

# remote working, close connecting

Fostering a community feeling in the era of homeworking

Master's thesis  
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Master's Thesis

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# abstract

Research over the years has shown that what became the norm for many workers during the pandemic of covid-19, was in fact already a growing trend (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). The detachment of work from a fixed space has been translated to a large extent into working from home, which also implies potential spatial conflicts within a household, as private spaces need to accommodate the more public functions of a workplace environment (Wapshott, Mallett, 2011). What puts the traditional functions of a home and subsequently of a typical residential building into question is also the aspect of the psychological impact homeworking has. Studies so far have shown that some of the most psychologically challenging aspects of homeworking is separating personal from work life and overcoming the feeling of isolation (Flores, 2019).

So how do we, as architects, address these new realities within our profession? How do we foster a healthy lifestyle and a community feeling when considering the emerging spatial and mental needs of homeworkers?

This project aims to explore a different configuration of functions allocation for future residential buildings by acknowledging that homeworking is here to stay. The testbed for this exploration will be a plot in central Gothenburg, in Stenpiren, which also comes with its own sets of challenges. Being in such a central location calls for addressing the question on how this project will converse with the surrounding area, as well as how this building will relate to and invite in the public sphere.

The methodology that this project adopts is research by design, and will use as a starting point David Sim's (Gehl Architects) concept of a soft city.

# acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would thank my examiner, Ola Nylander and my supervisor Anna Baidre, for all the insightful comments and supportive pushes.

Thank you to all my friends, especially to Effrosyni, Nour and Stella, for being around when needed in the hard times.

I would also thank my both sisters, Leen and Tasyia, for being a supportive part and adding a touch of joy to my life.

From the deep of my heart. I would thank me, for being tough, patient and continue doing this against all odds.

And finally, to my parents, who raised me as perfect they could. They deserve every single success I do.

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# Introduction

1. Home working  
as a new possible  
reality

# Problem statement

## Why is this relevant?

In a world that is rapidly changing, architects need to keep up with the times and try to envision solutions for all the emerging realities.

Teleworking, and more specifically homeworking, while steadily increasing ever since the introduction of computers in everyday work life occurred, has skyrocketed during the past year, due to the global pandemic. While data shows that this is not just a passing trend, we cannot take it for granted. But what we can do, is speculate on its potential effects from our own standpoint as architects and try, based on this hypothesis, to imagine what the future of housing design would be were we to accommodate for the spatial and social needs of an increasing number of homeworkers.

Architecture and design have been facing disconnection from the realities of everyday life, and that's something that can be attributed to our reluctance to hypothesise and explore different predicted needs. The conclusions, reflections, and findings of such explorations can potentially inform our current practice, make us more flexible and in the end, more effective as active professionals within society.

## Research questions

*When considering the changing spatial needs of homeworkers, how can architecture promote a shared lifestyle and a sense of belonging to a community in a residential building in the heart of Gothenburg?*

## Aim

The aim of the thesis is the architectural design of a residential building in the city centre of Gothenburg. The building will accommodate different residents, from families to students. Since homeworking is an increasing trend, the design will provide spaces dedicated to this as well as spaces where residents can meet and socialize and avoid isolation at their own apartments. The purpose of this research isn't the design of a flexible layout of an apartment where residents work from home. The thesis is focusing on the public and common spaces among the apartments, where residents can meet, work, socialize and relax.

# Delimitations

While a spectrum of aspects is immediately linked to this endeavour, a specific focus needs to be formulated, strongly rooted in standpoints made throughout the process, without disregarding the importance of all the shades in this spectrum.

IT'S NOT ABOUT	IT'S ABOUT
Covid-19	Homeworking
Vision of Alvstaden	City center
Public space	Common space
Private spaces	Public realm
Future pandemics or lockdowns	Feeling of community
	Spectrum of shared spaces
	Variety of spaces within building

Figure 01

# Methodology

The methodology that this project adopts is research by design. After the statement of the problem, a series of studies have been conducted. The main keywords for this research were: homeworking, sharing, common spaces, the feeling of community, isolation. That is the phase of the definition and deep understanding of the problem. The next step was the overview of reference designs projects that propose solutions similar to the core idea of this thesis. Those projects were analyzed and positioned on a scale depending on the point of relevance with the thesis. That lead to the next step, the identification of the main design principles the final proposal should contain.

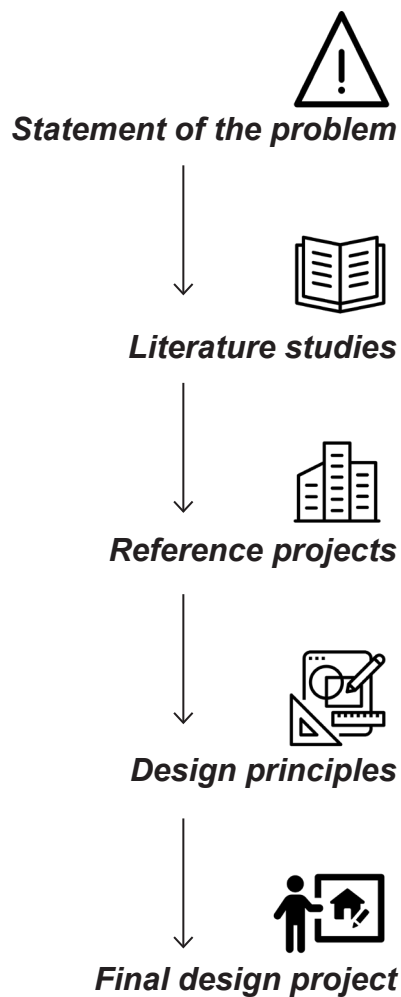


Figure 02



# Research

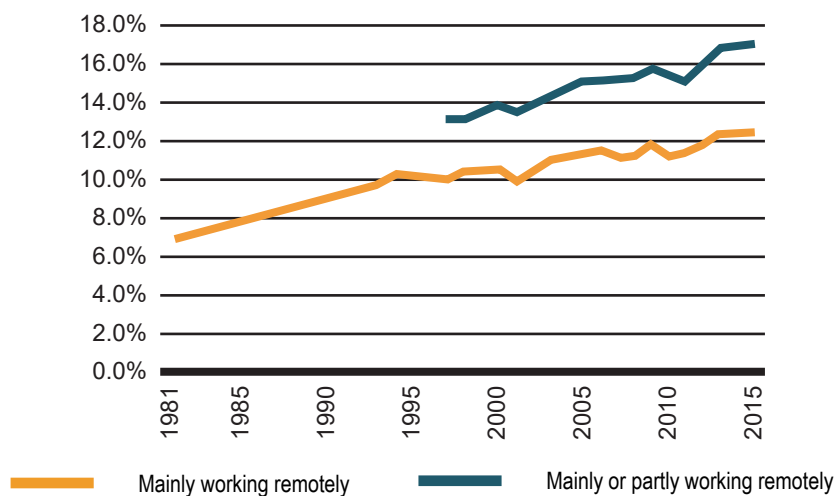
## Chapter 2

## Facts & Figures about homeworking

The pandemic of Covid-19 has undoubtedly brought about various changes in our everyday lives on a global scale. Our everyday routines have dramatically changed in most countries as people have been advised to stay at home and venture outside only to perform the necessary tasks.

One of the things that have changed, is the way our work lives take place. For many -mostly white-collar- workers, working remotely and specifically working from home became the norm. This however was neither new, nor unheard of during the past years. Studies show that from the 1980's there has been a slow but steady increase in homeworking (e.g. 3% in 1981 to nearly 8% in 2002) (Dex, 2009) while employers seem to embrace more and more this new reality (26% made the homeworking option available in 2004) (Dex, 2009). What this shows is that employment is no longer tied to specific work hours or -more importantly- to specific spatial configurations (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Research also shows that the technological advancements of the future will make the option of homeworking more and more viable for both workers and employees over the years (Dex, 2009). So homeworking is certainly here to stay.



Percentage of remote workers in the British employed labour force Figure 03

## Homeworking during the years

As mentioned in the introduction, teleworking and homeworking were not introduced to the world during the pandemic. It's necessary to have an overview of the situation during the last years.

According to the research, "Telework in the EU before and after COVID-19: where we were, where we head to" published by the European Commission in 2020, 40% of the people working in EU members states, have started homeworking because of the current pandemic restrictions. A year earlier, just before the Covid-19 outbreak, the respective percentage was 15%. That can safely lead us to the assumption, that a large part of people was, or even still are, facing challenges with this new reality.

According to the same research, the trend of homeworking increased slowly in the last ten years from 5,2% to 15% as mentioned above. At that point, 36% of people working from home were self-employed and only 11% were working as employees at a company. As this research was conducted through all the countries- members of the EU, it is important to have an insight at the trend in Sweden itself.

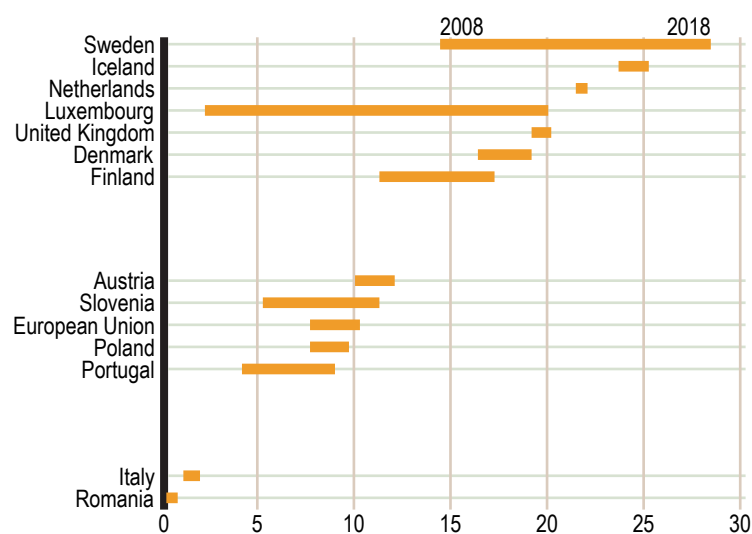


Figure 04

Sweden, along with Finland and the Netherlands, appeared to have the highest percentage of teleworking before the pandemic, which was above 30% while the average of EU countries, was around 10%. The difference is big and based on different factors such as sector and occupation, firm sizes, self-employment rates, management styles and digital skills of the employees.

Numerous studies and questionnaires have been taken during the last months to understand the benefits and challenges of remote working. The first one, which is presented below, was completed by dr. Marivic F. Flores and the participants were 43 remote workers of a big worldwide company. The question presented is “What are the possible benefits and challenges of working remotely?” It’s important to note that the survey selected was published in November 2019, so it provides insight into homeworking outside of crisis, which will be the case in the coming years and the focus of this thesis.

Rank	PROS	CONS
1	Flexible hours	Lack of communication
2	Better work-life balance	Technological problems
3	You manage your time	Finding information
4	Productivity and job satisfaction	Balancing work/life demands
5	Quality of work	Organizing of time
6	Better job prospects	Staying on top of informal development

Figure 05

Finally, the site <https://www.statista.com>, provides data about the benefits of homeworking from surveys conducted during 2020. The lack of commuting, the ability to take care of family/pets, to save up on costs, to be able to live wherever you want and to have a more personalized workspace can be added to the list of benefits.

# Homeworking in Gothenburg

To assess how these findings may reflect in the work-life in Sweden in general and Gothenburg in specific, a survey was conducted between January and February to collect opinions. Some factors need to be acknowledged before the analysis of the results of the survey. First of all, due to the current conditions of the pandemic, some questions may be more relevant than before (e.g. "Is it available for you to work remotely"). Moreover, the target group is limited to people who are studying/studied at Chalmers around this period, friends, family and previous work colleagues. However, one can argue that some of the changes that have occurred in the last year due to COVID 19 have the potential to become the new norm. Therefore it's important to explore and understand the shift in people's perspectives that's already happening.

The questionnaire is divided into 4 parts. The first section is about personal questions in order to understand the profile of the participants, the second section is about their current working life, the next part is about their social life and the last section is about general preferences regarding everything above.

## Participants profile

Most of the people, 52%, that took part in the research are between 25-34 years old, 44% are female and 54% are male. They either live alone or share the household with 1 or 2 other people. Their origins are very diverse as the answers contain ten different countries, half of them live in Göteborg, 34% live in other cities in Sweden and 17% of them live out of Sweden.

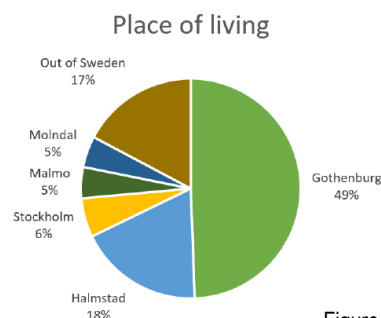


Figure 06

## Work life

In this section, the participants had to answer questions related to the current work life. Most of them are currently able to work from home (89%) while 62% of them are doing it.

There were follow up questions, as “11. What do you need in your dwelling to work more comfortably and productively?” to help determine the encouraging and discouraging factors of remote working. Some of the encouraging factors listed are schedule flexibility during working hours, flexibility with after-work hours, less commuting, and more free time to spend with family. On the other hand, reduced productivity, lack of designated working space and increased distractions make remote working a challenging task. The most common answer however was the loneliness and isolation people feeling during these lasts months.

The possibility of working remotely



Figure 07

Actual remote work

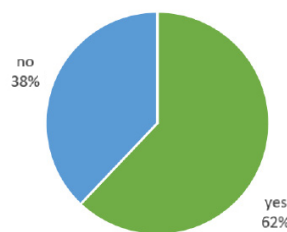


Figure 08

The following chart sums up this section of the questionnaire. The question is whether people would prefer working from their home or their regular office and to what extend. 39% of participants would prefer to have a balance between those two options while 26% would prefer to work mostly from home if there is this opportunity.

Working place preferences

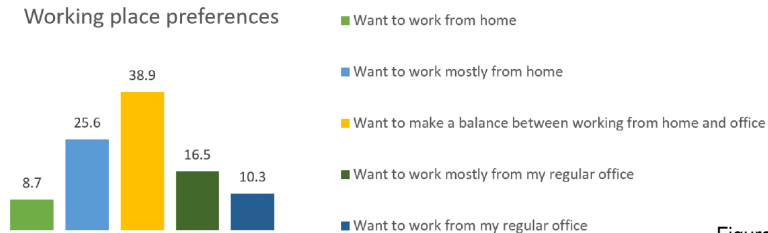


Figure 09

Most responses of the survey participants regarding unwillingness to work from home.

"I don't feel comfortable working from home"

"I feel it is more comfortable to do your work in a suitable environment away from home"

"For me home is for relaxing not working"

"Lack of suitable environment"

The pros and cons of working remotely from the participant's perspective.

Less social	Save time & money of transporting
Gaining weight	No need for self preparing
Boring	Flexibility
Less structured	Extra snooze in the morning
Lack of motivation	More chill
Loneliness	More time with family
No designated workspace	Multitasking
Easy to feel lazy	Focusing on results and not working hours
Inspiration problems	
Less coordination	
Less efficiency / Less productivity	
Won't leave the comfort zone	
Hard to separate work time from private	
No personal contact with colleagues	
Staying in the same environment	
Hard to focus on the lecture and take notes	
Noise from family / neighbours / renovation, etc	

What they need within dwelling building to work more comfortably and productively.

"Something brings joy" "Extra screen"  
"Good chair, desk and some equipment for conferences"  
"Quiet, all by myself I need perfect quiet" "Nature"  
"A combination of study from home and campus activities"  
"Separate room" "Good lighting"  
"Better desk that works for standing up"  
"I want to be active with people nearby"  
"Workshop" "Common area for chilling and studying"  
"Possibility to leave home and sit in a nearby space"  
"Devoted workspace" "Noise isolation"  
"Nice View" "Suitable atmosphere for work"  
"A tiny room 1m X 1m where I can be there just when I'm working" "Whiteboard"

What they miss from the regular office.

"Social relationships" "A second screen"  
"The daily walks to and from work clear my head"  
"Taking the quick decision with my team"  
"The small talk and that you can get or give help easily"  
"Technical possibilities"  
"Interaction with people and feeling the working environment"  
"The energy of teamwork"  
"A spirit of participation and flexibility to work as a team"  
"Seeing new faces" "Closer to the production line"  
"Fast decisions" "Colleagues"

## Social life

From the perspective of strengthening the relationship between the residents by creating common spaces and activities. The survey participant preference and suggestions answers were according to the following pie diagram.

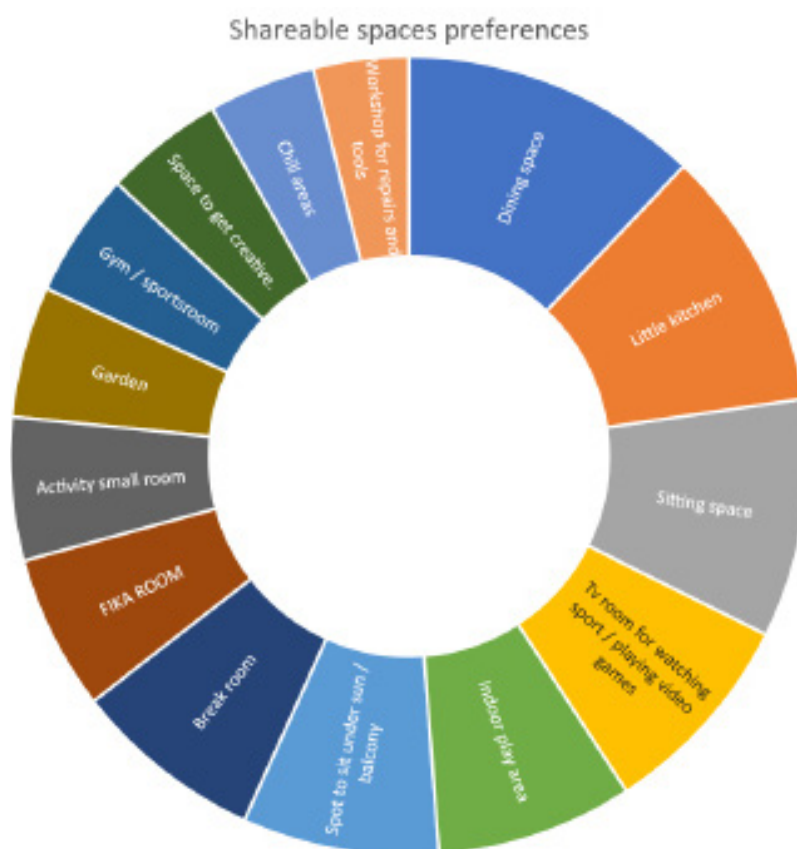


Figure 10

## Preferences



Figure 11

Reference book  
and projects

## Soft city

This thesis intends to bring people together, provide the private sphere of housing while at the same time create spaces for people to meet, share experiences, create a common identity and hopefully soften their feeling of loneliness and depression, as much as this is possible, through building design. Therefore, Gehl architects' "Soft city" is a relevant book to look into.

"Soft city" is a book written by David Sim of Gehl Architects and published in 2019. The book focuses on how architecture and city planning can have a better approach and understanding of how people live and feel in the building environment. Sim (2019) clarifies right at the beginning of the book, that "it's about ease, comfort, and care in everyday life" (p.7). The author attempts to translate the Scandinavian "hygge", i.e the concept of transforming something that is usually "endured" (e.g. scandinavian winters) to something that is celebrated into architecture. in a world that is facing progressively complicated problems such as rapid urbanization, social segregation, inequality, climate change and loneliness and therefore, the challenge is big. The tools that are meant to be used to address this new reality are simple design gestures, on a small scale, without any advanced technology and with low budget requirements.

## Neighbourhood

Sim brings forward the idea of the neighbourhood and how that fits into a contemporary and rapidly changing urban environment. According to him, if someone refers to the word "neighbour" the mind correlates it with at least a person or at the most with humanity; it's a term that everyone is familiar with and can relate to. Our neighbour is not exactly like us. We probably share similar attributes but differences are certainly to be found. We agree and disagree, co-exist and face conflicts, we collaborate and compete. In this way, we create relationships with other people, through the spaces we share and the city we live in. That's also a way to create identities and culture.

That is undoubtedly not new concept. It could, however, be enriched if we were to use the density and diversity that contemporary urban environments exhibit, to our advantage. Keeping in mind that those two characteristics could also lead to tension and segregation in the cityscape, a thorough and carefully thought through design proposing the creation of a smaller, “traditional” in a way, neighbourhood inside the big city could be a beneficial exploration towards a better quality of homeworking life.

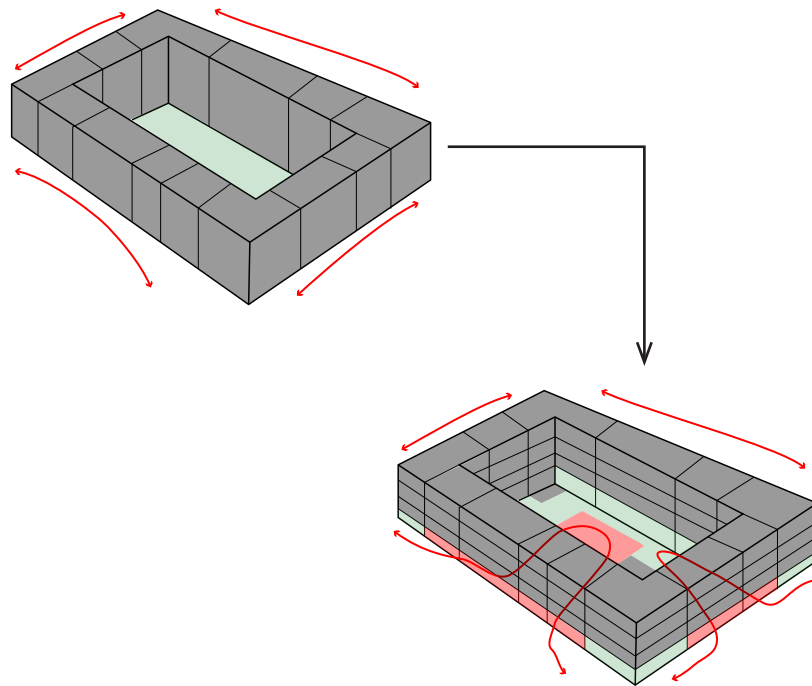
At this point, the author introduces the idea of “proximity”. In the introduction, Sim writes “The idea is that the fusion of density and diversity increases the likelihood or the possibility of useful things, places, and people being closer to you” (2019, p.21). If we, as architects, recognise and accept the crowdedness of the cities and the heterogeneity of the population and provide good services, common resources and adequate public transport, then the interactions among us would have the space in which to occur. If those activities are physically close to people’s dwellings, then the distances are minimised, and more time can be allocated to fruitful and purposeful activities within the day and therefore create more opportunities for fostering relationships with people and places. Moreover, the constant changes of life in the city can create unexpected events and therefore more opportunities for new encounters and enriched complexity.

The main aim of a design addressing all the aforementioned, is to perceive those characteristics as challenges to tackle, rather than as inescapable negative results of a contemporary lifestyle. What is needed is a profound mapping and understanding of contemporary needs and intense speculation on how to accommodate them. It is important to provide urban dwellers with both the necessary private spaces for a safe environment in which to live, but also with the common and public areas in which to be active and flourish.

## *The enclosure as an urban pattern*

Since the approach is simple and based on what we already have in the urban stock, the author analyses very precisely what the potential of the typical urban pattern of enclosure is. The enclosure pattern isn't a new idea. In this pattern, the buildings are placed on the perimeter of the block and they create a very well-defined inner courtyard. This yard can host private and shared spaces and keep away the intense public life, can provide security to the residents of the building and at the same time give the space for gatherings among them. As Sim (2019) mentions "Using the minimum material and space to enable different activities to develop, this pattern solves the greatest challenge in urban design, which is accommodating density with a diversity of building types and uses" (p.24). This very basic urban block could be enriched with simple, yet effective design gestures thus creating a mosaic of diverse spaces and consequently a more stimulating environment. The courtyard could be split into private, shared and common areas.

It is important to understand how the ground floor can transform the life that unfolds within and outside this urban block. The activation of the ground floor can increase the diversity of uses and people and transform the block from a private to a common "island". As Sim (2019) mentions "Active ground floors can help to foster a sense of community and security" (p.44). In the next few pages, Sim analyzes how different interpretations of the public can result in different activities and draw in the public realm, which relates very much to the proposal of the thesis, due to the chosen plot's position. Sim concludes with some examples of activities, other than shops, that could activate blocks, such as galleries, workshops and childcare spaces.



The potential of a typical enclosed block through the activation of ground floor

Figure 12

The top floor can become as attractive as the ground floor. Ventilation, better daylight, potential views, flexibility due to less structural restrictions and access to the rooftop can be used to the design' advantage and generate pleasant and active spaces.

# HSB Living Lab

HSB lab is a housing building located in Göteborg. The building is much more than an example of housing. It is a laboratory where research is constantly taking place by testing different aspects of sustainable living. This thesis is having a closer look at the aspect of social sustainability and how the design of the spaces is promoting co-habitation. The building hosts 29 apartments. The second floor has 12 studios organized into two groups. Each room has a separate bathroom and a small kitchen. The corridor among the studios is designed as a bigger common kitchen where a small group of residents has the opportunity to meet and cook together. There is also a common balcony and living room. Moreover, while most of the laundry rooms in other buildings are located on the underground floors and are considered the most neglected areas of the buildings, at HSB there are located on the first floor close to the main entrance. The design of the space also promotes social interaction among the residents since it provides spaces to sit and gather, while they do their laundry. In the plans, the green colour indicates the common areas, the grey indicates the private and the red the public areas.

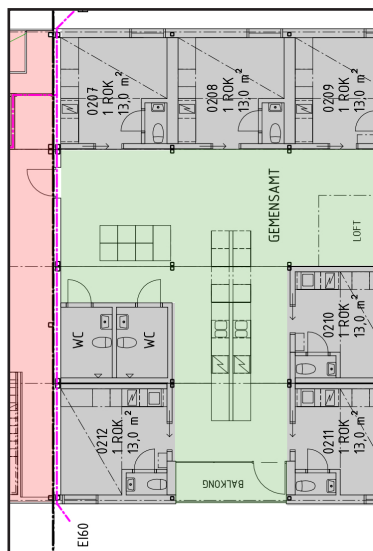


Figure 13: Plan 2 of HSB Lab

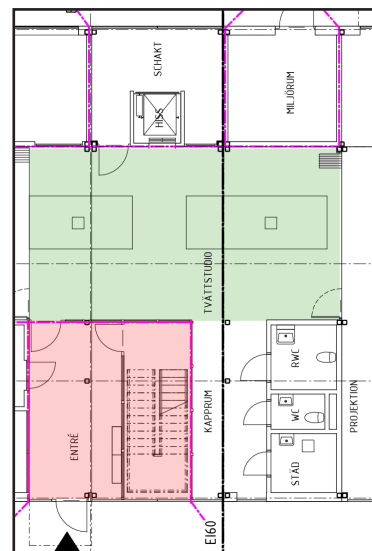


Figure 14: Plan 1 of HSB Lab

# Coop Spreefeld

Coop Spreefeld is a housing project located in Berlin. It consists of 64 housing units organized into 3 clusters. Each cluster hosts different types of accommodation and different age groups. So for example, one cluster hosts older people and families with young children. In this way, the older generation take advantages of the energy of the younger generation and compliment each other's needs. However, the idea of sharing and the nurturing of a sense of belonging expands more than that in this project. The design takes into consideration the public realm, integration with the city and the neighbourhood. The ground floor remains public with functions such as workshops, co-working spaces, catering kitchen, space for dancing and empty spaces to be used as needed. The project provides a great variation of private, common and public spaces. There are no identical spaces which provides flexibility in the layout too. Those aspects make the buildings welcoming to everyone.

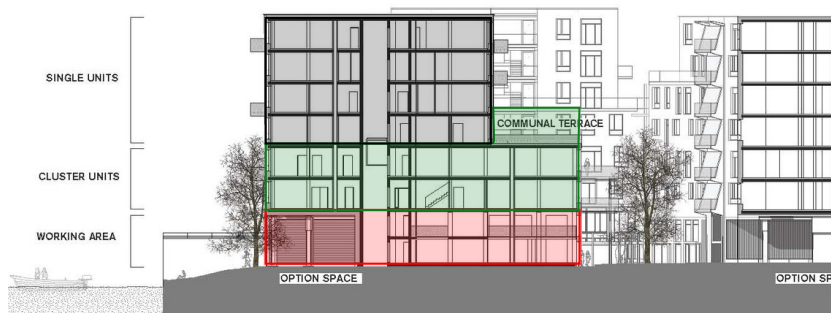


Figure 15: Closed spaces and levels of publicity

The diagrams represent the distribution of closed and open public red colour: municipal green colour: private black colour: spaces at the project

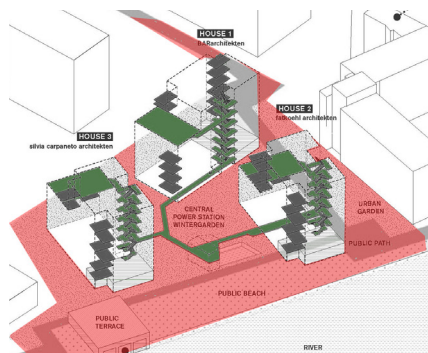


Figure 16: Open spaces and levels of publicity

# Mehr Als Wohnen

Mehr Als Wohnen, or otherwise More than Living, is a building cooperative in Zürich. The site was a former concrete factory and since 2015 it hosts living spaces for 1.200 people and working places for 150 people. A key aspect of the project was the dialogue and the participation of the community in its development. The current result is the invention of new forms of living, affordable costs, workspaces and common living rooms and a variety of communal spaces.



Figure 17: Configurations of public, common and private

# Treehouse Coliving Apartments

Treehouse is a residential building located in South Korea. It aims to create a community by combining studios for one or two residents and common spaces among them. The ground floor is designed as an interior patio with green spaces, co-working spaces, a common kitchen, laundry room and relaxing corners. The studios and lofts are taking the 6 floors that are above the interior garden. The project creates a communal lifestyle for people living alone and probably working remotely. The right corner of the building hosts restaurant which is the connection point between the community with the public. There is also an underground parking area.

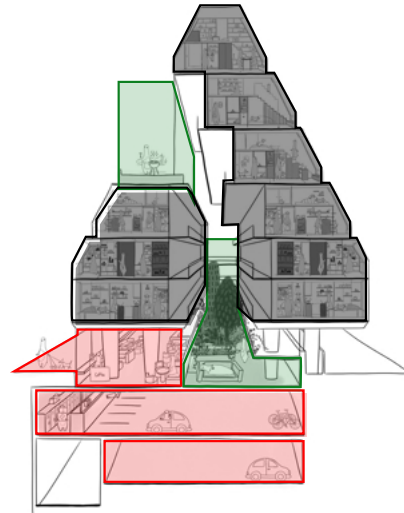


Figure 18: Section, configuration of public, common and private



Figure 19: Ground floor, configuration of public and common

# Conclusions

The research conducted had as a result a better understanding of the topic of the thesis. The book “Soft City, Building Density For Everyday Life” gave an insight into the current circumstances and need in urban design and how those could be addressed in the current urban forms and patterns, through the scale of a building block. That, followed by the analysis of four architectural projects provided a better knowledge of sharing within the limits of a building block and how the public, private and common areas can be interwoven effectively.

This part aims to present the conclusions of this research and what tools and strategies could be useful for the design part of the thesis.

## Design Strategies

### 1. Diversity of indoor spaces

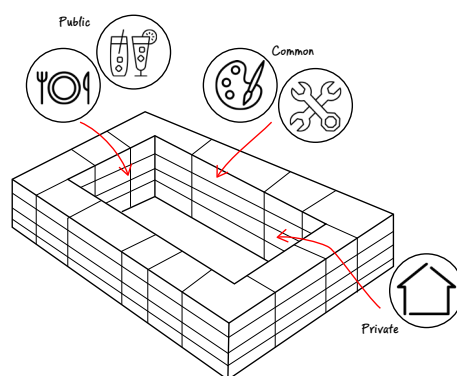


Figure 20

The indoor spaces could be a combination of private, public and common area. The residents could have access to more space to gather, but also the part of the building could be open to the public and bring more people inside the block.

## 2. Diversity of outdoor spaces

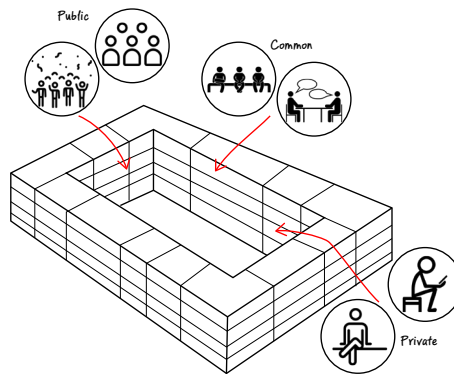


Figure 21

The variation of outdoor spaces will provide many options to residents and visitors to choose from. They will be able to sit alone, enjoy the company of another neighbour or be a part of a public event.

## 3. Diversity of people

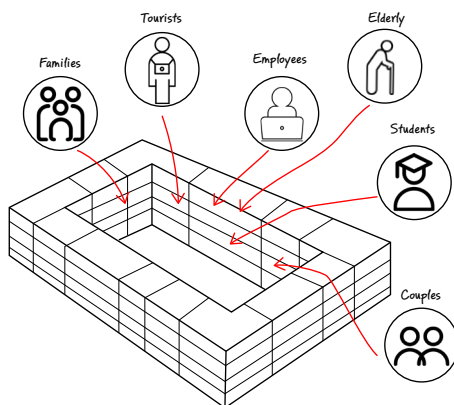


Figure 22

The project welcomes different groups of people. Some groups, such as families, students and elderly, can have an apartment on the upper floors, while others, such as tourists, can only use the public spaces. The more diverse the population, the more potential of creating a sense of community, the more intense the complexity and more relationships will be created.

#### 4. Walkability and accessibility

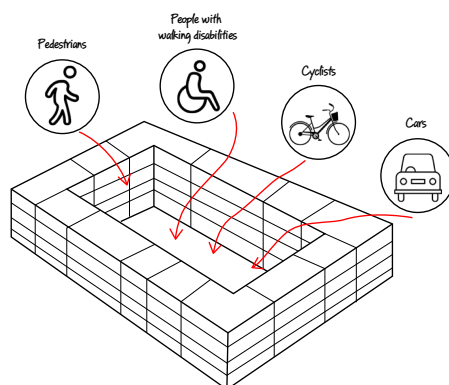


Figure 23

It is very important for the building to be easily accessible by everyone through a variety of different means of transport. The building should be accessible by car, which could be accommodated by an underground parking so that it won't hinder the pedestrian movement. The design should take into consideration everyone (pedestrians, people with walking disabilities and cyclists). The movement would be more pleasant if the experiences along the passages, corridors and staircases are strengthened.

#### 5. Flexibility

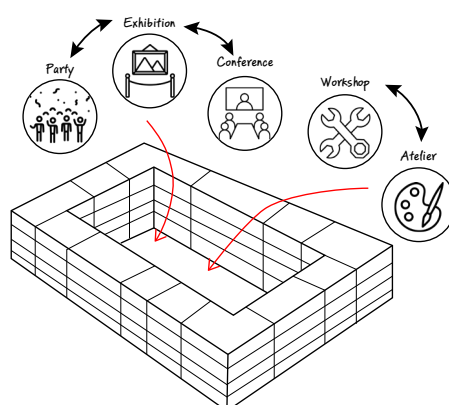


Figure 24

The spaces, especially the ones dedicated to common and public use, should allow space for flexibility. The demographics and needs will change from time to time and the spaces should be able to reflect and accommodate for that.

## 6. Sense of belonging

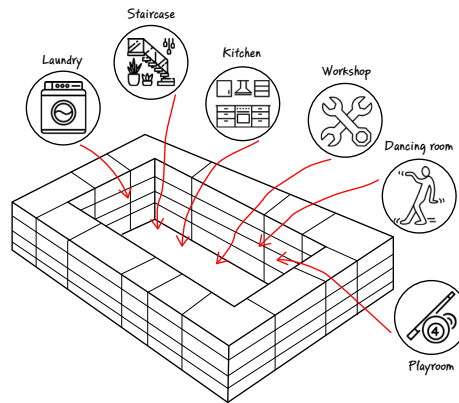


Figure 25

The existence of spaces that are “controlled” and used only by the residents are as important as the public spaces mentioned above. That could increase the sense of safety and allow the residents to create a common identity. The variety of the spaces and activities is an important feature for success in this case.



Context

Chapter 3

# Stenpiren as a plot proposal



Figure 26

# Current situation



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29

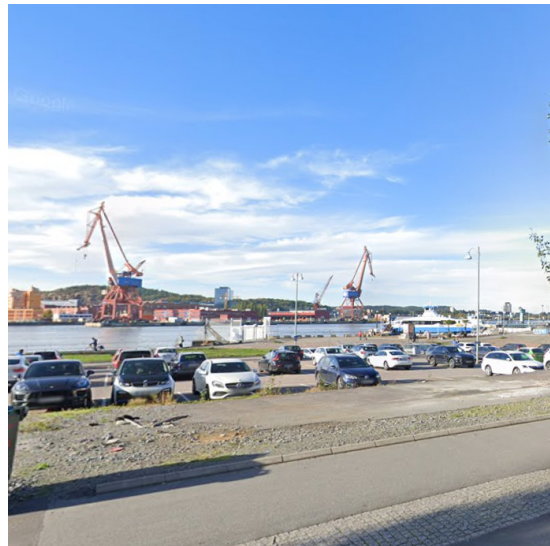


Figure 30

# history

Stenpiren is located on the river Göta that goes through Gothenburg city. Gothenburg is located in the southern part of the west coast of Sweden.

The story began in 1841 when Alexander Keiller bought some plots in the Stenpiren area. At the time of the purchase, they consisted of sharp mud from the river and demolition masses. The plots were soon framed by the shores of the Göta river, Verkstadsgatan, and Stora and Lilla Badhusgatan.

Along the riverbank, the first quay was built in an L-shaped wooden pier in 1842. A couple of years later, between 1844–45, Stenpiren was built which was followed shortly after by a steamboat pier in 1852 (Träpiren), which was where the new ferry pier of Stenpiren is today. From here, a stone quay was built up to Verkstadsgatan in 1854–55. It was not until 1864–67 that the stone quay was completed all the way to the Rosenlund Canal. The name Stora Badhusgatan did not become official until 1852 and the street then ran between Keiller's bathhouse and Keiller's mechanical workshop.

In the 1970s, demolition of all the remaining buildings on Skeppsbron was planned to extend the Götaleden, but about half remained, and traffic was



Figure 31: Sweden and Gothenburg

instead directed on Skeppsbron in a western direction (and on Stora Badhusgatan, which was widened, to the east). The railway was shut down and became a cycle path.

With the inauguration of the Göta tunnel in 2006, most traffic has been able to be diverted away from Skeppsbron.

In 2005, Project Skeppsbron was initiated, with the goal to renovate the area around Skeppsbron (Södra Älvstranden). The first stage of the project was a tramway to Stenpiren, and the second stage is the construction of homes, hotels, restaurants, etc. The construction of the latter however has been delayed considerably.

In Stenpiren, a public transport centre was completed in 2015. New tram tracks were laid from Kämpebron past Lilla torget and via Södra Hamngatan and Skeppsbroplatsen to Skeppsbron, where a terminal building for tram, bus and boat traffic was built (<https://gamlagoteborg.se/>)



Figure 32: Gothenburg and the plot of this study

## Municipality's vision



Figure 33

This map represents, the vision and plans of the municipality which are relevant to this thesis. The aim is to extent the pedestrian area by the river and to add new buildings to the existing blocks. The light brown colour is the selected plot for the thesis. It is currently a parking plot and the intention of the municipality is to build housing units.

Since the area will be developed during the next year, we assume that the current situation is the one after the changes. The analysis and the design will be based on this perspective.

## Points of importance



Figure 34

The map highlights the most important features of the area. The point “a” is the area around the Stenpiren. Point “b” is the “new” shore of the area which will be attractive either with added facilities for the public or even just as a nice place to walk by the river. The point “c” is the Göteborg Energi Rosenlundsverket, which even if it’s not currently fully functioning, someone can argue that it stands as a landmark for the area. The point “d” is Esperantoplatsen, a square where many people pass by since it connects the Inom Vallgraven with Järntorget. Moreover, around the area, one can find Feskekörka and Lindholmen, both very distinct places in Göteborg.

# Mobility

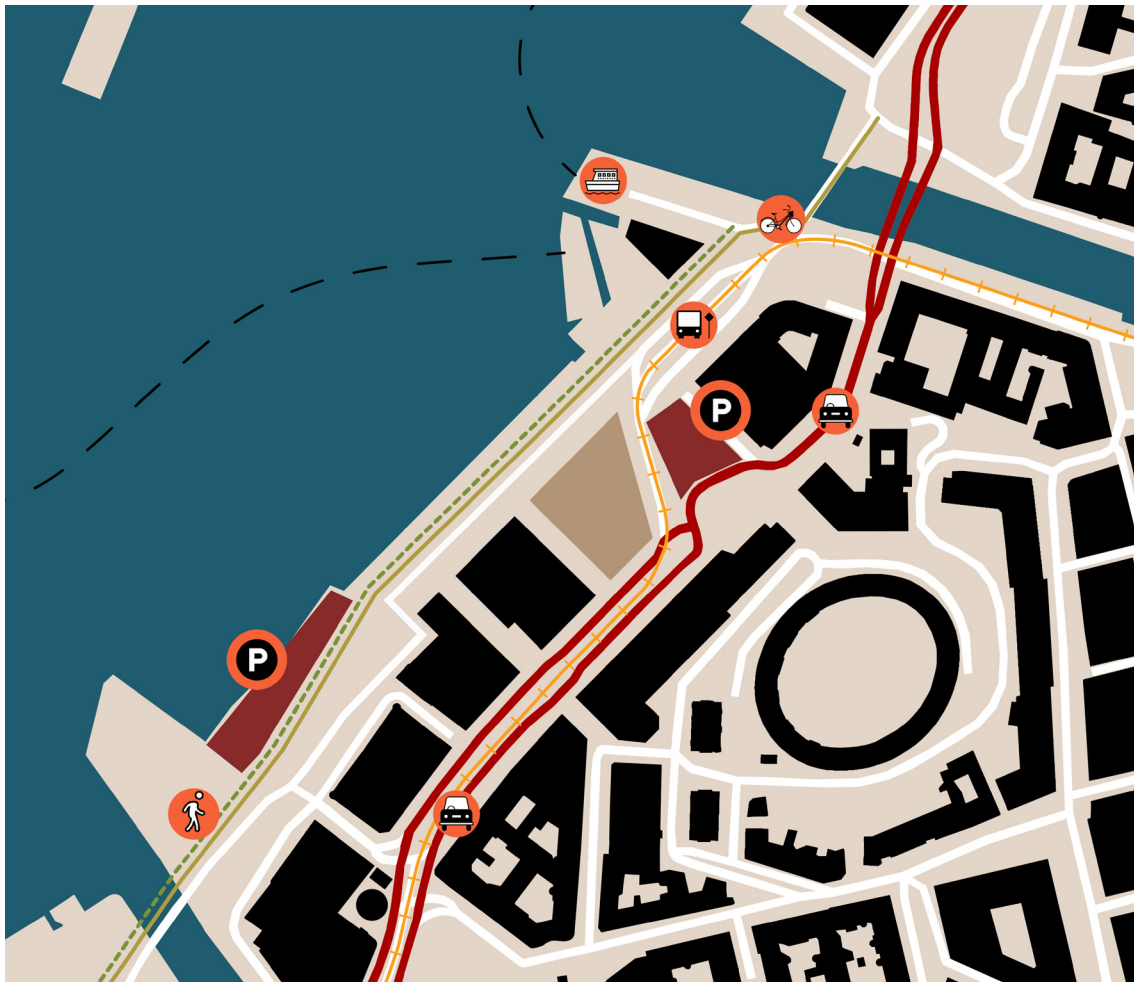


Figure 36

- Road network
- Car road
- Pedestrian path
- Cycling path
- Tram line
- Boat line
- Parking

The map represents the more intense movements around the area. It is a very crowded area since it includes an important traffic node, Stenpiren, where one can commute with trams, buses and boats. It is also very close to Järntorget and that creates a strong connection. Moreover, the riverside, according to the municipality's plans, will be a very attractive spot for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Green areas

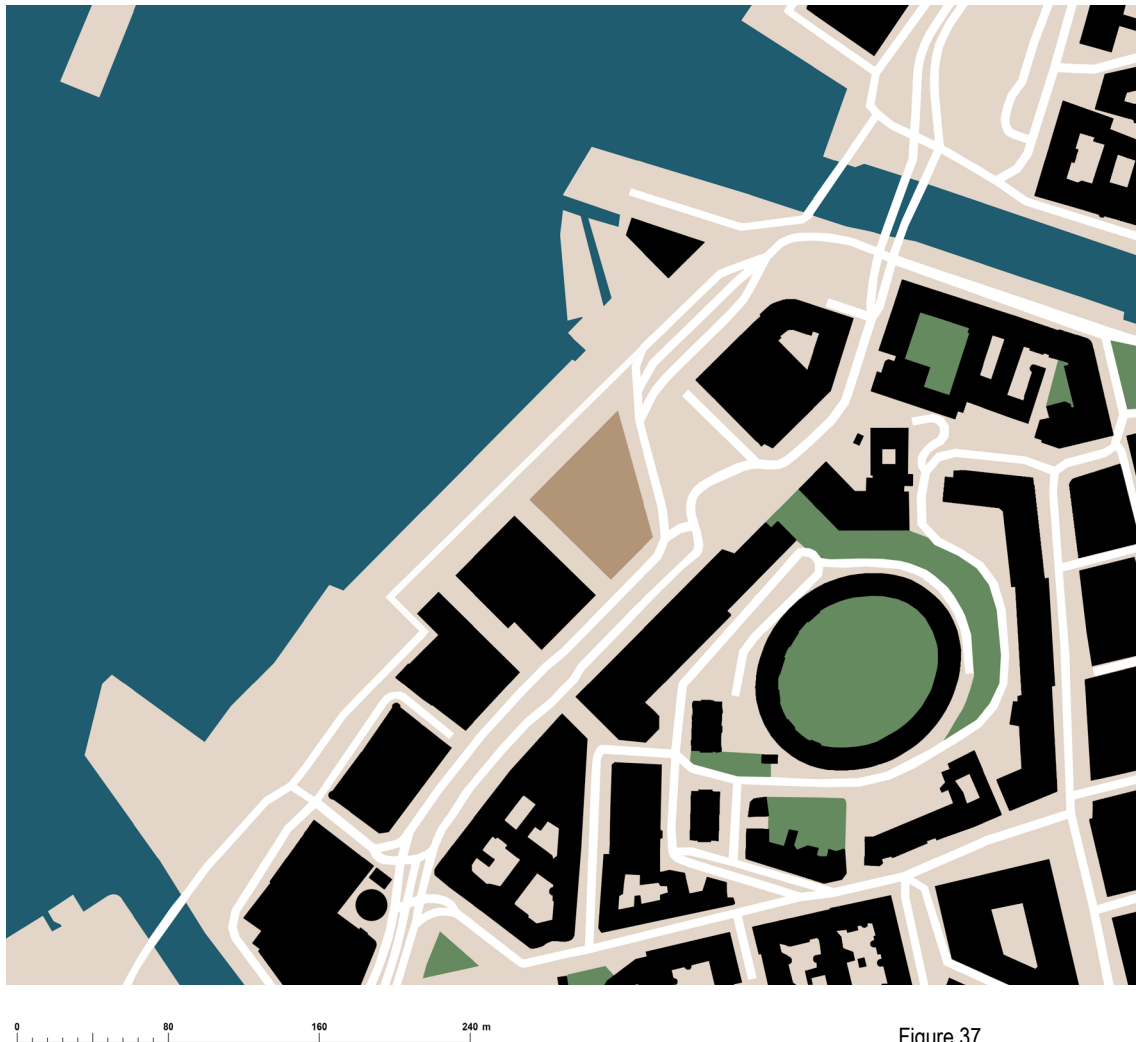


Figure 37



Green area

The green spaces of the area are limited and not accessible to the general public. The big round area is within a housing block, while the rest are located by the road and are consisted of trees and lower greenery.

## Uses



Figure 38



The map represents the activities found in the area. It is very active with many restaurants, shops, services and some hotels mainly by the river.

# Conclusions

The site analysis helped to identify what is relevant in terms of activities, accessibility and green spaces which should be included in the proposal.

The ground floor will be open to everybody. People that walk around the area will be able to spend some time on the block. It will be easily accessible to everybody and the parking won't be on the street level. Moreover, the yard will be a green space, pleasant to spend time in.

The area has a nice view of the river. Everybody will have the privilege to enjoy it. Therefore the top floor will have activities that will attract the residents of the building. There isn't going to be a public presence to this level for safety reasons.

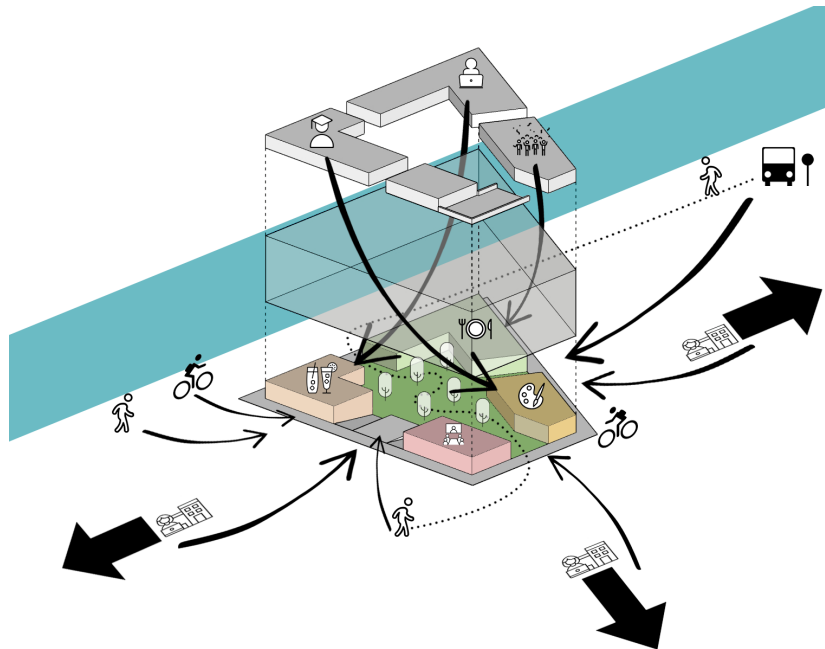


Figure 39



Concept

Chapter 4

# Introduction

Based on the previous studies, references and conclusions, the following proposal was built.

By having a closer look into the proposal, we see the project is divided in to three main sections, “Public” “Private” and “Social” with an integration in between.

## **The public section “ground level”**

By allowing the public to get into the green yard while simultaneously blocking access to the upper levels for non-residents a vibrant space is achieved on the ground floor without compromising the residents’ privacy.

## **The private section “2nd-6th level”**

Located between the public and social section the residents will always have an easy connection with the public and the social part and the feeling of loneliness will be reduced.

## **The social section “7th level”**

It is called the “Block Hub” and it will accommodate all the residents’ activities, from working, studying, playing to doing the laundry.

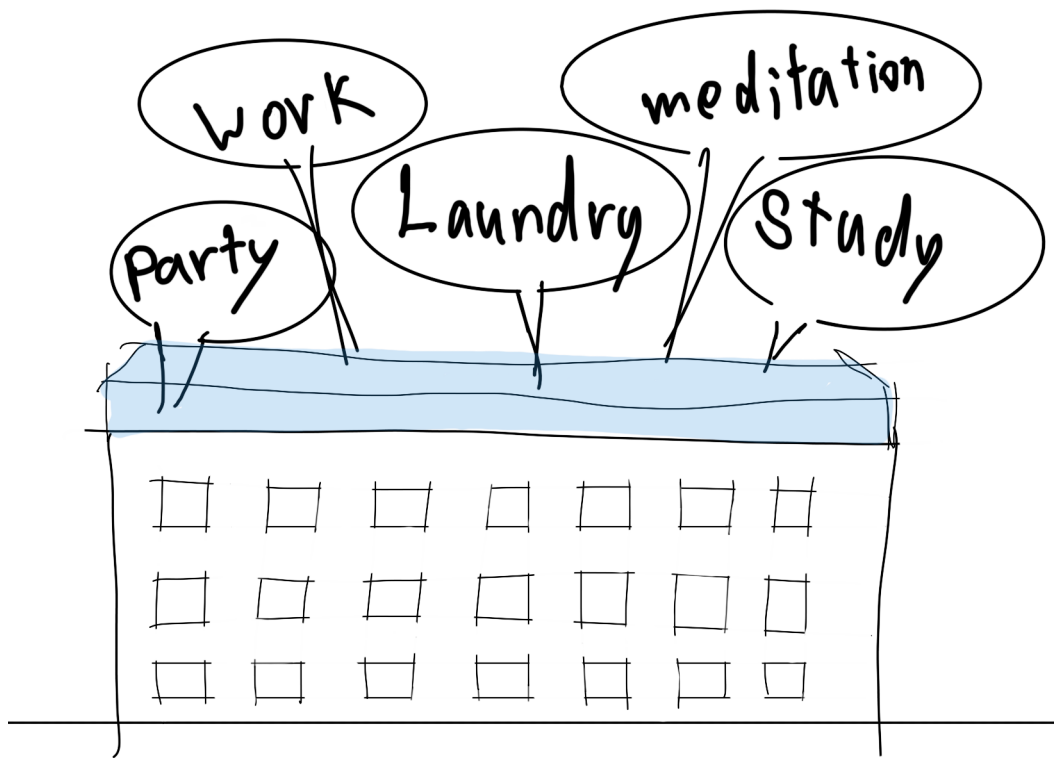


Figure 40

## Public section proposal

Since the plot is located in a very dense area with apartments, offices, services, shops, public transport commuters and many pedestrians and cyclists are circulating around the area, a nice, well-designed public space on the bottom floor of the new apartment block could fit really well with the general profile of the area and provide another pleasant space for people to spend time in.

The design of the ground floor aims to attract people and invite them to be a part of the new neighbourhood through functions such as pub/cafes, restaurants, art gallery/atelier/workshop, and a bookable multi-use hall. The multi-use hall is flexible for any other activities such as conferences, parties, workout sessions without equipment and some special events.

The general public can also have access to the inner courtyard. With an abundance of plants, the building's green lung will offer a quality space, enabling users to enjoy a natural enclave within the urban atmosphere. This green courtyard can be enjoyed all year round due to the glazed roof which protects the visitors from the wind, the cold and rain during the winter. This green lung aims to be a quality focal point not only for the users of the building, but also for the broader area of Stenpiren as well.

The art gallery/workshop will add a creative and artistic flair to the complex, with the exhibitions that it can be hosted, either indoors or outdoors in the courtyard.

The restaurants and the cafes will be key in attracting people to the area and will provide a nice connecting line between Järntorget and Stenpiren.

## Public section plan

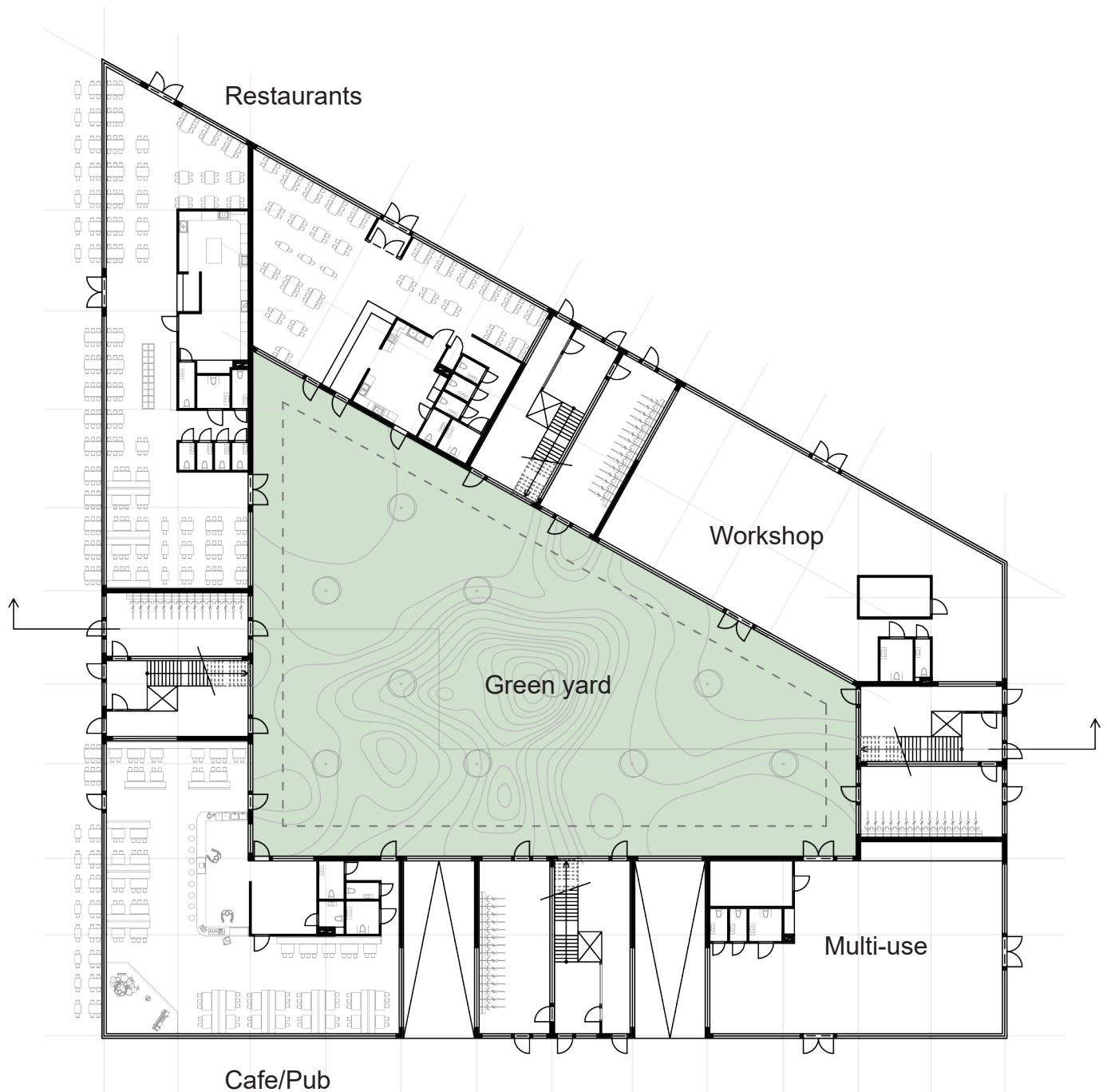


Figure 41: Ground floor, Public section, scale 1.400

## Public section details

Restaurants area 525m<sup>2</sup>, run by private investors or a 3rd party.

Cafe area 290m<sup>2</sup>, run by private investors or a 3rd party.

Multi-use sal area 230m<sup>2</sup>, rented out per hour/day for the public through a website, run by private investors or the property owner company.

Workshop/art gallery area 290m<sup>2</sup>, run by private investors or a union of artists.

Qualities of previous: Location, view, access to the inner green courtyard.

Green yard area 890m<sup>2</sup>, open for free for all.

The diagram on the following page shows the structure of the building and the placement of each part previously mentioned.

It also shows the cars' access in/out to underground parking which is for the tenants and the visitors for a monthly/hourly fee depends on.



Restaurants



Cafe/pub



Multi-use



Workshop/art gallery



Green yard

The relation between the public and the private sections.

The public zone in the building is providing easy and fast spontaneous interaction with strangers for the tenants. So it's an advantage for the residents to have because the strangers have no access to the upper floors.

# Public section diagram

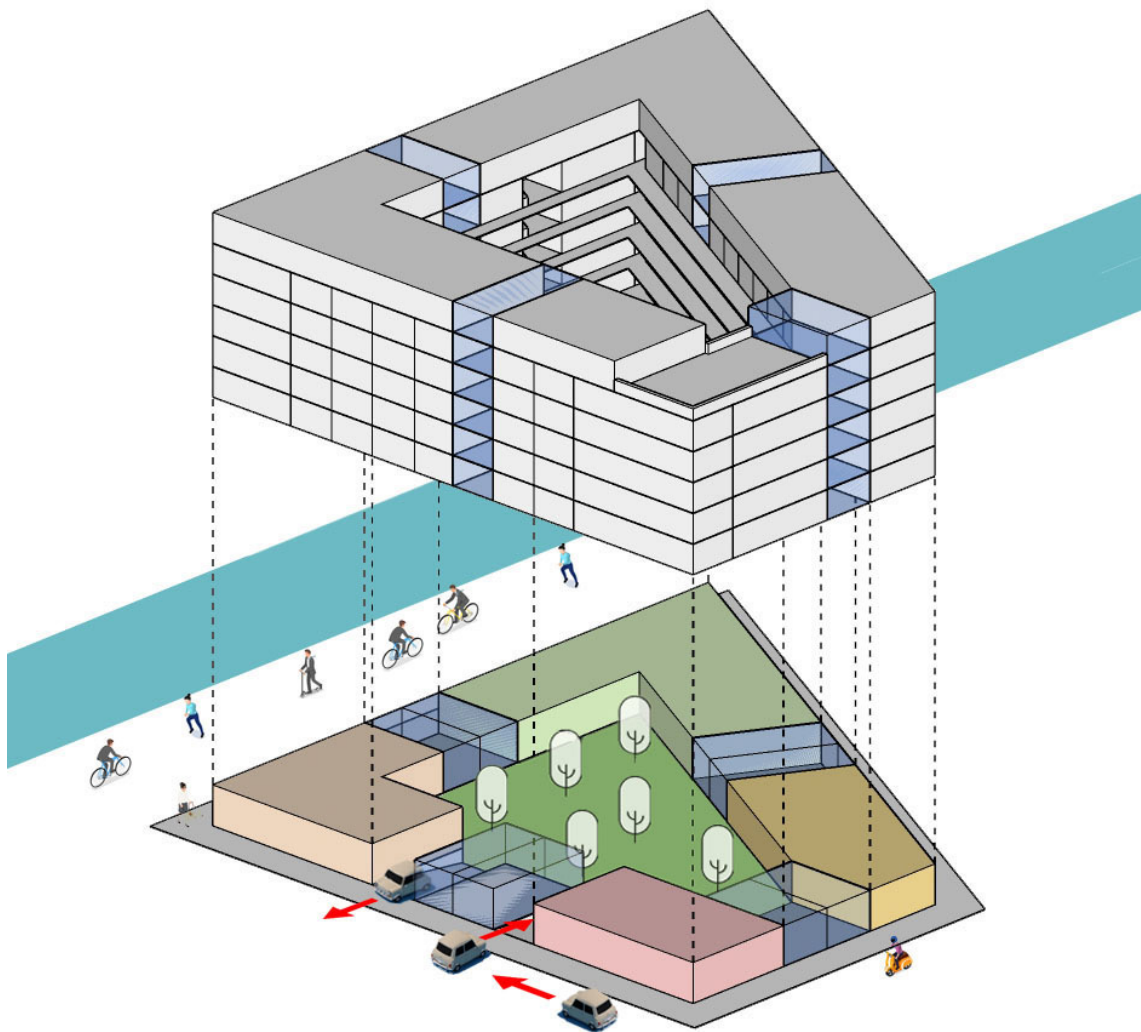


Figure 42

## Private living section proposal

The private living section has different types of apartments, the scale of which ranges from single person apartments to a few apartments that could fit large families or be used as collective living apartments.

The principle followed in most of the apartments is to maintain the communication with the outside as much as possible. To visualise the idea of an interactive, lively neighbourhood, the kitchen and food table is placed close to the common corridor thus keeping the option open to interact with neighbours outside through a window. When not being in the mood simply the curtains can be closed. In addition since the first step into the apartments, it is possible to see the nice view because of the open-plan solution which is very important to exploit.

Finally, the apartments are not designed to be suitable for home working since the purpose of the proposal is to keep the residents interacting with the outside world, making them feel belonging to a community and make them feel less lonely instead of keeping them isolated in their comfort zone.

The yellow spots in the plan indicate the flexible multi-use zones. The residents have the freedom to adjust those zones as they want, they are placed in the unused areas in the staircase without blocking the way in case of fire. The point of placing them there is because it is the area that the residents will go through the most, which will increase the chances of the neighbours spending more time with each other through different activities such as playing chess, watching a movie/match, reading books, sketching or even having fika together.

The blue spot is showing a shared kitchen that is available to be used by the residents, mainly to serve the people who are spending time in the flexible multi-use zones, which would be making it easier to make coffee while continuing to interact with each other.

Total apartments area including balconies 1690m<sup>2</sup>

# Private living section plan



Figure 43: 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> floor, Private living section, scale 1.400

# Private living section apartments specification



Each apartment has three rooms, a master bedroom, children room, living room and kitchen.

Apartments area goes from 77m<sup>2</sup> to 85m<sup>2</sup>.

Total number of apartments: 25



Big-scale apartments that work as a collective apartment or for big families.

Each apartment has six rooms, four of them work as master bedrooms or double beds, one singular bedroom, living room, dining area and a kitchen.

The apartment area is 182m<sup>2</sup>

Total number of apartments: 5



Small-scale studios, that work for single people or couples.

The apartment area goes from 47m<sup>2</sup> to 52m<sup>2</sup>

Total number of apartments: 70



Each apartment has four rooms, a master bedroom, two children rooms, living room and kitchen.

Apartments area goes from 98m<sup>2</sup>.

Total number of apartments: 5



Another type of Big-scale apartment, that also work for collective living and big families.

Each apartment has four rooms, two of them work as master bedrooms or double beds, one singular bedroom, living room, dining area and a kitchen.

The apartment area is 118m<sup>2</sup>

Total number of apartments: 5



A very small-scale flat for a single person.

Each apartment has one bedroom, a living room and a kitchen.

The apartment area is 36m<sup>2</sup>

Total number of apartments: 5

## Private living section diagram

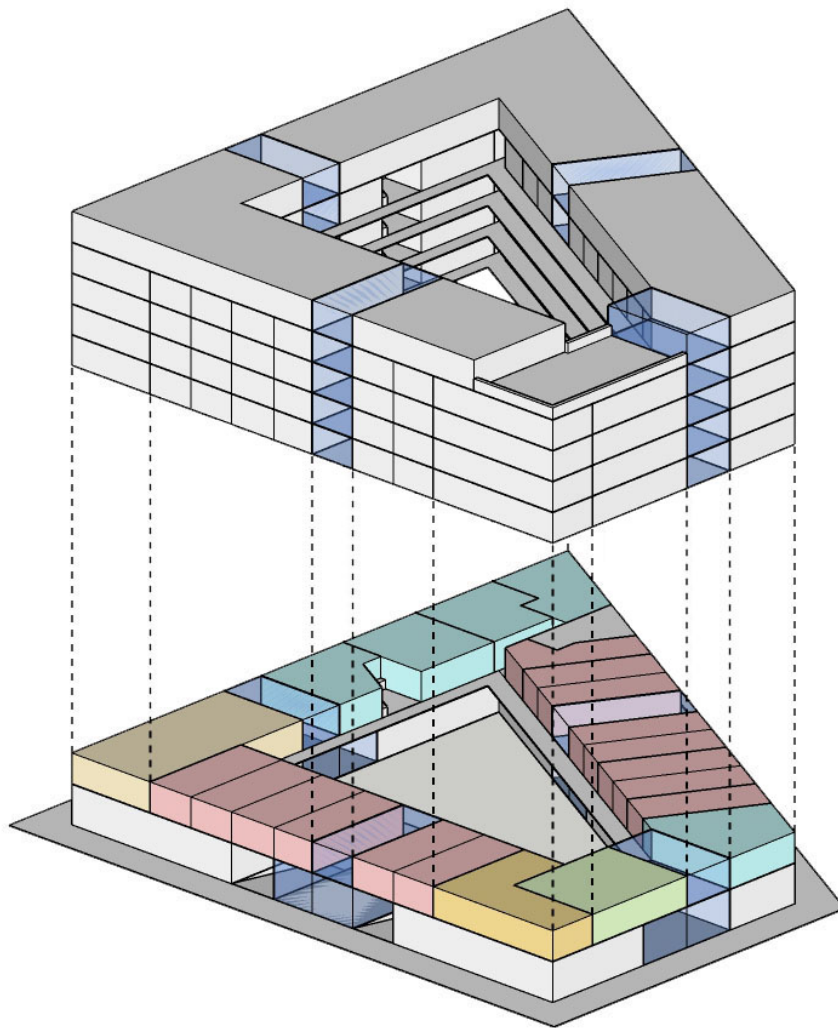


Figure 44

## Examples of some apartments

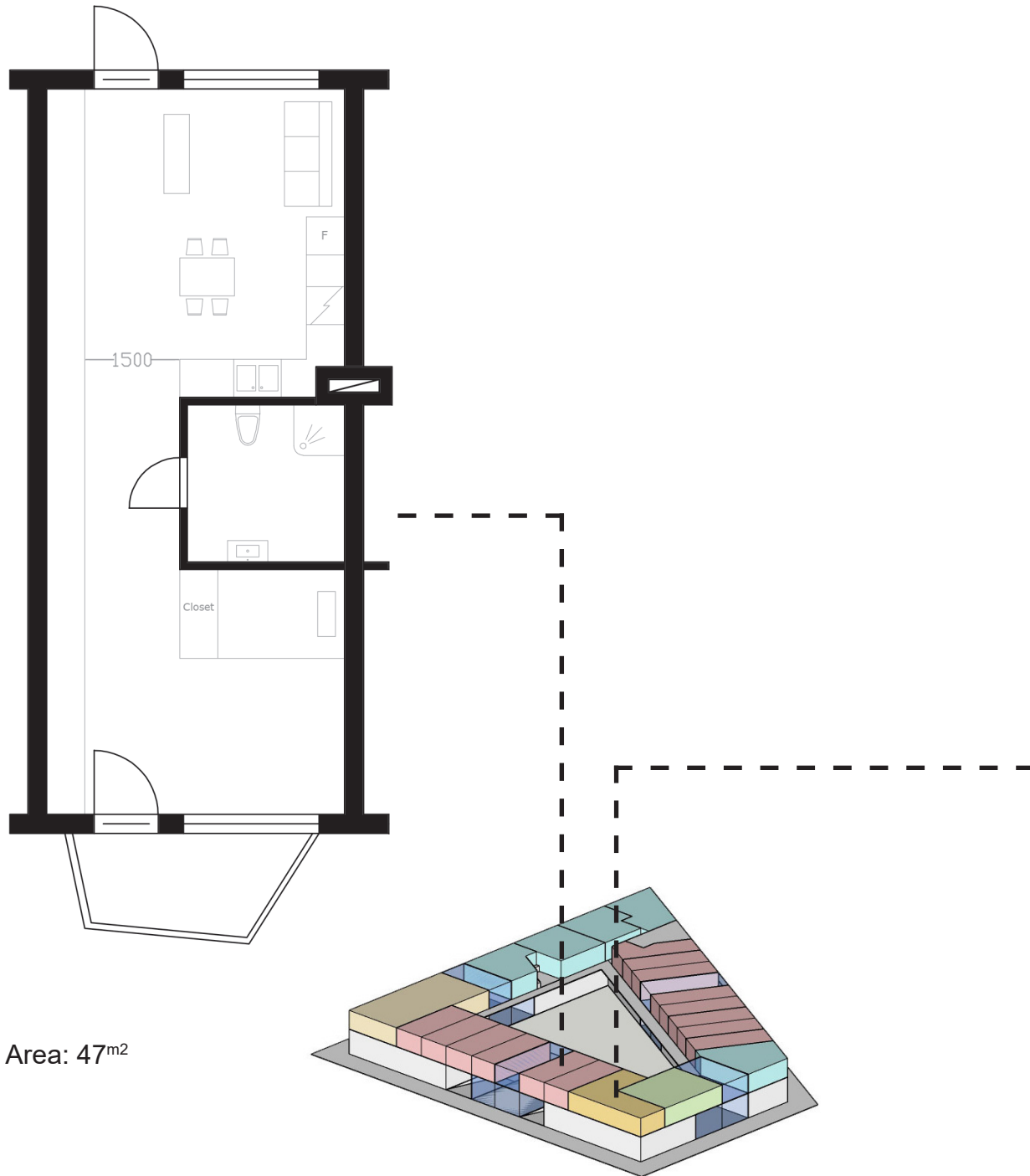
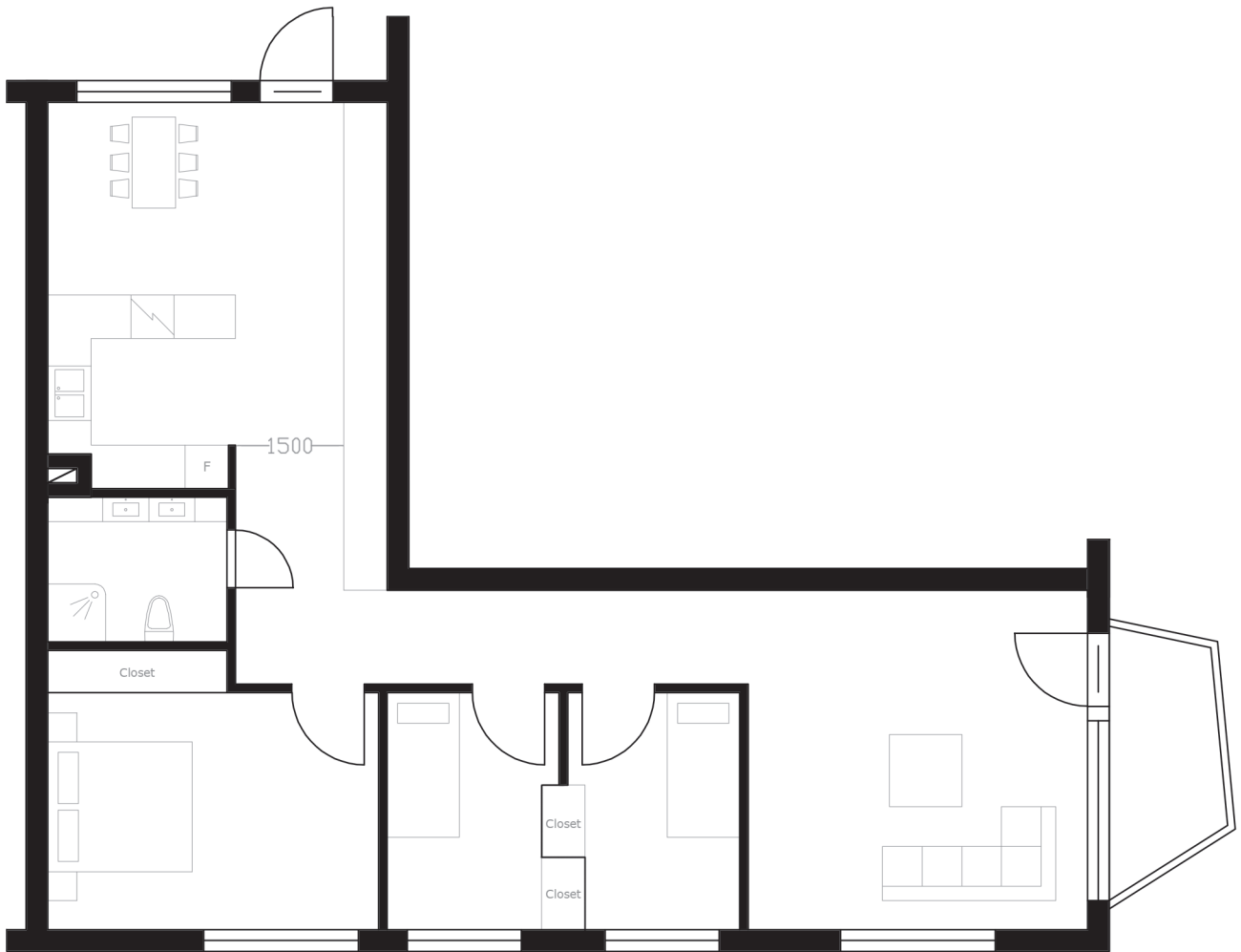


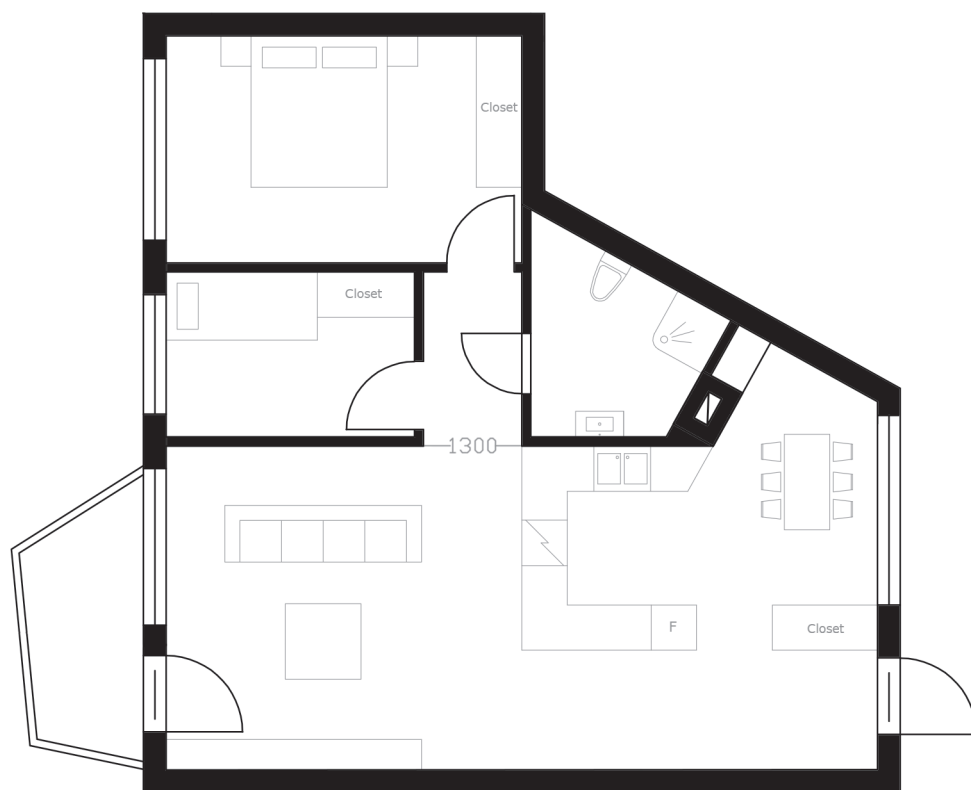
Figure 45: Studio plan, Scale 1.200



Area: 98<sup>m2</sup>

Figure 46: Four rooms apartment plan, Scale 1.200





Area: 77<sup>m2</sup>

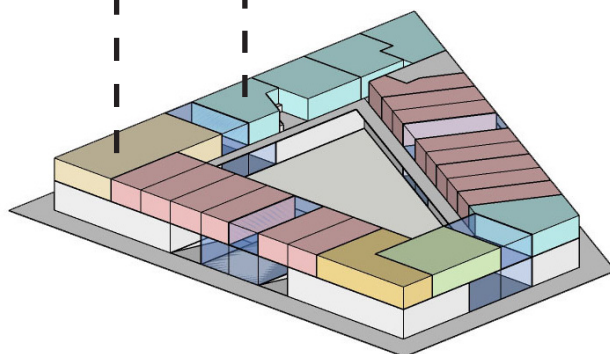


Figure 48: Three rooms apartment plan, Scale 1.200

## Social section proposal "The Block Hub"

This section was designed to gather the building members with all possible social activities and facilitate their remote career life with the best working environment.

It is divided into seven sections, each one is designed for a specific purpose.

Each paragraph colour is indicating a specific zone.

See the plan on page 71.

The working zone, with a total area of 433m<sup>2</sup> is designed to fit 103 desks close to each other for a more social working lifestyle and easier interacting.

It is not necessary to work with people in the same field or career path in order to use the same place. Since we are living in the era of globalization, people can do their jobs from anywhere.

Sharing a working space with other people, regardless of field relevance, is generally proven to positively impact a worker's motivation. This space aims to simulate a real working environment in order to provide a space for residents to be productive, interact and potentially share ideas and stories.

As any normal office, the zone includes a printing room, a special equipment room, some boards for brainstorming and mind maps etc., some couches spread around with a place for making coffee, also 14 small bookable rooms for Zoom meetings or to work in silence.

The silent working/studying zone amounts to a total of 233m<sup>2</sup>. It is for people or adult students who need a calm environment to work in. There are 40 desks in an open space with enough distance and plants in between.

As in the previous normal working zone, the same concept applies here but with more free space in between, accommodating for fewer people in order to keep it quiet, and with plants to absorb the noise. This zone has more individual silence rooms that can also be used for Zoom meetings, like the 10 silence/meeting rooms. In a divided section, there is a sitting area for breaks, 4 desks with screens, a table along with bookshelves, a small room for massage which can be run by a third party to serve the workers and the residents.

The places in the previous two working sections can be rented out per desk. The residents in the building have first priority, then come the residents in the surrounding buildings who can also rent a desk if there any available.

The kitchen and dining area is 135m<sup>2</sup> and located in the middle between the working zone and the silent working/studying zone to serve them both at lunchtime.

It is designed in a way to strengthen the relationship between members with a nice view on both sides, out of the building toward the water and inside in the green courtyard.

The laundry zone is a great place for socializing and performing other activities such as reading, while doing the laundry, with some couches and two small silent working rooms with a direct link with the terrace that gives the users the opportunity for being outside as well.

Located on the top floor to keep it closer to the other multi-use facilities and to keep the opportunity for socializing open for the people who are there only for the laundry purpose.

In the terrace zone, there is a place to grill, eat with others outdoors, and sunbathe. Divided into a glazed part and a non-glazed part in order to provide spaces that can be used all year round, in both good and bad weather conditions.

The social zone, 340m<sup>2</sup>, aspires to be a focal point for this complex. This zone is for tenants to gather and bond in a cosy atmosphere.

It accommodates for different activities like cooking, with a small shared kitchen and places to eat food with others, having parties with a dancing stage, a greenhouse for organic planting, a workshop room for painting, handicrafts and other things, a TV zone with a big couch for video games and watching movies, billiard and ping pong table.

It is also designed to be flexible according to the residents' needs which can be changed during the time.

The social section rent will be divided among the tenants' rent and it is accessible only for the tenants and their guests.

The youth zone, 276m<sup>2</sup>, is divided into two floors, a place where the younger people. e.g. teenagers can use for studying, and relaxing in a variety of spaces like computers room, dining area and a VR room. There are also some social zones for watching films (as an example), on the second level (see figure 50) a net is placed over the film zone where people can lay on and watch movies, and finally a place for reading books.

It is also designed with an easy connection with the two working sections for easy communication between them and their parents.

All the previous zones have easy access to the staircase and an inner balcony overlooking the inner courtyard.

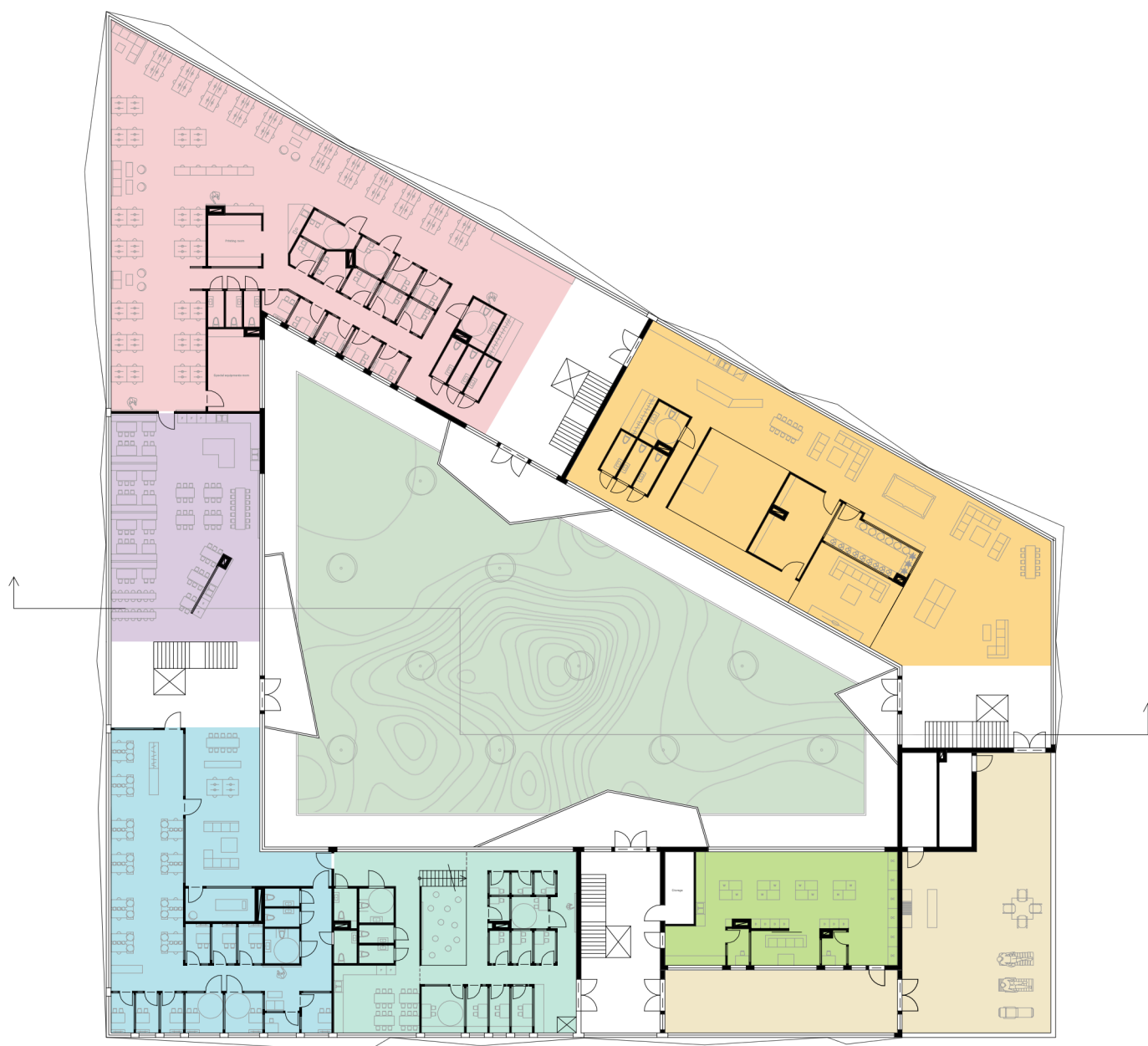


Figure 49: 7<sup>th</sup> floor, The social section “Block Hubb”, scale 1.400

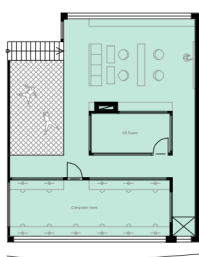
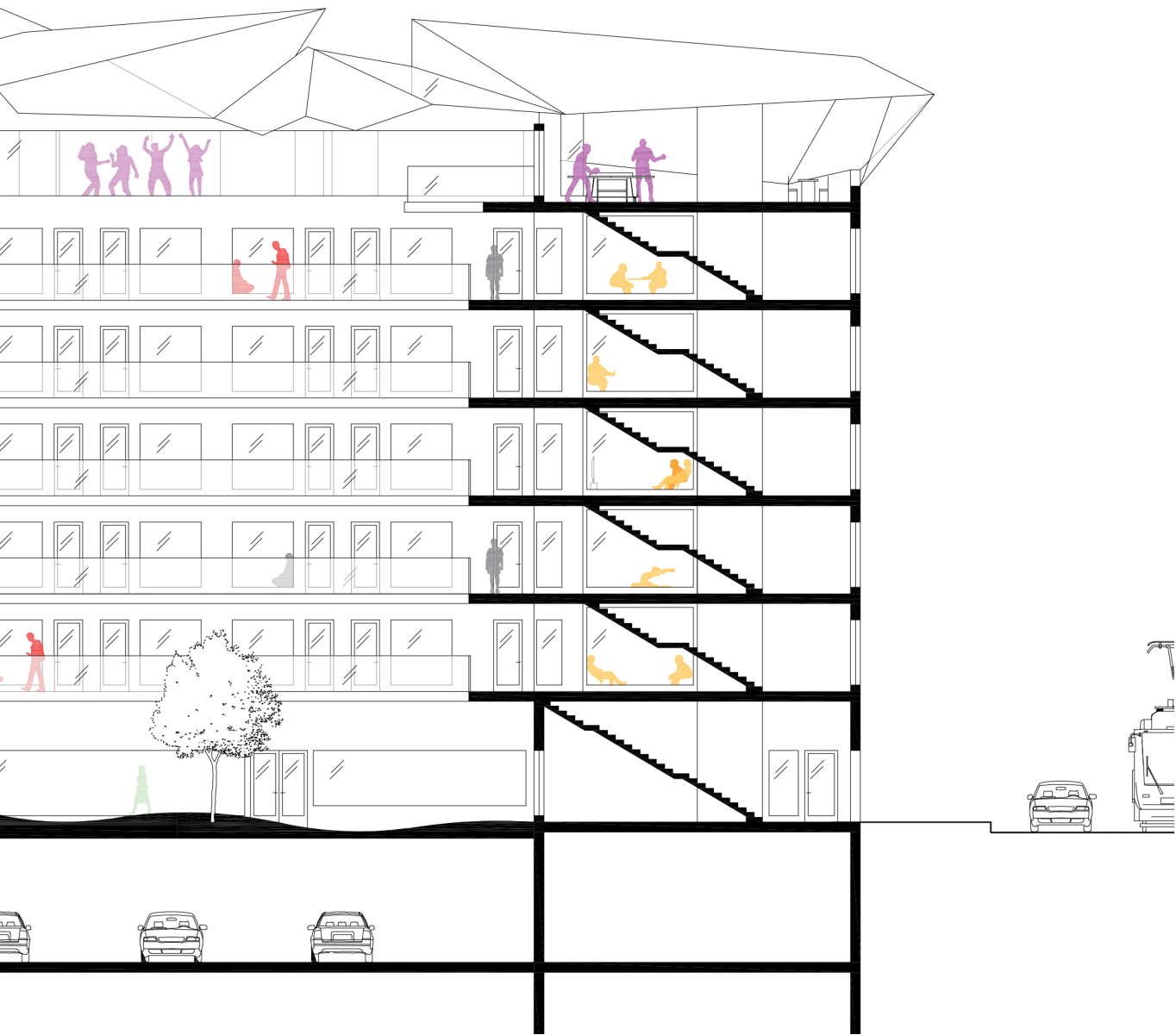


Figure 50: 2<sup>nd</sup> level of the youth zone, Scale 1.400



Figure 51: Section, Scale 1.200

This section shows the relation between the different sections and how the relationship between the neighbours is improved.



The people in the red colour signify the potential link that can be created between the neighbours when they walk by. The people in yellow are representing how the residents are using the flexible multi-use zones for socializing with each other. The purple people are showing the different activities in the Block Hub section from working to dancing and playing. Finally, the people on the ground floor are showing the visitor mosaic and how are they interacting.



Figure 52: Facade A-A, Scale 1.200







Figure 53: Facade B-B, Scale 1.200



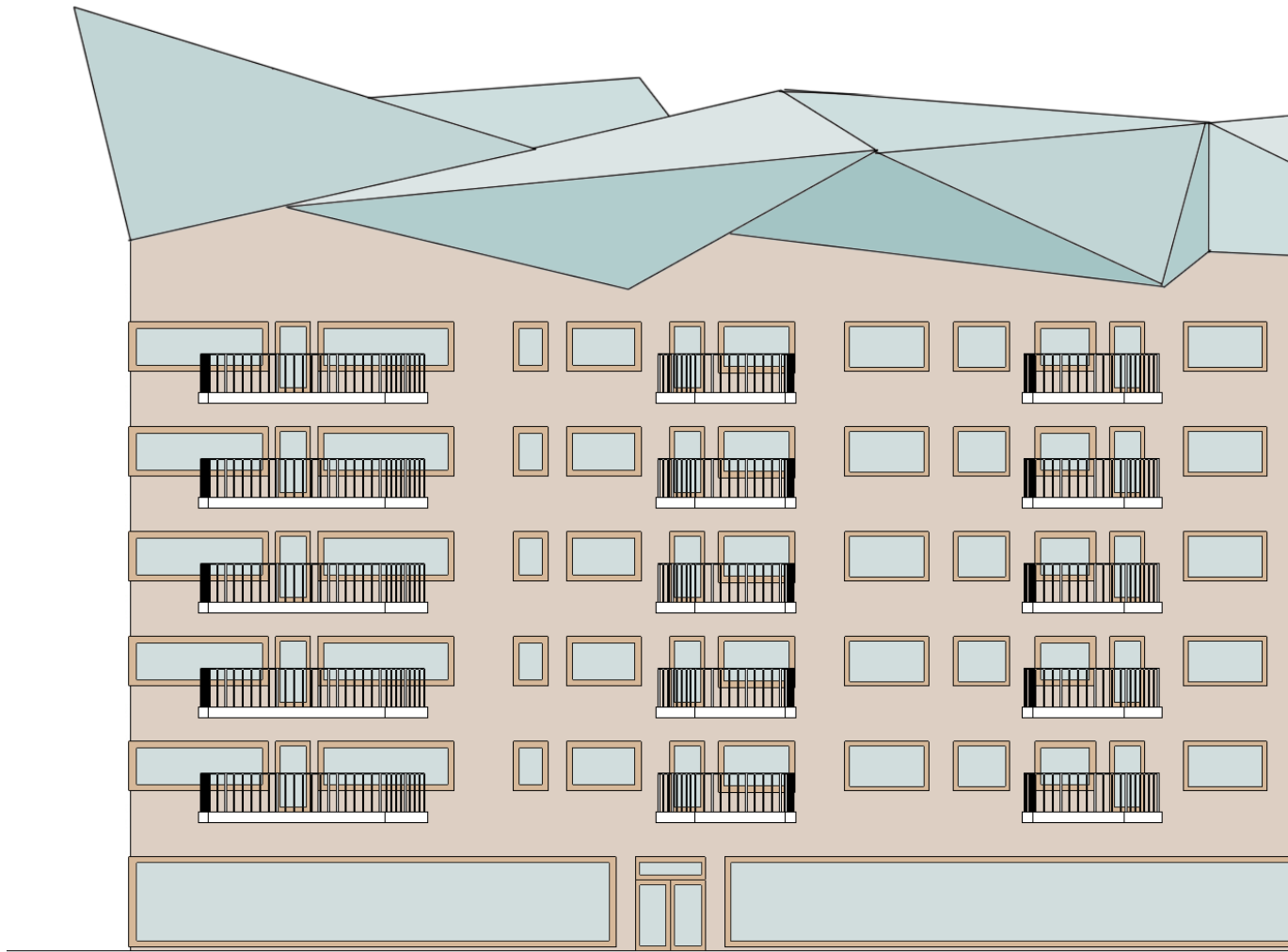


Figure 54: Facade C-C, Scale 1.200







Figure 55





Figure 56

That was my vision of how to foster tenants' social life  
during the growing trend of working remotely.

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