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# SEEKING REFUGE IN ARCHITECTURE



**A THESIS EXPLORING  
METHODS AND  
PRACTICES FOR A  
BETTER WOMEN'S  
SHELTER**

AAHM10 Masters Degree Project in Architecture  
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# Abstract

Domestic violence is a cruel and inhumane act of aggression that is inflicted on a victim by someone in their close domestic circle. This includes partners, ex-partners, immediate family members, other relatives and family friends. Violence within the home is the most common form of interpersonal violence for women.<sup>1</sup> While men and children can also be victims of abuse of different kinds within the domestic circle, generally intimate partner violence committed by men against women is the most common form of domestic violence. For the purpose of this thesis, domestic violence is defined as; violence between two adults who are or have been in an intimate or a family relationship - most often a sexual heterosexual relationship (Hague & Malos, 2005). Due to most of the statistics found in the literature that indicate the prevalence towards women in heterosexual relationships, the thesis' primary focus is towards women who have experienced domestic violence from a male intimate partner. However, the design principles suggested and developed can relevantly be applied to all victims including men and children.

Many women fall victim to abuse and while it leaves serious physical ramifications, the mental damage is far greater and much harder to treat. Physical, verbal and emotional violence is a heavy load for any human's mental health and it impacts the victim in several ways leading to anxiety, depression, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts and a range of other disorders. Globally, a third of women who have been in a relationship report that they have been through some sort of physical or sexual abuse by their partner and almost 40% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner (WHO, 2013).

Domestic violence is a major social issue globally, and unfortunately Swedish society is no exception to these patterns despite the strong culture of gender equality. Sweden, among other countries, have witnessed an increase in domestic violence reports all over the country during the current pandemic. Violence in close relationships increased in every third municipality (Dagens Nyheter, 2020), and many social workers see a vivid connection to the isolation and economical crisis.<sup>2</sup> When many families get isolated, the risk of violence increases mainly due to the society being in a crisis, economical pressure and anxiety. The home is no longer a space to avoid since it functions as a place of work as well, making it hard for the victims to escape it.<sup>3</sup>

Escaping an abusive relationship may sound logical to many but in various cases, it leaves many women in troublesome situations. Victims of domestic abuse identify with homelessness, many of these women don't have a place to seek refuge in and therefore find themselves on the streets. "In fact, the National Network to End Domestic Violence reports that a quarter to more than a half of homeless women identify domestic violence as a cause of their homelessness to begin with" (Routledge, 2015). Finance is another reason why some women choose to stay with their abuser. Many of them are financially dependent on their partner, have children or have been in the relationship for a long period of time and therefore stay.<sup>4</sup> These are just a few examples why shelters for women are crucial and much needed in all societies. In some cases, a shelter can be the only reason that gives victims of domestic abuse a reason to escape and seek help.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence--the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dn.se/sverige/okat-vald-i-nara-relationer-i-var-tredje-kommun-under-pandemin/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence--the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)



Fig 1: Japanese art of Kintsugi

# 1. Introduction

Shelter design has become a powerful tool to make people's lives better, with increasing demands from different marginalised groups in every society worldwide - this type of architectural typology and spaces has only escalated in popularity. But it is important to keep in mind that building emergency shelters is not a solution but it is a part of the solution and the bigger picture.

The aim of domestic violence programs and shelters is to empower the survivors and to offer a safe space; a space where these victims can seek shelter in the form of emergency housing, mental-health support and help with reclaiming a stable and non-violent family life. Usually, victims of domestic violence and their families spend between one week to three months in emergency shelters before potentially moving to transitional or permanent housing.<sup>1</sup>

It is crucial to not romanticise the idea of shelters and think of a shelter as a definite solution. Domestic violence victims go through a major mental burden and it takes a long time to process it and take steps towards recovery and rehabilitation. It is also a temporary aid, providing facilities and shelter that offers safety and housing while supporting each individual's healing process is a major challenge. Therefore, it is extremely important to keep in mind that emergency shelters are just a step towards the right direction and not to sell the idea of these spaces as a pink dream.

"It is critical for domestic violence shelters to provide residents with physical safety, but that is only one component of healing from abuse. Domestic violence programs also support survivors in reclaiming their independence, focusing on their relationships with their children, and reconnecting with support to end isolation imposed by the abuser." (Hobart, 2012) Building design can actually help achieve these goals, and this is where architecture plays a key role.

Today, there is no clear typology for designing shelters. Since safety is a central theme in the design, that aspect is heavily studied and thorough. But also other key themes such as privacy, individuality, flexibility and primarily peaceful spaces where the survivors can heal and reconnect with themselves and their children in many cases. Design strategies that support shelter housing have simply not been considered in a systematic way by design professionals.<sup>2</sup> But envisioning a possible design tool that could be valuable for any shelter seeking initiative could bring positive change and create a more open dialogue about these heavily needed spaces. It is also interesting to study the effects of different spaces on people, both man-made and natural and how these environments can contribute to healing.

I am interested in demonstrating the ability of using architecture to encourage political discourse. Resulting in bringing social change, and serving as a critique of conventional subjects and representation. I believe in architecture as a tool to aid marginalised groups within our society and to present contemporary solutions to current concerns. This is my aim with this thesis, to bring a "taboo" topic to the surface and work around the challenges to present modern solutions in our profession. Not only for women who seek help but also for women who are no longer in immediate danger or who don't choose to seek shelter. I wish to spread more knowledge about domestic violence, being a dangerous social issue but also present how architecture could play a part of the solution.

Through a combination of research and design I am interested in investigating how architecture; shelter architecture specifically can contribute to the victims' rehabilitation. Alongside growth and stability, instead of acting like a medical facility or a "prison cell" for women in crisis. I think it is important to have a variety of methods and mediums of research to tackle the topic from different perspectives. The research will be carried on through reading books, articles, scientific papers and investigating relevant material on the Internet. Examples of this material could be podcasts, movies, documentaries and talks. Discussions with people in my surrounding and my tutor/examiner do also play a vital role in the research process. Lastly, in the best possible scenario interviews with facilities or the victims themselves would add great value to the research if possible. (Disclaimer: even though I had prepared interview questions and I tried my best to reach out to different facilities, people and groups this was not possible due to safety measures which is totally understandable.)

## Research questions to explore further:

- How do our shelter buildings influence our rules, policies, and practices?
- How do you make the building a part of the urban environment, urban fabric and city network? Instead of a building thrown out of society. How does it blend in but still stand out?
- How to build a safe shelter in the middle of the city?
- How can the outdoor environment help with rehabilitation?
- How can shelters as a typology give back to society?

By the end of my research, I expect to establish design principles of how to design for this vulnerable group and then implement the principles in my own proposed model of a shelter. I believe architecture and design can engage the public and evoke emotions and responses from people. It can give back a feeling of dignity and safety, through careful use of space, light, materiality and thoughtfulness.

<sup>1</sup> <https://buildingdignity.wscadv.org/background/history/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bdcnetwork.com/study-presents-snapshot-domestic-violence-shelter-services>

## 1.1 Project overview - why?

Homelessness is a major issue that many women face when they decide to leave their abuser, it is also the reason why many victims of domestic abuse stay. Access to safe permanent housing is an important need for these women especially since they might not have other options and are therefore limited. There are two categories that these women fall into - formal and informal homelessness. The informal homeless stay with their family and friends or live in a weekly motel. However, this is not a sustainable option because they cannot afford it in the long run or for long periods of time. Other women feel like they are not welcome at their friends' or family's home.

Not all victims have these options to tend to because often, abusers isolate their partners from their families and friends and as a result they lose all contact and no longer have these informal housing options. Now, these women must turn to formal housing options which include emergency homeless- or domestic violence shelters and formal housing programs. However, while this is an option, homelessness is still a dilemma for many survivors due to the requirements the shelters put up which make it hard for all women to get help. Also, many shelters are full and not available during the exact times these women need it the most and this is why such a large group turn to the streets.

Many women struggle to make the decision of where to live after leaving or getting thrown out by their abusers. "My ex-husband always said, 'You have no other choice. Only me. If you do something, you'll be homeless on the street'". One woman stated (Tutty, et al., 2014 p. 1503). Some women are afraid and hopeless even when they are staying with friends and family because the future is uncertain and they could end up on the street at any time. "The women who lived rough on the streets or outdoors were also often exposed to sexual assault, robberies, and physical violence. Many feared they would be targeted because of their scars from their previous abusive relationships". Others are in constant fear of their children being taken away from them while simultaneously hating the environment their children were forced to live in on the streets. Therefore many women tend to return to their abusers due to lack of financial stability and fear of being homeless.

Shelters and emergency housing are not a final solution but a push on the way to heal and protect, they provide much needed safe spaces and other resources relating to therapy, counselling, career planning, finances, permanent housing searches and legal needs. Victims of domestic violence have specific needs and concerns that can be addressed through architectural design.

Maslow's (1970) Hierarchy of Needs is a model that outlines how a person must "first complete the first level of the hierarchy of physiological needs before moving up the hierarchy and attending to more abstract needs" (Rutledge, 2014). Maslow proposed several independent sets of basic human needs that work together to reach self-actualization, meaning "the complete realisation of one's potential, and the full development of one's abilities and appreciation for life" (Perera, 2020). This concept is at the top of Maslow's model but the goal for DV victims is not to reach the top at an instant but to gradually, with the right resources, work towards healing and climbing the ladder. Maslow presumed a universal set of distinct motives related to physiology, safety, affection and esteem. According to his theory, the internal drive to self-actualize would seldom emerge until one's basic needs are met and secured.

One of the biggest and most important concerns for DV victims is safety and finding a secure shelter. The basic needs are the most important and only after meeting them can, in this case, the victim of DV focus on things such as employment, permanent housing, empowerment and achieving self-actualization. This is why I believe it is crucial to explore the idea of emergency housing being the primary need before moving up this hierarchy and assisting with the survivors' other needs. With proper resources, shelters have the capacity to provide the range of protection and support services necessary, to help survivors and those at risk of violence to avoid future abuse. Everything works hand in hand, shelter being the first lead to save victims from falling back into the rabbit-hole will also be a reason to provide physiological needs such as rest and food.

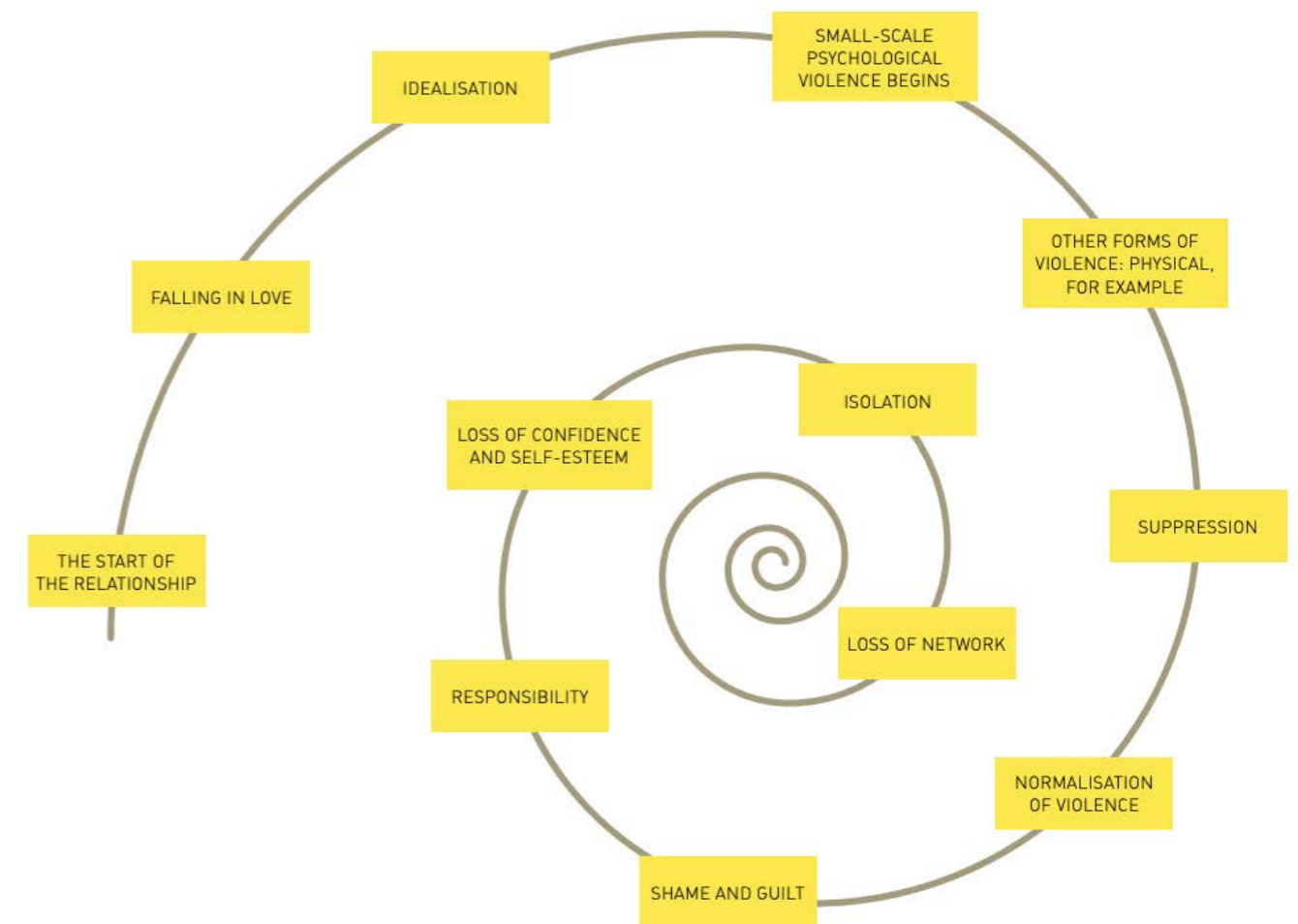


Fig 2: The spiral of violence by danner.dk

"The model shows how violence affects the woman over time, and how both victim and perpetrator may normalise and trivialise it as it slowly becomes part of their everyday lives. Professionals should realise that to a woman who feels trapped in the cycle of violence, to escape from the spiral may take as long as the journey into it."



Fig 3: Maslow's (1970) Hierarchy of Need

Even though shelters provide secure accommodation and other important services for women who are at risk or have been subjected to violence, it is only fair to recognize that they contribute far more than just a safe space. Shelters can contribute to raising awareness and social change as part of broader efforts to prevent violence against women. They provide essential aspects of protection, services and resources which enable women to build their self-esteem and embark on a journey of recovery. Most importantly, they encourage women to take steps forward to regain a self-determined and independent life.<sup>1</sup> Many DV survivors do not report abuse or seek help from formal service providers and authorities (Barrett & Pierre, 2011) and they do have their reasons. Limited attention to neglected groups in society, gender inequality, impunity and weak coordination and monitoring mechanisms are just a few examples.<sup>2</sup> The support offered by DV shelters and the presence of them can address some of these barriers and encourage women to escape their abusers and seek assistance. Shelters can also gain a key role in strengthening the quality of responses provided by other service providers who are in contact with abused women, but also society and the government.<sup>3</sup>

**Shelters may also:**

- Increase awareness among women and girls about their human rights and gender-based violence.
- "Increase the availability of adequate government resources for addressing the issue and strengthen the provision of appropriate survivor-centred services which respect women's confidentiality, decisions and needs." (UN WOMEN, 2012)
- Assist women in escaping their abusers and support them along the way.
- Educate professionals such as health and judicial providers in recognizing violence against women and how they can provide safe, appropriate referrals and responses.
- Shelters can be a voice in the local and global battle for women's' rights.
- Shelters can promote women's equality and serve as a voice against systemic issues of discrimination. "The influence on system responses and advocacy by shelters to promote access to various services is important in assisting women to cope with the extensive range of challenges resulting from the violence committed against them." (UN WOMEN, 2012)
- **Empowering women!**

Shelters are a critical component in every society and they act as a holistic response to survivors, it is established in various international agreements such as the famous 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which challenged all States to,

"[p]rovide well-funded shelters and relief support for girls and women subjected to violence, as well as medical, psychological and other counselling services and free or low-cost legal aid, where it is needed, as well as appropriate assistance to enable them to find a means of subsistence." (UNESCO, 1995)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1367-why-shelters-are-important.html#:~:text=With%20proper%20resources%2C%20shelters%20have,viole%20to%20avoid%20future%20abuse.>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/303-main-challenges.html>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1367-why-shelters-are-important.html#:~:text=With%20proper%20resources%2C%20shelters%20have,viole%20to%20avoid%20future%20abuse.>

## 1.2 Studies and proof - the issue

There are many factors and aspects that play a role when studying the causes behind domestic violence. It can be socio-economic reasons, underlying norms and attitudes, unemployment, power imbalance, education and status. For example, Aizer (2010) reported that a decrease in the gender wage gap in the US does in fact result in a decrease in domestic violence against women. While, Anderberg et al. (2016) reported along the same lines, showcasing UK data that proves an increase in unemployment among men does reduce intimate partner violence. On the other hand, an increase in unemployment among women increases it.<sup>1</sup>

Spain is a country that has stronger traditional gender roles than for instance Sweden. A Spanish study (Tur-Prats, 2019) finds out that a decrease in female relative to male unemployment causes an increase in violence – the man in the household feels like his role as the breadwinner is under threat when a woman improves her economic position and becomes independent therefore they retaliate with violence as a result.<sup>2</sup>

“Studies such as Iyer et al. (2012) and Miller and Segal (2018) highlight the importance of improving the position of women in society, which can be achieved through role models and female representation in critical positions (Perotta, 2021).”

An alternative interpretation of men’s violence against women has its ties to an emotional and irrational nature. It can be particular events or negative emotional shocks such as a football team losing a match (Card and Dahl, 2011) or having a bad encounter at work. These events can trigger violent reactions especially if they are exacerbated by a stressful climate within the household. There are several studies that associate general economical improvements with a reduction in domestic violence (Hidrobo et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2007; Haushofer et al., 2019). When life conditions get better that helps scale down the emotional and irrational instincts by creating a less stressful and charged climate within the household.<sup>3</sup>

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated in a 2005 report that between 30-60% of all women have been physically and/or sexually abused at some point in their lives. In a compilation of research from 2013, the organization estimated that 35% of the world’s women have been subjected to physical or sexual violence by a partner and/or sexual violence by a person other than a partner.<sup>4</sup> In 2014, the most comprehensive study at EU level to date on women’s experiences of violence was published. 42,000 women from 28 countries in Europe were interviewed “face to face”. The report showed that 33% of women in Europe have experienced physical and/ or sexual violence after the age of 15. This corresponds to 62 million women.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence—the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence—the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence—the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kvinnojouren-ada.nu/hur-vanligt-ar-mans-vald-mot-kvinnor/>  
<sup>5</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14_en.pdf)

## 1.3 Domestic violence in Sweden

Every year, the National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) in Sweden publishes a summary of the reported crimes in the country. The statistics include all reported and registered events with the criminal investigation authorities. According to Swedish law, the Social services authorities (Socialtjänsten) in Sweden also have a crucial role in both the work they do with potential DV victims and their children, collaborations with women’s shelters across the country and the vital research and statistics they provide.<sup>1</sup>

According to BRÅ, yearly at least 7% of the population in Sweden is exposed to domestic violence, both men and women roughly equal parts. However, women are more likely to get hospitalised due to severe injuries and they are also more likely to report recurring violence. In 2020, 29 200 cases were reported and 13 women were murdered by a man in their close circle (BRÅ, 2021). These numbers do not target a specific age group but according to a summary by BRÅ in 2018, they reported that 23% of girls aged 16-24 have been a victim of domestic violence at least once in their life. Which means, even underage girls and young adults are potential victims of violence.

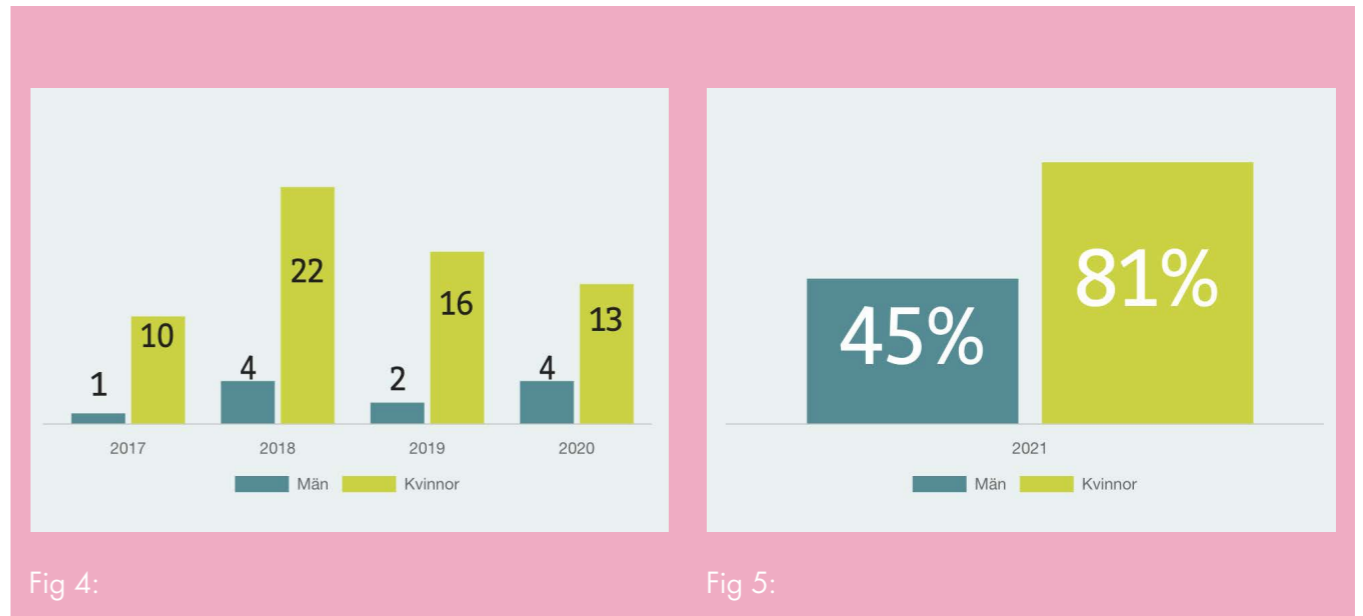


Fig 4:

“The number of cases of deadly violence against women where the victim and the perpetrator were or had been in a relationship amounted to 13 cases in 2020, corresponding to just over half (52%) of all cases of deadly violence against women during the year.” (BRÅ, 2022)

Fig 5:

“The number of cases of deadly violence against women where the victim and the perpetrator were or had been in a relationship amounted to 13 cases in 2020, corresponding to just over half (52%) of all cases of deadly violence against women during the year.” (BRÅ, 2022)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1560506/FULLTEXT02>

Many children experience violence in their family, approximately every tenth child - that is, about 200,000 children throughout Sweden. Every twentieth child of these children experiences violence often (NCK 2017). According to the Swedish Crime Prevention Council, approximately 150,000 children in Sweden live together with a parent who has been abused by the other parent (Socialstyrelsen).

Slagen dam is the first major national survey in Sweden, published in 2001, which was conducted with the aim of studying the extent of men's violence against women. The government allocated funds in 1998 for the investigation that went on for several years. A comprehensive survey, with 350 questions, was sent to 10,000 women in the country. The response rate was 70%. The study shows a high lifetime prevalence of violence against women. Lifetime prevalence refers to the proportion who have been subjected to violence at some point in their lives after reaching the age of 15.<sup>1</sup> The study showed that almost half (46%) of women have been abused at least once by a man after their 15th birthday and experienced physical violence. Furthermore, the survey showed that every third woman (34%) had been subjected to violence by a previous spouse or cohabitant and that 11% had been subjected to violence from a current cohabitant or spouse. The abuse was in many forms; sexual violence and threats but physical violence being the highest score. Almost every fifth woman (18%) had experienced being threatened by a man sometime and 4% had been threatened during the past year.<sup>2</sup>

These figures illustrate that violence against women is far from a marginal problem; almost every second Swedish woman has been subjected to violence at some point after her 15th birthday. This knowledge makes it impossible to regard violence against women as an isolated problem which can be handled outside the discussion of the relationship between men and women in society. In addition, for many women, the experiences of violence are not remote and it does not matter if you are underage or above the age of 18. Domestic violence is still a threat that many have to face daily.



Fig 6: Slagen dam the survey

1 <https://www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se/media/c51ayi3q/captured-queen.pdf>

2 <https://www.brottsoffermyndigheten.se/media/c51ayi3q/captured-queen.pdf>

## 1.4 Domestic violence & the pandemic

Spring of 2020 was a strange time that changed all of our lives in one way or another. The outbreak of Covid-19 did not only make us work from home or wear a mask but media outlets around the world have reported increases in domestic violence. The event was even referred to as the “shadow pandemic” by António Guterres, United Nations secretary-general. Alongside news outlets, academic researchers have also taken an interest in the issue which is important to find patterns for statistics and draw conclusions. Intimate partner violence has also highly increased in Sweden even though the country was absent of a strict lockdown. According to experts this is more likely a result of socio-economic changes brought by the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

There is a common perception that domestic violence increases during holidays and weekends as the potential victims are isolated from their social networks and routines. The pandemic brought with it lockdowns and new routines like working from home, that forced families to spend more time together at home. This unique opportunity did bring harm to some families where the potentially violent partner was not as occupied and therefore could be more violent. In some contexts, spikes in domestic violence can be connected to the strict limitation of movement.<sup>2</sup>

Sweden is close to unique in its management strategy during the Covid-19 crisis. The policy relied much on voluntary participation and individual responsibility rather than coercion like other nations did. Certainly, it was encouraged to work from home when possible, to avoid public transport as much as possible and the amount of participants allowed to indoor events were restricted. It is reasonable to expect individuals more exposed to violence to not risk being at home and instead decide to for instance not work from home. The power in Sweden's Covid-19 strategy is the freedom to choose.<sup>3</sup>

While the pandemic helped us better understand the underlying mechanisms behind domestic violence, it is still important to look beyond the pandemic and try to answer many of the open questions. Unfortunately, domestic violence will remain in our society after the pandemic. It existed before Covid-19 and will still do so after it. But investigating and understanding the reasons and questions surrounding domestic violence is important in order to formulate policies and ways to combat it during and after a crisis. But also to shape our future shelters in the best way possible.

1 <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence--the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>

2 <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence--the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>

3 <https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/news/site-publications/2020/domestic-violence--the-case-of-sweden-during-the-pandemic/>



## 2.1 Domestic shelter history

Throughout history and around the world, women have been protecting other women and supporting the efforts to provide safety and shelter for one another. It is no surprise that various forms of safe spaces have existed for a long time since the need for them has always been there - whether it was through faith based institutions, independent support by the surrounding community/family or other undefined spaces. In the past five decades, due to the progression in the women's rights movement and societies in general, there has been an enormous impact on the expansion of shelters and related spaces. Even though there are still many disadvantages and issues today, when looking at history it is clear that there has been improvement in providing for women in need.<sup>1</sup>

It is critical to acknowledge that women's rights movements started and are still ongoing all around the world, women everywhere struggle with gender-based violence and they encounter many difficulties daily. These challenges can look different based on location but essentially domestic violence is a global issue. Therefore, every region and place has a history of shelters and women trying to survive, the stories can vary but at the end of the day all these women reach for the same goal being to seek shelter and safety. Due to my project site being based in Malmö, I will solely focus on the history of shelters in Europe considering the background help it will provide me with while designing and researching.

### 1960-1970

During this time the women's rights movement first started to take place in Britain and a growing number of women started to get engaged in the issues relating to gender inequality, mainly addressing gender-based violence. The very first well-documented women's centre was established in Hounslow, England in 1971 which provided unofficial shelter for domestic violence survivors. The establishment of this centre during this period, was a great example and encouraged many other regions and places across the country to follow suit and open other shelters. These shelters responded to not only the physical injuries but also the emotional aspects of both the violence and leaving the abusive relationship. Also, the difficulties in escaping violence and living in unfamiliar surroundings, children-care, legal, social and medical service needs.<sup>2</sup>

### 1970-1980

Significant progress was made in the expansion and organisation of shelter and services in Europe. The National Women's Aid Federation first started in 1974, playing an important role in linking England, Scotland and Wales to clarify and establish goals to further develop the services and shelters helping women flee violence. The initiative had clear goals, one of them aiming to increase public awareness on these issues which lead to the creation of several printed materials like Working on Wife Abuse, 1976. But also other materials providing networking tools for shelters and tools to support the development of coalitions across the regions. During that time it was not easy for shelters to get funding, it required intensive fundraising efforts which resulted in some resources for the shelters but there was still shortage and a huge need for more support.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1368-the-history-and-origin-of-womens-sheltering.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1368-the-history-and-origin-of-womens-sheltering.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1368-the-history-and-origin-of-womens-sheltering.html>

### 1980-2000

At this time, an expanding number of shelter facilities for victims of domestic abuse started to blossom across Europe, even including spaces for children. All of this happening alongside the intensified focus on gender inequality and similar issues - within both the social and political realm. "By the turn of the century, there was growing acceptance that violence against women is a violation of human rights and an impediment to gender equality" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2006).<sup>1</sup>

### 2000-present

Despite all the progress made and the growing attention and commitment to support women escaping abuse, this does still not mean that this global issue is solved. There are still many countries that lack adequate coverage of shelters or other types of safe accommodation spaces for DV survivors. Today, advocacy for shelters and its services continues, the demand to develop these spaces is higher than ever and there is a rapid emergence of new networks and partnerships helping to carry on this demand. Such as the first World Conference on Women's Shelters organised in Alberta, Canada in 2008. The establishment of a Global Network of Women's Shelters, involving many different representatives across the world.<sup>2</sup>

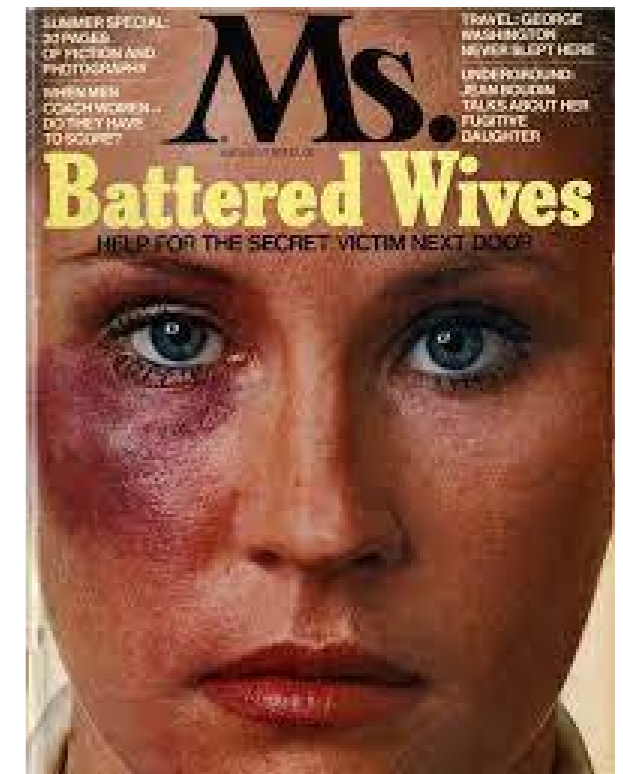
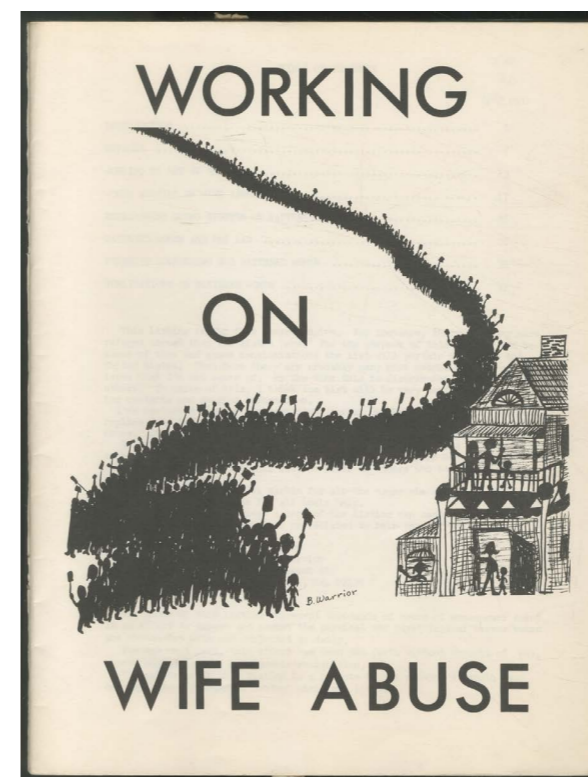


Fig 7: Work about women's rights and equality started to get published.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1368-the-history-and-origin-of-womens-sheltering.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1368-the-history-and-origin-of-womens-sheltering.html>

**If your husband ever finds out**  
you're not "store-testing" for fresher coffee...

... if he discovers you're still taking chances on getting flat, stale coffee ... wee be unto you!

For today there's a sure and certain way to test for freshness before you buy



**Here's how easy it is to be sure of fresher coffee**

Look for the "Dance Top" Can of Chase & Sanborn. That firm, rounded top shows it's packed under pressure, fresh from the oven.

**No other can lets you test!**  
You can't test an ordinary flat top can. Some are "makers" that have let air in to spoil freshness. But all flat top cans look alike. You can't tell which are good and which are bad.

**Here's the payoff!**  
Sure as you pour a cup, they'll want more! For Chase & Sanborn it's a genuine kind of sure experience coffee... brought to you fresher. No wonder Chase & Sanborn gets a flavor dividend you won't find in any other coffee!

**Just do this:**  
Press your thumb against the dance top before you buy. If it's firm, it's fresh. If the top clicks, pressure's gone—like another. It's the one way to get the freshest coffee ever packed.

**Chase & Sanborn**

**"PRESSURE PACKED"**

REGULAR GRIND  
PRESSURE PACKED  
**Chase & Sanborn**  
COFFEE

103



**This blouse will take a lot of beating**

Style 459 in TOOTAL Cotton Satin marked **TEBILIZED**. Colours: White, Ecru, Lime, Pink, Sky, Tango, Fuchsia, Blue. Sizes: 34" - 40"  
Price approx. \$9/11.

**Elsie Whiteley** house  
**TEBILIZED** in fabric marked  
for tested crease resistance

APRIL 14, 1961



Fig 9: Women rally in Boston to speak out against violence against women, August 26, 1976

**Is it always illegal TO KILL A WOMAN?**

For six weeks I bend the ears of the home office to get a postage meter. I win... Then the only good, fast, dependable, honest-to-Gregg stenographer I got, this redoubt Mortsey—balks at a postage meter! "I have no mechanical aptitude. Machines run me up, kind of," she says. As if we asked her to fly a P-51. I almost blow my top.

This postage meter, I explain, is modern, more efficient, a time saver... No more adhesive stamps. No stamp box, and who's got the key? No running out of the stamps you need. No scripping. No stamp sticking. Just out the lever for any kind of stamp you want, for any kind of mail, and the meter prints the stamp right on the envelope with a dated postmark—and it seals the flap at the same time. Faster than mailing by hand. Prints stamps on tape for parcel post. Will handle anything we have to mail out of this office. Even keeps its own records!

And metered mail doesn't have to be postmarked and cancelled in the post-office, gets going earlier. It is practically heaven's gift to the working girl... and so on. But with the Mortsey, no soap.

I try diplomacy. "Miss Mortsey, I want you personally to try it for two weeks. If you don't like it then—back it goes to the factory! I depend on your judgment implicitly. Okay?"... She acts like an early Christian about to be hanged for a look, but gives in.

So help me—two weeks later she has a big pink bow on the handle of the postage meter—like it was an orchid or something. I give it the gape.

"Kinda cute, ain't it," says Miss Mortsey. "But a very efficient machine, Mr. Jones. Now the mail is out early enough so I get to the girls' room in time to hear all of the dirt"... I wonder as it always illegal to kill a woman!

We are always learning some new advantages of the postage meter. If you'd like to learn what one could do for your office, call the nearest Pitney-Bowes office. Or write for an illustrated booklet.

**PITNEY-BOWES Postage Meter**

PITNEY-BOWES, Inc., 1125 Pacific Street, Stamford, Conn., Chicago, Ill.  
Mail. Largest makers of mailing machines. Branches in 63 cities in the United States.

boaredpanda.com



**It's nice to have a girl around the house.**

Though she was a tiger lady, our hero didn't have to fire a shot to floor her. After one look at his Mr. Leggs slacks, she was ready to have him walk all over her. That noble styling sure soothes the savage heart! If you'd like your own doll-to-doll carpeting, hunt up a pair of these he-man Mr. Leggs slacks. Such as our new automatic wash wear blend of 65% "Dacron" and 35% rayon—incomparably wrinkle-resistant. About \$12.99 at plush-carpeted stores.

**Dacron** for fall!

Get yourself a new girl in **Mr. Leggs**

THOMSON COMPANY, 1300 Avenue of the Americas, New York 13, N. Y.



Fig 10: Brigham and Women's Hospital, an organization on the vanguard of identifying and treating women who were battered, sponsors a neighbourhood health fair, 1980

Fig 8: Vintage sexist ads encouraging and normalising violence against women

## 2.2 Services offered

The most important thing that shelters provide is simply being a shelter, a safe place for victims of domestic violence. But there are a variety of other services that shelters offer, services that tend to be designed to empower the victims and help them break away from their abusers while gaining their independence back. Most of the victims who turn to shelters for safety and transitional purposes are determined to turn their life to the better and lose ties with their abusers, and they tend to use the maximum of the services offered to help them do so. However, other victims tend to have a harder time to regain their independence and they turn to shelters for respite, to “take a break” from the mental and physical burden placed on them by their abusers. Therefore, they do not use the services provided by the shelters to the fullest. On the other hand, it should be brought to attention that in many cases it takes more than one unsuccessful attempt before a woman is able to successfully escape an abusive relationship. It is also a journey that these women embark on, shelters help them rebuild themselves and the services offered serve as building blocks that work to help them reach freedom over time.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the typical services offered by many shelters are child- and healthcare, legal assistance, social- and mental support including different therapeutic activities such as group therapy. In many cases, the legal services are highly appreciated and needed, they include for instance court advocacy and support but also aim to educate the victims on the criminal justice process, assisting with visitation and filling out forms etc.<sup>2</sup>

Health services do not only include medical care but there is a huge focus on mental health care since many if not all of the victims carry heavy trauma with them. Individual, family and group counselling are also services that shelters usually provide. On the other hand, child care services are similar; they may include daycare education and recreation but as mentioned above medical services and counselling are included as well. Social support is another important service that ranges from emotional/group support to for example assisting with future plans such as employment and welfare needs. Typically, many of these services are provided within the shelter, for safety and convenience purposes, but the shelters can also have connections and collaborations with other governmental and independent organisations and agencies.<sup>3</sup>

In their turn, our shelters can influence our rules, policies, and practices. They do so by setting a successful example of how architecture and the services provided by the building can help vulnerable women within our society to heal and flourish again. A successful project will also educate and spread knowledge within society but also globally and allow women to see and understand that help is available if needed. Shelters can be a sign that there is support and hope of regaining independence and themselves again.

*“A safe space to be around other women and open up”*

-shelter.org.uk

*“We need to have a sisterhood where we all stick together”*

-shelter.org.uk

<sup>1</sup> <http://criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com/crime/domestic-violence/the-shelter-movement/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com/crime/domestic-violence/the-shelter-movement/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com/crime/domestic-violence/the-shelter-movement/>

## 2.3 Women & their children

Like mentioned before, safety is a keyword for women who have been through domestic violence but it is an even bigger concern of theirs’ when it comes to their children. In fact, women are more likely to leave an abusive relationship when their children are threatened. Mothers in abusive relationships go through a heavy mental burden because they often want to protect their children from the abuse oppressor yet also fear disrupting their children’s lives. It is a constant battle for them. Kathryn Oths and Tara Robertson (2007), University of Alabama professors of anthropology and counselling education conducted a study where they examined phone calls to domestic violence shelters in relation to children’s needs. The results indicated that women were more likely to call for entrance to a shelter and seek help during the summer months. This pattern connects to; mothers attempting to protect their children specially during the summer months when the children stay at home and are at a bigger risk of violence from abusers (Oths & Robertson, 2007). Due to this maternal instinct, shelters must be able to reassure mothers that they can stay with their children in the shelter and that the children’s needs are also met. In turn, shelters must also be able to provide counselling services for children who have experienced domestic violence and lost their daily routines.<sup>1</sup>

It is also important to keep in mind that children need to still be children. Counselling, education and mental health care is important and a priority but so is a playground and giving the children the freedom to run around and play with toys. Shelters need to provide children with a normal childhood as long as they are within the safe walls of the building. Childcare and education are ideal to provide if the facilities can afford it, it will give their mothers more free time but also help both parties heal. Units and rooms can be separate, allowing the mothers and the children to be alone but still making them see each other for safety and concert reasons. This could be fulfilled through windows, glass doors and cut outs.<sup>2</sup>

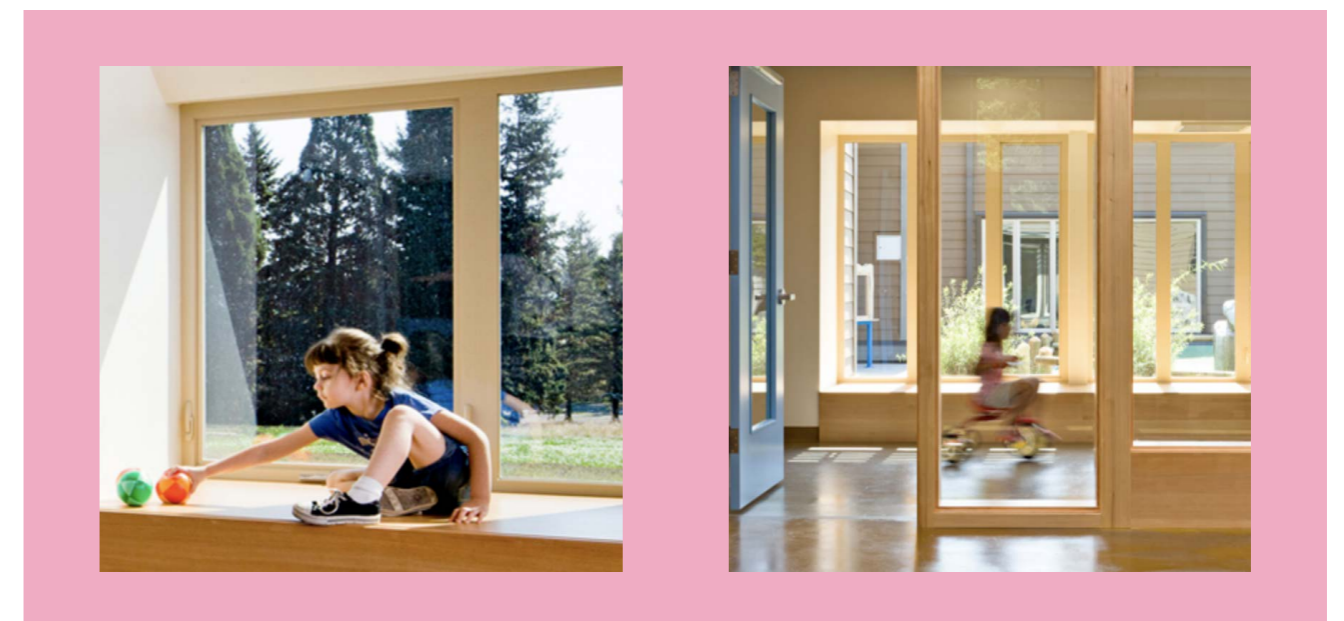


Fig 11: Design example

<sup>1</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2538&context=etd>

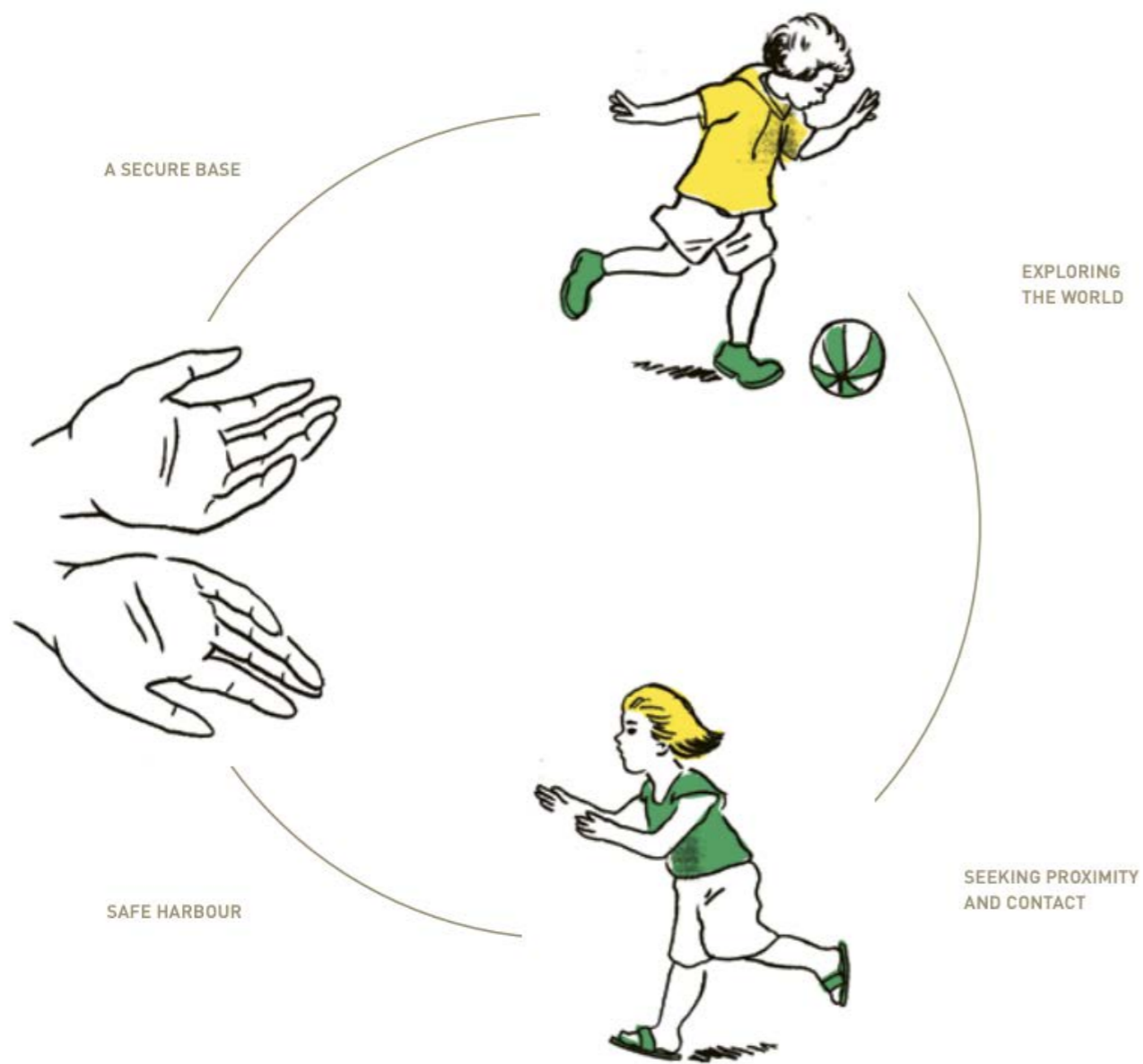


Fig 12: Diagram by danner.dk

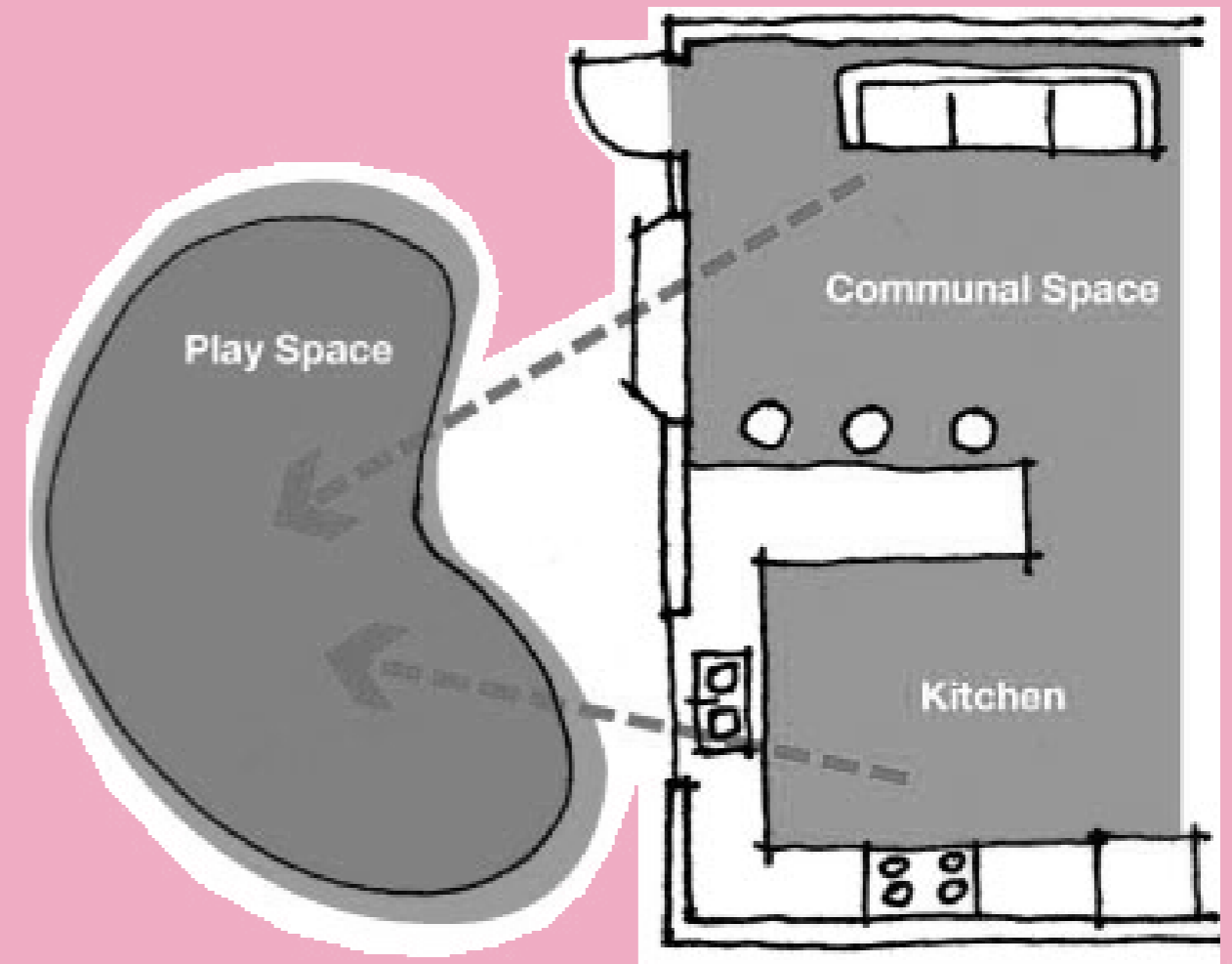


Fig 13: Design diagram by Building Dignity

## 2.4 Gaining independence back

Better designed shelters and programs with specific services for women in need are crucial for these women to gain their independence back from their abusers. Shelter stays only are not sufficient in the long run, instead it is important to identify the clients' needs and understand that they extend beyond the time of the stay in the shelter.

"When women leave, they need counselling. They need a better chance to get housing so they can get on their feet. They need help for the first 6 months. They need ways to get jobs and child care so they don't have to go back" (Baker, et al., 2009, p. 775).

Victims of domestic violence must begin to search for permanent housing after entering a shelter. Concurrently, it is ideal for the women to also look for a job, face legal battles and deal with the physical, mental and emotional implications of domestic violence. Because of this, victims are easily distracted emotionally and/or in a stressful state during their stay. It is important for any domestic violence shelter to have programs that help women with these needs but also empower them to meet their goals. Counselling and empowerment programs and activities are important to include in the rehabilitation process.

"Encouraging a strong sense of community between women who have experienced domestic violence, providing resources that encourage independence, and supporting residents with their needs can encourage empowerment (Hague & Malos, 2005; Hall, 1992; Hoff, 1990; Kasturirangan, 2008; Rutledge, 2015).

Even though shelters are a powerful tool that can help women in their journey of recovery, it is still important to acknowledge that the victims may return to their abusers for several reasons. Often, victims of domestic violence must confront a series of issues in their lives before making the decision to permanently leave their abusers. "For example, a woman may have to combat substance abuse, lack of adequate housing, or financial stability before she is able to leave her abuser and live independently. Shelters should be supportive of residents and encourage them to become independent, regardless of their decisions made after leaving the shelter" (Ben-Porat & Itzhaky, 2008; Goodman & Epstein, 2008; Kasturirangan, 2008; McDermott & Garofalo, 2004).

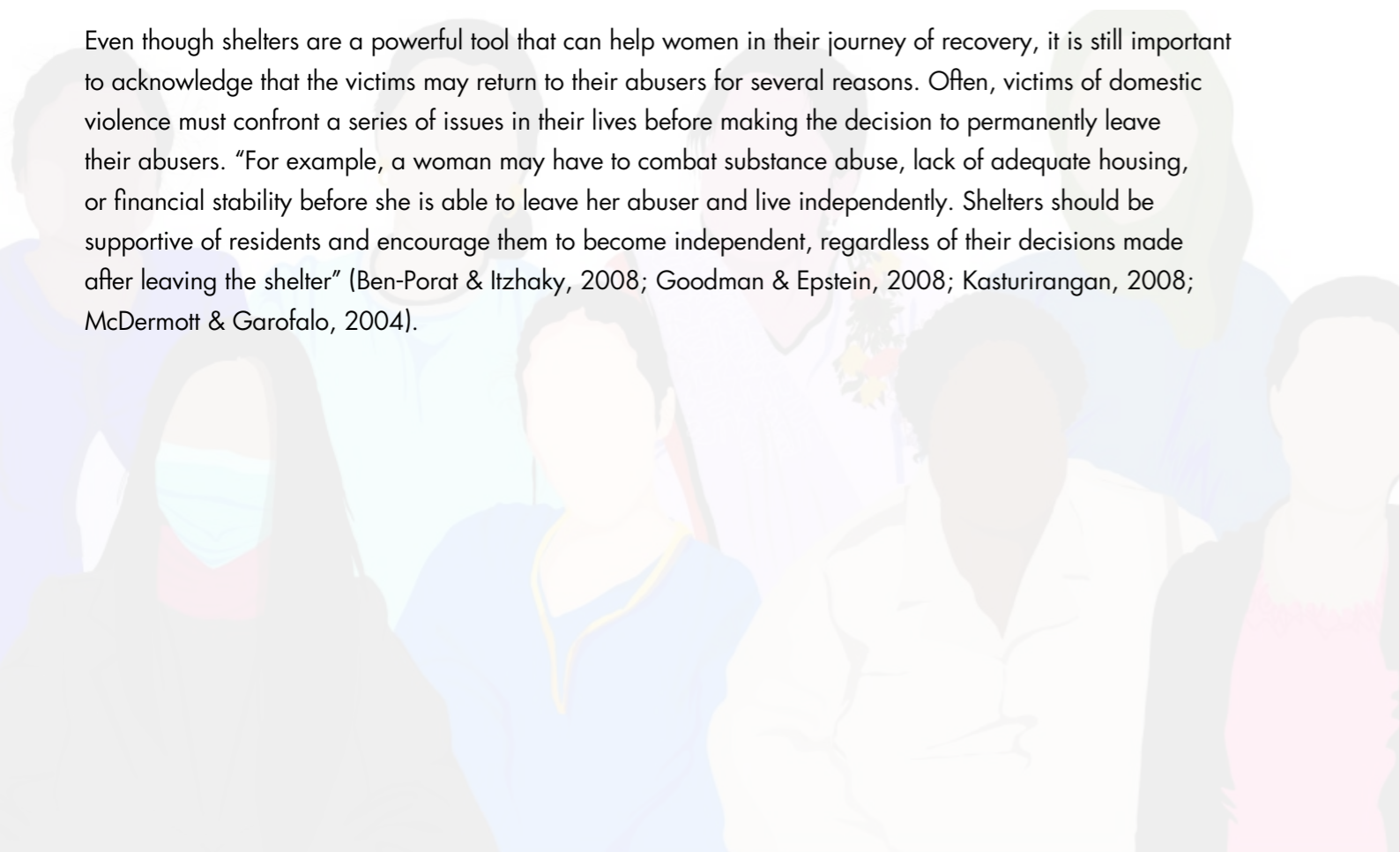


Fig 14: Sense of community among all women

## 2.5 Domestic violence & mental health

It is no surprise that being exposed to abuse brings a lot of mental health distress and trauma. According to a study by the Global Health Action in 2014, women who report symptoms of depression report an average score of abuse of 61. That is very alarming and shows clear connections between abuse and depression since women who do not report depression symptoms report an average of 43. The score being an estimation of the abuse these women are exposed to. Similarly, women who record symptoms of anxiety record an average exposure score of 61 while women who do not show these symptoms have an average score of 46. Clearly, there is a positive association between psychological distress and exposure to abuse. Of course, the severity of the psychological distress only increases according to the severity and extent of abuse these women are exposed to.<sup>1</sup>

It is now well accepted and studied that abuse is a very big factor in the development of mental health disorders in potential victims, both children and adults. It is the main factor that many DV victims suffer from depression, anxiety, PTSD that lead to other complications such as self-harm, suicide, sleep disturbances and eating disorders just to mention a few. Therefore, it is crucial that shelters offer mental health care services, allowing the victims to heal and gain important skills to get back into society.<sup>2</sup>

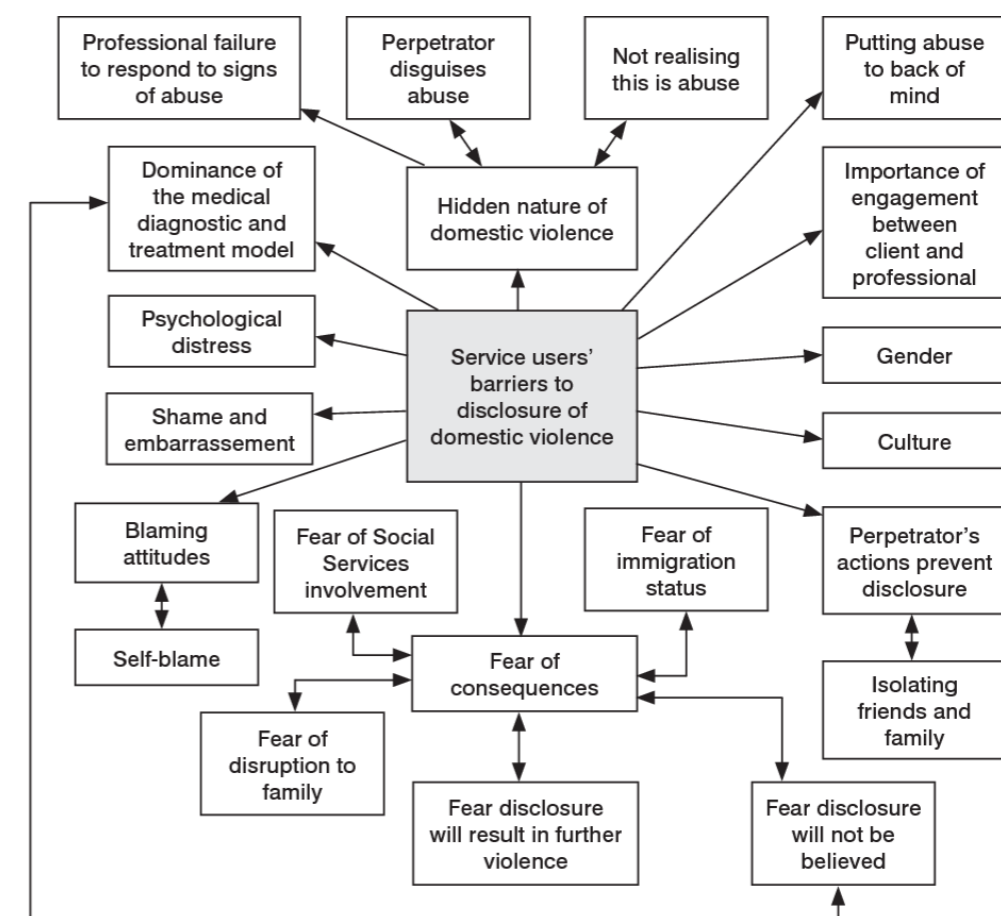


Fig 15:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3402/gha.v7.25519>

<sup>2</sup> <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Spotlight%207%20-%20Mental%20health%20and%20domestic%20abuse.pdf>

### 3. Kvinnohuset in Örebro

I was lucky enough to speak to the responsible architect for a shelter design in Örebro called Kvinnohuset by White arkitekter. Very early on in my research process, I became very interested in Kvinnohuset as a very successful and modern shelter design but due to safety reasons it wasn't easy to find information online. He was kind enough to meet with me and present the project in more detail. Kvinnohuset became a huge inspiration to my work due to its simplicity and the quality of work.

Kvinnohuset is located in the middle of Örebro city, it is a safe housing project for endangered women, where the building itself has become a model for how to create smart and sustainable infill projects in cramped urban environments. Kvinnohuset is a non-profit organisation that offers help and a refuge for abused women and children. In addition to counselling and therapy, the organisation assists with sheltered housing in critical situations.<sup>1</sup> Something very unique about Kvinnohuset that differentiates it from the traditional shelters is that the house is not hidden behind high walls or fences. Instead, it stands proudly in central Örebro, surrounded by the city.

Kvinnohuset is divided into two different buildings - one being an extension, and one being an already existing building called Spruthuset and was formerly part of the city's old fire station. It was built in 1899 and today, it contains offices and meeting rooms for both staff and residents and common spaces for socialising. The new residential building is five-stories and contains 11 new apartments and it is connected to Spruthuset via a glazed corridor. There is a protected courtyard between the two house bodies, with seating, cultivation and a playground for the children at the property.<sup>2</sup>

The wooden facade is a beautiful choice of material, it creates a warm welcoming atmosphere and forms a pleasant contrast to the surrounding context but it also blends in well with the warm colours.<sup>3</sup>

"Among other things, the contractor could use what are called just-in-time deliveries; large building elements such as pillars, beams, trusses and floor cassettes are delivered on the same day as they are to be lifted into place with a construction crane. A wooden building is also much quieter and disturbs the neighbours less than other building systems. A great advantage in a place surrounded by other residential buildings." (Hedvall, 2018)

**Kund:** John Ekströms AB  
**Plats:** Örebro  
**Status:** Färdigställt 2018  
**Area:** Nybyggd BTA: 650 kvm. Ombyggd BTA: 250 kvm  
**Kostnad:** 20 M SEK  
**Bild:** Anders Bobert  
**Relaterade tjänster:** Arkitektur, Hållbarhet

<sup>1</sup> <https://whitearkitekter.com/se/projekt/kvinnohuset/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://whitearkitekter.com/se/projekt/kvinnohuset/>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://whitearkitekter.com/se/projekt/kvinnohuset/>

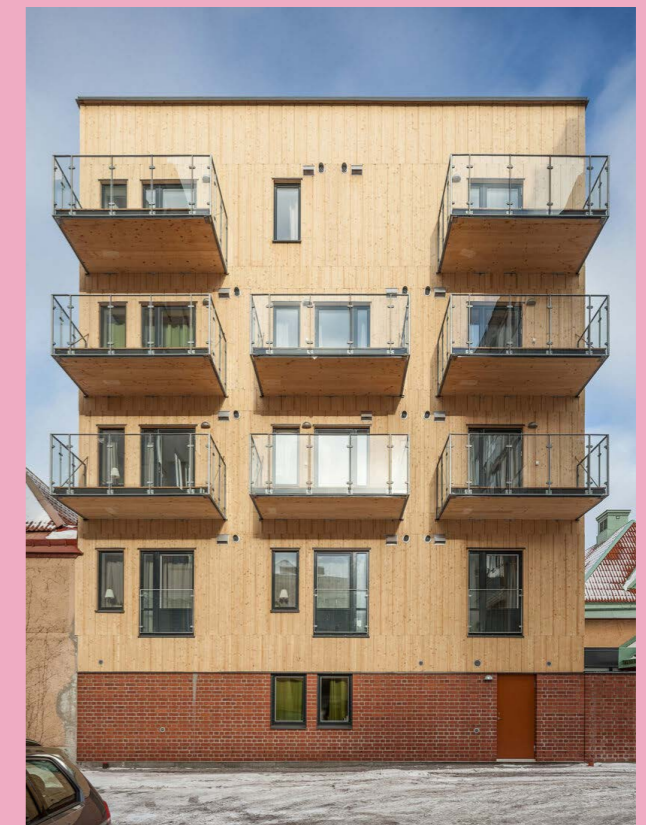
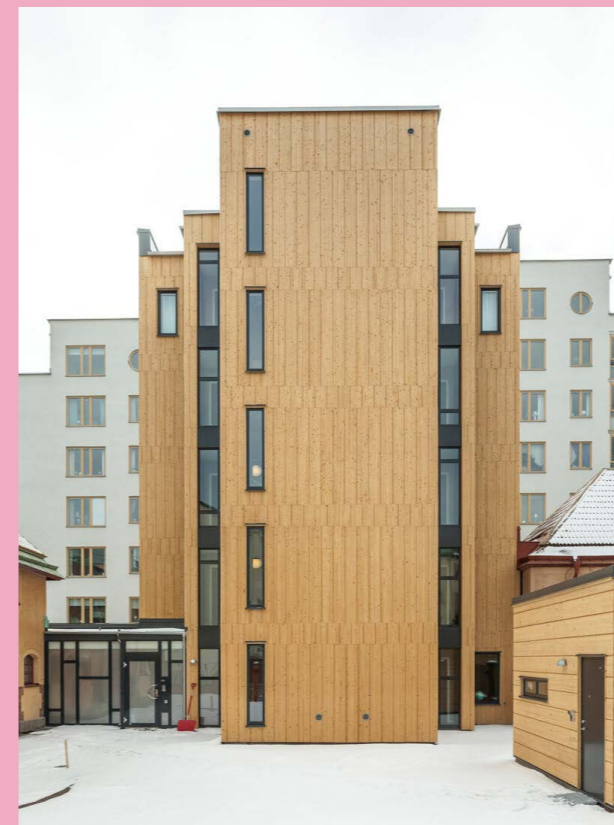


Fig 16: Kvinnohuset in Örebro

## 4.1 Evidence based design

“Evidence-based design permits an architect to evaluate a design, and variations of that design, to see if they contribute to human well being. This makes possible informed choices that push and guide a design towards a more adaptive final form.” (Salingaros, 2015)

It is the process to construct a successful building or physical environment based on scientific research to achieve the best outcome possible. This method is frequently used in architecture and is especially important in healthcare architecture where research has shown that the built environment design can affect patient outcome. It was popularised by Ulrich (1984) where it showed the impact a window and nature can have on patient recovery. Since then, studies have examined the relationship between design and the physical environment of hospitals with results in health and recovery. The results clearly show how the physical environment can for instance reduce stress and anxiety of the facility users, improve their safety and well being as well as their productivity levels while reducing resource waste and enhancing sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

As architects we believe that the built environment is a powerful force in patient care. Whether it is a carefully designed outdoor space or a thoughtful idea behind a window, the built environment plays a role in shaping our realities especially if it is properly designed. It does not only enable staff and care providers to do a more efficient job but it has the potential to improve patient safety and enhance their experience. However, it is not a standalone because there is an interplay between the building itself, its layout and the work happening within the walls that determinate the overall quality. The work flow and care delivery process needs to be in harmony with the choreography of patients as they interact with the building and the caregivers.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence-based design (EBD) is more than narrowing it down and only focusing on scientific research affecting the built environment. It is an important and rich tool that can improve the lives of many patients around the world, people in need of both physical- and mental health care. EBD can improve our current systems and develop our built environment into a more rewarding structure.

Stress is something that we have all, more or less, experienced in our lifetime and it is a result from any situation that requires behavioural adjustment. That can be invasion of privacy, feelings of helplessness, no control over noise and surroundings, separation from family or familiar things/surroundings, pain, and loss of control over events and the immediate environment. But some people, like DV victims, experience stress more than “normal” because they experience many of the examples mentioned above at the same time and for longer periods.<sup>3</sup>

When someone is stressed, their muscle tension increases and all forms of pain are worsened because the hormones that the body produces during stressful periods lower the threshold for pain. Blood pressure and respiration increase, and the overproduction of stress hormones can cause many complications such as depression, insomnia, cardiac arrhythmias as well as delay wound healing (KiecoltGlaser 1998). The negative effects of stress can cause long term harm and they can be measured hours and days after the occurrence of a stressful event. When being exposed to many stressful episodes, stress can impact the immune system which in this case affects the body as a whole.<sup>1</sup> This is one of perhaps the most compelling reasons why EBD is important and designing environments that reduce stress should be a priority in shelter design. Helping DV victims relax and feel comfortable while offering services to get them out in society again should be a human right.



Illustration by danner.dk

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evidence-based\\_design](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evidence-based_design)  
<sup>2</sup> [https://www.healthdesign.org/sites/default/files/Malkin\\_CH1.pdf](https://www.healthdesign.org/sites/default/files/Malkin_CH1.pdf)  
<sup>3</sup> [https://www.healthdesign.org/sites/default/files/Malkin\\_CH1.pdf](https://www.healthdesign.org/sites/default/files/Malkin_CH1.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.healthdesign.org/sites/default/files/Malkin\\_CH1.pdf](https://www.healthdesign.org/sites/default/files/Malkin_CH1.pdf)

## 4.2 Women only spaces

In a research document “The Importance of Women Only Spaces” published by Inspiring change Manchester and Women’s voices, a group of women were asked three questions around if women only spaces were needed and if so why. The key themes that were mostly brought up and discussed were safety, understanding, and judgement. Women only spaces allowed these women to feel safer, more understood and less judged. “Safe space” was a word that many women referred to when discussing women only spaces, and it is no surprise since gender-based violence affects women disproportionately. “In the UK in 2020, 92% of defendants in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were male, with 77% of the victims being female” (CSEW, 2020).

*“A place to speak with no danger or backlash”*

*“[Women need to be] ...given a voice and a space to express themselves, where they feel they aren’t being judged by men”*

*“If I went somewhere else, they wouldn’t have understood the situation”*

*“be heard, and have no judgements from anywhere or anything, in a judgemental world”*

*“...men would not have a strong understanding of women’s experiences and emotions in the same way other women could.”*

*“we get information from these places, that we wouldn’t necessarily know”*

*“need other women to guide them and help break the cycle”*

The quotes shown are taken from the discussions lead by Women’s’ Voices Manchester, highlighting the importance of women only spaces. So how do we design these spaces? One of the most important elements raised is including women and giving them a voice. If possible during the design, it would be very beneficial for both parties to involve women with lived experience in the design process of women only spaces (WOS). However, not all WOS are the same, for instance it can be harder to involve women when designing a shelter for DV victims. The involvement can be both through formal research, but also interviews and speaking to the women about their needs and experiences. By giving them a sense of control and ownership over the space and empowering them, the women will feel heard and cared for.<sup>1</sup>

The ability to feel safe, not judged and heard within these spaces can be influenced by the physical environment. The environment should feel like how one would their home to feel, home-ly and welcoming. A comfortable and warm space, a place that “immediately [makes you] feel at home”. Equally, it is important to consider a space for these women’s children, by providing childcare needs it will allow the women to focus on getting the support and help they need while feeling content that there is also a safe space for their children.<sup>2</sup>

The staff providing these services in the shelter or any women only space need to approach these conversations in a friendly and sensitive manner, everything that is happening in these spaces and within the borders should be explained clearly. For example what these spaces are for, how the women can access them, and what they will gain from going along. It is important to be clear from the very beginning and make the environment within feel safe and familiar. Another way to do that is by having female only staff and creating a feeling of “sisterhood”. This also reflects the reasons why women-only spaces are needed and desired by so many. Again, the feeling of safety, not being judged and instead understood and cared for. Even the high chance of sharing similarities and experiences.<sup>3</sup>



Fig 17: Women only space in London, the UK

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd\\_category\\_id=333&wpfd\\_file\\_id=7193&token=5ac6c26b8c4088f120fd2fc224b4c46a&preview=1](https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=333&wpfd_file_id=7193&token=5ac6c26b8c4088f120fd2fc224b4c46a&preview=1)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd\\_category\\_id=333&wpfd\\_file\\_id=7193&token=5ac6c26b8c4088f120fd2fc224b4c46a&preview=1](https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=333&wpfd_file_id=7193&token=5ac6c26b8c4088f120fd2fc224b4c46a&preview=1)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd\\_category\\_id=333&wpfd\\_file\\_id=7193&token=5ac6c26b8c4088f120fd2fc224b4c46a&preview=1](https://www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/wp-admin/admin-ajax.php?juwpfisadmin=false&action=wpfd&task=file.download&wpfd_category_id=333&wpfd_file_id=7193&token=5ac6c26b8c4088f120fd2fc224b4c46a&preview=1)



## 4.3 Third space environments

Defined by urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg, a third space environment is an informal public gathering place that serves the community. The first place is the home, it is a private space that you have full control over, the second space is work which offers a more structured and serious social experience, an experience that gives you back in form of, for example, a salary (economical growth). The third space is the in-between, it offers a more relaxed public environment where people can meet in a non-official way and interact in a range of different manners.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to offer the women at a DV shelter the same freedom and opportunities. All these three different types of spaces are important to every human being. Nobody wants to feel trapped in an enclosed space behind walls, a prison-like building confined from the world - even endangered individuals. The different spaces and the change of environment will give a sense of normality and routine, it is essential to make flexibility an important concept while designing women only spaces - especially shelters.

The first place is the home. Shelters provide emergency and temporary housing for women who are in danger and are looking for a safe place to turn to. Different shelters offer different types of housing, however giving the women a home is considered the first place for them where they regain ownership. The second place is work. In this case work is their journey towards healing and independence. That can be through for example therapy, legal assistance and counselling. A more structured social experience, usually 1 to 1 or in group, where they regain empowerment and mental health care. The third space is still possible in a shelter, however third space environments can vary in size and function. More public third space environments could be, shared kitchens and "living rooms" that create homely and relaxed atmospheres giving the opportunity to meet and socialise.

Courtyards and parks are also third spaces, more open and green giving different types of opportunities to both the women and their children. The laundry room could also be a third space, allowing unplanned meetings and conversations between the residents. Lastly, the different activities and services provided by the shelter are also third spaces. Not necessarily the more structured activities such as group counselling but creative and rehabilitating activities such as yoga and art class. Third spaces allow the women to have spontaneous encounters which is important since it gives them a sense of ordinariness and does not isolate them into their apartments and make them feel alone.

*"I support the woman in her efforts to structure and understand her everyday life. Once she has got the outer chaos under control, it's easier to work on the chaos inside her. This is fundamental to any progress."* SOCIAL WORKER, DANNER

<sup>1</sup> <https://perfectdailygrind.com/2021/06/the-third-place/>

## 4.4 Designing supportive environments for victims of domestic abuse

Domestic violence shelters should be designed to have the qualities to be able to support the victims and their children. A shelter needs to be much more than a room behind a closed door - it is not the end but the beginning of a journey to recovery. There is an option of working closely with multiple organisations to provide the best care and resources possible. However, shelters must be able to provide for the following needs of domestic violence victims:

### Safety and security

While safety is a keyword in designing shelters for women, it is important to keep in mind that safety doesn't mean segregation. Driving them out from the city scene and society is never an option because being a survivor of domestic violence and abuse is nothing one should be ashamed of. Society should not hide these women but instead help them integrate and build themselves back again. While this is an important detail to keep in mind, one should not shut their eyes on the danger that these women face after leaving their abusers. It is common knowledge that many of the abusers try to locate their victims again and engage in retaliation which can potentially lead to major complications. In worst case scenario, it can lead to the murder of the victim. Today, many shelters are anonymous and hide behind typical building façades or old countryside houses mainly for the residents' safety.<sup>1</sup>

- In relation to the design of residential environments for victims, creating a safe and secure environment helps to meet the primary concern of these individuals. Open locations are not a safe solution but a combination of smart security systems, many layers of security and a plan of integration would make a good start. Shelters and supportive housing staff must also take measures to keep information about domestic violence victims secure and confidential at all times.<sup>2</sup>

- With legal permission, staff can install security cameras outside of the shelter in order to deter abusers from entering the facility or lingering around it, creating fear. Cameras or any other type of surveillance should not be present inside of the facility, it is not a prison but a temporary home to grow in.<sup>3</sup>

- The area surrounding the facility should be well lit and provide clear and open paths from and to the building. The journey from the vehicle to the facility's entrance can be one of the most perilous parts of going out or coming home. Other security solutions that can shelter the victims from any potential danger are also good to take into consideration such as different ways of entering the building.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

- A private outdoor area for the women and children that is not visible from the street. It needs to be both visually and physically secure. This can be achieved with an opaque fence of adequate height. Through design and colour, the fence could have a different attitude to not create an unpleasant environment for the residents. Outdoor space could potentially be a courtyard or smaller park, these spaces would feel much more secure if they were surrounded by for instance buildings or trees. The feeling of something unexpected happening or being out in the open does not bring these women security but anxiety and worry.<sup>1</sup>

- "A prominent check-in desk that is staffed 24/7 can also be a deterrent to abusers seeking retaliation. Even if a facility's location is not secret, staff presence combined with active and passive security measures can create a safe environment for residents" (Goodman & Epstein, 2008; Grieder & Chanmugam, 2013; WSCADV & Mahlum, 2012).

- In many cases, these women want to keep in contact and keep meeting their family and friends. Therefore, there needs to be a safe ground and possibility of doing that within the shelter. A neutral meeting room is a good option but it is important to not give the guests access to private living areas and only allow these gatherings to take place in the specified spaces.<sup>2</sup>

- While security is vital and necessary, it doesn't mean that these features have to resemble an oppressive, prison-like environment. The facility and spaces within still need to look attractive and beautiful. It is a priority that the environment and living standard meets a high quality level because it all plays a meaningful role in the rehabilitation process.<sup>3</sup>

- Colour is a powerful tool. To avoid a hospital or prison-like facility, colour could be a way to make it easier for the residents to navigate themselves around the spaces. By specifying different colours for various parts of the building and using prominent artwork, the residents will find it easier to move around the residence. Especially if the residents are new to the space plan and need to familiarise themselves with the various spaces.<sup>4</sup>

- Private and public should be separated, not only the spaces but also the corridors, hallways etc. to create a stronger sense of security. For example, the public living rooms should be separated from the counselling rooms.<sup>5</sup>

- Ownership is a powerful feeling that also gives a sense of security. The women have the right to feel an ownership over their space, by giving each one of them the right to their own space this can be fulfilled.<sup>6</sup>

*"[My abusive partner] knows where my mother lives, where my family lives. I feel safer at the shelter than I do with my family"*

-VICTIM, SAFE HORIZON

<sup>1</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

- Abundant daylight and views to an outdoor space promotes wellness. Rooms, windows - and skylights could be designed to maximise natural daylight by being placed strategically throughout the building, creating a connection between the inside and outside while still preserving a sense of security. An increase in views of nature and trees does also contribute in feeling both secure and promoting wellness. However, it is important to keep in mind that too much visual access between the public and the shelter can make someone who is in danger or recovering from trauma feel uncomfortable. This connection needs to be created in a smart and thoughtful manner.<sup>1</sup>

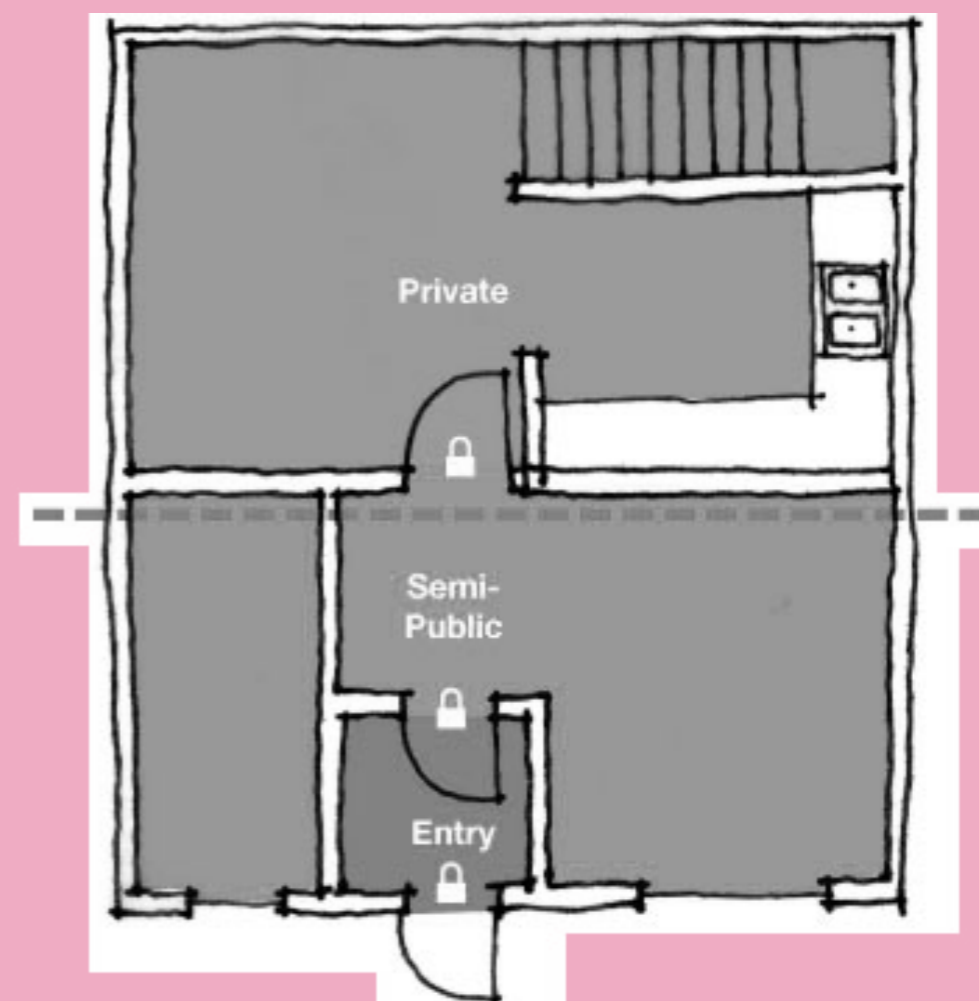


Fig 18: Safety diagram by Building Dignity

<sup>1</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

## Counselling & therapy services

Women and children who have experienced domestic violence are in need of therapy and counselling sessions that should be offered by the shelter. These spaces can be accommodated through office spaces, quiet rooms, group rooms or through a collaboration with other organisations/governmental institutions. These spaces can also have other purposes. For instance, quiet areas also provide a private space for women to meditate, think and give them a chance to re-group. These spaces integrate comfort in diverse ways, empathetic design is well-needed and highly appreciated in the rehabilitation process that the survivors go through.

We should not underestimate the power of a soothing colour palette and aesthetically pleasing interior furnishing. A space that has been created in a thoughtful way, away from traffic areas and every-day life, encourages self-reflection and reduces stress. To maximise the feeling of tranquillity, these spaces should have acoustical design solutions to minimise the noise within the room. But also, the travel of the sounds to and from the room. It is also beneficial to label the rooms to make sure that they are surely consistently being used for their sole purpose.<sup>1</sup>

## A sense of community

Creating a strong sense of community in the shelter can empower the residents and make them feel less alone and isolated. Especially since the women can connect with each other over shared trauma and experiences, learning from each other's stories is a vital part of the healing and empowerment process. When the women feel safe with each other and feel like they are a community, this will open the door to group counselling and therapy. Which is also a very beneficial tool to use in the rehabilitation journey to independence. Through careful design of communal areas, the goal is to create interaction among the residents and a sense of familiarity. But everything needs to be flexible. Visual access throughout the building enhances the anatomy, allowing the residents to choose when to interact and with whom is crucial to their self determination. It is appreciated to know and see who is in the space they are about to enter before entering it, this could be designed through interior windows, cut outs or open sight lines. Visual access is also a tool for residents with disabilities who might be deaf, struggle with hearing difficulties or use sign language to communicate.<sup>2</sup>

Offering a variety of seating options can allow residents to choose when to participate in the larger group activities. Some women may not be emotionally or mentally ready to socialise with others. Therefore, by offering nooks and smaller seating areas, these women are able to sit around the edges of groups, enabling them to choose their level of participation within the larger group. Specifying flexible seating that can be rearranged and adapted to the group's needs is important. Allowing residents to have control over group spaces encourages the empowerment process while also accommodating large and small groups. Providing a variety of group rooms also encourages various activities. Rooms for arts and crafts, group quiet areas, libraries, living rooms, and kitchens can allow residents to mingle with various different groups while offering choices that victims may have been previously denied.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://buildingdignity.wscadv.org/communal-space/empower/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight\\_VDV-1.pdf](http://designresourcesforhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Spotlight_VDV-1.pdf)

## Privacy and Flexibility

It is important that shelters cultivate a sense of community inside but the spatial means of privacy should also be taken into consideration. The challenge is creating harmony and achieving "the right amount" of both. This could be achieved through flexibility and allowing women to choose the level of interaction and engagement that works for them. Interacting with other women, sharing a space together and encouraging a break from the isolation that comes from abuse is one of the goals. However, access to a private space is equally important for women - it makes them feel independent, comfortable and secure. A shelter should give these women individual flexibility to personalise their space and make it their own. Many survivors may have a triggered relationship with their home, therefore by helping them transition and customise their new place it will make them reclaim the sense of belonging that was eroded by the abuser. Giving control over temperature, lighting levels (natural and artificial), moveable furniture layout and the room to move and live freely could help with the customisation of the space while making it feel more like "home". Mobile furniture creates flexible use of space, this is important specially for parents with children who need smaller and distraction free spaces to play, connect and read with their children. Instead of having every seat oriented towards one point, small seating groups would make more sense. With moveable furniture, communal areas could also easily be transformed into support groups or gathering spaces for adults.<sup>1</sup> Another way to increase the option of privacy is through providing quiet spaces. These spaces are appreciated by both children and adults - they are like a second living room but more quiet and individual with no distraction. Residents should have the option to retreat from larger groups and situations while still being in a semi-public space. Having window seats or alcoves allows the residents to create their own private spaces within the public space while still being connected to the larger communal space.<sup>2</sup>

Laundry and garbage rooms should be easily accessible within the shelter and the residents especially the ones with children have high laundry needs. These facilities are better placed on the ground floor than, for instance, in the basement, so they do not cause a challenge for residents with mobility problems or residents who need to bring their small children with them alongside their garbage or laundry basket.

## Empowerment

The concept of empowerment was first developed in the context of community psychology and it was presented as an alternative to the "needs versus rights" dialectic. There was a lot of criticism around the focus on solely the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups and on the other hand, the same criticism took place on the concept of primarily focusing on the rights. Empowerment transcends the needs vs rights issue by allowing providers to enhance their services and give the possibility to people to control their own lives. It also allows us to see vulnerable people as full human beings who have both rights and needs.<sup>3</sup>

*"To be heard and have no judgement from anywhere or anything, in a judgemental world"*

-VICTIM, INSPIRING CHANGE MANCHESTER

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stantec.com/en/ideas/better-than-before-3-ways-design-can-ease-the-transition-to-safety-for-survivors-of-abuse>

<sup>2</sup> <https://buildingdignity.wscadv.org/communal-space/empower/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon\\_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

The shelter environment itself may present challenges. By entering a shelter, particularly if it is in a confidential and secluded location, means a decrease in support from a system and network outside of the shelter. That could be informal support from friends and family. Therefore, many women find it hard to maintain the same healthy and close relationships since (1) shelter policies to maintain confidentiality and safety make it difficult and (2) the shelter is secluded.<sup>1</sup> To empower the survivors, it is important to give them the option to still maintain relationships with whom they want as long as it does not go against safety policies. By not isolating the shelter and moving it outside the city, one could argue that this is a way to empower the survivors and still make them feel a part of something bigger - society. There is no shame in seeking help and support, they should not feel alienated for practising their right to shelter when in danger. The survivors should instead be celebrated for their bravery and empowered within our societies.

Different shelters around the world have different regulations and policies, but one rule that many share in common is setting curfews.<sup>2</sup> Curfews, among other policies do restrict the residents and make them feel less empowered and independent to do what they please. We all agree that shelters should provide protection and safety but it should absolutely not feel like a prison but instead like a safe home. Of course, it is important to be aware of the policies but both formal and informal social support do play an important role in for example protecting against negative consequences of intimate partner violence (IPV) such as anxiety and depression (e.g., Carlson et al., 2002).

Another factor that makes shelters and people living/working there feel less empowered is the shelters' constant challenge of getting enough funding. In many areas around the world, shelters started as independent organisations run by volunteers but with time this supportive system has integrated within the governments. Furthermore, many shelters still struggle with providing quality resources due to the lack of funding and care by higher institutions. The funding could be used to hire and educate staff to be better qualified therefore providing better care. It could be used for resources, maintenance and further development of both the property and services.<sup>3</sup>

Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) developed an empowerment model called The Empowerment Process Model and it was mainly for women who have experienced IPV. They define empowerment as:

“An iterative process in which a person who lacks power sets a personally meaningful goal oriented toward increasing power, takes action toward that goal, and observes and reflects on the impact of this action, drawing on his or her evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence related to the goal. Social context influences all six process components and the links among them” (Cattaneo, Chapman, 2010).

There are three interconnected elements in their model: (1) defining/refining a meaningful, power-oriented goal and objective, (2) carrying out actions towards achieving the goal, and (3) observing and reflecting on one's current situation, and the impact of their actions in relation to goal achievement (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010). This model is used to create meaningful, personal and power-oriented goals that differ from person to person. The Empowerment Process Model recognizes that every individual is different and empowerment is an ongoing circular process containing constant goal-oriented behaviour, evaluation and goal setting.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon\\_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

<sup>2</sup> [https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon\\_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

<sup>3</sup> [https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon\\_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

<sup>4</sup> [https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon\\_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1993/32011/Kenyon_Katherine.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)

## Outdoor spaces and spaces for children

As mentioned in this report, outdoor spaces and gardens are healing factors and can offer solace while facilitating other activities such as outdoor therapy sessions, art therapy, exterior group work and giving the residents the option to garden. Outdoor spaces - whether it is a garden, park or playground - offer children a whole different experience and opportunity to play, reflect, connect and become a private space for healthy activity. Research has shown that access to views of trees and nature, the feeling of sunshine and being outdoors can provide healing effects to those in need of recovering from trauma (Barnes, Cooper, 1999).

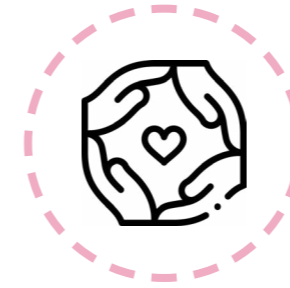
Daylight brings a lot of comfort to the residents and good daylight design can also lead to low energy use and a more positive environment. Outdoor areas should be placed to receive optimal light during the day creating a warm atmosphere, but still protected and ready to shelter from snow, wind and rains.

This type of facility cannot avoid dealing with children, spaces and services for children need to exist in terms of providing stable and inclusive spaces. Providing structured activities to learn and play and offering opportunities for physical activities, especially in the outdoors will help these children to deal with their trauma and work towards healing. Children should feel nurtured and cared for if the childcare is of good quality and that will promote a healthy and resilient environment for their growth and development. In turn, their mothers will feel at peace knowing that their children are being taken care of and being safe. The environment needs to feel caring and positive to allow the parent to focus on meeting their own goals.<sup>1</sup>

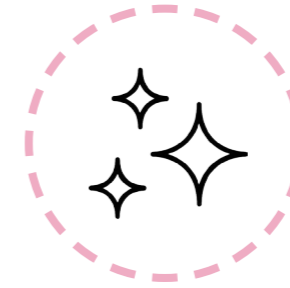
Illustration by danner.dk



## 4.5 Design principles



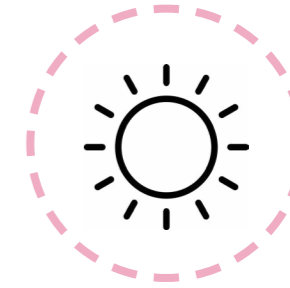
SENSE OF  
COMMUNITY



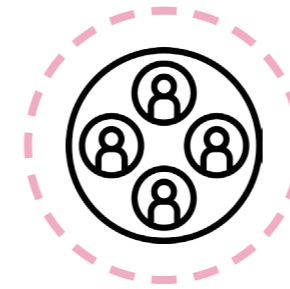
HIGH QUALITY OF  
LIFE & DESIGN



SECURITY



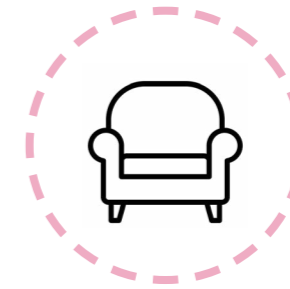
ACCESS TO  
DAYLIGHT



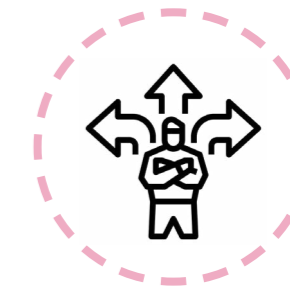
PRIVATE & PUBLIC  
SPACES



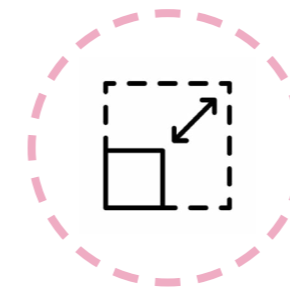
INCLUSIVITY



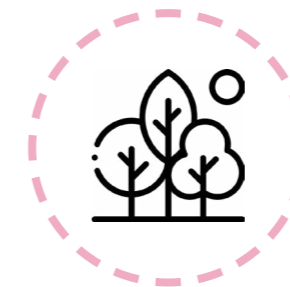
FLEXIBLE  
FURNISHING



FLEXIBILITY & THE  
FREEDOM TO CHOOSE



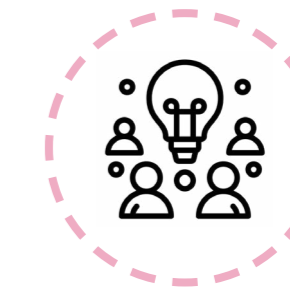
VARIETY IN SCALE  
& DESIGN



ACCESS TO  
GREEN SPACES



CHILD CARE



CREATIVE WAYS OF  
REHABILITATION

## 4.6 Challenges

There are many challenges that come with designing a shelter. One of the hardest challenges is the knowledge and education gap, shelters have been ignored and not developed enough by research and the system itself. And that is because of several reasons; these facilities house a small number of residents for a specific period of time and the complex collaboration many shelters have with so many different organisations and agencies. As a result of these reasons, among others, these facilities tend to be nearly invisible in society and they receive little attention and minimal funding. On top of that, many shelters don't have enough resources and the conditions of them are far from ideal. The biggest hardship shelters experience is financial which affects the services and resources they provide as well as their daily operations - from maintaining and training their staff to providing the best and most necessary services to the victims and their needs. As a result, it is only the victims who seek refuge who suffer the consequences. Furthermore, domestic violence is a social problem but there is a lack of education and knowledge from the public view about it or the need for shelters.<sup>1</sup> The lack of knowledge is also among the victims of abuse themselves, many are unaware of their rights and the existing system that is there to help them. Social norms and structures play a role in reducing women's access to support services as well.<sup>2</sup>

In many areas of the world, the availability and coverage of safe shelter spaces is limited. Usually, the demand for shelter services is too high and it exceeds the availability, making it hard for victims to seek urgent help when needed. Shelters are not as available as one would wish, they remain few to none and often limited to a certain place like the capital city or urban areas. According to the 3rd Global Shelter Count in 2011, in one single day, 56,308 women and 39,139 children were in need of shelter because of domestic violence in 36 countries across the world and 12,342 of these women and children were turned away due to limited space and resources. It is a large number, thinking about how life threatening domestic violence is. Even in countries with decent shelter services, there is still a particular shortage of services in rural and remote areas affecting women from smaller communities. Many of these women may already be marginalised and isolated from available services and assistance. In addition to the limited physical facilities, the survivors in rural areas are even more vulnerable since they may live far away from family members and friends, lack of anonymity when attempting to escape and seek support, less access to childcare, services, transportation and job opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

Globally, many shelters are not developed enough and remain in the early stages and do not cater for a diverse group of women. For example women who live with a physical and cognitive disability, teens/ adolescents, older women, undocumented women, migrant/refugees as well as women from ethnic and other marginalised groups. The challenges that these women face could for instance be language barriers, lack of accessibility, restrictive access to children of a certain age or insufficient knowledge by the staff.<sup>4</sup>

*"I did consider staying with friends or moving back with my mum , but I didn't want to be a burden to anyone"*

*"It's difficult for people to give you shelter when you have three kids. You don't want to end up in the streets. I could stay or leave them at my aunt's house but I was just using too much space."*

-VICTIMS, SAFE HORIZON

<sup>1</sup> <http://criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com/crime/domestic-violence/the-shelter-movement/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1360-main-challenges.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1360-main-challenges.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1360-main-challenges.html>

A big number of victims of domestic violence are economically dependent of their abuser or other family members and they are often faced with challenges in many settings when leaving the shelter without a secure plan for the future. Ensuring that these women and their children are able to access affordable housing after leaving the shelter is always a challenge and the risk of becoming homeless is big. Lack of second-stage shelter and housing force many of these victims to either return to their abuser or choose to not seek help at all. The access to affordable housing is limited, it is either not existent or it lacks the availability and therefore does not meet the demand.

Lastly, the shelters are not thought-through or modern enough to offer a homely and welcoming space that helps these women heal. Many shelters are either very old or buildings built for other purposes but turned into shelters because (1) it is cheap and (2) very convenient. They lack identity, quality and originality and therefore do not serve their purpose to the fullest.<sup>1</sup>



Illustration by danner.dk

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/1360-main-challenges.html>

## 5.1 Systems & work in Sweden

The goal of Swedish gender equality policy is for men and women to have the same power and opportunities to shape society and their own lives. Both should have the same control and freedom to shape and build their lives however they please - this is followed by four sub-goals: equal distribution of power and influence, economical equality, equal distribution of unpaid work like domestic home and care work and lastly focus on how men's violence against women should end.

Sweden has a relatively large support system for crime victims in general, the support involves both authorities and different organisations across the nation. Stödcentrum or support centres as they are called can be found all over the country and the work they do is in collaboration with Social Services and the Police authority. They offer support to mainly young victims in many different cases including domestic violence and sexual offenses. In addition, there are several different organisations and projects in Sweden that work in different ways to increase gender equality and they do preventative work against violence, with focus on societal norms and gender-based violence.<sup>1</sup>

Roks is the national organisation for women's and girls' shelters in Sweden, they focus mostly on work surrounding domestic violence and gender-based violence. Roks is a politically and religiously independent organisation with about 120 member shelters that provide support and protection for girls, women and children who have been subjected to violence by their partner. They also work to further support the common interest of emergency shelters and services in Sweden.<sup>2</sup>

Unizon is another politically and religiously independent organisation that brings together over 130 women's and girls' shelters, they work to support an equal society free from gender-based or any sort of violence. Unizon works to support and protect victims of abuse as well as vulnerable young people in society; they offer protection and help of high quality, regardless of background or life-situation. In addition to the work they do with the victims, Unizon offers member training to help ensure the quality and develop the emergency services across the country. By being a common voice for the emergency services, Unizon aims to influence politicians, authorities and other actors to take responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, the general work conducted in Sweden against violence, more specifically violence in close relationships is relatively well developed and exists throughout the whole country. Even though men don't seek help as much or often, there is thought-through and well structured assistance provided for perpetrators, because the work needs to be done from both sides and it will benefit the victims largely in the end. In recent years, there have been high stakes for research to understand these issues more but also much greater involvement from society against them. The media sheds more attention against a number of violence cases and that has created debates about the issues existing in society in terms of how to protect women who are exposed to violence etc. This has resulted in increased pressure on police and politicians to engage more with the public.<sup>4</sup>



Fig 19:

Above you can see a map showcasing DV shelters that exist in Malmö alone. All of these shelters have emergency housing. Malmö is also home to other support systems for women that don't have housing but offer other services including legal support. (ROKS, 2022)

Red - Kvinnojouren Öresund, Ungdomsjouren Öresund, Malmö Kvinnojour

Purple - FemCenter

Green - Kriscentrum for women in Malmö, Trans- och tjejjouren i Malmö

1 [https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017\\_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf](https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf)

2 [https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017\\_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf](https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf)

3 [https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017\\_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf](https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf)

4 [https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017\\_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf](https://bra.se/download/18.62fc8fb415c2ea10693349a/1496242938276/2017_K%C3%A6restevold.pdf)

## 5.2 Design site

The neighbourhood needs to be studied carefully and have the ability to assess and support the regaining residents' economical opportunities, independence and social connections. When looking for a site I started asking myself a few questions; is there access to public transportation? Health care? Groceries? Greenery? Any education and recreational facilities for the children? Is this area car dominated or pedestrian/bike friendly? Is it safe? What resources are nearby? Is the site big enough to bring and accommodate their own resources? Many important questions that had to be answered before choosing a site.

The site environment should be secure and have clear and defined boundaries between the shelter itself and the surrounding neighbourhood. Limited visibility from the public into the interior protects the residents' privacy, the outdoor spaces should also be protected allowing parents to supervise their children. The exterior of the site should be well lit, not only for security purposes but to also extend the opportunities for use during the evening.

The criteria for site selection was established according to the purpose of the shelter itself and the different design topics discussed in this report. The purpose and goal of a shelter is to provide a safe space and holistic healing for the residents. Having nature around the site in one way or another - that being a park or a generous amount of trees - is an important criteria that I was thinking about when deciding about the site. As well as accessibility to everyday necessities and qualities that would make the site more welcoming and homely such as access to public transport and the site being pedestrian friendly. It is important that the site can satisfy the needs of the survivors but also the programmatic requirements of the user.

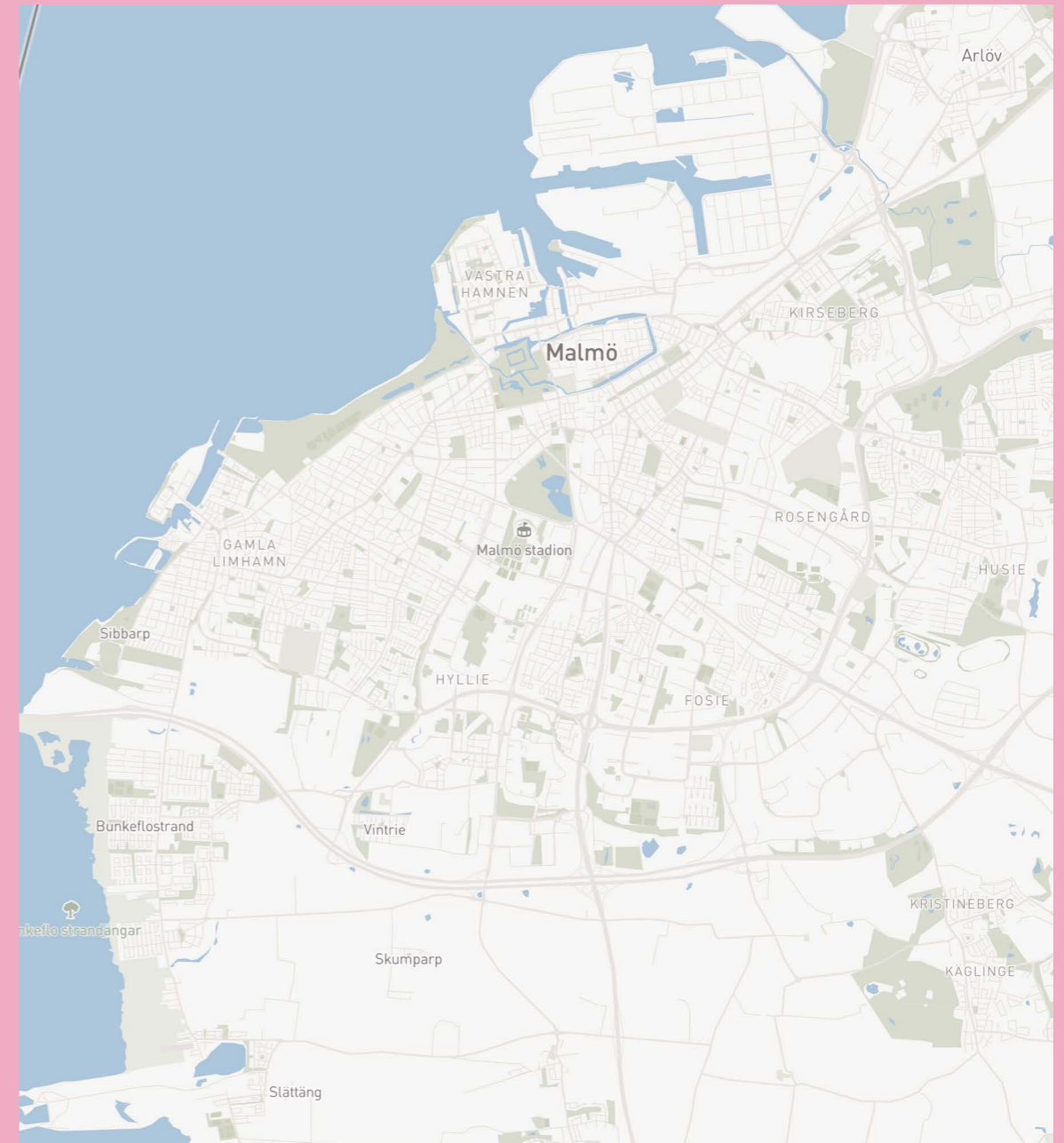


Fig 20: Map of Malmö City, Sweden



## 5.7 Site background & History

Norra Sorgenfri is a developing district with an attractive central position in east Malmö. The exciting combination of rich industrial heritage and creative hubs in the area play a vital role in the development of a new unique quarter in the city. Right now, there are several projects going on aiming to create more residential units to host the fast growing population of Malmö. There is a new shift in the area, aged and raw industrial buildings are being exchanged to sustainable residential areas making it a desirable sector of the future.

With around 40 ha and being very close to the densely populated centre the area belongs to the Central district of the city but also has strong ties to the historic part of the inner city, the eastern parts of Malmö and Rosengård. The degree of exploitation in the area is relatively low today with a large proportion of undeveloped areas due to the industrial character but the area's strategic location gives Norra Sorgenfri great potential for development. Industrigatan on the east-west and other lanes on that side can help tie the centre and the eastern parts together to make mobility easier throughout the city. The northern parts of Sorgenfri are Malmö's oldest industrial quarters which went through great changes since the 1990s. The area that today consists of Norra Sorgenfri was until the 1800s part of the city's pastures until the 19th century when the land was cultivated and there were several farms in the area that started to take place. Later in the 19th century, parallel roads were added and they divided the land into large, rectangular neighbourhoods that are still reflected in the city plan today.

The area held an important significance in the end of the 1940s; it was an important and active square where many residents of Malmö city spent their working days. The extensive demolitions in the area happened after 1990, but today you can see a part of the charming old industrial buildings still existing and being preserved for their cultural- and historical value. The mixture of old and new plays as a major advantage, this variety gives Sorgenfri a unique identity and appeal making it stand out from the other neighbourhoods.

There were about 40 different active actors and property owners in the area prior to the conversion of the old industrial districts. Today, the neighbourhood is characterised by small-scale businesses that have existed on the site for a long time, adding to Sorgenfri's current business area with about 2100 workplaces. Along that, there are smaller offices, schools, association premises as well as creative workshops.

The diversity and richness of the buildings have made the city want to preserve many of them for cultural and historical reasons but also because of the urban planning background and how they help tie the city and the area together. These buildings become an important resource to achieve the vision of a future Norra Sorgenfri as an exciting district with mixed buildings both in terms of age and architectural expression. In general, the buildings worthy of preservation in Norra Sorgenfri are of varying condition and status. Some of the buildings are dilapidated while others are in good condition, some have undergone many changes while others are well preserved. If handled correctly, the buildings can be adapted to new roles and needs at the same time as the cultural-historical values are taken into account and utilised. The area is relatively sparsely populated, which creates good conditions for combining new development with the conservation of existing structures. From a cultural perspective, the most valuable buildings are the oldest ones in addition to the street and neighbourhood structures, buildings with environmental values, cohesive industrial environments and the tram and bus stations.<sup>1</sup>



Fig 21: Site plan showcasing the site in Norra Sorgenfri

<sup>1</sup> <https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Stadsutvecklingsomraden/Sorgenfri/Hela-Sorgenfri-vaxer.html>

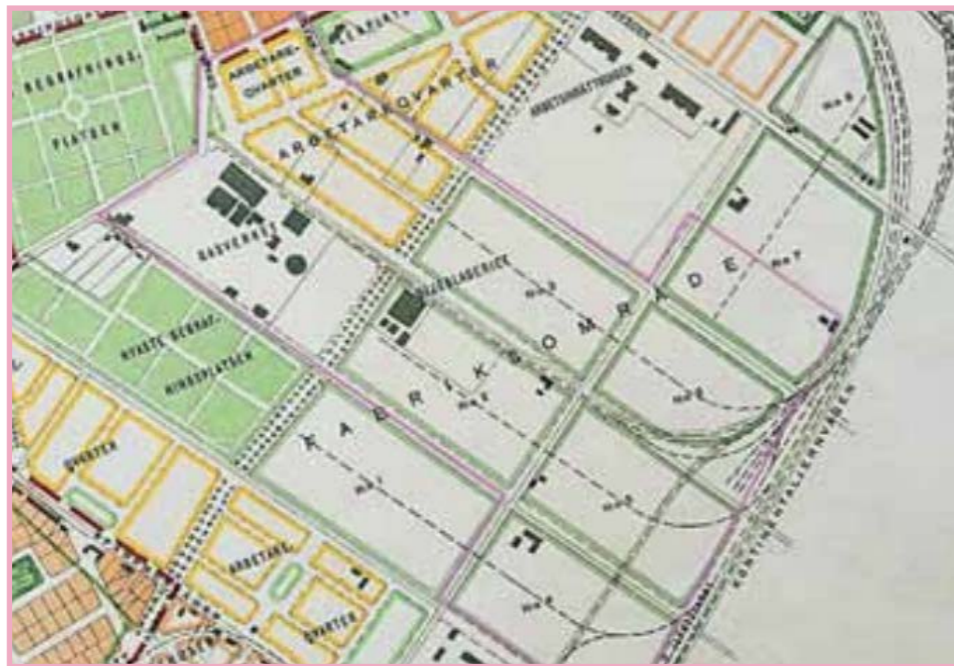


Fig 22: Historical images of the area

The expansion of the northern parts will mean major changes for the entire Sorgenfri. The entire area is approximately 40 hectares and divided into nine blocks and 38 properties, one block represents/ corresponds to Malmö's central areas. The nine blocks are large and all of them have great diversity of both buildings and contents. But despite the area's central location and long history, there are large areas that are still undeveloped waiting to be built. In conclusion, there are many attractions that would draw new developments into the area; the central location, the diversity of actors and businesses and the area's long history that gives many opportunities to an exciting and new urban development process.<sup>1</sup>

Sorgenfri is located in the east of Malmö and the northern parts of the old industrial districts are undergoing a transformation into a new residential area with a great variety of buildings and mixed forms of tenure for the different needs of the city. It is important to note that the new ongoing developments are given an opportunity and space to include sustainability, culture and community. Variety, diversity and human scale development are other important qualities taken into consideration into the development of the area. The transformation of Sorgenfri is not only driven by the city of Malmö but there is a great collaboration with construction-actors, property owners and other actors in the area. The development of the area would also help connect Malmö's eastern parts to the city centre. It would strengthen the city centre and make it branch out to the surrounding areas of the city. This is a long-term goal of the city of Malmö but it would surely lead to gradual positive change, where old businesses and properties would stay together with new functions and buildings.<sup>2</sup>

There is a common vision and a plan program that says that "Sorgenfri will gradually be developed into a part of the inner city, with a dense neighbourhood structure and mixed functions." (Malmö Stad, 2021)

The area has a rich presence of educational institutions; two primary schools for different grades (Rörsjöskolan), one high school (Rönnen) and a nursery. There are also different companies and smaller businesses as well as cultural activities. The department of roads, Swedish for Immigrants and the Migration Board are situated here as well. Generally, many of the necessities needed can be found in the area, there are several bus stations, sports facilities, offices and cultural spaces that are coming through. The greenery could be improved as well as markets and food businesses even though there is a very large supermarket in the area. Overall there are many new plans for Norra Sorgenfri that will help tie everything together and provide what is needed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Stadsutvecklingsomraden/Sorgenfri/Hela-Sorgenfri-vaxer.html>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Stadsutvecklingsomraden/Sorgenfri/Hela-Sorgenfri-vaxer.html>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Stadsutvecklingsomraden/Sorgenfri/Hela-Sorgenfri-vaxer.html>

## 5.5 Site (greenery, local amenities, roads, size, etc.)

Smedjan is a sub-area located in Norra Sorgenfri, more precisely between two main roads, Nobelvägen and Östra Farmvägen. It is a large quarter where the main roads are far away from the exact site but giving opportunity for public transport and closeness to the city. All land within the block is owned by private property owners today. There have been extensive demolition of older industrial buildings in the area, buildings that are seen of any cultural value and now there are several undeveloped properties in the area. Many of these undeveloped properties are located in Smedjan (Smedjan 14 and 15). Smedjan 15, the site I have chosen, is currently being used as ground parking for operations in the adjacent properties.

The quarter is in a central location in Malmö but the streets closest to the site, Celsiusgatan and Industrigatan, are fairly quiet and very bike/pedestrian friendly giving the area a welcoming and calm atmosphere. Rönnen is located straight in front of the site providing a very green and calming view but also a nursery for younger kids.

The planning area includes the properties Smedjan 8, 13 and 15, the site is located in number 13 while the other properties are of cultural-historical value and protected by the state. One of the buildings, Smedjan 13 is home to a gynaecologist making it a good opportunity to link the site to them. The site is fairly large and there are even plans by Malmö City to add a park. These are a few unofficial diagrams explaining the location, circulation, road-work as well as the greenery surrounding the site.



Fig 23: Diagram showcasing protected properties of cultural-historical value.



Fig 23: Location plan, the quarter Smedjan in Norra Sorgenfri is highlighted in pink.

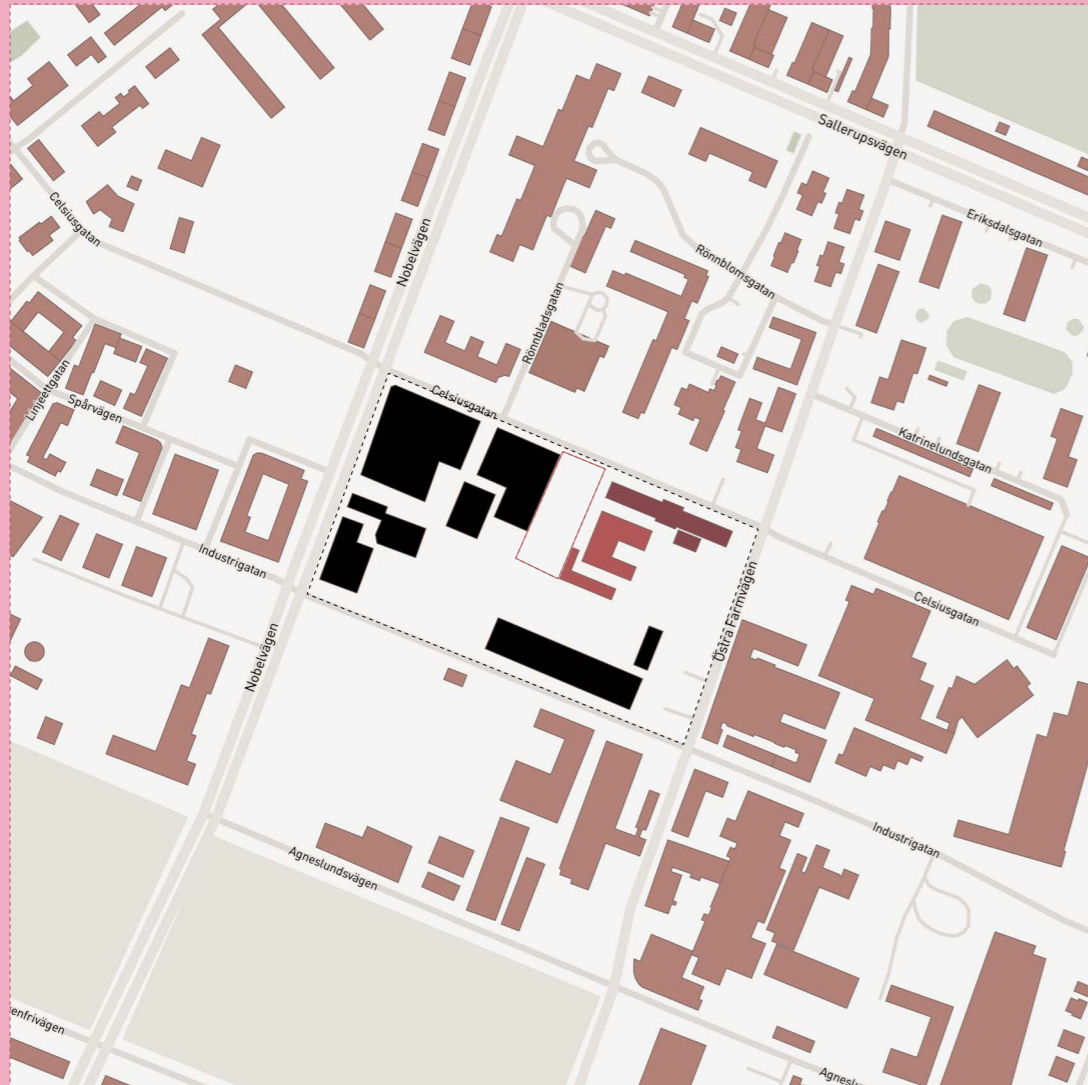


Fig 24: A zoomed in plan on the site Smedjan. The precise site is highlighted in red, surrounding buildings are in black and valuable buildings are in deep red.



Fig 25: Diagram showcasing local amenities and important spaces surrounding the site.

## 5.6 Site images



## 5.8 Character & Infrastructure

Norra Sorgenfri is one of Malmö's largest transformation areas and the renewal of the area is a high priority for Malmö City. The area's central location, unique character and generous size give it many different opportunities for development. Densification is one of the goals for the area, that could bring many benefits to the city, in terms of new typologies and businesses but also good environment and sustainable community buildings. The choices are endless but the idea simply put is for Norra Sorgenfri to gradually become a part of the inner city, a dense neighbourhood with a mix of housing and different industries. This is why Norra Sorgenfri is an ideal location for a shelter. It is an area that is waiting for something new and exciting to happen, through its diversity Norra Sorgenfri would make a perfect site for a new and challenging typology to take place. The core values in the area's development are diversity, small scale and variety. Small properties within each new neighbourhood is central to realising these core values. The same applies to a rich public life with shops, cafés and various activities on the ground floors of the properties.<sup>1</sup>

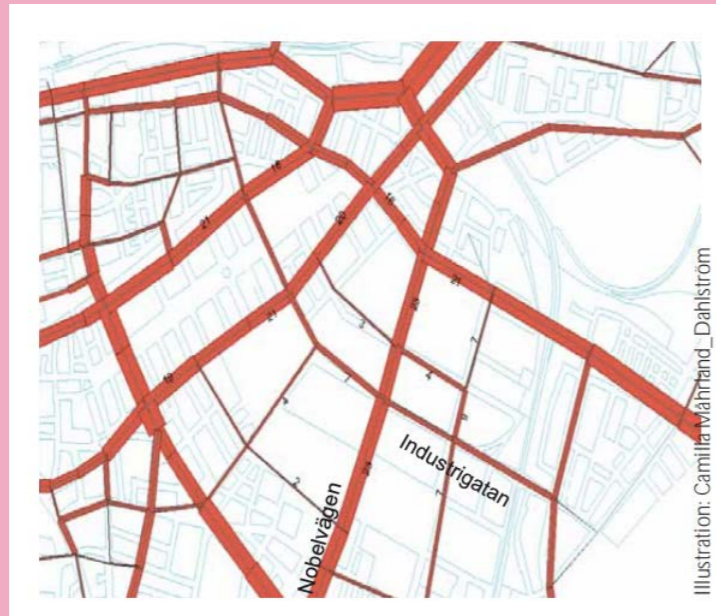
Norra Sorgenfri is Malmö's oldest industrial area with several important buildings worth preserving. Until today, the area has its own special old industrial character that gives it its identity. This identity could develop and become a part of the new Norra Sorgenfri that is being planned.

The streets in Norra Sorgenfri form a coarse mesh, sparse rectangular network around the large blocks. Nobelvägen and Östra Farmvägen are the two main streets that run in a north-south direction through the area. These streets are crossed in an east-west direction by Industrigatan, which forms the area's connecting backbone. Together, the streets form a clear grid where most noise comes from Nobelvägen, the most trafficked main street in the area. The eastern parts of Malmö are the parts of the city that have the largest traffic load. The major access roads pass through the district but the area is still pedestrian and bike-friendly. The cycle path network consists of a lane along Industrigatan and one along Östra Farmvägen. These are connected to the surrounding cycle paths along Sallerupsvägen and Föreningsgatan.<sup>2</sup>

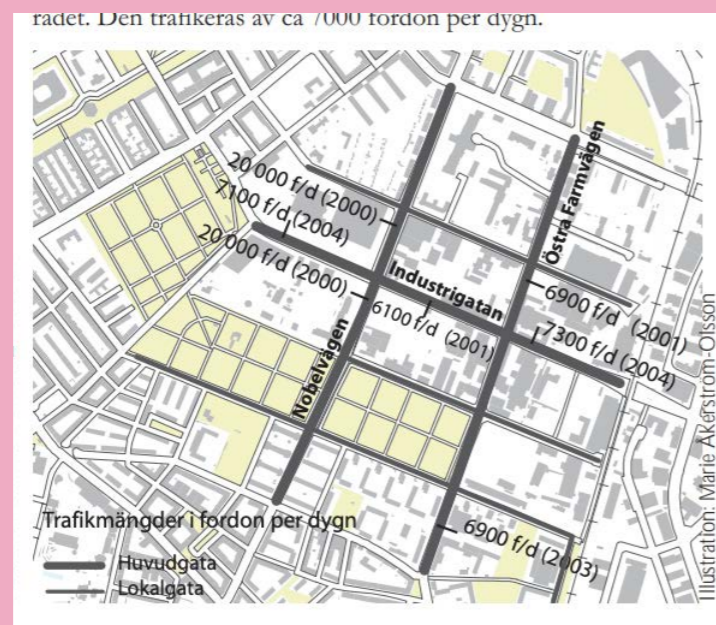
Industrigatan is being developed into an important lane between the city centre and the eastern districts and thus becomes the backbone of the area. In the western part of the route on the Spårvägen block lies a large bus garage building, which stopped operating in 2008 and is now planned to be released for other use. The building is planned to be developed into a sector-mixed meeting place for Malmö and the region with activities of a different nature such as trade, culture, sports, etc. Malmö City has many ideas for Norra Sorgenfri, it will become a lively and very diverse area which is why I think it would make the perfect site to welcome a DV shelter.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://malmo.se/download/18.af27481124e354c8f1800020125/1491302549563/Norra%20Sorgenfri%20planprogram\\_reviderat.pdf](https://malmo.se/download/18.af27481124e354c8f1800020125/1491302549563/Norra%20Sorgenfri%20planprogram_reviderat.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> [https://malmo.se/download/18.af27481124e354c8f1800020125/1491302549563/Norra%20Sorgenfri%20planprogram\\_reviderat.pdf](https://malmo.se/download/18.af27481124e354c8f1800020125/1491302549563/Norra%20Sorgenfri%20planprogram_reviderat.pdf)  
<sup>3</sup> [https://malmo.se/download/18.af27481124e354c8f1800020125/1491302549563/Norra%20Sorgenfri%20planprogram\\_reviderat.pdf](https://malmo.se/download/18.af27481124e354c8f1800020125/1491302549563/Norra%20Sorgenfri%20planprogram_reviderat.pdf)

Main car roads



Daily traffic



Bike roads

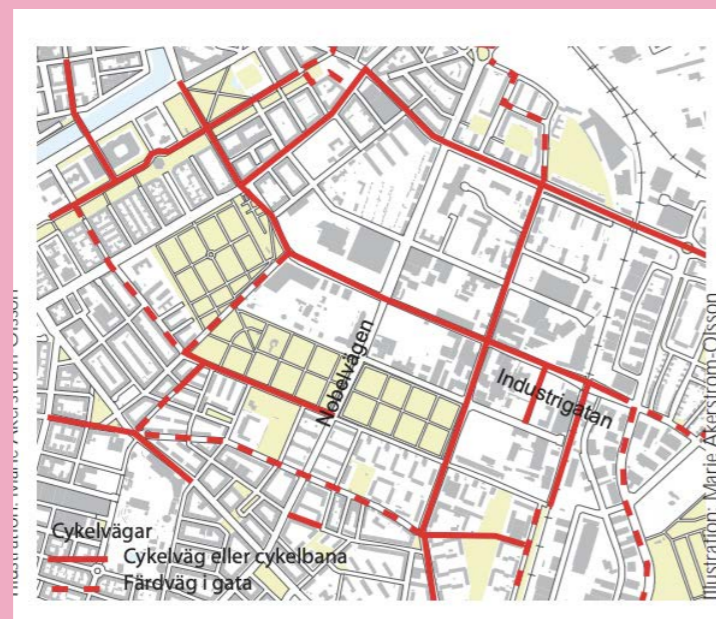


Fig 26: Diagrams by Malmö City explaining the infrastructure in Norra Sorgenfri



Fig 27: The infrastructure in Norra Sorgenfri, surrounding Smedjan.

## 5.9 Public life

Already today there are many activities and a rich cultural life that make the area an attractive place with a distinct character. There is a variety of large-scale manufacturing industries to small-scaled independent association activities coexisting. During the past few years, a large number of artists and creatives have emerged to the area making it even more diverse and attractive. There are still plenty of opportunities to create even more innovative and interesting cultural events and spaces because many properties are currently undeveloped, especially in the western part. There is a large group of visual artists and other creatives who have studios and showrooms in the area therefore the western part could be used for outdoor events increasing the opportunity for passers by and thus creating more interest in the area being a cultural hub. The area also contains a large number of old industrial buildings that can be used as premises for both visual art projects, performing arts and visual arts.

Leisure and recreational facilities do exist in the area today, like Rönnens Sporthall and other smaller sport facilities, restaurants, a few parks etc. but the plans for Norra Sorgenfri are way bigger. The opportunity for and areas for leisure activities are important for many Malmö residents, yet alone the residents at the DV Shelter. A leisure facility is proposed for one of the quarters in the area with a possibility to combine the facilities with public green spaces. The development of the bus garage in Spårvägen like mentioned before can transform into a leisure rich area with sports activities and, for example, a weekend market, art exhibition or music event. Many move through the area daily, especially during the day - by car, bike or foot so it is no surprise that Norra Sorgenfri would make a successful cultural hub in Malmö.

## 5.10 Green structure

The green structure together with buildings, streets and water make one of the city's basic building blocks. The green environments give identity and character to the city and function as a structuring and orienting element. In addition, the greenery makes the city more beautiful and more pleasant to live in. Norra Sorgenfri is located in a part of Malmö that is characterised by a great lack of green areas. The 40-hectare area has also a significant barrier to the connection between the inner city and natural areas on the outskirts of the city. "Exploitation of Norra Sorgenfri should be carried out so that two important goals for the Green Plan are achieved: create new greens and parks in a part of Malmö where there is a great shortage of such, and create conditions for connecting Bulltofta Stråket with the city centre." (Malmö City, 2021) This is a great opportunity to add a generous green area to the shelter since there is a big shortage and it will add a lot to the residents.

Within the area, there are no regular green areas or any clear interconnected green structure. That is an issue because an area this large needs green elements with access to the public. Since the character of the area is heavily industrial, there are many streets that even lack trees or any sort of greenery. But there are valuable green environments in the local area such as St. Paul's cemeteries, Zenith's colony areas, Kungsgatan's lush street environment and Rörsjöparken. The Green plan for Malmö 2003 states that large parts of the area around Sorgenfri have a shortage of green spaces. In the green model guideline of values, residents in Malmö need to have access to greenery such as neighbourhood parks, district parks, city parks and other larger nature and recreation areas within the city.

As mentioned previously in the report, green spaces are excellent environments for play, physical exercise and learning specially for children. Access to natural play areas has shown to positively affect children's movement and development. Children need space and the opportunity to play, run and move freely to become calm and harmonious. This is, of course, something to implement in the shelter but it is also important that the surrounding area offers the same opportunities. Green spaces can also become social and meeting spaces such as a square or smaller street. The various public rooms could be designed with different scales of greenery, from square space to relaxing park environments. In this way, the concept of accessibility is broadened in the sense that as many people as possible will be able to find "their" urban space and outdoor meeting room.<sup>1</sup>

According to research at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, it is important to strive for a variation of public spaces in the city. When designing public and green spaces in Norra Sorgenfri one could strive to include the following characters which could also be based on designing the green spaces within the shelter.<sup>2</sup>

- Calmness - a calm space where people can get away from noises and traffic.
- Wild and untouched nature with self-sought plants.
- A diverse selection of trees and plants to satisfy our exploratory needs.
- A refreshing space for meditation and finding inner peace.
- A large and open space for group meetings etc.
- A garden big and fun enough for children to want to play and run around. A welcoming green space for both adults and children.
- A central meeting place - a place to party!
- A creative place for art, history and exploration.

## 5.12 Smedjan

*What's happening right now?*

Work is currently underway on a new detailed plan and the idea is to be able to convert the eastern half of the block into mixed buildings, with housing, preschool, retail and offices. The eastern part of the block will be broken down into small-scale blocks of new streets and a park in the middle. The buildings and operations in the western half will remain unchanged for the time being and with the proximity to student housing on Rönnen in the northeast and trade in the north, it is important to design the neighbourhood in a way that makes it possible to walk and cycle through the neighbourhood. The closest train stations to the site can be found in Centralen and Persborg; there is also a bus station at every main street around the site connecting the most central bus locations to the site. Värnhem, Centralen and Södervärn.<sup>1</sup>

AB S Barnekow's technical-chemical laboratory on the corner of Industrigatan was one of the earliest industries to establish themselves in Norra Sorgenfri, sometime between the turn of the century and 1912. On the east side of Barnekow's laboratory, the Skandia leather factory was founded in 1917. A publishing house was built a few years later, on the corner of Nobelvägen, which then as now, housed a publishing and printing house. In 1939, Thure B. Wiberg's infamous coat factory moved to Celsiusgatan 31 from Storgatan. The area bloomed with new and old industries, making it a thriving business hub in central Malmö.

Cewilko AB the clothing factory was also in Smedjan until the late 1970s. In 1938, the pharmaceutical industry Ferrosan was established at Celsiusgatan. With time, more and more businesses moved and existed in the neighbourhood making the area a very desirable location. In the south-eastern part of the neighbourhood there was a Shell gas station from the 1950s until the 2000s and in the southern part of the block there are large empty areas.<sup>2</sup>

There have been several different activities in the neighbourhood since the beginning of the 20th century and they have all contributed to some sort of damage to the land. In the southern part of the block, there have been some sort of surface treatment as well as battery- and scrap management and manufacturing of leather and tannery products. In addition, there is a gas station in the southeastern part of the neighbourhood and it has been there for a very long time. At the end of the 1930s, industries and activities of various kinds were added in the northern part of the block, like for example, printing and a pharmaceutical industry. An investigation of the soil environment conditions in the area was made by Melica in 2007 on behalf of the city of Malmö. According to the investigation, there is a high risk of soil contamination in the area, especially within the southern properties. However, the assumption is uncertain because the pollution situation was poorly investigated at that time. In 2019, Sweco was assigned to run a similar investigation and the results were close to the investigation in 2007. Looking specifically at the quarter Smedjan, the soil is surely contaminated and needs to be treated before anything.<sup>3</sup>

A noise investigation has been carried out by the city planning office in August 2018 which reports estimated noise levels in Smedjan. Illustrations by Malmö City on the next page.

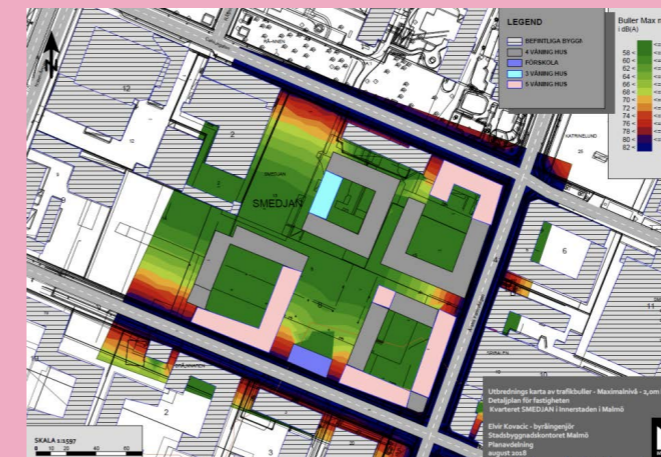


Fig 28: Estimated noise levels in Smedjan Smedjan. First image is 10 m above ground and the next is 3 m above ground.

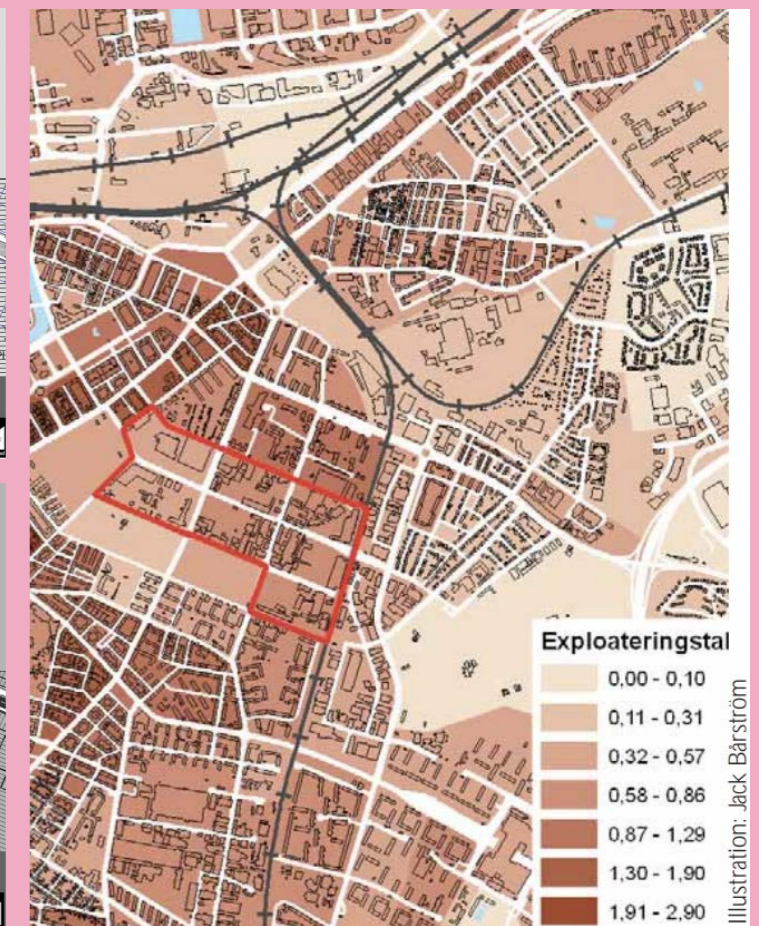


Fig 29: Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in Smedjan.

Illustration: Jack Bårström

<sup>1</sup> <https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Stadsutvecklingsomraden/Sorgenfri/Smedjan.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Stadsutvecklingsomraden/Sorgenfri/Smedjan.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Stadsutvecklingsomraden/Sorgenfri/Smedjan.html>



## 6. Design

I am proposing a village in the middle of the city that offers women in need shelter and the opportunity to heal. Through thoughtful consideration of scale and shape, the village consists of seven different diverse spaces, two of them which are open to the public and the surrounding community.

(1) Following along the grid of the neighbouring buildings, right in front of the main street, lies a preschool. It is not like any preschool but it follows the Swedish concept of “Open preschool” or Öppen Förskola. Open preschool is a complementary form of preschool activity that is aimed at children who are not enrolled in preschool, as well as a parent, daycare worker or other adult who is responsible for accompanying the children. The preschool has access to a private and generous green garden that is also facing the main street but is secured with a fence in friendly height. This green space adds to the lack of greenery in the area but does also function as a barrier between the open main street and the shelter, adding more security, privateness and a less formal touch. The preschool can be accessed through the private garden. It also functions as a less visible entrance to the shelter behind, by using the already existing drive in as a connection and adding a back door to a private space. This solution is more “natural-feeling”, anonymous and avoids any additional fences than the existing ones.

(2) Further in, in the driveway lies an existing gate that will be used to separate the shelter walls from any access to the public and is only accessible to the women and staff entering the shelter. The gate and preschool create a “double security” barrier from the public environment. The second building is the main building, it is the most public building within the private walls of the shelter. The first floor is home to the reception, communal and shared spaces which include a kitchen, dining area, lounge, and children’s play area— this is where the community can thrive. This is where residents can share meals together, where their children can do their homework, and where there is direct access to the secure outdoor space. This space encourages peer support and it also breaks the isolation that can come from abuse. It gives the women the choice and flexibility to come together and socialise but there is also opportunity to find privateness within the open space. Like choose to read a book in an armchair in front of the large class windows, looking onto the courtyard away from the more “social” areas. The second and third floors host therapy- and group rooms, staff rooms and offices (administrative part).

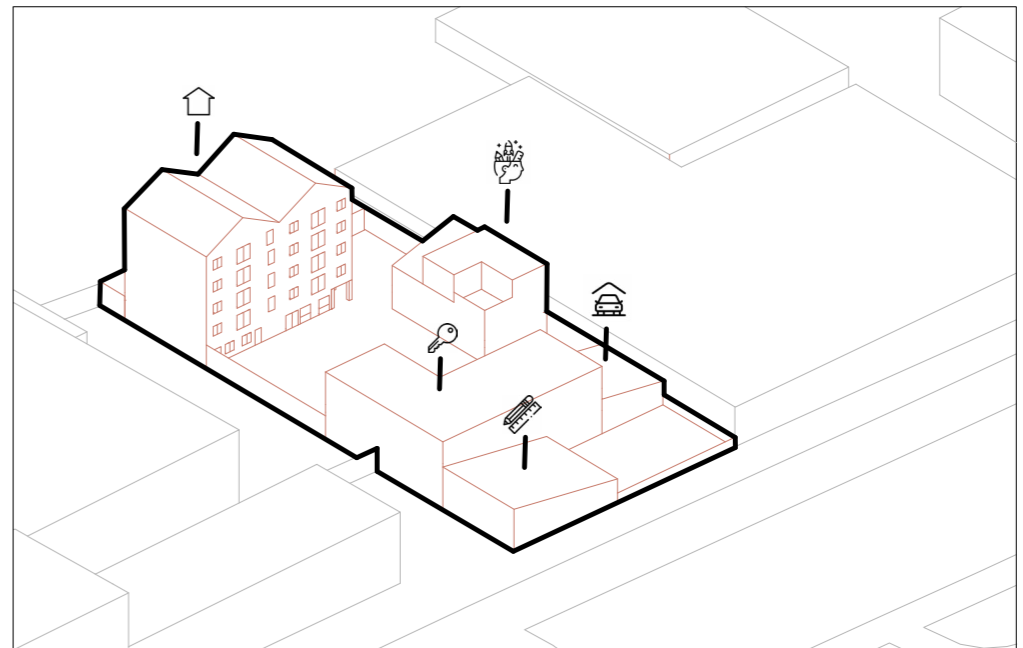
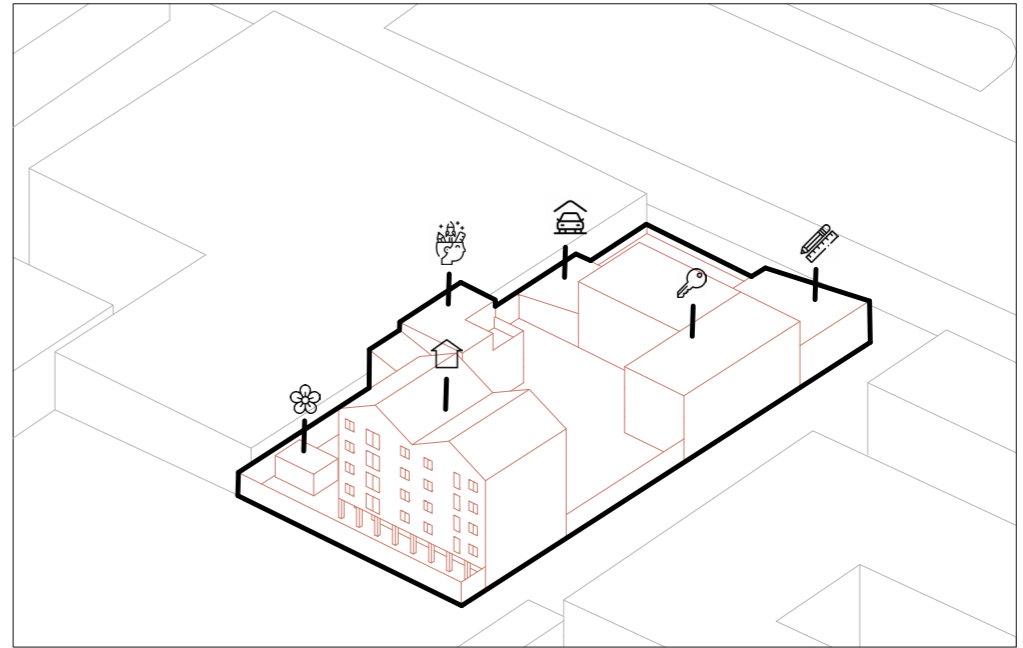
(3) This space is very important and has several functions. It can be accessed through the gate on the already existing drive in to the right but also through the small green space in front of it. The waste car can enter the property (outside the walls) through the gate to collect the waste bins from an already enclosed space that is only accessible to the shelter staff from the inside and the waste staff from the outside. This space also functions as a garage for the cars that drop off the women to the shelter for the first time, making their first entry as secure and anonymous as possible. There is a secure and enclosed visiting room inside, giving the women the opportunity to meet their friends and family in a secure space. The women in the shelter does also have the flexibility to leave and enter the shelter through private doors on building number 3, the gate outside being the security barrier again.

(4) This building hosts creative classes that aim to be a part of the survivors’ healing and rehabilitation journey. Classes include creative healing forms such as art, pottery, workshops, yoga, music and planting. This creative house faces a beautiful green courtyard with an overhead wooden structure that connects all the buildings together and functions as a shelter from rain when moving around the village. The large glass windows opens up to the courtyard when sunny but they do also give the women the possibility to look at their children while busy making. The green space to the left functions as a planting area and an open outdoor space for sunny activities such as outdoor painting classes or yoga. There is also a green house (5), keeping the women busy and active, where maybe some may discover that they have green thumbs!

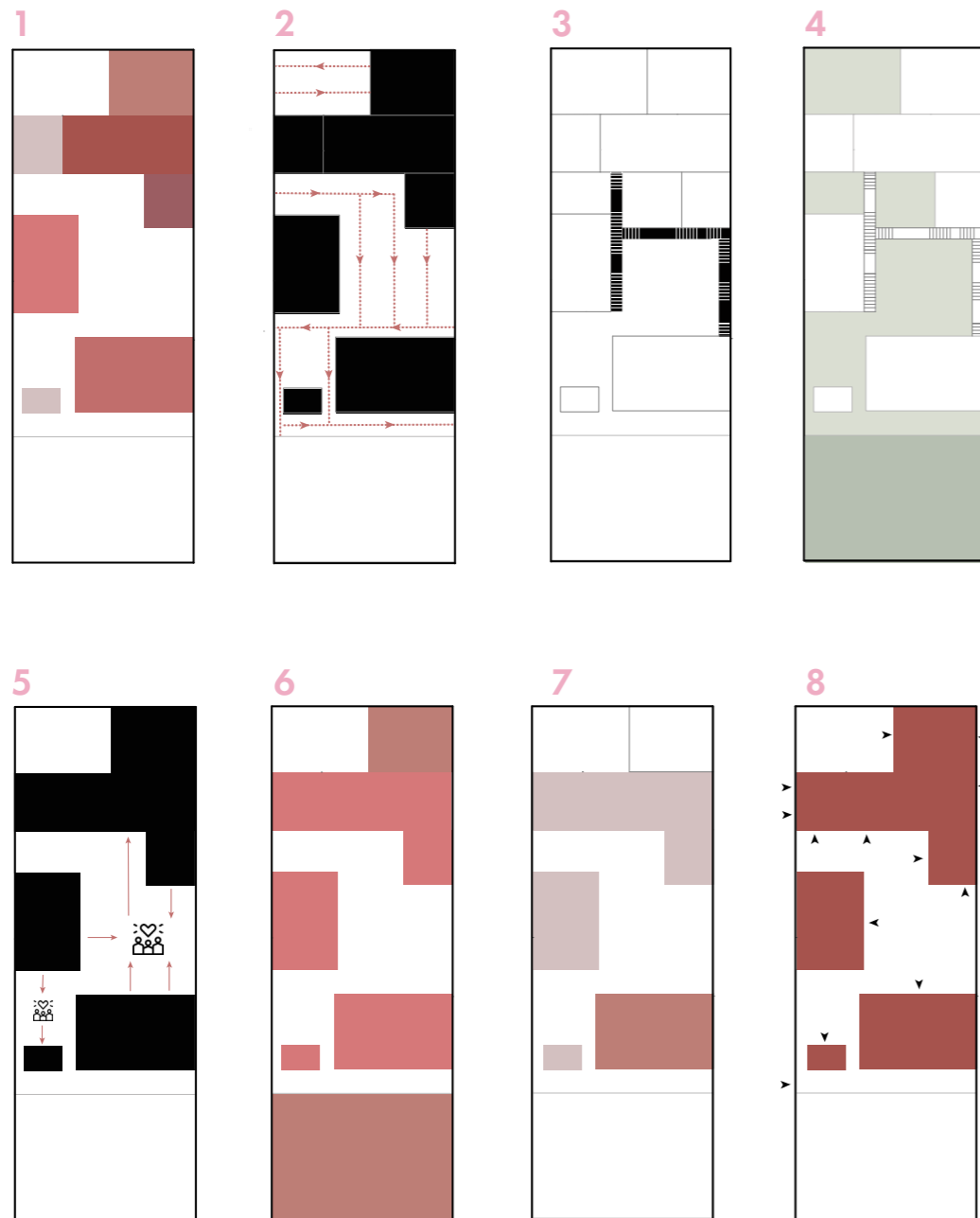
(6) The last building on the site is the residential building, that is home to 18 women and X children with its five floors. It lies at the back where it is the most private, secure and quiet. Giving the women the peaceful home they have always longed for. This is also the building which I decided to focus on and will be explored further.

(7) I decided to not use the whole site for the shelter but to adapt a proposal of a park that Malmö City already has planned for the same area. This proposal is a positive change and an urgent answer to the lack of greenery in the area. The park is public and sheltered, making the women in the shelter not feel far away from the life of the city yet still secure and content.





Axonometric diagrams showing the building arrangement within the site and the height diversity.



1. Diversity in shape, function and materials

2. Public park

3. Building connection in form of a pavilion

4. Public park / proposed green spaces

5. Building community

6. Public / private

7. Semi-private and private

8. Entrances



Walls are still needed but to make them less intimidating and more friendly I have decided to only have walls that “fill in” the empty spaces between the buildings but also breaking the wall down by using different materials and adding smaller windows and openings making it less “heavy looking”.

LANDSCAPE



The connecting pavilion can be opened up during the summer and enclosed during the winter, adding heat and shelter in both ways.

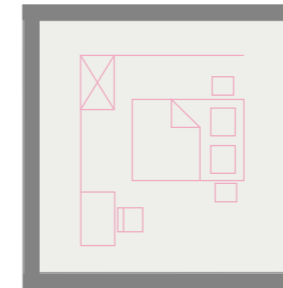


Exterior collage, focusing on pavilion and building connection.

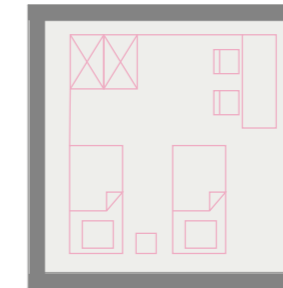
# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING



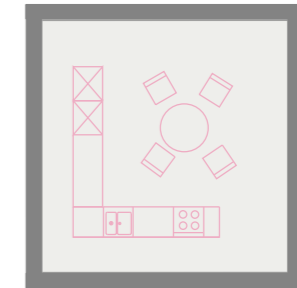
Exterior collage, focusing on residential building and courtyard.



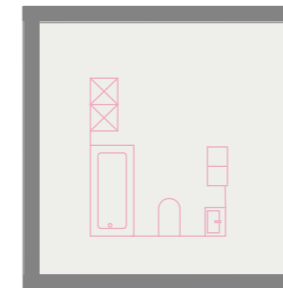
BEDROOM



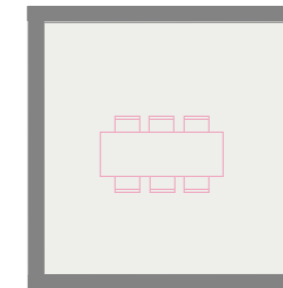
CHILDREN'S BEDROOM



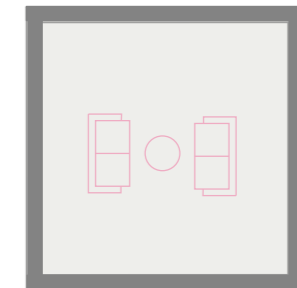
KITCHEN



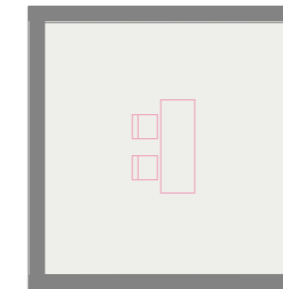
BATHROOM



DINING AREA



LIVING AREA



WORKING AREA

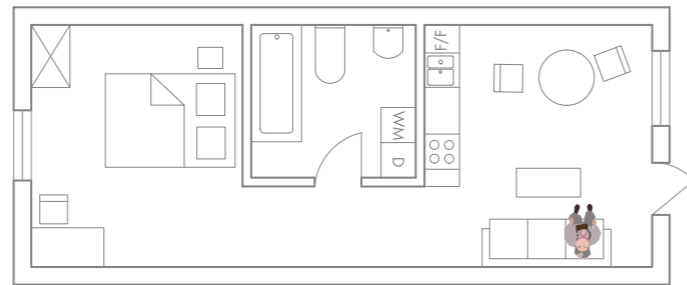
I have decided to focus on the residential building and the first thing I did was to identify the main and important functions that I want to include in the apartments. Keeping in mind that these spaces will be flexible, generous and accommodating to all needs.

# Ground floor

Different apartment modules were developed for the women's different needs and then further changed when designing the overall plan.



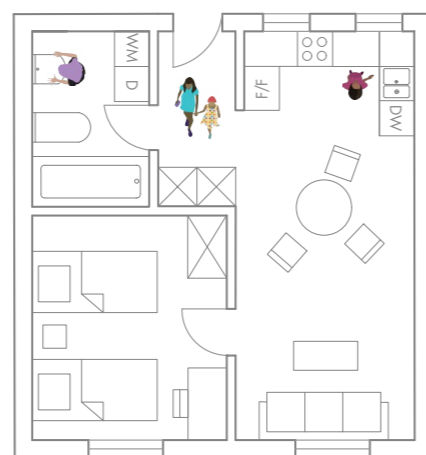
2 bedrooms  
2-3 children  
1 woman



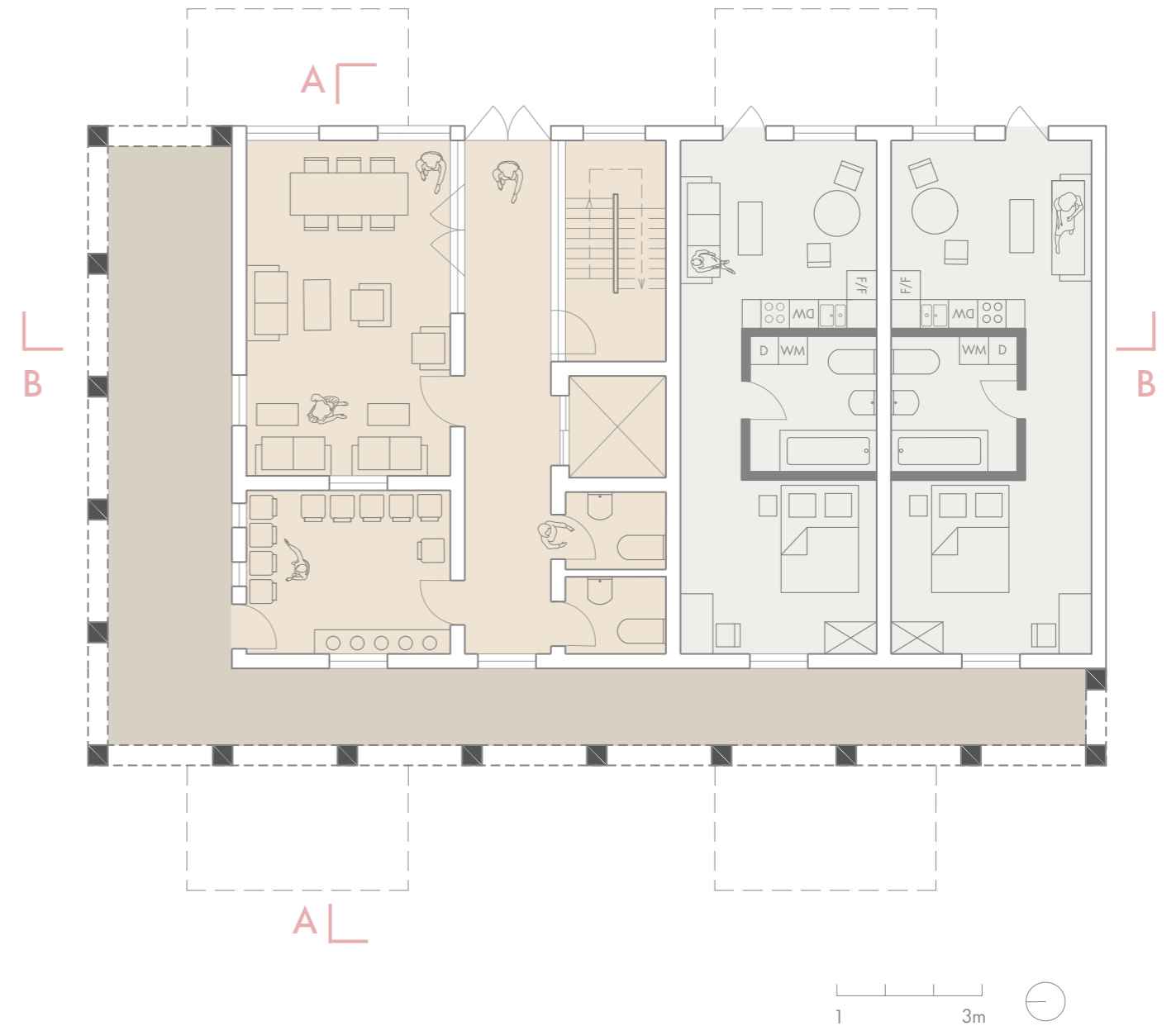
Studio apartment  
Open plan  
1 woman



1 bedroom  
1 small child  
1 woman



1 bigger bedroom  
1-2 small children  
1 woman



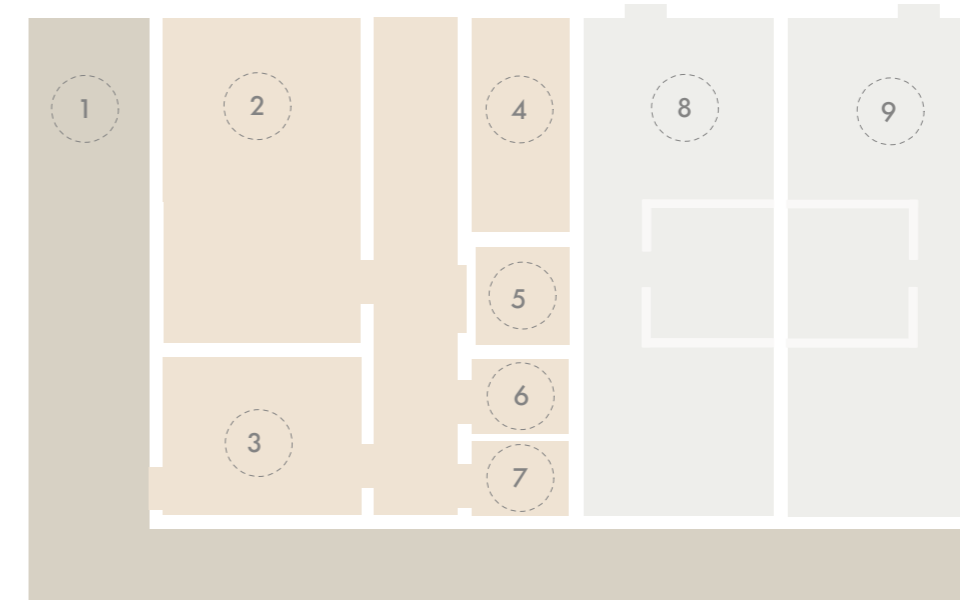
## Floors above X 4



The four different apartment layouts were then adapted and changed to fit into the building shape.

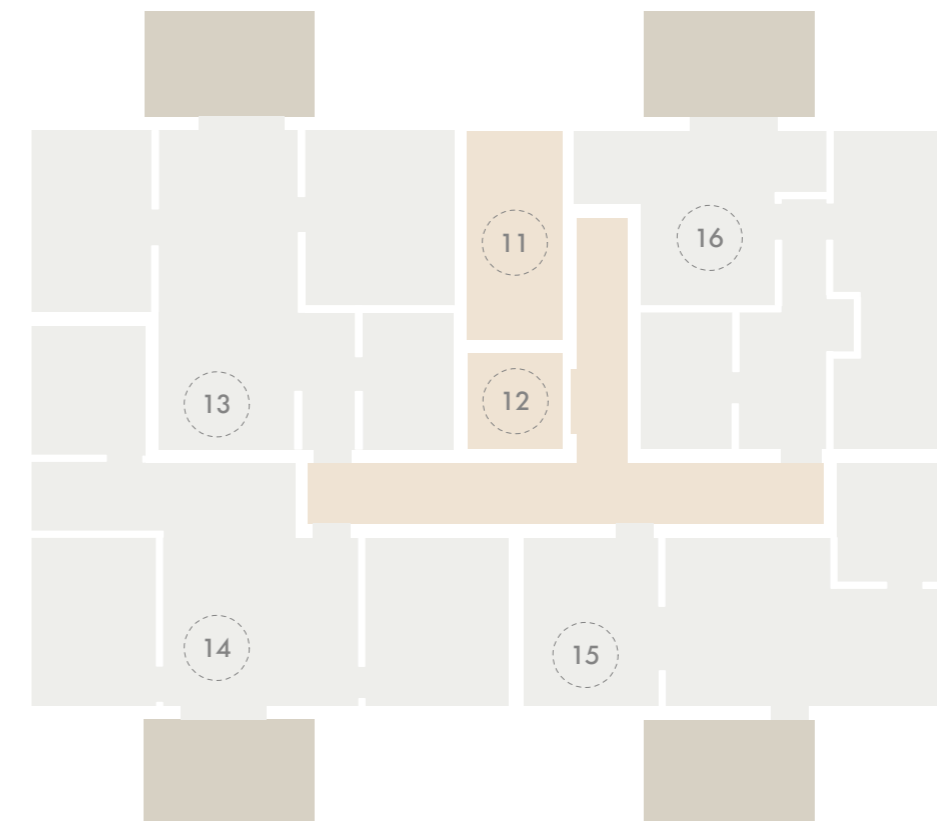
## Program

### Ground Floor



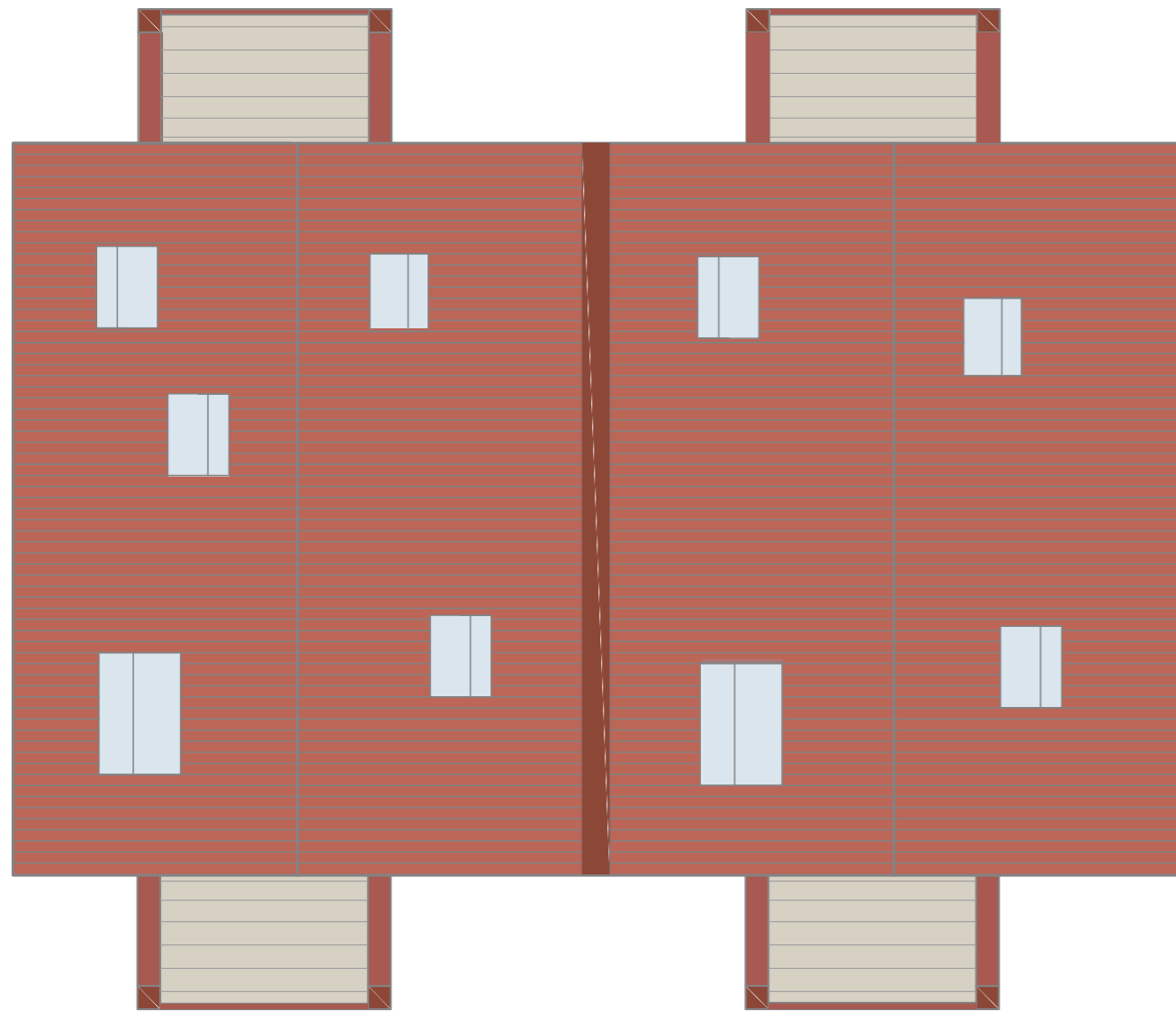
- 1. Sheltered outdoor walkway
- 2. Commonal space
- 3. Waste room
- 4. Staircase
- 5. Lift
- 6. Shared toilet 1
- 7. Shared toilet 2
- 8. Apartment modul 1
- 9. Apartment modul 2

### Floors above x 4



- 11. Staircase
- 12. Lift
- 13. Apartment modul 3 with balcony
- 14. Apartment modul 4 with balcony
- 15. Apartment modul 5 with balcony
- 16. Apartment modul 6 with balcony

# Roof plan



# Sections



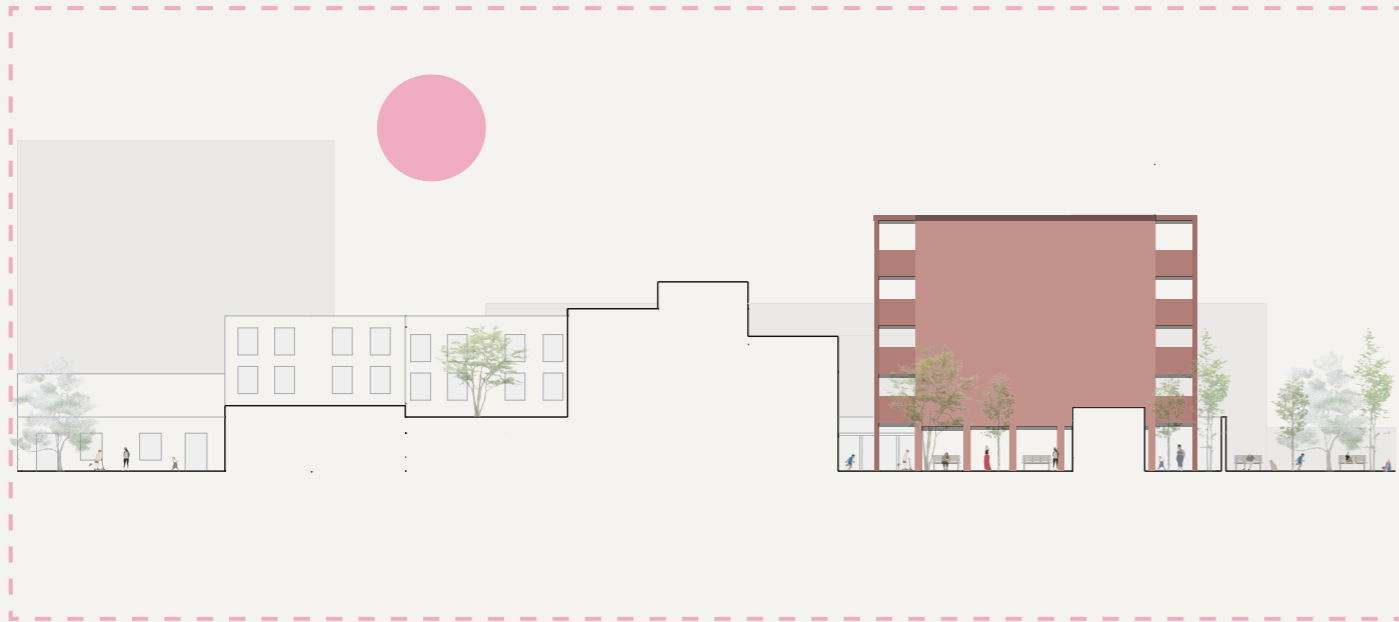
AA



BB



# Elevations



North Elevation



West Elevation

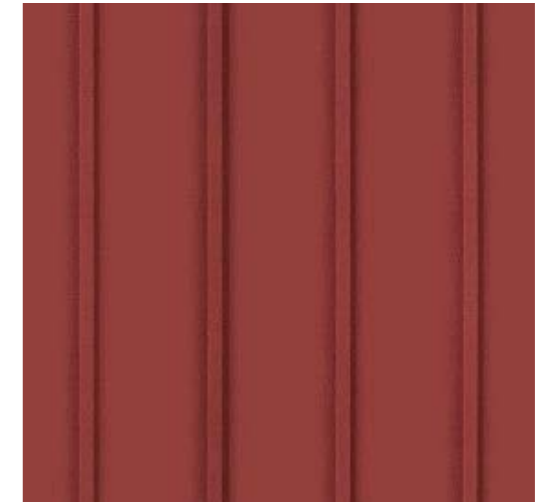
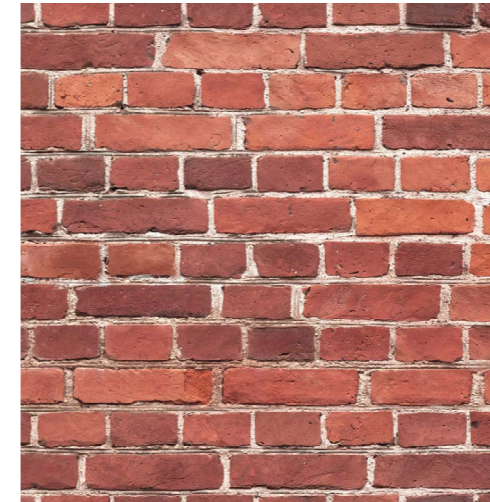


Interior collages  
Typical studio apartment

## Materials



Interior collages  
Typical living-room space



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