

LEARNING FROM THE 'SMALL-TOWN FEELING'

HOW A SHARED PUBLIC SPACE CAN FOSTER
NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION IN AN URBAN CONTEXT

Tilda Cronsell & Ellen Nyholm | Master's Thesis 2024

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CHALMERS
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Master's Thesis 2024
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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the idea of the 'small-town feeling' and its influence in an urban context. By using such a concept, it looks at how a shared public space can encourage social interactions and unite people from various social groups, by strengthening local qualities. The thesis questions aimed to be answered are: What is meant by the expression 'small-town feeling' and what could be benefited from implementing this atmosphere into urban areas? How can a shared public space improve factors connected to the 'small-town feeling' such as having a local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement? How can the design of an architectural space create a sense of belonging among neighbors?

A foundation for the thesis is laid by exploring the complex concept of the 'small-town feeling' and its resonance within architecture. The research underscores how this feeling fosters a sense of community and shared ownership, on a local level. Through an examination of various aspects connected to architectural design and community-driven efforts, it becomes clear that promoting belonging and shared responsibility is vital for vibrant urban neighborhoods. These findings emphasize the need to incorporate elements supporting social interaction, local empowerment, and cultural representation to develop lively and

sustainable urban spaces appreciated by both residents and visitors.

Tynnered in Gothenburg is chosen as the location for implementation of the studies. It is used as a testing ground for identifying and designing a solution for specific issues in Tynnered but with broader applicability to other locations. Tynnered has demographic differences, diverse socio-economic groups and contains various types of housing, such as million program homes, townhouses and villas, which makes it suitable for the implementation of this thesis.

Methods used are mainly qualitative, since the thesis questions deal with human perceptions and associations, with complementary quantitative data. Design iterations and analysis are made continuously during the process, resulting in a design proposal.

The thesis ends with a development plan with what is needed from other actors to keep the project sustainable and self-driving in the future. It also reflects upon what has been learned throughout the process and what it adds to the discourse.

Keywords : community; identity; local qualities; social exchange; social sustainability

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READING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with an overview of the thesis. It introduces the main topic by presenting the problem setting, aim and research questions of the thesis as well as explains the process and methods used to develop and discuss the thesis' topic. It sets the stage for the reader by outlining the significance of the study and its relevance in the broader context.

2. Theory

In the theory chapter, the fundamental concepts and theoretical framework related to the 'small-town feeling' and the topic of how to create neighborhood cohesion through architecture are explored and discussed. This chapter lays the groundwork by examining existing literature and reference projects, together with site visits to places considered fostering a 'small-town feeling', that inform the research and provide theoretical insights.

3. Context

The context chapter delves into the context of the implementation area of Tynnered in Gothenburg, and sets the ground for what and where in the neighborhood the project will be situated. It examines the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the neighborhood, as well as the challenges and opportunities it presents. The perspectives of residents are learned about through existing dialogue projects, highlighting their perceptions, preferences, and aspirations for the community.

4. Design Strategies

This chapter presents the bridge between the theory and context research and the design implementation. Strategies for designing are presented and discussed in relation to the research objectives. It explores how architectural design can address the identified challenges and opportunities within the context, with a focus on fostering local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement.

5. Design Implementation

The design implementation chapter contains the practical application of the design strategies. It describes how these strategies are translated into actual design interventions or solutions for the chosen site or project area. Different options are tested and evaluated, culminating in a design proposal. A development plan is also suggested for the design proposal to become self-driven and sustain long-term.

6. Discussion

Finally, the discussion chapter synthesizes the key findings and insights from the process of the thesis. It analyzes the outcome of the design implementation, evaluates its effectiveness, and reflects on the implication of the research in theory and in practice. The chapter also addresses challenges we faced along the way. Lastly, it discusses limitations for the thesis and suggests areas for future exploration.

1.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Problem Setting
- 1.2 Aim & Purpose
- 1.3 Thesis Questions
- 1.4 Research Approach & Methods
- 1.5 Vocabulary & Definitions
 - Vocabulary
 - Geographical Areas
- 1.6 Delimitations

This chapter provides the reader with an overview of the thesis. It introduces the main topic by presenting the problem setting, aim and research questions of the thesis as well as explains the process and methods used to develop and discuss the thesis' topic. It sets the stage for the reader by outlining the significance of the study and its relevance in the broader context.

1.1 PROBLEM SETTING

This thesis is based on an investigation of the expression 'small-town feeling' and research on how architecture can achieve positive aspects connected to it. It explores how this knowledge can contribute to a more socially sustainable built urban environment.

There is a lack of research about small towns. Research focus is usually on either urban or rural areas but the gap in between, where small towns belong, is often forgotten in the discourse (Carlow & Steinführer, 2016). The same applies for the atmosphere connected to the small town. The presumed positive qualities attributed to the small town atmosphere have rarely been examined or described in research (Sternudd, 2007).

Small-town life is not the ideal way of life for everyone, but still most people have a positive association to the 'small-town feeling' (Sternudd, 2007). There is a collective perspective present in small towns, encouraging human interactions and shared meanings, that often gets lost when planning urban areas. The intangible qualities and connections that appear in between the architecture, get somewhat forgotten when working on a bigger scale. The thesis focuses on the social life of small towns, and how to create well-functioning public spaces that contribute to neighborhood cohesion through local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement.

1.2 AIM & PURPOSE

The general aim of this research is to investigate how architects, through emphasizing the concept of a 'small-town feeling', can positively impact an urban neighborhood by providing a shared public space, strengthening the sense of local community, enhancing local identity, local economy, as well as local influence and engagement.

Specifically, this research aims to:

1. Define and comprehend the essence of a 'small-town feeling' and its potential benefits when applied to an urban context.
2. Examine how a shared public space can contribute to fostering local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement.
3. Evaluate the role of architectural space in creating a sense of cohesion among neighbors.

Through these investigations, this research seeks to intertwine the 'small-town feeling' and public urban design, aiming to inspire architects to create more inclusive, vibrant, and socially connected urban environments.

1.3 THESIS QUESTIONS

What is meant by the expression 'small-town feeling' and what could be benefited from implementing this atmosphere into urban areas?

How can a shared public space improve factors connected to the 'small-town feeling' such as having a local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement?

How can the design of an architectural space create a sense of cohesion among neighbors?

1.4 RESEARCH APPROACH & METHODS

A combination of 'research for design' and 'research by design' is used. In the former, literature studies, reference projects and choice and analysis of implementation site provides a base for the design process. The approach of 'research by design' is applied through making several design iterations and analyzing them continuously throughout the process.

The main focus is on qualitative methods since the thesis questions deal with perceptions, associations and personal feelings. Site visits to small towns and urban areas considered to have a 'small-town feeling' are made to collect primary data connected to this topic and to help grasp the essence of it. The urban areas considered to foster a 'small-town feeling' are chosen based on qualitative assessments made by the authors in consultation with friends and our tutor. While we acknowledge that this perception is subjective and lacks empirical data to confirm its widespread acceptance, it guided our selection process for the study. Quantitative data, such as demographic variations, is used complementarily to better understand the characteristics of the site and its context.

Through the literature review and site visits, important aspects connected to the 'small-town feeling' are defined and used as a starting point for the research connected to the design implementation. Important characteristics to achieve these qualities are then stated and related to the design process.

Tynnered in Gothenburg is chosen as the design implementation site due to its urban setting and demographic differences, mainly in terms of living conditions and forms of tenure. A municipal survey, local reports and cognitive mapping carried out in the area help to adapt the design strategy according to local needs and wishes. A design solution is made based on the context of Tynnered together with knowledge gathered from the theoretical framework on 'small-town feeling' and its resonance within architecture. This adaptable approach allows for adjustments and can be used in various contexts beyond Tynnered.



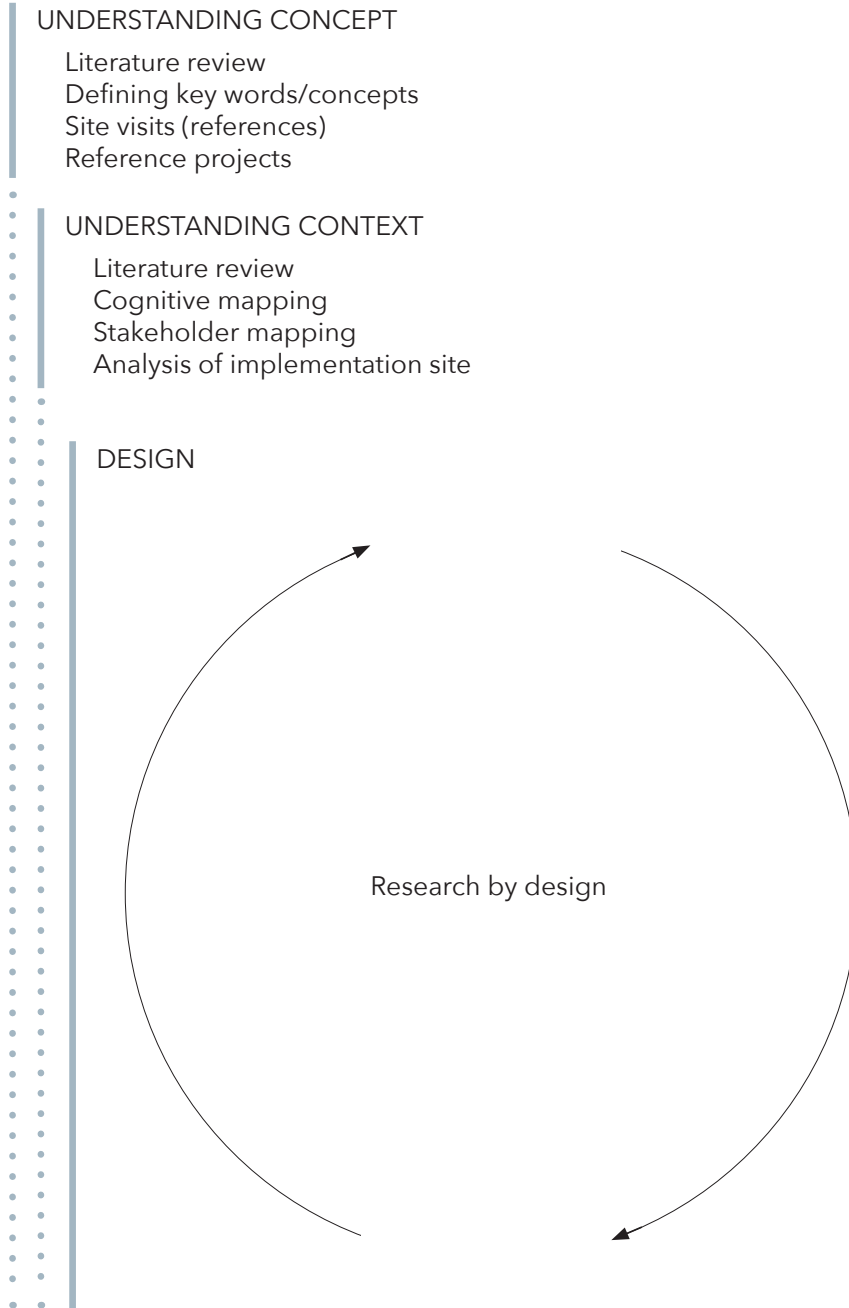
UNDERSTANDING CONCEPT

- Literature review
- Defining key words/concepts
- Site visits (references)
- Reference projects

UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

- Literature review
- Cognitive mapping
- Stakeholder mapping
- Analysis of implementation site

DESIGN



1.5 VOCABULARY & DEFINITIONS

Vocabulary

Local Community - Referring to a cohesive group of people residing in a specific area, characterized by shared social bonds, cultural connections and collective engagement in local affairs.

Local Identity - About people defining themselves in relation to the material world. It encompasses the distinct characteristics and cultural traits that set the area and its inhabitants apart from others, shaping residents' sense of belonging and pride.

Local Economy - Referring to a shared economy in terms of money but also in other forms such as sharing of services, goods, and knowledge, that creates value for the local community.

Local Influence and Engagement - Used in terms of political questions as well as encouraging a meaningful societal participation, engagement in local affairs, and a sense of shared ownership.

Geographical Areas

Southwest district of Gothenburg - Blue area shown on small map

Tynnered - Area 54 and 55

Central Tynnered - Area 55

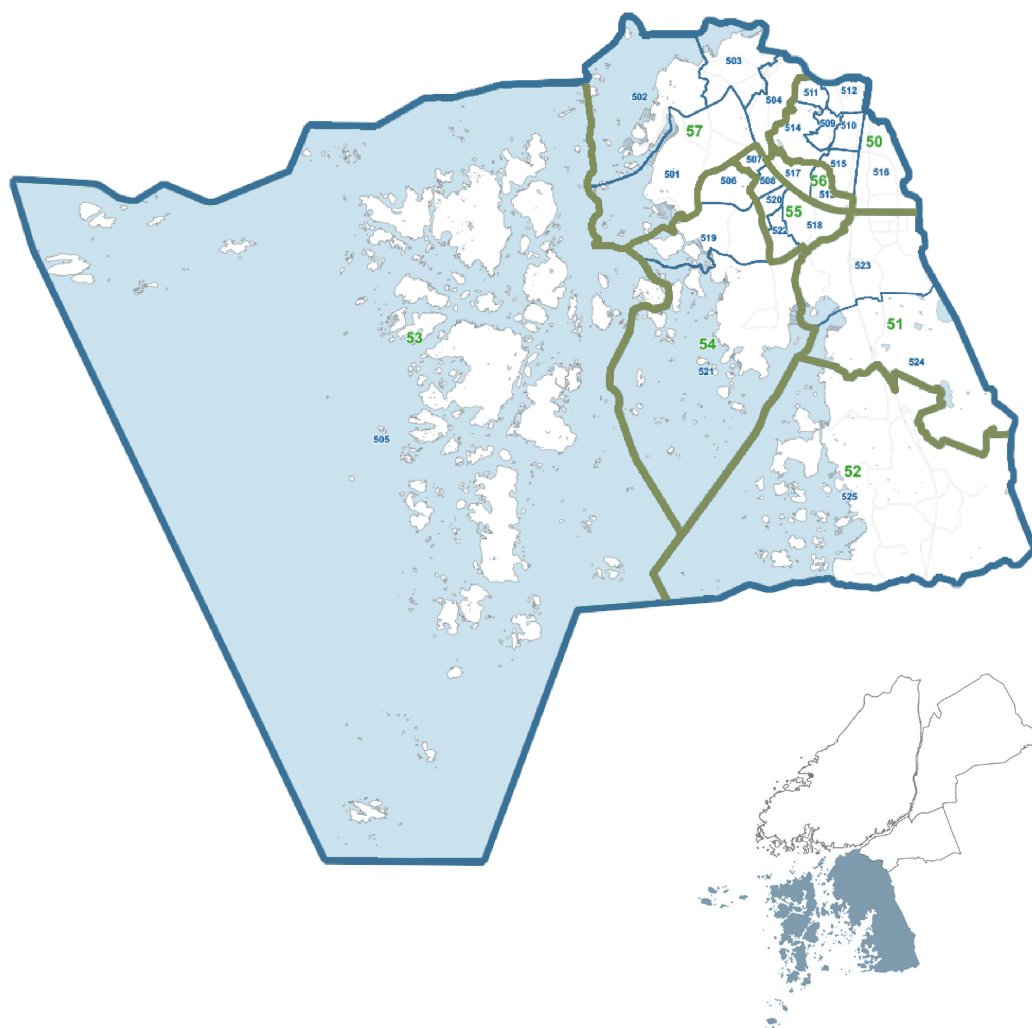


Fig. 1 Maps of the southwest district of Gothenburg showing its different areas (Göteborgs Stad, Avdelningen för Statistik och Analys, n.d.)

1.6 DELIMITATIONS

Aesthetics of Typical Small Town Typology

The work examines what can be learned from the social life within a small town. The built environment of small towns or areas fostering a 'small-town feeling' is analyzed based on the social aspects and interactions within, not the aesthetics of it.

Participatory Design

The thesis research is partly based on surveys and further qualitative research made by others. However, the design implementation will not be made by these participants but by the authors of the thesis.

Urban Planning

The project is made in consideration to and by analyzing a bigger area, but the design implementation is not on an urban planning level.

Criminality

Criminality is indirectly addressed in the thesis since it is affected by the improvement of the local community, identity, economy, influence and engagement, for example through improving safety aspects. The focus is thus on these local qualities and a potential improvement regarding criminality is viewed as a consequence of them.

Political Reform

Different kinds of political structures are being discussed in connection to places considered to foster a 'small-town feeling'. The motive for this is not to advocate for specific political changes, but to give insight and lessons applicable to the architectural role.

All Future Plans and Proposals for the Area

There are a lot of developments being planned for Tynnered and its surroundings, in different stages of being finalized or determined. Taking all of the future plans and proposals into consideration would have been too extensive a task. The project delimitates to adhere to the built environment and projects that are under construction in the neighborhood, and future plans for the adjacent surroundings of the implementation site.

2.

THEORY

2.1 'Small-Town Feeling'

- Defining Small Towns and the Expression of a 'Small-Town Feeling'

- Introducing the Site Visits

- Defining Aspects of the 'Small-Town Feeling'

2.2 Creating Neighborhood Cohesion through Architecture

- Characteristics of Built Environment in Small Towns

- Providing a Base for Social Exchange

- Encouraging Social Exchange

2.3 Theory Reflection & Takeaways

In the theory chapter, the fundamental concepts and theoretical framework related to the 'small-town feeling' and the topic of how to create neighborhood cohesion through architecture are explored and discussed. This chapter lays the groundwork by examining existing literature and reference projects, together with site visits to places considered fostering a 'small-town feeling', that inform the research and provide theoretical insights.



Fig. 2 Kungsgatan, the main street in the small town of Alingsås.

2.1 'SMALL-TOWN FEELING'

Defining Small Towns and the Expression of a 'Small-Town Feeling'

First of all; What is a small town? It is not that easy to define. There is no universal definition for it (Roberts, 2014). It varies by country due to differences in administrative organization, as well as density and sprawl of the settlements, which poses a challenge in reaching a universal consensus (Boly & Kern 2019). Roberts (2014) states small and intermediate cities can have populations ranging from 5,000 to 100,000 people, and points out that the definition rather depends on the location of the place and its proximity to nearby urban and rural areas.

Steinführer (Carlow & Steinführer, 2016) discusses small towns in Germany in her essay *Living in a Small Town: An Urban and a Rural Experience at Once*. According to her, the definition does not only depend on the size of the town. Architectural features, historical and socio-economic aspects as well as geographic position is also taken into consideration. She defines a small town as "a settlement with between 5,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, a non-agrarian economic basis, and a centrality function for its rural surroundings." (p. 44).

Sternudd (2007) covers the topic of Swedish small towns in *Images of the Small Town - on Aesthetic Evaluation of a Townscape*. She agrees that the concept of small town has only to a small extent to do with the number of inhabitants. According to her, the term small town primarily describes a series of planning conditions characteristic of the traditional small town as well as a visual character. She mentions a lower limit of 10,000 and an upper limit of 40,000 inhabitants, but emphasizes that settlements with a higher or lower population can still be considered small towns.

It seems that even though people have different opinions about small towns, when talking about the atmosphere connected to the expression 'small-town feeling', most people have a positive perception of it. This wording is, as well as the small town itself, difficult to define. The use of the small-town concept on internet websites reflects a positive perception of life in a small town. The term 'small town' is commonly used in the marketing of municipalities, housing projects, and vacation destinations. It is often used to describe an idealized vision in the formulation of municipal strategies. In

these cases, the connection to aesthetic similarity is very weak; instead, it seems to be about evoking associations to a community that cares about its residents. (Sternudd, 2007)

Introducing the Site Visits

The 'small-town feeling' and the atmosphere connected to the expression was explored through site visits. The town of Alingsås serves as the 'actual small town' for the investigation, corresponding to the definitions previously stated. The town has just above 27 000 inhabitants (Statistics Sweden, n.d.a), and is also the central node for several settlements in the municipality of Alingsås. According to a municipal survey, 96.5 percent of the municipality's residents think the municipality is a good place to live. They also give a higher rating than Sweden's average in terms of safety aspects (Alingsås kommun, 2023). For investigating if 'small-town feeling' can also be found in an urban context, neighborhoods in Gothenburg and Berlin were analyzed. The neighborhoods were chosen based on a perception of fostering a 'small-town feeling', and analyzed based on this hypothesis.

Defining Aspects of the 'Small-Town Feeling'

Small towns navigate a delicate balance between the advantages and disadvantages inherent in their size. The smaller-sized community offers benefits, such as a close-knit environment that fosters mutual exchange, cooperation, and trust among inhabitants. However, it also presents challenges. For instance, lower population density translates to reduced demand for services and activities, leading to economic challenges in meeting community needs. A strong collective and a mutual support system is common in small towns. The downside is a lack of privacy or anonymity, which may feel limiting for individuals valuing independence (Friedman, 2018). The following research focuses on well-functioning small towns, aiming to learn from how they function and how they have managed to tackle these problems successfully.

In the following paragraphs some key qualities are discussed, found to be connected with social aspects of life in small towns. The aim is to understand the atmosphere these aspects create and thereby also the associations to the expression 'small-town feeling'.

Local Community

Community plays a crucial role in determining social well-being and psychological health (Oldenburg, 1997) and a close-knit community seems to be a key feature for well-functioning small towns. The "Life Between Buildings" (p. 106) is discussed in the book *Small town sustainability: Economic, social, and environmental innovation* (Knox & Mayer, 2013). According to the authors, chance encounters are an important aspect of social life in small towns, strengthening the connection between residents. The fact that small towns have a smaller variety of services and places to meet may be considered a disadvantage, but it has advantages for the community. Small towns allow people to naturally meet through the rhythms of their daily and weekly activities, due to the fact that they use the same public spaces (Knox & Mayer, 2013). Friedman (2018) agrees, saying that getting to know your neighbors and having face-to-face interactions is key for small towns functioning well. Fewer places to meet result in more frequent chance encounters between the residents, resulting in a close-knit community (Friedman, 2018). Squares and market places serve as the focal points for these activities in small towns, closely followed by pedestrian streets and small parks (Knox & Mayer, 2013).

In Alingsås, the local government also recognizes the importance of a strong local community. Their development plan talks about how the small size of the town makes it easier for everyone, regardless of age, gender, or origin, to meet each other and connect (Alingsås Kommun, 2018). This was also witnessed during the site visit. A lot of people were talking on the streets. They seemed to know each other and stopped by for a quick chat upon encountering each other in town.

Local Identity

A strong sense of identity and place is an important component of liveability and cultural sustainability. These concepts are socially constructed and involve people defining themselves in relation to the material world. The specific attributes of particular places have an impact, whether positive or negative, on people's physical well-being, opportunities, and lifestyle choices (Knox & Mayer, 2013).

The development of a collective identity of contemporary residents of a small town, is a product of many different things, but factors such as cultural



Fig. 3 Chance encounters by the square in Alingsås.

landscapes, heritage and traditions are important (Knox & Mayer, 2013). Stanowicka (2011) adds that town authorities play a major role in building town identity by formulating key ideas, communication policies, and strategic development. Realizing the importance of considering the image of the town as an intangible resource and a competitive advantage, town authorities increasingly often strategically plan and develop their identities, aiming for a specific image that attracts investments, tourists, and residents. This has many positive consequences for the town development, including strengthening the local identity of the residents (Stanowicka, 2011).

The municipality of Alingsås has understood the importance of giving the municipality and the town a strong identity of its own. They recognize and place value on its small-scale development with proximity to services and commerce in a well-preserved historic city center and good public transport (Alingsås Kommun, 2018). This can be seen across the town through initiatives such as information signs, informing citizens and visitors about Alingsås' historical as well as current events and development.

Conviviality and hospitality is also discussed by Knox & Mayer (2013) as an important factor for small town sustainability. As mentioned by Stanowicka (2011), tourism is often an important income for small towns, relying on the image of the town for attracting visitors. Fostering a friendly and welcoming environment towards newcomers and outsiders is essential for the vitality of small towns. Small towns depend on their proximity to other settlements. Being an attractive place for others to visit also sends out the signal to inhabitants of the town that they have something to be proud of, contributing to the local identity of their town (Knox & Mayer, 2013).

Knox & Mayer (2013) mention routine encounters and shared public spaces as important aspects as well connected to identity. Shared everyday routines foster shared meaning, leading to shared experiences and memories associated with their shared place. This in turn can generate a sense of identity, ownership, and belonging amongst the inhabitants of the place (Knox & Mayer, 2013).

Local Influence and Engagement

Social ties are an important foundation for collective action and democracy in small towns. A familiarity and mutual care among the inhabitants intensifies their sense of civil society, which in turn increases the probability of their engagement in local affairs and democracy (Knox & Mayer, 2013). It is common to be active in different kinds of associations in small towns, including both political parties as well as sport clubs, cultural associations, and religious communities. Inhabitants of rural areas, small towns and suburbs in Sweden have a higher percentage

of members in civic associations, compared to cities (Statistics Sweden, n.d.b). They are also more active in political parties (Statistics Sweden, n.d.c). Informed by Knox & Mayer's (2013) assertion that the familiarity and mutual concern among residents amplify their sense of civil society and enhance their likelihood of involvement in local affairs and democratic processes, it can be inferred that active engagement in various associations not only fosters a sense of community but also reinforces the perception of individual influence, meaningful societal participation, and the belief that your voice matters.

Given that the small town is a municipality of its own, it presents greater opportunities for influencing decisions compared to a suburban area which has to relate more to its bigger context, and follow the decisions of the bigger city. A higher degree of independence of a local authority in relation to a central government enables the local government to delegate certain responsibilities to its citizens, thereby making it possible to provide goods and services that may be lacking. (Feinberg et al., 2021).

The city of Berlin is divided into 12 districts or boroughs, each one consisting of several officially recognized sub districts or neighborhoods. The boroughs have considerable influence of their own, primarily responsible for local matters such as culture, green spaces or schools (The Official Website of Berlin, n.d.). Based on the discussion of Feinberg et al., (2021), this division and delegation of responsibility enhances the local influence and could be assumed to reinforce the perception of individual influence among the citizens.



Fig. 4 The main street in the center of Alingsås.

Local Economy

Smaller, locally owned businesses are common in small towns, and there is a focus and care among the inhabitants of the town on supporting them. According to Knox & Mayer (2013), consumers recognize the importance of supporting these small businesses, and they have an interest in buying locally produced products. The authors also emphasize that the survival of these businesses is crucial for the well-being of the small town. They provide employment opportunities, generate income for local residents, and contribute to the overall economic stability of the community (Knox & Mayer, 2013).

Local businesses were frequently observed during several site visits, both in the small town of Alingsås and in urban contexts considered fostering the 'small-town feeling'. The neighborhood of Majorna in Gothenburg provides a good example of a similar scenario in an urban setting. A notable observation was that businesses often had names directly reflecting their function, such as "The Bookshop," "Flower Shop," and "Bike Service." This indicates that there is probably just that one bookshop in the area, and everyone who wants to buy a book in the area goes there. As well in Berlin, a lot of local businesses can be found, including restaurants, cafes, shops, and also your local 'späti' kiosk at every second corner. Another notable feature in Berlin is the markets, which are popular among both locals and tourists, where many local merchants come to sell their goods.

However, the concept of local economy in small towns can be extended beyond exchange of money. Exchange of things such as services, goods, and knowledge also creates value for the community. Friedman (2018) states that a mutual support system is common in small towns. The author also points out that meeting your neighbors is not only essential to build a community, it is also important for the sharing of knowledge, material, cooperation and trust. Research shows that there is a connection between well-developed social capital and economic growth. In successful small towns under investigation, the authorities regarded community development also as economic development, for example by encouraging leadership and investing in youth entrepreneurship. This fosters mutual learning among inhabitants, contributing value back to the community (Friedman, 2018).



Fig. 5 Local business in Majorna, Gothenburg.



Fig. 6 Weekly Maybachufer market in Neukölln, Berlin.

2.2 CREATING NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

Characteristics of Built Environment in Small Towns

The built structure in small towns is usually condensed and interspersed with continuous public spaces, incorporating a blend of residences, workplaces, commerce, and services. These factors allow for unique lifestyles and social structures distinct from those commonly observed in large cities or rural areas. A clearly defined city center and short distance to surrounding residential areas are also pointed out as characteristics of small towns, thus enabling the creation of networks (Sternudd, 2007). The ability of walking to services and essential facilities is seen as an important aspect of the built environment in small towns (Friedman, 2018).

In a project aimed at developing the Canadian town Stony Plain, preserving the 'small-town experience' was an important objective. To achieve this, they kept a redundancy of green spaces, public parks and multi-use buildings which showcases that this is an important part of a small town lifestyle (Friedman, 2018).

Providing a Base for Social Exchange

To promote social exchange between different people, whether in a small town or urban setting, certain basic conditions must be met, which will be discussed in this chapter. When these aspects are successfully achieved, the space has the potential of becoming a well-functioning 'third place'. Third places are defined by Oldenburg (1997, p.6) as "informal gathering spaces". Such places have the benefit of bringing people together, enhancing community building and strengthening the connection between neighbors (Bosman & Dolley, 2019).

Safety

Safety can be seen as part of the base for social exchange and a prerequisite for participation (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001). Light is considered an important factor to achieve a sense of safety since it enables us to fully understand the space and be aware of what is happening around us. Providing uniform lighting that doesn't cause glare ensures that one can clearly see the faces of those encountered, which contributes to a feeling of

security. Good lighting therefore helps us to get an overview of a space, which is another factor to be considered when designing safe public environments. Particularly entrances, bus stops and other significant spots should be clearly visible and easily identifiable. (Jonson, 2019)

Safety can also be created indirectly by working with the identity and community spirit, seeing as it gives a feeling of belonging while also increasing the acquaintance among residents (Jonson, 2019). The liveliness of a street or open public space also plays a role in its perceived, and actual, safety. If a place is well-populated, numerous people have the ability to interfere if something happens, while liveliness also benefits the activity "street watching" or "people watching", from balconies or windows of surrounding buildings, as keeping up with events is entertaining and valuable for the individual. (Gehl, 2011)

Gopalakrishnan's (2023) master thesis *Configuring Identities* showcases a public place with movement and activity throughout the day. The author has worked with creating this liveliness by combining several functions connected to different age groups and their interests as well as their daily patterns. For example, a café, co-work space, youth center and a multi-purpose stage were included. This mixed program enables activity during all hours which contributes to the place's safety as it increases the liveliness and thus also the occurrence of "people watching".

Accessibility

The accessibility of our common public spaces and third places is important to consider when aiming for social exchange. Accessibility is not only an important part of small towns but should also be considered in urban contexts. Oldenburg states that for third places to work as an enhancing community factor they need to be locally situated in the neighborhood and preferably being accessible even at a walking distance. Economic factors should also be considered to maximize third places' social effect since it impacts who uses them. By being accessible, both in terms of geographical location and economy, they will be used more regularly which increases their effect on the residents and their daily life. (Oldenburg, 1997)

Providing a Spatial Framework

The topic of designing spaces for social exchange is also explored in the book *In search of new public domain* (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001) where they view public domains as places which foster interaction and engagement between different groups of people. They talk about the relationship between form and meaning and imply that it plays a significant role in how we interpret and view a public space. The typologies for different urban spaces were more distinct and commonly understood in the past whereas parks and squares nowadays are losing their limit. The uncertainty of what is expected from us makes us less likely to feel comfortable in these public spaces and therefore less likely to use them. They mention Tompkins Square Park in New York as an example of a well-functioning public space. The usage of fences has helped create symbolic limits to the different areas in the park

which meant that people could establish their own functions within these spaces. (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001)

Similar to Tompkins Square Park, the architects of the *Study Pavilion* at the Technical University of Braunschweig worked with a 3x3m grid structure to provide a framework for the users while still keeping the space flexible for different needs. Several zones divide the building into spaces with different characteristics. Smaller areas with lower ceiling height for relaxation or more intimate studies, and bigger spaces with double height where larger friend groups or several individual people can meet to exchange knowledge. This helps to communicate which activities are appropriate for the space and contributes to a common understanding of its usage. (Pintos, 2023)

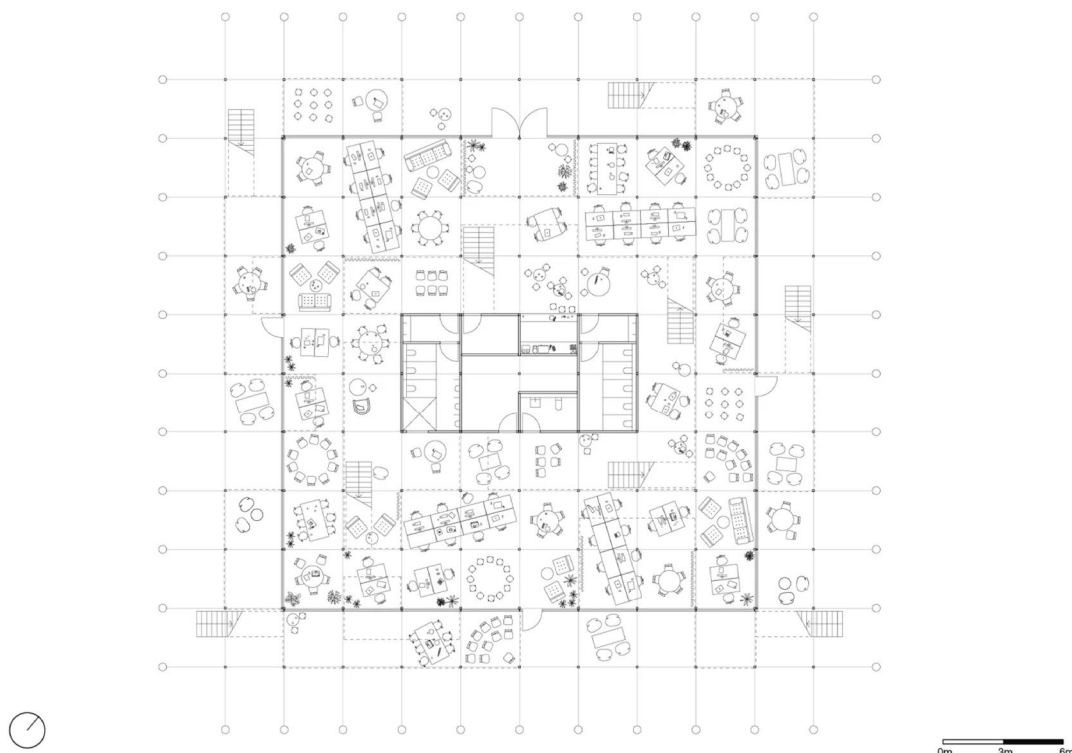


Fig. 7 Groundfloor plan of the *Study Pavilion* at the Technical University of Braunschweig (Gustav Düsing, 2024).

Encouraging Social Exchange

Enhancing Local Engagement

An example of where they have achieved a sense of community by working with local engagement is the project *The Cook, the Farmer, his Wife and their Neighbour* (Potrč, 2010). It is located in Amsterdam and they turned an unutilized building into a community kitchen with an adjacent community garden. The garden is cared for by twenty-two families with seven different ethnicities which showcases how a collective activity can bring diverse social groups together. It has an open-door policy and apart from engaging the residents, local initiatives and institutions have also shown interest in being involved in the project which creates a connection between the neighborhood and the rest of the city.

Community-based art is another way of creating social connections and encouraging engagement. Such activities allow the residents to express themselves and use their creativity in various ways. The cultural identity of a neighborhood can also be nourished or created by different kinds of artistic expressions. (Knox & Mayer, 2013)

Mixed Functions

Having mixed-use functions, such as workplaces, services and recreational spaces, in a neighborhood can help strengthen its identity and atmosphere (Beyer, 2010, referred to in Friedman, 2018). In the book *Cities for People*, Gehl (2010) states that having mixed use in a city is fundamental for its liveliness since it engages different people at different times. This also contributes to both the real and perceived safety of the place in a positive way.

It is also important to think about the needs and requirements of different age groups when striving for a public space which facilitates social exchange. Thinking about the children and teenagers living in a neighborhood is beneficial for a community as they contribute to its vibrancy as well as bringing light to new perspectives. Younger people often appreciate third places that provide the opportunity to be physically active or where they can practice sports by using the objects or spaces on site. In contrast, the elderly generation typically enjoy a slower tempo and value meeting places which are diverse in use as well as symbolic (Friedman, 2018). To create a sense of identity and give meaning to the elderly, third places need to make them

feel an attachment to the place and its character (Andrews & Phillips, 2005, referred to in Friedman, 2018). Apart from adapting meeting places to their individual needs, it is also important to create third places where different generations can meet as it can give rise to a support system within the community (Friedman, 2018).

La Duna Skatepark is an example of a project where they have created a space for social exchange by implementing various functions. This public space does not only provide a skate park but also classrooms for workshops, a viewpoint and square where various outdoor activities can be carried out. By giving the space mixed uses and outdoor spaces of different characteristics, people of many ages and interests can use and appreciate the space. (Coulleri, 2021)

Greenery and Water Sources

In Cilliers' work *Planning for third places through evidence-based urban development* (Bosman et al., 2019), she analyzed five public spaces which she considered as functioning third places. One of the spaces analyzed was *Jardin de la Maison* in Namur, Belgium. It was earlier a neglected open space and was lacking signage and visibility to the locals. They transformed the space by implementing an urban garden and opening up the view towards the river as well as adding furniture for relaxation (Dolley et al., 2019). Occasionally, there will also be activities arranged in the park to engage the community (Pinchart, 2014). Implementing a green space and emphasizing the presence of water is a way to create an emotional bond and a connection to a place as well as strengthening its identity (Sternudd, 2007).



Fig. 8 Jardin de la Maison (AMCV, n.d.).

Representation and Heritage

Representation and acknowledgement of heritage is a way of creating or enhancing an identity (Knox & Mayer, 2013). Working with the identity of a place is significant for people to be able to create a connection to it, both individually and collectively. This connection is essential for the space to be used and thus also for social exchange to occur (Kaymaz, 2013). *Superkilen* is a public urban space reaching through an ethnically diverse residential area in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is an example of a socially thriving public space where they have managed to enhance the local identity by implementing objects from several nationalities represented in the neighborhood. Each object is accompanied with a sign with compiled information about its history and origin, explained also in its native language. This helps educate the community about its identity and heritage as well as creating something for the residents to be proud of. In connection to the park and the sports hall Norrebrohall, they have also made a red square for physical activities and games as well as hosting markets or other social activities. (BIG, 2012)

The architects of the project *La Duna Skatepark* have also worked with creating a representation of the surroundings and integrating it into the design. A connection to the nearby Chihuahua desert and Samalayuca dunes was made through the

concrete's lightly pink and sandy color, which was also a way to acknowledge the natural heritage of the area. (Coulleri, 2021)

Public Art

All the objects in *Superkilen* in Copenhagen can be seen as public art and it can be a way of showcasing a community's history and identity. Public art has the potential of being the starting point of discussions and conversations between diverse social groups which foster the liveliness of these public spaces. It is also inspiring and boosts creativity independent of age, which can then be shared with others. When implementing public art in an open space, it is essential to also design places which facilitate the admiration of it. It can be spots to sit as benches or steps but it can also be a semi-high wall to lean on (Friedman, 2018).

An example of how public art is seen as a valuable resource is that the municipality of Gothenburg has decided to follow a one-percentage rule. It requires their actors and administrations to invest one percent in public art when taking part in new construction projects. They implemented this rule for public art to be more visible in the urban space as it enables people's voices to be heard and contributes to democratic discussions. (Göteborgs Konst, 2024)



Fig. 9 La Duna Skatepark (Coulleri, 2021).

2.3 THEORY REFLECTION & TAKEAWAYS

OUR ROLE AS ARCHITECTS



The research shows that the creation of neighborhood cohesion, learning from the 'small-town feeling', requires a deep understanding and extensive work involving multiple social aspects. Since this feeling is partly based on social interactions and attractive public spaces, it becomes fundamental to provide spaces which people want to use. Sharing the same spaces also has an impact on the local identity of the inhabitants, generating a sense of ownership and belonging.

When implementing the research, the different aspects can be considered in regards to choice of site, program or design. Lighting and the ability to easily identify important points is a way of increasing safety by working with the design. The specific design can also connect to the history and character of a place and strengthen its identity. This can be achieved through different colors, materials or typologies that are represented in the area or are part of its character.

Other aspects, such as enhancing local engagement and having mixed functions, are more suitable to apply on the program of the project. Creating something the inhabitants can feel proud of is an important aspect to take into consideration, both through design decisions and the program. Similar to how small towns can benefit from using the image of the town as a resource attracting investments, tourists, and residents, the same could be done in urban neighborhoods. Being an attractive place for others to visit also sends out the signal to

inhabitants that they have something to be proud of, contributing to the local identity of the place. It also has benefits for the local economy. Enabling self expression is also an important aspect to consider in connection to both identity and engagement, considering the program of the project. Furthermore, to encourage activities contributing value back to the community is also important to consider regarding the program, for example through providing facilities for local businesses. Besides design and program, to carefully choose the site of the project is essential for the space to be accessible and regularly used.

On the subject of local influence and engagement, our role as architects is not to change the political structure, but what we can do is encourage a meaningful participation and a sense of shared ownership among the inhabitants. This can be done through listening and being aware of the residents' opinions and wishes in planning and decisions regarding both the site, program and design of the project. Residents can also be invited to be involved more throughout the whole process, and the project should be communicated to them clearly from start. Additionally, the architectural role can involve communicating a development plan moving forward, including what needs to be done for the project's sustainability beyond its completion. This can include identifying existing community actors or associations that can support ongoing engagement, and suggest establishment of new ones if necessary.

3.

CONTEXT

3.1 History of Tynnered

3.2 Tynnered Today

- Demographics

- Built Environment

- Spatial Integration

- Service and Culture

- Destination Tynnered

- Current Constructions and Future Plans

- Cognitive Mapping of Central Tynnered

3.3 The Inhabitants Point of View

- Municipal Surveys

- Popular and Appreciated Places

- Well-Visited Places

- Places Residents Want to Preserve

- Unsafe Spots

- Intangible Barriers

- Wishes from the Residents

3.4 Context Reflection & Choice of Site

The context chapter delves into the context of the implementation area of Tynnered in Gothenburg, and sets the ground for what and where in the neighborhood the project will be situated. It examines the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the neighborhood, as well as the challenges and opportunities it presents. The perspectives of residents are learned about through existing dialogue projects, highlighting their perceptions, preferences, and aspirations for the community.

3.1 HISTORY OF TYNNERED



Fig. 10 Illustration showing when different areas in Tynnered were constructed. Aerial images from Lantmäteriet (2023).

Tynnered is a suburban area in southwest Gothenburg, around 8 kilometers from the city center. It consisted mainly of arable land until the 20th century, before it quickly became more of a residential district during the Swedish Million Program era in the 1960s. The old cottages and agricultural properties were then replaced with car-free neighborhoods of multi-family buildings in the

east and villas in the west. Green areas between the neighborhoods were kept and outdoor sport facilities were added (Stadsbyggnadsförvaltningen Göteborgs Stad, 2017). The tram line was also extended to Opalorget at this time (Lantmäteriet, 2024). In 1970-1980, single-family villas and townhouses were added between the ridge Ängåshöjden and Näsetvägen (Göteborgs Stad, 2022).

3.2 TYNNERED TODAY

Demographics

The whole of Tynnered today has roughly 30 000 inhabitants where central Tynnered constitutes for around 17 000 of the residents (Göteborgs Stad, Avdelningen för Statistik och Analys, 2024). Tynnered stands out compared to surrounding neighborhoods in terms of demographics and socio-economic structure. The area has a lower average income, employment rate and education level than the average in Gothenburg. The southwest district as a whole, on the other hand, is above the Gothenburg average in terms of income, employment rate and education level

(Göteborgs Stad, 2022). There are big differences in terms of living conditions and tenures between central Tynnered and Tynnered as a whole. In central Tynnered, a majority of people live in rentable multi-family houses whereas people in the surrounding areas of Bratthammar, Näset and Önnered mostly live in single-family villas. The residential areas also vary, where almost 69% of the residents in Bratthammar, Näset and Önnered live on a minimum of 121 square meters. In central Tynnered, the figure is only 5.76%. (Göteborgs Stad, Avdelningen för Statistik och Analys, 2024)

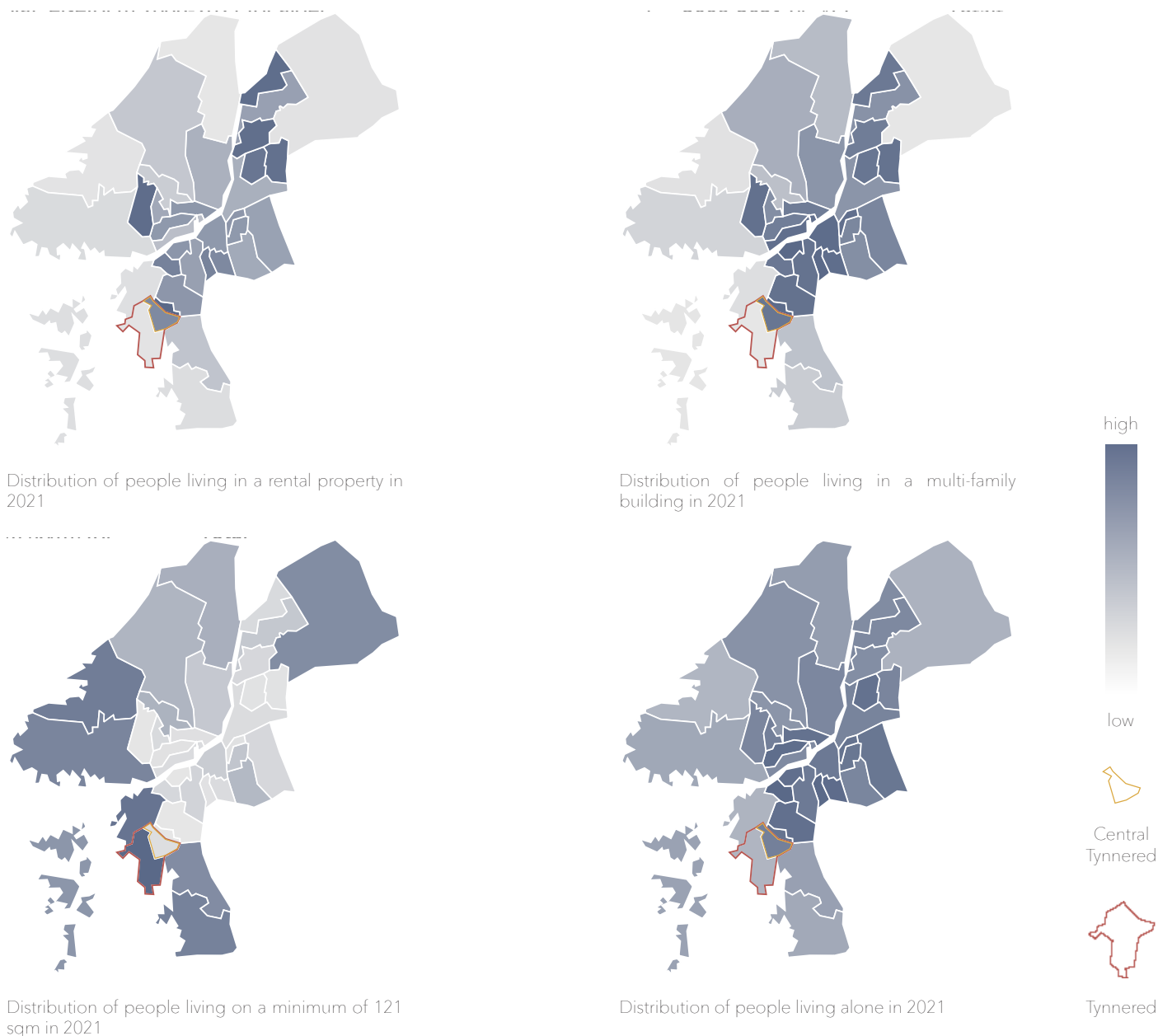


Fig. 11 Maps from Göteborgs Stad, Avdelningen för Statistik och Analys (n.d.).

Built Environment

The built environment in Tynnered today still consists of multi-family buildings, townhouses and single-family villas. The larger roads of Västerleden, Näsetvägen, Grevegårdsvägen and Skattegårdsvägen enclose central Tynnered and create physical barriers to its surrounding areas. Other physical barriers are the topography and the tram rail going through the area, with few crossings and underpasses. The shifting topography also affects the ability to navigate the area due to broken sightlines (Göteborgs Stad, 2022). The majority of the apartment blocks in Tynnered are three to four stories high and have their own courtyard with playground and seating areas. Most of these blocks are owned by Familjebostäder, Stena Fastigheter and Bostadsbolaget (Frölunda-Tynnered, n.d.).

Spatial Integration

Figure 13 shows the spatial integration of pathways in Tynnered. It is developed by analyzing the connection of different urban spaces through sightlines. The path Kastanjeallén and adjacent neighborhoods in the north-west are well integrated in the urban structure whereas parts in the south-east are separated from this network. This is mainly due to physical height barriers, roads and tram traffic as well as uncertain footpaths. (Spacescape, 2018)

Service and Culture

The commercial center in Tynnered is located around Opaltorget and Smycketorget where there are services such as supermarkets, pharmacies and pizzerias. Frölunda Torg, located just north of Tynnered, and its vast supply is considered a reason for the scarce quantity of services in Tynnered (Stadsbyggnadskontoret Göteborgs Stad, 2008). There is a cultural center by Frölunda Torg, but there is a lack of cultural activities within Tynnered. It is also emphasized by the city that Tynnered is in need of its own meeting places for residents to experience a sense of belonging and ownership (Kulturförvaltningen Göteborgs Stad, 2022).



Fig. 12 Residential buildings at Topasgatan in central Tynnered, built as part of the Swedish Million Program.

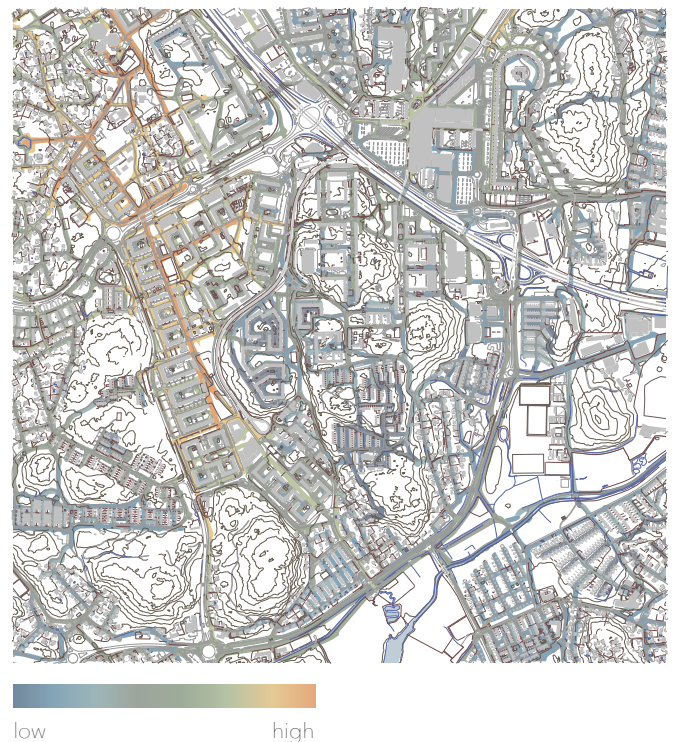


Fig. 13 Map showing the spatial integration in Tynnered. Based on data from Spacescape (2018).

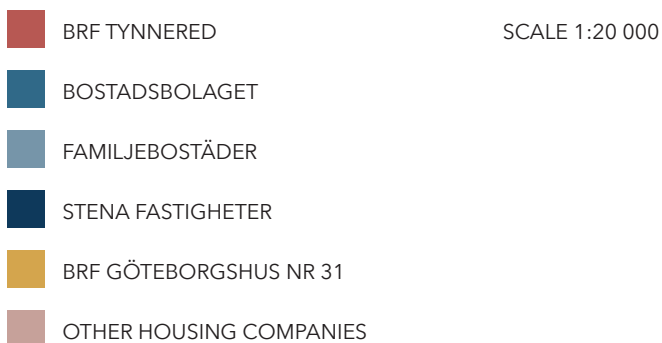
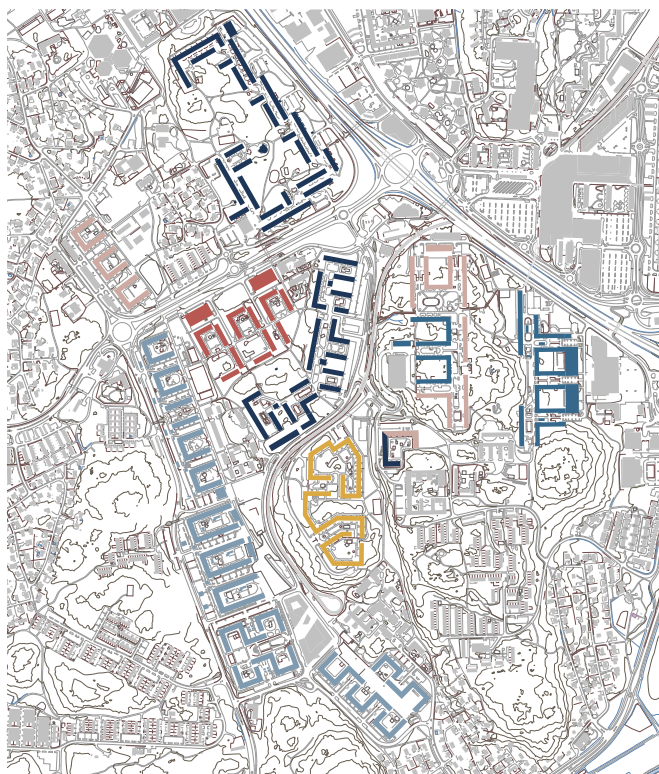


Fig. 14 Map showing housing companies in Tynnered in September 2022. Made by authors with information from Frölunda-Tynnered (n.d.).

Destination Tynnered

The initiative *Destination Tynnered* is working for a safe and sustainable Tynnered. It is a cooperation between Volvo Cars, Stena Fastigheter and Framtiden. Volvo has a socially sustainable focus on education and Stena Fastigheter develops pleasant residential areas, while Framtiden's engagement is strongly linked to combating crime and insecurity in the area. Tynnered is assessed as a risk area since 2021, after previously being considered as a particularly vulnerable area which is a higher level of vulnerability (Polismyndigheten, 2021). It is still in need of further development and the goal for the initiative is to transform Tynnered into an attractive place for its residents and for Gothenburg as a whole (iTynnered, n.d.).

Current Constructions and Future Plans

Today there are ongoing constructions in central Tynnered, of Opalorget and its surroundings along Kastanjeallén. The vision for Göteborgs Stad's project is to make Opalorget a safe and attractive space that allows for social exchange, cultural activities and recreation as well as offering various services for the people living in Tynnered (Göteborgs Stad, 2014).

Spacescape has, at the request of Framtiden, developed a scenario in Tynnered where they add around 5000 dwellings at different locations. Most of them are located along Skattegårdsvägen and Grevegårdsvägen, where there is empty space adjacent to the roads. In their scenario, the main streets are being redesigned into a smaller scale which benefits bicycles and pedestrians. Their suggestion also adds parks and green areas along existing central pathways (Spacescape, 2018). Kastanjeallén is an important pedestrian path which Göteborgs Stad wishes to make more accessible. In line with Spacescape, they also suggest changing Skattegårdsvägen into a more urban street with safer crossings, but the tunnel under Skattegårdsvägen is planned to be retained. They suggest adding activities there and along Kastanjeallén in general to increase the liveliness of the pathway. (Göteborgs Stad, 2022)



Fig. 15 Spacescape's suggestion for the redesign into urban streets (Spacescape, 2018).

Cognitive Mapping of Central Tynnered

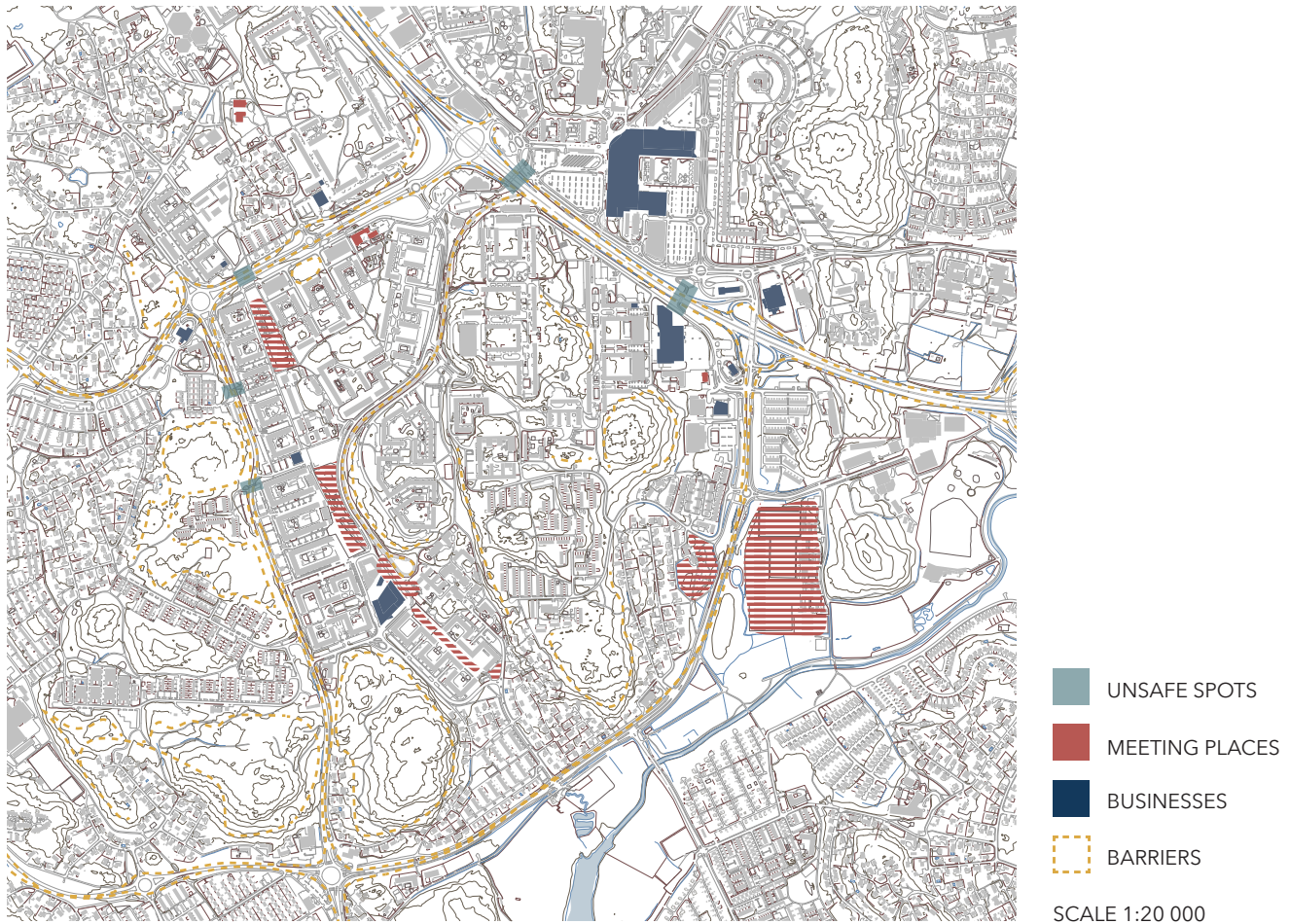


Fig. 16 Map showing cognitive mapping of Tynnered.

Tynnered was visited at two separate occasions for cognitive mapping, first time in September and second in February. Both times were during daytime, on a weekday, which are similar circumstances to the site visits to Alingsås and neighborhoods of Gothenburg and Berlin.

Noticeable when comparing Tynnered to the other places analyzed is that far fewer people move around the area. People move from the tram stop to their homes, maybe they stop by the grocery store at Opalorget or Smycketorget on their way. The people met during the visits appeared to be on their way somewhere. Very few people seemed to be just strolling around.

The roads around the area, and the tramline through it, were evident as barriers which are difficult to cross. There are tunnels for pedestrians and cyclists, but these are problematic from a safety point of view due to the obscured visibility. The topography as

a barrier was also noticeable, with narrow winding walkways up the hills, even less accessible during winter.

The businesses located in Tynnered are not really adapted for the area and its inhabitants. Large retail chains located next to Västerleden, by big parking lots and difficult to reach by foot, rather exist for the motorists passing on Västerleden. The new business premises around Opalorget is an exception to this, but there is still a lack of local businesses providing services and activities in the neighborhood.

There are not a lot of common meeting places in central Tynnered. Ängås Trädgård, a community garden, and some sports fields like Vålensvallen and Gothia Arena are examples of places found. The path along Kastanjeallén is being developed with the intention of creating new meeting places, mostly consisting of the new park Opalparken with a lot of play areas aimed for younger children.

3.3 THE INHABITANTS POINT OF VIEW

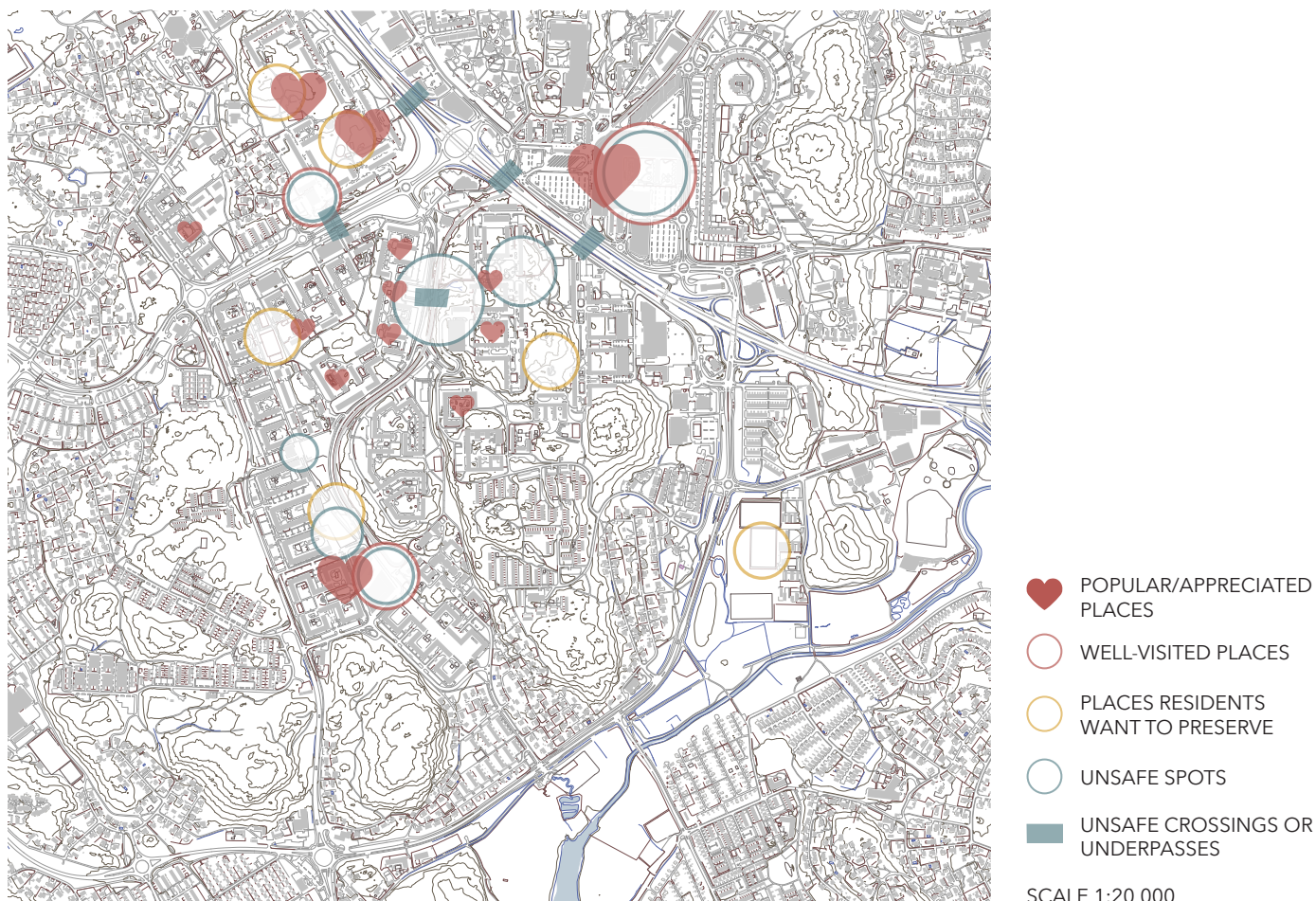


Fig. 17 Map showing Inhabitants of Tynnered's point of view, based on *Dialog Tynnered* (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023).

Municipal Surveys

A survey was conducted in 2023 with residents of Tynnered, in which 590 individuals aged 13 to 90+ participated. The findings from this survey have been compiled in the report titled *Dialog Tynnered* (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023).

Another dialogue project was conducted during 2021 and 2022, commissioned by Göteborgs Stad. The project is called *Hej Tynnered* and it aims to understand Tynnered from the perspectives of children and youth. Five school classes from grades 5 to 9, and two after-school groups aged 11-18, participated in the project. (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022)

Popular and Appreciated Places

Dialog Tynnered shows that Frölunda Torg and Opaltorget are often pointed out as places that residents appreciate during daytime. Generally, the residential courtyards are appreciated and used by the residents. The homely atmosphere is mentioned as a reason, with comments like "nice environment", "home" and "I live here and spend a lot of time here" (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023, p.12, own translation). Places that residents appreciate in the evening have considerably fewer markings and seem to be mostly associated with the home environment. (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023)

Many of the places highlighted in this section have also been mentioned and commented on in

response to the question about “places that can be improved”. This could be interpreted as residents appreciating these places while simultaneously seeing potential for improvement. (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023)

Well-Visited Places

It is clear that during daytime, Frölunda Torg is the most visited place by the inhabitants of Tynnered, followed by Opaltorget and Smycketorget. The residents go there mainly to do everyday shopping, but it is also a meeting point for walking, exercising and playing, and for walking to school or work. The number of places visited by residents in the evening is considerably fewer. (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023)

The kids also point out the courtyards as where they spend a lot of time. Although, it appears they use their own courtyard, but not the one belonging to the adjacent building unless you know someone there or have business there. “We stay where we live. What would I do on someone else’s courtyard?” (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022, p.17, own translation). There are few restaurants in the area but they sometimes go to McDonalds by Topas or to restaurants at Frölunda Torg. In summer, the different ball courts in the area are popular. The nature reserve and the cow pasture at Välen is also appreciated and the kids do excursions there sometimes. During winter or rainy days, there are significantly fewer places for the kids to spend their free time. (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022)

Places Residents Want to Preserve

Of the places identified by the residents that they want to preserve, 42% are green areas. The most prominent locations are Smyckeparken and Smyckegården. Other places that the residents value are the soccer field along Kastanjeallén and Välen. (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023)

Unsafe Spots

Several places are being pointed out as places residents would like to use but avoid, mainly in the evening. Primarily, these are the over- and underpasses in the area, and those over and under Västerleden. They are described as unsafe, insecure, dark and narrow. Opaltorget and Smycketorget are

also frequently pointed out. Again, poor lighting is mentioned, as well as fear of crime. (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023)

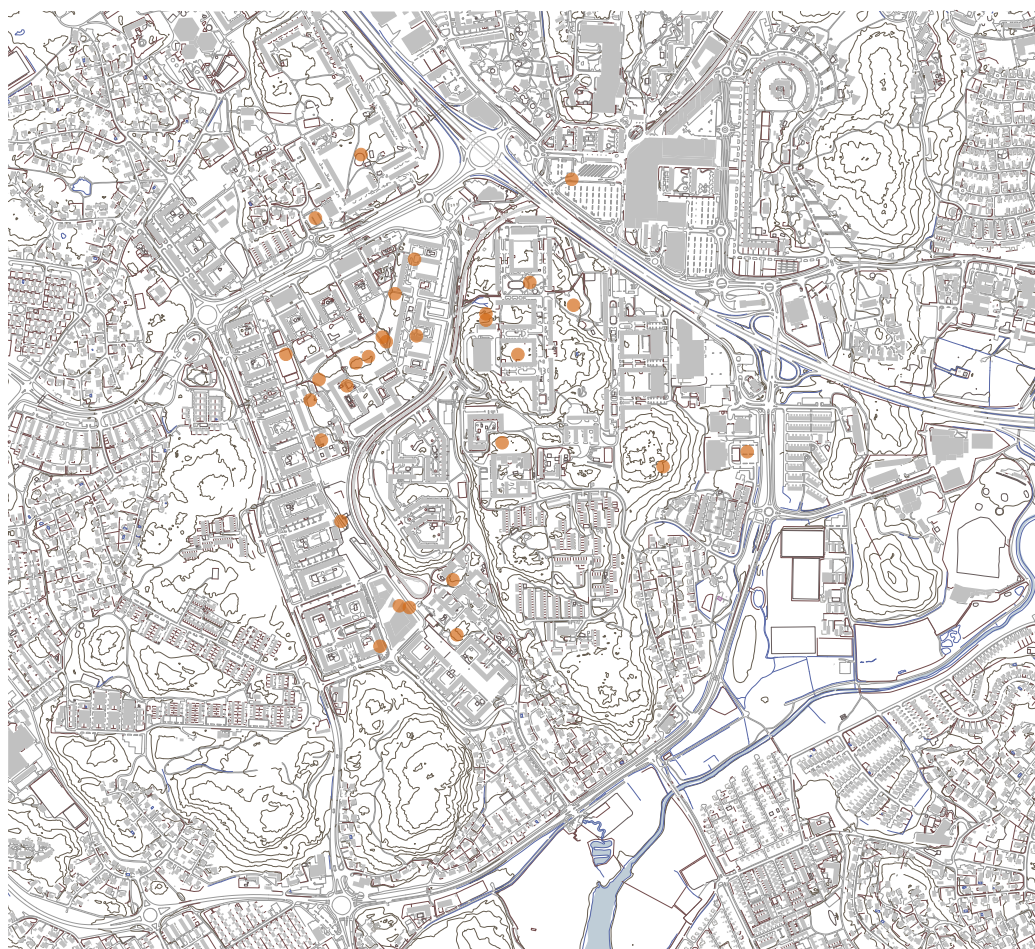
Kastanjeallén is described as long, dark and unsafe. It appears lush and beautiful in the summer but feels threatening in the dark. Parts of the road are also, as many others in the area, lacking adequate lighting. (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022)

The places mentioned as most unsafe are also locations connected to public transportation or passages to adjacent neighborhoods. This not only restricts freedom of movement within Tynnered, but also to other parts of the city. (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023)

Intangible Barriers

There seems to be a mental barrier between the million program area in central Tynnered and the single-family housing areas in the adjacent neighborhoods, together constituting the whole of Tynnered. The children from central Tynnered testify to a clear sense of ‘Us and Them’. Us, who live in the apartment buildings with the inner courtyards, and Them, who live over there, on the other side. “We don’t go there. That’s where the rich, white people live.” (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022, p.17, own translation)

There is a similar feeling of segregation towards Frölunda, which, like Tynnered, mostly consists of million-program housing. Frölunda feels close, but it is still a different place which belongs to somebody else. Some testify that residents in Frölunda do not think the children from Tynnered belong there. The children from Tynnered express a sense of inequity over the fact that Frölunda has a lot more function and services than Tynnered. “Everything is over there, that Frölunda has everything, and that there’s nothing in Tynnered.” (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022, p.18, own translation)



● WISH FOR MEETING PLACES

SCALE 1:20 000

Fig. 18 Map showing where the residents wish for more meeting places and social life, according to *Dialog Tynnered* (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023).

Wishes from the Residents

To the question of “what is missing in Tynnered?”, the most common answer is meeting places and social life. The residents wish for places where they can meet friends, play or enjoy culture. Cafés and restaurants are placed high on the wish list. The area around the residential courtyards on Smaragd-gatan and Turkosgatan is frequently pointed out as a suggestion to where outdoor meeting spots could be implemented. (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023)

A Youth Center is also a popular suggestion in both surveys (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023) (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022). The children clarify that they miss a place like Tyrolen by Tynneredsskolan,

a youth center that closed down about two years earlier due to inadequate premises (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022), after being a part of Tynnered for over 40 years (P4 Göteborg, 2017).

The children in the area express a frustration over lack of information or participation when decisions are being made about their neighborhood. They have a feeling that they are not being heard or taken seriously. Examples of situations where places have been claimed, for new developments like housing or a school yard, without warning are being mentioned. (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022)

3.4 CONTEXT REFLECTION & CHOICE OF SITE

Reflections on the compiled context research:

- The residents like their courtyards, but a meeting place on a larger scale where neighbors from different houses can meet seems to be missing.
- The neighborhood has both physical and mental barriers between the residents.
- Many places feel dark and unsafe, for example Kastanjeallén. A lack of adequate lighting is part of the problem. There are also many unsafe crossings and underpasses.
- Businesses are car-centric and difficult to reach by foot.
- The new development along Kastanjeallén is a step in the right direction, but we are critical of its scope. Extending the path further would connect the Million Program areas to the villa areas, which we see as a missed opportunity. Additionally, we are concerned about the lack of diversity in the choice of activities.
- Specific wishes from residents:
 - Meeting places
 - Café
 - Culture
 - Activities for youths

The site circled below is the one we choose for the implementation of our research.

Why?

- Today it is an unused place, a wide underpass under Skattegårdsvägen. Turning this space into an attractive place to be could have a big impact on the surroundings.
- The site has great potential as it is situated on a strip of parks and other types of meeting places.
- The chosen site is already physically accessible and well spatially integrated, giving us the opportunity to focus on bridging the mental barriers.
- The chosen site is located in between a million program area and an area with single-family villas, which increases its potential to become a shared public space for different social groups.
- Whilst the site is not specifically pointed out as a place where residents wish for meeting places, a pattern can be seen that the residents often point out unused spaces in between and around their courtyards. This is the case for the chosen site as well, and we believe a meeting place situated here would fulfill the needs expressed by the residents even better.



Fig. 19 Map showing the choice of site in Tynnered, and pictures from it.

4.

DESIGN STRATEGIES

4.1 Base for Design Decisions

4.2 Presenting the Program & its Qualities

This chapter presents the bridge between the theory and context research and the design implementation. Strategies for designing are presented and discussed in relation to the research objectives. It explores how architectural design can address the identified challenges and opportunities within the context, with a focus on fostering local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement.

4.1 BASE FOR DESIGN DECISIONS

When implementing the research in the design project, the aspects found to be important to consider are mixed functions, greenery and water sources, representation and heritage, public art and enhancing local engagement as well as safety, accessibility and providing a spatial framework. By incorporating and working with these elements, the local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement can be strengthened

and contribute to the feeling of neighborhood cohesion.

To increase the impact of the project, it is also important to consider the implementation site and what is needed in the area. Choosing a site which is accessible for all target groups allows the project to influence their shared public spaces and how they meet their neighbors.

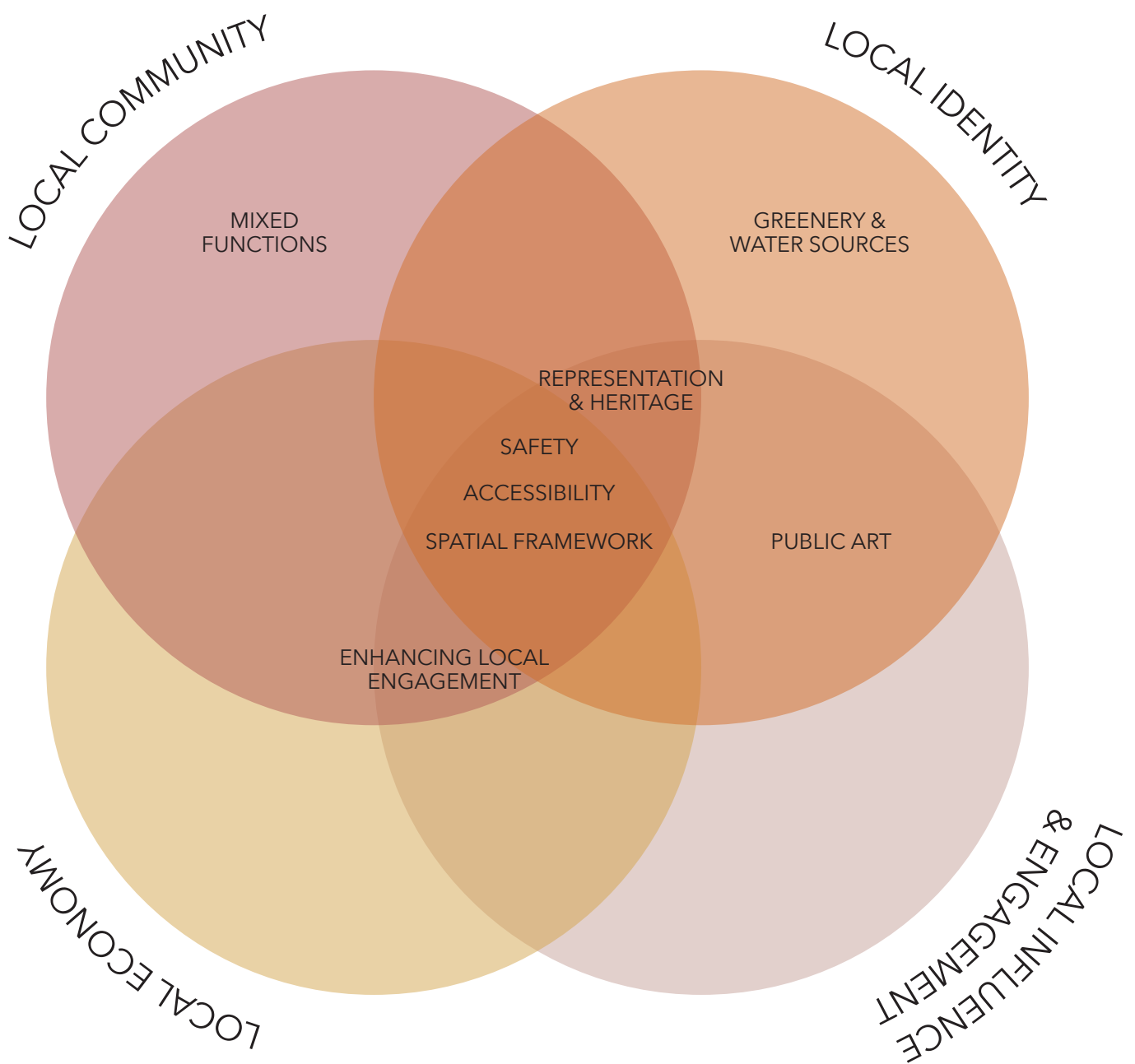


Fig. 20 Diagram of 'small-town' aspects and architectural working methods to achieve a 'small-town feeling'.

4.2 PRESENTING THE PROGRAM & ITS QUALITIES



LIGHTHOUSE VIEWPOINT

Cherish heritage and enhance pride, through artistic expression and serving as an attractor. Providing base prerequisites through overview and light design.



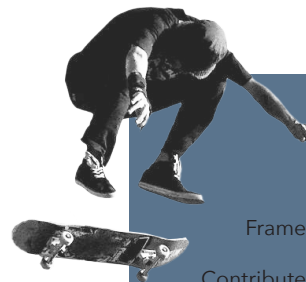
CAFÉ

Wish from residents of Tynnered. Providing a third place. Encouraging local businesses & entrepreneurs.



CO-WORK SPACE

Contributes to mixed ages, targeting working-age adults. Active during all hours.



SKATE PARK

Framework encouraging appropriation and social engagement. Contributes to mixed ages, targeting youth. Providing a third place.



GARDEN

Framework encouraging appropriation and social engagement. Contributes to mixed ages, targeting elderly. Providing a third place.



PARTICIPATORY ART

Framework encouraging appropriation and social engagement. Enabling self-expression. Showcasing history and identity.



GALLERY

Wish for culture from residents of Tynnered. Enabling self-expression. Showcasing history and identity.



CULTURE SCENE

Wish for culture from residents of Tynnered. Enabling self-expression. Cherish heritage and enhance pride. Framework encouraging appropriation and social engagement.

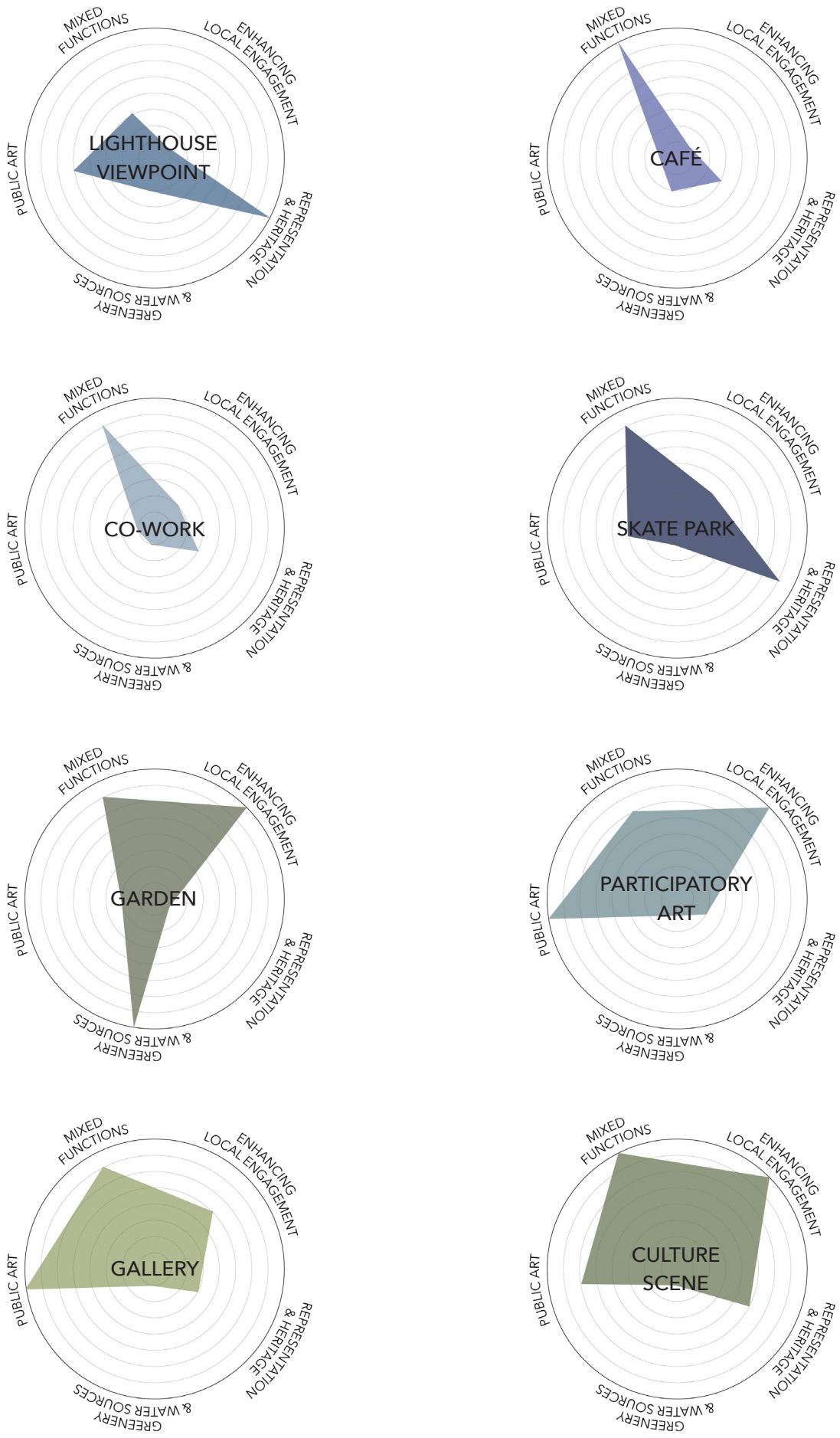


Fig. 21 Diagrams showing the program’s connection to the aspects found to generate a ‘small-town feeling’.

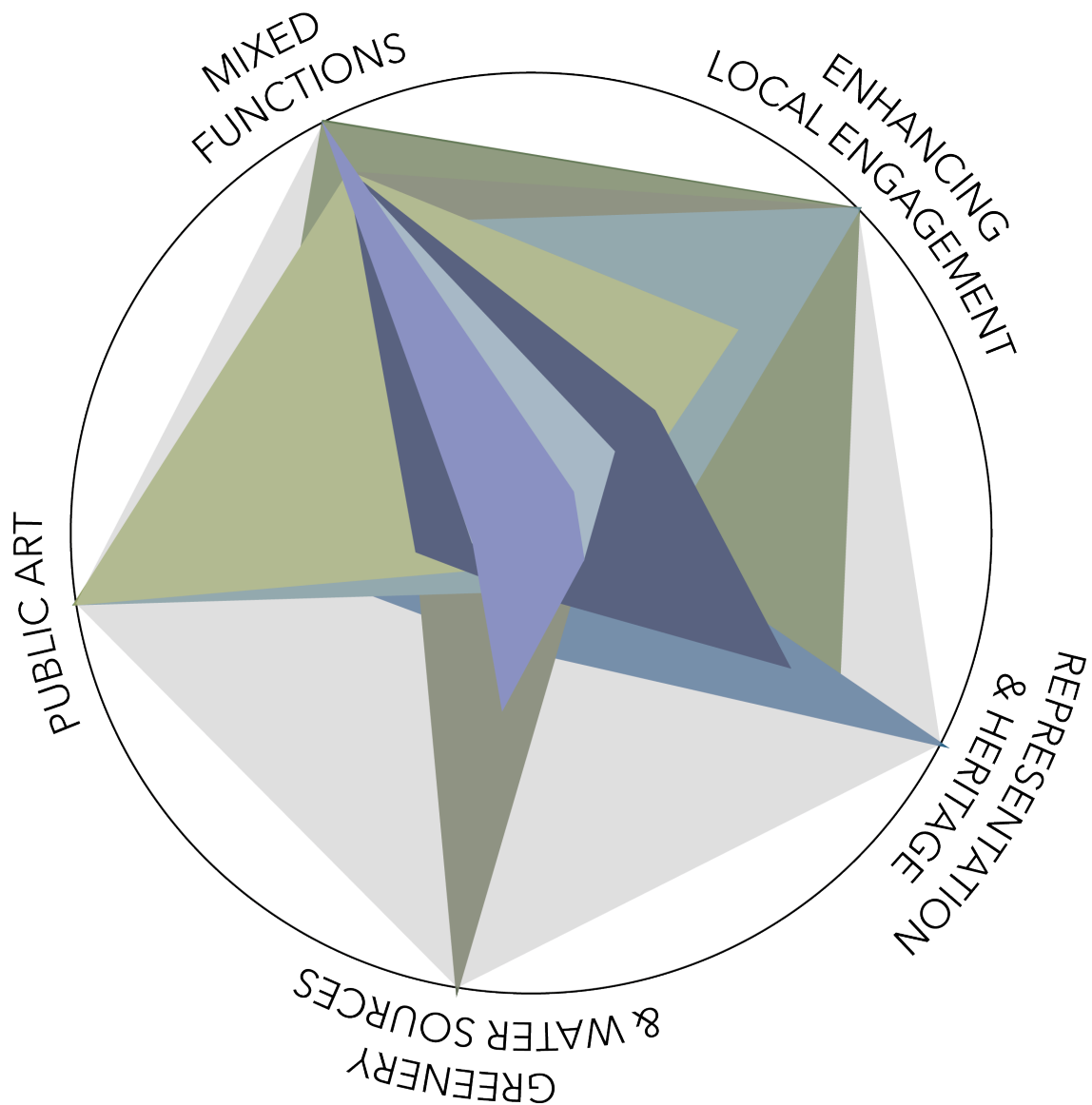


Fig. 22 Diagram showing the program's overall connection to the aspects found to generate neighborhood cohesion.

The program for the project consists of a lighthouse viewpoint, café, skate park, co-work space, garden, participatory art, gallery and culture scene. Different parts of the program fulfill different aspects and by combining them on site, they achieve all aspects found to be important when striving for neighborhood cohesion. It is a mix of indoor and outdoor functions as well as activities targeting various ages to make the place active during all hours of the

day, and during different weather conditions. More active features, such as the skate park, are located alongside recreational areas to create a dynamic place attractive to all. This mix of functions also makes people with varied interests use the same public space which allows them to meet through chance encounters, and gives them a collective meaning by sharing the space.



5.

DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Site Analysis

5.2 Design Concepts & Tools

Common Yard

Integrated Light

Local Materials

5.3 Design Elements

Lighthouse Viewpoint

Café

Co-Work Space

Skate Park

Garden

Participatory Art

Gallery

Culture Scene

5.4 Setting the Game Plan

5.5 Design Tests

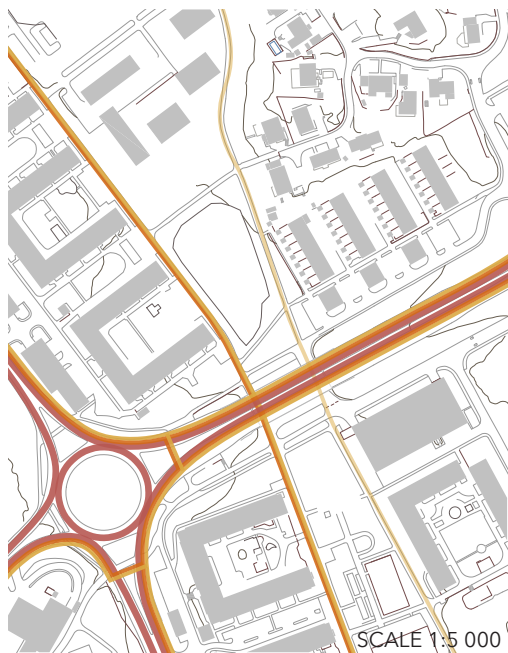
5.6 Design Proposal: *Common Yard*

5.7 The Future of *Common Yard*

The design implementation chapter contains the practical application of the design strategies. It describes how these strategies are translated into actual design interventions or solutions for the chosen site or project area. Different options are tested and evaluated, culminating in a design proposal. A development plan is also suggested for the design proposal to become self-driven and sustain long-term.

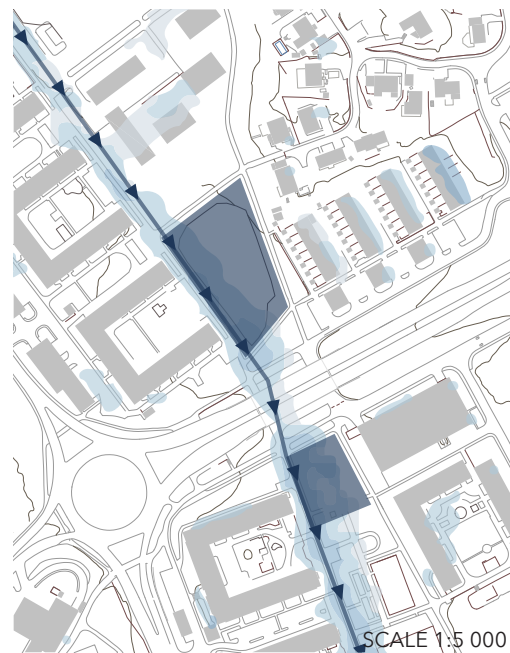
5.1 SITE ANALYSIS

Circulation



- MAIN PEDESTRIAN
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN
- BIKE
- CAR

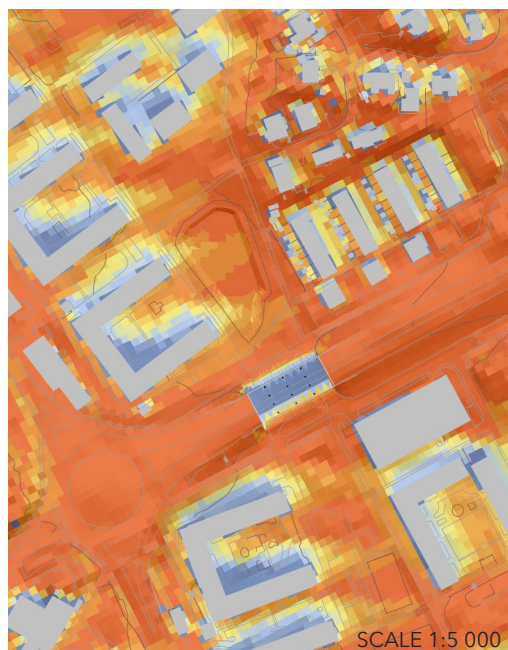
Water Management



- WATER MASS DURING RAINFALL
- WATER RETENTION SURFACE
- WATER DISTRIBUTION LINE

Illustration based on water management strategy of Göteborgs Stad (Göteborgs Stad, n.d.).

Sun Hours



AMOUNT OF SUN HOURS (MARCH 21)



Future Scenario



- URBAN STREET
- SPORT FACILITIES
- BUILDABLE LAND
- PARKS

Illustration based on Spacescape's development scenario (Spacescape, 2018).

5.2 DESIGN CONCEPTS & TOOLS

Common Yard

The courtyards in central Tynnered are appreciated by residents and appear to function effectively as intended, offering a small scaled mix of meeting places for the residents around it, with things such as small playgrounds and barbecue areas. Drawing inspiration from this model, our project introduces the concept of the *Common Yard* - a larger scaled meeting place shared among all residents around the neighborhood.



Integrated Light



23.



24.



25.

Fig. 23-25 Pictures from reference projects with integrated light design, and sketch of our interpretation (fig. 25).

Fig. 23: Museum Park of The Polytechnic Museum / Wowhaus (Annenkov, n.d.).

Fig. 24: Maison Hermés, night view (Denancé, n.d.).

Based on research regarding safety aspects in Tynnered and surveys showing lack of adequate lighting, light is integrated throughout the design elements. Glass blocks are used for certain facades and design elements, to create a warm atmosphere around and under the bridge. Lighting will be integrated throughout the whole design, also including the outdoor activities such as the skate park, culture scene and graffiti wall.

Local Materials

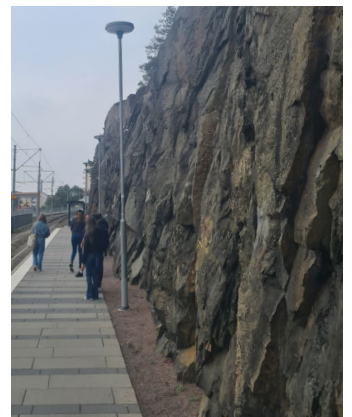


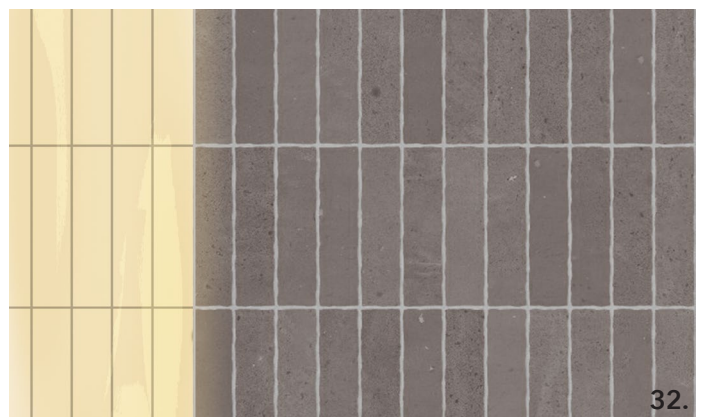
Fig. 26-29 Local materials of Tynnered.



30.



31.



32.

Fig. 30-32 References showing an interpretation of how the local materials of Tynnered can be represented in the project design materials. Fig. 30: Comedor Restaurant (Olson Kundig, n.d.).

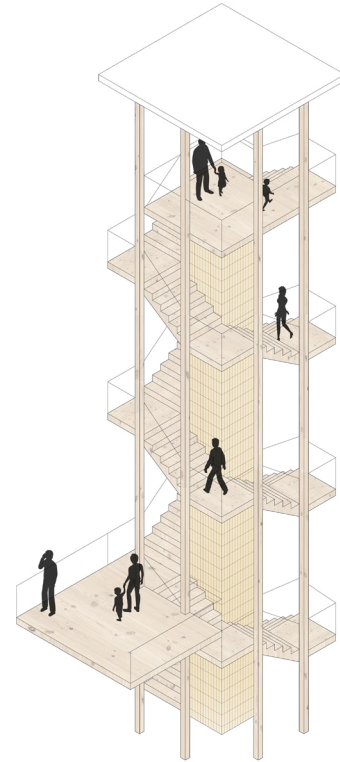
Drawing inspiration from surrounding nature and materials, design materials are chosen to connect the new design to the local character of Tynnered, with a contemporary interpretation.

5.3 DESIGN ELEMENTS

Lighthouse Viewpoint

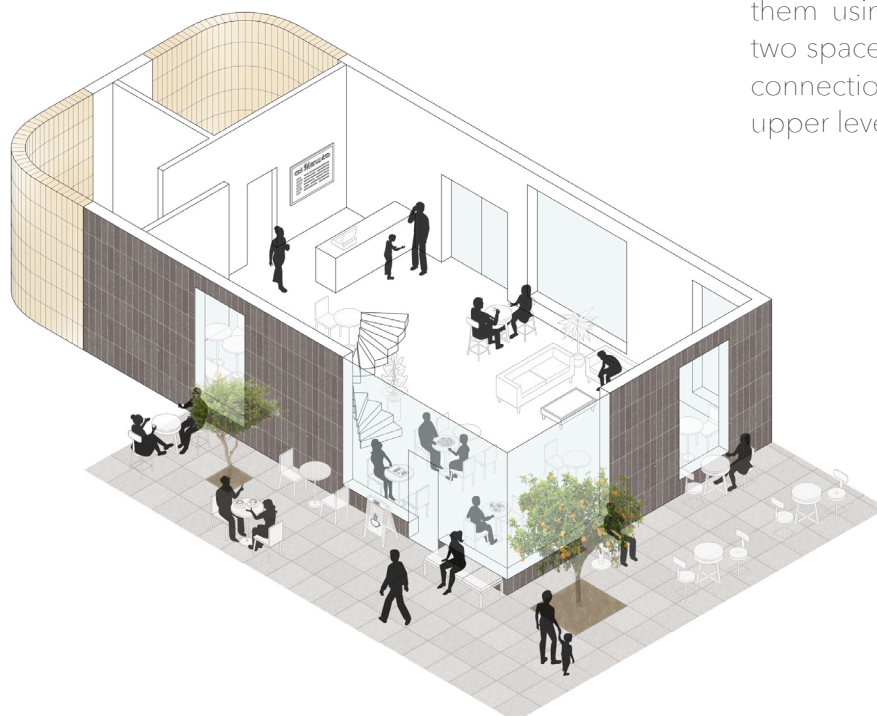
The lighthouse viewpoint helps to create a more safe public space by integrating a core of light which illuminates the place at all times. A viewpoint reaching up marks it as a site of events, welcoming visitors to the site and facilitating its localization.

The design connects to the identity of Tynnered, as a coastal area, as it incorporates visual features of lighthouses by the sea. The light structure creates an approachable expression and the openness adds to good visibility through the viewpoint and thereby also to safety.



Café

The café has the main function of bringing people here at different times of the day and independent of interests or age. It was also a specific wish from the residents of Tynnered as something they are missing in the neighborhood. The outdoor seating extends the café to the outside spaces during warmer days.



On the facade under the bridge, glass blocks are used to create a warm atmosphere, and for the building volumes to serve as gigantic lamps lighting up the space. The corners on this side are rounded to appear more soft and welcoming.

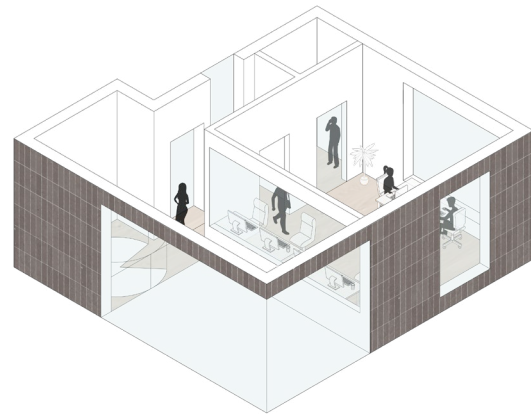
The café is located in the same space as the co-work premises and it is possible to move between them using the indoor staircase. To connect the two spaces further, there is a void creating a visual connection between the people working on the upper level and the café visitors below.

Co-Work Space

The co-work space contributes to mixed functions and has the main purpose of bringing people to the place during all hours of the day. It is also a way of encouraging local businesses and entrepreneurs by providing a space for flexible work.

The co-work space is located adjacent to the café for the two spaces to benefit from each other. It makes the space more lively and increases the possibility of it being used at all hours. The visual connection between the café and the co-work space allows workers to be part of the vibrancy of the café, while people having a coffee get a more dynamic experience as well.

The combined volume of the co-work space and the café has dark gray bricks as a way of representing the local materials of Tynnered. This helps the space to connect to the identity of the area and strengthen the character of the place.

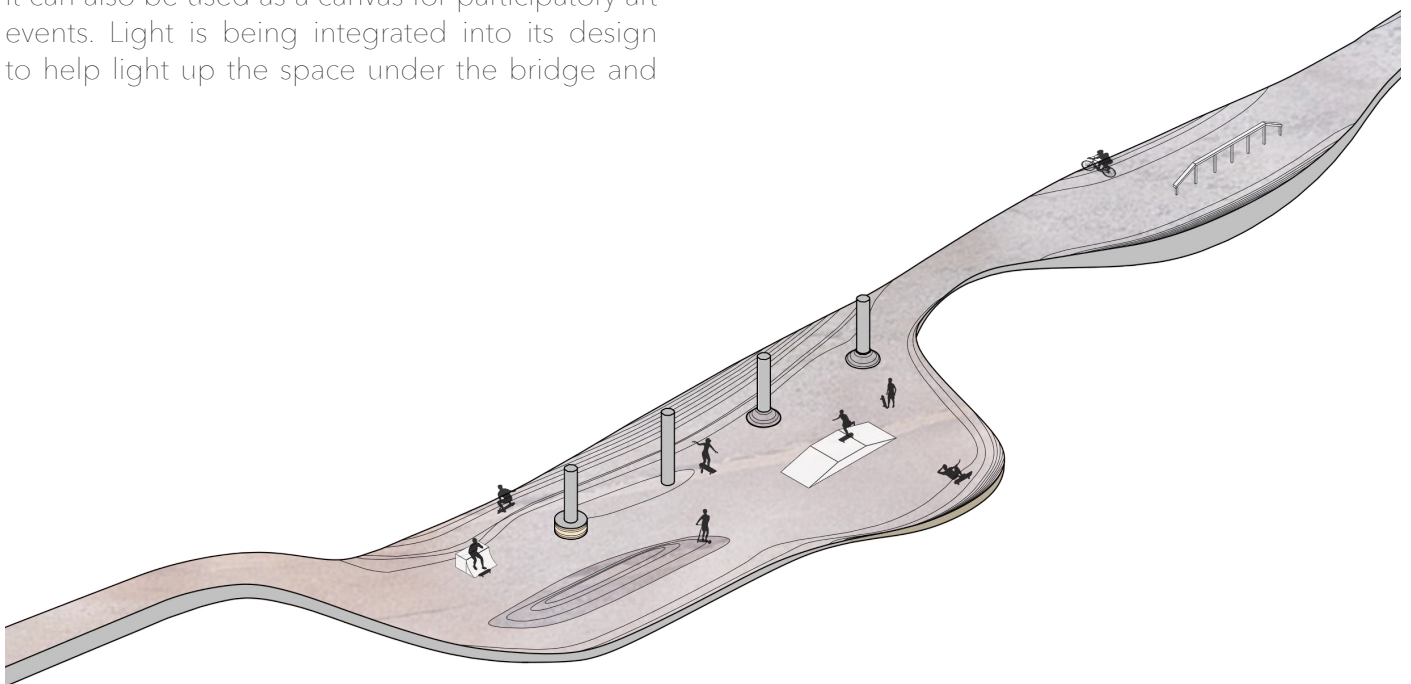


Skate Park

Skating is an activity targeting a wide age-span within the younger generation. The skate park is a place for leisure and has the ability to engage people walking by.

The design of the skate park resembles cliffs by the sea to connect to Tynnered's identity and heritage. It can also be used as a canvas for participatory art events. Light is being integrated into its design to help light up the space under the bridge and

along Kastanjeallén. The shape of the skate park is adapted to being able to handle large amounts of water during heavy rainfalls, since there is a water distribution line crossing the site, and the skate park is partly located on a water retention surface.



Garden

The garden is a way of implementing a collective activity, which engages the residents, into the program of the project as well as adding greenery to the space. It is also something for the residents to care for which contributes to a sense of belonging to the place and sharing it with others can give rise to a community feeling.

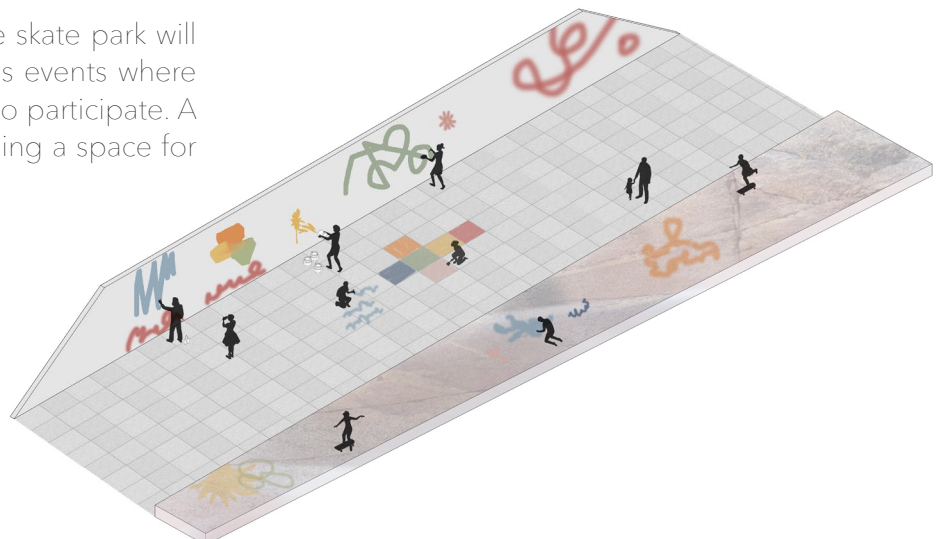
The garden is divided into several planter boxes organized around a shared hose which increases the probability of chance encounters. The residents also have access to a common tool shed where they can share various equipment. Taking advantage of the water retention area located adjacent to the planter boxes, the rainwater can be collected and reused for the gardens.



Participatory Art

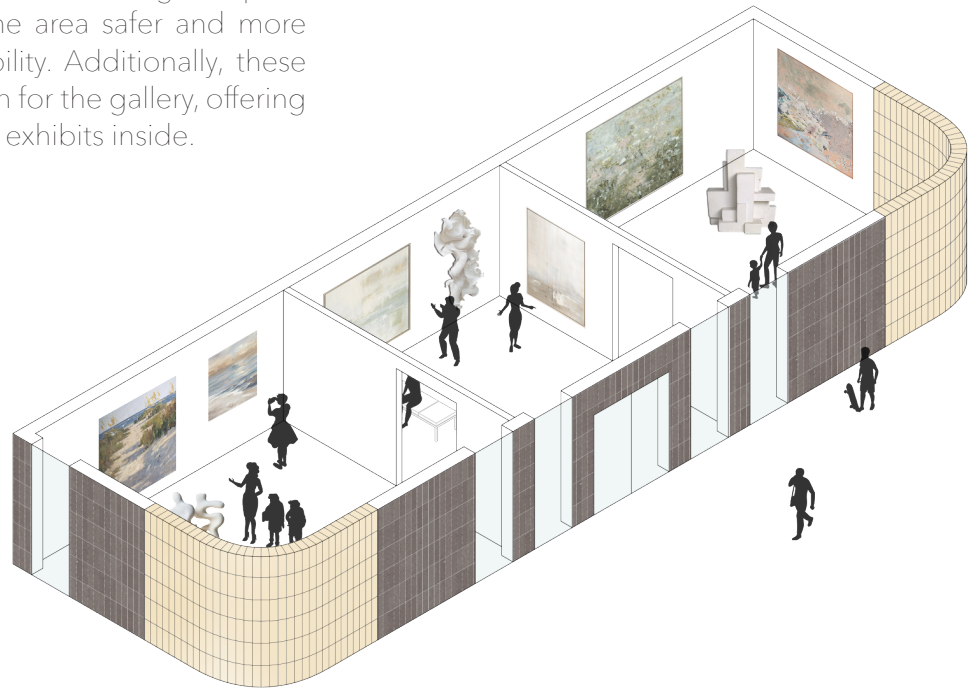
Participatory art is part of the program to add a collective activity that contributes with culture and public art. It enables self-expression while engaging people from several age groups. The art is also a way for the residents to create an identity for the place.

The streets around the site and the skate park will be used as canvases during various events where residents and others are welcome to participate. A graffiti wall complements by providing a space for creativity at all times.



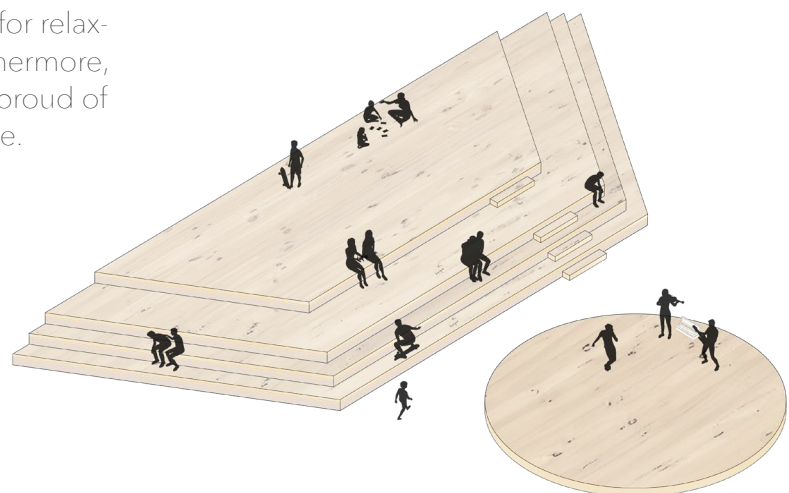
Gallery

The gallery serves as a meeting place where the identity and history of Tynnered can be showcased and expressed. Similar to the café design, glass blocks form rounded corners, casting a warm light under the bridge both when the gallery is occupied and when it is not. Large windows facing the space under the bridge make the area safer and more appealing, increasing visibility. Additionally, these windows act as an attraction for the gallery, offering passersby a glimpse of the exhibits inside.



Culture Scene

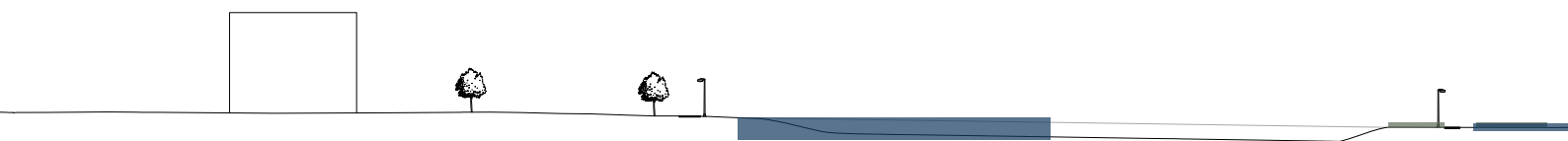
A culture scene is a way to allow people to express themselves while it engages people walking by or staying to watch a performance. An open and socially constructed set of stairs invites the audience to enjoy the show, but it can also be used for relaxation and socializing at other times. Furthermore, culture is something the residents can be proud of which adds to the local identity of the place.



5.4 SETTING THE GAME PLAN



PROGRAM PLAN | SCALE 1:1000



PROGRAM SECTION | SCALE 1:1000

GARDEN



PARTICIPATORY ART



GALLERY



CULTURE SCENE



FRÖLUNDA TORG

TRAM STOP

EXISTING OUTDOOR SPORT FACILITIES

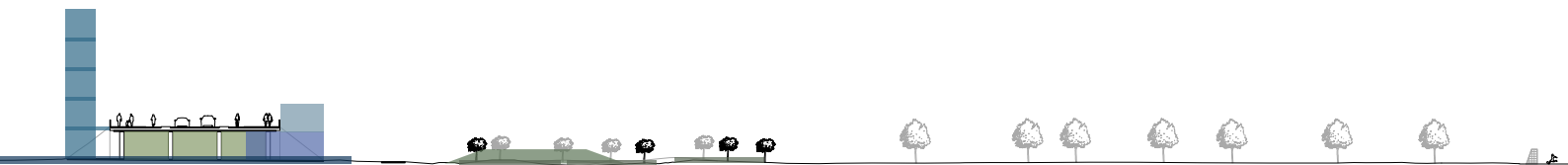
OPALTORGET

ÖNNERED & THE COAST



PEDESTRIAN

BIKE

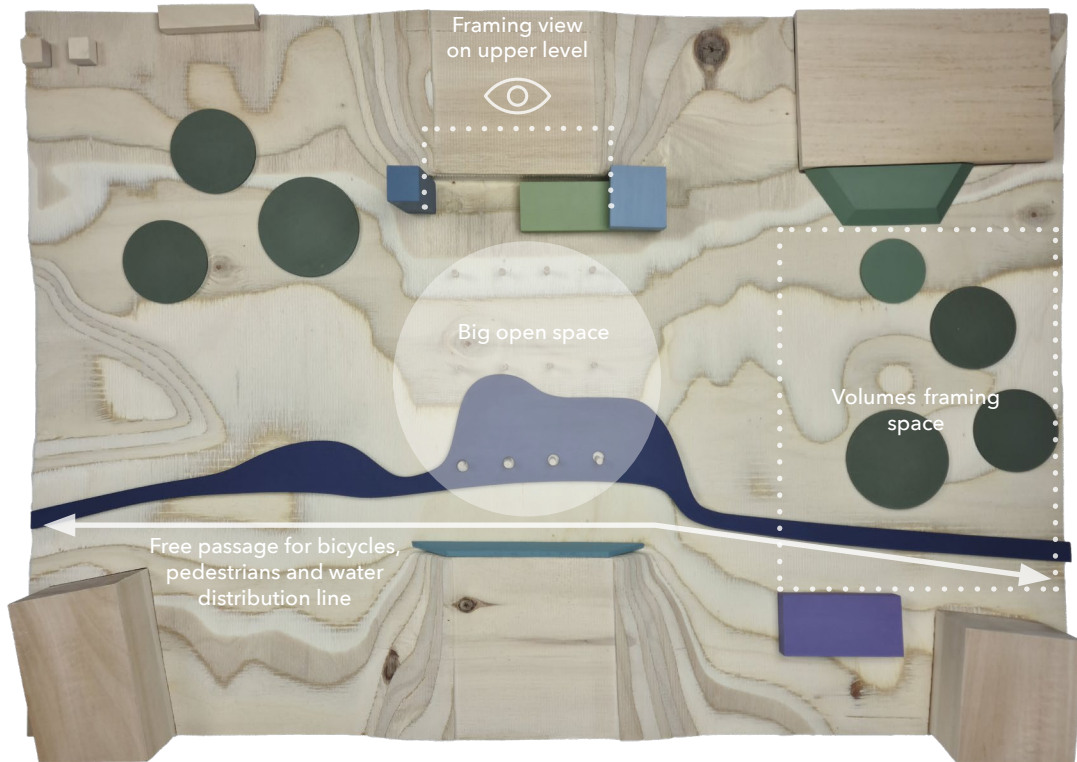


5.5 DESIGN TESTS

Evaluation Criteria

- Space for each activity
- Integration between activities
- Framed views, spaces and functions
- Strategy for water management
- Circulation promoting accessibility
- Generally a welcoming space

Test 1



Test 2

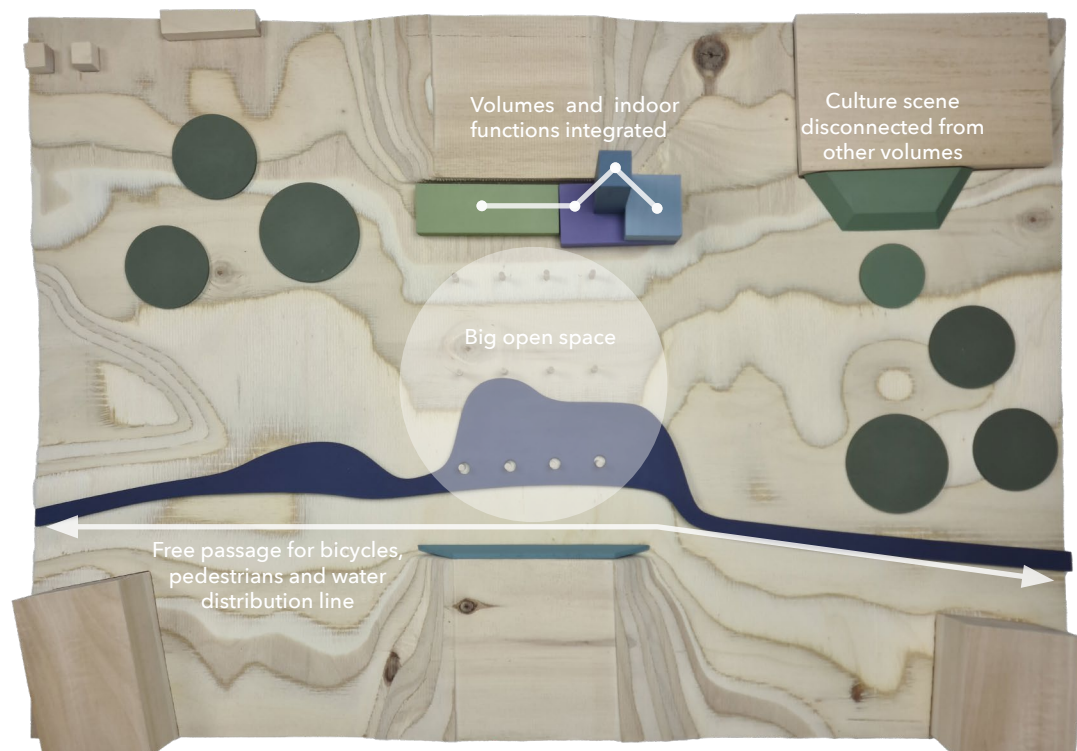




Fig. 33 Sketch of design test, illustrating space under bridge.

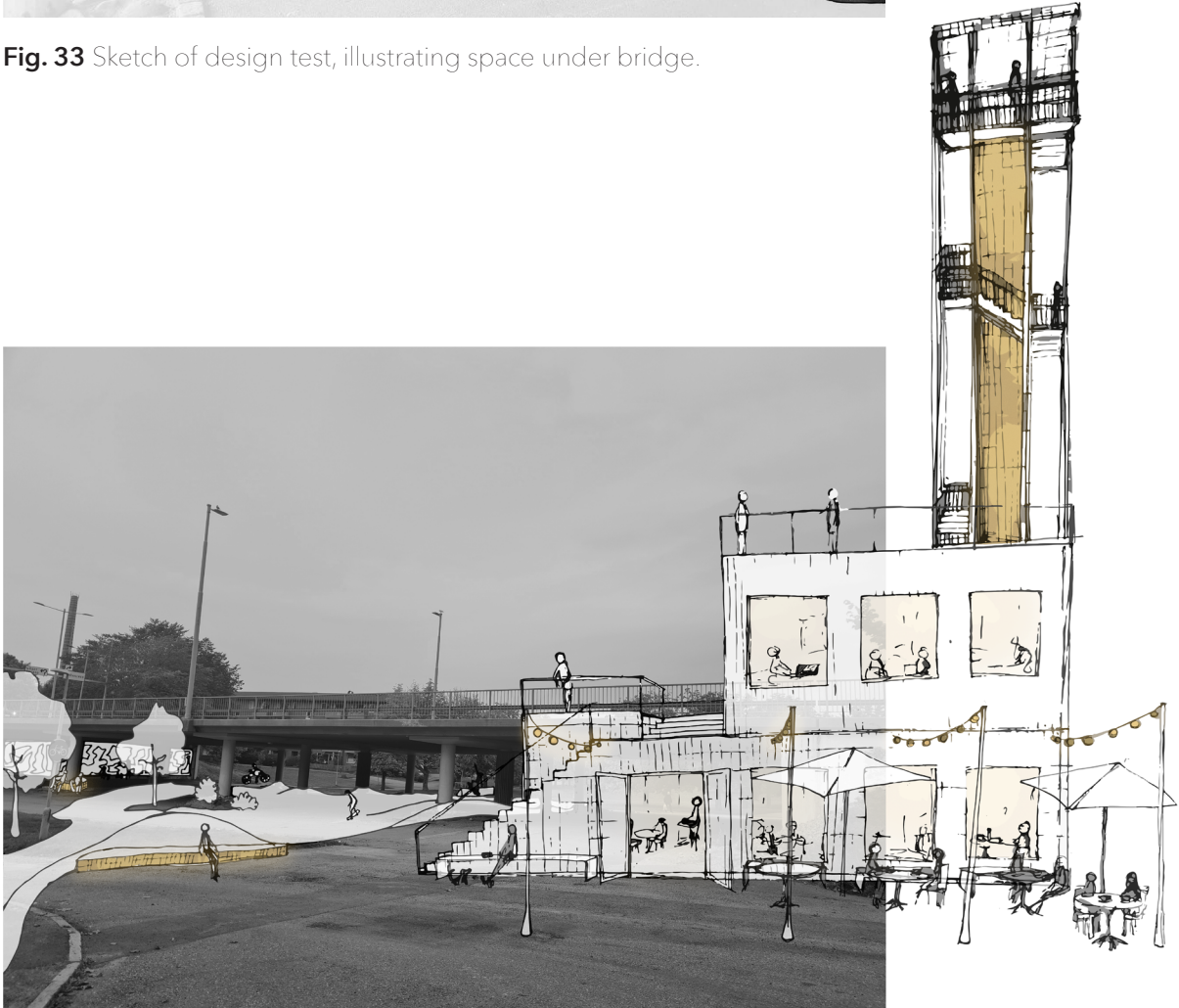
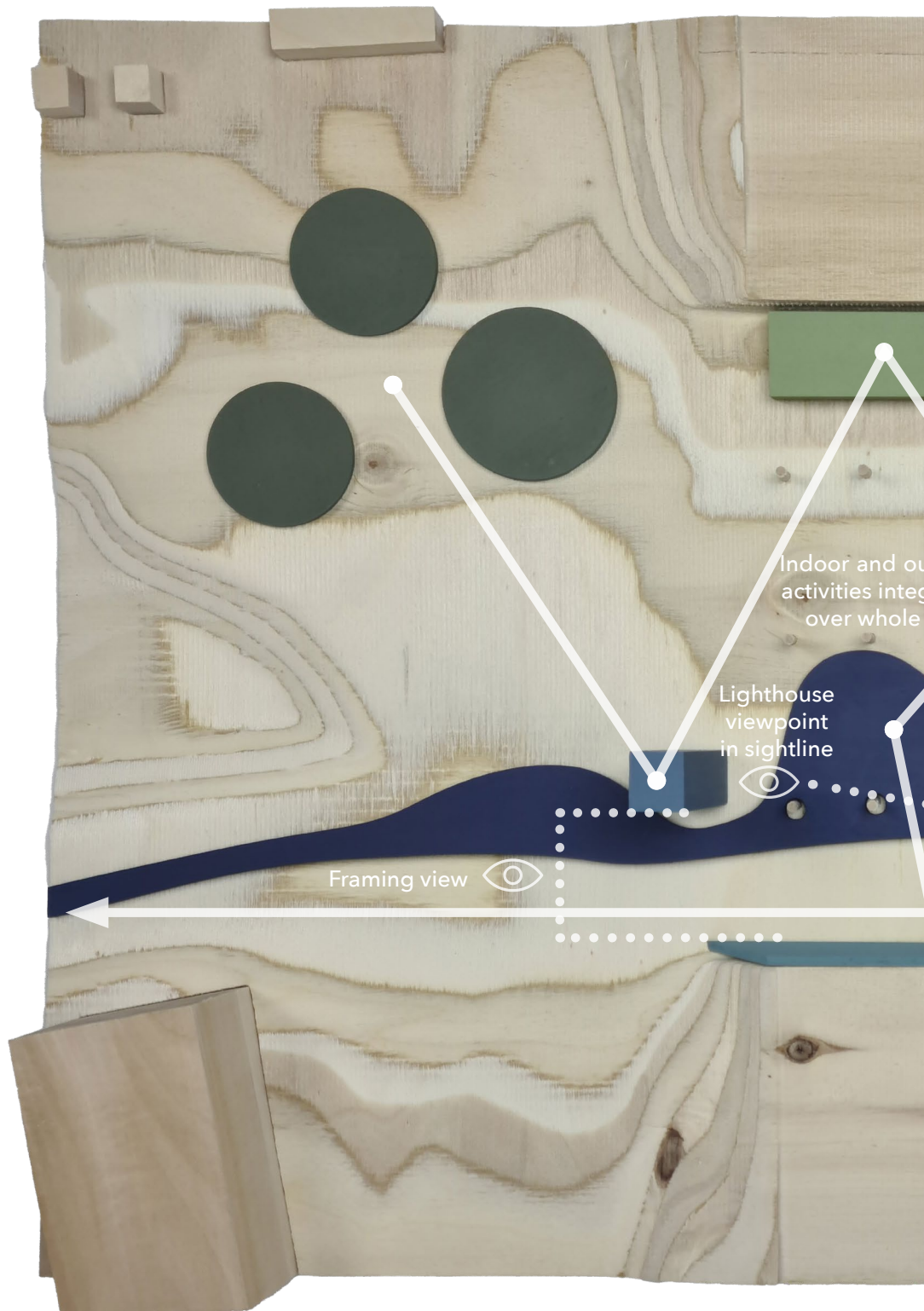
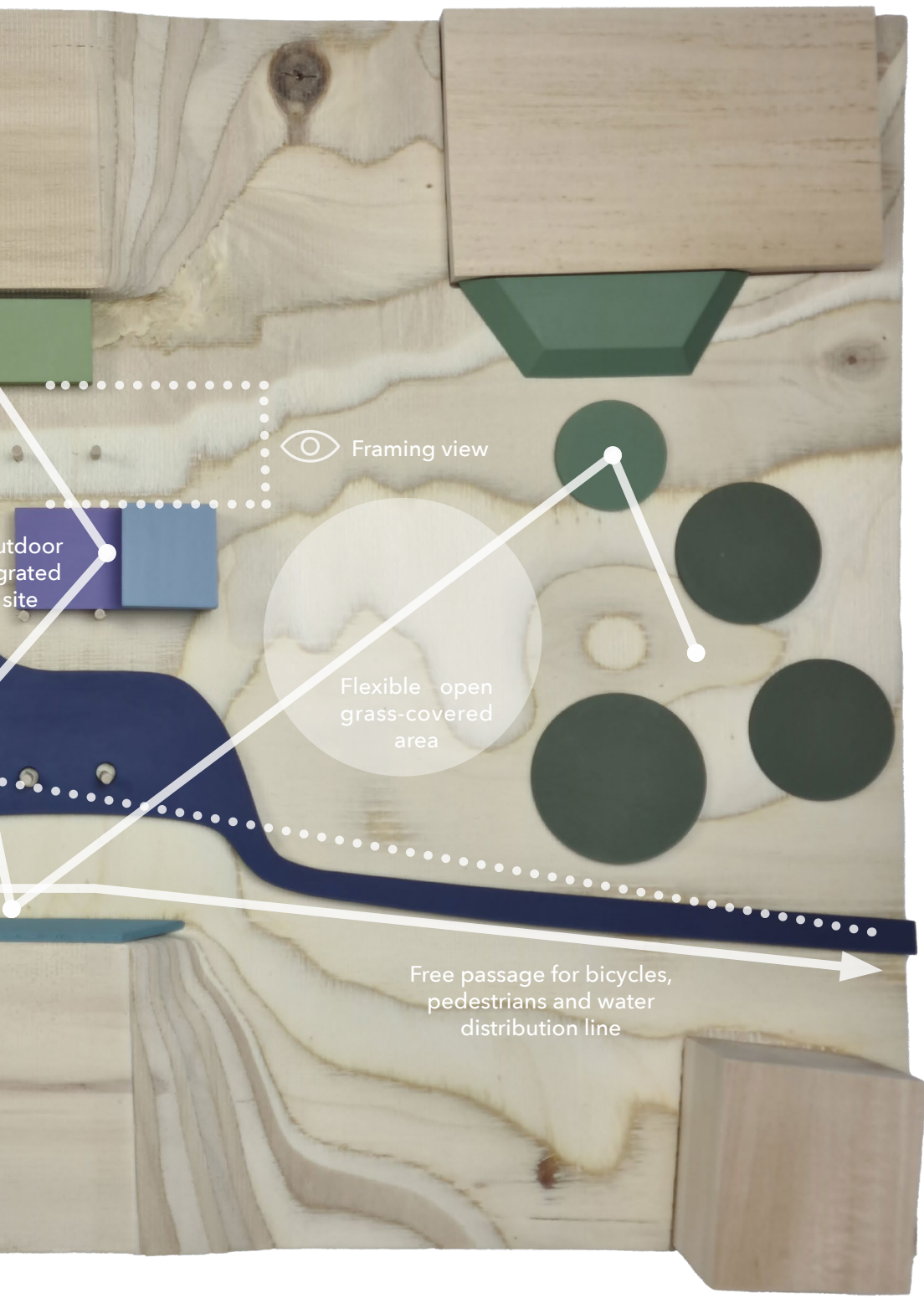


Fig. 34 Sketch of design test where volumes and indoor functions are integrated.

Test 3 - last iteration

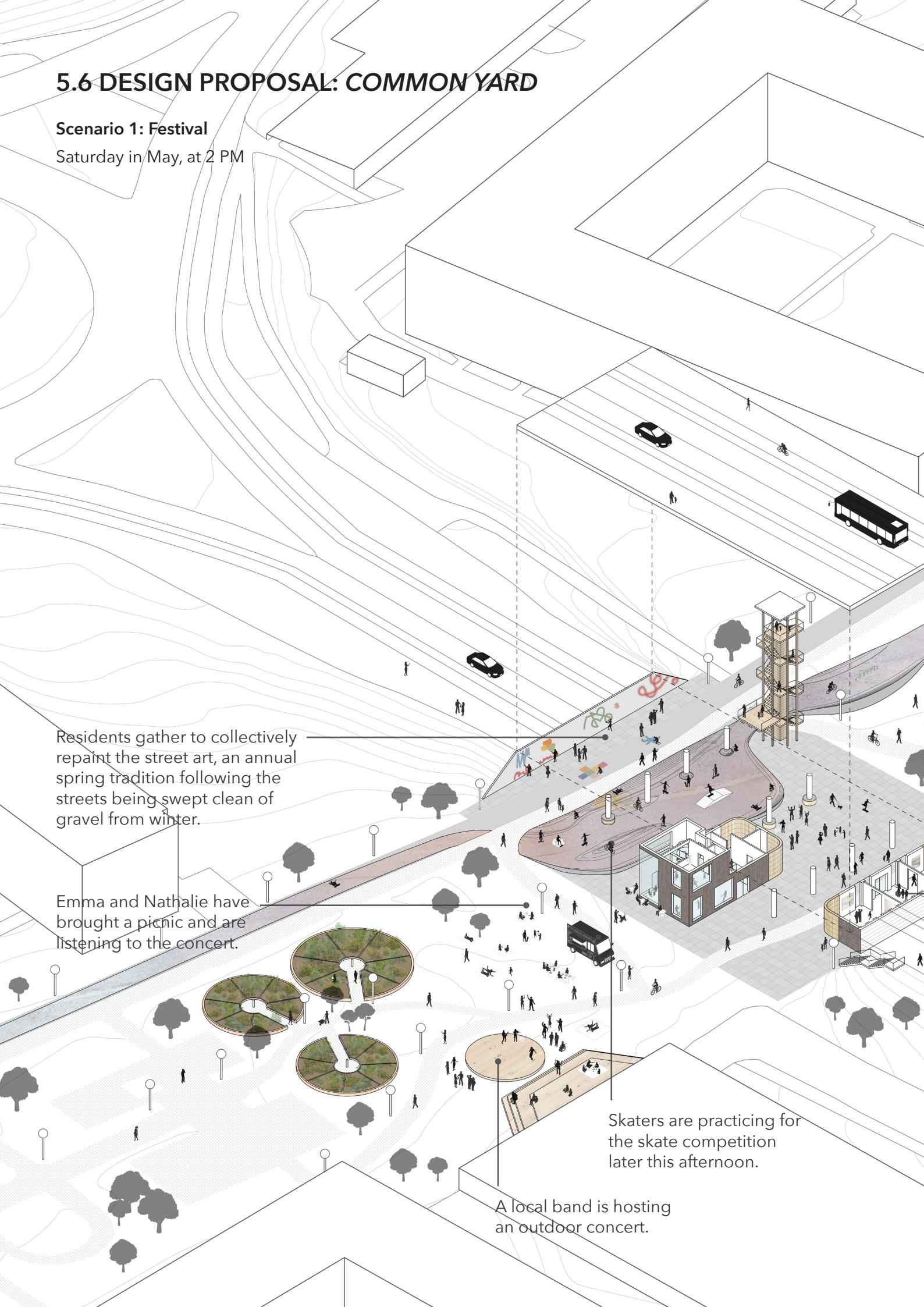




5.6 DESIGN PROPOSAL: COMMON YARD

Scenario 1: Festival

Saturday in May, at 2 PM

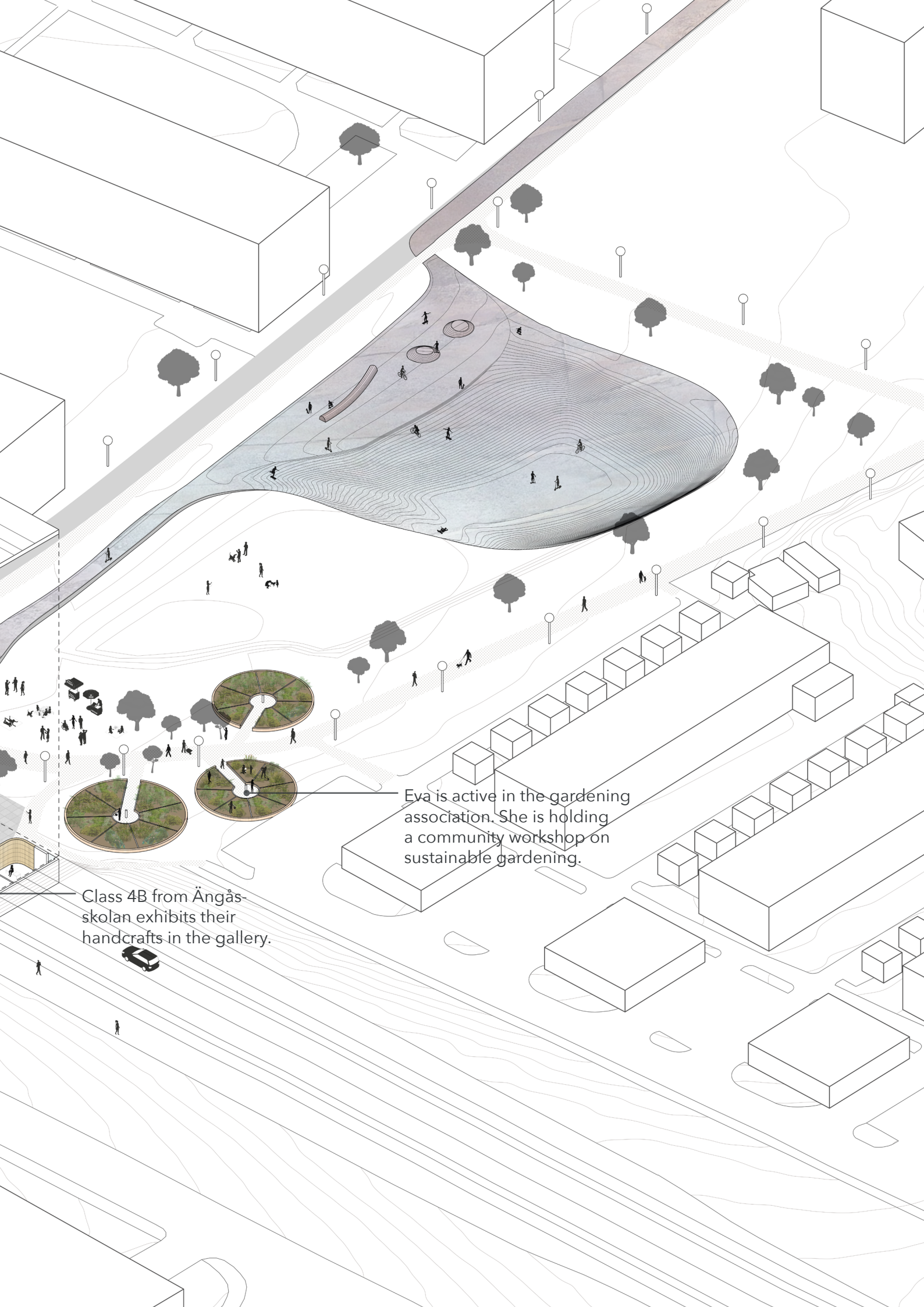


Residents gather to collectively repaint the street art, an annual spring tradition following the streets being swept clean of gravel from winter.

Emma and Nathalie have brought a picnic and are listening to the concert.

Skaters are practicing for the skate competition later this afternoon.

A local band is hosting an outdoor concert.



Eva is active in the gardening association. She is holding a community workshop on sustainable gardening.

Class 4B from Ängåskolan exhibits their handcrafts in the gallery.

Scenario 2: Everyday life

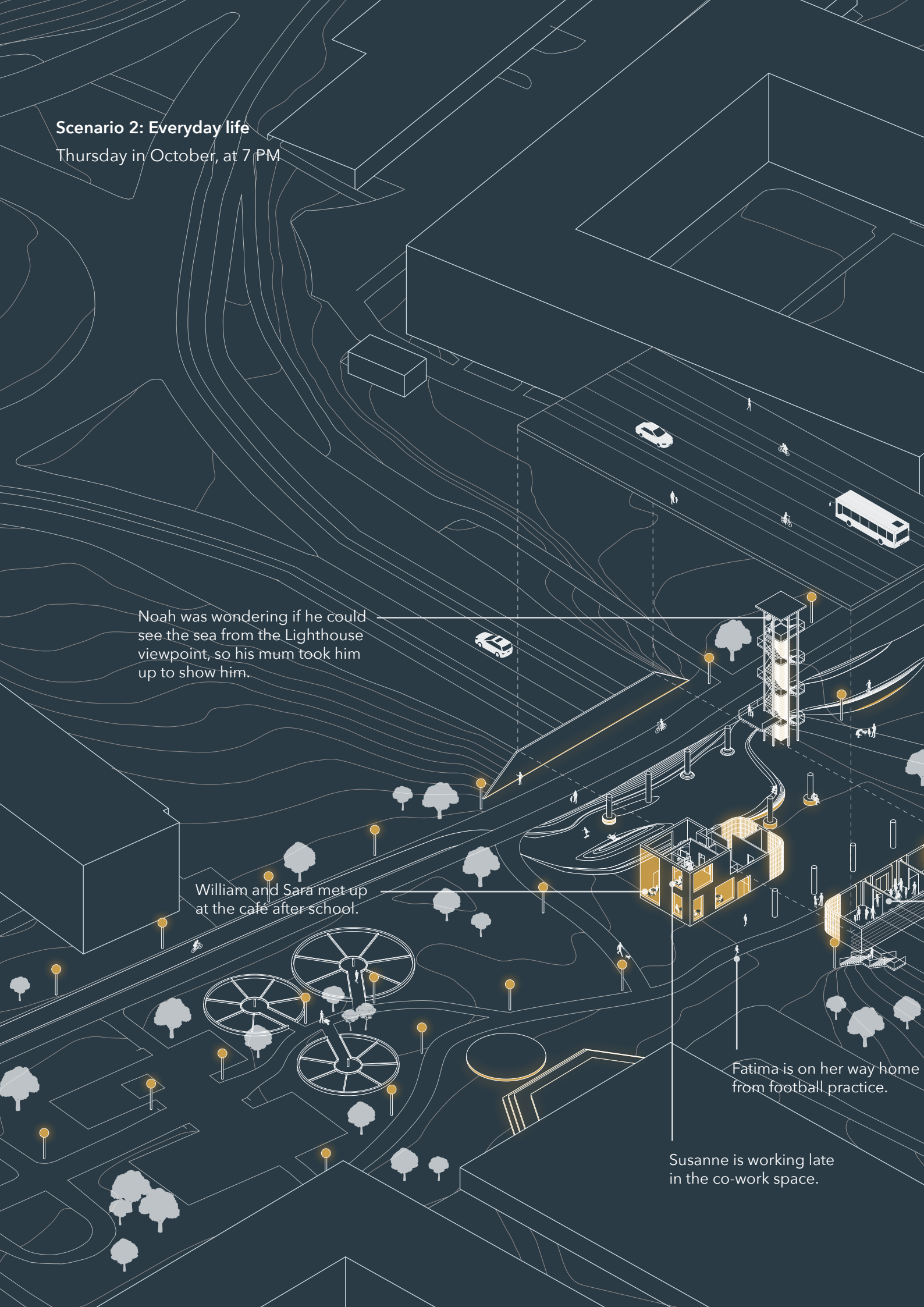
Thursday in October, at 7 PM

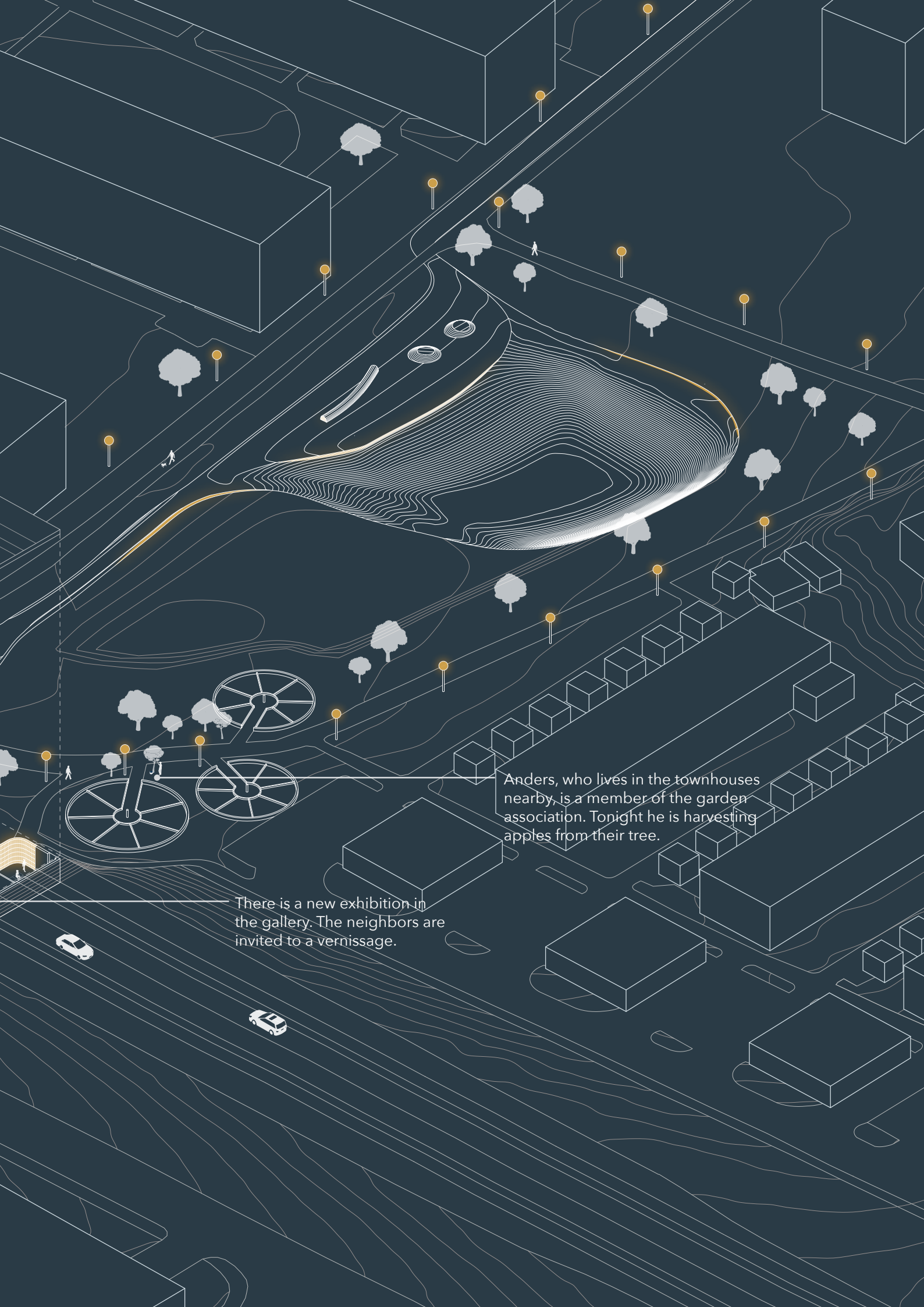
Noah was wondering if he could see the sea from the Lighthouse viewpoint, so his mum took him up to show him.

William and Sara met up at the café after school.

Fatima is on her way home from football practice.

Susanne is working late in the co-work space.





Anders, who lives in the townhouses nearby, is a member of the garden association. Tonight he is harvesting apples from their tree.

There is a new exhibition in the gallery. The neighbors are invited to a vernissage.

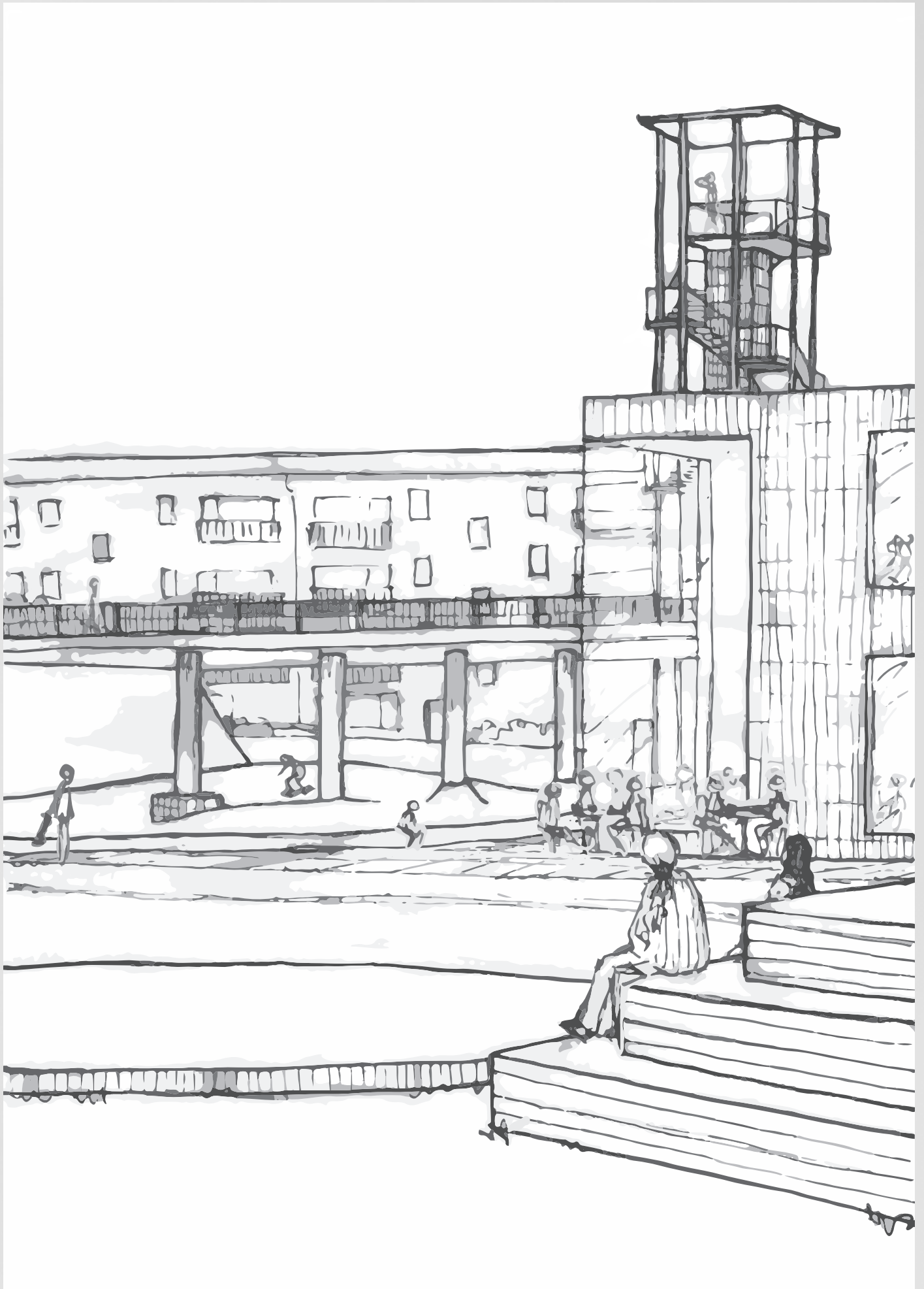


Fig. 35 Atmospheric sketch, perspective from culture scene.

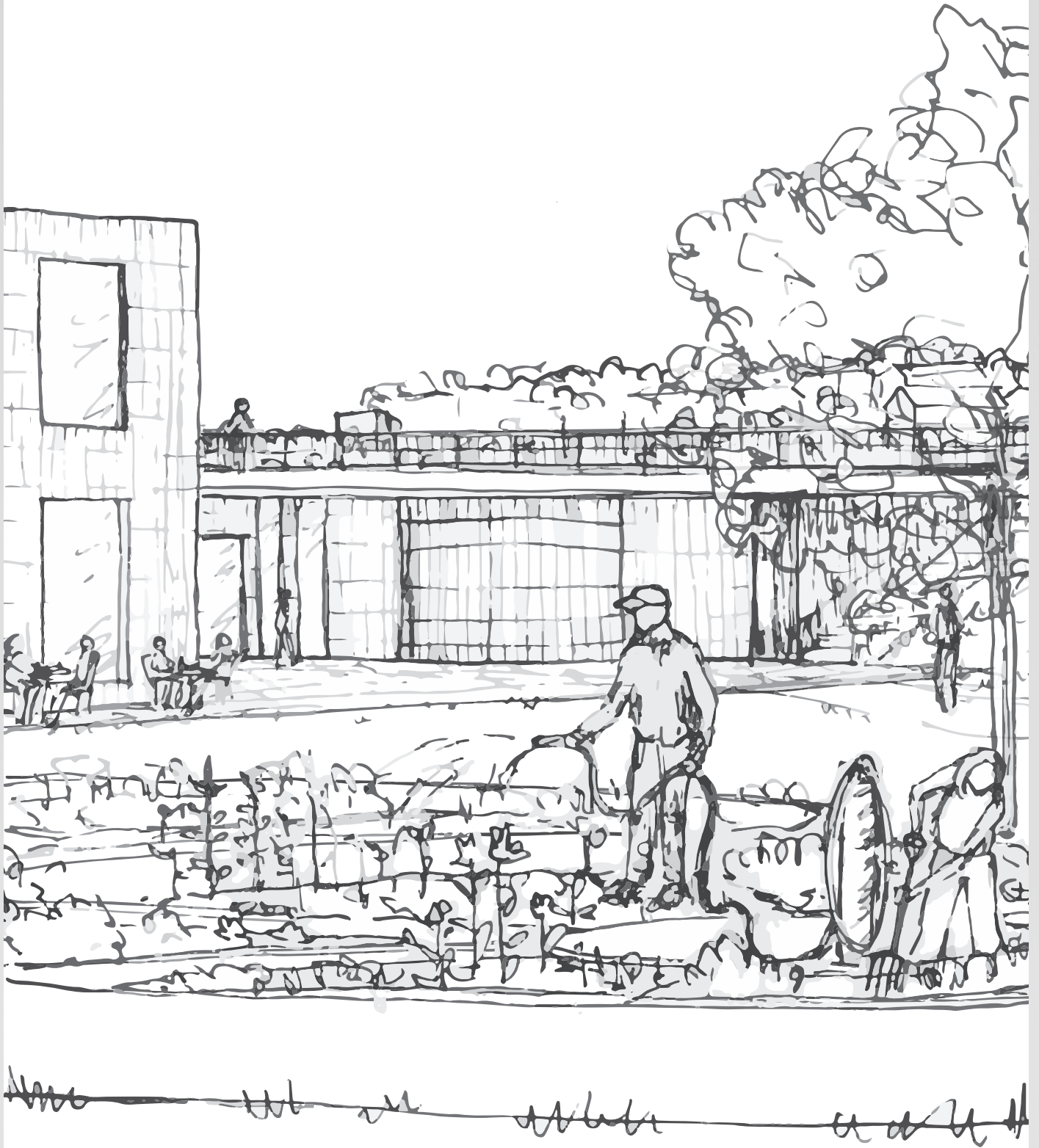


Fig. 36 Atmospheric sketch, perspective from garden.

5.7 THE FUTURE OF COMMON YARD

The idea for the project is to become sustainable and self-driving in a way that benefits the neighborhood and its residents. New activities and functions can be implemented and adjusted according to the community's changing needs and varying interests. Our project provides frames for the local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement, to grow. However, in order for this to succeed and sustain long term, it is dependent on people to engage in the site and take advantage of its possibilities. There are already several existing stakeholders active in Tynnered that could engage in the project beyond its completion.



As part of the initiative *Destination Tynnered* (iTynnered, n.d.), Volvo could use their focus on education to engage in organization of classes, encouraging local engagement and a local economy in terms of exchange of knowledge and mutual learning among inhabitants. For example, they can initiate a gardening association and organize gardening classes where residents of different ages can gather and learn about how they can grow their own vegetables or which flowers and crops are suitable for the soil in Tynnered.



An art association would also be a profitable initiative to start in connection to the gallery and public art program at the site. They could organize exhibitions for the residents of Tynnered, and visitors. They can use the skate park and the streets around the site to engage people in participatory art events where the residents design their public space together. The art association could benefit from cooperating with the owner of the café as they can host common events where food and drinks can be included. Adding to such events, the culture center at Frölunda Torg can get engaged and organize outdoor concerts, theaters, dance shows or any other sorts of performances at this public space and its cultural scene.

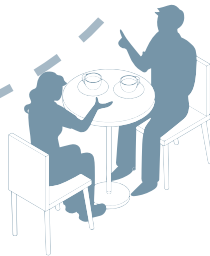




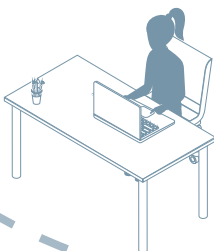
The gallery can also be used in a collaboration between the art association and the schools in the area. School classes can use it as a showroom for the children to exhibit their learning process within art or other creative subjects. They can host monthly gallery openings for the neighbors, contributing to a local influence and a meaningful societal participation for the kids. The schools can also engage in the participatory art events and use the outdoor spaces.



For the café to serve as intended, as a meeting place for the neighbors but also as a self-sustaining business generating value back to the community, it is important that it is runned as a local business. Like in small towns, these kinds of businesses can improve the well-being of the neighborhood, through promoting a local economy. The café can provide employment opportunities, generate income for local residents, and will contribute to the overall economic stability of the community. The café and the gardening association could also benefit from a collaboration, where the café could buy local crops grown right outside their window, from the gardeners.



The co-work space also needs an actor to run as intended. It could be run as a local business, maybe by the same owners as the café. Stena Fastigheter also has the possibility to initiate it, as part of their participation in *Destination Tynnered* (iTynnered, n.d.), with their focus on developing pleasant residential areas.





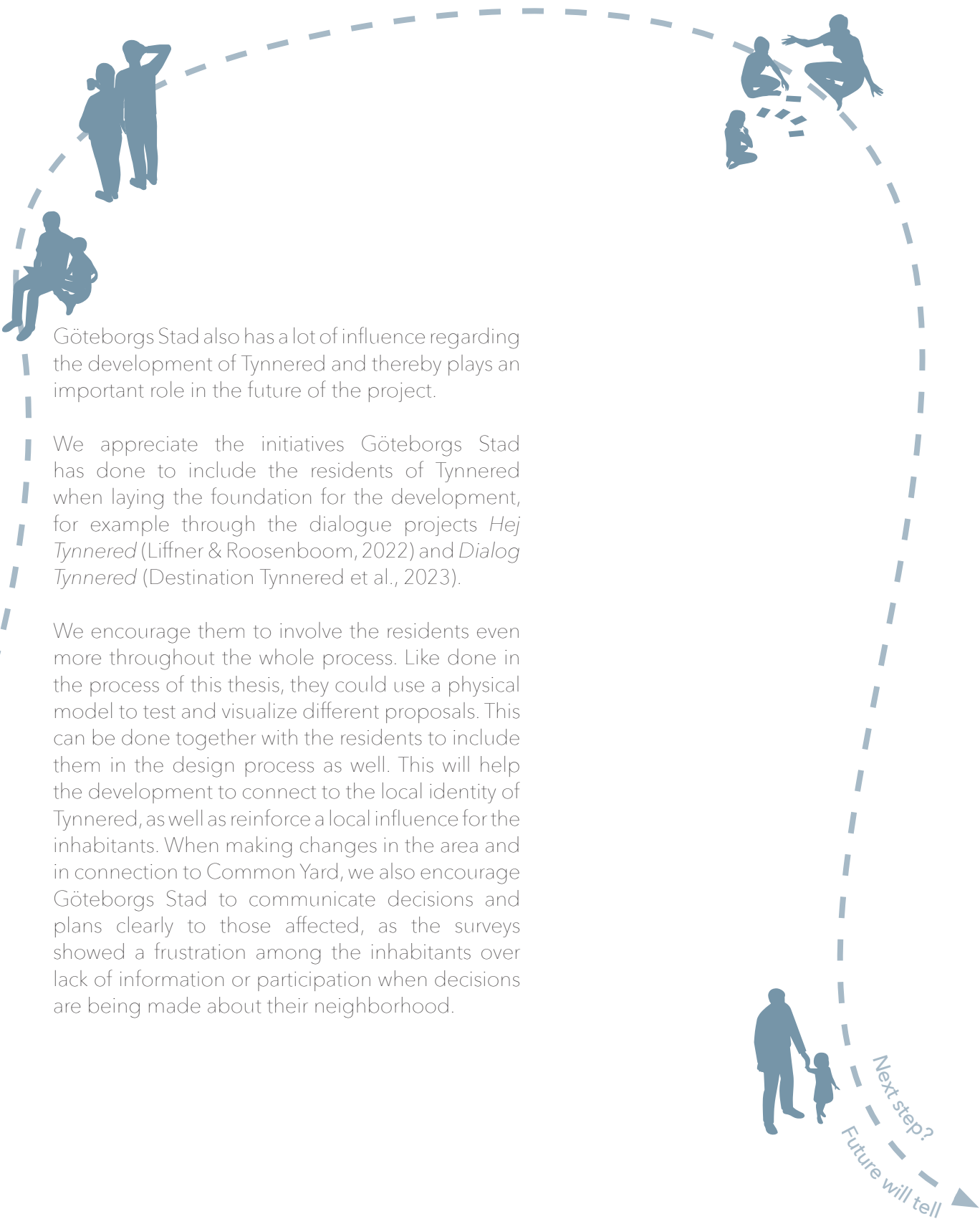
Considering the future surroundings of the project, it is important for the actors involved in the development of Tynnered to adjust and connect to the project in their plans for the area. With Spacescape's proposal to densify around the site (Spacescape, 2018), they should consider our site and its program as an asset with a potential of benefitting the whole area. Densifying the area creates a need for additional public spaces. *Common Yard* has the potential to grow and adjust according to these new developments and change of needs.

Furthermore, the project connects to the new urban street of Skattegårdsvägen that Spacescape has proposed. It has considered the future need of facilitating people's movement between the new street and the path of public spaces and activities along Kastanjeallén below.

Regarding investments in public art, as it is a requirement when investing in new construction projects by Göteborgs Stad, this budget included in the densification project can be used for integrating public art at the project site.



Considering the safety aspect and providing good lighting, Framtiden could help maintain and develop the lighting design as part of their participation in the initiative *Destination Tynnered* (iTynnered, n.d.). Since light elements are an important design tool in the project, they can also start initiatives to engage people in the site through events with light shows or projections. They can be held in participation with other actors on the site, such as the art association and the café.



Göteborgs Stad also has a lot of influence regarding the development of Tynnered and thereby plays an important role in the future of the project.

We appreciate the initiatives Göteborgs Stad has done to include the residents of Tynnered when laying the foundation for the development, for example through the dialogue projects *Hej Tynnered* (Liffner & Roosenboom, 2022) and *Dialog Tynnered* (Destination Tynnered et al., 2023).

We encourage them to involve the residents even more throughout the whole process. Like done in the process of this thesis, they could use a physical model to test and visualize different proposals. This can be done together with the residents to include them in the design process as well. This will help the development to connect to the local identity of Tynnered, as well as reinforce a local influence for the inhabitants. When making changes in the area and in connection to Common Yard, we also encourage Göteborgs Stad to communicate decisions and plans clearly to those affected, as the surveys showed a frustration among the inhabitants over lack of information or participation when decisions are being made about their neighborhood.

6.

DISCUSSION

Finally, the discussion chapter synthesizes the key findings and insights from the process of the thesis. It analyzes the outcome of the design implementation, evaluates its effectiveness, and reflects on the implication of the research in theory and in practice. The chapter also addresses challenges we faced along the way. Lastly, it discusses limitations for the thesis and suggests areas for future exploration.

What was the point of departure and what was the aim?

The aim of our thesis was not to turn Tynnered into a small-town, or to artificially construct specifically a 'small-town feeling'. There is a collective perspective, and a unique sense of community, present in small towns that sometimes get lost in urban architecture. We do not believe that these qualities are very much planned on purpose in small towns, but rather just happen to appear more naturally there. The aim was to understand the positive social aspects creating the 'small-town feeling' atmosphere, and through this learn about socially sustainable qualities for a neighborhood and how they can be improved through an architectural implementation.

We saw a cohesion among neighbors in small towns and in areas considered to foster a 'small-town feeling' that Tynnered seemed to lack. Central Tynnered is designed for people to move easily from their home to their parking lot and straight out onto the road leading to their workplace in another part of the city. Public spaces shared among all the inhabitants, like the one we propose, are missing in the neighborhood. As a result, unlike in small towns, residents do not meet naturally in their everyday life. By implementing our thesis research in Tynnered, we wanted to test how these principles could benefit a neighborhood in a context vastly different from a small town.

What did we learn from the 'small-town feeling'? Does a local community, identity, economy and influence and engagement always give rise to a 'small-town feeling'?

Throughout the process of our thesis, we discovered a strong connection between the 'small-town feeling' and a sense of cohesion among residents. We also learned that the 'small-town feeling' often arises when people feel a collective responsibility and care for their common places and things shared between them.

We believe that the presence of a local community, identity, economy and influence and engagement has the possibility to give a neighborhood a sense of 'small-town feeling'. With that being said,

these four aspects alone do not always evoke this particular feeling. Our focus when investigating the 'small-town feeling' was on the social aspects. Other factors, such as scale and building typology, likely play significant roles but were beyond the scope of our thesis. If the aim would be to fully construct a 'small-town feeling', it might be necessary to incorporate aesthetics and visual characteristics alongside the social aspects.

Even if the atmosphere we create through our project would not be perceived as a 'small-town feeling', a space that fulfills these aspects will positively impact the neighborhood and enhance cohesion among the residents. Additionally, a similar atmosphere could likely be achieved with different approaches than ours. The creation of cohesion cannot be entirely planned in advance, as it depends on individuals and their engagement. However, we believe that working with the aspects of local community, identity, economy and influence and engagement can provide a framework for cohesion to emerge.

What was the result?

Implementing the features connected to the 'small-town' atmosphere into an urban area was shown to benefit all of the different social aspects we investigated, including the local community, identity, economy as well as influence and engagement. Implementing a public space shared among the inhabitants enables neighbors to interact or just co-exist. The design of our common public spaces becomes important for us to feel a connection to them. By acknowledging the character and heritage of a place, the design can help people feel a sense of cohesion to it. The space we design is created with the intention of it to be an ongoing process after our job as architects is done, providing frames for the users to put their own mark and build upon the identity of the place and their neighborhood. The activities taking place at the site also play an important role in engaging the residents and creating a community feeling between neighbors.

How can these solutions improve neighborhoods like Tynnered?

We see a need to consider these types of social aspects in both existing neighborhoods in need of improvement and in developing new residential areas. The debate on how to address issues in problematic residential areas built during the Million Program is a hot topic in Sweden. Many of today's vulnerable areas are residential suburbs that were built during the reform, naturally leading to the architecture being blamed for segregation and social exclusion. Politicians are discussing different solutions. Densification, like the plans in Tynnered, is one of them. Sometimes it is even discussed to demolish entire neighborhoods to start over. However, given Sweden's current housing shortage and the climate crisis, we do not believe that tearing down these areas is a defensible option.

Tynnered, like many other Million Program areas, faces various social challenges but also has potential for improvement with many organizations and people working for a change. Adding to the future plans of the neighborhood, our project utilizes a 'left over space' in an established residential area. We wanted to test what could be done to improve the existing while seeing potential in a problematic area. These kinds of unused spaces can be found anywhere, and we believe similar implementations could benefit neighborhoods facing comparable challenges to Tynnered. By acknowledging and working with both the appreciated and problematic aspects, such projects can improve various neighborhoods. Since our project is largely based on the requirements, characteristics and people in Tynnered, a project somewhere else would of course need to adapt to that specific place. Alike our process, an analysis of the context and its needs has to be executed in order for the project to be successful and have an impact on the neighborhood where it is located.

What are the challenges for the project to succeed?

Since the thesis covers complex questions connected to social sustainability and encouraging engagement, a challenge is to maintain the usage of the public space that we have created. As discussed in the chapter 'The future of *Common*

Yard', it is important for the development of the project to be clearly communicated to residents in order for them to feel like it is their space to use. It is also important, especially at the start of the project's life cycle, to encourage participation by organizing events and activities showcasing how the space can be used in various ways. Initiating different associations is essential to promote engagement among the residents and give rise to further initiatives, contributing to a self-sustained shared public space. Another challenge is to make people feel a shared responsibility for the place. This is essential for the long-term maintenance of the space and to achieve a sense of cohesion between the residents. Making sure that people become a part of the place is important for the project to succeed.

What did we learn about our role as architects?

The role of the architect is, like the 'small-town feeling', not always easy to define. We touch upon many different fields. Considering some aspects, we would have liked to do even more, but we lack the tools to do so. Mainly regarding encouraging local influence and engagement, and strengthening a local identity. As architects we can create the frames and plant a seed for engagement to grow, but we cannot force it on the people living there. In the end, it needs to come from them. We learned that, in cases like this, what we can do is communicate what we see is needed and reach out for help from other actors in order to get there.

What could we have done differently, and what can be explored further?

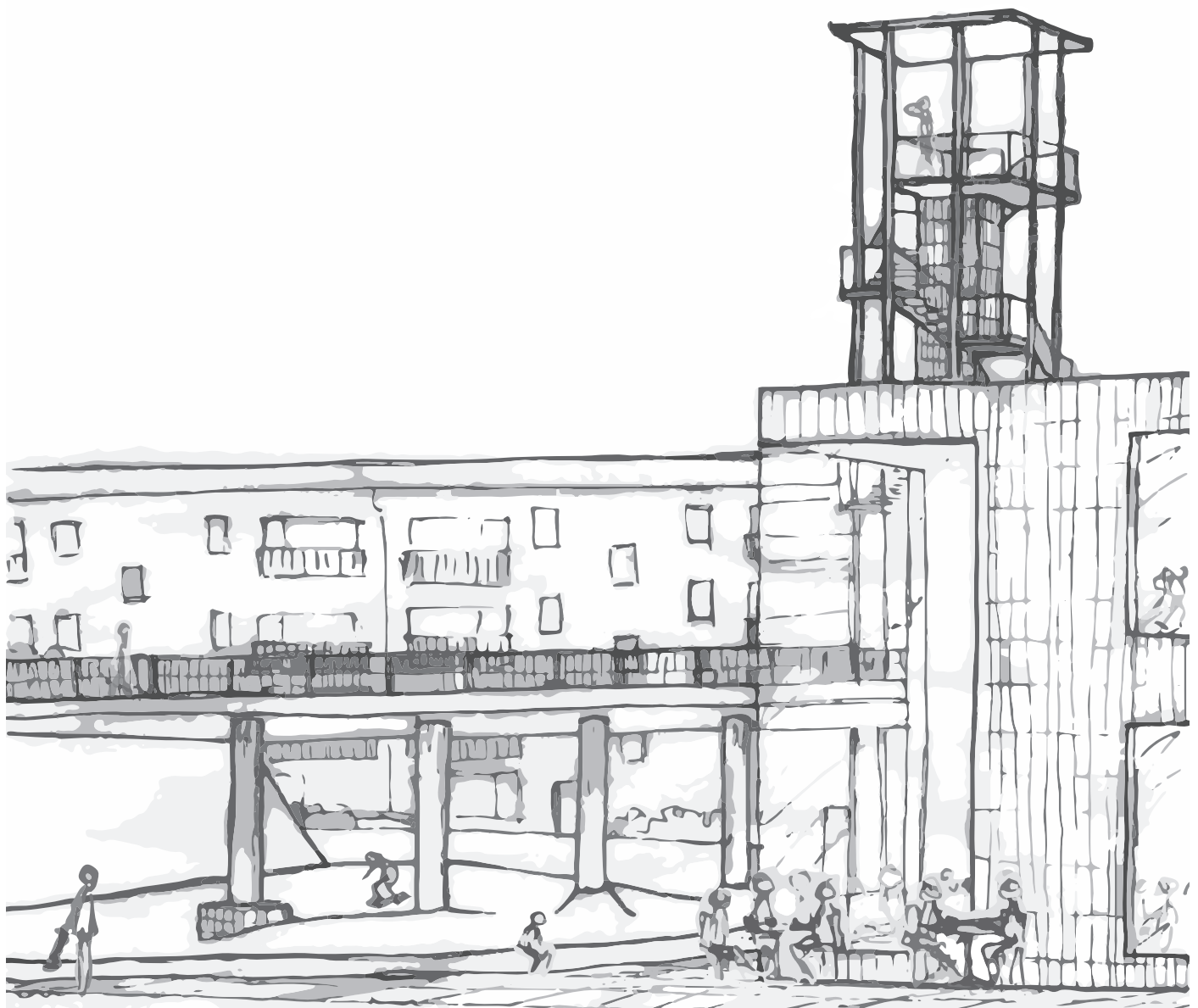
There is a limit on how much time and resources we can spend on the thesis. If we would have had more time, we would have liked to base the perception of a 'small-town feeling' more on empirical data. There is not much research made on this topic, and basing a thesis on a subjective idea has been a challenge at times. We would have liked to include a survey to collect data on the topic, having more opinions to back it up. However, despite the thesis being based on a subjective idea, the knowledge learned along the way is just as valuable, and it has been fun to explore a complex topic, adding something new to the discourse.

Even though we chose not to focus on small-town typology, scale, and aesthetics in our thesis, we found these elements to be important if the aim would have been to fully construct a 'small-town feeling'. Since this was not our aim, and given our limited time, we focused on the social aspects. However, these elements could be included in further exploration.

To create a stronger connection to the neighborhood where the project is implemented, we would have liked to get engaged with local initiatives. If we would have had more time, doing interviews and surveys could have helped us gain more knowledge about the area and its needs as well as getting new ideas of what could be implemented to help the neighborhood. This would help the project become a natural part of the area and the

residents' everyday life, which is beneficial for its sustainability.

Working with a broad thesis topic that covers subjective perspectives has sometimes made it difficult to clearly communicate our findings. The 'small-town feeling' aspects of local community, identity, economy and influence and engagement are broad topics on their own and could each be researched much further than what we were able to do in our thesis. A thesis could be made individually upon each of these topics in connection to the 'small-town feeling', which would result in four different outcomes. However, combining these aspects contributes with a broader understanding of the complexity of the topic and what factors need to be considered when striving for neighborhood cohesion.



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