SUSTAINABLE URBAN ENVIRONMENTS IN EUROPE: ASSESSING BEST PRACTICE

Pierre LACONTE
President, Foundation for the Urban Environment,
Past-president, International Society of City and Regional Planners,
Lee Kuan Yew World Cities Prize Council Member 2010-2012-2014,
EU Green Capital Award Evaluator 2011-2012.
»Sustainable urban environments in Europe - Assessing best practice«
1. LINEARITY
The principle of built-in space continuity through linear development
  - Saving space
  - Saving energy
Planning for uncertainty.

A linear pedestrian central spine – in this case the University of Lancaster - allows a step by step mixed urban development, automobile access to buildings and parking being placed outside of the spine, with occasional underpasses.
IMPLEMENTATION AT A LARGER SCALE
The city grows quarter by quarter, with its roads, technical services and the public transport line growing similarly. The total organism is always in balance, is always complete, whether it stops growing or not.
The periphery roads run on either side of the city and are connected to each other by local roads crossing the main centre either on the level or in an underpass. There is vehicle access to all parts.
IN ROME THE SIXTUS V PLAN STARTED FROM THE PRESENT PIAZZA DEL POPOLO AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESSED SOUTHWARDS ALONG VIA DEL CORSO, VIA RIPETTA AND VIA DEL BABUINO.
IN BERLIN THE BAROQUE FRIEDRICHSTADT COMPOSITION PROGRESSES NORTHWARDS FROM THE PRESENT MEHRINGENPLATZ ALONG FRIEDRICHSTRASSE.
EAST OF FRIEDRICHSTADT THE SCHLOSS WAS BUILT ON THE LOCATION OF THE FORMER FORTIFICATIONS IN BETWEEN THE NEW TOWN AND THE OLD TOWN COELLN.
IN AMSTERDAM THE MIDDLE AGE TOWN DEVELOPED NORTHWARDS FROM THE PORT.
THE AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE 17TH CENTURY SURROUNDED THE OLD TOWN BY A TRIPLE CIRCLE OF CANALS AND ROWS OF BUILDINGS. THIS PLAN WAS IMPLEMENTED OVER SOME 300 YEARS. IT HAS BECOME A WORLD HERITAGE SITE.
IN EDINBUROUGH THE LONG MILE WAS THE LINE OF DEVELOPMENT FROM THE MIDDLE AGES.
A “NEW TOWN” WAS DESIGNED IN PARALLEL TO THE LONG MILE AND GRADUALLY IMPLEMENTED THROUGH THE 19TH CENTURY.
IN COPENHAGEN THE MIDDLE AGE CITY NARROW STREET PATTERN AND SMALL PLOTS WERE PRESERVED AND THE LINEAR FOCAL POINT ITS ACTIVITY WAS THE LONG STROEGET, THE FIRST PEDESTRIANISED STREET IN EUROPE.
URBAN EXTENSION TOOK PLACE ALONG PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINES ("FINGER PLAN"), LATER ALONG THE NEW METRO NETWORK.
A MAJOR EXTENSION WAS THE RAIL LINK TO THE AIRPORT AND TO MALMOE, IN SWEDEN, THROUGH THE ORESUND BRIDGE.
THE FIRST INVESTMENT IN THE CLEARED LAND WAS THE NEW GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM.
THE FURTHER LAND DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS THE CULTURE AND CONGRESS CENTRE WAS FOCUSING ON A NEW OFFICE TOWER.
ITS IMPLEMENTATION WAS FINALISED IN 2011.
THE HUGE FINANCIAL SURPLUS GENERATED BY THE RECONVERSION WAS DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO PUBLIC INVESTMENTS SUCH AS A NEW TRAM LINE ALONG THE RIA AND OTHER URBAN IMPROVEMENTS.
THE RIA VIEJA, FURTHER ALONG THE RIA, IS BEING REHABILITATED.
2. CONTINUITY IN TIME
Heritage friendly land-policy: Development through long term leases or land rent equalisation.
THE AMSTERDAM CANAL PLAN SHOWN BEFORE WAS DEVELOPED ENTIRELY BY THE CITY THROUGH LONG TERM LEASES (‘ERFPACHT’), GRANTED TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPERS.
IN CURITIBA, THE LAND RENT EQUALISATION WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS BETWEEN THE AREAS WHERE DEVELOPMENT WAS RESTRICTED TO AREAS WHERE DEVELOPMENT WAS ENCOURAGED (CENTRAL BOULEVARDS).
THESE BOULEVARDS WERE ADAPTED TO HIGH DENSITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE BUS RAPID TRANSIT NETWORK.
Scheme of incentives for transfer of building rights - FMH
IN THE NEW UNIVERSITY TOWN OF LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (NEAR BRUSSELS) SUSTAINABILITY WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH A LINEAR MASTERPLAN ALLOWING STEP-BY-STEP GROWTH STARTING FROM THE EXISTING ROAD EAST OF THE SITE. ALL LAND IS OWNED BY THE UNIVERSITY AND LEASED FOR DEVELOPMENT (“ERFPACHT/EMPHYTEOSE”).
FROM 1976 THE NEW RAILWAY STATION BECAME THE CENTRE OF THE DEVELOPMENT. THE TRACKS ARE TO BE COVERED BY A SHOPPING CENTRE EXTENSION.
THE ENTIRE CENTRE OF THE NEW TOWN IS PEDESTRIAN. THE VIEW SHOWS THE ENTRANCE OF THE RAILWAY STATION. TRAINS AND CARS ARE UNDERNEATH.
THE NARROW STREETS PATTERN ALLOWS AN INTENSIVE PEDESTRIAN OCCUPATION.
MANY SMALL PIAZZAS ENCOURAGE SOCIAL ACTIVITY.
UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES GENERATE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND CULTURAL INVESTMENT.
SUSTAINABILITY INCLUDES A DUAL WATER COLLECTION NETWORK. STORM WATER IS COLLECTED TOWARDS A LAKE THAT ACTS BOTH AS RESERVOIR, PROTECTION AGAINST FLOODS AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY.