6. Development of a former military district

Jaamamõisa at the former Raadi air base in Tartu

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6.1 The social background
6.1.1 The district of Jaamamõisa
6.1.2 The military background
6.1.3 The 1996 plan for the district
6.1.4 Social composition of population ethnically heterogenous
6.1.5 A low sense of belonging in the area

6.2 Housing
6.2.1 State of the apartment houses
6.2.2 Privatisation and renovation
6.2.3 Public opinion on the district

6.3 Renovation of the district
6.3.1 The aims of the master plan
6.3.2 Demolition of barracks
6.3.3 Renovation of the neighbourhood
6.3.4 Renovation of apartments

6.4 Evaluation of the development
6.4.1 Future actions
6.4.2 Development perspectives
6.4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

6.1.1 The district of Jaamamõisa
The district of Jaamamõisa is located a couple of kilometres from the city centre and close to the former Raadi military air base. The physical structure of the district and land-use are functional and laid out in a grid plan of paved streets. The majority of the buildings are five to seven storey apartment buildings from the 1970s. This is reflected in the population composition as well. Less than 1% of the district’s population lived there before the 1970s. A few ‘barracks’ attached to the area are currently under demolition. The population in the area in the late 1980s was over 4,000. This number decreased to 2,700 by the mid-1990s and then rose to 3,000 by the end of the 1990s.

6.1.2 Planning and construction of the district
The construction of Jaamamõisa has been particular due to its past role as a housing area for Soviet military forces. The military also participated to a certain extent in the construction of the buildings which is reflected in their poor quality

The development of the area was regulated by the military. After the independence of Estonia in 1991, the neighbourhood was converted into an ordinary housing area. At first, the area belonged to the central authorities who then transferred it to the local authorities. In the mid-1990s, the local authorities decided to create a general plan that would be designed for the housing and the former military base area. The former Soviet street names were changed to more neutral ones. The preparations for planning were substantial and an environmental assessment and a sociological survey were conducted (Mållo 1995; Jauhiainen & Mållo 1997). Both of these research efforts indicated serious problems in the area: the soil around the military base was contaminated. With regard to social issues, there was not a high degree of belonging in the neighbourhood due to its particular function. It was found that there would be several difficulties in launching development in the neighbourhood. In terms of land value, Jaamamõisa’s proximity to the Tartu city centre is an advantage.

The near-by former military air base of Raadi was seen as a constraining factor for the development of Jaamamõisa.
In the mid-1990s, there was serious discussion about converting the military base into a civilian airport or an international air cargo centre. The projected land-use for the territory of the former military base was utopian and did not pay enough attention to the conversion costs and to the need for environmental improvement. A small amount of funding was received from the European Union to assess redevelopment possibilities for the area. A further constraint in the context of Tartu was that land availability was not a problem in the mid-1990s. It was difficult to attract investments and foreign capital for the necessary redevelopment (Jauhiainen 1997; Jauhiainen 1998).

6.1.3 The 1996 plan for the district
A comprehensive plan for the 70 hectares of Jaamamõisa was designed in 1996 by the Tartu town planning office planners Indrek Ranniku and Ilona Merzin. (Figure 6.2) The aim of the plan was to avoid the possibility that the district would turn into a ghetto, to develop the area in general, and to integrate it into the town structure. A more specific aim was to improve living standards in the existing structure. References were made to the high quality district of Tähtvere that was located at the same distance from the centre.

The major issues in the plan were the demolition of the barracks, rehabilitation of the existing five storey buildings and construction of three rings of housing. The first area would consist of six to twelve storey buildings which are the apartment buildings currently existing. The second area would consist of semi-detached housing to be constructed in the former barracks’ location. The third area would be detached housing located behind the current Jaamamõisa. The plan also included development of green and leisure areas, including a continuous green belt, small density park-forest and alleys. The aim is to increase the population from the current 3,238 (official number) to a total of 4,060, or an increase of approximately a third.

The question of land ownership was a significant issue. It was also a constraining factor for development. The land was owned by the state and the ministry of defence, so local authorities could not intervene in the area as they may have done. Sustainability was not an explicit theme in the plan. However, the plan included partial use of the existing building structure. Also participation in planning was not a major topic in the plan, because planners estimated that most of the people would move away from Jaamamõisa. It needs to be understood that sustainability and participation were relatively fresh issues in Estonian planning when the plan was designed.

6.1.4 Social composition of population
In the 1980s about 4,200 people lived in Jaamamõisa. From 1988 (4,190 persons) to 1995 (3,200 persons) the population declined officially by 25%. Most likely the emigration was even higher. In 1995, according to a social survey, about 2,600-2,900 people lived in Jaamamõisa of whom 200 lived in the barracks and 2,400-2,700 lived in the five storey apartment buildings. It was impossible to find an exact population figure because of the large emigration from Estonia in the early 1990s, especially by people of ethnic Russian origin. In the neighbourhood, 29% of the population were ethnic Estonians. The demographic structure showed that the number of people between 45-55 years of age was relatively low and the number of elderly (over 64 years) was high, indicating a particular pattern of migration: the pensioners could not leave the area (Millo 1995).

After the mid-1990s, the number of ethnic Estonians did not increase. In 1998, only one in four people in Jaamamõisa was ethnic Estonian (26%), half (52%) were born in Estonia, and 70% speak only Russian at home. The birthplaces of residents include Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, the Ukraine and different parts of Russia. In an ethnic sense the district is very heterogeneous (Tartu ja tartlased 1998) and very different from Tartu. The number of ethnically non-Estonians in Tartu is about one fourth.

The social status of the inhabitants can be looked at through the general education level. With regard to formal education, there are some differences between Jaamamõisa and Tartu. In the higher strata there are no differences: the number of people with higher education (finished or under way) is 23% (in Tartu 22%), but the number of those with lower or basic education is less in Jaamamõisa (12%) than in Tartu (22%). Furthermore, the background of the inhabitants is urban, only one fifth (21%) have lived in the countryside. This is challenging information with regard to future housing options for the people. Movement into peripheral areas is not a viable solution.

The internal population change has been rapid during the 1990s. The major reasons for emigration were external with regard to the broader societal changes in Estonia, and internal with regard to the deteriorated standard of living in the area. It is estimated that the immigration and emigration stabilised in the latter part of the 1990s and the population may have risen by 200-300 persons. The exact population is not known, however, the most recent official number is from 1998 (3,030 persons) showing either a small decline or small growth in the last few years.

6.1.5 Sense of belonging in the area
In 1995, about 37% had lived in the area for more than 15 years and by 1999 their share had fallen to 16%. In 1999, one out of eleven had lived in Jaamamõisa less than a year, half of the population less than five years and almost three out of four (72%) have lived there less than a decade (Figure 6.1). This means that there has been a large population turnover relatively recently which affects the sense of social belonging in the neighbourhood. Only 7% of the population have lived in the district since the beginning - the lowest percentage in Tartu. There has been a constant and relatively high immigration (1-2% of the total population each year) from 1993 and onwards - that is among
the highest in Tartu. There are maybe only twenty people that have lived in the area for more than 30 years. The emigration will continue because 40% of the inhabitants claim that they will move away from the district, the highest number in Tartu (Tartu ja tartlased 1998).

The sense of belonging to the district is the lowest in Tartu, i.e., only one out of three people (36%) in Jaamamõisa feel that they have this feeling for the neighbourhood. About 17% of the working population work in the district, so that does not increase the sense of belonging.

One aspect of belonging is the feeling of safety. The inhabitants perceived Jaamamõisa as the most unsafe district in Tartu. Security and social problems are connected to each other. One indication of social problems is that 18% of respondents are very afraid of violence at home and 26% are afraid to a certain extent (total 38%, in Tartu 29%). 26% are very afraid of violence in general (21% in Tartu). One major development problem is then the lack of a sense of unity in Jaamamõisa (Tartu ja tartlased 1998).

Other indicators show that there are people with social problems in Jaamamõisa. The inhabitants received the highest rate of social aid for housing (13% of respondents) and general aid for living (14% of respondents). Further, 58% of respondents perceive a need for such help, which is the highest in Tartu (Tartu ja tartlased 1998). In April 1998, 4% of the households earned more than 10,000 EEK, 17% between 5,000-10,000 EEK, 50% between 2,001-4,999 EEK, and 13% 2,000 EEK or less. The majority earns enough to maintain basic living standards, and a small proportion of the population are on the margin of survival. This selection of indicators illustrates the existence of direct, indirect and perceived social problems in Jaamamõisa. In addition, one third of the residents (34%; 40% in Tartu) claim that their future is not surely guaranteed in economic terms. In conclusion, it can be said that the social environment has serious challenges, and the specific cultural background of the population needs to be taken into account in the future planning and improvements undertaken in the district.

6.2 HOUSING

6.2.1 State of the apartment houses

Jaamamõisa consists mainly of high-rise apartment buildings, with the exception of some old barracks that are still left in the area, so almost everybody (92%) lives in a building with more than five floors. The apartments are among the smallest in the town. The size of the apartments, 18.1 m²/person, is 25% less than the Tartu average (24.1 m²/person). This also means that the number of rooms per person is also smaller, i.e. 0.92 rooms/person in Jaamamõisa and 1.10 rooms/person in Tartu (Tartu ja tartlased 1998, 24). This creates larger density within the buildings, but the average size of the rooms is only slightly smaller than the town average.

Due to the relatively recent construction of the site, the availability of functioning housing facilities is excellent: all apartments in the apartment buildings have water and sewage systems and heating. The district provides a good standard of basic amenities for housing in the context of Tartu. However, 8% claimed that hot water was not available in their apartments and 13% were lacking flush toilets. Despite this functionality, only one out of ten residents (10%) had

not made fundamental improvements to their apartment during the 1990s. Paradoxically, central heating and water systems can create difficulties for residents in poor areas. The rise in the price of water has created problems for two-thirds (65%) of the residents of Jaamamõisa, which is the highest rate in Tartu. The rise in the cost of central heating has created problems for almost everybody (91%) in Jaamamõisa, again the highest rate in Tartu (Tartu ja tartlased 1998, 30-33). Both aspects cannot be regulated by the inhabitants. Water is needed for living and apartment heat needs to be paid for.

One problem is that in many cases inhabitants are not paying directly for what they are consuming (for water or heat), but they pay according to the size of the apartment. The difficulties in regulating heating and the deficiencies in infrastructure create additional problems of energy waste. Actually, with regard to all municipal costs, Jaamamõisa is included among the neighbourhoods in which people see large problems in the increase in living costs. This indicates increasing socio-economic problems in the area. These are real because on the average the inhabitants of Jaamamõisa receive financial help more often than those in other areas of Tartu (38 times/year) and other material help second most often (47 times/year). The average income per person in the area was 1,600 EEEK/month which is not the lowest, however, there are large differences in income distribution (Tartu ja tartlased 1998, 46-48). These indicate clear and persistent problems of an economic nature within the households.

6.2.2 Privatisation and renovation

In the housing sector one major change has been that the residents of Jaamamõisa have become property owners during the 1990s. In 1998, 88% were property owners and of the rest, 7% aim to privatise their apartments. The privatisation has taken place with about half (46%) privatising the flats from the former enterprise where they worked and about one third (34%) from the state. About 78% were individual owners of their apartment or owned their apartment with a member of their family, 10% of the apartments were owned by a housing co-operative and 5% were state-owned. The changes in the housing sector have formalised the organisation of housing. Already 82% of the population live in apartments that belong to a housing association, highest rate in Tartu (Tartu ja tartlased 1998).

Almost everyone (88%) preferred to live in housing which they owned, and only a very small number of people (4%) preferred rental housing. This is an important outcome because two-thirds (64%) had previously lived in the area in rental apartments (Tartu ja tartlased 1998). This indicates that either the rental sector is not functioning properly or that one solution for housing would be the construction of privately owned apartments for the people. Unfortunately, new and expensive flats are out of reach for the majority of the current inhabitants.

Jaamamõisa was perceived by the inhabitants of Tartu as the least satisfactory district in which to live. As early as 1995, the poor quality of the apartments was a major problem. Relatively few (16%) carried out full renovations in their apartment, but three-quarters (73%) have done sanitary renovations. The amount spent on renovations varies greatly: 10% spent less than 1,000 EEEK, 27% spent between 1,000-5,000 EEEK, 38% between 5,000-10,000 EEEK, 16% between 10,000-50,000 EEEK and 4% over 50,000 EEEK.

6.2.3 Public opinion on the district

In the 1998 survey, the lowest number of people considered Jaamamõisa as the most satisfactory district and the highest number of people considered Jaamamõisa as the most unsatisfactory district in which to live. A further indication of this perception is that 70% of Tartu’s inhabitants included Jaamamõisa among the three worst districts in Tartu. The inhabitants of Jaamamõisa share this general view. Only 14% of the inhabitants of Jaamamõisa ranked the district as the best district in Tartu (Tartu ja tartlased 1998). Interestingly, there are ethnic differences in preferences: of ethnic Estonians, over half (55%) rank Jaamamõisa as the worst district, but only 24% of ethnic Russians do so. The preferences are neither a direct expression of functional facilities nor of ethnic background, as everyday experiences and images are also important.

6.3 RENOVATION OF THE DISTRICT

6.3.1 The aims of the master plan

In summary, the aims of the Jaamamõisa master plan were:
1) to avoid a transformation of the district into a ghetto
2) to develop the area in general
3) to integrate it into the town structure
4) to improve living standards in the existing structure
5) to demolish the barracks
6) to rehabilitate the existing five storey buildings
7) to construct three rings of housing areas (six to twelve storey buildings, semi-detached housing, and detached housing)
8) to develop green and leisure areas with a continuous green belt, small density park-forest and alleys

An analysis follows of the real changes and the viewpoints of the inhabitants regarding the development of Jaamamõisa as well as how much of the planning was realised by the late 1990s. The physical development in the district during the 1990s can be analysed from both an external and an internal viewpoint.

6.3.2 Demolition of barracks

One major project was the demolition of the barracks (task 5). This began in 1997 after some delay due to administrative problems between the Ministry of Defence and the town council of Tartu. However, the demolition has been significantly slower than planned. By 1999, only one fourth of the demolition had taken place. The spring of 2000, the demolition was almost completed.

There have been three particular questions to deal with: the local authorities have had to indicate a place of residence for those who have a legal right to live in the barracks, but who must leave due to demolition. This is expensive for the town though the apartments will be municipal property. By 1999, the town had bought 26 one to three room apartments at an average cost of 120,000 EEK including some renovations. Tracing residents who no longer live in Tartu or in Estonia has also been a problem. Some people have refused to leave the barracks for various reasons including negotiating with the town council for better replacements. The redevelopment is also expensive: the average cost for the demolition of each barracks has been 36,000 EEK and over 3,000,000 EEK has been used to relocate the residents. The redevelopment activities ceased temporarily in February 1999 because there was no state or local funding. However, by April 2000 the site was almost cleared.

6.3.3 Renovation of the neighbourhood

According to the plan, there has also been expenses for reconstructing the electrical system and road surfaces (task 2, task 4). However, in 1998 the inhabitants still evaluated the quality of roads on average as ‘bad’, the lowest rating in Tartu. This was ranked among the most important problems in Jaamatõisa. The situation with street lighting is similar. The estimation of the standard of the renovations of Jaamatõisa’s buildings and the maintenance of the surrounding environment is again ranked the lowest in Tartu (Tartu ja tartlased 1998, 16, 33-36). Planning or the realisation of the plan has not been satisfactory enough to meet the needs of the people.

The inhabitants of Jaamatõisa rank the quality of their own neighbourhood in total along with the surrounding environment in very critical terms. This indicates that the plan has not been realised to the extent proposed (task 6, task 8). Concerning the surrounding environment there are however, differences of opinion: 34% of the inhabitants evaluate it as bad or very bad and 17% as good or very good. There is a similar pattern of differences of opinion with regard to the open and green spaces (Tartu ja tartlased 1998, 33-35). One reason for this is apartment location. There are better and worse areas within Jaamatõisa.

6.3.4 Renovation of apartments

Nevertheless, there are significant improvements in the internal rehabilitation of the district. Apartment renovations have taken place during the 1990s, however, as an initiative of the residents themselves, not by the local authorities. Only 10% of the respondents had not carried out significant renovation during the 1990s; 75% had improved the sanitary conditions and 14% carried out other improvements. This partially explains why about half of the population (46%) perceived that there were improvements in the living conditions during the 1990s. The improvement has not been even, because one-third (34%) argued that the situation had remained the same and one-fifth (21%) claimed that it had worsened. This is worrying because the district has serious physical and social problems. However, in terms of the future, only 12% thought that their living conditions would become worse and half thought that they would remain (50%) the same (Tartu ja tartlased 1998). This indicates that the worst period might be over (task 1).

According to the social survey conducted in 1995, the major problems in Jaamatõisa were the poor quality of the apartments and of the entire neighbourhood (Mälder 1995). To tackle these issues, the local authorities made the master plan for the area. The survey from 1998 indicates that these problems persist. In this sense, there have not been relative improvements in the area. As a general conclusion it could be said that some tasks from the 1996 detail plan have been fulfilled. The district has not become a marginalized ghetto (task 1) although the bad image persists, and there have been general improvements in the physical environment, mostly of the roads. The Jaama-Põhja Avenue crossing for facilitating transport between the district and the town (task 3) was considered important. However, there has not been a launch in the development and in this sense the plan has only been realised to a limited extent (task 2).

6.4 Evaluation of the Development

6.4.1 Future actions

The current situation does not indicate major short term changes in the situation. The current economic downturn in Estonia has meant that many projects in Jaamatõisa have been stopped, or slowed down. There is also the temptation to leave the district as it currently is because there are other districts in need of improvement. Furthermore, solving the problems of Jaamatõisa requires a large amount of financial support from internal and external sources.
One constraining factor has definitely been the land ownership question, which should be solved within the year 2000. The slow movement of the local authorities in demolition and redevelopment projects created problems in launching the area more generally in the mid-1990s. This is partly due to the unclear situation about the former air base which made larger development plans uncertain. It has finally been decided that there will not be an airport in the area. The physical integration of the district to the rest of Tartu has remained poor and there are deficiencies in the technical environment.

New development for Jaamomõisa concerns the former barracks area and the area more towards the periphery. The idea is that the local authorities would provide the technical facilities in the area and the private sector or individuals would then take the initiative and build semi-detached and detached housing in the area. There is also a competition for bids for an area for young families. However, development heavily depends on the current economic situation.

6.4.2 Development perspectives

In a theoretical sense, the district of Jaamomõisa has development potential due its advantageous location in terms of town structure. A value gap exists between actual and potential values, but currently the potential value has not increased much. The problems are evident, both from a physical and social perspective. Actually, the neighbourhood is moving in a worrying direction according to the development cycle presented in the theoretical part of this study. This is indicated by the rapid change in the population as a whole. The socio-economic situation is not very bad yet, but social deprivation exists in the neighbourhood. It is difficult to find resources for improvement when the neighbourhood inhabitants struggle for their everyday survival. Jaamomõisa is a district where there exists the potential for social segregation and deterioration with deeply deteriorated urban pockets, if continuous efforts to enhance the social and physical situation do not occur. Despite the development potential for a less densely built area behind Jaamomõisa, and the idea of attracting young families, the current image of Jaamomõisa is a serious hindrance to that kind of project.

6.4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

It is thus important that Jaamomõisa does not turn into a ghetto and that it be integrated physically to a greater extent into the town structure. Specific attention should be paid to the particular socio-ethnic composition of the area.

- special emphasis must be given to the tangible cultural-political context of Jaamomõisa and to the role of planning as a factor for enabling or constraining marginalisation and empowerment of the inhabitants.
- more emphasis must be directed to social cohesion in the district.
- new methods of participatory and negotiative planning must be used to include the inhabitants in the political power structures, and the planning and influencing of real development; non-exclusionary methods of planning and non-imperialist methods of public consultation should be in use.
- Local Agenda 21 practices and working groups could be used to improve contacts between the planners and the inhabitants, through the use of non-exclusionary methods and discussions in both Russian and Estonian.
- efforts should be made to ‘root’ the inhabitants in the area. In order to achieve this, physical improvement of the area as well as improvement of the image of Jaamomõisa are needed.
- it would be useful to conduct a social survey regarding the redevelopment possibilities of the area and concerning the development potential of the area behind Jaamomõisa.

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