



**CREATIVE CHRISTIANIA**  
A CALL FOR A NEW VERNACULAR  
MASTER'S THESIS BY MALIN MARKKANEN, 2018

**AAHM01: DEGREE PROJECT**  
IN ARCHITECTURE, **LTH**  
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The following project is an urban design proposal for the future development of Christiania, a squatters commune in Copenhagen. It will include a discussion of recent trends in urban planning, a thorough examination on the history and context of the project site, and a resulting proposal with a list of guidelines for future undertakings.

Once an abandoned military outpost, Christiania evolved into a hideout for those who were discontent with Danish society. Since its birth in the early seventies, the district been a hot subject of debate. In the collective conscience, Christiania is associated with creativity and counter-culture, as well as marijuana and altercations with authorities. Nowadays, it's also a popular destination for tourists.

In recent years, the inhabitants of Christiania were suddenly standing at the crossroads, after buying the location from the state. With this shift in ownership, the freetown is now having unprecedented power over the growth and development of their home-environment. This is an obvious milestone for a community that has spent countless of hours, resources and effort in fighting for its right to exist.

In search for a development strategy for a new Christiania, the project discusses the issue of creativity in urban space, the conditions of the creative city, and how to plan for it to occur. What started as a critique of modern day trends in urban planning and the theories of Richard Florida, grew into a discussion on how to combine social and ecological sustainability with planning-practices adapted to a local context. Through a theoretical framework, I managed to compose a set of principles and axioms that could result into a certain master plan. My project is not only a design proposal, but a manifesto that celebrates site-specific planning practices, or "a new vernacular".

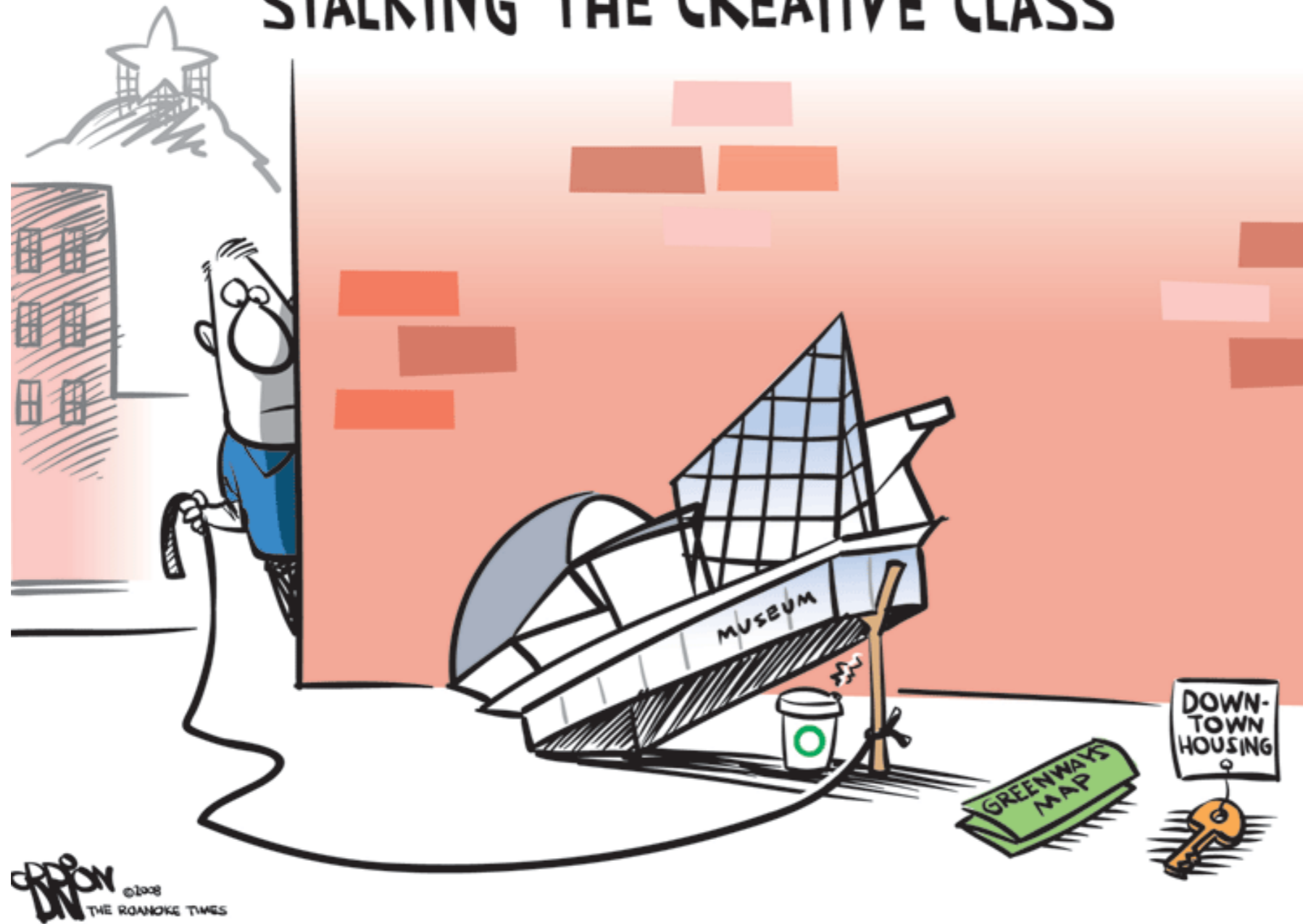
If each location is unique, each deserves a special plan that has been taken for this site in particular, with consideration to its characteristics, history, local values, and potential. But compared to other city districts, Christiania is extraordinarily special. Therefore, the resulting proposal is bound to be experimental, something similar has not been attempted anywhere near the Oresund region. Yet surprisingly, some common ground can be located between the freetown, and the prevailing municipal plan of Copenhagen, thus making room for a possible reconciliation, in which mutual respect is being established without compromising anybody's identity in the process.

**To the right:** Photos of Christiania, made during my site visit in April 2018.





# STALKING THE CREATIVE CLASS



Cartoon image by Chris Obrion, 2008.







## 2. METHOD

I started very early with the theoretical part of my thesis project, as a means to find inspiration and guidance for the future unfolding of my design proposal. When looking for text sources and references, I relied on the local search engine LUBsearch\*. During my years at Lunds University, many of my tutors have recommended it for research. I did indeed find some interesting papers, such as the work of post-doctoral researchers Alberto Vanolo, Amanda K. Winter and Christa Amouroux. Some of these articles referred to other relevant journal entries, that I also could find and download on LUBsearch. The latter group consists of Richard Florida, Jamie Peck, Darrin Bayliss, and Anders Lund Hansen et al. Each and every author is mentioned in the reference list, together with the name of the paper.

The library on Lunds University has also been helpful when seeking for source material. It is where I found the dissertation of Maria Hellström, that is often referred to throughout the text. In her work *Steal this place* from 2006, the professor in landscape architecture has written an extensive evaluation on Christiania.

By creating a theoretical framework for my project, I found it easier to compose the masterplan and to make other decisions on my designs. I would often return to my writing when I found myself short on inspiration.

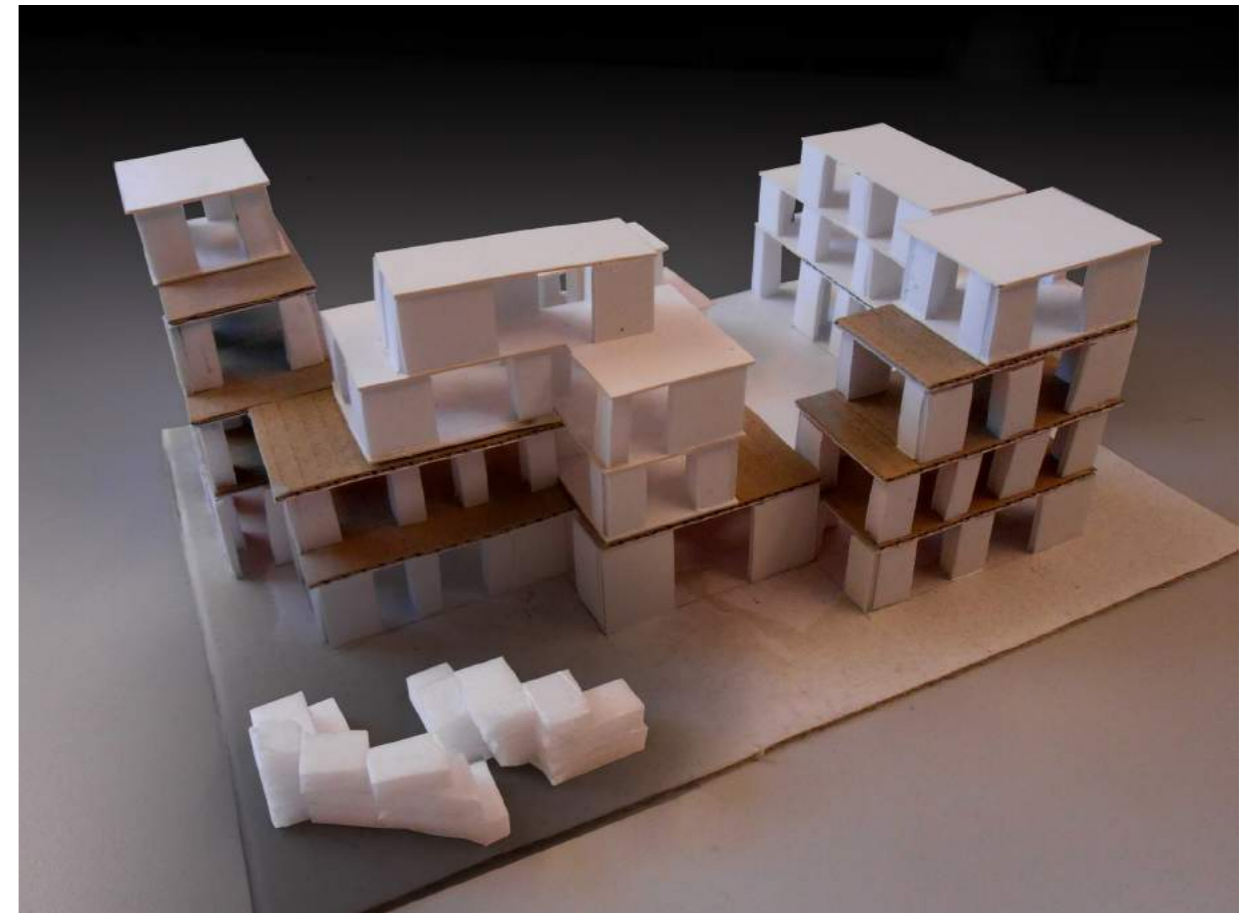
For my spatial analysis of Christiania, I made two visits to the site.

The first visit was made in the 16th of February, approximately at 13:00 to 15:30 on a weekday. The weather was cloudy with cold and pervasive breezes that made people cover their faces with scarves.

My second visit took place on the 18th of April, also a weekday afternoon approximately at 14:00-17:00. At this time, the weather was warm, sunny and perfect for short sleeves. Far more people were spending time outdoors, moving in and around the area. As for the surrounding nature, the trees and bushes were about to develop leaves.

Models played an important part in the process. I would work on different scales in order to try out different solutions: a big picture perspective scaled 1:1000 over the whole area, versus some more detailed models on varying typologies. I also made many sketches in section, perspective and axonometric views. Later during the process, I would try to recreate them as physical models, just to see how they worked out in 3D.

\*LUBsearch, link: <http://lubsearch.lub.lu.se/>

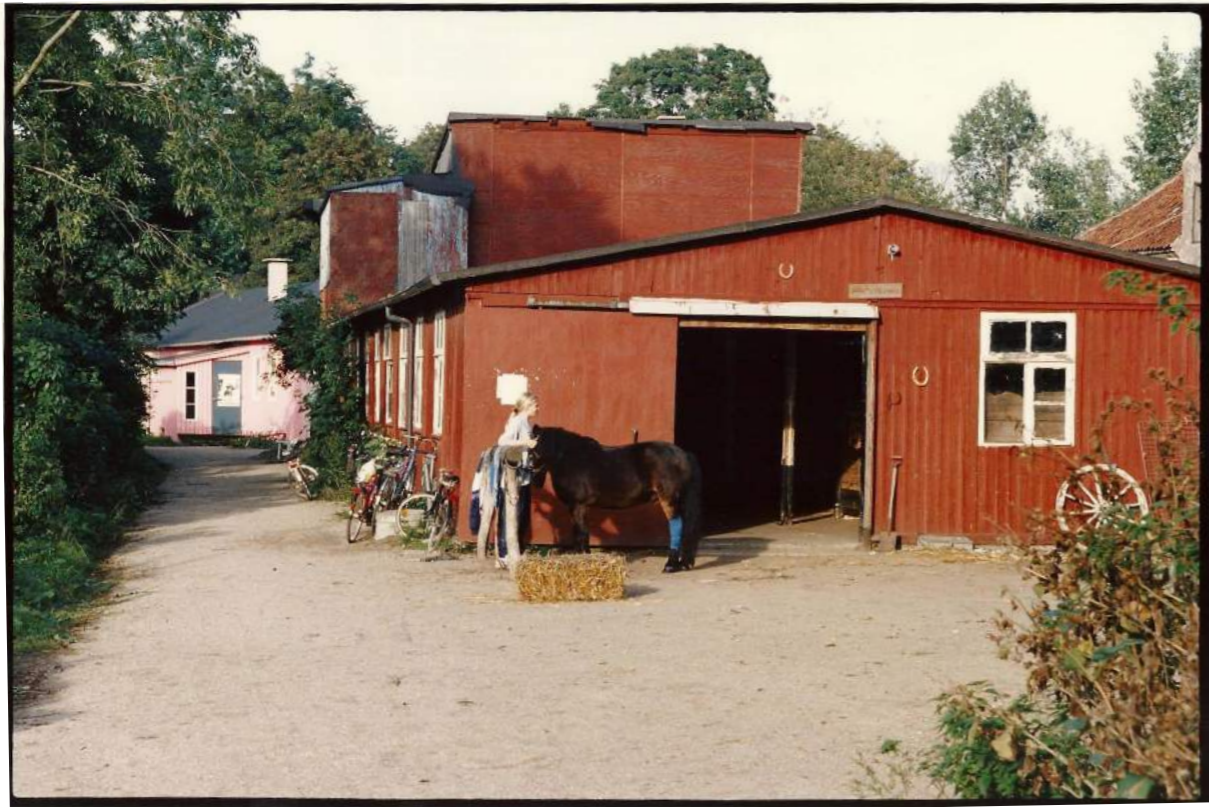


A typology model, accompanied by a minor recreation in 1:1000.



Part of the site model, 1:1000.





Horse-keeping and stable in Christiania (Lamberth 1995).



Resulting sketch



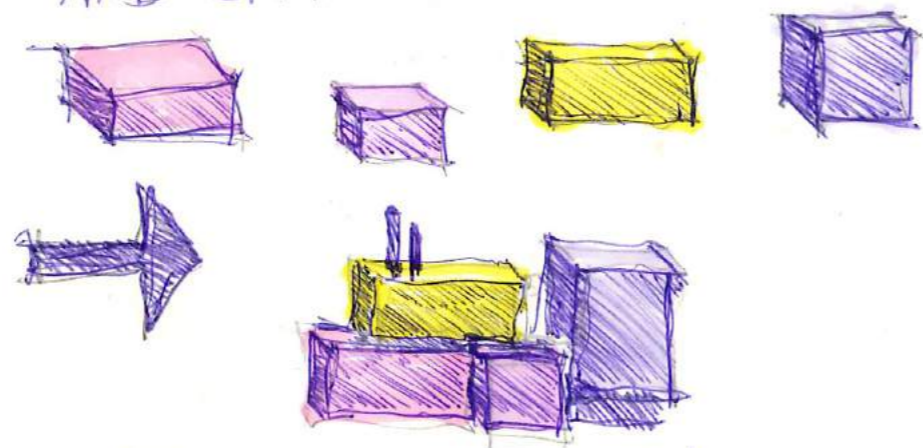
A sample of some early sketches



An attempt at recreating a fluid between the indoors and outdoors

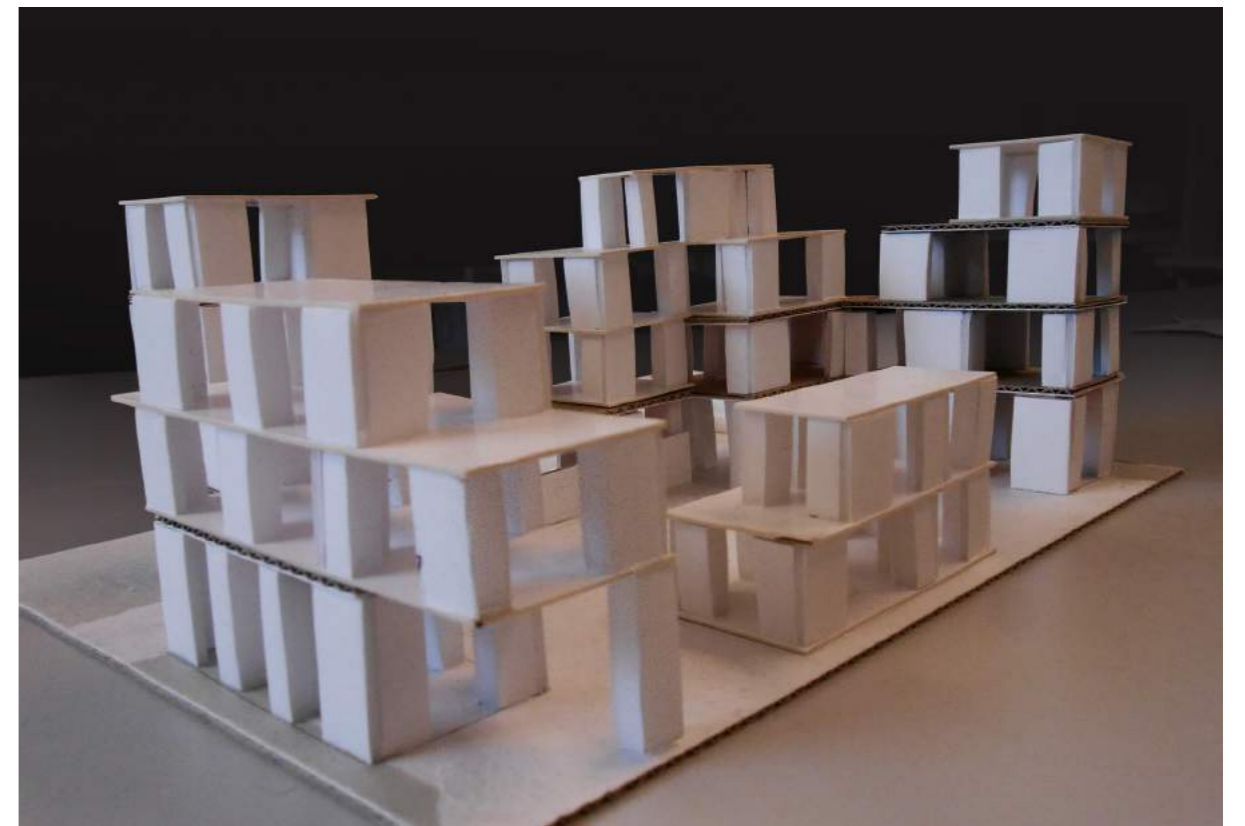
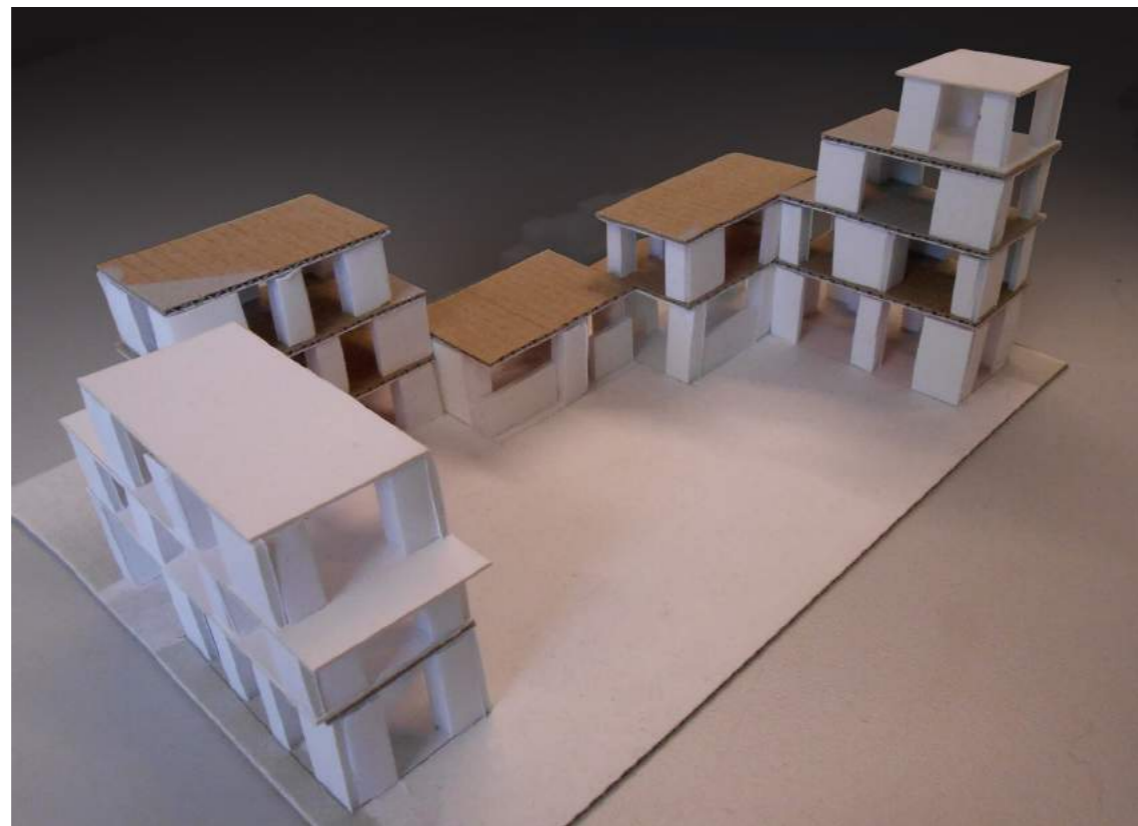
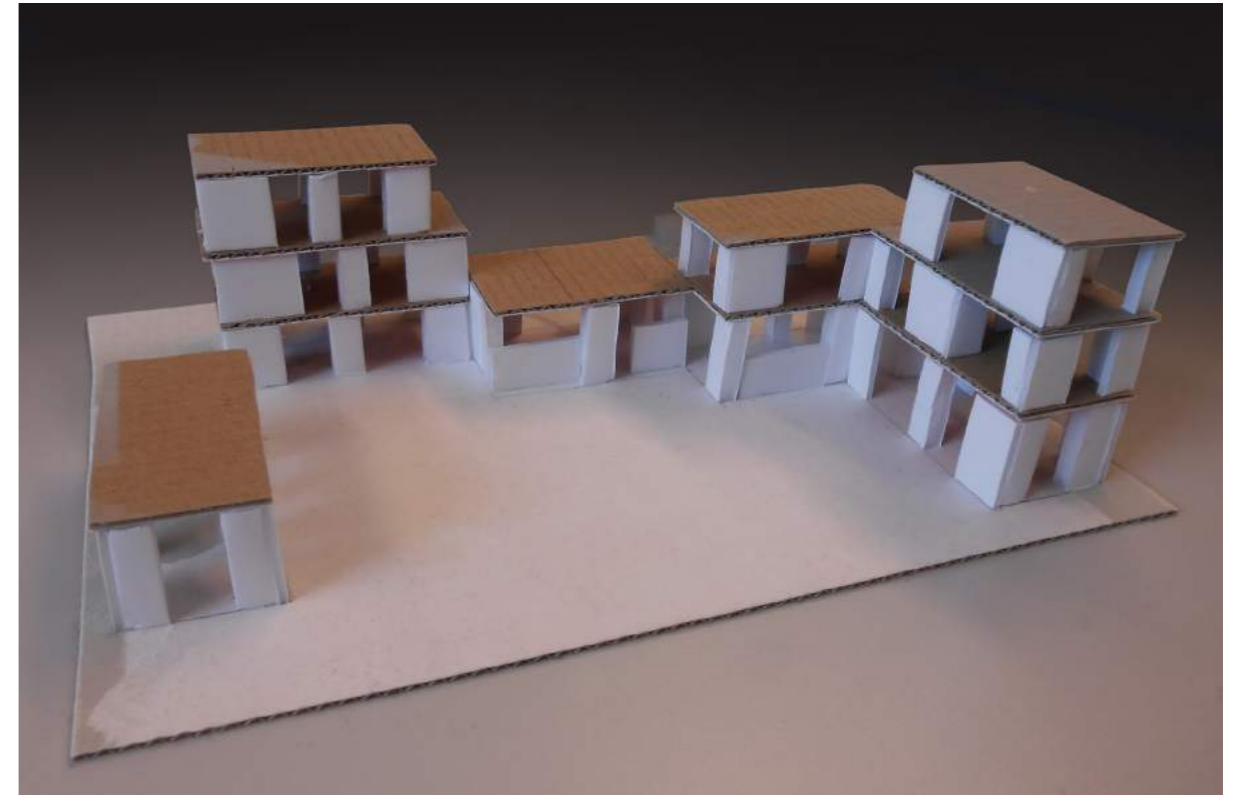


WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THOSE SHEDS  
AND SMALL CABINS:

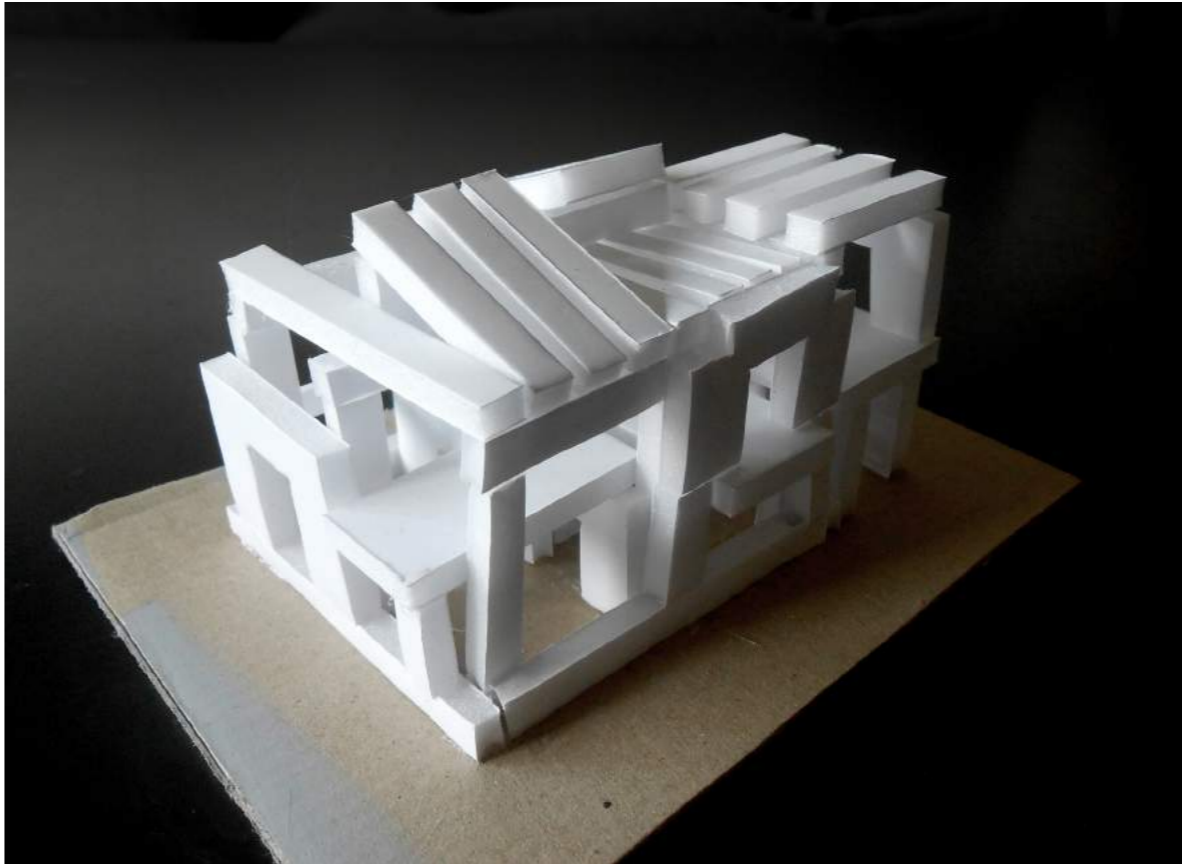
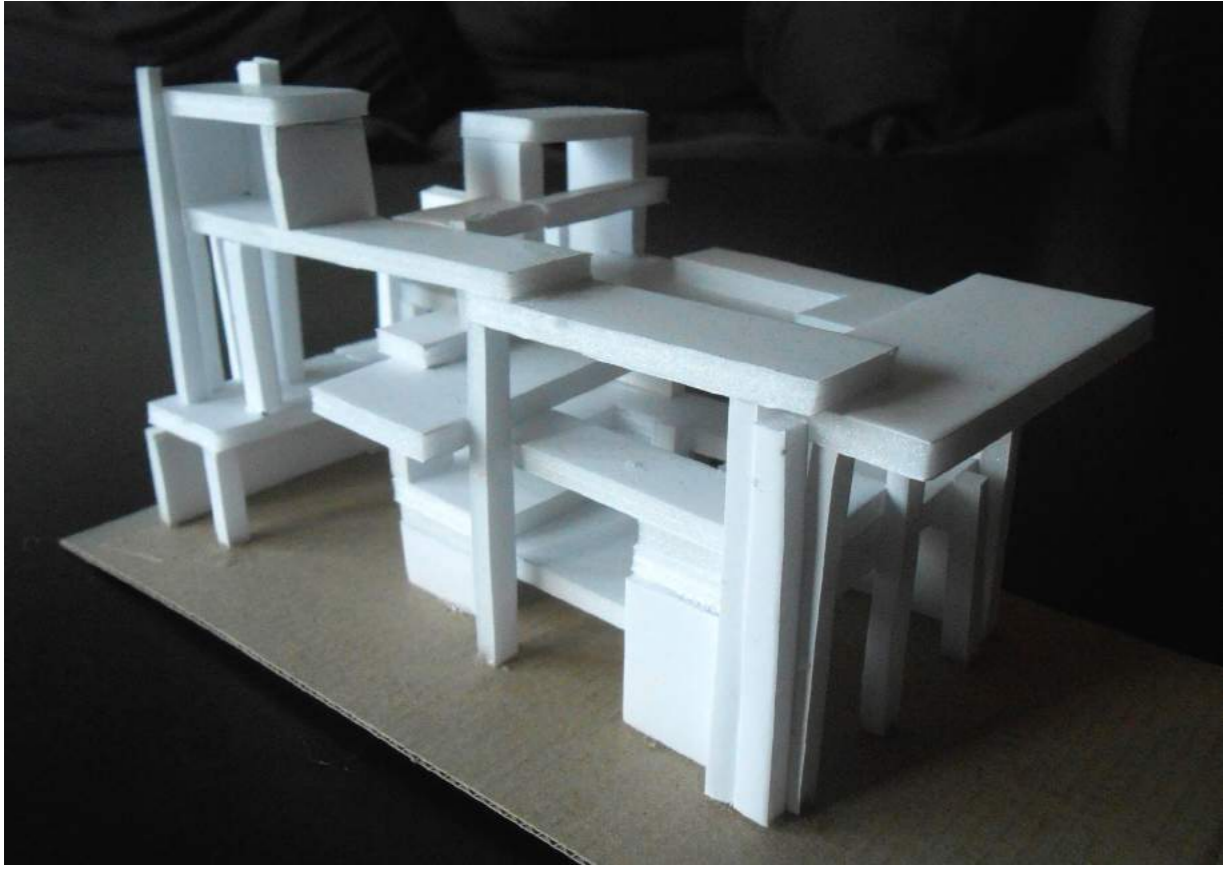


A SUPER-CABIN!

Sketch and photos of a gradually growing house. One and a few cabins at a time.











First sketch of proposal, experimenting with density and spatial extensions. Although this sketch has been refuted, it was a helpful task nevertheless.





### 3. COPENHAGEN AND THE CREATIVE CITY

This chapter describes Richard Florida's influence on urban planning in Copenhagen, and how the pursuit of creativity and talent keeps affecting the cityshape in various ways. The urban theorist Richard Florida is known for his musings on the Creative Class, a new trendy brand of highly educated knowledge-workers, whose presence is enough to make cities prosperous. In attempts to keep up with an increasingly globalized world, post-industrial Copenhagen is eager to attract these professionals as potential inhabitants. Lately, Richard Florida's work has received harsh criticism for neglecting social and political issues. In order to find a balance between the creative city and social sustainability, the latest municipal plan of Copenhagen selected the following keywords: social cohesion, diversity and a good quality of life for everybody, together with the notion that equality is inseparable from urban growth.

Creativity in itself is a multifaceted concept that is hard to boil down into one precise definition. While Richard Florida captures one aspect of it, more possibilities need to be sought after. In the discussion at the end of this chapter, I attempt to unify creativity with social sustainability, and to consider the criticism of the creative city. The gained insights will be important for my proposal on the future development of Christiania, a controversial district in central Copenhagen.

Image of the inner city life in Copenhagen (Municipal plan 2005, 49) on a good day.





## 3.1 THE CREATIVE CITY AND ITS INHABITANTS

Creativity (commonly understood as invention and innovation) has turned into some trendy new buzzword for urban development in the 21st century. Among countless of theories, Richard Florida and his work on creativity and urban development is the most popular in the present. Associating creativity with knowledge, information and higher education levels, his conclusions are that young, well-educated and talented individuals generate economic growth. This desirable group is attracted to a vibrant city life. Therefore, investing in cultural activities will result in economic growth, as creative cities attract skilled labour and business (Bayliss 2007, 3-4).

The notion of the creative city can be traced back to the mid-1980's. Municipalities have lately used this concept as a place-marketing product, especially when trying to distinguish themselves from other cities and regions. Copenhagen makes an interesting case study, in regards to their recent aspirations in becoming a reputable city on par with today's trends: a place that promotes innovation, culture and life-long learning (Lund Hansen et al. 2001, 2-3).

Aided by the theories of Manuel Castells, Robert E. Lucas and Richard Florida, Darrin Bayliss (2007, 5) writes that the economic success of regions depends on knowledge, demonstrated through complex problem solving, technological innovation, and the development of new products and services. Educated, talented and flexible workers that do well in dynamic, information-rich environments, are the greatest asset for productivity in knowledge-intensive fields. Therefore it is crucial for any region to collect a large number of talented and skilled professionals, to ensure economic growth. A vast population of such individuals attracts high-technology industries, which in turn spurs regional growth.

The Creative Class, a term coined by Richard Florida, refers to this group of creative and talented professionals. The creative class consists of knowledge workers (scientists, engineers, educators, think tanks) and culture workers (artists, musicians, designers, architects, entertainers)

that create new technology, ideas and cultural content. This category of people is complemented by other skilled personnel in finance, business, law etc. What the members of the creative class have in common, is their ability to solve complex problems that require independent judgement and higher levels of education.

These smart, competent and problem-solving workers of the Creative Class have plenty of employment options, and are sought after by many. They are able to, and will indeed change jobs more frequently. To firms that are active in knowledge-based industries, the availability of talent is more important than tax rates, government incentives and costs of land and labour. Especially in highly innovative and competitive fields, much time and energy is spent on recruiting talented employees. Therefore it is safe to say that high-technology industries prefer locations that possess high levels of human talent.

While locations with a rich labour market are strongly preferred amongst members of the Creative Class, this alone is not sufficient. The city of choice has to be diverse, rich in cultural life, and to facilitate for a certain lifestyle (Florida 2002, 8-10).

The Creative Class is closely associated with a specific way of life. These individuals embrace diversity, and prefer to collect experiences rather than possessions. To them, it is important to express one's individuality and creativity, which relates to their need for tolerance. People of the Creative Class want to be surrounded by cultural amenities, open minds, challenging activities and places with a "good buzz", meaning a dynamic night- and street life (Bayliss 2007, 5-6).

Further research on the lifestyle preferences of the Creative Class, suggests that its members are willing to pay more for a dwelling, if located in a "cool" place with amenities nearby. In interviews with workers from the mentioned class, many subjects have expressed a desire for a thriving music scene, outdoor recreation, an active nightlife, dining and a bustling street scene (Florida 2001, 7).

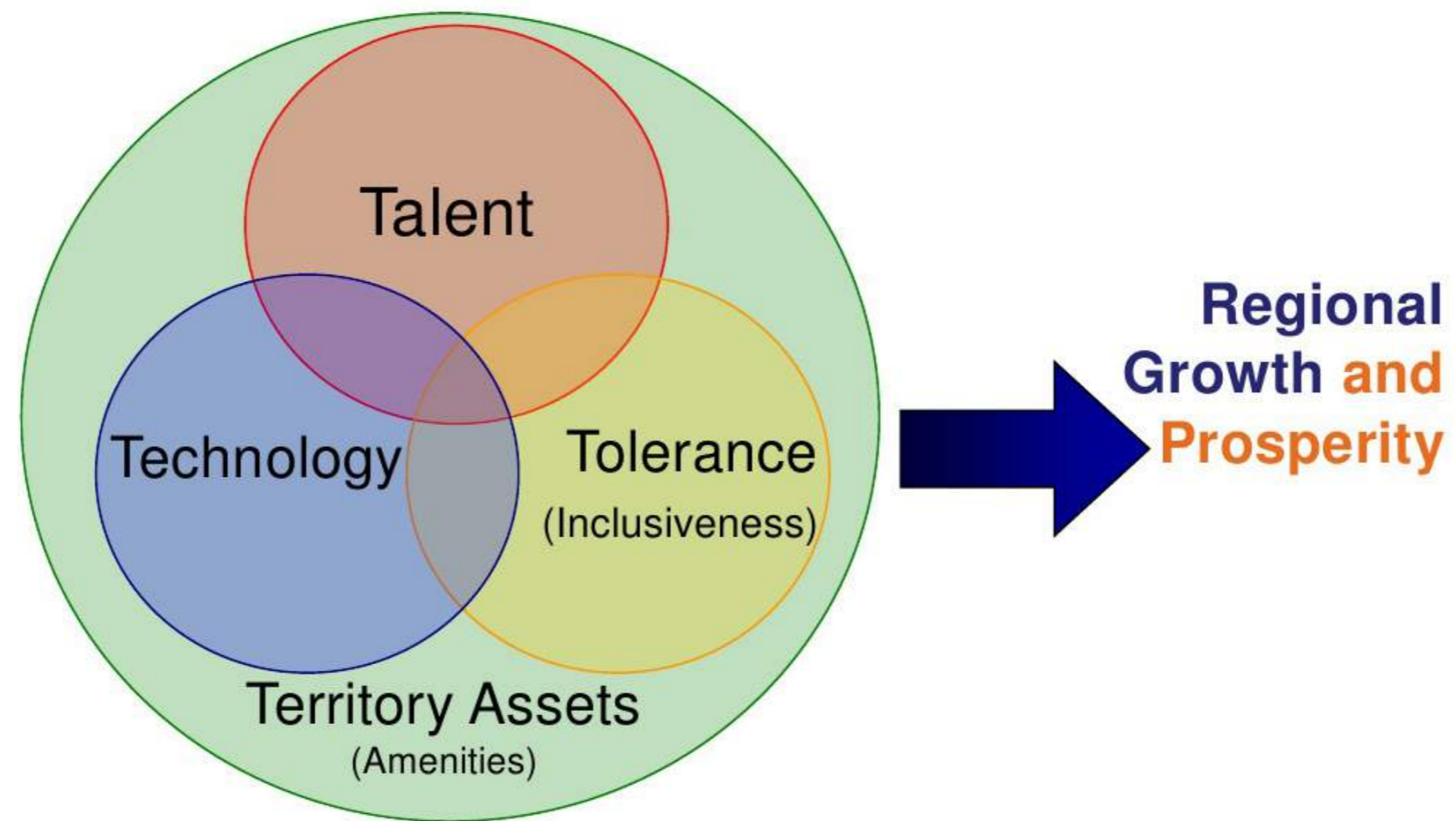


Diagram (Stolarick 2009, 27) on the factors that attract members of the creative class to a certain city, which in turn spurs regional growth.



## 3.2 URBAN PLANNING AND POLITICS IN COPENHAGEN



Arken museum for modern art (Hemmingsen 2008).



The new city district Ørestad, with Metro line and view over the Bella Sky Comwell Hotel (Never give up 2012).

Since the late 1980's, some distinct changes have appeared gradually in the urban politics of the welfare-city Copenhagen. Urban growth became a higher priority than redistribution. Perspective shifted from a local level to something wider, that went beyond the national borders, as Danes grew increasingly conscious of Denmark's place in Europe and on the world map. Private enterprises became included in the processes of decision making, while the public sector adapted an entrepreneurial style in organization and management. The changes came partly as a reaction to the slow recovery from the economic crisis in the mid-1970's, that kept continuing through the 1980's in Denmark. The crisis resulted in high rates of unemployment, especially among the socio-economically vulnerable groups in society. Since the 1960's, local deindustrialization kept cutting down on industrial employment significantly, thus leaving fewer job opportunities for unskilled labourers. The latter changes in urban governance, that took place in the 1980's, did very little to change that. On the contrary, critics have pointed out that the economic restructuring caused even higher demands on labour qualifications. Despite of some economic growth in the following ten years, high levels of unemployment and social polarization remained. The poor, unemployed and marginalized of Copenhagen kept living in ghettos in the inner city, while the upper classes kept moving to homogeneous suburbs.

In between the late 1980's and early 1990's, Copenhagen took a new role as the national "growth engine", from previously being regarded as one of many towns in Denmark. The new label was prompted further by major infrastructural projects, that were ongoing in the capital region, such as the Øresund Bridge, the emerging city area Ørestad, improved train services and a new metro line. Along came a growth in confidence that allowed the municipality of Copenhagen to take up competition with the other neighbouring metropolises Berlin, Hamburg and Stockholm, as well as making the city stand out internationally. The newly established connections with other cities and regions nearby, together with improvements in infrastructure, has made the city more attractive for business (Lund Hansen et al. 2001, 6-9).



Fueled by ambitions to compete on a global level, the municipality has been eager to attract foreign investment, and for international companies to settle in Copenhagen. There is an underlying expectation that the middle class will follow and find its way to the city. Local authorities have adapted the local housing policies, to create appealing spaces for the so called "economically sustainable population". The dwellings that have been designed and built during the last three decades, were more spacious and expensive than usual. Many of them were planned in the inner parts of the city, in former working class quarters that underwent urban renewal, which in turn caused gentrification. As the weaker socio-economic groups could no longer afford to pay rent, they were moved around to other municipalities (Lund Hansen et al. 2001, 12-13).

Influenced by the theories of Richard Florida, Copenhagen is rebranding itself in accordance to the creative city. Culture is regarded as a means to attract creative, knowledgeable professionals, companies and investment. Recreational opportunities are seen as essential in producing a vibrant city environment, and as another step in attracting the right people. Recent additions to Copenhagen's architecture and cultural life, for example the Arken Museum of modern art and a new opera house, testify the new ambitions of the municipality. More flagship attractions with international appeal are to be expected. Copenhagen has also been the proud host of big cultural events, such as the International Film Festival, the Jazz Festival and the Eurovision Song Contest.

The cultural industry is growing rapidly in Denmark and Copenhagen, especially in fashion, design, advertising, music, computer games and film. Information communication technology is another thriving sector. The municipality takes great pride in its recent transition into a service and knowledge economy. By catering to the Creative Class, Copenhagen expects to attract knowledge-based industries, innovation, an increased amount of employment opportunities in general, and even more talented labourers. Culture and creativity become a valuable resource for urban development (Bayliss 2007, 7-10).



The new opera house at dusk (Dahlström 2015).



Nightlife and music in the city (Høyer-Christensen 2010).

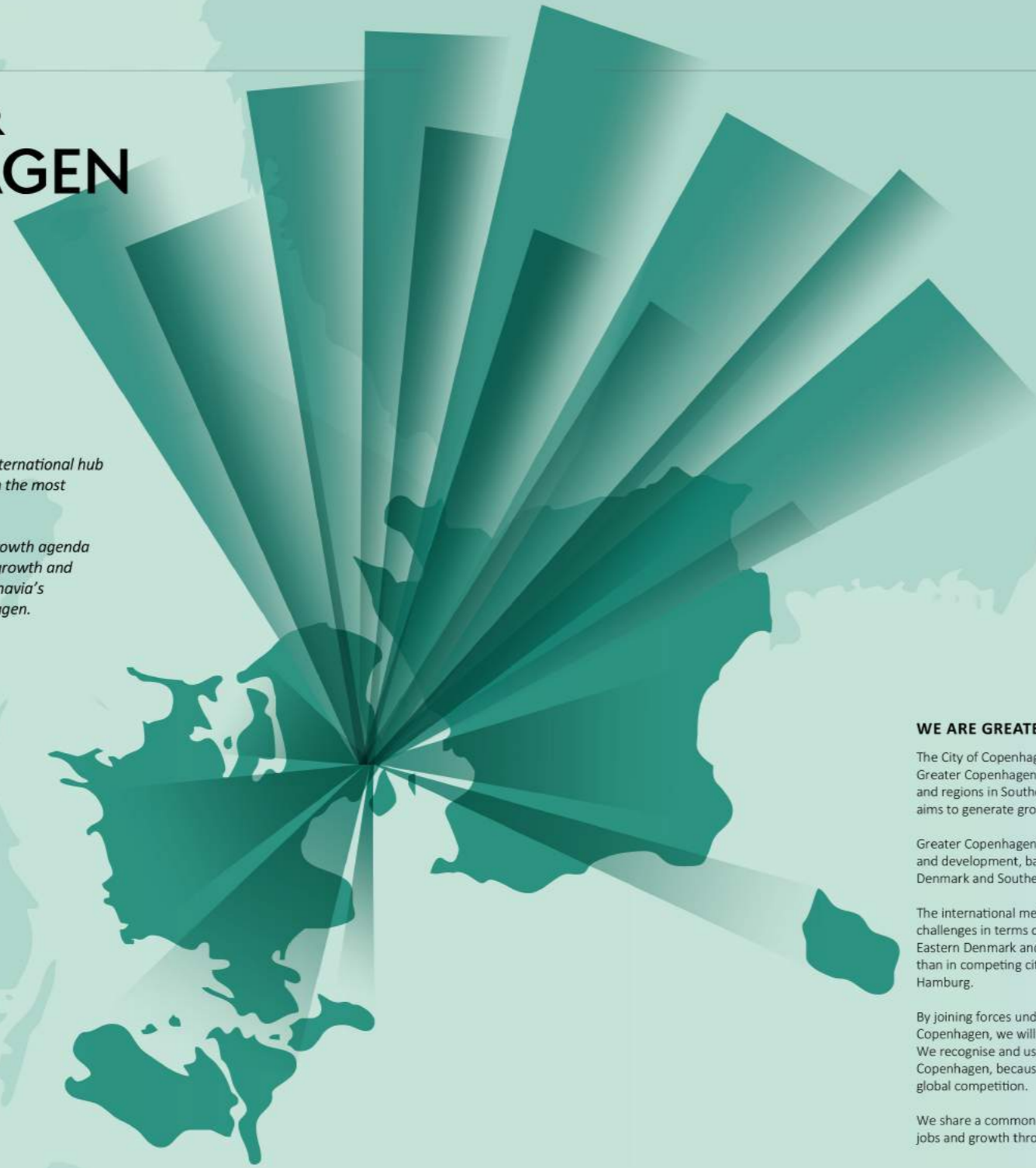


# GREATER COPENHAGEN

## THE VISION

*In 2020, Greater Copenhagen will be an international hub for investment and knowledge, in line with the most successful metropolises in Europe.*

*By 2020, the collaboration on a focused growth agenda will have generated significant economic growth and increased employment in southern Scandinavia's international metropolis, Greater Copenhagen.*



## WE ARE GREATER COPENHAGEN

The City of Copenhagen is part of Greater Copenhagen. Greater Copenhagen is a collaboration between municipalities and regions in Southern Sweden and Eastern Denmark that aims to generate growth.

Greater Copenhagen shares an agenda focused on growth and development, based on the involvement of all of Eastern Denmark and Southern Sweden.

The international metropolis of Greater Copenhagen is facing challenges in terms of creating growth and jobs. Growth in Eastern Denmark and Southern Sweden is significantly lower than in competing cities such as Stockholm, Amsterdam and Hamburg.

By joining forces under the common name of Greater Copenhagen, we will make a greater impact internationally. We recognise and use the various strengths inherent in Greater Copenhagen, because this will make us a stronger contender in global competition.

We share a common vision and a range of initiatives to create jobs and growth throughout Greater Copenhagen.

This spread was found in the Municipal Plan 2015 (The Municipality of Copenhagen 2015, 72-73), describing the visions for the following five years.

### 3.3 THE MUNICIPAL PLAN OF 2015

The following chapter is based entirely on the Municipal Plan 2015, produced by the Municipality of Copenhagen. The programme describes ongoing projects in urban development, goals and ambitions, and guidelines for the future planning of Copenhagen. A link to the PDF can be found in the list of references.

Coherency and growth are the predominant key-words. Urban growth and a good quality of life are deemed as inseparable. By improving the quality of life for its entire population, Copenhagen seeks to attract new residents, businesses and more investment. Urban growth generates higher rates of employment, which is expected to make cities more equal. The municipality acknowledges that social inequality is growing within the city. Compared to the rest of Denmark, the capital contains a large number of homeless, unemployed, drug-addicts and mentally ill (2015, 1-2).

Social inequality manifests itself in the health of the inhabitants. By increasing the quality of life for all, the people of Copenhagen will become healthier on an average, as both things go hand in hand. Good health is an important resource for the city as a whole, and everybody shall have an equal opportunity to a long and wholesome life. Good urban planning can provide a good framework for a healthful lifestyle (2015, 49).

In Copenhagen, the average price per square metre has increased up to five times during the years 1993-2013. The municipality hopes to combat steep housing prices by meeting the demand for more dwellings. In the following years 2015-2027, 45.000 new homes are to be expected, which is enough to shelter 100.000 new inhabitants (2015, 13-14).

As a means to prevent urban sprawl in the countryside, the city is eager to make room for a growing number of residents (2015, 7). The Finger Plan from 1947 is still relevant for urban development in the capital, in order to preserve green areas. High urban density is considered as ideal (2015, 16).

The aim for growth needs to be balanced with the maintenance of existing infrastructure. Special regards go to affordable housing, facilities for children, recreational activities, sustainable means of transportation, and green spaces (2015, 1-2). One must keep in mind that architectural projects such as schools and sport facilities require large quantities of space. Therefore, these undertakings have to be introduced in the early stages of planning (2015, 40).

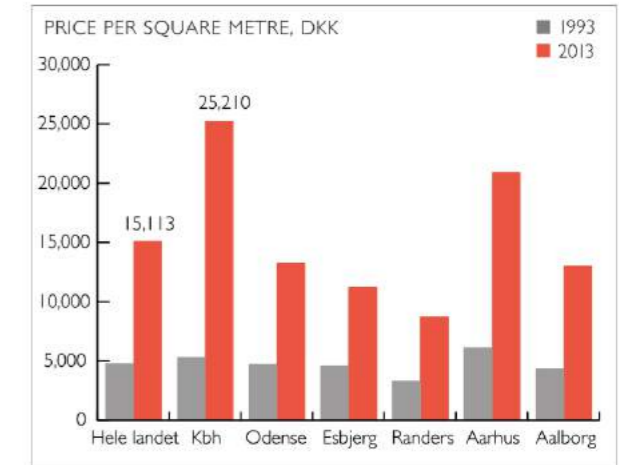
To make better use of existing buildings and spaces, multifunctionality is preferred. Instead of distributing different activities in separate buildings that will stay empty for most of the time, they will be located in the same spot. Users will come and leave all day, and thus create livelier urban spaces just by running their errands. This approach has already been tried out in Copenhagen; the resulting experiences were positive (2015, 44).

Diagrams made in 2014, show that a greater part of the city's population is aged 20-39 (2015, 8). The municipality promises that 6000 new homes, designated for young people, are to be built before 2027. To provide housing for all, is one way to achieve social sustainability (2015, 14).

#### DEVELOPMENT IN HOUSING PRICES

The average price per square metre has risen more in Copenhagen from 1993 to 2013 than in the other six major cities and in Denmark as a whole.

The figure shows the average price per square meter for detached/terraced houses and flats in 1993 and 2013 in Copenhagen, the other six major cities and for Denmark as a whole. Holiday homes are not included. The prices are not adjusted for inflation.



Source: Association of Danish Mortgage Credit Banks

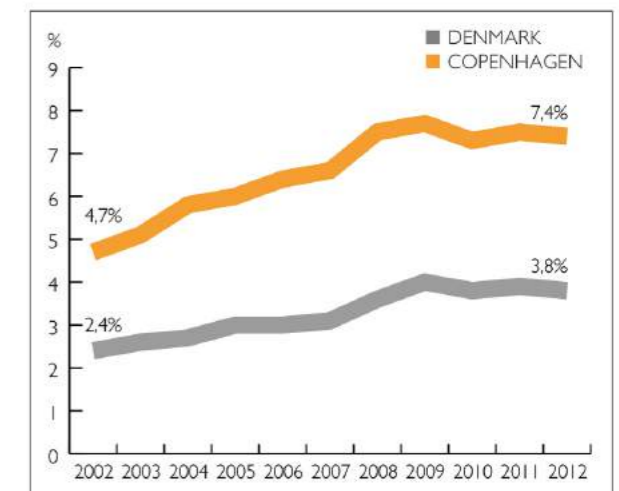
Diagram of the rising costs of urban space in Denmark (The Municipality of Copenhagen 2015, 12).

#### POVERTY

The figure shows the share of poor residents in the City of Copenhagen and in Denmark as a whole.

The share of poor residents is calculated according to the definition of poverty developed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Interior and the Economic Council of the Labour Movement. The figures do not include students.

Source: Statistics Denmark, the Economic Council of the Labour Movement.



Poverty rates in Copenhagen, compared to the country in total (The Municipality of Copenhagen 2015, 26).





The Finger Plan of Copenhagen (1947) and the corresponding S-train network (DSB).

### POPULATION PYRAMID 2014

In the City of Copenhagen, 20 to 39-year-olds represent a significantly larger share of the population than in Denmark as a whole. Copenhagen has relatively few residents aged 50 or older, compared with the rest of the country.

Source: Statistics Denmark, City of Copenhagen (2014 population projection).



Diagrams on population age regionally and nationally (The Municipality of Copenhagen 2015, 8).

Another goal is to boost disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Copenhagen has a larger number of poor people than the national average. The city's districts show significant differences in health, income and employment, due to growing social gaps. To prevent housing areas from becoming isolated and homogeneous islands, the municipality aims to "diversify" its neighbourhoods by adding dwellings with mixed forms of ownership and price-levels. Public housing units are to be distributed in various districts. The connections to the surrounding city are going to be improved. In the process of area-renovation, space will be made for new attractions, shops and enterprises. Thus, the differences between the neighbourhoods of the city shall be minimized. Socio-economic diversity will strengthen social cohesion, and establish mutual trust between varying societal groups (2015, 28-29).

The municipality wishes to promote diversity, to include residents of all sorts, and to make room for more frequent encounters between the social, economical and cultural classes (2015, 8). Recent years have shown a growing demand for collective housing, a dwelling type that has great potential for diversity and meetings (2015, 35).

With reference to the public housing, three categories have been mapped out to fulfill future needs and demands: Dwellings for families, youth dwellings, and care-homes for the elderly, mentally ill and disabled (2015, 37).

Accessible green areas near homes, are important for people's well-being. Therefore, Copenhagen seeks to provide its inhabitants with more recreational greenery, while maintaining and expanding those parks that already exist (2015, 21). Other suggestions for creating "greener" cityscapes, are rooftop gardens, vegetation on roofs and facades, planting trees along the streets, and to invent new ways of integrating green elements in architecture. Vegetation has the ability to invent new ways of integrating green elements in architecture. Vegetation has the ability to reduce noise and air pollution in the city, while offering a sanctuary for plants and animals. The municipality wants to plan for a broad variety of green spaces, to promote biodiversity and to encourage more outdoor recreation (2015, 45-46).

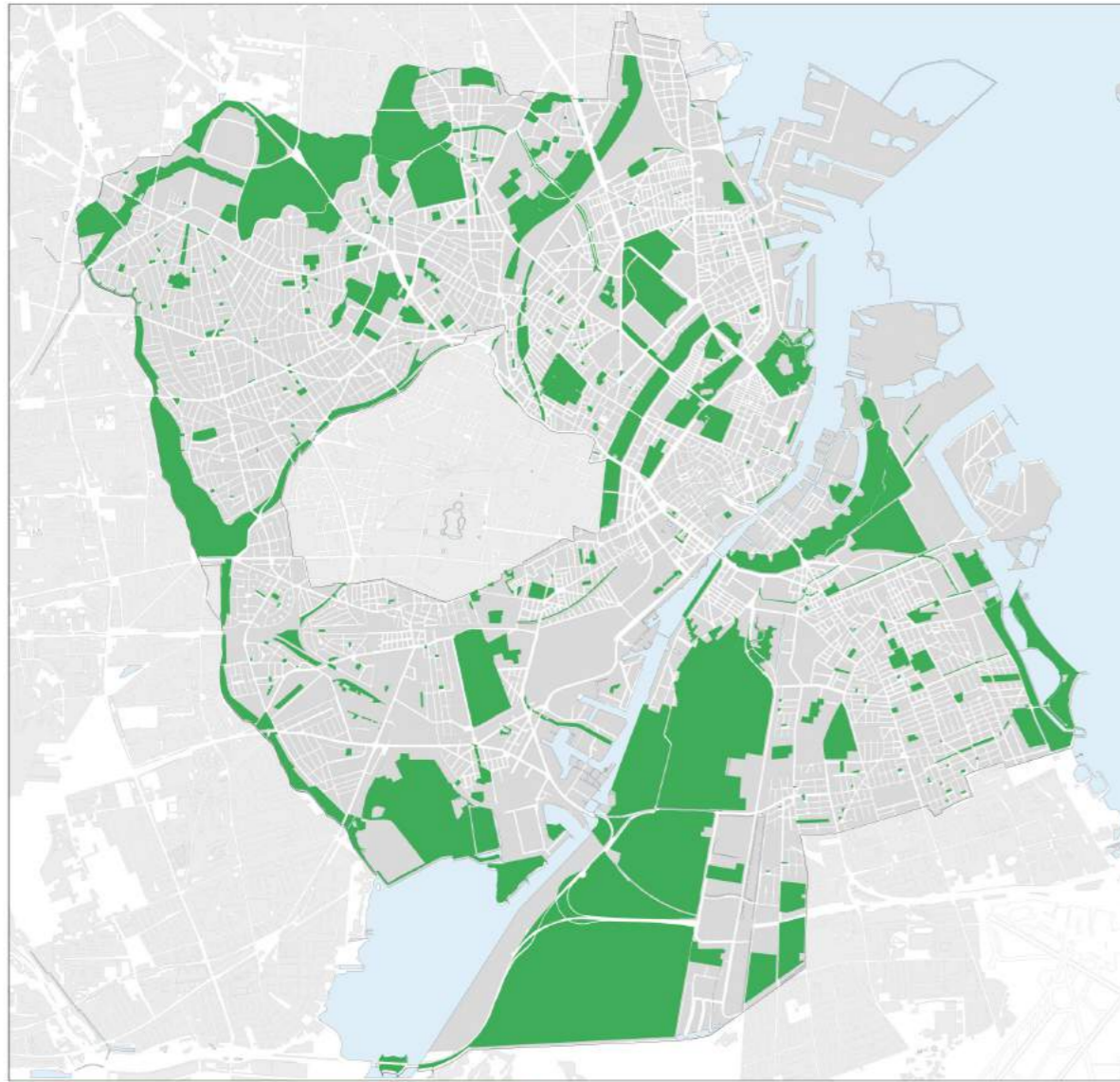
The waterscape is also being taken into consideration, when working to improve the health and well-being of the city dwellers. According to the programme, the water in the harbour is clean enough to swim in. Waterfronts make good places for leisure. To make more people visit the "blue spaces", the municipality plans to increase the accessibility of those locations. More bicycle paths, pedestrian routes and activities will be connected to the water, especially the harbour. Existing nature around the waterscape needs to be preserved, in order to enhance those sensual qualities that people desire in recreational spaces (2015, 45-47).

Well-functioning public spaces bring people together and strengthen the social cohesion of the city. A growing population generates a higher demand for places in which one can meet, play and socialize (2015, 37). By undertaking more courtyard renovation, recreational park-spaces are brought right in front of one's home (2015, 49).

In the near future, Copenhagen wants to achieve a traffic composition that contains a maximum of 1/3 cars, 1/3 bicycles at a minimum, and over a 1/3 in public transport. This calls for an expansion of the public transportation networks, bicycle paths and pedestrian-oriented areas. A new Metro City Ring is planned to open in 2019, with a holding capacity of 100.000 new passengers daily. More metro lines and stations are intended as well, to increase availability and to encourage people to use public transportation more often (2015, 18-19). To keep people cycling during winter and after dark, the safety of the bicycle paths has to be continuously improved. More lighting along the paths will induce feelings of security (2015, 29).

When extending transportation networks, it will become easier to utilize *all* spaces within the Copenhagen, and to facilitate the development of high-density city districts. To make use of existing plots, and to refurbish old buildings that have outlived their previous function, and to add lofts on roofs, are other means that will be implemented simultaneously (2015, 26-27). Those outdated structures are to be regarded as architectural heritage. By inducing new life into them, the historical layers of the city are being preserved (2015, 37).





**GREEN AREAS**

The map shows publicly accessible recreational and green areas in Copenhagen, i.e. publicly owned spaces and a selection of private green areas to which public use is guaranteed by a local plan, easement or the like. There is great variation in the nature, size and location of these areas in the city. From large open spaces to large parks, sports facilities, green urban spaces, allotment areas with paths cutting through them, cemeteries, squares with green features, small green corners and playgrounds with local character. Semi-private areas such as the green courtyards are also very important for a green city; however, for the sake of clarity these areas are not included on the map, nor are green areas subject to impending new plans, such as Grøntorvet in Valby, Sundmølen and Levantkaj in Nordhavn, etc.

Source: The Danish Nature Agency and the City of Copenhagen.

Map of the different green areas in Copenhagen (The Municipality of Copenhagen 2015, 46).



An example of a desirable courtyard (The Municipality of Copenhagen 2015, 36).



### 3.4 CRITICISM OF THE CREATIVE CITY

The vision of the creative city has not gone unquestioned. One re-occurring source of criticism are the social costs that follow it. For example, Lund Hansen et al. (2001, 15-16) concludes that the planning strategies for these creative environments result in gentrification. Poor and marginalized people are regarded as a burden that needs to be dislocated and hidden, when the municipality is trying to attract investment and favourable inhabitants. For Copenhagen, the ambition to promote the capital as a national growth engine, has been used as a justification to cater to an "economically sustainable" population on the expenses of the socially and economically vulnerable. Creativity in itself is rather positive, but the notion of the creative city is made problematic due to its lack of a social perspective.

To Jamie Peck (2005, 17-18), worker inequality and Richard Florida's notion of creativity appear to be mutually dependent. Someone needs to provide the Creative Classes with designer coffee and laundered clothes. It makes the issues of intraurban inequality and working poverty more pressing, especially as the Creative Class only makes up for one-third of the western working force. This means that there are two-thirds of supposedly "non-creative" labourers that need to be compensated. According to Florida's theories, it is assumed that everyone just needs to become more creative, and everybody's problems will be solved. Jamie Peck points out that this is unrealistic.

Although Richard Florida seems fully aware of the notion that his Creative Class depends on a plentitude of poorly paid service workers, he refrains from any directly expressed political involvement. Relevant topics such as the support of working unions, social justice movements, humanitarian work and the like, are hardly even mentioned. Instead, we are told to give the Creative Class some time to figure it out in their own pace, if they wish to. In the meanwhile, the creative have-nots are supposed to carry on as usual with their minimum-wage jobs and poor working conditions, dutifully waiting for the creatives to make up their minds (Peck 2005, 7).

Another question is whether the wish-list of the Creative Class offers a realistic representation of what the middle- and upper classes *really* want. As stated by Jamie Peck (2005, 16), most people want the same things when looking for a place to settle on. Cultural events and inspiring environments are certainly considered as pleasant, but is it really more important than safe streets, good schools, easily accessible routes for commuting, and nice neighbourhoods?

One may even wonder if middle class consumption and cultural amenities are the consequences of economic growth, instead of its cause.

Regarding the praise of tolerance and cultural diversity, approximately 18% of the population in Copenhagen is of a foreign background. To further solidify the image of being open-minded, the municipality has adopted the motto "*Being comfortable being different*". Paradoxically, the anti-immigrant Danish People's Party enjoys growing political power since 2001. Their presence has contributed to tougher immigration policies. Foreigners are only welcomed if they blend conveniently with the narrative of the Creative Class, or possess the necessary qualifications to become an active part in the knowledge economy (Bayliss 2007, 12).

Jamie Peck (2005, 19) implies that the members of the Creative Class prefer to gather in homogeneous enclaves, surrounded by like-minded individuals. The ideal of cultural diversity seems more of a lifestyle preference instead of a political trait. Peck assumes that this may explain Richard Florida's indifference to social problems.

In his critique against the creative city, Alberto Vanolo (2013, 3-4) asks himself and his readers how we decide *what* is creative, and *which* places are more inspiring than others. Florida's notion of the Creative Class is deemed as only partial and inadequate; even in developing countries, among the poor and uneducated, people have displayed impressive feats of creativity and innovation when trying to solve the problems of their daily life. Vanolo concludes that the concept of a creative urban environment is based on a selective, neo-liberal interpretation of creativity. According to this view, a region is only recognized as inventive if it is possible to harness it for economic growth, measured by numbers, and nurtured by competition and open markets. Vanolo also objects the notion that space is a passive container to be filled with activity, solely defined by geographic location and economic value, which completely neglects the importance of local culture.



## 3.5 DISCUSSION

Vanolo (2013, 7-8) proceeds by choosing Christiania as his case study. In terms of income and employment levels, its inhabitants are doing rather poorly, in comparison to Copenhagen as a whole. Only a third of the inhabitants are officially employed. Yet entertainment, artistic expression, concerts and other cultural activity are commonplace, and almost every corner is adorned by some artwork made by the locals themselves. The underlying creative processes tend to be informal, spontaneous, and place-specific. The businesses on site are creative and knowledge-based in their production (most famous for their bicycles, art and design). According to Vanolo's observations, economic gain is not the driving force behind the artistic endeavours of the residents. Yet Christiania is globally recognized as creative, and very popular among tourists in Copenhagen.

Without its local culture made up by the residents of this place, Christiania would no longer be the same creative haven for which it is known as. This trait has not been achieved by formal planning, or by tending to commercial interests, or through commodification. Instead, it developed over time by voluntary efforts, emotional labour, neighbourhood cohesion and social experimentation (Vanolo 2013, 12).

When implementing strategies to plan for the creative city, the theories have become clichés in their own right, based on standardized instructions that urban planners will copy and paste. This contradicts the very idea of creativity and innovation (Peck 2005, 24). Both Bayliss (2007, 13) and Peck (2005, 24) conclude that the creative city has commodified culture. To me, this goes against the very idea of creativity, as it is commonly interpreted as something intangible and intuitive that cannot be summarized with numbers.

Jamie Peck (2005, 21-22) also mentions that creative strategies have become superficial feel-good additions that are not contributing to an actual improvement of the city. Small, selective interventions such as hiring artists for public art, adding another night-club, or introducing new restaurants, do not entail any risk for the average mayor, nor does it require any long-term commitment or strugglesome ordeals. It is mostly about consumption-oriented place-marketing than actively creating a better city for everyone in it.

Creativity is a means of self-expression; it is beneficial for one's mental health\*, and it leads to self-fulfilment. Much of its beauty lies in the unpredictable, the unexpected, and the endless array of possibilities that it gives rise to. Even if Richard Florida and his associates discuss the subject in terms of economic growth, plenty of people engage in creative pursuits for the sake of creativity itself. Considering all this, it is safe to say that creative expression fits into the umbrella term of social sustainability. Christiania makes indeed a very well-fitting case study, both in Alberto Vanolo's article as well as my own thesis project, as this freetown is notorious for its art, cultural activities and innovation. While creativity is commonly associated with artistic practices and crafts, it can also entail problem-solving in many forms. By connecting creative professions with higher levels of income, Richard Florida does most likely focus on the latter. Not every artist or craftsman is fortunate enough to turn their talent into great money, hence the trope of the starving artist.

Speaking from personal observations, plenty of municipal plans like to mention social sustainability, but are rarely discussing this concept in greater depth. For most of the time, this term is present as some abstract, fuzzy entity, without any depth attached to it. In its lesser form, it appears as a set of fancy words to impress the intended readers with. At its best, a few attempts are made to develop this notion any further. Regarding the municipal programme of Copenhagen (described in chapter 3.3), a few strategies have been suggested along the way, in order to live up to the promise of an enhanced quality of life for everybody. The topic is mainly approached from a neo-liberal perspective by suggesting that more employment opportunities will lead to equality (which in turn will lead to a higher quality of life). This sounds reasonable at first, as employment may hopefully lead to some degree of financial stability. However, this alone will not be sufficient to help the homeless, the mentally ill and the elderly, whose joblessness is just one of many interconnected problems that need to be worked out simultaneously. I am also wondering about the working conditions that come with these new jobs. As previously mentioned, the creative class relies on a horde of service workers, often disadvantaged through low wages and lacking employee rights. These branches have lately been associated with precarious employment, which is being harshly

\*According to Cathy Malchiodi (2015), a therapist who has written much about art and mental health, creative expression is a potent wellness practice. Participation in arts helps to combat negative emotions. It can also delay dementia in old people. Lately, arts and crafts have been embedded in therapy, in order to harness its health benefits.

criticized by labour right organizations for its poor working conditions and for being exploitative. To make matters more problematic, the marginalized and vulnerable are more likely to be stuck in precarious employment. In retrospect, Richard Florida's reluctance to take a political standpoint has become largely disadvantageous to his work and theory on the creative city. I believe it has done him a great disservice.

To mention something positive, the municipal plan suggest affordable housing intended for the socio-economically weaker groups, and green public spaces for recreation. In my opinion, housing for the marginalized has to be accompanied by recreational facilities that are easily accessible to the tenants. Otherwise, the inhabitants will find themselves isolated in their own homes. Green public spaces and generous courtyards are definitely a step in the right direction.

In connection to public spaces, I wish to address the programmes focus on diversity, coupled with another one of my observations. When discussing the importance of diversity, together with the elimination of so called "urban islands", the main responsibility seems always to fall on the marginalized groups (those who commonly live in these mentioned urban island, probably intended as a synonym to the ghetto). Somehow, it becomes their duty to reach out and to blend in with the rest of mainstream society. They are the ones that "have" to be relocated across town, all for the sake of diversity. Whether they feel welcome in their new neighbourhood, or have access to any recreational opportunities nearby, is barely considered. As a result of uneven power dynamics, it becomes their task alone to make diversity work. To me, this notion becomes even more evident when people from the upper classes move into cheap neighbourhoods (whether it is for variety, or to enjoy low prices), which commonly results in increased costs for rents and recreation. Those who cannot keep up with the changes, have no other option than moving: gentrification

does not only affect housing prices, but also about the costs for using recreational and social spaces. In those venues, people socialize and establish communities. Gentrification endangers local communities by restricting the access to important meeting places. Displacement becomes inevitable when tenants find themselves limited and alienated in their neighbourhood. As for those dreaded "urban islands", the marginalized and vulnerable do at least find accessible social spaces there. If planners want people to live in diverse neighbourhoods instead of homogeneous enclaves, they need to provide an adequate amount of social venues available to all the potential inhabitants. To mention it once and for all: I do not oppose diversity. I am merely trying to explain where and why plans could go wrong, despite of having the best intentions in mind.

Democratic communities are important. They enable public engagement and make it possible for the common person to improve their surroundings. To its members, communities offer support networks, opportunities to acquire social capital, and a sense of belonging. Thus, communities are empowering and play an important role in social sustainability.

In today's growth-hungry Copenhagen, influenced by "Floridan" planning approaches, the improvised township of Christiania stands in stark contrast to the creative city which has been carefully designed to be cool. I believe that plans can serve as helpful guidelines and, to some degree, facilitate for creativity in its surroundings. Yet all plans need room for improvisation in case of unforeseen events. Ideally, a harmonic balance between planning and spontaneity needs reached, to enjoy the best traits of both while balancing out the shortcomings of each. I also wish to point out that Christiania offers much to the issue of social sustainability, for reasons that will be discussed in the next chapter.





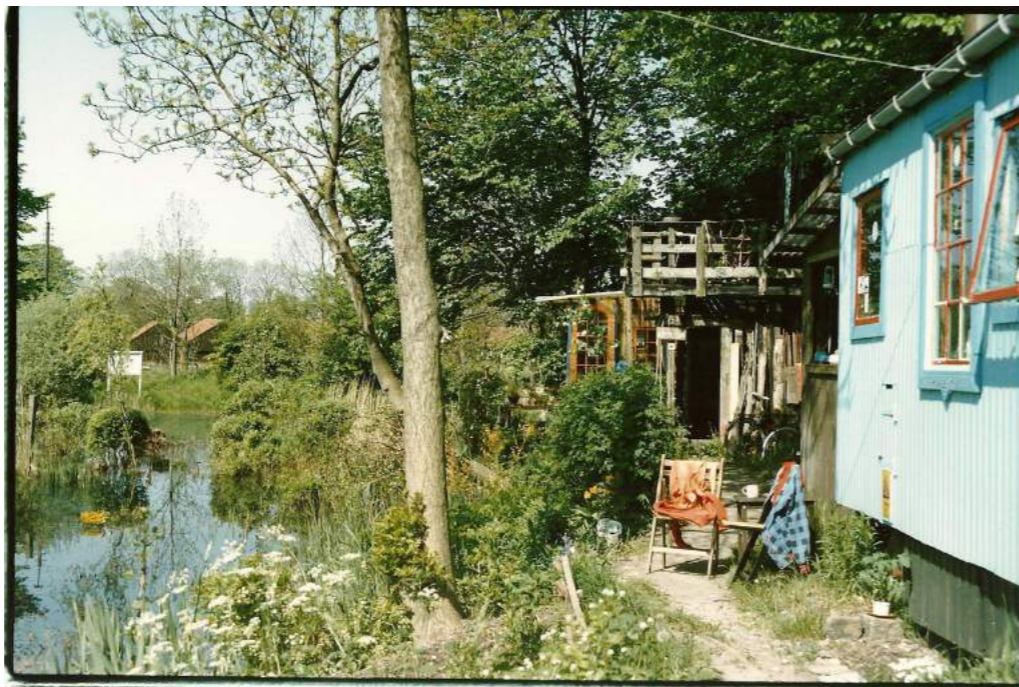


## 4. CHRISTIANIA UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

When visiting Copenhagen, it is difficult to overlook Christiania, a district of approximately 85 acres in size (Christiania Guide 2005, 2) located east of the city centre. The place was initially made for martial purposes, and used by the danish military, before it was abandoned and overtaken by squatters in the late half of the 20th century. These new inhabitants made it their goal to start their own, counter-cultural society on this area, despite of not owning the property at this time. Since then, Christiania has been a subject of controversy.

Among thick vegetation, and a plethora of quirky houses and public art located on site, traces of its martial past are visible across the area. Over the years, the squatter community of Christiania has made a name for itself from hosting cultural events, acting as a live demonstration of idealism ("the social experiment"), and unfortunately, run-ins with authorities. Nowadays, this place is wildly popular with the tourists.

Since the community agreed to buy the area in 2011, a new period in the history of Christiania is taking shape. Surrounded by countless of opportunities to seize, and significant decisions to make, the freetown is standing at the crossroads.



A photo of Christiania, showing the interplay between built environment and nature (Lamberth 1995).



Image of Christiania viewed from Vor Frelsers Kirke (Thue 2006).



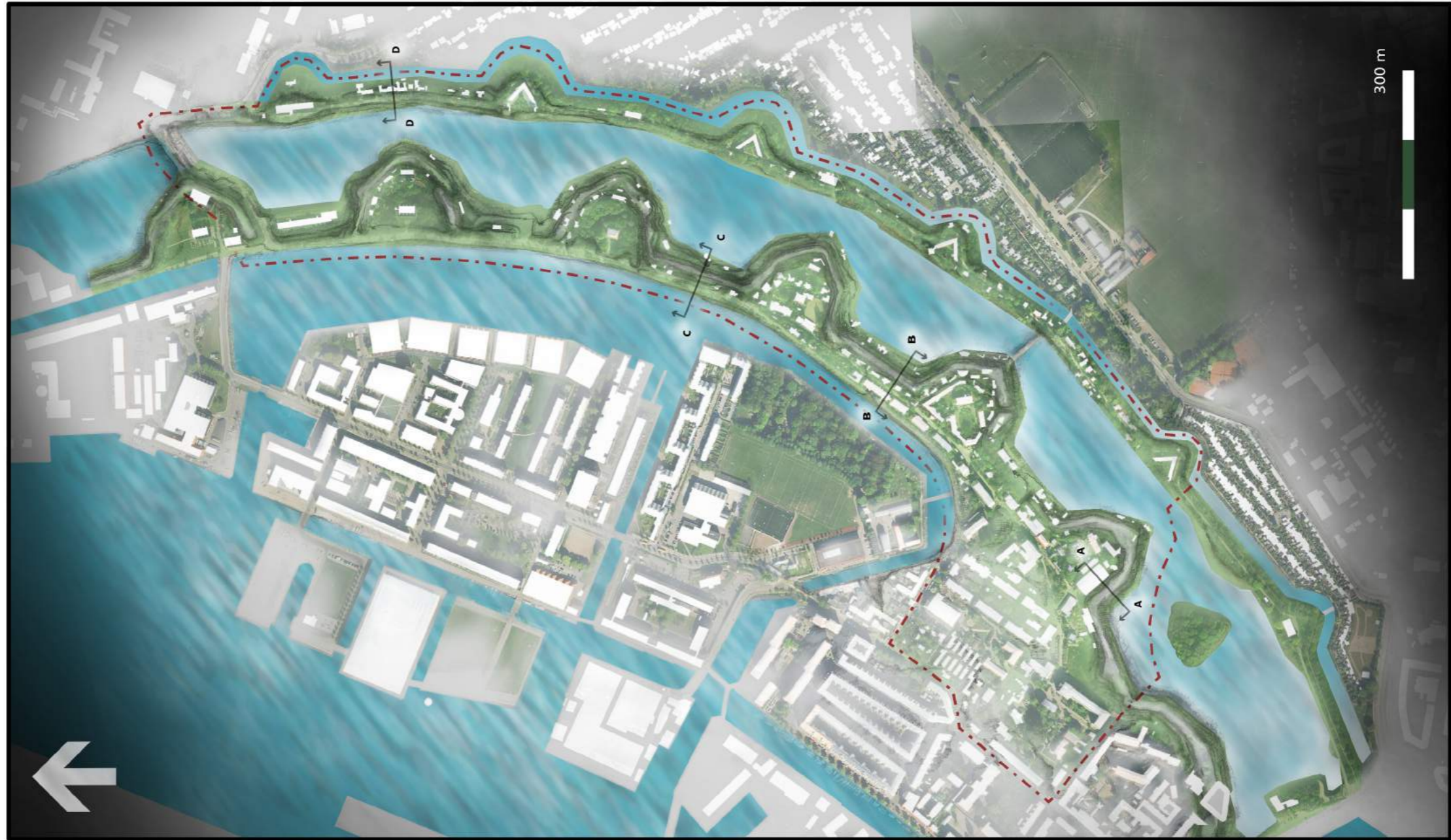
Mural against hard drugs (Smurrayinchester 2016).





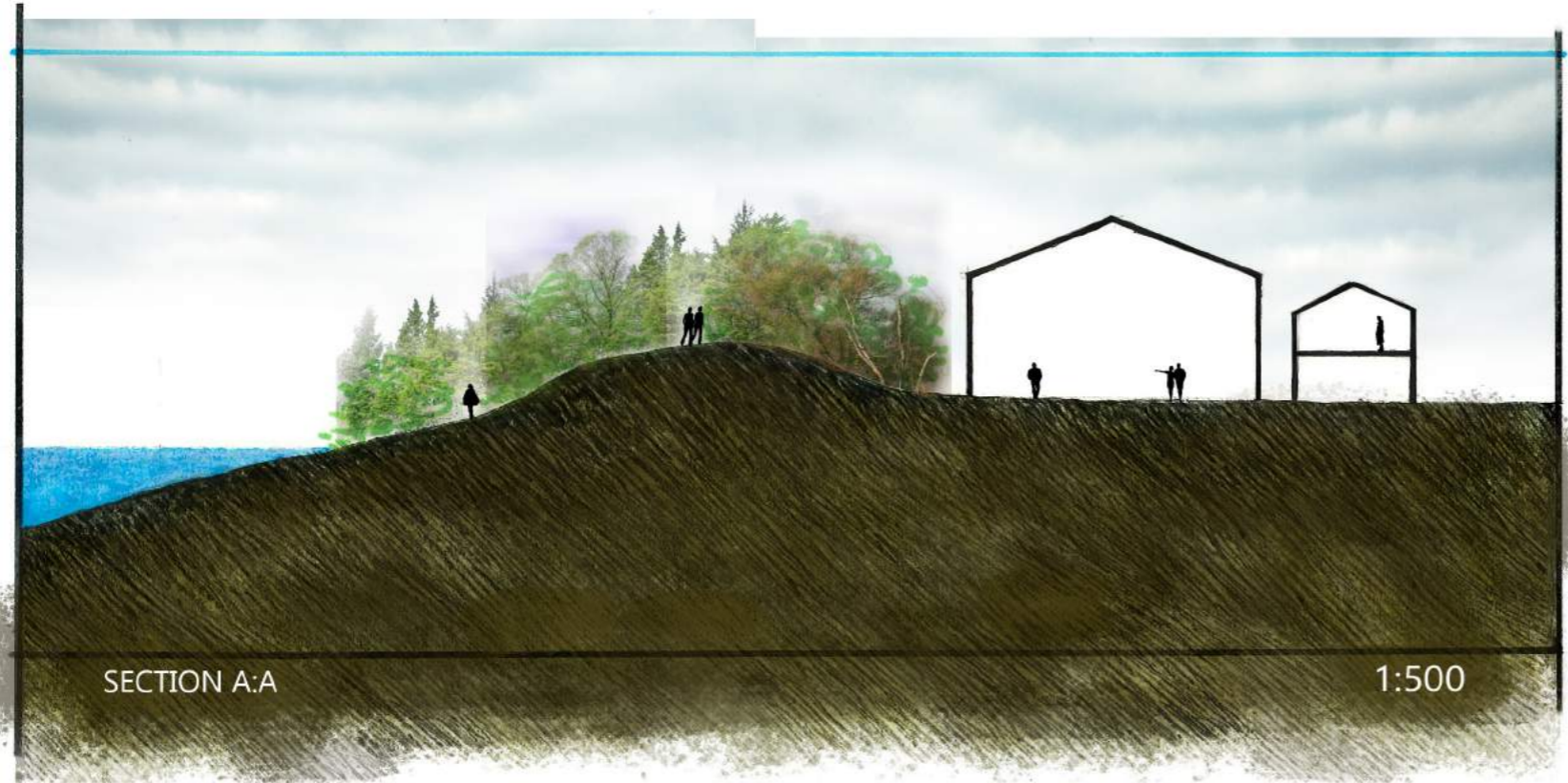
Area size of Christiania: a bit over 85 acres (Christiania Guide 2005, 2).  
The city centre of Copenhagen is to the right, across the river.





An early illustration of Christiania and its surroundings.  
The four sections will appear in the following pages.





Section cutting through the *Vold* and *Den Grønne Genbrugshal* (first structure to the left)



Collage showing the *Grønne Genbrugshal* and the adjacent townscape.





Collage showing the area around Mælkebøtten. Bird view from Google Maps is on the edge to the right.





## 4.1 SITE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION



Downtown area of Christiania, viewed in Google Maps. The two red arrows show the main entrances to the freetown.



Entrance from Prinsessegade (top arrow in the bird perspective). Photo by Peter Mulvany, 2014.



Entrance from the intersection of Prinsessegade and Bådmandsstræde (bottom arrow in the bird perspective). Photo made on my visit in April 2018.

The site of Christiania encompasses half of *Christianshavns Vold*, a historical rampart dating back to the 12th century. The martial land fortification has been continuously enhanced over the following 600 years. Military structures from different time periods are scattered across the area (Hellström 2006, 33).

The bastions and ammunition depots, that are located on the pointy ends of the rampart, have been constructed in the late 1600s and through the 18th century. At the time, the site of Christiania was considered a city fringe, which was an ideal condition for storing vast quantities of gunpowder that could cause disastrous explosions. The surrounding hills and water spaces worked as a protective cushion, for increased safety against accidents. In 1905, the city of Copenhagen had expanded to such a degree that the ammunition storages had to be relocated further away. Lately, the facades and interiors of the buildings have been altered and renovated by Christianitters. The buildings are no longer used for martial purposes (Heritage Agency of Denmark 2007).

The southern section of Christiania contains a series of brick buildings, referred to as *Bådsmansstræde Kaserner*. These former military barracks were built in 1836 and onwards (Hellström 2006, 33).

During the last decades, each one of the martial structures has been made into a part of the freetown through various ways. Although these buildings already stand out through their historical value, they would be “reduced” if separated from their Christianian context. I believe that Christiania has had a great influence on the spatialities of the site. It is safe to say that after 40 years of civilian use and architectural additions, the community has left its mark. Especially when considering that the area was not created for civilian daily life, to begin with.

Another remnant of Christianias martial past, is the building complex *Mælkebøtten* (the Dandelion). A larger main-building in yellow, accompanied by smaller volumes, are organized in the shape of a hexagon, with a courtyard in the middle. Beginning in the midst of the 19th century, the Mælkebøtten complex hosted a laboratory for the production of ammunition. The architectural design, for example the number of smaller individual buildings surrounding an open area, was adapted to the security risks that were associated with greater quantities of explosives. Nowadays, the structure is being used for residential purposes. More windows have been added, along with other design interventions (Heritage Agency of Denmark 2007).

Since being a part of Christiania, small houses have been added around the building complex of Mælkebøtten almost



like a protective rind. The aforementioned courtyard serves nowadays as an informal meeting spot for the tenants, who I have observed gathering outside when the weather was pleasant enough.

Initially a stable and a riding hall, *Den Grå Hal* was situated in another part of Copenhagen. It got relocated to Christiania in 1891; disassembled and transported in bits and pieces. Its roof construction and supporting arches are unique for European architecture (Heritage Agency of Denmark 2007). From the birth of the freetown to present times, the former riding hall is used for concerts, festivities, markets and gatherings. It is the largest building in Christiania, with room for 1500 individuals (Christiania Guide 2005, 17).

The green recycling-hall, *Den Grønne Genbrugshal*, is another distinctive timber construction from past times. Alike Den Grå Hal, it too used to be a riding house (Heritage Agency of Denmark 2007). To this day, the spacious building has taken on a new function as a hardware market and storage hall, that provides the community with material (Christiania Guide 2005, 17).

The structures that have been built for and by Christianitters, are partially or wholly self-constructed. Recycled materials are commonly used (Vanolo 2013, 7).

While the architecture follows standard rules for construction and safety, there are no aesthetical guidelines or any professionalized planning. This has over the years generated some genuinely unique houses with strange shapes, bold facades and inventive interiors. The freedom to express oneself creatively, is further emphasized in the resulting town shape (Vanolo 2013, 9).

Many of the individually produced buildings are lined along the coast, next to the water and in-between the greenery. According to my observations on site, this creates some beautiful views when walking along the shoreline and gazing across the sea. Other structures have been added on top of the older buildings, as spatial extensions. Each creation is truly unique. When the weather permits it, dwellers can be seen painting, repairing or maintaining their houses.

The general atmosphere of this place appeared laid-back to me. Everyone seems to be at an equal footing, regardless if you show up in brand-new designer clothes or dirty sweatpants. Most people mind their own business, but are polite when interacted with. From my second visit in particular, I got the impression of Christiania as a recreational bubble in which people dive in to enjoy themselves and to relax. When the weather was good (as in my second visit), the public spaces were frequented by anything from larger groups to couples.

Christiania downtown area viewed in Google Maps. *Den Grå Hal* is the large building on the right side of the barracks.



Photo of the Bådmandsstræde barracks, from the 1920s. The image has been borrowed from Christianias lokalhistoriske arkiv.



The Bådmandsstræde barracks, 70 years later (Lamberth 1995).







Section cutting through Refshalevej (right) and the adjacent area of Christiania (left).



Collage composed by images from Google Maps, showing street views of Refshalevej.





Section cutting through the Norddyssen



Collage of the small cabins on Norddyssen, Midtdyssen, Syddyssen and the Vold.





Christmas market in *Den Grå Hal* (Nico-dk 2008).



Heading towards Pusher Street and the Green Light District (Pudelek 2015).

Families were a common sight, as well as teenagers, young adults, tourists and dogs. Some people lay in the grass to soak up the sun, while others had a meal and a beverage with their friends. Most of these activities were observed in the downtown area of Christiania.

The town centre of Christiania, with Pusher Street as its spine, appeared to me as unorganized and messy. Without a steady flow of people that subtly pushes you into a certain direction, the space confuses due to its lack of road hierarchies. During my first visit in February, when most activity took place indoors due to unfriendly weather conditions, the spatial chaos became very evident. I believe this has to do with the creative process that gave rise to Christiania, which favours spontaneity over long-term planning.

Graffiti, colourful wall-paintings, funky sculptures and street furniture can be seen in almost every corner. The only kind of advertising that I could find around the area, were for local events and businesses. Most remarkably, there was no pressure to buy anything. I could find plenty of places to sit on, regardless if I bought anything prior, or nothing at all.

In my opinion, the lines between the private and the public realms seemed rather blurry. More than often, I accidentally stumbled into daycare centres or courtyards, which made me feel awkward. At some places, signs have been put up to inform guests about the private nature of an area.

The further away one drifts from the town centre, the more tranquil and secluded the atmosphere appeared to me. The buildings became more sparse, as nature took over. So did the visitors. It still felt open and welcoming, but significantly more slow-paced. In this regard, the northern edge of Christiania can be compared to a small village in the countryside.

As I hinted at before, the lush nature and vast water spaces of Christiania are a truly remarkable quality. It offers a refuge for birds and small animals, who cannot find shelter somewhere else in the capital. A sign next to a gravel path gives a short description on the biodiversity of the area. Apart from basic maintenance, nobody seeks to control or organize the nature, as it is the case in most public parks. Even in the colourless times of February, I could not fail to notice the vegetation and its impact on space. On the warm and sunny spring-day of my second visit, I saw a lot of people lounging in the green, or sitting on the coasts. The narrow trails appear to be popular among joggers, dog-owners and those on horseback. Although Christiania is commonly mentioned in context to soft drugs, most of the visitors that I encountered were not smoking anything else than ordinary cigarettes. The Pusher booths caught attention, but that did not change my impression that Christiania has so much more to offer than drugs. To chalk down its entire existence to drug use, is a gross misinterpretation of the entire community, its history and everything that it stands for. The occurrence of cannabis is a mere fraction; neither a purpose nor a reason.





These photos were taken on my first site visit on February, 2018.





A no-cars policy covers the entire area, which protects the natural environment from toxic emissions and road construction (Christiania Guide 2005, 2). The existing paths are not made for anything bigger than bikes. For me as a pedestrian, this felt strangely relaxing to walk freely without having to throw second glances for approaching vehicles. The no-car policy stops at Refshalevej, a small street along the western edge of Christiania. During my visits this road was sparsely used by any motorized vehicles, yet I could feel the difference. According to my first impressions, Refshalevej and its adjacent waterfront seemed like an unutilized access. The view over the water is dull, and it got barely any places to sit on. If it had not been for the cars, the road could have been narrowed down to make room for more vegetation along the coast. I could see why people preferred other paths over Refshalevej, as there was nothing on this street that made me stand still for a second.

## 4.2 CHRISTIANIA – SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STANDPOINT

Christiania was born out of the ambition to create an alternative, independent society “from scratch” (Winter 2016, 7). A quote from the manifesto of the freetown, written in 1971, summarized its ideals in a few sentences:

“The aim of Christiania is to build a self-ruling society, where each individual can unfold freely while remaining responsible to the community as a whole. The society is to be economically self-sufficient, and the common goal must always be to try to show that mental and physical pollution can be prevented” (Hellström 2006, 36).

For organization and decision-making, the community relies on consensus democracy instead of representative authority (Hellström 2006, 34). Executive meetings take place in each of Christiania’s fourteen districts, thereby reinforcing the idea of decentralization and self-governance. Dialogue between groups and individuals is deemed as essential (Hellström 2006, 40-41). The inhabitants are kept up to date about the going-ons in their community by their local radio station and newspaper, as well as oral communication between individuals (Winter 2016, 7). On my own visits of Christiania, I have also seen flyers attached to boards and posts, to announce upcoming meetings.

In practice, this brand of communitarian anarchism requires a vast amount of personal engagement from every member of the community. Here, all power entails obligations. A well-fitting statement can be found in the Green Plan (Christiania, 1991), in which the importance

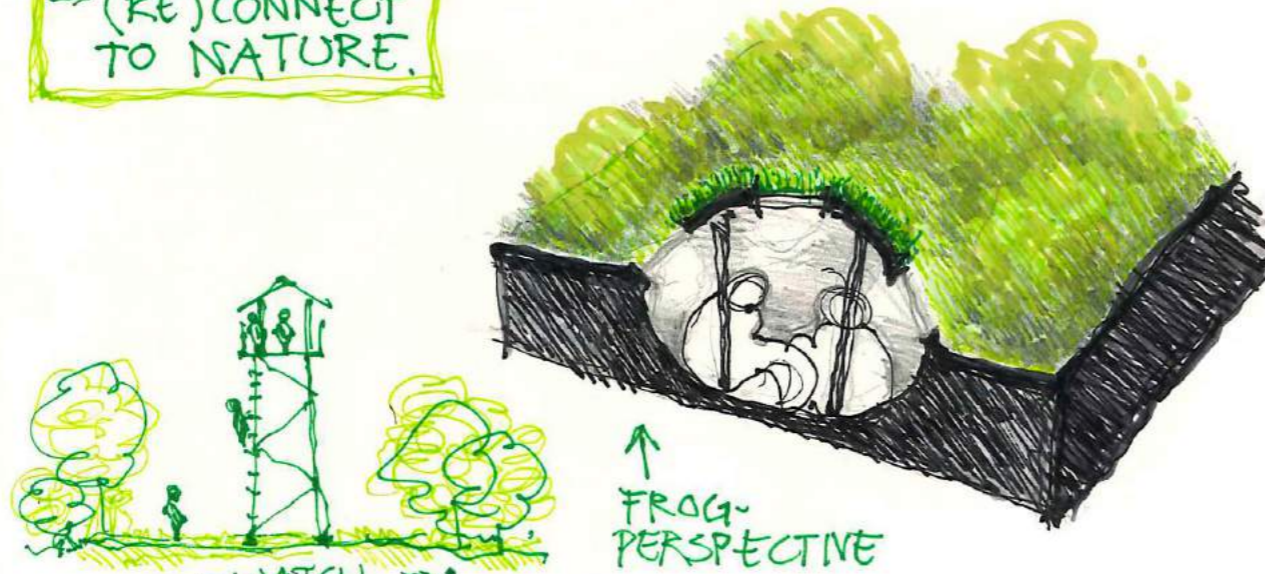
The first photo from above is borrowed from Wikimedia (Schorle, 2015). The other two were made by myself during my visit in April 2018.



→ TAKE SHELTER IN NATURE?



→ (RE)CONNECT TO NATURE.



Earlier sketches of recreational possibilities and interactions with nature.

The picture to the right shows the local skateboard hall, which I made during my site visits. The place appeared to be popular with younger Christianitters.



→ THE AGE-NEUTRAL PLAYGROUND





**Everybody is welcome in Christiania**

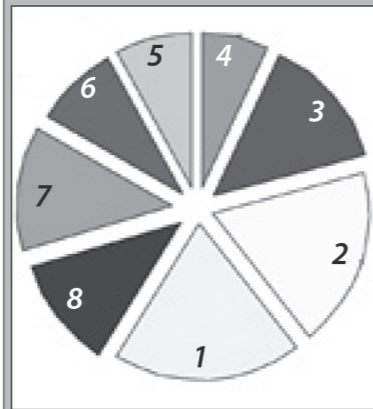
Christiania is one of Copenhagen's most open areas. Paths and roads are often so close to the houses that you can look directly into people's rooms, when you walk around.

As regards moving in, Christiania functions like most cooperative housing associations. When a dwelling becomes vacant, it is announced in the Christiania weekly "Ugespejlet". Applicants are invited to a talk with the residents of the area in question, and those deemed most suitable for the vacant rooms are chosen.

But with one important difference: There is no question of payment for a share, and no money under the table in Christiania, so you don't need a fortune to move in.



**How is the rent used?**



1. Building office
2. Children and adolescents
3. External expenses
4. Social fund
5. Area purse
6. Funds
7. Various institutions
8. Machine hall

External expenses are: Taxes and renovation duties, communal VAT, chimney sweeping, insurance etc.

The various institutions are: The weekly mirror, health house, post office, radio, Christiania's consultancy and social office, administration, public toilets, the cultural society, the recycling station, the traffic group, the playground, the contact group, Gallopperiet etc.



Two first images: Snippets from the Christiania Guide 2005, pages 5 and 21.

The common laws of Christiania, summarized through images (Jeuleu 2009).



of solidarity is being emphasized, along with the personal responsibilities that come with free individual development: over oneself, others and the community as a whole. According to the Green Plan, to have these principles as guidelines will simplify most problem-solving, and eliminate all superfluous control in the process. Responsibility is not just reserved towards human beings, but extended to animals and vegetation as well. In the Christiania Guide (2005, 2), the freetown prides itself for its "exciting" natural environment. An ecologically sustainable way of life is promoted through various methods, such as garbage sorting, policies to keep the area car-free etc. In the Green Plan, produced by the community in the nineties, a plethora of measures are described on how the freetown carries out its green values in everyday life (Christiania Guide 2005, 6). Apart from participatory consensus democracy, everything is done with an ecological perspective in mind.

Maria Hellström (2006, 43) adds that the civic structure of Christiania, a *parliament of the street*, allows for an informal distribution of power in which decision-making becomes a spontaneous, ever-continuing flow. Thereby every decision can be revisited and reconsidered, if the circumstances call for it.

To maintain economic self-sufficiency, all residential rent is collected in *the common purse*, administered by the economy group of the community. Payment from local businesses goes into the common purse as well, which makes up for approximately 30% of the collected money. After paying for the external expenses, which are largely made up by municipal taxes, maintenance duties, insurances and anything else required by public agreements, the remaining money is spent on the upkeep of local infrastructure and institutions, renovations, electricity, water, and to tend to other emerging needs. By keeping these priorities strict, the residents makes sure that authorities cannot pester them over unpaid fees. Over the years, this has earned them the label as model citizens, given to them by various authorities and politicians (Christiania Guide 2005, 21).

The Christiania Guide (2005, 21) refers to residential rent as some sort of subscription that dwellers pay monthly in order to live at this place. According to the Guide (2005, 5), dwellings are not owned by any separate individual. Instead, Christiania functions like a cooperative housing association. Payments other than the monthly rent, are not required.

This curious housing policy has to do with the communities rejection of private land ownership and financial speculation on urban space. Christiania belongs to everybody and nobody at the same time. The land is to be shared by all, not to be fenced off by private owners. When the community was faced with the choice to either buy the area or to lose it to developers, they found themselves in a moral dilemma (Winter 2016, 8). This sequel is covered in chapter 4.33, describing the unconventional solution to this problem in the shape of their own stock, the *Folkektie* - something I would describe as the fusion between an investment and a donation.

The photos on this page depict a series of street views in Christiania. They have been made on my visit in April 2018.







Street art  
on a wall in  
Christiania  
(Webster 2014).



Another graffiti  
(Dudva 2013).

Sights like this  
are common  
around the  
freetown.



An example of  
mural artwork,  
found in the  
area (Beth  
2014).

As for those residents who repair, adorn and upgrade their houses, I can only assume that they do it for their own personal reasons, as they do not own their dwellings. Traditionally, the houses are improved gradually when the dweller has saved enough money (Winter 2016, 5), but I also assume that there is some recreational aspect in it as well. As a result, no building looks like the other. In the case of Christiania, the freedom to express oneself has been expanded from consensus democracy to creative pursuits (Winter 2016, 8).

By not relying on help from third parties, the inhabitants learn how to fix things themselves, which can be anything from repairing a bike, renovating a house, installing a heating system, or organizing local infrastructure. When applying for a dwelling in Christiania, the residents will even ask you about your do-it-yourself abilities, as your skills are regarded as useful to the freetown as a whole. In the community, knowledge is shared as readily as other material possessions (Winter 2016, 11-12).





These photos were taken on my second visit in spring 2018.



## 4.3 CHRISTIANIA – HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

### 4.31 THE EARLY YEARS

In the years 1967-71, The Ministry of Defence gradually decreased its activities in the old ramparts. The site was left vacant, in wait for new plans of use. During those years, visitors sneaked into the area through openings in the surrounding fences, to use the space for recreation. The place became very popular among hippies and children from the neighbouring slums. Homeless people and youngsters from the squatting movement made use of the abandoned barracks. In October 1971, the visitors were such a widely known occurrence that the alternative newspaper *Hovedbladet* declared the site as "officially conquered". The newly founded community was to be named Christiania. Its members saw a chance to build a new society from scratch, in which the ideals of the seventies could be implemented. (Hellström 2006, 33-34)

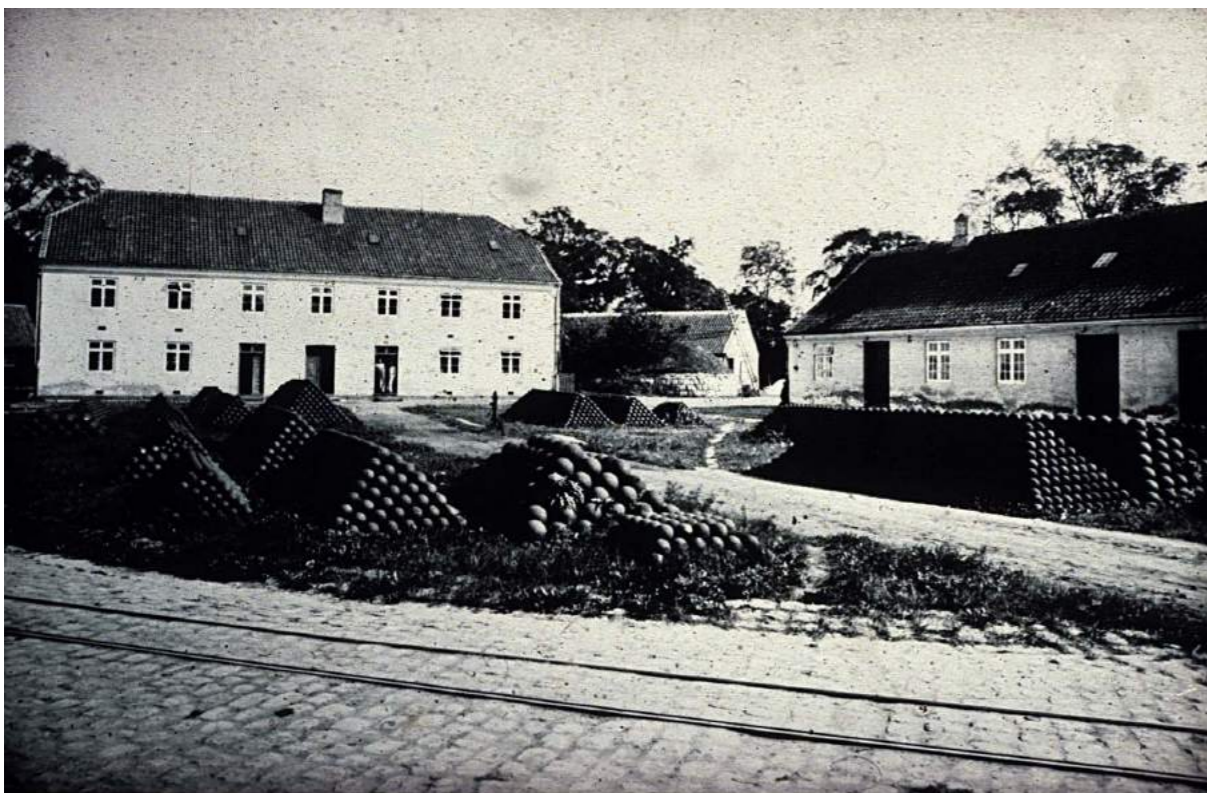
In a manifesto, that was published shortly after the mentioned newspaper article, Christiania was envisioned as a self-ruling, unpolluted and economically self-sustaining society in which individual freedom was to be balanced with responsibility towards the community. Over the months, a social structure started to appear in the area. As the squatters made themselves at home, common functions were established: within a short time, the inhabitants of the site managed to install kitchens, a grocery- and renovation service, facilities for entertainment, and an information office, to name a few examples. In May 1972, the community came to the following agreement with the Ministry of Defence: its 500 members were permitted to stay if they provided fire-fighting and sanitation functions. Both parties settled on a monthly user fee for the Christianitters, that paid for their energy- and water consumption (Hellström 2006, 36-38).

In 1973, the residential permit was extended with three additional years, in which Christiania was allowed to continue freely as a social experiment. In the meanwhile, an architectural competition opened in order to determine the future development of the site (Hellström 2006, 44).

Despite the legitimization of Christiania, the municipality of Copenhagen planned to demolish the freetown in the following year. The community responded by suing the state, for breaking its agreement before the three years period was over. Along with the organization Support Christiania, that was set up in 1974 to prevent the government from clearing the area, the community received help from Akademirådet (advisory expert counsel for architectural issues), that believed in the importance of the social experiment. Also, the proposals from the architectural competition were very positive of the freetown, and argued for its further existence. As another act of protest, Christiania increased its cultural activity, which attracted favourable media attention. By then, the community had won supporters from all over Denmark, as well as beyond its borders (Hellström 2006, 49-52).



People breaking into Bådsmadsstrædes Kaserne (Langkilde 1971).



The area in the 1920s, when it was used by the Danish military (Christiania).



Finally, the eviction date got delayed to 1976-78, when the government came to the realization that closing Christiania would be problematic both socially and politically. In the meanwhile, the cultural activity increased the public awareness of Christiania (Hellström 2006, 54).

#### 4.32 THE TURBULENT MIDDLE PERIOD

In the late seventies, Denmark succumbed to an economic crisis. At that period, social and drug-related problems soared in Christiania. This was in parts caused by an influx of drug-dealers, who aimed to introduce heroin and cocaine to a Scandinavian audience. Visits by the police became more frequent, which reinforced public opinion of Christiania being a shady place, associated with criminality, substance abuse and immorality. After some failed attempts at collaborating with the police, the inhabitants decided to take matters in their own hands by setting up the Junk Blockade. This operation sought to rid the area of hard drugs by evicting drug-dealers and addicts. The latter were permitted to return to the freetown if they could prove themselves clean.

The drug issue caused rifts within the community. On one side, the Junk Blockade had been a much-needed success that redeemed the freetown in the public eye. Yet some people wondered how one could exert authority and pass judgement over others lifestyle choices in a place that sought to embody openness and individual freedom. However, the operation gave rise to a new wave of optimism, and spurred further activity, improvement of existing community functions and the opening of other small businesses. Some of them undertook the task of rehabilitating former addicts through activity (Hellström 2006, 56-58).

New problems emerged when a notorious motorcycle gang named Bullshit decided to occupy Christiania for business. Their presence intensified the drug market, as well as fueling other illegal catering trades. More violent conflicts happened, and so did the police raids. The whole situation escalated in 1986, when one biker was found dead and buried in the area. Since then, all gang activity has been banned in Christiania (Hellström 2006, 67). Up to this day, hard drugs, rocker badges, weapons and violence are strictly forbidden in Christiania (Christiania Guide 2005, 2). In context to the prior problems with motorcycle gangs, I assume that rocker badges are referred to items that express any affiliation to criminal bikers.

During these times of turbulence, Christiania made a name for itself by hosting concerts, demonstrations, festivals, exhibitions and other counter-cultural events. Despite of growing threats by the government in the late 70s and early 80s to disassemble Christiania, and emerging smear campaigns from conservative forces in Denmark and Sweden, the cultural activity kept blooming (Christiania Guide 2005, 5).

In 1989, the passing of a special Christiania Law, *Christianialoven*, gave the Ministry of Defense more decisive power over the area. As an important precondition, the proposal of *Christianialoven* had previously been discussed with the community as a whole and its members personally. In practice, the Christiania Law entailed the legalization of the freetown, thus granting it to exist in the future. During the process, some of the vernacular constructions by the community were listed as worthy of protection. According to official opinion, the "Christianian" architecture expressed a special building culture



Group portrait of the MC-gang Bullshit, which operated in Christiania for a brief period (Henrichsen 1985).



People getting arrested during a police intervention in Christiania (Flindt 1993).



that shaped the identity of this place, and that needed to be preserved. Overall, this served as an acknowledgement that many had been waiting for (Hellström 2006, 70-71).

Drugs continue to be a hot topic in discussions about Christiania. In 1992 the Danish Police organizes a special patrol to combat the hash trade in the area. The site remains under strict police surveillance for 18 months to come, affecting many unsuspecting civilians alike tourists, school children and random by-passers who were being subjected to bodily searches. As their usual tool of criticism, the community members staged events, entertainment and street theatre to weigh in on the topic. Amnesty International, together with the testimony of several nurses and lawyers, point out the unwarranted police violence that has been used against suspects, demanding it to stop. While the patrol group was dissolved, Christiania was threatened with closure if they would not deal with the local hash market themselves (Christiania Guide 2005, 7).

#### 4.33 ENTERING A NEW MILLENNIUM, AGAINST A NEW GOVERNMENT

In 2001, the conservative right-wing party Dansk Folkeparti was voted into the Danish parliament by a wide margin. Immediately, it sought to disintegrate Christiania through enforced normalization. During this time period, the ownership rights of the area were handed over from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Justice, under "The Palace and Properties Agency" with the responsibility to preserve historic land- and cityscapes. The Christiania Law got adapted to the new plans. A new eviction date was set on 2006, with no concluding evaluation on the social experiment from the past (Hellström 2006, 81-82).

Despite being a tourist attraction and a functional community\*, the new government labelled Christiania as an eyesore and security hazard, populated by antisocial people. Police raids become more commonplace in the freetown, as authorities swore to put an end to the hash market. In interviews, residents claimed that they felt targeted, and that politicians had another, underlying agenda than fighting drug-related crimes. Community members feared to lose their neighbourhood to gentrification, if the municipality were to build on the area. Entrepreneurs within real estate had for a long time been interested in the area due to its waterfront and favourable location within Copenhagen (Arie, 2003).

Thanks to tireless efforts by the local negotiation group of the freetown, the eviction date got postponed to July 2008. As the discussions dragged on with unsatisfactory results for The Palace and Properties Agency, and the Christiania negotiation group kept protesting one agreement after the other, the matter was taken into court. In 2008, The Ministry of Finances estimated that the whole endeavour had cost them 20 million Danish Kroner in payments for assisting consultants, and approximately 20 000 working hours of planning. Further attempts at dialogues were cancelled the same year, and the community responded by suing the state (Jonshøj, 2008).

To generate new ideas on how to re-plan Christiania, a competition plan was released in 2003. The program requested a characteristic, mixed-use city district that combined housing, space for enterprises, recreational venues and the preservation of historical structures (Hellström 2006, 82-83).

The competition was no success. Only 17 proposals were handed in; nine of them were deemed as irrelevant. Generally speaking, the entries were critical towards the plans to normalize the area. To the contributors, Christiania was much more than a sole product of its landscape and architecture: it was a lifestyle, an independent entity that defied the notion of profit, and a self-organized community that ought to be respected as such. At the end, five entries received rewards despite of their lack in quality and inventiveness (Hellström 2006, 86).



Christianitters marching to court together, while holding the flag of the freetown (Fürstenberg 2011).

\*Christiania has kept its agreements with its previous owner, the Ministry of Defense. Utilities as electricity, sewage and water are maintained in good condition (Christiania Guide 2005, 9). The residents pay bills and taxes, while handling their own infrastructure. Own youth facilities, renovations, postal service, maintenance of green areas etc, are provided for within the community (Christiania Guide 2005, 7)



In 2009, one year after the fall-out with The Palace and Properties Agency, the inhabitants of Christiania lost its lawsuit against the state, and so their dwellings and occupation rights. The area did officially belong to the state, which was no longer benevolent towards the community (Vester, 2009).

Years of uncertainty came to an end in 2011, when the freetown accepted a deal with the government, on buying the area for approximately 120 million Danish Kroner. The residents were satisfied with the outcome; the required sum was considered a good price for a plot in central Copenhagen. Despite questions on how to raise the money, the agreement could finally secure the future existence of the community (The Copenhagen Post, 2011).

In order to buy the land, the freetown established a unique fund in which one donates a sum and receives a stock of purely symbolic value, a so called Folkeaktie. According to the community, the land belonged to nobody and everybody at the same time. By paying for one of those shares, one is supporting Christiania rather than possessing it (Winter 2016, 8).

Due to an unyielding police presence, that has kept increasing in Christiania since the early 2000's, small-time drug dealers became replaced by career criminals who sought to profit from the local cannabis trade. This group of individuals were more organized and systematic in their dealings, and willing to take greater risks than the average Christianitter. As a result, a "capitalist-styled drug-supermarket" evolved on site. At this point, the freetown residents themselves grew weary of the hash market on Pusher Street (Cathcart-Keays, 2016).

The state's efforts to curb the drug trade were taken a step further when the Ministry of Justice declared a war against organized crime. In a written commentary for the news-service Berlingske, the head of the department Morten Bødskov emphasized that it was the top priority of the government to fight criminal gangs. During the same period, police raided more than hundred different places in Copenhagen and beyond. Police patrols became more frequent, especially in socio-economically vulnerable districts. A special task force was designated for Christiania in particular, seizing items for millions of Danish Kroner. The Ministry of Justice stated that intensified efforts were to be expected in a near future, and that one must take hard measures against outlaws (Bødskov, 2013).

The interventions peaked in 2014, when the police swept through 150 locations in Christiania. By then, the freetown had for long been suspected of housing a drug industry worth billions of Danish Kroner. The following trials resulted in more than 76 guilty verdicts, amounting to 187 years in prison. Among the convicted were gang members, bikers and drug-sellers. In the news, this was described as Denmark's largest cannabis case (The Local, 2015).

In 2016, Christiania made big headlines once again. In a failed drug-bust on site, a suspect injured two officers and one civilian before he got shot. He died from his wounds shortly after the incident. The tragic event prompted the residents to tear down the hash booths on Pusher Street, urging people to buy their drugs somewhere else, in order to support the community (Cathcart-Keays, 2016).

Personal observations made in 2018, show that the cannabis market is still ongoing in Christiania.



Street musicians spotted in the area (Andersen 2009).



Performers at Loppen, Christiania (juicebox013 2007).



## 4.4 WHERE DO WE GO NOW? FIGURING OUT THE NEXT STEPS

First and foremost, there is a dire need for more housing. By now, Christiania has been around for almost 50 years. Many of its inhabitants have aged and grown weary of all the emotional and physical labour that is associated with the upkeep of the freetown. Yet there is not enough roof to accommodate new community members (Winter 2016, 10).

The existing daycare centres and children's institutions on site, make me assume that many residents are interested in raising their offspring into this way of life, as people are committed to this freetown for life. Parenting and counter-cultural lifestyles are not mutually exclusive by default, and why should it? I can imagine that many parents are enthusiastic about the relaxed small-town atmosphere in which everyone seems to know and trust each other, the car-free roads, the proximity to nature, and the place-specific culture that values knowledge and creativity over the accumulation of material goods. However, I wonder if Christiania can support its elderly inhabitants. As the freetown is getting older, so is its population. Some of them may no longer be able to climb the stairs in their own home, but want to remain within the community.

In regards for new building project for the future, the Christiania Guide (2005, 12) mentions homes for the elderly, guest residences for the friends of the freetown, a hostel for backpackers, and independent children's institutions available for outsiders as well as community members. Another request calls for workshops and ateliers accessible to art students, in which they get to work together with local artists. Although the referred Guide was written 13 years ago, I will consider it for my project. A few years ago, before the inhabitants were able to buy the area for themselves, the building opportunities were restricted by a ban (Christiania Guide 2005, 12). As the ban has been lifted recently, I assume that there must be much left to catch up with. Christiania has for a long time been open to visitors, and is positive towards connecting and collaborating with outside professionals.

The Christiania Guide (2005, pages 2 and 12) expresses an interest in environmental sustainability, and to improve their ecologically sound interventions whenever possible. This is further cemented in the interviews conducted by Amanda Winter (2016, pages 10 and 18), in which the subjects are adamant about protecting their green spaces from pollution and other destruction.

Christiania does also have its own political party, Christiania-listen. It vouches for the importance of nature, urban greenery, publicly accessible culture, creativity and teamwork. It supports urban renewal done "from below" and free of speculation, with the opportunity for people to build their houses themselves, and more accessible dwellings for those with special needs. The underlying value is Man Before Profit, Ideas Before Money. Other bids include free public toilets, ecologically sustainable buildings, urban farming, local emergency rooms and health centres as a means to decentralize the bigger and more specialized hospitals, and to facilitate for ecologically sustainable means of transportation (Christiania-listen, 2017).

Many of the listed proposals align well with the Municipal plan from 2015. Most obviously, both advocate for an increased social and ecological sustainability in urban space, although the methods may vary. Despite the underlying ideological differences, I believe it should be easy for both plans to meet each other halfway. Some parts of the municipal plan can even be adopted by the Christiania-listen and Christiania itself, without compromising its integrity. For example, higher density and multi-use buildings make it easier to preserve the surrounding nature, while creating livelier cityscapes in the process.

Upcoming events are still being announced on a regular on Christiania's official homepage <http://www.christiania.org>, as well as on Facebook. Pictures from past events show utilized spaces and happy encounters between locals and visitors.

It was also interesting to check out the reviews written by people on Tripadvisor (check the next page for images). Many visitors were fascinated by the atmosphere, and that visiting the place felt like diving into another realm. A group of veterans lamented that Christiania was no longer what it used to be. Other visitors stated that the freetown seemed commercialized and unkept, and that the presence of drugs was menacing. More enthusiastic reviewers praised the public art, the nature, the craft-stores and the attractions that this place has to offer. Whether one loved this destination or not, most agreed that their trip to the freetown was time well spent. Nevertheless, I am fully aware that these reviews need to be taken with a grain of salt, and that Christiania exists for other purposes than tourism.





★★★★★ [written 08-06-2018]

### Touristic but you can find your inspirational spot

Google-översättning

It is true that the place is not what it was, because is one of the main attractions in Copenhagen. However, if you lose yourself in the small paths and go next to the lake you can find calm places where you can rest, read a book, have lunch or simply think. Everyone was super respectful and enjoying him/herself. Very good vibes.



Traveler's guide  
Dublin, Irland  
479 likes 149

★★★★★ [written 02-05-2018]

### We loved it but it's not for everyone

Google-översättning

Christiania is interesting, a bit mystical but also a bit odd. On one hand it's a hippie enclave with art, herbal smells and vibes of freedom. On the other hand they sell branded merchandise all over the place so very much in line with capitalism. I know that they also need money but still it feels like it contradicts itself a bit. But anyway - we loved it. You can walk around and discover interesting art installations, food places, cafes etc. There's reggae music all around and I can only imagine how awesome it is during the summer with live music on the stage. The place could use a bit of a cleanup as there is litter all over which is bad for the planet so again a bit of a contradiction to the values of Christiania. And I'm not sure if I would visit at night. Some individuals sitting around look a bit dodgy and as a seasoned traveler I can smell trouble from a mile out so I wouldn't want to bump into them in the dark alley. Also, I don't understand why people walk with small kids along Pusher St but hey, it's a free world ;) We will return though and recommend anyone to open their minds and check it out. There is no other place like it in Western Europe.



Rindler-Schjerve  
Zürich, Schweiz  
939 likes 216

★★★★★ [written 05-07-2018]

### old fashioned, but still alive

Google-översättning

there is hardly anything new to say about Christiania. also here people get older, and that reflects on the scenery. but still it is an alternative haven as few others, and it keeps up its spirit, even if it grows older. a nice stroll, informal and unconventional, even if well established in the meantime.



Alyson D  
Brighton, Storbritannien  
28 likes 13

★★★★★ [written 12-04-2018]

### Chilled

Google-översättning

Christiania has a vibe all of its own and the rest of Copenhagen seems a world away. Very relaxed atmosphere and quirky buildings. It was fascinating to read up about the history of the place and if you're accepting of an alternative lifestyle it's well worth a visit. Plenty of places to eat and drink, lots of art, individual self built homes and walks around the lake. Perfect place to relax and people watch.



Sophie K  
58 likes 11

★★★★★ [written 15-07-2018]

### Depressing, dirty and run-down

Google-översättning

So very disappointed by our visit to Christiania which the woman at the tourist office had strongly recommended we visit. Run down, dirty, junky trinkets (most likely made in China), trash-strewn area. The 70s were known for mellow, positive, sweet people who revered "mother Earth". Peace and love ruled. That vibe was no where to be found in Christiania of today. Crassness and consumerism reign. The central area was dirty and dusty. Trash left in dried out grasses or behind broken fences. The "lovely" walk by the canal strewn with litter. A creepy guy growling at tourists saying, "No photo, no photo" to those who wished to take pictures of the illegal cannabis stands. Don't waste your time!



★★★★★ [written 18-07-2018]

### Found the Free State freeing indeed!

Google-översättning

The Free State of Christiania is probably not for everyone. I enjoyed biking through, stopping for a smoothie, doing a bit of shopping (homemade goods, not smoking), and just soaking up the atmosphere. It is definitely a cool, hippie vibe with art, music, free thinking, and commune living. Photos are strongly discouraged, but periodically you would see a place where photos were allowed. You can explore the living and shop area, "pusher's alley," or take advantage of the walking and biking trails. It is a fun contrast to the rest of the city and a great cultural experience. If you have an open mind, enjoy something different, and want to experience more than the local tourist attractions, then definitely give this a try!



August 8  
Barcelona, Spanien  
146 likes 37

★★★★★ [written 27-02-2018]

### Not so attractive as it used to be

Google-översättning

Been there in 1977, and then it was really amazing, surprising, new, cool, funny. Inside citizens were polited, and more on a revolutionary basis of social attraction. Now, its just people from all over the world, everywhere is dirty, you can find marihuana, alcohol everywhere. Many social tribes assorted, skin, punks, ska, rockers, vagabonds, alcoholics, drogadicts, and we , the tourists... Would go there just to fill extra time.



Traveler's guide  
Tisbury, Storbritannien  
162 likes 23

★★★★★ [written 20-06-2018]

### may not be everyone's cup of tea but.....

Google-översättning

We were aware of this area prior to our trip and unsure whether to visit or not. However when we arrived at the entrance our minds were instantly made up. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, with the graffiti and the cannabis selling but it is an alternative way of life that has a certain attraction. No cars, a peaceful ambience, people working on the houses, craft workshops and very good coffee shops make this a must see. However care must be taken to remember that this is a living place where people live and not get drawn into any type of voyeurism.



Maggie F  
Oxford, Storbritannien  
33 likes 11

★★★★★ [written 14-04-2018]

### Probably not what the hippies had in mind....

Google-översättning

Really interesting place to walk around, but if it says no photos it means it, particularly on Pusher St. Has become rather commercial, guess they have to earn a living somehow, and the 'herb' is mostly sold by unsavoury young men in hoodies. A part of what might have been the original spirit of the 60s still lingers on, but there is more than a whiff of Disney about it now.



Sachin D  
Alexandria, Virginia  
91 likes 49

★★★★★ [written 10-06-2018]

### A very interesting place.

Google-översättning

After reading the reviews on TA, I decided to go anyway. It was easy to find and was a great place for taking photos. Lots of painted houses and small buildings. I got there around 1pm and saw a bunch of police walking around. I guess they were looking marijuana but if that were the case, they came way too early. I walked around and found a jewelry maker who had a sign out on the main drag to come visit her shop. It was attached to her house and looked out on the water. I wound up getting some reasonably priced jewelry. There were other small shops here and there but the predominate selling sites were the stands up by the entrance. All of the wares looked the same. I would return again just for the painted buildings and probably more jewelry.





Adrian W  
116 21

5 [written 05-02-2018]

### A timeless bubble inside Copenhagen

Google-översättning

Christiania is considered by most one of the main spots in Copenhagen, let's say a "must". Actually, I think it's a peculiar place, but not so special as is described everywhere. I think its fashion is due to the idea of an hippy community selling drugs and living separately from the rest of town, which can be fascinating indeed. However, what it's true is that this place is more fascinating for people interested in buying hash or weed, more than for the other. It's of course something worthwhile to visit, but reality is more that black or white, and Christiania is an example of grey. Beyond pusher street (I think you'll like it only if you like weed consumption) you may find attractive the way people living there have made structures using parts of bikes, scraps of metal, and other stuff. It's interesting to stare at skaters inside the skate park. It's interesting to hang around and getting lost within all the small streets of this place. On the contrary, you may find not so attractive the presence of bunches of drunk people near by a children area. It's clearly interesting, I'm not saying it's a place not to visit, but all the hype related to this place is a bit exaggerated.



Patricia W  
Santa Rosa, Kalifornien  
101 21

5 [written 06-02-2018]

### Wandering in Copenhagen's Free Zone

Google-översättning

Very unusual hippie enclave in the middle of downtown Copenhagen, it is a kind of "attractive nuisance" that both attracts and repels. I went back a few times over several days. It is not busy in January, though I heard from the locals that it's packed in the summertime. Cannabis is sold in a small area; they keep this business pretty confined. Apparently, living inside of Christiania is a very desirable location for the locals, who are blessed with both the proximity to the central downtown area, and also a feel of being way out in the country, with views of the river, and no car traffic to speak of. There is a lot of graffiti, not all of it attractive, and many buildings sport one or more hippie-style murals, which also vary in quality and appeal. I got my haircut at the hairdresser's in the centre of the Christiania district, and it was one of the best haircuts I have ever had in my life. Also spent an hour plus at the local watering hole, which did not sell any alcohol, but was quite busy nonetheless. The locals were enjoying themselves, and said they like to come to Christiania to party, and many local people do as well. If you go, stray off the beaten path, and take a look at some of the creative housing options near the outskirts.



Shady B  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
138 55

5 [written 19-03-2018]

### A fun walk

Google-översättning

If your a person who just likes to wander around this is a nice place to visit. I enjoyed the interesting hand-built homes and graffiti. To the mentions of "sketchy".. i was there during the day and can't say i ever felt unsafe, most people seemed to keep to themselves. Just put your camera away on pusher street.



John L  
Pitlochry, Storbritannien  
50 33

5 [written 08-03-2018]

### Did not have a good feel to it!

Google-översättning

I have visited here a couple of times before the first being in 1973 and then 2015 - both times and in different ways it felt like a nice and relaxed and cool place. This time it felt like it was hard edged and the guys manning the Hash stalls weren't happy hippies - there wasn't much smiling going on. All in it was a bit sad, maybe it was just the time of year.



Aurilia L  
Madrid, Spanien  
7 5

5 [written 10-03-2018]

### Unique!

Google-översättning

We went on a family trip to Copenhagen and we spent all Saturday morning at Christiania. It's a very special place and we liked it because it is very authentic. The urban art is amazing, the atmosphere is very special and it is a colourful place. My sons enjoyed the skate park and we all enjoyed the place. Just one advise: depending on how "open" you are or who are you going with you may like it or not. There is a street where you can buy all kinds of weed and smoke it there. It did not bother us since we knew we were going to find this but it is better to know in advance.

Comments: Screenshots taken on Tripadvisor, a site in which travellers exchange information on various tourist destinations.



## 4.5 ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

One reason why Christiania caught my attention, is how it enabled the transmutation from idealism to a series of pragmatic and innovative solutions acted out in lived reality. Yet I do not agree with the label of a social experiment. As this label has been assigned by a more powerful institution (the state), it comes with indirect expectations of delivering something that is deemed as good and useful by *their* standards. This is a rather contradictory thing to ask from a counter-cultural movement which came about to challenge and criticize the norm. Although it seems like a benevolent gesture to let the freetown exist under the guise of an experiment, it comes with conditions that are potentially limiting. For example, what if the outcome does not humour the patron (the government) of this project (Christiania)? By now, one may realize why this is a precarious position to be in.

I do indeed believe that outside spectators can gain a lot of inspiration and new insights from observing the inner workings of Christiania. But one needs to make sure to let the community do its own thing, and not to meddle with its decisive processes.

Christiania is a lifestyle as much as it is an urban phenomena. Every phase of the human lifespan has to be represented in it. Its most distinctive features are not material, but of practices, values and traditions that are passed down from one resident to another. These may sound like incomprehensible elements, but make up for a place-specific culture that cannot be separated from the area in which it all started. It cannot be objectively measured, calculated and summarized in formulas, which puts Christiania in direct opposition to the neoliberal urban strategies influenced by Richard Florida. A district of this kind cannot be transferred from the desk to the city, with every detail planned in advance to make it work; instead, it grows roots and becomes one with its location. Its practices and traditions were born out of a spatial, historical and political context: the local history throughout the years, provides plenty of examples in which problems unique to this place have generated experiences, that in one way or another have had an impact on the community. If the freetown is moved to another place, it will cease to be Christiania.

Alike the creative process, Christiania is not a sculpture that has to be locked away in a glass box, only to be admired from a distance in its unaltered state. Instead, it calls for you to participate in it, and to experience it, instead of merely looking at it. Christiania is an ever-developing organism; fluid and dynamic, as opposed to stagnant and frozen. The freetown is to be regarded as a series of subsequent processes, in which the product is altered by the needs and desires of the inhabitants, and the problems that emerge over time. The resulting unpredictability that comes with the ever-changing properties of this

place, is not something bad per se, but it clashes with architectural conservation practices. Architecture and urban design is usually envisioned as something monumental that is not expected to change, which makes it possible to predict its value. But reality is inherently dynamic, and everything that is alive, is destined to change over time. This applies to the local culture of the freetown, which is defined by movement. If Christiania was to be "frozen", would result in a contradiction.

The 1970's are over, but that does not mean that younger generations can inherit the freetown to keep it dynamic. This new population would adapt it to their values, aspirations, and problems, thus developing the "Christianian" way of life. I assume that many supporters will always look at the freetown through nostalgia-tinted glasses, with difficulties to imagine it as something different. But hopefully, the veterans will embrace the younger generations nevertheless, when realizing that their visions and contributions are necessary for the survival of Christiania. Even if the young have their own ideas, they will also be receptive for guidance and inspiration from its seniors.

As an additional notion, I would like to point out that tourism does not have to be a threat, as long as the desires of the tourists will not be of a higher priority than the needs of the inhabitants. So far, it seems like a pleasant by-product instead of an incentive. As long as tourism is not allowed to extend at the expense of inhabitants and nature, it is acceptable.

Although the open sale of soft drugs has been the elephant in the room for many years, I will not address this in my design proposal. As I have mentioned earlier, in my site analysis in chapter 4.1, there is more to Christiania than just cannabis. I want to focus on the nature, the proximity to water, the community, the social spaces, and creativity practiced for its own sake. I want to upgrade and develop existing structures, instead of tearing down and replacing them. While the rest of Copenhagen has to do some homework in social sustainability, Christiania offers an accepting space for those who deviate from the image of the average Dane. After all, the Municipality Plan of 2015 wants to encourage diversity and encounters between different socio-economic groups. I want to enhance what has been obscured by the elephant, and hope that it will ultimately divert focus from it. To me as the designer, the drug-issue has gotten too much attention already, and the Danish government has not managed to reach these vast, ambitious goals that it has set for itself. Instead, previously mentioned criticism points towards the opposite.





**STAGE 0:** Christiania, present day



**STAGE 1:** Gradual enlargement of buildings

**EARLIER SKETCHES OF CHRISTIANIA IMAGINED AS A PROCESS**





**STAGE 2:** The houses start to grow into each other



**STAGE 3:** The area becomes one with nature





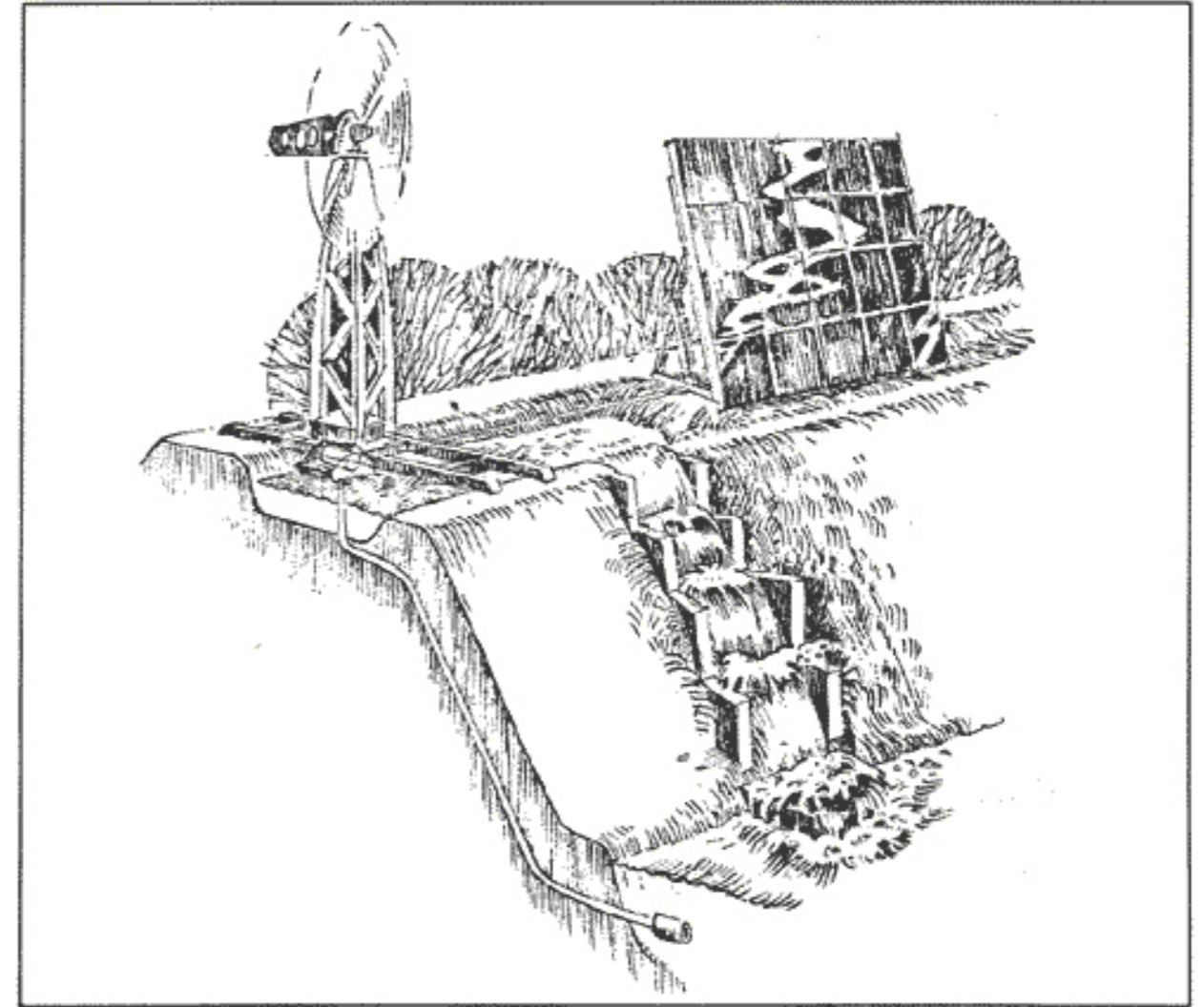


## 5. LEARNING FROM OTHER PLANS

Over the years, the community has produced a large number of programs for the future development of Christiania. Most of them came as reactions to other design plans for the area, made by government officials or other institutions. This section will describe and analyse previous proposals that I have deemed as the most interesting, and the discussion that followed them. The feedback loop between author and recipient, outsiders versus locals, served as substantial food for thought. It also offers an opportunity to learn from others mistakes.

Among the mentioned projects, there is another (*Framtidsloftet* in Stockholm) undertaking that is not related to Christiania, but still relevant for my design visions and what I want to accomplish.

This chapter is to be viewed as a bridge from the theoretical framework to the proposal itself, and how the two previous chapters can be realized in an actual design.



*Water steps: A windmill and a solar panel that gives energy to a pump, which lifts water from the lake. From here it runs down through a few falls and is oxidized.*



**Image above:** An example of green technology that could have been installed locally (Christiania 1991).

**Image below:** About the building reconstruction project *Framtidsloftet*, chapter 5.5 (Edström).



## 5.1 THE ISSUE OF PLANNING

In 1986, the state formed a special governing group to develop a local plan for Christiania. Due to the complex nature of this task, it dragged on for two additional years. During this process, the Christiania Byg building committee was funded to renovate built structures in the area. The enterprise involved craftsmen from within and outside the community. Many Christianitters were skeptical towards "outside intervention", as it interfered with their democratic decision-making process and principles of self-administration. In the end, the community decided to decline the millions in funding that the building committee offered, in order to stay true to their values (Hellström 2006, 68-69).

As an alternative solution, the community requested a tax reduction for the freetown's own businesses. The surplus collected from these local enterprises, would be used to pay for internal construction work. Thus the building office *Christianias Byggekontor* was born, to be responsible for all construction projects funded by the collected economic surplus (Hellström 2006, 69-70).

The community tends to avoid long-term planning in favour of a more spontaneous approach. A common explanation is the fear of bureaucratization and rigid hierarchies, which is incompatible with their decision-making style. In worst cases, the rejection of planning resulted in a lack of common vision, poor use of resources, and the inability to take action (Hellström 2006, 62). To me, this seems more like a question of leadership rather than urban planning. Strong leadership coupled with resourceful and efficient management, will yield good results regardless of planning mode.

My own argument for plans, is that they can serve as helpful guidance. Even if the plan in question is vague, or results in something entirely different than initially envisioned, a plan gives a sense of context and direction to a project. Proposals do not have to be obligatory schedules that have to be followed from A to Z without deviation. On the contrary, they can be open for negotiation and changes if the circumstances call for it. Especially if a project will go on for years, alterations are going to be made down the road as nobody can predict the future. To allow room for flexibility, one will be able to enjoy the benefits of having a plan, yet being able to go with the flow.

In order to find a mode of planning that Christianitters can agree on, I believe in low power distances, and the importance of transparency. Individuals that are of special importance to the building- and planning process, need to be trusting of their subordinates and easy to approach. Information needs to be easily accessible and presented in a manner that even laypersons can understand. I consider the democratic decision-making model (that is currently used by the community) as favourable, as it makes sure that everyone gets an opportunity to voice their opinion.

I estimate Christianitters to be capable of carrying out construction plans with higher degrees of complexity; they just want it to happen on their terms. As demonstrated in the pictures of chapter four, the independently constructed buildings exhibit varying levels of complexity; lofts added on older buildings, other restoration projects on old architecture, sedum roofs, solar panels etc. The community even managed to build an ecological daycare facility on their own (Christiania Guide 2005, 8), which will be mentioned with greater detail together with the Green plan. It is also important to keep in mind that construction work has become increasingly specialized over the years. This stresses the importance of communication and mutual respect between project leaders, locals, officials, and professionals from outside, for future projects that require specific skills. Although this sounds cliché, cooperation and networking are vital. It seems as if the community has understood it too; Christiania (along with the the local business Christiania Smedie) has its own page on LinkedIn.

Through successful collaborations with other specialist, one may find solutions that would not have been considered otherwise. One possible drawback is that Christianitters may feel alienated from the design- and construction process, if it has not been properly adapted to the inner workings of the freetown and its culture of democratic decision-making. Organizations that struggle to empathize with the values of the community, may complain that the decision-making processes are slowing down the pace of work. To find a good balance will take its fair share of trial and error.



## 5.2 THE GREEN PLAN 1991

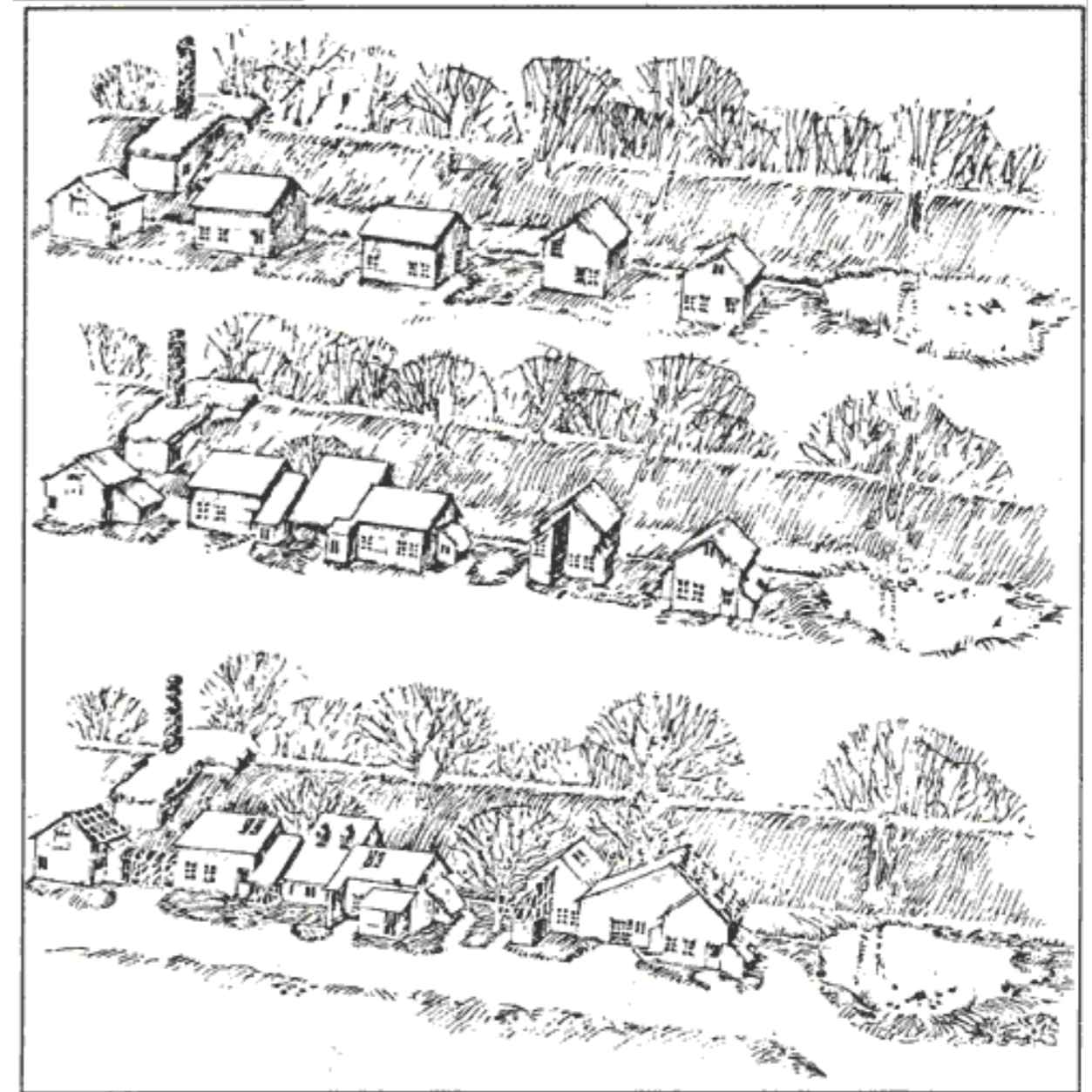
In the cited plan that was released in 1991, Christiania presented itself as an ecological community. According to the proposal, humans were dependent on nature and strived to live in harmony with it; access to greenery was presented as the much-needed remedy for the urbanite. While the community had been reluctant towards long-term planning in the past, planning for a natural balance made it seem legitimate. The programme argued that being in balance with nature, had the potential to reduce social and economic injustice. Apart from this notion, socio-economic issues and political aspects were discussed less than usual (Hellström 2006, 74-75).

The Green Plan came initially as a protest against a local plan that was produced by the government shortly before. This local plan sought to divide Christiania into two parts: an urban and a rural realm. While the urban, lively quarter was open for development, the rural and overgrown turf was supposed to be left untouched. In the critique issued against this proposal, this split would spoil Christiania's image as a rural-urban hybrid. It ignored the historic relationship between the barracks and the rampants. A parting line between nature and built space would obscure this connection (Hellström 2006, 72). Instead, the freetown wanted to maintain a gradual change from town-space to greenlands. In order to create this subtle shift in scenery, various combinations of urban and rural elements needed to be present. Examples of such combinations were areas in which nature roamed freely, green spaces that contained small clusters of houses, and grassy plots for pets (Christiania, 1991).

The "natural structures" were recognized as equal to the built structures, when planning to preserve the cultural landscape of Christiania (Hellström 2006, 74).

The Green Plan incorporated suggestions on how to make Christiania ecologically more sustainable over the years, and the goal of providing a green, creative and more pleasant area for its dwellers and visitors. It also included notes on administration and different task-groups to actualize the plans.

For more ecological sustainability, the plan listed some "green" technology that would reduce the energy consumption of the freetown. Mentioned examples were solar cells, low-energy devices and houses, thermal stores and electricity meters. Actions like composting, garbage sorting and recycling, and to choose ecologically savvy products, were promoted as well. As to reduce drainage waste, the plan suggested some alternatives on how



The images have been borrowed from the Green plan (Christiania 1991). It describes a suggested planning approach.





households could less water (earth toilets instead of water toilets, etc) and the reuse of rainwater. Vegetation and plant-life were to be preserved and maintained. Yet certain conveniences would be made available for people who wished to enjoy the nature, like public toilets, fireplaces and improved paths.

The plan stressed that all decision-making in Christiania should be based on the principles of solidarity, responsibility and balance with nature. Each member of the freetown had to acknowledge their responsibilities towards the community, the area and the individual (Christiania, 1991).

In its implementation, the Green Plan resulted in the first common building *Rosinhuset*, the raisin house, a kindergarten equipped with sun panels and organic earth closets. Completed in 1995, it demonstrated the community's ability to plan for larger undertakings and to complete them successfully (Hellström 2006, 77). The Green Plan did also promote building preservation and maintenance, and the sanitation of areas. Extensive renovation projects were undertaken throughout the 90's (Hellström 2006, 74).

Unlike other initiatives for ecological sustainable cities, the Green Plan 1991 did not rely excessively on technology as the great saviour. Amanda K. Winter (2016, 130) used the city's visions for Nordhavn, another district in Copenhagen, to compare with Christiania. According to the proposal from By & Havn, Nordhavn shall be equipped with new forms of energy supply and re-use and optimized usage of resources, to strengthen Copenhagen's identity as a so-called "eco-metropolis". Although the Green Plan 1991 argues for the advantages of technology, it does not play the leading role. To rely on technology alone, is not enough for the planet. What else is needed, is the continuous re-evaluation of our day-to-day habits and lifestyle. The Municipal plan of 2015 comes somewhat close by promoting the bike as a means of transportation, and how to facilitate for a car-free lifestyle in other ways. While the population of Christiania lives by values and habits that result in less excesses, the importance of significant lifestyle changes hides between the lines.

The Green Plan's emphasis on preserving its vegetation, is at odds with the strategy for increased urban density, that the Municipal Plan 2015 advocates for. On the other hand, the Municipal Plan 2015 devotes several pages on the importance of accessible green plots, in which people can enjoy nature.

As the Green Plan was penned almost 30 years ago, it appears to have faded from the the residents memories. In her interviews with other Christianitters, Amanda K. Winter (2016, 134) got the impression that most community members do not consider themselves as environmentalist, even if their actions indicated the opposite. One explanation that she received, was that people were simply too poor to



care; the habit of recycling and reusing may as well be a means of saving money, rather than a conscious desire to reduce one's green footprint. Apart from the referred programme from 1991, there have not been any other sustainability plans. One is reminded of the community's reluctance for long-term planning.

Towards the end of her article, Amanda K. Winter (2016, 145) concludes that the respect for people generates an increased veneration of nature among dwellers. The desire for a peaceful, natural scenery in which children and adults can play, leads to a natural interest in preserving the surrounding greenery. Environmental sustainability becomes an unintentional, yet pleasant byproduct. Although her conclusion, that solidarity and responsibility towards each other should be considered when planning for a "greener" townscape, matches with the decision-making principles mentioned in the Green plan, contemporary urban development still has to catch up.

As proposed in the Green plan 1991, ecological sustainability and the respect for nature could justify a set of building rules, if they help to preserve the surrounding environment. One could argue whether those really are rules, or highlighted pieces of information to ensure that inhabitants make good decisions when building a house. I am sure that Christiansitters will accept certain guidelines if they are reasonable, such as promoting ecological sustainability and to respect the spatial needs of animals. So far, the apparent absence of building rules seems to come from the desire to defy the societal pressure to conform, by letting creativity roam free. But to build in accordance to nature and its preservation, is not necessarily tied to conformity. On the contrary, one may even argue that it is borderline subversive to put nature and environmental concerns before other people's preferences and wallets. The notion that some things will not be up for sale, despite of the widely accepted dogma of supply and demand, becomes controversial in an era of neoliberal planning approaches and global capitalism.

The images in this spread were taken by me, during my study trips to the freetown. They show the spatial effects of greenery, and how people enjoy it.





## 5.3 THE NORMALIZATION INITIATIVE

In the normalization plans that started to appear in the early noughties, the discussion revolved around “re-integrating” Christiania into the urban fabric of Copenhagen. Following the architectural competition, a final master- and action plan got presented in 2004. These proposals included the notion to sell off the area to private developers. (Hellström 2006, 90-91).

The preceding competition programme from 2003 contained four crucial success criterias, which influenced the aforementioned masterplan. “**The historical**” implied the preservation of the martial buildings and embankments, on the expense of the Christianian homes that happen to be located there as well. “**The recreational**” stated that the area needed to be opened up for everyone to enjoy. “**The characteristic**” stood for the preservation of some of the freetown’s houses, to serve as colourful ornaments stripped of their political context that gave rise to those structures in the first place. “**The new city district**” envisioned Christiania as a mixed urban space that combined housing, small enterprises and cultural activity, while distancing itself from the values held by the squatter community. If the freetown got to exist in the future, it was to be reduced into a collection of “characteristic” facades, as a merely aesthetic scenery (Hellström 2006, 83).

In the year after the competition, the four success criterias re-surfaced in the Master- and Action plan as key objectives. Anthropology professor Christa Amouroux (2009, 120-122) argues that the objectives demonstrated several techniques of normalization. For the sake of “historical preservation”, houses will be torn down and residents displaced. The programmes assumed that Christiania is closed and needs to be “opened up” for the public, as if thousands of visitors and regular events were not enough already. Over the years, the freetown had all sorts of labels applied to them (once a slum, then a social experiment, and now a district with unique character etc.), which hampered the possibility for alternative representations. By adding increased privatization into the mix, community members will be stripped of authority and prevented from practicing their traditional activities. Christa Amouroux concludes that normalization strategies are coercive yet discrete manifestations of power. Others may argue that normalization is about developing and improving an area, as something well-intentioned. To challenge this viewpoint, Christa Amouroux (2009, 124) stresses that normalization entails interventions that are imposed on a community from “above”, meaning that it is about a dominant party that seeks to shoehorn their social and political goals into their surroundings. In order to point out the hidden agendas behind normalization, community residents share their own side of the story on a collective blog\*. Christa Amouroux (2009, 125-126) refers to those stories as counter-narratives, which serve to dispel the various myths that the normalization initiative has resulted in. For example, the prejudice that Christianitters are lazy and irresponsible usurpers, is challenged by highlighting that the residents spend countless of hours to maintain the area, its infrastructure and all its architecture.

\*The blog in question: [www.christiania.org](http://www.christiania.org) - the site is updated on a regular, and its entries are written in a clear language that is easy to grasp. Much information is available in English. The Christiania Guide is easily found on this site.



Protestors rioting against the police in the autumn of 2008; a turbulent period in the history of Christiania (Dresling 2008).



Supporters outside the courtroom in Copenhagen, following a lawsuit regarding the freetown (Dige 2009).



Maria Hellström, who too discusses the topic of normalization (2006, 86), argues that the governments aim to preserve the historic landscape, came about as an alibi than from a legitimate interest in architecture. Many of these martial remnants existed *thanks to* the squatters, rather than *despite of* them. By turning old military barracks into homes, and through renovating the stables, barns and workshops by themselves, these structures were protected from demolition plans in the past (2006, 93).

I suspect that the proposed "new city district" has more in common with Richard Florida's theory of the creative city, that came en vogue at this time, and which favours diversity and artistic expression as a trendy accessory rather than a sincere interest in ensuring social sustainability for all. According to the critique that was directed toward Florida's theories *as well as* the normalization plans, the notion of a cleansed and swept Christiania ("a cappuccino quarter for the rich and fanciful", as stated in Christiania Guide 2005, 12) clashed with the self-governing, anti-consumerist views of the 70's squatter-colony Christiania. As Maria Hellström (2006, 93) weights in, normalization would be the end of collective usage right to the area, if it were to be distributed amongst developers and entrepreneurs, or sold off to the highest bidder for private use.

Although the residents of Christiania are collectively buying off the area, the government refuses to let go. It keeps manifesting itself through constant police presence under the pretext of drug prevention. Yet the Junk Blockade during the late seventies, and the journalist Sophie Arie's recollections of the drug raids from recent years, indicates the following things: that Christianitters have in the past shown the ability to solve local drug problems on their own, and that police surveillance has worsened the very same problem that was supposed to be prevented. Ignorance is no longer a valid excuse, as the community members make active efforts to communicate their side of the story. In the 21st century, in which drugs can be conveniently purchased on the internet, it is presumptuous to assume that thousands and millions of visitors only show up for the substances.

While officials keep emphasizing on the drug-related activities, they forget about the humanitarian contributions made by the community. Over the years, marginalized groups in society have found an oasis in Christiania, in which they have been met with acceptance and support. Among its regular visitors, the Christiania Guide (2005, 2) mentions social security recipients, the poor and the homeless, immigrants and clients from social institutions. I wish these efforts to get more noticed and credited, as they are difficult to achieve through formal development plans. Normalization would put an end to that by commercializing urban space.



Photos of the old powder houses on the Vold, taken on my second visit in spring 2018. These are a sample of the local structures that have been turned into dwellings over the years.



## 5.4 CHRISTIANSHAVNSRUTEN, THE BICYCLE HIGHWAY



People crossing the *Dyssebroen* that connects the Vold with the eastern edge of Christiania (Andersen 2016).



A local house and the parked bicycles of its tenants (Rouiller 2004).

Christianshavnsruten, a proposed bicycle highway, is one of many recent projects that have been undertaken to promote cycling, and to increase accessibility of the city. The route was designed to accommodate heavy traffic flows. The plans were initially proposed in 2008, with the purpose to further connect the neighbouring districts of Amager, Christianshavn and Nyhavn, while creating a convenient shortcut to the city centre. According to the drawings, the route would have cut right through Christiania, halving it in a literal sense. As one may have predicted, the community residents did not approve of those plans. People were worried what impact Christianshavnsruten would have on the surrounding landscape and greenery of the freetown. Safety concerns for children, animals and visitors, were listed as well. The influx of traffic would have disrupted the peaceful atmosphere that the community wanted to maintain.

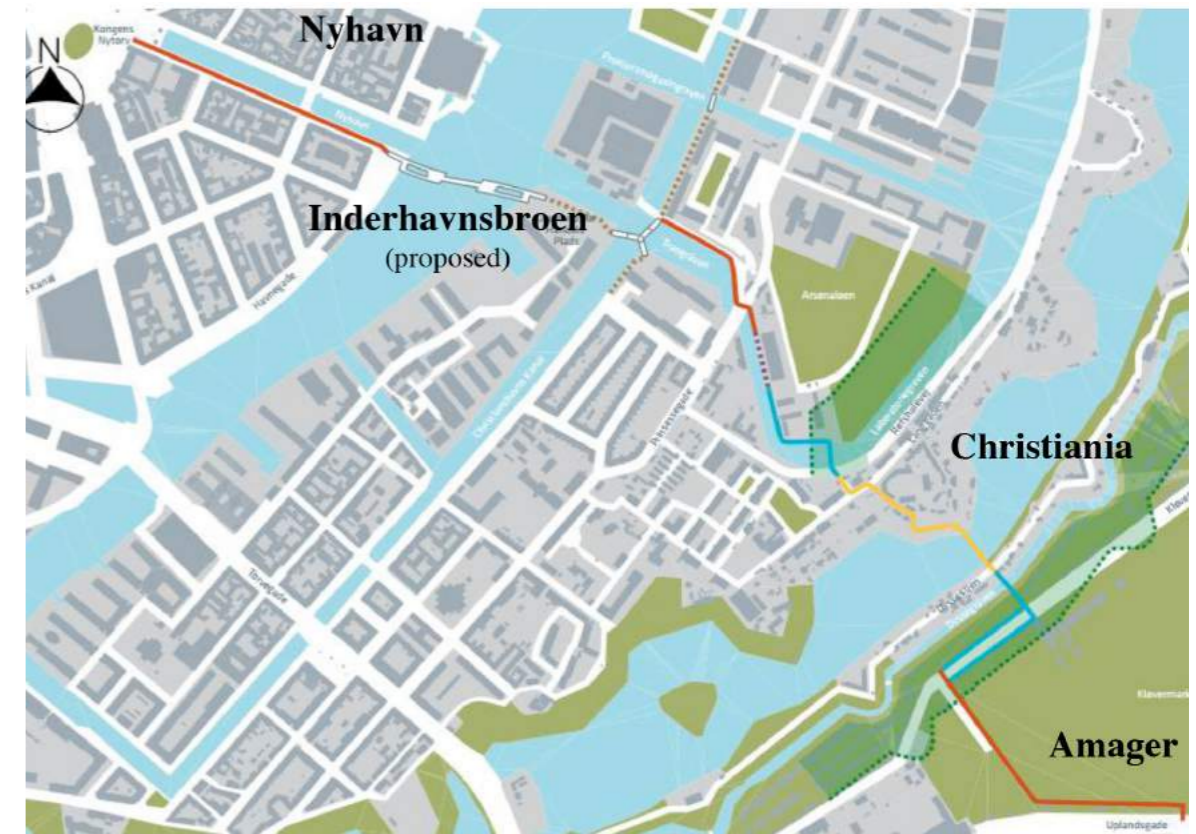
Christiania is a car-free zone, in which its inhabitants get by on foot and bike without any difficulties. There is no opposition to cycling in itself, rather the contrary. The bicycle highway was deemed as superfluous altogether, and residents of the freetown claimed that the project could have been realized in other ways. As a gesture of cooperativeness, efforts were made to propose an alternative route. Many were upset that politicians and planners did not bother to discuss the plans with those who would be affected by it. Instead, the proposed path felt like an "enforced" intervention from above; a disturbing concept for a community that values decision-making through community meetings and consensus (Winter 2016, 12-16).



As one can observe in Figure 7 (Winter 2016, 15), the cycling route intersects Christiania in an unflattering manner, separating its urban and rural realms. This split would have interrupted the flow on site, and disrupted the spatial unity of the area. The dwellings on the northern side would have been isolated from the activity cluster on the south-western edge of the freetown. For visitors and inhabitants alike, this would have altered the perception of the area. The freetown had since the Green Plan from 1991 been adamant about preventing an urban-rural split.

Unity of space and community are interlinked with each other, as the members of a community exist and gather in space. It is safe to say that the governing of Christiania depends on the unity of its residents. In 2008, when the plans for Christianshavnsruten were introduced to the public, the freetown residents were entangled in legal quarrels over the right to occupy Christiania. A weakened unity amongst dwellers would put the community in a disadvantageous position, in the fight against the government. In the future, and the problems that may come, unity amongst residents will remain crucial.

Put into the context of normalization, the bicycle highway appears as one of many steps in which the municipality tried to gradually incorporate the freetown into the surrounding city, while distancing the present-day residents from the area. By inducing a disruptive, dominant flow of motion that was outside the control of its residents, the first step would have been taken to dissolve the influence of Christiania's governing unity.



**Figure 7: Christianshavnsruten (City of Copenhagen 2014)**

Plan of the proposed bicycle highway (City of Copenhagen 2014).



Christiania is a car-free zone, which is expressed in this street sign (Webster 2014).



## 5.5 FRAMTIDSLOFTET, STOCKHOLM

Alike social sustainability, the term vernacular architecture evokes a variety of images. Anything from architecture without formally educated architects, agricultural structures from a distant past, to indigenous huts associated with a specific region. What many examples of vernacular architecture have in common, is their intimate connection to their surroundings. In an article for website ArchDaily, writer Sarah Edwards (2011) states that this category of building is highly influenced by its spatial and cultural context. The materials for construction are taken from the surrounding environment. Local traditions and knowledge on how to utilize these resources, governs the building process. The resulting houses are well-adapted to regional weather- and site-conditions. They are characterized by certain aesthetics that mirror the culture of its architects, as well as the needs of the occupants.

This definition of vernacular architecture applies to the houses in Christiania, which have been shaped under similar circumstances. But has contemporary architecture forgotten about the vernacular? One may suspect it, as the building process has grown increasingly complicated. For the average person, the prospect of constructing one's own house based on local traditions and individual needs, does not seem as customary as it did one century ago. For this reasons, the project Framtidsloftet becomes interesting to me, as it demonstrates how self-construction can be made possible even in the western world and all its building standards. If Christiania wishes to further develop their culture of self-construction, studying such projects can be very helpful. The freetown and Framtidsloftet share common ground in this regard, which makes the latter an interesting example that I am eager to include.

Framtidsloftet, which roughly translates into "loft of the future", was an unconventional construction project in Stockholm, initiated in 1996 and completed two years later. Young people were given the opportunity to build their own dwelling, by collectively renovating a heavily run-down apartment structure under professional supervision. The building in question dated back to the post-war era, and gained historic value by being one of the first houses in Sweden that had access balconies. If it had not been for this detail, it would have been torn down immediately, as real-estate investors were deterred by the costly reparation work that this house was in need of (Lindstrand and Vall, 2018).

The inspiration came from the United Kingdom, and its tradition of initiating construction projects in which young people got to build their own home while receiving professional training in the process. These ventures had a social dimension, as the participants were struggling socioeconomically. By offering this opportunity, these individuals would be successfully integrated in society. When officials from the municipality of Stockholm tried to initiate a similar project locally, it was done with the british model in mind. But minor alterations had to be made to adapt this venture to a Scandinavian context (Lindstrand and Vall, 2018).

Unlike the british model, the swedish version tried to gather a more mixed group of participants with various backgrounds and motives, to mirror the demographics of Stockholm. In total, 60 young adults were rounded up for the introductory meeting in 1997. More conferences with supervisors, different contractors and associations, were to follow. The participants had to decide which organization got to administer the building. The chosen enterprise would become the landlord of the apartments, and bear the financial responsibilities of the project. This agreement was established in one of those meetings.

Shortly afterwards, the participants received a basic education in construction work. The lectures were scheduled on evenings and weekends so people could go to their jobs on daytime. As a bait, regular attendance in class would result in a discount in renting fees.

However, this process was not without starting difficulties. Many participants did not expect all these initial negotiations, administrative questions and time-consuming meetings that would drag on for a year. Some were even afraid that they were never going to build after all (Lindstrand and Vall, 2018).

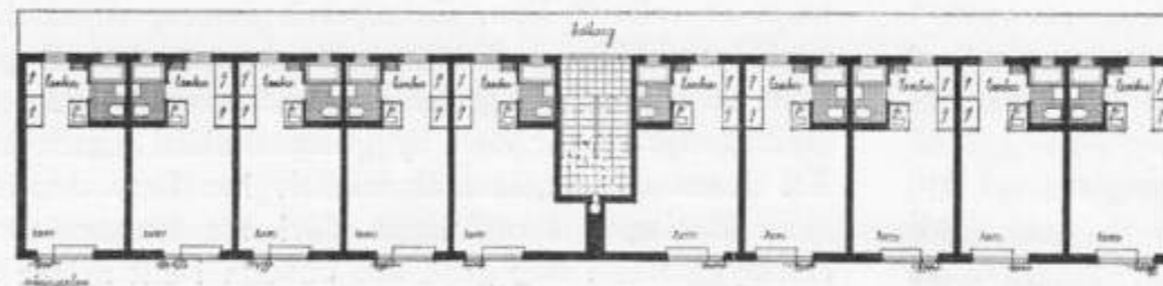
Most of the actual construction work transpired in 1998. It was agreed on that electricity, water conduits was to be handled by professionals due to insurance policies. The same applied for the repair of structural framework. Two professional construction workers, from the involved contractor firms, were present from the start to aid the members through the different moments of process. They were also tasked with giving practical instructions and to provide feedback. Over time, these professionals developed a mentor relationship to the young adults. Regular meetings with supervisors kept going throughout the entire project. Participants arrived to the construction site on their time off work, either alone or accompanied by friends and family to help out. Access to machines was strictly limited due to safety concerns. Beginner mistakes were inevitable, and had to be corrected. Even if the assisting professionals enjoyed to help the aspiring self-constructors, the workload became greater than anticipated. As the building site was open every day of the week, from early morning to late night, they found themselves working long shifts at odd hours and on weekends.

The irregular shifts made it at times difficult to distribute new information. To solve this problem, some of the participants took the additional responsibility to manage the circulation of information. Due to the medial attention that Framtidsloftet attracted, the office for information handled public relations as well (Lindstrand and Vall, 2018).





Fasad mot sydväst (överst), fasad mot nordost (nederst). Skala 1:400. T. h. sektion.



Våningsplan. Skala 1:400.

Architectural drawings of the building, by Gunnar Jacobson in 1947. The images were later published the magazine *Byggmästaren* (Jacobson 1947).





A participant renovating the bathroom (Edström).



Recent photo of the building (Lindstrand and Vall 2018).

By building their own spaces, the young adults got to design their own apartment interiors. Although earlier plan drawings had been prepared for this, the participants were allowed to make their own changes during the building process. As a result, the flats became quite varied.

People started to move in during the later half of 1998. After finally setting foot into their new dwellings, many participants were so exhausted that they were not motivated to engage themselves further with administrative questions. The young adults remained friends even after that Framtidsloftet was completed. Obviously, the project affected the use of the architecture as the tenants kept socializing with each other on the access balconies. In present day, seven of the initial group are still living in their apartments. To this day, seven members of the initial group are still residing in this building. (Lindstrand and Vall, 2018).

In hindsight, one may be surprised that this project has not been replicated in other locations. After all, the outcome appeared to be a success. Christiania-listen discusses the prospect of building one's own dwelling as it were something that a lot of people want to do, if given the opportunity.

Regarding the article on Framtidsloftet, I was a little disconcerted that only seven tenants of the initial group were able to stay in their apartments. If this mode of building were to be implemented in Christiania, the new houses should accommodate apartments of varying sizes, and aim for participants of various stages in life. As time goes on and families grow and shrink in size, so will the need of spare rooms. This may also be why most of the project members of Framtidsloftet moved out one by one: one-room apartments are easy to outgrow, once young people start families on their own, which expand in size as new children are born. I am sure that many would have liked to stay in the loft if it had been spatially possible. Therefore, I consider it important that the new apartment buildings should be designed to encompass the varying stages of life, to make sure that people can remain in the same building for the next decades. Either by providing apartments of different sizes (which can be swapped by the tenants as time goes by), through flexible room arrangements, or collective modes of living.

In an era of inflated housing prices in the bigger cities, fewer and fewer individuals are able to buy their own dwelling. What used to be a reliable investment for earlier generations, is getting increasingly out of reach. Many young people are already burdened by student debts, which will affect their ability to have another loan. If building one's apartment could result in a drastically decreased price of purchase, this could be a valid alternative to the contemporary housing market. As a side-effect, the act of working on a project together, gives the participants a sense of community and belonging.





One of my many typology models, depicted in two different scales. It is of a multi-storey apartment building.







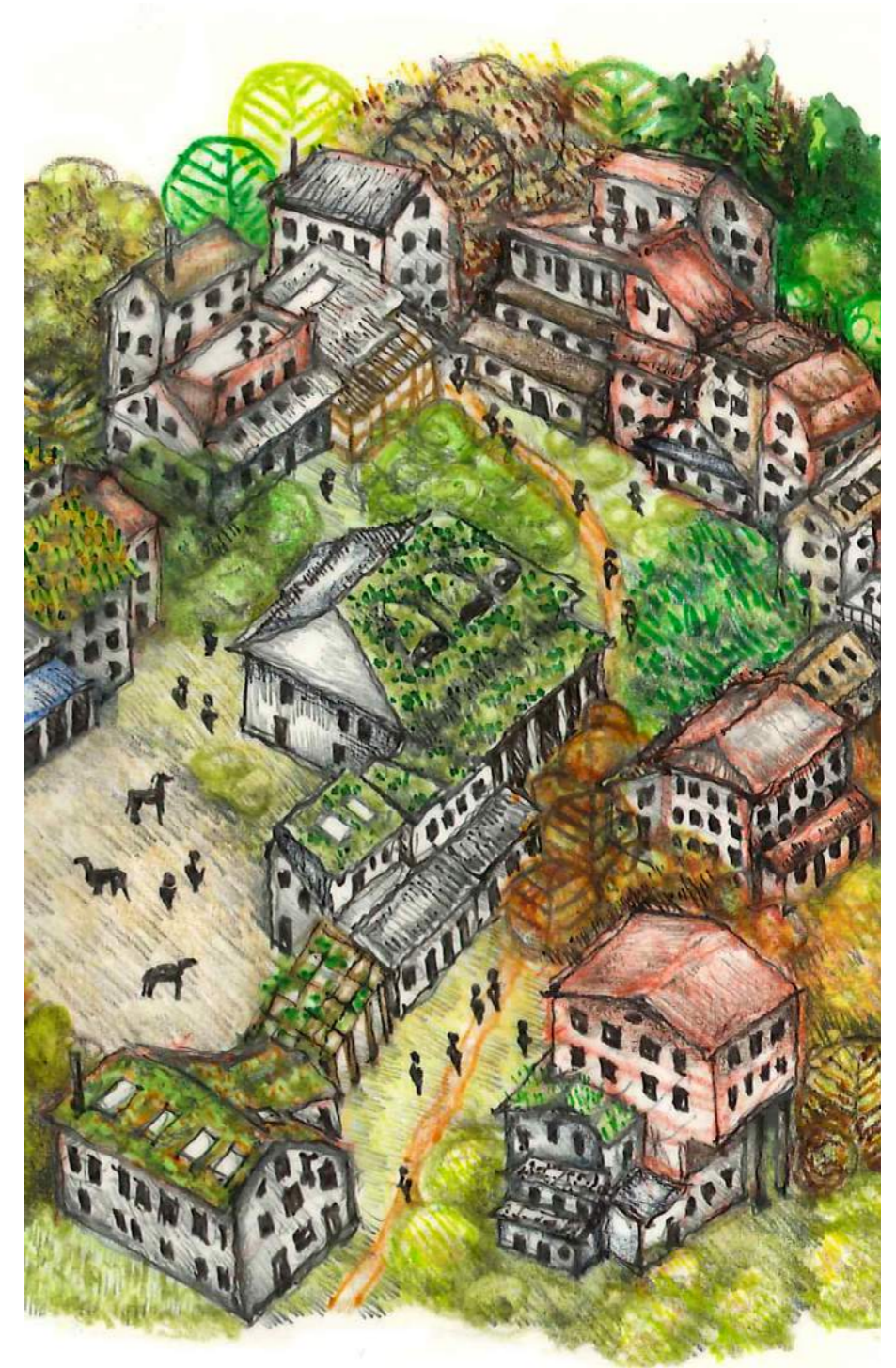
## 6. THE CALL FOR A NEW VERNACULAR - DESCRIPTION OF A DESIGN PROPOSAL

The following chapter describes a set of underlying guidelines, which lead up to the final masterplan. They are divided into two categories: principles for planning, and axioms for building. Although I have attempted to make a clear distinction between the different guides, they tend to converge with each other. The guidelines themselves have been kept relatively vague, to leave some space for creativity and innovation within their boundaries.

As I mentioned earlier, plans do not have to be binding. I want mine to be regarded as tools rather than obligations. The proposed principles and axioms serve as instructions on how to reach certain goals. Based on the previous two chapters, these goals include social sustainability, preservation of nature, and the implementation of place-specific planning practices.

I am fully aware of how contradictory this may sound, to suppose that a community, that celebrates freedom and spontaneity, shall accept a list of rules. But if a bigger group agrees on working for a shared goal, rules are necessary to achieve this. Eventually, it is up to the group itself to find their balance between freedom and result. How much freedom is one willing to give up on, in order to reach a certain goal? Which compromises are worth making? After my theoretical investigations in the history, values and previous plans of the community, I hope that I can propose a certain set of custom-made guidelines that the freetown would be more likely to accept. My set of principles and axioms is composed in a manner that makes it possible to pick some, reject others, and even allowing modification. In other words, one does not have to commit to the whole thing. Eventually, the "rules" take the shape of mere suggestions on what could be done. Some of them may already be implemented by the community.

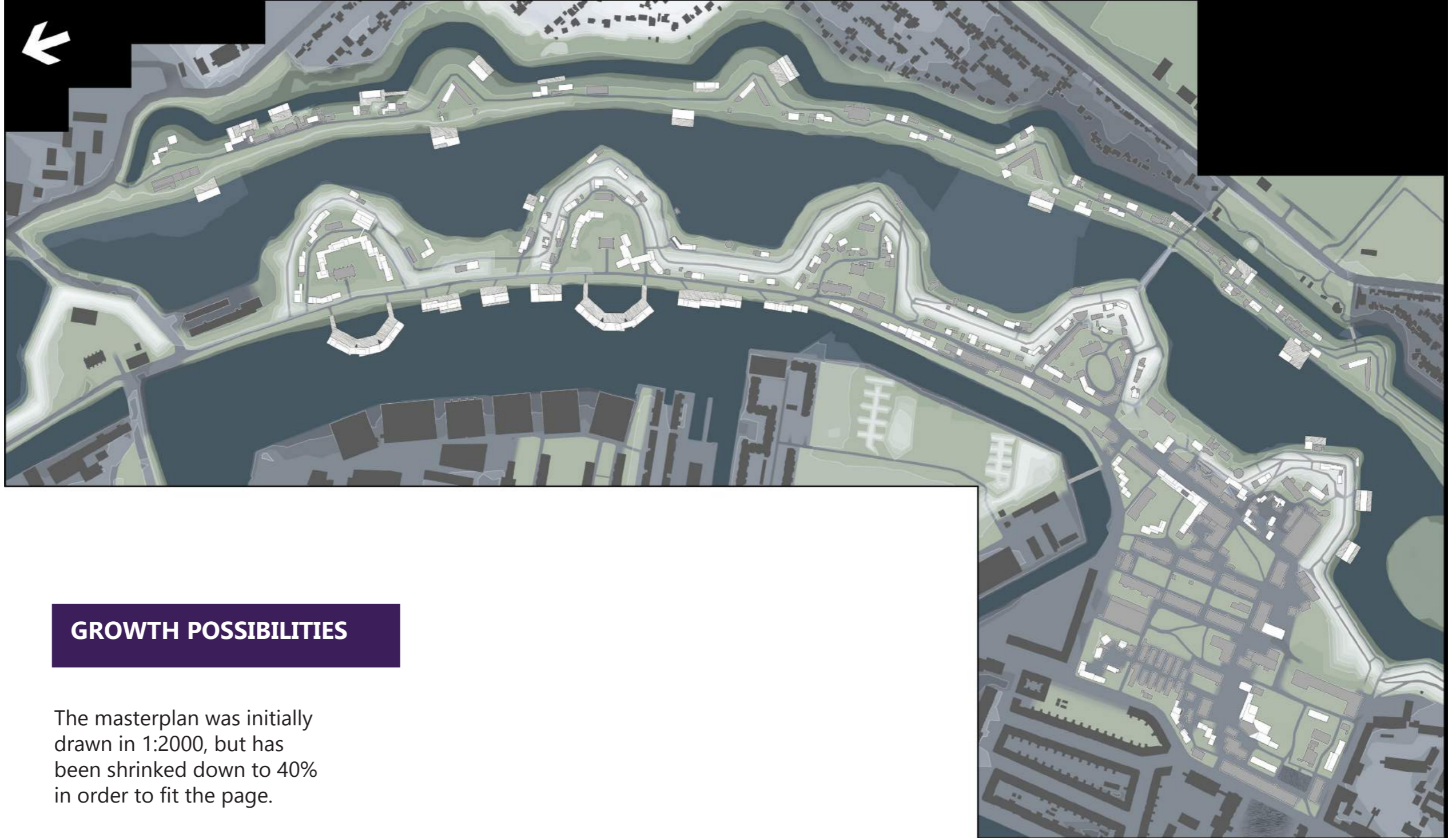
My masterplan is a mere speculation on what the area *could* look like, if these guidelines were to be implemented.







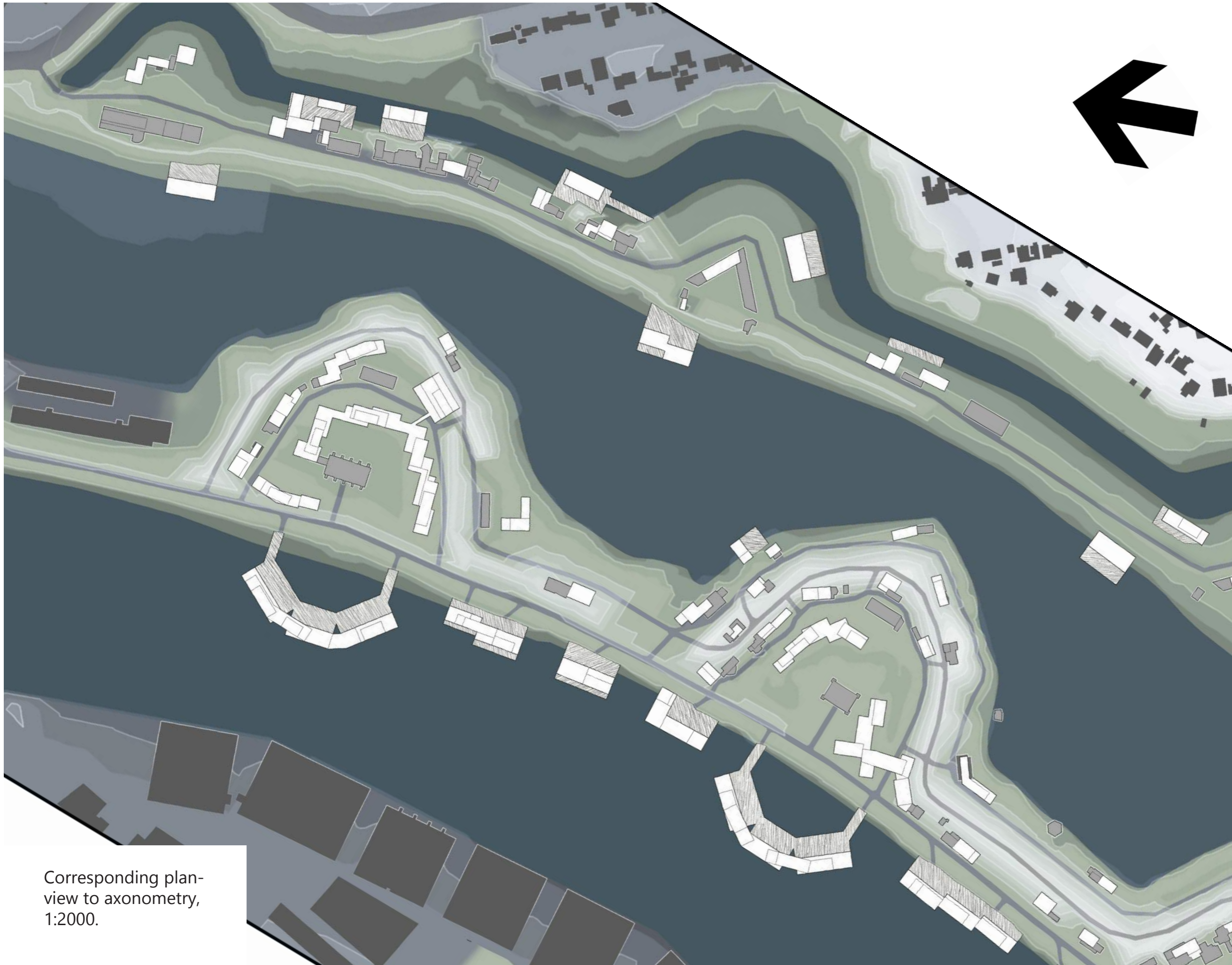




**GROWTH POSSIBILITIES**

The masterplan was initially drawn in 1:2000, but has been shrunk down to 40% in order to fit the page.





Corresponding plan-view to axonometry, 1:2000.

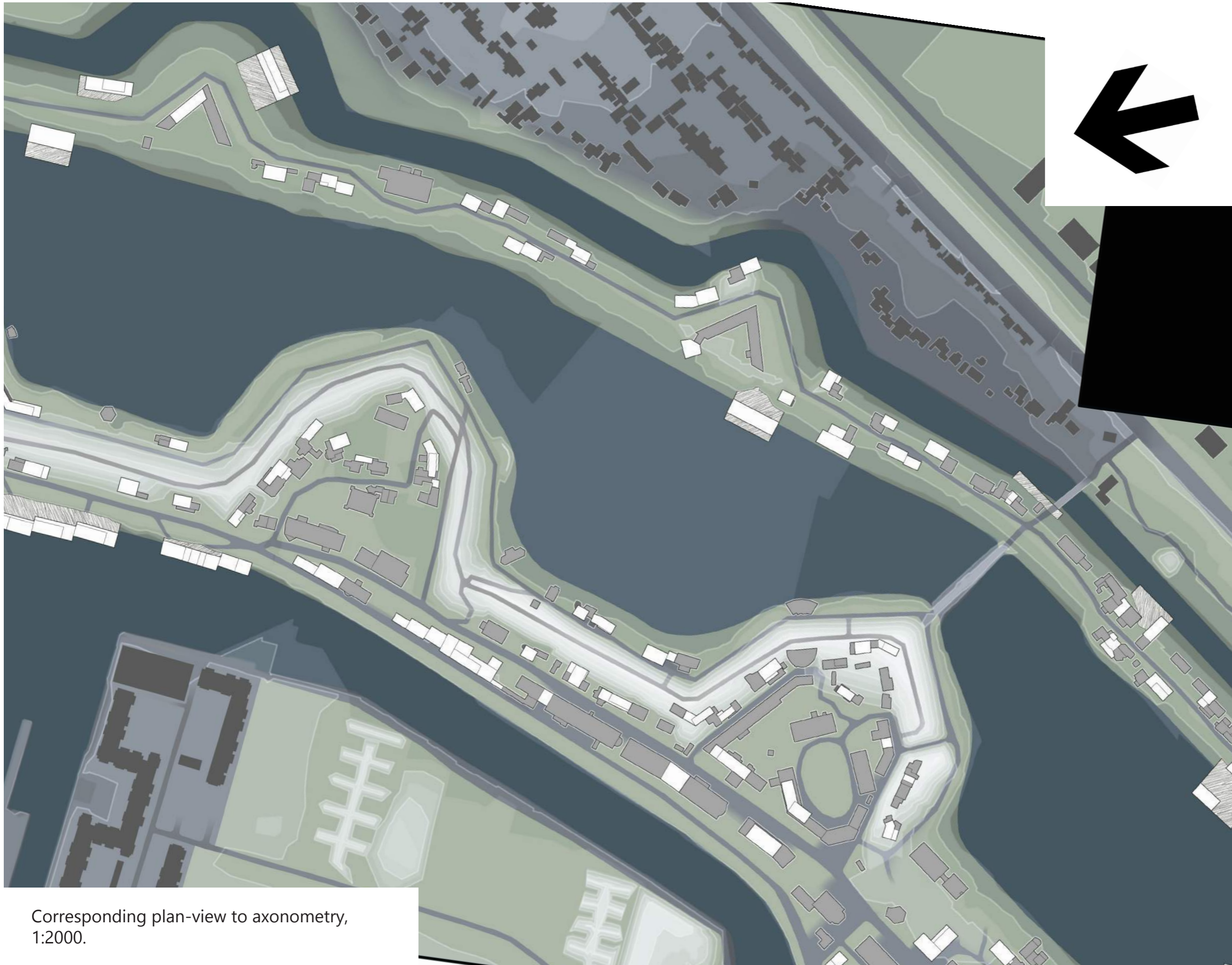




**NORDDYSEN - AXONOMETRIC VIEW**

The suggested buildings are in pink.  
What already exists, is coloured purple.





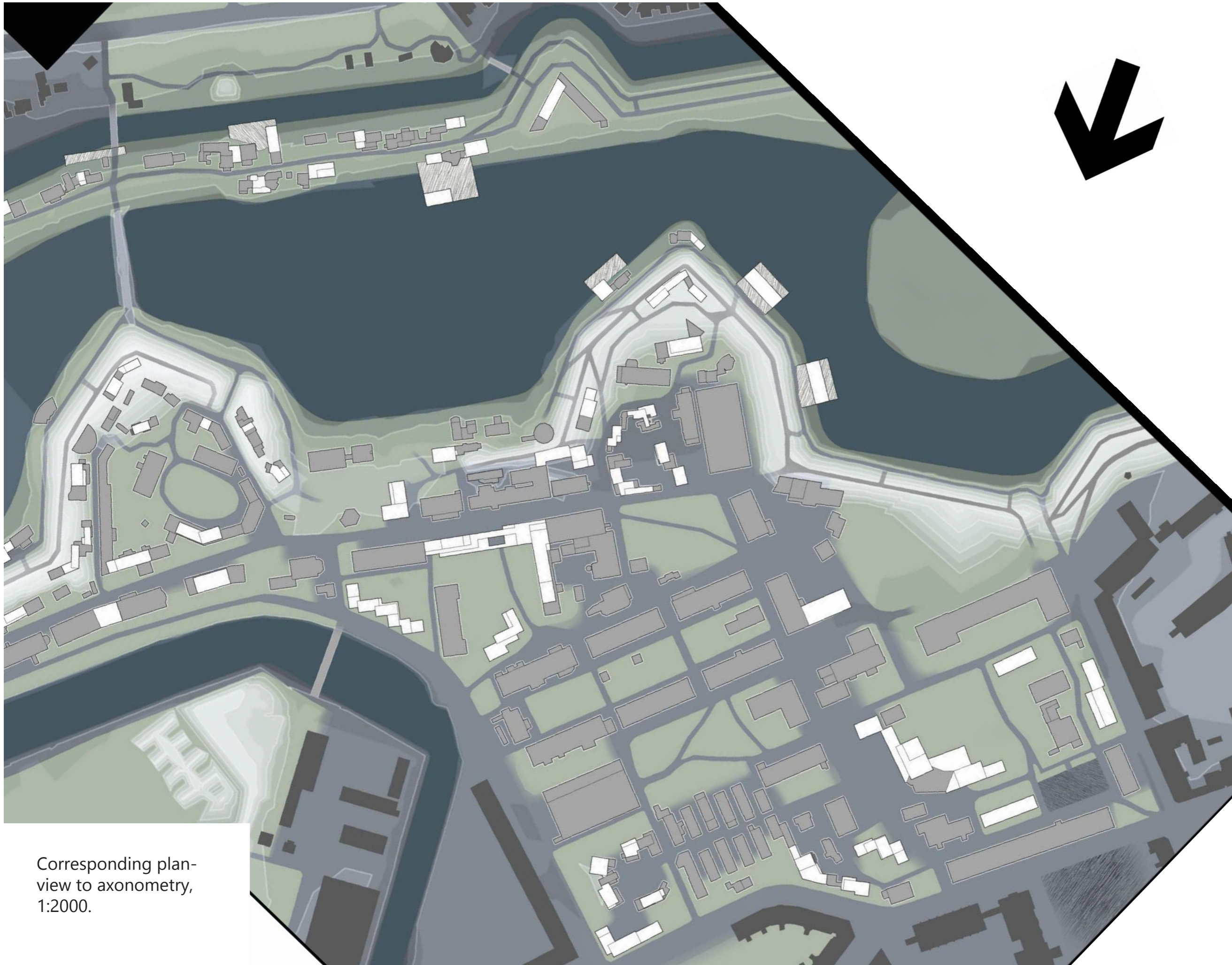
Corresponding plan-view to axonometry,  
1:2000.





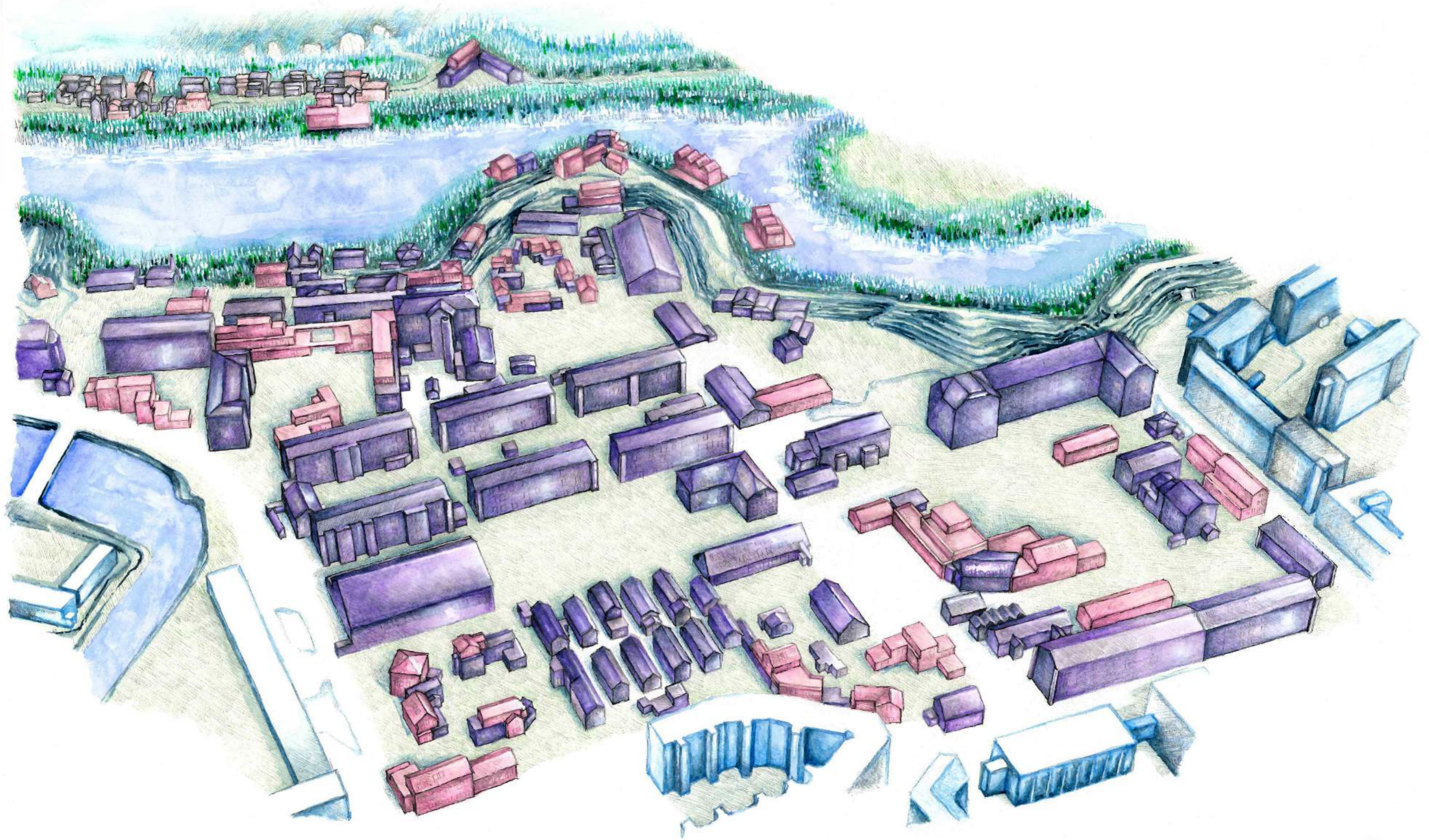
**MIDTDYSSEN - AXONOMETRIC VIEW**





Corresponding plan-view to axonometry, 1:2000.





**DOWNTOWN AREA - AXONOMETRIC VIEW**



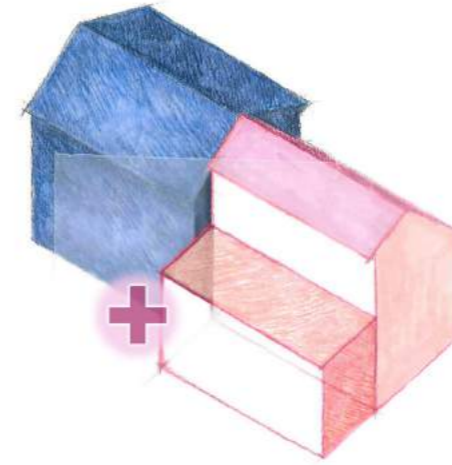
# 6.1 GROWTH PROCESS - PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING

## 6.11 PRINCIPLE OF DENSITY

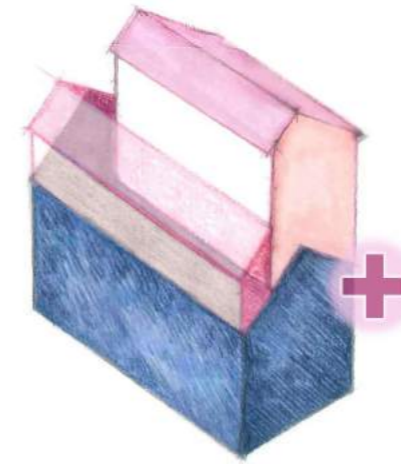
In order to preserve as many green spaces as possible, while simultaneously provide more housing, dense building clusters are preferred over single dwelling units that sprawl all over the place. In other words: aim for density to keep the surrounding nature whole. People will be encouraged to extend houses in height and width, to attach a new dwelling unit to another structure, or to construct rowhouses and multi-storey apartment buildings.

As another benefit, these compact, conjoined housing types make it easier to use energy in a more resourceful manner. For those who are reluctant to alter their building in any significant way, the structures can be discreetly joined by a glasshouse in between. A glasshouse stores heat while providing room for gardening and recreation, which contributes to a denser user space.

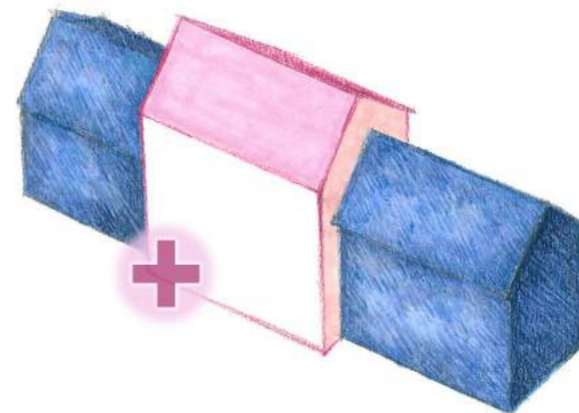
This mode of planning applies to certain areas in particular, such as the eastern side of Christiania, behind the lake (with special regards to Noddyssen and Midtdyssen), and on the edges of the Vold. These spaces are characterized by their greenery, and all the cabins that are sprinkled in between the vegetation. For the future preservation of the local greenery, a chosen committee of community members have to plan in advance with plots should be eligible for future construction work, and which areas should be left untouched. The latter group should be characterized by its significance for plantlife and biodiversity. To ensure that local wildlife will not be disturbed by people and their pets, natural spaces for recreation need to be provided for as well.



**Alternative 1:**  
Extend horizontally.



**Alternative 2:**  
Extend vertically.



**Alternative 3:** Join two (or more) separate houses through a strategically placed structure





**Top illustration:** The new additions are coloured blue.



AVAILABLE SPACE



BUILT SPACE

UNDOMESTICATED NATURE



RECREATIONAL NATURE

ANIMAL- AND PLANT LIFE

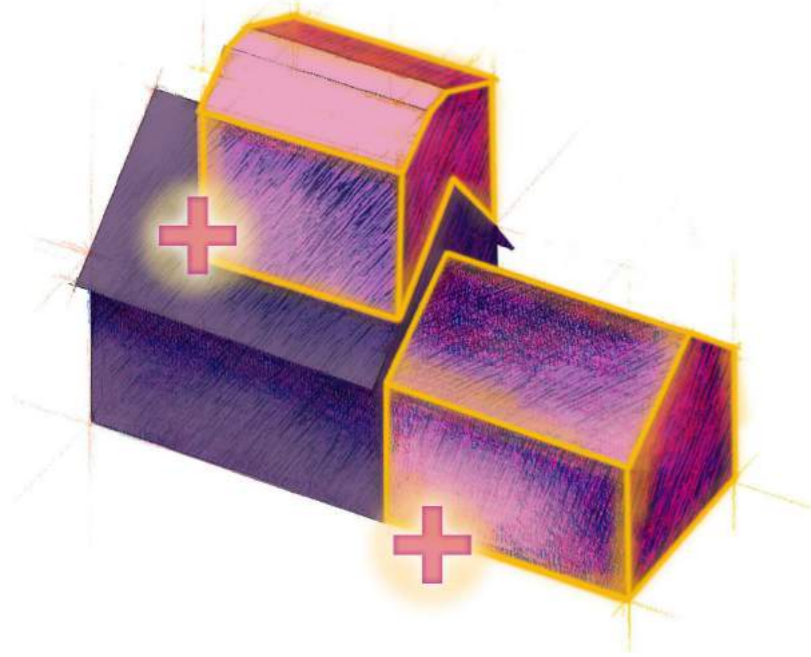




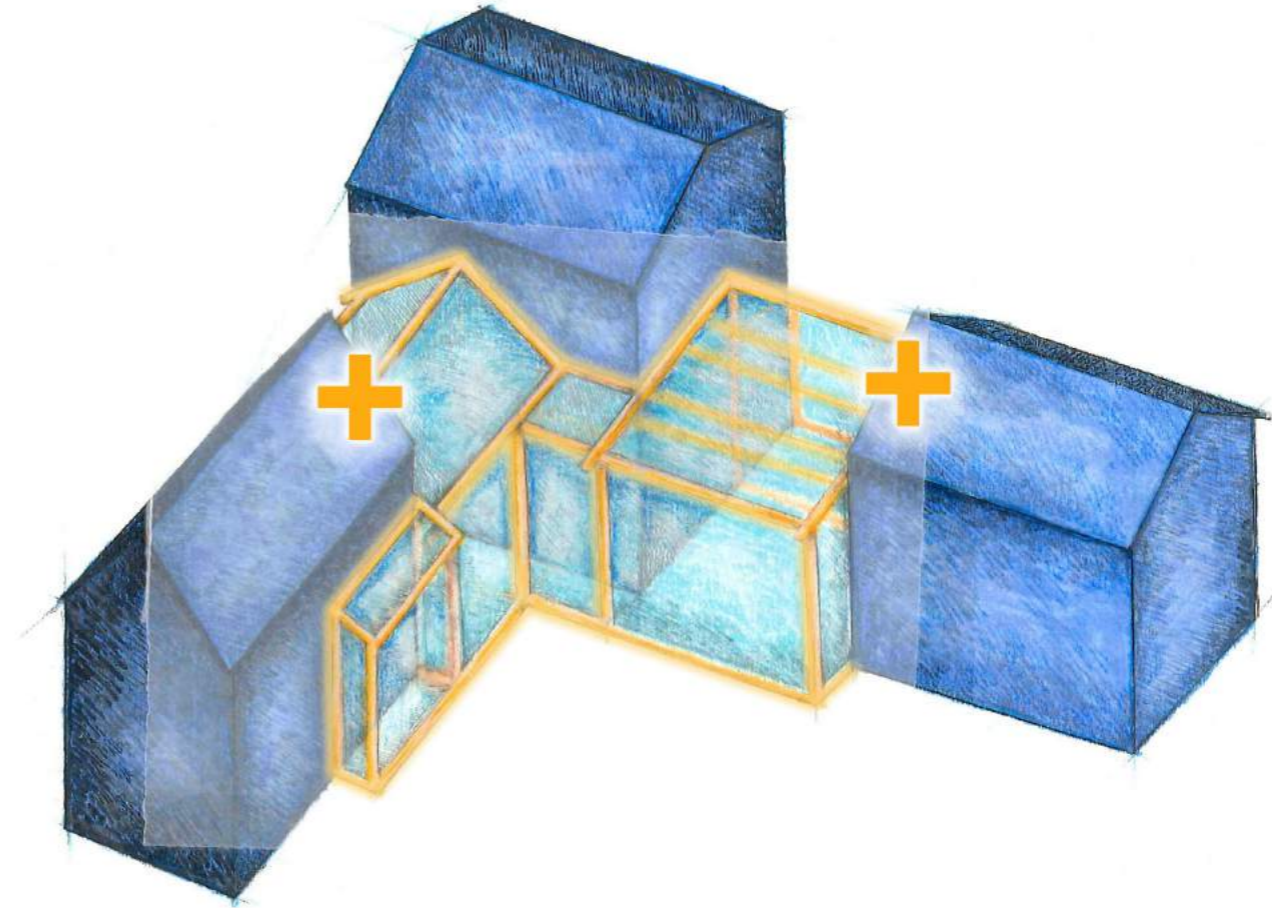


A combination of built space and nature, recreation and plant-life.

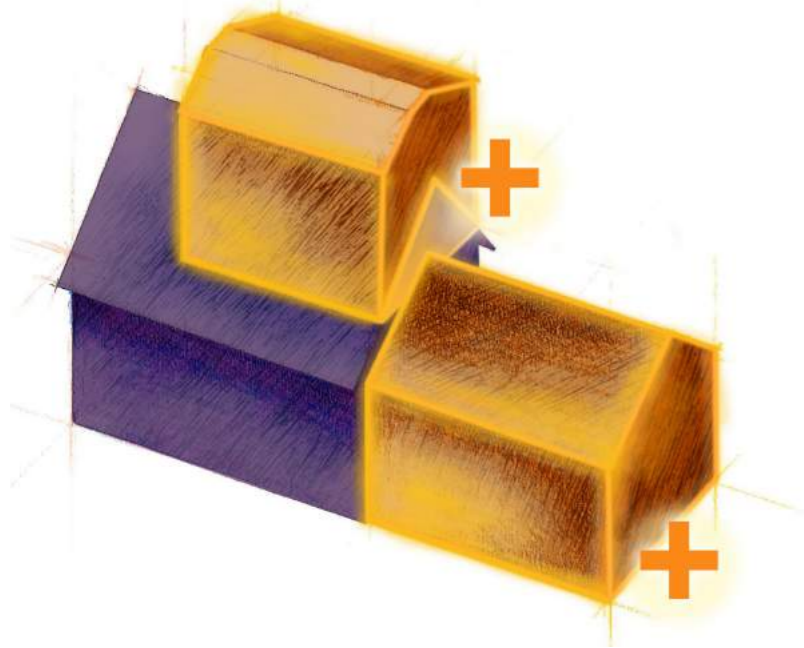




Spatial extension of house.



Conjoining glasshouse inbetween the houses.



New housing units added to an existing one.



Reference image  
of a red cabin with  
a sedum roof,  
located in Christiania  
(Lamovsek 2015).



A sketch on how  
this house could  
be expanded, in  
accordance to the  
illustrations in the  
previous page.







## 6.12 THE INVOLVEMENT OF REFSHALEVEJ

Although it is not obvious, the thin strip of Refshalevej does not belong to Christiania. This is why it is given a principle of its own. Due to its ownership of the area, the municipality of Copenhagen will be entrusted with the construction and financing of these structures, if they wish to build there. The Copenhagen Municipal Plan 2015 has promised to create more public housing, rentable units, dwellings for students, for the disabled and for the elderly. This group of people could be interested in interacting with Christianitters, as well as sharing recreational space with them, and to be integrated into the narrative. If it is possible to build on Refshalevej as intended, this would in my opinion be the perfect target group. Eventually, elderly members of Christiania could move into those care facilities to get adequate care, while still being a part of the freetown. It would be a win-win situation.

Another potential group of tenants, could be expats who have found work in Copenhagen, yet are hesitant to buy their own house as their stay is only temporary. With the aim for globalization, Copenhagen will see more of this population group within the next ten years. As mentioned, these people need apartments to rent.

If every apartment building along Refshalevej has a percentage of housing earmarked for each group mentioned, it would become a very diverse area.

**Plan-view of Refshalevej:** the proposed buildings, along the road, are marked out in pink.

The image was initially drawn in 1:1000, but has been shrunk down to 40 % of its size in order to fit the spread.







## 6.13 PRINCIPLE OF OCCUPANCY

All new dwelling and business locales have to be rentable units. Every building on site has to remain as a rental. No private individual or organization shall own space, nor shall this area be a subject to financial speculation.

The legal ownership over the area shall remain in the hands of the community, but only to ensure that it remains open to the public. This seemingly contradictory principle is already prevailing in Christiania, but I wish to mention it again due to its importance. As usual, the community as a whole will act as a landlord. Collected rent payments are already used to finance the continued maintenance of the area, and will continue to do so.

The housing units in Refshalevej should be rentals too, to adapt to the means of its target group.

As any inhabitant of Christiania forfeits the possibility for private house ownership (and the possibility of keeping a nest-egg in the shape of real estate), the community needs to offer housing and infrastructure for all stages of life. Not only dwellings, but also schools, small healthcare facilities,

recreational outlets etc. It should be possible to spend an entire lifetime in the freetown, especially because the tenants spend a lot of their time and efforts into shaping this community. If town members cannot boast with home ownership, they do at least get the opportunity to create their own micro society without having to make their way through bureaucracy and office hierarchies, choosing certain career paths, becoming politically active, or civic engagement. While these are legitimate ways of trying to make a change, some individuals might be interested in taking it a step further, or exploring other means altogether. For these people, the christianian method of community building seems like a good alternative. In practice, this can take many shapes; whether it is through building a house, organize weekly meetings, manage a certain task group or improving the local infrastructure. Christiania becomes the alternative housing association in which people invest their time and efforts, instead of money.

For many people in Copenhagen, buying your own apartment will result in staggering loans that will take decades to pay off, especially in the inner city. Not everyone wants to do this, but any other options are difficult to come by.







## 6.14 PRINCIPLE OF PHASING

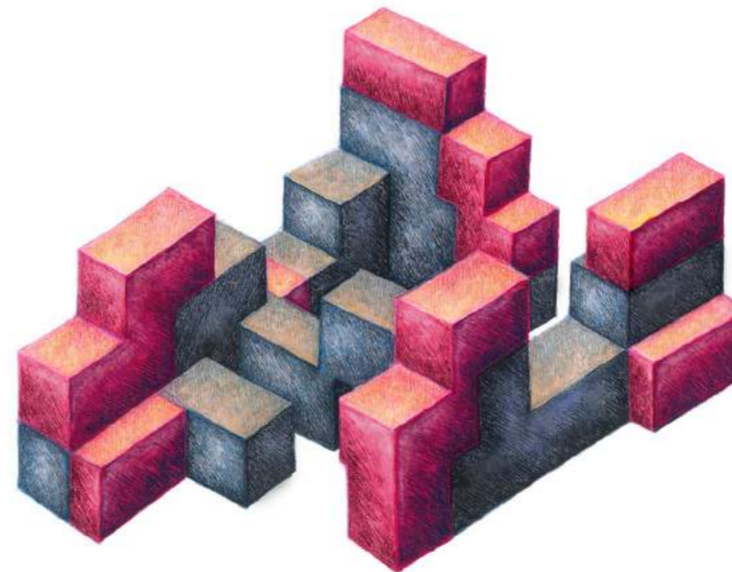
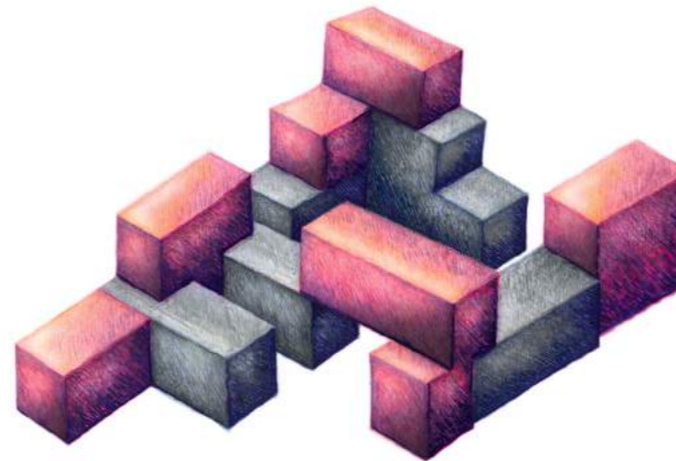
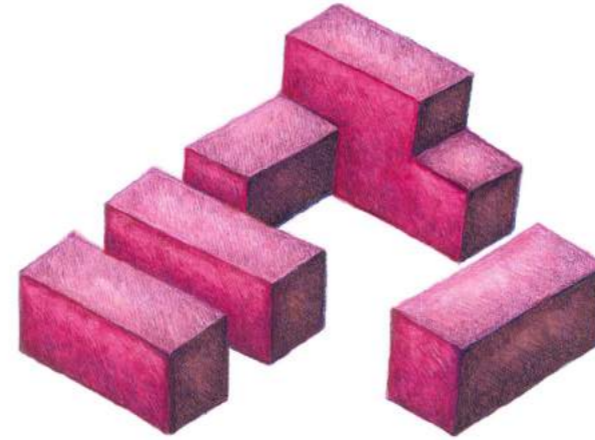
With good planning decisions, the amount of housing could double, if not more. A growing number of inhabitants call for more social spaces, amenities, school- and daycare facilities, and other extensions in infrastructure. These supplements need to be added in relation to the increase in dwelling units. Certain spaces need to be earmarked early on, because some features require greater amounts of ground area than others. Examples of such are schools, daycare facilities and recreational space. Non-commercial social venues and meeting places need to remain available for dwellers and visitors alike, in order to prevent gentrification.

Ground areas can be utilized for various purposes. If plans regarding these spaces happen to be cancelled, it will be easy to assign them a new function.

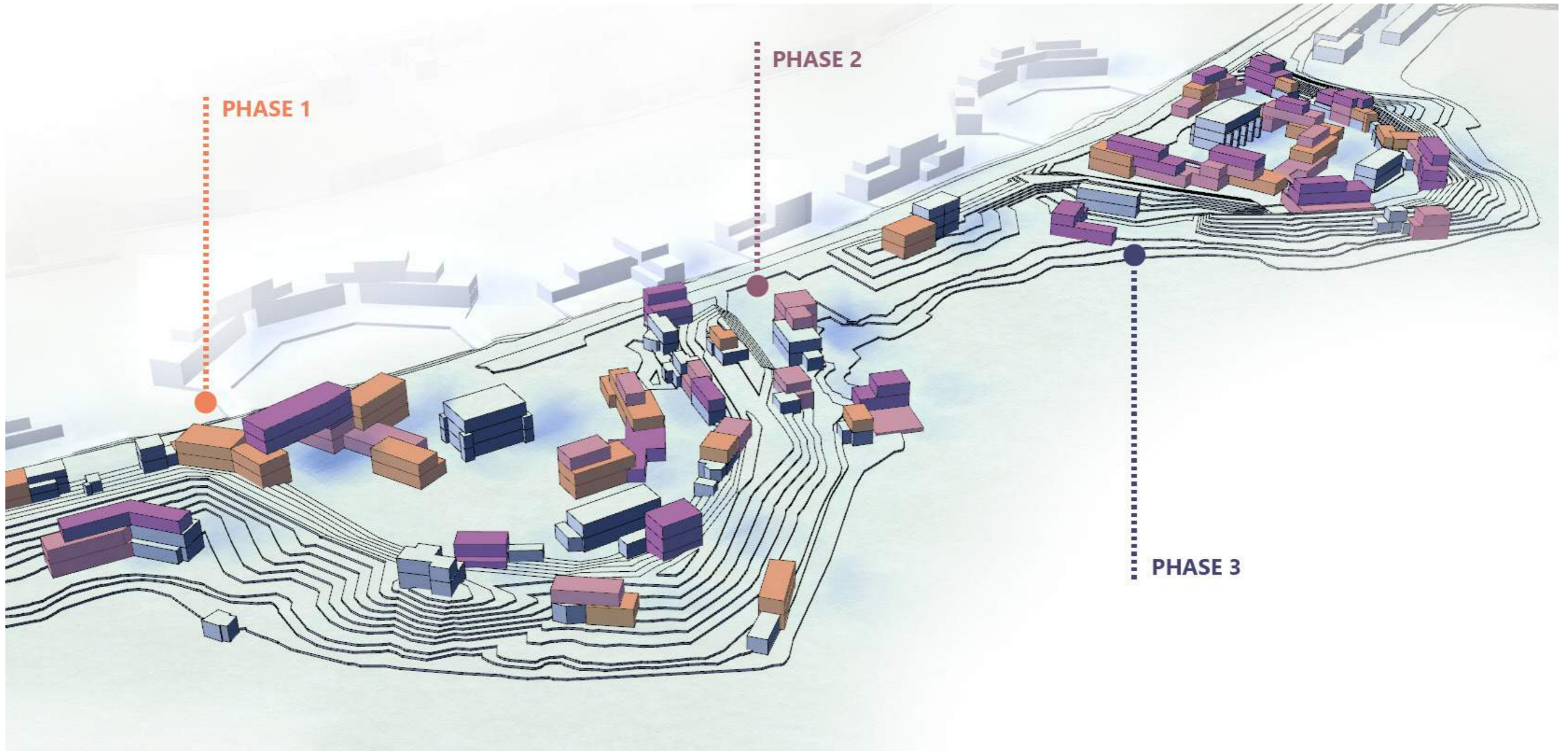
Building projects that involve non-professionals as creators of their own spaces, are going to take longer than if done by skilled construction workers. The development of new houses, regardless of size, can start as soon as willing participants are found. Its pace and continuation will depend on the resulting team and their abilities. Estimating the approximate duration of these projects, is difficult. Extensive building projects, with *Framtidsloftet* as role model, have rarely been tried out in Scandinavia, which makes it hard for me to estimate a timespan. The reference project itself, went on for two years; a number that I will settle with, in lack of other data.

Single dwelling units, that are added to other, existing houses, will be entirely up to the tenants themselves and their abilities. This mainly applies to the districts of Norddysen, Midtdysen, and around the Vold, in which most of these houses are located. The phasing of these areas, should be dated in *the least amount of years required* for each stage to be completed, as opposed to a completion deadline.

Professionals such as architects, engineers and craftsmen can be employed to help with the construction, but should not dominate the entire project. If the development of Refshalevej starts early, this could be a great networking opportunity, to find suitable partners for more advanced building projects in Christiania.

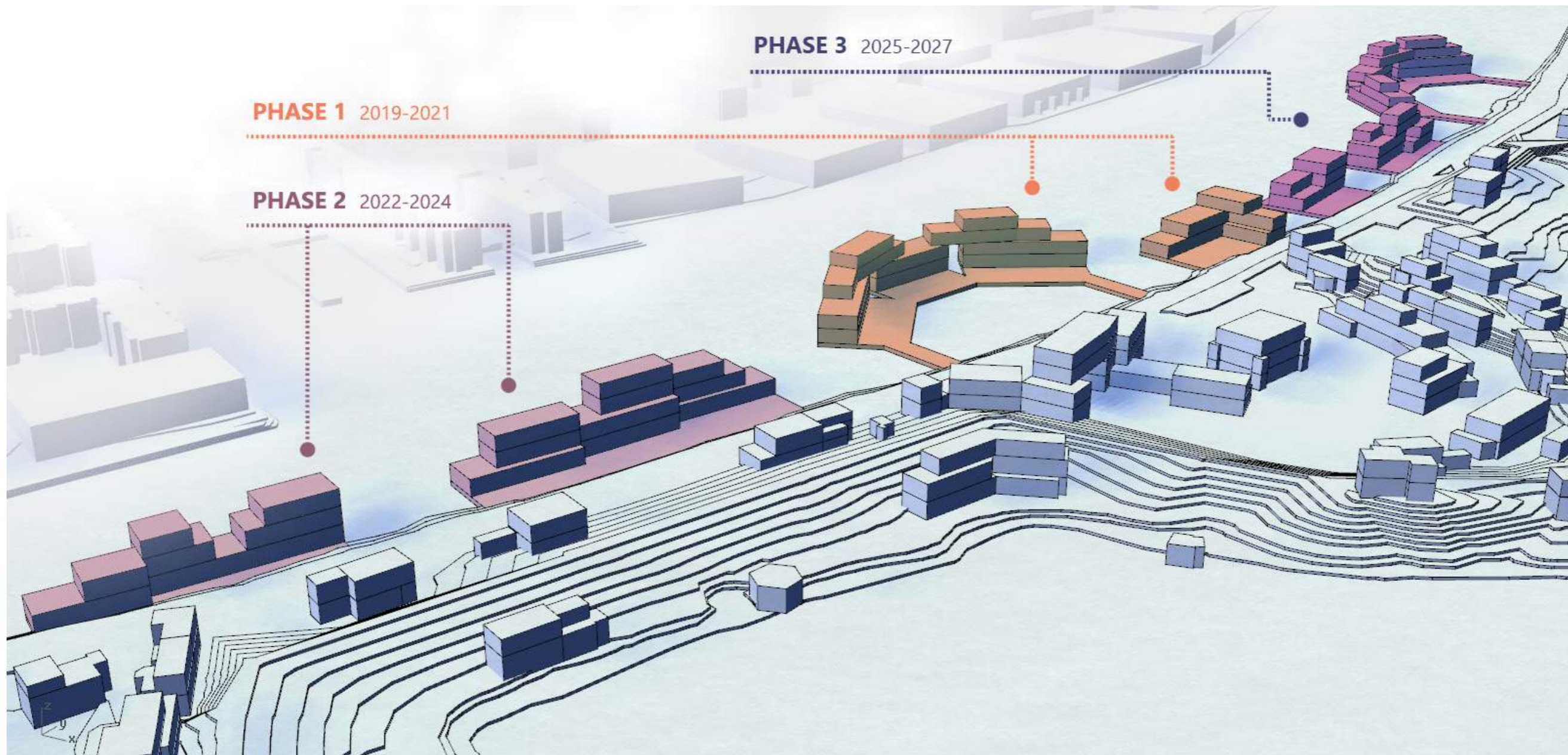






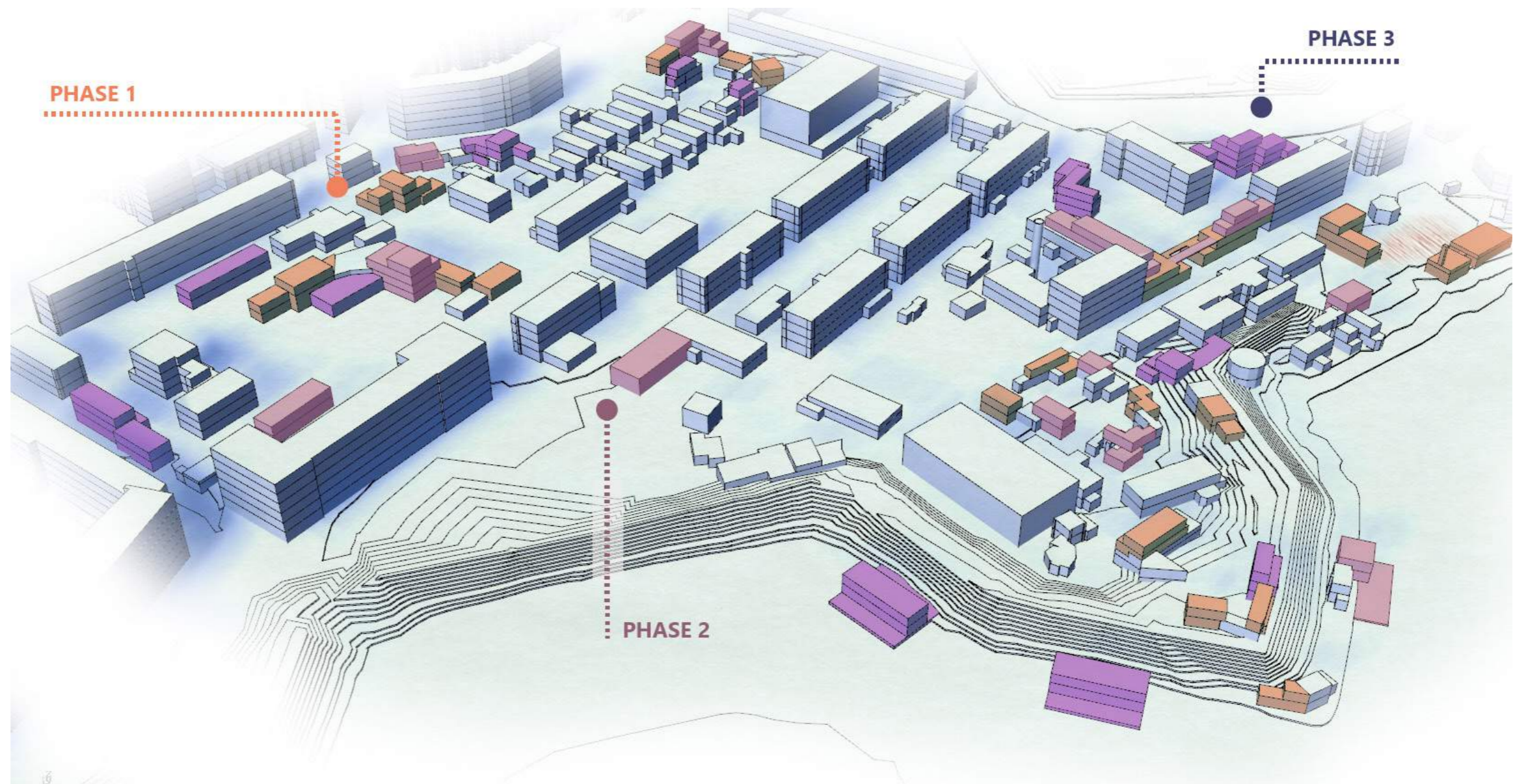
Each phase needs **at least** five years to reach completion.





Different rules apply for Refshalevej.





Each phase needs **at least** five years to reach completion. The structures may be fewer in number, but have to be in tune with the development of the whole area.



## 6.15 REGARDING THE CITY CENTRE

No greater changes are required to bring some spatial order to the downtown area of Christiania. In my plans, relatively few buildings have been added to the centre, if compared to the rest of the freetown. Instead, I have been preoccupied with the flow of the area, and how to improve it. So far, I have managed to do this through establishing road hierarchies, to either accentuate or obscure certain paths, and to point out building entrances, as subtle means to govern the flow.

In order to maintain a good relationship with tourists, the boundaries between public and private need to be more clear. Even if Christiania tries to make a point of being open to all, some areas need to be more private, for the well-being of the inhabitants. This includes the privacy of child care facilities and other peoples homes. One does not have to build walls; there are less imposing ways to achieve this. For example, concealing certain roads to make them less attractive for bypassers, and strategically planted greenery that helps to lead the flow into a certain direction. Improved road hierarchies are also needed to direct a flow in a discrete manner. Privacy for dwellers can be maintained by either reserving the ground floors for public use, or to plant small hedges around the house, to create a distance between the street and the window. Those "green embellishments" do not have to be higher than one metre. Instead, they can be planted about 250 centimetres away from the wall, to keep bypassers on a healthy distance.

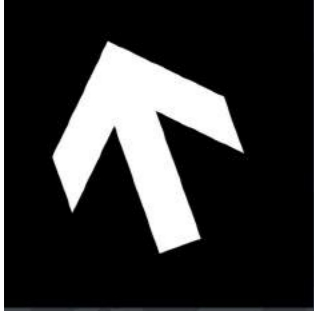
For the sake of priorities, I am rather skeptical towards the idea of adding a hostel. Additional guest rooms to accomodate performers and community friends, are the only exception. While tourism offers an additional source of income, the primary purpose of Christiania is of a norm-defying community in which people live and carry on with their daily lives, not a tourist hotspot. Therefore, the needs of the inhabitants should always have priority over the wants and wishes of the tourists. This is why I would rather see more dwellings and recreational spaces, than a hostel. Christiania does only have that much space to expand on.

Another suggestion to make the tourism less intrusive, is to keep a regularly updated picture blog in which inhabitants posts their own images of the freetown, as an alternative for the tourist who wishes to memorize every nook and cranny with their camera. Christiania already has a small collection of pictures on their website, but it could be expanded and made easier to find. The address to the blog will be made available through a QR-code (and link) printed on different corners on the freetown, so people can access them through their smartphone within seconds. Collections of printed images can also be sold among the other souvenirs, for those who prefer this mode of imagery. By composing their own images, Christianitters get more power over their own narrative, as images make a potent element of storytelling. While Pusher street is the only zone with clear restrictions on photography, it can be mind-grating for community members to have tourists constantly making photos of their backyard.

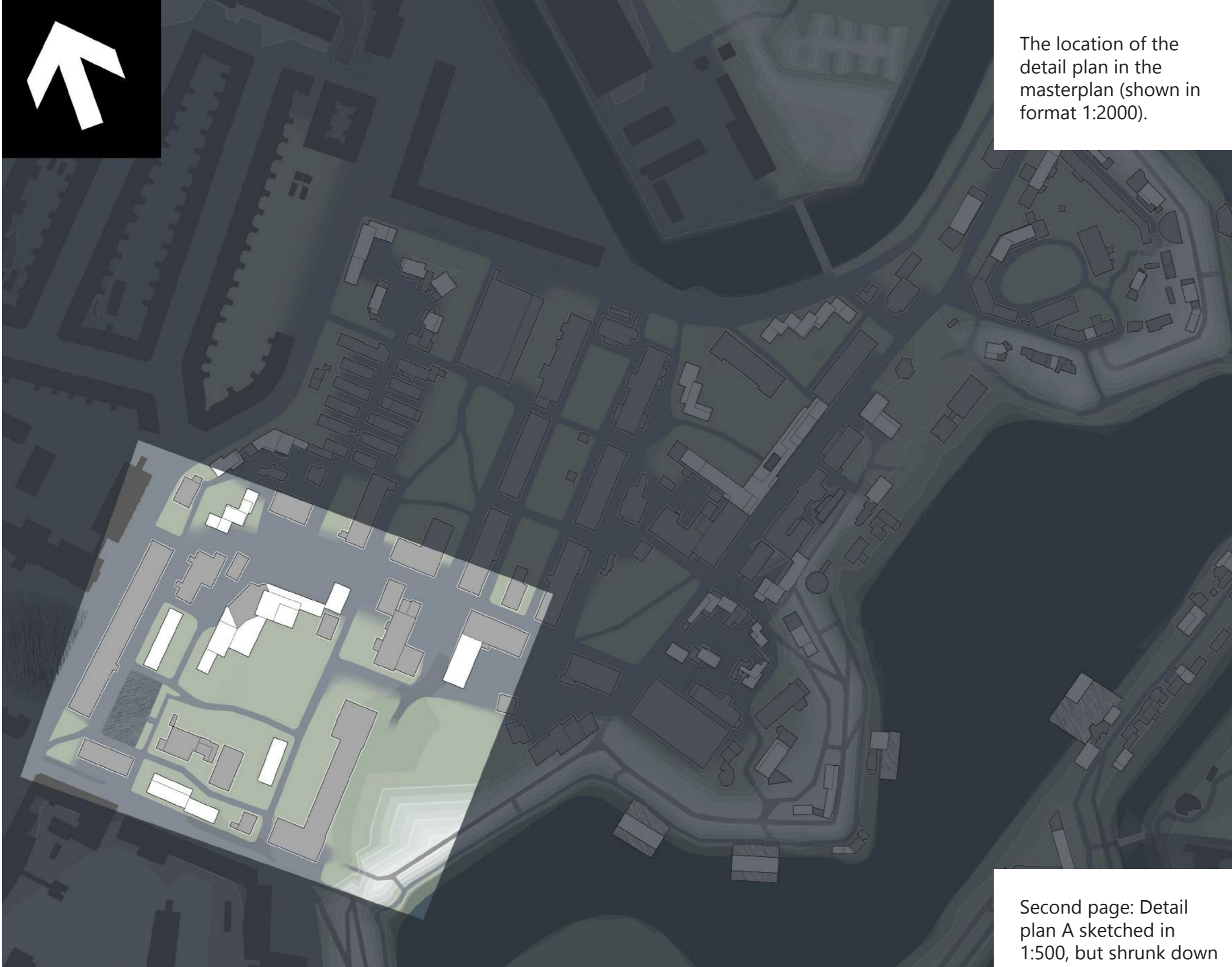








The location of the detail plan in the masterplan (shown in format 1:2000).



Second page: Detail plan A sketched in 1:500, but shrunk down to 70% of its size.









**Section A:A for detail plan A:**

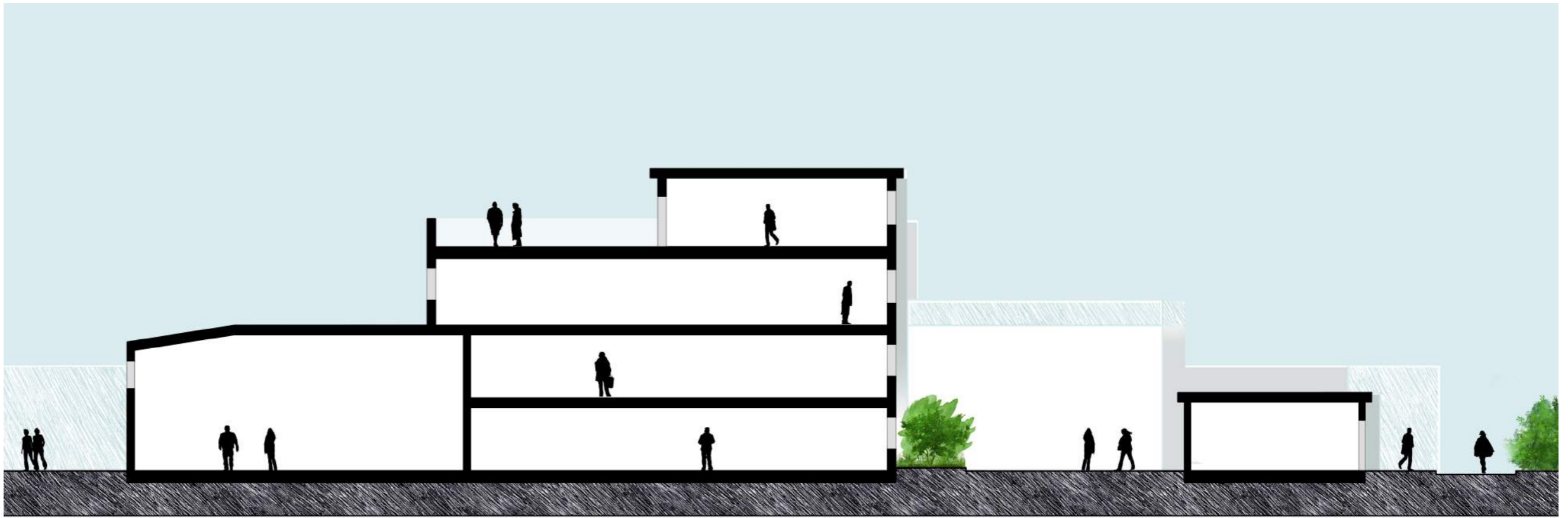
The image has been drawn in scale 1:200, but has been scaled down to a third of its initial size.

**Opposite page:** Snippets of section A:A, shown in their initial scale 1:200.

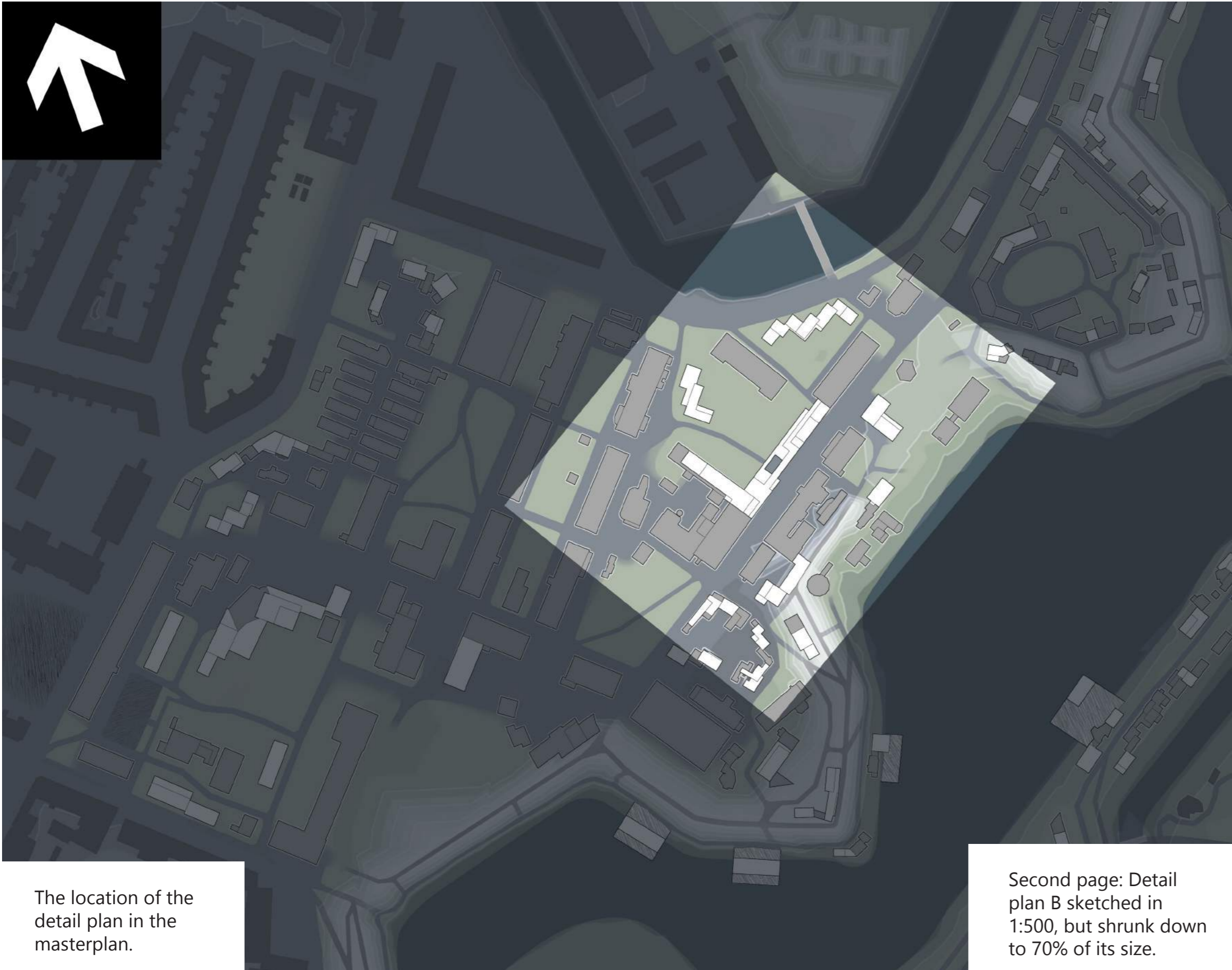
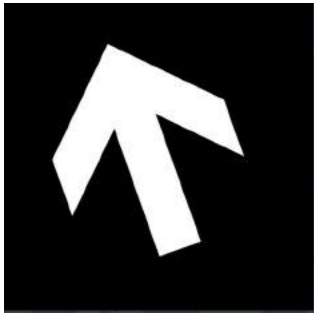
**Top section:** I imagine that the local skateboard hall (building with high, slanted roof) can be expanded and connected to other buildings (additional view in detail plan).

**Bottom section:** A large hall (building to the right) offers a very flexible space that can be utilized for gatherings, recreational activities, workshops, education etc. Its connection to a courtyard (right) and down town street life (left) will work as a convenient addition, especially during warmer days.









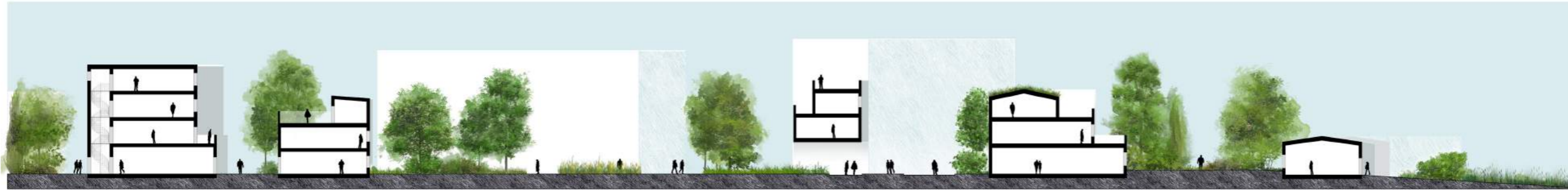
The location of the detail plan in the masterplan.

Second page: Detail plan B sketched in 1:500, but shrunk down to 70% of its size.









**Section B:B for detail plan B:** The image has been drawn in scale 1:200, but has been scaled down to a third of its initial size.

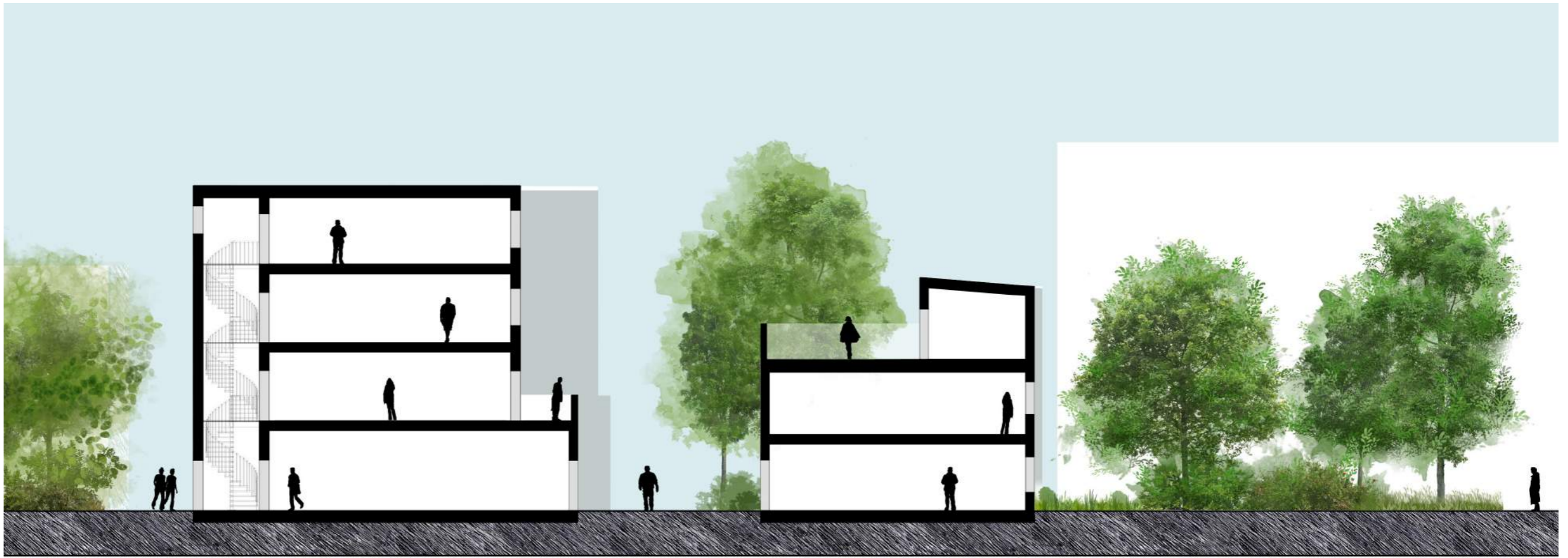
**Opposite page:** Snippets of section B:B, shown in their initial scale 1:200.

**Top section:** A small, local health care centre on the ground floor, with connections to the hospitals and pharmacies of Copenhagen. The plan(s) of the previous spread show that the buildings are close to a road for car traffic, which would be convenient for eventual ambulances and other transportation vehicles.

Green spaces, inbetween the buildings, will be good for public use, pets, gardening and other outdoor activities.

**Bottom section:** In present days, the daycare facilities are located elsewhere in the area. By getting relocated to another structure shown in the section, and covered by greenery, there will be more space and privacy for the children. Compare with the detail plan, which displays green barriers and boundaries.











## 6.16 PRINCIPLE OF FINANCING

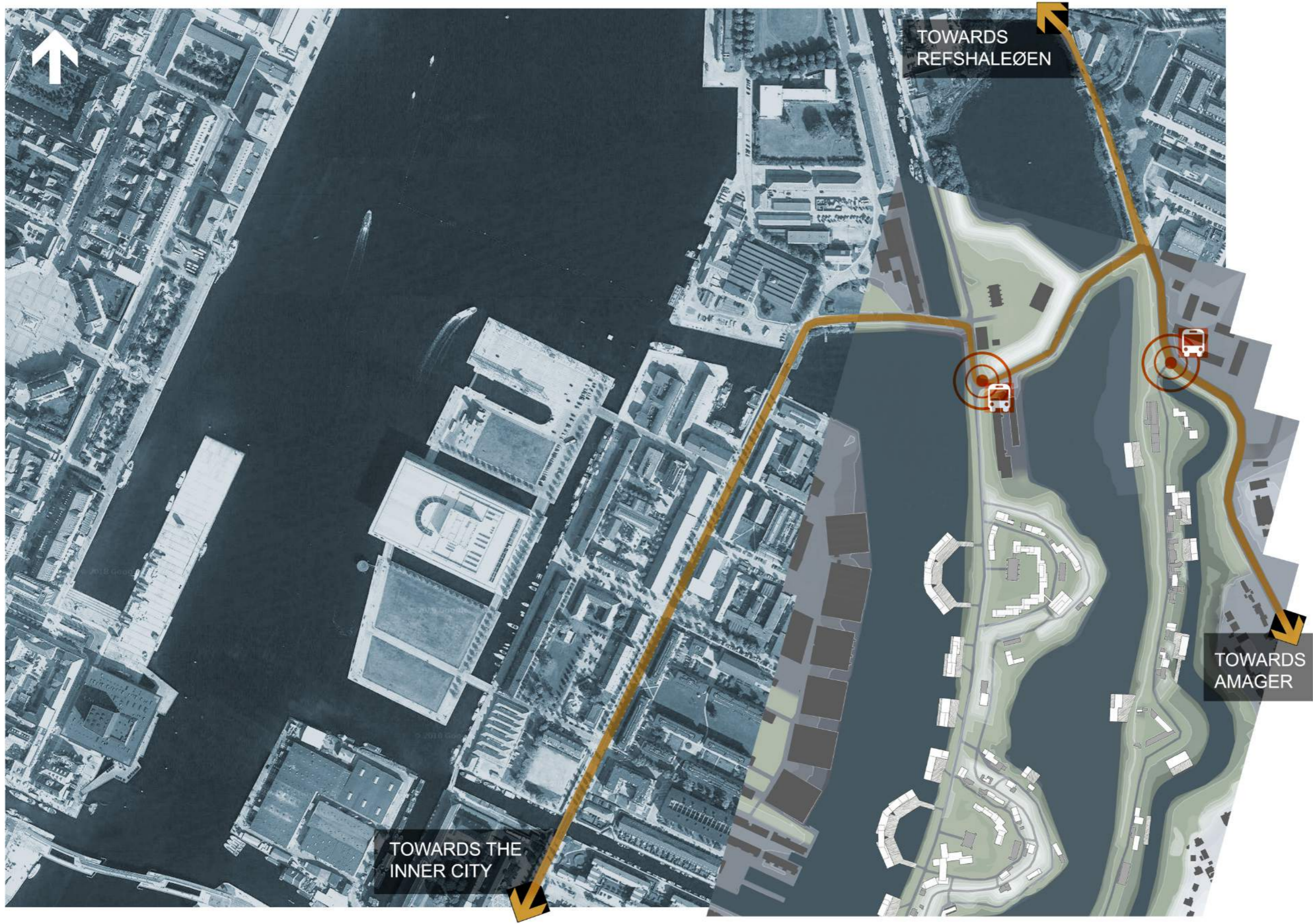
So far, the common purse (rent payments, profits made by local businesses, individual contributions) make up for a great part of the available resources. According to the Christiania Guide, it pays for the upkeep of local infrastructure, and for the general maintenance of the area. While the spatial development will increase the expenses, it will also result in additional rent payments from new inhabitants and businesses. Nevertheless, the currently available resources will have an effect on the growth rate: the more you have at hand, the more projects you can afford. Eventually, there is nothing wrong with taking small but steady steps, if that is the most compatible with the freetown's finances. It makes space for negotiation and constructive discussion, which goes well with a democratic management style. After all, the inner workings of the freetown are based on constant negotiation and public participation, on the expense of speed. Christiania in itself is a slow process; a sequence of small steps with one small investment at a time, will probably work better than a large makeover done in one sitting.

Understandably, the development along Refshalevej will be undertaken and funded by the municipality itself, as this turf does not belong to Christiania. While the municipality of Copenhagen has good reasons to invest in the freetown due to its contribution to the cityscape, it really is a double-edged sword. As noted in the previous chapter, the community has already declined municipal funding in the past, due to the perceived expectations that came

with it, along with its aim to be self-sufficient. Instead, tax reductions for local businesses have been preferred, as a means to gather funds for more building projects. So far, helpful allies have been advised to buy the Folkeaktie. I can see why the community prefers these donations, as the purchaser is indirectly agreeing on being anonymous, which removes all expectations that may come with the gifted money. If the municipality wishes to support Christiania financially, it is best done by doing it in relation to the development of Refshalevej. Apart from dwellings, the structures are also intended to contain utile and social functions, to ensure that the new inhabitants will not strain the infrastructure of Christiania (although tenants from both areas should be free to use each others spaces mutually). These facilities could either be located in Refshalevej or in other areas directly bordering to Christiania.

What else needs to be discussed, is the individual house building and its focus on density. If existing houses are to be expanded, it will inevitably involve both households: the new neighbours and the initial tenants. It can be difficult to find that magic circumstance in which both families have the right amount of time and resources to embark on such a project. Stipends for house building could solve this to some extent. Apart from the local building office *Christianias Byggekontor*, other sponsors may be investigated. If Christiania, taken as a whole, is reluctant to outside interventions, I wonder if private households would be more willing to accept it.





Suggestion for two new bus-stops to the area.

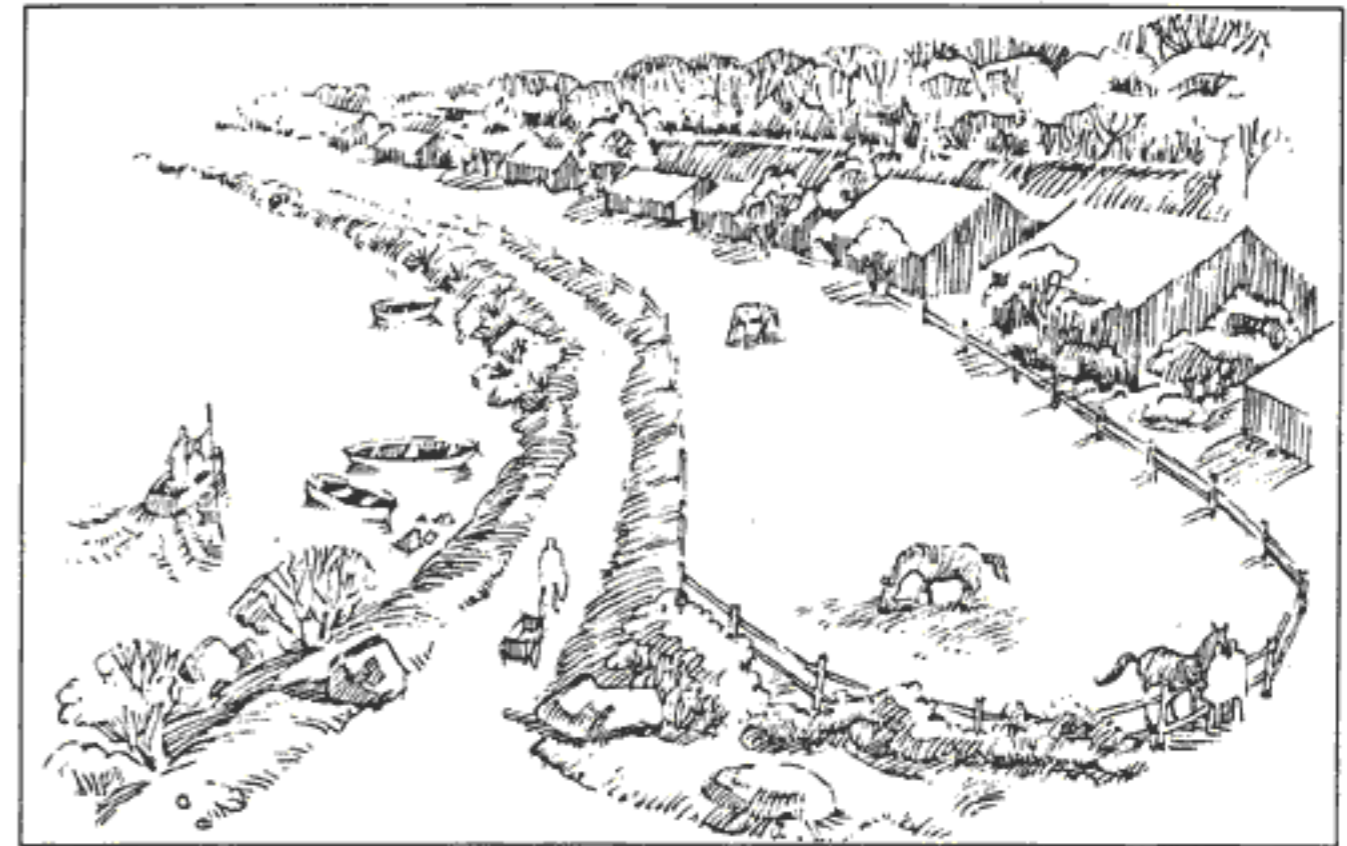


## 6.17 PRINCIPLE OF WHEELS

To keep planning for less car use, the next step would be to gradually reduce the amount of parking space for cars. Although Christiania is a car-free zone already, there are a number of areas on the edges of the freetown, that are used for parking. In recent years, the municipality of Copenhagen has made some serious efforts to reduce the amount of car traffic in the city. Nowadays, one does not need to own a private vehicle in order to travel within Copenhagen. To compensate for a decrease in parking space, another bus stop could be added in the northern end of Christiania, towards the end of Refshalevej.

It is about time to expand the no-car policy to Refshalevej, with carriers and ambulances as the only exceptions. Judging by my observations from my site inspections, the road needs to be paved anew. When improving the roads, wheelchairs and strollers need to be considered along with bicycles. In practice, this means that cobblestone paving should be avoided in the future.

Even bicyclists need to adhere to speed limitations.



*Refshalevej as a green recreational area instead of a street with busy traffic*



**Top:** Illustration of Refshalevej, re-imagined as a car-free zone (Green plan 1991).

**Bottom:** Image of a standard radar sign, which is commonly used for cars (Dwernertl). Will bicycles need this too?



## 6.2 AXIOMS TO BUILD BY

### 6.21 AXIOM OF LOCATION

For the construction of smaller structures, one gets to choose from a variety of ground plots to build on. However, for the continued preservation of nature and wildlife, valuable green spaces should have a higher standing than the desire of building ones house at a certain spot. Additional rules for construction gain in significance if they serve to protect the environment. A majority of the spaces chosen for construction, should be those that are already populated or build on since previously, adhering to the principle for density.

Each plot has fixed dimensions and limitations in height, to make sure that enough daylight reaches the adjacent structures. It is also vital to communicate with the inhabitants of the neighbouring cabins, if their housing unit will be conjoined with the new structure.

**Image:** Aerial view of fields makes a good allusion to the act of dividing an area into different plots (Hintsä 2004).





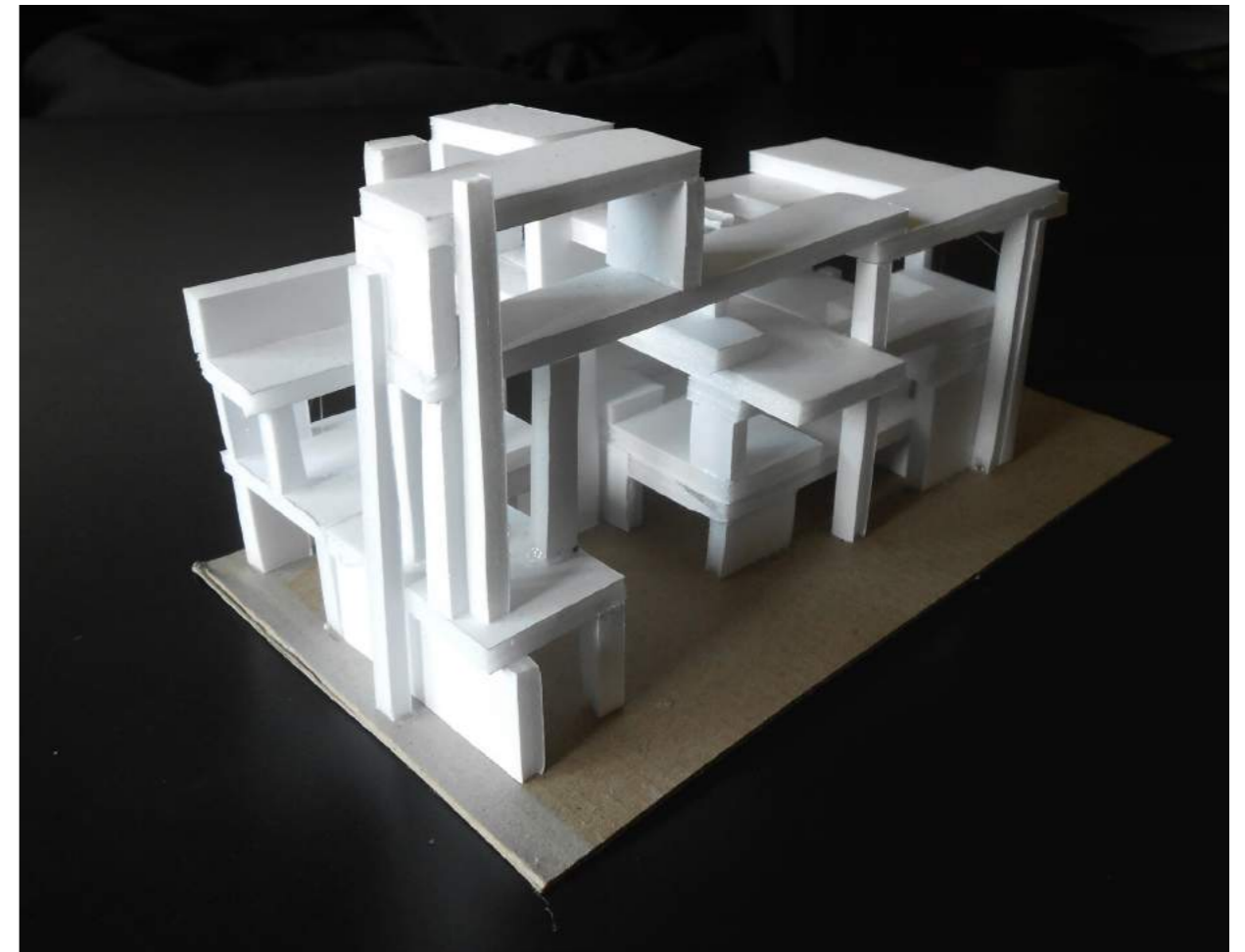
## 6.22 AXIOM OF PARTICIPATION

Dwelling units, facilities for infrastructure, and social venues, will continue to be built by the future inhabitants themselves. As the architects of their own dwelling, the tenants are at liberty to decide the design of facade and interior for themselves. No aesthetic guidelines shall be imposed; instead, builders are free to express themselves through the means of architecture. Thus, the vernacular tradition is to continue. By being personally involved in the process of creating one's own community, the ties between community members will be strengthened.

Larger structures need a collective mode of building, as described in chapter 5.5 about Framtidsloftet. Even if the tenants stand for the majority of construction work themselves, the most specialized tasks (electricity, water conduits etc) need to be carried out by professionals.

While being engaged in a such a project, the participants have to attend classes, workshops and seminars to learn how to build properly. The Christiania building office will be extended for this purpose, adding knowledge and education to their resume.

**Photos:** Models for multi-storey buildings that have been made during the project.





## 6.23 AXIOM OF SUSTAINABILITY

In accordance to the Green Plan 1991, all buildings need to be done with ecological sustainability in mind. Inhabitants shall receive help and advice on how to install resourceful technologies, something that the local building office is already providing for. Tenants, and janitors for the larger structures, will be encouraged to keep up with new developments in "green" building techniques and housekeeping. Whenever bigger household devices need to be installed (washing machines, dryers, dishwashers etc.), these are to be shared. Even smaller items can be gathered in specific locations, in which they can be borrowed or bartered. This is already implemented in Christiania to some extent, and shall continue to be.

Good architecture can also facilitate for greener habits in daily life. Even simple design decisions, such as the order of rooms, proper insulation, and choice of windows, can make a huge difference. For the individual, "smart" planning could result in a decreased use of energy, money and resources.

To aid future house builders in their aim for smarter and greener architecture, I would suggest a compendium of reference projects for such designs, completed with a list of manufacturers of relevant building material. Information is the key, and it needs to be easy to access.

I approve of the local tradition of utilizing recycled components when possible. To use excess material, that would have been thrown away otherwise, is also a way of saving money. As for existing structures, renovation is to be preferred over demolition. The martial buildings and stables have been successfully preserved partly due to being re-adapted for civilian use.

**Opposite page:** Some examples of architecture and construction, which may be relevant to the axiom of sustainability.

**Top row:** Self-constructed buildings from the Lammas project, for an ecologically sustainable lifestyle. The featured houses are located in North Pembrokeshire, Wales (Lammas community).

**Bottom row:** Climate-smart earthship houses that have been made out of garbage, such as bottles, soda cans and car tires (Notapaperhouse 2014). The buildings, which are located in New Mexico in US, has been featured in the documentary *Garbage Warrior*.







## 6.24 AXIOM OF USE

Larger structures shall be designed with multi-use in mind, especially those in the downtown area. Spaces, ground floors in particular, are supposed to be flexible in a sense that they can be used for a variety of functions, all around the clock. Therefore, bottom floors with high roofs are preferable, as some functions require a ceiling height above three metres. If the ground level is not used for public functions or local businesses, it shall be earmarked for for the elderly and disabled. Other floors can provide space for collective living and home offices. The large roof terraces, which can be found in many of the planned multi-storey houses, can be utilized by the tenants as social- and recreational spaces.

For the sake of community-building and socializing, non-commercial seats need to be available both indoors and outdoors. A growing number of users requires more of those spaces, as well as the increased maintenance of existing ones.

Whenever possible, apartments should be planned to encompass all walks of life. The latter can be more difficult to follow through, if everyone is promised the freedom to design their own living space. Eventually, it is up to the future tenants to find their own balance between personal preference and flexibility, and to figure out for themselves what works best. Assuming that each has their own goals and wishes, everyone's vision of flexibility may differ.

**Opposite page:** Diagram on mixed use architecture and the possibilities of each floor.











## 7. CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

My goal for this project has been to combine social and environmental sustainability with sensible planning practices, and to present my conclusions (compiled as a list of principles and axioms) in an urban design proposal for Christiania. During my work, it became difficult to make up my mind about “sensible planning practices” and what this means for my thesis. I cannot call my suggested planning practices as efficient, as it became clear that the development of Christiania builds upon lengthy discussions and careful considerations. Compared to more conventional planning processes, it is a time-consuming endeavour, in a work environment in which time is a resource. Even if I am content with my suggested planning practices, I cannot call it “good” either, because that would require a standard according to which something can be judged. I never made explicit mentions about any standard in particular, but I paid a lot of attention to the site context, and how well my proposal aligned with it. Eventually, the notion about “sensible” planning practices got interpreted as something based on consideration for place-specific factors and local culture. This makes it even more difficult to define a good planning process, as the emphasis on context implies that there is no encompassing rule that applies for all and everything.

As for the questions of social sustainability, I concluded early on that it has to be regarded as an umbrella term which branches off into various topics. For obvious reasons, I would only address a few in my project: to establish local communities, foster creativity and self-realization for all, and to find a good balance between built space and urban nature. If my theories intersected with other topics of social sustainability, it came as a by-product. But a solution that addresses more issues, is obviously preferable as it is more relevant and easier to argue for (as opposed to something that is strictly niched).

To mention it once again, I am completely aware of the contradiction that lies in me, as an outsider, suggesting guidelines to a community, that is notoriously suspicious of rules and outside intervention. It is indeed problematic, and I am willing to bite any bullet that comes from it. Since the community has responded to previous design proposals by writing a counter-proposal in return, I would be fully content if my project has the power to inspire such a reaction. Even if the resulting manifesto would have rejected my work, it would at least have worked as an inspiration and generator for new ideas. Apart from that, my proposal offers a smorgasbord of different how-to-do's which can be applied independently of each other, thus making it less obligatory in nature, as one does not have to commit to the whole package.

Another interesting observation I made while writing my principles, was that the community was already following some of them in present reality. At some point, I even felt like I was merely cataloguing something that everyone had inexplicably agreed upon before. It also needs to be mentioned that Christiania, as a whole, adheres to a set of underlying guidelines that ensure that things work out as desired; whether it is the Green Plan 1991, the duties of each task group, or the Junk Blockade, just to name some examples. Thus,



The diagram that set the direction of this project.



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even the most freedom-affirming establishments cannot escape any sorts of regulations, whether these are informal or official. As these examples demonstrate, one needs rules to ensure freedom *within* a certain community, and to prevent that another person's freedom does not override those of others.

Conclusively, if you cannot escape any type of regulations, you can at least use them as tools to create the society that you wish to see.

In hindsight, I would also like to redeem Richard Florida, despite of the previously expressed criticism towards his theories. His work expanded the concept of creativity from fine arts to problem solving and innovation. Tech- and knowledge-workers became suddenly included in the creative group, along with artisans. Previously, popular consciousness tended to associate creativity strictly with the latter. For example, consider the engineer and how the common view of this profession has evolved from being something obscure and intangible, to the inventive visionary of tomorrows world (for example, Elon Musk). I think of this development as something positive; creativity is a multi-facetted concept that applies to a vast variety of activities, problem-solving being one of them. Therefore I wish to credit Richard Florida for acknowledging this.

Despite of the ideological differences between the Christiania and the Creative City, there is some common ground between the referred Municipal Plan 2015 and my proposal. Both writings advocate for the preservation of urban greenery, more affordable housing, to reduce private vehicle use, and to build for density. Even if my design proposal came about as a critique towards the Creative City, there is room for reconciliation. I am also sure that the community of Christiania would agree upon the notion that problem-solving is an inherently creative activity, and that the existence of a problem spurs creative thought. If young danes in the 70ies did not feel any discontent towards society, Christiania would most likely not have happened. When thinking about it, the entire history of this freetown appears as an array of problems and solutions superseding each other.

There is nothing against the notion that many brands of creativity can co-exist, whether it is the trendy tech-entrepreneur or the practical, house-building, mural-painting hippie. Nothing has ever been said about them being mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the hippie can use his/her carpenting abilities entrepreneurial manner, while the tech-worker might want to paint murals in his/her time off work. However, it becomes a problem when one is given space and recognition *on the behalf of* the other; when only one kind of creativity is being regarded as preferable. With this, I believe that Richard Florida's theory can be redeemed, if it is coupled with a political standpoint that considers service workers (and anyone else who cannot turn their creativity into a tool of trade). After all, even the highly educated professionals in the exclusive creative class started out with engaging in creative pursuits, for the sake of creativity in itself. What sets them apart, is that they were able to turn their abilities into a set of lucrative favours and services. But we must not measure the value of an activity by the amount of money it generates, which is precisely what irks me with the neo-liberal take on creativity.

Hopefully, Christiania will continue to enrich the urban landscape of Copenhagen, for decades to come.



**Images:** Photos from my site visit in spring 2018.







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If there is no source tied to a certain image, it has been created by me (unless otherwise stated).

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