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Lindholst, Andrej Christian; Stigsdotter, Anna Ulrika Karlsson

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Findeis G., Arnberger A., Eder R., Schuster K. (Eds.);
Institute of Landscape Development, Recreation and Conservation Planning
Department of Spatial-, Landscape-, and Infrastructure-Sciences
BOKU – University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria

“An experience based method for green-space planning at small scales: A conceptual development and critical assessment”

Andrzej Christian Lindholst, Ulrika Stigsdotter

e-mail: chli@life.ku.dk and uks@life.ku.dk

Institutional affiliation:

Research group for Parks, People and Policies
Department for Parks and Urban Landscapes
Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning
University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Rolighedsvej 23, DK-1958 Frederiksberg C

Abstract

This presentation will discuss the background and practical merits of an urban green-space planning approach based on an ‘experience perspective’. We propose that one objective in planning should be aware of the match between user preferences and user experiences. The presentation will address the promises and practical challenges in the experience perspective by discussing the results from the innovation of a practical step-by-step method for urban green-space planning applied at small scales. The method is labeled ‘Small-Scale Experience Method’ (‘SSE-method’).

In theory, recreational qualities are not merely given by a green-space’s physical characteristics but co-determined through a person’s experience(s). In consequence it is suggested that it is possible to identify and plan for recreational qualities in settings where an analysis of physical characteristics (e.g. high noise levels) normally would rule these out. An experience based Method should therefore be highly applicable in urban surroundings characterized by features such as dense housing or transport grids

The innovation of the SSE-method is ongoing and has until now taken place in Denmark and Sweden. The SSE-method has in each case been applied step-wise in planning situations where practitioners and researchers deliberately reflected on the applicability of the method after each step. The innovation, based on repetitive research at SLU, drew upon a division of green space experiences into eight sensory perceived dimensions (‘nature’, ‘rich in species’, ‘serene’, ‘refuge’, ‘space’, ‘prospect’, ‘culture/history’ and ‘social’). Registration of experiences in specific areas was done through joint site visits and integrated into ‘E-maps’. The potential for development and new investments were subsequently discussed.

T. Reic

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