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Modelling the impact of retention-detention units on sewer surcharge and peak and annual runoff reduction

Luca LOCATELLI¹, Søren GABRIEL², Ole MARK³, Peter Steen MIKKELSEN¹, Karsten ARNBJERG-NIELSEN¹, Heidi TAYLOR², Britta BOCKHORN⁴, Hauge LARSEN², Morten Just KJØLBY³, Anne Steensen BLICHER², Philip John BINNING¹

¹Technical University of Denmark, Denmark ²Orbicon, Denmark ³DHI, Denmark ⁴University of Copenhagen, Denmark

16 ABSTRACT

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17 Stormwater management using Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) is expected to be part 18 of future drainage systems. This paper aims to model the combination of local retention units, 19 such as soakaways, with subsurface detention units. Soakaways are employed to reduce (by 20 storage and infiltration) peak and volume stormwater-runoff, however large retention 21 volumes are required for a significant peak reduction. Peak runoff can therefore be handled 22 by combining detention units with soakaways. This paper models the impact of retrofitting 23 retention-detention units for an existing urbanized catchment in Denmark.

The impact of retrofitting a retention-detention unit of $3.3 \text{ m}^3/100\text{m}^2$ (volume/impervious-24 25 area) was simulated for a small catchment in Copenhagen using MIKE URBAN. The 26 retention-detention unit was shown to prevent flooding from the sewer for a 10-years rainfall 27 event. Statistical analysis of continuous simulations covering 22 years showed that annual 28 stormwater-runoff was reduced by 68-87%, and that the retention volume was on average 29 53% full at the beginning of rain events. The effect of different retention-detention volume 30 combinations was simulated and results showed that allocating 20-40% of a soakaway 31 volume to detention would significantly increase peak runoff reduction with a small reduction 32 in the annual runoff.

33

34 Keywords

35 Detention; modelling; soakaways; Water Sensitive Urban Design

36 INTRODUCTION

37 Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) aims at improving stormwater management and can

- 38 be part of climate change adaptation strategies (Wong and Brown, 2009). Soakaways coupled
- 39 with detention units, referred to as retention-detention units, increase groundwater recharge

40 and reduce annual stormwater-runoff, pipe surcharge and Combined Sewer Overflows 41 (CSOs).

- 41 (CSOS). 42 Existing hydrologies
- 42 Existing hydrological models that include WSUD elements are presented by Elliott and43 Trowsdale, 2007.
- 44 Several studies have presented models for the hydrological performance of single soakaways
- 45 (Roldin et al., 2013; Roldin et al., 2012; Freni et al., 2009; Warnaars et al., 1999). These
- 46 models were validated against either observed data or physical based models and then used
- 47 for short term predictions of runoff from single soakaways.

Other studies have modeled the impact of implementing soakaways at catchment scale (Roldin et al., 2012; Maimone et al., 2011; Antia, 2008), examining the effect on CSOs and groundwater response. None of these studies have combined detention volumes to soakaways and statistically quantified the continuous hydrological performance of retention-detention units.

The aim of this study was to model the impact of retention-detention units on sewer surcharge and annual runoff reduction. Moreover, the water content of storage units at the beginning of rain events was estimated in order to determine the proper initial conditions when modelling single events. Further, we model how different retention-detention volume combinations affect annual and peak runoff reduction in order to assist in combined soakaway-detention system design.

59

60 TOOLS AND METHODS

61 **The retention-detention unit**

- 62 Figure 1 shows the retention-detention unit that consists of the following elements:
- Water inlet. A pipe that diverts stormwater runoff into the retention-detention unit.
- Retention volume (Soakaway). A volume aimed for storage and infiltration.
- Detention storage. A volume aimed to delay peak flows.
- Overflow pipes. Pipes diverting water from the storage to the sewer system in case of
 overflow.
- Valve. To control the maximum flow rate from the detention storage to the sewer system.



70 71

Figure 1. The retention-detention unit.

72 The retention-detention unit design

- 73 The retention-detention unit consists of a detention volume above a soakaway volume. The
- soakaway aims to reduce annual runoff and the detention storage aims to reduce peak
- verflow to the sewer. Soakaway and detention volumes are designed using Danish design
- tools (Petersen et al., 1995). The design aims at accommodating the stormwater volume
- accumulated during design events with a specified return period.
- 78

79 The case study area

- 80 The street of Sandbygårdvej is located in Copenhagen (Denmark) and is served by a
- 81 combined sewer system (Figure 2). The reduced (impermeable) catchment area connected to
- the local sewer pipe is 0.67 hectares consisting of 55% roofs, 20% front and backyards and
- 83 25% street and sidewalks. Sandbygårdvej lies on a topographic highpoint (32-34 m above
- 84 mean sea level) and has an average slope of approximately 2%. The near surface geology is
- 85 dominated by low permeability clay tills. The saturated hydraulic conductivity was measured

- 86 at 40 cm depth below terrain with a Guelph Permeameter at 20 random points on a 100x100m
- field located nearby with similar geological conditions. Results showed a saturated hydraulic conductivity with a geometric mean of $8.2 \cdot 10^{-7}$ m/s, a standard deviation of $1.8 \cdot 10^{-6}$ m/s, and
- 89 no spatial correlation between the measuring points.



90 91

Figure 2. The case study area.

92 **The model**

93 The urban drainage model used in this study was a MIKE URBAN/MOUSE (Andersen et al., 94 2004) model set up by the companies HOFOR and Rambøll. The model covers a large area 95 and it divides the area into several sub-catchments described by lumped parameters and 96 connected to the sewer system at specified manholes. The surface runoff was calculated using 97 the time-area method and the resulting hydrograph used as input to the hydrodynamic pipe 98 flow model. Boundary conditions include dry weather flows in the local stream and water 99 levels at lakes and at the estuary. The model includes pipe dimensions (slope, diameter, 100 length, roughness) and connected surfaces (roofs, streets, backyards). Green areas were assumed to have a high infiltration capacity and therefore did not contribute to stormwater 101 102 runoff.

103 The soakaway model integrated into MIKE URBAN (Roldin et al., 2012) was used to 104 simulate the retention-detention units. The soakaway model is based on mass balance for the

105 soakaway with infiltration rates (*f*) described as:

$$f = klw + k2h(l+w)$$

- 106 Where k is the soil hydraulic conductivity, l is length, w the width and h is the water level in 107 the soakaway.
- 108 The retention-detention unit was modelled as a 'basin' in MIKE URBAN with infiltration
- 109 rates determined from the soakaway model. The 'basin' was connected to the sewer system
- 110 by 2 overflow pipes, one with a maximum rate (the lowest pipe) and the other without an
 - 111 outflow control.
 - 112

113 Sewer surcharge

- 114 The impact of retention-detention units on sewer surcharge was modelled using single event
- 115 simulation. A Baseline scenario and Retention-detention scenario was simulated. The input
- 116 rainfall was a 4 hours duration Chicago Design Storm (CDS) (Keifer and Chu, 1957) event of
- 117 10-years return period (5-minutes rainfall-intensity \approx 90 mm/h) as determined using the
- 118 Danish regional IDF curves (Madsen et al., 2009). The soakaway was designed for a 0.1-year

- return period (19 mm of storage capacity) and the detention volume for a 10-year return period (14 mm of storage capacity) (Table 1, Unit 1). The designed detention volume is a function of the maximum flow rate through the 'valve' (see Figure 1) which was determined as explained later in this section.
- 123
- 124 The *Baseline scenario* simulated the maximum water level in the drainage system. This was 125 then used to quantify the impervious area to be disconnected from the sewer in order to avoid
- sewer surcharge. The area to be disconnected was determined by model trial and error and the
- 127 resulting area was connected to the retention-detention units.

128 The *Retention-detention scenario* simulated the water level in the drainage system in the 129 presence of the designed retention-detention units with several units modeled as a single aggregated unit according to the method presented by Roldin et al. (2012). The error 130 131 introduced by upscaling was assumed to be comparable with the error calculated by Roldin et 132 al. (2012) that was on average 5%. Initial conditions for the retention-detention system were 133 chosen as shown in the section 'Annual water balance and initial conditions'. The Retention-134 detention scenario was an iterative process where the maximum controlled outflow rate from 135 the detention volume to the sewer (the flow through the 'valve' in Figure 1) was adjusted in order to avoid sewer surcharge during the simulation. The maximum outflow rate obtained 136 137 was used to design the detention volume.

137 was used to design the detention volume.

138 Annual water balance and initial conditions

139 The annual water balance and initial conditions of single retention-detention units were

140 modeled using 22-years of continuous simulations with a 1-minute time step and input

141 rainfall time series from Copenhagen.

142 Five different design return periods (Table 1, Unit 2-6) were considered for the soakaway.

143 The detention volume was not included in these simulations as it was found to have a small

144 impact on the annual water balance and initial conditions. This is because detention time

scale is about an hour, whereas the infiltration process from soakaways occurs over a period of days. Moreover, the detention volume is exploited only few times a year (i.e.

147 approximately 10 times a year if the soakaway is designed for a 0.1-year return period).

		Retention volume (soakaway)			Detention volume			Total retention- detention volume
Section name in the paper	Unit	Design return period*	Retention capacity	Soakaway volume / impervious area	Design return period	Detention capacity	Detention volume / impervious area	volume / impervious area
		[years]	[mm]	[m ³ / 100m ²]	[years]	[mm]	[m ³ /100m ²]	[m ³ /100m ²]
Sewer surcharge	1	0.1	19	1.9	10	14	1.4	3.3
Annual water balance and initial conditions	2	0.1	19	1.9		0	0	
	3	0.5	37	3.7		0	0	
	4	1	46	4.6		0	0	
	5	2	56	5.6		0	0	
	6	5	69	6.9		0	0	
Retention- detention volume combinations	7		0	0		33	3.3	3.3
	8		6.6	0.7		26.4	2.6	3.3
	9		13.2	1.3		19.8	2.0	3.3
	10		19.8	2.0		13.2	1.3	3.3
	11		26.4	2.6		6.6	0.7	3.3
	12		33	3.3		0	0	3.3

149

*soakaway cross section 1m x 1m.

150 **Retention-detention volume combinations**

151 The impact of different detention-retention volume combinations on peak runoff and annual 152 water balance from single units was modeled with the same continuous simulations as shown

above. Several volume combinations of retention-detention were modeled (see Table 1, Unit

154 7-12). Results show peak reduction, defined as average reduction for the modeled single

- events with a return period between 1 and 10 years; and annual runoff reduction, defined as
- 156 the average annual runoff reduction for the 22 year period.

157 **RESULTS**

158 Sewer surcharge

The *Baseline scenario* showed that the maximum water level observed in the sewer system during the single event simulation was above terrain (flooding). The area that must be disconnected in order to avoid flooding was found to be approximately 88%. The discharging capacity of the local pipe was reduced due to backwater from the downstream pipe, having a high water level due to water coming from outside of the case study area; this explains the

164 high percentage of disconnection required.

165 Figure 3 shows the maximum water level observed in the sewer system for the Retentiondetention scenario. The results show that sewer surcharge can be avoided by connecting 88% 166 of the impervious area to the retention-detention unit. Similar results were obtained by Elliot 167 et al. (2009) and Peters et al. (2007), who showed that stormwater infiltration devices reduce 168 169 hydraulic peak loads. The maximum discharge capacity from the detention volume to the sewer system was found to be 25 l/s. The maximum discharge rate was used together with the 170 intensity distribution of a 10-year return period rainfall event to find the required detention 171 volume of 1.4 m^3 for every 100 m^2 . 172



175 Annual water balance and initial conditions

The simulated water content at the beginning of single rain events as a function of the 176 177 soakaway design return period is shown in Figure 4 (right). Results show that the degree of filling is 5-94%. Moreover, the higher the soakaway design return period, the lower the water 178 179 content at the beginning of rain events; this is because the bigger the storage volume the 180 smaller the filling ratio for a fixed input water volume. Soakaways designed for a 0.1-year 181 return period (the selected design) are on average 53% filled at the beginning of rain events. 182 The peak runoff reduction capacity of soakaways is highly dependent on the available water storage at the beginning of the storm event, and it was shown that soakaways can be almost 183 184 full at the beginning of an event. The detention storage coupled to the soakaway would most 185 likely be empty at the beginning of rain events since it drains within an hour, making 186 detention units a more robust solution for peak runoff reduction in this catchment.

Figure 3 (left) shows the annual runoff infiltrated by soakaways. The volume of infiltrated water increases with the design return period and a soakaway designed for 0.1-years return period (the selected design) can infiltrate 68-87% of the annual volume. In comparison, Roldin et al. (2012) showed that soakaways could potentially reduce CSO volume by 68% in a modelled catchment. Freni et al. (2009) showed that an infiltration unit of 0.4 m³/100m² in different soils could reduce 28-80% of the 6-year stormwater runoff.



193 194

195 Retention-detention volume combinations

Figure 5 shows how the retention-detention volume combinations affect annual-runoff and single event peak-runoff reduction. Results show that a maximum of 80% peak reduction can be achieved; the volume combination '10' (Figure 5) is a better solution than '7', '8' and '9' since it scores higher in annual runoff reduction while having the same peak runoff reductions. This figure shows that the design could be based on multiple objectives and two main conclusions can be drawn: (1) Allocating part of a soakaway volume to detention can significantly improve peak reduction with little impact on annual runoff reductions. A soakaway designed for a 5 year return period required 69 mm of storage capacity (Table 1) whereas a detention volume designed for a 10 year return period required 19 mm of storage capacity ('The retention-detention unit design' section), showing that detention requires significantly less storage compared to retention. (2) Allocating part of a detention volume to retention can improve annual runoff reduction with little impact on peak reduction.





Figure 5. Simulation results of retention-detention volume combinations.

210

211 CONCLUSIONS

A retention-detention system was modelled. It was shown that soakaways require extremely

213 large volumes if design events are to be handled without flooding, and that the peak reduction 214 depends on the highly uncertain initial conditions. The initial conditions were determined by

the degree of filling of the retention volume and were found to be 5-94% depending on the

- soakaway design. Coupling a detention unit to a soakaway was shown to significantly increase peak reduction. Retention-detention units were shown to be a more robust solution
- for peak runoff reduction because the detention volume is empty at the beginning of single events and has the capability of detaining peak flows.
- A soakaway designed for a 0.1-year return period was shown to be 53% filled on average at the beginning of rain events making it insufficient to accommodate peak flow from a design event with a 10-year return period. Soakaways were shown to infiltrate more than 68% of the
- 223 annual stormwater runoff if designed for a 0.1-year return period; which is a significant 224 reduction in annual stormwater runoff volume to the sewer system.
- The $3.3 \text{ m}^3/100\text{m}^2$ retention-detention unit was shown to avoid sewer surcharge for a design event with a 10 year return period, reducing annual runoff by 68-87% and single events peak runoff by 80%.
- 228 This study showed that retention-detention units can reduce peak and annual runoff volumes
- and sewer surcharges and that adding a small detention unit to a retention unit can
- significantly improve peak stormwater runoff reduction. The results are specific to the Danish
- case study; however the modeling methodology can be applied to a broad range of
- conditions. The results illustrate the utility of retention-detention units, and the design
- 233 presented can easily be modified to fit other climate and soil conditions.

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