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1. Pilot Project Description

The pilot area called Kumpula is a district in Helsinki situated about 10 kilometres north of the centre of the city. Kumpula has been built between the early 60's and late 80's.

The Housing Production Department, ATT, is an organisation of the city that produces and refurbishes apartments owned by the city. ATT does not manage or rent flats.

The pilot area is managed by the Kumpula Housing Company, which manages in total 2124 apartments in 71 buildings. The housing company maintains the houses itself, whereas the cleaning is outsourced.

The pilot project consists of three blocks of flats, which have 403 apartments. They are built in 1962 and made of concrete. These buildings at Kunnalliskodintie 6 form one of the biggest rented real estate units in Helsinki.

2 State of the Site - January 2002 – pilot

The SUREURO pilot is going to concentrate in the outdoor environment of the three buildings mentioned. Their facades have been renovated a couple of years ago and the renovation of the balconies has started in 2001. It has been decided that the apartments will be renovated from inside in 2004.

The district is surrounded by areas of mainly suburban homes and relatively sparsely built. That is why, at the level of urban planning, a study concerning some smaller houses that could be built on the edge of the pilot block is going on.

3 The work performed during the first 24 months

3.1. Tenants participation

The questionnaire that was delivered to each of the 403 apartments revealed that there are only few tenants willing to participate in common tasks and activities. That might be due to the high average age of the tenants - nearly 47 % are 50 years old or older. On the other hand, a recent study has found out that elder people are generally among those who are most involved with their living environment.

Some inhabitants claimed that they do not even get informed about the events organised by tenants association.

One lady has participated in the refurbishment project group meetings as the representative of the tenants association.

3.2. Partnerships research

Due to the qualitative emphasis and the current phase - planning, not yet design - of the outdoors refurbishment, the pilot in question has not co-operated as a partner in scientific research.

3.3 National organisation

ATT pilot project belongs to SUREURO Finnish team. Finnish Real Estate Federation has been the main monitoring and coordinating actor between ATT and two other Finnish pilots, VVO and VTS housing companies. Working methods, tools and results especially on attempts to get tenants involved with the refurbishment process have been discussed in meetings, too.

The targets of ATT, VVO and VTS are different. ATT and VTS pilots are going to carry out a status survey according to a similar model.

3.4 Phase in progress

At the building level, the refurbishment comprises the balconies of the three blocks of flats that are to be renovated. At the level of urban planning, a study concerning some smaller houses that could be built in the area is going on. The target of the SUREURO project is the outdoor environment, but these three phases have to cooperate their timing.

The planning of additional buildings does not belong to the pilot work. It may, though, alter the land use and spatial structure at the pilot site. Therefore it is no use passing to the design phase concerning the outdoor environment until the urban planners have accomplished their suggestion. It would be suitable that the design concerning the outdoor environment of the pilot block would be accomplished by the end of the year 2003.

3.5 Measurements

As, in this pilot, the main focus is on qualitative matters, no technical measures were undertaken.

A survey about the tenants view to their environment was realized in form of a questionnaire with structured and freeform questions. The questionnaire was formulated to serve as a basis to further design. According to the tenants, it seemed to be too exhaustive, and 26 % answered.

Of those who answered, 39 % had lived at the site more than 30 years. On the other hand, 30 % had lived there for a shorter period than 10 years. The latter were the most eager in suggesting improvements. Tenants had the possibility to make visual drafts on a map, but very few did so.

The two courtyards that the pilot block comprises are situated between eight-story-high buildings. They are vast areas, and look almost like parks with their rocks, solitary trees and lawn. Many tenants claimed, though. They have no choice, and they would like to find some closed, calm sitting-out places, too. The fact that very few materials are used is also relevant: surfaces are mainly covered with lawn or asphalt and buildings are made of concrete. Because of varying topography and slippery paths it can be really difficult to cross the courtyard in winter.

The relation to the surroundings is not established. A vast parking space on the outskirts of the pilot block is considered boring and untidy. On the other hand, that is just the point where one gets his first impression of the whole site. Cars that are parked in the courtyard caused insecurity and irritation, as there are specific parking areas on the edge of the building site. Some vandalism in the common areas was also mentioned.

4 The next 24 months:

According to the questionnaire, functionality, ecological, social and cultural sustainability along with visual matters proved to be significant. Using the analysed results as a base, the refurbishment can be given a more detailed form.

Objectives:

To optimise the use of ground

- By taking into consideration the effects in the spatial quality caused by the potential additional buildings
- By making it more difficult to use the courtyards as parking spaces for cars

To improve:

- The accessibility within the boundaries of this block
- It is relevant to see that for many elderly tenants this is the only place to take a walk and to experience the variation of seasons.
- How the pilot site is visually connected to neighbouring areas
 - The opportunities to use outdoor areas for social activities, especially for adolescent
 - The diversity in range of plants, materials and spatial experiences that the tenants face outdoors

Of those tenants who returned the questionnaire, 44 % were willing to get involved with the refurbishment project. When the planning phase is accomplished, the results are to be displayed to the tenants interested, supposedly in spring 2002.

Development of the questionnaire to a practical assessment tool is in progress.

5 Project group

Kalevi Holopainen, Manager, ATT (until March, 2002)

Ulla Mehik, executive management, ATT

Mikko Tiainen, researcher, coordinator, Finnish Real Estate Federation

Jari Joronen, CEO, Kumpula Housing Company

Iris Koivula, Student of landscape architecture