

# INSIDE/OUTSIDE the box

Modifying public spaces, creating social interaction

Arvid Hellström



# Inside / outside the box

Modifying public spaces, creating social interaction

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# Abstract

In an uncertain future, flexibility and ability to adapt are recognized as important factors in avoiding errors, but also discover new ways of handling urban problems.

This thesis examines how standardized wooden modules can be used to modify, manipulate and reinvent public space. It also investigates how flexibility in design could help to involve communities and individuals in reshaping and recycling public spaces.

The site primarily analysed in this thesis is Värnhemstorget in Malmö, but other public places in the same city are also investigated. One of the main ideas is that the modules have the ability to create different scenarios. This depends on where they are situated, what time of day and year it is, and who is currently using them.

The design is divided into three levels, where the first level is the module, basically a wooden box. The next is the pod level, where the modules have been combined to form small rooms that can house functions like a language café or a workshop. The most overarching level is the scenario in which the pods form a larger situation, such as a market, a festival or a temporary library.

The design is therefore very open ended and the pods and the scenarios I have chosen are only examples of some of the possibilities.

# Preface

I began this project by exploring a concept that I will here call *urban nomadism*, an idea that people now, and more than ever live flexible, changeable lives, and that they are living them within an urban context. This led me to explore subjects such as temporality, flexibility and changeability. I have done so through the lens of art and culture, but also by considering everyday objects and architectural elements as adjustable pollards, heated domes and movable statues. I was always fascinated by the idea of a city able to interact and adapts itself to its inhabitants - a city like a living organism. In a segregated city, public spaces are recognized as the meeting points for all inhabitants. My starting point was to explore what would happen if public spaces were more flexible, involving and adjustable. This move toward flexibility is motivated by concerns of democracy, segregation and social involvement. Through interviews and by experience I have learnt that this is something that many of those working in the field find problematic and has a hard time to involve in their daily practice. It was important for me to take this problem seriously but make of it something simple and playful.

I would like to thank Niels de Bruin, Andreas Olsson, Björn Ekelund, Erik Arnell, Sofia Massrouf, Johan Bång, Tilda Kristersson, Malin Svensson, Sebastian Dahlquist & Mosaik Arkitekter for their valuable input and thank you for reading

# Theorist Explained

## Robert Kronenburg

Professor in architecture at Liverpool University. Writes about flexibility within architecture, influenced by innovative technology, transient demands, and the arts of film and popular music.

## Richard Sennet

Professor in sociology at the London School of Economics, MIT and New York University. Urbanist with an interest in public space, social friction, uncertainties and openness.

## Yona Friedman

Architect, urban planner and designer. Already in 1958, Yona Friedman published his first manifesto: “Mobile architecture”, describing a new kind of mobility not of the buildings, but of the inhabitants.

## Lisa Diedrich

Professor of landscape architecture at the Swedish University of Agriculture, one of the inventors of the transect analysing method, writes about city and harbour transformations.

## Luca Galofaro & Carmelo Baglivo

Both part of multidisciplinary agency IAN+ Architects, educators and theorists who write about changeability.

“Architecture should be a transformer of territory, it does not only create rooms but defines the conditions that lets the room evolve. The strategy of architecture and urban design should be more open-ended to be able to adapt. The danger in over-determinating the process of the project from the start is that it will neglect evaluations and experiments.”  
(Buildingcentre[online] 2011-04-01)

- Robert Kronenburg

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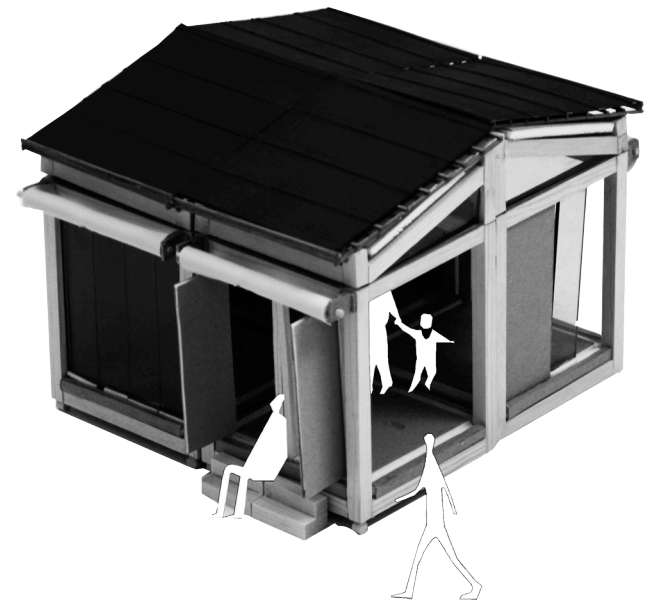
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## I Introduction

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## Research Question

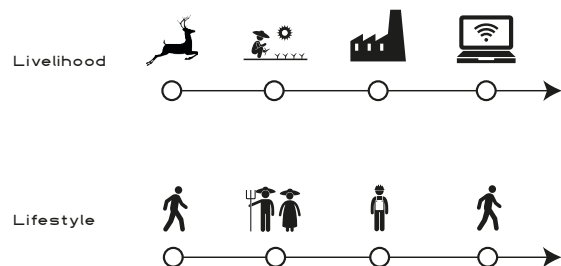
How can flexible urban design help to create social interaction and citizen engagement in the specific case of Värnhemstorget?

## Limitations

Even though the project outcome may be applicable on a variety of urban contexts it is primarily concerned with Malmö and Värnhemstorget.

The reason why Värnhemstorget was choosed as a case study is that its problems were seen to be typical: traffic, harsh climate, lack of interaction and citizen engagement.

The idea regarding this project was to solve problems on a small scale but that similar solutions can be applied in a bigger urban context. If one would like to extend the investigation of the thesis it would have been interesting to compare the effects of a similar design in another city.



## Why flexibility?

The majority of the inhabitants of our planet are now living in urban areas (UN recommended definition: 20.000 inhabitants km<sup>2</sup>). According to Swedish government Bureau of Statistics(SCB) it is these areas that are most likely to grow in the future(Statistiska centralbyrån[online]2013-10-10).

Who are the modern citizens? The traditional meaning of the word nomad is someone with no settled home, who moves from place to place in order to obtain food, finding pasture for livestock, or otherwise making a living. Most nomadic groups follow a fixed annual or seasonal pattern of migration and settlements. The modern flexible and uprooted lifestyle of the growing urban population can be interpreted as a new type of nomadism.

This new urban nomadic existence is based on a pattern of migration between towns or within them, global markets, internet, faster communications, transportations and changeable employments. As our lifestyle is becoming more nomadic our living environment should adapt to it, responding to the seasonal changes, behaviours and other factors. According to Professor Robert Kronenburg - researcher of mobile and flexible architecture - this is the philosophical base of flexible architecture (building-centre [online] 2011-04-01).



## II Background

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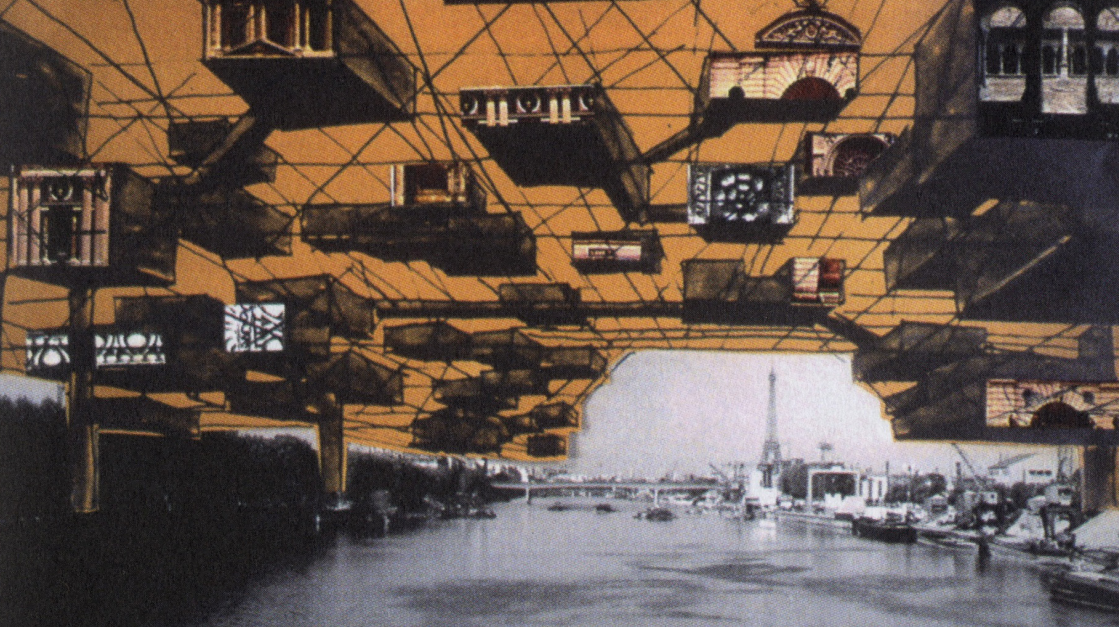


Figure 1: Superstructure above Paris, Yona Friedman

## A flexible Utopia

Yona Friedman, one of the leading architectural theorists in the 1950 and 1960 identified flexibility as a key concept within architecture. In 1958 he published his first manifesto called Mobile Architecture. His concept of mobility revolved around inhabitants acquiring the freedom - within a certain framework - to change their homes as they pleased. He stressed that architecture should not be something reserved for professionals and specialists. (Forty, p.142 & Friedman, p.14)

Friedman's visions of flexibility focused on how the citizen could move, adapt, influence their home, and change their living condition. He imagined the houses to be part of a large scale superstructure floating above ground.

## Definitions of flexibility

When trying to define flexibility, Kronenburg identifies four factors which flexible architecture constitutes of: Movability, adaptation, interaction and transformation. Movability is the notion that physical objects can be moved, thus creating a new spatial situation depending on different context. Adaptation lets the architecture respond to better fit a new situation that it is placed in. Interaction is creating a dialogue between the person and the physical environment. Transformation is the part of flexible architecture that lets it change from one thing to another, it states that the world is constantly in transformation, and things are not divided into before and after.

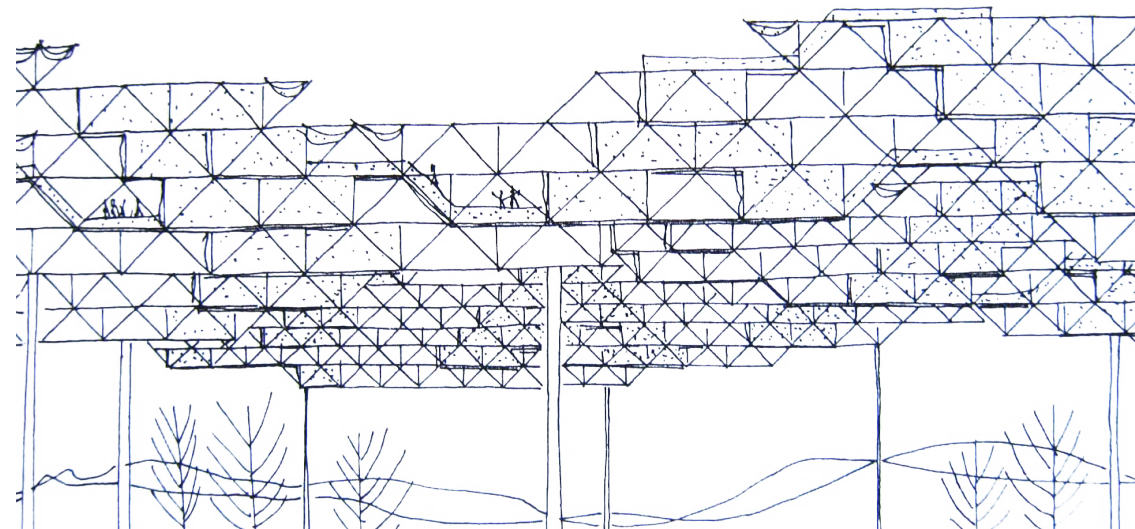


Figure 2: Superstructure in section, Yona Friedman

## An open ending

“...Rather than a lockstep march towards achieving a single end, we look at the different and conflicting possibilities which each stage of the design process should open up; keeping these possibilities intact, leaving conflict elements in play, opens up the design system.”(Sennet, 2006, p. 4)

- Robert Sennet

Carmelo Baglivo & Luca Galofaro view architecture as a transformer of territory, an ever-changing system, that organizes and defines relationships and meetings rather than creating concrete objects. It does not only create rooms, but defines the conditions that let the room evolve (Baglivo & Galofaro, 2003, p41).

The strategy of architecture & urban design should be more open-ended to be able to adapt itself more easily, be more resilient. We should consider that most certainly today's consensus of how a city should be will surely not be the same as in the future. Still we consider contemporary city planning as a form of tool that answers to all needs. But it is impossible to understand the problems with shaping a city in a few generic contemporary truths.

These truths changes and modernism is a good example. Today and since the ending of world war II we have been critical to this ideology. Lisa Diedrich states that a lot of the criticism of modernism concerns lack of local considerations and a so often tabula rasa way of building (Diedrich. 2012, s 40). In that sense modernism, has been about remaking what has been done earlier, instead of recycling and transforming.



“If a novelist were to announce at the beginning of a story, here’s what will happen, what the characters will become, and what the story means, we would immediately close the book.”

“An urban designer or planner should just like a writer act as a guide through the exploration of the unknown, not necessarily starting off with telling the citizen what the best solution is and then cement it...” (Sennet, 2006, p. 4)

- Robert Sennet

Planners work in a much too bureaucratic way with zoning rules and regulations, which according to Richard Sennet disables local innovation and growth. He states that this encourages one to think of the city in a static way, something he calls the Brittle city, the city that does not adapt. A building has its function, and when it has lost its purpose it can be destroyed to construct a new one. Sennett suggests that urbanists should aim to shape the narrative of urban development with focus on time and phases, and an understanding of what the initial phase will lead to.

He means that the danger in over-determinating the process of the project from the start will neglect evaluations and experiments, thus making the city less resilient. Sennet sees the planner as a narrator and compares them with writers.



Figure 3: Superkilen, Copenhagen, BIG.

## Placemaking

Kronenburg writes that for architecture to be complete it needs to be influenced by people. It is when people have the possibility to affect and appropriate a space that they care and make it their own.

“As well as the concept of democracy, the concept of public space is a phenomenon that constantly needs to be conquered, formed and filled with meaning” (Building-centre[online] 2011-04-01)

“.As both an overarching idea and a hands-on approach for improving a neighbourhood, city, or region, Placemaking inspires people to collectively re-imagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community” (Project for public spaces [online], 2014-04-11).

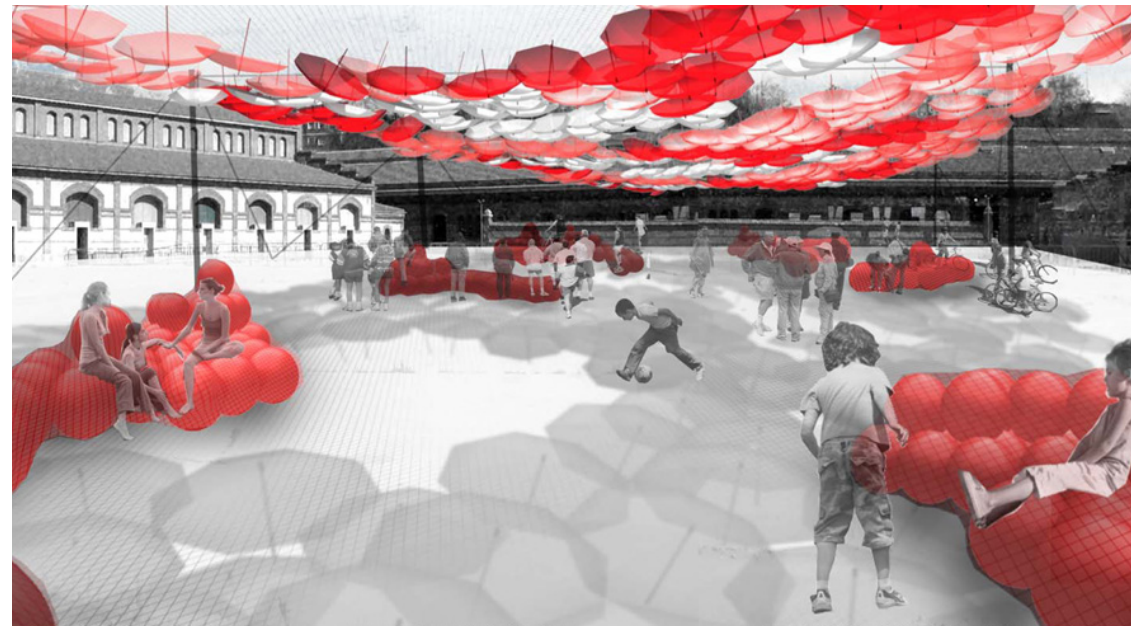


Figure 4: This is not an umbrella, Madrid ,Ecosistema Urbano,

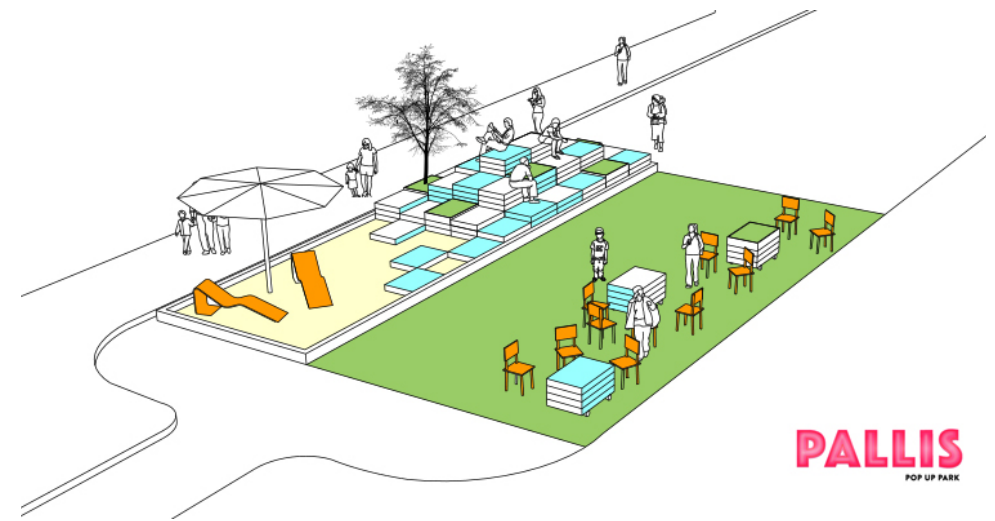


Placemaking aims to strengthen the connection between people and the places they share; placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that defines a place and support its ongoing evolution.

With community-based participation at its centre, an effective placemaking process utilizes the local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces which contribute to people's health, happiness, and well-being.



Figure 5: Dome, Malmö, Malmö stad



**PALLIS**  
POP UP PARK

Figure 6 & 7: Pallis, Stockholm, White





Figure 8: Lampan, Malmö, Malmö stad

## Flexibility & Sustainability

Sustainability is an important part of flexibility. If the design can adapt it could remain relevant for a longer period of time. This would make it more Economically and ecologically viable. One important aspect of flexibility is in how we use a design. Kronenburg means that people, when having the possibility of using architecture in many ways they tend to do so. Depending on e.g. socio-cultural background, age and what time of the day it is. In this way democracy is in-bedded within flexibility, as citizens are able to influence the forming of cities in a direct way (buildingcentre[online] 2011-04-01).

## The in between space

Sebastian Dahlquist is co-founder of the artist collective called *Mellanrum* (between spaces) whom does projects between art & city planning. He says that the aim of *Mellanrum* is to de-program / create a more open program for the city. *Dahlquist* argues that there is a constant on-going change in a city. He means that it is unwise to look upon it in such a static way that we still tend to do. He believes that planners should leave more open endings, and argues that there is a large risk of replacing old mono functionalities with new ones. One goal of open endings would be that fewer resources would be needed to remake the mistakes that we surely will do.

Dahlquist considers the city as being overly programmed and controlled. He means that the aim of *Mellanrum* is to create spaces in which the citizens can decide what will happen. He argues that the municipality needs to let go of some of the control of the city, in order to leave some space for the citizens to form. He therefore argues that a bottom up process is much more needed in city planning. Besides involving people who are able to express their perspectives, it also encourages the citizens to care for and - in the long run - manage the area.



Figure 9: Hjulpark, Malmö, Mellanrum

The municipality needs to be more responsive to what people want, and not just e.g. give them a limited possibilities of how a square might look, or what the color of a building might be.

On the website of *Mellanrum* the collective describes that new ideas and initiatives led by citizens takes place in the vacant spaces of the city. They take it as their mission to make space available and share knowledge about city development. (<http://www.mellanrum.nu>). One of their projects is *Hjulpark*, a tiny movable park/furniture construction that fits on e.g. empty parking lots.



Figure 10: Makroskopet

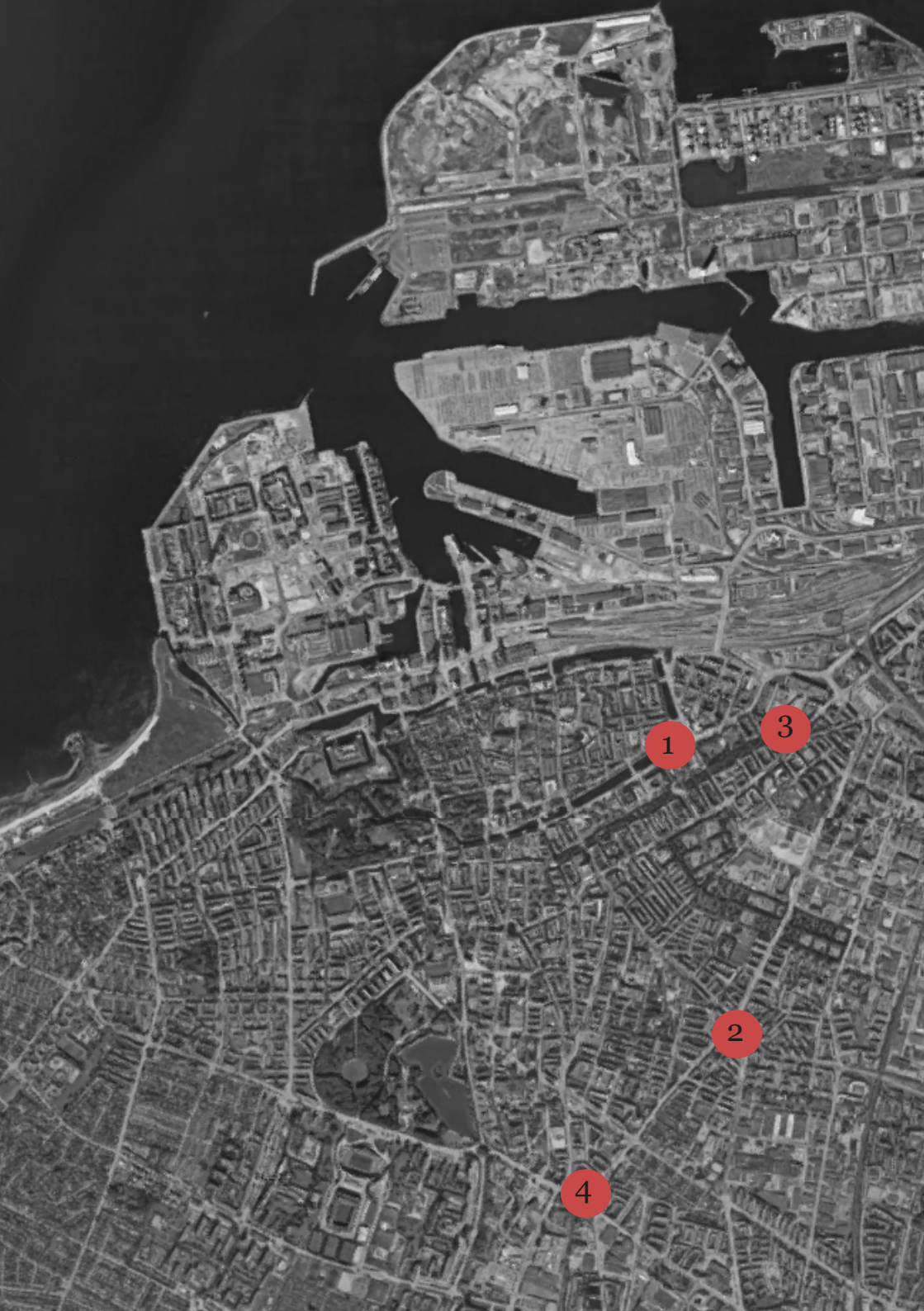
*Mellanrums* projects are often situated in temporary abandoned places or places that are undefined, left over or in between (*Mellanrum* in Swedish). In their projects they think of the citizens as co-creators of space. One of their projects: *Gula rummet* was a small room placed in a park, where people themselves could plan and execute what would happen.

*Makroskopet* was part of the discussion forum *Framtidsveckan i Sofielund*. It is described as a temporal platform for meetings, workshops, lectures and discussions. The name refers to the opposite of a microscope which instead of zooming in zooms out, to get a larger perspective on the situation we are in.

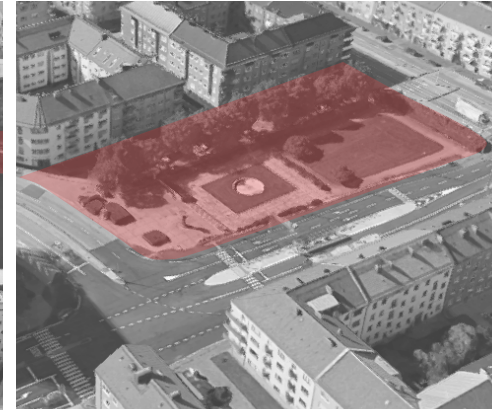




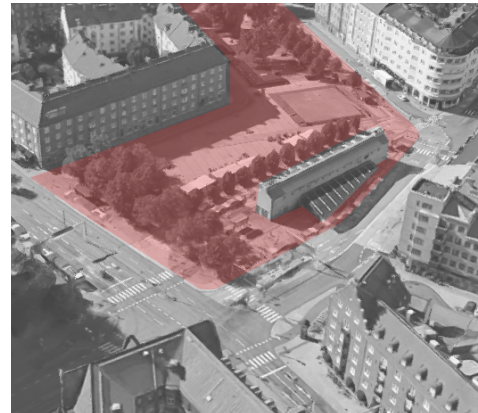
### III The sites



1: Along Rörsjökanalen



2: Nobeltorget



3: Värnhemstorget



4: Dalaplan

## Problems with the public spaces in Malmö

In this thesis, four public spaces in Malmö have been identified as areas with typical urban problems. These problems apply for cities in general, and especially for northern European cities. During most of the day they are oversized in comparison to how many people that stays there. This gives them a vast empty, unwelcoming feeling.





Figure 11: Functions on site not very well connected to the outdoor



Figure 12: Large adjacent roads that acts as barriers



Figure 13: Harsh climate

Even though many people pass by, none of the places are popular for social activities. Despite several functions as restaurants, bars, cafés, stores etc. the buildings and what's inside of them do not connect in a good way to the outdoor environment. This differs to some extent depending on season but in general there are few of these places that actually utilizes their potential.

The public spaces are next to large roads with a lot of traffic. This makes the areas noisy and unfriendly. The roads do not provide a pleasant environment for social gatherings and activities. At the same time these places mostly gather people due to the fact that they are traffic nodes.

Rörsjökanalen which has the potential to be a nice walk, mostly acts as a barrier instead of a place for recreation. The canal is also parallel to large roads, creating an unpleasant traffic situation, instead of a comfortable pedestrian walk.

Another problem is the Swedish harsh climate. Even if Malmö is one of the most southern cities in Sweden, rain and wind are prohibiting factors in using the public space.



# Challenges



## Socioeconomic segregation

**According to the OECD, Sweden has fallen from 1st to 14th place in equality ranking between countries.** Residential segregation has also increased based on both ethnicity and socioeconomic background. **This is particularly evident in larger cities.** Malmö is a city with a large population born in other countries (32%).



## Lack of influence

An overall problem in planning of cities is the citizen's lack of influence. It is hard to get people's opinions for something that has not already been built and it's often the same few people that already understand the future plans who speaks their mind about it.



## Nordic Climate

For public space to be used all year round in a climate like Sweden's it would be an advantage with some sheltering possibilities. The large indoor spaces often have commercial purposes. These spaces are almost always private but share many of the social functions with public space. It is therefore a large risk of excluding people.



## Static planning

When constructing new areas the plans are often formed from an idea of before and after the project. This creates rigidity and an area which is not adaptable for changes.

# Case study: Värnhemstorget

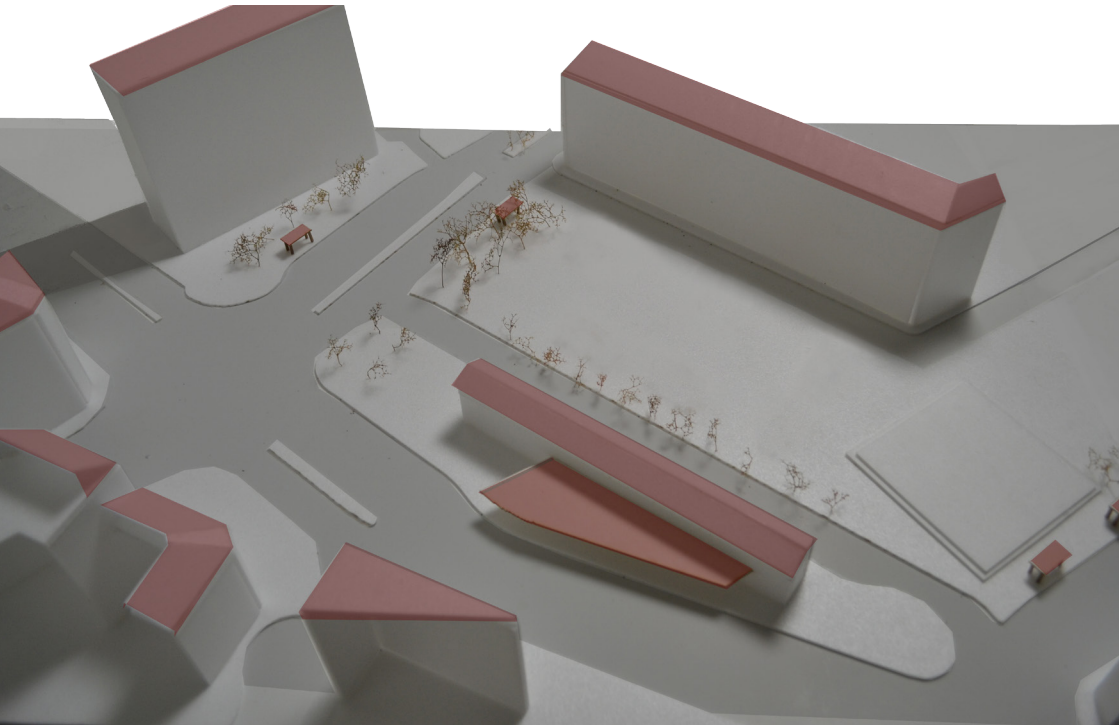


Figure 14: Model of Värnhemstorget



Figure 15: Värnhemstorget 1950s

Värnhemstorget is a square on the edge of Malmö. It is a busy traffic node and traffic has always been the main focus here. The municipality plans to build new housing and a train station close to Värnhemstorget. Östra förstadsgatan and Föreningsgatan (see page 44) are some of the most busy roads in Malmö, (Malmö stad[online] 2017-12-08) and the square is one of Malmö's most frequented areas for commuters (Samuelsson, 2004). A lot of people pass by, and a lot of time is spent on site.



Figure 16: Värnhemstorget 1980s





Figure 17: Sightline towards Kungsgatan



Figure 18: Gatherings at a bus stop

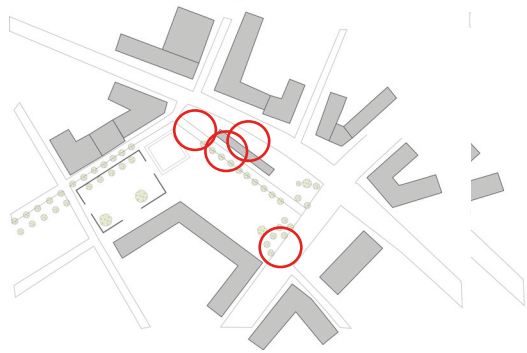
Värnhemstorget as a square is divided into different areas. It is a mixed place, a place with many local people and many people from other areas of the city passing by. As it is today they seldom meet. Except bus commuters and some people doing their shopping, (mostly at the nearby shopping mall Entré and the supermarket) it is also a place for social outcasts and is used by addicts and dealers. In between 2005 - 2015 soup, bread and coffee was served on Saturdays by a charity organisation. The goal of that was said to get people to meet.



Plan Värnhemstorget

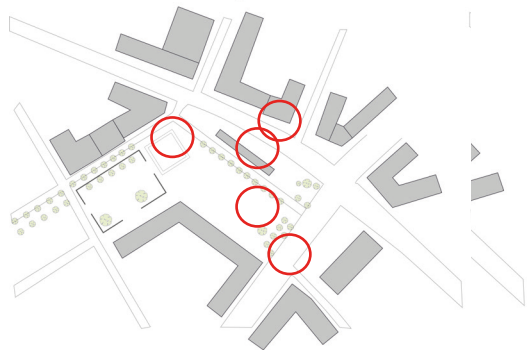


Section Värnhemstorget



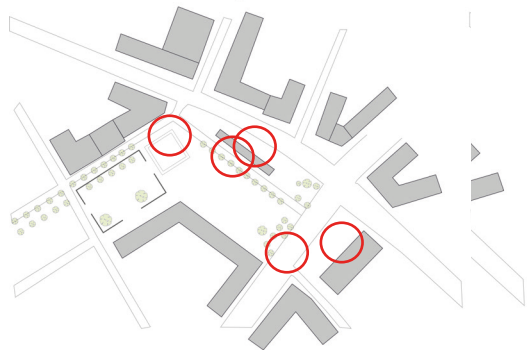
### People gathering between 09:00- 10:30

The observation was performed during autumn. People were gathering next to the bus stops. Not much attention was given to anything else than getting on the bus and going away. Street vendors and recruiters that roamed the area tried constantly, but were quite unsuccessful, to get the attention of the commuters.



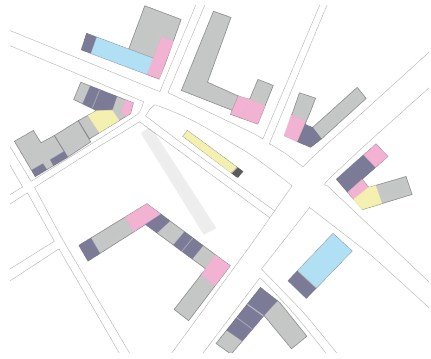
### People gathering between 12:30- 13:15

Later during the day people were staying at the main square in a higher extent, taking small walks, sitting at benches etc. There was a market stall on the square which attracted a few. Two people sat outside of the supermarket drinking beer, and a few people were sitting outside on a cafeteria next to Östra Förstadsgatan.



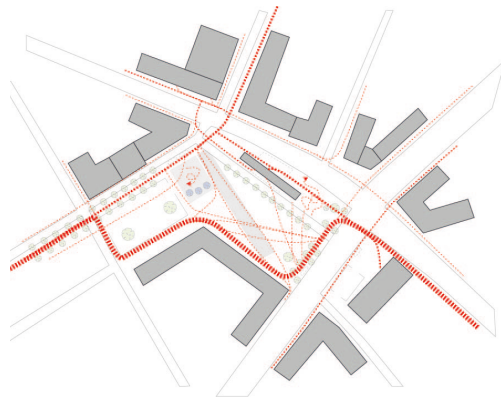
### People gathering between 18:15- 19:00

Later in the day people gathered next to the bus stops again, but the major part were arriving from somewhere else getting out of the buses. A beggar was sitting outside of the supermarket and many people passed by to buy groceries.



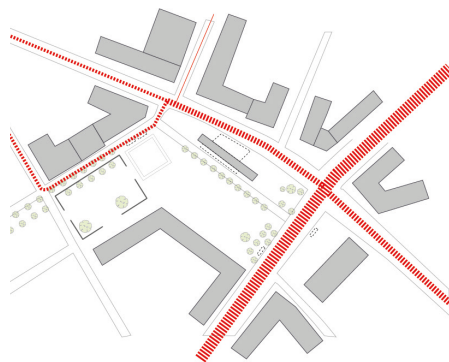
## Functions

■	WC	■	Convenience store
■	Fastfood	■	Supermarket
■	Retail		



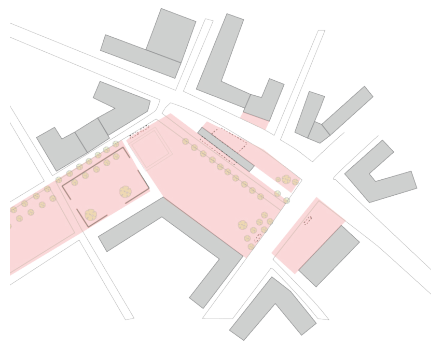
## Pedestrian & bicycle movements

When observing the movement of people one can easily notice that they tend to move in the periphery of the square, not appropriating it but rather framing it. The more part of the cyclists were moving from Kungsgatan down towards the supermarket and out of town (illustrated by the thickest red line).



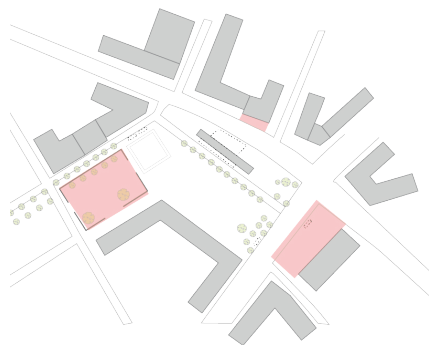
## Bus & car movements

The main traffic passes through Östra förstadsgatan and Föreningsgatan which is also the road for the buses that leaves town. This cuts off the pedestrian route and makes the supermarket disconnect from the rest of the square.



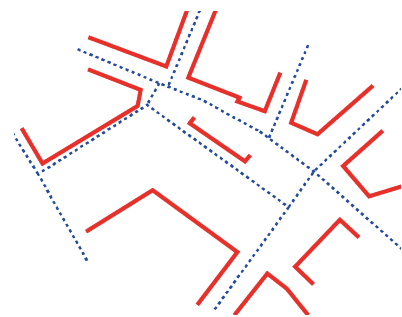
## Rooms

The main actual square (aprox 100 x 50 meters) is the least active part of the place and feels vast and empty. Kungsgatan to the left is a green promenade, the area outside the supermarket (to the right) is frequently used which is also true about the area north of the bus station building.



## Rooms for interaction

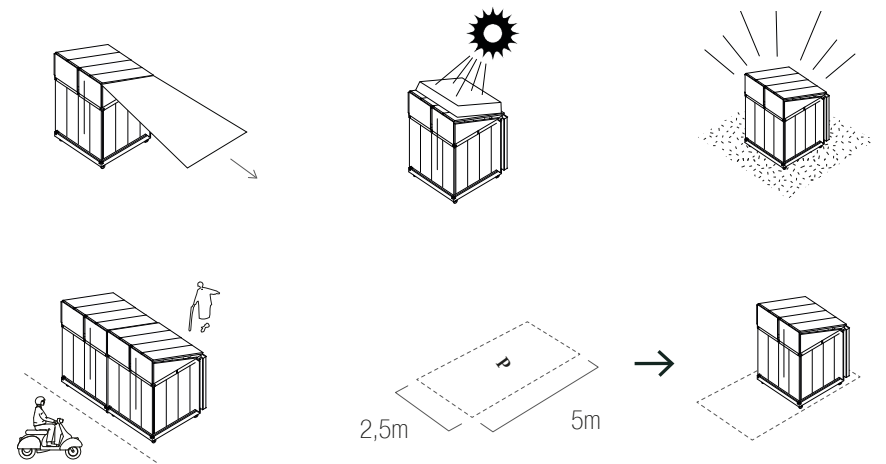
In these areas people tend to stay more in an active way and possibility for interaction and conversation takes place. The areas to the left and to the right are mostly appropriated by alcoholics which today seems to keep others from appropriating the areas. The area to the north is connected to a popular cafeteria.



## Borders

Värnhemstorget was planned around 1923. When observing the borders of the square it shows that it is quite a large area (aprox 150 x 85 meters). Traffic is cutting through various places and most areas seems like leftovers, rather than somewhere that you would actually like to stay (Except for the main square).





## IV Strategies

# Overall strategies



~~Segregation~~  
Meetings

To avoid segregation meetings are crucial. Sennett has a view on good urbanity, which is the contrary of friction-free. He means that a difference in urban behaviour acts as a stimulation of urban influence and democracy. As cities are becoming denser higher demands are put on public spaces to be the social glue of the society, as well as to serve citizens from a variety of backgrounds.



~~Lack of influence~~  
Empowerment

If people sense a lack of influence a flexible construction allows for them to change the public spaces. Adapt it to their needs, as well as transforming the area over time. This creates empowerment with the citizens who clearly can see the result of their will.



~~Nordic Climate~~  
A indoor publicity

The meetings that public spaces allow are needed for a city to function. But they need to be adapted to the context they exist in. Heat and shelter would benefit and encourage the use of public space in cold climate.



~~Static planning~~  
Smallscale

A small-scale framework is more adaptable and easy to remake and try out. This allows empowerment for people. It also more easily allows for modifying already existing larger structures, as placing smaller elements in between in order for playful experiments to take places.

## Social strategies

### Public/private space

All space inside and around the design should be considered public. The design is locked and closed during night-time (standard opening hours would be 9-20) but it can still be booked for certain occasions. It can also be rented for a limited amount of time (e.g. maximum 2 months) by private people. This is to open up for the idea that people should be able to try out a business: a café, a small shop, a yoga retreat etc. This can be regulated so that no established companies would take advantage of this opportunity.

### Attract a variety of people

To attract different kinds of people the area needs different types of activities or functions in different times of the day.

### Physical involvement

To share a ritual, be part of a workshop or a happening brings people together and creates a sense of belonging. Physical involvement in an area is important as more and more of our social life happens on internet.

## Spatial strategies

### New use of parking lots

The size of the design should be 2.5 x 2.5 meters in size and does therefore fit half a parking lot. It could therefore be placed there when the lots are not used for cars.

### Screen off traffic

A strategy much needed in the public areas in Malmö is to visually and audibly screen off the traffic and create a new framing of social space.

### Open-ended

The design should be able to be moved and changed. It is therefore a good tool when conducting spatial investigations. If a solution appears to be successful, a more permanent situation could then be constructed.

???



## Create indoor public spaces

The design should both define the room that they stand in, separate and divide it, but it should also create a room within itself. The relationship between the indoor and outdoor, together creates the new changeable public realm.

## Sharing & recycling

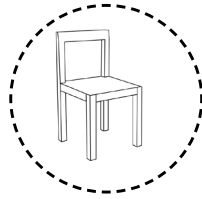
The new public spaces should also be an area for collecting material, re-using, repairing and recycling them. A system of rotating material and people having basic knowledge in how to build creates a sharing of knowledge. It also creates a physical involvement and a sense of doing something together. Another effect of this would be to create an awareness of what you can do by yourself, and to remake and share things instead of throwing them away.



Wood



Cloth



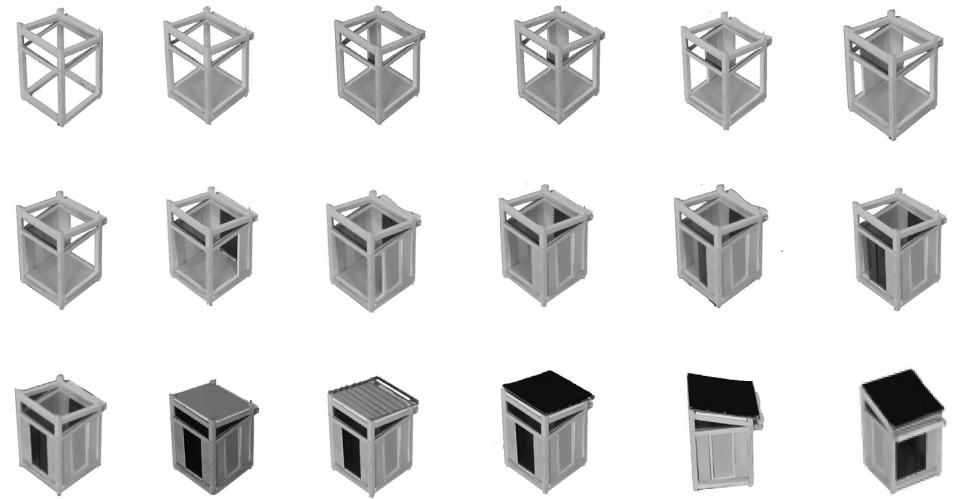
Furniture



Bike repair workshop

## Host

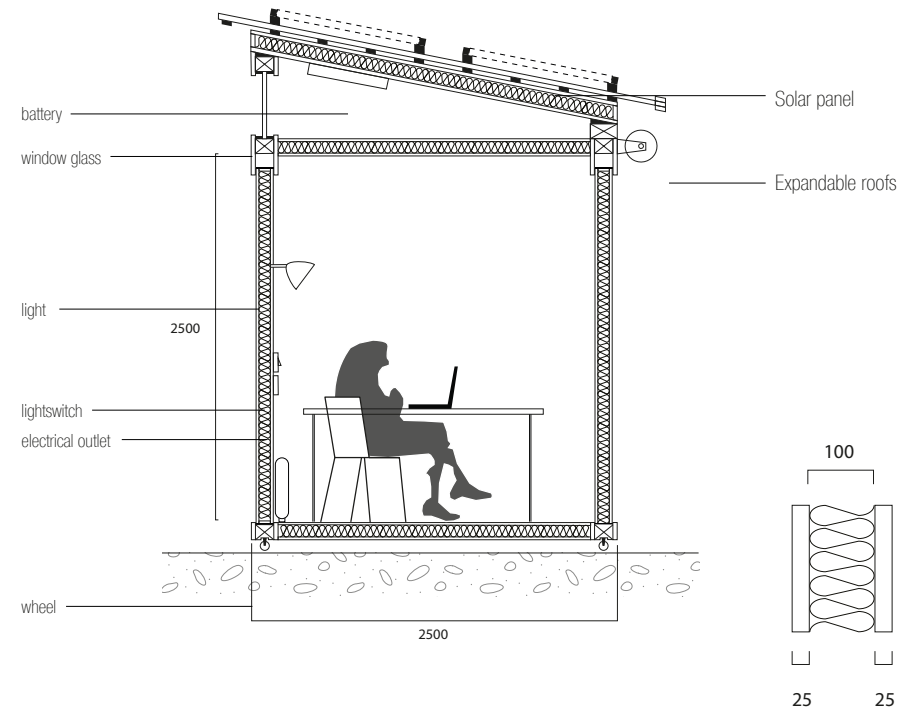
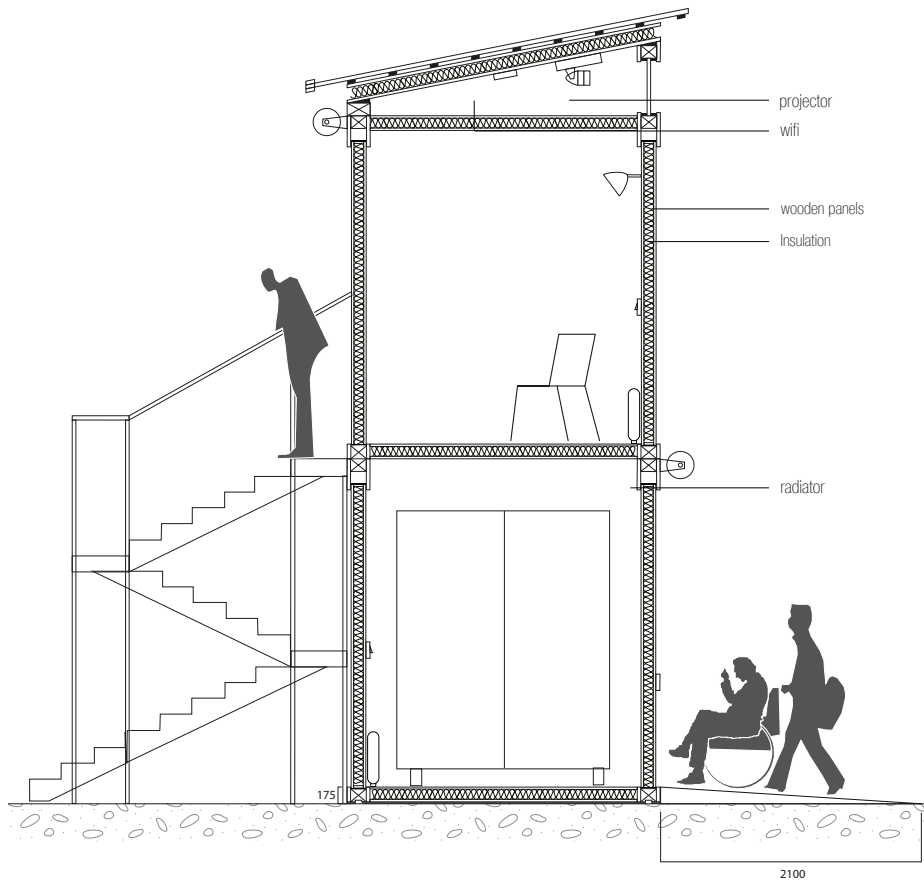
The host is employed by the municipality to take care of the area. He/she is a mix between a caretaker a librarian and an event coordinator. It is the host's duty to be responsive to the public directly on site or via an mobile application. The host is also responsible for repairing, moving or anything technical that's needed, such as electricity, water etc. The role of the host is also to arranging workshops and cultural events.



V Design

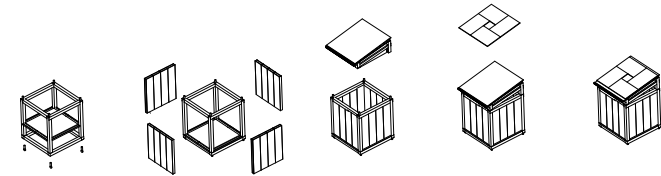
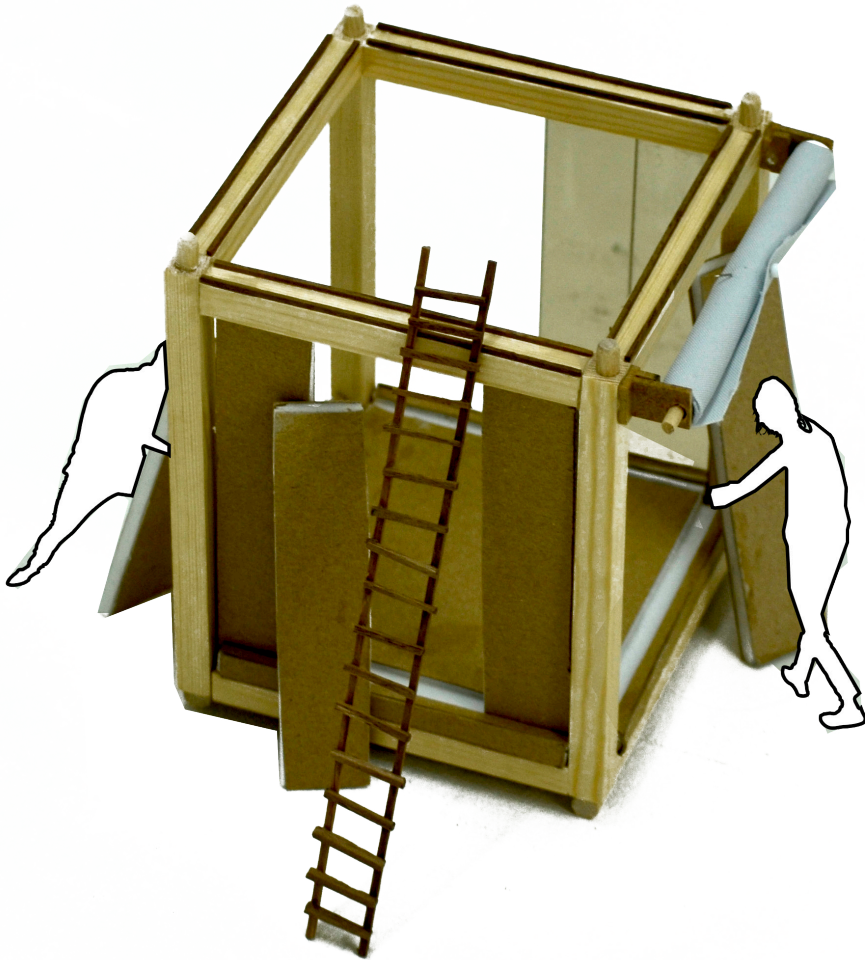
# Module

The design strategy is split up in three scales. The first one is the module, the next is the pod and the third and last one is the scenario. The module is a 2.5 x 2.5 meter wide wooden box. It is equipped with different functions that can be seen on the illustrations. With solar panels and battery for self-sufficiency, light and wifi for work, as well as insulation and radiators to keep the heat.



## Assembling

The modules consist of a basic wooden framework. Walls are added depending on function and purpose. It is assembled by the host and anyone can easily assist. The host is also responsible for remaking the modules and changing the walls depending on the needs of the place.



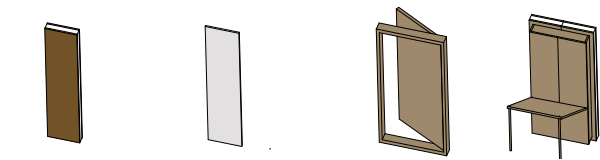
Basic Framework

Walls

Roof

Solar Panels

Each side of the wall has four slots and (572 x 2500 mm) there are four standardized walls that can be mounted in these slots. These are: the insulated sandwich wooden wall, the glass window wall (occupies one slot each), the door and the table wall (occupies two slots each).



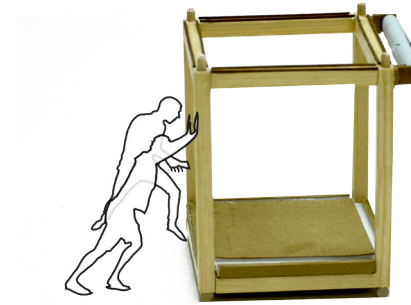
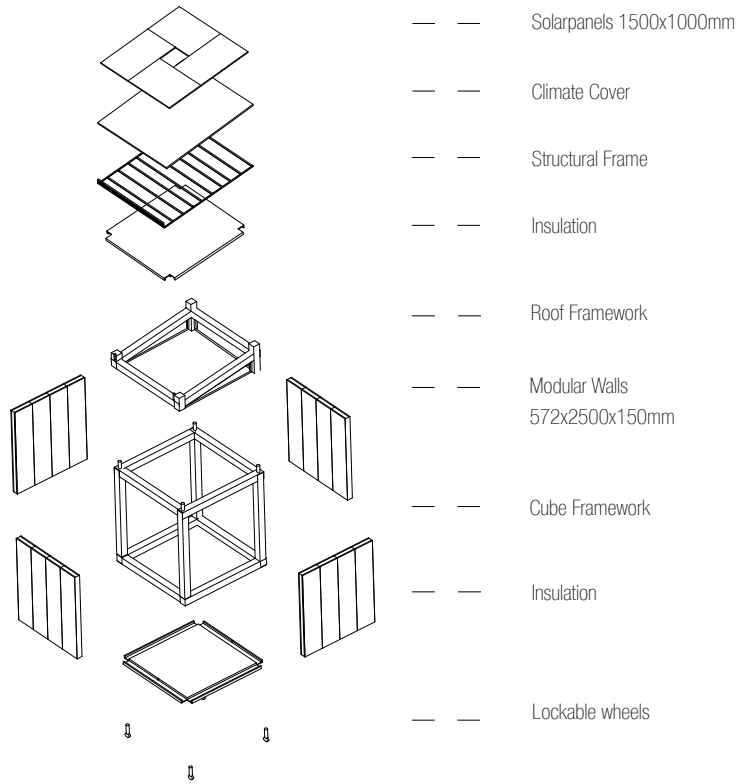
Sandwich wall

Window

Door

Table wall

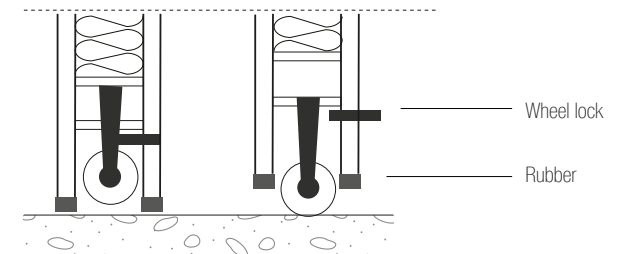




### Moving

The citizens can communicate to the host where they want to move the modules.

The modules are moved on wheels by people on site under the supervision of the host. The modules is fixed by locking the wheels.

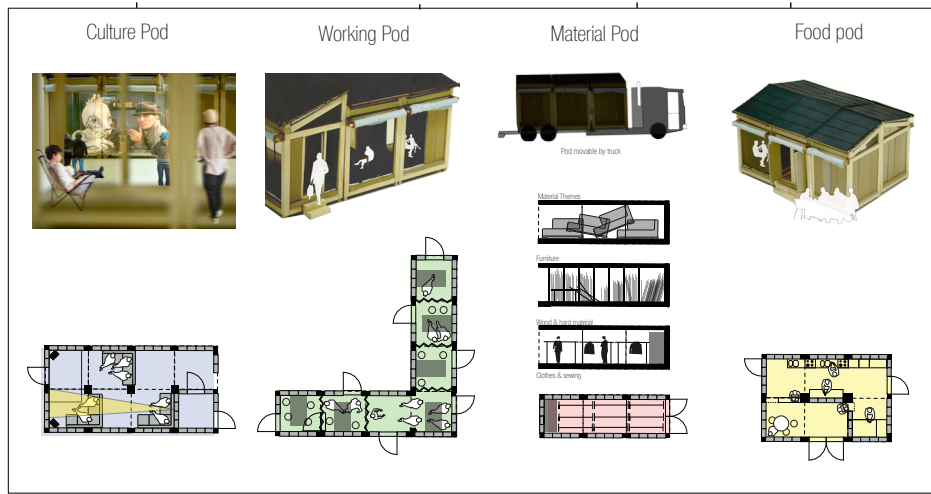








Vårhemstorget



# Pod

The pods both create an indoor public space as well as a relationship to the already existing outdoor area. With a variety of functions and themes the pods will hopefully attract different types of people.

The culture pod might be a small outdoor/indoor cinema, a small stage, a language cafe or an area for lectures.

The working pod is providing a small working space, much similar to the ones often found in a library. It can also be an area to wait for the bus or to pray.

The material pod are used for workshops, building and recycling material. They can also move from site to site on a truck, collecting materials and goods.

The food pod can be used for serving food to homeless or socially excluded, and for festivals or events. It can also serve for trying out a short term business concept regarding food.

# Scenario

The pods form larger changeable scenarios that can adapt to different forms and functions depending on the time of the day, season or special occasion. These scenarios form another layer to the public space, modifying it, creating new situations for people to explore and investigate. As the modules are free to be moved the scenarios on site is in constant change.

When smaller rooms are created within a large space, one could more easily find a secure place, be closer to start a conversation with someone new etc. The modules - except dividing the outside space - also have an inside space, which means that they can be used for social activities, even when the weather does not allow for it.

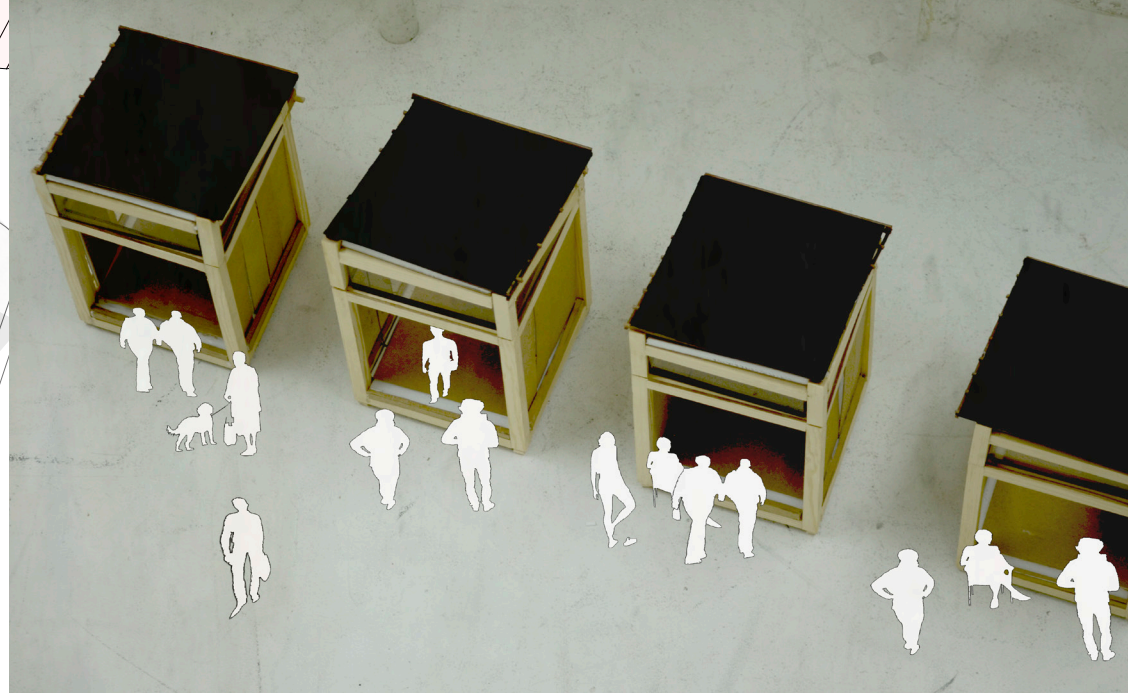
When there is a lot of activity going on people are usually attracted. All of the places presented in this thesis are places where people pass by, which increases the chance that they spontaneously will involve themselves in the area. When this happens it is even more likely that more people join up, as people tend to attract more people. In this way it's possible to try out what attracts people in certain places? and what spatial constellations that fits certain situations?







Scattered positioning



Expo

## Scenarios at Värnhemstorget

These scenarios show examples of the positioning of the modules as well as a zoom in on how they might function on a closer level, e.g. how the modules might be used as an expo (as in the first scenario, page 74).

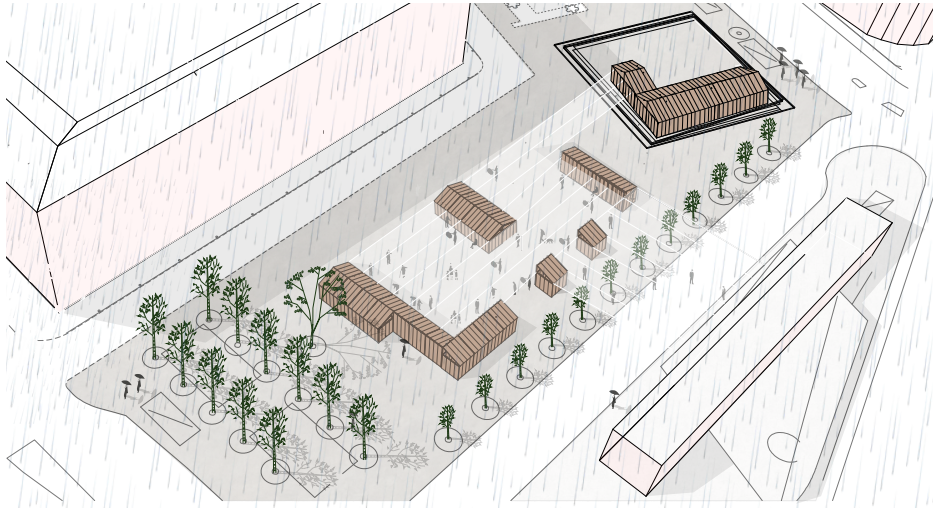
In the second scenario: Market in the rain (page 75), the pods form different rooms in were one might walk underneath the expandable roofs. The roofs shelters the visitor while staying at the market and when going to and from the bus stops.

Light is also connected to the modules, and when hosting night activities, as a concert or outdoor cinema, light is also a factor that shapes the rooms of the site.

If public space has more alternatives, and more functions connected to them, they might be shown more interest. This could encourage spontaneous meetings as well as planned events.

The planned activities will attract the spontaneous pedestrians passing by, and they will together create a mix and hopefully an interaction of people.

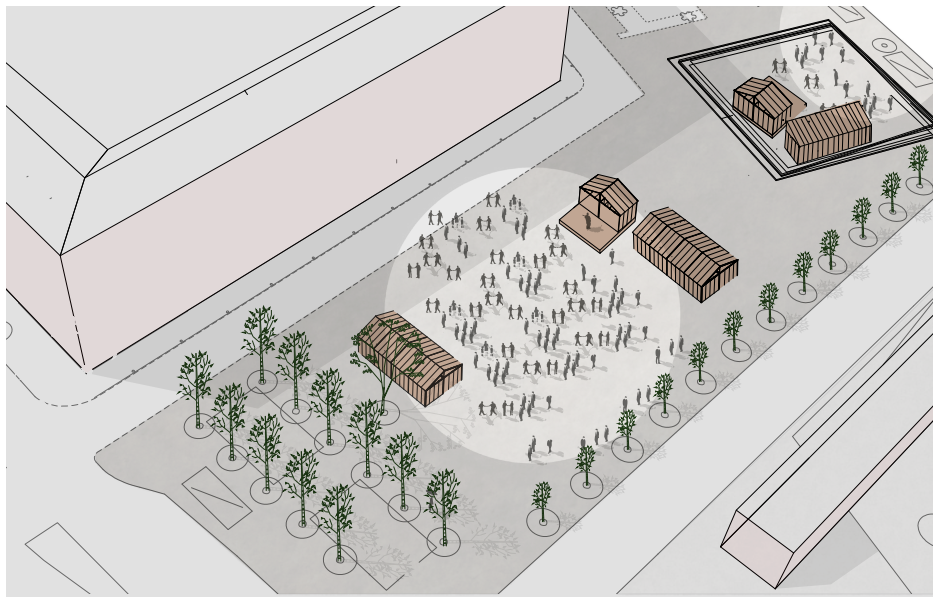




Market in the rain



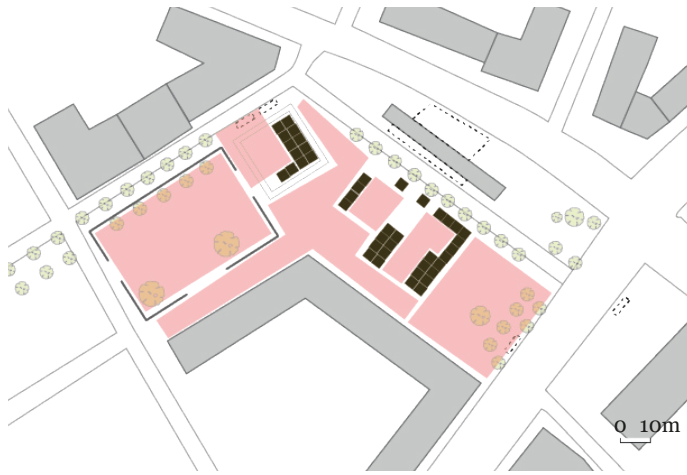
Expandable Roofs



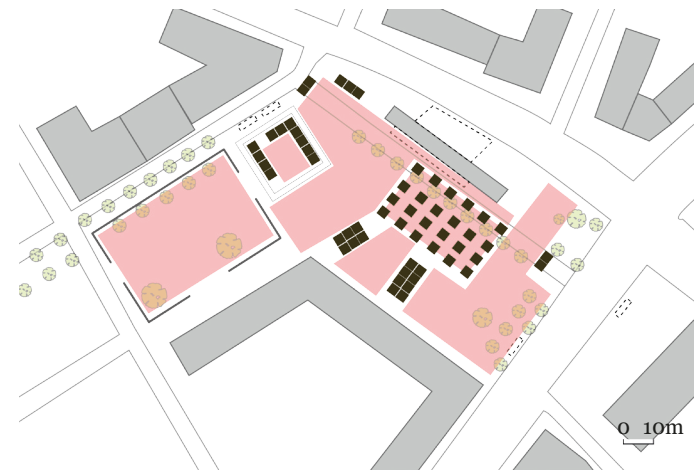
Evening Events



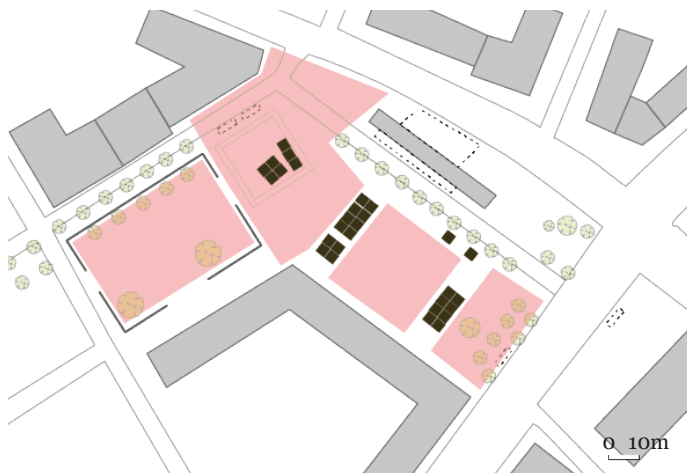
Outdoor concert



Market in the rain



Scattered positioning



Evening events

## Dividing outdoor spaces

One of the main ideas is to create new outdoor spaces on the square, dividing them into different smaller rooms for people to appropriate.

As seen on the diagrams, instead of being one large square, one could now see it as different spaces connected to each other. The diagrams shows the rooms (the pink) being created with the scenarios on page 73-76.



## Positioning through the year

During summertime when more people in Sweden are outside, the modules will be arranged to create larger rooms so that public space enable for more people to gather.

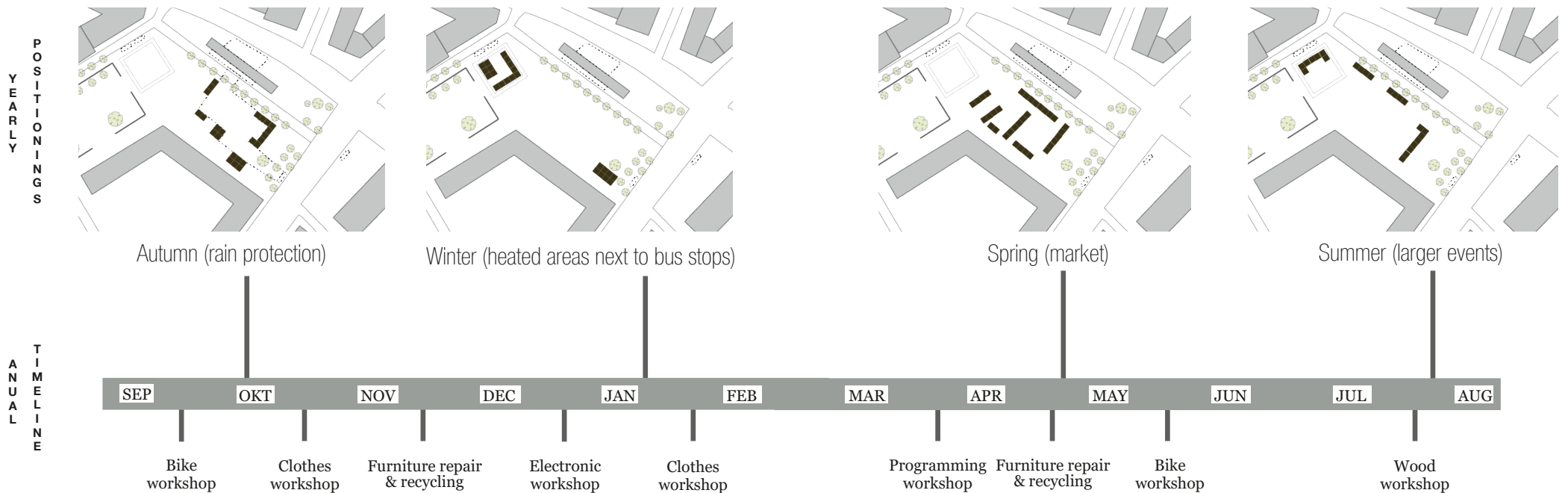
During winter the modules would be used more for heating, waiting for the bus and indoor activities. In general the modules will be clustered next to each other to better keep the temperature.

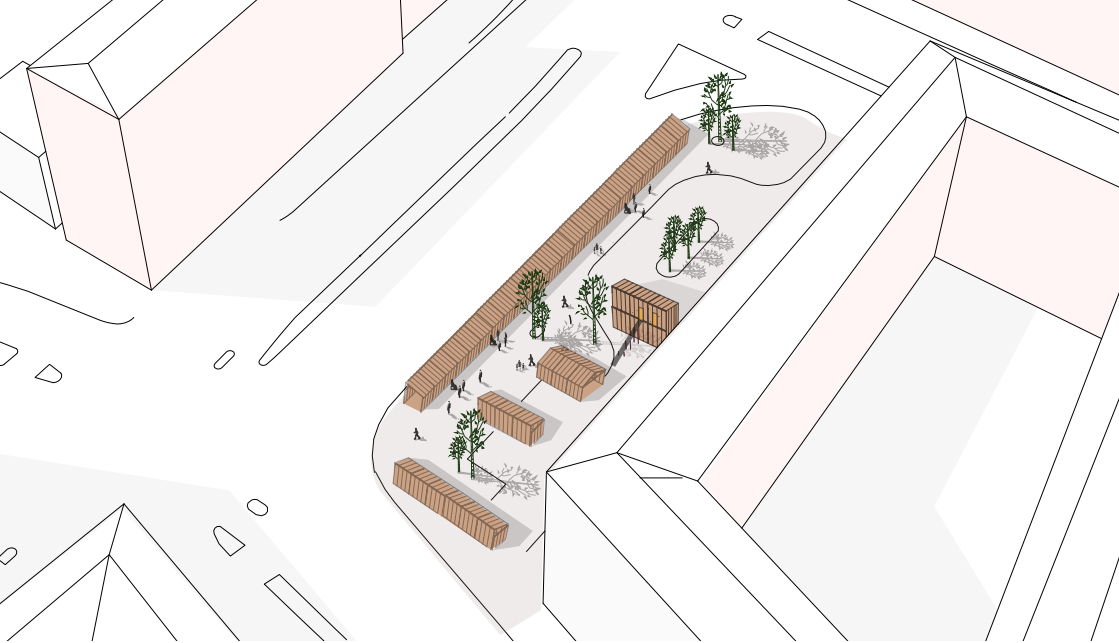
## Yearly events

Every modified place will have different events depending on what people want.

The overall idea with the events is that there should be physical meetings, watching, doing and learning together as a group.

This can be arranged through the host or by anyone via the host, with the youth culture school, ABF (the workers educational association) or similar groups.





Screening off traffic in Dalaplan

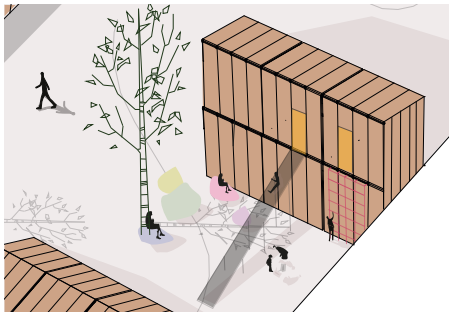
## Scenario: Dalaplan

The proposed situation in Dalaplan deals with traffic by temporarily screening it off, framing the public space that today is an unwelcoming parking lot - a no man's land.

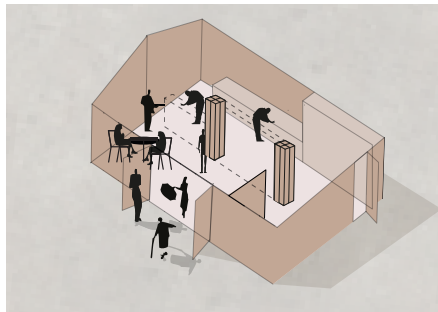
This place has potential to be a meeting spot for many, and a weekly market could be a starting point for this. What if all neighbourhoods had their own cinema that was run by people in the nearby community?

The modules could also form a playground pod: an area for children and for parents to meet.

A soup kitchen is another example of what could benefit the area: a place in which cheap or even free food could be served. This could then be an area to help out people who are outside the society, homeless, newly arrived etc.



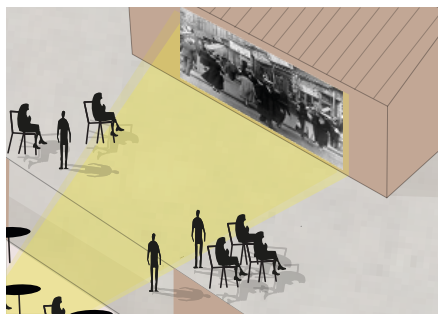
Playground



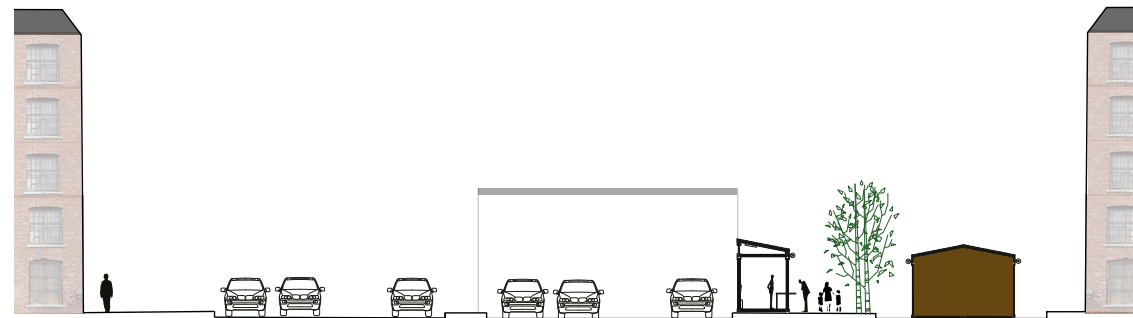
Soup Kitchen



Market



Outdoor/indoor cinema



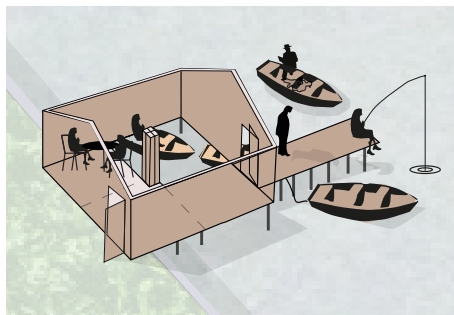
Section Dalaplan

5,5m

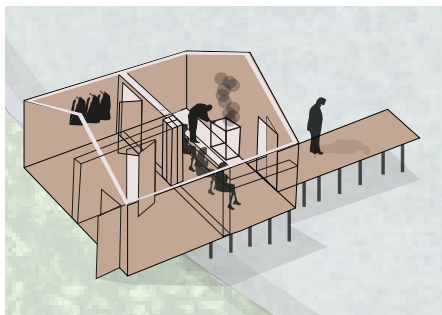
3m



Along Rör sjökanalen



Boat Club



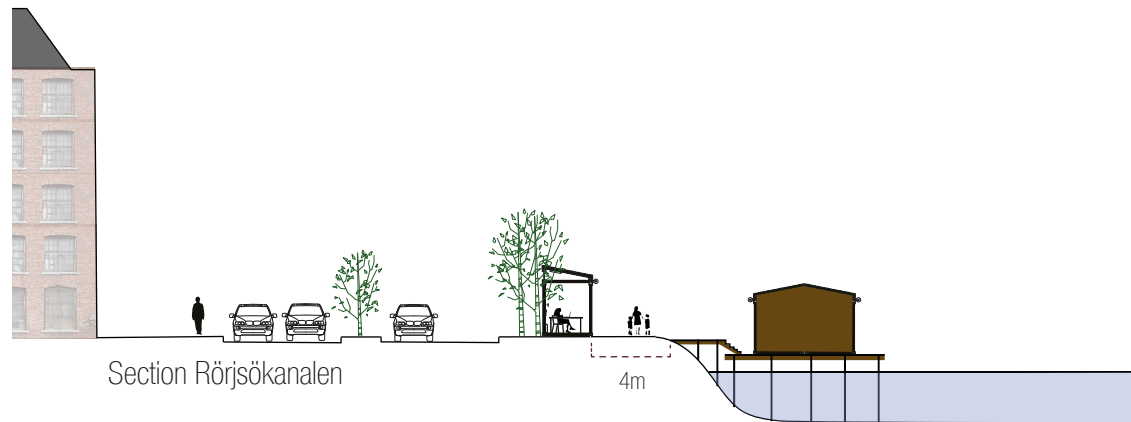
Sauna



Game Pod



Pop Up Cafe



Section Rör sjökanalen

4m

## Scenario: Rör sjökanalen

The proposed situation along Rör sjökanalen is also based on framing the traffic from the pathway alongside the water. This creates a calmer, nicer promenade along the water and in the scenario suggested: with some activities as well. As one of the most popular attractions in Malmö is Ribersborgs Baths (a sauna and outdoor bathing area), a sauna next to the canal on the eastern part of town would surely be something that people would find enjoyable.

It would also benefit Malmö as a whole if the canals would be populated with small boats and kayaks, and a boat club could be the start of this. A small café and some indoor activities next to the canal would also make it cosier. Working pods next to the water would be a way of populating the area alongside Rör sjökanalen.





On the parkinglots along Kungsgatan

## Scenario: Kungsgatan

Kungsgatan is situated close to Värnhemstorget and many people move here as a popular bike path is situated along the area.

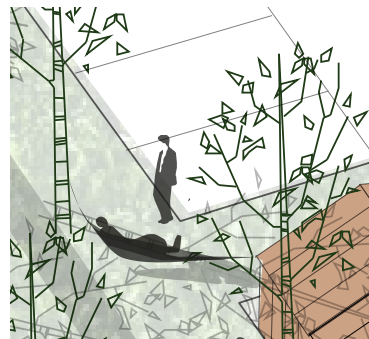
Small functions alongside the much used path would be beneficial to the area. Recreational places, like hammocks and chill out areas are fitting for Kungsgatan as it today works as a stretched park. Planting equipment for people wanting their own allotment garden in the nearby park (Rörsjöparken) can be found in one of the modules.

Functions connected to bikes and repairing them should also be a part of the modules that occupies the empty parking lots.

The nearby school along Kungsgatan does not have its own school yard, and a secluded part of the area could be designated for the youth.



Schoolyard



Hammock



Bike Repair



Section Kungsgatan

20m





Nobeltorget expanding out on the street

## Scenario: Nobeltorget

Nobeltorget is a square which - like so many of the public spaces in Malmö - is situated in a highly trafficked area.

In summertime the modules could here be used to temporarily shut down the traffic on the roads. On the illustration to the left temporary trees have been placed on the former road.

Malmö is a city with many newly arrived people from different countries. One of the strongest integration tool we have is the Swedish language. If public spaces could act as language learning hubs it would in a very concrete way lead to social sustainability for a city.

The working pods provide the core of the modified square, with opportunity to work with whatever you would like to, waiting for the bus, play a game etc.



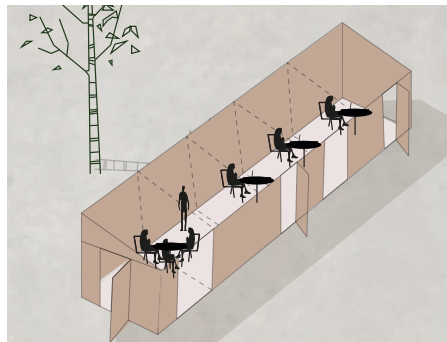
Toilet



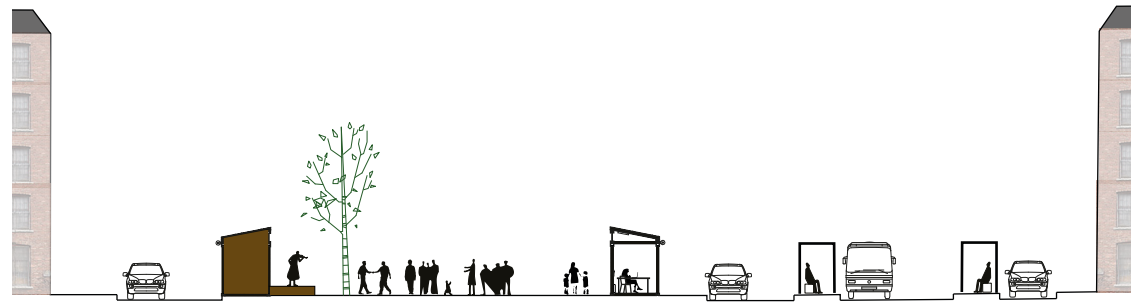
Language Cafe



Stage



Working Pod



Section Nobeltorget

15m

# Conclusions

The overall idea is to create places where the citizens can affect some aspects of the city, try out and change an area as well as meet each other while doing this. A condition for the proposal is to acknowledge the idea that public space is the social glue that holds a city together. The design of this project is flexible and based on social sustainability.

The public places I have chosen as case studies are spaces that have the potential to perform better. They are situated along roads that create barriers and unfriendly environment. The public spaces often consist of large, inflexible areas seldom occupied by anyone. Rather than to come up with a grand solution, this thesis focuses on small-scale modular add-ons. The modules activate the areas by introducing new functions as well as dividing and rearranging them. The new spatial configuration of the area is done in a temporary way. The modules could therefore be changed and moved depending on function, hour of the day, or time of the year. These public spaces are areas that you pass by, spontaneous as well as planned, for locals as well as visitors. The role of public spaces in cities should be to provide spaces where physical involvement, meetings and rituals can be shared.

The design creates an indoor public space and an alternative to shopping malls. It's an easy construction to mass-produce and it's made of wood, which means that it can be locally produced in Sweden. The module is easily assembled and the design is in three levels, the module, the pod and the scenario.

One important social building block in the design is the host whom has an overall responsibility for positioning and maintenance of the places. The modules are locked during night-time but in a future scenario the hosts might not be needed and the modules could instead be self-sufficient. The city would preferably pay for the hosts and the modules so that it allows the spaces to be public and not influenced by private interests.

The discussion of flexible architecture is not new, theorists like Yona Friedman along popular culture, artists and writers constantly exchange ideas of how our future could become if we had more influence of our surroundings.

I do see this thesis as a continuation of that discussion, but more important as an attempt to put all of this great and visionary thoughts of flexibility and social inclusiveness to a very simple physical design.

I do want to stress that the simplicity of the design has been important for me, that one would be able to assemble it without any special knowledge. I believe the project follows the idea of Friedman, that being able to change the cities should not only be a privilege of the professionals. Sooner or later a paradigm shift will have to occur with true involvement, co-design and collaboration with the collective. Not looking upon the architect as a lone wolf or genius but rather someone who creates a framework to act within.

Perhaps one will notice that it is in fact the discussion when such a design is implemented and not the design itself that is the most interesting thing.

Maybe it would start to affect already existing frameworks of the city, as libraries, workplaces, supermarkets and societal institutions.

Sennet writes that we cannot - and should not - be sure of what will happen in the end when planning. Maybe it would be as good or even better for a sustainable urban development - if temporary architecture could help us in exploring the potential of what cities as well as ourselves could become?

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**Figure 1, page 19:** [Online] [http://grahamfoundation.org/system/grants/images/5693/original/Friedman\\_figure\\_1\\_large.jpg](http://grahamfoundation.org/system/grants/images/5693/original/Friedman_figure_1_large.jpg)

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**Figure 4, page 26:** [Online] <http://ecosistemaurbano.com/portfolio/this-is-not-an-umbrella/>

**Figure 5, page 27:** Photo by Arvid Hellström

**Figure 6-7, page 28:** [Online] [http://tidskriftenrum.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Pallis\\_150612\\_ThomasZaar\\_0782.jpg](http://tidskriftenrum.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Pallis_150612_ThomasZaar_0782.jpg),  
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**Page 34:** Photo by Arvid Hellström



**Figure: 11-13, page 37:** Photo by Arvid Hellström

**Figure: 14, page 41:** Photo by Arvid Hellström

**Figure 15, page 42:** [Online] <https://bildarkivet.malmo.se/asset-bank/action/viewAsset?id=19844&index=32&total=79&view=viewSearchItem>

**Figure 16, page 42:** [Online] <https://bildarkivet.malmo.se/asset-bank/action/viewAsset?id=37239&index=82&total=135&view=viewSearchItem>

**Figure 17-18, page 43:** Photo by Arvid Hellström

How can temporary design help us explore the potential of public space?

Public space is recognized as the meeting ground of the city, a social glue that keeps the city together. In an age of growing urban population, ethnic and socio-economic segregation, can public space be used more efficiently?

This thesis examines how wooden modules, in the context of Malmö and Värnhemstorget, can be used to modify and reinvent public space. It suggests that flexibility in design can help to involve both communities and individuals in reshaping and recycling their public spaces.

