

4.4 Summarizing analysis of Hornsgatan

Based on the gathered spatio-sonic information and qualitative sound analysis of the chosen case study sites presented on the previous pages, a final summarizing reflection and analysis of the entire street is given in the following section.

As explained at the beginning of the case study chapter, the street can be divided into several sections and sites depending on the experienced and observed quality of sound and space.

The identified tripartite division of Hornsgatan, is directly connected to the experienced sonic synthesis of the entire street. The sonic synthesis is affected by the physical structure of the built environment and relates to the temporal activities and functions existing there more or less recurrently. It is a synthesis experienced by a person, in this case me, situated in and moving through that urban sonic space by feet. From this perspective, section one and two have similarities in terms of function and spatial quality that section three does not embrace in the same way. This difference is a part of what gives Hornsgatan its unique expression and particular identity, which is characterized by having both positive and problematic qualities.

Section one and two

On the whole, the first two sections between Götgatan and Zinkensdamm can be regarded as fairly well functioning as the interaction between different sound intensities and sound events coming from various sound sources, are in a fairly good balance in terms of dynamic interplay. In short, the ability to hear and to be heard by someone else at a proximate distance is present in this urban space for a majority of the studied time periods. The amount of traffic is obviously a dominating sonic feature of this site, but still, contrasting sonic events are present and fill in the temporal breaks of a more silent character that recurrently appear during the day as the flow of traffic changes or are regulated by the traffic lights. The spatial character along this section is also variegated. Here it is relevant to mention Puckeln, Maria Magdalena churchyard, Mariatorget, Bysis and Bysistorget. The spatial character affects the behavior of sound on site and beyond and also affects human behavior and presence in the area. Parts of this section have more of a closed character, being a typical street canyon with no or limited possibilities to move away from the present spatio-sonic situation. This situation is partly weak and problematic as one is directly exposed to high

sound intensities coming from the constant waves of traffic at a very close distance which drowns any other sound event. Here it is relevant to mention the strip between Mariatorget and Bysistorget and the strip between Bysistorget and Zinkensamm - these parts are, however, outweighed by sites of more spatially loose and open character, leaving several choices of moving to and from the specific geographic position. This possibility affects the overall spatio-sonic experience as the act of moving enables the experiencing subject to take part in a variety of contrasting qualities.

The conclusion is that the sound quality of this part of Hornsgatan can be considered as adequate in relation to how it is utilized. These two identified sections are appreciated by the inhabitants as they contain several co-existing activities, usages and functions of different character that are not entirely drowned by the partly intense traffic, just disturbed. However, it is important not to neglect that acceptable sound pressure levels too often are exceeded at Hornsgatan and that the street would of course benefit from lowering the sound pressure levels for the wellbeing of all. At the same time such a change would decrease the exceedingly high levels of toxic air-borne particles emitted from the traffic, providing a better quality of life for everyone in the area.

Section three

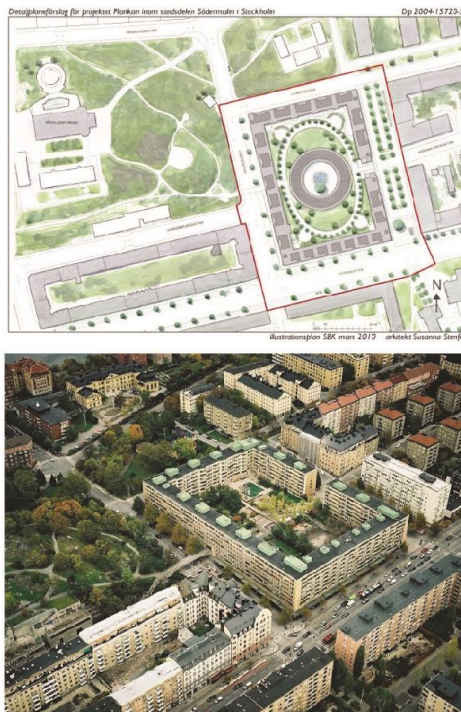
The inventory and spatio-sonic analysis of the thesis points out that the third section of Hornsgatan, between Zinkensdamm and Hornstull, is of another problematic magnitude in terms of urban sound quality than the previously described two sections.

Between Zinkensdamm and Hornstull, the relationship between the physical structure of the built environment and the present activities, actions and functions can be regarded as *not* being in balance or well-functioning from an experiential point of view. Here, human outdoor and indoor activities at ground level are sparse and the function of Hornsgatan as a transportation artery dominates both the visual and aural scene. Human and natural sounds are recurrently drowned, not only disturbed, in highly intense sound masses deriving from traffic. At the same time as the situation repels human and natural sound to emerge and fill up the air in the pauses that do occur regularly due to the frequency of how the traffic lights operated. This implies that in the breaks of relative silence that do in fact occur during the lapse of an ordinary day are very limited.

Being able to access contrasting spaces in terms of sound quality that differs from the dominating sonic state is crucial. Living in this area as a child, or as an elderly or disabled person with a limited radius of movability which raises the question of the importance of availability and access to variegated spaces in a neighborhood. The qualitative inventories and mappings of this section point at a limited access to contrasting sonic spaces in particular between the peak of Hornsgatan and Hornstull, in particular for those who have problems of movability, such as children, the elderly or the disabled. The public park of Tantolunden and the park around the church of Högalid are nearby, but the path is spatially cut off from Hornsgatan due to the change of ground level and dependence upon the usage of stairs to enter into the park areas. The limited ability to take part in other kinds of sonic qualities found in urban public space that function like an interesting, stimulating or calming contrast to the most common and prevailing site-specific sound quality – traffic - is alarming. The described situation puts the publically accessible inner courtyard of the residential block Plankan into the core of this discussion. Current plans of building a round house containing 119 new apartments at the approx. 1-hectare-sized courtyard can be questioned on account of the described situation. Proposing a solution for the area as a whole and for those living and working there, would be to update the currently decayed and worn out courtyard of Plankan into an open and freely accessible site for

recreation calmness and social interaction for everyone regardless of age or physical abilities. Such scenario would of course be of extra value and relevancy as long as the surrounding inferior spatio-sonic situation continues to be severely degraded. However, in case of changed circumstances concerning the surrounding spatio-sonic situation steps could be taken towards a densification of the site by exploiting the open yard. At least from a democratic sound perspective and the right for everyone to choose what kind of sonic environment one wants to linger and live in. It is possible to claim that the qualitative sound analysis of this work has enabled a deepened understanding for the functions and meanings of this site in relation to the area as a whole, by extending the discussion on sound quality and placing it in a site-specific context

The final part of section three, between Hornstull and Bergsundsstrand, has its own character and experiential quality. The busy crossing of Hornstull can be described as a dense sonic wall during weekday daytime. Increasing ones distance to the sonically intense crossing and moving towards the sea along the last strip of Hornsgatan, provides the clear sensation of an apparent transition through evidently changing spatio-sonic qualities. Slowly the tempo goes down and the sonic intensity of the traffic node at Hornstull diminishes in the distance. When approaching the edge of Hornsgatan and walking down to Hornstulls strand just below and by the waterfront, the quick change between two completely very opposing sonic states are obvious. The closeness between these oppositional states in terms of distance makes the act of physical transition into a valuable experiential quality on its own. The meaning and importance of having access to and being able to experience such a change of both the spatial and sonic quality within a very short distance in this highly activated and densely populated urban area, is a subject that according to my opinion, is worth further discussion both at a more general level in for example urban development projects as well as at more graspable site-specific level when dealing with concrete detail solutions in the neighborhood.



160

¹⁶⁰ Local plan and aerial photo of the block of Plankan 2010, Stockholm planning office (Stockholms stadsbyggnadskontor) retrieved from www.stockholmproject.blogspot.se (161021).