HOME IS WHEREVER I’M WITH YOU

- New eyes on housing to promote alternative households

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Thank you!

Bengt Carlsson, Lena Höpck, Jonas Lundberg for tutoring.
Ann-Katrin Wibe, Tove and Jesper and co-housing BIG Kornet.
The built environment affects our everyday life and social behaviour. A majority of the dwellings in Swedish cities are built for conventional households. This locks social structures and limits us from seeing the possibilities of a new way of living together with friends, with another family or in a multigenerational home etc. The aim for this Master Thesis is to spur a discussion about diversity and normativity in our future built environment.

A range of methods has been used during the process. A field trip to the Netherlands served as a point of departure to study dense small-scale housing. During the process I also went to Mölndal and Stockholm to visit people living in non-normative households.

I have interviewed a sociologist, studied sociological and architectural literature and been active in social media to study tendencies in our time. Spatial qualities and relations have been studied through sketches and model workshops. My ambition has been to create space for diverse households by designing a new type of housing in the slope between Gråberget and Vänmötet in Majorna, Gothenburg. To be able to dissolve the conventional housing, and allow a greater creativity in how we live, I have looked beyond regulations and conventions but into experiences, scenarios and actual use of space over time. By disconnecting activities from their common spaces and reorganize them by various levels of privacy, this Master Thesis suggest a experimental typology that aim to reveal ways of inhabiting.
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HANNA HELQUIST, DAGENS NYHETER 12-09-12
INTRODUCTION
When spending family holidays sailing, I started to reflect upon the fact that the space of the boat made us interact with each other in a different way than usual. These experiences made me think about how our living environments affect our everyday life and social behaviors.

Most of our housing stock in our Swedish cities is built to fit the nuclear family, and many of them are difficult to reconfigure in order to make them fit both alternative households and changed needs. This Master Thesis dig deeper into the subject of housing and explores how alternative arrangements of spaces can inspire to a greater diversity in how we live.

The aim of this work has been to rethink housing to enable various constellations of people living together and to spur a discussion about diversity in our future built environment.

Does lack of good examples of non-normative housing limit us from seeing the possibilities and benefits of living together in alternative social constellations?
Households today do not look like they did a couple of decades ago. Nuclear families are still the most dominant type, but more and more people live in other constellations. Part-time families, elderly co-housing and multi-generational living are some examples of non-normative housing that is getting more common.

Combining households in alternative social constellations can have a lot of advantages. Having the opportunity to help each other with cooking, laundry and childcare could for example be a great benefit when there is insufficient time. By designing homes with a great flexibility and with our behavior in the room configuration, there could be an opening for new possibilities. People living together, single parents sharing a home, multi-generational housing, etc. It could also be possible for people to afford to live in a more urban context when several incomes share the rent. When planning for a smarter use of space and furniture the heating and power consumption could be reduced.

In “Tillbaka till Framtiden” the sociologists Thomas Knoll and Ann-Katrin Witt look into trends and tendencies of new family constellations. They describe that Swedish people of today resign in many different ways that more or less differ from normative family formations, and new variations emerge all the time.1

“...a world where being crazy is rare and striving for the typical life is the expected way. The ongoing mutation of culture, however, needs more crazies. It is through misbehavior that newness can be uncovered, rehearsed and emerge out of sameness.” (Lai, J. (2012) Character Plasticity in Volume, p. 6-8.)

We need to look beyond traditional ways of both planning and designing to be able to reach sustainable solutions. By dissolving the conventional apartment structures and explore the notion of housing from activities and situations instead of planning our living environment from room configurations and standards new possibilities of urban housing will be revealed.

5 6

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A typical floor plan encourages a typical behaviour, which might shape us into patterns that not relate to real life or how we wish to dwell. It is therefore important to let loose of our traditional interpretations of social structures, gender and age in order to create living environment that can fit different social constellations without imagined hierarchies.

The architect Jimenez Lai, professor at University of Illinois and leader of Bureau Spectacular looks at the degree to which an architectural situation affects our behavior in his project Three Little Worlds.

Lai means that stacking of generic spaces encourages monoculture: “... a world where being crazy is rare and striving for the typical life is the expected way. The ongoing mutation of culture, however, needs more crazies. It is through misbehavior that newness can be uncovered, rehearsed and emerge out of sameness.” (Lai, J. (2012) Character Plasticity in Volume, p. 6-8.)

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The municipality of Gothenburg is investigating the possibilities to densify Gråberget in Majorna, Gothenburg and has pointed out a number of possible sites in their publication Program för Gråberget. 300 new apartments are suggested within the area and there are also plans for new preschools and business premises. The investigation states that the existing apartment stock at Gråberget consists to a large extent of small apartments, many of them inhabited by young people and pensioners. According to the program, the apartment buildings should then be complemented with new kinds of housing typologies that will ease a bigger social diversity. The program also states that the new exploitation should attract more families with children by planning for larger housing units in connection to the green areas. Because most of the development areas are situated in high-pitched slopes, the municipality with the creative ideas of suitable housing for dramatic terrains.

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Just like many big cities in Sweden, Gothenburg is in need of more housing. In times of increasing urbanisation, our cities need to be denser to inhabit more people without creating energy-consuming sprawl structures. In order to decrease the need for cars, new dwellings should be built in already exploited areas that hold local services and sufficient public transport.

Gothenburg is a city of hills with dramatic slopes and many of these areas have been left undeveloped during the years. The lose connection between the neighbourhoods on the tops and the surrounding areas often makes the slopes function like walls between districts. To create a well-connected and dense city, the slopes around Gothenburg need to be utilized without sacrificing the recreational qualities of the landscape and its greenery. To do this, it takes innovation and exploration in order to find ways of handling steep topography.

The estimated population growth in Gothenburg

Majorna, a Vibrant City District

Majorna is a district situated in the western parts of Gothenburg. The area is well integrated in the city with four tramway lines traversing the area. Most of the buildings are housing dwellings, but close to the harbor area there are also some fully commercial buildings. The road Oscarsleden separates the harbor from the rest of Majorna and what makes the areas very different in character and atmosphere.

Majorna has a history as a distinct labour district, but during the last decades the area grew more popular. Today it is one of the most attractive residential areas in Gothenburg and attracts people that value a rich cultural life, closeness to recreational areas and good public transport connections. Majorna is known for being a progressive area with an active population. The slogan used is “The ecological district” and there are several public events every year such as Melegoppis, a large flea market and Konstrundan i Majorna, an art tour through the many art studios in the area.

Gråberget, an Island in the City

Gråberget is a hill in Majorna dominated by dwellings from the 1950s surrounded by green areas and steep slopes which create the natural delimitations. The neighborhood is perceived as a self-defined part of Majorna, because of its dramatic topography. The few connections to the surroundings that makes the area hard to reach despite the central location.
Functionalistic housing at Slottskogsgatan

Lamellas at Kabelgatan

Studios at Vänmötet

Allotment gardens, Slottskogskolonin

Mariaplan

Landshövdingehus

Businesses

Businesses

Almunge gärde, Värbygårdskullen
THE PLOT

The plot is situated at the southern slope of Gråberget. According to the plans provided by the municipality of Gothenburg the site should be exploited with approximately twenty apartments and space for businesses towards Ekedalsgatan/Slottskogsgatan.1

The space in front of the chosen plot is called Vänmötet and the area holds a range of creative businesses and studios. There is also a traditional workers’ café called Skogen at the site, which contributes to the non-commercialized character and genuine atmosphere. The local centre of the area, Mariaplan, is located close by and holds a lot of small boutiques and services such as a shoe store, a pharmacy, a grocery shop, cafés and restaurants. The plot is very hilly and inaccessible, but for those who are in good physics there are a few attractive spots with tall oaks and dizzyly views over the rooftops of Majorna. Because of its location and difficult topography the site has become a gap between several city-planning principles. In the south direction the 1920’s block structure characterizes the urban space, while in the north direction the 1950’s lamellas and tower blocks dominates the hill. In the west direction you find functionalistic lamellas and in the other direction there are allotment gardens that was planned in 1915. In this plot, between different ages’ ideas of the ideal city structure, I believe there could be space for a future typology and a new kind of living.

1 Göteborgs Stad (2011) Program för Gråberget inom stadsdelen Majorna I
Göteborgs Programområde Februari 2011, s. 9
In relation to the municipality’s investigation of the area, workshops were done with the inhabitants of Gråberget to find out about how different areas in the neighborhood are used and how these could be developed in the future. The children in the group mentioned the northern part of the chosen site is an area that they would like to spend more time in, but because of the topographical conditions it is difficult to reach. The teenagers wished for a communication from Kabelgatan to Storängsgatan to Slottskogsgatan at the slope, while the adults pointed out attractive spots for barbeques and views over the city.

**Strategy**

- The greenery of the slope has a great value, but because of the dramatic terrain it’s not used as much as it could have been if it would have been more accessible. My approach is to keep as much of the existing qualities and make the area easier to access for all the inhabitants in the area.
- An added communication structure will ease the connection and dissolve the natural limitation between Gråberget with the area around Vänmötet.
- The urban space in the most southern part of the slope will be defined and programmed with a flexible structure for new studios and businesses that will attract more people to the public space.
- Flexible housing with close connection to the surrounding nature will be added to the site.

Gråberget is one of nine primary areas in Majorna-Linné, which is the largest district in Gothenburg with about 62,800 inhabitants. A huge amount of the population of district are young adults while there are few families with children in the area. This is the result of that from the 35,000 residences in the area, 60% of them are rented apartment, and only 6% of the dwellings are single-family houses. Most of the families that leave the district move to residential areas in the suburban areas in other parts of Gothenburg, and neighboring municipalities. In 2011, 14% of the children in Gothenburg were born in Majorna-Linné, the highest number in the city, while only 8% of the school kids in the city lived in the district.

Regarding economical resources, the median income in 2010 among the women in the age 25–64 years old in the district, was just over 250,000 per year while the average man earned about 300,000. This put Majorna-Linné among the four lowest ranked districts of the city. This is a surprisingly low place in comparison to the level of education.

In 2011, about two thirds of the inhabitants (25–64 years) have a post-secondary education, which is the second highest level in the city.

![Income Distribution 2010](image1)

![Age Distribution](image2)

![The Apartments after Ownership Category](image3)

![Share Small Houses](image4)
Because of the situation by the intake of Göta Älv, the area that today is Majorna has been populated since the Iron Age. The oldest ancient remains were found in today’s Sandarna in the western part of the city, in the 6000s BC.

**OLD ALVSBORG**

In the mid 1200s a wooden fort, Älvseborg was built at the area of Klippan, a strategic spot to control the traffic between Kattegat/Skagerrak and Sweden. The fort was replaced after the 1300s by a stone fort, Älvsborg Castle. The agricultural land around the castle that supported the castle with food was called Kungsladugård, and the area today wears the same name. Many people worked at the farm at that farm, there were 450 cottages that inhabitants could live in with the help of daily onerous services. Älvsborg Castle lost its military and economical significance in 1621 when the fortified town and Dutch enclave, Gothenburg became the economical centre of the region.

**EARLY INDUSTRY**

Shipbuilding have during the years played a central role in Majorna, and a lot of the inhabitants have worked at the industries. In the mid 1660s a yard, Gamla varvet was founded and around that area which today is Stigbergskajen. Apart from supporting and administrative building, a small suburban village for the employees started to emerge. Apart from supporting and administrative building, a small suburban village for the employees started to emerge. In the 18th century the shipbuilding business flourished and three new yards was established in the area: Nya Varvet in the year 1790, Wikens Varv in 1747 and Kustens Varv in 1784. The Swedish East India Company that was founded in 1731 vitalised the new business and made the shipbuilding in Gothenburg very intense.

During the Great herring period that started in 1740, the population of Majorna increased and centres for refining of the fish started to pop up along the river. New housing was established in the area, both cottages for the workers and manorial dwellings for the businessmen and their families.
King Karl XII had plans for the area back in 1717. He asked the governor general Johan Ehrensvard Carling to draw a city plan over the area and the inhabitants were asked to mark out streets and plots that could be sold to specula-
tors. The plans failed. The situation of Majorna was re-
garded too distant to Gothenburg and there wasn’t an
urgent housing shortage at that time. Not until 1878, ten
years after Majorna was incorporated to Gothenburg the
district was regulated and transformed according a master
plan. The person who transformed Majorna into the char-
acter of today was Albert Lilienberg. He made the first
Master plan of the area that was realized with low-density
houses in the north part of the area and small houses and row
houses in the southern parts.

5 Ibid, s. 48
The southern and eastern parts of Gråberget remained unplanned and until the 1950s when the urbanisation was intensified and more space was needed for expanding and densifying the city by starting to build on sites with dramatic terrain. This part of the hill was quite inaccessible with slips that made it almost an island in the city and on the top; there were only an orphan house, a shelter of homeless children and two water reservoirs.

The master plan was established according to the thoughts of community unions with freestanding apartment buildings with a common centre. Along the main street, Kabelgatan, tower blocks were built while lamellas were placed along the edges of the hill up like old times fortresses. This new way of planning the cities was a protest to the grid plan, and was made to enhance the communion among the inhabitants. The streets were designed as dead ends in order to decrease the traffic by cars in the area.
Pre-Industrial Revolution Housing

The first house type in Sweden that has similarities to houses of today was the firehouse. It occurred at that time when one learnt how to cultivate the soil and therefore could settle down. The houses were built out of timber without any windows and just a hole in the roof for the smoke of the fire. The firehouse included all living functions, but later on one started to split the functions into different houses. There were shelters for food storage, cattle, lavatory, sleep, work and socializing. These buildings were organized in different ways into farms depending on geographical location. For example, in the most southern regions of Sweden, the farms were usually built from four single-floor buildings that shaped a rectangle in order to hold the small cattle. In the west coastal areas, where the population lived from fishing, the buildings were organized to use the most of the hilly environment and create shelter from the harsh winds.

Historical Development of Housing in Sweden

Until the industrial revolution, the majority of the population in Sweden lived in rural areas. There were different social positions; far from everybody could afford to own their own land. A lot of people lived in small cottages and made their day work at the farms in the area. Despite economical gaps, affluence is an accepted term when talking about culture and lifestyle among common people in the rustic society. This fact made the housing and furniture very standardized and slowly developed during many centuries. There were two dominant types of dwelling houses: the single- and the double cottage. The first one consisted of only one room with a hearth and additional chamber and porch. The second type looked like the first one, but with an additional room that wasn’t used at daily basis but for storage, as a conversation or as a tearoom. The cottages were often very confined because of the fact that families of that time usually were larger than today. Aside from large broods, the grandparents most often stayed in the same house.

Double cottage in Lundby, Stockholm
During the industrial revolution in the 19th century, the urbanization grew larger and young people moved to the cities to work at the new factories. In order to house all the workers and their families, apartment buildings were raised when the contract of the tenements were connected to the employment.

The housing units were very small and confined. A lot of the large families lived in a single room, spisrummet, and it was common that the family had an additional lodger to help their financial situation.¹

In the 1920’s the standard of living in the cities was increased to some extent when new housing areas for the labour force were built in the cities. The new apartments had one or two rooms and were equipped with bathroom and hobs. These new housing made the life easier for many people at this time but still in 1932, 70% of the workers families in the cities of Sweden still lived in apartments of only one room and a kitchen.²

¹ Konsumentverket, (1979) Boende förr nu och i framtiden s. 5-11
² Gromark, S. (1983) Boendegemenskap: En kritisk granskning av boendegemenskap som samhällsangelägenhet, av dess värden, vilkor och förutsättningar samt exempel på praktisk tillämpning I ett västeuropeiskt sammanhang, s 123

Functionalism

During the Stockholm fair in 1930 a whole new approach of living was introduced. In Sweden this movement was called functionalism and these new ideas was an interpretation of the modernistic thoughts that had flourished in Europe since the 1920’s. The focus on this fair was the concept of a future democratic lifestyle for the big mass and included every scale of living from architecture to kitchen appliances. By introducing standardization of products that were mass-produced and was designed to achieve the optimal function, prices could be cut and the products and housing would apply to every one despite economical resources. The new home was a place for the new life. The old times of heavy furniture and tiring housework for the woman would be gone forever. Apart from previous ages, the new apartments were designed specifically for the nuclear family and multigenerational living and additional lodges was part of a time one left behind. In Sweden, the new social housing that would save the population from the low sanitary conditions was built in quite large amount before the Second World War started.
At the end of the war, Sweden experienced a flourishing economy as a result of being a neutral part in the battles. In 1947, the government tabled a program for a large-scale social housing investment. During the 1940s, studies were initiated in order to map how people actually lived and used their dwellings to sharpen the standards and assignments for future planning of social housing.

In the 1950s, the idea about the suburb what held work, housing and local service was realized in a few places in Sweden. Årsta Centrum and Vällingby Centrum are renowned examples of the so-called ABC-city that was inspired by American and English figures. This new structure of living was based on the thought about the relation between the dwellings and “the small neighborhood” with natural meeting spots at the common services for people living in the same area.

In spite of previous attempts to spark the social house building with high standards, Sweden had not succeeded to meet the need for affordable dwellings. In 1965, a big decision was made: One million dwellings would be constructed in ten years. The idea about suburbs with local centers was developed and large clusters of apartment blocks in the outskirts of the cities were built around the country. Also, in the city centers new dwellings were replacing housing that didn’t reach the new standards. Aside from the large-scale projects, a big part of the housing units that were built during this period were single-family houses and three-story buildings both in the urban areas but also in the smaller towns around the country.

The enormous project was realized by using prefabricated elements, which made it economically possible to reach a better standard and larger housing. The implementation of this program has been a very crucial factor to ensure the foundations of our Swedish welfare society, but along with the building of new areas, critics to the way of design...
The rational building technique often made all the houses in an area have the exact same appearance. The elements were instead often made out of concrete, which made the apartments hard to individualize and reconfigure according to the needs of the habitats. The absence of relation to the human scale and created an explosion of critics from the public. This debate resulted in an increased consciousness of the importance of the "untouchable" values of living, and mixing of typologies were introduced many of the following projects during the 1970s. Experienced alienisms that the conformity in the built environment brought during the "mass production areas" made a lot of people search for a more subjective living. The small house stock increased rapidly where the families had larger opportunities to make changes according to shifting needs and wishes.4


The goal of building one million dwellings succeeded and in 1975 Sweden had the highest housing standards in the world.5 Many of the apartments were left vacant when more people chose to move into their own houses. Along with abolition of public subventions in the beginning of the 1990's the building of housing decreased, but halfway through the decade a new housing shortage occurred as a result of the increasing urbanization. In contrast to previous times social approach, most of new dwellings that was built at this time were exclusive apartments in central urban locations.

Today, the cities of Sweden suffer from housing shortage again and a lot of people live in rented sublet apartments. The waiting time get access to a rented apartment is often very long and the rents consume most of the income. We need to build more dwellings that are accessible for not just economically privileged people, but also for the young people, the pensioners and for families with kids. In order to create a diverse and tolerant city, the new housing needs a bigger generality and flexibility to make it attractive and accessible for more people.

5 Björk, C, Reppen, L, Nordling, L (2000) Så byggdes staden, s. 58

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Kronparken, Karlstad

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Parallel to the Swedish history of housing, there have been some examples of rethinking of the concept of housing that saw possibilities of choosing a living that stands out from the crowd. Beside the ideas of the modern nuclear family after the Stockholm fair in the 1930’s, there were also thoughts about how the homes could be rationalized by organizing them into collective housing where all the cooking, washing, etc. were done jointly and the children were taken care of in a day care in the same building. This new way of living would make it possible for both the adults in the family to work. These thoughts was formulated in command of Alva Myrdal and Sven Markelius who had been one of the most influential architect’s in the Stockholm fair. Two years later the first proposal of a collective housing that they called “family hotel” was published and it sparked a great debate, but just a few of these collective housing projects were built in Sweden. 6

During the period of large scale production of dwellings in the 1960’s and 70’s, the discussion about the values of community housing was brought up again and new household constellations started to become more common. In the end of the 1970’s the discussion was intensified and more people requested alternative to the existing housing typologies and new living constellations. 7

Collective housing is often connected to the 1970’s when many people tried out to live in extended families with a political agenda. Some of them moved out from the cities to run their own farms. Moder Jord in Tollarp in Skane and Skogsåsen in Ramsele are two examples from this period that are still running. In collective housing where the “extended family is a crucial concept, all spaces except the private room are communal and it is common to share all cooking and cleaning. This type of alternative to the mainstream way of living is still closely connected to a certain kind of identity. By describing the hierarchy of housing and introducing a new typology that is not connected to prejudgments and notions, I believe more people will dare to try living in new social constellations.

6 Elmqvist, A-M (2006) En debatt om kollektivhus i det tidiga 1930-talet- Den gifta kvinnan möter moderniteten, s. 3
7 Gromark, S. (1983) Boendegemenskap: En kritik granskning av boendegemenskap som samhällsangelägenhet, av dess värden, vilkor och förutsättningar samt exempel på praktisk tillämpning i ett västeuropeiskt sammanhang; s. 26-27
The tools for investigation of the subject have been to study literature, reference projects, and housing typologies. I also went on study trips interviewing people that have chosen an alternative living. Another important method has been to keep up with both social and traditional media in order to recognize tendencies and thoughts about our future living and relation to each other.

The possibilities and limitations of the chosen site have been explored through models and sketches. The same method was used when studying spatial configuration inside the dwellings.
FIELD STUDIES
THE NETHERLANDS

A field trip to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Delft was made to study housing projects, public spaces and dense structures.

One discovery that was made was that the gap between the private space and the public is smaller in The Netherlands than in Sweden. This gave the inspiration of trying out a typology that of a private house in urban contexts, with less outdoor space than in regular villa. The boathouses and MVRDV’s house with a dissolved structure was a great inspiration of alternative small-scale private space in dense urban contexts.

Narrow urban space
Narrow housing with dissolved interior

Small scale housing in an urban context
**Double Family**

In a 115 sqm apartment in Södermalm, Stockholm, two couples and two children live together. See appendix for interview.

The family told about all the experienced benefits of this kind of living, like spending more time with your siblings' children, hanging out together passively and cook for each other. This type of household is still quite rare, but visiting this home gives great inspiration to design a typology that fits alternative households like this.

**Co-housing**

In the co-housing building Kornet in Gothenburg, the residents have their own apartments and share facilities such as kitchen, library, workshop etc.

Even though the house is open to everyone at any age, most of the people at Kornet are older than 65 years old. At this study visit I discovered that there are many elderly people that live alone, but would like to spend more time with other people when they get retired and spend their days at home. Living together with friends in this period of life will prolong the life, as one of the inhabitants stated.
Falling leaves
- As platforms to build on
- Possibilities to be hidden
- Movement and rhythm

Weaved structure
- Organisation of movement
- Layering of privacy
- Parallel activities

Along the curve
- Clear directions
- Great views
- Covers the hill

On top of each other
- Clear definitions of volumes
- Possible to enter from different heights
- Three house associations

Around a courtyard
- Creates a semi-private space in between
- Possibilities to create relations between the neighbours
**Communication**

- Possibilities to travel with wheelchairs and bikes
- Possibilities to plan for public activities along the path
- The path would take up too much space and destroy the slope

**Straight way**
- Need of main or descent
- No continuous public path
- Creates dead ends

**Along the hill**
- Flat paths, easy access to the houses
- Clear division of the communication: Flat along the mountain and stairs up the hill

**Arrangement of Clusters**

- Associations to earlier development at the site
- Narrow passages and courtyards
- Accentuates the hill
- Intimate semi-private spaces
- Detailed silhouettes

**Configuration of the Smallest Units**

- Floating spaces
  - Possibilities to be on top and below
  - Creating semi-private spaces
  - Floating rooms with connections in three dimensions

- Stack units
  - Defines the space between the houses
  - Creates natural meeting points

- Floating units
  - Interior architecture with a similar structure as the urban configuration
  - Possibilities to be on top/below
  - The volume is creating a floating room indoors
  - Tree house associations

- Village structure
  - Spaces in between like streets in a village
  - Two-dimensional structure

- Stairing
  - Continuous roofs
  - No vertical connections
STUDIES OF HOUSING TYPOLoGIES

To understand the anatomy of contemporary dwellings, we studied different modernistic typologies. The examples are collected from the chapter *Bostadens Typologi* by Ola Nylander in *Bostaden och Kunskapen*.

**CONFIGURED BY FUNCTION AND INSTALLATIONS**
- not equal conditions
- different sizes and connections
- rational division
- all installations in one zone

**APARTMENT ORGANIZED AROUND THE A CENTRALLY LOCATED ROOM**
- no hierarchy
- private rooms with same conditions
- need to pass living rooms to reach bathrooms

**APARTMENT DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS**
- hierarchy between the private rooms
- different sizes and connections
- living room and kitchen separated

**APARTMENT DIVIDED INTO ZONES**
- possible to rent one room out
- private bathroom
Sweden has a long tradition of studies in the area of housing in order to formulate standards for the housing production. The first studies started in the end of the 1930s and lasted until the mid 1970’s. Many of them were done by Svenska Slöjdföreningen (Swedish Society of Industrial Design) and Hemmens Forskningsinstitut (The Home Research Institute). The studies made the foundation for the God Bostad that was published in three different editions from 1954 to 1964. Besides the standard on design and equipment to provide housing loans, it also contained a dissertation about comfort and an augmenting text that should convince the reader about the advantages of the standards. In 1975, the additional text about soft dimensions was taken away and the demands were radically established. Even though the rules have been replaced by advice since the last 20 years, the demands remain essentially the same.

The use of norms when planning housing aims to create dwellings that is democratic and suits all people no matter if you are old, sick or have a disability. This should of course be a fundamental requirement in our entire built environment and Sweden is predecessor in this area. The problem is not the advice but when the norms are taken for rules and we forget about other values in the built environment. The society is rapidly changing and the habit of planning for watching television together is a artifact from times before the tablets, smart phones and “TV on demand” where natural parts of our daily life. These help kits for here taken our commuting of studies out on the street and we don’t know that the future holds in these areas. Large living rooms with space that is hard to use for other activities are there for not only economically and environmentally hard to defend, it is also build us back from seeing new possibilities of living.

Another example is the difficulties of living together with in different social constellation other than the nuclear family when following the prevalent norms. The standard model of newly constructed housing in Sweden besides bathrooms, storage etc, often consist of one large room that contain both space of socializing and cooking, one master bedroom and a few smaller bedrooms. This structure is still quite well functioning for the nuclear family that is still the most common family type, but as mentioned earlier, the amount of new household types are increasing. This standard hierarchy inside the dwellings, does not permit a for example two couples living together, or multigenerational living without running out of space or privacy. Flexible structures are therefore a necessity in order to achieve more democratic and tolerant living environment.
FLEXIBILITY

Japan is a predecessor in the area of variability in architecture. In the Japanska rum- en diskussion kring tomhet och föränderlighet i traditionell och nutida japansk arkitektur, Kristina Fridh describes how sliding doors and mobile elements were used in order to change the shape, light and use of the rooms and recon- figure the internal configuration in the traditional tea- houses called sukiya.1 The building style occurred in the end of the 16th century and it had a great impact on the following architecture in Japan ever since and the modular concept with pillars and beams have big similarities to modern structural elements. The flexible way of organizing space is closely connected to the notion of Ma that is a perception the indivisible relation of room and space, specific for the Japanese culture. If we look back our eyes our own Swedish history of housing we find big variability and flexible use of space and furniture. Besides the general rooms that could be used for different occasions in for example double cottage that was the most common house type before the industrial revolution, also the furniture tells a story of ingenuity when it comes to different use over time. The gate leg table, which can be extended, and the sofa bed are two examples of traditional furniture types with multiple uses as a spacious and economical necessity.

SOFT DIMENSIONS

Close your eyes and imagine the sun hitting your face the first day of spring, or the way fresh sheets feels on your skin when going to bed after a long day. Moments when all your senses are active and your mind and body are one. In order to create successful living spaces it takes ardour and sensuous presence. Parallel to flexibility and generality, planning for “untouchable” qualities the notion of living should be an axiom in the design of housing. Parallel to flexibility and extensibility in that sense, the notion of living should be an axiom in the design of housing.2 This could be a useful tool to bring another dimension of sensuality to flexible and general dwellings-structures. Ten people inhabit an apartment designed for four people, and there are couples living in flats planned for six people. There is a gap between the expected behavior inside our homes and the actual use of them. The main function of bathrooms is usually to serve daily hygiene routines, but there are numerous activities and situations taking place in these spaces. Properties, four people putting on make up in front of the same mirror and hush-to-hust conversations. No spaces are mono-functional but are rather layered by various situations and activities over time, both during the day, week, year and decade. The architect In- ana Nevskaya have together with the Dutch office DUS Architects started up a research project on the concept Soft Dimensions. This term captures the dimension of how architecture actually is used and here knowledge in this area can be help when planning for more resilient housing.2

Housing have very much been a question of lifestyle and consumption in the last two decades, but I believe that people is starting to long for a life with less belongings that always have to be updated in order to stay tuned with the latest trends. Natural materials such as wood, stone, wool and leather started to find their way back to the Swedish homes. The intense discussion of the environ- mental disasters of consumption has slowly washed the big noise and people are getting more and more conscious about our unsustainable lifestyles. By designing flexible, multifunctional furniture inspired by Swedish traditional furniture, designed from scenarios and use them as fittings for the dwellings the need for space and consump- tion could be decreased.

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1 Fridh, K (2001) Japanska rum- en diskussion kring tomhet och föränderlighet i traditionell och nutida japansk arkitektur, s. 132
Building in dramatic landscape in urban contexts is challenging, but not impossible. This picture is taken at the same street in 1916.

The small-scale structure accenuates the landscape and creates intimate semi-private spaces. These qualities are explored and developed in the proposal.

**Spatial Principle**

In apartment buildings, the connection between neighbours is weak. With semi-private space you may not know who is living on the other side of your wall.

The concept of having one’s own house and the opportunity to be at home outside generates communication between neighbours. Let’s raise the wall between us to ask each other for help.
Public path with semi-private qualities

Private/semi-private terrace

The tree houses
small houses in the woods

Space for public events, such as looking for new years eve, ice cream café
and parties

Public path with semi-private qualities

Dramatic nature

Entrance to private houses through semi-private space with space for cultivation, hanging laundry etc.

The cave

Defines and accentuates the square and provide space for small scale business and studios

The Village street

Intimate urban space

public seats integrated in the façade

Space for markets, events or art tours etc.

ANNA KLARA JOHANSSON 63 64
The shifting angle of the roofs emphasizes the shape of the hill. The scale and orientation of the buildings let the greenery in the slope characterize the atmosphere of the site.
The addition is divided into two clusters. The north one is accessible by wheelchair and ambulance from the top of the hill and the south one from the square.

Public spaces for look outs, barbeque and temporary events are added at the top of the hill and by the tall oaks in the southwestern part of the hill.

Public stairs connect Gråberget with Vänmötet.

The new dwellings are dancing up the hill creating playful structure and intimate semi-public spaces. The small scale of the additions relates to the allotment gardens in southwestern direction.

The square is cladded with bricks to define the space, connect to the surrounding buildings, slow down the traffic and to give the square identity.
The picture shows how the dwelling looked like close to the project site before the refurbishment in the 1920's. Small scale houses that accentuated the landscape and created narrow spaces. The inner layer is a calm area with space to play and socialize.
In order to rethink housing I started “from with in” by exploring the constitutional scale to prevent common configuration of housing limit the design of the project. The first act was to liberate the body and its activities from its regular route in conventional housing.

The activities in our homes was divided into grades of privacy; From the most intimate in the middle that you do alone or with your partner, to the most public that can be done outside the walls of our homes. All activities was also divided into three categories; The basic survival that are common for all people, the supporting that are substantial for having a worthy life, and the life quality which represent those activities that is you chose do when you've extra time depending on personality, interests, age for example.
In order to translate the mapping of activities into actual space, the question of how we like doing things needs to be addressed. This has been made by both designing for different households and scenarios but also from subjective experience of enjoyable situations in relation to space.

Qualities

- Fall asleep to the sound of people talking
- Chat while you are doing other things
- Share dinner in an intimate way, like on a sailing boat
- Play next to your parent making dinner
- Drink morning coffee in the sun
- Sneak inside without anyone noticing
- Hang out while putting on makeup together
- Ask your neighbor for help spontaneously
- Cultivate outside and at the same time being at home.

By dissolving the two-dimensional structure and work in all three dimensions, continuous spaces with space for both privacy and social situations are ensured.

Internal Spatial Principle
The boxes become almost like tree houses in the crowns of the slope.

By organizing the most private activities that you want to share only with your self or with your partner, the private boxes or the "tree houses" was designed. They are inspired by the interior of boats with enclosed storage, minimize the need of space. The size of the bed can be changed if more floor space is needed for a wheel chair.
The interior of the houses can be regarded as an architecture in the architecture. By looking upon the private boxes as Furniture, the interior is allowed to be very specific even though the architecture itself is general.

**Spatial Configuration**

The outer shell is a general space with loadbearing walls of solid wood. The first floor is the common level, 35 sqm and hold space for eating, cooking, socializing and use the bathroom facilities. The residents decide how many private boxes they need and how they want to organize them to create different spatial configurations. If the needs are changed or the house switches owner, it is possible to both add and subtract private boxes because of the easy mounting in the outer walls.

By using a small grid with the dimension 2600 x 2600 mm, the interior can be very efficient with not losing any spatial qualities. The project can be regarded as a kit that can own building of an own house in the city with not-demand of neither large space nor furniture to fill up the houses.

- **Type 1** Space for two levels
- **Type 2** Space for three levels
- **Type 3** Space for three levels + suite basement
- **Type 4** Space for two levels + suite basement
By using multifunctional furniture pieces as components of the house, many functions and spaces can be included in the interior. This way of looking upon furniture can decrease the need of space and create more efficient housing.
Most of the houses share a room with another house. This feature makes it possible for two families to live close together but still have private space. The shared room can be used for having people staying over night in a proper bedroom with out need of extra permanent space in the house. It also provides space for temporary use if some of the inhabitants for example break a leg.

The area for media consumption on the first floor is not space consuming but large enough for watching TV, playing video games, etc.

Thanks to the rule that exists many them is space for many people to have dinner together in an intimate way without needing extra spaces.

The hygiene unit is divided into three parts so the functions can be used separately and thin walls in the can be folded to fit a wheel chair.

The private deck outside provides space for out-side dinners and cultivation during the warmer months.

The external staircase makes it possible to sneak in to the rare room with out need to cross the common areas.
Two single parents with children could afford to live in an urban context but still get the qualities of living in a small house. With two adults in the household, the children never have to stay home alone even though the parent needs to work late, see friends or work out.

The semi-private spaces provide space for more private socializing with the two small families. The benefits of having space for work, but being at home with the children, but still able to work.
SCENARIO 2
THREE SINGLE ADULTS

Many elderly people live by them selves after their part-
ners have past away. By sharing a home with friends in the
same situation, you could share the rent; help each other
out with practicals that get more difficult when you’re get-
ing older. More private space could also be provided if
someone finds a partner.
Couples with children and grandparents can benefit from sharing together. The grandparent will be able to help the family with cooking, baby-sitting, and home works and at the same time get help from the family with difficulties that come with age and different diseases. The older member of the household could also get its own floor plan with hygiene facilities and space to be alone or socialize with friends. If needed, an industrial scissor lift could be installed near to the staircase and the walls in the bathrooms space can be folded to fit a wheelchair.

**Scenario 3**

**Multi Generational Family**

*Section A-A 1:100*

*Floor Plan 1*

*Floor Plan 2*

*Floor Plan 3*

*Plan 1:100*
Majorna is a district characterized by wood houses both today and in the former days. The new addition use solid wood as the structural principle and the indoor surfaces, which make the houses easy to adjust according exchanged needs and personal taste. For example the houses can be painted in different colors to express who lives inside it. The solid wood has a lot of qualities; aside from being a renewable material and with an energy effective refining process, it also have positive impact on the indoor climate since it holds heat and moisture.

The facades and the roofs are covered with reversed cover boarding to give the houses an even surface. The cover boards are treated with green vitriol to make the houses blend together with the greenery.

**EXPLA TION VIEW**

climate shell /insulation, surface layer etc.

roof slabs, cross laminated timber

wall, cross laminated timber

stairs with industrial platform lift with perforated steel sheets

slab foundation
The nested spatial configuration in the NA house both demands creativity of usage and promotes social interactions. Lack of slabs dividing the space vertically creates a continuous room and layering of spaces that challenge the concept of housing.

In the west-coastal area of Swedish villages traditionally are built from small-scale houses that follows the natural rocky topography. This structure creates narrow urban spaces, microclimate between the houses and appear almost like extensions to the landscape.

Traditional Finnish summerhouses are built for the simple life and are free from manners and extraneous. The solid wood and the close relationship to the surrounding landscapes offers sensuality and space for rest and socializing.

Natural wood interiors create a warm atmosphere and a feeling of more space when all the surfaces have the same appearance.
DISCUSSION
The starting point for this thesis was a fleeting thought on sailing boat, a sunny morning in the end of July. The seagulls shouted and on the deck, parts of the company were preparing the sailing of the day. The sea gulls shouted and on the deck, parts of the company were preparing the sailing of the day. The thought that struck me was that this easy life, far away from our natural habits and patterns is something that could be realized in our daily life. The curiosity of what the end product would hold has driven me through this work and has made me explore the concept of living from a new direction. Starting up the project by investigating the subject from within instead of the other way around, the road of development were exiting in that sense that it was impossible to see where it would end up.

The site was chosen because of its hard conditions and a strong belief that problems spur creativity and new thoughts. Building small houses in central plots creates a lower density than apartment buildings would, but it could also have a lot of advantages. Besides from propose a new kind of living in alternative constellation, it also suggest a new small-scale typology that could result in inspiration for future densification of high plots in our cities. The scale does not only complement the existing housing stock, but also make the nature both usable for exploitation and at the same time preserves a lot of the existing qualities at the site. Majorna is a progressive district with a lot of people that are open to innovative ways adapting to a more sustainable lifestyle. This fact in combination with the problem of young families leaving the area for buying their own houses in more rural area will make the choice of site extra suitable and could stand as inspiration for other districts.

Taking a step back from the standards of planning housing has both been inspiring and challenging; it have made the project and investigations taking other turns that it usually would have done. I have also met difficulties that might need more time to be developed. The initial statement that all people should have the same spatial conditions for the most private activities in combination with the demand that you should be able to sleep undisturbed on the first floor would have made the base of my houses a lot bigger in order to gain the same flexibility. This made me take the decision to sacrifice this quality and chose an alternative where you can choose between a staircase and a platform lift or adding both alternative. This might not be the perfect answer of the question about accessibility, but by exploring new possibilities of spatial configuration before limiting the process according to standards, will result in innovations and development of our built environment. The site was chosen because of its hard conditions and a strong belief that problems spur creativity and new thoughts. Building small houses in central plots creates a lower density than apartment buildings would, but it could also have a lot of advantages. Besides from propose a new kind of living in alternative constellation, it also suggest a new small-scale typology that could result in inspiration for future densification of high plots in our cities. The scale does not only complement the existing housing stock, but also make the nature both usable for exploitation and at the same time preserves a lot of the existing qualities at the site. Majorna is a progressive district with a lot of people that are open to innovative ways adapting to a more sustainable lifestyle. This fact in combination with the problem of young families leaving the area for buying their own houses in more rural area will make the choice of site extra suitable and could stand as inspiration for other districts.

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My proposal is different from how we build in our Swedish cities today. The big building companies most often choose the most rational and economical way of building dwellings. This is a way to ensure the revenues, but the result is a monochrome housing stock that doesn’t allow creativity in ways of living. The aim of my proposal is not to fit the way of building housing today, but to show an alternative where some qualities of conventional housing are replaced by other ones. For example, my project does not include parking lots, huge storage space, and bathrooms at every floor. Instead the inhabitants will gain more freedom in how they want use their space. For example there are opportunities to add more storage and choose the amount of bathrooms. Other qualities gained by choosing a new kind of living is to live in an urban location with instant connection to nature from the own front door. In combination with the great flexibility, I believe this new typology is missing in our cities because we will never know what the future will hold.
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"Det stora fördelen för mig är att man avlastar varandra bättre jämfört med i ett traditionellt hushåll"

Tove och Stefan har jobbat jättemycket i vissa perioder, och Stefan jobbar väldigt mycket natt. Då hade Ellen suttit hemma själv med barnen, vilket skulle kännas jättejobbigt. Som det är nu behöver man inte oroa sig för att den andra är ensam. Man gör för några daggånger, och parten blir inte lika irtorisk.

Jesper:
Det är ju skillnad på att vara hemma själv och rulla tummarna eller bara fika och titta och tala med någon annan. Det är mycket viktigare att ha sällskap.

"Det stora fördelen för mig är att man avlastar varandra bättre jämfört med i ett traditionellt hushåll"

De tar upp en viktig aspekt angående social interaktion, att det inte behöver handla om att utföra aktiviteter tillsammans.

Jesper:

De tar upp en viktig aspekt angående social interaktion, att det inte behöver handla om att utföra aktiviteter tillsammans.

Jesper:
Tove: Det är ju ett helt annat problem att leva tätt inpå varandra, men att fördelarna överväger nackdelarna.


"Vi är två familjer som är en familj"


"...det är ju Ellen, Stefan och barnen vi vill bo med! Det är väl det som gör det sådana kasniga.”


Det som Tove och David tycker är bra med planlösningen på den lägenhet de har nu är att den är liten och komfortabel och man kan ha nöjesfrukost i ett som helhet. Det är ju Ellen, Stefan och barnen vi vill bo med! Det är väl det som gör det sådana kasniga.


Vi frågar hur länge de tror att de kommer bo. Tove: Jag tror vi kommer ihop i några år och blir så kvar. Tove och Stefan är båda mycket åldriga och vill att de inte ska drabbas av några nya hela. Tove och Stefan är båda mycket åldriga och vill att de inte ska drabbas av några nya hela.
När de berättar för andra om sin livsstil möts de av blandade reaktioner.

"Människor är så konventionella i hur de ser på boendet så de kan inte ens föreställa sig en annan situation."

Tove:

De berättar att en del människor reagerar genom att säga att de aldrig skulle klara av att bo som Tove och Jesper, då de är rädda att inte få vara ensamma. Vi diskuterar människans privata sfär och att folk har ett stort behov av att känna att de kan ha ett privatliv.

"Jag tror att de medför ganska mycket psykologiska problem, den där ensam-sfären."

Tove:

"En rolig sak är att många uttrycker ju att de gärna skulle bo i parboende. Att de gärna skulle ha sin familj nära, men inte i samma husbåt."

Tove:

Jesper uttrycker att det finns ganska många fördomar om människor som väljer alternativa boendeformer.

"I dag är inte bostadsförvärvningen anpassad till det mänskliga beteendet!"

Jesper:

"Folk har ju ett starkt behov av att bo nära varandra, det är synd att det är så svårt att få till det."

Tove:
"Folk har ju ett starkt behov av att bo nära varandra, det är synd att det är så svårt att få till det."
"Vi ser en inflyttning till större städer för att hitta jobb. Många av oss valde att leva ensamma när vi inte fann jobb."..."För en gång i stort sett, funkar inte mycket som de återkommande alternativen. Det finns rika personer som vill ha barn, men de inte ändå Vill att de behöver försörjning, och det är en stor fördel för dem att få barn."..."Eftersom vi i Sverige oftast är självförsörjande, både kvinnor och män, är vi mer fria att välja familjetyper än tidigare generationer var när mannen var familjeförsörjare. Jag tror på en ökad flexibilitet trots att vi ser tendenser av romantiserande av det förflutna."..."Jag menar att tillgången på bostäder begränsar människor i deras livsval och det är förstås negativt. Unga har problem att flytta hemifrån eftersom det finns många barnbostäder."..."De som lever ensamma mer, befinde sig också i en situation där de inte kan något från familjen. De som lever ensamma har också en större möjlighet att realisera sina trots att de inte har några andra alternativ."..."Men av individuallivet samhället bör detta mindre betydan för att det biologiska familjen och människor bygger större betydelse beroende på inkomsten och sociala klass."..."Ju mer individualiserat samhället blir desto mindre betydan för det biologiska familjen och människor bygger större betydelse beroende på inkomsten och sociala klass."

Efter middagen åter vi barnsliga äppelskal och dricker vin och Linda gör gula brasa i kakelugnen, först får hon lära sig hugga ved såklart, och hon är en riktig hejare på att hugga ved. Så klart. Det är en perfekt kväll. Precis så som Linda och jag tänker att vi ska ha det en vacker dag, på var sitt håll.


Vår vardag hemma i Sverige, där vi lever isolerat från varandra i olika lägenheter, den är skev.