

# Urban design in the city of Helsingborg:

## The conflicting interests of mobility and cultural heritage in a contemporary project

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### Abstract

This paper presents a case study in Helsingborg. The case began with a developer competition in 2009 and covered the acceptance of the detail plan in 2013 by politicians on the Board of City Planning Department (Stadsbyggnämnden). The developer competition was organized by the Property Development Administration in the city of Helsingborg (Mark- och exploateringsenheten). When the jury chose a first prize winner the City Planning Department (Stadsbyggnadsförvaltningen) was given the task of drawing up a detail plan to implement the winning design proposal. This became a complicated assignment. A cultural heritage building, Ångfärjestation (Steam Ferry Station) from 1898, had to be moved to free up ground for the development. The relation between mobility and heritage values became a key issue in the urban design project.

The County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen) has a supervisory role for areas, which have been pointed out as important for national cultural heritage such as the city center of Helsingborg. If the County Administrative Board finds that the detail plan risks causing significant damage to national interests it may annul the municipality's decision. This is the fate of the first detail plan in Helsingborg. Part of the dispute concerns the relocation of the Ferry and Train Station, which may be assumed to cause considerable damage. This is a complex of problems. Assessments are founded on both descriptions of national interests and design, as well as how the cultural heritage value is dealt with in the detail plan.

The overall purpose of the study is to present a case that demonstrates the role cultural heritage plays in the detail planning process regarding aspects of mobility. The methods for collecting and processing the data in the case study are close reading of documents found in archives and interviews with key actors. Documentation from the detail planning procedure was provided by the City Planning Department and the County Administrative Board. This documentation made it possible to identify the key actors and have them complete the interview guide. Viewpoints were thus obtained from eleven key actors who influenced the way development interests were weighed against cultural environment interests.

The case study finishes with conclusions and discussion. Here the negative consequences of development are balanced by weighing them against the value of the cultural environment. Ten summing-up conclusions are made which describe types of compensation, decisions, roles, power relations, organization and steering of planning work. The final discussion takes up the preconditions for a systematic reunification of cultural environment experiences in the detail planning processes.

**Key words:** Cultural environment, compensation, damage, national interests, detail plan.