

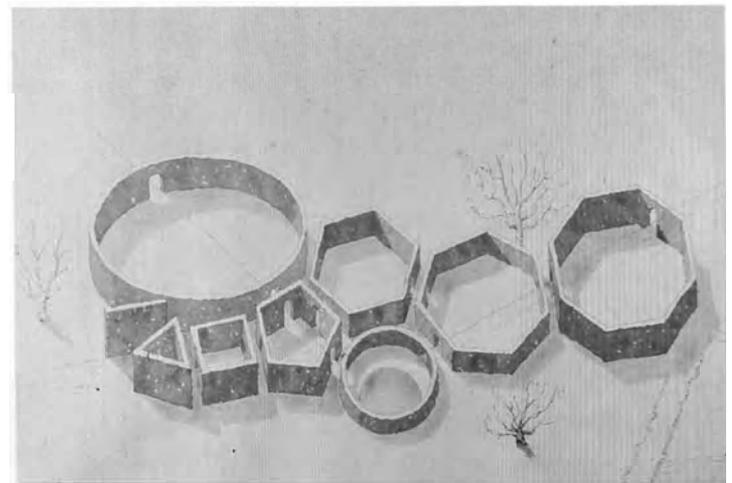
SVEN-INGVAR ANDERSSON, WHO SHOULD HAVE COME FROM HVEN

Marc Treib

Sven-Ingvar Andersson, despite his unabashed modesty, remains the most important Nordic landscape architect of his generation. While both original and contemporary, his designs and ideas build upon those of men and women landscape architects active earlier in the century. In Scandinavia, from the 'thirties to the 'fifties, the emergence of landscape architecture as a profession coincided with the arrival of such design luminaries as C.Th. Sørensen, Troels Erstad, and Arne Jacobsen in Denmark; Sven Hermelin, Erik Glemme, Ulla Bodorff and Gunnar Asplund in Sweden. Although they shared a common Nordic sensibility, the styles of Danish and Swedish landscape designers differed markedly, distinguishing the work done in these two countries separated in the southwest only by the narrow Sound.

With only slight exaggeration, one could say that Swedish landscape architects have been more accepting of their physical conditions as they have designed in accordance with the dictates of land form and climate. Their projects generally appear more naturalistic than those of their Danish counterparts, as if the light hand of the builder has been content to complete the natural setting rather than to substantially reform or recreate it. The Swedish approach appears to be tinted by an Eastern idea of recasting an existing condition, for example, in the way that the Japanese martial art of *judo* uses the opponent's body against him. In other ways, however, the acceptance of the given conditions implies an admission that what nature provides can neither be overcome nor dismissed; instead, one must understand the natural palette and processes and use them for human purposes.

The achievements of the Swedish landscape designers in the first half of the century include the celebrated Woodland Cemetery in Enskede by Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz (1915 to 1940); the Norr Mälarstrand linear park by



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Erik Glemme (1930s through the 1940s); Marabou Park by Sven Hermelin (1953); sensitive reconstructions such as the Tessinska Palatset by Walter Bauer (1960s), and the site planning for the Reimersholme housing quarter by Ulla Bodorff (1950s and 1960s). While at times their qualities elude the eye of the camera, appearing in pictures as merely natural and unexceptional as form, these landscapes are without exception modern, functional and beautiful in all respects. Like most great works, they are better to be within than to look upon in photographs.

If the Swedish designs were relaxed in the vigor of their form, the Danish work was more aggressively contrived. Certainly, the Danes, too, possess a high regard for nature, and their landscape architecture has rarely exhibited the extreme control traditionally associated with the French. The flat or softly rolling land forms, the prevalence of water around Denmark's peninsulas and islands, and a closer link to continental Europe instilled an attitude and allowed – one could say almost required – both landscape designers and their designs to be more assertive. A mainstay of these



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1. *The Musical gardens* by C.Th. Sørensen. 1954.
2. *Hellerup Strandpark* by G.N. Brandt. 1916.
3. *The Norr Mälarstrand linear park* by Erik Glemme. 1930-40.

designs is the hedged enclosure. The wind from the west blows strong and cold across Denmark; it created the need for the hedgerow almost from the time of first settlement to comfort the people and protect the soil against erosion. The hedgerow can be seen as the predecessor of the hedge, and the hedge can be seen as the primary – and usually geometrical – element that became central to the work of various designers, mostly obviously C.Th. Sørensen.

The elliptical form was a recurrent *leitmotif* in Sørensen's landscape designs, appearing as a stepped bowl in early projects such as the Marcussen garden (1932), as the principal green of the Vitus Bering Park in Horsens, and as the elliptical hedged rooms of the allotment gardens at Nærum (both from the 1950s). The Musical Gardens in Herning, recreated by Sven-Ingvar Andersson and Sonja Poll half a decade ago, exemplifies Sørensen's inter-related concerns for geometry, spatial definition, and climatic management. These are manifested in sets of hedged enclosures based on geometric figures of increasing numbers of sides.

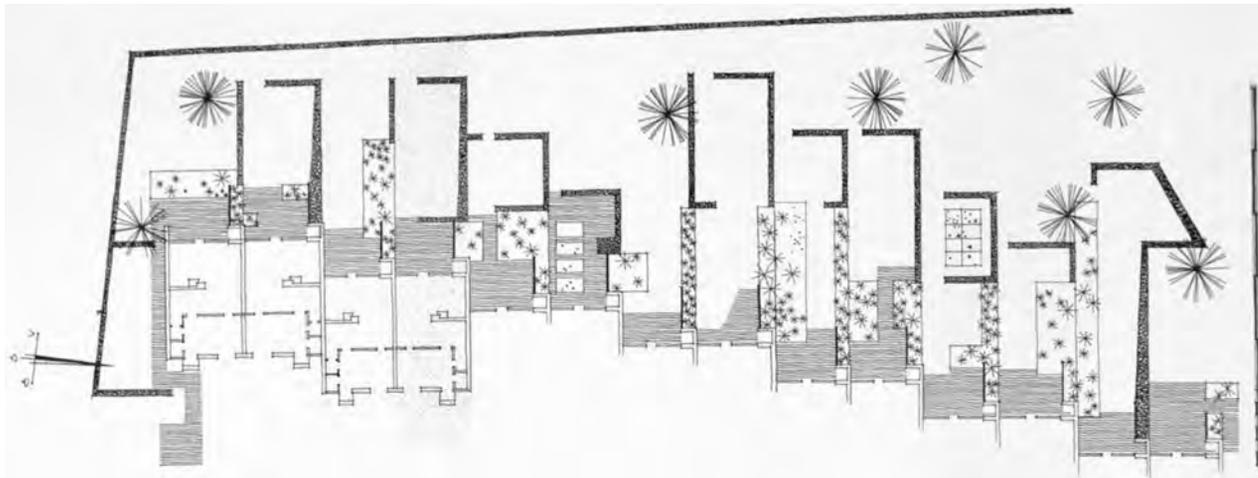
Thus, Sørensen provided a geometric model, if not the method for shaping the landscape (and the ellipse appears regularly in Sven-Ingvar Andersson's plans). G.N. Brandt, on the other hand, illustrated how the nascent concern for activity and use could be accommodated within a landscape whose elements were both functional and formally integrated. Brandt's noted Strandpark in Hellerup (1916) retained the Renaissance notion of the outdoor room, while suggesting bonds between discreet spaces and their link to the sea and shore – even if separated by a frame. These and other landscapes designed from the 1930s through the early 1950s provided the context in which Sven-Ingvar Andersson completed his studies at Alnarp in 1954.

That the young landscape architect entered the atelier of

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Sven Hermelin upon graduation came as no surprise. Hermelin had long been the predominant figure in Swedish landscape architecture as a designer, corresponding editor for the Danish journal 'Havekunst,' and frequent ambassador to landscape architecture congresses. Sven-Ingvar Andersson later described Hermelin as "an ecologist and aesthete [who] refused to separate these concepts from each other. ...He emphasized the values of nature to the architects and artists and emphasized the human right to value them to the ecologists." Hermelin's later work ranged from intensely detailed – and one must add caring – landscapes like Marabou Park in Stockholm to his concerns for landscape planning on a broader scale. His articles for 'Bygd och Natur,' his involvement with landscape preservation and the studied development of natural areas display his love of the land; his contributions to more popular publications such as 'Trädgården – Sommarrummet' suggest that the social concerns of landscape architects distinguished them from gardeners and even garden architects.¹ Almost all these characterizations of Sven Hermelin could apply with equal validity to Sven-Ingvar Andersson himself.



Sven-Ingvar Andersson is a man of southwestern Sweden. It would have been quite appropriate, however, for him to have been born on Hven [today usually written as Ven] – the small island between Sweden and Denmark – for in so many ways, one senses the mark of both societies upon him.² He is, by nature, polite and refined, and yet assertive and convincing. His own landscape designs at times softly modulate the natural setting in the Swedish manner, while at other times – when the conditions so warrant – he creates strong, often geometric, forms more characteristic of Denmark. The local conditions ultimately sway the designer towards a more particular solution that acknowledges the presence of the *genius loci*: “The forest edge is to Denmark what the lakes are to Finland, the mountain ridges are to Italy, and the rivers to France.”³ Annemarie Lund has depicted Andersson, as he had depicted Sven Hermelin: *[A]n aesthete and an artist[.] He takes us into the borderland between different styles, indeed between the material and the ethereal. Form is inevitably stringent, but poetry and humour are often in evidence. Fast and feast, pause and intention are key words in his work.*⁴

In many ways – and despite the French air produced by the beret he frequently wears – Sven-Ingvar could be the most Japanese of Swedish/Danish landscape architects. His characteristic sense of restraint, his strategic use of vegetal or mineral elements to obtain maximum effects, and his ability to create subtle richness within seemingly simple forms are all qualities of the best Japanese garden makers. There is always more than what first greets the eye.

Sven-Ingvar Andersson’s earliest published project, the gardens for the rowhouses in Hälsingborg from 1959, suggests why Hermelin was interested in having this young man in his office. Andersson has explained that rowhouse dwellers unfortunately “often still demand their own small plot of

earth, enclosed and protected,”⁵ producing a pattern of small and independent gardens. As a result, the sense of collective space is lost. The Hälsingborg scheme cleverly reformulated the program so as to create a both/and rather than an either/or landscape design. A plane of brick extended the full length of the rowhouse block, offering a unified plinth to the architecture and series of terraces to the inhabitants. Low reed fences set perpendicularly to the facade, combined with flowering vegetation and shrubs rather than dense hedges, softened the relation between private areas while suggesting spatial extension beyond the individual unit. During the summer months, when gardens are most frequently used, the deciduous planting was appropriately opaque, increasing the inhabitants’ sense of privacy. Only at a distance from the building’s facade did clipped beech hedges enclose a second zone of more private spaces; their staggered configuration formed a variety of common spaces between the individual gardens and the property line.

The plaza and surroundings for the new town hall at Högnäs, realized in 1963, represented the application of Andersson’s ideas to a communal landscape. Life was the point of departure for his description of this small civic complex: *It is a fine experience to enter the courtyard on a sunny summer day, with a light breeze rippling the surface of the water and bending the streams of water into a gentle bow. There the young mothers are sitting on the stairs, senior citizens on the benches, and small children feed the goldfish or drag the sailboats around the edges of the pool.*⁶

The architects planned the town hall as several blocks clustered as a courtyard sheltered from the wind. Believing the animation of moving water to be a necessary feature of the design because “it belongs to the better town halls,”⁷ Andersson asked himself: How can one design a fountain to make it interesting during the seven months of the year it

will be without water? He chose to eliminate the distinction between plaza and water feature, instead combining both in a water parterre of some 500 square meters. Small pencil jets animated the water's surface in clement weather, and softly disturbed the stillness within this court entered beneath a dense grove of Norway maples. The floors of the loggias surrounding the court took a smooth surface of finished limestone. The shallow pool, on the other hand, was paved with the same cobblestones as those more informally arranged beneath the bosks and in other zones around the outside the buildings. The pool bottom thus embodied a memory of the town hall's surroundings, linking interior and exterior zones with common materials.

The Höganäs town hall landscape also acknowledged the passing of the seasons and the presence of the primary elements. The fountain comprised an arrangement of limestone slabs, each indented to hold a shallow sheet of water destined for the pool. Gas burners set amidst the fountain's jets played fire against water. With characteristic irony, Andersson noted in a caption: "Unfortunately it is a little difficult to get fire and water to function at the same time, but on a windless day, the idea can be put into practice."⁸ Footed flower boxes – cleverly fitted with extended handles to facilitate their movement – were set within the shallow pool during the summer months, splashing spots of color upon the monochrome courtyard and adding to the setting a sense of the transitory.

The courtyard as a type was also developed in the Archive for Decorative Art in Lund from the same year. This is a unique and curious museum whose founder, Ragnar Josephson, centered his collection on preparatory sketches rather than completed paintings or sculptures. The addition to the original building created a sheltered court, further defined by a loggia displaying plaster casts of sculpture. The

public space centered on a lawn intended for sculptural display, although the enclosing wall addressed the sun and was lined with benches. A second, more private, courtyard was purposefully restrained: crushed red brick for its paving, articulated by a fragment of checkerboard executed in box-wood; an ancient maple roofed the entirety. While the scheme was unremarkable in itself, the resolution of the details embodied an almost Japanese sense of materials and their employ. The design seemed intended not to make noise, but to create quiet and a setting for looking and thinking.

That the garden and the courtyard provided Sven-Ingvar Andersson with his first commissions follows a typical pattern for designers only recently independent. But these small-scale commissions also established the ideas and methods with which he would undertake further commissions. "I believe that the garden for the villa," he wrote, "constitutes some of landscape art's test sites and touchstones. It is on this comparatively small scale that we can risk trying out new expressions in form and material."⁹

History represents the collective memory of a people, and its landscape the tangible records of what has been. When the landscape no longer exists, or when it has been substantially altered, questions arise concerning the most appropriate means of restoration. True restoration, to some degree, is impossible: reviving a landscape is always a re-creation because too many factors have changed over time. Sven-Ingvar Andersson understands the complex network of decisions and distinguishes among three different approaches to the task: reconstruction, renovation, and restitution. One creates something new, but "re-creation is most enduringly successful if one understands original creation."¹⁰ Even if the form were exactly replicable, the conditions surrounding it – its greater context and its people – would have been

substantially changed. How does one approach the re-creation of landscape?

An article early in his career responded to a statement by Nils Wollin about the supremacy of graphic documentation for rebuilding landscapes past. While sympathetic, Andersson could not take these records at face value. In “Pastiche and Antiquarian Restoration,” he noted for the first time that landscapes must address contemporary conditions. A restoration has an obligation to verity only in so far as it acknowledges the people who will use that landscape today. Andersson’s work at Sophienholm was based on the understanding of contemporary and future use, and that although the site in the past had been an estate for the new aristocracy, it was now a park for all. The “restoration” of Sophienholm was thus a conversion to new uses sympathetic to the old forms, at times utilizing the forms of landscapes past, in other places starting anew.¹¹

More recently, the project for the “restoration” of Tycho Brahe’s Uraniborg garden on Hven represented an orchestrated study of specialists from several disciplines. No suggestion of the original Renaissance garden existed, and there was no question that this would be a re-creation rather than a restoration. Using graphic documentation, and in consultation with plant specialists, the restoration team reconstructed only one quarter segment of the round and symmetrical composition. Curiously perhaps, the landscape architects believed one quarter would be sufficient, and that its incomplete state would require the visitors’ powers of imagination to complete the full circle that once comprised this embodiment of astronomical belief. Here again, Sven-Ingvar Andersson did not consider archeological replication to be the critical issue. To him, a restoration is a landscape with a history, but it is also a landscape for today, and tomorrow.

Nowadays, most restorations are intended as museums or public parks, and the role of the park in our society has been the frequent subject of both Sven-Ingvar Andersson’s writing and his designs. He formulates the park as the public green, and wonders about its position in contemporary Danish society. “An easy way to describe the Danish town parks since the 1920s is to ascertain that there are none.”¹² Why? Because the town parks’ traditional roles have been absorbed by the open areas around housing and the space between buildings. And one of Denmark’s principal contributions to landscape architecture in this century is the implementation of carefully designed park-like areas for housing. Andersson concludes that the town park has largely disappeared because “more precise functional open air layouts on the one hand and diffuse open space areas on the other”¹³ have taken its place.

For the 1987 Ronneby Brunn park in southern Sweden, a site on the outskirts of the town provided sufficient area for a host of activities that included recreation and play, sitting, taking the sun, and even strolling in the woods. Much of the site was managed by the plan but left untouched. The design, which in most places is freer in spirit and plan than earlier projects, introduced several formed gardens within the prevailing natural order. These included a water garden, a rose garden, a Japanese garden designed by Akira Mochizuki based on Andersson’s basic concepts, and one that tantalized the nose.¹⁴ Pergolas of lozenge-sectioned concrete posts supporting a gently inclined network of rustic beam-work structure this aromatic and provided a genial growing structure for fragrant vines. Andersson once defined the concerns of the landscape architect in the physical environment as possessing seven facets: structure; identity; beauty; the experience of nature; social contact; reserve land for extension; and physical recreation. To illustrate his essay, he found one small plaza in Lisbon that embodied all of these



The intimate scale of Karlsplatz.

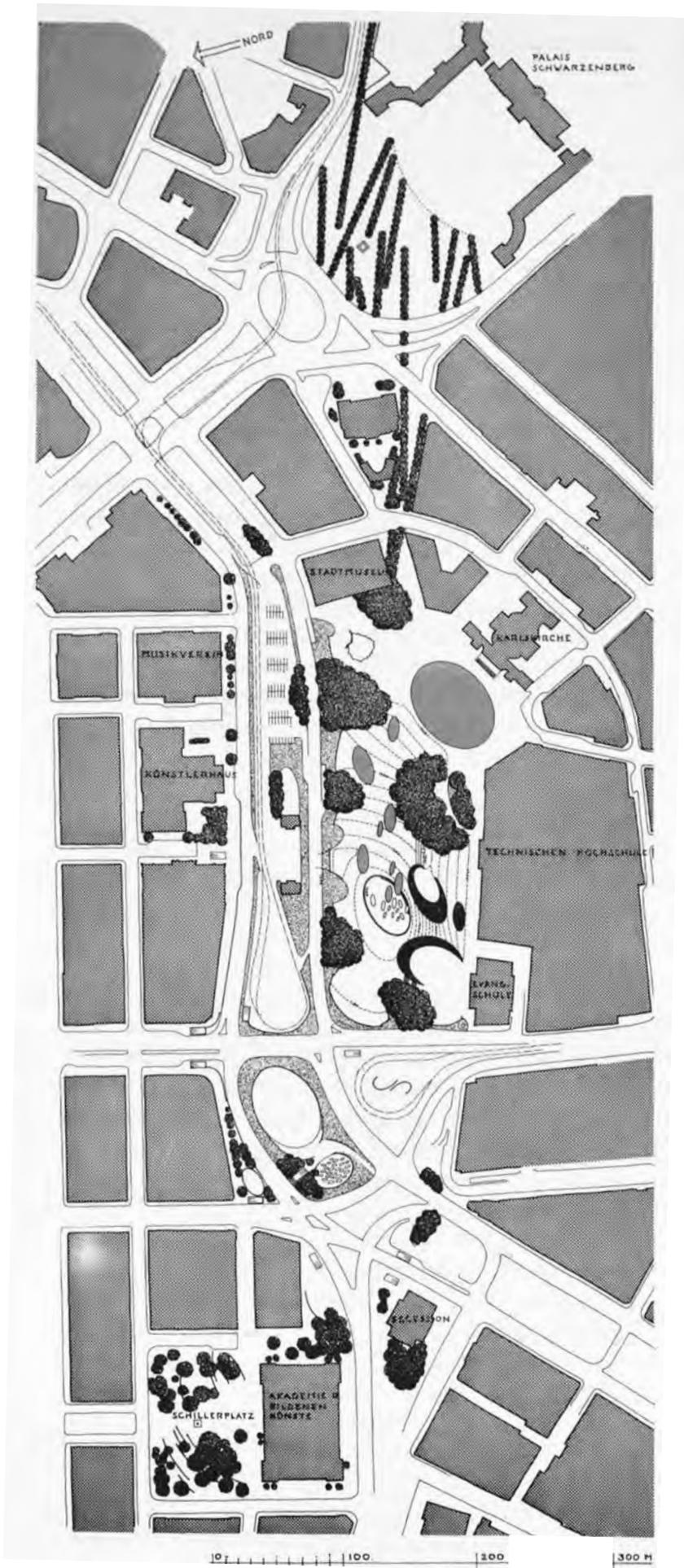
qualities.¹⁵ The Ronneby Brunn park could also serve as a model for these desirable qualities.

In an article published in 1981, Andersson divided the concerns of the landscape architect into three main areas: garden art, which is the beginning of all landscape work; landscape architecture; and the broad scale of landscape planning that some would say is more a part of ecology and public policy than of true landscape architecture. His own practice has followed this conventional expansion from small to large scale, although his interest in the broad scale of the region has been found more in his writing than in his practice. But given his evident social orientation, Sven-Ingvar Andersson's intervention into the public and urban landscape is certainly no surprise. The Höganäs town hall was a new, small-scale project over which, with the architects, he had virtually complete control. The refurbishing of the Karlsplatz in Vienna, on the other hand, had to acknowledge the diverse range of social and political forces converging on the production of urban space: "aesthetic, functional, and social."¹⁶

The Andersson group's winning competition scheme for the Karlsplatz unified the disparate urban spaces and landmark buildings into an integrated network of linked spaces. Beginning with the Palais Schwarzenberg, squeezing through a stricture to the rear of the Stadtmuseum, the space opens to the grand plaza before Johann Fischer von Erlach's Karlskirche, the show piece of this chain of plazas. The elliptical pool fronting the dynamic facade of the Karlskirche provided the point of departure for a series of ovals that tumble downward toward the Schillerplatz, the final space in the group. Obliquely set alignments of lindens, repeated as a unifying device, were staggered to draw the pedestrian into the narrow gap to the rear of the city museum. These lines served as arboreal bandages of a kind intended to tie one park area with the next.

Each of the conditions of the square's public use was carefully considered and conceived both as a human setting and as a part of the greater cityscape. "The Karlsplatz is not a plaza, but it can be experienced as a space within the townscape."¹⁷ The question was less one of creating an architecturally defined space than of modulating the scale of the pedestrian and the automobile. Since the regulation of vehicular traffic was beyond their control, the designers instead directed their attention to the pedestrian. The dual polarities of day and night and summer and winter were also considered. Certain areas were sheltered and even heated, others shaded; evergreen boxwood, robinia, and other species were used that would "remain fresh and vital also in winter."¹⁸ Artificial illumination also played an important role. Perhaps the only shortcoming of the design was the continued repetition of ovals that are scattered through the Karlsplatz almost in the manner of a Kandinsky painting. While at one level, the augmentation of elliptical shapes provides the plaza with continuity, their repetition to some extent reduces the strength of the shape of the Karlskirche pool. This criticism notwithstanding, the Karlsplatz design seems to have successfully drawn upon an understanding of the past, while utilizing a design idiom rooted in today.

Six years later, in 1972, the landscape architect offered a candid evaluation of the Karlsplatz project. The principal pool received a new edge to encourage use: "Now it is there. The children are playing in and around the pool and the tourists realized at once that the edge was specially shaped for sitting when their feet needed a cool dip."¹⁹ He admits that certain aspects of the design, like establishing a precise edge to the elliptical plantings, were difficult to achieve. Other elements of the original proposal had been modified or eliminated in the realization of the park, but to the designers' delight, almost all of the Resselpark had been



The competition scheme for Karlsplatz in Vienna. 1971.

Karlskirche and the early works of Sven-Ingvar Andersson. 1978.





“The hot water bench”, detail of the Rådhusplads competition.

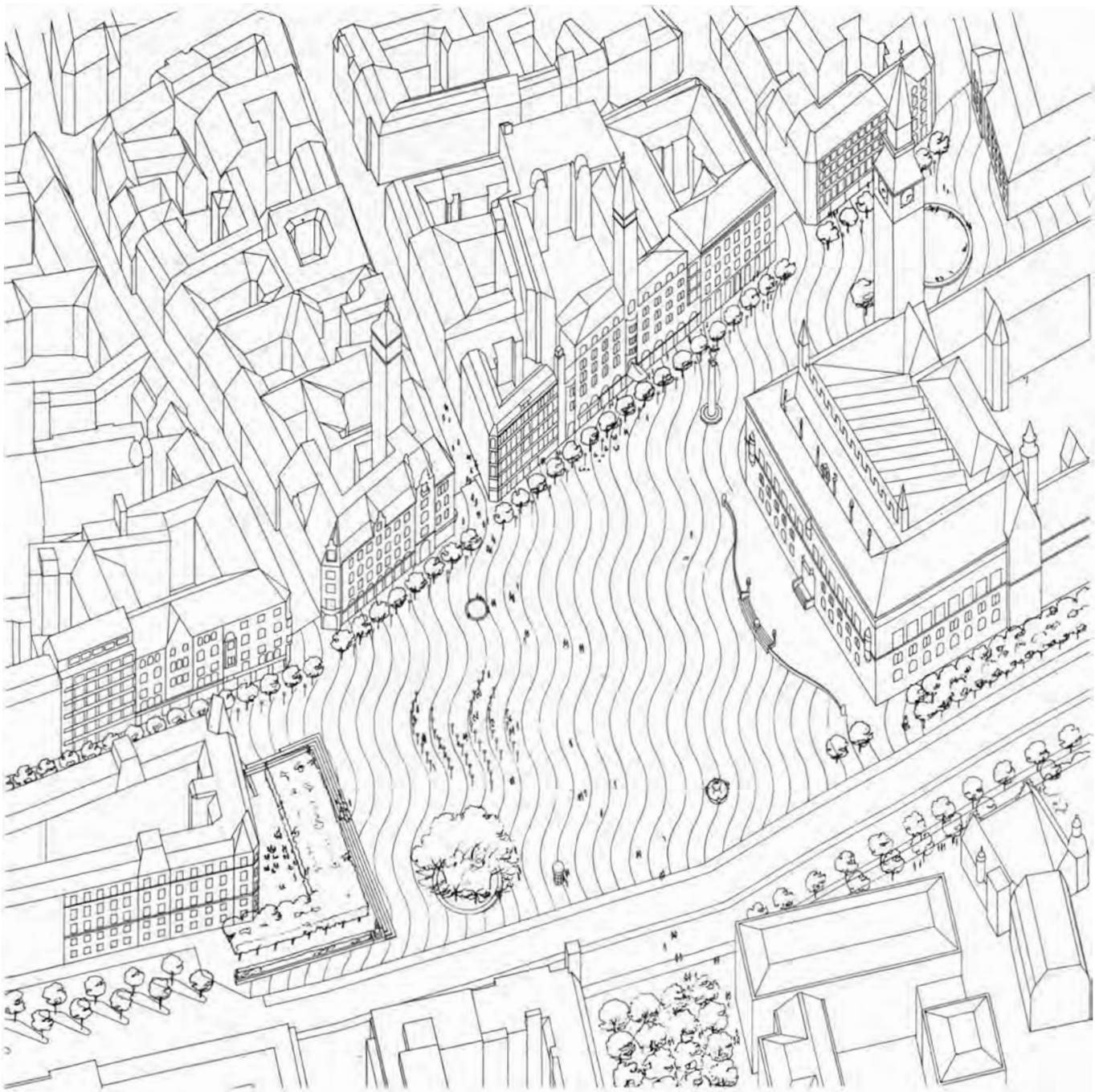
appropriated by parents and children as a playground. The new Karlsplatz successfully integrated the aesthetic, the functional, and the social, as its designers had hoped.

Two unrealized competition entries continued some of the ideas first proposed in Vienna. The Andersson plan for the Rådhusplads in Copenhagen treated the entirety of the plaza as a continuous carpet. Today this central place for Copenhagen is intersected by bus routes and surrounded by traffic. The proposal diverted the traffic in order to create a pedestrian zone – a “pedestrian floor” – in the spirit of the Piazza del Campo in Siena or the Piazza della Signoria in Florence. Wavy stripes extending from one side of the plaza to the other were formed by alternating just-hewn granite sets with already worn stones. Upon this field, several diverse landscape elements were carefully set. A grove of chestnut trees served as a meeting point, a sculpture, and provided shade on the hot days of summer. For the colder months, a raised metal pipe bent into a ring bench was filled with hot water as a thermal oasis when the temperatures drop. A circle of lights – both sculptural objects and sources of illumination – structured the space when evening falls. At Copenhagen’s central plaza, Sven-Ingvar Andersson and his collaborators displayed their concern for the use of the plaza, its role as an announcement for the city hall, and how and why people come to the place.²⁰ In some other ways, however, the minimalism of the scheme appears more appropriate for small squares such as his recent Sankt Hans Torv than the larger plazas like the Rådhuspladsen. How people *leave* the place seems not to have been emphasized, however, and one wonders about the connections between an entry point such as Strøget and its continuation as Vesterbrogade. Given the careful detailing of Andersson’s executed work, it can safely be assumed that these connections would have been satisfactorily resolved if the project had been realized.

In association with architect Otto v. Spreckelsen, Sven-Ingvar Andersson planned the surroundings of the Grande Arche de La Défense on the edge of Paris. The central open area of La Défense may be one of the most bizarre and inhospitable open spaces in the entire industrialized world, and anything to ameliorate the appalling Parvis would be welcome. Brilliant and broiling in summer, chilling and windswept in winter – and difficult to decipher at any time – the concourse at La Défense offers little protection from the elements, much less any public amenities. While the linear promenade by Dan Kiley continues the traditional French pattern of allées and bosks, all planting comes to an abrupt halt at the plaza before the Open Cube.

The scheme devised by Andersson and collaborators’ called for several elements to render the scale more manageable and to enliven the banality of the plaza. Given the superlative dimensions of the space, the proposed features were designed to be large. A linear sheet of water joined the building’s lobby level with the lower plaza level, using the building’s reflection to bind the pieces together. The canal was conceived as “the biological element of the scheme. It is a framework for a rich, varied vegetation with alder trees [planted within the watercourse] as the binding and dominant element.”²¹ The constructed “clouds,” a pleated canopy of sandblasted glass, were to pass through the central open area of the cube and the surrounding approach, simultaneously reducing the scale while effecting a transition between the building and its surroundings. And the glazed roof garden – a feature sorely missed by visitors to the Grande Arche today – was to offer its guests shrubbery, grape vines, clematis, and calm. Simplicity and minimalism were not the issues here. And unlike the Copenhagen proposal, the problem was not to find a common denominator for integrating pre-existing elements. Instead, it centered on a quest for enrichment. At La Défense, the context com-

*Plan for the Rådhusplads competition.
In association with architects Vibeke Fischer Thomsen,
Theo Bjerg & Palle Dyreborg. 1979.*



1. Karlsplatz, the early works of the elliptical composition.
1978.
2. The elliptical pool. Model. 1974.





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pelled the creation of amenity, and it is tragic that virtually nothing of Sven-Ingvar Andersson's plan was realized.

Like the Parvis at La Défense, the central area of the 1983 competition entry for the Parc de La Villette in Paris was left open – as a grassed area. But both edges of the park were defined by complex overlays of forms and uses.²² Along the southwestern edge, the staggered lines of trees first used in the Karlsplatz design reappeared (representing the forest); to the northeast, the ovals took the form of mounds superimposed one upon the other (representing the mountains). Between them was the broad plain, relatively uninflected. A linear sheet of water linked the north and south segments of the site divided by the l'Ourq canal, and created a cross of water. In plan, the three-part scheme was somewhat deceiving, appearing more as a geometric exercise in pattern making than a social space based on “the body, the soul, the intellect, fantasy, and fellowship.”²⁵ The accompanying perspective sketches, on the other hand, explain the wealth of detailed ideas that Andersson and his collaborators proposed for La Villette.

The oval mounds, whose considerable heights and manipulated earth forms recalled the rises and falls of Alphand's park of Buttes-Chaumont, served as an effective barrier against the noise of the Périphérique freeway. The mounds themselves addressed a multitude of uses that ranged from an astronomical theme garden – which was a staple of land art at the time – to a rustic meadow for grazing sheep. The project for La Villette was a complete vision for an urban park, a vision suggesting that the park accommodates activities and embodies ideas.

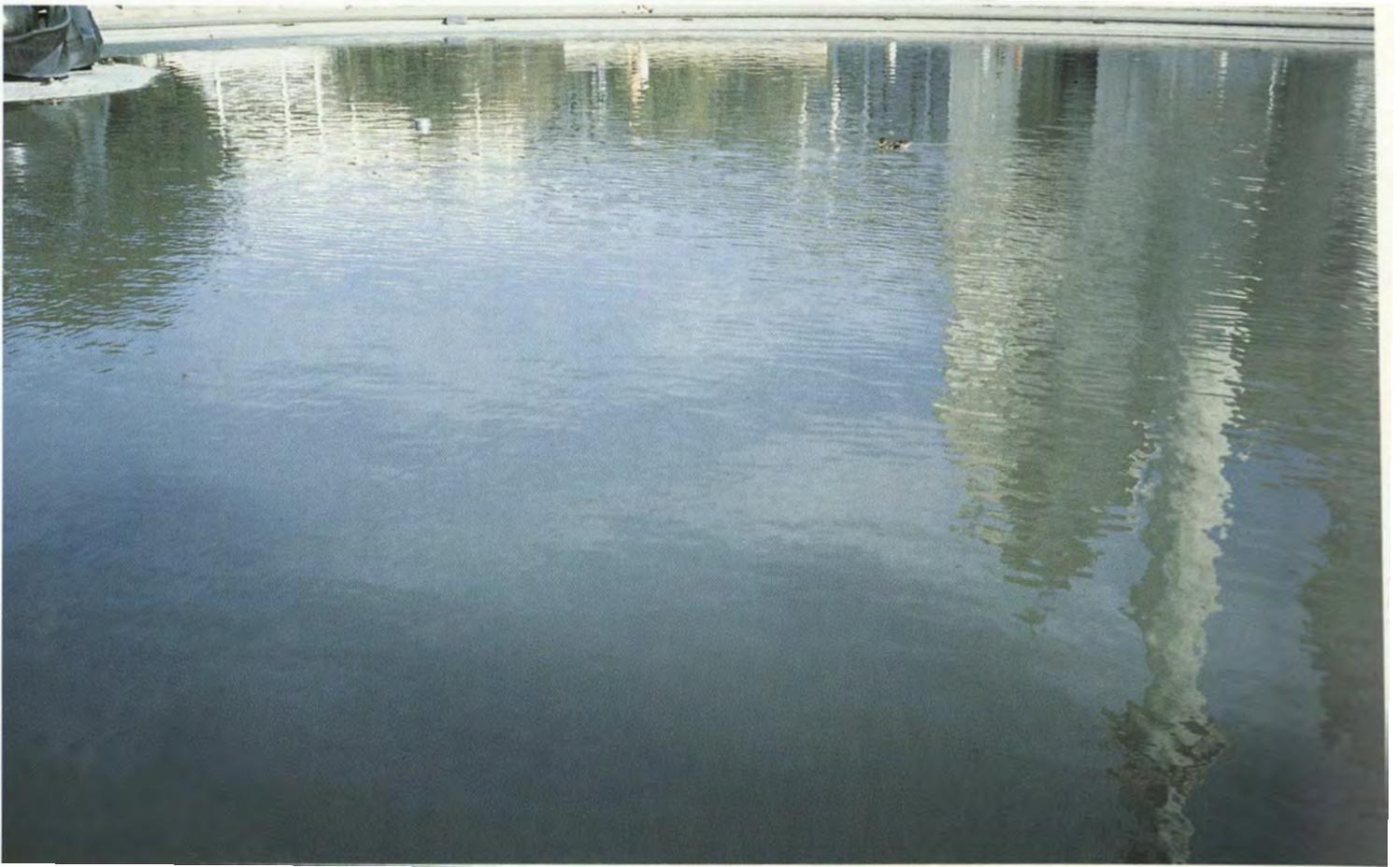
In his writings, Sven-Ingvar Andersson has also examined the role of parks in contemporary and future society. His conclusions may not always have been popular, however.

In ‘Sunday Landscape and Monday Cities’ from 1966, his attention turned to the park in the city, and more particularly to the relationship between greenery and urbanity. This article criticized development that is more suburban than urban, and more suburban than rural. He was apprehensive of a strange and ironic pastiche derived from that blended garden city, Le Corbusier's Radiant City, and Daniel Burnham's City Beautiful: the Radiant Garden City Beautiful! To deny the contributions of urban life, he wrote, is to deny the benefits of civilization. To nurture them, planning must establish sufficient densities for interpersonal exchange while protecting countryside from negative infringement. The challenge is to determine the right scale and the right form. His conclusion:

In my vision, the Danish landscape is a softly flowing terrain bordered by low-lying shorelines intersected by wooded areas, which, sometimes as connectors, sometimes as districts of greater or smaller proportions, divide up the land into landscape rooms, varying between intimate enclosures and grand horizons. And there are cities and small towns, as demarcated artifacts in clear relation to the forest edge, the line of the coast, and the land. At times, like a band along the forest edge, at others as a mass on the terrain. I also see – conservationists forgive me – strong new towns on the highest cliffs and along the shore, so near that they have their feet in the water. More and more small settlements come in step with the increase in population, and a network of roads stretches across the landscape.²⁴

One can see this as a quite courageous vision for its time, and see why it may require the pardon of those promoting the absolute preservation of open space for agriculture and leisure. Yet Andersson's vision remains realistic in its critique of the netherworld world of the suburb, a hybrid that provides the blessings of neither the city nor the country. Sven-Ingvar Andersson continues to maintain a youthful spirit and a characteristically open mind. That he can speak

Reflection pool of Karlskirche in Vienna, experienced by SIA.



so positively about the upcoming generation, or write so perceptively about land art, is much to his credit. As long ago as 1961 he created an exhibition called “Gardens on Paper,” at a time when reflective and speculative work was hardly the norm in landscape architecture.²⁵ The exhibition displayed both commissioned projects and those more purely conceptual. Clearly Andersson sought new expressions from the world of art, land art (earthworks), in particular. The molded fingers of mounds and the asphalted hilltops of the play surfaces at Ådalsparken in north Zealand from the mid-1960s, for example, recall the earth forms and poured asphalt artworks by Robert Smithson.²⁶

He also wrote positively on the giant snake created by Morten Klint on the edge of Hvidovre Hospital. Like the Parc de La Villette project, the site was troubled by the constant roar of a motor road, and a berm was erected to baffle the noise. Klint enlivened the sloping surface with a winding vegetal line, a 600-m-long snake to be seen from the moving automobile. Although the reference to the serpent would hardly be noticeable at speeds of 120 km/hr, Andersson discusses its variable meanings. To some drivers it shows that they will soon be home; others see its relation to Nordic prehistory. But perhaps more important than personal interpretation is what a landscape artwork and beauty signify in a greater context. Here Sven-Ingvar quotes the Swedish poet Nils Ferlin: “When beauty comes to the city, so shall wisdom be there.”²⁷

The critical discernment of Sven-Ingvar Andersson is revealed in his 1979 essay on the land artist Christo, and in particular on his “Running Fence” in Sonoma and Napa counties, California, from 1976. This is a work, writes Andersson, with “ecological religiosity,” and one which stimulates associations extending in many directions: “sailboats in the archipelago; the Great Wall of China; motor-

ways and aqueducts.”²⁸ For him, the power of Christo’s intervention warrants a place not only in art history, but in landscape history as well: “It is not a functional design, not a well-formulated solution to a practical problem. It is simply a message and an experience.” Or is there a moral, he asks, one that challenges landscape architects to “give people the strong, stimulating experiences they seek”? “Why are we making rose gardens” and other bits of nature, when we already know that they do not constitute the opportunity to create a landscape for today. His conclusion: “Instead we should be inspired by Christo.”²⁹

Andersson is careful to distinguish among the *havekunstner*, the “garden artist,” the *landskabsarkitekt*, and the product he calls *landkunstner*, or “land artist.” In his own work, the site and social considerations always rank first; questions of art enter the design as part of the process. In Christo’s work the primary consideration is art, an approach that the landscape architect must question. This critical distance applies to other garden artists as well:

*It may be unfair to cite [the work] of [Roberto Burle] Marx and [Isamu] Noguchi. In both cases they are noticed to a large degree because they have entered the garden worksite from other art forms, Marx as a painter and Noguchi as a sculptor. And although their work has stimulated garden design to a great degree, one cannot help noticing the touch of the dilettante when they work without the aid of an architect or a landscape architect.*³⁰

Their work, like Christo’s, is important for landscape architects because it challenges complacency and suggests new forms and experiences.

Sven-Ingvar Andersson has also created artworks, in each of his projects, but most emphatically in his own garden in Södra Sandby in southwestern Sweden. In “Hedges and Hens – My Cottage Garden,” he tells its saga, and of the

considerations that have formed it during the three intervening decades since its creation.³¹ First, as is so often necessary in Skåne, 600 hawthorn bushes were planted, set half a meter on center for protection against the wind. Managing the wind, in fact, was the basis of the plan; the various arrangements of hedges created enclosed rooms rectilinear and linear. Only to the west were these rooms left unbounded to allow the view and the sun. While sharing C.Th. Sørensen's predilection for, and at times infatuation with, the ellipse and other geometric shapes, Sven-Ingvar Andersson seems to possess a greater ability to integrate these forms into a more coherent whole. In certain of Sørensen's projects, such as the Poll garden or the celebrated allotment gardens at Nærum (both from the 1950s), the spaces beyond the elliptical enclosures can appear as awkward, left-over parcels without a defined identity. Andersson, on the other hand, has truly mastered the ellipse as a landscape shape. His compositional structure is more dynamic than Sørensen's, and the relationships he establishes between and throughout the elements show greater resolve and consolidation. At home in Skåne, Sven-Ingvar Andersson has joined the various outdoor rooms together in spite of their hedged limits.

In one part of the garden, the "chicken run," the hawthorns have relinquished their intractability and under the shears have assumed the shape of fowl. Of course, the shrubs read as abstract shapes first and hens only thereafter; to me the shapes recall the sculpture of Brancusi, especially his *Seal!* This bit of Swedish vegetal wit works equally well as a formal and a humorous element within the garden. It also reveals the impish dimension, otherwise concealed, of the creator who dwells within this landscape of hedges and hens. Presumably with tongue in cheek, the garden maker writes:

If I have the chance to live until then [to the turn of the century],

*I will attain the age of the patriarchs and senile frailty, and if my hen garden is not cleared away for a rocket launching pad or put to some other purpose, maybe sometime around the turn of the century I'll be able to sit in a hawthorn meadow with a blanket over my legs.*³²

Perhaps more sincerely he ends his little tale by saying: "And if I am really lucky, my great grandchildren will make hideouts under [hawthorn] branches."³³

At home and abroad, Sven-Ingvar Andersson has revealed his presence as a man who should have been from Hven, and as a man of the world. His designs draw on the native *genius loci* as they draw on the greater international heritage of designed and ordinary landscapes. He operates with equal effectiveness within the small garden and the large public plaza, quietly in Scandinavia and more vehemently upon the larger stages of Paris or Vienna. He has designed and produced both the Sunday landscapes and the Monday cities of which he has written. The landscapes that have resulted from his drawings and models possess what he has termed a "soul," and reveal his understanding of social concerns not as a sociologist, but as a landscape architect who respects the soul of the people as well as that of the land. He can be chiding and critical, but more often, he is gently persuasive in a polite and yet effective manner. His designs begin in sense and end in sensibility. While his landscapes possess logic and beauty, Sven-Ingvar Andersson is at base a humanist who places life and culture at the center of his concerns. Perhaps more importantly, he thinks and designs landscapes not only as a humanist, but also as a human being.

The reflection pool and an elliptical clump of trees seen from the Karlskirche.



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