

AALBORG UNIVERSITY

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# Model Predictive Control of a Sewer System

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Control and Automation:  
Master Thesis

Group:  
CA9-1030

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**Master thesis**  
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## **AALBORG UNIVERSITY**

### **STUDENT REPORT**

**Title:**

Model predictive control of flow  
and concentration of sewage in a sewer  
system

**Abstract:**



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# Preface

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This report has been created by Jacob Naundrup Pedersen. The project is performed on the 3rd semester of the master control and automation at Aalborg University. The project is constructed in an internship at Grundfos. Grundfos has contributed with the test setup for the project. The student has followed two courses at Aalborg University, non-linear systems and machine learning.

The report is intended for people with a background knowledge corresponding to a third-semester master student at Control and Automation, Aalborg University. The following programming languages MATLAB and Simulink are used in the project. All graphical elements in the report are constructed by the author. Otherwise, a reference to the source, is stated in the figure text.

Sources are indicated by [name,year], and can be found in the bibliography list at the given [name,year].

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Jacob Naundrup Pedersen

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# Contents

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<b>Nomenclature</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 General sewer construction . . . . .	1
1.2 Chemical process . . . . .	3
1.2.1 Chemical reactions in a sewer . . . . .	4
1.2.2 Wastewater treatment plant . . . . .	4
<b>2 System description</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A Appendix</b>	<b>13</b>





# Nomenclature

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## Abbreviation

Abbreviation	Definition
GIS	Geographically Information System

## Symbols

Symbol	Description	Units
$A$	Area	$m^2$
$Q$	Water flow	$m^3/s$
$q$	Inflow of water	$m^2/s$
$D$	Diameter meter	$m$
$r$	Radius	$m$
$F$	Force	$N$
$\theta$	Angle	$rad$
$v$	Velocity	$m/s$
$m$	Mass	$kg$
$V$	Volume	$m^3$
$\rho$	Density	$kg/m^3$
$l$	Length	$m$
$g$	Gravitational acceleration	$m/s^2$
$T$	Temperature	$^{\circ}C$
$m_n$	Mass flow	$kg/s$



Sewers were created to solve the seemingly simple problem of removal of wastewater. The first sewers, registered, dates back to 7000 B.C. in urban settlements and were created to remove wastewater from houses and surface runoff created by rain water. To avoid clogging and wear of the sewers grit chambers was constructed. They work by slowing the flow of sewage in long narrow channels making the solids, such as sand, end up as sediments in the channels due to gravity. Complexity of sewers increased in ancient Rome where large underground systems were created leading to the the main sewer system called "Cloaca Maxima" making it possible to have latrines with running water within households, though mostly made available for the rich.

Waste were still thrown onto streets as the population, without immediate access to a latrine in their household, during night time did not want to put in the effort to properly dispose of the waste. Because of this the ancient Rome suffered from illnesses related to waste lying in the streets. The hygienic aspect of proper disposal of wastewater in relation to drinking water were not considered until the 19th century, where several European cities saw large outbreak of cholera causing the deaths of millions.

The growth in waste furthermore caused the expansion of 26 km. sewer network in Paris to 600 km. during the 19th century. But it is not until the start of the 20th century that the chemical and microbial processes in sewers are considered. The microbial cause of cholera were identified by the German doctor Robert Koch in 1883, a discovery for which he in 1905 received the Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine. The growing industries and technological progress in the 20th century meant that more chemicals were disposed into the sewers having severe consequences for the organic life downstream of the receiving waters. Wastewater treatment plants were introduced to reduce the pollution, but several countries did not have any wastewater treatment plants before after World War II. Today disposal of sewage and setup of wastewater treatment plants is a given part of construction of new settlements, even in poor regions of the world [Hvitved-Jacobsen et al., 2013].

## 1.1 General sewer construction

An illustration of the process wastewater undergoes from it is used at the consumer to it is treated at the plant will be explained. Furthermore the general construction of sewers will be elaborated.

In figure 1.3 a block diagram of the process wastewater undergoes is illustrated.

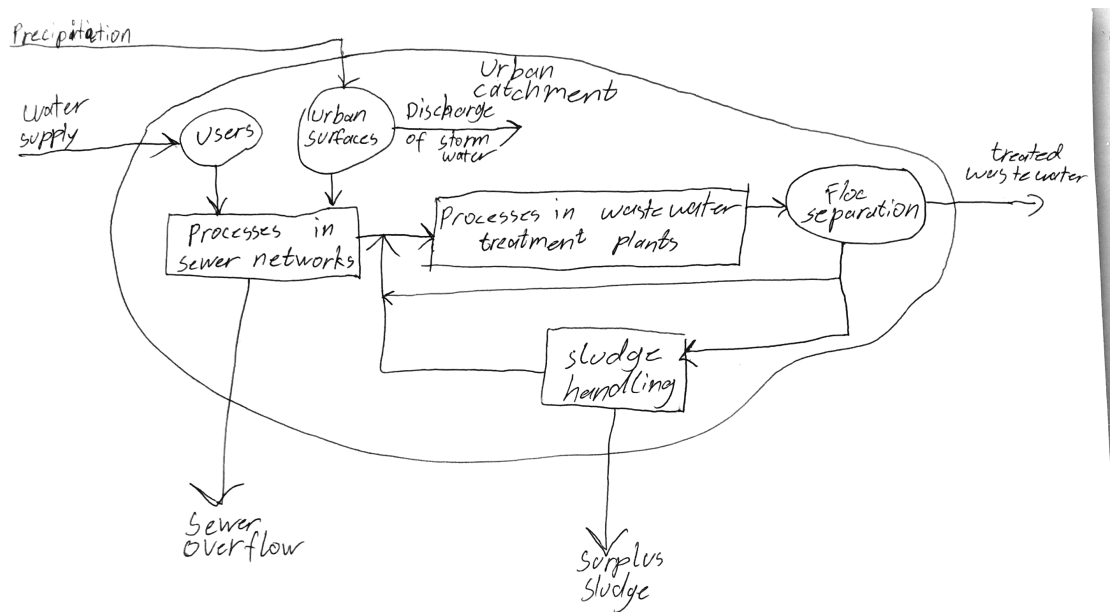


Figure 1.1: Arbejdsblad billede, inspiration er taget fra hvidved. Fjern sludge handling of floc separation og forklar det nede ved afsnittet.

From the left the precipitation over urban surfaces are collected in the sewers. If the precipitation are to much for the sewer to handle it will be discharged in a storm water sewer, which will lead the water into small rivers or be collected in tanks <sup>1</sup>. Furthermore from the left the water supplies goes into the consumers of the water, such as the industry or households. These will produce wastewater that is lead into the sewers. Within the sewers chemical and microbial reactions occurs, which will be explained in subsection 1.2.1. If the sewer is overfilled the wastewater is lead into rivers and fields to prevent flooding in households, industry and on the urban surfaces. The sewer leads the wastewater to the wastewater treatment plant, where the wastewater will be filtered before sending it back into the environment, which will be explained in greater detail in subsection ??.

Typically the water treatment plant are constructed near rivers or a fjord which is typical at a lower geographical location, thereby enabling the force of the gravity to transport the wastewater in a sewer. If the industry or the households are at a lower geographical location than the water treatment plant, then pumps are used to transport the wastewater as illustrated in figure 1.2.

<sup>1</sup>Fixme Note: Skriv hvad det bliver brugt til

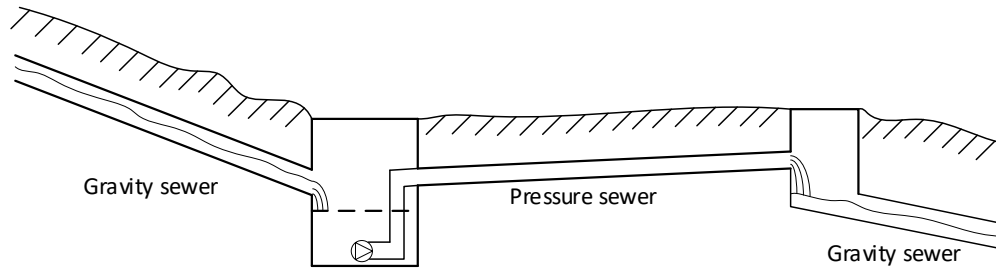


Figure 1.2: Illustrate different methods for transportation of wastewater.

The pipes are often constructed in concrete or polyethylene. Where concrete pipes are used for gravity sewers and polyethylene are used in a pressure sewer due to a lower roughness height which means less friction from the surface of the pipe.

## 1.2 Chemical process

This section will analyse the chemical process that wastewater undergoes from the water is used to it is cleaned at the water treatment plant. The processes in a wastewater treatment plant will be investigate to get an understanding of the different processes. Furthermore a illustration will be presented to elaborate the details in a sewer.

In figure 1.3 an illustration is shown to explained the processes that wastewater undergoes within the sewer.

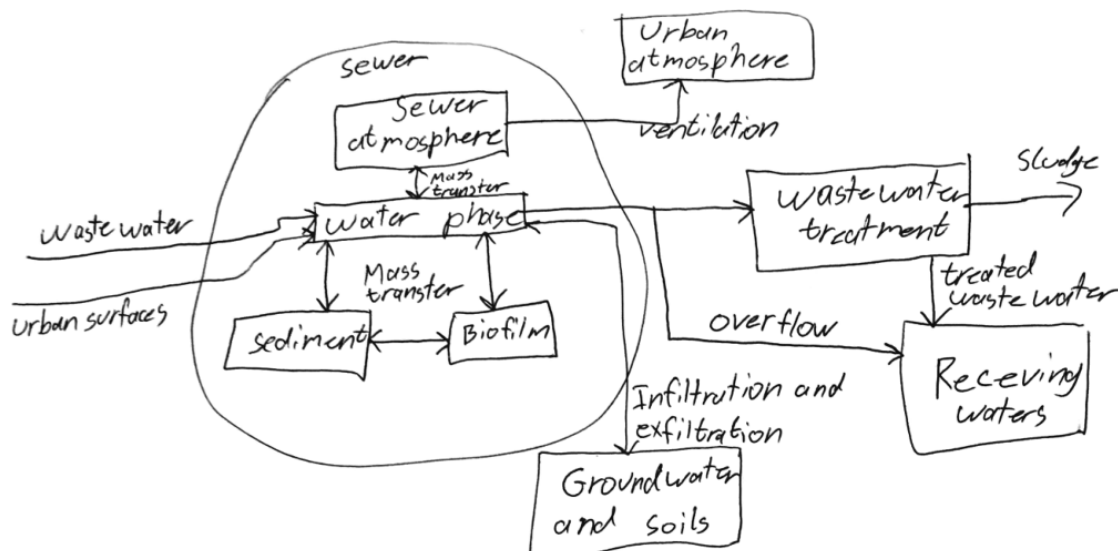


Figure 1.3: arbejdsblad billede. <sup>2</sup>

Wastewater are subject to a variety of changes in the sewer, due to free electrons in the wastewater different kinds of compounds are created which will be elaborated in subsection 1.2.1. Therefore the concentration that are at the beginning of the water phase has changed

at the wastewater treatment plant. These chemical reactions can create gases that can be free into the urban atmosphere. Besides chemical reaction in the sewer there are also microorganisms that eat the sludge that sediments in the sewer. These microorganisms are breeding on the biofilm that is created on the surface of the pipe. Microorganisms are also used in the wastewater treatment plant to clean the wastewater. The wastewater in the pipes can sink into the groundwater and the soils due to small leaks in the construction of the sewer. The wastewater ends up at the wastewater treatment plant, this process will be explained in subsection 1.2.2. And as previous mentioned in case of flooding, the wastewater will be lead into receiving waters.

### 1.2.1 Chemical reactions in a sewer

A wastewater treatment plant does not only contain what is discharged into the sewer from the industry and households but also the chemical and microbial reactions that occurs in a sewer. These reaction occurs as redox reactions between the different compounds. Redox reaction is the transfer of electrons between two compounds at a atomic or molecular scale. By transferring electrons from one compound to another new compounds will rise, such as hydrogen sulfide which is know for it malodorous smell of rotten eggs. Theses reactions are determined by the electron acceptors that are present in the wastewater. The electron acceptor is the compound that receives electrons in a redox reaction. Examples of dissolved acceptors are oxygen ( $O_2$ ), nitrate ( $NO_3^-$ ) and sulfate ( $SO_4^{2-}$ ), which determines whether aerobic, anoxic or anaerobic processes may occur. The redox reaction reduces these three compounds in the wastewater by changing them to new compounds as water  $H_2O$ , molecular nitrogen ( $N_2$ ) and hydrogen sulfide ( $H_2S$ ). Redox reactions are determine to a great extend by the design of the sewer where different conditions such as aerobic, anaerobic and anoxic exist, where the last only occurs if nitrate is artificially added to the wastewater. If the process is aerobic the typical characteristics for the sewer are either partly filled gravity sewer or a aerated pressure sewer which means that there are free oxygen ( $O^+$ ), and these will be connected with hydrogen to create water. In the case of anoxic the wastewater is pumped and there are added nitrate resulting in molecular nitrogen. In a anaerobic sewer the characteristic of the sewer is either a pressure sewer or a full flowing gravity sewer, then the redox reaction will result in hydrogen sulfide. Therefore sewers can actively be designed to achieve a specific process. This knowledge is used to make simulation that is able to express the chemical and microbial reaction which occur in the wastewater. As previous mention these are examples of some of the reactions that occur in the wastewater. Furthermore turbulence in the flow of the wastewater affects reaeration and can release odorous and corrosive particles into the atmosphere.

### 1.2.2 Wastewater treatment plant

At the wastewater treatment plant the wastewater undergoes several process before the chemicals, dirt, etc. is removed from the water and it is lead back into the nature. The first stage in clearing the wastewater is screening, where larger objects are remove from the wastewater. Some of the objects that are filtered from the wastewater are bottles, plastic bags, diapers, etc. all items that are to big that would either block or damage the equipment.

Stage two is the primary treatment where the separation of organic matter (human waste) from the wastewater. By leading the wastewater into a large settlement tank the organic matter will sink to the bottom of the tank. The matter that have sedimented is now called

sludge. At the bottom large scrapers are scraping the floor moving the sludge to the center of the tank where it is pumped away for further treatment. From here the separated water is pumped into the secondary treatment.

In this stage the water is pumped into large rectangular tanks where air is pumped into the water to make the bacteria consume the sludge that have passed on from the previous stage. When the bacteria have consumed the sludge it will start to sediment at the bottom of the tank. This process takes 3-6 hours.

After these treatment processes there are still some diseases in the water. If the water is lead in to sensitive or fragile ecosystems the water is further treated. It is disinfected for at least 20-25 minutes in tanks where a mixture of chemicals are used to cleanse the remaining water before leading it into the environment. If the water is not lead to a fragile ecosystem the last phase is passed through a settlement tank where the remaining particles will sediment at the bottom of the tank creating more sludge. From here the water is lead through a filter the remove any additional particles. Hereafter the water is lead into the environment.

The sludge that is collected in the process undergoes further treatment, where the remaining water in the sludge is separated from it. The water is lead back to the wastewater treatment process where it will undergo the same process again. The sludge is collected and used for agricultural.





# System description 2

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This section will go into details of the structure of the sewer network for which the further work of this project will be based upon.

As mentioned in section 1.2 a steady flow of sewage with a fixed level of contaminants is desired such that an optimal utilization of the wastewater treatment plant can be obtained. An area of interest is Fredericia with a sizable population of around 40.000 and industries where some of the largest consists of a brewery, bottling plant, refinery and a dairy plant [Sta, ]. All of these industries is placed in the outskirt of the city, meaning that wastewater discharge from any of them into the sewer goes through populated areas creating an uneven flow of sewage to the wastewater treatment plant. Two main sewer lines separates the northern and southern part of the city. To limit the project the northern main sewer line is considered, which covers the largest part of the city and the industry, excluding the dairy from the scope of the project. In figure 2.1 a simplified overview of the northern main sewer line attached to the various population and industrial areas of Fredericia. The placement of the sewers shown in 2.1 is obtained from a Geographically Information System (GIS) map [GIS, ].

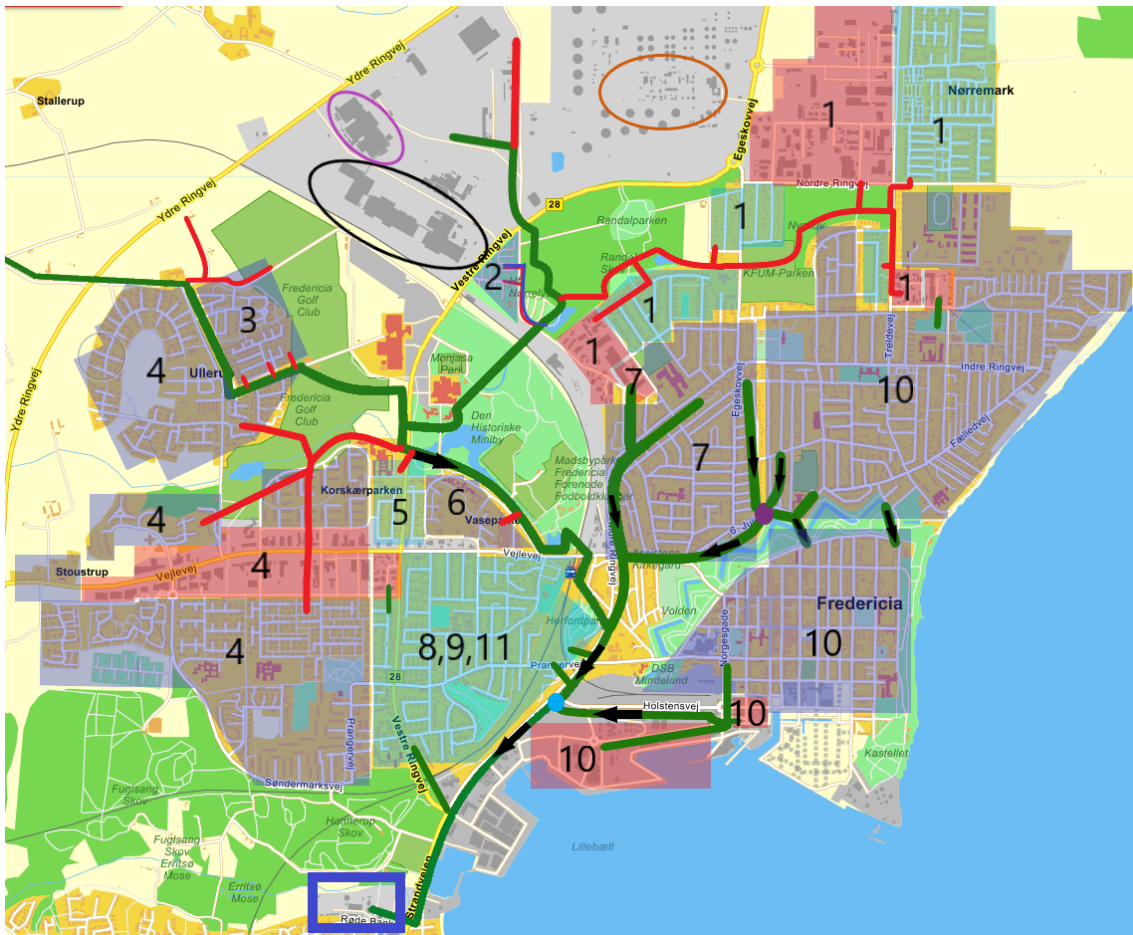


Figure 2.1: Mapping of part of the sewer network in Fredericia. The red and green lines indicate sewers where the red sewers has flows of sewage only and the green line is combined sewage and runoff from urban surfaces. Transparent parts indicate that the area has a connected sewer grid within and the red/green lines from this grid indicates the output from this area. Two shades of transparent blue is used to illustrate sewer systems in populated areas. The red transparent areas indicate minor industry and the black, brown and purple rings is brewery, refinery and bottling plant respectively. The purple dot indicate a connecting point with several incoming and outgoing sewer pipes. The blue dot is a sewer reservoir before wastewater is led to the wastewater treatment plant indicated by the blue rectangle.

1

<sup>1</sup>FiXme Note: (The blue dot is a sewer reservoir)this is a guess pt. so might need to be corrected

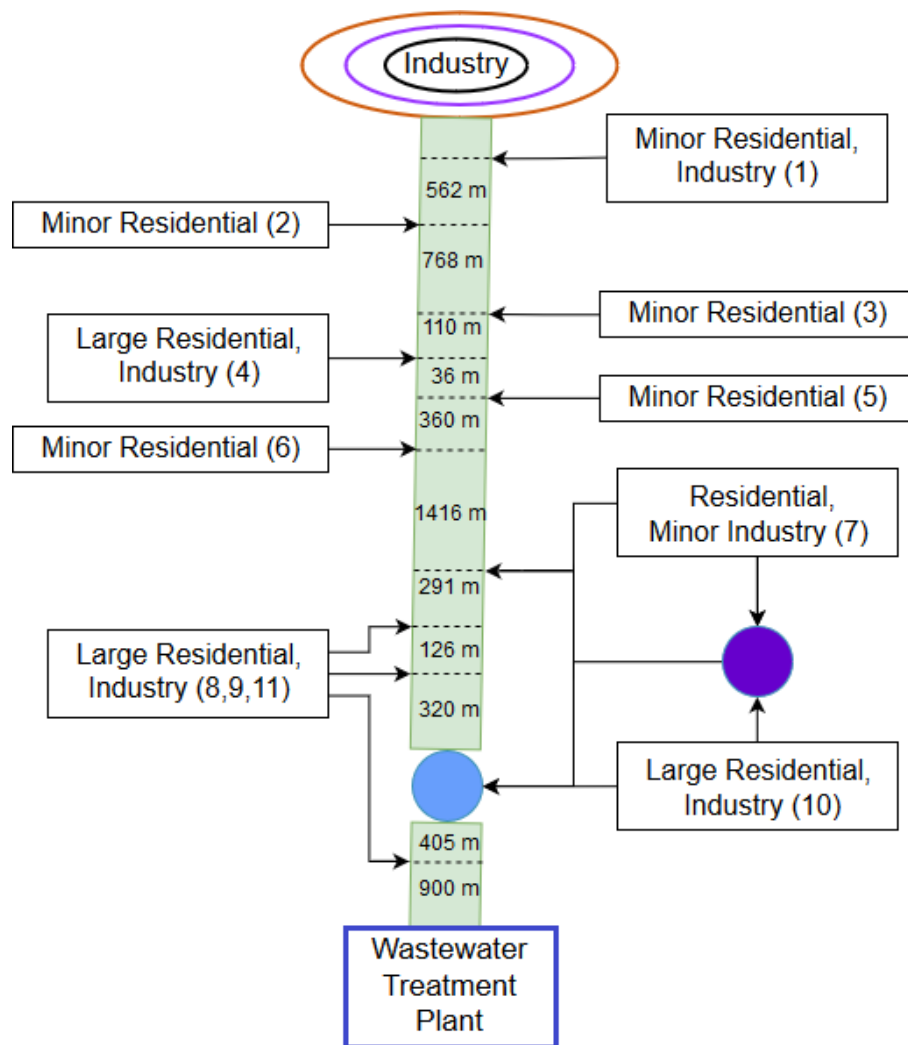


Figure 2.2: Simplification of the map shown in figure 2.1 where the numbers correspond to which area is connected to the main sewer line furthest from the wastewater treatment plant and the distance between the connections.



# Bibliography

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[Sta, ]

[GIS, ]

[Hvitved-Jacobsen et al., 2013] Hvitved-Jacobsen, T., Vollertsen, J., and Nielsen, A. H. (2013). *Sewer processes: microbial and chemical process engineering of sewer networks*. CRC press.



# Appendix A

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**Rettelser**

Note: Skriv hvad det bliver brugt til . . . . .	2
Note: Ny tegning . . . . .	3
Note: (The blue dot is a sewer reservoir)this is a guess pt. so might need to be corrected . . . . .	8