

is covered by taxation. For the guidance of the tax-payer it would be desirable to indicate, as they do in America, for what purpose the taxes levied are spent.

It goes without saying that the financial participation of citizens is desirable irrespective of the form the latter may take. Any planning of individual playgrounds should be undertaken with due consideration to the overall playground projects of the community.

Interesting questions for discussion

- Is the most natural site the best one for playgrounds?
- Is there a common classification in all countries for playgrounds?
- Are "fighting games" to be promoted as a means of compensation, or rather to be condemned as a cause of over-excitement?
- Which playgrounds can promote community life within a settlement?
- Is it desirable to determine the size of playgrounds, and, if so, on what basis (population density, number of homes)?
- Is sociological differentiation between individual residential districts necessary?
- Is it desirable and possible to have unused areas in our present cities?
- Should school yards serve as playgrounds?
- Should the various kinds of playgrounds be established next to each other or separated?
- How is accident insurance to be arranged?

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D. PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

Part II

by

Mr. H. BLOM

As a City Parks man of Stockholm, may I amplify the heading by illustrating, in a series of slides, the relations between town, inhabitants, parks and playgrounds, that is public parks and public playgrounds. May I state further that all examples, good and bad, are from Stockholm.

The town-dweller's need for open-air life has been stressed and this need should be met by the parks of the town. By parks I mean all space intended for open-air recreation outside the buildings: market-places, large and small, squares, planted street borders, uninhabited building sites, playgrounds, assembly places, sports grounds, grass fields, groves and woods; even water (lakes and canals) I count among park facilities.

Of course it is useless to talk about how parks are to be laid out, if the necessary ground for the purpose is not available. Consequently it cannot be over-emphasized that the town-planners - those who fix the town's structure, should be fully conscious of the demand for open-air spaces: the requisite size, desirable situation, suitable topography (or nature of the ground). The park, the open space, is a health institution. It means health for the town-dweller and it creates contentment. Physical health and spiritual contentment promote the will to work and it is of course by the inhabitants' working performance that the community lives. Here lies the great importance of the park; and it is with these and similar arguments that we must confront those short-sighted persons who advocate the idea that the park is simply a decorative feature and that we cannot afford to take up costly ground for what is solely an aesthetic enjoyment.

Hereunder, I have (perhaps without too much attention to logic) noted the four main purposes which public parks have to fulfil.

<u>Parks</u>	Open up the city	network in city	let in light and air
		separate and individualize the various districts	protect against noise and fire

<u>Parks</u>	Provide places for fresh air recreation	walks and relaxation open spaces for all ages	sites for public buildings traffic arrangements etc. playgrounds playing fields camping grounds sports and athletic grounds
<u>Parks</u>	Assembly places	commons for meetings	religious services music theatre demonstrations festivals dancing
<u>Parks</u>	Preserve natural beauties and cultural objects		primeval and new natural beauties from single trees to whole landscapes old and new monuments from the Vikings' graves to modern sculpture

This is not Stockholm, but Manhattan Island in New York, an enormous brick city stretching for twelve miles in length, in which Central Park is situated like an open rectangle, with its 600 acres (more than twice the size of Hyde Park). Otherwise Manhattan lacks useable parks and it is not easy to reach Central Park.

Here we have an aerial view of Stockholm. What is shown on the picture corresponds to about as much as we saw of Manhattan. The difference in structure is striking. Stockholm is distributed over several islands. Right in the middle there is a mediaeval city section on its own island. Next around this is the quite compact built-up area of the nineteenth century and then outside this the more dispersed buildings of the twentieth century, with plenty of open spaces and parks between them.

In the older mediaeval city section there are problems of clearing improvement. The buildings here have historic importance. The narrow alleys with their romantic character give the town-picture a stamp which it is desired to retain, but the insides of the blocks are a conglomeration of unsound building. We are therefore engaged on clearing out the "innards" of the blocks and are trying to convert them into open, planted, more accessible courtyards with

seats for the elderly, and one or two small playgrounds for children. There are not so many children nowadays in this old city section. Here we see a planted courtyard which is common to the different buildings of the block. Nevertheless, the streets have retained their ancient character.

The black parts on this map show the extent of the permanent buildings in Stockholm a hundred years ago. The population was then around 100,000.

By 1914 the town had grown a little. What the picture does not show is that the low wooden buildings formerly so common, have now been replaced by stone and brick, but the natural countryside still lies open and accessible. On the outskirts there has been some private building exploitation. Around this time the City of Stockholm bought up extensive farmyards spread around the town and incorporated the areas. You can see the boundaries of the City as then enlarged. In 40 years the population has increased to its present figure of up to one million.

Today the permanently built-up area appears like this. For the most part Stockholm is now entirely built up within its present boundaries, and it is estimated that further building cannot go on for more than another six to eight years. What chiefly stands out on this map is how the park areas are distributed in the older inner-city and in the new-city areas. In the older city, the parks constitute small patches among the buildings, like scattered postage stamps. In the newer parts of the town the greenery spreads out like a web. The parks girdle the built-up sections, these forming the independent individual town-parks which I have spoken about.

Here I shall show a typical park belt from the newer part of the inner city. Here we see the one end of this park belt, which divides two city sections from each other. Over the bridge runs a main traffic artery into the city, passing alongside the park belt, here extended to form a rather large playground with grass, paddling pool, place for play implements, sand boxes etc.

The other end of the park belt, too, has been enlarged to make a grass play-field. I would emphasize that this park is located in the inner city, adjoining a densely built-up area, as may be seen from this plan where we have the traffic artery, a fairly large unbroken grass area, a couple of small playgrounds, a paddling pool (not yet executed) and an amphitheatre. Below to the right is the shore of the central lake (Riddarfjärden). Along this shore the park belt continues in the form of a narrow shore park, almost all the way to the centre of the city and the City Hall.

This open-air theatre is an interesting feature, which has aroused some attention. We consider that this theatre (like a number of others projected in various parts of the city) should serve as an open-air forum, intended to be at the disposal of the city dwellers for their meetings, manifestations, festivals, etc. Societies, associations etc. may make use of them for their various interests, which may cover anything, politics, religion and everything lying between, such as theatrical performances, dancing, propaganda etc. The theatre is at their disposal for a very small, nominal fee and it is always used by, and for, children for their entertainment.

The Parks Department also gives entertainments on these grounds. Each summer something like 200 theatrical performances and concerts are given free of charge. It is extremely interesting to note how interest in the theatre is being aroused in the city dwellers, even among those who perhaps never thought before of spending money on a theatre ticket. For the Parks Department's theatrical performances we make use of a practical theatre truck, a scenery truck. The walls of the truck can be opened to form floor and ceiling and the scenery is clearly to be seen inside. This scenery truck goes from park to park, evening after evening. This is another of our open-air theatres as it appears some hours before the show begins; people want to be sure of getting a seat in good time.

These assembly places have a great mission to fill in counter-acting the boredom and loneliness which strangely enough people in densely built-up areas easily fall a prey to. On this picture the theatre space is empty and it can be seen how the park merges into the lake. The quay that used to be here has been removed and replaced by a natural beach. (In Stockholm we have no tidal water to trouble us).

The Stockholm waterways naturally provide enormous facilities for boating. Here beneath the bridge the small boats wait to take families out on water excursions. Both the island world of Lake Mälaren and the skerries in the Baltic form an eldorado for the boating enthusiast. Park shores are therefore made available for landing stages, and park ground is also rented out for winter-laying-up of boats.

Along the narrow strip of park along the lake, small open spaces are arranged for the children and adults of the densely built housing area close by.

May I show an example of the distribution of housing and park in one of the newer city areas.

Three town sections more or less divided from each other by park belts. The highway from Stockholm to the south of Sweden passes

along in the lower corner, bordered by greenery and separated from the built-up areas. In the green belt between the town sections we have various provisions for open-air recreation: a sports ground, a place for the small children's ball games; here are two play centres, each containing a paddling pool, an open-air bathing pool and a building for public purposes. Here we are just starting to build an open-air stage, used for theatres, meetings, etc. These play centres consist of different spaces for implements of play and for play generally, a paddling pool and enough grass for walking and sitting on.

The left hand side of one of these city sections looks like this. The suburban line goes through, running on a viaduct over the centre, with a station close by. Business life is concentrated in this centre. There are also some minor market places. Close to the centre there are multi-storey buildings and then the buildings decrease in size towards the outskirts, where terrace houses and detached houses prevail.

The residence-buildings are served in front by roads for vehicles, but on the other side of the sites there is access to the local public park which belongs to the cohesive branched park system traversing the city part. This park system is chiefly laid out with footpaths which constitute an important means of communication in the city part. The intention is to keep pedestrians off the roads and instead direct them to these park paths, which connect the dwellings with the shopping centre, bus stop and suburban lines, the school, the games fields etc. On these paths, which thus lead to a definite goal, the pedestrians are relieved from the motor traffic. The park stretches vary, of course, in width, from a narrow planted strip to widths of around 100-150 yards. The park stretches are provided with the various arrangements needed for the open air recreation of the residents, as required,

Close to the blocks of flats the small parts of the sites not built on are utilised as gardens. Besides the necessary communicating roadways, grass plots are planted with trees and bushes, supplemented by sand boxes and small playgrounds for the infants. It is evidently difficult to avoid damage to these garden spaces but thanks to appropriate layout and the planting of thorny bushes and shrubs as protection, damage is surprisingly small. The layout and upkeep of these garden spaces is entirely defrayed by the owners of the buildings. These have in recent years shown ever greater interest in looking after the grounds well. The city is empowered to check what is done and, in case of need, direct the owners to lay out such gardens.

Nearest the buildings are the playgrounds for the infants, where the mothers can watch them from the windows. Farther away in

the park, playgrounds for the older children. Each city unit is, if possible, provided with some large play centres (the principle up to now has been one per 5,000 inhabitants). I would emphasise that these play centres are in no way athletic grounds or playing fields, but locally accessible playgrounds designed for children from infants up to about 14 years.

Here we have the play centre of this city section. It has very good communication by footpaths with all parts of the housing district. Here is the city centre and station and ways to the playground. The layout of these playgrounds takes into account the different age groups, so that different ages and quite different habits of play do not interfere with each other. This has been found to be extremely important. Gradually in the laying out of our playground places there has crystallised a series of "play elements" for the different age groups. The infants have their sand-box place, those rather older their space with play implements for climbing, swings, jumping and the like, everything children of 5 to 8 years old need to develop muscles and judgment. There is a separate section for a paddling pool, separate sections for various table and ground games. At each playground there is a small plot of ground at the disposal of the children where they can practise the cultivation of simple plants. It has been found necessary to provide each such playground with one or two sections for ball games. These are fenced and there children not yet of age for athletics can train themselves in football or the like, without disturbing or being disturbed by other children's play, as would otherwise be the case.

I usually declare, and Professor Zbinden did too the other day, that any form of urban development is in itself an artificial product, where on the one hand people do gain quite a lot of mental and material advantages as compared with residence in rural areas, on the other one lacks quite a number of rural advantages. Among other things, it is of course not possible for the children to be allowed to play in the free unhampered way they do in the country. It cannot be avoided that the town's playgrounds are likewise artificial, that quite a number of artificial devices must be employed to provide the children with facilities for play. One may see nowadays examples of all types of playgrounds from those that are located free and open in green park surroundings with ample space, to playgrounds which are confined to a restricted area between some big blocks of flats and where all the play arrangements have been designed, it is true, with good architectural imagination but executed in hard sterile material, so that the planner must too obviously give the children directions as to how each play device is to be utilised.

Here we are faced with a real problem which, in the first place is evidently dependent on the space available. It has been found

that children very soon weary of the sterile pre-constructed playground and even go out on the street which offers them more inspiration for play, though of course far from being suitable as a playground. It is a question of making the playground a living thing, to let the children find there an outlet for their imagination, a highly important feature in education. The playground should be flexible, the children should find the possibility of creating, shaping, designing, constructing. The playground should be provided with play implements of various kinds, but also with material that can be built up and formed. The contents of the sand-box constitute, of course, the classic moulding material. In our play centres we try to have a considerable amount of building play material: blocks, boards, carpentry tools, modelling clay etc. This however requires the playgrounds to be staffed with play supervisors.

As a town in general requires controlling (police etc.), so, too, does the playground require supervision. The children must be looked after, guarded from mishaps and from unwanted intrusion upon their playgrounds, but above all they must have assistance in their play. Not that the children should be forced to play this or that game, but with a gentle hand they should be guided and inspired to self-activity. The playground is in fact the big open-air nursery where large numbers of children of various ages and of differing character are assembled.

The playground has become a very important educational institution. It is, indeed, the first place where the child meets and comes into contact with social community. The playground should teach the child community conditions, consideration for others and to have a judgment of its own. We have, at least in Sweden, the idea at present that education of the children in the home is very much neglected. It would seem that the expression "untrammelled education" has been misunderstood to mean "no education at all". So there is rather a need of education for the parents as well.

Our play-supervisor-work at the playgrounds has become an institution of very great importance, which has made the playgrounds effective and caused parents to have more confidence in them. At present the work of the organisation is as follows: at about 85 playgrounds located in housing areas throughout the city we have from 2 to 5 play supervisors at each, making a total of about 200. They come under a head supervisor, who is subordinate to the parks director. The play supervisors consist for the most part of young women with some pedagogic social training. They have a simple uniform to make them recognisable and respected, but they often become more friends of the children than superiors in charge. And the first point in their instructions is to the effect that they shall first and foremost inspire the children to activities of their own. (Perhaps "park hostesses" would be a more adequate and up-to-date

expression!) The play supervisors have no responsibility for the children at the playgrounds. These may come and go at will, but it is gratifying to note that the children spontaneously arrange themselves in groups and communities and that their ambitions grow by the feeling of responsibility they have for the arrangements at the playground. In one respect, however, the play supervisors receive the children and have responsibility for them: this applies to the infant pens, to be found at most of the playgrounds. These consist simply of low movable pens on the grass where infants from 2 to 5 years are received for one or two hours, while their mothers are busy shopping or occupied elsewhere. This must not be confused with infant cribs or day nurseries, which are managed by the city's social department and are located indoors at various places.

Each playground is provided with a building containing mainly a lavatory, a room for the play supervisory and play material and a small space for indoor play in the winter and bad weather. The building is supplemented by a sun and rain shelter. These must not be confused with day nurseries or nursery schools.

As stated, there has been considerable discussion regarding the layout of playgrounds. It is complained that they are dreary and sterile and despite all efforts do not give outlet to the children's desire to construct. Yes, there is a need for playgrounds of the Endrup type in Copenhagen, the private "adventure playground", which has become so well-known. In Stockholm, too, we have tried for more than 10 years with this type of playground at several public grounds. As is known, the children may dig there, do carpentry, build and "let themselves go" in almost complete freedom, to give them an outlet for their imagination and ideas. I have found it very difficult, however, for such playgrounds to be public ones. It calls for extensive qualified supervision. From the nature of things it cannot fail to be very untidy and noisy and take up a lot of space. The playground should, of course, be centrally situated and as near the dwellings as possible; and this is difficult with these grounds, which we call "building playgrounds".

How great is the need for playgrounds? How large should they be? How close together should they be? How many children should each playground accommodate?

Those are vital questions for those concerned with the laying out of play places. Some years ago we carried out an investigation of the visit frequency at play places. It was found that if the playground lay at a greater distance than some 300 to 400 yards from the dwellings, the small children did not go to them. They chose rather to play in the street. The green patches on this map represent the recreation grounds investigated. The ringed ground is that with which we are concerned in this case. Each of the black

dots shows the home of the children who on a given occasion were in the playground - (slide). This picture shows, in red of different strengths, the percentage of children living there who went to recreation grounds in the section of the city under investigation.

(Slide) - This section of the town appears like this from the air. The recreation ground I was speaking of is situated where two main roads meet, which in itself is not a good thing, when one thinks of the risk of accidents in the traffic. (Slide) - The history of the recreation ground itself is interesting as regards development. No longer than 25 years ago the park was laid out, as shown here, with a large rectangular gravelled space which was simply called a playground. As the district around was built up and the children had only this playground to go to, there were clashes on the playground between the different age groups. The small children were in the way of the older ones, and it was the same the other way round. The small children got in the way of those playing football and the elder boys practised long jump in the infants' sand boxes. Not more than 10 years after being laid out, the park had to be rearranged. (Slide) - This is how it looks now. Here we can see fenced in grounds where the larger boys can play ball games. Here are play places for the small children and an adjoining rain shelter, lavatories, etc. Here there is a paddling pool and here a building of historical interest which has been preserved, and generally we have tried to arrange as large a continuous grass area as possible. This arrangement of the different parts of the recreation ground provides something of a programme for the laying out of such grounds.

(Slide) - Here we have a sketch of the park, which shows the continuous grass space. To the right, the small football grounds. To the left, a peep at the infants' games house and in the background the old cultural building.

We in Stockholm have had to work our way gradually forward: from small beginnings in 1937 we increased the number of playgrounds and play supervisors every year to what we can afford and the situation demands. To begin with we set ourselves the goal of one supervised playground per 10,000 inhabitants (there are estimated to be about 2,000 children aged 1 - 15 years per 10,000 inhabitants, i.e. 20%). Last year we reached that goal and now we are working to the goal of one playground per 5,000 inhabitants, equivalent to about 1,000 children aged 1 - 15 years.

The location of the playgrounds depends naturally entirely on topographical possibilities. In the older sections of the city we have to take into account available space and not be too insistent on proximity to dwellings. In the laying out of the newer city sections the Parks Department has had exceedingly close and productive collaboration with the Town Planning Department, so that in

those sections we have been able to acquire space for the playgrounds where there is need for them, central and easily accessible and moreover on sites of such a nature as to facilitate their practical layout. From the architectural point of view, the playgrounds are of course a kind of open-air equivalent to the dwellings: a children's home under the open sky (see tables in Appendix III).

The needs of the children cannot avoid dominating park activity. The future depends, of course, on the children and their growing up in sound and proper surroundings. If the children are not given their place, there is no possibility of being allowed to have other arrangements left in peace. For example, it is no use making a pool of aquatic plants solely for the sake of beauty unless the children have already got a paddling pool in the vicinity. It is just as useless to create a field of flowers unless the children are provided beforehand with areas for running and ball games.

Too much attention and work cannot be devoted to the facilities for open air life. One often hears it said that we cannot afford to spend money on parks, playgrounds, outdoor space: the money has already gone to housing. We must get the public to recognise the fact that buildings provide space for only one side of life, but for the other side, the park, the playground is equally important. Let me offer a parallel; we all know how much effort and expense are devoted to providing motor vehicles with facilities, roads, traffic control, parking places etc. Is it not just as important to provide human beings with a "parking place", to spend money on pleasant practical outdoor residences? Of course it is. And it pays in the long run.