to understand the development processes and outcomes characteristic of ‘post-socialist’ Tallinn.** As I am looking at indeterminacy through exploring three very different case studies the story is diverse, both socially and economically. Each case demonstrates a different aspect of the complex indeterminate condition and stalled urban development. Through three case studies, I will explore what are the uses that emerge on indeterminate sites and ask how these could be valuable. Is indeterminacy part of an organic regular urban development cycle and, if so, should more conscious approaches for mid-periods between development phases be embraced? What can these indeterminate sites teach us about the post-socialist context?

I provide an explanation of why I have specifically decided to focus on the term ‘indeterminacy’ to summarise theories referring to complex urban situations. It can be argued that indeterminacy is an open-ended notion that enables focus on ephemeral and transient aspects of landscapes and opens new perspectives on the way space is studied, used and planned. Qviström and Saltzman have stated that a focus on landscape dynamics is a way to challenge agreements in how space is understood (Qviström and Saltzman, 2007). This is relevant when approaching the three case studies in focus in this thesis. Contemporary theory of ambivalent, complex spaces that represent some form of indeterminacy seems to agree that the potential richness of formal and informal uses overlapping in space is often not adequately considered and a potential to support more diverse and just urban

development is often lost because of this (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007, Doron, 2007).

3.3.1 Theorising indeterminacy

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, many cities witnessed the disuse of significant, mostly industrial, landscapes and their eventual abandonment. The cycles of capitalist economy have produced landscapes that are visually or functionally in an indeterminate state, often for significant periods. Gil Doron has written impactfully that indeterminate landscapes are reservoirs of social, cultural and architectural urban history and remain a part of the urban palimpsest (Doron, 2000). Indeterminate sites change rapidly and therefore become strong symbols of time and change. There are a large variety of reasons for the emergence of these spaces. Many of them are **political and economic**. Post-socialist cities have experienced a change in the use of significant urban landscapes on an especially large scale and in short time periods. While many post-socialist cities adopted a neoliberal approach to development and focused on the quick redefinition of spaces and the abandonment of Soviet ideologies on a policy level as well as with respect to physical space, the transformation has nevertheless been a long-term ongoing process and produced significant examples of long-term indeterminacy in urban space. Throughout the almost 30-year period since regaining independence, however, the way space is viewed in Estonia and how it relates to new ideologies has been reinterpreted numerous times. Visions for indeterminate sites are an excellent example when trying to explore how this process of maturing democracy has taken place.

According to Németh and Langhorst in recent decades vacancy has usually occurred because of the shift from an industrial to a service economy, suburban migration, more mobile working, and weak economic cycles (Németh and

Langhorst, 2014). But indeterminacy is not a modern phenomenon. It is very unlikely that there could be a planning model that leaves no land underused for often extended periods and this shouldn't also be the aim. When sustained long enough, indeterminate spaces become part of local identities, producing a special kind of wandering urbanite and offering new perspectives on urban development. Spaces that can be defined as 'indeterminate' offer a unique window into the changes of recent decades in how we understand, conceptualise and use space outside institutional frameworks and in everyday contexts as well as encourage us to look at urban development as a process. In the case of Tallinn, it is clear that urban landscapes that emerged for example in former Soviet industrial areas in the early 1990s differ greatly from developments proposed in the years since 2000. It can be argued that there is value in this process.

The term indeterminate is used here to refer to spaces that are in a state that can be considered to not have a clear use, that are on hold while waiting for a 'more legitimate' future use. However, these spaces are not stuck in time nor are they easily defined. This is an exploration into how these spaces have been understood in recent urban theory and what is the purpose of supporting 'productive uncertainty' – understanding indeterminate sites as intrinsic and valuable parts of the urban development process.

The term 'indeterminate space' has been used by a number of scholars (e.g. Groth and Corijn, 2005; Sheridan (2007), Cuff Sherman (2011), Havik, Patteeuw and Teerds (2011), Vervloesem and Dehaene, (2011), Sweeney, Mee, McGuirk and Ruming (2018) to refer to a variety of spaces. The concept of indeterminacy is used to refer both to the physical condition of space as well as patterns of use. But predominantly the term is used in the context of looking at 'waste spaces' in cities. There was a certain boom in theorising about wastelands in the mid-2000s and this has created a substantial list of concepts to explore. The most influential texts used here were published a decade ago and include the widely referred to text by Jacqueline Groth and Eric Corijn, 'Reclaiming Urbanity: Indeterminate

Spaces, Informal Actors and Urban Agenda Setting' published in 2005, a kind of a landmark text that has influenced a number of subsequent discussions about temporality and indeterminacy. Groth and Corijn: *′how these new forms of urbanism* (that emerge on indeterminate sites) *can be given a place in city planning in order to pay more justice to the social and cultural complexity that constitutes contemporary urbanity′* (Groth and Corijn, 2005: 503). Their text focuses specifically on how informal actors reappropriate indeterminate spaces and through that influence formal urban agenda setting. They also suggest the concept of free space, which is an early attempt to focus especially on the potential of indeterminate sites to contribute to a wider understanding of urban change. Corijn's and Groth's text has influenced a number of publications since, especially during the boom of theorising about the temporary use of space (2008–2014). Some of those texts are also important here, for example Tom Verebes's (2014) book *Masterplanning the Adaptive City: Computational Urbanism in the 21st Century*. The temporal nature of indeterminate sites is opened especially clearly by Qviström and Saltzman (2007), who look at landscape dynamics at the edge of the city by juxtaposing plans and visions with everyday experiences of indeterminate sites in Malmö, Sweden, and suggest that in order to understand fringe landscapes their temporary character needs to be in focus.

Looking at indeterminate urban spaces as a breeding ground for urban innovations is something that has been done for some time now (e.g. Haydn and Temel, 2006, Bishop and Williams, 2012, Hentilä, Bengs and Nagy, 2002), but what are the specific (land) uses that emerge on these sites? Are they formal or informal, and how can we capture these temporal occurrences?

Indeterminacy as a concept can be approached from a number of angles. Indeterminate space doesn't directly equal unused – these spaces can be busy and full of life. It also doesn't necessarily mean abandoned – indeterminate spaces are often treated with great attention. Indeterminate spaces don't need to be empty – these spaces can include physical structures or even landmark buildings.

Without aiming to reach a clear definition, but some clarity, I will start by exploring a number of concepts used in urban theory to approach these complex landscapes. Concepts that have influenced the thinking behind understanding indeterminacy extend from terms used in planning to trendy notions of contemporary urbanism. Gil Doron has compiled a list of terms used to refer to sites outside the standard use of cities:

'…badlands, blank space, border vacuums, brownfields, conceptual Nevada, Dead Zones, derelict areas, ellipsis spaces, empty places, free space liminal spaces, , nameless spaces, No Man's Lands, polite spaces, post architectural zones, spaces of indeterminacy, spaces of uncertainty, smooth spaces, Tabula Rasa, Temporary Autonomous Zones, terrain vague, urban deserts, vacant lands, voids, white areas, Wasteland... SLOAPs' (Doron, 2007)

This list is not conclusive and later literature has extended it significantly. Following this, the terms relevant here can broadly be categorised. Despite indeterminacy being very difficult to define there have been endless efforts to do so – behind all definitions lies the assumption that these types of spaces are unique and anomalous and should, therefore, be somehow managed (Doron, 2007).

There are terms that look at indeterminate spaces as empty: empty spaces, dead zones (Doron, 2007), No Man's Land (De Sola-Morales, 1995), urban voids, vacant spaces, wasteful places, wasted spaces, wasteland, terra nullius (e.g. Edensor, 2005), blank spaces (e.g. Unt, Travalou and Bell, 2014), the spaces between buildings, spaces of nothingness (Trigg, 2009), terrain vague (Sola-Morales, 1995) and urban deserts (e.g. Unt, Travalou and Bell, 2014). Terms that place these spaces outside the everyday city include edgelands (Farley and Roberts, 2011) and border vacuums (Jacobs, 1961). Terms that look at

indeterminate spaces as essentially negative landscapes include trashed space (Lister, 2006), badlands (Hethertington, 1997), junkspace (Lister, 2006, Koolhaas and Foster, 2013), landscapes of contempt (Armstrong, 2006) and urban dystopia. Terms that are typically used in planning legislation include brownfields (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006), Derelict, Underused and Neglected Land (DUN) (Doick, Sinnett, Hutchings 2006) and residual space (e.g. Groth and Corijn, 2005). Terms that focus on the flexible use and ambiguous nature of indeterminate spaces include ambivalent landscapes (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007), awkward zones (Jones, 2008), fragmentary space, free-zone (Groth and Corijn, 2005), the landscape in limbo (Qviström and Saltzman, 2007), spaces of uncertainty (Cupers and Miessen, 2002), uncanny space (Vidler, 1994), in-between zones (Martinez, 2016), indeterminate landscape, flexible space, open-ended space (Fernando, 2007), loose space (Franck and Stevens 2007), smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari (1988), porous space (Stavrides, 2007) liminal space (Livingstone and Matthews, 2017) and interstitial space (Hetherington, 1997). Urban researchers and geographers often view indeterminate landscapes as examples of heterotopia (Foucault, 2008), differential space (Lefebvre, 1991) or entropy, or focus on specific interpretations of these spaces such as urban commons (Gilbert, 1991), found space (Rivlin, 2007).

Doron has interestingly argued that ‘official’ definitions of terms such as wasteland, brownfield, vacant land and derelict land clearly exclude time and temporality and that including this dimension would render these dimensions useless (Doron, 1997). It seems that most definitions of underused space remain somewhat subjective, even poetic. Achieving a clear definition that can be understood uniformly seems to be impossible. This subjectivity, however, is relevant here, in order to understand the significance of indeterminacy in urban development, it is important to understand the complexity of ‘uses’ – while a space might appear derelict it might be highly functional for a specific group, and on the contrary, a space that seems to have a determinate character can be in

a state of abandonment. For example, Doron refers to the term *'dead space'* typically used in the jargon of urban planners – he argues that space cannot be dead or void and tabula rasa in itself, but the way planners conceptualise space is problematic (Doron, 2007)

Definitions can't be based solely on ownership, visual qualities or even use. It is typical that definitions of unused spaces start from and can roughly be divided into functional or aesthetic categories. Terms such as derelict space and wasteland, badland or junkspace seem to have a moral judgement hidden in them – they seem to refer to intentional abandonment (Doron, 2007). The notion of `urban wasteland' contains the idea that this land is seen to have no intrinsic value. It signifies a type of urban nature, but it is more barren and less vegetated than 'wilderness' (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). It usually signifies places that formerly had a function but have since lost it. But this is not the only possible reason for the emergence of urban wastelands. Wastelands are also built into cities as vacuums, emerge around infrastructural systems and so on. Jane Jacobs has referred to these spaces as border vacuums. She dedicated a chapter of her book *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) to describing how contemporary urbanism creates these unused barrier spaces. The typical Estonian terms used for land with now clearly understandable use, *'jäätmaa'* (left space, residue space) and *'tühermaa'* (a derivation of 'empty land'), seem to have similar connotations – this space is either intentionally abandoned or there is an assumption that these types of spaces are void of use. Wasteland can be considered as a negative location, representing a sort of distracted and spontaneously emerged artificial environment. Wasteland also manifests itself as a negative time carrying the meaning of border-zone between the past and future, being a blank space in the present. *'As a concept, it derives from the opposition between full and empty – it is a symbol of entropy and conveys meanings of participating space, death and chaos etc.'* (Zlydneva, 2002: 382–384). Frequently urban wastelands are looked at as a negative phenomenon – '*locus horribilis*', as the urban geographer Tim Edensor has called them, in which deviant acts take place, suspicious people meet, and which promote feelings of

fear and disorder (Edensor, 2005). French landscape architect Christope Girot has described waste spaces in cities as 'landscapes of contempt' (cited in Armstrong, 2006). Despite this mostly dark outlook, waste spaces tend to carry some sort of attraction, especially to the urban explorer and the artist, and tell us something about spaces in transition.

There are terms that attempt to be more objective and these are typically used in policy documents. A typical example of this are terms such as brownfield or vacant land. In planning terms, vacant land can be redeveloped easily, without demolition or clearing the site. Doron argues that the term vacant is too general as the vacancy is neither physical nor occupational – it is temporal and seen to be problematic when it is extended (Doron, 2007). In legal terms derelict land is usually that which has been abandoned by its owner, but if this were used as the only criterion for definition, many relevant aspects of indeterminacy would be left out. Kenneth L. Wallwork has suggested that some kind of a bridge should be created between the economic and aesthetic definitions. For example, it is possible for land to appear degraded without it being economically derelict (and vice versa) (Wallwork, 1974). Often the definition is derived from the visual qualities of the derelict land – there is a long tradition of literary description which equates, for example, industrialisation with the squalor of the landscape. Most definitions suggest this ambivalence (Wallwork, 1974).

When indeterminate space is looked at as vacant there seems to be an assumption that it can be filled with something new without adjustment or treatment. But viewing vacancy as emptiness can also have more poetic connotations. Tim Edensor has referred to spaces with no apparent use as *'the scars of landscape'*, whose value has disappeared and whose new meaning is yet to emerge (Edensor, 2005). Though approaches to urban indeterminate landscapes have in many ways changed since the 1990s and early 2000s and these zones are often viewed as sites of alternative economy, this idea of nothingness, vacuum, no-go areas seems to remain. For example, Dylan Trigg has approached the issue of indeterminacy through the idea of ´nothingness´. ´Nothingness´ is defined by

him as the vantage point from which the absent past is traceable in the unformed present. He looks at ruins, waste landscapes as privileged spaces in the contemporary urban landscape – they have the ability to mirror an alternate past-present-future (Trigg, 2009). This can also be seen as the main reason for the attraction of these spaces. Lehtovuori refers to Stefano Boeri's approach to vacant sites from 1993 when this was still a fairly undefined field. Boeri (2003) approached these spaces by calling them 'new nameless' spaces since these sites have acquired a vast number of names and definitions and through that in a way lost some of their indeterminacy. Interestingly Boeri distinguishes so-called 'new nameless spaces', *terrains vague*, from other vacant sites in the city – *terrains vague* are sites that do not possess a clear or univocal identity and seem to lack any identity whatsoever. Contrary to other unclear sites, *terrain vague* seems to resist all definitions (Lehtovuori, 2010).

A similar term to nothingness is ´urban void´ or the previously mentioned ´dead zone´ (Doron, 2007). But how does our daily experience resonate with the idea of ´voidness´ when these spaces are typically full of debris, decay and signs of the past (Janssen, 2008) as well as present activity? The idea of urban voids has the connotation of ´tabula rasa´, an empty page filled with potential. It seems to imply that spaces left behind can be seen as an arena for new types of urban practices and ideas. This perspective became especially popular in Berlin in the 1990s in the context of the reunification of Germany but continues to be relevant. Wasteland or void space also means freedom – these are free spaces outside of institutionalised urban planning. One of the dominant terms used to refer to urban indeterminacy, ‘no man's land’ seems to be losing its relevance. The number of such zones in contemporary terms is increasing in many cities, but they are no longer only seen as areas of danger and decay, zones of the underclass, but instead as spaces of new kinds of ambiguity and uncertainty of meaning (Moods, 2000).

3.3.2 Aesthetic perspectives: nature/culture opposition

Most often landscapes defined as wastelands are seen as characteristic of post-industrial and post-socialist spaces – mostly due to the fact that post-industrial landscapes are highly visible and concrete (Doron, 1997). But it would be hasty to equate the notions of wasteland and post-industrial landscape. The former has several reasons to appear and the latter takes different forms. The same applies to the interpretations of these spaces – the reasoning behind the attraction is varied. Aesthetic conceptualisations of indeterminate sites often lead to the nature–culture opposition. Indeterminate spaces are often compared to the natural world; they function as reminders that nature can be in rule in any place after a short period of time. The post-modern urban wilderness can be found in woodlands, abandoned allotments, river corridors or derelict brownfield sites. These areas suggest that nature is taking over control (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). So, paradoxically, though mostly seen as ugly, indeterminate spaces in derelict condition can become symbols of pastoral idyll – the yearning for a lost connection with nature in cities. Velbaum-Staub has used Bakhtin's notion of idyll in this context; he sees one of the main characteristics of idyll to be the joining of human life with that of nature in a common rhythm. Idyll has organic ties with the location, it levels all aspects of time and demonstrates its cyclical nature (Velbaum-Staub, 2002). In many post-industrial, post-communist cities this idyll can be found on wasteland. One of the reasons why these spaces are attractive seems to be the tension between the polarities of nature and culture (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). In an increasingly urbanised built environment indeterminacy provides an alternative experience – maybe even a substitute to planned urban nature.

Nassauer and Raskin are critical of viewing these sites as something that is returning to nature. They may take on the appearance of ‘nature’, but only to an uneducated eye. This seeming appearance of nature underlies uncertainties about the legacies present on vacant urban landscapes. Landscapes may look natural, but often they are contaminated in a variety of ways (Nassauer and Raskin, 2014). These landscapes call for a transdisciplinary approach that incorporates

urban ecology, design and planning (Nassauer and Raskin, 2014). The oppositions characteristic of indeterminate landscapes seem to encourage transdisciplinary research – the nature-culture ambivalence opens the topic up to wider debates.

3.3.3 Urban heterotopias: awkward and ambiguous spaces

The ambivalence between aesthetic and functional definitions is included in more soft-edged approaches that focus especially on the uncertain character of indeterminate spaces. These are the previously listed concepts that focus on the flexible use and ambiguous nature of indeterminate spaces such as ambivalent landscapes (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007), awkward zones (Jones, 2008), fragmentary space, free-zone (Groth and Corijn, 2005), the landscape in limbo (Qviström, and Saltzman, 2007), spaces of uncertainty (Cupers and Miessen, 2002), in-between zones, flexible space (Griffiths), open-ended space (Fernando, 2007), loose space (Franck and Stevens 2007), liminal space and interstitial space (Hetherington, 1997).

Hannah Jones's idea of awkward space could be seen as an example of ambivalence intrinsic to indeterminacy – awkwardness being an 'inharmonious quality or condition'. Jones (2007) has defined the concept of 'awkward space' as *'ambivalent or unresolved space that represents the remnants of a previous pattern of flow'* (Jones, 2007:70). She argues that these types of spaces are relevant to analyse because they offer planners and designers an insight into informal practices within cities – the term refers to spaces that lie outside the realm of rational planning and design strategies (Jones, 2007). The truth is that no matter how well cities are planned eventually there are ambivalent or unresolved spaces. Important in this case is whether this awkwardness is a thoroughly negative characteristic of space or could it bring forward some new possibilities, alternative ways to understand cities. In economic terms, this awkwardness can be looked at as the lack of use, but it is also aesthetic

awkwardness that can be described with the word uncanny – something different from the everyday draws the attention of the observer (Jones, 2007).

Jorgensen and Tylecote have looked at these spaces as ambivalent, focusing especially on humans' relationship to wilderness and suggesting that post-modern wilderness can be found on indeterminate, interstitial sites. Both terms, awkward space and ambivalent space focus on the certain experience that these spaces trigger (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). A number of scholars have used Foucault's concept of heterotopia to interpret these spaces (for example Hetherington, 1997, Edensor 2005, Jones, 2007, Qviström and Saltzman, 2007, Unt, Travalou and Bell, 2014, Livingstone and Matthews, 2017, Lehtovuori, 2010). Foucault has defined heterotopian spaces as places where differences meet, spaces that overturn and challenge normality (Stavrides, 2006). Jorgensen and Tylecote refer to Hetherington, who has written that *'heterotopias organise a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them'* (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). Unt, Travalou and Bell have linked the concept of heterotopia to the idea of porous space (Stravides, 2007) and Rivlin's concept of found space (Rivlin, 2007) – as these spaces are open to interpretations and uses that differ from their initial purpose. These spaces demonstrate freedom of choice (Unt, Travalou and Bell, 2014). Savrides and Stavros, authors of the text *Heterotopias and the experience of porous urban space* (2006) emphasise that opposing the will to fix spatial meanings creates new spatial articulations and this results in ´urban porosity´: *´Porosity seems to describe..the way in which urban space is performed in the process of being appropriated´* (Stavrides, 2007: 1).

The frequently used terms loose space (Franck and Stevens, 2007) and open-ended space similarly refer to spaces that have lost their programmatic use and are open for interpretation and appropriation. Jorgensen and Tylecote have also proposed the term 'representational space' to refer to spaces where human agency is not formative – these spaces are situated between landscapes of power

and vernacular landscapes and include brownfield sites etc (Jorgensen, and Tylecote, 2007).

Linnahall, Kopli Lines and Kalarand are sites that are known for a specific kind of indeterminacy that has been reflected in both uncertain futures, but also prevalent informal uses - the sites can be seen to function as informal gathering points, but have also been a location for informal inhabitation. It is argued that it is relevant to explore this informality in order to give meaning to the question of waste spaces in cities both in terms of aesthetic, use, but also policy. The sites are explored through the complex list of terms used in contemporary theory; they are seen as a form of heterotopic spaces, with certain awkwardness that can be seen as productive.

3.3.4 The tourist gaze and indeterminacy

Indeterminate, ambivalent spaces seem to have a certain attraction for a new kind of urban explorer. Formal qualities of indeterminate spaces become important; their form is often foregrounded. Spaces that were formerly appraised for their utility seem to now be devoid of it. This generates a feeling of uncanny beauty. Among other qualities Tim Edensor suggests the idea of mundane surrealism – the relationship of objects and space create a dream-like fantastical world that interrogates the regulations of the normative objective world (Edensor, 2005). The new way of looking at these spaces turns them from usually former production sites into consumption sites – the distancing tourist gaze turns them into urban *'adult playgrounds'* (High and Lewis, 2007: 44). But can John Urry's idea of the tourist gaze really be utilised here? Eva Näripea has written that 'tourist gaze' does not directly imply the specificities of the foreign experience – it can also refer to the choices made by locals; it can be called site creation. It refers to the image that is wished to portray a place to the outside world. This in turn refers to local collective identities (Näripea, 2005). The tourist gaze is directed to a landscape and city that is different from everyday experience – this

kind of approach has a stronger sensitivity towards visual elements. People objectify their viewpoint and preserve it in photos, postcards, films and so on (Urry, 2002). It is possible that the same commodifying tourist gaze is turned to elements that are classically viewed as negative and ugly or uncertain. The idea of apocalyptic landscapes seems to invite a new type of consumption of space. Abandoned and waste spaces can carry many symbolic meanings to an urban dweller. Undoubtedly indeterminate landscapes have an attraction that can be seen from the ongoing museumification of industrial landscapes. Many of these landscapes end up being transformed into popular tourist sites, abandoned mills and factories become important loci for cultural events and so on. But the problem with these spaces is that they can't be commodified without being entirely transformed. According to Edensor, ruined spaces contrast the spectacle of the post-modern and stimulate alternative practices. Critical forms of consciousness and the exploration of ruins can be also looked at as anti-tourism (Edensor, 2005). Edensor uses the term anti-tourism when the visitor has access to experiences that are not highly manipulated (Edensor, 2005).

Urban change brings forward a certain kind of nostalgia for past times, which often becomes glorified in collective memory. High and Lewis have called ruined spaces *'memory places'* – these are urban spaces that make us pause, reflect and remember. The issue of memory in the context of urban wastelands is relevant in the texts of several writers. But this is not an easy question if we want to look beyond the *'smokestack nostalgia'* (High and Lewis, 2007: 9). One of the main attractions for urban explorers in decayed landscapes is the idea that they suggest some kind of an alternative to the current societal situation. Indeterminate spaces present a critique of the modernist ideal, the idea of continuous progress, the endless consumption of spaces. 'Waste' spaces in cities demonstrate the inevitability of change and show that nothing really is permanent or ever-growing. For example, the impermanence of the industrial landscape has become apparent in the second half of the twentieth century. The ideas of the constant progress of society and what we value in urban space have

become questioned. Specifically, industrial ruins seem to temper the optimism in modern progress (High and Lewis, 2007). These spaces have become irrelevant to the continual creation of the new. To understand that something that is now classified as waste once signified progress is to understand the fragility of the social order (Edensor, 2005).

For a user, interminate sites function as a trigger for the imagination. However, the first instinct in contemporary cities is to look past these landscapes as non-spaces, negative vistas or simply something that is not there. Indeterminate spaces serve as a reminder that all space has the potential to be both useful and useless**.** Wasted, empty, ruined spaces in cities are the arena for the becoming of new forms, new aesthetics. Just as much as ruined or void spaces reflect the past they gesture towards the future and suggest its potential (Edensor, 2005). Corijn and Groth (2005) claim that places that are not coded by market-led urban development (amongst them urban residual spaces, such as industrial areas) provide opportunities for new, transitional re-appropriations suggested by informal actors. In many contexts the potential of wastelands has been seen as their main attraction point – it makes these landscapes playful and imaginative. Many urban explorers and artists therefore treat indeterminate areas as laboratories for new ideas where fantasy can run free. Post-socialist contexts seem often to have acquired this aura of excitement for the external observer.

Interest in exploring how these landscapes in focus are gazed upon is the core reason behind the choice to include autoethnographic approaches as an additional layer to site exploration. Autoethnographic records exist somewhere between a distanced tourist gaze that is focused on the visual and everyday experiences of indeterminate spaces. As an author I am conscious of my role as an 'urban explorer', who in a sense through explorations commodifies informal spaces. This perspective however is nevertheless seens as valuable in seeing sites in focus as memory places that remind us that all space has the potential to be both

useful and useless, and both ends of these spectrums need a spectator in order to be understood.

3.3.5 Forms of indeterminacy: vacant buildings, neighbourhoods, stalled sites

There isn't one typical pattern of vacancy, but it is more common for this to occur near transportation corridors, in areas of transitioning use (e.g. from industrial to commercial), transition zones between different morphological patterns and the edges of cities (Németh and Langhorst, 2014). Nemeth and Langhorst have classified three categories of vacant land:

- remnant parcels that are often small in size, irregular shape, have steep slopes or other geophysical regulatory limitations that hinder development.

- reserve parcels: these are lots held by private owners for speculation or future expansion or public agencies for future sale or development.

- TOADS – temporary obsolete, abandoned or derelict sites, typically former industrial or commercial areas (Németh and Langhorst, 2014).

Based on this classification they argue that vacancy is primarily mediated by two factors: ownership and developability, and urban development cycles depend on vacant land – it is a necessary byproduct of urban development processes. They refer to Berger (2006), who argued that vacant land is a natural component of every dynamically evolving city (Németh and Langhorst, 2014). It can be argued that cities have a cyclical existence of growth and shrinkage – this is a capitalist development model characterised by boom/bust cycles.

It is important to be aware that indeterminate sites are more than just an eyesore (Garvin, Branas, Keddem, Sellman and Cannuscio, 2012) or an urban explorer´s playground. There are significant social and economic issues that result from undefined sites. Vacant sites are magnets for illegal and criminal activities, and long- term uncertainty has negative effects on neighbourhoods (Pearsall, 2014). Indeterminacy of futures and high vacancy rates tend to concentrate in

neighbourhoods with marginalised populations. Long-term indeterminacy of futures, as demonstrated by the case of Kopli Lines, demonstrates especially clearly that unknown futures can have effects on the health of communities. Looking at these sites enables us to address issues of social and environmental injustice (Németh and Langhorst, 2014).

The social consequences of living in a highly vacant neighbourhood may include a sense of isolation or stigmatisation, which is a circular process that ends up undermining the social capital of the space. Landscapes' types of abandonment are affected by post-industrial economic changes, financial uncertainties in real estate, poverty, ineffective government and perceptions of insecurity. Nassauer and Raskin pose some important questions, such as how legacies of past land uses as well as land abandonment and vacancy might affect social and environmental systems (Nassauer and Raskin, 2014).

Neighbourhood dynamics and social capital are very important when trying to understand these spaces. It has been argued that the dynamics of landscape abandonment and vacancy are both social and environmental, and understanding them requires taking a temporal perspective (Nassauer and Raskin, 2014).

3.4 Towards productive uncertainty

> *'Between indeterminacy and over-determinacy there is a broad spectrum of spatial registers in which to play the game of giving and taking space.'*
> *(Dehaene, Vervloesem, 2011:17)*

Cupers and Miessen (2002) have noted that while on the one hand urban voids can be considered an introverted desolation, an essential and sociological appearance of loss, the concept can be also interpreted positively – empty also means free and therefore full of opportunity. While historically indeterminacy or vacancy has been considered a problem that should be fixed as soon as possible, the continuing deindustrialisation the second half of the twentieth century and as well as, for example, shrinking cities in Eastern Europe has led to thinking that considers vacant land a resource that can lead to transformative processes in cities (Nemeth and Langhorst, 2004). This perspective has possibly been opposed by the too generous glorification of temporary uses after the 2008 world economic crisis. But could there be a middle ground? Lehtovuori and Ruoppila refer to Oswald and Baccini, who have looked at 'empty space' as an ever-present part of the urban form that shouldn't be looked at as an exception or a problem, but a necessary category on its own. They link this idea to Lefebvre's understanding of urban space and the concept of spatial dialectic – tensions in space reflected on indeterminate sites make urban space dynamic and open for change (Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2017).

In theory, indeterminate sites are often looked at as community assets, especially based on processes that emerged on sites where developments have been on hold since the 2008 world economic crisis. Panu Lehtovuori claims that more than in neat and regulated centres, a genuine, idiosyncratic experience is possible on urban wastelands. He names the attachment that can be formed to space in these

sites as *'weak place'* (Lehtovuori, 2010: 2). This idea suggests that the notion of place is not closed and physically bounded, but rather open and porous and can be invaded by people for constantly changing purposes (Mare, 2008). Indeterminate landscapes are seen to invite so-called spontaneous urbanity based on *'marginal lifestyles, informal economies, artistic experimentation, a deliberately open transformation of public space. Today, these initiatives, in many European cities, are increasingly supported by institutions as a tool for urban regeneration, but at the same time, they are a form of resistance and critique of top-down urban planning'* (Groth and Corijn, 2005: 503). However, indeterminate spaces continue to be something that is not always considered to be part of the regular cycle of urban life despite the fact that the production of voids is one of the dominant characteristics of the logic of a capitalist city. Vacant buildings are expected to find new permanent uses as soon as possible or remain a no-man's land that is cut out of the attention spectrum and utilised by the outcasts of society, illicit activities or urban wanderers. This is visible in how developers typically approach indeterminate periods, typically by boarding off sites or making access to them difficult. Predominantly negative connotations expressed in media behind concepts related to indeterminate spaces, such as squatting, make it difficult for urban governments to decide what should be the policy approach to these spaces and to find a use for the present day. Similarly, community-led initiatives are often seen as negative as they might cause opposition to future development ambitions. It has been claimed that in-between uses seem to do a lot of 'deconstruction work' by calling into question the fundamental issues of planning and its premises (Kohoutek and Kamleithner, 2006). But it seems that bottom-up deconstruction is being adopted by top town practises. More and more governments and developers are looking at promoting temporary uses as a means for progressing development.

There was a clear boom in Europe of supporting temporary use on indeterminate sites after the economic crisis that started from bottom up practices but was later taken over by developers as a measure for ‘preparing the ground’. Since then

promoting the temporary use of space has also been extensively criticised. What temporary nature of uses can result in is a kind of urban recycling, but Kohoutek and Kamleithner, for example, claim that at the moment it tends to lead to uses with even shorter lives, which aim for nothing more than quickly filling the market and making a profit and are abandoned after circumstances change. The array of temporary uses promoted is often quite limited and not triggered by a concrete location and a community. A key question related to temporary projects is of course their environmental impact. The ecological consequences of temporary projects are difficult to estimate. It has been suggested that this might lead to social and functional disentanglement and many claim that there haven't been many convincing solutions or results produced by temporary uses (Kohoutek and Kamleithner, 2006). Festivalisation and the event city are also concepts that are objected to in relation to temporary uses. For example, Robert Temel has argued that the conscious use of temporary projects in urban renewal can lead to the homogenisation of city centres and a displacement of functions. It brings forward the question of who is expected to use the urban space and who is excluded – for example, low-income workers are exploited to provide events of which they can not take part themselves (Temel, 2005). This refers to the problem that while initially being a tool aiming to increase social cohesion, event-like temporary uses might become a tool for city branding and create further exclusion. A critique of the instrumentalisation of culture through temporary uses has been provided by Claire Colomb. She has approached the discourse of temporary uses critically based on the situation in Berlin, claiming that a lot of attention has been given to *'integration of temporary uses and interim spaces into urban policies and the official place marketing discourse'*. She asks if temporary users are nothing more than gap-fillers in periods of lower market demand (Colomb, 2012: 138).

However, while extensively criticised the boom of temporary uses did create a shift in the way urban planning and development is conceptualised and have led to the adoption of more inclusive concepts such as open cities or explorations of

the potential of productive uncertainty. The notion of an open city proposes looking at the city as a scenario able to evolve over time and categorises the urban environment as an opportunity structure. Allowing a certain level of indeterminacy is a prerequisite to openness. Dehaene and Vervloesem argue for an approach that brings together the benefits of planning and allows indeterminacy. They see the open city approach as an exercise in dealing with the relative indeterminacy that is inherent to all urban environments. Based on the example of Rotterdam-Zuid they demonstrate that creating indeterminate environments is very challenging and it would be naive to glorify indeterminacy in itself as it is often a sign of decay and problematic social space. But the opposite is just as problematic as the ambition to arrive at a harmonised urban space often ignores the process. They argue for something that can be referred to as 'relative indeterminacy', that is, not deregulation and 'everyday life' determined urban development, but meaningful considerations of all shades of urban development (Dehaene and Vervloesem, 2011).

3.4.1 Theory applied

It is typical for revitalisation initiatives to be led by an ambition to find seemingly 'permanent' or at least long-term solutions to urban vacancy, but in doing so the existing community resource is often overlooked. This becomes evident when looking at uses that emerge on sites that have been in a long-term indeterminate state. Cycles of clearly defined use and loose space serve as critical components of the urban ecosystem. Because indeterminacy has for a long time been conceptualised as problematic and there is an imperative to develop urban space without a clear use as soon as possible without paying much attention to the processes that emerge in the mid-period, the potentials for alternative uses that could have a positive effect on these sites are not very well known (Editorial, 2014). Why looking at indeterminate sites informs us about urban development processes is in a way quite obvious – the margin that these

sites exist in demystifies terms such as development and process. As Cupers and Miessen have put it, we need to critically look at the way architecture is traditionally involved with developing empty sites into well-developed places – this seems to refer to a **beginning and endpoint.** But there is no final product, no perfect city: *'The city is a never-ending cycle of growth and decay'* (Cupers, Miessen, 2002: 178). The standard and common practice in dealing with indeterminacy is to return underutilised land back to more productive uses. Strategies are aimed at replacing vacant space with space that can in some way be considered useful or profitable. Jorgensen and Tylecote have suggested that re-visioning indeterminate sites could have far-reaching implications for urban landscape planning and design as their essential qualities (such as their ability to accommodate spontaneous development, freedom, flexibility) could be used to manage open space in cities (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). This doesn't mean that these spaces should be idealised or given heritage treatment, but rather that when the temporal nature of these spaces is taken into account these spaces no longer act like tabula rasa (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). The aesthetic attraction of waste spaces seems to suggest the idea of preservation, but as Dylan Trigg has argued, a ruin preserved and commodified ends up being a monument (Trigg, 2009). An opposite to this would be festivalisation, which commodifies indeterminate spaces as landscapes for new kinds of consumption. It is more important to focus on the flux of these spaces, the processes that emerge, the relationships that form. Some alternative practices promote flexible land-use models and suggest that this might be useful under conditions of political uncertainty and economic decline. Alternative approaches could empower marginalised communities and also support ecological systems that have been damaged by permanent uses (Pearsall, 2014).

It is clear that understanding indeterminacy in a post-socialist context is a complex debate, but what is needed is openness to new ways of thinking. It is important that planners increasingly see the potential of space and consider the effects (both positive and negative) that long-term indeterminacy has on local

communities. One could argue that architects and designers have always dealt with indeterminacy and unknown futures, but the instability of the political, cultural and economic context for projects, especially in transitional societies, is unprecedented – it is essential that in addition to the dimension of form urban visions include the dimension of time (Havik, Patteeuw and Teerds, 2011). Indeterminacy can be long-lasting and therefore needs to be considered inclusively, considering a variety of communities and the way this condition can impact urban situations for decades.

In order to arrive at a meaningful understanding of the significance of memory and everyday practices indeterminate spaces possess it is argued that it is relevant to explore visions and proposals that have never been realised in addition to mapping the typomorphology and everyday uses of sites in focus. As follows a detailed overview of the methodological approach to case study sites is provided with awareness of the limitations of the approach. The methodological approach is embedded in critical theory.

4. Methodology and research design: an interdisciplinary approach to urban change

As follows an overview of the development and application of the thesis methodology is given. Three level approach to each site is introduced. The chapter includes an insight into critical theory and the challenges of balancing objective and subjective records, the question of representation, and an overview of the types of data used for site analyses. A detailed review of research questions as well as the reasoning behind the case studies will be given.

4.1 Qualitative case study approach

Viewing place as a process originates foremost from critical theory and this perspective is also relevant here. Critical theory emerged from the writings of radical urban researchers such as Henri Lefebvre (1996), David Harvey (2008) and, more recently, Peter Marcuse (2009), who all dealt with the concept of 'right to the city'. The perspective emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the aforementioned authors shared a common interest in understanding how cities operate as strategic sites of capitalism (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2009). The key concepts of their writings continue to be relevant. Critical theory brings up several questions about the relationship between theory and practice and the necessity of planning theory as such. The question is how to move from critical theory to critical practice and in the current context how to approach temporality in post-socialist spaces. Critical theory is reflective, which means that it claims that all social knowledge is contextual and there exists a critical consciousness of reality and accepted paradigms (Brenner, 2009). A central perspective is formed around the critique of instrumental reason, a 'means-ends' rationality without the interrogation of the ends themselves. It can broadly be claimed that critical theory deals with deconstruction and reconstruction. Deconstruction means that prevailing knowledge is broken down into its essential elements – this might be

the collection of empirical data and examining this data in relation to theoretical constructs. Reconstruction is about rebuilding the idea and creating new frameworks (McCarthy, 1993). One of the aims of the present research is to find out if designing a research methodology that attempts to map ongoing change could inform urban design practice and through this deconstruct the trope of looking at former Soviet spaces solely as post-socialist. For this research project, a number of data sources have become relevant: these include historical maps, masterplans and policy documents, but equally media records and walking the city, autoethnographic photographic documentation including diary-form note-taking. Central to this methodology is the question of representation and the impact these representations have not only on our sense of these spaces in focus, but also on future development.

This thesis is built around a case study method. To be more specific I look at urban change in the city of Tallinn through a number of sub-cases. The morphology of Tallinn will be explored through three urban situations selected to represent a certain indeterminacy. The most common definition of the term case associates a case study with a location and emphasises the intensive examination of the setting (Bryman, 2012). The aim of this thesis is to gain in-depth knowledge of the indeterminate sites in Tallinn and this is more a process-driven approach that focuses on observations and personal experience rather than conclusions, and juxtaposes this with maps, plans, visions and representations.

Urban design is often criticised for its obsession with the finished product rather than looking at urban development as a complex process that is intertwined with social and political mechanisms. Matthew Carmona (2014) claims that this becomes especially visible when looking at the latest urbanisms such as post-urbanism, landscape urbanism, new urbanism, everyday urbanism, ecological urbanism, temporary urbanism, tactical urbanism and so on. He argues that these trends seek to neatly organise physical forms with prescribed social

and ecological content and philosophical meaning but often end up being narrow aesthetic debates (Carmona, 2014). As argued in the literature review, innovation is needed for viewing places as temporal in order to challenge development processes in contexts considered post-socialist and therefore it is relevant to put the major focus on qualitative exploratory practices (Wunderlich, 2014). Ian Borden has suggested viewing space as foremost a social phenomenon that is dynamically constructed out of things, actions, representations, ideas and experiences we have of it (Borden, 2014). This is also the premise of creating a methodological approach for this thesis looking at the case study of Tallinn and three locations that can be characterised as having been in a long-term indeterminate state.

The aim here has been to design a research methodology that would in the most comprehensive way take into consideration temporality and urban change when re-evaluating the notion of post-socialism. It is observed that approaches, theoretical frameworks and stakeholders involved in urban design and development are constantly evolving and reflect changes in society, the economy and the prevailing politics. This all overlays the historically defined processes of place (Carmona, 2014). The aim is to look at the urban context as a multi-scalar flux from the local to regional and global levels, exploring a variety of design research methods such as using typological and morphological investigations and creating a so-called 'elastic toolkit' (Arabindoo, 2014).

4.1.1 The balance between visual and textual information

It has been argued that cities can be read as a (visual) text with the persistence of memory. Differences of power, resistance, production and consumption, and features of the streets, buildings, shops and parks leave traces on people's psyches long after they have been reshaped (Spencer, 2011). The way spaces are

represented is key to understanding the political and social and political processes surrounding them. Photos, maps, plans and renderings of future visions uncover ideology and sense of place characteristic to a time period. However, this abundance of visual information can often turn out to be an obstacle rather than a benefit when trying to understand the multiple forces that shape urban change. A balance between not only visual and textual, but also objective and subjective information needs to be found. Urban studies research methods often focus on the visual aspects of the space uncritically, treating a representation of space as a description of objective reality. This is understandable and also relevant here as the visual is recognised as central to the human condition (Spencer, 2011). However, for example in social sciences, on the contrary, the visual functions mainly as subsidiary illustrations to the written text (Spencer, 2011). Therefore, urban design practices are often criticised for an aesthetic focus that is lacking pressing social, economic, cultural and political issues and leads to the commodification of the built environment (Arabindoo, 2014). The same criticism is also emphasised by Filipa Matos Wunderlich, who argues that for many years practitioners have analysed urban spaces in a formalistic manner and there has been very little innovation in the methods of analysis, representation and interpretation of urban reality. There is an established set of representations such as the figure-ground map, land use map, the conceptual diagram, the masterplan, sketches and photo-realistic images. Giving dominance to visual images reflects an approach to urban space that sees it as an object that is measured and observed from a distance and considers transitions and rhythms in only a limited manner (Matos Wunderlich, 2014). I am not arguing that there should be a turn away from the visual, but more that there is a need for an approach that consciously not only mixes a multitude of approaches and engages with the everyday of spaces, but also uses varied mediums to describe space and contextualises visual imagery through, for example, autoethnographic writing that critically approaches the question of representation.

There is also a dilemma between qualitative and quantitative methods, and sociological and 'scientific' approaches. Architecture and urban studies research methods can be divided roughly into scientific, social science methods (focusing on the study of human social phenomena), humanities methods (approaches based on critical analysis, speculation and historical research that do not seek final truths but instead explore their context), design methods (focusing on speculation through design and research-led design practice, often uses experimentation) (Carmona, 2014a). For this thesis, humanities methods take the foreground. Liu (2011) has offered an interesting perspective that aims to overcome the gap between the physical and experiential in urban research. He combines morphological and everyday life approaches to urban scholarship and argues that mapping the morphological changes of a city is not enough for a comprehensive study, and that empirical approaches to everyday life are just as relevant when researching urban change (Liu, 2011). A multi-method perspective informed by typomorphological and morphological approaches using experiential material as well as media analysis is relevant when trying to understand the process of (non)-change surrounding all three case studies in focus.

4.2 Case studies in detail: justification and background

This case study-led thesis mixes primary and secondary data, subjective and objective knowledge through a deductive approach to an urban context that has been described as transitional. The majority of case study research is based on qualitative methods. Qualitative methods mainly seek to interpret more local meanings, look at data as gathered in context, seek patterns and accommodate differences within data. They tend to be inductive (working from data) and have a less fixed method (can also accommodate a shift in focus in the same study) (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In this case, the exploration started from the

exploration of contemporary urban theory parallel to the often subjective exploration of place.

The thesis presents an in-depth analysis of three complex coastal sites in Tallinn. In a sense there are two layers of cases – the broader focus is on the urban processes characteristic to Tallinn as a city, but the approach also offers a detailed insight into the development and non-development characteristic to Linnahall, Kopli Lines and Kalarand. Deciding on a mixed-method approach means making a decision to focus on what works rather than the purity of the approach taken. It has been argued that good social science is problem- not methodology-driven. This means it uses methods that best answer the research questions at hand (Flyvbjerg, 2006). An ideal urban case study is replicative (of long duration, allowing for follow up studies and checking and rechecking previous findings as well as the extension of new ideas), triangulative (allowing the application of different research methods) (Bryman, 2012) and cumulative (making it possible to draw resources of several groups of researchers) (Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg, 1991). However, an ideal case rarely exists. Typical problems with case studies include the problem of the case being less typical than the researcher might assume as well as the issue of insider research (objectivity issue) (Feagin, Orum, Anthony and Sjoberg, 1991). A common critique of case study research is that it is impossible to generalise from a single case study and therefore this method might only be suitable for pilot studies rather than full research schemes. It has also been argued that a case study is subjective and gives too much scope to the researcher's own interpretations. Flyvbjerg (2006) has summarised some common misunderstandings and challenges related to case study research:

1. General knowledge is more valuable than context-dependent knowledge. Burns argues, however, that generalisation has not been the main goal of case study research. Case studies focus on circumstantial uniqueness, every case is embedded in historical, social, political, personal and other contexts and

interpretations. A mix of data provides a picture that is more true to life (Burns, 2000).

2. It is impossible to generalise based on individual case study.

3. The case study is more useful for generating hypotheses, other methods are more suitable for hypothesis testing and theory building.

4. A case study contains a bias toward verification, it has a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions. Ways to overcome this involve triangulation, reporting any personal bias of the researcher, and clear information about how data was obtained (Burns, 2000).

5. It is often difficult to develop general propositions and theories based on specific studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

These are, however, relevant to consider here as well. The specific interest in indeterminate sites can be observed to include a bias towards verification. While it is possible to make generalisations about sites in focus here, these are highly subjective. However, it is argued here, that the subjective, autoethnographic insight into the case studies is a relevant unique contribution documenting a transitional period in Tallinn's modern history. Additionally it is possible to make significant statements about post-socialist urbansim exploring transitory sites and uncovering processes as they are represented.

The selection of specific case studies beyond the interest in mapping the transformation processes characteristic to Tallinn has been a central challenge of this research project. I started this PhD project in 2013 with an interest in exploring the complex development processes characteristic to post-socialist Tallinn and a broad list of cases – a typology of mixed forms of indeterminate spaces that emerged after Estonia regained independence. In addition to the three cases that have remained in focus, I started from mapping inner-city voids, wastelands and abandoned buildings. In addition to cases in focus here, I explored another monumental structure that has been vacant for a number of years known as the Patarei Prison complex as well as the former site of the

Estonian Academy of Arts. Eventually, the case studies were whittled down by a number of site visits and initial archival research. Rather than focusing on the question of indeterminacy and temporary uses in the post-socialist condition more broadly, or attempting to map the extent of these sites in Tallinn, a decision was made to explore specific sites in depth - looking at their morphology, representation and providing an autoethnographic documentation. The story of urban change and the development of the planning system in Tallinn will be told through exploring these three diverse coastal sites – this is significant to understanding urban change in a context where the city is governed under a new system. Opening Tallinn to the sea is a topic that has been the focus of a number of research projects and a continuous urbanist debate. All three sites are characterised by a long-term stalled condition and a number of elaborate visions that have fallen through over the years. This part-time PhD afforded a unique opportunity to document and explore urban change on these sites from the autumn of 2013 until late 2020.

When looking at the case studies over a period of time and comparing visions to the physical space it becomes evident that innovation is needed to look at place-temporality and the rhythmicity of urban places, and therefore it is relevant to put the main focus on qualitative exploratory practices (Wunderlich, 2014). Space is looked at as foremost a social phenomenon that is dynamically constructed out of things, actions, representations, ideas and the experiences we have of it (Borden, 2014). This is also the premise of a methodological approach taken towards the case studies. In order to be able to fully understand urban processes sites of interest need to be looked at as informed by historical context, set within contemporary policy influences and a political-economic context, and defined by a particular set of stakeholder relationships (Carmona, 2014b). It is argued that spaces cannot be understood only formally, on the basis of physical and visual qualities; neither can urban forms be explained only through ideological processes. In order to achieve an understanding of urban change and how to incorporate flexibility in planning an approach is needed that includes the

temporal dimension as a key shaper of urban situations. This thesis takes a qualitative and experiential approach to these sites and emphasises that each of these sites has an everyday, ordinary dimension. Both visual and textual records are used for this.

Linnahall

The first case study explored is Linnahall – a monumental concert hall built for the sailing regatta of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games that was continuously underused until it became almost completely vacant in 2009. The case study is significant for unfolding the issue of dealing with the **material legacies** of Soviet cities and the challenges of finding new uses for monumental architectural structures. Topics of conservation, adaptive reuse and authenticity emerge alongside challenges of development. While still predominantly unused in 2021, the building has gained cultural significance among locals and visitors and has in a way become a symbol of post-socialist Tallinn.

Kopli Lines

The second case study explored is Kopli Lines, a controversial residential neighbourhood built for the Russo-Baltic ship factory workers in 1914–1916 that, contrary to the common pattern of newly independent formerly Soviet cities, was not privatised in the 1990s. The area has been a location of crime, fires and uncertain futures. These all led to residents being displaced. The long-term issues with redevelopment and an undefined future vision until 2016 created conditions for slow deterioration. While in 2021 the area has been partially redeveloped into a modern neighbourhood mimicking the layout of the original workers' housing, the challenges concerning the identity of the neighbourhood and its heritage significance continue to be actual. The case is relevant for exploring neoliberal planning models, ad hoc planning, long-term indeterminacy, land reform, restitution and issues of social justice emerging from this. Kopli Lines is a conservation area (Est.: *miljööväärtuslik ala*) and a site that, alongside social and policy-related challenges, has become a site of debates

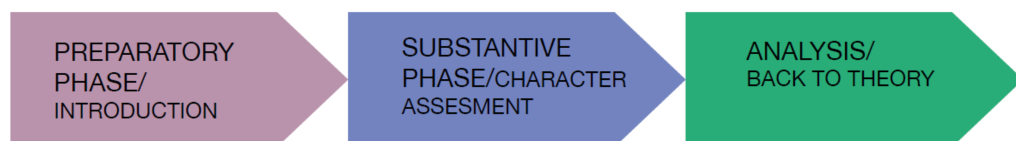
about what is relevant to preserve, and for whom and why. Contemporary development is framed by challenges of how to approach heritage environments, and the development process of Kopli Lines offers a unique insight into heritage-led regeneration/development in Tallinn.

Kalarand

The third and final case study is known as Kalarand, which only recently used to be the only (informal) public beach in the city centre of Tallinn, which had stood in a semi-indeterminate state since the early 1990s. The long-term planning struggles related to the case demonstrate the development of civic society and an active residential community interested in participating in the planning process. The case enables to explore the development of civic society in a post-socialist context and the growing number of stakeholders invested in urban planning, temporary uses, the reaction and impact of 2008 financial crisis, the position of Tallinn as the European Capital of Culture in 2011 and the broader debates surrounding plans to open Tallinn to the sea. In 2021 the site is in the middle of redevelopment. The case study is an opportunity to explore how temporal bottom-up reactions have impacted visions that are in the midst of becoming reality.

4.3 Data collection and approach to cases

An individual chapter is dedicated to each case study. and each of these has been constructed using a similar structure.



The research project consisted of:

1. Preparatory phase: the literature review, proposing general research questions, selection of relevant sites (Bryman, 2012).

2. Substantive phase: looking at cases on different levels. This includes the policy context, stakeholder narratives (includes identifying stakeholders who have been/are involved in the design, planning, development and ongoing management of each of the case study sites. Interviews were conducted to understand perspectives on development, design, regulatory and political/policy perspectives. This can be viewed as oral history (Burns, 2000). Here a narrative approach could be suitable: stakeholders are able to provide insight by telling their story about the spaces.

3. Analyses.

Each case study is explored by analysing four types of information:

1. Historic maps and present morphology of the space
2. Media records
3. Plans and visions projected on the space
4. Site visit documentation and autoethnographic records.

These are structured as follows:

- A detailed introduction to the development and morphology of the site - the history and urban context
- The site as a heritage and research object
- Media narratives and urban visions including never realised plans
- The site as an everyday ordinary space

Autoethnographic records have been categorised as follows:

- The site as a landscape - this is an exploration of how the site operates in the wider systems of Tallinn's coastal landscape

- The built landscape - insight into the layers of heritage characteristic to the site
- A canvas - insight into how the space has been adapted informally, this includes observations of signs of use
- A public space - insight into how the site is used by various groups of people

4.3.1 Historic maps and present morphology of the space

The first level of analysis includes an insight into urban morphology. The morphological approach is founded on three dimensions of urban context: form, function and development (Larkham, 2002). The morphological approach is interdisciplinary and takes into account history, geography, architecture and sociology and is therefore important for this research (Liu, 2011). Maps can be seen as both iconic (mirroring the real shape of the landscape) as well as symbolic (a constructed perspective that employs a variety of codes) (Spencer, 132). The history and context of each case study site are uncovered through selected historical maps and historical photographs. This also includes contextualisation of the sites in the wider Estonian architecture scene of the time of construction in the case of Linnahall and Kopli Lines and shifting landscape in the case of Kalarand. Additionally, each site is looked at as a heritage site and the emergence of this narrative is explored on the basis of literature and contemporary media.

Maps, masterplans and strategic development plans

Historic and contemporary maps have been accessed through the Republic of Estonia LandBoard Geoportal.[8] The Land Board mediates various spatial data managed by a variety of owners. Additionally, historic maps and plans have been retrieved from the Tallinn City Archive.[9] The main focus in this dissertation is on aerial photographs, historic maps, and public land use maps. Masterplans and detailed spatial plans are retrieved from Tallinn Planning Registry.[10] The listed building descriptions have been retrieved from The National Registry of Cultural Monuments.[11] Information about milieu valued areas (conservation areas) has been retrieved from Tallinn City Government resources.[12] The core interest when exploring maps is to document the transformation of urban landscape. Maps from core transformational periods - the first independence, Soviet occupation and regained independence since 1991 are juxtaposed.

Historic and contemporary photography

Additional insight to the evolution of case studies is gained from historic photography. Historic photography of sites in focus has been retrieved from a variety of sources: Tallinn City Archive, Estonian National Archive Photography Information Registry[13] as well as the photography collection of the Estonian Museum of Architecture.[14] Additional photographic information as well as maps have been found in the local media.

Site as a research object

[8] Republic of Estonia Landboard: https://geoportaal.maaamet.ee/eng/Web-Maps-p35.html
[9] Tallinn City Archive https://www.tallinn.ee/eng/arhiivindus/
[10] Tallinn Planning Registry https://tpr.tallinn.ee/
[11] The National Registry of Cultural Monuments https://register.muinas.ee/public.php?lang=en
[12] Tallinn City Government https://www.tallinn.ee/est/ehitus/Miljoovaartuslikud-piirkonnad-Tallinnas-3
[13] Estonian National Archive Photographic Information Registry https://www.ra.ee/fotis/index.php?lang=en
[14] Estonian Museum of Architecture photo collection: https://tpr.tallinn.ee/

All three sites are explored as research objects. An important aspect of their representation are both academic and non academic texts exploring these sites. This includes references to student projects that have gained wider attention.
Linnahall and Kopli Lines are sites with a heritage status (a listed building and a milieu valued area respectively). This has triggered significant interest in researching the sites' origin, but also significance in heritage practices - both in terms of built heritage, but also socio-cultural heritage. This becomes evident through insight into previous research projects.

4.3.2 Media narratives and plans and visions projected on the space

The second level of analysis brings together media records and juxtaposes these with visuals of architectural visions for the sites. For the purposes of this thesis articles from two daily newspapers, *Eesti Päevaleht*[15] and *Postimees*[16], and the online news portal DELFI[17] are analysed as well as articles from the weekly paper *Eesti Ekspress*[18] and a weekly cultural newspaper, *Sirp*[19]. Additional material is gathered from a variety of news stories published on other platforms. Throughout the research I gathered information about recent activities on each case study location, keeping a 'media diary'. The media diary has been the basis for creating a 'timeline' of landmark events, decisions or stakeholder moves for each site. Media representation needs to be approached critically, but it is an invaluable resource for uncovering ideology, dominant narratives in planning and urban visions, and key stakeholders. As all three case studies include a challenge or an urban conflict, and media records are especially useful for unpacking these.

Articles published on these news outlets have been located directly from the archives of the respective websites, DIGAR´s collection of Estonian articles[20] that includes digitised newspapers, journals and other serials as well as from the

[15] Eesti Päevaleht https://epl.delfi.ee/
[16] Postimees https://www.postimees.ee/
[17] DELFI https://www.delfi.ee/
[18] Eesti Ekspress https://ekspress.delfi.ee/
[19] Sirp: https://sirp.ee/
[20] DIGAR https//dea.digar.ee/

collection of the National Library of Estonia[21]. The relevant articles have been collected into a spreadsheet that documents the date, publication, author, title, a summary and link.

These entries have been categorised and keywords have been identified. Keywords, however, have not been retrieved using a coding system, but based on thematic focuses that include words and themes focusing on heritage status of these sites, future visions, plans for demolition and redevelopment, coastal redevelopment.

Date	Publication	Title	Keywords- focus themes	Quotes	Summary in English	Location

Number of topics emerge from the media narrative, e.g. coastal areas being connected to luxury, catching up with the west demolition visions, changing approaches to heritage value and soviet legacies. Keen interest was paid to metaphors used when referring to these sites (e.g. "turtle shaped fire hazard" in the case of Linnahall (Alatalu, 1996). Media records are also used for building a chronological overview of development attempts and in the cases of Kopli Lines and Kalarand the process of development.

Visions and plans projected onto the space

In order to evaluate changing value systems it is argued that development visions that have never been realised have a significance. A number of architectural competitions have taken place, informal proposals have been produced that visualise the future of all case study locations. These proposals are described based on media record and where possible illustrated by visuals produced by designers, developers, students. These have been sourced from media, the

[21] National Library of Estonia https://www.nlib.ee/en

Estonian Museum of Architecture collection, Tallinn City Government Archives and directly from architects. Interest when looking at these proposals is on approach to the heritage value of these sites (e.g. visions that propose reconstruction or demolition of Linnahall) and mapping stakeholders who are leading the process of change or non-change.

4.3.3 Site visits and autoethnographic records

The final collection of data is formed of autobiographical records. A key contribution of this PhD is a collection of materials from site visits between 2013 and 2020. As I live in England, I did not have flexible access to these sites - site visits took place 1-3 times a year during the seven year project. Majority of these site visit- and visual documentation is used in the final section of case study analyses exploring the sites as everyday ordinary space.

The documentation techniques continued to evolve in the process of getting to know the sites and of a more specific formulation of my PhD focus. The first site visits are dominantly documented by photography, scattered notes and a visit diary. As the research progressed I started to add video documentation as well as more detailed written notes on observations. One aspect is of course juxtaposing the material collected from different site visits to each other and seeing slow deterioration, new street art, new developments on surrounding sites and so on. But possibly even more important is juxtaposing the material from site visits to corresponding visions. The core of this method can be called visual ethnography.

This thesis utilises experiential autoethnographic methods - this is a combination of ethnographic methods and autobiographical records of the connections with the site. As a method, autoethnography brings together personal narrative and sociocultural exploration. As a researcher, I have made a decision to rely on my personal experience of these sites in order to explore the ordinary everyday layer of transformation. Autoethnography has gained popularity in urban studies, as it

challenges dominant ways of research and argues that subjective, emotional records offer a relevant insight into development (Adams, et.al, 2015). Through personal experience, the everyday of the city becomes more relevant. According to Spencer '*the collision* of the individual *perception of milieu with the process of history and large-scale social-change distinguishes the sociological approach.* Autoethnographic method offers a number of ways for gathering data, this includes reflective diaries that are central to this research project. The method rejects the idea that there is an 'objective truth' and explores urbanism similarly to ethnography as a cultural construction (Chang, 2016) Images and notes have immediacy but they can also allow for a slow release of meaning (Spencer, 2011: 85). However, it is important to emphasise here again that a photograph or a diary is not a neutral observation, it is a mediation of the explorer's reality (Allmark, 2010). This subjectivity is essential to the analysis presented.

Each case study has been approached through urban walking and photography and notes taken during and after these visits. Walking the city is a long-research practice. The French *flaneur* is translated into the Situationist drifter who skirted the quarter of cities in order to experience alternative aspects of urban development (Sadler, 1999). One well-known Situationist tactic used to re-interpret cities is known as psychogeography – a method that attempts to combine subjective and objective modes of study such mapping and experiment (Sadler, 1999). Psychogeographic drift offered a new way of surveying the urban space and also alternatives for representation. This was a less ordered approach to the city (Sadler, 1999). Simon Sadler argues that this produced the social geography of the city that theorised space as a product of society (Sadler, 1999). Each site visit has been documented through detailed photography, occasionally audio records and a diary describing the visual, acoustic and other sensory changes that have taken place in the space.

Site visit path and protocols became gradually more defined during the research

project. As I did not have constant access to these sites, there are limitations to site visit records - rather than documenting the sites during different seasons, times of day, conducting long observations on site, it was possible to document rhythms characteristic to these sites over longer periods of time. This dissertation text includes 10 documented site visits to Linnahall, 6 documented site visits to Kopli Lines and 8 documented site visits to Kalarand. In addition to photographic documentation of the condition of each site broadly, the record includes recapturing common viewpoints in order to observe gradual, minor, but also in some situations sharp transitions in space. For example in the case of Linnahall the documentation clearly captures the slow deterioration of the building, but also its growing popularity as a destination, documentation of Kopli Lines captures the deterioration of the historic built environment environment, but recreation the street structure and architectural scale and the the records of Kalarand demonstrate the aftermath of temporary practices amongst others.

	Linnahall	**Kopli Lines**	**Kalarand**
1	3rd September 2013	10th October 2013	25th September 2013
2	8th May 2014		8th May 2014
3	27th April 2016	27th April 2016	27th April 2016
4	29th March 2017	28th March 2017	29th March 2017
5	25th July 2017		
6	4th April 2018		4th April 2018
7	2nd April 2019	24th November 2018	4th April 2019
8	22nd July 2019		
9	25th October 2019	25th October 2019	25th October 2019
10	12th November 2020	12th November	12th November 2020

4.4 Methodological approach summarised

The methodology combining analysis of maps and photography, media records and autoethnographic documentation is used in order to return to the research questions.

How have the changes from socialism to market economy and the related ownership shifts shaped the (typo)morphology of Tallinn over the course of three decades? Could exploring processes shaping long-term indeterminate landscapes offer a valid context for understanding shifting value systems and be relevant to devising a more inclusive approach to dealing with urban heritage and shaping the future of indeterminate sites?

Data	**Maps and plans**	**Media analyses**	**Autoethnographic records**
Use	Maps and plans are used in two senses: in order to create a narrative understanding of the sites in focus, but also explore never realised urban visions. Unpacking the language of representation uncovers another perspective on prevailing value systems.	Documentation of value narratives, perspectives on conservation versus demolition and development narratives. Media record is used to map stakeholders and their publicly stated positions regarding the development, value and current situation of sites in focus	Autoethnographic record looks at the sites of interest in their everyday physical conditions, including documenting signs of uses, decay and repair, abandonment. This is juxtaposed with a parallel media record.

A key stage of this PhD has been gathering visions and plans created for each site from the early 1990s to the present. This information about future visions, usually in the form of colourful renderings, a media narrative that juxtaposed

with information gathered from regular site visits and a mixture of planned and ad hoc encounters, creates a unique insight into the temporality of these sites, but also presents a question of representation.

Three layers of data offer a multi-layered insight into temporalities characterising the case studies and their long-term indeterminate condition. The autoethnographic approach depicts the sites beyond their post-socialist condition and unveils an alternative narrative in which the past, present and future are tied together into a more complex, yet ordinary urban process.

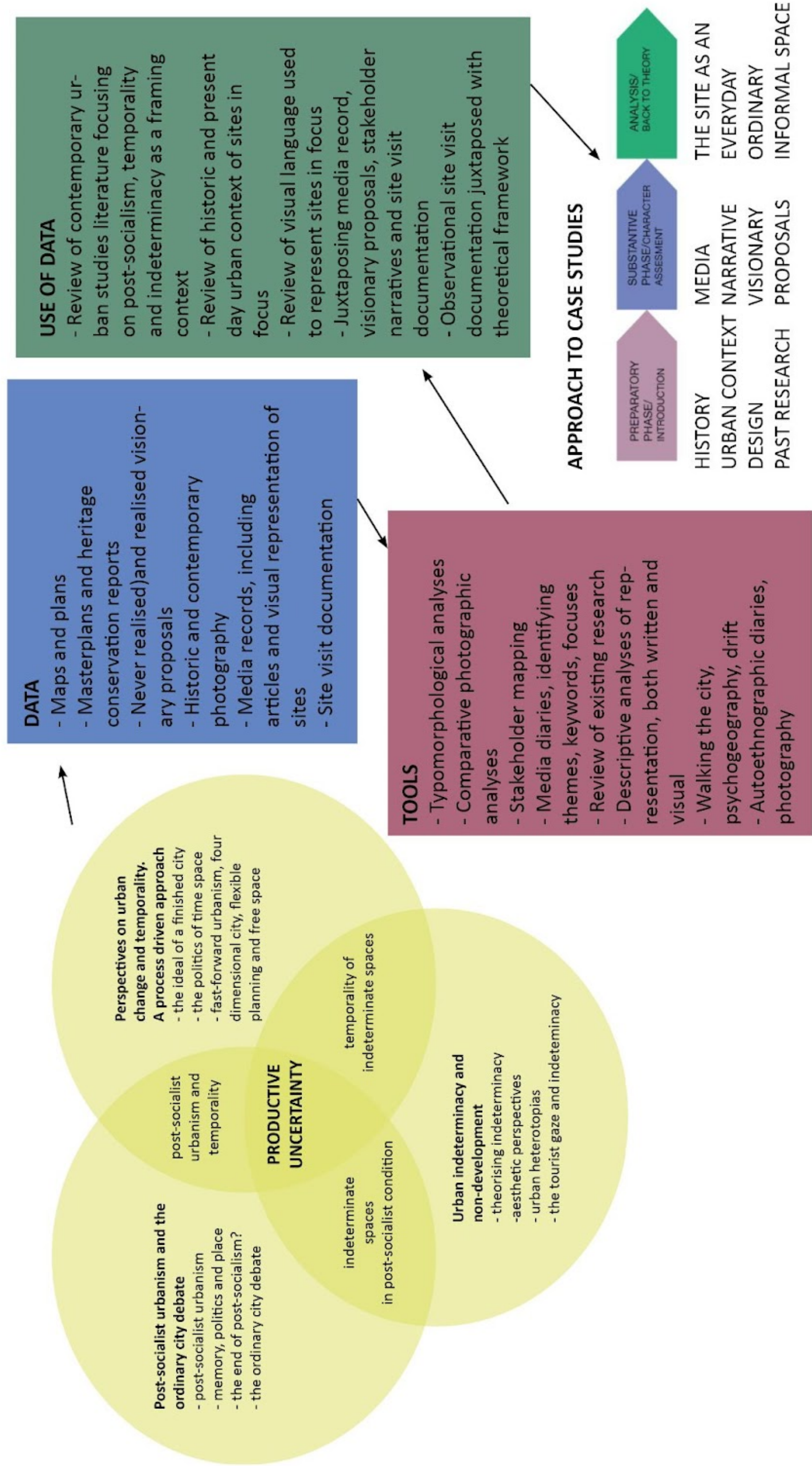


Figure 20: Methodological tools

5. LINNAHALL

Material legacies of a hibernating space

Figure 21: Linnahall in 1980. (Source: Tallinn City Museum, 1980: online)

Figure 22: Linnahall on 29th April 2017 (Source: Kurik, 2017)

Figure 23: Linnahall on 12th November 2020 (Source: Kurik, 2020)

5.1 Introduction

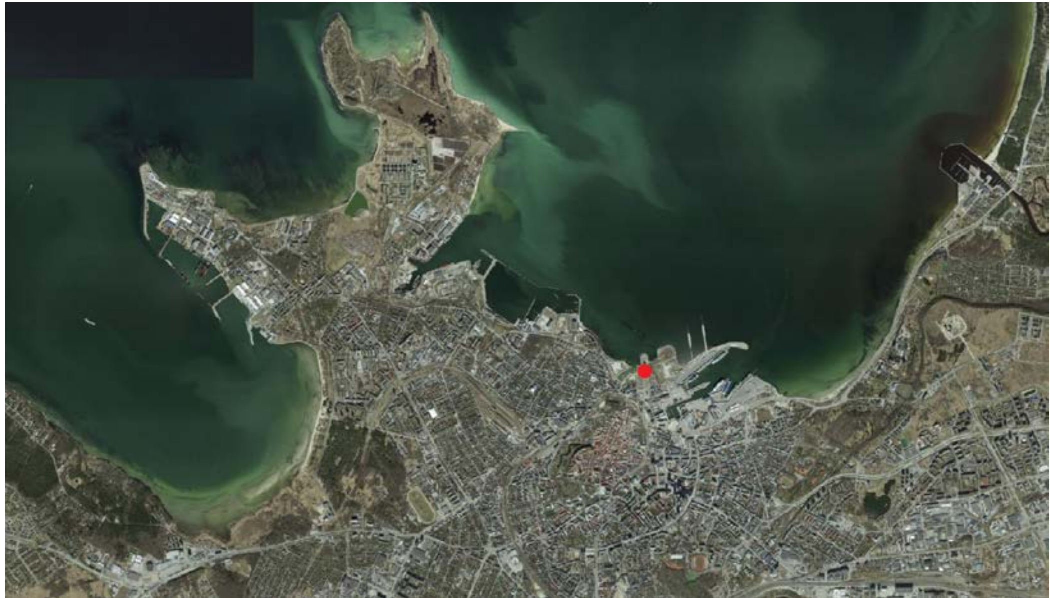


Figure 24: Linnahall is situated on the coast of central Tallinn (Source: Republic of Estonian Land Board: online)

This chapter explores a monumental modernist building known as Linnahall (originally V.I. Lenin Culture and Sports Palace, renamed in the early 1990s. Eng 'City hall') as an indeterminate temporal heritage space. It was built on the coast of the Baltic Sea in central Tallinn (Figure 24) for the yachting regatta of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games and has stood almost completely vacant since late 2009. Its fall into disuse, less than three decades after completion, and the long-term search for new use(s) for this city-owned architectural monument has continued hand-in-hand with the development of a post-socialist planning culture and ideals for a good city, questions of heritage management, and redefined values in a transitional society. It is argued that the uncertainty of future use can be seen as productive in understanding the post-socialist urban transition, especially when considering heritage spaces. Here, I present a story that moves from potential developers demanding demolition in the late 1990s and early 2000s, to a widespread consensus that regards the building as a cultural monument and a heritage site. Linnahall was nationally listed (Estonian

equivalent)[22] in 1997, following a recommendation by DoCoMoMo (International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement[23]), making it a rare case of a building becoming formally protected as a heritage object when less than 20 years old. This case study enables us to explore questions about temporality in shifting ideological frameworks and asks how to understand (non)-change when looking at the physical adaptation of a monumental structure, amidst ideological transformations and changing aspirations for the building's future. Such an approach considers the building as an architectural, political and social landmark.

The narrative presented here demonstrates that Linnahall's symbolic meaning has clearly shifted since its opening in 1980 and Estonia's re-gaining of independence in 1991. I argue that understanding these changes is relevant also for the building's future. The visions presented for Linnahall's future tell a clear story of ambitions in urban development in Tallinn and continue to reflect the dominant ideology and manifested power in space (as an ideology was also manifested in the original vision of the building). What specific spatial patterns and processes characterise capitalist society and how do they change with the further development of capitalism based on the example of Linnahall? Linnahall has become an architectural monument that signifies a bygone era, but it has also acquired new contemporary meanings. Present-day Tallinn ascribes value to the site through its residents, architects and government. It also has a certain appeal for international researchers, urban explorers and tourists. Finding a new function has been a challenge that is intertwined with politics, economic aspirations, the development of the new post-socialist planning system and the poor physical condition of the building. Central to this is the problem of re-connecting central Tallinn to the coast. As explained in Chapter 2, the reasons for the complicated relationship with the coast are manifold. During the Soviet period access to the coast in central Tallinn was largely closed off to the general

[22] Linnahall's National List description: https://register.muinas.ee/public.php?menuID=monument&action=view&id=8781
[23] Docomomo International: https://www.docomomo.com/#ai

public. The area was an industrial and military zone. The idea of redeveloping the seaside emerged in the 1950s and 60s and has been included in a number of *general plans* (masterplans) produced during the Soviet period. The construction of Linnahall was the first clear decision to demonstrate this aspiration. In its present long-term indeterminate state, the building continues to function as both a barrier and a connector between the city and sea.

The aim of this chapter is to present explorations into the meaning of this site in the present urban landscape while also reflecting on its past, heritage and future scenarios. The approach is focused on the indeterminate state of the site since 1991 and reflections on an array of representations of the building. The case study helps to unfold issues around material legacies of Soviet cities and clearly highlights how stakeholders in city making represent very diverse agendas. A number of **architectural visions** created for the site are juxtaposed with a **media record** outlining development models pursued by the city government of Tallinn (the building owner) over two decades. A chronological overview of the redevelopment ambitions and indeterminate state of the building helps to unfold a story of changing value systems from the late 1990s to the present day. What emerges is supplemented by looking at **Linnahall as an everyday, ordinary space** – this is supported through site visit documentation gathered over seven years (2013–2020) as well as documentation of art interventions and reports about the condition of the building and more recent social media representations of the site. Interesting parallels emerge when looking at Linnahall as a ‘free space’ such as proposed by Groth and Corijn (2005) for demonstrations in the late 1980s and early 1990s and as a canvas for social commentary at present in its indeterminate state.

In order to understand the change and stagnation of the building, a variety of urban processes become relevant. The narrative that emerges from analysing media, masterplans produced by the city government and visionary architectural proposals, is a story of the uncertainty of futures and approaches to development. How to reconcile the idea of land with potentially high financial value and a

heritage object that mostly holds symbolic significance is a challenging question that has continued and sustained relevance and remains in many ways unresolved.

Linnahall is solid and monumental in its form, and the perceptible physical **changes** to the building are, in a way, minimal and even somewhat poetic. Though still impressive in its form, when observed closely the effects of long-term vacancy are clearly visible – the structure, predominantly unused for more than a decade, is crumbling due to natural forces and limited maintenance. A more fundamental change can be observed at an **ideological level** – a key challenge is finding solutions, asking how can such a monumental piece of architecture built during a totalitarian regime find a new identity during a time of less defined state-led goals and mainly developer-driven freedom in planning. This raises the question: **what is the architectural legacy and relevance of this relatively recent building?** When looking at the media narrative, clear stakeholders emerge: it is a story created by the centrist-party *Keskerakond*-led city government of Tallinn (since 2001), the **community of architects, conservationists and historians, potential developers and the creative community as well as the everyday users of the space**. As such, I will trace this complex narrative, presented through the agendas of various stakeholders, political and commercial agents over recent decades.

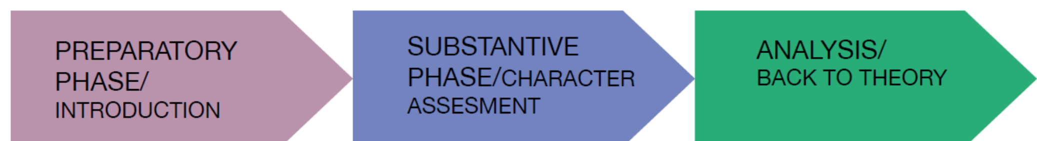
Chapter overview

I will start by giving an overview of the urban context and a brief back-story to this monumental building – this will include an overview of its history and design logic as well as its position in Tallinn's urban landscape and coastal regeneration. This will also require positioning the design of Linnahall in the wider Estonian modernism of the period. As there are quite extensive records on the history of the building, this section will be kept relatively brief. I will provide an overview of academic and non-academic texts and past research. Existing

texts support the key argument of this research paper – the approach to the value of Linnahall's unique indeterminate state has changed over time and this has significance for the future of the building. The core of the chapter is based on archival records and site visit documentation and the analysis that follows. This includes a story that unfolds across almost 400 articles published in Estonian mainstream media about the future of the building as well as the outcomes of numerous design exercises that have taken place on different scales during recent decades – some of these have been difficult to locate as never finished visions seem to make it to museum collections and archives in only rare cases. I would like to thank the architects and planners who have provided plans from their personal archives.

The exploration into understanding the transformation (and non-change) of this site has continuously developed throughout writing this dissertation and insight gathered will be revealed through site photography and site visit diaries that provide a unique look into Linnahall as an everyday ordinary space.

Approach to the case study:



HISTORY
URBAN
CONTEXT
DESIGN
PAST
RESEARCH

MEDIA
NARRATIVE
VISIONARY
PROPOSALS

LINNAHALL
AS AN
EVERYDAY,
ORDINARY
SPACE,
INFORMAL

5.2 The history of the building and its urban context

The vision for Linnahall (initially known as V.I. Lenin Culture and Sports Palace) was derived from the Central Tallinn Detailed Planning[24] project developed in 1975, which was triggered by the decision to hold the yachting competition of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games in Tallinn (22nd July–2nd August 1980) (Lindpere, 2012). The building was completed just before the Olympic Games in 1980 and its architects Raine Karp and Riina Altmäe and interior architects Ülo Sirp and Mariann Hakk were awarded a gold medal by the International Association of Architects for its original design (Figure 25).[25] The building gained international attention elsewhere as a unique public building. The impressive slate construction consisted of an up to 5,900-seat concert hall, an ice skating rink, a rooftop promenade/viewing platform and studio rooms. The design reflected on the 1975 master plan produced for the area demonstrates an ambition to create a shift also on a larger urban scale.

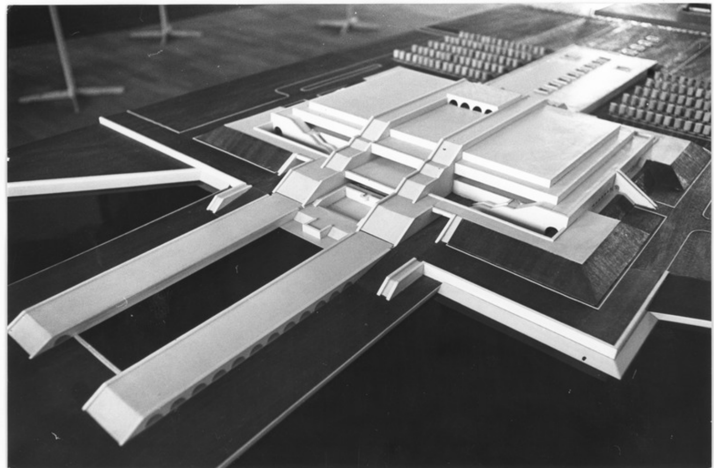


Figure 25: Linnahall's original model from the late 1970s (Source:Vaidla, 1975–1978: online)

The 1975 master plan for the area envisioned that the industrial buildings next to

[24] Tallinna kesklinna detailplaneerimise projekt, 1975
[25] The National List (Kultuurimälestiste riiklik register) https://register.muinas.ee/public.php?menuID=monument&action=view&id=8781

Mere Avenue would be demolished (See Figure 26 produced by Belanger and Haas) and a straight avenue would lead from Viru Hotel to the coast.

Figure 26: Industrial buildings on the site before the construction of Linnahall (Source: Karjahärm, 1927, adapted by Belanger and Haas. 2008: online)

The monumental concert hall was seen to conclude the avenue and open the coast to the public. The plan envisioned a seaside park next to Linnahall (Künnapu, 2016) (Figure 27). A more detailed proposal for the landscaping of the surrounding area was proposed by architect Ignar Fjuk in 1982 (Figure 28). The wider urban vision around Linnahall was never completed and the land surrounding the building continued to be in a predominantly indeterminate state until recent years when structures like Kultuurikatel, the Kilometre of Culture and later the Kalarand housing estate were developed. This means that the site has since its construction been surrounded by a certain indeterminacy as it has continuously been surrounded by a landscape that can be defined as a wasteland, loose space or a no-man's land.

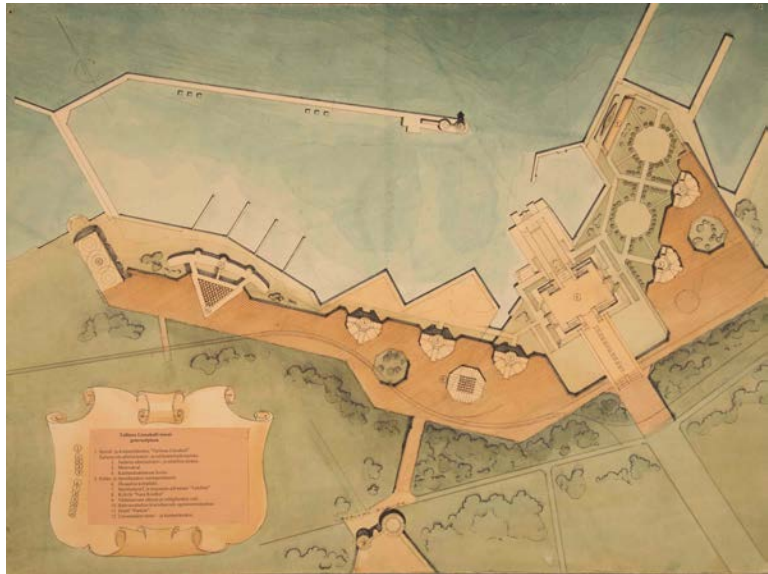


Figure 27: A plan from 1975 demonstrates a design proposal for the wider urban landscape surrounding Linnahall (Source: Tallinn City Archive, 1975: online)

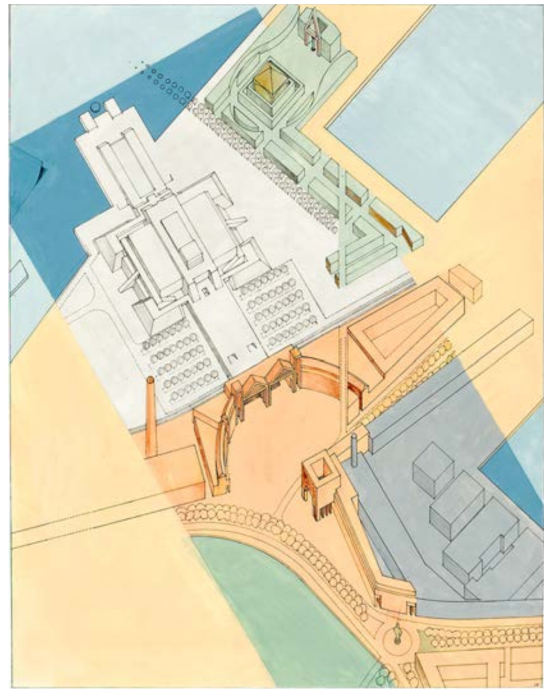


Figure 28: Vision proposed for the area surrounding Linnahall by Ignar Fjuk (Source: The Estonian Museum of Architecture, Fjuk, 1982: online)

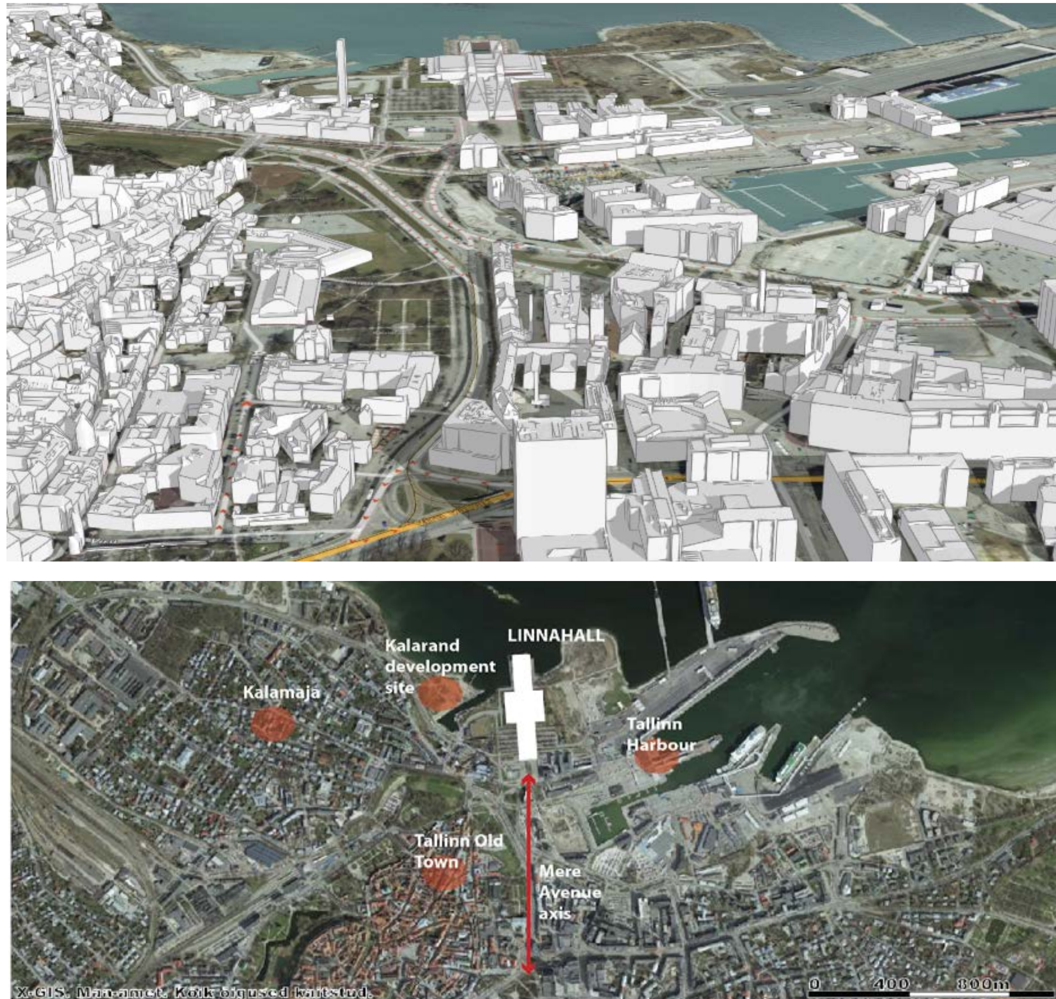
The pressures of the Olympic Games-related development and the scale and ambition of the vision made this a challenging project that has been critiqued for its poor quality since its opening. The complexity of the formerly industrial site added additional challenges to the aspiration (see Figures 29 and 30)

Figure 29: The beginning of construction in 1976 (Source: Linnahall, 1976: online)

Figure 30: The building initially functioned as a railway bridge for pedestrians (Source: Linnahall: online)

The impressive slate structure is situated in the Northern-Tallinn neighbourhood in close proximity to Tallinn's mediaeval core on a formerly industrial harbour landscape. The below plans (Figures 31 and 32) demonstrate the building's position between the Tallinn Harbour area and the Old Town. When built the landscape around the building consisted predominantly of industrial buildings – the Tallinn power station and Kalarand's industrial structures to the West, harbour

infrastructure to the East and a railway line connecting both landscapes. Additionally, the building is cut off from the city core by a busy road junction known as Põhjaväil. Linnahall blends into Tallinn's famous silhouette sitting before the towers of the mediaeval old city when approaching the city from the sea (Figure 33).



Figures 31 and 32: Linnahall is in the centre of Tallinn situated between Kalamaja neighbourhood, Tallinn Old Town and the Tallinn Harbour (Source: adapted from Republic of Estonian Land Board maps: online)

Figure 33: Linnahall as seen from the Baltic sea (Source: linnahall.ee: online)

The evolution of the site

As stated, the site where the building was planned was an industrial landscape, a location inaccessible to the general public. These maps (Figures 34-36) demonstrate the development of the site. A significant amount of infilling of the sea has taken place over the century. The harbour landscape is connected by multiple rail lines. As removing the railway line that led to the harbour was not possible at the time, the Linnahall building later also functioned as a railway bridge for pedestrians.

Figures 34–36: The development of the site over a century (maps from 1915, 1929, 1996) (Source: republic of Estonia Land board historic maps: online)

While undeniably significant on its own, the building needs to be looked at in the broader context of Soviet modernism and the impact of the Olympic Games on Tallinn's development specifically. A number of other built structures were planned and built in Tallinn for the Olympic games, including the Olümpia Hotel (The Olympic Hotel, Figure 37), Tallinn Airport (Figure 38), Tallinn TV Tower (Figure 39) and Tallinn Olympic Sailing Centre (Figure 40). These landmark buildings continue to be part of the unique landscape of Tallinn and are generally valued for their design characteristics, combining Nordic and Soviet influences.

Figures 37: The Olympic Hotel (Source: The Estonian Museum of Architecture, 1980: online)
Figure 38: Tallinn Airport (Source: The Estonian Museum of Architecture: online)
Figure 39: The TV tower (Source: The Estonian National Archive: online)
Figure 40: Tallinn Olympic Sailing Centre (Source: Rõõmus, 2015: online)

The lead architect of Linnahall, Raine Karp is also the architect of several other monumental modernist structures in Tallinn, including the National Library (Figure 41) and the now partially demolished Sakala Centre (Figure 42) – both also monumental slate structures with a fortress-like appearance and winding

steps and pathways.

Figure 41: The Estonian National Library building, architect Raine Karp (Source: Mänd, 1999: online)

Figure 42: The now-demolished Sakala Centre, architect Raine Karp (Source: The Estonian Museum of Architecture: online)

The origins of this style can be found in Finnish modernism mixed with the influences of postmodernism. Linnahall's unique design, however, has contributed to the difficulty of finding a new sustainable use. Additionally, it seems that other buildings from the era were functionally more suited for adaptation – the National Library, TV tower, the airport and the Olympic hotel have all remained in their original use. Linnahall's scale and spatial programme no longer seem to have suited the post-socialist urban context.

Figure 43: The architects of the building Riina Altmäe and Rainer Karp and the head engineer Allan Onton with the model of Linnahall, 1976 (Source: Estonian Research Council archives: online)

While receiving design awards, the building proved to be unstable fairly quickly. The architect of the building, Raine Karp (figures 43 and 44), has commented that Linnahall is one of the

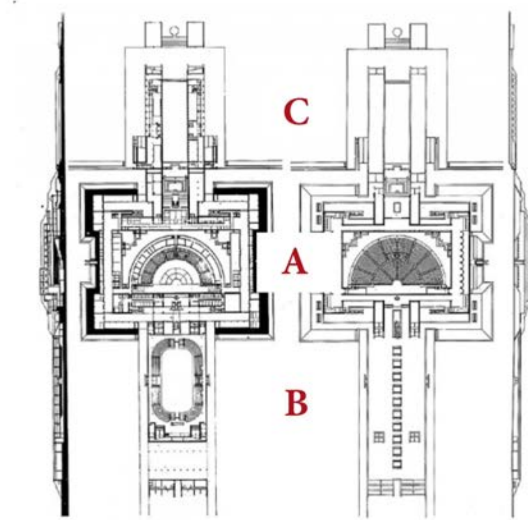
poorest quality built structures from the end period of the Soviet Union. He has stated *'In essence, Linnahall is probably one of the worst built, worst quality buildings ever. At least out of those built towards the end of the Soviet era. ... It was of course built in a rush because the party and the government decided that the building should open for the Olympic Games. At the same time, everyone needed builders' (Ranne, 2017) (Figure 36)*

Figure 44: Linnahall's architect Raine Karp on the rooftop promenade of the building in 2017 (Source: Osula, 2017: online)

Many of the buildings built for the Olympic games have issues in common. The building period was short, materials cheap and of poor quality and investments made into the upkeep of the building following the games were minimal (Künnapu, 2016). Architectural historian Triin Ojari argues that this mega-structure would have most likely never been built in Estonia under any other system of government. *'It is the only colossus remaining in Tallinn's city centre in its current abandoned state, yet invisible threads connect it to all those countless kolkhoz* (collective farm) *and recreation centres and community cultural centres built mainly in the countryside in the 1970s and 1980s that are no longer needed nowadays in that form – or perhaps we do not know how to make them relevant in their current form'* (Ojari, 2012: 151). The main reason why constructing such buildings was possible was the structure of land ownership whereby Soviet architects did not have to worry about the cost of the land (Kurg, 2012).

The vast built structure extends across 10 hectares and comprises a large Mayan temple-like exterior that hides a number of diverse public functions. The uniqueness of the building is emphasised by a large accessible rooftop aligned with seating and street lighting that leads to a modest main entrance. The sides of

the building were masked by grass and its closed appearance makes reference to the bastions of the historic city centre.



The building is functionally divided into three parts (Figure 37).

Figure 45: Linnahall can functionally be divided into three (Source: [adapted from] National Registry of Cultural Monuments: online)

A is the main building that incorporates the concert venue and the surrounding gallery

The functional logic of Linnahall is quite unique: the audience entered from behind the stage complex. The interior consists of an open space of wardrobes, and an amphitheatre-like hall. The hall/gallery of the building covers 6000m2 (Figures 46 and 47).

Figure 46: The main concert hall (Source: Tallinn City Museum: online)

Figure 47: The entrance gallery (Source: Tallinn City Museum: online)

B is the ice skating rink and the estacade. The ice skating rink included a 3,000 seat viewing area and was finished after the Olympic games in 1981 (Figure 48).

Figure 48: The ice rink (Source: Viktor, 1982: online)

C is the area facing the sea with fountains and pedestrian walkways. The pool on the north side of Linnahall was designed to keep the cooling water meant for the compressors of the ice rink (Künnapu, 2016) (Figure 49).

Figure 49: The north side of Linnahall with water cooling pools (Source: ETA, 1980–1990: online)

The most detailed description of the design of the building can be found in the Reconstruction Conditions for the building commissioned by the Estonian National Heritage Board (Lindpere and Kaasik, 2004; Künnapu, 2016). The architecture of the building is grandiose yet simple and Nordic in its use of materials. Architecturally the building consists of a bridge, pathways, terraces and monumental steps creating the main façade. The building is considered a significant structure as well as a monumental landscape, but its design has been deemed inconvenient for visitors from the start – it has long windy pathways leading to the entrance, high stairs that get slippery during the winter period and so on (Künnapu, 2016).

During the 1990s the concert hall had to expand its array of events and uses and this also had a minor impact on the design of the building. Several new services attached themselves to the structure, including a hydrofoil port, a helicopter landing space and a nightclub (Figures 50 and 51).

Figure 50: A restaurant and a nightclub Lucky Luke's in 1992 (Source: Prozes, 1992: online)

Figure 43: Helicopter landing grounds behind Linnahall (Source: Tarto, 2012: online)

5.3 Linnahall as a heritage and a research object

Over three decades of regained independence, Linnahall has become a centre of debates discussing reimagining socialist and modernist heritage in Estonia that bring together political, economic and everyday challenges and continue to evoke

the question of how (heritage) value is defined in a transitional society. The story of Linnahall is revealed in past master plans and, briefly, in a few publications dealing with the architectural history of Tallinn, where the building excites heritage and architecture specialists and academics as well as decision-makers in the city.

The history of Linnahall has been documented by the architecture historian Dimitri Bruns (1993), who provides a broader insight into the urban development processes of Tallinn. The Estonian Museum of Architecture published a monograph focusing on the works by the architect Raine Karp (Karp and Väljas, 2016) that provides a detailed insight from the perspective of the building's architect.

Figure 52: The cover of the Venice Biennale 2012 Estonian pavilion Catalogue (Source: Digar: online)

From a future-looking perspective, Linnahall was at the centre of attention in 2012 when Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla, Urmo Vaikla, Veronika Valk, Maria Pukk and Ivar Lubjak curated the Estonian exposition at the XIII Venice Architecture Biennale. The exposition posed an intriguing question: **'How long is the life of a building?'** (2012) (Figure 52). This was complemented by a thorough catalogue deconstructing the meaning of the building in the Estonian wider contexts. The exposition explored the reasons why architectural objects that were once considered significant (and are still) end up abandoned. Part of the

exposition was a film that portrayed a unique journey inside the building and included interviews with people who have a strong relationship with the site. The exhibition catalogue consisting of a number of essays as well as the video material is an important source referenced here. An overview of the complex processes surrounding the development and non-development of the site was published in English in *Landscape Research Record* by Blake Belanger and Vaike Haas (2018) as ‘Re-imagining Linnahall in Tallinn, Estonia: Shaping the Future of a Post-Soviet Relic through ethnic integration, adaptive reuse, contemporary arts and ecological reclamation’. Belanger and Haas write: *‘As a symbol of Soviet occupation, Linnahall has been simultaneously a stark reminder of Soviet times and a node of multi-ethnic, integrative activities of music, sport, and art. In addition to programmatic and cultural complexities, sea-level rise models suggest the building will be inundated during storm surges by the year 2100. Further complicating proposed predevelopment, Linnahall is protected by historic preservation regulations.’* (355). They suggest a solution-oriented approach to the site.

Alongside solution-oriented approaches (e.g. proposals of reuse or demolition), more theoretical interest in the building has emerged. For example anthropologist Francisco Martinez values Linnahall as a ruin. He writes: *‘Linnahall is an iconic place in Tallinn and illustrates the dramatic identity of the city. The palace stands both scatological and monumental, giving to the site effectual energy. I thus advocate for treating the building as a curated ruin, establishing a set of measures that do not obliterate the offences of time and acknowledge the traces of the past’* (Martinez, 2018: 17). His anthropological scrutiny of the place takes a closer look at the new meanings the building has acquired during its lifespan and looks at its *‘preservation against odds’* (Martinez, 2018:107).

Over the years a number of studies and strategy documents around the condition of Linnahall have been put together in order to create a basis for future renovation and restoration that respects the character of the original building. A study of the

technical condition of Linnahall was conducted in 2002 by professor Karl Õiger (Õiger, 2002), and architect Ignar Fjuk put together special conditions for reconstruction in 2003 (Fjuk, 2003). These became the basis for organising an architectural competition that took place the same year. The most thorough analysis of the history and the condition of the building was compiled in 2004 by architecture historian Piret Lindpere and architect Veljo Kaasik, who was commissioned by the Estonian National Heritage Board to put together conditions for redevelopment. However, this document was never adopted (Lindpere and Kaasik, 2004). These were reviewed in 2016 by Liivi Künnapu based on a commission of the Estonian National Heritage Board (Künnapu, 2016).

These academic or non-academic explorations and experimental visions all provide a valuable context for the discussion. However, an in-depth analysis of the significance of Linnahall and the surrounding planning and ideological framework shaping its potential use continues to be limited. It can be argued that a critical analysis of why Linnahall continues to be in this curious indeterminate state with unknown futures and what can be learned from this case about post-socialist development is largely missing. Student projects mainly deal with finding a new alternative and often temporary function for Linnahall, while the city actors and available reports discuss the most viable future. The biennale exhibition and its connected catalogue is the main compilation of critical essays trying to put into words the significance of Linnahall and challenge general opinions about potential futures. Scattered pieces of writing try to make sense of the complex chronology.

What these records do demonstrate is that Linnahall is essentially seen as a heritage object, a monumental building that is often credited as the first attempt to open Tallinn to the sea during the Soviet period, a site that gave access to the sea from central Tallinn. The heritage status of the building is further explored here. Referring back to Liu (2011) and Raie (2020), the question of value is a relevant but complex one and in addition to being to some degree subjective, fits into an

ideological framework. It can be argued that in principle a consensus has emerged that the building has intrinsic heritage value, however, demolition of the building has been extensively discussed by developers and the city, sometimes as the only valid option. The debates around the future of the building in essence focus on the question of what is the cultural, economic, and ideological value of Linnahall and how it has changed over the recent decades.

In the late 1990s, Linnahall was often referenced as an object with negative Soviet legacies that should possibly be demolished. The discussion of demolition has been clearly documented in local media over the years. Demolition as an option was discussed by the community of artists, developers as well as considered as an option by the city (Juske and Karpa, 1999, Kasela, 2000, Postimees, 2004, etc.). Early reconstruction plans demonstrate partial demolition as a widely accepted option (Raiski, 2000, Kasela, 2000). In May 2000 it was prematurely announced that Linnahall's demolition was starting shortly (Kasela, 2000). In 2004 demolition was supported by a number of developers, who commissioned studies to support their case. Articles in the local media such as *'Experts recommend demolishing Linnahall'* seemed to add strength to their argument (Postimees, 2004). This course, however, was opposed by many, for example by professor Karl Õiger, who argued that the costs of renovation were inflated in order to support the case for demolition (Peensoo, 2004a). Karin Hallas-Murla notes contradicting perspectives: while in 1999 the director of the Museum of Estonian Art Marika Valk stated that the building should be bulldozed, in 2000 it was chosen to be a building of the century on a popular TV programme Nurgakivi (Hallas-Murula, 2006). The architecture historian Piret Lindpere quoted the vice mayor of Tallinn, Liisa Pakosta, who had stated that as Linnahall is a building that was created for *'the ideological purification of the masses'*, the city government can't be rigid about potential demolition plans (Lindpere, 2003). The controversial mayor of Tallinn, Edgar Savisaar, did not see Linnahall as the most urgent place to invest in and was pro-demolition in early 2000s (for and against arguments around demolition were explored in Eesti Päevaleht, 2003a). The most

recent suggestion that the building should be demolished was made by a developer, Urmas Sõõrumaa, in an interview in March 2021. According to Sõõrumaa demolition would enable to create a consistent promenade lining the coast. According to him the building functions as an obstruction (Salu, 2021). Despite the fact that the Estonian National Heritage Board took a clear stand against demolition in the 1990s (Äripäev, 2003) envisioned futures for the site that include demolition continue to be alive. Demolition has also been opposed by the Union of Estonian Architects, which argues that the building is one of the most unique architectural landmarks from the twentieth century – not only locally, but internationally. The heritage value of the building is frequently noted internationally. In 2002 an article about the building was published in *Wallpaper* that explored the building as something not traditional in the Soviet context. Journalist Troy Selvaratnam wrote: *'Psychologically the building broke out from the Soviet Union and looked across the Baltic Sea'* (Eesti Ekspress, 2002: online).

When the city of Tallinn put the building up for auction in 2003 its heritage value became the centre of discussions. A number of architecture historians and architects published opinion pieces emphasising the significance of the building. These were published mainly in the weekly newspaper *Eesti Ekspress* and the weekly culture newspaper *Sirp*. Architecture historian Piret Lindpere claimed that the city of Tallinn saw Linnahall as a problem (*that could be demolished*) (Lindpere, 2003). Architect Kalle Vellevoog argued that Linnahall is part of Estonia´s cultural heritage (Eesti Päevaleht, 2003). Art historian Krista Kodres criticised the approach taken by the city to the sale of the building in 2003 and 2004 as symptomatic of Estonia, where the focus is on economic rather than symbolic capital. She argued that history exists without us and Soviet heritage is part of our narrative (Kodres, 2004). The architect Margit Mutso argued that Linnahall is a star building from the 1980s, a building that tourists are interested in visiting. She argued that developer-led visions make Tallinn more and more similar to Western European cities and take its character (Mutso, 2004). Architect Veronika Valk agreed and made reference to proposals by the developer

Manutent's visions as characterless (Valk, 2004). Art historian Karin Paulus argued in an opinion piece titled '*Linnahall – a beauty or a beast?'* that in addition to lacking an architectural policy the city of Tallinn is lacking a cultural policy (Paulus, 2004).

While these discussions of demolition might seem abstract today, this fate has characterised some architecturally significant buildings in Tallinn from the era – one of the most controversial examples of this is the partially demolished Sakala Centre mentioned earlier (Figure 34). While conservationists, architecture historians and representatives of a variety of other disciplines dealing with space achieve a consensus on the value of the building, the development visions proposed continue to question the heritage value of the building or the value of heritage in urban development more broadly.

Challenges around the future of the building emerge from contradictory visions. Media analysis reveals a number of conflicting narratives and parallel visions for the building. It can be claimed that there has been only limited collaboration between stakeholders in the process of envisioning futures for the building and a lack of vision. The architect Leonhard Lapin invited the city to enter into a dialogue with artists, architects and urbanists to develop a vision for the building (Lapin, 2017). The city of Tallinn has predominantly taken an approach to the building that facilitates development while working with heritage protection regulations. An intrusive vision proposed by a developer can exist alongside the buildings management team envisioning repairs that involve only minor changes; ambitious development plans in the media are juxtaposed with news articles portraying the poor condition of the building and a lack of funding for basic maintenance.

5.4 The stagnation as represented: media narratives and never-realised visions

When attempting to trace changing attitudes media representations and political ambitions become relevant. Linnahall and its surrounding plots have been owned by the municipality of Tallinn since the early 1990s and they are managed by Tallinn Linnahall Ltd.[26] This can be considered quite unique – 1991 witnessed a total shift in land ownership, land that belonged to the state was privatised at extraordinary speed. Deregulation and a desire to make a conscious break from the Soviet era meant that the city of Tallinn owned less property than ever before (Kurg, 2012). For a period the land beneath Linnahall, however, did not belong to the city, feeding the indeterminacy characteristic to the building.

While still relatively actively used in the 1990s the building was already rapidly deteriorating (Vaikla et al., 2012, Kurg, 2012). Discussions over its future use started while the building was still in active use as a concert venue. During the debate about the future of the building before its official closing Linnahall continued to lose money. In 2001 Linnahall housed a concert hall, ice rink, a bowling alley, Judo club, a boat terminal, a Copertline Heliport, catering service, Tallinn city archives, a sound studio, electrical company, concert organising companies, car audio, a security company and more (Seaver, 2001a). These uses were seen as marginal and over recent decades the city of Tallinn has made a number of efforts to develop the area. This narrative has been covered in detail in the local media. The city of Tallinn's initial approach was to explore the possibility of selling the building or the development rights (attempts were made in 2002, 2003, 2007, 2009 and 2015). However, the potential buyers were predominantly interested in the site, not the building. Over the years the challenge to renovate the building has been considered unachievable, mainly because of its unique design, and the fact that adapting the building for a new function would

[26] Tallinn Linnahall Ltd: https://linnahall.ee/en/226-2/

require significant rebuilding while being restricted by the buildings' listed status (Kurg, 2012). Aspirations to find a better working use model initially and any use eventually are argued on a complex battleground between stakeholders.

A number of topics emerge from the media narrative, including the issue of coastal areas in neoliberal conditions being connected to the idea of **luxury** (especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s), Scandinavian aesthetics as something to aspire to when 'catching up with the west', the sensitivity of Soviet heritage and the general precariousness of the building itself. The case study is extremely political and connected to Tallinn's City Government led by the centrist party Keskerakond for many years (since 2001). While the story that emerges in the media appears as a linear narrative it is also contested and needs to be approached critically. For example, one of the key issues that clearly surfaces is a question about who is an expert when we look at urban development and especially the redevelopment of sites that are connected to the public interest. Ultimately the question is if the user of space is also an expert and if so, could considering the user perspective be a gateway for new sustainable uses.

Tallinn City Government's approach to redevelopment

Some of the earliest proposals for new uses originate from 1993 and envision Linnahall as a recreation and sports centre with wellness facilities and tennis courts on the roof of the ice rink (Kasela, 2000). In 1996 a journalist Epp Alatalu described Linnahall as a *'turtle-shaped fire hazard'*. A detailed plan for the harbour area was produced by Nord Projekt and adopted in 1997. It is argued that Tallinn as a city has no need for a hall this size as it is only at 50 per cent capacity annually. However, visions for the future of the space were undecided (Alatalu, 1996: online). The city government started seriously looking into producing a development plan for the building in the late 1990s. It was acknowledged that Linnahall is in a valuable location and surrounded by a number of large-scale development projects, but in its present state did not justify the city's investment (Tiits, 1998).

In 1999, the municipality of Tallinn started to explore the option of converting Linnahall into the Estonian Museum of Art. However, this plan found little support. The museum director, as well as the wider art community, referred to Linnahall as a Soviet building with a negative reputation that should be demolished, while the new Museum of Art would be a symbol celebrating different times. The director of the Estonian Museum of Architecture at the time, Karin Hallas-Murula stated: *'The plan to see the future of the Estonian arts in Linnahall is ridiculous from the perspective of artists. This reminds me of Stalinist times when they built pools and weightlifting gyms in old churches. In addition to this, Linnahall has a bad reputation – a museum of art is a symbol, but Linnahall is a cultural palace built in Soviet times'* (Juske and Karpa, 1999: online). Additionally, it was considered whether the building could be converted into a recreation and sports centre (Kasela, 2000), a shopping centre (Alatalu, 1996), an EU-funded international Science Centre (Keian, 2001), the 'Forum Tallinn' conference centre (Postimees, 2001), a concert hall (Pärna, 2004), a casino (Jõgis-Laats, 2010) and an opera house (Randlaid, 2019). A number of proposals

were developed up to a variety of stages – from conceptual proposals to detailed drawings. In the following section I will introduce some of the proposals that were also developed up to a visual representation stage since 1999 in more detail.

'Forum Tallinn', 1999–2001

A proposal for an EU-funded conversion into an international conference and science centre

One of the earlier visions to take a more formal shape is known as **'Forum Tallinn'**. A working group was put together by the city government to explore the potential futures of the building in 1999. In addition to brief discussions about a potential museum, it was envisioned that Linnahall could become the European Union's Environmental Institute with scientists and experts from EU countries (Seaver, 2000). Support for the project was found from the city council of St Petersburg that offered to support a project engaging with Russian scientists (Eilart, 2001).

Further international interest emerged and highlighted the unique nature of the building. The city of Tallinn was approached by a Swedish foundation, Österled, who proposed that they will commission a development plan and initial design proposals for the building with their own funds. Visions were presented to the municipality, which signed a contract with Österled to further explore the options and develop a business case for developing Linnahall into an international science centre (Peensoo, 2000). The city relied on the aspiration that EU funding was either secured or the building would be put up for sale (Äripäev/Delfi, 2000). The plan for 'Forum Tallinn' was finalised in November 2001 and opened to investors with the ambition that the project would be realised in six years and be led by a city-created foundation (Postimees, 2001). However, only months after the plan was completed it was shelved due to there not being a masterplan for the wider

coastal area as well as limited investor interest (Ärileht, 2002). The proposed use was supported by some visual imagery that is relevant to interpret here.

Österled produced a vision and commissioned two options for Linnahall and presented these to the city of Tallinn. They commissioned initial designs from Wingardhs AB and Arkitekbyran AB. Visions included significant demolition – it was proposed that the ice rink and the staircase, nightclub and pools on the coastal side of the building would all be removed. It was envisioned that the main hall of the building would be preserved, but be divided into smaller conference spaces. The vision included a new harbour for small boats, a public outdoor pool, a pillared roof area surrounding Linnahall and a seaside promenade. It was proposed that the redesigned building would look like an Inca temple and form the focal point of a new active area (Peensoo, 2000).

The aspirations of 'Forum Tallinn' fit into the development ambition of Tallinn in the early 2000s. This is an era of boom developments and characterised by the widespread and generally accepted aspiration to erase landscapes and sites considered to be Soviet. Some characteristic developments completed from the period include Coca Cola Plaza (2001) (Figure 53) and the Radisson Blu Sky Hotel Tallinn (1999–2001), which signifies the reshaping of Tallinn's skyline and the development of a central business district.

Figure 53: Coca-Cola Plaza built in 2001 next to the Raine Karp-designed Postimaja building (Source: Maripuu, 2013)

Attempts to sell the building 2000–2009

After the vision commissioned by Österled and the plans for 'Forum Tallinn' failed, the municipality of Tallinn started to explore the option of selling the building more seriously . The sale of the building to developers was discussed and attempted by the city of Tallinn over the course of the first decades of the newly independent Estonia in a variety of forms and setups. Despite significant flexibility in terms, this has never been successful, but in some cases developed into long-term negotiations. Many local developers deemed the site not valuable over the years, including a development company Pro Kapital and a number of Finnish developers (Raiski, 2000). A number of real-estate advisors have deemed Linnahall not worthy to be reconstructed over the years, including Uus Maa, whose experts state that the building has an irrational layout (Eilart, 2001).

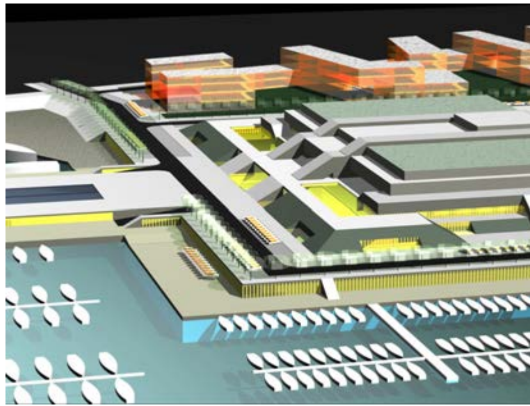
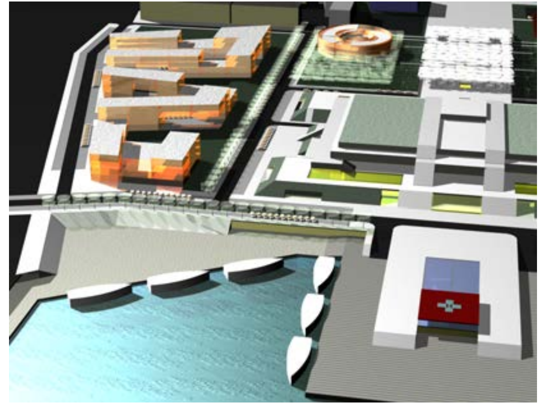
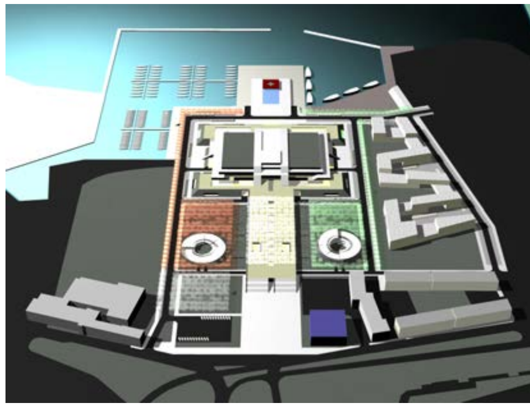
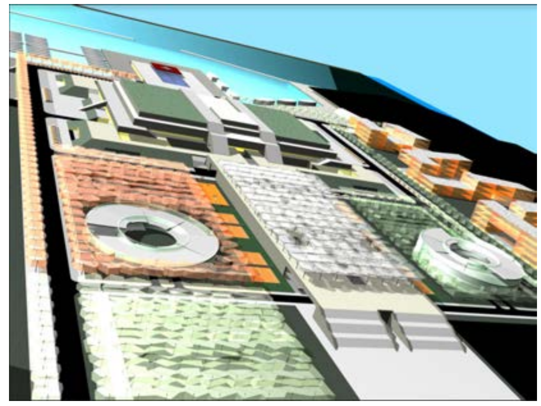
A vision competition and three consecutive auctions in 2003

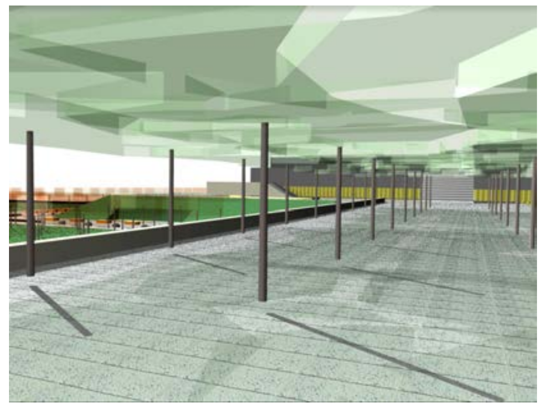
The city government and the Linnahall board decided to commission three visions for Linnahall and the surrounding areas from local architects and thereafter put the building up for auction after the 'Forum Tallinn' plans were abandoned. A decision was made to commission visions from three architecture offices chosen in collaboration with The Union of Estonian Architects and city government officials. The architects chosen for the invited competition were **COO Architects**, **KOSMOS** and **Rein Murula**. The visions were assessed by the chair of Linnahall board Ignar Fjuk, Linnahall's director Tõnu Prööm, city architect at the time Arvo Rikkinen, the director of Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department Agne Trummal and architects Veljo Kaasik, Andres Põime, Emil Urbel and the building's original architect Raine Karp (Peensoo, 2003 a, b, c). All design proposals followed the brief and designed a conference centre, and it was hoped that these could be used

to initiate a detailed plan process for the area. Three proposals covered in more detail below envisioned some significant changes to the built structure, however all included the preservation of the main hall and broadly the form of the building.

COO architects' vision 'Cuac'
**The proposal had two authors Hanno Grossschmidt (Coo Architects and Jaan Tiidemann (Ninja Stuudio) (Figures 54-59)*

The COO architects proposed transforming the ice rink into a three-story car park and surrounding the terrace in front of the main entrance of the building into a cherry garden with transparent windscreens. Their vision included additional space for the harbour, an area for yachts and a new pool and fountains on the rooftop of the building. A number of new structures were proposed for the surrounding area – including two circular buildings in parks next to Linnahall for parking and office use. The vision included preserving partial access to a coastal promenade. The pool in section C (as visible in Figure 41) of Linnahall is repurposed for harbour facilities. The wasteland to the west of Linnahall is reserved for snake-shaped built forms that make reference to Mayan Chicchan (Peensoo, 2003). The proposal demonstrates the need to find a vision for the broader area surrounding Linnahall and links with the broader development aspirations of Tallinn at the time – predominant city centre functions were seen to be connected to the need for office and parking space. It is significant to note in the context of this dissertation what is considered valuable to preserve from the building and what is seen to need to be modernised.



Figures 54-59: A proposal titled 'Cuac' (Source: Grosschmidt & Tiidemann, 2003)

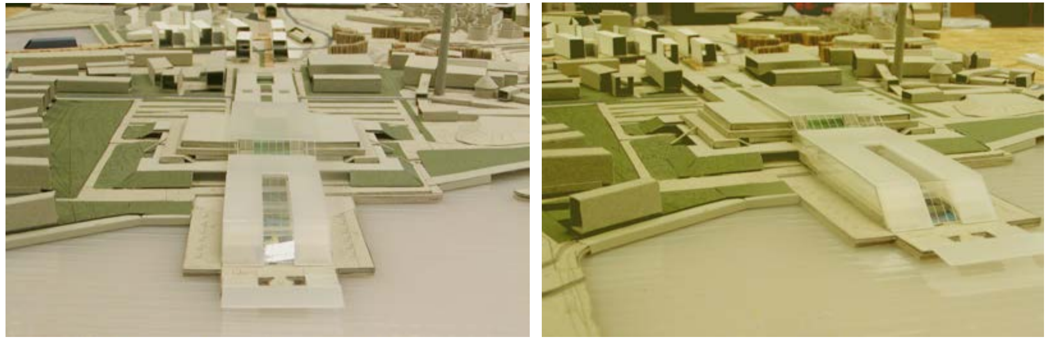
Kosmos architects' vision 'Kompass'

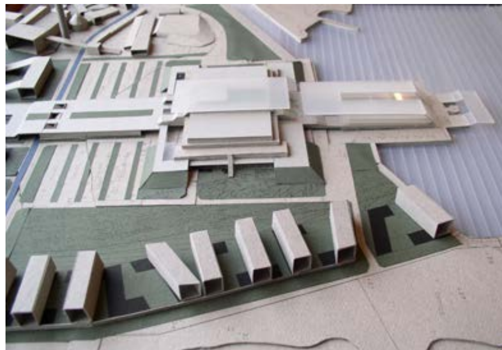
The proposal by Kosmos architects is somewhat similar, reflecting wider discussions around the future functionality of the building. The ice rink is envisioned as being replaced by a parking building, and the plans include a conference centre, sports complex, a hotel, an office complex. The proposal included two new building blocks on the roof of Linnahall; as a result of this the otherwise windy viewing platform would have become a quiet urban square lined with cafes and entertainment facilities. The architects envisioned that a tramline would pass under the building and proposed that the conference venue should be accessed from the side of the sea. The architects also proposed a 4–6- floor building complex for residential and office use next to Linnahall. Additionally, the proposal envisioned restoring Linnahall's original fountains (Peensoo, 2003).[27]

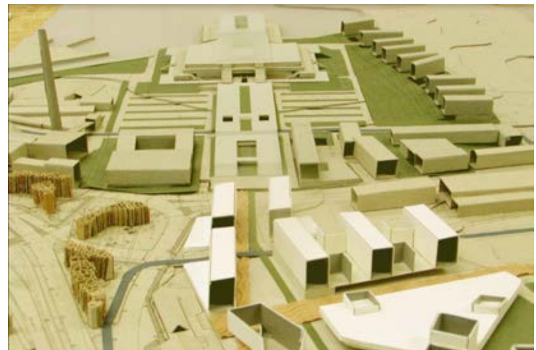
[27] No supporting illustrations available due to limited access to physical archives during Covid-19 pandemic.

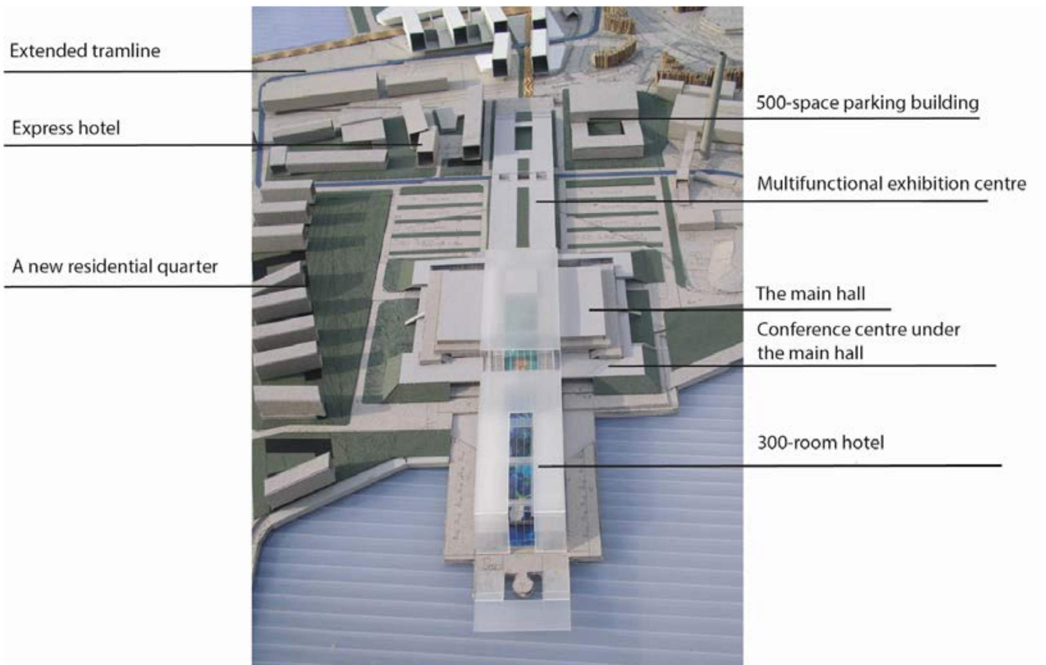
Rein Murula's vision 'Rewind'

The third vision divided the building into three parts so that it could be sold to different developers. The central building with the hall was again seen to be redeveloped into a conference centre. The steps and platforms on the side of Mere Avenue were envisioned as a multifunctional exhibition centre and a parking building; the coastal side would have included entertainment functions, business space and a hotel. The stairs on the coastal side were covered by glass and the roof of the building transformed into a banquet hall. The architects stated at the time that their ambition is to preserve the interior and interior of the building as much as possible – they especially looked at the interior of the hall as a successful example of 1980s design. 4–5-floor residential buildings were proposed next to Linnahall – these would have been connected to the hall by a public eco-green space (Peensoo, 2003). It is significant that while the architects considered the heritage value of the building the proposed structures surrounding the building seem to preserve very little visibility of Linnahall from the city side – for example, the proposed new parking building (see plans in Figures 60–64) would have blocked the main view corridor towards the building.









Figures 60–64: Visuals accompanying the proposal titled 'Rewind' by Rein Murula (Source: Murula, 2003)

These three design proposals were not progressed and three consecutive auction attempts took place in 2003. Parallel to this a number of articles describing

growing maintenance issues were published (e.g. Peensoo, 2003). The auctions were also surrounded by debates around the building's heritage listing status – newspaper articles demonstrate that the municipality made attempts to challenge the listing while the National Heritage Board was firmly against it (e.g. as reported in, 20 April 2003, Peenso, 2003, Seaver, 2003). The architect of the building, Raine Karp, argued that demolition of the building would be problematic, but was disappointed by the vision competition results (Peensoo, 2003). He proposed his own solution for the building following the invited competition. His proposal included preserving the concert hall, but demolishing the ice rink, which would have been replaced with a ramp. He proposed a three-storey parking building next to Linnahall. Additionally, he proposed a hotel and a conference centre next to the building (Viivik, 2003) (Figure 65).

Figure 65: A proposal for redevelopment proposed by the building's original architect in 2003 (Source: Viivik, 2003)

The failed auction process

Following the previously described four proposals, an auction process was initiated. The city's attempts to sell the building to a developer proved to be complicated as is demonstrated by three consecutive failed attempts to find a developer in 2003. A decision was made that part of the conditions for the future developer is the preservation of Linnahall, but a back and forth between demolition and new development solutions continued throughout the auction process (Eesti Päevaleht, 2002). While initially the potential sale price was included in the 2004 budget the local government decided to postpone the sale in May 2003 (Eesti Päevaleht, 2003b).

The sale was re-initiated in August the same year with a starting price of 150 million Estonian Kroons, but no expressions of interest were submitted before the deadline later in the year. The reflections of the former director of Linnahall, Taave Vahermägi, who has explored why despite the city's efforts a buyer was not found offer an interesting context here. He argued that while the Estonian planning model has been taken from Nordic countries, there is one crucial difference – Estonia did not have a tradition of city planning. He argued that a liberal attitude has dominated here – and the planners' role has been only to stop undesirable developments. Vahermägi saw this as a negative city planning that focused on banning things; opposite to this would be positive city planning that is driven by the city's initiative and active participation in creating visions for the city. He argued that the Linnahall case is a great example of negative planning. It would not be possible in any other European city for such a large piece of central land to remain a brownfield for years. Vahermägi stated that the city's hope to earn millions of kroons from the sale was set up falsely. Linnahall was not something that someone could or would want to buy without knowing exactly what the mutual responsibilities will be. In conclusion, Vahermägi stated that the city would be successful with the sale only if they participated in the vision created for the building. Instead of desperately trying to sell, the city should be

working with business owners, planners and architects in order to create a vision, state it clearly and visually develop it. And only then should they start looking for investors (Vahermägi, 2003). Suggesting that the city lacks vision in the planning process is a continuous theme in planning commentary in early 2000s Tallinn.

The city government restarted the auction process for the third time in one year with the same conditions and starting price of 150 million Estonian Kroons (Peensoo, 2003). One offer with the minimum asking price was received from EPC Manutent with a proposal to develop the area into a gateway to Tallinn by 2010 (Postimees, 2003). The director of Manutent Märt Vooglaid took the position again that Linnahall should be *'looked at without emotions'* and demolished, and this should be done by the city. He stated that a concert hall that was named after Lenin does not fit the vision of a future gateway (Postimees, 2004a: online). He argued that the site of Linnahall could become an urban square, a green zone (Vooglaid, 2004).

A developer-commissioned survey depicted Linnahall as being in a dangerous state, and numerous real estate companies such as Pindi Kinnisvara, and Ober Hause and Uus Maa argued for its demolition (Postimees, 2004c). An economic analysis commissioned from the investment bank LHV came back with the conclusion that renovating the building was not justified from the economic perspective and therefore the city should subsidise the project. The article titles in the local newspaper are telling, e.g. *´There is no point in renovating Linnahall´* (Postimees, 2004b). However, this study was not seen as accurate by the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department (Eesti Päevaleht, 2004) and it was agreed that there is no legal basis for demolition as the building does meet the criteria that would enable it to be removed from the National List (Teder, 2004).

´Tallinn City Gate´/Talsinki. 2004

Developer Manutent commissioned architectural visions

Manutent's proposal also developed into a spatial design. They commissioned architectural visions from Danish and Swedish architects (**Hvidt and Molgaard AS and Swedish Sweco FFNS Arkitekter**) and provided them with a brief that includes Linnahall's demolition (Figure 66) The proposed visions see public spaces and residential buildings instead of the hall. The proposals include a yachting harbour, gallery space, cafes and an exhibition centre (Peensoo, 2004b).

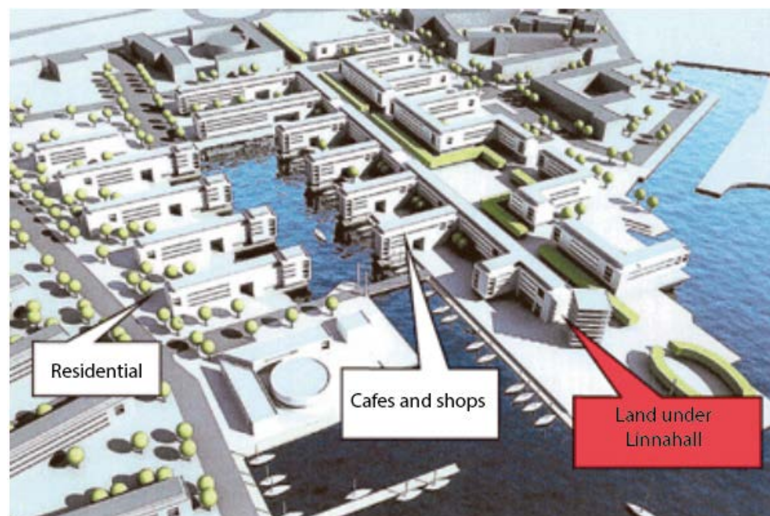


Figure 66: Vision created by Manutent´s commissioned architects Hvidt & Molgaard. Based on the proposal Linnahall would have been demolished and the area used for residential development (Source: Põld, 2004: online)

A professor from Tallinn Technical University pointed out that the cost estimates for renovation proposed by the developer were unrealistic as no vision has been proposed for the building (Peensoo, 2004b). In order to save the building, heritage protection conditions for the building were commissioned and the city of Tallinn agreed that preserving the building and reusing it as a conference centre that includes gallery space and preserved Tallinn City Archives would be a reasonable approach (Postimees, 2004e). The sale was postponed for an unknown period in June 2004 and eventually cancelled (Postimees, 2004f).

However, after these failed attempts to sell the building the municipality continued to look for a developer. An attempt to find a buyer took place in 2006. The city launched a competition with a more defined brief in order to find a developer who would convert the building into a conference and a concert hall. Additionally, the developer would have gained access to neighbouring plots (Seaver, 2006). The potential developer was expected to organise an architectural competition (Lohk, 2006). According to deputy mayor at the time, Jüri Ratas, the city had decided to stop pursuing a sale (Kaljuvee, 2006). The starting price for the development rights was 60 million Estonian Kroons and the city publicly announced the competition in early 2007. It was estimated that the development process would take 3–4 years and the programme of the building would be commissioned from its original architect Raine Karp (Seaver, 2006). Articles in the mainstream media took a confident tone, claiming that Linnahall would become the most exceptional conference centre in the region. As Tallinn had the status of European Capital of Culture in 2011 the city government promised large scale investments into cultural venues (Uusen, 2007). In May 2007 rumours emerged that the competition was a facade and the city had already made an agreement with Tallink Grupp (Uusen, 2007). Despite ten companies taking part in the Expression of Interest exercise (Seaver, 2007) no offers for the development rights were made at the end of the competition (Mäekivi, 2007).

2009–2010 The city looks to collaborate with a foreign investor Tallinn Entertainment LLC

Following the failed competition to find a developer the city government started negotiations with an American company Tallinn Entertainment LLC. A preliminary contract was signed that handed over exclusive rights for negotiations for one year. As a result of this, a detailed plan should have emerged for how the building would be converted into an event and leisure centre. The City of Tallinn planned to set up a joint enterprise with the developer or hand over development

rights for 99 years and finish works by 2011 (Gnadenteich, 2009) During these negotiations, Linnahall closed to the public (1st January 2010). A committee was formed for the negotiations. It was expected that the works would start in 2010, however discussions stalled and suspicions arose about the approach. The approach the developer proposed was essentially a loan from the government of the USA and the Estonian government was not willing to back this (Aas, 2010). The lack of vision was criticised and concern expressed in the media that the developer was not interested in delivering a cultural venue, but a casino (Kaljuvee, 2010). Despite this, the city of Tallinn extended the exclusivity contract by six months in April 2010 (Ratt, 2010). An agreement signed with the developers stated that during the period when Tallinn would be paying back the loan (for 15 years) they also would give up the right to participate in Linnahall's board (August 2010). Other political parties objected to the contract and pointed out that a clause should be added to the agreement that limits the extent of the potential casino (Postimees, 2010). The liberal Reform (Reformierakond) party claimed that the contract was damaging to Tallinn (Smutov, 2019). The conservative IRL party demanded that the contract be invalidated and a public competition organised (Gnadenteich, 2010). In January 2012 the city of Tallinn acknowledged that the negotiations had ended(Gnadenteich, 2012). This approach taken by the municipality drew significant attention and the problematic future of Linnahall became discussed more broadly.

2009 Tallinn Entertainment LLC

The architect, Jack Weinand, appointed by Tallinn Entertainment LLC proposed minor changes to Linnahall (Eilart, 2009). Weinand described his vision in the media, stating that the aim was to develop the area as public urban space (Tooming, 2009) (Figure 67). When designing, the architects' ambition was to continue the idea of opening Tallinn to the sea while connecting the coast with the centre of the city – this meant that Linnahall would have needed a number of additional leisure uses. The architect is quoted saying *'It is like a staircase that*

joins the sea with the city centre. The building and the area offer many interesting opportunities for the architect, at the same time we must start from the need to preserve everything that is important and valuable' (Tooming, 2009: online).

Figure 67: Tallinn Entertainment LLC appointed architect Jack Weinand and the mayor of Tallinn at the time, Edgar Savisaar, discussing visions for Linnahall (Source: Tooming, 2009: online)

A number of attempts to find new uses for the building were made after development plans after plans with Tallinn Entertainment LLC failed. A detailed plan was presented in 2007 that envisioned a total shift in the area surrounding the area of Linnahall. The city architect Endrik Mänd argued that preserving Tallinns's silhouette is not essential – the aim is to create a Scandinavian centre around Linnahall (Rannajõe, 2007). A vision for opening Tallinn to the sea was approved (Postimees, 2007). The area around Linnahall and the building itself gained significant attention with the city's plan to move the city government functions to a new building situated next to Linnahall. An architecture competition for the new city government building was won by Bjarke Ingels in 2009 (Fairs, 2009) (Figure 68).

Figure 68: Bjarke Engels' proposed design for the new city government offices next to Linnahall. Linnahall is visible in the foreground (Source: Fairs, 2009: online)

Attempts to progress the restoration and development after the building's closure.

Linnahall closed to the public as a concert hall on 1st January 2010 and the future of the building became more and more unclear. Tallink Grupp, led by Ain Hanschmidt, expressed interest in developing the site into a concert and entertainment centre (Kaljuvee, 2010). The developer claimed that they had already invested in creating visions for the site and saw the entertainment centre as a part of a wider city quarter (Kaljuvee, 2010). Collaboration discussions took place with Hard Rock International in 2012 (Seiton and Nergi, 2012). The mayoral candidates agreed during the 2013 elections that Linnahall needs to become a centre opened to the sea that would preserve its original scale and would join coastal cultural venues into one. A politician from the Social Democratic party, Andres Anvelt, argued that it is central to opening Tallinn to the

sea. Erik-Niiles Kross (from the conservative IRL party) claimed that the most important thing is to preserve the scale of the building and its presence on the coast, and to save the building from demolition. Valdo Randpere from the Reform party stated that in the worst-case scenario the present situation carries on. He was convinced that the present city government is behind the failed re-development. The representative of the Centrist party stated that Linanhall needs to be renovated, ideally by the time Estonia takes leadership of the EU in 2018 (Veski, 2013).

In 2014 the city of Tallinn proposed dividing the site into three parts (Jaagant, 2014). After dividing the building the city government planned to keep ownership of one of these. The plan proposed to renovate the building by 2018, for Estonia's 100th anniversary. The three parts would have been the former ice rink, the main hall with support rooms and the seaside parts. The ice rink and seaside would have been given into private ownership (Värk, 2014). The plan to divide the building found significant criticism and a committee was created for the reconstruction of the building in 2015. The committee consisted of city government officers (Eesti Päevaleht, 2015) and no broader engagement was considered. One of the first decisions that the committee supported was to cancel all previous decisions made regarding the future of the building and start from scratch in planning a conference venue (Postimees, 2015).

The detailed spatial plan approved in 2017

After eight years of disuse, a detailed plan for Linnahall and surrounding areas was adopted in October 2017. The planned area is in the heritage protection zone surrounding Tallinn old town and a key focus of the detailed plan is that the silhouette of the old town has to remain visible. The permitted structures in the area can be up to six floors tall, and the plans envision reconstruction and extension of Linnahall (AB Artes Terrae OÜ, 2017). To achieve the best result an

architectural competition was required. The visuals below provide a broad guideline for the architects (Figures 60–65).

Figures 69–72: Images from Linnahall´s detailed plan approved in 2017 (Source: Estonian Public Broadcasting, 2017: online)

Figures 73–74: Stills from the Tallinn City Office Service Bureau-produced video depicting the future of Linnahall (Pärgma, 2017: online)

The building was in essence divided into three parts. The conference centre was envisioned to be built where the former ice rink is situated while the concert hall would be in the former hall. The ice rink area was seen to be demolished. The conference hall should have a minimum of 2,500 seats and 12 different halls,

including a 500-seat black box. It was stated that the concert hall would be reconstructed based on heritage requirements, and have a minimum of 3,500 seats. The side facing the sea was seen to be reconstructed as close to the original as possible. According to these plans, the building would be ready in 2019 (Einmann, 2016).

The forming of a joint enterprise and continued uncertain futures, 2020-

A deal was signed between The Tallinn City Government, AS Tallink Grupp and AS Infortar. The parties created a joint enterprise (The City government 34%, AS Tallink Grupp 33% and AS Infortar 33%). The agreement envisions that Linnahall will become a 5,000-seat conference and concert venue with a variety of performance spaces. In addition to this, Tallinn harbour will be developed on the coastal side of the building. The city has completely moved away from the idea of dividing the building into parts and the mayor of Tallinn Mihhail Kõlvart is quoted saying, *'We are talking about a complete solution, collaboration and synergy. The city's interest is for the development to be a whole, so that a new urban space would be created, in which the traffic problem would also be solved.'* It is estimated that the project will cost 300 million euros (Raag, 2020: online).

Architectural and vision proposals produced separately from the city

A number of architectural visions have been developed over recent decades that attempt to spatially solve the issue of Linnahall's disuse; some visions have been commissioned by the city but alternative options have also been proposed by local and international architects who have been independently inspired by the building's indeterminacy. In addition to this Linnahall is central to the strategic regeneration frameworks produced for the coastal area and features as a constant in vision documents. The level of intervention these visions propose is also significant; earlier more radical visions including partial demolition are

juxtaposed with preserving Linnahall as a curious ruin with minimal intervention. A general consensus has emerged that Linnahall needs to be preserved, but there is some flexibility in the extent of preservation. The city's development plans have predominantly emerged without engaging with the wider community of experts in architecture, urbanism and culture. The architect Leonhard Lapin criticises the commercial approach taken and invites the city to have a dialogue with artists, urbanists and architects (Lapin, 2017). An early example to initiate discussion was a cross-European architectural competition, EUROPAN 10, which took place in 2010. Estonia proposed the site next to Linnahall under the title 'Inventing Urbanity. Regeneration – Revitalisation – Colonisation' (Figure 75).

Figure 75: The EUROPAN 10 site highlighted in white next to Linnahall (Source: The Union of Estonian Architects, 2017)

Participants from the Netherlands suggested that Linnahall should be surrounded by a forest and a fish market. The winning project by David Mulder and Max Cohen De Lara titled 'Green Cement' included Linnahall in their proposal (Lamp, 2010) (Figures 76-77). EUROPAN 10 did not directly deal with the future of the Linnahall building but with the surrounding area, but it is evident that the

proposals acknowledge the heritage value and significance of the building in defining the identity of the area.

Figures 76–77: The winning project by David Mulder and Max Cohen De Lara titled 'Green Cement' (Source: Xml Architecture Research Urbanism: 2010, online)

The Estonian exposition at the Venice Biennale in 2012 brought further attention to the questions surrounding the building's future. One of the authors of the pavilion, Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla, has explained that the project focused on the question of the disappearance of modernist heritage that is both influenced by the economic situation as well as plans in political flows (Vaikla, 2012) (Figure 78). This is a significant moment when the heritage value of the building in its present state was seen as more relevant.

Figure 78: An image from the biennale exhibition that paid homage to a modernist architecture based on the example of Linnahall (Source:Phaidon, 2012: online)

It is relevant to note, however, that these broader vision competitions and theoretical discussions around the building's future continuously take place without the building owner’s involvement. A critical article about the lack of involvement by the architect Veronika Valk highlights how university students, urbanists, architects and artists have made numerous attempts to envision the future of the building. Her article is poignantly titled *‘Linnahall can´t be blamed for its poor present or dark future’* (Valk, 2012: online). All this highlights that the building is seen as significant by a large group of people and ideologically understandable. Numerous proposed visions demonstrate how there is interest in seeing more activity on, in and around the building. Valk refers to a workshop that took place in 2012 and a number of proposed uses that deal with both the exterior and interior of the building proposing public beaches, playful public spaces, studio and meeting spaces, cafes, schools, nurseries and government facilities (Valk, 2012) (Figure 79). A proposal by Architect Must from 2016 proposes another playful alternative future for the building (Figure 80).

Figure 79: Keiti Kljavin and Brett Astrid Võmma, visualisation created during a public workshop accompanying ambitious and playful future scenarios for the building (Source: Kljavin, Võmma, 2012: online)

Figure 80: A proposal by a group of young architects in 2016 (Alvin Järving, Ott Alver, Mari Rass (Arhitekt Must)) envisioning a public pool as part of Linnahall's future (Source: Architect Must, 2016: online

5.5 Linnahall as an everyday ordinary space

The media and archival research demonstrates the list of key stakeholders discussing the building's future and their ambitions over time. The city continues to aspire to preserve and protect Linnahall and develop it into a polyfunctional conference centre (Künnapu, 2016), but despite numerous efforts achieving this or finding another new function for this purpose-built structure has turned out to be an unachievable goal up to now. From time to time enthusiastic developers emerge, but all suggested plans have been abandoned. Linnahall is not open to the public daily, but from time to time its doors are open for an exhibition, performance, a public tour or as a film set. It becomes starkly visible that visions proposed for the building rarely engage with the debates in contemporary urbanism and architecture and the city has made little if any effort to engage with the wider community in creating long-term or temporal visions for the site. In the midst of these debates, however, the building has gained its own cultural and physical significance as a formally unused space that has found a wide array of temporary uses. Linnahall has a history as a social and political arena.

But does Linnahall have a specific value in its in-between/indeterminate state? Could this indeterminacy be incorporated into the future of this building? This has clearly been explored in some student visions, but is there more to this perspective? Linnahall's roof is known as a curious public space by locals and tourists alike, and site visits have enabled me to document what kind of informal and formal uses have emerged on-site during the period of indeterminacy. This brings up a question: **what does it mean for a space to be wasted?** How do temporary urban situations and indeterminate states affect the urban experience? What is the significance of Linnahall to its users and the wider community? Sociologist Francisco Martinez has poignantly argued that Linnahall should be viewed as a democratic event space (Martinez, 2014). The developer and city-driven visions for the building rarely emphasise its cultural significance as an arena for multiple culturally significant events as well as its unique quality as a 'free space' in a transitional city as part of development proposals. The approach taken to the building is focused on the end result and ignores the long-term indeterminacy that produces its own significant interpretations.

Martinez has claimed that the building's abandoned state makes it impactful – he has argued that the indeterminate state of the building tells us about other people's lives and different ways of living and uncovers never achieved ambitions. He argued that describing Linnahall as a socialist space has its significance – it has a life story that is separate from totalitarian dreams, functionality and deterioration (Martinez, 2014). The history of uses of the building and the area tell a story of the building's cultural significance as a political arena and a significant public space (Figures 81–83).

Figure 81: A festive meeting in Linnahall celebrating the NLKP letter to L.Brežnev (Source: Estonian National Archive, 1980: online)

Figure 82: An 'Eestimaa Rahvarinne' (a community-led political movement to support 'perestroika') political meeting on 'Stalin's policies and Estonia' (Source: Puhm, 1988: online)

Figure 83: A meeting supporting Estonian independence on the stairs of Linnahall in 1989 (Source: Rudko, 1989)

During the period after the building's closing and of uncertain future use, a number of temporary uses have emerged. Meanwhile, uses for indeterminate sites became especially popular in Tallinn after the 2008 economic crisis and especially in 2011 when Tallinn had the status of the European Capital of Culture. A significant part of the programme was LIFT11 – a festival of urban installations, with artworks focused on controversial and curious questions in urban space and for which Linnahall was one location for an installation.

Figure 84: LIFT11 installation 'To the Sea' by Tomomi Hayashi in 2011 (Source: Hayashi, 2011: online)

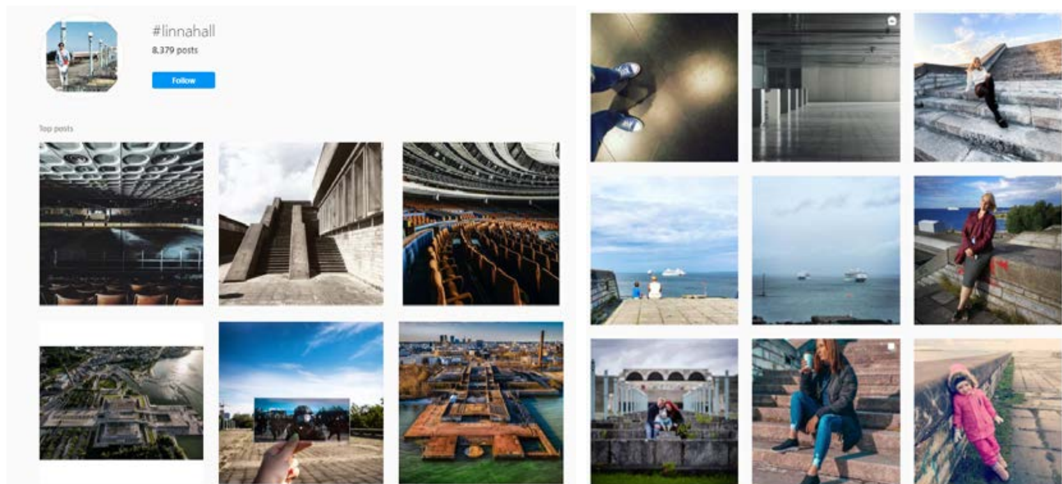
The meaning behind the installation (Figure 84) has been explained by its author, the Japanese architect Tomomi Hayashi, as follows: *'By introducing the temporary structures of the viewing platforms, this installation emphasises a desire, concealed in the building, to move on towards the horizon and freedom. Addressing these universal striving and the official rhetoric of the capital of culture '(re)opening Tallinn towards the sea', the installation engages in a dialogue with Linnahall's recent past, present and, as we can also hope, future'* (Hayashi, 2011:online).

This post-economic crisis approach to space boomed in the following years. While the building was once one of the main entertainment spaces in the city on a key artery connecting Viru Hotel to the coast, it now functions as an arena for a variety of temporary uses (in addition to installations and art projects, for example, a training ground for narcotics dogs and policemen (Vaikla, 2012). It is reported in the media that the building does not receive enough maintenance funding, but occasional artistic interventions also contribute to the upkeep of the space (Loonet, 2011). The unique design with its many angles and roofed areas has made it a safe space for the homeless. The easily accessible roof promenade of the building is an important gathering place for the youth, a canvas for graffiti, a landmark for tourists to visit. In 2019 Linnahall was used as a film set for Christopher Nolan's film Tenet, bringing further international attention to the building and its unique significance in modernist architectural heritage (Figures 85–86).

Figure 85: The filming of 'Christopher Nolan's 'Tenet' (Source: Syncopy, Warner Bros Pictures, 2020: online)

Figure 86: Special effects explosion on top of Linnahall, 'Tenet', 2020 (Source: Syncopy, Warner Bros Pictures, 2020: online)

It can be argued that this special disorganised atmosphere has made the rooftop and surrounding areas of Linnahall into one of the most valuable public spaces in the city. It has become a tourist attraction and a social media background with relevance to several generations (Figures 87–88).



Figures 87–88: Linnahall is widely represented as a background or site of interest in social media, for example, the building has been tagged on Instagram over 8,000 times. Screenshots retrieved 29th November 2020 (Source: Instagram, 2020: online)

Over years of non-use Linnahall has imprinted itself in the memory of Tallinn's residents and visitors as a curious landscape. Personal narratives gain meaning when the focus on temporality and the indeterminacy of transitional spaces. For me personally, Linnahall has been an exciting space of exploration since I started university in Tallinn in 2006. Over the years I have met friends on the rooftop, taken tourists and urban explorers into the area as a member of the Estonian Urban Lab, stood on its roof to watch the new year's fireworks and followed how its story has been discussed in the local architecture community. My academic interest in the site has largely emerged from this personal relationship with the building. I started to document the site more consciously in 2013 during the first academic year of my PhD. The following is based on autoethnographic explorations, notes and photos of the site taken during site visits. It is relevant to note how pop-culture narratives and ethnographic observations contrast with visions and media narratives. Images from site visits over the course of seven years reveal a different type of rhythm characteristic to the building, its use and disuse, its physical deterioration, and also its impact as a 'free space'. Each site visit represented below over the years has been documented through a set of diary-style notes and photographic documentation (APPENDICES 1-10).

Images and observations from 10 site visits made between 2013 and 2020 are represented below. The photographic documentation is divided into four key interests:

A landscape: Linnahall and the surrounding area is viewed as a changing landscape in Tallinn city centre. Images look at the building as it operates in the frameworks of the city

The building/architectural site: Interest in the building's physical structure, its deterioration and repair over the years

'A canvas': The building as a canvas for political and social commentary – mostly represented through street art or lack of it

A public space: The uses of the building, adaptation by people visiting the site.

The starting point of autoethnographic reflections used here is September 2013 (3rd September 2013, Appendix 1), two years have passed since the time when Tallinn was the European Capital of Culture with Linnahall's rooftop as a venue for one of its installations and a year has passed since the exhibition in the Venice Biennale. Initial site visit documentation demonstrates the indeterminate state of the site - it is a curious wasteland with a sense of temporality. The future plans surrounding the building remain unsure, these uncertainties and the post-socialist frameworks are reflected in previously covered media records. I write: *I live in Kalamaja, historically a fisherman's village, but now an up and coming neighbourhood of colourful timber houses in Tallinn, on Kungla Street about a kilometre from Linnahall, and work in a temporary bar built into a former industrial unit next to Linnahall. I cycle to work every day and observe Linnahall in the distance. This is a first site visit before embarking on my PhD to explore the ground and note down my initial ideas. Knowing the context I feel that there is a sense of need for redevelopment in the wider area, but the feelings are mixed – isn't there something special about this temporary state and undefined landscapes that invite people to explore and create images of undefined futures? I feel like this is an interesting time to be young in Tallinn – there is still a lot to happen and the manner in which it will, is uncertain, the air is full of potential.* The documentation of the visit includes a variety of photography, highlighting informal uses of the site. The documentation highlights scales significant to the site, from views (A cruise ship is visible in the distance and a pair of girls are sitting on the edge of the building and discussing something seemingly serious) to weeds growing through the steps of the building. (Appendix 1)

The peculiarity of this building becomes evident in its disused state - rather than a building, it can be observed to function as a landscape. It is used for climbing, exploring. The documentation below highlights the building's structural uniqueness as well as signs of it being adapted, including graffiti and scribbles.

Figures 89–90: The building comes across as abandoned with weeds growing through the walls and crumbling steps (Source: Kurik, 2013)

Figures 91–96: The walls of Linnahall function as a canvas for social commentary and seemingly neutral colourful scribbles (Source: Kurik, 2013)

Figures 97–100: Linnahall is a common meeting point, but also a curious site to visit. Almost four years after the closing of the concert hall, the surrounding area continues to be used for events such as the fairground visible in the images here. The informal landscape surrounding the site makes it suitable for various temporary uses (Source: Kurik, 2013)

During the following year (8th May 2014) further visible deterioration of the building was documented. In its abandoned state the building forms a strong contrast with views to Tallinn. I make observations about the paths of uses of the rooftop of the building; the majority of people can be observed to be drawn to the Western side of Linnahall, leaving the harbour side appearing more deteriorated. A wasteland can be found between the building and the harbour. (Appendix 2) The building is observed in its wider context, part of an underdeveloped post-socialist coastal landscape. (This is documented during a period where plans for the future of the building include dividing it into three distinct parts. (Jaagant, 2014)

Figures 101–104: The landscape surrounding the building is at least visually an urban wasteland or a half empty car park. This mixed and abandoned typology characterises the coastal landscape of Tallinn more broadly at the time(Source: Kurik, 2014)

Figures 105–110: The building is showing signs of deterioration, but predominantly a lack of maintenance. This is evident from weeds growing through the structure, loose wires and uncovered electrics, but also loose slates (Source: Kurik, 2014)

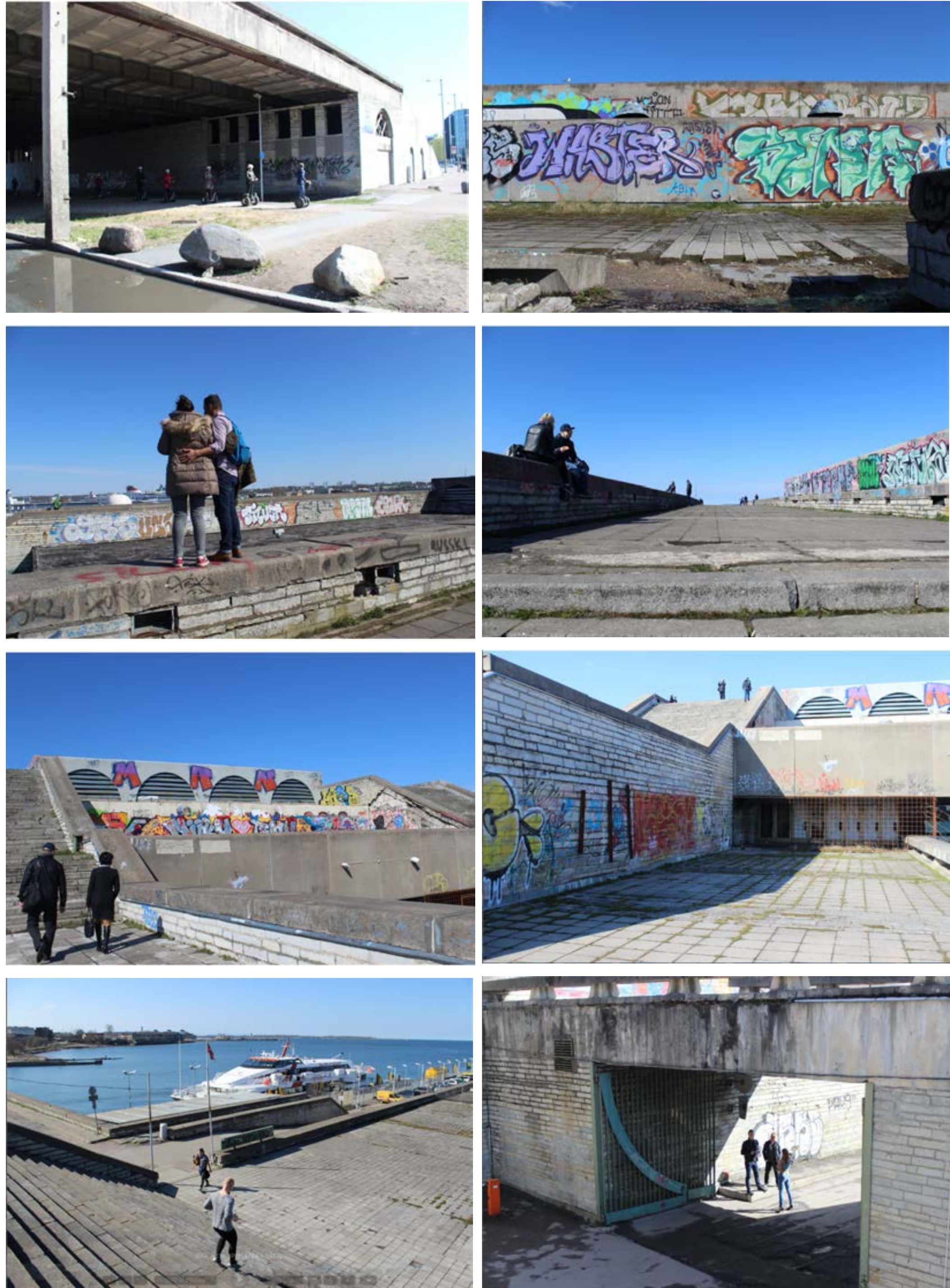
Figures 111–116: The building has been overtaken by loud colourful graffiti. There is a fairground on a wasteland behind Linnahall adding to the curiosity of the landscape. This juxtaposition of an architectural landscape and an informal adoption of space is the core of Linnahall's unique appeal (Source: Kurik, 2014)

By the spring of 2016 (27th April 2016) graffiti had overtaken the building. And the rooftop of the building has more apparently become a social space. Site visit documentation highlights the use of space: *It's difficult to find a common characteristic of the people I see, it seems like anyone and everyone is attracted to this curious space. There is a group of tourists in an organised line wheeling through what used to be the railway tunnel on their Segways and a lone jogger*

racing up the steps, there is a well-dressed middle-aged couple, younger couples, teenagers, explorers. (Appendix 3). Parallel to stalled development, autoethnographic records are able to portray the building gaining a use in its ruin condition. It can be argued that this specific temporality characteristic to the site is also part of its attraction.

Figures 117–122: The building of Linnahall appears as an organic part of the indeterminate coastal landscape. The surrounding area as well as the accessible rooftop of the building are used, but these uses are marginal or informal. The most active use is the speedboat harbour at the back of the building – in a way Linnahall functions as a coastal gateway to Tallinn, but also as a barrier between the city and the sea (Source: Kurik, 2016)

Figures 123–128: Compared to the previous site visit, the structure displays significant signs of deterioration. While the building's main uses have ended and it is predominantly vacant (some smaller uses continue in the building, including music studios etc.), there are still some establishments using the space. These include the nightclub Poseidon on the coastal side of the building (Source: Kurik, 2016).



Figures 129–136: The space can be seen as an active public space. I documented people using the rooftop for multiple activities: a group of people on Segways, couples and groups of people gathering, a jogger, people boarding speedboats to Finland, what appears to be a photoshoot with a model etc (Source: Kurik, 2016).

A certain stagnation is observed during a site visit in the spring of 2017 (29th March 2017). The plans around the building's future have remained on the level of an occasional article in local media in recent years. Site visit documentation includes notes about political events in the world taking place at the time that are reflected in graffiti and artwork on the walls e.g. *'Down with Assad, down with imperialism. Freedom for Syria', 'Justice for Aleppo 2016'.* Documenting the state of the building, further deterioration is revealed - connections between having a use and preservation can be observed. (Appendix 4) It is relevant to observe the significance of uncertainty characteristic to this building in reflecting changing values systems - in its present condition these changes are informal and liminal, however, an argument can be made for reviewing the future visions for the building with this perspective in mind. Value systems have changed significantly since 1991, and 2009 when the building was left vacant.

Figures 137–144: One of the reasons why the building of Linnahall seems to very strongly be part of the identity of Tallinn might be the spectacular views available from the rooftop of the building. Standing on the steps of it is possible to see the old town of Tallinn, the Soviet housing blocks in Lasnamäe, the 1990s and early 2000s central business district and the Kalamaja neighbourhood, as well as the Baltic Sea and approaching boats and cruise ships (Source: Kurik, 2017).

Figures 145-150: During this site visit the building seemed especially abandoned as the rooftop was empty – it has become typical to see it in use as a public space. The deteriorating 'facade' of the concert hall revealed the poor quality construction that the architect of the building has made reference to. Layers of slate have peeled off to reveal a structure that has been built from a mismatch of materials (Source: Kurik, 2017).

Figures 151–158: The large blank slate walls of the building seem to naturally invite street art. Some of it is playful and does not seem to make reference to anything, it's a place to note 'I was here', some of it is, however, more critical social commentary and makes reference to recent political events (Source: Kurik, 2017).

During the summer of 2017 (25th July 2017) the building is again observed as part of the harbour landscape. In the site visit documentation, the building's unique role in the urban landscape is highlighted: *In order to arrive at the well-known touristic old town, after disembarking the boat you have to pass through this curious wasteland. I assume it is difficult to understand what Linnahall is without knowing any background about it. The slate construction grows from the landscape like a Mayan temple or a mediaeval fortress behind tourists dragging their heavy luggage towards their nearby hotels. (Appendix 5)* While in the 1990s and early 2000s the site was often described negatively as part of totalitarian heritage, it has gained a significance as a sign of a period of unique architecture in Estonia.

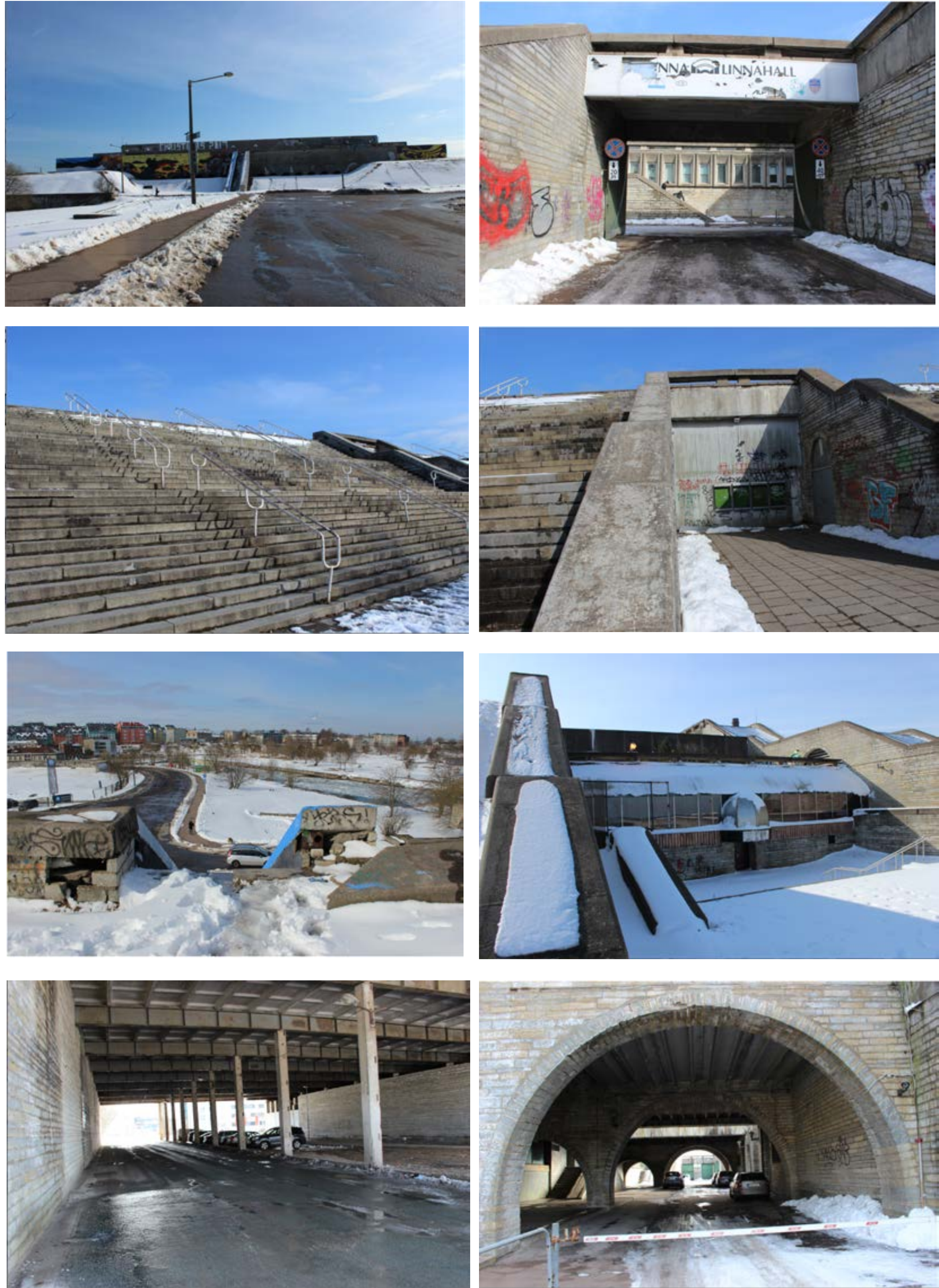
Figures 159–164: During the high season of tourism where hundreds of cruise ships in addition to regular travel between Tallinn and Finland and Sweden dock in the nearby harbour, the landscape surrounding Linnahall looks busy, but at the same time an inconvenient welcome to the city. Large numbers of tourists can be witnessed dragging their suitcases through the challenging waste-landscape surrounding Linnahall (Source: Kurik, 2017).

Figures 165–170: Looking closely at the building's condition it seems like parts of it are sliding – gravity is pulling the decorative slate and concrete layers off the structure and revealing a messy skeleton. From a distance, this architectural landmark looks intact, but a closer look reveals a site that has been left to nature (Source: Kurik, 2017).

Figures 171–176: Used by some wanderers and tourists, the summer landscape of Linnahall looks predominantly abandoned (Source: Kurik, 2017).

In 2018 (4th April 2018) the heritage status of the building is at the forefront of discussions. A controversial mural, commissioned by a politician, has appeared on the side of the building. This has triggered public conversations about the heritage value of the building, and its authentic state. Two opposing perspectives have emerged - some argue that the building should be fully covered in artwork to take away from its sorry state, others, led by the Estonian National Heritage Board argue that the building should be kept intact. The graffiti documented during this site visit reveals that it has become not only a site for informal interventions, but also advertisements and political propaganda. Dominant political directions take a forefront, for example the growing popularity of nationalism is reflected, this is juxtaposed with scribbles.

Juxtaposed with previous site visits, further deterioration can be observed. For example the rows of lamps on the entrance promenade, part of the building's original design, have partially been lost. (Appendix 6)



Figures 177–184: Linnahall in a snowy landscape. The cars parked underneath the building demonstrate that there are still some uses in the building. It is also a sign of the surrounding coastal landscape becoming more active as a number of cultural institutions have opened their doors nearby (Source: Kurik, 2018).

Figures 185–190: A controversial large-scale mural is juxtaposed with walls that the building owner has attempted to clear of graffiti. The building briefly became a battleground for figuring out how and by whom heritage should be preserved and what is its authentic condition (Source: Kurik, 2018).

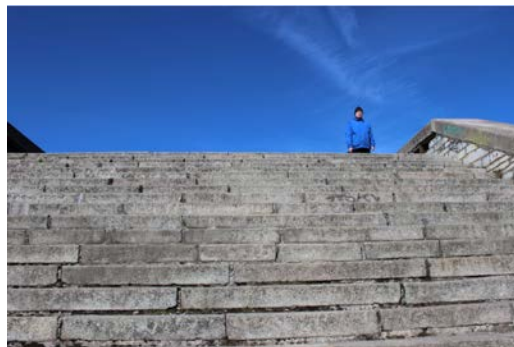
Figures 191–198: The footsteps on the snow demonstrate that even during the winter months the building's rooftop is used actively as a public space. It is interesting to observe people prepared to make significant efforts to climb up the slippery icy steps of the building (Source: Kurik, 2018).

The deterioration is further documented in the spring of 2019 (2nd April 2019). The fallen stones revealed a brick structure that has been built against traditional building practices on a vertical angle. The poor state of the building is further highlighted by protective fences that barricade access to certain parts of the building's rooftop. Parallel media debates highlighted earlier in the chapter continue discussions about the building's future use as a conference space.

The level of maintenance has increased after the debates surrounding the political mural - the building has received a thorough clean and from a distance appears close to its original state. (Appendix 7) This demonstrates the continuation of debates around the heritage significance of the building - while its listed status gives it a strong layer of protection, this is nevertheless frequently challenged.

Figures 199–204: The building looks closer to its original image after being cleaned from graffiti. However, the deteriorating condition has created a need to close some access to the public so it is no longer possible to explore the whole rooftop of the building (Source: Kurik, 2019).

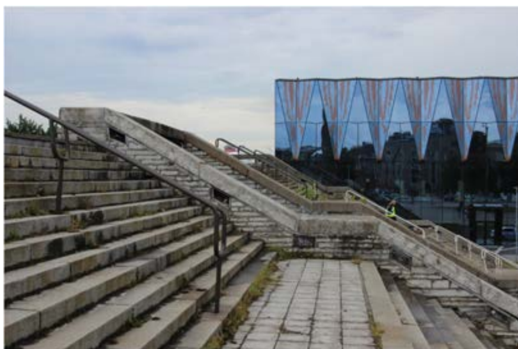
Figures 205–212: Fencing demonstrating the poor condition of the building. The central promenade running across the building is still accessible, but it is no longer possible to explore the curious pathways characteristic to the building (Source: Kurik, 2019).



Figures 213–218: Fresh scribbles appearing on the building. One of these makes reference to the right-wing conservative party EKRE gaining popularity in Estonia at the time (Source: Kurik, 2019).

While the building can be observed relatively abandoned during off seasons, it has acquired a certain status as a tourist destination that becomes especially evident during the summer season (27th July 2019). The site visit documentation reveals a busy and bustling rooftop (*It looks like there are tourists from all over the world, families, groups of friends)* and it can be speculated that recent production by Christopher Nolan that used this as a spot for filming has had an impact. Additionally, looking into parallel debates in media as well as urban theory, growing attraction to waste landscapes can be observed. Here a certain productive uncertainty can be noted. It can be argued that in its ruined indeterminate state the building has gained a 'use'. (Appendix 8)

Figures 219–226: The rooftop of Linnahall has never looked this busy and popular – there are most likely a number of factors behind it, including the growing curiosity about abandoned spaces, as well as attraction to 'Soviet spaces' might be considered some of these. It is no longer just an alternative space for the youth, but a unique tourist attraction (Source: Kurik, 2019).

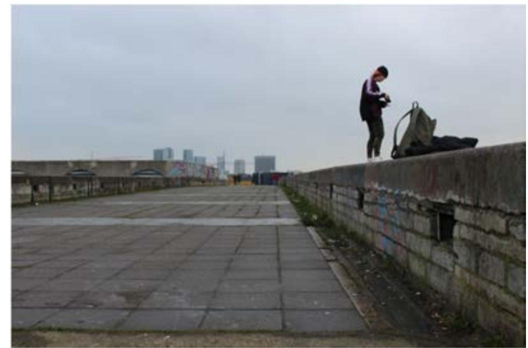


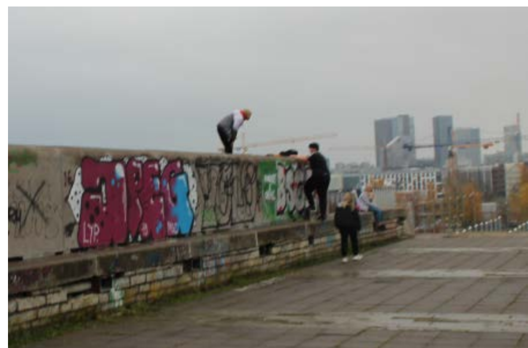
Figures 227–234: Indeterminate sites can look both used and disused at the same time (Source: Kurik, 2019).

Further signs of popularity are documented in October 2019 (25th October 2019). The records from the site visit offer some descriptions of the users: *I capture a lone teenage girl dancing on the roof. She is wearing headphones and appears like a symbol of rebellion against the grey sea. Just 20 metres from here another group of Russian speaking teenagers are climbing on the ledges and roofs. A student group speaking German appears – their professors excitedly explain the story behind the building and students take photos. A man in a red puffer coat is taking photos next to me.*

During this period of growing popularity as a landscape the steps can be documented crumbling. There are, however, some signs of sporadic maintenance. (Appendix 9)

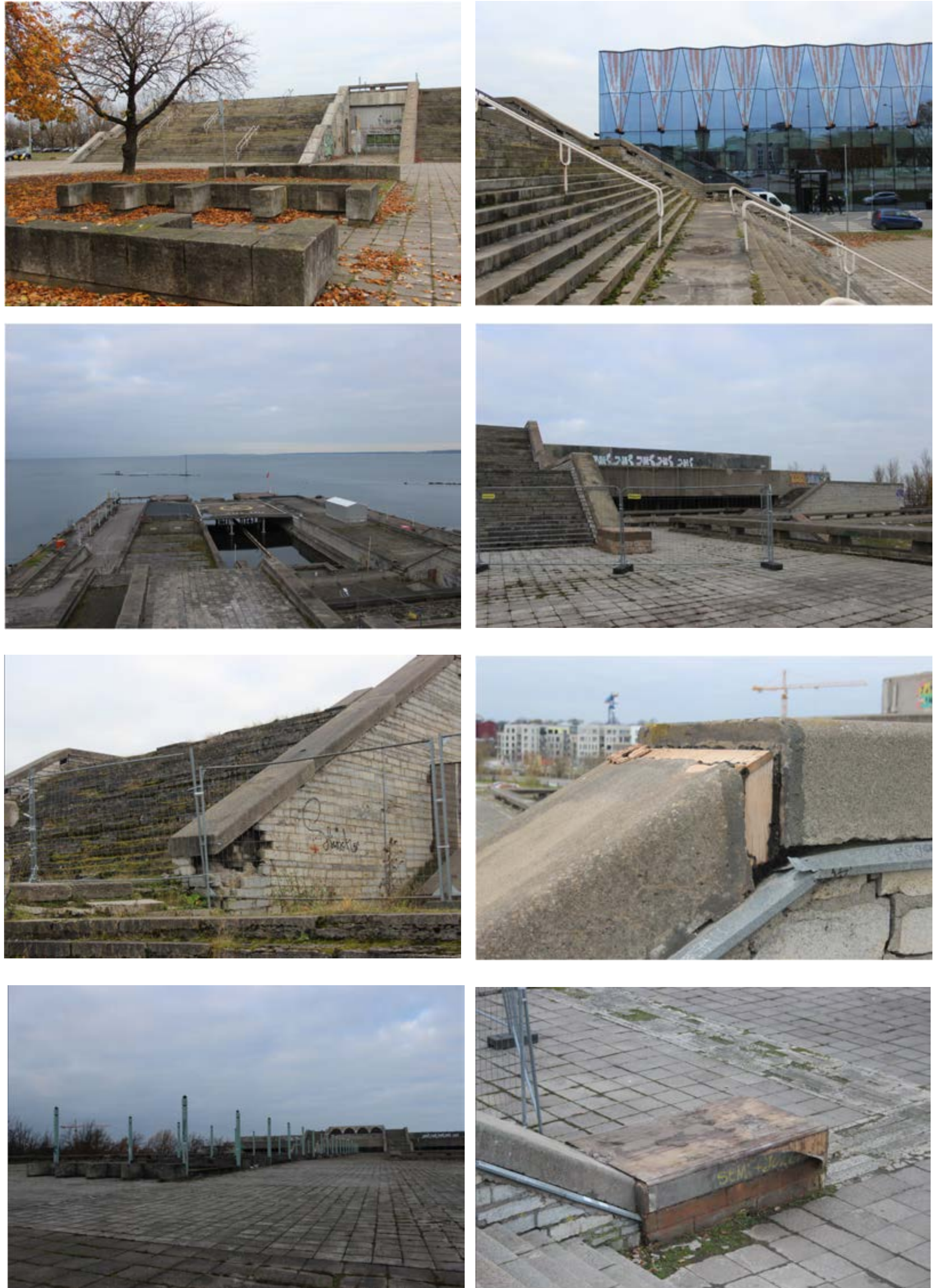
Figures 235–242: Viewed from a distance Linnahall looks in a slightly better condition than in the past, but a closer look reveals a continuing process of deterioration (Source: Kurik, 2019).





Figures 243–248: During this season the building seems to become a popular destination for groups of students. I heard a German-speaking professor explaining the history of the building to their students, and observed photographers and young people using the space (Source: Kurik, 2019).

Final visit to the site takes place on the 12t October 2020, in the middle of the global pandemic. The building's rooftop is documented as largely inaccessible. Only the main walkways and the Western side of the rooftop remain free to walk on. Further signs of some forms of temporary maintenance is evident, but despite this the building's condition can be observed to have worsened over seven years slowly and gradually. Looking back to a quote by the mayor of Tallinn in February 2020 discussing the future of the building in collaboration with Tallink Grupp: *'We are talking about a complete solution, collaboration and synergy. The city's interest is for the development to be a whole, so that a new urban space would be created, in which the traffic problem would also be solved.'* (Raag, 2020: online) It is evident that broadly temporal uses of this building are seen as acceptable, but not yet informative. The building continues to operate in diverse spheres of use, visions and value - it has significance as an everyday public space, it has a broadly unanimously understood heritage significance, that it is not necessarily situated only in the context of post-socialism, and it has a number of drastic future perspectives - despite discussions over recent decades complete overhaul and occasional mention of demolition appear.



Figures 249–256: The building seems to be in a cycle of deterioration and minor repairs. The timber used visible here demonstrates the temporality and uncertainty of the process (Source: Kurik, 2020).

Figures 257–264: The rhythms characteristic to the building can be sensed clearly when observing how in the condition of the global pandemic it has been taken over again by tagging, graffiti and informal uses (Source: Kurik, 2020).

Observations from site visits form a basis for further analyses below where Linnahall is documented as a significant landscape, a deteriorating structure, a canvas for social commentary and a public space.

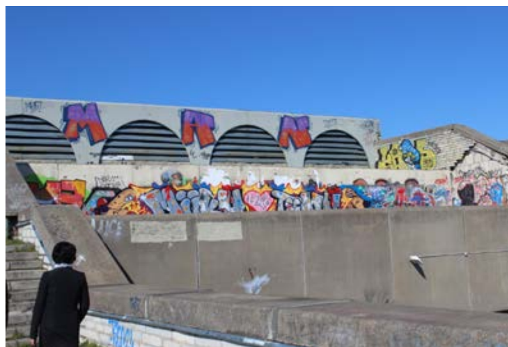
Linnahall as a significant landscape

Linnahall forms a background to a number of activities typical to Tallinn's central coastal region. Its unique design blends the building into the landscape. The images here display the building as it emerges from the landscape when accessed from the West. The site visit documentation demonstrates the building during different seasons and weather conditions as well as in a varied state of repair. A number of observations can be made about the condition of the building, however, the rhythms characterising the landscape are more seasonal than anything else. The images from site visits demonstrate the indeterminacy of the building – while it has occasionally been cleaned from graffiti, it continues to deteriorate. In the final image the building is cleaned and looks close to its original condition, but it is also inaccessible and blocked to the public from the side visible here.

Figures 265–268: Photos from site visits on 8th May 2014, 25th July 2017, 4th April 2018 and 2nd April 2019 (Source: Kurik).

Linnahall as a deteriorating built structure

The images demonstrate the deterioration of the building over the course of this research project. This specific set of photos focuses on the space that most recently has been used as a nightclub. The club at the northern side of Linnahall reopened briefly in 2012 – the first image shows the nightclub called 'Poseidon' open to the public, if slightly suspicious. Since closing after a fire the nightclub entrance has slowly shown signs of deterioration. The later images show it blocked by metal fences and covered in graffiti. It does seem that the years of being on the brink of a solution have impacted the building in significant ways – any intervention made has been a quick and temporary fix. It is significant to note the quite rapid impact disuse can have on a building. While the uncertainty of futures lets the user imagine alternatives, landmark buildings can quite quickly become beyond repair.



Figures 269–272: Photos from site visits on 19th March 2014, 27th April, 2016, 4th April 2018 and 12th Nov 2012 (Source: Kurik)

Linnahall as a canvas for social commentary

Documenting graffiti and signs of use of the building gives a significant insight into the transitional society framing the context. The street art documented over the course of the site visits demonstrates freedom that is

offered by indeterminate states of buildings and landscapes that the user can not find anywhere else in the contemporary city – in some cases the graffiti is playful, focused on tags and personal representations. However, the scribbles and signs on the building make references to the political climate surrounding the indeterminate site. Posters for conferences focusing on post-socialist urbanism are juxtaposed with tags promoting the liberation of Syria. A politically motivated large scale mural commissioned by a centrist party politician and installed illegally demonstrates that the significance of Linnahall as a cultural landmark is widely known. The complete cleaning of the building in 2017 seems to make a value statement about the building – the Estonian National Heritage Board took a stand for the integrity of the original architectural design. However, next to functioning as an arena for social commentary the tags and street art tell a story of popculture – 'Berit is stupid' and 'Anja loves Andrei Artjom' – revealing the building as a popular public space.

Figures 273–276: Photos from site visits 27th April 2016, 29th April; 2017, 4th April 2018. 22nd July 2019 (Source: Kurik)

Linnahall as a public space

This dissertation focuses predominantly on the uses visible to anyone approaching the building – what goes on inside the building is not in focus here and not part of the story.

The photos presented here demonstrate uses observed on the rooftop of the building over the course of site visits between 2013 and 2020. Uses represented here show the rooftop of Linnahall as a touristic site, as a leisure site and as a gathering point, as an opportunity for privacy in the proximity of a busy city centre, a backdrop for filmmaking, a location for studying and so on.

A unique insight into how actively the building is used is created by the grid of footsteps on the snow during the site visit in April 2018.

Figures 277–280: Photos from site visits on 3rd September 2013, 27th April 2016, 4th April 2018 and 22nd July 2019 (Source: Kurik)

Discussion

Focusing on three levels of data – media records, plans and visions and site visit documentation has helped to uncover processes shaping the present and future of Linnahall. The media record revealed the complex stakeholder relationships and development deals formed in order to find a new use for the building. A dominant stakeholder here has been the centrist party Keskerakond-led Tallinn City Government. Development proposals and visions created between 2001 and 2020 revealed a limited engagement – the future of the building was predominantly left to be shaped by the developers where the building owner, the city of Tallinn, operates as a facilitator or a visionless partner. The community of architects and heritage specialists function as an informal voice in the media commenting on a list of future visions for the building – from full demolition to minor intervention. References to the building's Soviet legacy in the 1990s and early 2000s faded slowly and the building has come to be seen as a significant modernist landmark locally and internationally. Challenging the integrity of the site shows the fragmented approach to city planning characteristic to the city government. Observing design proposals over the years reveals a decrease in the levels of interventions proposed – from large-scale visions for the building and the surrounding area to a more realistic minimalist intervention and bringing the building back into use while preserving its integrity and heritage of the building.

The never-used design proposals are invaluable in revealing the changing value systems and to understanding the heritage value of the building.

Yearly or twice-yearly site visits have revealed many subtle faces of Linnahall. Rhythms can be viewed on a variety of scales, but it has been argued that spaces are inherently rhythmical. Linnahall is part of the first entrance to Tallinn for many approaching the city by the sea, a unique part of the silhouette of the city. It becomes evident that space is produced socially out of actions and representations and experiences (Borden, 2014). Linnahall is revealed as a free space with

significant symbolic capital that seems to be unused by the building owner and the stakeholders that have been engaged in the process.

While the city government is continually focused on looking for a long-term solution for the building, the building itself is documented as deteriorating. Ideas surrounding architecture and permanence can be argued to also be evident in proposals for demolition – flexible, adaptive solutions have not yet gained momentum. The approach taken to development can be described through the concept of utopics explored in the literature review – utopic and heterotopian sites are often oriented to the future, rather than the present or past (Hetherington, 2001). I argue here that Linnahall should also be seen and understood as a **temporal space**. The meanwhile, temporary uses characteristic to the building sit separately from decision-makers' long-term visions. However, the lack of vision for the future is juxtaposed with an abundance of visions produced by the community of placemakers, the community or urbanists and architects as well as students and international visionaries. Whether it is characteristic to post-socialist societies that architects, universities, the city and other stakeholders work in silos could be a future question to explore. Have the temporary everyday uses of the building impacted the future visions proposed for the building?

The poor condition and the building and the maintenance decisions that have been made equally reveal the processes behind defining the value of places – decisions to remove graffiti, rebuild specific walls and barricade sections of the building show a patchwork meanwhile approach to the building while keeping the everyday user at bay. For example, one might ask why is graffiti on the building problematic when the building itself is in an extremely poor state, or specifically why is a certain kind of graffiti problematic.

Looking at Linnahall as unused, indeterminate space is paradoxical – the building continues to be used, but differently from its original purpose – it functions as a landscape, a public space and a unique Soviet ruin that has become part of

Tallinn’s unique attraction. The media and social media representations and increasing international interest in the building suggest that there is interest in such landscapes in their seemingly unused state. Is there something uniquely socialist/post-socialist about Linnahall?

6. KOPLI LIINID/KOPLI LINES

A neighbourhood transformed

Figure 281: The workers housing during construction, 2010 (Source: Estonian National Archive: online)
Figure 282: A photo from a site visit on 25th October 2019 (Source: Kurik, 2019)
Figure 283: A photo from a site visit on 12th November 2020 (Source: Kurik, 2020)

6.1 Introduction

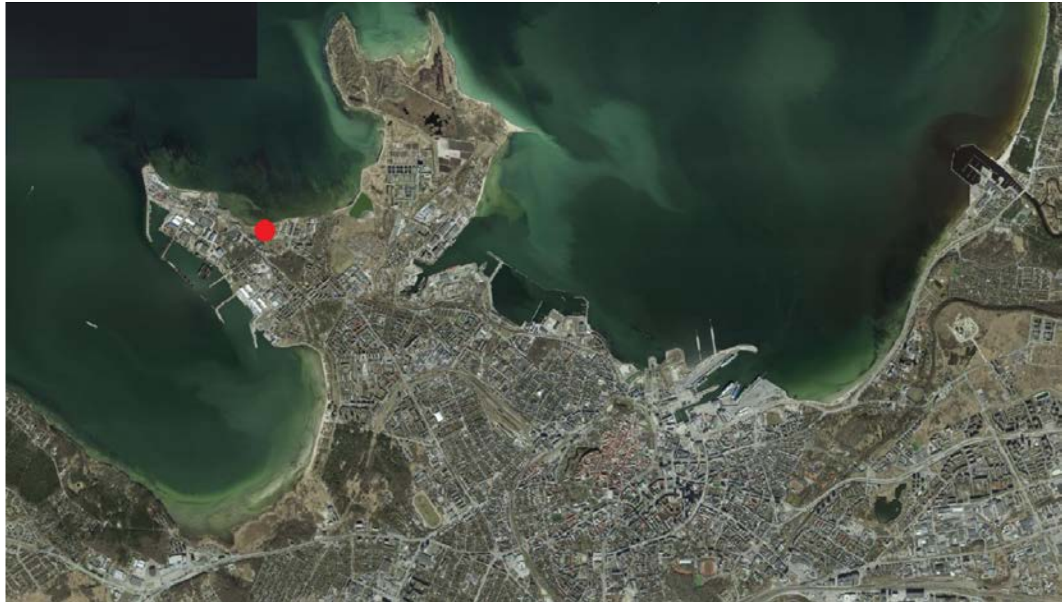


Figure 284: Kopli Lines is a neighbourhood situated on the coast of Northern Tallinn district (Source: Republic of Estonian Land Board: online)

The site in focus here, known as Kopli Lines (Est.: Kopli Liinid)[28] is a coastal neighbourhood situated approximately 5 km from the city centre of Tallinn (Figure 284) originally built for the Russo-Baltic and 'Bekkeri' ship factory workers in the first decades of 1900s and which has been a source of controversy for decades. The neighbourhood became known as Kopli Lines in 1951, presumably inspired by Vassili Island Lines in St Petersburg (Leningrad at the time) and consists of barracks built for factory workers in the early twentieth century and a separating railway line that still divides the lower and upper lines (Orro, 2017). The area has, since Estonia regained independence, been influenced by a number of ambitious future visions that can be juxtaposed with dramatic circumstances caused by long-term indeterminacy including deteriorating vacant buildings, fires, crime, demolition and shifting populations. The chapter unfolds as the story of a challenging development process that has characterised Kopli Lines since the early 1990s up until the present. While redevelopment of the site

[28] The neighbourhood is situated in Kopli sub-district of Põhja-Tallinn (Northern-Tallinn) administrative district in Tallinn. It is located on the Kopli peninsula and bordered by parts of Tallinn Bay, Kopli Bay in the Southwest and Paljassaare bay in the North. Kopli has a population of 6628 (1 January 2020).

was still ongoing when this longitudinal study concluded in 2021, this chapter explores the impacts of long-term uncertainty on neighbourhood dynamics as well as redevelopment of coastal residential neighbourhoods in post-socialist conditions. Shifts in residential neighbourhoods are characteristic to the post-Soviet condition, but the Kopli Lines area stands out with its unique coastal location between historically industrial uses. In this chapter I will explore how shifting ownership relationships and value systems have shaped the residential urban landscape of Tallinn. A narrative is presented here that demonstrates mixed stakeholder interests and questions of value allocated to coastal neighbourhoods and historic street structures. The historic housing built for the ship factory workers has had a designated conservation area (*miljööväärtuslik ala*) status since 2014, but long-term indeterminacy and uncertain futures have had a drastic impact on the heritage landscape and the future of the neighbourhood.

The Kopli Lines neighbourhood has been viewed as problematic almost since it was built and it has gone through a number of shifts in its history. The most distinct redevelopment visions were formulated after 1991, however discussions about the need to redevelop the area that led to the present development process were already emerging in the late 1970s (Orro, 2017). In contrast to predominant trends, Kopli Lines was not privatised in the 1990s and the land and buildings belonged to the city of Tallinn from 1991 until late 2015. The city government's aim was to support rapid redevelopment of the already declining area in one unit, but the site’s true complexity emerged in the 1990s and 2000s when frequent fires in seemingly abandoned buildings caused many deaths.[29] The area became known for drug use and trade and other illegal activities. The city government's initially loosely defined vision of unified redevelopment progressed into the need to relocate residents and the search for a developer who would be willing to take on a challenging project. However, while development plans were taking shape, there were several long-term residents still staying in semi-derelict buildings up until

[29] Six people died in a fire in December 2007 resulting in demolitions (*Delfi*, 2007), two people died in a fire in January 2008 (*Delfi*, 2008) and two people died in a fire in October 2013 (Teder, 2013)

November 2015 and informal residents continued to use the buildings as shelter even beyond that. Finding a developer for the area was problematic for several reasons – such as the need to develop new infrastructure systems that the city could not afford, and the complicated relocation of existing populations, as well as the distance from the city centre, more up and coming development areas in northern Tallinn, for example in Kalamaja, which is significantly closer to the city centre, and the general poor reputation of the area.

Kopli Lines has been known for the extremely poor condition of its buildings and a socially challenging environment that has for many years invited poetic descriptions in the media. The scenery was described in a local news portal in 2003: *‘The area resembles a badly kept mouth of a drunk. The teeth mauled by caries stand sparsely, single ‘teeth’ are more or less decent buildings, but there are also those where you can see scars of smaller or bigger fires. Some buildings are just piles of ash. There are a number of foundations that let you guess that at one point a building stood there’* (*Delfi*, 2013: online). The area is often referred to as a neighbourhood that *'can't be saved*’, or as an example of a slum in post-socialist context (Paadam, 2013), a *‘mythical wild west’* or *‘terra incognita’* (Karro-Kalberg, 2020). Two dominant categories of news stories can be identified about the area: stories that describe the excellent potential of this coastal location (predominantly featuring city government officials and potential developers) and journalistic explorations that discuss the challenging condition of the neighbourhood and associated social issues. The area has been often described as having *‘great development potential’* (e.g. Talk, 2011, Tänavsuu, 2014, Jürivete and Hint, 2016), but also a specific type of attraction characteristic to indeterminate and waste spaces. A journalist wrote in 2015 when the final official residents had just left the area: *‘Kopli Lines have become a visitor attraction in Tallinn, a museum of life or a bizarre reality show’* (Aasa, 2015: online).

The appropriations of space often connected to urban indeterminacy, such as squatting, are often represented negatively, and this has made it difficult for urban

governments to decide what should be the policy approach to these spaces and how to find and support uses during the indeterminate period. Despite these challenges, the vision of general strategic development of the area continued to be presented in the media and explored in architectural competitions after the 1990s. The city government focused on finding a developer who would take responsibility for the whole area and had limited interest in the mid-period – a potential of several years of deteriorating conditions or no use creating a certain 'permanently temporary' state. Many urban visions did not seem to consider the present situation, however: the static and undesirable state can be a reality for a whole generation if not longer. Stephen Hincks (2015) has observed that many approaches to *'neighbourhood change adopt a bookend mode of analysis in which a baseline year is identified for a chosen outcome variable from which the magnitude of change is calculated'* – this change often runs over several decades. This however smooths short-run change patterns and neighbourhood dynamics (Hincks, 2015: 1). This can also be observed based on the information that is available about Kopli Lines – there is a significant amount of speculative information about future plans and steps to reach these visions, but very little information about the change/decline of the neighbourhood over the course of nearly three decades.

The architectural historian and conservationist Oliver Orro has written: *'The general success of the Estonian state and its capital, and the rapid change that has taken place in society over the last few decades has had a very small impact on Kopli. Time passes here as if at a different speed and with its own rhythm"* (Orro, 2017). While neighbourhoods closer to the city centre characterised by similar style timber workers' housing, such as Kalamaja, have gone through a clear process of gentrification, Kopli remains relatively untouched. The slight movement towards change has started to take place in recent years and is documented in the media through mainly reports on the rise of real estate prices in the area.

The story here stops in 2021 when the Lines are in the process of redevelopment with original residents moved to mainly social housing units, some new residents living in the area, some buildings still derelict and some of the area presenting as a wasteland. After a number of failed deals with developers, the Kopli Lines area was sold to the construction company FUND Ehitus in August 2015. A phased plan for the development of the area was put together not long after the developer took over and work to redevelop the residential area was planned to be started in 2016. However, this was further delayed. Partial demolition took place in the summer of 2017, construction works started in 2019 and the process is predicted to finish in 2026. While the majority of buildings have been demolished and now redeveloped the story of this area remains controversial. The long-term deterioration of Kopli Lines has had dramatic spatial and social implications. Abandoned, indeterminate landscapes are affected by post-industrial economic changes, financial uncertainties in real estate, poverty, ineffective government and perceptions of insecurity. A key question is how might legacies of past land uses as well as land abandonment and vacancy affect social systems and the environment (Nassauer and Raskin, 2014). The controversial process of displacing original residents and the increased property values in the area added other layers of complexity to the post-1991 narrative.

What stating that an area is beyond saving and needs a clean slate approach means to local communities and who should take responsibility for any impact created are extremely complex questions that are not explored in-depth or answered in this thesis. Instead, the focus is strongly on the everyday life of the neighbourhood, the urban rhythms, signs of uses and processes of change parallel to the official development narrative. Kopli Lines has invited spontaneous urbanity, based on *'marginal lifestyles, informal economies, artistic experimentation, a deliberately open transformation of public space'* (Groth and Corijn, 2005: 503). For a significant period, the case study could have been characterised as being in a certain 'permanently temporary' situation. Uncertain

futures created a distinct sense of time and this case is very useful for interpreting temporality as a quality and characteristic of urban space and development.

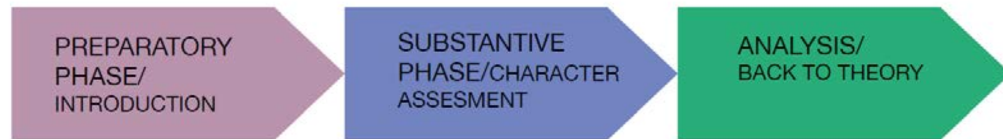
The aim of this chapter is to explore the site from mixed perspectives – the conservation area is explored based on media representations as well as site visits between 2013 and 2021. This abandoned, but somehow photogenic nature characteristic to the area has made it an intriguing place for urbanists, photographers, wanderers and so on, and in a way the area can be seen as a symbol of a transitional period. Long-term uncertainty has created a complex case of urban history that continues to unfold.

Chapter overview

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the history of the site focusing on the significance of industrial development in Tallinn and the social conditions characteristic of the area. More detail is given about the scale and layout of the neighbourhood. The idea of redevelopment is explored in the context of the broader coastal regeneration of Tallinn. Kopli Lines stands out from the other two case studies in focus here due to its location further away from the city centre, but some similar challenges characterise the sites – including the idea of luxury that emerges when redevelopment of coastal areas is discussed in post-socialist conditions. The redevelopment ambitions of Kopli Lines are also viewed in the context of broader gentrification processes that have characterised timber housing areas in Tallinn since the mid-2000s, especially the Kalamaja neighbourhood. Thereafter a brief overview of past academic and non-academic texts focusing on the post-1991 period in the area is provided. This is followed by an overview of redevelopment visions, including the development of the detailed spatial plan setting the parameters for the new development, the city's search for a developer and eventually the actual development process. The final section of the chapter focuses on Kopli Lines as an everyday ordinary lived-space. This includes site

visit documentation as well as social media representations of the area and provides an alternative narrative.

Approach to the case study:



HISTORY URBAN CONTEXT PAST RESEARCH	MEDIA NARRATIVE DETAILED PLAN AND VISION DEVELOPMENT OF THE HERITAGE SITE	KOPLI LINES AN EVERYDAY, ORDINARY, SOCIAL SPACE

6.2 The history and the urban context of Kopli Lines

Figure 285: Bird's-eye view towards the Kopli peninsula and the ship factory. The workers' housing is in the bottom right corner. 13th February 1936 (Source: Artus, 1936: online)

The complex history of this site in focus here extends over a century and includes a number of shifts in powers and social and political conditions. The gentrification process that characterises neighbourhoods surrounding the city core has only recently reached the Kopli area. Here, I will give a relatively condensed overview of the development of the neighbourhood and its decline in recent decades in order to provide context for the more detailed analyses of the post-socialist development process and urban ethnographic exploration of the neighbourhood.

The history and evolution of Kopli Lines have been covered in a number of publications and development documents. The most recent, an excellently detailed book *Kopli Sonata: The Russo-Baltic Shipyard* (2017) by Oliver Orro, Robert Treufeldt and Maris Mändel gives an overview of the industrial development on Kopli peninsula and includes a rich selection of illustrations and archival materials, including building plans and historic photos (some of which are also used here). The publication gives a well-studied overview of the reasons behind the complexity and attraction of the neighbourhood and situates the story in the wider development of Kopli and the evolution of Estonian planning. The history of the area has also been covered by, amongst others, architecture historians Karin Hallas-Murula, Dmitri Bruns and Leo Gens as well as Robert Nerman in two books *AS Kopli Kinnisvarad – Vana Tallinn. III (VII)* (1993) and *Kopli. Miljöö, olustik, kultuurilugu* (2002). A monograph about the planner of the area Aleksandr Dmitrjev was written by Russian art historian Boris Kirikov (cited in Orro, 2017). Additionally, the history of the area is uncovered in a number of planning documents such as the description of the Kopli Lines detailed spatial plan (RAAM Arhitektid, 2003). The complex history of the site creates a frame for its present condition characterised by long-term development challenges. The brief history of the area explained below is followed by insight into literature covering the period post-1991 as well as developments in understanding the heritage significance of the site.

The Evolution of Kopli Lines between 1912 and 1991

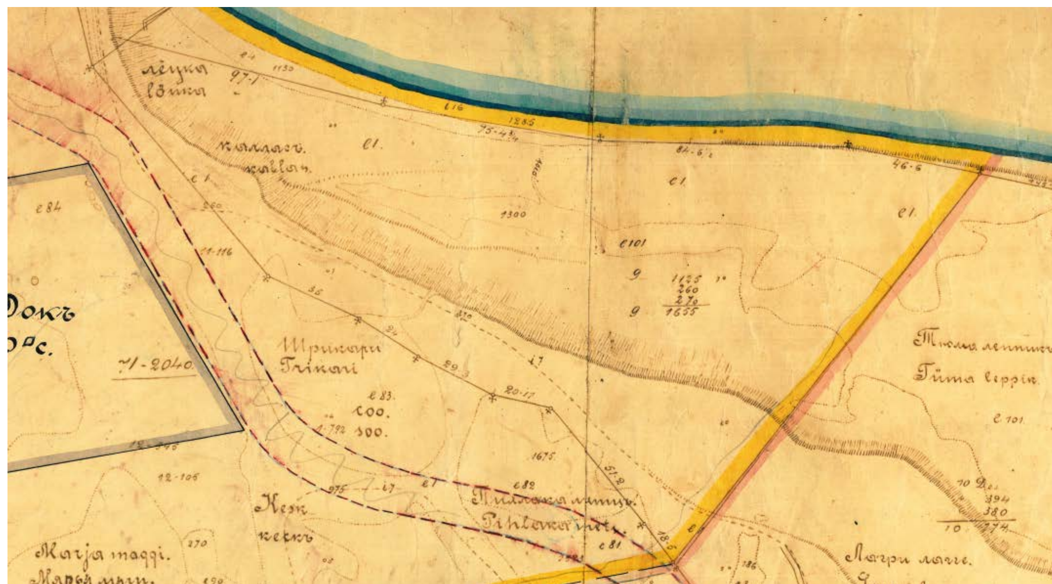
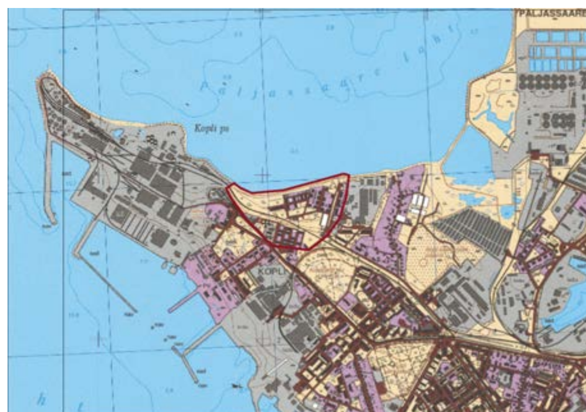


Figure 286: Kopli Lines area as a development site in 1912 (Source: Tallinn City Archive: online)

The area became known as Kopli Lines in the 1950s; from October 1951 the streets were named 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th line like they are known today. (Orro, 2017) (see Figure 300). By that time the neighbourhood and the peninsula more broadly had gone through a number of ups and downs since its development in the 1910s.

The construction of workers' housing between 1914 and 1916 took place during an industrial boom in Tallinn during the early twentieth century (Mäeorg, 2017). Until the beginning of the twentieth century Kopli peninsula was one of the most popular recreational destinations for Tallinners. The landscape of Kopli was significantly more diverse than it is now, with forests and small hills. The industrialisation process has had a significant and lasting effect on the natural landscape (see the site before development started in Figure 286). Before the industrial boom that shaped the urban landscape of Tallinn in the early 1900s, Kopli peninsula was seen as a landscape distinctly separate from urban Tallinn (Orro, 2017).



Figures 287-289: The site highlighted on historic maps in 1015, 1926, 2005 (Source: Republic of Estonia Land Board: online)

More significant changes in the milieu of the area took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the Baltic Cotton Factory was built on Sitsimäe – another sub-district of Põhja-Tallinn. This also included workers' housing. Between 1912 and 1916 the Russo-Baltic ship factory and Bekkeri ship factory were built together with workers' housing. The housing development in focus here consisted of 66 buildings with about 1,200 apartments, in addition to which there were a hospital, sauna, shops, post office, cinema, community centre, church, bakery and so on (Mäeorg, cited in Karro-Kalberg, 2020). The Russian-Baltic ship factory built in the Kopli area employed 7,500 workers in 1915 and it has been estimated that at least 6,000 of them lived in the area now known as Kopli Lines during the peak industrial development (Orro, 2017, Mäeorg, 2017).

The historic maps (Figures 287-289) demonstrate the morphological development of the area between 1895 and 2020. The first maps demonstrate an undeveloped natural landscape with railway lines predicting future industrial development. The second map from the period of the first Estonian independence demonstrates extensive industrial structures and a dense housing area. The post-Soviet condition demonstrated in the third map highlights the decline of the neighbourhood with a number of buildings already demolished.

The original plan for the industrial complex and connected housing was designed by architect **Aleksandr Dmitrjev** between 1913 and 1916. Buildings on Kopli Lines were built following premade building plans and these were grouped based on types. Initially, the buildings were designed as temporary, but good quality timber walls turned out to be longer lasting than many buildings that had been built after WWII (Orro, 2017, Mäeorg, 2017) (see Figures 290-291 demonstrating the construction process). The original layout of the newly developed neighbourhood can be seen on Figure 292.

Figures 290–291: The construction of Russo-Baltic ship factory housing estate 1912–1916 (Source: The collection of Estonian Maritime Museum, 1912–1916)

Figure 292: The layout of the original neighbourhood demonstrates a dense built environment with some public uses that include a cinema, sauna and a bread factory (Source: [adapted from] Tallinn City Archive: online).

The neighbourhood only had a short period of stability after completion and its history is characterised by sharp ups and downs. The situation changed completely only a year after the buildings were completed when the goods from the factory were evacuated to Russia and the majority of workers left. During the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920) the majority of the buildings in Kopli remained half empty or were destroyed, and production facilities were used as warehouses and medical spaces. During a typhus epidemic at the end of 1919 and the beginning of the 1920s five barracks on the 5th line were used as hospitals. Up to 1,500 people caught the illness and several hundred of those died (Nerman, 1993). Figure 293 demonstrates a dense neighbourhood structure.

Figure 293: The military on Kopli Lines (Source: Ajapaik: online)

The downfall of the ship factory continued in the 1920s and the majority of the buildings on Kopli Lines were not viewed as fit for living, with a quarter of the flats empty. The residents of Kopli almost completely changed (Mäeorg, 2017). According to the historian Robert Nerman (1995) many Russian intellectuals, officials and economists who fled the Soviet repressions found a place in Kopli. This included scholars, former government officials and members of the military. Another larger group was Estonians returning from Russia who had lost all their property and could not afford to live anywhere else. At the beginning of 1920s the population of the area was about 1,500 and by 1924 the population had grown to 4229 and the area started to slowly improve (Mäeorg, 2017).

The period of Estonia's first independence proved to be when the area thrived the most. Kopli Realestate Government (*Kopli Kinnsivaravalitus*, in 1936 reformulated as Ltd Kopli Realestate) that was formed in 1933 started to renovate the buildings and also build parks and roads, and support education and community activities.

Figure 294: The development of green space in the 1930s (Source: Nerman)

In a few years, the Kopli area became one of the most valued residential areas for workers in Tallinn (Paadam, 2013). The Kopli Realestate Government was the biggest real-estate company between the wars: it owned 310 buildings in Kopli, of which 144 were residential. It was able to raise the quality of life in the area and also contributed to community development. During the late **1930s, the Kopli planning document** was created. In 1934 a landscaping programme started (until then the land had been bare) (RAAM Arhitektid, 2009) (Figure 294). The reputation of the area was also enhanced by the city's integration policy, which brought a university branch to the area. The development of the area depended largely on the Tallinn Technical School and later Tallinn University of Technology relocating to the area. This is why the housing district that was next to the campus is known even today as The Professors' Village.

A new decline of Kopli Lines started with WWII and with the beginning of Soviet occupation in 1940. Large areas in the district were given to the military and half-military organisations. A major reason for the area's downfall was that investments made into renovating older housing were non-existent during the Soviet period (Karjus, 2015). The Kopli Lines neighbourhood became known as more and more criminal. Well-maintained green spaces disappeared by the 1980s

and the inhabitants became more and more transitory. The gradual deterioration of the neighbourhood continued into the period of regained independence (Figure 294).

Figure 294: A residential building in Kopli in February 1989 (Source: Truuväärt, 1989: online)

From deterioration to gentrification post-1991

Figure 295: A view of a residential building and the sea on Kopli Lines in 1998 (Source: Mikkin, 1998: online)

By the 1990s, when Estonia regained its independence, the area was seriously declining (Figures 296 and 297), but there was also a lack of faith in change. Many large companies on the peninsula could not adapt to the change of regime. The people living in the Lines were not given the opportunity to become owners of their flats as there was a wider understanding that they would eventually be demolished. By 2006 there were 300 official residents in the Kopli Lines, supplemented by an unknown number of illegal residents (Eesti Päevaleht, 2006). By May 2013 this number had decreased to 18 families (Mäeorg, 2017a), the final official residents left the area in 2015.

Figure 296: A view of Line 2 in Kopli Lines in 1996 (Source: Langovits, 1996: online)

Figure 297: Demolition of a building in Kopli lines in 2000 (Source: The collection of the Estonian Museum of Architecture, 2000: online)

Some of the historical connections remained, however. There are a number of harbours in Kopli: Bekkeri, Meeruse, Miini-, Paljassaare and Russian-Baltic. There is the Business department of Tallinn University of Technology, Tallinn Art College, Kopli College and Kopli and Pelguranna libraries, and the sea base of the border control (Nerman, 2002).

Future plans for the area envisioned a development with approximately 500 new flats, some of which would include partial reuse of existing built fabric. The detailed spatial plan states a requirement to preserve the street network with cobbled roads and low, dense housing (Mäeorg, 2017a). Orro has noted how the redevelopment process characteristic to residential areas surrounding the core of Tallinn is slowly reaching Kopli. He references developments in Noblessner Quarter, restoration of Arsenali factory as key shapers of the process (Orro, 2017). The post-socialist development process has been extensively covered in the media, but only limited academic coverage is available. Despite visions of a fast gentrification process and a sense of potential the area reflected, the 1990s and 2000s are characterised by deterioration and need-based demolition of buildings in the area. The images and schematic maps below give some insight into the loss and redevelopment of the built fabric between 2005 and 2020 (see Figures 298-299).

Figure 298: A bird's-eye view of Kopli Lines in 2017 (Source: Putting, 2017: online)

Figure 299: A view of Kopli Lines in the middle of the reconstruction process in 2019 (Source: Putting, 2019: online)

Spatial analyses of the area

The evolution and present day landscape characteristic to Kopli Lines can be divided into three distinct sections visually and based on typology (see Figure 300).

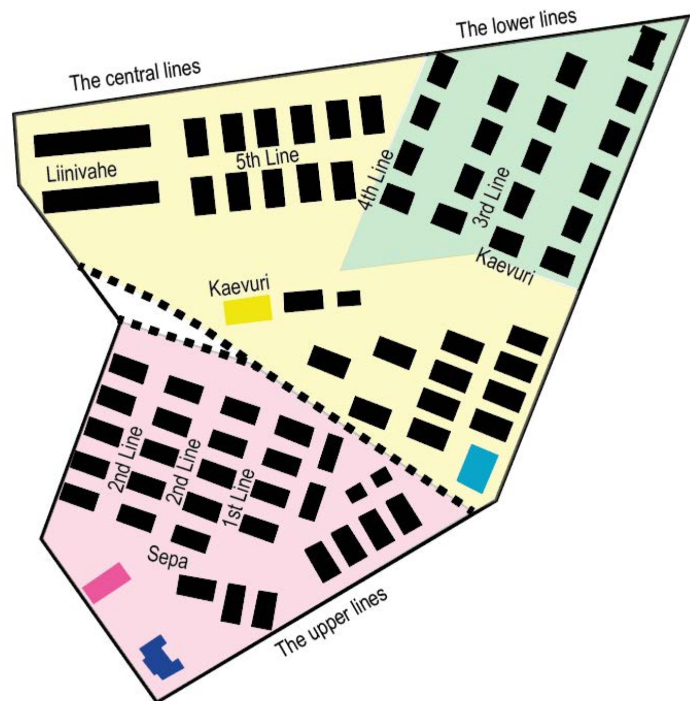
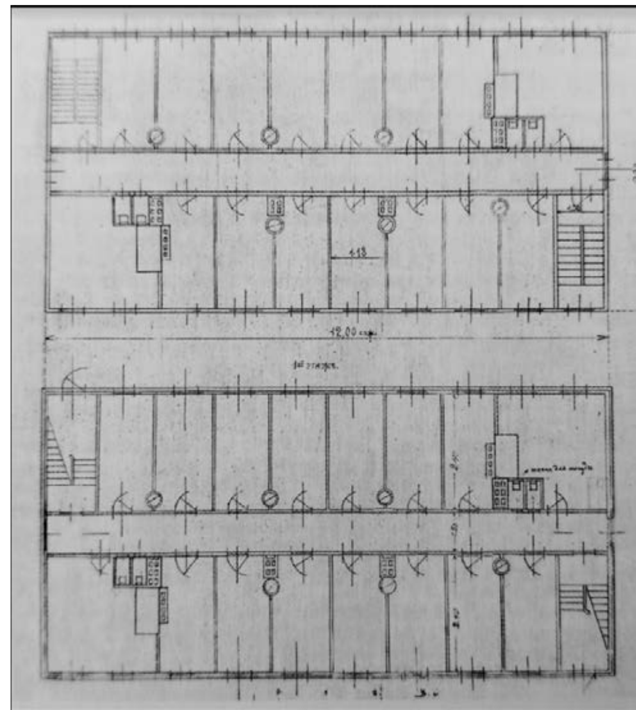


Figure 300: The density of the original neighbourhood and three distinct housing typologies in three areas referred to here as the upper lines, the lower lines and the central lines. (Source: [based on] Republic of Estonia land Board historic maps: online)

The upper lines – so called 'long' buildings (Orro, 2017)

These were situated closest to Kopli Street and historically formed the face of the neighbourhood, as they continue to do today. Designed for manual labourers and consisted of 12-square-metre studio flats with shared toilet facilities, this was a typical modest workers' housing typology.



Figures 301-302: The housing typology on upper lines included small single person flats (Source: images retrieved from Orro, 2017)

Central stone staircases were added to some of these buildings during the 1930s (visible on Figure 303). Despite the simplest and most modest conditions, a

number of these buildings have been preserved and continue to provide glimpses into the lifestyle that the neighbourhood provided. These buildings formed a dense landscape with minimal outside space between them.

Figure 303: The upper lines on 25th October 2019 (Source: Kurik, 2019)

The central lines

It is thought to be likely that the first buildings completed in the area (1914) were barracks designated for single male workers. Both of these buildings included 70 dorm style studio apartments (Figures 304-306).

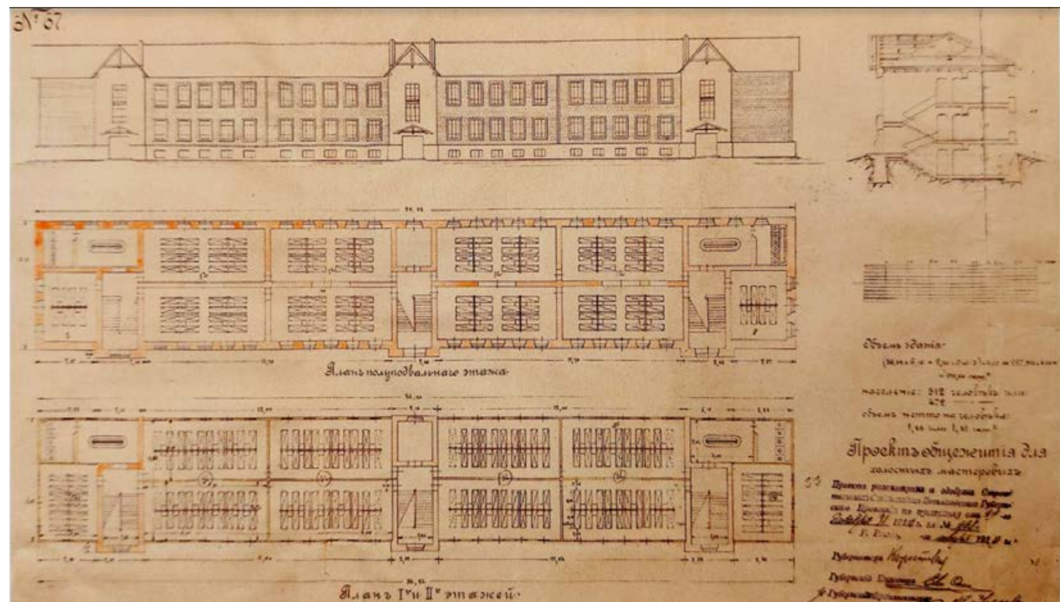


Figure 304: Buildings for labourers on 'central lines'. (Source: images retrieved from Orro, 2017)

Figure 305–306: The construction of residential buildings in progress on central lines (Source: The collection of the Estonian Maritime Museum: online)

The smaller buildings were designated for labourers. The larger of those buildings included 32 apartments (approximately 15 square metres each) and the smaller

buildings included 20 studio apartments. Toilet facilities in those buildings were shared. All buildings had electricity, which at the time of construction was actually not widespread in Tallinn (Mäeorg, 2017a).

Buildings in this section of the lines have mostly disappeared; some have been lost in the fires, some have been demolished. One of the first long single workers' buildings remains, but it was damaged in a fire in 2019.

Figure 307: The central lines on 5th October 2013 (Source: Kurik, 2013)
Figure 308: The central lines on 23rd March 2017 (Source: Kurik, 2017)

The lower lines: so called 'square buildings'

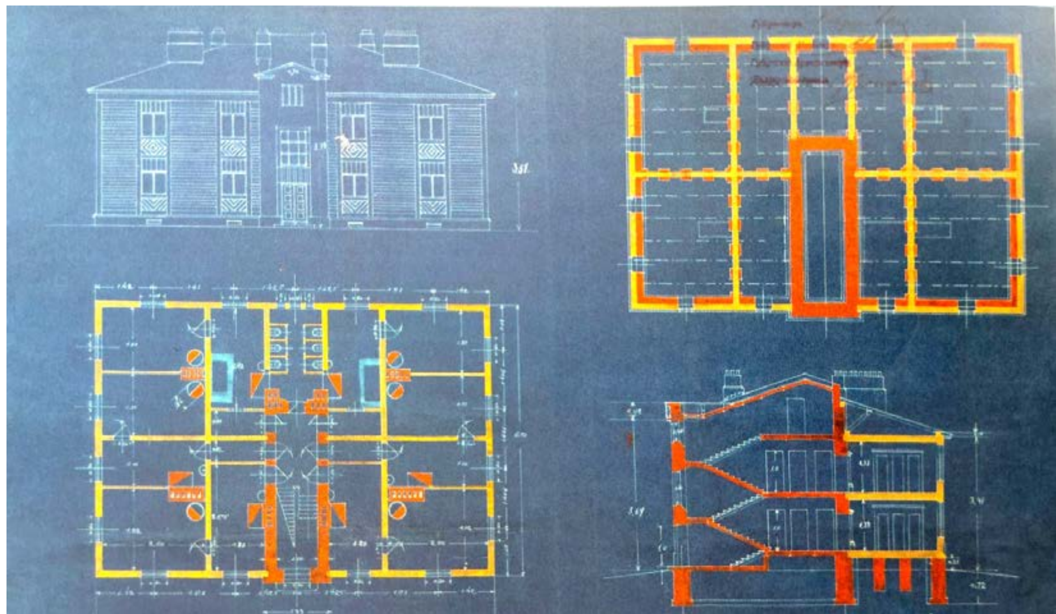


Figure 309: A building typology designated for specialised workers had slightly more luxurious amenities (Source: images retrieved from Orro, 2017)

These buildings were meant for more specialised workers and included approximately 35-square-metre apartments that consisted of a bedroom, kitchen and toilet (Mäerorg, 2017a). Each of those 2-storey wooden buildings included 12 flats (Figure 309). This design was also used elsewhere in Tallinn during the 1920s and 1930s – the type of building with a stone staircase became known as the Tallinn House (Orro, 2017). Central staircases characteristic to these buildings have been considered valuable to preserve and form a basis for present regeneration – there are some examples where these buildings have been restored or new buildings have been designed around the historic structure (Figures 310-312).

Figure 310: The construction of residential buildings on lower lines, 1910. First phase of housing that was most likely completed by 1914 (Source: Fotis, 1910: online)

Figure 311: A fire damaged building on lower lines on 28th August 2017 (Source: Kurik, 2017)
Figure 312: A reconstructed building on lower lines on 25th October 2019 (Source: Kurik, 2019)

These three typologies remain in some form in the redevelopment project and phased process. The same categorisation is also used to present site visit observations in this dissertation. An interesting and complex process of redevelopment has left the area partially derelict while new residents have moved in. This gradual process is seen as relevant for demonstrating temporality or urban processes, as well as the significance of the long-term indeterminacy of this site.

6.3 Kopli Lines as a heritage and a research object

Academic research focusing on Kopli Lines during the period of regained independence is relatively limited. There is a consensus in viewing the Kopli Lines area as a challenge that extends beyond the post-socialist years. As briefly mentioned, a number of books have been published that explore the narrative of the Russo-Baltic Ship Factory and the Bekkeri Factory, and the residential workers' housing is a significant part of this story. The most comprehensive of these publications is Oliver Orro, Robert Treufledt and Maris Mändel's book *Kopli Sonata: The Russo-Baltic Shipyard* (2017). Many historic texts provide a chronological overview of the industrial development and its impact on Kopli peninsula more broadly. Orro gives a detailed overview of the development of Kopli Lines and supports his research with archive images including plans, photos and maps. His is also one of the few more substantial publications that addresses the complex condition that characterised the Kopli Lines area since 1991. A more contemporary perspective is also available based on a number of critical articles in local culture and architecture media. Some of the key texts include Karin Paadam's 'Kopli Lines – our own or foreign downfall' (2005) and Telle Jürivete's and Juhan Hint's text outlining the development ambitions, "Another beginning on Kopli Lines (2016).

There is also significant scholarly interest, and a number of student projects provide insight into the state of the area. The complex nature of the site has made it a relevant case study for urban studies, planning and architecture students. A substantial example of this is the Estonian Academy of Arts 2012 Urban Studies project focusing on northern Tallinn that was formed into a book that includes a spatial analysis of the Kopli Lines area. The project explores Kopli Lines, but also the wider northern Tallinn area as a space of great potential, but also as an everyday lived space. The students look at the space through the idea of a myth of a sleeping beauty and the socio-spatial formation of the site, and give a clear

overview of the state of affairs in 2012 (Elme, Kontus, Neumann and Ratnieks, 2012).

The area's history and condition has also been covered in a number of survey documents as well as the detailed plan and master plan documents. For example a thorough overview of the buildings' technical condition was compiled by Ehitusekspertiisibüroo in 2001 and by Tiina Linna and Andres Sildre in 2005 (Linna and Sildre, 2005). The supporting documents for the detailed spatial plan include a thorough explanation of the condition and future ambition for the area and were put together by RAAM Architects in 2006 (Raam Architects, 2006). The document highlights key spatial values of the area and what needs to be preserved.

Kopli Liinid as a heritage area

Similarly to the previous case study the stalled development of the site is surrounded by questions about the heritage value of the area parallel to discussions about potential complete demolition. The first master plan of Tallinn was launched in 2000 and this included a policy for milieu-valued areas (conservation areas).

This process has been explored based on the example of the Kopli area by Kadri Semm in 'Toward meaning of milieu for neighbourhood regeneration: discussions on the institutional designation of milieu-valued areas in Tallinn, Estonia' (Semm 2012). In addition to arguing for the need for an experiential approach, she is critical of the process and writes: *'The problematic side of this milieu discourse is that it appears that the heritage-oriented milieu discourse participates in the neighbourhood regeneration process, but it is not bound with the actual routine, everyday environment. In this milieu strategy, the dispossessed groups are excluded and only some selected designed (sic) areas in the urban neighbourhoods are presented as valuable urban milieus'* (Semm, 2012: 493).

The Kopli Lines milieu-valued area/conservation area was first proposed in 2005 (Askur, 2005) (Figure 313). A significant stakeholder in this was the Professor's Village Neighbourhood association, which was focused on creating a historic, safe and friendly place for living in Kopli more broadly. While not directly involved with Kopli Lines, the neighbourhood association had a voice to represent the residents of the area on the government level.[30] The detailed spatial plan developed for the Kopli Lines area that was approved in 2008 proposed the conservation area designation more formally and highlighted the key heritage values of the area. While it is to be considered whether the housing specifically has heritage value, the National Heritage Board sees the main value of the area in its totality. A heritage specialist in the board at the time, Oliver Orro argued that a number of lenient decisions have been made over the years and it's not a question about what *should* be preserved, but more about what *can* be preserved (Jaagant, 2010). Kopli Lines was formally given a designated conservation area status in 2014 together with finalising the detailed plan.

It is relevant to explore what is considered valuable to preserve and what the process of arriving at the designation was like. As Semm (2016) has pointed out, the milieu discourse seems to support a certain type of placemaking and the preservation of certain lifestyles.

[30] The Professors' Village Neighbourhood Association: http://www.professoritekyla.info/cmtls/node/2

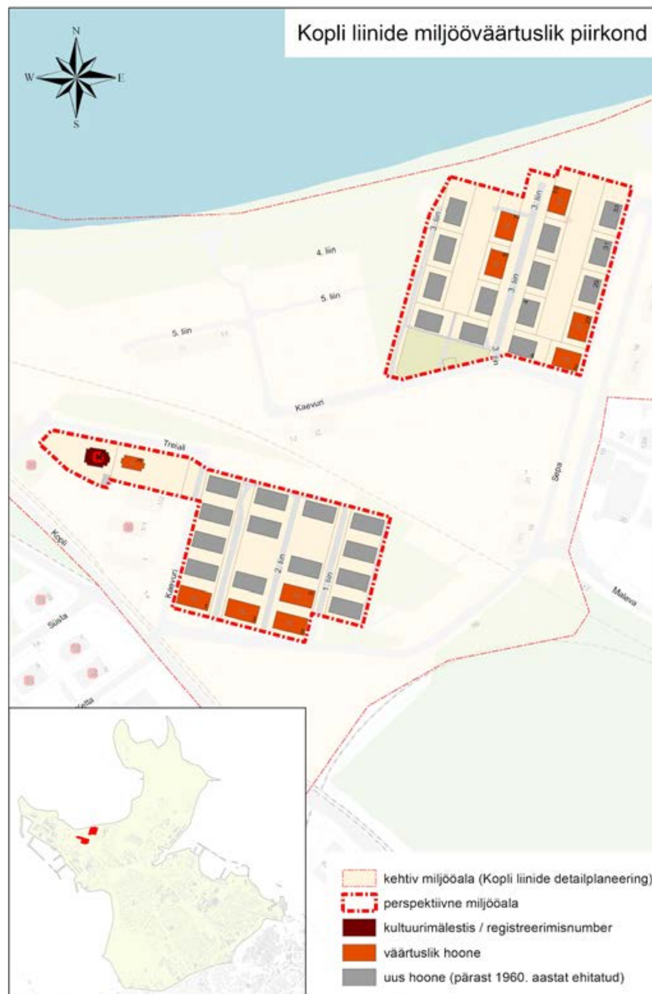


Figure 313: Assessment of the heritage value of the Kopli lines neighbourhood. The milieu valued area is highlighted in yellow, areas with preservation potential with a red line. Valuable buildings in orange (Source: Tallinn city Government: online)

During the development of the detailed spatial plan and approval process, the future development vision of the area was relatively unclear and a significant number of buildings that have now been demolished remained and were seen as valuable from the heritage standpoint. The map above highlights the level of significance assigned to specific buildings, with only one in the area seen as a culturally significant heritage building – the former police station that was seriously damaged in a fire in 2013. Other key buildings are seen to have significance from the perspective of preserving the milieu of the area. The buildings highlighted in yellow are stated to be significant but also in a bad condition – by 2021 these have all been lost.

The northern Tallinn masterplan continues to be in process of development and approval in 2021 when this study concludes, but available materials include information about the heritage value of the Kopli Lines area. The masterplan

proposes a reduction of the boundaries of the milieu valued area (conservation area) as the majority of historic built structures have been lost and the development plans envision a complete landscape transformation. Heritage significance is preserved in the area bordered by Sepa Liinivahe and the 4th Line and upper area bordered by Sepa, Kaevuri, Treiali and the 1st Line. The master plan includes preserving the quarter structure and restoring some historic buildings and sets limitations for new buildings in the area. Buildings highlighted in grey on the map are new – some of them replicas of historic buildings (Põhja-Tallinna üldplaneering, working document).

In the upper section, it is seen as relevant to preserve street fronts and design new buildings in similar forms to the historic ones. Based on the masterplan, it is expected that buildings will be restored in detail as copies. Characteristic details include central brick hallways. The new buildings follow a set of restrictions: the contemporary design needs to reflect the volumes of original buildings. It is important that the buildings' footprints are the same as historic buildings (Tallinna Linnaplaneerimise Amet, 2020).

Debates around the significance of the area's heritage mostly focus on building typologies and correlate with the increased understanding of the significance of timber architecture in Tallinn's development. New visions for the area take into account the historic density, materials and built forms. However, it can be seen as somewhat controversial that while formally the redevelopment process preserves and celebrates the heritage of the neighbourhood, and the built forms, the price of this has been the complete displacement of the original residents. This raises the question significant throughout this dissertation about the value assigned to coastal locations in the regeneration and gentrification process.

6.4 Media narratives and urban visions: stagnation and development as represented

The complex history of the Kopli Lines neighbourhood has been shaped by shifts in regime and ownership as well as a variety of approaches to development and stagnation. The city of Tallinn became the owner of the area after the end of the Soviet Union with a plan to redevelop the area into a 'family-friendly', 'high-end' seaside residential area. For more than two decades this plan was either on hold or left to a future developer. The city held the ownership of Kopli Lines from 1991–2015 and oversaw a complete decline of the area. The decline occurred alongside vision competitions and the development of an architectural solution for revitalising the area. Observing the story of development that unfolds in press releases and articles as well as planning documents gives an opportunity to describe contradictions between visions and the everyday reality that have been characteristic to the Kopli Lines area for a number of years, as well as an emerging understanding of the challenges and values of the neighbourhood. Telle Jürivete and Juhan Hint have referred to the process that has taken place in the area in recent decades as *'The saga of Kopli Lines'*, characterised by repeated attempts at a new beginning mixed with an array of obstacles (Jürivete and Hint, 2016).

As described when Estonia regained independence in 1991 the typical approach to privatisation did not reach Kopli Lines. The decision to place the historic workers' housing into city ownership was partially connected to the already poor condition of the buildings and a visible need for future redevelopment. An assumption of the trickle-down effect of investment is evident when observing the process.

Planned demolition has taken place in the area, but the majority of the loss of built fabric has been caused by fires in vacant buildings deteriorating beyond repair.

More substantial demolition work started in 2000 when the mayor at the time, Jüri Mõis, symbolically took part in an action to demonstrate a potential beginning of the regeneration process (Äripäev, 2000b). At the turn of the century, the city stated that all 50 buildings were designated for demolition, however, the perspectives changed quite rapidly within a couple of years. This uncertainty between statements by politicians and the actual non-development limited faith in change. Despite the demolition plans in the early 2000s the buildings continued to fill with informal tenants and life continued as usual for more than a decade due to the lack of a defined vision (Seaver, 2001b). Despite the residents' wishes and the neighbourhood association's repeated requests, the city of Tallinn did not consider giving the apartments into private ownership of the residents, resulting in the slow decline of the building stock (Kalvet, 2004). However, while the condition of the buildings in the early 2000s was seen as beyond saving, the heritage significance of the neighbourhood became increasingly relevant in debates about the future of the area. In 2006 the vice mayor of Tallinn Taavi Aas presented a vision that saw most of Kopli Lines preserved in its original form, making references to a proposal from EUROPAN 5 produced in 1998 (Aas, 2006).

The search for a developer started in 2004. Plans for complete demolition had by then changed into the idea of preserving 19 buildings.

In what follows, an overview is given of the process that predated the development in process in 2021. This includes an overview of visional proposals, the development of the detailed spatial plan for the area as well as a final architectural solution for a section of the area. The main interest here is the language of representation.

Europan 5 (1998–99). New housing landscapes: travel and proximity

One of the first attempts to reimagine the future of Kopli Lines more comprehensively was an international architectural competition EUROPAN 5 that took place in 1998 and picked Kopli Lines as one of its sites. The focus of this competition was on linking abandoned landscapes in Europe to transportation networks. The organisers of EUROPAN viewed the idea of a city as a whole as being in crisis and claimed that it was necessary to find ways to mend parts of fragmented cities. This was the first time a site from Estonia was included in the competition. Initially, 15 plots were suggested as potential case studies. The final choice was complicated by the fact that the plot had to belong to the city as stated in the competition conditions and Kopli Lines was one of the few suitable sites. A new NGO was created next to the Estonian Architects Association (EUROPAN-Eesti). It was hoped that developing this area would start a chain reaction that would trigger development in other areas in Kopli. The use of Kopli as a relevant case study shows the city's ambition to create change in the area already prior to the change of centuries.

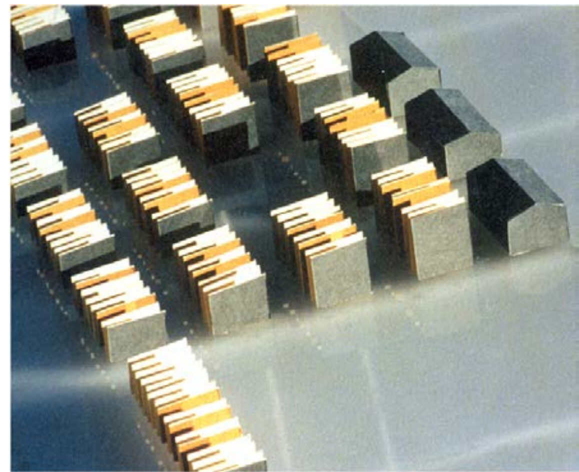


Figure 314–315: Visualisations supporting the EUROPAN proposal 'Good heavens, clear skies' (Source: Hakala, Sarlin, Sopanen, Vuorio, 1998: online)

28 proposals were submitted to the competition. The winning work was titled ***'Good heavens, clear skies'*** (Figures 314-315) and was put together by the young Finnish architects Olli Sarlin, Marja Sopanen, Tuomas Hakala and Katariina Vuorio. The winning proposal was not radical, rather it took the old structure of the neighbourhood, preserved some buildings and planned to replace old buildings with new ones in stages. The architects envisioned that the milieu of the area should be preserved by developing low-density housing. The buildings were a kind of terraced house with apartments on several levels. The winning project

emphasised preservation of the urban structure, recreation of the beach, and the creation of connections for trams and cars. It was envisioned that the area should be more connected to the nearby university building (RAAM Arhitektid, 2009). This low intervention proposal highlights that some value was seen in the historic milieu of the area.

The competition winners were commissioned to develop the vision and put together a number of follow-up proposals (Figure 316). A further proposal was produced by QP architects in 2014-2015 (Figures 317-319) The project has had a surprisingly lasting impact and was a basis for development proposals also almost two decades later in 2016. The idea of low-density housing as suitable for the area has been sustained.

Figure 316: Follow-up to the original EUROPAN proposal in 2006 (Source: Hakala, Sarlin, Sopanen, Vuorio, 2006: online)

Figures 317–319 :Visuals supporting the redevelopment proposal by QP Architects in 2014–2015 (Source: Laigu and Georgijeva, 2014–2015: online)

The city of Tallinn's search for a developer

While discussions about the future of the area after the EUROPAN competition continued, many obstacles were faced during the development process. The language represented in the media that was used by city government officials is clear in describing the future user of the area. Characteristically of early post-Soviet planning conditions, the visions were loose but also drastically different from the existing condition. The future of the Kopli Lines area was often referred to using terms such as *'high-end'*, *'elite'* (Peensoo, 2004, Eesti Ekspress, 2006), *'luxury'* (e.g. *'The homeless on Kopli lines will be replaced with luxury*

with views to the sea', Kinnisvarauudised.ee, 2008: online). The idea of luxury in connection with the development proposals is closely connected to the site's coastal location – the apartments in the new development are advertised with *'views to the sea'* as one of their key selling points. The redeveloped area is seen as suitable for *'young families'* (Askur, 2005, Aasma, 2015).

Six years after the EUROPAN competition, in 2004, a more clearly worded plan emerged to redevelop Kopli Lines into a residential area with a historic milieu but a renewed sense of identity. All options were on the table at first – selling the land to a developer, giving the residents a chance to become owners of their apartments and the city finding a development partner. Articles from 2004 highlight the fact that 450 people (207 families) potentially needed a new home, and 21 buildings were scheduled for demolition. The uncertainty characteristic of the area had already created a situation where the residents of the area were in many cases transitory and many buildings were semi-vacant or derelict, however, many residents expressed opposition to moving (Peensoo, 2004).

Development rights on offer in 2006

The city of Tallinn made a first attempt to offer the development rights to a potential developer in 2006. The developer was also expected to develop the infrastructure and find new housing for the inhabitants. According to the plan the developer could build 50,000 square metres of new residential area and reconstruct 20,000 square metres of old. This meant developing up to 1,000 rooms in Kopli Lines (Sander, 2006). However, the developer would have faced a challenge to come to an agreement with 200 families still living on the Lines. Media representations of this attempt portray the scepticism of residents living in the area. An interesting insight is given by an article documenting the opinions of local residents. A resident who has lived on Kopli lines all his life is quoted as saying: *'They have been demolishing here since 1980'.* Another resident, who has lived on the lines for 65 years is cited as saying that her family has lived in these houses for 5 generations: *'We don't want to leave. They have been discussing that*

for 30 years, but there are no results'. A resident who has lived on the lines for 35 years: *'I would not want to leave permanently. An only option is temporary replacement housing. I do not understand why the city prefers wealthy people's interest before the local inhabitants' (*Sander, 2006: online).

The sale was initially successful and the development rights were bought in October 2006 by Endel Siff for 201 million Estonian Kroons. However, challenges emerged and the developer stepped back in 2007, refusing to sign the contract because of restrictive conditions (Kaljuvee, 2006a; Soe, 2006).

Finding a solution for how to approach the existing residents and their futures has been one of the central challenges in the regeneration process. In this case the interested developer agreed to secure new housing for existing residents and move the residents out (Soe, 2006). In a twist of events, however, the developer turned to court against the city after winning the competition due to limitations and restrictive conditions that were specifically connected to the issue of the existing residents (Askur, 2006). By early 2007 the first attempt to find a developer was considered a failure and the future of the area remained unclear (Püüa, 2007).

The detailed spatial plan approval process in 2008

The detailed spatial plan for the area is based on the EUROPAN 5 competition despite the fact that a significant period had passed since the competition. The aim of detailed spatial plans is to provide limitations for the developer, including plot sizes, building heights and so on. RAAM architects were commissioned to develop the detailed plan and continue developing the winning EUROPAN 5 work from 1998. The architects started the process in 2003 and it was completed in 2008 and approved in 2009.

The detailed planning process demonstrates changing attitudes to the area's heritage. The plan envisions that historically relevant buildings on the site need to

be restored and all the stone set roads need to be preserved. The rest of the building stock would, according to the plan, mostly be demolished, but new buildings will have to follow the historic street structure and appearance of the original buildings. The area of 23.13 ha will mostly be residential and, according to the detailed plan, there should be 728 flats in total. The area will also have a centre for the elderly, a kindergarten, a cafe, green spaces, and business, service and office spaces (Ehitusinfo, 2009). The detailed spatial plan includes 115 plots, out of which 9 are designated for housing and business, 4 for business, 6 for production, 63 for housing, 17 for transport and 13 for social land (general land) and 3 for social land (public buildings).

Some key limitations and principles set in the plan include the following:

- The older buildings in the area form a structurally unique whole and this should be used as a starting point for the development.
- A 50m-wide green promenade-corridor should follow the coastline and eventually connect the site with the centre of the city.
- A clear street front needs to emerge on Kopli Street (Raam Arhitektid, 2009).(Figures 320-322)

Figures 320–322: Visualisations accompanying the Kopli Lines detailed spatial plan approved in 2015 (Source: Tallinn City Council, 2015: online)

The city governments attempts to find a developer, continued, 2009–2015

After the approval of the detailed plan the city of Tallinn made repeated attempts to find a developer for the area. Failed auctions took place in 2009 and 2010. These were followed by an unsuccessful search for an international investor. The city contacted international embassies and made a number of attempts to find international developers (Leitmaa, 2010). The process was clearly impacted by the global economic crisis. By the end of 2012, 15 families formally continued to live in the neighbourhood (Delfi, 2012).

A plan for a two-phased auction emerged in late 2012 and a sale process was initiated in June 2013. An interested British developer emerged but backed down in March 2014 (Ärileht, 2014). This period of uncertain futures is reflected in a number of opinion pieces reflecting on the condition of the area. The deterioration

of the area was especially clearly summarised by sociologist Katrin Paadam in 2013. She wrote *'The Kopli Lines are, in the imagination of other residents of Tallinn, a dirty gathering place for antisocial people, where a 'normal person' cannot live. A relatively true picture, which is now difficult to reverse, as the decline of the lines, which began after WWIII, has continued to this day and has created a place of residence with almost all the classic features of a slum. With the exception of overcrowding, which was used as a justification for slum clearance in the UK in the 1960s for example ... A newer way of focusing on human flourishing which values differences and diverse lifestyles and ways of life will probably arrive late to Estonia to preserve the historically valuable, socially and physically complete living context..the Lines have not been an attractive environment for officials or real estate developers, the loss of the local contexts has been rather organic'* (Paadam, 2013: online).

A successful sale and development process: Fund Ehitus 2015

In a slowly recovering economy and after a decade of attempted sales, a successful deal was achieved between the city of Tallinn and a developer in 2015. A general contracting and construction company FUND Ehitus purchased Kopli Lines for 1,900,100 Euros in 2015 and started with a plan to redevelop the area over the course of 12 years with construction due to start in 2016.

According to the development conditions by the city government, the developer was expected to also develop the street network, lighting, traffic system, technical networks, sewage and develop public green spaces. The company's vision presents a complete living environment that is especially suitable for young families. The planned investment was 55–65 million Euros and the development was envisioned to take place in stages (Karjus, 2015) (Figure 323).

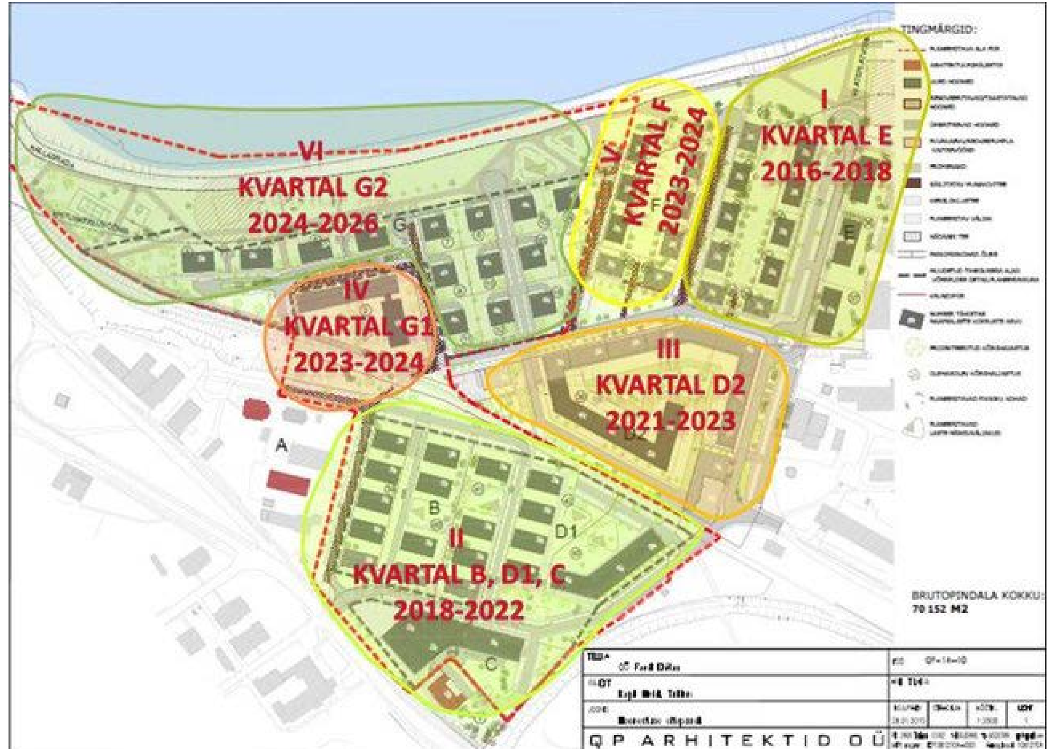


Figure 323: Development phases proposed by the developer Fund Ehitus (Source: QP Architects: online)

The developer commissioned an architectural vision for the area from Tallinn-based Apex Architects. It was initially reported that construction would start in 2016 but delays emerged and in 2016 the area stood still, further diminishing confidence in the process. No start to development activity was evident by the end of 2017 either and the developer struggled to explain the reasons for the stalling (Kreek, 2017). This stalled development created a further sense of the indeterminacy of the area. Development finally started in 2019 and now moves forward with significant speed.

2016–2017 A reconstruction vision by Apex architects

Figure 324: A vision for the second typology in the former specialised workers' housing area (Source: Fund Ehitus/Apex Architects: online)

Apex architects developed the vision in collaboration with Ekspertiis and Projekt OÜ, NÜÜD Architects and K-Projekt. Based on the approved detailed spatial plan as well as the conservation area limitations the architectural solution reflects the historic layout of the area. The architects state in their portfolio: *'Although both the ways of using urban space and the user have changed, the need and nature of modernist dwelling by favourable and fast construction methods for large scale industry still remains. As the user becomes a designer, we also consider it right to create new meanings and reflect the modern era in both architectural solutions and the re-use of valuable buildings'* (Apex Architects, 2016: online). Interestingly, the architects emphasise that the design solution is determined by the situation that characterises Tallinn in 2016 – this includes economic, bureaucratic, mechanical and social influences. The proposed solution included reconstructing a number of historic buildings as well as a proposal for a new typology (see Figure 324-326).

Figures 325–326: Reconstruction and rebuilding proposal of the historic streetscape by Apex Architects (Source: Apex Architects: online)

Images from Fund Ehitus website advertising the new development give an overview of proposed typologies that mix the old and the new:

1. A contemporary residential apartment building

2. Restored historic building or a replica with added loft apartments and terrace

3. A contemporary low-rise timber-clad apartment building

The visions include renewed fully public as well as gated outside spaces that follow the historic street structure but limit access to the areas between the buildings.

Figures 327–332: New housing typologies as represented on the developer's website (Source: Fund Ehitus: online)

The developer has taken a gradual approach to the development process and while demolition work is still taking place and a significant number of buildings in the area are in a derelict condition, many new residents have also moved into the area. The final vision preserves and restores or builds replicas of 13 original buildings.

Figure 333: An image from a real estate website advertising the development represents the gradual development process that is taking place on the site. Retrieved 19th June 2021 (Source: kv.ee: online)

The development is framed by a newly built public space designed by the landscape architect Kaie Kuldkepp.

The complex challenges surrounding the development process have taken place parallel to the changing economic environment, but also the shifting values assigned to the residential neighbourhoods surrounding central Tallinn. While the gentrification process of neighbourhoods closer to the city centre has been extensively documented, this has also taken place relatively recently. Giving value to low-rise timber architecture originally built for communities of workers is clearly a trend that has emerged since the millennium. Neighbourhoods that were characterised by poor conditions and small, usually poorly insulated wooden heated apartments have in recent decades become some of the most highly valued areas to live in Tallinn. A certain romanticism of living in a timber building next to a repurposed factory became especially apparent in Tallinn after the emergence of cultural and creative industries in the northern Tallinn area.

6.5 Kopli Lines as an everyday ordinary space

Media representations, student papers and publications share a fascination with the social history of the Kopli area and the Kopli Lines neighbourhood. This more ephemeral layer of urban life forms a relevant element to understanding the value and impact that the indeterminacy and uncertain futures of this site have embodied over the years. Interviews with local residents discussing the future of the area have been published frequently in mainstream media since the early 2000s. In addition, the residents' perspectives have been presented in exhibitions, documentary films and architectural photography. A narrative of development can be juxtaposed with a narrative of declining population and changing attitudes to the heritage and cultural value of the area. A number of articles were published between 2004 and 2015 representing long-term residents' opposition to moving and leaving the area, thus highlighting the relevance of sense of ownership and home that regeneration plans rarely prioritise.

Over the years many colourful descriptions have been published in local newspapers. Rando Tooming described the atmosphere in 2002: *'When driving around the Kopli lines, a rarely calm and bright atmosphere stands out. Only litter and mess catches the eye often. Some large and mottled, calf-sized dogs move around self-assured. Cats with kittens, clothes hanging to dry and young men with shaved heads and vest tops ... the city promises to demolish the neighbourhood'* (Tooming, 2002: online). The Lines have been referred to as '*idyllic'* (Kängsepp, 2004) and often the atmosphere is described using a distinctly Estonian expression that is difficult to translate: *'aguliromantika'* (a specific type of romantic atmosphere characteristic of historic working-class neighbourhoods) (Delfi, 2010).

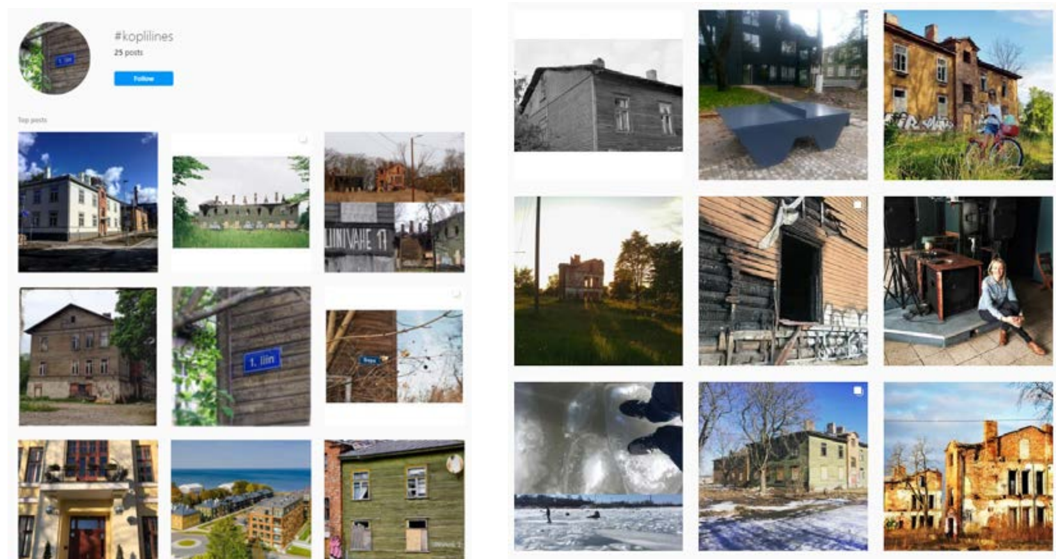
The area was lined with buildings that have recently burned to the ground, signs that only recently were people living in the area. The dramatic circumstances around the stalled development process have left their impact on residents of the

area as well as the wider community. The gradual development process creates an equally unique and strange atmosphere – completed buildings with new residents living in modern apartments are juxtaposed with ruins and large areas of vacant land.

The unique atmosphere of Kopli Lines has been depicted in exhibitions and even during a street festival in 2016 (Figures 334-336). Organised by the Sociology Department of Tallinn University, the festival brought a number of activities to the area and explored the significance of memory to the story of Kopli Lines. The festival was essentially a sort of a farewell event to the Kopli Lines area as it was known to the locals just before the development was about to start. Its programme demonstrated that the neighbourhood, while complex, has been part of the social history of Tallinn in significant ways for more than a century.

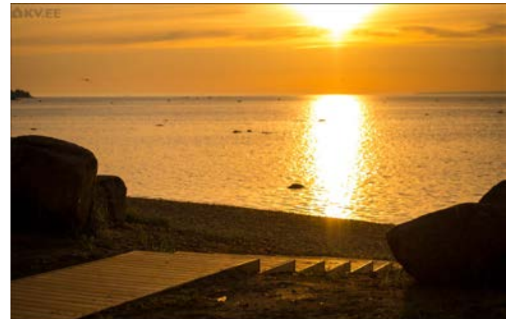
Figures 334–336: The Kopli Lines Festival. Images from the Professors' Village Neighbourhood Association Facebook page, 2016 (Source: Professors' Village Neighbourhood Association: online)

The unique character of the area further becomes evident from social media representation and the availability of an abundance of images in blog posts and media articles documenting the 'reality' and sharp contrasts characteristic of the area (Figures 337-338).



Figures 337–338: Instagram posts hashtagged Kopli lines retrieved on 26th December 2020 (Source: Instagram: online)

While the image of Kopli Lines as an area in a complicated deteriorated condition is slow to fade, another type of representation can be found in real estate ads and developer websites as well as in interior design magazines. Modern, yet traditional interiors and street views create an image of a historic and traditional neighbourhood.



Figures 339–343: Images from for sale and for rent real estate ads from kv.ee retrieved on 17th January 2021 (Source: kv.ee: online)

A view of the everyday ordinary spaces of Kopli Lines emerges from site visits made to the area between 2013 and 2021. The research project started during a period of uncertain futures between failed attempts to sell the Kopli Lines to a developer. This has given me an opportunity to bear witness to a significant shift in the area's development. The documentation enables us to witness the moving of final residents, demolition works and periods of stagnation as well as new residents moving into the partially redeveloped area in 2019. Visiting an area with complex social conditions comes with its own challenges. An urbanist with a camera and a notebook exploring a deprived area where people continue to live their everyday life stands out and is in the awkward position of an intruder. Generally, I would avoid visiting Kopli Lines on my own, not necessarily because I would consider it dangerous (even though there have been many criminal incidents, there has never been mention of an attack on or robbery of an explorer), but more because of the eerie atmosphere, especially pre-November 2015 when the final residents moved out. This means that each site visit was also an ability to reflect on what I had learned with a friend or family member I invited to wander around the area with me. My personal experience and documentation of the development and non-development in the Kopli Lines area is presented as a series of photographs from site visits with supporting notes highlighting key processes taking place in the area at the time of the site visit. The notes demonstrate a personal experience of getting to know the area as well as a number of assumptions I have made over the years.

When analysing this case study the site visit documentation is predominantly viewed on the basis of the three typological areas detected in the Lines.

The upper lines

I have decided to start by describing the upper lines and so-called 'long buildings' as this is the last development area and therefore the most untouched. The buildings on Sepa street are the most visible for people visiting the Kopli area and function as the first entrance to the area.

The central lines

The upper lines and middle section are separated by a rail line.

The lower lines

This area is the first zone to be almost completely redeveloped and includes contemporary apartment buildings, gated courtyards and a coastal promenade.

Even though the site visit photography is organised differently, the same categories are considered relevant as for the case of Linnahall. Kopli Lines are viewed as:

A landscape: Kopli Lines is viewed as a landscape in transition. Here questions of access, the proximity to the coast, viewing corridors are considered significant.

An architectural heritage site: Kopli Lines is viewed as a heritage site with some significant timber architecture, but also contemporary designs.

'A canvas': Here appropriations of space and social commentary visible in the indeterminate condition are the focus.

A lived space: The focus is on the site as a social and gathering space and a place that is in everyday use/disuse.

Documenting site visits includes additional complexities - during the start of the research project it is still a semi-functioning residential area. The first site visit took place on 10th October 2013 and highlights the remnants of a formerly vibrant workers housing estate. The neighbourhood is part of a wider Kopli area that is not affluent, but the level of dereliction that can be observed here is unique. Buildings appear either abandoned, with partially covered windows, fire damaged or to an extent still in use. A larger wasteland space has emerged in the centre of the site. Cars can be noticed parked in front of actively used buildings, an occasional resident is seen to move around buildings. Damage caused by frequent fires is evident - this includes buildings as well as trees and rubble that has not been cleaned. This leaves an eerie atmosphere in the air. (Appendix 11).The starting point of autoethnographic records takes place during an uncertain period of the neighbourhood when the city government of Tallinn continues to be on the hunt for a developer for the site. A sale of the site had been initiated in July 2013 (Ärileht, 2014) that had led to discussions about the future. At the end of 2012, 15 families were officially living in the area. (Delfi, 2012). A quote from 2013 by Karin Paadam (see page 322) highlights the poor condition of the site as well as its slow and gradual deterioration. This sense is supported by records below.

Figures 344–349 The area is characterised by a mix of buildings in a variety of conditions. Some are still partially in use and lived-in, some are semi-derelict and some are completely vacant or in a state of ruin. Buildings are surrounded by overgrown trees and grass (Source: Kurik, 2013)

Figures 350–351: The coastline next to the neighbourhood appears calm and undisturbed. These views, atypical for a city landscape, are part of the development potential of the site (Source: Kurik, 2013)

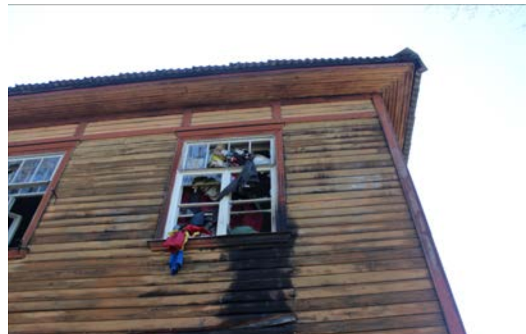
Figures 352–357: The difficult condition of the neighbourhood is evident from extensive signs of fires – there are a number of buildings that have been impacted by fires partially or completely burned down. The eerie atmosphere is amplified by burnt trees and the smell of recent fires in the air (Source: Kurik, 2013)

A break between site visits takes place due to study in America. By 2016 (27th April 2016) the area has found a new developer and final registered residents have left the area. Burnt down buildings have been largely cleaned, however, the atmosphere of dereliction continues to be evident in signs of half derelict buildings (many of these with signs of fire). It is clearly visible that the heritage layer of the area is becoming sparse. While formally there should be no residents in the area, documentation reveals signs of informal residents. While media records revealed limited protest against displacement, there are some signs of opposition that can be noticed on site.

Additionally urban explorers have started to wander the area more bravely. (Appendix 12) Similar trend of attraction to waste spaces can be observed as noted in the case of Linnahall.

Figures 358–365: The fires have continued in the area and this is especially evident on the lines closest to Kopli Street and furthest away from the coast. The buildings have been partially blocked from public access, but this has not stopped informal uses (Source: Kurik, 2016)

Figures 366–373: The burnt buildings visible in the site visit photography from 2013 have been cleared and this area appears somehow the clearest and best preserved despite the boarded-up windows. It looks like this building could be restored in its original form (Source: Kurik, 2016)



Figures 374–381: The specialised workers' housing on the lower lines is a mix of signs of life that has recently left, e.g. pieces of furniture, fabric, remains of gardens and signs of recent fires (Source: Kurik, 2016

Figure 382–383: There are some signs of protest by local residents against the development, including these notes on boarded up windows. The first one reads 'WHY? Majority of people living in this building worked and raised children. WHY DID YOU TAKE OUR ONLY HOME? AND WHAT DID YOU REPLACE IT WITH? A DUMP IN A SHELTER FOR DRUNKS'

The second comic strip reads: 'Where are we going to live now?', 'If we are lucky then in the homeless shelter, if not behind the bins' (Source: Kurik, 2016)

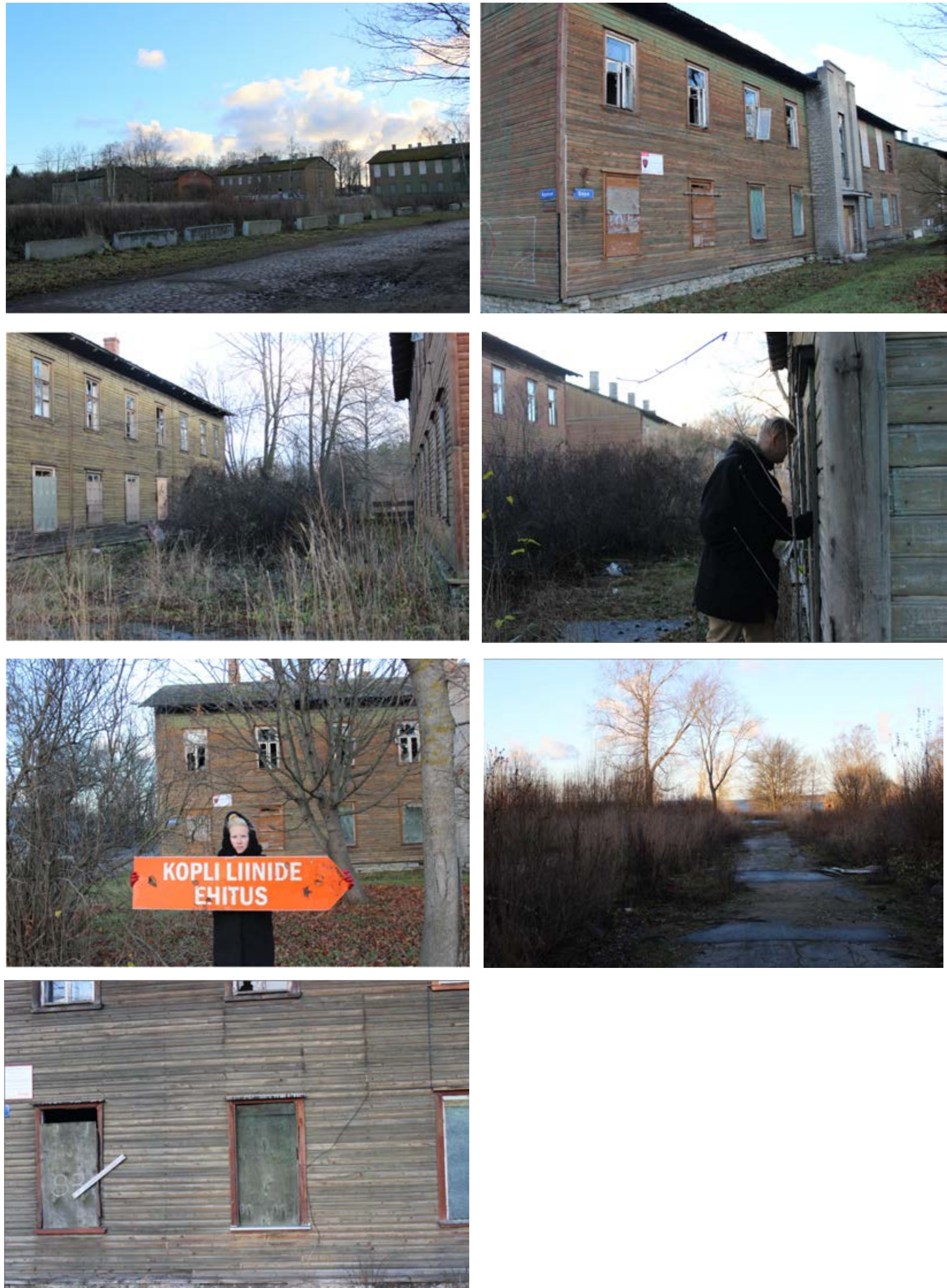
A year later (28th March 2017) demolition on upper lines was documented. This is preparation by the developer that has recently taken over the site from the city. Signs of works starting also include fences, and red signs highlighting that entry to buildings is forbidden. This transitory atmosphere between uses is also characterised by abandoned furniture and other signs of private life scattered across the site. (Appendix 13)

Figures 384–389: Demolition has started on the upper lines. The leftover timber has been gathered in huge piles and diggers are working. I note what seem to be recently installed PVC windows on one of the buildings (Source: Kurik, 2017)

Figures 390–395: Not much has changed on the central lines. The long building for single workers continues to be intact and accommodates some street art. It is surrounded by fruit trees giving an insight to the gardens that used to surround buildings on the lines (Source: Kurik, 2017)

Figures 396–401: The lower lines continue to be a mix of buildings that are relatively intact and buildings that will most likely be lost. The brick staircases visible on lower images will be preserved and later used as the core of new buildings that will replicate the historic structures (Source: Kurik, 2017)

The beginnings of the development process are documented in 2018 (24th November 2018). This means also that the site is no longer completely accessible. A unique gradual approach to development can be observed - with burned buildings and signs of deterioration visible and new buildings rising. (Appendix 14) This adds another layer to the temporal sense of this site. It is unsure whether this is part of the unique attraction of this coastal residential redevelopment?



Figures 402–408: The upper lines are designated to be the final stage of the redevelopment. In their present state they have been cleaned and left waiting for a new future. The ground floor windows of buildings have been boarded, but the upper floors remain exposed to the elements. It

is possible to identify the historic street structure based on paths between the buildings, but it is now predominantly a leftover landscape (Source: Kurik, 2018)

Figures 409–414: There are further signs of deterioration on the central lines, including broken windows on upper floors leaving the building exposed. It is also evident that there are still informal uses in the building (Source: Kurik, 2018)

Figures 415–420: Works have started on the lower lines – the first phase of redevelopment. Historic buildings that will be restored have been gutted and will be brought back into use with different floor plans. A new taller apartment building is also in its final stages of development (Source: Kurik, 2018)

Figures 421–427: The development site offers curious views of vacant buildings in various conditions. The photographic documentation shows the construction of the new street network around the historic building layout (Source: Kurik, 2018)

By 2019 (25th October 2019) construction works have progressed. It is possible to observe the pattern of new streets, pavements and green spaces, even gardens with children's play equipment are in place. Notes from site visits document mixed feelings following the newly improved, but also gated atmosphere in construction. While the development follows the heritage landscape and offers new public spaces, a significant amount of the land has become inaccessible to the general public. (Appendix 15). One of the best preserved buildings on site has been damaged by fire - this further highlights how disuse is a significant risk to heritage buildings.

Figures 428–431: There has been another fire and the long building that has stood relatively intact on the central lines has been significantly damaged (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Figures 432–437: The development process is still underway on the lower lines (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Figures 438–445: The first new residents have moved to the area. Strange views emerge – while new buildings appear contemporary and comfortable some historic timber structures continue to appear derelict. The green building visible here is an example of restoration where a central hallway has been preserved (Source: Kurik, 2019)

The contrasting development areas are further documented in 2020 (12th November 2020). I have noted: '*While the upper lines stand abandoned and the central lines where most of the buildings have been demolished appear as a wasteland or even an informal park, the lower lines are slowly developing into a functioning neighbourhood.'*

The images below demonstrate the ongoing development process (with some buildings covered and surrounded with scaffolding), more established greenspaces, landscaping and parked cars surrounding the new builds create an image of the future neighbourhood.

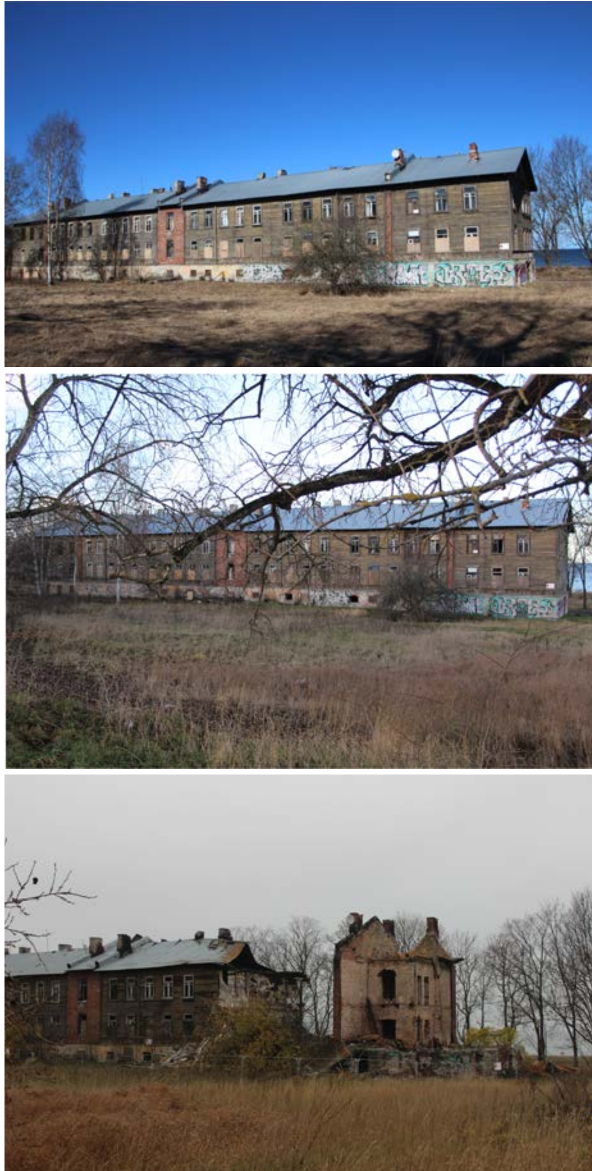
The final site visit concludes an observation that started in 2013 – when the future ownership relationships of the area were unsure and residents ranged from families who had lived in the area for decades to fluctuating informal residents, to 2020 when the ongoing development process fits into the wider acknowledgement of Kopli area as a desirable neighbourhood.

Figures 446–452: The buildings on the upper lines have now been barricaded with heras fencing. A door has been broken down on one of the buildings, leaving you thinking that someone still informally uses it as shelter (Source: Kurik, 2020)

Figures 453–456: The building that was recently damaged in a fire has also been surrounded by heras fencing. It has been reported that the developer will be restoring it in its original form. The lower lines operate as an informal greenspace (Source: Kurik, 2020)

Figures 457–463: The lower lines are starting to take the shape of a functioning neighbourhood. This is supported by nearly finished landscaping surrounding the buildings. Works are underway on some of the timber buildings that will be restored (Source: Kurik, 2020)

Figures 464–470: New buildings have emerged around preserved central staircases. While historically these buildings housed very small apartments for workers, the new ones, while looking very similar externally, have been redesigned to accomodate contemporary needs (Source: Kurik, 2020)



One of the first buildings completed in 1914 is also one of the last standing in a relatively untouched condition. Images from three consecutive years demonstrate initially an untouched condition that was impacted by a large fire in 2019 (Figures 471-473). As the building was designated for redevelopment the developer is obliged to rebuild the historic building. While originally part of a dense neighbourhood structure it now stands as a large landmark on its own.

Figures 471–473: Photos of one of the first buildings that was completed, on site on 28th March 2017, 24th November 2018 and 25th October 2019 (Source: Kurik)

Kopli Lines as a landscape in transition

The milieu-valued or conservation area status of the building set certain restrictions on the development of the area. This includes the requirement to preserve central stone staircases characteristic to the specialised workers housing on the lower lines. The images demonstrate partially demolished buildings in 2016, demolition and cleaning of the staircases in 2018, and the redeveloped apartment buildings in 2020 (Figures 474-476). The elements that have been considered valuable to preserve or restore have shifted over the years, but there is an understanding that the street layout as well as some key buildings from the milieu of the area are significant enough that they need to be maintained in the new development. The new development also mimics the scale of the historic buildings.

Figures 474–476: New buildings around historic staircases on the lower lines on 27th April 2016, 24th November 2018 and 12th November 2020 (Source: Kurik)

Kopli Lines as a heritage site

The complex heritage of Kopli Lines has formed a basis of discussions in establishing the future of the neighbourhood. The area's milieu-valued status highlights what is considered valuable to preserve. Rather than individual buildings, the industrial housing is seen as significant in its totality, scale and street structure. This case demonstrates that the approach protecting heritage neighbourhoods is predominantly focused on the built environment. Approaching a deprived neighbourhood for redevelopment is a challenge and poses significant questions in a transitory environment – whose heritage is this, and how should it be highlighted and preserved?

The conservation approach is visible from some of the buildings that have been fully restored. Images demonstrate the progression of the development process on the lower lines – pre-start, during works and the finished new builds. The new buildings in the 2019 photo are almost replicas of the buildings of the early 1900s (Figures 477-479).

Figures 477–479: Reconstruction of historic workers' houses on the lower lines documented on 28th March 2017, 24th November 2018 and 5th October 2019 (Source: Kurik)

Kopli Lines as a lived-space

The images demonstrate the gradual development approach to regeneration (Figures 480-482). While contemporary new builds are completed and available on the market many derelict buildings remain. The approach taken to the contemporary design and the black timber used creates somewhat eerie connections with the large number of fires that have taken place in the area over the years. This gradual approach taken to development also reflects the gradual decline and rebirth of the neighbourhood. The lived space of Kopli-lines was problematic for many decades, but there was never a distinct point of change. A certain indeterminacy continues to characterise the present-day landscape.

Figures 480–482: Contemporary timber buildings on sites where historic buildings had not been preserved. The development progress documented on 28th March 2017, 25th October 2019 and 12th November 2020 (Source: Kurik)

Discussion

The period of this research project between 2013 and 2021 has enabled to observe the Kopli Lines area during a significant period of change after almost a generation of uncertain futures and stalled development plans. However, uncertainty and indeterminacy have equally characterised the development process since the sale to a developer in 2015. Three levels of data observed present a strong interest in the heritage of Kopli Lines and more broadly the Kopli area's industrial heritage, the attraction to working-class timber housing and associations with gentrification, and the challenges connected to revitalising a declining socially difficult area.

The re-development of the Kopli Lines neighbourhood was a challenge for decades and progress there coincides with the growing popularity of the Kopli neighbourhood as a place for young professionals. This case highlights the challenges of urban revitalisation in transitional contexts: while it is evident that solutions were needed, the record of planning documents, media and site visits demonstrates an approach to the site that does not consider many alternatives within neoliberal market conditions.

The media records give insight into the city government's approach to development, the positions of heritage specialists, the long-term residents of the area, and developers and newer residents. It becomes clear that long-term indeterminacy and a lack of vision has had a significant impact on gradual deterioration and low investment into the area. Additionally, the fact that long-term residents were not given an opportunity to become owners of their apartments created an atmosphere of low perspectives. This case demonstrates the impact of uncertain futures to neighbourhood dynamics. While official residents left the area gradually and formally by 2015, the site has accommodated meanwhile and temporary uses, and has been a location for squatting and appropriation. The characteristic temporality acquired a certain permanence in

this case.

The new development offers relevant insight into the development of heritage protection practices in newly independent Estonia. The policy of milieu-valued areas protects characteristic urban landscapes, and elements of Kopli Lines have been identified as relevant to preserve. This has led to a design solution that reflects the historic street layout as well as the scale and height of the buildings. The juxtaposition of this with the socio-economic realities of the area has been the focus of extensive media representation. The redeveloped area reflects a lifestyle characteristic of a newly liberal society – while the coastal area is accessible to the public, the buildings are surrounded by gated courtyards.

The indeterminacy that characterised the site for a significant period can, however, be seen as productive. The vision that first emerged from the 1998 EUROPAN competition proved to be sustainable while the social and economic conditions allowed the model two decades later. This market-led development of the site has, however, made evident the lack of attention in the planning process that is given to mid- and transitional periods.

7. KALARAND:

SLAPP and change

From an industrial wasteland to a semi-private community

Figures 483–-485: Kalarand photographed from the rooftop of Linnahall. The Patarei prison is visible in the background in 2016, 25th October 2019 and 12th November 2020. (Source: Kurik)

7.1 Introduction

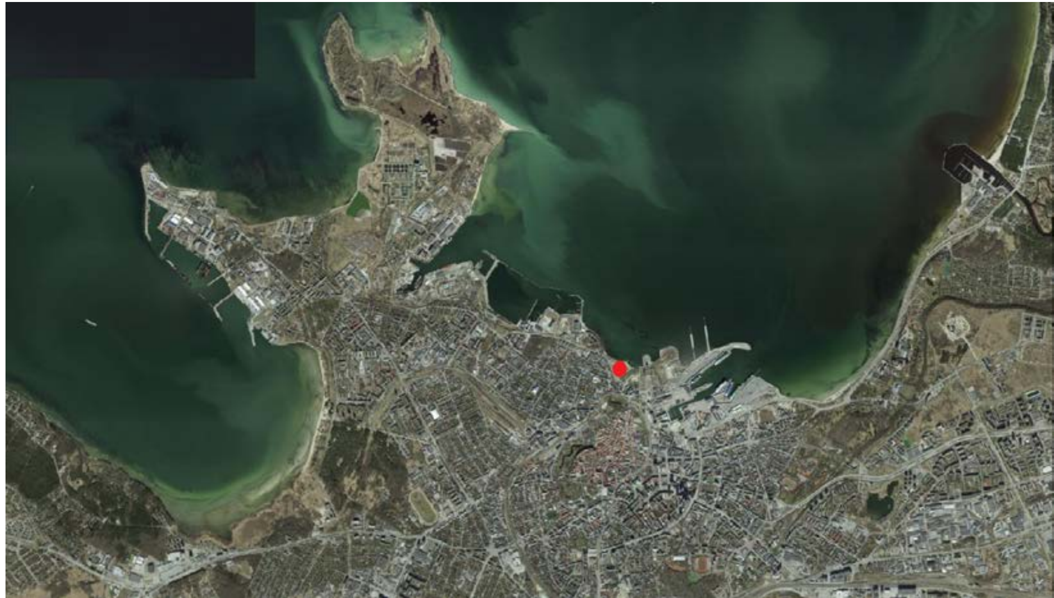


Figure 486: The location of Kalarand on the coast of central Tallinn (Source: Republic of Estonia Estonian Land Board)

The third and final case study, Kalarand (Eng. '*Fishers Beach*'), is a formerly industrial artificially filled-in coastal site in central Tallinn that stood in a long-term indeterminate state since Estonia regained its independence in 1991 (Figure 486). The complex development process of the site tells a revealing story about the development of the present planning framework in Estonia and the challenges of recreating the relationship between the city and the sea. The narrative is especially revealing about the development of mixed stakeholder groups in post-Soviet Tallinn as well as the impact of long-term indeterminacy and changing development ambitions. Simply imagining and comparing plans for what would be on the site if it would have been redeveloped in the 1990s compared to the visions we are presented with today shows how considerations regarding space are constantly changing and developing. Next to complex ownership relations the site has historically also been complex in its physical form, being separated from the city by an industrial railway line. At the same time, the surrounding area has a high concentration of cultural establishments and examples of adaptive reuse – from cultural spaces in former factories to museums

and other venues. These include the Museum of Estonian Contemporary Art, Kultuurikatel (Eng.: Creative Hub), and the Maritime Museum in the historic Seaplane Harbour. Over recent decades the area has developed into an attractive location that invites tourists and locals to explore a landscape that seems to be considered in many ways unique to Tallinn. Its long-term indeterminacy has enabled the site to gain a multitude of meanings – beyond a development site it became, for a period, a highly valued public space, a semi-formal gathering spot and a symbol of the city's complex relationship with the coast and part of the process of re-connecting the city with the sea. Similarly to the case of Kopli Lines, the site is currently in the middle of a development process and on its way to becoming a mixed-use area accommodating apartments and businesses. While its indeterminacy, which has throughout the recent decade been both highly valued as well as criticised by various stakeholder groups, is disappearing, it is a significant case in exploring the variety of narratives that exist about a site simultaneously and how exploring these can help us understand spaces in transition.

Amongst other things, looking at the development as well as the historic storyline of the site provides an opportunity to analyse the long-term effect of temporary uses and community-led urban appropriations as development plans are becoming realised. Over the course of its uncertain futures the site has taken on alternative meanings, especially after the 2008 economic crisis and the following slowed down development and boom in temporary uses. This was especially concentrated in 2011 when Tallinn was the European Capital of Culture, with a programme focused on Opening Tallinn to the Sea (and a special programme dedicated to the 'Stories of the seaside' (Est.: Mereäärsed lood). A key trigger for changes in the perception and circle of active stakeholders has been the popularity of temporary uses on the site. Kalarand started to gain wider public attention in 2011 when the detailed spatial plan that would provide a framework for the future development had not yet been approved and the lingering impact of the worldwide economic crisis meant slowed down development in most places. This

was also the time when the railroad tracks separating the site from the rest of the city were removed and replaced with a temporary pedestrian path known as 'The Kilometre of Culture'. The temporary beach that emerged on the site as the result of an installation competition organised as part of the Capital of Culture programme was also the beginning of the formation of a wider stakeholder group who wanted to have a say in the development as equal partners to the developers and the city. The part-time activists behind temporary uses posed the question of what right do people have in directing the development of private land. Later access to the coast was further enhanced by an experimental coastal promenade referred to as 'Betapromenade'. These experimental temporary uses on the site were relevant also for the developer as a means to change perceptions about a space that was for some decades seen as an inaccessible post-industrial wasteland.

Despite debates and conflicts surrounding the development process the physical space of Kalarand remained for a significant period surprisingly unchanged after the industrial structures were demolished on the site in the 1990s. The temporary, predominantly community-led use of the site and the area's general use as a public space gained a sense of permanence. When looking at temporary uses in wider urbanism it seems that it is often the case that the nature of the uses being temporary is very rarely part of the core agenda of these uses. The temporality comes from the uncertainty of futures. It has been argued that temporary uses are often a transitional step towards establishment – incubators for new professionals (Hernberg, 2008). More recently this type of placemaking has become a standard practice in the developers' 'toolkit'. The development process of Kalarand is in many ways a typical case study demonstrating this practice. The temporary and uncertain state of this site brought together a network of urban activists who have become key partners in the wider urban development of Tallinn; however, their input has constantly been challenged by the developer and the city, and the significance of these temporary practices in shaping the eventual development remains unclear.

As a temporary public space Kalarand is an example of the effect temporary uses can have on urban space and enables exploration of the significance of collaboration between community associations and the developers. The development and stakeholder narratives can be observed through the design process. Seaside locations tend to come with a symbolic expectation: for a site to be visible from the sea (meaning to the guests, visitors entering the country) means a certain status and the idea of 'making a good impression' tends to be part of the discussions when developing a future plan for the area. In a young capitalist society, this has meant a widely common perception that the coastal locations should present a new image appropriate for a newly free Estonia. This also sets limits to how and by whom these sites should be used. The cultural geographer Maria Lindmäe (2014) has critically argued that the visions of Kalarand are examples of copy-paste development models that break the dynamics of the local community. She writes: *'Even though the construction of high-class housing, cultural and recreational establishments, shopping centres, hotels and leisure parks may create new jobs and improve the image of the formerly abandoned waterfront, it also has the risk of creating social exclusion, if not by force, then by symbolic codes of dress, taste and income'* (Lindmäe, 2014: 16). What use is most suitable and who should have a say in the development of private space with high community interest is a question that continues to be a focus of debates surrounding the site and its future.

A key challenge in the development of this site has been the tension between the local residents and the developer Pro Kapital Grupp. In a transitory context where the planning process has quickly shifted from top-down control to complex systems, these conflicts seem necessary for identifying stakeholders who shape urban environments. A detailed spatial plan that gives guidelines for what can be built in the area was approved after 13 years of debates and court cases in 2016. The process included significant controversy. Kalarand's complex development process includes Estonia's first and highly publicised case of what is in the US context known as 'SLAPP' (strategic lawsuit against public participation; adapted

to Estonian as LÄTAK), where the developer sued a community activist who had voiced her concerns about their plans to build a private yachting harbour on the site and limit public access to the sea (Kuusk, 2015). It is possible to identify clearly opposing stakeholders and analyse their role in the production of space. The developer, the city and the local community have demonstrated distinct and changing agendas and the long-term stalled process is significant to understanding the changing planning process characteristic to Estonia and Tallinn. However, during the period of indeterminacy and stalled development, a number of collaborative efforts did take place.

Figure 487: A local activist Peeter Liiv protesting against the development of Kalaranna street. The sign states 'No to the Kalaranna Street development plan, that sacrifices hundreds of trees and demolishes the Kilometre of Culture' (Source: Prozes, 2015: online)

Figure 487: An activist Teele Pehk on site in 2015 after being sued by the developer (Source: Volmar, 2015:online)

While the process of change and non-change characteristic to the development of Tallinn's coast is in many ways context-specific, the site could simultaneously be seen as not unique and enabling some generalisations. These types of complex voids often characterise post-Soviet or post-war cities that tend to grow outwards. Inner-city vacant sites with ambiguous plans, complex ownership relations or strong dependency on the economic climate tend to function as unofficial parks, no-man's lands for long periods of time, and become significant for the local community. The development of Tallinn is closely connected to the sea, but the Soviet occupation had a hindering effect on the use of coastal areas and ports. Large coastal areas were closed to the public. This is why the development of the city was focused inland over the twentieth century. After a long period of stagnation and indeterminacy, Kalarand has found its place in a second real estate boom. While only as recently as 2018 Kalarand remained a development site that was frequently used by local people as a popular public space, despite its difficult access and mostly barren landscape and fences surrounding the site, by 2021 the development process is nearly complete – the site's uses are transitioning from informal and public to formal and semi-private.

Through this case study I will mainly explore the following questions:

- How has access to the sea changed since 1991?
- Who are the key stakeholders in the development of Kalarand and how have their roles changed in the process?
- How do the plans for Kalarand characterise the move from socialist to neoliberal planning? And how have plans changed during the development of capitalism?
- How have the temporary uses that more formally emerged on the site since 2011 influenced the development of Kalarand?
- How has the media portrayed the views of different stakeholders regarding Kalarand's development?
- What is the significance of temporary uses and community-led appropriations in the development narrative of the site?
- What can be said about the development process by exploring everyday urban landscape and rhythms of the place?

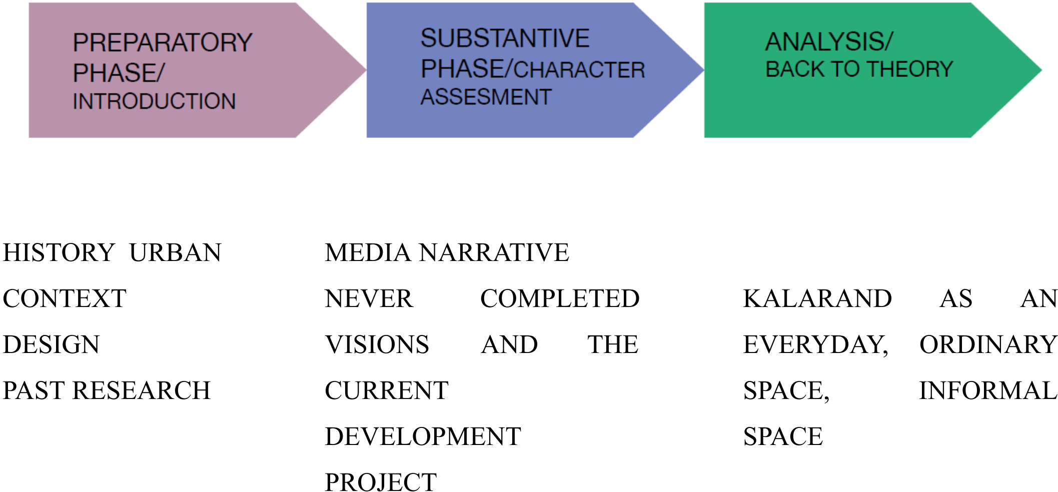
It has been argued that changes in urban landscapes are the medium and outcome of the intersection of different sets of values and urban forms are a result of conflicts between value systems. Often it is the case that economic values come before the ideas of growth and redevelopment and symbolic values (Kong, 2003). The development and non-development of Kalarand is a clear example of opposing value systems in a young society. I will look at different stakeholder narratives and how these have been represented in the media, and describe how the development of the site can be understood based on planning documents, visions and architectural competition results as well as media representations and site visit documentation. The redevelopment process of the site is seen as significant in unpacking the process of changing ideas about urban planning in a transitional context.

Chapter overview

I will start with a brief introduction to the site, its history and its urban context. Kalarand is seen as a strategic location in the regeneration of Tallinn's coast and the development of modes of collaboration in planning. I will provide a brief overview of academic and non-academic literature focusing on the history and regeneration process of the site. Academic records dealing with the site highlight its strategic location and role in defining the direction of Tallinn's urban development as well as review the challenges and new meanings that have emerged during the process. The core of the chapter is formed of archival records, masterplans and visionary schemes projected onto the site. As the site is currently under development the story stops before a complete settling in of its new identity. The everyday meanings of the site and informal use are presented through site visit documentation as well as a brief overview of the site's significant role in re-connecting the city with the sea more symbolically in the recent decade, especially since 2011 Capital of Culture programme.

The analysis includes an overview of visual and textual results of architectural competitions as well as more informal visions for the area.

Approach to the case study:



7.2 The history and urban context of Kalarand

Figure 488: This map from 1899 demonstrates that the coast is disconnected from the rest of the city with a railway line. (Source: [adapted from] Republic of Estonia Land Board historic maps:online)

Kalarand is a culturally significant location that has a long history of fishing, markets and industries, and is a key site in Tallinn's history as a coastal city. The area was a stopping place for fishermen as long ago as the Middle Ages and this heritage continues to be somewhat relevant today (Bruns, 1993; Nerman, 1996) . The focus of historic Kalarand was the fish market (there is also a fish market adjacent to the site of interest today, opened in 2010) (Gnadenteich, 2010). The site is in the protection zone of the Tallinn Old Town milieu valued/conservation area (Nord Projekt, 2010) (Figure 489).

Figure 489: A view from Kalarand towards Tallinn between 1930 and 1940 (Source: Fotis: online)

Historically the name Kalarand was used to refer to a wider area of the inner Tallinn coastline just outside the old city walls. A significant change of landscape on the coast came with the construction of the Patarei fort that blocked a large area of the coast (Bruns, 1993, Nerman, 1996). The building opened in 1840 as a canon battery and the fortress occupies a seafront area of about 4 hectares. The building became a prison after Estonia gained its independence in 1918 and became notorious during the period of Soviet occupation (Belford, 2013). In addition to accessibility issues, this complex landmark adjacent to the site known as Kalarand today has had an impact on the atmosphere as well as uncertainties in development. The historic fort continues to dominate the landscape at present, but has like Kalarand acquired new meanings and has been used as a site for a variety of temporary uses since its closure.

Figure 490: A view towards Kalarand in 1897, with the Patarei fort in the background (Source: The Estonian Maritime Museum: online)

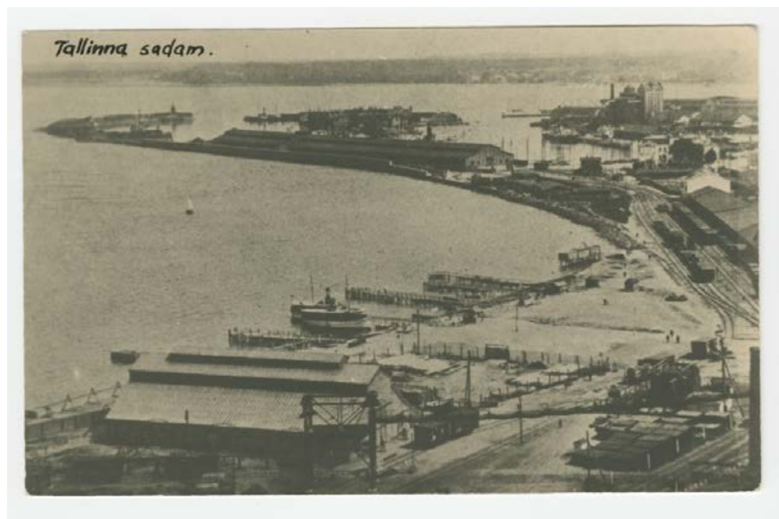
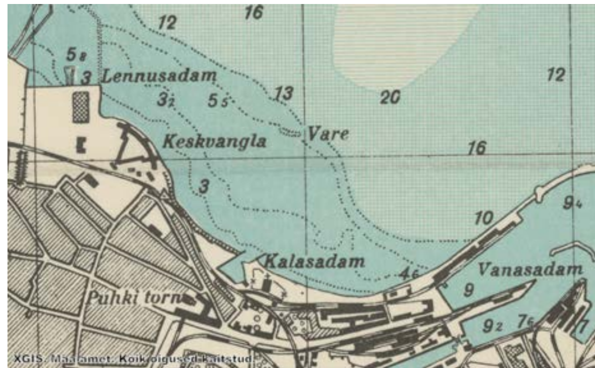


Figure 491: A view towards Tallinn Harbour and Kalaranna area approximately in the 1920s–1930s (Source: The Estonian Maritime Museum: online)



From a historic gathering point for fishing, the site developed into an important location for industry. In 1898 the first fishing net industry was built in Kalarand. This enabled fishing in larger quantities (Nerman, 1996). Industries continued to grow in the Soviet era. The sea was filled in and the contemporary seafront was formed.

Maps 492–495: The site on historic maps in 1899, 1929, 1996, 1999

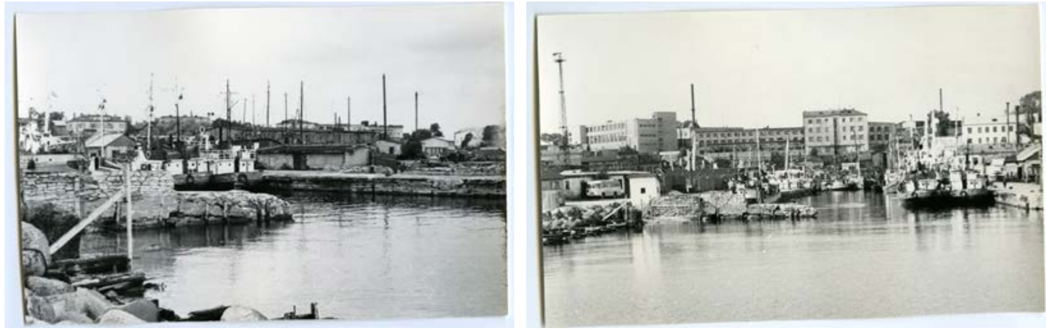
(Source: Republic of Estonia Land Board historic maps)

Historic maps (Figures 492-495) demonstrate the development of the site and infilling of the coast from the late nineteenth century until the 1990s. The site's industrial development started during the Russian czarist rule – the rail lines visible on the first map run parallel to the coast. The map from Estonia's first period of independence demonstrates infilling of the land and the site in focus here has been developed. The maps from the 1990s demonstrate surrounding urban development, including

the Linnahall building next to the site, but also outline the dense structure of small scale industrial buildings on the site. These developments can further be understood from the images below.

In the early 1960s, a large ship factory was built in Kalarand. An even larger project was planned – a large office and production building that would be shaped like a ship, however this was never built. The products of the company went to Japan, Sierra Leone, Cuba, Angola and Russia. In the Soviet era most of the seafront was administered by various Moscow-based institutions . The area of Kalarand was functionally and visually disconnected from the rest of Tallinn (Lindmäe, 2014). The development of industry on the coast created a fundamental change in Tallinn's relationship with the sea that continues to influence the urban dynamics today. One author of Tallinn's first masterplans, H. Arman, has written that while for centuries Tallinners had access to the sea, during the Soviet period the coast was covered with industrial structures and Tallinn stopped being a coastal town in the direct sense (Bruns, 1991). Industrialisation of coastal areas in inner cities has impacted access to the sea in many cities not only in the Soviet context. This links the regeneration process characteristic to Kalarand to the development processes of many coastal cities.

The site developed from a natural coastline into a dense industrial area and a port. Images from the 1970s and 1980s show a coastal harbour landscape that is actively in use (Figures 496-498).



Figures 496–497: Views towards Kalarand in 1971 (Source: The Estonian Maritime Museum, 1971: online)

Figure 498: Kalarand in 1980. (Source:Retro Tallinn: online)

The development of the site post-1991

During the Soviet period the Kalarand beach was closed to the public and unkempt and this state continued to the 1990s. Between 1968 and 1997 the site belonged to the ship factory. In the 1990s the fishing industry and the ship factory closed down. The site was briefly owned by the city of Tallinn, which sold it to ProKapital in 1999 (Nord Projekt, 2010).

Figure 499: Orthophoto from 1993 shows the landscape pre-demolition of industrial structures (Source: Republic of Estonia Land Boar orthophotos: online)

Pro Kapital, the new owner of the area (who purchased the site with 142 million Estonian Kroons), demolished the industrial buildings in the early 2000s (Juske, 2012) (see Figure 499 and 500 pre-demolition). The detailed plan for the redevelopment of the site was initiated soon after, but the slow process left the site unused for many years. The complicated process has been documented in detail by Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association and spans more than eight years.

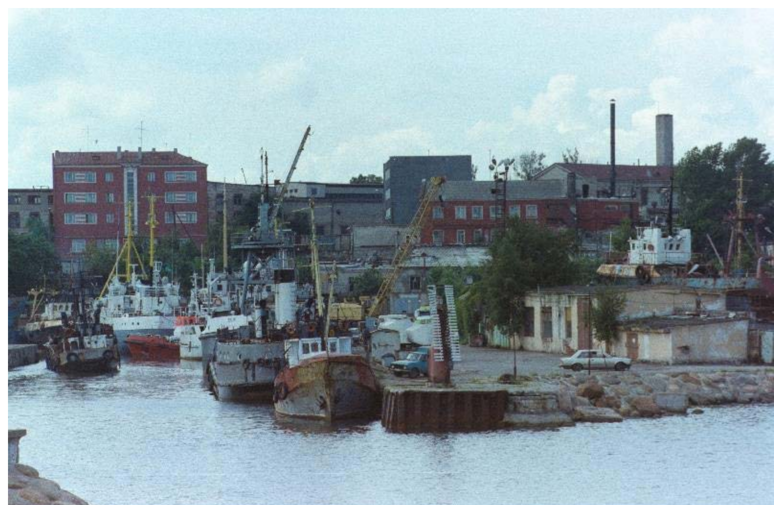


Figure 500: A view towards Kalarand and the old harbour in 1996. The industrial structures on site are in a state of ruin (Source: Langovits, 1996: online)

Developments in the 1990s and the unique layout of the landscape assist in defining the specific area of interest here. The industrial landscape of the site was further separated from the city by a rail connection for transporting goods. The peripheral nature of the site was shaped by both physical and mental barriers. This continued to impact the accessibility of the area up until the mid-2010s. Kalarand as it is known today is a specific triangular infill landscape that is separated from the Kalamaja neighbourhood by a road. Situated between the Patarei prison building and Linnahall it became a significant open space that enabled access to the sea.

Figure 501: The site in 2019 – the construction of the new mixed-use area has started (Source: Republic of Estonia Land Board: online)

The coastal area had in only limited ways featured in local consciousness. One of the most unique examples of this is the use of the rail lines adjacent to the site as a location for filming scenes for Tarkovsky's cult film 'Stalker' (see Figure 502).

These relevant, yet marginal uses in cultural history added to the appeal of the industrial landscape.

Figure 502: As the neighbouring Culture Hub area was used to film a film classic 'Stalker' the historic rail-lines cutting the site from the city can be observed from a photo taken during filming (Source:Bessmertny, 1977: online)

The site's unique potential for reconnecting the city to the sea became more widely acknowledged with the removal of the historic rail line separating the site from the city and construction of the temporary Kilometre of Culture in 2011.

Figure 503: The Kilometre of Culture opened in 2011 (Source: Saabas, 2011: online)

The rail lines were removed in 2010 and replaced with a temporary pathway created with limited investment. This was the first wider attempt to bring attention to the area as a public space. The aim of the path named Kilometre of Culture (see images 503-505) was to provide access to an area that had been remote from

locals. In addition to links with film history, the reference to culture highlighted the fact that the path connected a number of present or future cultural establishments, but in essence, the project was a low investment and low impact temporary use. A local news portal *Delfi* reported in June 2011 how the path offers *'eerie beauty'* (Delfi, 2011a: online). This gives insight into how in the context after the world economic crisis these indeterminate landscapes continued to gain significance and a certain unique attraction, and had a sense of potential.

Figure 504–505: The Kilometre of Culture passing Kalarand site and construction of a Capital of Culture programme installation in 2011 (Source: Saabas, 2011: online)

The case of the Kilometre of Culture rolled out in the media as an interesting confrontation between the city government, local inhabitants and public figures. During the development of the project and its inauguration in 2011, there were several sceptical voices. For example, Kaarel Tarand, the editor-in-chief of the cultural newspaper *Sirp*, named it 'The Kilometre of Shame' (Est.: Häbikilomeeter) and suggested that the Kilometre of Culture project is most likely a cover for a larger real-estate project that will only take shape in the future (Tarand, 2011). This analysis shows that there existed a certain distrust towards culturally oriented (and temporary) projects implemented from the top down. However, when the plans for the redevelopment of the area became more clear the local neighbourhood association Telliskivi started a petition in favour of the Kilometre of Culture and keeping the seaside public to the city centre.

Construction of Kalaranna street in 2014

Figures 506–507: Construction in 2014 and 2015 of Kalaranna Street, which replaced the temporary Kilometre of Culture (Source: Mänd, 2014, 2015: online)

The Kilometre of Culture was one of the first most significant consciously temporary projects to create a shift in the area and also a point of discussion. The development ambitions of the developer and the city became more acknowledged during the construction of Kalranna Street. Replacing the temporary intervention with a multi-lane road created a different type of access to the site (See Figures 506-509). It was no longer just a curious wasteland used only by urban explorers and knowledgeable locals but a significant arterial connection in northern Tallinn. The construction of the street took place alongside the detailed planning process and the future plans continued to be loosely defined in many ways.

Figures 508–509: Kalaranna Street in October 2019 and November 2020 (Source: Kurik)

Creating access to the coast has shaped the landscape potential as a development site, but also demonstrates the development priorities of the time. The developer's willingness to facilitate temporary uses, however, created an arena for discussions about the future and accessibility of the city's coastline.

The protest of the inhabitants demonstrates that the value of a cultural project is not tied to it being temporary. This was reflected in an article *'The Kalarand detailed plan would destroy the milieu'*, which stated that straight after people had accepted the Kilometre of Culture the short 'cultural' interim use would surrender to the pressures of real-estate developers' (Jõesaar, 2012) and *'The Telliskivi association collected more than 2000 signatures for the protection of Culture Kilometre'* (Eesti Päevaleht, 2012). These articles were responded to by the city government, which commented on the planning of a road on the path of the Kilometre of Culture that *'Kalamaja passing will trigger the development of the whole area'* (Aas, 2012: online), and news such as *'The city will continue developing the Kalaranna street'* (Tooming, 2012). The political implication here is a question of whose interests prevail – especially because the road is connected to developing private land.

7.3. Kalarand as a heritage site and a research object

The historical transformations and development challenges since the regaining of independence have contributed to interest in Kalarand as a significant site for urban research. The urban development of Tallinn and the significance of Kalarand and the wider challenge of connecting the city to the sea have been examined by Dmitri Bruns (1991) and Robert Nerman (1996). Both of these authors also focus on the cultural heritage of the site. The site is situated in the Tallinn Old Town conservation area protection zone, meaning that additional regulations apply for the development of the site. Additionally, it is part of the Kalamaja milieu valued area (Nord Projekt, 2010). Limitations affecting the

development of coastal sites also apply in Kalarand. These limitations mean that the site has significance in local consciousness as a heritage location, but it is also a valuable research object.

In recent years the development process has drawn more focused academic interest. Kalarand has been a popular case study for student projects, especially for masters students exploring urban regeneration. A dominant focus of research papers is on community engagement in the process or lack thereof. An Italian urbanist Damiano Cerrone has written a number of texts about Kalarand and the challenges of opening Tallinn to the sea (2011, 2015). Maria Lindmäe has opened the complexities behind public engagement related to this case in her dissertation *'Urban Waterfront Regeneration and Public participation. Confrontation of Cooperation? The Case of Kalarand, Tallinn'* (2014). She argues that Kalarand is a type of site where problems are bound to arise – where land with a high price and development potential meets alternative land uses and different interests are evident. A recent PhD project by Viktorija Prilenska (2020) focuses on the challenges of communicative planning in the Baltics using the example of civic engagement in the case of Kalarand as an Estonian example. Additional texts that are relevant here include Francisco Martinez's polemical text *'This Place has Potential: Trash, Culture, and Urban Regeneration in Tallinn, Estonia'* (2017), in which the author analyses cultural programmes as tools for urban speculation in Tallinn, focusing especially on the case of Kalarand. Viktorija Prilensaka, Katrin Paadam and Roode Liias's (2020) paper focusing on the challenges of civic engagement in transitional contexts takes Kalarand as one of its case studies to further develop arguments Prilenska made in her PhD dissertation. They focus specifically on the shortcomings of civic engagement strategies during the ratification process of detailed plans that lead to challenging negotiations between a variety of stakeholders.

Over the years a large number of opinion pieces have been published in the local media about the development potential and process of the site. A key focus of

opinion pieces can be identified. It is a site that has caught the attention of young urbanists, architects and architectural critics, who have in many ways become watchdogs of development projects on significant sites in the city. In 2012 the architects Kadri Klementi and Siiri Vallner summarised the site and the controversial development process as follows: *'Kalarand is a typical Eastern European gap in urban space. An area for which there is every reason to assume that it is public is in fact owned by a private owner, but the private owner cannot develop the area because there is no planning. The city, in turn, lacks the resources to cooperate with the private owner and the public is irritated by the city's passivity in defining and protecting the public interest. Added to this is an extremely time-consuming planning process, during which planning solutions inevitably expire, and so the area has been abandoned for decades'* (Klementi, Vallner, 2012: online). Klementi and Vallner argue that after ten years of developing the detailed spatial plan urbanism has changed. A significant shift has taken place in the way the urban space is experienced and valued. A location that was considered peripheral 10 years ago has become central. In this context, it becomes significant that the detailed planning process has taken more than a decade. While an understanding of what is a good urban space or how value is created continues to develop, this is not always reflected in the planning process, which is more rigid and static.

In 2015 the environmental psychologist Grete Arro acknowledged the opportunity for making generalisations that lie in the case. She asked what exactly is behind the fact that one stretch of beach has been being fought over for years, and argued that the opposition to the current official development of Kalarand and the closure of the beach actually points to the universal needs of people in urban space. *'I'm not focusing on the dichotomy of 'businessman versus flower.' The developer develops and has no obligation to create a good public space. Specialists, such as officials in the respective field, must stand up for an urban space that supports the public good and takes into account the well-being of the individual'* (Arro, 2015: online). A critical perspective is also presented by the architect Elo Kiivet, who

spotted signs of corruption in the planning process and argued that the participation process has been flawed. She writes, *'Kalaranna is not a NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) syndrome where locals are opposed to new buildings or developments. It is a matter of substantively understanding each other with a legal document so that nothing is lost in the translation later. The logically structured plan leaves the opportunity to talk to each other and to turn the verbally promised good head, i.e. to destroy the valuable environment'* (Kiivet, 2015: online).

The landscape architect Merle-Karro Kalberg has argued that the case of Kalarand is a perfect example of beginners urban studies. The debates focus on whether the development will be a gated community – even if only symbolically (Karro-Kalberg, 2016). The urbanist Triin Pitsi used the case to argue that we need to let go of set in stone opinions about urban development and embrace a variety of ideas and practices, including temporary uses (Pitsi, 2016).

All these opinion pieces represent one side of the story, as well as the fact that Kalarand is considered an important case study in understanding the emergence of the post-socialist planning model in Tallinn. As a research object Kalarand is a significant, but also compact example that enables analysis of stakeholder relationships and the importance of transparent processes in urban development. However, there continues to be relevance in the in-depth analyses of the process and how it has been represented.

7.4 Media narratives and urban visions: the development process represented

Debates in the media surrounding the development process that has characterised the site have been heated. A number of opinion pieces from the mayor of Tallinn, the city architect, the chancellor of justice, the members of the neighbourhood association, the Estonian Architects Union, the developer and reporters demonstrate a variety of perspectives. The long list of interested stakeholders

demonstrates the significance of the site more broadly and specifically to the residents of the city.

Key stakeholders surrounding the long-term indeterminacy of the site include the city of Tallinn, the owner and developer Prokapital, Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association and the border community. The Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association initiated a series of opinion pieces about the site that was published in one of the main Estonian daily newspapers in 2015. The developer of the site has taken a mixed position. Having become the owner in the late 1990s and opened the site to the public it has demonstrated flexibility in facilitating temporary uses and mixed futures. The Pro Kapital Grupp is a large real estate developer that focuses on large scale commercial and residential development in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. While planning a residential development on the site it started from the idea of high-end living and a private yachting harbour, entirely characteristic to the mentality of late-1990s and early-2000s Estonia that was struggling to leave the Soviet past behind. The developer's vision has however morphed and adjusted to the trends of urban development. In the 2010s the developers presented a slogan for the site: **'Sea, air and space – for everyone'** and the vision included a waterfront park and a promenade open to the sea and public together with a stairway descending to the sea. This idea is referred to as 'Sunset theatre' (see early visionary images in Figures 510-511).

Figures 510–511: Early visionary images circulated online to support development proposals (Source: ProKapital)

The plan also includes a flag square, fish market, bike paths and walking trails. The development website elaborated that the detailed plan for the Kalasadama neighbourhood has been processed for over a decade, but despite looking into the past they aim to look into the future. So seemingly there shouldn't be a controversy with the local community, but it seems that the issue is in details that the local neighbourhood association became aware of by being a daily user of the site. It has been argued that in the case of Kalarand the complex process for planning the site has demonstrated the weak role played by the planning department of the Tallinn City Government in developing central coastal sites in Tallinn that represent the public interest (Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association).

Kalarand as part of the re-opening to the coast narrative

Reconnecting central Tallinn with the coast became a topic of discussion already in the 1960s when a masterplan for the whole city was approved. It was again a centre of discussions during the 1980 Moscow Olympic games when Linnahall was the first site that enabled public access to the sea. However, Kalarand has remained a complicated site until now despite a number of efforts and vision documents. A first wider vision for Tallinn's relationship with the sea was created in 2004 and Kalarand is featured as a key part of a city-wide coastal promenade (As Entec, 2004) (Figure 512-513). This sets limitations to the future of the site and requires it to stay public. Despite the 14-year distance from the first approved coastal vision it continues to be a reference document and detailed plans need to follow the somewhat dated plan's recommendations. Kalarand's future vision has also been shaped by a number of local plans and more distinctly in a detailed plan that was approved in 2016 (Nord Projekt, 2010)

Figure 512: Illustration of the plan for Tallinn's coastal promenade in 2004 (Source: Tallinn City Council: online)

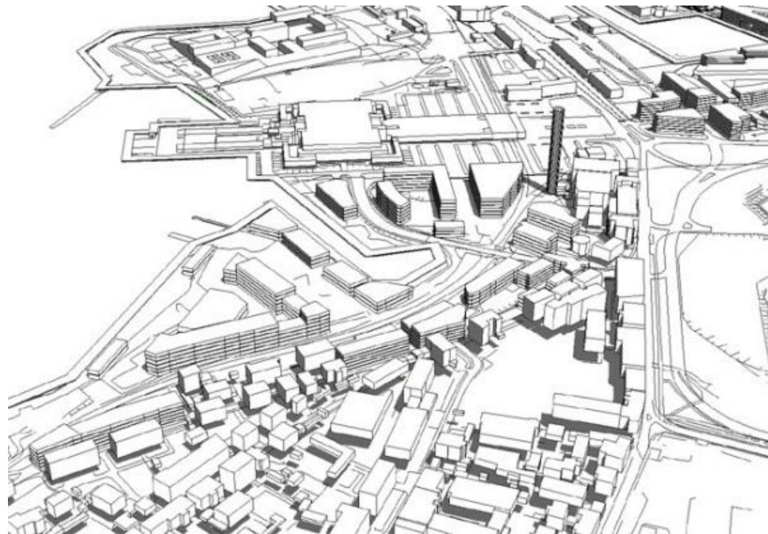


Figure 513: A proposed layout for Kalarand from the coastal master plan document produced in 2004 (Source: As Entec, 2004: online)

The master plan for the Tallinn-wide coastal area was produced by KAVAKAVA architects and approved in 2004 and covers 20km and 500ha of coastline in Tallinn. The main aim of this master plan was to connect Tallinn's urban space with the sea and re-establish Tallinn as a coastal town (K-Projekt, 2011). The master plan also includes Linnahall, Kalasadam and Patarei. The plan defines some limitations for the development in Kalarand. Amongst others it states that an architectural competition needs to be organised to develop the site, the neighbouring Linnahall will define the maximum height in the area and a green corridor should be developed next to the building. The masterplan sets clear limitations including that buildings have to be lower towards the sea to enable maximum views and can't be higher than five floors; the area has to remain completely accessible to pedestrians (50m from the coast); and the planned yacht harbour has to be public (Raam Arhitektid, 2009).

A proposal for the spatial development of Tallinn's coastal promenade was produced by Arsprojekt in 2007. The proposal defines the shape, activities on the

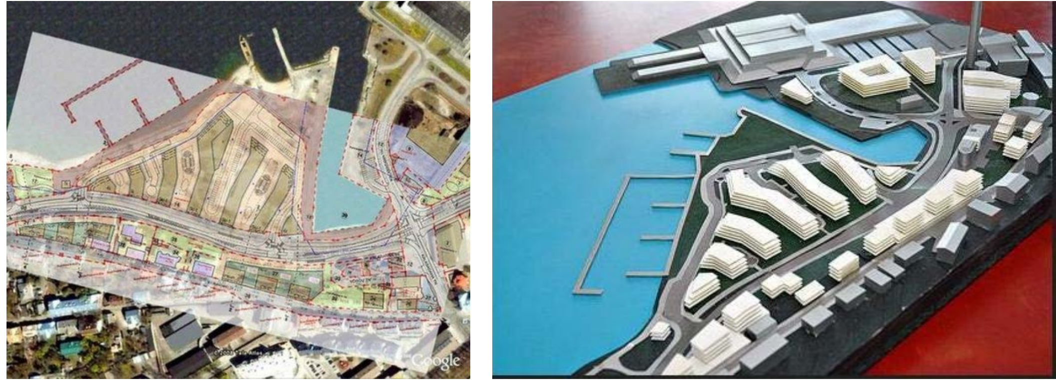
promenade, parking, important access sites, cross-sections of the promenade and plans in different sections, and important attraction centres by the promenade. The promenade is divided into eleven sections: Merivälja seawall and Pirita beach, Pirita road, Põhjaväil, Tallinn harbour, the area between Kalasadam and Miinisadam, Paljassaare harbour, Katariina pier, Neeme (Kopli), Mustjõe (Stroomi beach), Merirahu and Kakumäe beach (Arsprojekt, 2007). Kalarand features as a significant location in these wider visions for Tallinn's coast, however, establishing a specific detailed spatial plan for the area was a complex process that lasted more than 12 years.

Establishing the detailed spatial plan

Characterised as it was by strong community opposition, the planning process was an important precedent in the development of planning culture in Estonia. The local residents' position on this site has been more vocally represented by the **Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association**, which was created in 2009 and has been involved in discussions about the site since 2011. It argues that the complex process behind developing this site demonstrates how the city government and specifically the planning department has, despite producing visionary documents, in many ways failed to activate the seaside of Tallinn and represent the public interest, and has stalled the process through objections several times. The central position the association emphasises is that the beach and public space on the site need to be preserved. The neighbourhood association took the development of Kalarand as one of its main focuses. It argued that as Kalarand is the only place to swim in central Tallinn and has strong connections with the Kalamaja neighbourhood the area needs to remain a public space. It supported temporary uses on-site to achieve the best solution for space. The key difference of opinion and point of challenge is in the fact that the developer proposed reducing the seaside promenade from the required 50m to 25m and creating a semi-gated residential community. The area will technically remain accessible to the public,

but the community challenged whether this access was meaningful and sufficient. By challenging the development process the Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association argued that the fact that the site is in private ownership doesn't mean that there is no public interest and people should not be able to create a space they desire.

The detailed plan for the site was initiated in 2001 and the aim was to extend the city centre to the area, re-establish historical connections between the city and the sea and open access to the coastal area, develop a fish market, develop Kalamaja Street with a green corridor and define the borders of plots and building criteria. The first version of the plan was published in 2008 (Paaver, 2011). This received an unexpected storm of opposition, gathering 300 letters of objection, including from the Estonian Architects Union. The developer's initial vision included up to 5-storey high apartment buildings with 400 flats and a private yachting harbour. The plan was criticised for not considering surrounding developers and pedestrians and sacrificing the quality of public space in order to increase building sizes, while the proposed linear buildings would create wind corridors.



Figures 514–516: Illustrations supporting the detailed spatial plan compiled in 2008. The chronology of the detailed plan process has been compiled by the Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association (Sources: Tallinn City Council, retrieved from Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association: online)

Architect and local activist Toomas Paaver argued that the Kalaranna development would become a significant example of spatial planning in Estonia. However, the detailed planning process has failed to map the residents' expectations, carry out an architectural competition or carry out discussions and suggest visionary ideas. Instead of open discussions, it has been a bureaucratic process around the same spatial solution. Paaver is critical of the idea that a detailed spatial plan should be developed before an architectural vision competition. The detailed plan itself was seen as too complex and not

understandable for many residents. Paaver also suggested that if there had been an ambition to do so, it would have been possible to preserve the Kilometre of Culture. He highlights the significance of community and neighbourhood associations that have gained competence and can object against planning proposals also legally: *‘If the detailed spatial plan at hand would have been approved in 2004, the area would have most likely been filled with boom-time apartment buildings and the residents would most likely be now complaining about poor building quality and lack of public space’* (Paaver 2011: online).

In February 2012 a second attempt was made to formalise the detailed spatial plan in virtually unchanged form. This triggered even greater opposition. A petition to improve the detailed plan was signed by 2,000 people.

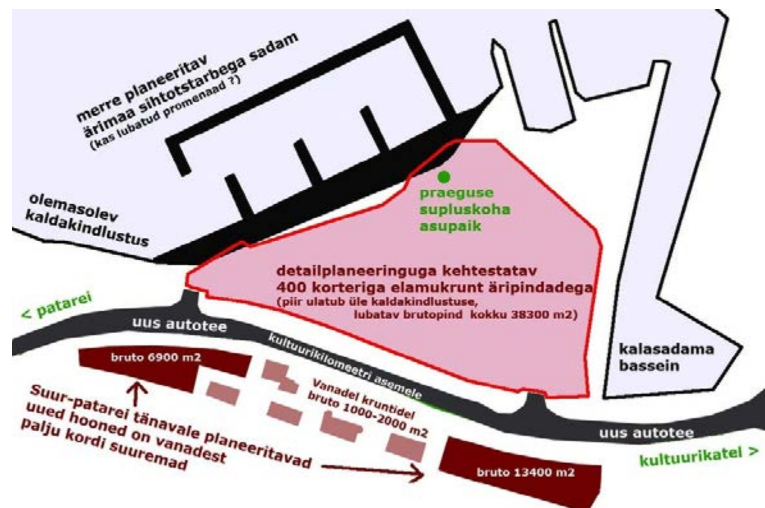


Figure 517: This critical drawing produced by the Union of Estonian Architects demonstrates that according to the detailed plan the harbour would be built in the sea (green dot signifies the location of current swimming spot) (Source: the union of Estonian architects: online)

The Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association organised a charette in March 2012 to discuss the plan with the developer and planning officers and the association presented its proposals for improving the plan. In August the association worded its issues with the plan as the improved plan did not consider previous comments

and the process was in many ways flawed. In September 2012 a meeting was organised with the head of planning in order to achieve a compromise. At the same time, an international workshop took place to envision alternative futures for the area. In October 2012 the association met with the landowner Pro Kapital and Nord Projekt representatives who had put together the detailed plan. No development was made (Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association).

After review, the detailed plan was publicly displayed for the third time from 3rd August until 3rd September 2015.

Figure 518: Illustration supporting the development of the detailed spatial plan compiled from 201. (Sources: Tallinn City Council, retrieved from Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association: online)

Figure 519: A layout proposed by the developer ProKapital in 2015 demonstrates allowance for public space (Source: ProKapital. retrieved from Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association: online)

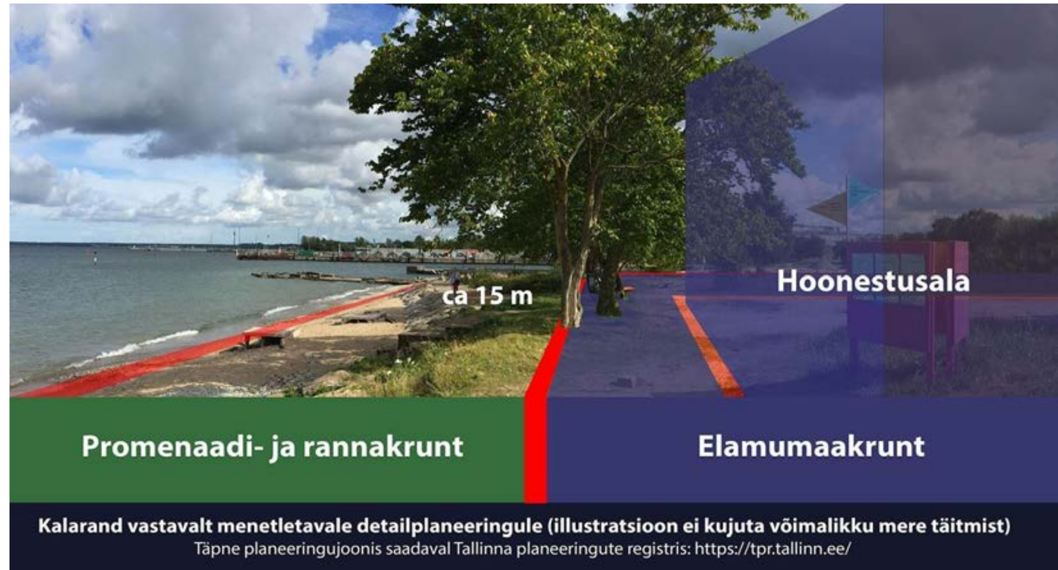


Figure 520: This sketchy drawing used by the Telliskivi neighbourhood association demonstrates how narrow the seaside promenade will look when the site is developed based on the detailed plan. (Source: Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association: online)

The key challenge with the plan was that only a 25m space was left for public use on the coast. At the beginning of September 2015, Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association presented a petition with 2,375 signatures proposing that at least a 50m-wide space would be left for public use as required in the initial coastal master plan produced in 2004. One of the most controversial articles was published in 2015 in *The Baltic Times* and was titled *'The battle for Estonian coastline'* (Garlick, 2015). The author Stuart Garlick started by painting a picture of Kalarand: *'TALLINN – The sea looks vibrant and exciting from Kalarand, the beach in the centre of Tallinn, spray lashing onto the rocky outcrops where young people sit, laugh, and contemplate their future. Someone strips down to swimwear and jumps in the clean water for a morning refresher. The summer weather in Tallinn in 2015 might be bracing, but local bathers are used to worse, and are made of tough stuff … Kalarand seems a rare example, in such a developed urban landscape as Tallinn, of a patch of calm, where it is possible to spend leisure time without being required to pay for a coffee or to have a ticket. However, the daily thrum of construction equipment behind the beach, in a patch of flat land present since the 1980s, tells a different story. Development is taking place, with*

landowners since 2000, AS Pro Kapital Eesti, preparing the site for future building work. Surprised and confused by the seeming contradiction of a beach that could be privately owned, I looked further into this' (Garlick, 2015: online). This author's exploration and an interview with a community activist representing Telliskivi Neighbourhood later led to a defamation court case between the activist and the developer that has been referred to as a case of SLAPP (Karro-Kalberg, 2015). This was followed by further heated exchanges. The developer published an article claiming that the Telliskivi Neighbourhood Association is bending the truth and spreading false information. A number of debate shows were aired on the radio. A number of articles followed with titles such as *'The Citizen Society activist claims that the developer is attempting to silence her through court'* (Kuusk, 2015). In 2015 the developer sued a member of the association with a defamation charge. This conflict followed a long complex process surrounding the site's detailed plan development and a number of architectural visions for the area. In order to understand these debates, it is relevant to explore Kalarand as a key site in the process of reopening Tallinn to the sea. The detailed plan was approved in 2016 with the 25m limitation included. Nevertheless, there has been a significant change from the initiation of the detailed plan in the early 2000s when the site would have been developed into a fully private residential area with a private yachting harbour. The final approved plan demonstrates a seaside promenade bordered with mostly public uses.

The emerging layout and detailed design of the site

An architectural competition for the site was announced after the approval of the detailed plan on 1st November 2016. The competition was organised as a one-phase public competition and it received 11 entries. Exploring some of these provides a significant insight into trends in architecture in the mid-2010s.

Conditions for the competition were stated as follows:

- the area should have a high quality of public spaces which provide opportunities for diverse use

- contemporary architecture of buildings creates a good quality living environment

- the harbour area is without barriers

- coastal protection together with natural waterfront allows direct contact with the sea.

- buildings will be 25 metres from the waterfront.

- A coastal promenade: an uninterrupted light traffic road and walkway should run along the seashore – this should become part of the larger promenade envisioned in the master plan for the area between Russalka and Paljassaare area. The promenade would also connect the area with the Patarei promenade and must be accessible and attractive for pedestrians. Connections must be ensured with the Kalamaja district.

- the area could become an attractive residential area: it is central, close to the old town. The new buildings must form a clearly distinguishable architectural whole. Preference inside blocks should be given to pedestrians.

- parking will be solved inside the building areas (underground parking, or inside the buildings and courtyards, but not on the ground floors or on the street level) (Pro Kapital, 2016: online)

Figure 521: The area designated for the new urban neighbourhood (Source: The Union of Estonian Architects, 2016: online)

The landscape architect Karin Bachmann has criticised the competition conditions claiming that the opposition between the local residents and the developer was evident in almost every chapter of the competition conditions. She points out that it is suspicious how in a competition on that scale no one had included a landscape architect. Lack of semi-public space might end up creating an environment for temporary living (Bachmann, 2017). The competition entries present a mix of styles. The winning work by architects Kadarik and Tüür presents a style of housing that is relatively characteristic of modern Tallinn and includes a mix of retail and housing. The project is titled 'Kesk-Küla', roughly translating 'Mid-village', or 'In the Middle of the Village'. The design creates a tense new street and pathway network and aims to connect the site with the city and the sea through public spaces. The core of the layout is a partially covered public square between the buildings surrounded by ground-floor retail uses.

Figures 522–523: The winning layout 'Kesk-Küla' designed by Kadarik and Tüür Architects demonstrates a mixed-use development with a new urban square in the middle of the housing-retail units (Source: ProKapital, 2017)

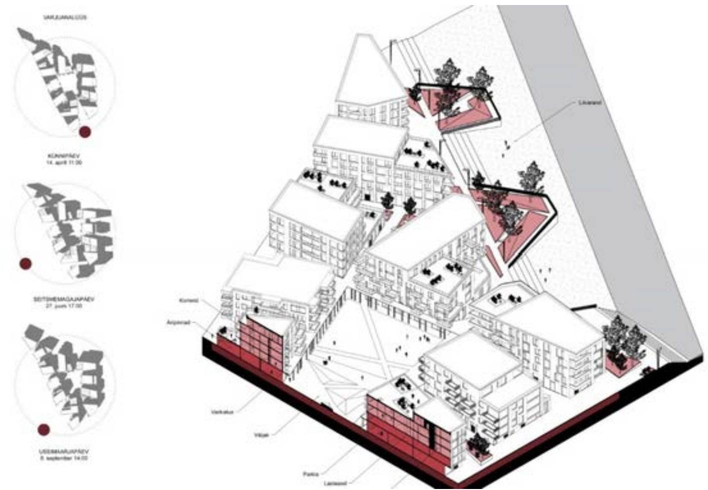


Figure 524: The public square is open towards Kalaranna street and away from the coast (Source: ProKapital, 2017: online)

Figure 525: A landscape design proposed for the site includes a mix of green spaces and tarmac-covered areas (Source: Kadarik and Tüür/ProKapital, 2017)

A number of other solutions proposed for the area that were noted in the competition followed a similar scale of housing as defined in the detailed plan, but created a potential alternative atmosphere – from a dense urban structure mimicking historic townhouse (e.g. 'Merekodu', see Figures 526-529) to a resort-style architecture (e.g. 'Pärandmaastik', see Figure 530-531) and a setup of square buildings by three Plus One architects (proposal 'Marmelade' See Figures 532-533).

Figures 526–529: Proposal ‘Merekodu’ by Pluss architects demonstrates a dense urban landscape with heritage references (Source: Pluss Architects, 2017: online)

Figures 530–531: Another noted submission titled Pärandmaastik (Eng. 'Heritage Landscape') by Villem Tomiste engaged with the natural and cultural heritage of the site and offered a solution that brings together biodiversity and new uses (Source:Tomiste, 2017: online)

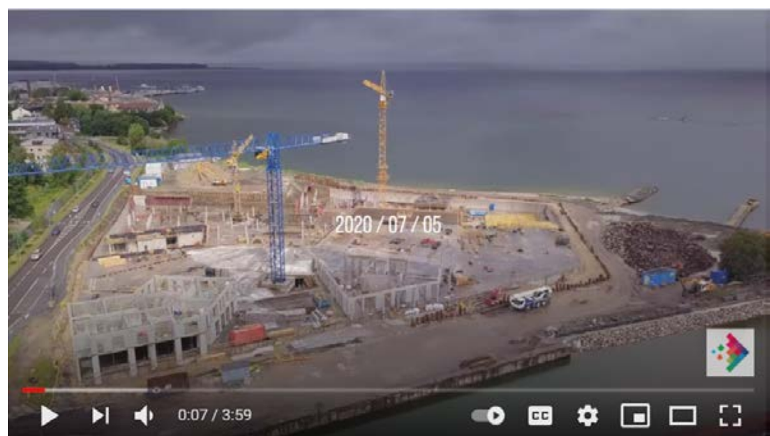
Figures 532–533: Proposal titled 'Marmelade' by Three Plus One Architects consists of a typology of square buildings in various sizes (Source: Three Plus One, 2017: online)

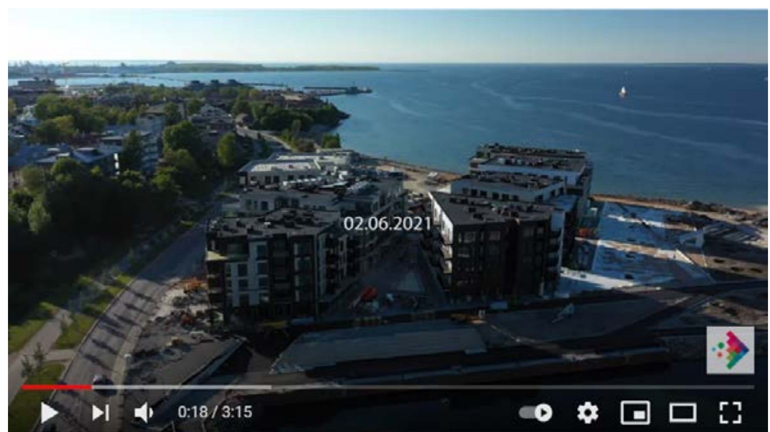
These mixed typologies proposed by different architecture offices demonstrate alternative futures. While the detailed plan sets a framework for the development, there is room for interpretations. While different in style and proportion, however, the approach to public space is seen as secondary to achieving urban density.

Kalaranna quarter in development

Figure 534: Kalaranna quarter under construction in 2020 (Source: Rushchak, 2020: online)

Construction started on-site in January 2020 (see progress on Figures 534-537), meaning that the indeterminate condition of the development had lasted for more than two decades. The new development is marketed on the site's specially dedicated website, which states that *‘Kalaranna District is a long-awaited, modern residential area, on six hectares, will include a renewed harbour and waterfront, 12 residential buildings with restaurants, boutiques and commercial spaces, centred around a square of almost the size of Town Hall Square with outdoor cafes and cultural events'’ (sic.; Kalaranna quarter: online).* It can be argued that this signifies the end of indeterminacy on the site.





Figures 535–537: Development progress documented by the youtube channel Pixelfy from January 2020 to June 2021. From an indeterminate development site to a nearly finished development. (Source: Pixelfy, 2020, 2021, online)

The challenges surrounding the development site and variety of stakeholders as well as achieving a balance between developing private property and providing public access to the sea has seemed to be difficult to achieve. The sense of publicness characteristic to the neighbourhood is difficult to predict – whether the access to the coast is mostly symbolic, or does it continue to have the sense of freedom as did the landscape in its indeterminate condition is a question that can be answered in future years? In the following subchapter, I will provide an alternative narrative and a closer insight into the period of indeterminacy and informal uses that characterised the site during the decades of uncertain future and look for parallels between visionary ideas and everyday urban rhythms.

7.5 Kalarand as an everyday ordinary space

Next to the challenging process of achieving the detailed spatial plan approval and some kind of an agreement between the community, the city and the developer, the site in its indeterminate state took on a variety of meanings and more informal uses. Kalarand is a significant site in Tallinn's cultural history. The below images demonstrate how it has been part of the everyday life of the city during various decades as a fishing and boating and fishing harbour, but also a leisure space (Figures 538–539). This site can be seen as key for understanding Tallinn as a coastal city – from its origins to the present day. The predominantly industrial use of the site during the Soviet period reflects the significance of Kalarand as a boundary of the union, but can also be considered a reason why the area was in a sense 'forgotten' for a significant period of time, and why finding a new identity has been a complex journey in a context of post-socialist urban reforms and market-driven urbanism.

Figure 538: An image demonstrating active everyday use in 1932 (Source: The Estonian Maritime Museum: online)

Figure 539: A painting of a view towards Kalarand in 1949 by Richard Uutmaa (Source: Uutmaa, 1949: online)

The emergence of temporary uses of the site since 1991

The Capital of Culture programme and LIFT11

The railway lines that separated the site from the city were removed in 2011. Tallinn was the European Capital of Culture in 2011 and the programme produced a number of other temporary uses that have had a long-term effect on the site. Part of the land was temporarily given for public use with a promise to create a pedestrian path on the former railroad track, connecting various cultural establishments that became known as the Kilometre of Culture (Figure 540). The Kilometre of Culture covered in more detail earlier is an example of a temporary project that enabled us to interpret the land in a different way.

Figure 540: The Kilometre of Culture two years after launch (Source: Kurik, 2013)

The Kilometre of Culture was an example of a small scale low-investment temporary project initiated by the city – it consisted of a path covered with gravel, some street furniture and street lighting. The content of the project was derived from the surrounding area – the cultural establishments (including Linnahall and the Patarei Culture Park). The temporary pedestrian path succeeded in bringing attention to the seaside and connecting various projects, some temporary, some more permanent in nature, with each other. This includes Kalarand, the garden of

Culture Hub, Patarei prison, and the Seaplane Harbour. These small-scale low-cost interventions shaped the space in the following years. In 2011 a temporary public beach was launched – this included platforms for seating, areas for barbecue and changing facilities. The piers were used for a public space project by architects from KAVAKAVA (Figures 541-543).

Figures 541–543: Installation 'The Pier' by Siiri Vallner and Indrek Peil utilised the pier that was no longer usable for landing boats (Source: Vallner, Peil, 2011: online)

Figure 544–545: The opening of the 'Kalarand' installation in 2011 (Source: Paaver, 2011: online)

Installation 'Kalarand'

As part of the LIFT11 programme, an installation for the site was proposed by the architect Toomas Paaver, conservationist Triin Talk and urbanist and activist Teele Pehk (figures 544 and 545). As part of the installation dressing space, benches and terraces were installed on the site. A key element of the installation was bringing attention to the site, by advertising it as a public beach and highlighting development plans for the area. The goal was that redefining the site as a public beach could bring new ideas to the development plans and improve the area's reputation, quality and usability (Aule, 2011).

The discussion that emerged from the temporary projects demonstrated the effect citizen practices can have on the urban environment. As the development of the area has met several obstacles and stretched over a long period, temporary uses have brought together a large group of people and various actors developing an interest, whether those who want to maintain the public space in the area as part of the future developments or actors from the city and the developers who see it as an area of dense developments. These temporary projects played a significant part in developing an identity for this previously industrial space. This makes it difficult to continue to implement a directly top-down solution in the area in the future, as it has started a public debate. It could be claimed that this debate is a

result of first of all the need for inner-city pedestrian pathways and public space and second the fact that the 'temporary' aspect of the project has remained loosely defined and created a situation where there is uncertainty about the future and a wish from the public for it to remain as a more permanent solution.

Temporary uses shape patterns of use and give places meaning and citizens a say in the urban development process. Space has been seen as important by many because it offers the best possibility of opening Tallinn to the sea – it is the nearest point to the sea next to the old town. The temporary projects have been possible because of and also a reason why the planning process has been very slow.

Kalarand continued to be used for a variety of temporary uses until development started on the site. These uses, often only seen through signs in space, become visible through the site visit documentation.

A landscape: Kalarand is viewed as a landscape in transition and a relevant site in the process of opening Tallinn to the sea.
A building and development site: Here the interest is on the visible signs of the development process, but also adaptation of the space over the period of indeterminacy.
A public space: The site is viewed as a location for temporary uses, but also a location for social commentary. The focus is on the site as a social and gathering space and a place that is in everyday use.

Kalarand became a site in the centre of wider awareness during the 2011 capital of culture year when it became a site for a number of temporary use practices. Site visit documentation here starts two years later (3rd September 2013). Photography and notes document remnants of installations blended into the landscape with signs of its former industrial use. While the site is surrounded by a number of new venues it continues to operate as a wasteland with an indeterminate future. However, it can be observed that developments in the wider area had caused Kalarand also to be an actively used public space. It offers a secluded scenery - the site is separated from the urban landscape with shrubs and trees. The hidden coastline is a rough landscape of large rocks, abandoned concrete blocks and overgrown trees creating an unique sense of indeterminate wilderness. (Appendix 17). This period of debates around the development of the detailed spatial plan - the exact layout of the future development continues to be uncertain.

Figures 546–551: The overgrown landscape of Kalarand facilitates a variety of public uses. While installations are are somewhat damaged, the furniture installed during the LIFT11 installation programme remains in relatively good condition (Source: Kurik, 2013)

A year later (18th May 2014) a sign was installed at the entrance to the site stating "The Sea for All" referencing development plans in the air. However, it continues to operate as an informal space - there are makeshift fireplaces, some of them with seats around them, litter. The natural landscape is full of greenery. The site visit notes state: *The wilderness and obscurity of the landscape is really striking, especially in contrast with the views of the surrounding city and Kalamaja neighbourhood. The asphalt-covered paths running through the site are crumbling, but show where the main traffic moved in the past. The street furniture that was installed in 2011 has been painted bright pink.* Further impact of the development potentials is felt through the more certain ending of the Kilometre of Culture project. (Appendix 18)

Figure 552: Sea for all sign that has recently been installed by the developer (Source: Kurik, 2014)

Figures 553-556: It is a popular site amongst fishermen, demonstrating that some traditional uses of the site remain. In the second image, a man is showing rubbish he has found in the water (Source: Kurik, 2014)

Figures 557–558: The landscape is at once both barren and lush, but somehow completely wild. *(Source: Kurik, 2014)*

Figures 559–560: Signs of use: places to make fire, rubbish, cars parked for meetings in a secluded area, a rusty bent open entrance gate to the site all demonstrate informal uses of the site (Source: Kurik, 2014)

Figures 561-562: The transformation of the street furniture. Compared to the previous site visit it is now painted bright pink and covered in graffiti (Source: Kurik, 2014)

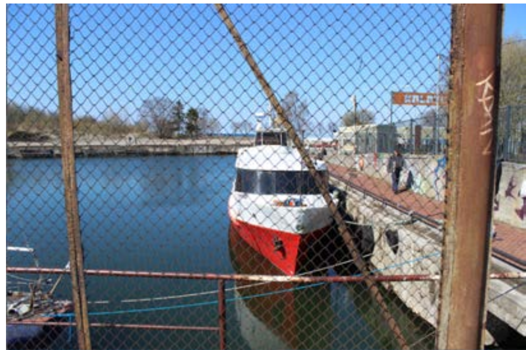
Figures 563-564: The Kilometre of Culture before being replaced by a new street that will open the area to various modes of traffic. Here it is dominantly used by joggers and walkers. The fact that the site is blocked by industrial structures adds to its secluded atmosphere (Source: Kurik, 2014)

By 2016 (27th April 2016) the Kilometre of Culture is gone and the site has been separated from the new road with heras fencing. This creates a sense of definition of the site - while previously Kalarand blended into the surrounding rough industrial landscape, it is now a clear development site. The new road has introduced a new sense of urbanity to the site - formerly secluded wasteland is now impacted by traffic noise, buses and trucks passing by (Appendix 19). The detailed spatial plan for the area was approved in November 2016 signifying the beginning of a more defined development process including an architectural competition.

Figures 565–568: The muddy and barren spring landscape shows some signs of preparation for the eventual development. (Source: Kurik, 2016)

Figures 569–572: the coastline continues to be a rough mix of stones, bricks and concrete blocks. The site is now separated from the road with heras fencing, but continues to be accessible to the public (Source: Kurik, 2016)

Figures 573–576: The Kilometre of Culture has been replaced with the Kalaranna Street connecting the area with the neighbourhood and nearby cultural establishments (Source: Kurik, 2016)



Figures 577–582: The informal 'beach' and street furniture continues to be used and adapted by the elements and people on site (Source: Kurik, 2016)

Architecture competition results were announced in February 2017. During a site visit in March 2017 (29th March 2017) active use of the site still seen as an informal public space was documented - people strolling on the site, sitting and chatting. A further connection has emerged - this is the Betapromenade connecting the site to further coastline. This creates a sense of a more connected coastline as a real possibility in Tallinn. (Appendix 20) While the site appears barren and ready for development it still operates at an intersection of an informal space and a development site. Both having some elements in common, but also some separate temporalities characteristic to them. Removing the uncertainty from the equation clearly impacts informal uses.

Figures 583–588: Views of the barren and clean landscape (Source: Kurik, 2017)

Figures 589–594: Street furniture is covered with signage advertising 'Betapromenade' – and access through the site created recently. It is a simple path that has been partially asphalted leading through the site and giving access to the neighbouring Patarei prison site. Kalarand itself is blocked by metal fencing. This new connection creates a sense of potential of a connected and accessible coastline (Source: Kurik, 2017)

Figures 595–598: The site is used as a shortcut, a meeting spot and a place for a stroll (Source: Kurik, 2017)

Nevertheless, a sense of stalled development or uncertain futures continues to be present in 2018 (4th April 2018). While new infrastructure is in place, e.g. bins, bike racks, a cleared pedestrian path it continues to have an indeterminate presence. Its frequent use as a public space is however reflected through footprints on the snow. Temporary installations are documented deteriorating. The sign “The Sea for All" is leaning to one side reflecting uncertainty of next steps at least publicly. (Appendix 21)

Figures 599–606: Paths and connections through the site demonstrate its significance as a shortcut or a public space (Source: Kurik, 2018)

Figures 607–612: Signs of use are especially evident from footprints and tracks in the snow (Source: Kurik, 2018)

Figures 613–620: A variety of perspectives of the city are visible from the site. In addition to the views of the sea, Kalamaja neighbourhood, the building of Linnahall and former Patarei prison stand out (Source: Kurik, 2018)

Figures 621–626: The deteriorating street furniture makes it evident that the uses of the site are predominantly informal (Source: Kurik, 2018)

The state of wilderness characteristic to the site continues (4th April 2019). The notes state: ‘ *It is curious to look at the variety of large trees next to a barren and bumpy moon landscape that is being prepared for development. The development on site is due to start and slowly Kalarand is losing its significance as an informal public space. This can also be connected with wider improvements taking place on the coastal landscape - including new public spaces that have emerged in the nearby Noblessner quarter. Residential development that surrounds the site in focus seems to add to the atmosphere of this area developing more towards local mixed uses, rather than a public landscape that has a city-wide significance.’ (Appendix 22)*

Figures 627–632: The site is clear and ready for the development that is soon going to start (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Figures 633–636: New information boards advertising the new Kalarand quarter have been installed. The fence and entrance gates leave the site accessible to the public. Crumbling piers and fishing boats are part of the already familiar informal Kalarand landscape (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Figures 637–644: Kalarand Street seems to be the main spatial reason for the shift that has taken place in the landscape – while the site in focus here continues to be used informally, there is a present outside world with people waiting for their bus, children walking home from school etc. The

Kalarand site is frequently used for a detour as it gives an opportunity to avoid the busy road with its buses and other large vehicles (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Signs of maintenance, but also beginning of the development process are documented during the autumn of 2019 (25th October 2019) (Appendix 23)

Figures 645–646: Signage advertising the future development on site. The area is promoted as the 'Kalarannna Quarter' (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Figures 647–648: Cars parking around the site demonstrate that a number of new functions have emerged in the neighbouring Kalamaja neighbourhood (Source: Kurik, 2019)

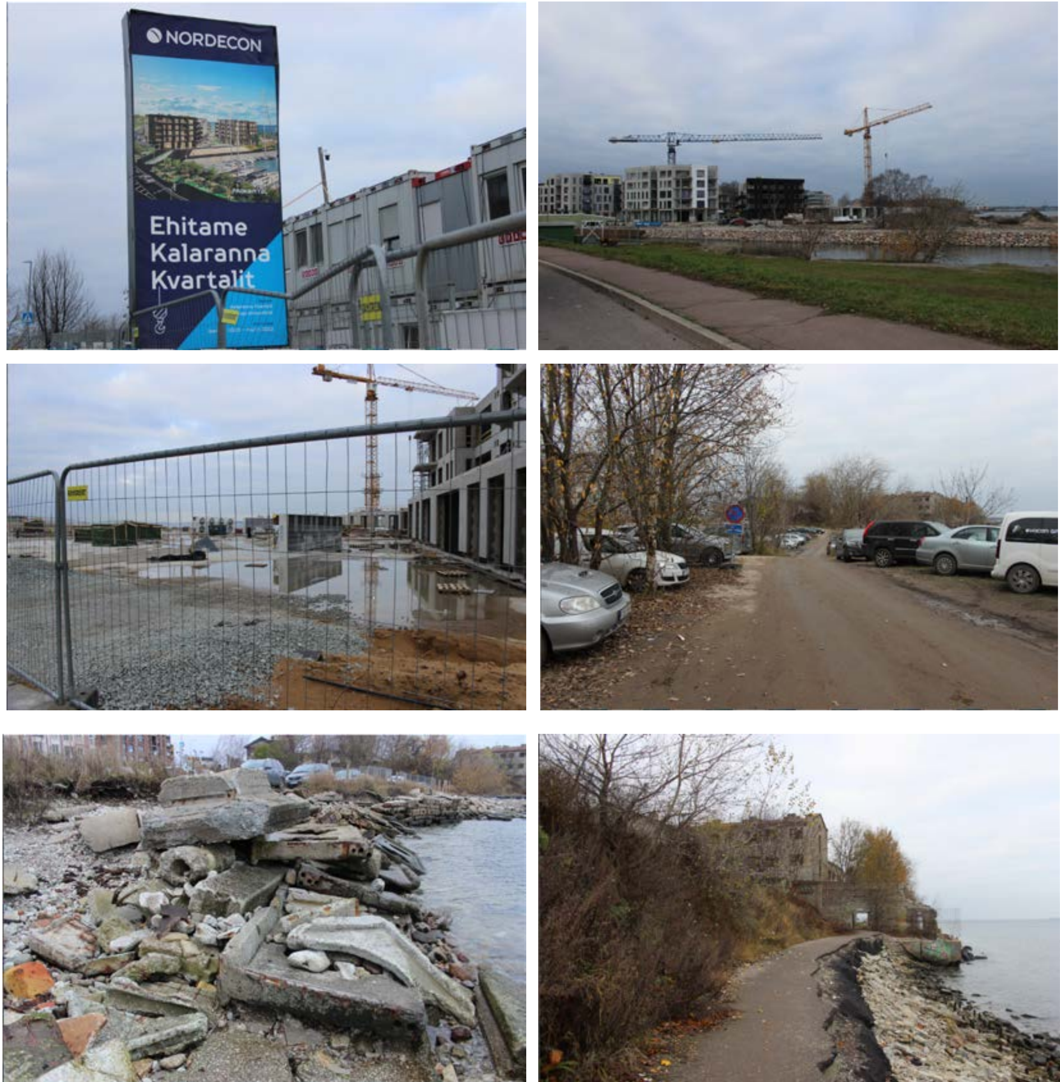
Figures 649–656: The autumn landscape is calm and quiet (Source: Kurik, 2019)

Figures 657–664. The street furniture on site is a mix of old and new. The new additions include a ping pong table (Source: Kurik, 2019)

The research project ends with documentation of the early stages of the development process during the global pandemic (12th November 2020). *It is no longer possible to access the site or the coast – it is surrounded by a fence, but it is possible to observe it from a variety of angles. A bird's-eye view can be found when standing on top of Linnahall next to the site, a close look at the development site and the buildings are visible from Kalarand Street. Observing the landscape over the last seven years it has clearly transformed from a peripheral site that has no direct road access to a coastal potential neighbourhood with infrastructure for large vehicles, buses and pedestrians. A level of informality remains, however. The proposed promenade that connects the Tallinn coast over 27 kilometres remains a fragmented project. While the Kalarand site is now connected with the Patarei area, this continues to be a rough-looking temporal landscape.' (Appendix 24)*

Site visit documentation over seven years reveals that uncertain futures create a certain public ownership of a place, disappearance of this can be slow and gradual.

Figures 665–670: The mixed-use development in progress (Source: Kurik, 2020)



Figures 671–676: The areas surrounding the development site continue to embody the indeterminacy that has been characteristic of Kalarand in recent years (Source: Kurik, 2020)

Figures 677–682: The heras fencing separating the development site from the surrounding is also an informal boundary for car parking (Source: Kurik, 2020)

Kalarand as a public space

The story of the change and adaptation of this temporary bench built as part of the 2011 Capital of Culture programme LIFT11 installation is a telling example that changes to indeterminate landscapes are often slow and temporal. Landscapes become sites in cities where it is still possible to clearly observe the changing of the seasons and the wear and tear of structures as well as emerging uses. While the significance of Kalarand as a public space remained unsure before the completion of the development, there continued to be potential of creating new public connections to the coast.

Figures 683–687: Kalarand in 2013 (n.d), 27th April 2016, 2018, 2nd April 2019, 25th October 2019 (Source: Kurik)

Kalarand as a built and heritage site

These images taken over the course of four and a half years demonstrate the slow shift in the landscape that has facilitated temporary uses. The photos have been taken looking from Kalarand towards Patarei fort/prison (Figures 688-691). The fort has since the late 1800s formed a barrier on the coast. This architectural landscape limited the Kalarand site. During the period of indeterminacy, the prison similarly became a site for temporary uses. This created an opportunity to connect the sites. While in the first image the coast is a waste landscape full of rubble the final image shows a low investment path connecting the sites.

Figures 688–691: April 2016, April 2018, April 2019 and November 2020 (Source: Kurik)

Discussion

Kalarand is a complex development site that can be uncovered from a variety of perspectives. Under development at the end of this project, the site has acquired a multitude of meanings throughout its period of indeterminacy.

The media record and an almost chronological overview of landmark planning documents reveal a complex process that has been shaped by a wide range of stakeholders. Key in this has been achieving a balance between private and public interests in urban planning and the question of access on multiple levels – access to the coast, but also access to the housing development on site. Kalarand can be viewed as a landmark case in Estonia, as it is one of the most documented cases where temporary uses have been consciously used initially by the community, but eventually by the developer in shaping the place. The hypothesis surrounding this exploration was that these temporary practices during indeterminate periods have shaped the development outcome. This is something that is difficult to confirm or deny. However, the complex process behind achieving the detailed spatial plan does demonstrate shifting value systems. Early illustrations of bright colourful public spaces can be compared with the architectural competition results in order to understand how places are shaped through representation.

Site visit documentation has revealed an additional side of post-transition development. Shifts in the physical space and practices of use have been gradual. For a period Kalarand became a unique informal public space adapted by mixed communities. Loss of these types of landscapes does signify a new phase in the development of Tallinn – from informal to more and more formal and distinctly private. This again raises the question of access – what types of communities should have access to central coastal landscapes and whether this can be shaped only by private interests is a question that will most likely remain relevant even after the development has completed.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has explored three long-term indeterminate culturally and economically significant sites in Tallinn, Estonia in order to understand their status as post-socialist places as well as the significance of uncertain development plans and never-realised urban visions as a laboratory for informal uses that are in turn shaping urban futures. The three-step experimental methodology unveiled unique potentials for the researcher as well as the urban practitioner. The juxtaposition of formal and developed strategy documents and media representation with autoethnographic explorations created a multilayered understanding of each site as an urban place in continuous flux. While site visits are an intrinsic part of any urban vision creation and temporary uses have become part of the planners' and designers' toolbox, it is argued that **there continues to be unused potential in considering the uncertain mid-period that characterises complex development sites for understanding how we create value, define heritage, understand the significance of place and create just cities.** This dissertation focused specifically on telling the story of Tallinn: a coastal city with a rich historic urban fabric and unique development potentials. However, it is argued that acknowledging mid-periods and seeing value in uncertainty is relevant to the critical exploration of any urban context. Ultimately it is always significant to ask why and who makes decisions, who shapes the urban space around us and how these decisions impact present-day communities as well as urban futures.

The conclusions or rather elaboration proposed here can only be open-ended, as the dissertation itself looked at spaces that are themselves in the process of change. A core contribution of this thesis is an experiment in synthesising a variety of information about sites – from land ownership, stakeholder relationships and morphology to the significance of never-realised visions and informal uses in shaping development sites. Tallinn, often considered through the perspective of post-socialist urban studies, is a city where shifts in space as well

as ideas of an urbanism that is good, just, accessible, inclusive and so on have been at the forefront of discussions in recent decades. The case studies of Linnahall, Kalarand and Kopli Lines have enabled to uncover debates that surround the long-term development visions and informal uses that emerge during indeterminate periods. It was argued that there is value in uncertain mid-periods characterising development sites often for a number of years in terms of assisting to deconstruct the concept of postsocialism, exploring urban heritage, but possibly also for shaping urban futures.

Summary of key findings

Post-socialist urban transitions, temporality and indeterminacy re-evaluated

The theoretical framework of the dissertation brought forward three core fields of debate. A context-specific framework was created by exploring the notion of post-socialism. More and more scholars are exploring the notion critically and exploring alternative ways of unveiling former Soviet spaces. While it is acknowledged that the sharp transition from one planning system to another has had identifiable clear effects on the urban development processes, I have argued that when it comes to understanding urban change in Tallinn, post-socialist urban studies have significant limitations. It is equally important to stress characteristics of capitalist urbanisations more globally and acknowledge the everyday, ordinary nature of urban waste spaces.

In order to have a meaningful debate about post-socialist urbanism, it is relevant to look into the temporality of urban spaces. It was argued that urban development continues to be oriented towards a finalised result, in a sense a consensus about what is good in terms of design, use and accessibility. Without challenging these assumptions and paying justice to changing value systems, however, it is possible to miss significant opportunities. The unique opportunity to document changes on multiple levels that characterise these stalled sites has made it possible to argue

for the significance of indeterminate mid-periods, but also the open endedness of defining what can be considered post-socialist, or how processes taking place in formerly socialist context are situated in global urbanism. I asked how, if change is a constant, should this be reflected in the way we understand and think about urban space and planning, and how, in turn, could it shape urban development.

Looking at stalled indeterminate sites is not a common entry point into post-socialist urbanism (Pusca, 2010). Exploring urban indeterminacy is an interesting challenge – there is a certain excitement around temporary uses and the possibility of appropriating indeterminate spaces flexibly, while at the same time this type of approach to indeterminate spaces often does not acknowledge that the types of uses approved more generally leave broader social challenges on the background. This thesis has highlighted the significance of non-change and stalled projects as well as never-realised urban visions to understand how we value place, heritage and context and how debates around value systems have morphed over the last three decades. The thesis has explored relationships between spaces, order and disorder, construction and destruction, the politics of memory and the ever-present idea that history should have been somehow different.

A significant interest that emerged from the literature review focused on the question how we understand, define, but also protect what is valuable in space as well as frameworks of value become evident through the language of representation. Morphing debate has been revealed through representations in a variety of mediums - how sites in focus are described in media, but also represented visually. It is argued that value systems are not obvious, but they become evident when looking at processes shaping space reflectively and through representations. In order to do that a certain distance is needed. It was argued that it is a relevant moment to critically evaluate urban transformation processes characteristic to Tallinn and reevaluate the significance of post-socialist transformations as the dominant defining framework.

This interest in building a bridge between post-socialist urbanism, indeterminacy and temporality brings the discussion back to the research questions:

How have the changes from socialism to market economy and the related ownership shifts shaped the (typo)morphology of Tallinn over the course of three decades? Could exploring processes shaping long-term indeterminate landscapes offer a valid context for understanding shifting value systems and be relevant to devising a more inclusive approach to dealing with urban heritage and shaping the future of indeterminate sites?

These research questions are formed in a way that looks for clear answers - however, a limited answer is provided to the inquiry about devising a more inclusive approach to heritage. It is evidenced through case study analyses, that what we consider significant to protect and where it is deemed appropriate to develop is a morphing debate, the scale and focus of development and preservation practices is dependent on political, economic and everyday practices.

Through literature review and case study research it became evident that there is a significant gap between theory and practice. As demonstrated in the literature review, contemporary urbanism is growingly interested in temporality, flexibility, indeterminacy and ultimately understanding space as political, shaped by ownership relationships and stakeholder narratives. Post-socialist urbanism however appears often as a broad concept including everything that takes place in formerly Soviet contexts. Development processes and management of space takes place in a separate sphere and operates in a neoliberal context uncritically, in some forms intensely focused on catching up with the west and highlighting the significance of end result in development beyond process and engagement with a broad range of interested stakeholders.

This thesis has called into question the notion of post-socialism as a universal term describing urban processes in a wide array of spaces. While seen as relevant to explaining certain aspects of urban development in former Soviet contexts, exploring case studies as everyday, ordinary spaces has added to the debate about what exactly makes these spaces post-socialist. Whether there is a reason to claim that post-socialism has ended is an academic debate that will most likely continue for a significant period, but exploring change in indeterminate conditions has enabled us to argue that urban change is constant and defining places through ruptures is in many ways limited.

Summary of key case study findings. Indeterminate sites as an opportunity to learn about urban processes

All three sites in focus in this thesis have been in the centre of a number of research papers, and sites for a long list of urban visions. The coastal development of Tallinn, more broadly, has been one of Tallinn's key developmental focuses since early 1990s. Connecting coastal sites, debating about appropriate uses and questions of access has been at the forefront of planning debates for a significant number of years. However, while development potential was identified, there is also an intense sense of interest in the informality of these sites more particularly. This sense of potential can often be seen as characteristic of indeterminate sites in transitional contexts. It was argued that these development sites with uncertain futures are characterised by a certain kind of attraction to the urban wanderer. They have a romantic element to them, a perceived authenticity, but they are also shaped by future ambitions for a different city.

All three case studies were explored essentially as heritage sites – places that are considered valuable to preserve but also develop following elements of their unique identity. The challenge of achieving a balance between conservation and an acceptance of change characterises all the diverse contexts explored here. An additional layer of complex histories adds to the challenge of reuse and

redevelopment. Especially in the case of Linnahall, the question about preserving Soviet heritage has been debated.

Exploring the three case studies as research objects and heritage sites, as media representations and as everyday places uncovered the complexity of development and changing ideals. The cases demonstrate changing attitudes to heritage – what is considered worth preserving is continuously changing.

Linnahall - material legacies of a hibernating space

As a monumental architectural heritage site Linnahall offers relevant perspectives for exploring transitions in value systems. The case study exploration demonstrated that indeterminate periods, a certain hibernating state, can be a breeding ground for alternative uses, though incremental. It can be argued that the building has gained a new significance as a destination and as a ruin. However, long term disuse has a significant impact on buildings - while its cultural significance is more unanimously understood the structure can be observed crumbling. The at risk status highlights the value further.

Uncovering debates focused on the heritage significance of the building (from proposed demolition in 1990s and early 2000s to more subtle restoration proposals at present) demonstrate the morphing character of newly capitalist contexts. Ultimately what is considered valuable is up for debate continuously and this can be seen both as an asset and as a challenge.

While the city government is continually focused on looking for a long-term new use for the building, the building itself is documented as deteriorating. Ideas surrounding architecture and permanence can be argued to also be evident in proposals for demolition – flexible, adaptive solutions have not yet gained momentum. The media analyses juxtaposed with plans and vision documents

demonstrated that collaboration between a variety of stakeholders is needed. Linnahall was viewed as a built heritage site, a significant landscape and a public space and a canvas for social commentary. It has a role in broader regeneration of Tallinn's coastline, however it remains undefined. Autoethnographic records revealed how the indetermiante state of the building has given the building a certain role in urban politics - it is used as a canvas for commentary, but also a tool in political debates.

Kopli Liinid/Kopli Lines

Kopli Liinid/Kopli Lines neighbourhood redevelopment arrived at the development phase during this research project after decades of uncertain futures. This case study demonstrated the impact of indeterminacy on neighbourhood dynamics, and explored how heritage is protected and managed through the tool of milieu valued area designation. The chapter revealed a change in perceptions that surrounded the development process and its gradual transition to a middle class residential neighbourhood balancing contemporary design and heritage landscape.

The re-development of the Kopli Lines neighbourhood was a challenge for decades and progress there coincides with the growing popularity of the wider Kopli area as a place for young professionals. This case highlights the challenges of urban revitalisation in transitional contexts: while it is evident that solutions were needed, the record of planning documents, media and site visits demonstrates an approach to the site that does not consider many alternatives within neoliberal market conditions.

The new development offers relevant insight into the development of heritage protection practices in newly independent Estonia. The policy of milieu-valued areas protects characteristic urban landscapes, and elements of Kopli Lines have been identified as relevant to preserve. This has led to a design that reflects the

historic street layout as well as the scale and height of the buildings. The juxtaposition of this with the socio-economic realities of the area has been the focus of extensive media representation. The redeveloped area reflects a approach to space characteristic of a newly liberal society where private space is central to development (for example reflected in gated courtyards), a certain luxury is connected to the idea of coastal living, including views and scenery and value is identified in pre-soviet architectural heritage and traditional typologies.

Kalarand

The uncertainty and certain wilderness characteristic to the Kalarand development site for a significant period unfolds in media representations, plans and vision documents as a telling example during the process of expanding stakeholders in city making. From a site that is cut off from the city it morphed into a dense residential neighbourhood. This process was surrounded by complex debates around coastal development. Autoethnographic records view the site for a significant period as something that existed between informality and development. It can be concluded that this characteristic uncertainty is behind a certain sense of freedom that enables informal uses to emerge, users to interpret the space, but also start making claims on it.

The documentation of the development of the detailed spatial plan is a significant example of how the planning process is complex in a transitional context.

Key in this has been achieving a balance between private and public interests in urban planning and the question of access on multiple levels – access to the coast, but also access to the housing development on site. Kalarand can be viewed as a landmark case in Estonia, as it is one of the most documented cases where temporary uses have been consciously used initially by the community, but eventually by the developer in shaping the place. It can be argued that in order for debates about future of a space to emerge certain characteristics need to be in

place - there needs to be openness about a sites future use or proposed plans need to be open for debating, indeterminacy has to last for a significant period, the site needs to be accessible to a level, there needs to be a possibility to adapt it to the users' needs even if this is in a small scale e.g. creating paths, gathering spots, it needs to be situated in a central or a significant location in terms of wider urban dynamics. Edgelands gain attention if they are 'central', at the forefront of debates, however, as the redevelopment has not concluded by the end of this project, it is difficult to conclusively state what has been the impact of informal uses in shaping the use patterns of the redevelopment mixed use site and how will the access to coast be preserved and used by the wider public.

Case studies comparatively

Three case studies in focus enabled the opening of diverse perspectives on the capitalist development process in a post-socialist context. While visions of Kopli Lines have, throughout the development process, represented a future middle-class residential area describing a physically improved urban landscape, the actual physical space can be claimed to have been continuously deteriorating, and partially continues to do so alongside an ongoing development process. While Kalarand was envisioned as a yachting harbour and a semi-gated community in the late 1990s and early 2000s, alternative processes have directed the future of the area for a period towards more community-led uses and extensive public spaces. While large visions for Linnahall have failed, the building continues to function as an informal public space and it has gained new significance due to its indeterminate state and lack of use.

In the case of Kalarad, when looking at the initially vague and eventually more definite future visions compared to images from the site visits and additional qualitative data it is revealed that a seemingly more conscious approach for the indeterminate period was chosen. The creation of a temporary public beach, the Kilometre of Culture and support for public access to the area created a

momentum in space that has influenced the emerging vision. Kalarand's uses between 2011 and the present as a temporary public beach, a Kilometre of Culture and an event space position it within a wider boom of temporary urbanism. The community involvement that has emerged since 2008 enabled the people of Tallinn to envision improved access to the city centre seaside; the community opposition to the initial detail plan has been a trigger for a more conscious vision. This could be viewed as an example of post-socialist planning moving from the ad hoc to a more strategic vision and eventually more conscious community engagement and participatory practices. This enables the drawing of parallels with similar processes characteristic of Western Europe where bottom-up processes, participatory planning and temporary uses have gained significance since the 2008 world economic crisis. Similarly, since then these practices have increasingly become part of the toolkit and vocabulary of neoliberal planning practice.

Linnahall was seen as a unique case among the three as it is an architectural landmark that symbolises the opening of Tallinn to the sea during the Soviet period and also a highly valued listed heritage object due to its representation of Estonian modernism and its unique brutalist design. It is a site where negotiations about what to do with Soviet heritage have largely taken place. However, it has been a significant challenge to find a contemporary use for such a monumental structure. While visions have been created of future uses as a casino or a conference centre, the monumental structure is slowly decaying and taking new forms as a community art project, a viewing platform and a public space for city inhabitants and visitors. The building has been largely vacant for approximately a decade. This long-term vacancy enables the organic processes of nature to take over; while visions continue to emerge the structure is slowly crumbling.

The case studies demonstrated that describing the morphology of the city through **periods of non-development** can provide unique insights into the processes that shape the urban space. The urban form of Tallinn, as it is seen today, in its

mediaeval core and extensive districts of wooden housing, is in many ways unique because of a lack of development at certain times. The same applies when looking at the case studies in question. Quick re-development in the early 1990s would have created an urban landscape that is difficult to imagine today. The wish to erase Soviet and even pre-Soviet memory has affected these spaces, but this effect is not easily visible. The slowness of change to the physical space of these sites has followed the course of development of a planning culture.

It is argued that vacant or underused land is a key element when aiming to understand any urban condition. It enables a constant imagining of new identities and expects an active participation from the urban dweller. The **process of urban design and development is constantly evolving and reflects changes in society, economy and the prevailing politics**. This all overlays the historically defined processes of place (Carmona, 2014a). The slow and stalled process of development characteristic to the case studies in focus undoubtedly has an impact on the changing planning process. Large-scale vision-centred planning continues to dominate; however, it has become evident that during the continuous process of transition from socialist to neoliberal conditions the group of stakeholders continues to broaden, with local communities taking a keen interest in these indeterminate sites and new links emerging between the government, the developer and the resident.

The goal of this thesis was to take a step back and observe, rather than argue against or for development to retrospectively observe processes surrounding decision making and how these were portrayed. These three case studies have been significant precedents for shaping how planning is thought of in the context of Tallinn and the involvement of mixed stakeholders. While the development process is still undecided, underway or almost complete, these sites continue to transition and find new meanings, some of them formal and some informal.

The value of uncertainty?

A relevant question remains - what would be the middle ground in terms of approaching indeterminate spaces? Could waste spaces in cities in their variety of forms be seen not essentially as a problem, but a category on their own, a site where tensions in space are reflected clearly, that function as a basis for creating value?

Based on theoretical an case study explorations I argued that city-making in Tallinn has moved from unregulated ad hoc planning to more inclusive and strategic approaches during the three decades of post-socialist change, but there continues to be room for the development of a more coherent and just urban management in terms of accessibility, participation and approaches to heritage and urban futures. This requires meaningful collaboration between the city, developers, communities and everyday users of the space. Exploring the planning process in the transitional context of Tallinn has revealed not only the significance of vision creation, but also the relevance of incorporating uncertainty and flexibility in visions.

It is argued that more attention in urban planning needs to be given to liminality. Mid-periods, periods of no-use and uncertain futures are ideal contexts for mapping the needs of a community, bottom-up aspirations and natural patterns of movement and use. Urban planning continues to be focused on end goals, finished developments often failing to acknowledge that mid-periods can often last for decades or even generations. This can lead to the loss of significant heritage sites, deprivation and conflicts between stakeholders. The uncertainty characteristic of these sites is considered to be productive. This productive uncertainty reveals how our approach to ‘the good city’ is changing and that is reflected in plans.

This project demonstrated that uncertainty creates a sense of broad public ownership - this allows a number of visionary perspectives and informal uses to

emerge. Framed by Panu Lehtovuori's concept 'weak place' (Lehtovuori, 2010) a sense of freedom that emerges allows places to be malleable and reactive to constantly changing circumstances

Informal uses have a limited impact if they are not consciously seen as valuable. A discussion between creative gentrification and uncertainty is also continuously actual. There is a sensitive balance - it is not argued that information should be adapted consciously into a planners', developers' and placemakers' toolkit. Using informal uses for place branding, can also be problematic. It is increasingly common in urban theory to highlight the challenges of instrumentalisation of culture where temporary uses become gap fillers. There seems to be a difference between types of informality that would require further research.

What is considered significant here, however, is a broader theoretical observation - a city can be viewed as a scenario able to evolve over time - allowing a certain level of indeterminacy consciously is a prerequisite to openness. Existing community resources are often underused - this becomes especially evident when exploring processes surrounding the futures of Linnahall. It is evident that there is a broad interest in the future of this landmark building in academia, the field of architecture and urbanism as well as arts. Valuing uncertainty would enable creating more sustainable flexible vision documents. Incorporating indeterminacy and flexibility in vision creation could have far-reaching implications and allow spaces to accommodate spontaneity and a sense of flexibility. This is especially relevant in transitional contexts, post-industrial, post-socialist, but also post-pandemic urban development.

Returning to one of the central research interests of this project - what is the significance of post-socialist urbanism in arriving at these conclusions? It is relevant to highlight that these sites in focus acquired a unique almost laboratory environment largely due to the transitional processes in society - shifting ownership relationships, but also fresh debates around the questions of heritage

and value. So it can be argued that conclusions made here are possible due to the post-socialist nature of these sites, however, the question of the significance or value of uncertainty and informality is more universal. Informality offers a right to the city, enables to challenge the past and present and visualise alternative futures.

Limitations and opportunities for further research

This research project attempted to use social sciences methods in order to offer new perspectives on urban development processes. The experimental research project dealt with records that are widely accessible in online archives, media portals and so on in order to create a narrative of development processes. It is acknowledged that the three level methodology used here: typomorphological analysis, analyses of media representation and autoethnographic documentation - has limitations. There could be further opportunities to explore stakeholder narratives through including wider reflections as well as documenting the rhythms characteristic to these sites with more rigid methodologies. However, it is argued that in order to explore indeterminacy based on a variety of contexts, mixed-methods chosen here have proved to be relevant.

Additionally, the debates uncovered here are very current, transformation processes characteristic to the sites in focus continue to take place. Nevertheless, the sense of openness this research project ends with supports the argument - there is no finished city, these sites continue to be malleable, shaped by societal processes. In a way this dissertation is a record of a period of time, reflecting the speed of change in frameworks of contemporary urbanism.

A clear alternative to post-socialism has not been offered here. Contrary to some contemporary theorists, the conclusions are not radical in a sense as they do not invite an abandonment of the project. However, it is seen that there is room for these debates to continue. It is highlighted that it is relevant to see former Soviet

cities as morphing sites and post-socialist urbanim can be used only to characterise certain elements of urban change, processes characteristic to Tallinn need to also be observed in the context of late capitalism, shifting political dilemmas globally, post-industrial, post-pandemic influences etc. Further research into a more conscious and inclusive approach to indeterminacy is also needed. There is potential for a publication that deals with the development of Tallinn in the last three decades through non-development and development alike.

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APPENDIX 1
Site visit diary - Linnahall

3 September 2013

I live in Kalamaja, historically a fisherman's village, but now an up and coming neighbourhood of colourful timber houses in Tallinn, on Kungla Street about a kilometre from Linnahall, and work in a temporary bar built into a former industrial unit next to Linnahall. I cycle to work every day and observe Linnahall in the distance. This is a first site visit before embarking on my PhD to explore the ground and note down my initial ideas. Knowing the context I feel that there is a sense of need for redevelopment in the wider area, but the feelings are mixed – isn't there something special about this temporary state and undefined landscapes that invite people to explore and create images of undefined futures? I feel like this is an interesting time to be young in Tallinn – there is still a lot to happen and

the manner in which it will, is uncertain, the air is full of potential. Two years have passed since the time when Tallinn was the European Capital of Culture with Linnahall's rooftop as a venue for one of its installations and a year has passed since the exhibition in the Venice Biennale. What will happen next is unsure.

On this specific day, there is a fair taking place and colourful attractions have invited children and families in the area. It is a bright early autumn day and the wide-open walkways and steps of Linnahall are full of people exploring, observing. I am drawn to the stone of Linnahall and take many pictures of walls and steps with weeds pushing through.

A cruise ship is visible in the distance and a pair of girls are sitting on the edge of the building and discussing something seemingly serious. The main entrance of Linnahall appears like a black hole – I realise the peculiarity of this building now that it is not in use. It feels like a landscape and entrances, and windows ... the most crucial elements of a traditional building seem somehow rudimentary ... It's now a space for climbing, exploring and hanging out and I doubt that many visitors imagine that under them is a dark empty hall that used to play sold-out shows for thousands of people. Windows and doors that are hidden under steps and complicated structural elements are covered with graffiti and scribbles. There is a poster with the letters TAB – this refers to the Tallinn Architecture Biennale that took place earlier that year and dealt with the post-socialist heritage and interpreting post-socialist heritage in Tallinn. I found graffiti in Russian stating boldly 'Anja loves Andrei Artjom'.

APPENDIX 2
Site visit diary - Linnahall

8th May 2014

It's a gloomy day and Linnahall makes a very different appearance from the first documented visit almost a year earlier. The landmark building stands out in the coastal landscape covered in colourful graffiti and the structure is visibly crumbling with weeds growing through stones forming pathways and steps. The access to the main entrances to the building are blocked by metal bars and barbed wire and the building's unwelcoming nature is somehow especially evident. From window reflections you can see the glass towers of Tallinn's central business district developed mostly in the 1990s and early 2000s – what a contrast!

Somehow it seems that most people are naturally drawn to the Western side of Linnahall, closer to the Kalamaja neighbourhood and urban views, rather than the side facing the harbour. I'm no different, my previous visits as a local resident, student, explorer have always taken me on this side. To change my perspective, I walk under what used to be a railway bridge to explore the Eastern side of Linnahall and adjacent wasteland. Like a year before I am surprised to find a fairground with the same attractions. This time, however, it is not in front of Linnahall, but on an odd muddy wasteland slightly hidden from everyone's view between Linnahall and the harbour highlighting the strange wasteland landscape still characteristic to Tallinn.

APPENDIX 3

Site visit diary - Linnahall

27 April 2016

A sunny spring day with barren trees exposes a colourful Linnahall covered in graffiti on all sides. I started the site visit from Kalarand next to Linnahall and took a few photos of Linnahall in the distance. The structure is surrounded by boats – a smaller speed boat has docked in the little harbour just behind Linnahall, bigger (cruise)ships are visible in Tallinn Harbour. I wonder what do

people who visit Tallinn for the first time think of the building. Can they guess the use … or the former use of the building? Or does it come across as a natural part of the fragmented city of Tallinn?

The weather is not yet warm, but surprisingly the rooftop is filled with people who have gathered there to spend their afternoon, to take a quick walk. It's difficult to find a common characteristic of the people I see, it seems like anyone and everyone is attracted to this curious space. There is a group of tourists in an organised line wheeling through what used to be the railway tunnel on their Segways and a lone jogger racing up the steps, there is a well-dressed middle-aged couple, younger couples, teenagers, explorers. Linnahall is not a shortcut or an especially convenient place to visit … in order to admire the view of the sea and the city one must climb a number of steps and walk across wide windy walkways. But the space is attractive and curious. There is something vibrant about the site even though each picture demonstrates the structure crumbling. There is no sign of any maintenance … the building lives its own wild life.

APPENDIX 4

Site visit diary - Linnahall

29 March 2017

At first glance, seemingly nothing has changed since the last site visit a year earlier. The world around us has changed, however, and you can find little signs of this on Linnahall. I find political stencil artwork on walls: 'Down with Assad, down with imperialism. Freedom for Syria', 'Justice for Aleppo 2016'. Steps leading to the roof are empty, the air is still wintery. I notice for the first time that the walls of Linnahall are completely crumbling and the slate that has fallen off reveals the poorly constructed structure behind it. Linnahall has been without a permanent use for more than seven years and it becomes evident that

deterioration takes place quite quickly – having use is a key part of preservation. Behind the piles of fallen bricks, the view is dominated by large ships in the harbour – seemingly two different cities exist next to each other. The rooftop is empty – this is a rare sight, but winter cold in Estonia can easily last until April – no one seems to want to be outside yet. There is a curious sight in the water cooling pool behind Linnahall – a young boy is rafting on what seems to be a door. Compared to the previous visit, the nightclub Poseidon behind looks abandoned, a few months ago there was a fire … It has been a place with a suspicious reputation throughout its existence. The wall of graffiti is growing and changing every year telling new stories about the climate around us and noting the process of urban change.

APPENDIX 5

Site visit diary - Linnahall

25 July 2017

Lush summer landscape and a busy day of locals and tourists passing through or exploring the area. Nature emerging on and around Linnahall is green and voluptuous. This odd landmark feels like a natural part of entering Tallinn from a speedboat from Helsinki. In order to arrive at the well-known touristic old town, after disembarking the boat you have to pass through this curious wasteland. I assume it is difficult to understand what Linnahall is without knowing any background about it. The slate construction grows from the landscape like a Mayan temple or a medieval fortress behind tourists dragging their heavy luggage towards their nearby hotels. Photos demonstrate that being part of a landscape is, even more, real – in addition to small plants there are even bigger trees pushing through the stone. It has been six years since LIFT11 and five years since the Venice Architecture Biennale at which Linnahall was in focus. The

search for a solution and a new use has quietened down. It seems that the indeterminate situation and slow deterioration of the building have been accepted as a semi-permanent condition. The graffiti covering the building has become natural to the building.

APPENDIX 6

Site visit diary - Linnahall

4th April 2018

A controversial mural has emerged on the building that has stirred quite a storm in the media in recent months. After the Estonian National Heritage Board raised an alarm, I assumed it would have been removed, but it remained on the side of Linnahall months later. There are opposing opinions – some argue that the building should fully be covered with artwork, others that this architectural landscape should be kept intact. It seems that Linnahall now attracts not only informal graffiti but also advertisements and political propaganda. The Estonian flag on the coastal/north side of Linnahall tells us about the time we live in. Nationalism has been raising its head for a number of years. On one side of the steps, there is graffiti with national symbols, on another someone has drawn a set of penises.

The steps of Linnahall are unbelievably slippery. I notice people peeking in through the windows to explore what is going on inside the building. An effort has been made to remove previous informal graffiti … signs of it are still visible and new drawings are slowly covering it. Some tourists are braving the cold.

The building's deterioration process is visible from broken and missing lamps on the promenade. The Tallinn Linnahall sign is disappearing. A sea of footprints in the snow, a snowman. Linnahall has been in this abandoned state for almost a decade. I realise that it has been a symbol for a whole generation.

APPENDIX 7

Site visit diary - Linnahall

2nd April 2019

When climbing on the rooftop I notice new signs of deterioration – it was curious to see that the fallen off stone revealed a brick structure built at an angle – I would think that is just not how it's done and remember how the building's architect Raine Karp claimed once that it is one of the worst quality buildings from the Soviet period. Climbing on the top there was no one there and the formerly extensive graffiti was replaced by few fresh scribbles. The back of the structure revealed new protective fences – the side of the building I don't usually explore seems to have arrived at a state where it is not safe to access anymore.

It seems that after the debates about the controversial mural the building has received a thorough clean. The illegal nationalist mural of a wolf has been completely removed, but also any other signs of graffiti. The building stands grey and clean and signs of community appropriation were pretty much gone, revealing the sad state of the building. At the same time, it is now possible to imagine how the building looked when it first opened in the 1980s.

APPENDIX 8

Site visit diary - Linnahall

22 July 2019

I notice a couple of things have changed – Tallinn, including the landscape surrounding Linnahall, is bustling with tourists and young couples having fun using a new type of transport - electric scooters that have taken over the city. And another change has occurred on top of Linnahall. While it has always been a site that attracts young people and explorers, the amount of people on the rooftop is something I have never seen before, and it's a rainy Monday. It looks like there are tourists from all over the world, families, groups of friends. Has it been Christopher Nolan's production that has created the change? Thinking about years of discussions and failed visions it occurs to me that this vision has never

been considered – Linnahall is a destination, it is a place we want to see and a place that tells a story. Images from this day can be juxtaposed with images from Dmitri Bruns' photos from the early 1980s. It is surprising to see that in its ruined indeterminate state the building has actually gained a 'use'.

I also wonder if the growth in popularity has been supported by social media aesthetics and the trend for wasteland admiration. The building itself stands relatively unchanged but more and more inaccessible – the condition of the steps, walkways and entrances continues to worsen.

APPENDIX 9

Site visit diary - Linnahall

25 October 2019

This is my first autumn visit to the site. I approach from the side of Kalarand and Linnahall appears relatively clean as it did during my last visit in July the same year. The low autumn light, however, offers a different perspective.

I capture a lonely teenage girl dancing on the roof. She is wearing headphones and appears like a symbol of rebellion against the grey sea. Just 20 meters from here another group of Russian speaking teenagers are climbing on the ledges and roofs. A student group speaking German appears – their professors excitedly explain the story behind the building and students take photos. A man in a red puffer coat is taking photos next to me – I wonder if it is for social media or a building-related purpose. His focus does seem to be on the views rather than details.

Half of Linnahall is blocked from public access, the stairs are crumbling. But I do notice that the building is in better condition than it was previously. (Later I read from the papers that Christopher Nolan's team did some renovation work during their filming period.)

APPENDIX 10

Site visit diary - Linnahall

12th November 2020

It has been a year since the previous site visit, it is autumn during a global pandemic and more uncertainties surround the future of the building. The building's rooftop has become largely inaccessible, only the main walkways and the Western side of the rooftop remain free to walk on. Barricading fences seem to protect the visitor from potential accidents, but if needed they can easily be

overcome. I notice further minor repairs to some of the elements of the building that I have previously documented falling apart and crumbling. Interestingly some kind of timber has been used to patch the building – these seem like quick fixes before a long-term solution emerges. Despite quick fixes, I have not before seen the building in such a poor condition. After a full clean in 2017, the building is again covered in colourful graffiti, from scribbles and tags to larger pieces. However, I can't clearly identify any political commentary, the artwork is bright and seemingly neutral. A new trend seems to be references to Instagram handles. I note the use of the building – three boys who are not yet teenagers climb on the rooftop with heavy-looking gear. I wonder what they are doing when I realise they are setting up equipment for filming – looking back I wish I had asked about their project. I also noticed a couple of people looking like hikers climbing the steps.

APPENDIX 11

Site visit diary - Kopli Liinid

10th October 2013

The last residents[31]

The wider Kopli area is not affluent, but the level of dereliction on Kopli Lines is on an extreme scale. This is not my first visit to the area, but I am very aware of the contrast. During this site visit, I witnessed many families still living in the area, but do not dare to take pictures of buildings that still seem actively in use. The majority of buildings look and are derelict, with windows blocked or open to the elements.

Photos of buildings nevertheless demonstrate that some families still live in the area or have only recently left. Top floors look more well maintained, the bars on the ground floors highlight the criminal problems in the area. I still note cars parked in front of the buildings, but at the same time the gaps between buildings have grown vast and there are unlimited signs of recent fires.

Fires have left behind ruins of buildings as well as burned trees and rubble that has not been cleaned. It is unsure what is the main reason for the extensive number of burned down buildings, but it is very likely that many of them are caused by illegal residents making fires inside. This contributes to the eerie atmosphere as it is very likely that people have also died or been hurt.[32]

As many buildings have been demolished the central area of the Lines is a large vacant landscape. Nature is slowly taking over and restoring its order.

[31] *First observation was not carried out according to a pre-designed plan, I took my camera with me for a walk in the area and caught some images. Prior to this visit I had visited the site several times as an explorer, but never documented my visits in much detail. This is the first visit I have some visual material of.*

[32] *8 people have lost their lives in fire or through crime in the area since 2007 (Tallinn Rescue Service statistics, 2020).*

Meanwhile, the coast and spring trees create a calm landscape and an oddly pleasant atmosphere.

APPENDIX 12
Site visit diary - Kopli Liinid

27th April 2016
A STANDSTILL

The final official residents have left and the area has found a new developer who is in the process of putting together an action plan. My first visit to the area documented here was characterised by extensive signs of fires and a number of buildings in ruins. Since then a lot of these buildings have been cleared and burned trees have been taken down. However, there are still plenty of half burnt-down buildings and it is clearly visible that the area is getting sparser and sparser.

I invited a friend to join me to visit the site without knowing this would become a tradition. I appreciate the extra set of eyes reflecting on what we see. On the lower and central lines it can be sensed that the residents have only just left. Looking at some windows with curtains still in front of them, it can be assumed that some informal residents continue to occupy apartments. The garages separating the residential buildings still stand in ruins and furniture and personal items are scattered between the buildings. I am not the only urban explorer and notice others with cameras wandering around the Lines. This site has become an attractive location for urban studies students as well as adventurous tourists.

Stone staircases stand out on lower lines with an abundance of burnt material and piles of brick surrounding them. Windows are insulated with old clothes – a sign of informal residents in the area. A white picket fence surrounding a small garden shows recent care for the environment. Some boarded up windows on lower lines have been covered with writing potesting against displacement of residents.

APPENDIX 13
Site visit diary - Kopli Liinid

28th March 2017

DEMOLITION

Demolition is taking place on the upper lines. Only four buildings remain and will most likely be restored in their original form. However, there are still signs of people living in the area – curtains in front of windows, people minding their daily business around the buildings. The developer that has recently taken over the site from the city is making preparations, but the works have not yet started. However, new gates and signs warning against entry have been installed. Especially visible are red signs stating that buildings are fire hazards and entry is forbidden. However, the windows are wide open – this has been the case throughout the recent history of Kopli Lines; informal uses continued in the area for a long time as the area was never secured.

The buildings are surrounded by abandoned furniture, toilet seats and old tires. However, compared to 2016 the empty spaces between buildings are clearer, there is a sense that the development process is about to start. The atmosphere is quiet and calm, no one else seems to be around on a sunny spring afternoon.

Many buildings remain in near collapsing conditions. Piles of rubble from the previous year remain. A historic photo in a frame on one of the buildings seems to be a sign remaining from the street festival that took place a year before.

APPENDIX 14
Site visit diary - Kopli Liinid

24th November 2018

I visited the Lines with a group of friends and colleagues, some of them who had never visited the area and observed the unique non-urban atmosphere of the area. We wandered from the development site on the lower line to the coastline, through the central lines and around the long building up towards Kopli Street. A new situation has emerged. After strange visits displaying stagnation and signs of former residents and demolition in 2017, the development process has started. For the first time it feels like some areas of the Lines

are no longer accessible. The development process promises to be a unique one – with burned buildings and signs of deteriorations visible and new buildings rising. It is interesting to imagine who might be the future residents of the area – they need to be pioneers in a sense, willing to live on a development site and in an undecided atmosphere.

APPENDIX 15

Site visit diary - Kopli Liinid

25 October 2019

I visited on my own for the first time. While during the first years I felt too awkward and like an intruder as people were still living in the area, the later years made me invite companions due to the eerie atmosphere of the derelict neighbourhood with its many ruins. I took a tram to the site and walked my usual route through the area. The top lines with workers' housing first – new fences had appeared so I wasn't able to get close to some of the buildings that only 6 months ago I was able to go inside.

The tall burnt building stands as it was, continuing to fall apart. I met another explorer on site with their camera, a couple of people walking their dogs.

Over the years buildings on the middle lines have been demolished so two edges of the site appear very separate. Construction works are fully underway. There is a street pattern, new pavements, some new green spaces, even gardens with children's play equipment in place. I note that it feels slightly eerie that next to burned ruins the contemporary buildings are clad with black timber. The process can create mixed feelings: while the new development seems appealing and it will be beautiful, the process behind it seems to highlight some difficult decisions that regeneration processes in transitional contexts demand. While externally many buildings look the same, it is clear that they are targeted for a new type of urban resident.

APPENDIX 16

Site visit diary - Kopli Liinid

12th November 2020

This site visit took place during the global Covid-19 pandemic. During this gloomy autumn afternoon it is especially evident that Kopli Lines have developed into contrasting development areas. I do not see anyone around – the pandemic can of course be seen as a reason for this.

While the upper lines stand abandoned and the central lines where most of the buildings have been demolished appear as a wasteland or even an informal park, the lower lines are slowly developing into a functioning neighbourhood. The images below demonstrate the ongoing development process (with some buildings covered and surrounded with scaffolding), more established greenspaces, landscaping and parked cars surrounding the new builds create an image of the future neighbourhood. The final site visit concludes an observation that started in 2013 – when the future ownership relationships of the area were unsure and residents ranged from families who had lived in the area for decades to fluctuating informal residents, to 2020 when the ongoing development process fits into the wider acknowledgement of Kopli area as a desirable neighbourhood.

APPENDIX 17

Site visit diary - Kalarand

3rd September 2013

Kalarand had been instilled in my mind as an urbanist already in 2011 and the Capital of Culture programme – it was a site that introduced many innovative temporary use practices to Tallinn. The remnants of installations a few years before had blended into the landscape, which still included signs of its industrial and less accessible existence. Sailing in the wind of temporary activities and the Cultural Capital status of 2011 the site continues to operate as predominantly informal and difficult to access.

Kalarand is a popular place amongst the local community and visitors. A number of new venues have opened in the vicinity. For example the urban garden, a concert venue and a vegan cafe called Kanala. This means that Kalarand is now a popular place for youths gathering on nice summer evenings. It is often filled with bikes and groups of people chatting. I'm welcomed by lush nature and an unmaintained landscape that creates odd views of the city. I notice a lone swimmer and small groups of people using the temporary street furniture. The view towards the city is obscured by overgrown trees, shrubs and grass – the only thing maintained in the area seems to be the street furniture, which stands out in bright colours from the overgrown surroundings.

The orange bench used by a couple in the photos below is a piece of leftover furniture from the LIFT11 installation where the area was transformed into a temporary public beach.

The coastline is a rough landscape of large rocks, abandoned concrete blocks and overgrown trees. The wildness of this landscape becomes especially evident in the summer.

APPENDIX 18

Site visit diary - Kalarand

8th May 2014

I'm welcomed by a rusty entrance gate with the sign installed by the developer 'The Sea for All' . While exploring the site I notice small makeshift fireplaces in the 'wasteland forest'. I can count at least four. Some of them have seats around them. Someone has thrown away a set of plates. The site forms a beautiful spring landscape with bright green fresh leaves on trees. There is something magical in the landscape with the sun shining through the trees. The landscape is empty – the only real life on the site is a number of friendly fishermen on the broken pier. I

climb on the 'rubble mountain' to get an overview of the area. The wilderness and obscurity of the landscape is really striking, especially in contrast with the views of the surrounding city and Kalamaja neighbourhood. The asphalt-covered paths running through the site are crumbling, but show where the main traffic moved in the past. The street furniture that was installed in 2011 has been painted bright pink.

I've always found the cars parked on the side of Patarei prison slightly suspicious. The foundation of a former building stands out in the middle of the site. The landscape is rough and full of potholes. This is the last year of the temporary 'Kilometre of Culture' project. A grand name for what is actually just a temporary paved path on the site of the former railroad track. It looks like it is frequently used by mothers with children, joggers, tourists etc. When walking back I capture a picture of two older ladies just looking at the silhouette of the city, turning their backs to the sea.

APPENDIX 19

Site visit diary - Kalarand

27th April 2016

April in Estonia is not what one might expect coming from England. There are no dandelions or daffodils or young leaves on trees. I have not been able to do a site visit in 2015 and feel like I've missed quite a bit of change. The spring is only in the air, it is still not green and the light is cold and bright. The first bright yellow flowers (the toughest kind) and the bright pink street furniture stand out especially strikingly. When visiting the site the first change is that the Kilometre of Culture is gone and the site is separated from the new road with heras fencing. This creates a sense of the definition of the site – while previously Kalarand blended into the surrounding rough industrial landscape, it is now a separate unit. The landscape is relatively clear and covered with tracks from large vehicles. The first thing I

notice is the new level of urban noise. Kalarand used to be dominated by the sound of the sea, but now all I can focus on are the trucks and buses passing by.

The landscape is muddy and full of all sorts of signs of life. The fence is almost uncomfortably close to the sea near Patarei prison. This demonstrates the future that is likely to emerge when the plans become realised. I notice that someone is lying on the beach and taking in the spring air. Why is there a fence is a question that pops into my mind. There are still some fishermen, just ignoring the change around and carrying on with their own business.

APPENDIX 20

Site visit diary - Kalarand

29th March 2017

Despite the icy cold weather and fences and a barren land, there are surprisingly many people in Kalarand – most of them alone, and walking slowly, some of them with baby carriages etc.. I realise I am one of the wanderers. Three ladies sit on the central bench chatting. Continuing my walk through the site I realise why it's so busy – the 'Betapromenade' has opened and now it's possible to use the area as a shortcut. It is possible to take some photos from new previously inaccessible angles. The soundscape of Kalarand is dominated by passing cars, seagulls and the waves hitting the beach, but when entering the area of Patarei prison a sudden silence appears. I realise that this minor new project in a way blends my case study with a wider area, for the first time I sense that the coast of Tallinn could be one continuous landscape and not a series of separated odd pieces of industrial and harbour landscape.

APPENDIX 21

Site visit diary - Kalarand

4th April 2018

Surprisingly there is snow in April, enabling us to see signs of use on the ground. The entrance to Kalarand has turned into an informal parking space. I noticed a group of men standing in the middle of the site being interviewed and filmed, there was a mother with a pram, fishermen and different people wandering. 'Beta-promenade' has brought in new infrastructures such as bins and bike racks and the pedestrian path is cleared of snow. It is unusually cold for April, but it's difficult to identify a significant change compared to the previous visit. The snowy landscape is full of the criss-cross of footprints showing that the area is used frequently. I notice that temporary structures installed in 2011 are deteriorating. The sign 'The Sea for All' is leaning to one side. There are new entrances in the fence separating the site from the road – in previous years there was only one access, now there are altogether four.

APPENDIX 22

Site visit diary - Kalarand

4th April 2019

Standing in the middle of the site, Kalarand does not feel like a place that is in a central location of a capital city. It is curious to look at the variety of large trees next to a barren and bumpy moon landscape that is being prepared for development. The development on site is due to start and slowly Kalarand is losing its significance as an informal public space. This can also be connected with wider improvements taking place on the coastal landscape - including new public spaces that have emerged in the nearby Noblessner quarter. Residential development that surrounds the site in focus seems to add to the atmosphere of this area developing more towards local mixed uses, rather than a public landscape that has a city-wide significance.

APPENDIX 23

Site visit diary - Kalarand

25th October 2019

This is my first Autumn visit to the site. I approach from the side of Kalarand and Linnahall appears relatively clean as it did during my last visit in July the same year. The low light creates a gloomy atmosphere, but the autumn colours show the space in a different light. The site is surrounded by parking cars. I notice people passing or using the site: a man sitting, a family on a walk, a woman using the site as a shortcut or a detour.

While the street furniture installed in 2011 is deteriorating a more standard bench has been installed and it does look like the site is maintained.

APPENDIX 24

Site visit diary - Kalarand

12th November 2020

Construction has started on-site. It's a high time of global pandemic and the future is uncertain, however, real estate markets seem to predict a certain boom and it's not the only ongoing development site in central Tallinn. It is no longer possible to access the site or the coast – it is surrounded by a fence, but it is possible to observe it from a variety of angles. A bird's-eye view can be found when standing on top of Linnahall next to the site, a close look at the development site and the buildings are visible from Kalarand Street. Observing the landscape over the last seven years it has clearly transformed from a peripheral site that has no direct road access to a coastal potential neighbourhood with infrastructure for large vehicles, buses and pedestrians. A level of informality remains, however. The proposed promenade that connects the Tallinn coast over 27 kilometres remains a fragmented project. While the Kalarand site is now connected with the Patarei area, this continues to be a rough-looking temporal landscape.

The back of the site – where in the past it was possible to observe people gathering for various exchanges – is now predominantly used by parking cars. it can be assumed that these belong to people working or living nearby in the new apartment buildings boasting a sea view.