

THE STRUCTURE OF STOCKHOLM

The inner town in Stockholm, the so-called "City of Stone"--characterized by a grid pattern street network with rectangular enclosed blocks--was fully built up by the end of the 1920's. Its clear and simple form came about as the result of a period of intensive urban development sparked off by the triumphal progress of industrialization in the latter half of the 19th century. The population of the City of Stone increased from 90,000 in 1850 to 430,000 in 1930 by influx from the agrarian countryside. This rapid growth forced the municipality for the first time to take independent action in the matter of (inter alia) town planning and technical services such as gas, water and sewerage networks. Building sites were then and still are mainly in private ownership. The first tramway companies were, in fact, speculative undertakings run by private enterprises.

Within the City of Stone, dwellings and industries were fairly evenly distributed up to 1930--most people walked to work--and the economic centre had shifted from its original location in the mediaeval Old Town on the central island to the northern shore of Lower Norrmalm where it is now largely concentrated. Drottninggatan and Regeringsgatan on Lower Norrmalm developed into high-class shopping streets connecting with Västerlånggatan, nowadays the only shopping street of any significance in the Old Town.

But the growth of the town did not cease in 1930 when the inner-town district was fully developed. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, the authorities had started to buy up agricultural land adjoining the old city limits in the south and west in order to provide the overcrowded population of the City of Stone with tracts of natural beauty for recreation purposes and the opportunity of living in homes of their own in a "garden suburb" on English lines. A few independent garden cities and industrial communities had also sprung up outside the city limits. Certain tramway services had been extended to neighbouring municipalities and garden suburbs and a tram network--which the city of Stockholm had taken over--had, in the 1930's, expanded to form the framework for an improved public transport system to serve completely newly planned outer-town districts, now including blocks of flats, essential if newcomers to Stockholm were to have a roof over their heads. Incorporation of some neighbouring municipalities had already taken place and it then became a matter of vital importance to incorporate more. At the end of the Second World War, the population of Stockholm proper had risen to 670,000 and of Greater Stockholm to 860,000.

The new districts were planned on entirely different lines from the City of Stone whose enclosed and densely-built blocks were now considered unsuitable. Demands for sun, light and air on all floors of residential buildings led to a completely open type of plan on the continental pattern with free-standing blocks of flats in natural surroundings. All blocks of flats were built on land which the municipality had bought much earlier and retained in its own hands. By this means, it could itself determine the pace of development and the general social standard. The first outer-town districts to be constructed on these lines were Traneberg in the west and Hammarby in the south.

However, the continued development of new residential areas and modern spacious industrial areas in the outer-town could not be founded on an inadequate tram network. A resolution passed by the City Council in 1941 gave the starting signal to Stockholm's modern underground railway system.

It soon became obvious that the logical outcome of the new public transport system was an entirely new planning pattern for the districts served by the underground. They were developed with a central area of blocks of flats within walking distance from the station and its local commercial centre. One-family houses were placed in a new ring outside the blocks of flats. This simple theme was then repeated so that districts with 10--15,000 inhabitants were strung out one after another like pearls on a string. But some of the pearls became larger than others; they have been developed into main centres to serve several districts. Vällingby in the west, Högdalen and Farsta in the south are completed and in operation and each serves a population of 50--80,000. Still another main centre, Skärholmen, is in process of construction in the southwest along E 4. Apart from a plentiful assortment of shops, they contain offices, upper-schools, churches, clubrooms and so on and industrial areas are located nearby. Including areas linked by means of bus routes, this new planning system will provide opportunities for housing about 500,000 Stockholmers. A new addition will be the district of Järvaältet in the north, now at the planning stage. After this, virtually all land within the administrative borders of Stockholm will have been developed, but a similar expansion is taking place in urban areas outside its borders. At present, there are 325,000 people living in the inner-town, 475,000 in outlying districts inside the administrative boundaries of Stockholm and 410,000 in suburbs outside.

Parallel with this expansion of the outlying districts--and partially occasioned thereby--a large-scale redevelopment of the heart of the city has been started. About 340,000 people work in the inner-town and of these about one-third are employed in the actual city core south of Kungsgatan. At the end of the 19th century, this was still a residential area with a narrow street pattern dating back to a town plan from the 17th century.

The great significance which the area has as economic and administrative centre for both Stockholm and the whole country has necessitated a radical alteration of the old, over-crowded and cramped residential area to a modern and functionally-effective city core. A resolution to this purpose was passed in 1945. The reconstruction of streets and buildings had to be co-ordinated and underground railway lines, motor traffic routes and parking garages built. It is not possible to undertake a radical and rapid transformation of this kind if the land is split up between different owners and the municipality has therefore continuously since 1912 bought up sites in the city area now included in the present redevelopment. It is gradually acquiring all the remaining land, partly through negotiated purchase and partly by eminent domain. It will continue to retain the ownership in this area in the same way as it does in the outlying districts. The first stage in the redevelopment, the five high shop and office blocks at Hötorget, was carried out between 1953 and 1962.

The city core is the heart of the central business district. In order to give the whole of this area the necessary concentration around the underground railways and preserve the rest of the inner-town for well-situated dwellings, a zoning plan was passed in 1962. The effect of this is that dwellings are preserved in the inner-town itself for about 300,000 inhabitants and the central business district, with the city core, may expand to a work population of 190,000. It is estimated that, in all, the inner-town will be able to provide employment for about 400,000 people.

The car is well on its way to becoming everybody's vehicle in Stockholm, as in most American and European cities. We now have one car per five inhabitants and will probably double this density by 1980. This calls for entirely new traffic routes and, for this reason, a new Traffic Route Plan was adopted in 1960. A ring of motorways is in the process of being built around the whole inner-town. A large north-south motorway which passes right through the inner-town is also under construction. A motorway from east to west is also being planned. Other-

wise, the street network in the inner-town will be largely preserved, which means restricting traffic usage there, whilst the newly-planned outlying districts can be permitted unlimited use of the motorcar. However, the underground network--which, in 1963, transported 96 million passengers--must handle the high traffic peaks for the town as a whole.

The high standard of transport which is being developed in this way within the administrative boundaries of Stockholm must, however, be co-ordinated with that of the neighbouring municipalities as must also building development. This is regulated by a joint regional plan for 1.5 million inhabitants in Greater Stockholm (now 1.2 millions), planned at present so that suburban and underground railways largely handle the trips to town at rush hours. Agreement has been reached for the expansion of the underground railway network outside the administrative boundaries of the City simultaneously with the construction of traffic routes and for a joint traffic company to run the local traffic for the whole of Greater Stockholm. Opportunities for a wider administrative co-operation are also being investigated in order that Stockholm and the neighbouring municipalities may solve their vast town building tasks in unison.

TORSTEN WESTMAN