Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

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Blekinge Technical University
Department of Spatial Planning

Tutor: Thomas Hellquist

Åke Hjalmarsson

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Abstract

Design is about aesthetics and function and in this study following a research problem: How to redesign Palacky Square with vicinity to stimulate social interaction? This study identifies characters, design strategy and implementation of social interaction.

The study area is chosen from a falsifying perspective. It is already beautiful and has people in transit. But very little chosen interaction. The situation can neither be blamed on the car traffic and walkability is okay. The vicinity is included as understanding the network of public spaces.

Theory, observations and interviews creates a seven point design strategy for social interaction implemented in a redesign proposal of Palacky Square with vicinity in Prague.

Social Interaction is the awareness of communication between people. Output is serendipity important for wellbeing and creativity. Design strategy is creating identity, destination making, human sense, activities, diversity, social elements and communicative distances. These are implemented at and around Palacky Square as local centre movement, community store, monastery entrance, outdoor library, space separation, cute statue and more furniture.

The usefulness of the report is the summoning of existing theory and design knowledge. Providing tools for both attractiveness and interaction possibilities of public spaces.

Key words

Encounters Amenities Social Interaction
Prague Urban Design Palackého náměstí
Public Space Meetings Redesign
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1 Introduction chapters

1.1 Intention with this analyse

1.1.1 Problem Picture: Usage and reputation creates the identity of a place which support life opportunities, business and tourism (Florida 2011). According to Jacobs (1992) and Gehl (2010) city life and small talk is vital for the attraction and survival of the city core. Other people is the biggest attraction and source for happiness, mentioned in 13th century by Sturlason (maður er manns gaman, 2011). Still there is a knowledge gap in urban sociology between what actually brings people together in public space and what keep people apart. It is affecting wellbeing and mental health. Social interaction in public space has not been subject of study by itself, except for Goffman (1963). A diversity of researchers has found separate parts related to social interaction. Research overview identifies eleven separate areas. Bringing these together is vital for success of places.

Though architects visualizations are thronged with people because we as humans can better identify ourselves within the design, the norm in town planning is visual experience rather than usage. (Jacobs 1992) This causes people to stand alone without a place to identify neither wanting themselves to be in. Social interaction design is needed to be further looked into.

The Prague context offer many squares to be studied, some standing out for their usage or lack of usage. Most bad spaces can be identified with one or several dominating problems, noise levels, car parking or lack of people. The study area Palacky Square with vicinity is chosen from a falsifying perspective. It is already beautiful and has people in transit. But very little chosen interaction. The situation can neither be blamed on the car traffic and walkability is okay. The vicinity is included as understanding the network of public spaces.

1.1.2 Aim: To illustrate the design criteria related to social life of places in urban environment
1.1.3 Research problem: How to redesign Palacky Square with vicinity to stimulate social interaction?

Research questions are:

1. What’s the character of social interaction in Public place?
2. What strategies improve social interaction?
3. How can these strategies be implemented in Palacky Square?

1.1.4 Limits: This study is not about human behaviour or design in general, nor in the living places, neither in the working places. But in places that Zukin (2010) called third places. Public places where people seek socialization, when they are not at home neither at work. Social interaction is in this case the definition of when people are aware of their communication with others (Goffman, 1961; 83-150). The stimulation approach is towards wanted social interaction, and not forced, hostile or violent encounters. The scale of study is based on theory of communicative distances (Gehl, 2010) from 0.5 meter to 500 meter acceptable walking distance.

Design proposal is limited to the open spaces around the Health Ministry in Prague; Palacky vicinity is the collective name this report uses for all of them. River Vltava with surrounding main roads Rossinova, Svobodova and Vysehradská are set as boundaries of study area after acceptable walking distance from Palacky Square.

1.1.5 Application: This research is of value for those in position of getting places popular.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Scientific approach: This research is in the field of urban design towards hermeneutic understanding with qualitative methods. A full statistical proof is not included and quantitative methods are not important for understanding the factors for social interaction. Subject area of study is information answering the research questions:

1. What’s the character of social interactions in public space?
2. What design strategies improve social interaction?
3. How can these strategies be implemented in Palacky Square?
Targeted study population to gain this information are City Authority office (Digital maps and information of site), people, shops and public spaces in the study area.

1.2.2 Qualitative Methods: Triangulation with discourse analysis, observation and interviews. Triangulation analyse results in the design strategy that is implemented in a design proposal.

![Diagram of Triangulation](image)

Figure 1.2.2-1 Triangulation (Hjalmarsson design 2012)

1) **Discourse analysis** to understand Prague’s strategic, development and land use plans.

2) **Observation**, focused to explore how people use and interact in the study area today and spontaneous observation of other places to compare with existing theories.

3) **Survey** with open and unstructured interviews with official at City Authority in Prague. Structured surveys with service staff near site and people (users) in site. Purpose is to get a greater understanding of the place.

4) **Triangulation analyses and design strategy** compare existing theory with discourse analysis, observation and survey. Understanding character of social interaction. Identify need and expression for usage groups. Form the social interaction design strategy and design program for site.

5) **Design proposal** to implement design strategy on the site Palacky Square. Completing the hermeneutical understanding of social interaction as urban design approach.
Evolution and conclusion is finally discussing the character, design strategy and implementation of social interaction according to the research question. The last chapter also comments the use of methods and give recommendations for further study and have a discussion on the outcome.

1.2.3 **Discussion on methods:** Examples on ethnographical observations (Arvidsson och Ehn, 2009) have been studied to avoid errors. Other methodology sources studied are Uppsatsguiden.se (2012) and Norris (2008).

Discourse analysis is difficult in its matter of not to be mixed with theory. Discussion is aimed at empiric related documents specific for the site. Arguing and logic reasons are the empiric counterpart to reading.

What is written down and selected to be looked upon in observation is based on conductor’s own interpretation of important information. It is difficult to stay neutral and not emotionally biased. Another problem when conducting observations occurs during winter and early spring because few people use outdoor public spaces.

Survey in a Czech context means language problem. Unstructured approach gives more qualitative answers but structured approach with questioners presented in Appendix gives the opportunity to interview non-English speaking people.

Implementing a strategy as a design is a methodology that is quick and cheap way to visualize a concept from which analyse can be summoned; however both expectations and simplified conditions are built in into a design. As example visualization by architects has many people in the picture, but when realized it is different.

Other scientific field approaches than urban design to study social interaction could be Goffman’s psychological approach, Florida or Whyte’s economical approach or Zukin’s urban sociological approach.

1.2.4 **Use of existing knowledge**

An introduction of the site and an research overview of the field are presented as separate chapters, used as preparation to the study and framing the perspective of the subject area.
1.3 Palacky Square Introduction

The choice of site is an excellent place to identify the failing piece of interaction and implement it in a revitalizing proposal for stimulated social interaction. The Palacky Square in Prague has by first appearance, two out of three rights for a living public space in the city centre. It is beautiful so design shouldn’t be the problem. It has people in transit so lack of people shouldn’t be the problem. But other use and staying in the place is a minimum, and no conversation was observed. A problem with choosing a site in winter is that people use outdoor public spaces much less than in summer and Prague’s tourist peak had not yet come. The applied problem picture may change with season. Prague as a city is of medieval character with many old open squares where tourists and 1.2 million inhabitants (Magistrát hl. M Prahy, 2008) could be observed.

![Figure 1.3.1-1 Location in the world heritage city of Prague (Hjalmarsson map, 2012)](image)

1.3.1 Location of site

The red spot (50°4′22.08″N, 14°24′51.84″E) is Palacky Square in the district of Prague 2, 1.5 km from city centre (Prague 1). Site is within world heritage city of Prague (warm grey). Map shows also the site’s relation to distinct walkability (purple), comparable voluntary use (green), main tourist path and a comparable monastery (brown).
Figure 1.3.1-2 Palacky vicinity with public spaces (Hjalmarsson, map; 2012)
Figure 1.3.1-3 Palacky vicinity with major functions (Hjalmarsson, map; 2012)
The studied area of Palacky Square includes what could be called Below Emauzy. It is all the public spaces (38 000m²) around the Health ministry building; Palackého náměstí (Palacky Square 6 480m²), Zitkovy sady (Zitkovy Gardens 8700m²), Náměstí Pod Emauzy (Square Below Emauzy 2 480m²), Pod Slovany (4 300m²) and the square in front of the Emauzy church (583m²). The total vicinity of the study area is 270 000m². The vicinity is limited by the hierarchy of the main roads; Resslova, Vyšehradská, Svobodova and the river Vltava. It could in the same time be linked to, or rather dived from the rest of the city with the public spaces in the north with Jirásek Square (with the dancing house) connecting to Prague I, in east 80 000m² big Charles Square link to the centre of Prague 2, and in the south Výtoň Park links to the area below Vyšehradská Castle. In this study are important changes in the vicinity proposed if it is vital for the interaction at the areas of Palacky Square. Otherwise minor changes in the vicinity are not relevant for this study. Pictures of the area are presented in Appendix Palacky Square pictures, last in this report.

1.3.2 Existing use of Palacky Square

The site’s different spaces have its own social function. Palacky Square works as a transit place between bus, tram and metro, Zitkovy Gardens as place to sit on the benches in the sun and perhaps watch the roses in summer. Observations in winter shows only it’s use as take a walk with the dog. That use seems also to be the main use for Pod Slovany, besides parking along the street. The Square Below Emauzy is a quiet place used by only a few, mostly empty unless people walk towards the metro station which is the secondary use noticed on all the spaces, particularly most on Zitkovy Garden along the axis of Podalská street.

1.3.3 History of site

All historical information has been retrieved from Magistrát hl. m. Prahy (2008). The area 2010 hasn’t changed much since the original flight photos of 1938. The block’s buildings around the area, mostly for housing, are from 19th and early 20th century with a mix of classical, art noveau and fill in of cubism and socialistic realism. The ministry buildings, squares and garden are mixed classical/cubistic from 1929 by architect Bohumil Hypšman. The Palacky Bridge was built 1878 by engineer Josef Reiter. The district Novestro Praha (New Town Prague) was planned on order of Emperor Charles IV in the
14th century when Prague was made a capital city of the Holy Roman Empire with the Vyšehrad Castle on the hill outside the south gates. (Perhaps the Gate was where Vyšehrad Street now crosses the railway and the stream of Botič.) Today this old district is part of the Prague world heritage counted as the central city of Prague. The site is part of the administrative district Prague 2.

![Figure 1.3.3-1 Aerial view 2010 and 1938, Yellow lines are paths, streets and tram lines, blue dots mark doors. Arrow marks the old Emauzy Church tower destroyed in World War II (City Development Prague City Authority (2010)).](image)

The granite and bronze monument from 1912 (repaired 1948) at Palacky Square represents voices of history talking to the nations father František Palacký. The monument at Below Emauzy Square is a memorial to the people of Prague killed in World War I. Though the existing one is a replica from 1998, apparently the invading Germans didn’t like the original monuments and destroyed both 1940.

Výtoň, the Vltava river walkway is today paved and separated from Rašínova Road with the granite masonry embankment wall with cast-iron balustrade built 1907. There are some vaults in the wall approximately each 100 meters. As to why this is so there seems to be no easy found information. One of these vaults is used as a restaurant today and the other three are locked and fenced storages. This embankment used to be the Podalska settlement with fishermen and ice collectors of the Vltava River, which the Po-
dalska Street is a reminder about. At the end of Palacky vicinity and the Podalska Street, in a pit (the former terrain level) at Výtoň Park is the former Customs office, Podskalska no. 412. Today it is a restaurant and it eluded the site observation that it also contains a museum with the exhibitions History of Prague steam navigation and Vanished Podalská. At this border of the studied area along the Svobodova Street is also the railway bridge and the stream of Botič.

What has changed between the pictures is the “Emauzy Church” (Full name: Church of the Virgin Mary, Saint Jeroným and Saint Slavonic, patrons in Emauzy). Its two 50 meter high towers with gilded peaks by architect F. M. Černý. The old spire and roof was lost in the war 1945 (see arrow). The new towers are the main attraction for the whole area Below Emauzy as it stands out as an icon and is illuminated at night. In the same time the concrete material fit in with its surroundings. This church together with the small 11th century church of St. Kosmas and Damián belongs to the Emauzy Monastery. The Monastery was re-established 1989 from an exile since 1939. For tourists it is possible to visit the inner yard gallery of the cloister but that is as touristic the monastery gets. The entrances to the church and cloister are not logical placed at opposite sides of the complex.

Figure 1.3.3-2 (Hjalmarson photo, 2012) *Emauzy (background) has no access to river side.*
The next major change to the area was when the Charles Square metro station was built 1978, with four entrances at Palacky Square. A minor change was made as late as 2007 when the Palacky Square was sparsely renovated and tram tracks was moved a little. New Prague Mosaic pavement was laid in the asphalt to emphasize space and walking direction

Figure 1.3.3-3
(Hjalmarsson photo 2012) Photo on information board (originally Prague City Authority)

[36]Emauzy Monastery: the only national monument in the vicinity.

Landmarks (figurative drawings)

National cultural Monuments (red)

Cultural monuments (orange)

Historical statue (pawn)


[31]Vseobecna faculty

[32]Jana Na Skalce Church

Metro Line B (Yellow circles)
Tramline (blue line)

Figure 1.3.3-4 Active connections to city (Hjalmarsson, map, 2012)
1.3.4 Relation to centres

Prague 2 is too close to City centre to be able to build up a fully functional district centre on its own. The commercial services are predominantly located along the streets to Wenceslas Square in Prague 1, with an exception for Prague 2’s centre Tylovo Square which recently was redesign 2012 to hold a permanent market. The big arterial road that cuts through the centre in four-lane one-way streets does not completely split the district. This condition has created some interesting and innovative but not well functional crossings. A great spot for district centre development is around the metro station at Pavlova Square, now dominated by bank buildings and traffic congestion. This centre of the administrative district of Prague 2 is 1.1 km from Palacky Square, and the direct way through Na Moráni, U Nemocnice and Kateřinská streets is not activated at all. Ječna Street is an arterial road extending from Resslova with some activities, but the general conception is that the Palacky vicinity or the community on Charles Square west side is not connected to the districts centre. Still the site is more connected to the commercial centre around Wenceslas Square (1.3 km away) in the previous district of New Town and the City centre in general (Prague 1) via the river walk and from Charles Square via the streets Spálená, Jungmanova and Vodičova.

The area Below Emauzy divides two communities which centres could be identified with concentration of shops, supermarket and functional gathering place. The “Charles Square community” has its centre at Václavská Passage on the west side of Charles Square, where elderly gather from early morning at the Café with fairly cheap prices and a staff not too far from their own retirement. The other community is smaller and less distinct but have a concentration of restaurants and service around the supermarket in the crossing of Svobodova and Vyšehradská Street. The gathering function may either be the popular playing ground for children and parents, or the outdoor serving restaurant in the old Podalska 441 building.
The gravitation analyse is put together from Huffs law (Lagéren 2012). The graphics show the three people counting units closest to Palacky Square. City Authority has detailed figures of residents and workplaces per building in databases (Ales, 2012). Counted together in these three units, north and south unit is somewhat in correlation with study area, and the eastern unit is made up hospital, university, and botanical garden east of Vysehradska Street and Charles Square. The example is simplified but shows that about 5000 people, roughly 20% of both residents and workers, can be expected to visit the area when other choose to go somewhere else. When commercial sales area is doubled it also attracts twice the number of people. In theoretical overview the relation between commercial and public space attraction is described. This model pictures also the possible usage of public space. It should be noted that the big unit with 10.350 working places is not really that well connected to the site, because of big walls on both sides of Vysehradska Street. But the centre of that unit is also mostly low density garden space and the development areas are concentrated along the edges.

Huff’s Gravitation model: $P_{ij}=\left(\frac{S_j}{T_{ij}^3}\right)/\sum_{i}^{n}\left(\frac{S_j}{T_{ij}^3}\right) = 5.223$ plausible visitors

$S =$ sales area values, here simplified impressions of relative size

$T =$ traveltime simplified to distance from center of people count unit ($j$)

$P =$ place, in this case Palacky square and the Vaclavska passage community

$\lambda =$ sluggish constant, here ignored but could include psychological effects.
1.3.5 Tourism and service

Tourism attraction doesn’t follow the gravitation model and the attraction is based much more on identity and new visitors. The following maps from City Authority (Geodata, 2008), shows that there are 41 sights of interest and seven museums within one square kilometre east of Palacky Square.

Figure 1.3.5-1; 1.3.5 -2 Sights, amenities and dog bins (Geodata, 2008) legend description added by author.
The map shows the important workplaces, schools, and major parking’s relation to Palacky Square. It also shows that there is no cinema or theatre within walking distance. Why City Authority put up information on dog bins is not clear. Dog bins is a way of self-maintenance by dog-walkers seen in the study area. Self-maintenance does fail when it comes to graffiti which is a major part of Prague’s street view. This graffiti doesn’t stay at the legal wall under Wilsonova Road in the city centre.

1.3.6 Theoretic overview of situation

Carr et al. has bad and good example of comparable sites. Surrounded by government buildings according to 1960’s planning practice of function separation, Boston City Hall Plaza is empty. “Anyone without government business has little reason to be in the area... At lunch, one of the few times employees might use the plaza, most people go elsewhere.” (Carr et al. 1992:89). This is very much the same situation as Palacky Square. “The lesson that can be learned from Beaubourg is that a combination of the centrality of the place, the physical supports of surrounding pedestrian streets, and the drawing power of a structure of interest can create a context – but only a context- for use. It must be further supported by an appropriate physical arena and open-minded management policies.” (Carr et al. 1992:113). Place de Beaubourg in Paris is simply a concrete slope towards Centre Pompidou, “not overdesigned”. “A critical mass of people and a variety of interesting events, not necessary programmed ones, can provide expected and unexpected stimulation to the audience. In this respect, the Pompidou Plaza appears to be successful.” (Carr et al. 1992:113).

Palacky Square differs mostly from Beaubourg by its not so central position. The large flow of people and pedestrian streets don’t reach this far south of the Prague city epicentre. Palacky Square is neither a place to develop a district centre which could compensate for its location. The level of possible usage of Palacky Square cannot be as high as in the very centre.

1.3.7 Summary of Palacky Square introduction

The choice is Palacky Square because at first appearance it seems to have two out of three rights for a living public space in the city centre; beautiful and with people in movement but little voluntary occupation of the public space. Conversations could not be noticed.
The location is 1.5 km from city centre of Prague. Capital of Czech Republic and a tourist destination in Europe. The location prevents from equal development as the city core.

The study area has Palacky Square as its core, the network and paths studied stretches into its vicinity, community and working places. The border for the study and the design proposal is larger than Palacky Square itself. The total vicinity of the study area is 270 000m² with emphasis on the public 38 000m² space surrounding the Health Ministry building. The outer border for the vicinity and site is limited by main roads, river Vltava and the public places of Výtoň Park, Jirásek and Charles Square.

Palacky Square divides rather than combines the north and south residential blocks. Community concentrations are located at north east and south west corner of the studied vicinity. In this aspect public space can both divide and unite complex networks of a city. Palacky Square is connected with the rest Prague with, metro, tram, bus and car. Walkability is restricted to sidewalks and cut off from continuous axis of commercial service from nearby district centers.

Prime function of the spaces:

1. Palacky Square: transit and monumental
2. Zitkovy Garden: monumental and recreation
3. Square Below Emauzy: monumental
4. Pod Slovany: parking and recreation
1.4 Research overview of social interaction

What is stated in this chapter is not part of the empiric study. This is what’s already known. If the reader is somewhat familiar with the field the reader can move on. This chapter is the base from which the study takes off. It’s a background for the unknowing reader with descriptions of phenomenon. It functions as a knowledge library for the author. Literature provides a theoretical framework from Gehl’s studies on human scaled design and Goffman’s interaction studies. Jacobs provide early observations of city life.

1.4.1 Background - Why social interaction?

The reason to study social interaction is the function for happiness and psychological wellbeing. Eight centuries ago the Icelandic Sturlason wrote “man is the joy of man” (“manda er mans gaman,” 2011). Similarly; people enjoys watching other people, expressed by Jacobs, Whyte and Gehl, critics of the 20th century planning practice.

Characters of the urban happiness are expressed through citizen’s acts, will and emotions according to Bartetzky and Schalenberg (2009:8). Public happiness comes from the 18th century enlightenment movement. It was introduced in planning by early 20th century. Designed by modernist who thought they had the strategies for people’s happiness; structure the town plans as functional machines. Though the result was disintegrated and monotonous and seems far from happiness today. Functionalism missed some of the people’s needs and the value of traditional city as a place of identification. This is the practice Jacobs, Whyte and Gehl criticize.

Jacobs and Whyte are critical about American planner’s view that loitering and similar occupying activities in the public realm are unwanted. Holland who is the newest author confirms this view among common British people in their relation to public spaces and strangers. Gehl’s Danish work is done within more liberal preferences where occupying activity is not unwanted by practice, but simple ignored. Still Gehl is critical as he sees all activities to be of the greater good and with diversity comes acceptance. These authors have in common that they have focused their study on activating the public space. It is natural to continue the activity studies with a study on stimulating social interaction, in this case from a Czech context. From these authors a theoretic frame of the field can be summoned with the following eleven key attributes for activating public places.
1.4.2 Public space as gathering place

(Goffman, 1963:9) Public place is any place within a community accessible to all its members. Private place are a soundproof space available only to those invited. Semi-private space is something in between, not open to all, neither isolated from them. (Holland et al. 2007: XI-2) Place is a space that acquired reputation, affecting its usage. (Florida 2011:189) Public places are places where citizens neither sleep nor work, they are third places. Open-air living room or outdoor leisure centre where people meet different people, share experience and learn to trust another. New unacquainted places can create emotions of curiosity, uncertainty or insecurity.

Holland et al. (2007:27) writes about time usage of space. That it’s easiest to get people out for a lunch at a square or café, hardest to get people out at mornings or staying in winter or rain. Her observations show that the flow of walking people peaks before 9am, 12am-2pm, and after 4pm, clearly in relation to working times, at other times less people but more leisure and longer stays.

1.4.3 Invitation to public space

(Ghel 2010: 75-83) To attract people the visual contact to the space is important, slow motion gives more time to see and stop, bringing the city to life. Outdoor activities could be inviting for either fast transit quantity or slow occupying quality. Ralph Erskine wrote:

 If the built environment at eye level is interesting and exciting, the whole area becomes interesting. Use your energy to make the edge zone inviting and rich in details, save on the other floors, where both functions and visually has much less influence. (Gehl 2010:92)

1.4.4 Stimulating the human sense

(Gehl 2010:87) An interval of 4-5 second is needed for the stimulation of human senses. Too less is boring and too much is stressing. In distance it is a new shop each 5-6m. That would be narrow units and many doors, optimal for communication costumer to seller. Holland et al. (2007:68) says that everyday stimulation can mean small cost-effective improvements like street musician, market stall or something different to look at.

Gehl’s (2010:73-75) focus is not so much shops as it is people but admits that good space, critical mass and daily routine are the key to unlock a positive spiral. The living
city is inviting with the signals friendliness and social possibilities. The people themselves create expectation and joy of a common experience. Other people are the major attraction. People get inspired spontaneous by activities and the presence of other people. Jacobs have observed benches packed with viewers in very bad places, just because the view of movement back and forth to a shopping mall. While benches placed in the best condition stay unused because there is not a person to look at.

1.4.5 Critical mass’s acceptable distance
Critical mass in public space is important for both social and economic life. (Gehl, 2010:130) It’s limited by an acceptable walking distance about 500metres. This is how far a five minute walk is. 500metres radius is also a common size for city centres. This distance is less acceptable for disabled, children and elders who are slower walkers. Acceptable distance is also reduced by steep hills and waiting at traffic lights. A variety of functions or critical social infrastructures can if spread over 24 hours invite to activities for needs and recreation from an inhomogeneous but critical mass of inhabitants, workers, commuters and tourists within this distance.

1.4.6 Interaction space
Supported by Goffman (1963:98) but better described by Gehl (2010:45-53), perceiving distances are based on our social eye that is horizontal and 10% down tilted. It’s an adaption to 5km/h walking speed. Within 7metres is the four communicating distances, the closer the more senses activates. The first is the intimal distance where it gets private, physical and scented within half a meter. Second is the personal distance 0.5-1.2m like at a dining table for close friends and family. Third is the social distance 1.2-3.7 m like a big chair group for conversations among colleagues. Fourth distance above 3.7m is the public distance, for formal contacts and one-way communication like a street performance. Where someone wants to hear but not participate. One way-communication has a maximum of 35m which is common in theatres. Up to 25m faces are still visible and also the maximum for two-way communication while shouting. Carr et al. describes the distance as the diameter of a small square or piazza. Two walkers can see each other at 100m allowing a minute for reaction, thoughts and recognition. This distance is used in arenas and larger squares. Preferable square sizes are 80x40metres to 100x70metres, unclear why Gehl mention two different sizes. The entry of such a square
gives overview of the actions taking place. The square signals stop and watch, while a street signals go. The walking speed is slower at squares and faster at streets.

(Gehl, 2010:59) Communicating distances are part of the social rules to start, keep and end contacts, when contact is wanted and not wanted. In the urban context humans use them to walk safe and comfortable among strangers. To put up a mentally social barrier with an arm lengths distance to others for protection, a phenomena that could be seen between waiting commuters at bus stops. Temporarily it shrinks to non-touch–no-eye-contact at crowds like in a bus or elevator. When in this situation without escape it’s mentally hard to start small talk. Communication needs its space. Gehl (2010:62) draws a parallel between communicative distances to urban space, where small distances is perceived as intensive and warm and the larger distance it’s getting colder and lifeless. This gives a complex situation for designing encounters, to create the social distance. But if people don’t know each other and are pushed through their safety barriers they get introvert.

According to Jacobs (1988:58-59) people put up social barriers because privacy in the city is rare, though the big population provides anonymity. Getting advice from a grocer differs from getting advice from a neighbour. Jacobs is critical about the planner professions idea of sight lines that privacy is when no one can look into some ones window. Instead Jacobs define privacy as control over whom you allow personal access and information to. This is described with behaviour in public space as Goffman looked into.

1.4.7 Social behaviour
Goffman (1963:64-82, chap. 5) divides behaviour in public spaces as passive (unfocused) and active (focused) interaction. He describes three passive interactions. First “auto-involvements” are things people automatically do like smell, listen and look at others, attending to personal appearance, or scratching. Some are accepted in public, some not. One element that increases this kind of actions is mirrors or reflecting street windows. Second passive involvement, called “away” by Goffman, is introverted silent symptoms of not enjoying the social gathering, by either daydreaming or toy-involvements like playing with something during a conversation, hair twisting, piling beer cans or a child jumping over cracks in pavement. The third he calls “occult involvement” like when a
child talks to imaginary friends. It’s easy to get unfocused or uncomfortable if not fitting in or failing to grasp the meaning of the conversation.

Goffman (83-111) Active interaction is greetings, small-talk and conversations. People are aware of their behaviour, and the first active interaction he calls the “civil-inattention act”, to eye-up people at encounter – then looking away from the unknown when personal distance gets closer to 2.5 meter. Holland calls this city-etiquette and also noticed that people moves aside while meeting. Gehl describes this ignoring as a social ritual to say that I don’t want trouble I’m not interested in you. The search for eye-contact is an invite to face-to-face contact. The next active interaction is encounter, the opportunity that occurs when people meet face to face, expressed by face expression and changed voice for greeting. It’s an invitation to further interaction. Goffman’s theory is only describing and provides no tool for turning passive interactions or civil inattention acts towards social interaction.

Planners and architects don’t have this psychological approach but have observed parts of it as Holland et al. (2007:42-43) calling it country etiquette when strangers where interacting, being more friendly, saying hello, smiling or nodding to each other. Jacobs (1988:54) called it a public acquaintance, when stranger sees each other three or four times and as recognition they start to nodding heads. Spontaneous encounter could develop to greetings and conversations between known and unknown people.

1.4.8 Open air social activities

A social activity (according to Goffman (1963:18) who prefers the word occasion) occurs when people come into each other’s immediate presence. Social activities can be organized with beginning, agenda and end, like a theatre visit. Social activities can also be spontaneous. Dependent on the individuals own development, like a walk downtown. Individuals may be part of something bigger where they are unable to grasp the whole event. Both forms of social events may have social interaction. It’s possible to walk into some new and old friends at a private party as well in a shopping mall. But what activities and amenities is it that open up to conversation? As example the public bus has few conversations between strangers, though juxtaposition seating.
Ghel (2010:144,158-167) divides outdoor activities in needful and voluntary. Needful activities are vendor selling, cleaning and waiting. Voluntary activities are recreational like sitting on benches or cafes. They are depending on weather and the quality of the place. Voluntary activities are the key to good city life, where people are not just passing by, but are invited to stand or sit down. Good places for interaction are related to three human activities, to see, to hear and to speak. To see is the most common activity.

Ghel (2010:85, 149,170) points out a direct connection with what he calls soft edges and city life activities, where walkers slow down, look at the façades and stops many times. Gehl has also noticed that more non-commercial activities are also taking place like talking in the cell phone, knitting shoes, fixing bags and chatting. Close distance and eye-level means a lot for the human scale. The city life grows from the edge to the centre of an urban space. Activities in street level could partly change the square from transit to occupation function. Activities could further be either fixed like daily life, or flexible like seasonal ice-skating, or floating like a temporary concert or street musicians.

1.4.9 Amenities that stimulates activity
Zukin (2009:237) writes that bar, cafes and small shops in creative districts functions in the same way as the coffee machine in an office where working people mingle. Henceforth the phenomenon is called the “Coffee machine effect” in this report. Amenities that are used are following this rule by Gehl (2010:77): Gather people in a few small spaces with logical placement and logical function and hierarchy of importance. Amenities could then easily be placed where people pass, and give richer experience of the passage, perceived as shorter distance.

Gehl (2010:147-149) says that the placement of amenities should follow the “edge effect”. The edge is an imaginary friend when not wanting to signal lonely waiting in the public realm. A niche in the façade is especially attractive for staying as it gives a half private opportunity. The visual field is maximized for the watcher, the back is protected and microclimate better. Edges are the best places for waiting, the best places for placing benches or cafés. Similar, when no edge is near, is the piano effect, to find mental and body support in objects, like a piano, to lean against.
Noticed by Whyte but better described by Gehl (2010:150-156). If special attraction is at place, like water, flower and art, then good view is important, but view towards people is the most important criteria for seating placement. Good benches are 70% used, the remaining empty seats helps to keep the arm-length of comfortable distance to the neighbour. Primary seating possibilities are benches and chairs, while rocks and stairs counts as secondary, the later inviting for spontaneous use by young people. Older people must have the back support of a primary seating. The comfort is depending on material, insulation and water repelling. Cold material like granite and marble is less inviting, likewise if the position is exposed or at the centre of a space. Popular cafes with longer stays are evidence of attractive combination of possibilities, comfortable chairs and good view of people. (Gehl, 2010:158-167, 179) Cafes can extend the outdoor season with heaters and blankets for frozen customers. Length and intensity of the talk are improved with grouping benches into conversation landscapes. Movable chairs provide the best and flexible opportunities to arrange the conversation landscape.

A square encircled with buildings could give great acoustics for musicians where the sounds bounce back, while grass and wind quickly absorbs spoken words in a park. Carr et al. (1992) argue that designs for recreation areas overlook the value as attraction. Lacking benches, fenced off or hidden behind bushes. Compare this to the tennis court at Pod Slovany that couldn’t be more excluded behind a wall, hiding all evidence of recreation or activity.

### 1.4.10 Difficult with interaction between generations

Because teenagers have a need of practicing sociability in neutral space they demand amenities where they can gather. Social organization or gangs among teenagers can result in “colonization” of particular public spaces as their homestead. It’s a practice for identity and sense of space, but also seeking safety and privacy. Design should recognize teenagers need for space that invites privacy. But large groups of teenagers can also be threatening and noisy to adults.

Elders are more likely to use public space during morning. Elders withdraw themselves from gatherings of teenagers and avoid dark and empty spaces. Safety is improved for elders with visible security guards. Holland et al. (2007: X-XI) describes this as generation needs. Interaction between generations is rare unless they are family members. Co-
existence among different generations softens the expected threat from others. Florida (2011:184) supports this theory with “Places that rank high in aesthetics and openness do something that is powerful and unique: They level the playing fields for all their residents”

Children’s interaction and activity is depending on safe out door environment. Car dominated environment is a problem. Play is more active in hilly and irregular landscapes with vegetation. Small local parks are needed for spontaneous interaction between children and between parents. A Larger park is also needed for sport activity and excursions (Stadsbyggnadskontoret 2008:61).

1.4.11 People keeps a place safe

(Jacobs, 1988:31-32, 35-36) Safety in the public realm is firstly controlled by its users, the people, only secondary by the police. The urban space is a place of strangers and Jacobs identified three assets for handling strangers as they could be a potential threat. First is a clear difference between public and private space. Here she thinks differently from Gehl who actually sees semi-private space as part of soft edges. Second asset is eyes on street where shops, residents and users alarms if something is wrong. Here Jacobs comes close to Gehls soft edges but from a safety reason of more shops and public places along sidewalks. Third asset is users both over time and in number, as it attracts more eyes on the street. “Nobody enjoys looking out a window at an empty street. Almost nobody does such a thing” (Jacobs, 1988:35). Here matches Jacobs’s safe streets and Gehls pedestrian city, with amenities like shops, restaurants and bars mixed in function, users and opening times. Jacobs further argues that it is futile to compensate unsafe streets with sheltered play spaces or courtyards.

(Gehl, 2010:108) Safety is increased at night by warm light from windows. Edges gives a feeling of having your back protected. Clear signs keep the safety of staying on the right track and not getting lost for visitors. Public maps functions as a place for visitors to stop and search for directions and opens up for a possibility that someone would help them with a direction.
1.4.12 Anchor the attraction of a place

This is the theory of including commercialism into urbanism, Town Centre Renewal, TCR (Sandahl et al. 2005). Purchasing power and visitors are part of strengthening the attraction. Allocation strategies, like Local Attraction (Lagerén 2005), can valuate a future position of a shop. Using parameters urban designers seek to create. If a similar tool was available for visiting intensity in general it could be very useful for testing design outcome. It is a tool with more urban design parameters than gravitation models or space syntaxes.

General features in attraction of a place are; anchors (community shop of 1000m² or popular in another way), destination making, management (city group), marketing, respond to demand, accessibility, logic movement and profitability.

Figure 1.4.11 -1 Local Attraction (Lagéren ,2005) Graph by author.

Lagerén argues that a commercial centre location is 80% depending on visitor gravitation, accessibility, and relative competition. 20% is depending on physical environment, which an urban designer can improve. Gravitation, like Huffs law, is described as attraction increase with its size and decrease with the time distance to visitors starting point. Daily leisure activities are accepted within 20minutes travel (40 minutes for work).

Negative effect for attraction is empty stores, while a bank is a neutral phenomenon where people increase their speed when passing. Compared to mirrors or reflecting shop windows where people slow down to look at themselves.

Gender differences (Lagerén 2005) are that shops profile to females need specialisation clusters of seven alternatives (good neighbours) before achieving purchasing. This is called “cluster”-effect. Small district can compensate lack of clusters with diversity of goods. Shops with profile to men are better off without competition. Women compared
to men also respond better to light and beautiful environments and avoid parking garages. How much of this is correct is a debate for critics unanswered in this report but Lagerén also stated that younger men show tendencies to take after women’s behaviour.

Quality is important for image and market segmenting; the physical environment should be in correlation with image. Shop employees attitude is an important complement to interaction culture and district image. (Forsman et al. 2005) It should be noted that the source studied a small town, and with Holly’s “city behaviour” it is likely that shop attendants friendliness is not transmitted to its visitors.

Centre movement is one of the most important things to take in actions when being an urban planner and it will affect interaction if every reason to be in a space has moved away. Sandahl et al. (2005) gives example of centre lifecycle in six steps:

1. A few shops move in to a new attractive place.
2. More shops establish
3. The shops develop a centre
4. Centre reaches a critical mass of shops and visitors of an urban environment.
5. Competition challenge from new attractive place
6. a: Challenge is responded by renewal and increased attractiveness.
   b: Challenge ignored with the result of stagnation and down spiral where the anchors and centre move away (Creative Destruction).

1.4.13 Discursion analyze on existing theories

Humans are social beings, and it’s our ability of intention thinking “I think you know” that make us so much more social than other animals (Hård, 2012). The intention thinking affects social structures and creates ability of networking and seeking further information from new contacts through interaction. This statement is in line with Goffman as physical or passive interaction limits the information to only an impression of another person. To gain more information, and be creative and make something out of that information human beings have to active and socially interact with each other. This is the authors assumption that interaction is evolutionary profitable and gives psychological reward of wellbeing when being in a group and interacting.
The existing theory shows that specific amenities attract people, commercial anchors are important. The simplest form of interaction when observing each other can be improved with placement of seating, while more interaction like chatting among strangers need happenings or physical art that creates fuzz. Open food stalls and markets also function as sociably elements but literature doesn’t explain why. The existing literature has information gaps of which functions can activate introvert people, those who are excluded and don’t open up and talk to strangers. That gap includes a full study of the barriers that prevents people to meet. The following research make an attempt to falsify earlier mentioned theories while also filling the information gaps with function and design.

Social interaction may further affect the outcome of communities, networking or creative centers. The failure of social interaction at Palacky Square must have a cause. To find this cause it’s a good start to collect the known theories and frame them for a design strategy.

1.4.14 Summary: the theoretical frame

1. Social interaction is when people are aware of their communication with others. Depending on encounters and voluntary social activities at gathering places. Gathering places should be logical in placement, function and hierarchy of importance to attract the critical mass.

2. Critical mass is enough people for an activity, attraction or service to be self-supportive. Critical mass’s acceptable distance is a five minute walk -- 500 metres.

3. Place is a space with identity. Public place is any place within a community accessible to all its members. Spaces can be monumental, recreational or transitional.

4. Attractive amenities to invite for social interaction by diverse groups of inhabitants, workers, commuters and tourists at all 24hours. Strongest attraction is Anchors. Amenities stimulating activity are ice rink, water features, and seasonal markets. Social icebreakers can be temporary street musician or permanent art. Features stimulating the human sense are mainly other people or else something different to look at each 5-6m. Placing amenities by “edge effect” and in the flow of people enriches the walking and shortens the perceived distance.

5. Three design effects to remember: “coffee machine”, “edge” and “piano” effect”
6. Furniture and spaces need comfort to be inviting. Comfort is improved with facing sun, wind and noise protection, trees and with warm materials. Primary seating is benches and chairs. Secondary is rocks and stairs. Social interaction is improved with conversation landscapes, easiest created with movable chairs.

7. Communicative distances in metres:
   0 – intimate -- 0.5 – private -- 1.2 – professional -- 3.7 – public -- 35 – arena -- 100

8. Privacy is to have control over who you allow access to. It also creates social barriers of an arm-lengths distance.

9. Social safety is self-regulating through presence of people

10. Young people’s social need is areas for practice interaction and self-expression.

11. Social needs of elderly people are early openings and places to meet others and watch city life. Toilets and benches with back and arm support each 200 meters.

These tools will be used in the design theory if they cannot be falsified through empirical findings in interviews or own observation. To these theories the importance of urban identity can be added (Evans et al. 2011).
2 Empirical chapters

2.1 Discourse analysis

2.1.1 Palacky and Prague City documents

The Palacky Square and its vicinity are not included in any major changes in Prague according to strategic and development plans (Prague, 2008) (Prague, 2010b). Main focus for the city is to develop its district centers. A well-functioning district development is Andel in Prague 5 (1km from site across Vltava river), where shopping mall, entertainment and node in public transit has made it the most populated public space outside city center (Prague 1). Next in big development plans are Hradcanska and Dejvická along Metro line A that is going to be extended to Červený, a suburb halfway to the airport, where also a new shopping district is planned.

Palacky Square was renovated 2007, there is not much planning about for the moment. Smaller developments are run by the local district (Ales, 2012). Palacky Square is governed under Prague 2 Authority, who during the winter finished a renovation and a permanent market at Tylovo Square, center of Prague 2.
Ales (2012) scanned these analogue plan of buildings usage from 2003. As land use plan (Geodata, 2010) show land use per block, here is shown residents and public use per building. What is remarkable is the “special use” for the ministry buildings. It is a thought from the author that all buildings should be available for service in the street facade to acquire Gehl’s soft edges. Most interesting is that here is shown the original layout (until 2007) of tram over Palacky Square, slicing it in two parts. Most of the square was dominated by traffic, two main roads and turnabout for the ministry. The change of 2007 was an improvement with removing half the car traffic. Notable is also the small plots on Pod Slovany, leaving the area as an urban greenery and not a defined park. In the upper right corner is the Václavská Passage and the gallery next to it marked. It is also from land use plan it is possible to see beyond the high walls and discovers the tennis court (yellow).

### 2.2 Observations

Observations has been done in two ways, as part of the study of the case study site and also as spontaneous search of interesting places and people behaviour during the early spring of 2012 in random cities visited, some photos are from earlier visits. Spontaneous search is to walk around with camera and notebook between urban spaces noting down serendipitous findings. Most findings support existing theories. Because of observations came after reading theory and therefor the observer’s eye is looking for confirmation of these theories. Falsifying a theory cannot be done with only missing to observe theoretical support.

#### 2.2.1 Confirming spontaneous observation result

Observed types of active people in winter in Prague’s public centre dominated by flaneurs that might be shoppers or tourists. On the shaggiest benches, both in in populated and almost empty spaces, but withdrawn from flow of pedestrians there where drinkers and homeless watching people. Single dog walker and mother with stroller where observed to be the only users in green parks and less used spaces. Few elders sitting on benches and only one bird feeder were observed in the second week of January.
Figure 2.2.1-1 (Hjalmarsson photo 2012) Sign of the desire to create communicative landscapes. Example is from a park near the TV-tower in Prague. Perhaps movable chairs had been easier to move than concrete benches.

Figure 2.2.1-2 (Hjalmarsson photo 2012) This newly redesigned square is neither a place for interaction, despite its location near popular Náměstí Republiky. The street windows here belong more to offices than shops. Benches are placed without mental protection for peoples back, though they all face the centre of the square where pedestrians cross each other’s direction. Goffman mentioned that it is the single individual who walks out of the way when crossing path with a group.

2.2.2 New findings: choice and interactivity of seating furniture
The use of benches and seating furniture was found to be chosen before standing tables. However this seems to have to do with the convenience of the personal safety distance. Sofa groups where, thus soft seating comfort, less preferred to hard seat café chairs with a small table as observed at Republic Square galleria within the same café. Movable chairs are moved from tables with single person to tables with groups. Small café tables was observed to be occupied by one to five people, newer shared. Pick-nick tables with two benches with rooms for three- to five people on a row were observed to have the ability to be shared by two groups, thus few intergroup contacts were made and people could sometimes turn their back at the other group and pretend they didn’t exist at the other end of the table.

Most shareable is the standing table, despite being the last choice if seating is an option. Usually used by single people outside near a street food vendor, but can hold one to four different groups, where sometimes holding a hand on the table or put down the
beer is enough for support. If some sort of parasol or stick rises from the middle it seems to work as a safe barrier to the people at the other side.

### 2.2.3 Tree support of right height good for piano effect

The piano effect was observed to be improved by triangular tree-support structure. Requiring populated places and the proper height to lean an elbow against. A good example is Brunnsparken in Gothenburg. The problem in Prague was that the tree supports were either to low (40cm) or to high (2m) to work properly for humans.

### 2.2.4 New finding: Cute art installation is most stimulating

Cute art was observed to be the most sociable art. Appreciated by children and youths and give their parents something to talk about. Weird art also works quite fine to start an opening quite similar to what Whyte pointed out in his movie. Sexuality in art is also provides both awkward silence and verbal communication. Historical statues are most popular by birds and only a few takes a picture of them. Visitors wasn’t observed to start talking between each other and seemed to be quite ignorant of what the historical monument represents. People ignore by looking shorter time compared to other monuments and not reading the name plate. That gives a discussion whether a successful statue should be extravagant, sexual or cute. The best combination to draw attraction is probably expressed in Manneken Pis, Brussels, both cute and with functional genitals. Pictures presented in the appendix.

### 2.2.5 New finding: Easier to look down

![Figure 2.2.5-1 (Hjalmarsson; photo, 2012, Jiráskovo Square)](image)

As discovered by personal experience, while street level is still the best in line with existing theory, it is easier to look half a floor down compare to half a floor up. A possible alternative for soften the edges at the site Zitkovy Gardens with restaurants and cafes, where the floor is not in street level. The existing space is today used as document storage. With outdoor seating it would still be possible to sit and see the rose gardens in the summer.
2.2.6 New finding: “Ant Trail Behaviour”

There is no other word to describe the phenomena of moving masses concentrated to one path (picture in Appendix; Pictures from site – tourist trail); while comparably little activity is generated to adjacent streets. Like a trail of ants concentrating on one path instead of free running over a sand field. Individuals, apparently, let themselves thoughtlessly be carried away with the mass, being in the flow, in the same rhythm as the mass. This phenomenon was observed in Prague from Old Town Square and the winding narrow streets, via Charles Bridge, Mala Strana old district to the Prague Castle, a turning point which reverses the movement. This phenomenon was not as obvious in the winter before the tourists increase around beginning of April and becoming a mass. A mass is when you instantly can see hundreds of people in a limited space, forcing them closer to each other than the convenient personal safety distance. The path is mainly a tourist path, and is helped to remain in this path by all the souvenir shops. But basically people follow people, led by thousands on the way, but here against all theories resulting in comparably or almost dead side-streets even in the very centre of Prague. A possible explanation could be irregular street pattern of the old town, it is impossible as a visitor to read the street structure. This creates uncertainty on what to find or how to get from point A to point B. The only hierarchy of the narrow streets are the level of use, giving the most used paths a security feeling of being on the right track. This explanation is against theory presented by Burton and Mitchell (2007), that irregular street patterns are most easy to remember. Perhaps that is a valid case for community members, but for temporary visitors the observations shows differently. Nerudova Street, the steep path between Mala Strana to the Prague Castle is somewhat excuse for its concentration as it is the only direct street. In despite of the crowd unable to fit on the sidewalk, the path is predominantly designed for low intensive car traffic and parking with a driving lane of the unfriendly walking material “medieval” big stones. When the crowd spills out among the cars they create a natural shared street.

2.2.7 New finding: Problem with Prague mosaic

The Prague Mosaics is the type of cobble-stones that are used by tradition in Prague. It is mixed in diverse patterns of different stones of the same small size, creating colours of white, beige, reddish, grey, or black. It can be noted that the grey and black stones are granite and is more durable than the ochre coloured that might be sandstone and was
observed to be the first to crack and fall apart. However the largest problem recognised is that the unfixed fitting easily makes stones come loose, lie disturbingly on the pavement and create pot holes. The problem might be the depth of only 50-55mm. The horizontal size is 60x60mm. Smooth cut on the horizontal sides leaving minimal void between stones, and no other fixing is used. A void less than common rough cut cobblestones and much less than the bigger “old medieval” street stones with cracks large enough to fit a piece of Prague mosaic. Still, the cracks in Prague mosaics are a problem for women in high heels, tourist dragging cabin caskets with small wheels. Probably not the most comfortable place to take a ride in baby carriage, even if the wheels are big enough to make the cracks, the uneven surface still makes the pram shake.

Figure 2.2.7-1 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) is a visualisation of the problem. The top figure is the existing Prague mosaic, with too low deep and 270° outer corners easily getting a direct hit that may get them loose. Depending on how expensive the material that could be afforded, the durability is likely to increase with the depth of the stone. More deep than shallow will fix the stones better to each other. With inspiration from bees that evolved the most efficient way of reducing in-between spaces; the hexagon. This is desired if less sharp heels should break in the cracks. The hexagons outer angle 240° is also little less exposed to direct hits.

Against this own created theory is the production method that could create more irregularities with more surfaces to cut. The recognizable improvement might be the 80mm deep hexagon shape with a deep twice as wide as its sides. This shape opens for new design patterns and also makes some traditional pattern impossible.

2.2.8 New finding: preferred smoothness

Figure 2.2.5-1 (Hjalmarsson photo 2012) The waterfront in front of the Rašínová Street is of the large stone “medieval” surface, approximately 250x150mm. According to the bicycle program in Prague the waterfront is one of the bicycle ways. Therefore the old style stone has with a genius urban design left two stripe of smooth surface, painted with white bicycles icons. Filled in-between lines with rough
cut 120mm-cobblestones as commonly used throughout Europe. The genuineness is the serendipitous malfunction of it. It’s not just bicycles that are using the smooth lines. Everyone use them; runners, walkers, mothers with baby carriages (with only the wheels on one side able to fit in the line). It can get so crowded that the bikers may have to take a shaky detour on the rough stones to pass.

2.2.9 New finding: signs are not enough – designs do matter.
Wenceslas Square is hub of commercial activities in Prague, while only the lower end of the long square (which is more like an avenue) is made pedestrian with seasonal markets. The rest of the square has wide sidewalk and asphalted car lanes and dedicated parking spaces in the middle. If you step out in the street it gives an awkward feeling that you are not in your place, as well as some cars may let their horn sound. But this is the pedestrians right at Wenceslas Square, according to the signs declaring shared street. The design and practise speaks another language.

The second examples of ignored signs are from the Na Morani Street towards Palacky Square, the narrow sidewalk has no-walking signs on half of the south side. This provide an interesting use of the space, where people choose to walk, some people change sidewalk, some not, and some walk in the middle of the road between cars and trams. The small but inconvenient sidewalk still is a design that says it’s for walking. For people’s behaviour do design matter more than written signs.

2.2.10 Difficult with youth design
Because teenagers have a need of practicing sociability in neutral space they demand amenities where they can gather. The so called colonization act can also be threatening and noisy to adults (Holland et al. 2008). This can be solved with time separation. In case of Palacky Square the transit changes happens most of the day, and would not be private enough for youths. Holland et al.’s examples have two pictures of youths sitting on rocks or a levelled platform. This phenomenon is not taken into consideration. Is it only because young people have easier to use secondary seating possibilities, as Gehl pointed out? Or does a raised platform mean something else? This has not been discussed in theory and a few spontaneous observations in this study have not been enough for conclusions. Another youth phenomena common in Prague is Graffiti. Two occasions with marker pen scribbling has been observed, one in midday at Zitkovy Garden and another
at evening on a bridge. Scribble has negative impact on the safety experience of a place. If scribble is part of a social expression is unknown. Scribble wall at Palacky Square is not recommended as conclusion from observation at permanent legal wall in Malmö (Sweden) and in Prague, both showing sprawled scribble in their vicinity.

### 2.2.11 Focused observations at Palacky vicinity

Focused observations have been made at Palacky Square, Pod Slovany, Emauzy Monastery, Below Emauzy Square, Zítkovy Gardens with surrounding streets. During week 12 and 13, Mars 19 – April 1st 2012, in snow, rain and sun, 6a.m until 4a.m at work days, weekends, Saturday and Easter markets and extra ordinary events (Prague Marathon).

![Staying and moving people. (Hjalmarsson map 2012) based from two weeks observation. Dashed flow means it's fluctuating with peaks at good weather for people and end of work for cars. Size is relative as one pixel per 5 people per 15 minutes observations. The primary use of stay is waiting for the tram. Benches are only used in good weather or if the flow of people peak and some benches are still very rarely used (turquoise). The morphology of the area shows traditional 6-story blocks with inner yards. Usage in these has not been studied as they are not fully public.](image-url)
The difference from doing spontaneous observation to focused observation is that you notice details. One example is that staying people at site is not at all as many as all those in transit. Zitkovy Sady appeared to be a place mostly for resting dogs, but while there are 10 dog-walkers staying 10 minutes each during an hour there are one hundred commuters shifting tram or from tram to metro. But they never stop and are gone within a minute. Simplified; both groups takes an equal share of time at the site. This was a generalization and in fact my observation show that the transit people waited in average 3 minute on their tram and are by far both in number and total time use of the space the major group. To these most obvious groups at site comes; mothers with prams, local pub- restaurant- and café visitors, smokers outside the metro entrance, a few graffiti youths, a few homeless and a few tourist trying to find a way to Emauzy monastery.

Figure 2.2.11-2 (Hjalmarsson photo 2012) failed design: five seating furniture that remains unused. Back to back makes conversations impossible and the trashcan is a nice thought to keep the place clean, but is not inviting. Graffiti is probably best avoided with making the place active all 24 hours.

2.2.12 Theoretical summary of observations
1. Smooth slabs are chosen instead of cobblestones of all users.
2. Prague mosaic is beautiful but not endurable.
3. Tree support good for piano effect if the height is right.
4. Tourist was observed to trail in the same path “Ant behaviour”.
5. Cute art is most stimulating
6. Standing tables was more sociable inviting between strangers than seating groups. If more comfort then it was less conversations.
7. Easier to look down than up
8. In general existing theories were confirmed
2.3 Survey of Palacky vicinity

2.3.1 Users of site

Interviewing users of site was tricky, most where unwilling to speak English or not comfortable with being encountered with questions. To get around this problem a document (see Appendix: Interview) where prepared with Google translator into Czech language. Then most barriers where eased. It was easier to confront people with questions and they seemed to be less surprised of the question when they could see the questioner on a distance and prepare themselves for interaction. Still some problem occurred for the validity, the biggest group of visiting people, the commuters, didn’t have time to answer and question number 7 become incomprehensible with the automatic translation. This was a last effort to make the interviews before leaving Prague and when done, it’s easy to understand that this way of performance was easier than unstructured interviews and should have been tested earlier, with time to reach more questionnaires. The research is qualitative and not statistical, so the number of 19 responses doesn’t have to affect the usefulness of the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Palacky Square</th>
<th>Zitkovy Garden</th>
<th>Below Emauzy</th>
<th>Pod Slovany</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empty-Lively</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable-Safe</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ugly-Beautiful</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noisy -Quiet</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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Figure 2.3.1-1 (Hjalmarsson 2012) Average graded 1-5 for environmental qualities per space, (unanswered rating has not been included).

Palacky Square and Zitkovy Garden are both considered beautiful but noisy. Safety seems with these 19 responses to be related to how empty a place is, in controversy with Jacobs’s theory of people makes places safe. The similar answers of 3.7 are not useful to any conclusions because only three questionnaires were conducted on each of these sites with less people.
Zitkovy Garden got most marks as popular because of its greenery and most popular advice was to add more benches. The majority interviewed here were elderly people from the neighbourhood. Supported advice for Palacky Square was to add more flowers and greenery. Pod Slovany was liked for its beauty, a bit strange as it is mostly parking and a badly maintained grass area. Proposal was more flowers. Otherwise the beauty is explained by the view which is beautiful; a high concave slope, Emauzy small church in the background, edge of the ministries and City authority. The concave slope has potential to be developed as it is in visualisation theory more inviting than straight or convex slopes (Neufert and Neufert 2001). Those three who were interviewed was 15-30 years old and were the ones agreeing to a new playground.

Below Emauzy had only three people there, but they seemed to had found their place in the city, coming back every day if good weather. The rest of the answers are well mixed and no easy conclusion can be made from these small numbers.

The other proposal offered for change that got some answers where outdoor café (3), seasonal market (3), no change (3), new church connection (1). Anomalies to mention is that someone wanted to help with proposing a fountain and another wrote “no” for proposal of more parking spaces. Most helpful were people with correcting the Czech spelling mistakes in the questionnaire.

2.3.2 Service staff

Similar procedure where taken for the questionnaires (Appendix: Interview) to shops but the reluctance to answer where harder and less than 50% of businesses wanted to answer questions, either because they were busy or didn’t understand the purpose of the questionnaire. Maybe that is the same reasons none of ministries or district authority replied back on questions emailed or granted interview request. Total answers from the shops where nine. This is however a little bit to week as there are big differences between different branches and for clothes, hair, hotel and laundry there where only one single respondent in the area.

The conclusions made from these nine commercial persons (staff or owner) in the area are generally that few tourist visit them, instead costumer base is neighbourhood or Prague city. Maybe there is a connection to the nearby working places rather than
strong attraction that makes the visitors come from the city. This was a question not thought of before summarizing the answers. Most services have their costumers from lunch to evening, all year. Opening hours provide a variety of time and service from 6 a.m. (bakery on workday) to 1p.m (weekend 3 p.m.) for pub or club. The personal relation to the costumer is in most answers as acquaintances while hair salon, Wi-Fi-cafe and laundry also answers personal contact. Generation profiles could be noticed as towards, 15-45, and 30+ (alternatives per 15-year section)

Anomalies; four of the nine respondents answered 30 as their number of daily costumers and still seven of them agreed with it’s a good location. One who didn’t agree on the location was the restaurant claiming to have the highest number of visitors. According to town centre renewal theory of cluster effect for fashion, it’s understandable that a lone store is the other respondent disagreeing on the good location.

2.3.3 Special interview

Dominic Ales (Ales, 2012), one of the staff at City Authority of Prague, where contacted by recommendation from data-department, for providing additional information on the site, from analogue sources on the history and specific demographic figures.

From the interview I got the information that Prague uses JC Decaux as coherent design of street furniture, commercial boards and bus shelters. It is also from him I got the name Prague Mosaic of the sidewalk material. It’s not a rule to use it but a tradition. “Ladies don’t like it. No don’t write that.” This was a private thought, but also important information that just because the cobblestone and gaps are smaller they still provide similar problem as normal sized cobblestones. The problem of people wearing high heels gets stuck in gaps in the pavement.

Ales give a view of a general parking conflict between the transport departments pedestrianize plan and residential opinion who thinks it is too few parking spaces. The function of parking is marked with three colours, blue for residents (the colour used in the study area), green for 6-hours limit parking and orange in the city centre for 2 –hour limit.

The general street renewal program for the district runs by Prague 2 Authority. Ales knew about their recent project which was Tylovo Square. Pod Slovany is intended to
change somehow and site has been a study case for several architecture classes. Any change must be approved by the Department of Historical Monuments.

Another transport department related design issue is the white red fences at intersections to separate cars and people. Ales point was that these fences were ugly, but within a larger context they also regulate a natural flow of pedestrians. This type of fences was only observed by the author in the Palacky vicinity at the intersections Vysheradska – Plavecka and Vysehradska – Na Morani. The experience from this observation is that it is awkward to meet a mother with a pram on a small sidewalk, and no space to meet, or step aside because of the railing.

More information from Ales is that the embankment is important as Palacky Square and Emauzy garden was not damaged by the big flooding 2002. In the railing on the embankment is inserting points for mobile flood walls.

According to Ales lunch for employees at City Authority, located between Charles Square and Pod Slovany (locked stairs), takes place in nearby restaurants. Restaurants across the 800 meter long Charles Square takes longer time to walk to and leaves not enough time to eat. This is somewhat theoretically comparable to Gehls five minutes acceptable walking distance. If going outside for a shorter brake the Charles Square greenery could be a place for a walk. When Ales was informed about the reasons for this study on Palacky Square it was somewhat justified as: “Yes, it’s something about the place”.

A spontaneous interview was also attempted with the local library at Na Morani but they had no English speaking personal. With translation help from a costumer, the following information was retrieved; that the library lends 200 books each day. (Further questions were not asked as getting understood was quite complicated.) How this figure related to other libraries has not been evaluated only that the size of the library is small enough to be in the basement of an apartment building. The number 200 could also be a misunderstanding as the flow of people noticed visiting is not bigger than those shops claiming to have 30 daily customers.
2.3.4 Summary of surveys
The user survey found that Below Emauzy was popular to a small group of people. Zitkovy Garden is appreciated for its greenery. Most popular advice was to add more benches as it was to add more flowers and greenery at Palacky Square. Females below 30 years agreed to suggestion of a playground.

The shop survey confirms lack of tourist, and a quite low use of business that is not depending on season, connected to residents and works in the area. Their profile is turning to young, middle aged or mixed group of people. The week commercial attraction is connected with the lack of flower, books, supermarket and fashion cluster.

The useful information from City Authority is a view how workers might use the restaurants in the area. Palacky Square would be within five minute acceptable walking from several governments and the City Authority. Perhaps Zitkovy Garden and Palacky Square is a better alternative for lunching than Charles Square far sides.

2.4 The design strategy
This is the logical reasoning where the 11-points of fragmented theory come together with discursion on documents, survey and observation. This is the description of the seven point design strategy and how to implement it on Palacky Square with vicinity.

2.4.1 Character of public space
Social interaction is when people are aware of their communication with others. Social gathering places should be logical in placement, function and hierarchy of importance. From theory on monumental, transit and recreational space the Palacky Vicinity could be divided in the similar use in figure 2.4.1-1 (Hjalmarsson map 2012).
2.4.2 Identifying social needs for diverse groups

Social interactions is not as simple as just a conversation, it’s separated by groups, networks, age, life stage, professions and community. Needs for these are utterly complex, but this is what makes the city. The closest theories to respond for these needs are Town Centre Renewal and studies on either community or creativeness. For the interpreted matrix, see Appendix: Identifying social needs for diverse groups.

The service desired by diverse demographic groups are, cafés, weekend destination, playgrounds, park benches and markets. They can be said to respond to the need for social interaction. Each life stage has its own friends and goals. Only family bridges the generation gap (Holland et al. 2007). Social media play also a big part of the younger generations life pattern, support for Wi-Fi is a tool to make public space more attractive and invite to longer stay, even though social interaction via internet may seem to be a lonely activity in the public realm.

Professional diversity follows a different pattern, the role played by people’s occupation. Creativity to merge ideas and places to do their tasks is most desired. The latter is generally an internal matter to fix, but creative place is usually a place were different professional get together and are inspired either by each other or physical features. It is the author’s conclusion that lunch places are small creative environments that fit many groups. Professionals are different from their private life as professions tend to seek new contacts while private people either stay within established networks or are in the act of establish one. This is important if the aim is to make either creative or community places.

The deductive profiles in the matrix can be compared to Lagerén (2005) who gave a fictive most common profile for the community store (Swedish context): Visited frequently by, one, high income, elderly, woman, accompanied with child, who walked or biked from work or study, to buy something for them, but who lives in a small household in an apartment house.
2.4.3 What kind of public place is relevant?

This came up as a knowledge gap when trying to imply new and existing knowledge into a design process. In order to combine user groups with needs and local conditions (Appendix: Identifying social needs for diverse groups). It was a different kind of issue not discussed in literature. Research theories define public spaces as squares or parks (Carr et al, 1992:120), the human need research (if referred to) focus on recreation or commercial need, seldom on social need. But these terms are means and fails on the human purpose of the third place. This discourse analysis on theories and the preferences of the site give a new deduction. A new designation terminology needs to be used by urban designers; communities, creative centres and silent places.

**Communities** are functional areas consisting of people in a neighbourhood. Communities develop different gathering places for different social and demographic groups. Communities support daily needs service. Community is a place where people know each other through gossip and greetings. Communities feel safe. Communities have unwritten rules of how to behave, and thus creating restrictiveness on creativity and new contacts. Public space within a community serves a function of meeting known people, walking the dog and let the children play. In other parts of the world are functions like exercise and play be added to the community. Though in Europe these functions are no more bound to the neighbourhood community as they follow social networks. At district and city level, local soccer clubs are important for the identification. Communities need to find similar tools to identify with and be proud of.

**Creative centres** are the opposition to communities, as a place for making new connections and discoveries, to brake restricting social orders, to try new things and limits. Creative centres can have many different aims; connecting students, knowledge, business or entrepreneurship, mating, or -as the most pictured view - an artistic hot spot. However designing the creative centre is almost impossible as it needs its own developing to generate creativeness. A fully designed creative area wouldn’t be any creative at all for designers. The need for businesses is somewhat simpler as its connections are not related to the design but to the neighbouring businesses and the mix of cheap and expansive premises. Creative research environments are dependent on high knowledge (professors and students), cheap places (reused old factories and cheap cafés) and the possibility to
make spin-offs (risk capital and entrepreneurship support). For young single people, these job creating opportunities are second priority as mating is the first, good nightlife and other possibilities to meet the opposite sex (usually) is the right kind of creative environment, involving alcohol to brake social barriers. Creative centres don’t need the public accessibility as other places, users are niched and follows the social code (Goffman, 1963) needed to be accepted in private areas. A more diverse use could create more serendipity. Public access should therefore not be neglected.

**Silent places** are spaces protected from the high level of noise in the city. People are not bound to these places, but tend to have personal favourites for relaxing, change of environment and a moment for themselves. It does not mean the function falters with other peoples presence, Goffmans “away”-moment is connected with peoples inner thought and just need a safe place with low risk of being interrupted. Silent places are somewhat contra-productive as it provides the best places for normal voice conversations, which reduce the silence. Silent places are rare in the city outdoor environment, found mostly in inner yards. The good example found in Prague is Franciscan Garden (Figure 2.4.3-1) – the public inner yard garden between Jungmanova and Wenceslas Square. The full use of benches, children playing, people reading, kissing, talking in phone showed a larger variety in only voluntary activities, maybe half of the 200 people being there where there independently. This observation was a trigger of the idea of silent spaces. Square Below Emauzy have similar conditions and less greenery but the usage is only found by a handful of people. Silent places are usually protected from traffic noise, loud footsteps from hasty movements and shopping behaviour, but inner yards is also often restricted areas or uninviting which reduce the function as a public place. Parks planned for recreation are generally not silent places as surrounding traffic is disturbing or the park is too big for a convenient visit to the silent places away from traffic noise. Big parks are good for running or other exercises (Stadsbyggnadskontoret, 2008), but for relaxing they might not work more often than on weekends, people’s free days. There is a general need in the city for more, on daily basis, useful silent places.
2.4.4 Deduction of relevance for Palacky Square

Palacky Square has unique features that complement the city diversity and could be focus for storytelling or marketed as Palacky identity and destination making; Vyton Riverwalk with Saturday market, Emauzy Monastery, Hypšman’s architecture and Václavská Passage Community. Local conditions with workers, students and residents should be able to provide diversity. The students are little noticed at site and student related service could increase attraction for that group. The same logic conclusion can be adapted to tourist if destinations are made. The design strategy for Palacky Square should address identity both for holding together the community and be an interesting work and study place and a tourist destination.

Attraction is important to receive the critical mass. The 5.000 people that could visit the community centre at Václavská Passage could with the same gravitation logic reach 10.000 if service area was doubled. Functions lacking from Palacky Square are community store, flowers, books and selective goods. They do exist in minimal cluster at Charles Square. Adding these might cause a local centre movement (Sandahl et al. 2005) from Charles Square.

The anchor is important for acquaintance people to bond in the community. Service with a clear identity like the “elder people’s café” and the “young people’s Wi-Fi-café” are important to attract the diversity. The full bridging of age-groups is perhaps not possible. This study will not go further in that analyse and neither propose such solution.

Social safety will have no need for a special design strategy other than it needs to attract a diverse critical mass. It may solve the problem with graffiti, but that is just a guess, there is no fact to support that argument.

Amenities for present activity in the area are only the tennis court and dog faeces bin. If open up the walls according to Carr et al. (2005) the tennis court could draw watchers. The design strategy should acknowledge that more activities are attractive; providing for band stands, places for markets, cute art and play grounds. Some of these could also work as breakers of social barriers. Empiric results and theory find no way to stop people from choosing who they allow contact to – only tools to gather people with the same intentions, encouraged with social elements and creative clusters.
Soft edges should provide something different to look at each 5th meter. Placing amenities by “edge effect” and in the flow of people enriches the walking and shortens the perceived distance (Gehl, 2010). This is especially important at the eastern edge of Palacky Square and Zitkovy Garden, a distance of 200 meters along storage rooms and yews. Likewise it’s a bad idea to have small shops on Dittrichova Street. The existing failure of the most soft edge design in the area is a result of bad location according to Local Attraction model (Lagerén 2005) and observation. The concentration of flows to certain streets is important to business with broader customer segment than the locals.

Coffee machine effect could be reached with restaurants and cafes. These are well represented in the study area today. Piano effect and terraces could be addressed to provide more places to view other people from. These effects as well as furniture should be addressed in the design strategy to include human senses for comfort and sociability. This is improved with communicative distances (Gehl 2010) such as 0.5-1.2 metres for private talk, 1.2-3.7 metres for acquaintances and 3.7-25 metres for passive interaction as viewing unknown people like commuters.

Young people need areas for practice interaction and self-expression. These can be addressed in the design proposal together with communicative distances.

Elderly people need early openings and places to meet others and watch city life. Toilets and benches with back and arm support each 200 meters.

Design tools that were found relevant for the site as such but not effecting social interaction, were the new findings from interviews and observation on material, “ant behaviour” and basement location. That smooth slabs are chosen instead of cobblestones of all users and that the Prague mosaic is not endurable. The tourist stream can be thought of in a larger context of Prague as if it is not possible to create a second stream of tourist south to Vysehradska Castle via Emauzy and Dancing House. The ant-trailing could be in that context of good design and amenities spread in more than one trail to make more streets benefit. The local preference is that the ministry buildings first system of joists is in eyelevel. Then the best solution concluded from observations is to have the service or restaurant in the half relieved basement. These are tools to be addressed in the design proposal but not specifically in the design strategy for social interaction.
2.4.5 Design strategy

The general design strategy is a deductive conclusion from observations, survey and theory. If the first step is not applied, the next step will be more difficult to make successful. The seven steps are listed in order of importance:

1. Create identity by define usage profile and symbolic value to community and public place (creativity, community, silence or tourists).

2. Attract the critical mass. Create a destination for dwellers, workers and tourists.

3. Stimulate the human senses with soft edges along the flow of people.

4. Invite to longer stay with activities.

5. Allow for diverse use of public space in time and by groups.

6. Bridge anti-social behaviour with social elements.

7. Use of interaction space and communicative distances.

Figure 2.4.5-1 (Hjalmarsson 2012)
2.4.6 Implementing the 7-step design strategy in a design program:

In cities you have to build from existing assets, to make more assets.

Jane Jacobs 1992:176

1. Define usage profile and give symbolic value to community and public place: keep elderly community centre in Václavská Passage, create new young people community on Na Morani, and make creative centres for students and administrators (the common type of workers). Below Emauzy as a silent place, good as study place for students.

2. Attract the critical mass with destination making: Attract tourist as a new group with a new connection to Emauzy Monastery from Below Emauzy. The city people in general should continue to be attracted to Vyton Riverwalk, the today strongest asset in the area. Attract the student to spend time in the area with making the library a place for study outdoors by moving it to the silent place of Below Emauzy. Wi-Fi connection can make the open space also attractive for those in attached to social media. Office-workers may continue use the lunch restaurants for interaction. Residents are already in the area, but need to have their street as a public living room and not just as parking. Parking needs to move as it takes up to much valuable space, and creates quite hard edges. Further the residents need to be attracted to place with a community store, which the lack today makes them go way from the area. Commuters are hard to make stay longer in the area, but a small gift shop or convenience store along the transit flow may halt their movement.

3. Stimulate the human senses with soft edges along the flow of people: More shop windows softens edges but are primary developed from centre movement rather than design. New activity in the first floor of public buildings needs to be planned since interest in use of space is less commercial in public buildings, and therefore don’t possess a spiritual will to enhance the floor value. The ministry building’s basement could as example turn into restaurants.

4. Invite to longer stay with activities. Suggested for the area are winter activities like ice-skating, as complement to the only public rink in the city centre. Seasonal
market and place for performance. Exercise of the mind could be triggered by labyrinth pattern and running water features, especially attracting to children. Allowing library users to take books out in the public space is another activity and could be complemented with offered games and sport equipment (football) to exercise mind and physics for both young and old. Stimulating these low profit social activities is more important for social interaction than any design proposal and could be managed by any facility. Problem is that nobody thinks it’s their business to provide it. Because of proposed new location at Below Emauzy Square it can be suitable for the library.

5. Allow for diverse use of public space in time and by groups.

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<th>Lunch</th>
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<td>Restaurant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.4.6-1 (Hjalmarsson 2012) Proposed usage of Palcky vicinity by group

*Need cluster and study area is not suitable for attracting its customers.

**Entrepreneurs need cheap rents and cannot be stimulated with a new building.
6. Bridge anti-social behaviour with social elements: Could be managed with a cute statue of a puppy. If attraction is succeeded there may also turn up street performers that now only perform in the city centre. Food stalls may provide a meeting point for locals and tourists.

7. Use of interaction space and communicative distances: This is the detailed design of furniture to keep people’s faces within 1.2m. This measure can be in a variety of cafés seating, layout of park benches, leaning support at tram stop or standing tables for fast food. In a wider aspect this also the dimension of gathering places, small within 25 metres (street are 18m wide), and large within 100 metres. (Zitkovy Garden and Palacky Square needs a separation as their combined length is 200 metres long)

2.4.7 Summary: The seven most important goals in the design program:

1. Market Palacky Square as place of beauty and history.
2. Attract tourist with Emauzy Monastery, residents with a community store, and students with a study place and Wi-Fi connection.
3. Connect the ends of Zitkovy Garden with restaurants along the ministry building’s façade.
4. Develop Square Below Emauzy with new location and functions for the community library, including lending functions of social games.
5. Space function separation to stimulate diversity
6. Insert a cute puppy statue as social element
7. Use interactive spaces and communicative distances in the design.
2.5 Design proposal

The proposal is a suggestion of change of the Palacky Square vicinity to increase social interaction in the public spaces. Special focus has been given to Palacky Square. What was stated in the design strategy and design program have been applied and are illustrated in seven diagrams. Written explanations come first together with the proposal plans. Inspiration pictures as expected usage diagrams are gathered in Appendix. The design contents are as follows:

1. Design strategy illustration diagram
2. Proposal plans*
3. Sections
4. Service design
5. Extension of underground metro exit
6. New building
7. Expected usage
8. Interaction furniture

2.5.1 Design strategy illustration diagram

Figure 2.5.1-1 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Axis is important for the main structure and to visualise the spaces.
Figure 2.5.1-2 (Hjalmarsson design 2012)

Figure 2.5.1-3 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) based on Gehl’s edge principles. (2010:251)

Figure 2.5.1-4 (Hjalmarsson design 2012)
Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

Åke Hjalmarsson

Figure 2.5.1-5
(Hjalmarsson design 2012) Site is little used during night also in new proposal.

Figure 2.5.1-6
(Hjalmarsson design 2012)

Figure 2.5.1-7
(Hjalmarsson design 2012)
2.5.2 Proposal plans

Figure 2.5.2-1 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) First displayed is the Palacky Square new view and then the new plan compared to existing design from 2007. Here is the change modest with an approach to falsifying the original design and only change what doesn’t work. Renewal is built up from the existing visual character, in line with Jacobs’s (1992:176) argument and the strictness of Culture Department of Prague.

Figure 2.5.2-2(Hjalmarsson design 2012) Palacky Square design proposal with shadows. Attractive view towards commuters is addressed in placement of terraces, shelters, seat able bollards and outdoor serving areas.
Palacky Square usage profile is depending on its vicinity, a destination for workers, tourists, lunch eaters, students and residents, both young and old. Unified level of surface and material creates a more diverse flow over the square, and making the car path shared among pedestrians, cars and trams. Leveled surface is more accessible for disabled and new elevators from the underground also help. The existing open space is a good place for seasonal markets and performances to increase the activity. Electrification and extension of the statue’s base provide for a small temporarily stage.

New service provided on top of Palacky Square is café, flower shop and a kiosk. More service is added in Palacky Square extended underground metro exit. The badly used seating area is replaced with flower beds and the doubled tree row is opened up with removing half the trees to get glimpses of the beautiful architecture of Zitkovy Garden. Most important for the feeling of space is the new 15 meter high column at the non-built corner to frame the space.

Pavement material is addressing a hexagonal shaped 40x 80 mm alternative to the original Prague Mosaic. Dark granite slates are used to emphasize the central activity area (in sandstone squares), this dark slate is also used to emphasize the tourist path over Palacky Square. (In the street there are mainly cobblestones as it is shared with local car traffic.) Pavement material is also the coherent design profile in Palacky vicinity where marked paths of smooth granite slates lead the pedestrian between open spaces.
Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

Åke Hjalmarsson

Figure 2.5.2-4 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Street material design

Spaces have their own character and function. Successful usage profile demands individual and not copied design. Coherent vicinity profile for spaces with heterogenic characters is here made with pavement as marked paths of smooth granite slates leading pedestrians between spaces.

Figure 2.5.2-5 (Hjalmarsson design, 2012) Below Emauzy.

Usage profile for the diverse places in the Palacky vicinity can offer a destination for dwellers, workers, tourists and students. The new 600m² library attracts both students and community. It is placed in the health ministry’s ground floor, twice the size from its original location with a few room for students to work, and an 350m² outdoor garden (already fenced) to bring books outside to read. A new path through the building con-
nects Below Emauzy to the book café and exit 10. Extended service for the library, newspaper and books to lend out in the garden along with social games and play equipment, is proposed to extend social actions in public spaces nearby.

The existing Square Below Emauzy is kept with its inlaid of material of Prague mosaic from 2007, however shorted at Zitkovy garden to provide a defined place for temporary campaigns. It’s a good place for such activity (see 2.5.1-5 space activity map). People have time to stop here (as experienced while making the survey) compared to the more intense used Palacky Square. The existing design is a good invitation to Emauzy Church, but today’s solution leave the tourist confused as the inviting design ends in a parking lot at Pod Slovany. The design proposal is to use this working axis and define it as an Emauzy axis, anchored at the river walk and a tunnel through existing vault to Zitkovy Garden, through new campaign area, through Square Below Emauzy and finish with a stair to the Monastery. This proposal adds a sightline of the twin tower all the way from the river walk, being more inviting to the areas above.

To attract tourists to the area, connecting Emauzy Monastery with Zitkovy garden is important. The Tourist function of Emauzy Monastery can be greatly improved with the new stair as a front, the entrance to the gallery is proposed to move next the church entrance. The rents of the inner yard space to a plastic surgery company and various small offices are proposed to be changed for a more touristic profile like Strahov Monastery. That new profile could include a brewery with a cloister beer, souvenir shops and hostel. Profit from rents may not increase, but more tourists are a good resource for money for the Monastery. More valuable than the disturbance tourist may cause. The restaurant that is there today may benefit from a new door to the church front plaza.

Tourist may continue with a lunch at the new Zitkovy food court, five restaurants of local character with unified “romantic” design of subtle green movable furniture and marquises. The food court has great view of the kept Zitkovy rose planting beds from the outdoor seating, indoor location is in the former storage rooms in the basement of the two ministry buildings. International fast food chains are recommended to establish on other streets as their usual logos often are to dominating to fit in with a unified design concept as intended at Zitkovy garden. See Melbourne (Gehl and Gemzo 2006: 252) pic-
tures used for inspiration. This solution combines North and South community along softened and activated edges.

The community at Václavská Passage is proposed to be extended through Václavská Street and Na Morani Street to Palacky Square. A second passage is proposed to be opened next to Václavská’s. Existing today is a badly run centre of eight businesses, and an inner yard used as parking for three cars, is connected to Václavská street. The passage can be done with moving the only business occupying the in-between space. That business is a Chinese food restaurant that could be moved to the Zitkovy food court.

Figure 2.5.2-6 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Close up plan on the entrance stair to Emauzy, with Playground, labyrinth, and a puppy statue as social element. This is a space for activity triggering the playful mind. It is also a place for tourists to pass. So an ice-cream
store can be located under the existing stair (which is now locked). The Playground is designed in two levels to be more inviting for big kids (6-12 year olds).

Figure 2.5.2-7 (Hjalmarsön design 2012). Proposed plan of Palacky vicinity study area
2.5.3 Sections of streetscape

Figure 2.5.3-1 (Hjalmarssson design 2012) Section cuts along yellow lines

Figure 2.5.3-2 (Hjalmarssson design 2012) Palacky Sq.-Zitkovy G. and Emauzy axis.
Figure 2.5.3-3 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) display more sections and last including an elevation of the new Emauzy entrance and new building on Pod Slovany.
2.5.4 Service design

The service design plays an important function of assisting the atmosphere and image of the area. The existing service is not supporting all available space today, and mainly providing food for local workers from the diversity of offices in the area. The proposed main anchor is a community store located under Palacky Square and complements are flower and books in both new and vacant locations.
2.5.5 Extension of underground metro exit

Figure 2.5.5-1; 2.5.5-2 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Existing metro exit and new metro exit/ galleria underground.

To emphasize the metro axis and connect to the popular river walk, the underground metro exit is extended. Existing service of phones, toilets, hair, bakery, clothes and tobacco are kept, unused rooms could be used by juice bar and book cafe for the space towards the inner yard of the Health Ministry and the repositioned library. The best location is close to the new library. A library functions both as competitor and good neighbour attracting the right segment. In other metro stations in Prague there are bookshops.

To make the space more welcoming light shafts are opened to let the light be reflected on water, grass and flowers. In the new “dig-out” of Palacky Square is a light shaft open up to an indoor square with a café and close access via new exit 12 to five permanent stalls in the cubistic wall of Zitkovy Garden. Goods transport way could open during winter to create indoor stalls, when it’s not popular to go outside. There will be room for an 1800m² community supermarket, the new anchor of the service in the Palacky vicinity.

Service elevator of goods is located in the back and up to the surface of Palacky Square (viewing terrace). In other metro stations the company of Albert is located in similar position. One escalator is moved to the river walk where a new exit is placed. The “hole” in the wall can be equipped with a watertight gate in case of flooding of Vlatava River. Otherwise there would be a risk that a flooding would reach the metro line.

The new “dig-out” will be made in light colours as it has positive effect on people’s moods according to Neufert and Neufert (2001), especially women (Lagerén 2005).
White roof makes the space look more spacious. While sandstone in the walls would have similar colours as the health ministry buildings and still be a stone material, similar as the dark granite walls in the existing part. The existing metro stations dark granite is similar to many others metro stations in Prague. The ceiling is uncovered hidden in darkness. An inner ceiling with white panels would feel higher and lighten up the heavy atmosphere.

2.5.6 New building on Pod Slovany

Figure 2.5.6-1 (Hjalmarsson design 2012).
The new building on Pod Slovany is the biggest change for the area. The good natural concave grass slope is replaced with a new building. The reason is to compensate for 90 lost parking spaces on Na Morani and Pod Slovany, and 1100 m² office space of the ministry building. The building houses 150 parking spaces on two floors, 1100 m² office space, and two cafes and three medium sized stores of together 1300 m². The layout of the store plan is drawn after existing small plots on Pod Slovany (Geoportal, 2008: land use plan). Above that is space for four unspecified floors of 6000 m² total area. Proposed to have seven floors in the south to reach similar height (27 metres) as the ministry building, and three floors height (10 metres) towards the 24 meter wide Na Morani. That allows the sun to reach the northern street surface in summer.

In comparison, a sketch of Jiraskovo Square shows that one floor could have 160 parking spaces. In several places in Prague there are parking under the squares. In this case this is proposed outside the studied vicinity as 40 parking places could be moved from Gorazova Street. Jiraskovo is also a good location for parking along an arterial road and an existing ramp with the start of Vyton River walk. The surface is used for 20 parking spaces today.
Figure 2.5.6-2; 2.5.6-3 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) *Jiraskovo and Pod Slovany parking.*

Figure 2.5.6-4 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Morphology
2.5.6 Expected usage

Figure 2.5.7-1 (Hjalmarsson map 2012). Intended diverse usage and flow of Palacky vicinity at work end, six more charts are displayed in Appendix: New intended diverse usage and flow of design proposal. Diverse usage by group and over time are important for the attraction of the area. Not necessarily that social interaction between groups is possible to create. See Appendix for all seven intention of usage for the proposed design.

Most streets in Palacky vicinity are left as they are. Concentrating people flow to main paths is important to reach critical mass. The not prioritized streets will become empty streets for car parking. Observation noticed that this parking can be more efficient with marked parking squares in the pavement. Shared streets have low car traffic and pedestrian friendly environment. Half the parking removed and driving lane reduced to four meter without curbs, enough for one-way traffic. 60° parking makes a primary direction, making one way signs not necessary. Still both way traffic are allowed as it reduces speed and without curbs it is enough space to meet on the 16 to 24 meter wide streets. Tram route is not changed, but the material between tracks is shifted from asphalt to “medieval” stone in the pedestrian zone. This gives more variation to look at and a demarcation making curbs super fluent. It is also less convenient for pedestrians.
Figure 2.5.7-2 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Traffic separation.
2.5.8 Interaction furniture

Figure 2.5.8-1 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Small building on Palacky Square. Terrace, viewing platform, sheltered area with communicative landscape, Service elevator to community supermarket. The shelter is 10 meter from the tram stop and has great view of people coming from the metro. The other building on Palacky Square is similar but without seating in the shelter, also including kiosk and a stair to the viewing platform. Not physically connected to the elevator for accessibility, but passage to flowerbeds is overbridged with a roof that also allows access for disabled to the viewing platform.

Figure 2.5.8-2 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Existing bollards of un-fitting stone material are changed to concrete in cubistic inspired shape from the concrete balustrades of Hypsman. The top is made of soft rubber to also function as seating. They are placed tighter (1.1 meter) than before for communicating distance with an extra row at the tram stop. The new bollards follow the same old turn-way (before 2007) in front of the Ministry as they also mark the path of the new touristic axis. Bollards are also set at end of the activity space marking the edge to the car traffic of the new shared street function of the traffic crossing Palacky Square.
Figure 2.5.8-3 (Hjalmarsson design 2012) Type of outdoor sitting and standing furniture. The tree support is common in the design proposal along the flow of people where other people can be viewed. The design is a new typology of urban furniture, providing for piano effect. The leaning height is 1.3 meter, slightly higher than a standing table.

The standing tables can be with or without a roof. A standing table without a roof is neutral in its access to more than one unknown people. The roofs runoff should be inwards, (up-side down triangle, opposite as traditional parasol in example), as the space under such a roof is more open to new people. An enclosing parasol creates a feeling of claiming a space. That drives unknown people away. This was found during observation.

The designated outdoor seating areas along Gorazova, Podalska, Na Morani and Václavská Street provide an ordered place for serving food, drinks and smoke. The seating area could be adopted for the specific costumer segment with a standard selection of none, two, three and four seated tables. The overall design should be coherent to make the street as one unified space. This is especially important at the Zitkovy food court where they also affect the experience of Zitkovy Garden.

With continuous benches on the rim of the seating areas, seating place is also offered for free without purchase demands. This is important to be inclusive even for poor people, children and elders who get tired of walking. The aim is to have eateries sprawled over the area so there always will be a free bench each 200 meter.
3 Evaluation and conclusions

It is difficult to design a place that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished. -Whyte, 1988 (The end quote of the movie.)

3.1.1 What’s the character of social interaction in Public place?

Social interaction is when people are aware of their communication. Character of social interaction is when eye contact is approved and greetings and further conversation is allowed. The definition has not occurred in other sources and is here answered directly from Goffman (1963). This occurs in public space as gatherings. Gatherings can also be without social interaction as dozen people waiting on the tram making their best to ignore each other. This is why Palacky Square, with its primary function of transit feels cold and unused today.

The character of these social gatherings is that they are inviting and accepting for participation. Inviting is good comfort, weather and safety. Public gatherings are open for new participation, but this is not completely true (a deductive conclusion from the design process when seeking identity for the relevant use). Only places identifiable as creative are places where people seek new contacts and possibilities. Local communities have little interest in new relations. Instead they take care of their existing social network.

This makes a difference for Palacky Square as working places, restaurants and library are creative functions. Community functions are playground, a special café and community store. Functions of daily life where you can bump into someone you already know. Functions like street activity or planned social activity (like a dance lesson) pleases both creativity and community. How tourists are related to this identity separation has not been analysed in this study. But tourists seem to be of a third identity focusing on pleasure. That pleasure can be individual or social. The complexity could be subject for further study.

The outcome of social interaction is serendipity, a lucky finding of a friend in the community or new possibility in creative centre. Both are sources for happiness.
3.1.2 Thoughts on social atmosphere

In line with Holland’s noticing about city behaviour, I follow Jacobs’s explanation that privacy is so rare it has become precious. When people turn from the country etiquette to the city etiquette, they become picky about whom they talk to. It is like humans suddenly transforms into J.R.R Tolkien’s fictive figure Gollum. They forsake their own humanity to keep their precious, in real city life not a ring but their privacy.

A small village don’t have the luxury of choice. But have neither the problems of exclusion. Village people talk to anybody either for news or social needs (Holland et al. 2007). For example in Sweden before the Information-age, to invite someone for coffee was a way of communication, to get news, gossip and socially interact.

The city -etiquette is quite strange behaviour and seems to be contra productive in the modern world. When there are some alcohol involved to overcome social barriers, people become more friendly (or aggressive) on pubs and dance floors. Maybe this is a reason why cities like Copenhagen and Prague have a certain kind of “beer” atmosphere that has not yet been researched.

Open food stalls and markets also function as social elements but literature doesn’t explain why it is so. It’s my own thoughts that it can be a result from the feeling of group inclusion, common goal and objectives.

The talk choice is complex, unknown what needs it satisfies. However the circumstances, places and amenities, where the talk occur can be observed and analysed (Norris, 2004) for better design.

3.1.3 What strategies improve social interaction?

Improving social interaction has in this report showed a variety of tools, but what is important is how they are combined or else they won’t work. When not combined the result is the existing designed seating on Palacky Square (on the coverpage) hardly used by anyone. The micro climate for social interaction is not just sun and wind protection, but most important communicative distances (and furniture direction), silence and the right set of people for the situation. The latter is an expression for the resident need of communities, activities and networks to interact with known contacts, while professionals and young people seek new contacts in an anonymous context – the creative centre.
In this way it is also the suggestion that public spaces are not only divided in transit, recreation and monumental spaces. But those spaces also are seen as places of certain character – usage profiles divided as communities, creative centres and silent places. Each place has its own purpose of friendliness and gossip, anonymity and development, and privacy. It is my belief that lack of silent places for privacy in city moves privacy barriers out among the daily behaviour in the city. It’s a need for places okay to be alone in, not to be hidden away in one’s apartment or among other gatherings.

The seven step strategy for social interaction was the product of theory, empiric discoveries and analyse. It is general so it can be implemented in any public or private space design project and should be used as a combination listed in order of importance:

1. Create identity by define usage profile and symbolic value to public place.
2. Attract the critical mass. Create a destination for dwellers, workers and tourists.
3. Stimulate the human senses with soft edges along the flow of people
4. Invite to longer stay with activities
5. Allow for diverse use of public space in time and by groups.
6. Bridge anti-social behaviour with social elements
7. Use of interaction space and communicative distances

3.1.4 How can these strategies be implemented in Palacky Square?
The design proposal shows that all seven strategy points are used. The proposal is of course not the only way to implement the strategy, but a combination of my creativity and inspirations (see Appendix: inspiration pictures).

Using the name Palacky strengthens the identity of the community. Using centre movement to extend Václavská Passage community along Na Morani to Palacky Square defines the usage. The workers of the area have a positive effect and it is good to spread the activity in the area with keeping lunch restaurants in several streets. Food court at Zikovsky Garden is for tourist and the new soft edge brings the north and south residential blocks together as one community.

Attraction of the area is based on its existing beauty. Together with the new tourist profile and entrance of the Emauzy Monastery, commercial anchor of a community store under Palacky Square and the Saturday Vyton market.
Activities like ice skating in winter and seasonal markets and a place for bands to play are temporary activities for extraordinary experience. Places like these should be electrified. The normal activity should also be stimulated and is done so with a labyrinth design, playground and suggestion that books, newspaper and games could be lendable at the new located library. Wifi connection at public places is also important for younger people using social media to interact with friends. An activity otherwise mostly performed from home or Wi-Fi-cafes.

Usage maps (see Appendix) show an intended usage of the design. Local attraction models can be used to verify a commercial unit’s location choice, and the simplified gravitation model (see chapter 1.3.4 Relation to centres) shows that an increase of commercial area also increases the attraction. The exact usage is impossible to predict. Diversity of people is improved with diversity of amenities. Different spaces allow for different usage and different groups. This is one reason why the study area was extended beyond the facades of Palacky Square. On square may have difficulties in successfully separate its space for such a large diversity. The use of a bigger picture is important to understand diversity and function of community and creative centres.

The least described solutions in the proposals are social elements and communication distance. They are important, but also on a detailed micro-level. Social elements are created with a cute animal statue in close relation to the playground on Pod Slovany. More monuments will be too much as there is already art on Vyton riverwalk, historical monunuments on Palacky Square and Square Below Emauzy. More than one permanent monument on each space is too much in my opinion. Temporary art, as observed at Andel film festival could enrich the daily conversation. Temporary art place is the same as for seasonal markets on Palacky Square. Street musicians and other performances cannot be expected as an everyday happening as in the centre. But at special occasion like the Prague Marathon this was observed to already be happening at Palacky Square.

Design of communicative landscapes has not been put into detail, but furniture was observed to be better for spontaneous interaction if they were less comfortable. It is important that the communicative distance is 1 meter between faces. Picnic tables and standing tables are able to give room for more than one group of people. The distance and barrier to interact becomes also less.
3.1.5 Discussion on the relevance and alternatives of this proposal

Hardest to design is the open edge between Zitkovy and Palacky, the space that is so badly used today. It is important to enclose the space of Palacky Square to gain the perception of a closed space. The proposal is to take away half the trees to allow more visual contact to Zitkovy Garden without removing the enclosure. The enclosure is further manifested with a 15-meter high column at the end of the railing, in a mental line with the roofs of the opposite two built sides. That column is 2.8 meter wide in its base enough to fit a wheelchair accessible elevator to the community store and to permanent market stalls.

Alternative thought for enclosure was to raise the railing to an arcade of arches, but according to the protection of the area, that might not be approved by the Culture department who is strict about the heritage architecture including the work of Hypšman.

Alternative instead of proposed flower beds was to replace the existing double tree row with a terraced planting and water feature to the north side facing Palacky Square and a viewing terrace towards Zitkovy Garden. This proposal went away during the design process as I considered the viewing distance to users either to large or vendor visitors would not be visible behind the edge.

The buildings on Palacky Square were also target for various solutions. The existing unused tobacco building is considered to be misplaced. The first sketch with the long terrace included a flower shop and tobacco shop at opposite ends in the flow of pedestrian traffic. With change of the terrace the functions were kept as free standing small buildings. The tobacco shop kept the function of terrace facing sun and Zitkovy Garden. It is an untested concept to let the roof be accessible for youths to “claim” as their territory. For the coherence of the space this building is mirrored to the North-West corner, with terrace facing sun and the people crossing Palacky Bridge. This proposal of the terrace might be less used as it also faces the traffic road and is exposed to noise. The earlier proposal was to face the tram stop and all the fast exchange of activity that was quite fascinating to observe during the study. But the need for a good placement of bus shelter is also important, and is in the final proposal included in the small building, as is a goods elevator for the underground store. The location of shelter has a better public distance to the commuters than normal bus shelters and might be used even by non-
commuters. It is probably not possible according to Holland’s generation conflict description to be able to provide use of terrace and shelter by both youths and elders at the same time, but it gives a possibility of diversity over time.

The second hardest decision is the new building in a great natural concave slope. The final proposal spoils one good quality to compensate for existing use of the area today which importance has not been evaluated. The strategy has been to keep functions that exist today and replace lost government area with new office space.

A third design decision was to keep Pod Slovany as it is with its inviting function as axis to Emauzy Monastery. The alternative thought was to make the silent space more like the public inner yard in the centre of Prague. This could be done with flower-bed filling between the margins of Prague Mozaic (se Appendix: Palacky Square pictures – Pod Slovany). This idea leaves a defined circular space around the monument, and acts both more softening for the noise, surface and edges. It’s not a bad idea, but it might reduce the important function of leading tourist to Emauzy Monastery.

Design issues not developed but thought of for social interaction is new untested interaction stimulation could be encouraging “silly” text on continuous benches in variations like “say hi to your person to your right”. This was similarly seen on an art installation in Stockholm Central station with strange furniture that tried to be inviting with written words on it. Maybe it at least can get people to smile with each other. But the detail of the study didn’t go this deep.

Falsifying the problem picture of Palacky vicinity usage gives a deductive conclusion from theory of what is lacking in the area. As described in appendix, this was utterly complex and the deductive conclusion is an impression of the situation rather than a confirmed truth. Such a study is still subject for a new research topic to improve reliability. Understanding social barriers is another topic for further research to study what activate people that normally don’t open up and talk to strangers.

3.1.6 Critics of method and conduction

The main task when conducting a thesis is the usage of right set of methods and knowing why and how to use them. After spending one fifth of the study time on reading methodology I can conclude that this is time consuming. This is not easily done as
methodology literature recommended by school is heavy, different from common course literature of urban design and mostly focusing on how to write the report. It is like wanting to eat and searching for food but be given rules for the ingredients declaration of contents.

I have a strong wish for accessible tools of how to conduct a study, not how to write about them. Arvidsson and Ehn’s (2009) Etnografiska observationer and Norris’s (2004) Analyzing Multimodal Interaction – a Methodological Framework, were good exceptions for how studies could be proposed. But this was only for observations, when using discourse analysis I only know this is a proper name for a method if studying documents and making cross reflections. But I have not found information on how to use it. Survey through interviews was better described in the provided literature compared to other methods. During the study the most repeatedly reviewed sources on methodology are easy read sources like uppsatsguiden.se (2012).

Choosing a foreign study place affected the way to access information, including language barriers and lack of an established network. Most of these problems could be solved or alternative solution was found. It usually led to some frustration and took longer time.

Documents collected but not studied was copied information from a Czech book (Ales, 2012) with historical information on most buildings in central Prague. These documents where newer studied. Instead historical overview was only from Magistrát hl. m. Prahy.

Most time spent on observation, the two weeks focused observation on Palacky Square was not so useful. The quantitative data collected where never digitalised as the conclusions of the data was quantitative. Time consuming experiments conducted with non-participated following of people from Palacky Square. To see where they went only confirmed theories of accepted walking distance.

Interviews with professionals of social interaction was attempted but not conducted as intended. The main problem is finding relevant expertise target who accept to be interviewed. The search was mainly towards urban design faculties at Czech universities and local authorities. The obstacles seem to have been establishing contacts over barriers like time-consuming, not understanding the relevance of the issue and language prob-
lems of middle hands. The late real attempt for target search limited the chances of appointments as the researcher was located in Prague during a limited period. Scheduled meetings seem to be impossible to get sooner than two weeks in advance. Other established contacts didn’t become relevant for the issue and internet search for expertise neither presented relevant results. Authors of existing literature are believed to have put their main points in their published materials. The theory implemented in the design is therefore less anchored with expertise than if expertise interviews had been made.

Design processing come in after the visit in Prague and visits to the Culture Department at the Hall of Architecture was not prioritized during the focused observation. They are the ones who give permit to change a culture historical place, (applied on the whole UNESCO protection zone). This could have been useful for confirming the design and get more knowledge about their protection rules for National Culture Monument and Culture Monuments. In this study the protection codes have been treated as Swedish Q- and q markings for preservation. Leaving the outer area unchanged as much as possible. Suggestion of disabled people’s elevator in Emauzy Monastery may be a violation to these protection codes. That I do not know.

Analysing problem, to what part can I say people occur in a place because of design and to what part of other reasons. However Lagerén stated it is 20% for commercial centres. I couldn’t find a real answer to this and the complexity involves pretty much every issue discussed in this report. Together with finding a Local Attraction model for public spaces it can be a second topic for new research.

3.1.7 What I gained from this study

Now I know that serendipity is much related to creative centres, which is something completely different from a community. There are a few successful examples from Europe, but Asia and particularly China would be a good place to study the trial and error of creative quarters. The impression from my exchange study during 2011 in Nanjing is lots of everything and with shorter life cycles. Produced in hype rather than from the outcome of an economic analyse.

This theory has not been, but maybe should be, implemented as theoretical knowledge during the Urban Design program at Blekinge Technical University. Creative areas are
Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

much more than gentrification or experimented design failure areas. Creative centres also includes university campuses, business areas, dating places, party districts, lunch places or even the coffee machine at the office. Under the circumstances that social interaction is maximized to also include the making of new contacts and ideas. That is what creates serendipity, the unpredicted fortunate results.

3.1.8 Summary of conclusions

The research problem; redesigning Palacky Square with vicinity to improve social interaction, have been deductive completed for a hermeneutical understanding of the research questions of character, design strategy and implementation. Visualizing the design criteria related to social life of places in urban environment. This was the aim.

Character of social interaction is the gathering in places of either community or creativity with the outcome of serendipity or wellbeing. Important is also places of silence and tourism where the character of social interaction has not been evaluated.

The seven step design strategy is a reasonable way to improve social interaction in public places. Implementation at Palacky Square with vicinity solves the main problems with identity, attraction, human senses, activities and diversity. Examples of social elements and communicative distances are also provided. Most important new assets are local centre movement, community store, monastery entrance and Zitkovy food court. The three axes have separate function of vistas, way-finding and movement.

Criticism is raised towards the accessibility of good sources for conducting a research, not to write a report. Self–criticism of study is that some methods where time consuming and the result could be hard to write down.

Recommendations for new research topics are serendipity, diverse use of spaces and Local Attraction model on public spaces. The topic of this study could also be continued and applied to other places. Then this report offer an comparison with what is here found on character, design strategy and design proposal.

It is difficult to design a place that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished. -Whyte, (1988: The end quote of the movie)
4 References

4.1 Authors Material

Author of this report in the course FM2514 Urban Design Diploma Work is Åke Hjalmars-son, program student (Spatial Planning with emphasis on Urban Design in China and Eu- rope 120cr) at Blekinge Technical University, Karlskrona, Sweden. The following material has been produced by the author:

Hjalmarsson; photo (2012): Selection from 8 000 photos taken during mid-winter and early spring of 2012 with a compact camera. They are mainly taken in Prague, but in some occasions also in Borås, Gothenburg and Stockholm.

Hjalmarsson; map (2012): Maps are altered by the author to fit the purpose of this re-port. (Original digital data comes with permission for educational use from the Digital Map office of the City Development Authority of Prague. Special thanks to Jana Fortova with colleague who prepared the material and made English translations.)

Hjalmarsson; design (2012): The design is produced independently by the author.

4.2 Unwritten references- interviews

Ales, Dominic, staff at City Development Authority of Prague (April 23rd 2012)

4.3 Written references


4.4 Web based references


4.5 Other references


5 Appendixes

Appendix I- Interview guides

Appendix II- Use of Palacky vicinity

Appendix III- Sun study

Appendix IV- Identifying social needs of diverse groups

Appendix V- Social element pictures

Appendix VI- Design inspiration

Appendix VII- Palacky vicinity photos
Appendix I- Interview guides

First formula sent to important buildings didn’t give any answers. The guides related to service and people where responded better when translated to Czech with Goggle translator. But not all questions were understandable for the targets.

Hi, my name is Åke Hjalmarsson and I’m a urban design student at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden.

I’m doing a case study on how to stimulate social interactions. I found the public places Below Emauzy to have two right out of three; people and beauty but little interaction. My aim is to see if a revitalizing design can change the usage. In doing so I hope you can help me with reply in an email these ten questions:

1) What is your view of the MPSV role in the city of Prague?

2) Is it possible to change the facade in street level for the use of restaurants etc.  
2b) How would you want the loss of space to be replaced? (is all space needed?, is other buildings available , new extension building,)  
2c) Who owns the building and are responsible for renting the space?  
2d) What security concerns do the MPSV have with new users in the building.

3) How does the MPSV want to connect with its surrounding? (access to public space, service and parking needs etc )

4) How many work at the MPSV?  
4b) How many visitors?  
4c) Where do the people at MPSV go for a break or lunch?

5) Anything else you want to inform me about?
I'm a Swedish student studying public spaces. (Palacky Square). Please help me with these questions:

1) What is your opinion of this place? (Lively 5 4 3 2 1 Empty)
   (Safe 5 4 3 2 1 Uncomfortable)
   (Beautiful 5 4 3 2 1 Ugly)
   (Noisy 5 4 3 2 1 Calm)

2) What is best with this place? (Beauty)(Metro)(People)(Grass field)(Something else ...)

3) How often do you come here? (several times a day)(every day)(week) (not often)

4) When do you prefer to be here ? (morning) (lunch) (afternoon)(evening) (night)

5) Where do you come from? (work)(neighborhood) (Prague city) (tourist)

6) How old are you (0-15) (15-30) (30-45) (45-65) (65+)

7) To whom do people talk to? (you) (each other) (not at all)

8) If you could change this place, what would you like to change?
   (nothing) (more flowers/greenery) (new/more benches) (add/remove parking ) (distance
   between tram/metro) (new connection to water/church) (more shops/indoor ca-
   fé/outdoor cafe) (seasonal market) (winter activity)(playground for children)

Thank you for your time.
I'm a Swedish student studying public spaces. (Palacky Square). Please help me with these questions:

1) What is your view of the street activity? (lively, 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - empty)

2) Is this a good place for your business? (yes/no)

3) How many visitors/costumers (each day) (each year)?

4) When do the visitors come during the day? (morning) (lunch) (afternoon) (evening) (night)

5) When do the visitors come during the year? (Month 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12)

6) Where do your visitors come from? (neighborhood) (Prague city) (tourist)

7) How old are your visitors? (0-15) (15-30) (30-45) (45-65) (65+)

8) Do visitors talk to (you) (each other) (not at all)?

9) How is your relation to the visitor? (personal) (acquaintance) (strangers)

Thank you for your time.
Appendix II- Use of Palacky vicinity

Observed use in Palacky vicinity
The result is from two weeks focused study on weekday, weekend and Sunday at morning from 6 a.m., lunch flows, afternoon use, work ends peak, evening. Those are all quite even in the use; based on needful activities. Recreational use is walking the dog, sit in the sun and walk along Vyton river walk and Saturday markets. Night were studied with drop in usage between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. Between 4 a.m and 6 a.m was no observation done. 1 pixel represents 5 people per 15 minutes of observation.

![Figure II-1](image1)

New Intended diverse usage and flow of Design Proposal
This is a reasonable expectation of use, based on increasing purposes of stay and attraction anchors like community store and tourist profile on Emouzy cloister, doubled service (extended underground, shops in new building, Zitkovy food court). The time diversity is from observing the existing use. Displayed below are all made by the author.

![Figure II-2](image2)
Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

Åke Hjalmarsson

Figure II-3

Figure II-4
Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

Figure II-5

Figure II-6
Figure II-7; II-8, Lacking in display is filter displaying sun and shadowed areas, and a filter describing the light sources at night. The study has not included a study on light sources as the where observed to be sufficient in the existing performance. The enlightening of Emauzy Monastery is very good. Slightly changes can be doe of the street lightning armature as the use of the street goes from cars to people.
Appendix III - Sun study

Sun (yellow), rising (blue) and setting (red) in Prague is expected to be similar as this shown from Dresden, the closest city available on the website (Gaisma, 2005) on sun studies. In summer the dusk sets as late as 22pm and in winter already at 4.30pm. This is important for how long the public spaces are in use. Public spaces are depending on the sunshine (and weather). Sunrise is generally not directly important as staying activities first starts when the space ha getting warmed up a little by the sun, and then usually not before 7am in summer anyway.

Figure III-1 (Gaisma, 2005), Dresden sun conditions (Used according to terms)
Appendix IV- Identifying social needs of diverse groups

This is an interpretation with strong generalization made from observation (Å) and literature. Main sources are Burton (2007) (B) on elderly, Florida (2011) (F) on creativity and labelling relevant groups, Evans (2011) (E) on identity, Holland (2007) (H) on age and Watson (2006) (W) on markets. Unmarked attributes are general impressions, without clear observation or support in literature. Attribute rows are chosen for what is important in the design strategy.

Identifying social needs should be studied further to gain reliability. This table gives a qualitative overview. Social interactions as shown is not as simple as just a conversation, it’s separated by groups, networks, age, life stage, professions and community. Needs are complex and this is what makes the city. The closest theories to respond for these needs are Town Centre Renewal (TCR) and studies on either community or creativeness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest group by age:</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Singles</th>
<th>Parents with family</th>
<th>Elders/ Retiree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social gatherings/ networking place:</td>
<td>Nursery (Å)</td>
<td>Park (W)</td>
<td>Club, Bars (H)</td>
<td>Home Playground (Å)</td>
<td>Market (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind of contacts:</td>
<td>Nursery (Å)</td>
<td>Friends (W)</td>
<td>Aquaintances (Å)</td>
<td>Friends (W)</td>
<td>Friends (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining personal image/Social expression:</td>
<td>Friends (Å)</td>
<td>Self-expression (W)</td>
<td>Attention (F)</td>
<td>Family members (Å)</td>
<td>Family values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activity:</td>
<td>Play (Å)</td>
<td>Hang out (H)</td>
<td>Party (Å)</td>
<td>Associate (Å)</td>
<td>Day activity (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for:</td>
<td>Play (Å)</td>
<td>Independence (Å)</td>
<td>Dating (Å)</td>
<td>Raise Family</td>
<td>Stay healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life stage goal:</td>
<td>Play (Å)</td>
<td>Friends (Å)</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Toys, Clothes, Food</td>
<td>Toys, Clothes, Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets for money:</td>
<td>(Toys, Sweets, Entertainment, Pets)</td>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>Nutricous</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets for food:</td>
<td>Familiar Colorful and interesting</td>
<td>Trendy</td>
<td>Good value</td>
<td>Nutricous</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table gives a qualitative overview. Social interactions as shown is not as simple as just a conversation, it’s separated by groups, networks, age, life stage, professions and community. Needs are complex and this is what makes the city. The closest theories to respond for these needs are Town Centre Renewal (TCR) and studies on either community or creativeness.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest group by profession:</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Office staff</th>
<th>Creative people: Artists and musicians</th>
<th>Entrepeneur</th>
<th>Business incubator</th>
<th>Social media Lunch</th>
<th>Lunch Meeting rooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social gatherings/ networking place:</td>
<td>Home Activity Library Café</td>
<td>Lunch Café</td>
<td>Social media After work Evening Activity</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Business incubator</td>
<td>Social media Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch Meeting rooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind of contacts:</td>
<td>Established network Friends Family</td>
<td>Friends Study mate</td>
<td>Friends Colleges</td>
<td>Supplier partners</td>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Contractor Costumers Other Businesses</td>
<td>Brand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining personal image/Social expression:</td>
<td>Nice home</td>
<td>Attention for their selves and abilities</td>
<td>Self-expression Sub-culture</td>
<td>Attention of their work</td>
<td>Attention of their work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activity:</td>
<td>networking</td>
<td>Study Hang out</td>
<td>Lunchbreak</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Fair Meetings Mingle</td>
<td>Fair Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for:</td>
<td>Change from work Knowledge Job contacts Leisure</td>
<td>Earnings their payment Lunchbreak Do their task Inspiration market</td>
<td>Capital Partners Staff Raise Business</td>
<td>Sell Profit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession goal:</td>
<td>Wellbeing Exam Employability</td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>Raise</td>
<td>Sell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets for money:</td>
<td>Food News Entertainment</td>
<td>News Coffee</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets for food:</td>
<td>Breakfast, Dinner</td>
<td>Cheap Trendy</td>
<td>Good value</td>
<td>Cheap Trendy Mingle opportunity</td>
<td>Better value Meeting opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure IV-1, IV-2
Appendix V- Social element pictures

All photos by author (Hjalmarsson photo 2012).

Figure V-1; V-2 Most interactive monuments were also most interesting for kids, playing kids occupying parents and also attract others eyes as well.

Figure V-3 Sexual art attracts adult more than children, as these movable penises outside the Kafka Museum. Why is it women who takes picture this time?

Figure V-4 People with commercial messages where in general ignored, like this living advertisement sign, threatened like a fixed obstacle, creating a lite void around himself in the otherwise well used street.
Figure V-5 Costums for advertaisment draws same attention as street performance. Compare with the avoided guy in the street.

Figure V-7; V-8 The small boy has find intresst in the bell at the blacksmith’s stall at the seasonal market in Prague. The old working methods draws attention, but probably mostly because of the loud banging. The public distance is obvious, making a circle.

Figure V-8 This big boy is intrested in how big cigarett the statue has, which he comments to his mother.

Figure V-9 (Na Morani) People are curious of building sites and simir activities, but it seldom generate immedite interaction. Perhaps they ask themselves what it will become.
Appendix VI- Design inspiration

These pictures and design features are from where inspiration has flowed into the design process of Palacky Square proposal to create a similar activation of people. These functions cannot be said to be supported by the existing or new findings of social interaction theory. Thus they provide activation of people, mainly the function of looking at other people but also to stimulate the mind in a recreational or playful way. All photos by author (Hjalmarsson photo 2012).

Figure VI-1;VI-2 Bachmacské Square, Prague: Small square building with kiosk and toilets. Colour scheme, size and cubistic style elements suit Palacky square and surrounding architecture. New modernistic designs look alien to the character of site.

Figure VI-3
Brunnsparken, Gothenburg: Piano effect observed with these tree supports.

Figure VI-4
Korsvägen/Universeum, Gothenburg: Playground in shape of a boat. Well-functioning despite the heavy traffic at Korsvägen. Figurative design invites to role playing in larger extent than non-figurative “play-machines”. Compare with popular Vyton playground in Prague.

Above: Figure VI-5 near Prague castle: Design that emphasizes a route. (In this case too much as the gate is not important enough to be open). Also example of Prague mosaics

Left: Figure VI-6 Vyton river promenade, Prague: The design of the bicycle lanes was observed to be distinctively popular. But the smooth slabs are too narrow for wheelchairs or prams. It has also good linear function useable to emphasize axis or walking routes.

Figure VI-8 Stockholm central: Circular hole to view other commuters, also a meeting point.
Figure VI-9; VI-10; VI-11 A linear park in Tokyo, a hard edge path between blocks has been turned into a beautiful pedestrian park, not wider than a few meters, but sides is covered in greenery creating an unusual experience of a forest trail in small.

(Gehl, 2010; 169-Picture) Freiburg (?): Streams of water running in street, part of medieval solution, activate children’s play. This is proposed in linear park and labyrinth.

(Gehl and Gemsøe 2006; 63 -Picture) Auditorium Forecourt Fountain, Portland: Complex water feature inspires to relaxation and problem solving play. Used in the labyrinth.

(Gehl & Gemsøe, 2006; 233 -Picture) Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland: example of how ramp can be combined with stair and resting platforms. It is also good place to view other people. This is used in both terraces and new stair to Emauzy.

(Gehl & Gemsøe, 2006; 252 -Picture) Swanston Street walk, Melbourne, is example of unified street furniture that creates a unified street landscape. This is inviting to stay and recreation. Used in the design of seating areas along Zitkovy food court and Na Morani. The dark green colours and the light movable metal chairs are also inspiring to the design proposal. Example of Movable chairs in greenery is Bryant Park, New York Gehl 2010: 155-picture)
Appendix VII- Palacky vicinity photos

All pictures by the author (Hjalmarsson; photo, 2012) During January or April (Easter).

Figure VII-1, VII-2. Monumental views of Below Emauzy, Figure VII-3 Palacky Square
Palacky Square:

Figure VII-4 The newer used benches.

Figure VII-5, VII-6 inner yard, existing bollards, planting boxes.

Figure VII-7 corner for new café and elevator
Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

Figure VII-8; VII-9; VII-10 Tram ways
Figure VII-11; VII-12; VII-13 car street
Figure VII-14; VII-15; VII-16 People flows. Palacky Square is a transit space
Charles Square Metro Station exit Palacky Square:

Figure VII-11-20. Underground exit 9, 8 and 7

Figure VII-21 Photo on information board
Figure VII-22-27. Service functions in the metro exit
Figure VII-28-33, metro ticket box, exit 6 and light shaft,
Zitkovy Garden:

Figure VII-34;-35 Zitkovy Gardens late afternoon use in winter and early spring
Redesigning Palacky Square to Stimulate Social Interaction

Figure VII-36;37 use of benches, figure VII-38 Finnish Embassy

Figure VII-39 Health Ministry and Social Ministry (winter)
Figure VII-40; -41; -42 Unused benches, rose beds, towards Podalska Street along the Ministry of Social relations.

Figure VII-43; -44, crossing between ramp to river walk and Finnish Embassy.
Square Below Emauzy:

Figure VII-45;-46, -47;-48;49, -50
Emauzy Monastery:

Figure VII-51; -52, -53 Closed wall and stair to Emauzy from Below Emauzy

Figure VII-54; -55; -56 Treasure on the backyard wall of the small church, strange entrées
Figure VII-57;-58;-59;-60;-61 Outer and semi inner yard of Emauzy Monastery
Figure VII-62;-63;-64 Gate to Emauzy and Prague City Authority from Vysehradská Street.

Figure VII-62;-63;-64 Prague City Authority from Pod Slovany
Pod Slovany:

Figure VII-65;-66;-67 Bad shape of Pod Slovany, back side of Health Ministry, dogs

Figure VII-68;-69;-70

Figure VII-71;-72;-73. Hollows along Pod Slovany, possible to turn into a cave for play?
Václavská Street and Václavská Passage:

Figure VII-74 Václavská Street, from Václavská Passage towards Na Morani. Here among the few people some stop before the entrance to the passage and look at others. The niche works for seating for tired legs, or the concrete pillars can be fine to lean against wild talking in the phone.

Figure VII-75;-76 the bread shop is popular among the residents. Václavská Café is a popular among the aging generation. A node of the Charles Square Community

Figure VII-77;-78 Václavská Street and Hotell guests
Na Morani:

Figure VII-79;-80;-81;-82;-83 Na Morani with the existing intersection to Pod Slovany. Note the parking in the middle of the street.

Figure VII-84, -85 display hard edge along proposed metro exit and towards Charles Sq. (with walking restriction!).
Dittrichova Street

Figure VII-86; -87 Dittrichova Street

Figure VII-88; -89 Dittrichova Street houses church, student housing and governmental offices along residents. However the best building designed for providing soft edges with many small shops each fifth meter fails because of its location. The shops don’t survive in a street primarily used for parking.
Gorazova Street

Figure VII-90 at 5p.m end of office hours cars queuing through the area.

Figure VII-91 the common usage of parking and emptiness.

Figure VII-92; 93

Figure VII-94; 95
Podskalska Street

Figure VII-96 Podalska heading south from Zitkovy Garden

Figure VII-97, Looking back north to Palacky Square from the school (on the right).

Figure VII-98; 99, It is fine to stand up to mingle in the vinery, but why is it no people outside? This is Last block to Vyton Park.
Vysehradska Street

Figure VII-100; -101; -102; -103; -104; -105; -106; -107. View is from north to south end of study area. Church towers of the Vysehradska Castle in the Background.
Vyton Park

Figure VII-108 -111 Observed play favourites besides traditional swing, slide and sandbox:

Figure VII-112; -113 Playground 0-6 year olds and 6-12 year olds
Figure VII-114; Vyton tram stop and Vyton Park.

**Vyton Riverwalk:**

Figure VII-115  Grill boats and Saturday market area.

Figure VII-116
Figure VII-117;118;119;120 Movie setting. Below Saturday market figure VII-121;122:

Figure VII-123;124 Art on wall

Figure VII-125
Charles Square

Figure VII-126 the sun came many went out to Charles Square, a park for recreation. In the background the Jesuit Church.

Figure VII-127 Free-standing cafe with outdoor seating on the roof.

Figure VII-128;-129 Vseobecna faculty. The corner of Vysehradska and Na Morani Street.
Jiráskovo Square (Dancing house)

Figure VII-130;-133 three measures daytime showed an average of 50 photos taken on the building per 15 minutes. From this spot tourist prefer to either turn back or walk over the bridge. Few continue south. Hardly any photos where observed being taken at Palacky squire.

Comparable Touristic Path - Charles Bridge

Figure VII-134;-135, 500 heads counted instantly on bridge, 2000 at Old Town Sq. and 50 at Palacky.