COPENHAGEN GROWING
THE STORY OF ØRESTAD
1989-2010

THE ØRESTAD TIMELINE
A TURNING POINT FOR COPENHAGEN

1989

THE REPORT “WHAT DO WE WANT WITH OUR CAPITAL” IS PUBLISHED
At the end of the 1980s, Copenhagen was burdened with serious problems: economic growth was low, unemployment was high, and the debts of the City were worrying. There was not much optimism around, and in general Copenhagen was not attractive for neither families nor companies.

History shows, though, that that tendency has been reversed. The foundation for this growth was laid with the expansion of the airport, with building the Sound connection and the Metro, and with developing Ørestad.

It is not the first time that Copenhagen gets a new, planned urban quarter. The quarters of Christianshavn and Frederiksstad were built in the 17th and 18th centuries respectively, following plans to expand the city by including and building in new areas. Today these quarters are regarded as natural parts of Copenhagen, but back then it was difficult to attract new dwellers, and quite a few Copenhageners felt that these neighbourhoods were situated too far from central Copenhagen. This may also be observed in the case of Ørestad – critics suggest that Ørestad is “far out”, that the Danish “ere” is only one consonant away from “ede” [meaning “deserted” in Danish!] and that there is no life in Ørestad.

Walking through Ørestad today, watching parents playing with their kids in the parks, it makes one wonder that this was all bare fields only ten years ago. Considering the thousands of commuters being transported in the Metro to and from Ørestad every day and seeing the many students everywhere, one may ask, “where else in Copenhagen would it have been possible for all these people to work, study or live?”

A possible answer is that development would have come to a halt in Copenhagen – and other cities, such as Stockholm and Hamburg, would have benefited. Ørestad has been a much needed lever for the development of Copenhagen and has developed into an exciting urban quarter in itself.

There is still a long way to go before Ørestad is fully developed. But we think that Ørestad has come far during this last decade, and we hope that this booklet will give you an insight into that very development which has really just begun.

History writing is always subjective – others may write another story about Ørestad. This is our point of view.
A NEED FOR A NEW URBAN QUARTER

1992

THE ØRESTAD ACT IS PASSED
“What do we want with our capital?” was a question asked by an initiative group appointed by the then prime minister Poul Schülter. The group put forward a handful of suggestions on how to boost the Danish capital, among others by building the Sound bridge, expanding the airport and improving public transport.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Folketinget, the Danish Parliament, passed a series of traffic investments that fell in line with the recommendations of the initiative group. The bill on the combined bridge-tunnel Øresund Link was put forward in Folketinget in 1991, simultaneously with the bill on Ørestad. The original intention was that this new urban quarter should tie Copenhagen even tighter to the planned Øresund Link and tunnel. It was also decided to build a Metro in order to upgrade the public transport system of the capital considerably.

 Financing the Metro was inspired by the English New Town principle, according to which infrastructure would be financed by the value rises created by the very same Metro, in this case in Ørestad. By building Ørestad Copenhagen not only financed the Metro, but also a new urban quarter that would really contribute to leveraging Copenhagen out of the crisis.

The Ørestad Act placed the planning and the building of the Metro and the development of Ørestad in an adequately designed company: Ørestadsselskabet I/S (Ørestad Development Corporation I/S). This company existed from 1993 until October 2007, when the company was split into two new companies. One company, Metroselskabet (The Copenhagen Metro), was to build the Metro City Ring, while the other company merged with Port of Copenhagen to become CPH City & Port Development. The latter company is responsible for the continued development of Ørestad and the sites and activities in the harbours of Copenhagen.

Passing the acts on the Øresund Link, the Metro and Ørestad, in a close cooperation with the City of Copenhagen the Danish Folketing had made decisions crucial for the further development of Copenhagen.

“The report “What do we want with our capital?”, 1989

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THE ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION FOR A MASTER PLAN IS ANNOUNCED
From the very beginning it was obvious that Copenhagen’s new city quarter and Copenhagen’s new metro were closely connected. Thus, Ørestadsselskabet was established in 1993 to plan both the new Ørestad and the building of the new metro. The first task of the corporation was therefore to create a master plan for the whole area as a basis for the future work.

To this end, an international architectural competition was announced in 1994. The jury initially chose four nominees and a handful of other noteworthy contributions, finally ending up with the plan suggested by a new Finnish architecture studio, which was later to merge with Danish KHR and become Danish-Finnish ARKKI.

An important reason for choosing the Finnish master plan was the suggestion to concentrate buildings in four smaller districts, where it was possible to create a relatively tall and dense building mass. Thereby nature could be wedged in between the buildings, giving space for green areas. In that way the master plan secured Ørestad its green profile, built around water and nature. Adequate infrastructure, high architectural quality and access to nature would make it attractive for new residents and companies to settle in Ørestad.

ARRKI focused on creating a dense and modern city integrating, in spite of its high density, the surrounding nature. An extra feature would be the beautiful north-south canals, forming recreative lines in the new city quarter. Furthermore, the canals contribute to sustainability, being rainwater reservoirs.
ØRESTAD NORD
Today building this neighbourhood has almost finished – characteristic buildings are DR Byen headquarters, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation and the extensive educational institutions of the southern campus of The University of Copenhagen and the IT University. The many students in the area, the residents and the various employees all give a varied urban life.

ØRESTAD CITY
Ørestad City is limited by Vejlands Allé in the north and the motorway in the south. Even though this neighbourhood has not been finished yet, it is already vibrant with its international companies, dwellings, the shopping and event centre Field’s, a series of small shops and a much visited café. Byparken, the local park, is one of the natural meeting places in the neighbourhood, particularly in the summer, when there are events or concerts. The park is also popular in everyday life, being visited by grammar school students, families with children, football players and people walking their dogs.

1997
THE METRO BUILDING STARTS
THE SALE OF BUILDING SITES BEGINS
THE AMAGER FÆLLED NEIGHBOURHOOD
The district between Vejlands Allé and Grønjordssøen will be the last of the neighbourhoods in Ørestad to be developed. Until now, the dwelling complex Solstriben and the psychiatric ward of Amager Hospital have been built here east of the Metro.

ØRESTAD SYD
The building of Ørestad Syd, bordering on Kalvebod Fælled (Common), started a few years ago. The majority of the buildings will consist of residential flats, institutions and shops. The primary infrastructure has already been established, and the first café in the neighbourhood has opened. Here you will also find the very popular, but temporary activity area PLUG N PLAY.

2000
ØRESTAD STATION OPENS FOR SOUND TRAINS
INFRASTRUCTURE

2001

THE FIRST NEW BUILDING IN ØRESTAD: AMAGER HOSPITAL’S PSYCHIATRIC WARD OPENS
Talking about Ørestad and its infrastructure is like talking about the chicken and the egg: none of them had existed without the other, and both presupposed the other.

The first phases of the new Copenhagen metro was to be financed by selling sites in Ørestad and by taking loans.

When the Vestamager line opened in 2002, it ran along a traditional residential district on one side and the naked common on the other. To some it might have looked like an example of bad urban planning, because the buildings constituting today’s Ørestad had not been built yet. Now the city has grown up around the Metro, though, and in 2008 Ørestad Station was Denmark’s fifth largest station when it comes to the number of passengers.

Situating Ørestad so close to the motorway and the new Sound bridge and tunnel connection gave the new city quarter a fantastic infrastructure from the very beginning. Not only was the city quarter situated closer to Rådhuspladsen, the Town Hall Square of Copenhagen, than e.g. the quarter of Østerbro, its position between Central Copenhagen and the airport was perfect, and via the new Sound connection the access to neighbouring Sweden had really opened up.

From the start Ørestad was meant to be a sustainable city quarter. The Metro would be the backbone of transport, together with good bicycle lanes minimizing private car transport. To support public transport and the environment, the City of Copenhagen adopted a low parking norm in Ørestad. The Ørestad Development Corporation adapted the norm into a parking strategy to the effect that commercial and private users share the available parking spaces: residents use the parking spaces in the evenings and at night so that employees from outside Ørestad may use the spaces in the daytime. Parking spaces are primarily placed in parking garages, which means that the urban space of Ørestad is not dominated by parked cars.
THE BUILDINGS
OF THE CITY

2004
FIELD’S OPENS
RESIDENTS (APPROX.)
100
The competition stipulations from 1994 stated that “It is the intention to give full artistic freedom concerning architectural form, so that the new city quarter of Ørestad will boast state-of-the-art within architecture and art during the building years.”

Throughout the years, both Danish and international architects took this seriously and designed buildings which reflect the cream of contemporary architectural standards regarding both form and function. Many buildings have been awarded, and some of them may already now be considered modern classics. Interesting examples of modern architecture in Ørestad are: the IT University, the Bikuben Hall of Residence, Sejlhuset, Metropolen and 8TALLET.

“IT IS THE INTENTION TO GIVE FULL ARTISTIC FREEDOM CONCERNING ARCHITECTURAL FORM, SO THAT THE NEW CITY QUARTER OF ØRESTAD WILL BOAST STATE-OF-THE-ART WITHIN ARCHITECTURE AND ART DURING THE BUILDING YEARS.”
24

VM BJERGET (THE MOUNTAIN DWELLINGS)
From the tenth floor of the northwestern part of the building to the ground floor in the southeast there are 80 dwellings with large roof terraces, spreading over the slope of a complex which is also a gigantic parking garage with a capacity of 480 cars. The parking garage can be found inside the building, featuring spectacular, high-ceilinged, cathedral-like rooms painted in all the colours of the rainbow. The building was designed by BIG and was given the award as the world’s best residential building in 2009.

DR BYEN, INCLUDING KONCERTHUSET
In 2005 and 2006, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation concentrated all its activities in the Danish capital at one address, namely in DR Byen in Ørestad Nord. DR Byen is one of the world’s largest media buildings, and the physical framework was designed to fulfil sky-high ambitions as to architecture, quality, function and technical innovation.

DR Byen also includes Koncerthuset (The Concert Hall), designed by Jean Nouvel, the world famous French architect. The largest concert hall is formed like an amphitheatre with 1,800 seats. It hovers like a meteor 45 metres above the ground, surrounded by the blue box.

2005
NEW RESIDENTS IN VM
HUENE AND PARKHUENE, ØRESTAD CITY
RESIDENTS 375
In 2002 Ferring Pharmaceuticals moved into the 80 metre tall, black tower building at Kay Fiskers Plads, which has since then been the characteristic landmark of Ørestad City. Henning Larsen Architects designed the tower, recently followed by the lower sister building Neroport, the current address of the insurance company Skandia and other companies.

ØRESTAD GYMNASIUM

Flexibility and openness are the keywords when describing this new upper secondary school, which is not organized in traditional classrooms nor conventionally divided between students and teachers. The school is divided into four zones at each of the four floors, connected by a wide, spiral staircase forming the axis of the building. This gymnasium is primarily open plan, with study zones, areas for social activity, nooks for creativity and absorption, and only a few traditional classrooms. The school was designed by 3XN and opened in 2007.

THE TIEGEN HALL OF RESIDENCE

The Tietgen Hall of Residence has been called the most beautiful building of the decade. The extraordinary building – which is meant for quite ordinary students – was designed by Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects. With its ring-like form, it is a different element in the architecture of Ørestad Nord, otherwise characterized by north-south wing buildings.

The facade is faced with tombac, a copper alloy with zinc that does not get verdigrised as easily as copper, but the colour of the metal changes in time. The building received the prestigious RIBA European Award and was also awarded by Foreningen til Hovedstadens Forskennelse, an organization dedicated to making Copenhagen aesthetically attractive.

FERRING

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KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION

2006

FIRST BUILDING SITES IN ØRESTAD SYD SOLD

RESIDENTS 1739
From the very start Ørestad was characterized by know-how companies and institutions. When it all started, the Southern Campus of the University of Copenhagen, was situated in the northern area of future Ørestad. The campus expanded to twice its previous size in 2002 – these buildings were some of the first in Ørestad. This branch offers Denmark’s largest range of studies within the fields of languages and culture.

The second building stage has started now. Many of the old KUA buildings are torn down, and in the years between 2011 and 2013 computer science, theology and law studies will join the humanities in Ørestad Nord. There are now about 17,000 students and 800 staff members – but these figures bound to rise when the new buildings are finished.

The IT University, Ørestad’s second university, appeared here in 2004 and contributed significantly to making Ørestad one of Copenhagen’s most research focused districts. Currently this university has 1,500 students and about 400 staff members.

In 2006 students could live quite close to the educational institution when award-winning Tietgen Hall of Residence and the Bikuben Hall of Residence were finished in Ørestad Nord. The many students in Ørestad Nord do not go unnoticed, as they are often seen in the recreation areas at the canals and in the park.

Ørestad also offers pre-university education. Ørestad Gymnasium opened in 2007 and has since then been the most applied-for upper secondary school in Denmark. Since the summer of 2005, Ørestad has had its own private school, and in 2011 the first public school in Ørestad, run by the City of Copenhagen, will open right next to the gymnasium. This school will be a pioneer within sustainability, new learning tools and food culture. At the same time a new public library will open.
WORKING LIFE

2007

ØRESTAD’S FIRST PARKING LOT IS INAUGURATED AT ØRESTAD GYMNASIUM

RESIDENTS

3377
Today about 12,000 people work in Ørestad. When building has finished here, that number will have risen to about 80,000. The many people going to work in Ørestad every day make Ørestad a vibrant city quarter at all times of the day.

The companies of Ørestad are manifold, but there are particularly many within the know-how fields of IT, the medical industries and consultancy. Quite a few international and internationally orientated companies benefit from Ørestad’s advantageous position in the Sound region: close to Sweden, the railway system, the motorway, the airport and central Copenhagen.

Three companies in particular started the positive commercial development in Ørestad:

- In 2002 Ferring moved its activities from Malmö in Sweden, Valby in Copenhagen and Kiel in Germany to Ørestad. The slender black tower, one of Ørestad’s oldest buildings, is visible from the motorway.
- The Norwegian pension fund KLP invested massively in Ørestad, in 2003 resulting in the erection of the KLP House, boasting 33,000 floor office sqm. KLP was the first major institutional investor who believed in Ørestad, thus showing the way for other investors. This pension fund has also built a smaller office complex, and it still has an unused site in Ørestad.
- Field’s, Scandinavia’s largest shopping centre, opened in 2004. The centre attracts not only customers, but also staff from all over the Sound region. The about 3,000 employees at Field’s come from all over the Sound region.

There are many other both large and small companies in Ørestad. Among the best known are both public institutions and private firms:

- Københavns Energi, which is responsible for Copenhagen’s gas, water, heating and sewage systems.
- The Metro Company and the Metro Service Company, which develops, respectively runs the Metro.
- The engineering and consulting firm Ramboll, which concentrated all its Danish activities in new headquarter in Ørestad in 2010. All in all 1,600 people work in the HQ, whose atrium is partly open to the public.
- DI, The Confederation of Danish Industry, who resides in Ørestad while their headquarters at Rådhuspladsen in central Copenhagen are being renovated.
- Two major hotels, Crown Plaza and Hotel Cabinn Metro. In 2011 Bella Hotel will open next to Bella Center – this will be the largest hotel in Scandinavia.
- A range of international companies with branches in Ørestad, among others Novo Nordisk Scandinavia, Skandia, Accenture, Niras, Atkins, and Dell.
URBAN LIVING - EVERYDAY LIFE

2008

RESIDENTS
5410

BYPARKEN IS INAUGURATED
Today more than 6,100 residents in Ørestad benefit from a vibrant cultural life, large parks and, gradually, also cafés and restaurants in the streets. Urban life in Ørestad has developed much since the area was merely a bare field, but there is still a long way to go before urban life here is fully developed.

Going from nothing to something required a focused effort. Due to a lack of buildings, Ørestadsselskabet worked on creating a “mental infrastructure” with the Copenhageners. As a citizen you should be aware of the geographical position of Ørestad so as to create an image of the future city quarter as early as possible.

Events and temporary urban life projects in the quarter were meant to create the wished-for awareness about Ørestad. The idea about the temporary activities would prove to be essential in the urban life history of Ørestad, an idea that has later inspired other urban development projects. Unused building sites were temporarily used for some of the cultural and sports facilities that would normally only have been established several years later.

Among these projects was the area BKO (BevægelsesKlare Områder, “Areas Ready for Movement”) which was established in 2003 at the road Grønjordsvej close to the Metro station of DR Byen. This project included an outdoor training and fitness pavilion, basketball courts and football and pétanque pitches, and an area for willow weaving. In 2006, when the site was to be used for building, the activities were moved to Grønningen (a park in Ørestad Nord) as planned – in the meantime, Grønningen had begun to look like a real park.

The canals of Ørestad are not only nice to look at, they are also being used for short kayak trips and for skating when the ice is safe.

Temporary solutions have been instrumental in developing the urban life of Ørestad. This is Mikado Plads in its temporary version in the years 2006 to 2008.

Traditionally, Kay Fiskers Plads at Ørestad Station is the square being decorated with Christmas lights.
In the years 2005 to 2008 a barren building site in Ørestad Syd hosted a BMX pitch. The pitch fulfilled an urgent need for a BMX pitch in Copenhagen and attracted many people. The pitch is now permanently situated just outside of Ørestad.

From the beginning the city park in Ørestad City was supplied with trees and paths. In 2005 Ørestadselskabet and the building companies and institutions arranged an ambitious process to involve citizens – three years later the park was finished, complete with small thematic islands, benches and more plants. Since then the park has hosted countless events, ranging from large-scale circus performances to private family birthday parties.

During three days in September, ØX – Ørestad Culture Days – dominate Ørestad with exciting events arranged by local residents and companies. Originally it all started with a dance festival held by Ørestadselskabet in 2006, but since then it has evolved into a broader cultural festival.

The commitment of local citizens and companies in Ørestad Culture Days sparked a change of name and focus in 2010. Under the name Ørestad Culture, the new society will not only arrange a festival but will support various arrangements and a few major events throughout the year with know-how and, to a limited extent, money.

Ten minutes from central Copenhagen, but only five minutes from Great Nature – that is how it is being a resident in Ørestad.

2009

FIRST NEW RESIDENTS IN ØRESTAD SYD

RESIDENTS

5610

THE METRO NOW RUNS AROUND THE CLOCK
Like Ørestad Culture, Grundejerforeningssekretariatet (the secretariat of the houseowners’ association) plays an important role for urban life in Ørestad. In 2008, the houseowners’ associations in Nord, City and Syd agreed to join the Waterworks Corporation of Ørestad in establishing a joint secretariat. This secretariat not only services the boards of the associations, but also provides a common platform for contacts from residents, companies, etc. and works towards creating activities common for all four quarters in Ørestad. Among other accomplishments, in 2010 this resulted in the new website ørestad.net, which is a comprehensive information site by and for the residents of Ørestad.

When founding Ørestad Kultur and the joint secretariat, urban life in Ørestad took an important step forward. The increasing number of residents and the growing facilities have made it easier to further societies, local initiatives and events.

In 2008, Ørestad had its first shops at street level. Residents had been able to shop in Field’s for a long time, but now they could also shop in a DøgnNetto, a discount supermarket, in Parkhusene, just south of Byparken. At the same time, a handful of small shops opened in the same area. “Foodshop no. 55”, a café and deli opening at the beginning of 2010, was to be the first café in Ørestad.

After years with temporary urban spaces, Ørestad Nord had its first large, permanent park, Grønningen, in 2009. It is divided into three zones: an urban, a park and a nature zone all functioning as free areas for the many students and residents in the neighbourhood. Grønningen boasts a range of small, popular sports facilities.
In Ørestad Syd, where urban development has just started, the urban sports park PLUG N PLAY opened in 2009 in an available building site. Here you may do parkour, speed skating, dirt jumping, beach volley, 5-a-side or ordinary football, basketball or street basket – or get yourself an organic urban herb garden. From the start, PLUG N PLAY was incredibly popular and is used on a regular basis by local clubs and schools, but also by private individuals who just enjoy the new sports options in Ørestad.

It is the intention that the most popular activities in PLUG N PLAY be moved when building starts at the site, but CPH City & Port Development has guaranteed that all the facilities can remain here until at least 2014.

Temporary solutions are still being used. In 2010, the concept of 1:1 temporary architecture is adopted: Temporary architecture being tested at street level before being made permanent.

During 2010 the residents of Ørestad City also got “pocket parks” between V-huset, Parkhuset and a park south of Bella Hus. The pocket parks, which are already now very popular, are a bit more quiet and easy to move around in than Ørestad’s large city park.

In 2007, Byparken got designed islands and sports facilities.
THE NEXT URBAN LAYER
Take a walk through Ørestad. You will meet chatting students, concentrated businessmen on their way to meetings and shopping families. There are bright high-quality flats and modern offices and schools and universities for thousands of people. It is difficult to imagine that this area was a bare field ten years ago.

Obviously a quite new city quarter in Copenhagen will be compared with other quarters that are altogether more rooted in the city. Many people can see Ørestad’s qualities immediately, while others take an outsider’s view and think that there is no urban life, that the buildings are too tall and that there is too much distance between them. But cities take time. In time the space between the buildings will be filled, creating the urban life and intimacy that some people miss now. As more layers are gradually adding to the city, its variety will also grow.

It makes no sense to judge Ørestad as a finished quarter at the present time. Even when the last site has been sold and the last building built, this urban quarter will change continuously. It will always be influenced by the people working and living here.

Ørestad has had a good start. Surveys show that residents and daily users are really happy about the bright and modern flats, wide expanses and green surroundings, and that they also appreciate being only a few minutes from central Copenhagen by metro.

Ørestad has made it possible for internationally orientated companies to settle in the attractive area between Copenhagen Airport and “old” Copenhagen – close to the Sound trains, metro stations and motorway. Copenhagen is a growth engine for the whole country’s economic development. Ørestad is a strong asset in the capital’s competition with other metropolitan areas.

Throughout the recent decades Copenhagen has grown and transformed into a city talked about abroad. There are many reasons for this development, but the most important factor was always the will to seize opportunities. Ørestad is a result of the will to make Copenhagen a better place for residents, companies and visitors.
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