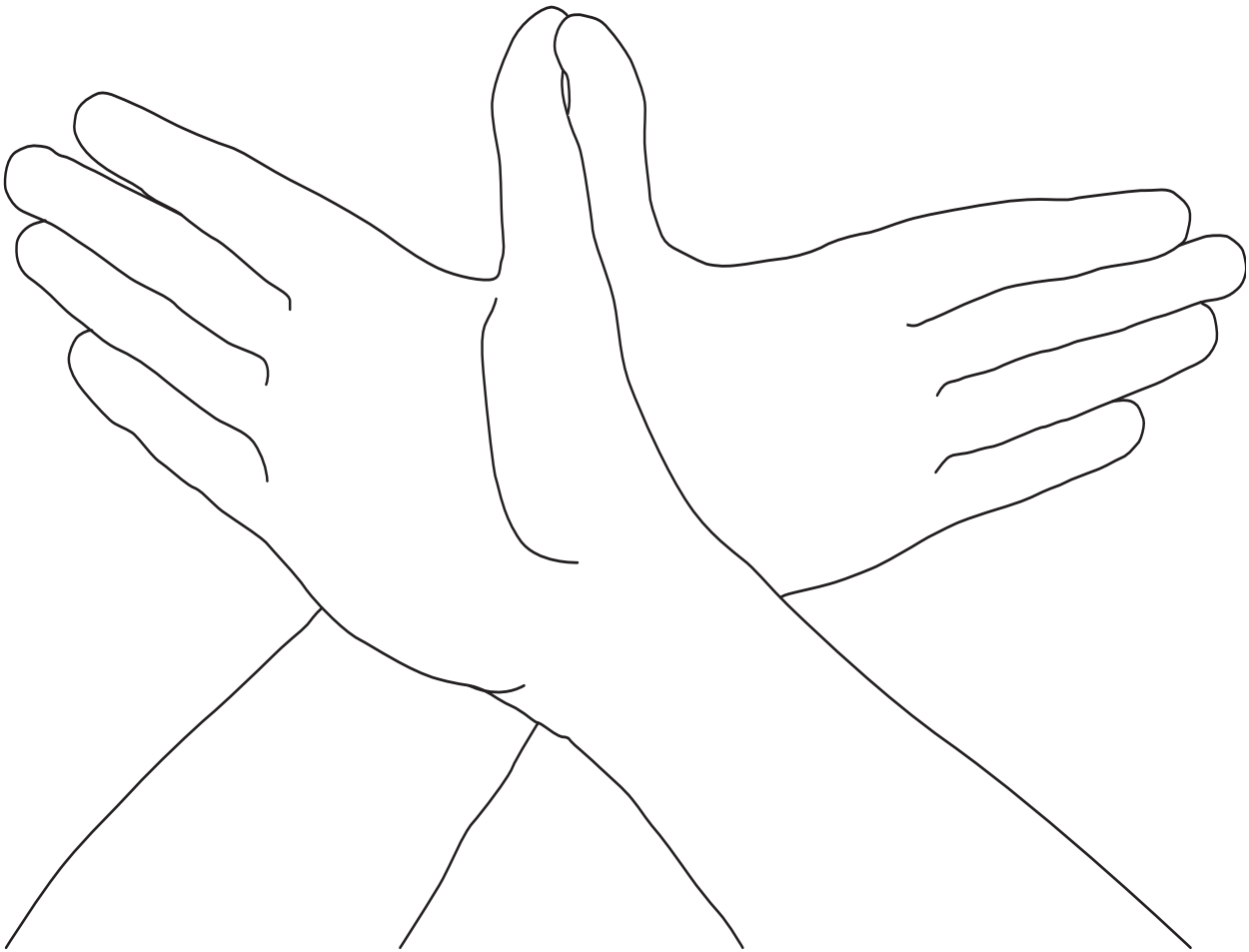
Making ideas a reality

The Architect as Entrepreneur

Malin Berglund



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Master's thesis within the Architecture and Urban Design master programme
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CHALMERS

ABSTRACT

The marginalization of architecture and the architecture profession has been expressed often during my schooling, from many individuals and discourses. Yet to me, there appear to be little discussion of what the alternatives could be. I decided to research possible options by examining the current, past and possible future state of the architectural role within gradually narrowing contexts ranging from societal to individual.

My focus is upon the values and attitudes and the effect they have upon ideation and in turn the built reality. These often unvoiced influences as portrayed in the litterature and discussions, become illuminating kernels in a building sector fraught with territorial professionals.Basing much of my reasoning upon the idea that entrepreneurship can be seen as the art and science of active innovation, taking place through a combination of ones ideas and values; there is a plethora of possibilities within the literature, debate articles, public inquiries, blogs, lectures etc.

I find that by embracing a more entrepreneurial viewpoint, architects can through their design thinking enable ideas with a greater value for themselves, the profession and the built parts of society.

Keywords:
architect-entrepreneur
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the role of the architect
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This thesis is dedicated to
Ellen for asking all the right questions,
Nancy for all your knowledge,
Mike for the attitude,
Jan for believing in change and opportunity and
Carolyn for sticking to your idea and giving it all you've got.

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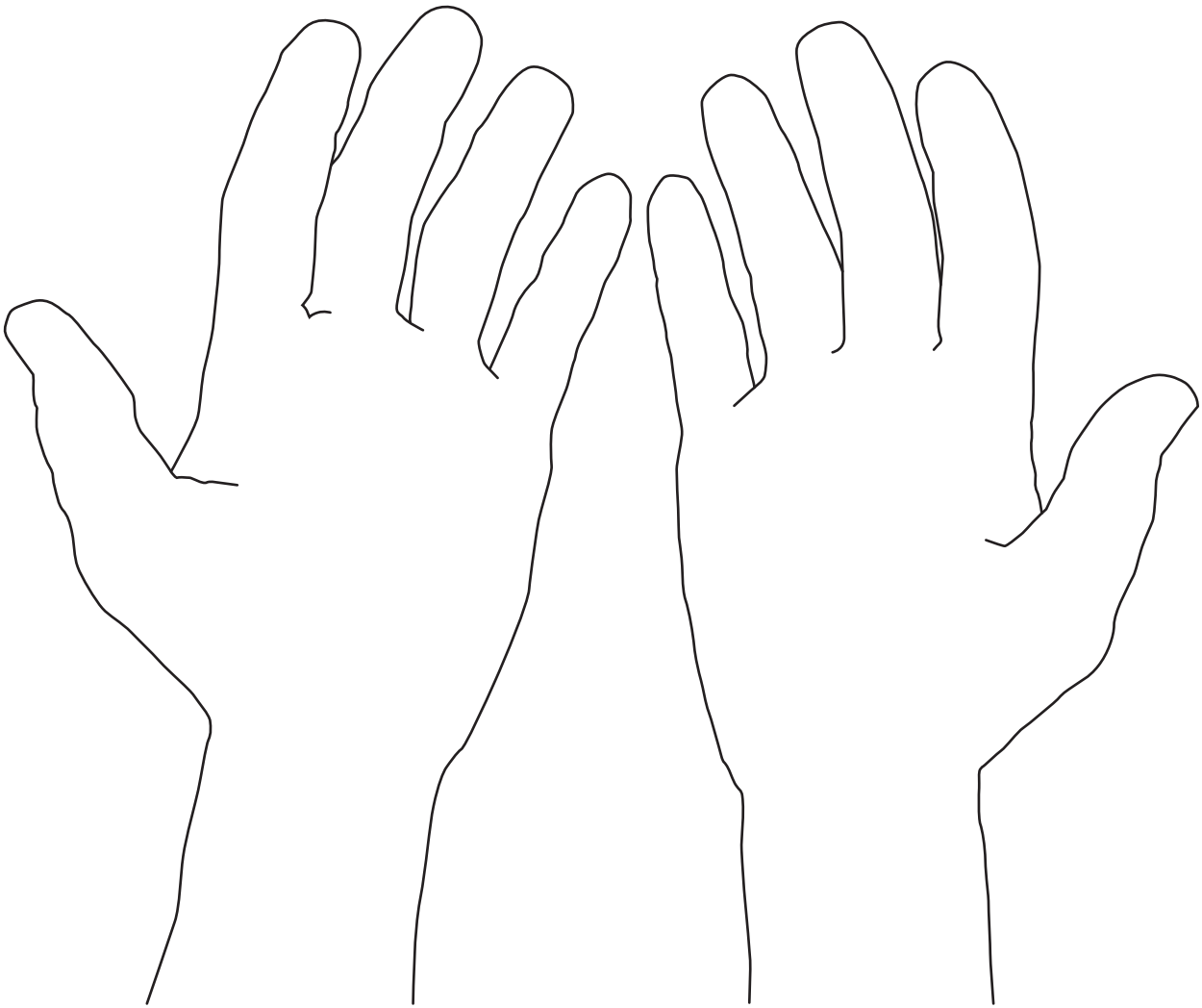


What do we begin with?

PREFACE

"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right."
Henry Ford

This thesis is very much about sense making and creation of mental maneuvering space. About understanding what could be done to realize ideas, and why sometimes the ideas you have cannot be done.

During my education I have wanted to see a bigger picture, and getting a grasp of how all these parts relate to each other within the building industry. One of the last courses I took before starting on the thesis was designing and making all relevant drawings from a small building. Based upon that course I originally set out to try to take a look at all the parts relating to the design of a home from the idea to the theoretical end result. Not just the traditional architect's work, but with a look into the whole process, as complete as I could manage. Before long however I found myself lacking vast parts of relevant knowledge regarding costs and how long actual steps take. E.g. how is rent calculated and what kinds of financial options are available if you would wish to create a baugemeinschaft, or similar collective form of financing for housing? How long does it actually take for a carpenter and painter to mount and finish a gypsum wall, and how much would their salary amount to and how much would that differ in different parts of the country? How much overhead is needed to cover unexpected changes in costs due to fluctuating currencies? The questions I faced were numerous.

I had to make a choice and since I felt that the financial and economical gaps were too big for me to go forward with the project within the timescale of the thesis, I chose in the end to focus upon the idea part and let the more practical side wait. However I had come far enough to participate in the Venture Cup, a business idea competition that develops into a business plan competition. I have included that part in the addendum since it is about the generation of an idea, and a way to develop the idea in order to make it reality. I have included my competition entry and the feedback I got.

Instead I chose to learn more about attitudes and values within the building industry and especially within the architecture profession. The values and attitudes a person has will affect the ideas generated and in turn the end result. Like architecture, entrepreneurship in my eyes begins with an idea, the realization of which is the main difference between entrepreneurship and general business. Like architecture, the projects are often long and demand a great deal of work before they can be completed.

Despite similarities architects and entrepreneurs, the literature on the subject of architect as entrepreneur is scant. Yet entrepreneurship of a sort is and probably always will be part of what architects often do within the building sector. It is a subject that intrigues me and it is something I would like to explore even further. Looking into the processes that shape our built environment is important. Both to find paths to follow within the profession, and to gain an understanding of why things are the way they are.

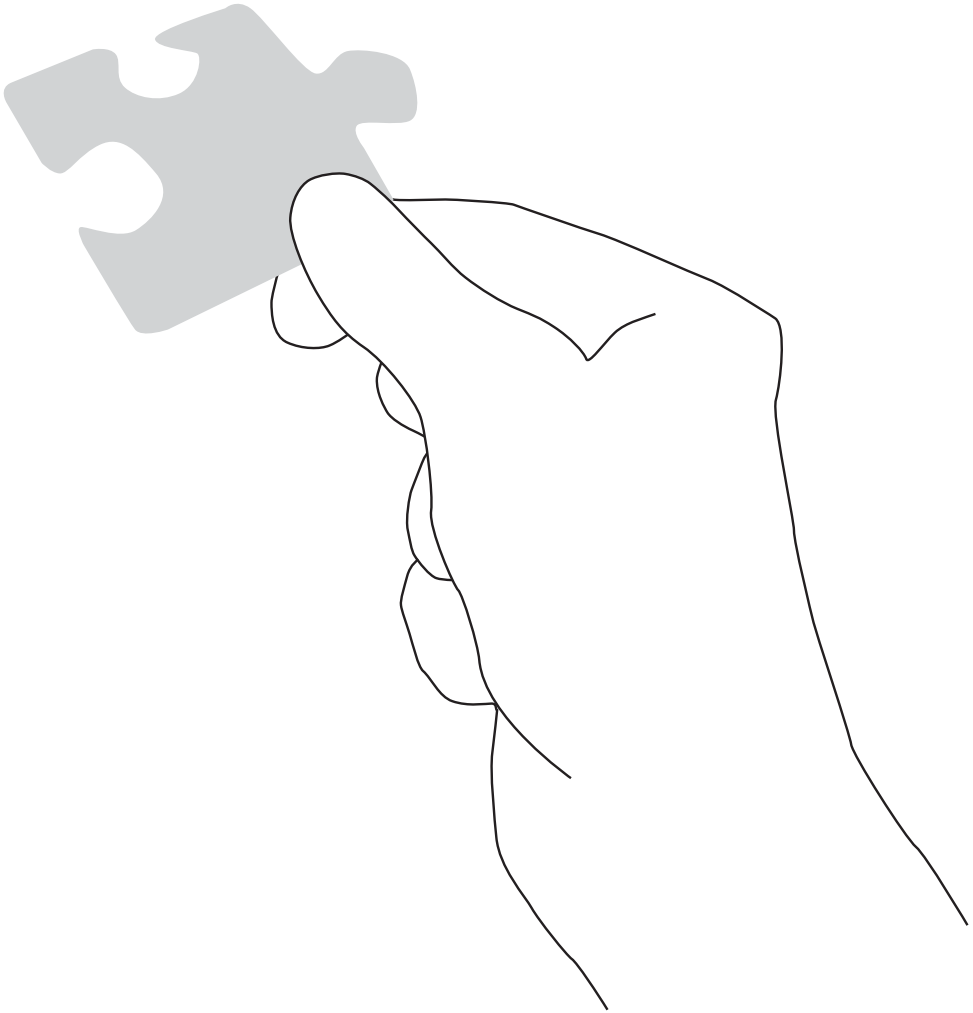
Much of the literature I have gone through while writing the thesis state that we are all currently living in a worldwide paradigm shift; perhaps however this kind of flux has always existed in the shape of ongoing progress and evolution. The major difference now is the speed at which changes occur, compared to before. I believe much

of our future work as professionals will be shaped by these uncertainties and our own ability to both relate to the times we are in, and the utilization of our design thinking.

No matter what happens, going on like it always has been is not any longer the answer. Out of the box thinking is necessary to cope with the diverging reality we are all in.

I also believe that by embracing a more entrepreneurial attitude with a greater focus upon the product, architects can through their design thinking enable ideas with a greater value for themselves, the profession and in extension the built parts of society. While I am writing primarily from the view point of an architecture student, I do not think this branching out into possibilities and "what if's" should limit itself only to architects. It seems like the whole building sector, both in Sweden and outside, could benefit from rethinking parts of its modus operandi.

As such the focus of the thesis is upon the often unvoiced processes that influence the idea generation, not upon practical matters like how business is conducted. The first steps to change must come from within, and since all projects have slightly, or widely, differing boundaries and circumstances it would be preposterous to assume that a thesis could cover all possible contingencies. Instead I have aimed for a thesis that creates more questions than answers. It is my hope that when the reader starts to find the answers for their questions and adapting them to their situation, then they can start discovering their own path into entrepreneurship.



So where does this fit?

Introduction

"Things do not change; we change"
Henry David Thoreau

1 *Background* sketches how I got started down this path. 2 *Methodology* explains how I set out to identify the relevant information. 3 *Limitations* draws the borders and my reasoning for them. 4 *Structure of the thesis* describes the contextual framework of the chapters to follow. 5 *Definitions* pins down some of the terminology used

While I originally wanted to study a single idea from start to theoretical finish, I realized I had so much to learn that a different approach would be more manageable (and equally educational for me) within the available time frame. The largest problem during this process was, and is, my own lack of financial knowledge and industry experience. Instead, I chose to study the attitudes and values architects stand in today, where they come from and what the future might bring.

My basic idea with the thesis is to rediscover architecture through entrepreneurship and discover how that vantage could help make architectural ideas realizable through changed perspectives, attitudes and values. By embracing a more entrepreneurial viewpoint, architects can through their design thinking enable ideas with a greater value for themselves, the profession and the built parts of society.

1 Background

In many ways the underlying purpose of this thesis is to record, encourage and find a way to handle change within the field of architecture. Change take many shapes; from the simple small personal change of me as a student about to step from the warm cradle of academia into the harsh realities of practice, to the world wide changes induced by climate disruption and population growth. Changes are made continuously in how architects view and relate to their everyday practice, what architecture is made out of and how it is put together. Change however do not happen on its own, it needs something to get it started with, something to keep it fueled. I believe change starts with an idea and the power of that idea supplies the fuel for the change. That is the foundation for this thesis.

The first concrete idea to write on the subject of exploring the possibilities of entrepreneurship within architecture started just this summer (of 2011) when I got the opportunity to go on an intensive immersion innovation internship (the formal name of the program is IIP) in the Bay Area sponsored by VINNOVA. The internship was arranged in order for Swedish students to attain the attitudes that enable Silicon Valley to flourish. And also to see what it takes to make a successful start-up, as well as the many ways such an endeavor can fail. There is a huge business focus upon ideas in the Bay Area, what you can make from them and how you can make your ideas a reality. My experiences there really opened up my eyes to entrepreneurship and unraveled the threads for this thesis since I started considering how architects do the things they do in their everyday practice and business, why do they do them and more specifically why don't they do some things that they could do?

VINNOVA, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, invests in research and strengthens Sweden's innovative capacity for competitiveness, sustainable development and growth.

Read more at: http://www.vinnova.se/en/

In pararell I also wanted to get a wider grasp upon the building industry. In my experience most of our education is focused upon winning competitions; I am more interested in understanding the processes that influence the built result.

As such I have missed seeing a complete view and getting a grasp on the whole. This led me to start with a wide look upon the industry and then narrowing it down to the individual architect.

2 Methodology

In order to understand the enabling of ideas I started to read literature consisting of dissertations, thesises or other material written by researches, professors and politicians detailing the underlying trends of the building sector and process, especially those involving the collaboration of architects with other disciplines and professionals. I worked at finding out what the main characteristics are, who are the players, what other parts could a mental model of these systems have? This search led in turn to a focus on how architecture firms and the architecture profession generally throughout Sweden, Europe and the US organize their work. I got to interview two architects, one working along the more traditional lines and the other focusing on a more encompassing perspective. I ended my research with a look at the role of the architect within our ever-changing reality, for this I looked at more speculative material published by RIBA and in one case a blog. Some of my information also comes from lectures I have attended during the creation of the thesis. I draw very wide boundaries since I aim for a general idea of the various parts each of the layers consist of and especially what their relationships might be.

I have taken a general approach, described by Holm (2006: 16) as an encircling research method. T. This since it has a very broad scope and contains multiple perspectives in order to both recognize the symptoms of the problem, and try to understand the consequences and causes. The main difference from the usual scientific thesis set up is that instead of asking “What is to be known, and what is to be found?” The perspective is of “what does it mean, and what larger understanding can be reached?”. (2006: 17)

I base much of my reasoning in Donella Meadows' 12 Leverage Points, the places where you can intervene in a system. This since I believe that the most effective ideas are those that create a (most often positive) change in any given system. As I have mentioned before, part of my purposes for writing this thesis was to enable me to understand clearer how the various parts of the building industry work together.

By studying how others have done and researching a possible way I could go about with a theoretical idea example, I hope to find a number of answers and hints. Both to encourage myself, but also to show others how they could go about realizing their ideas. My aim with the thesis is not to debate the statements made by those I write about or quote. Instead my thesis is heuristic, describing concepts, occurrences as told by others, synthesized from my own individual point of view and experiences. The examples I give are not necessarily "better" or "worse", it all depends on what will work in different situations under different circumstances.

As I've been researching I've focused upon three key questions:

1) What kind of possibilities can be developed with a different thinking within the architecture profession?
2) How could entrepreneurial spirit manifest within the architecture profession?
3) What values and attitudes is the foundation now for the architecture profession?

My goal is to through the search for answers to these questions create a plethora of the processes that would enable me and others to understand and affect some of the many things that influence the ideas that shape the built environment.

3 Limitations

I am primarily describing ideation within the constraints of the Swedish building industry, though it seems a general application could probably be done throughout the western world. Due to the material I've chosen (in order for fluency in the text) to translate a number of quotes and interviews from Swedish to English.

Some of the subjects I touch upon have no basis at all in Sweden; instead they are included to initiate a dialog of what could be. Yet since there are as many ideas as there are architects and even more ways of realizing them, I've chosen to paint a broad picture, omitting some parts that should perhaps have been discussed and delving deeper into other parts that seemed pertinent. The boundaries of the layers/chapters are drawn respectively around the practical level where architects will work. Continuing into the level where value judgments determine what ideas are implemented and the processes influencing that. And ending at the meta layer where ideas come to be. The boundaries are very similar to the layers of Meta-Modeling-Methodology, although I have not based any research upon a specific methodology or theory. Instead the frame of reference is my own experiences as an architecture student. Nor have I chosen to make a systemic map of the various fractions that create the whole of the building process since that would be overly time consuming and not relevant for the scope of the thesis which deals with ideation.

For brevity's sake, since the focus of the thesis is upon how ideas are realized and the interconnecting relationships that enable that, I have tried to remain informative enough to give a clear picture, yet brief. For example in the entrepreneurship chapter I am only touching upon the planning process with the municipal planning authorities. While the impact of ideas can be huge in such an early part of the building process, I have left out further specification of those parts. Likewise many parts are simplified or just briefly mentioned since they will be handled by professionals with adequate skills, for example project managers.

While I have tried to base the vast majority of my statements in research, the greatest weaknesses of all my theories are that they are just theories and ideas. Being a student I lack much of the, often tacit, knowledge that only work experience yields. The sources I have read are also somewhat problematic to use due their age. I have selected sources that are as current as possible, yet some are based on 40 years old

information and the validity for modern architects of some information might be questioned.

My target audience is primarily other architecture students and the thesis is written with them in mind. From numerous conversations with my fellow students I know I am not alone in many of the questions I have. As such I have tried to avoid an overly academic language and have intentionally made the thesis personal with plenty of personal reflections instead of keeping it objective as is the norm. Likewise I have refrained from making unnecessary summarizations and comparisons between the different sources in order to keep the texts relevant for my topic of discussion. Comparisons between school, theoretical practice and experienced practice are described as they have been communicated to me and interpreted by me.

By reading the thesis I hope it will give an architecture student ideas for their own practice, ideas that will define how they choose to work and collaborate, ideas that will enable more ideas to be realized, ideas that can help shape the built environment. In essence this thesis is also my attempt to fill in some of the gaps that I have realized I should know about in order to enable my own future practice the way I would like to realize it, and give me ideas on how to go about creating my own future projects.

I had difficulties finding information specifically for architects on the subject of entrepreneurship, less so concerning business practice though it was far from abundant. Ironically there is an overload of information concerning general entrepreneurship. The information I've been sifting through is also very specialized, well outside of anything we've ever learned in school and my core knowledge. While I have taken care to reference most of my statements, I might have misunderstood some parts regarding for example sociology or finance. To the best of my abilities I have tried to portray the information correctly.

Writing a thesis is never easy, in the end I am glad I came up with a very robust concept since it kept me from becoming too attached to a specific idea. Instead allowing me to revise my plans all along, narrowing the focus gradually and logically. My process could be called T-shaped, the horizontal being the bulk of the thesis; an orientation through the vast subject of architectural practice, trying to locate some essential bits and pieces on different levels and with a vertical look into the very mindset an architect could have. The most difficult part with such a broad and sprawling field of study was and is the limitations. I.e. what to include and what not to. Relevance has been a keyword for me, yet that in its own is a subjective value and I recognize that others might have a
different viewpoint.

I believe I have learned a lot, yet I still have so much to learn. I very much look forward to revising the thesis tempered after a couple of years practice, seeing what I can add and what I can take away.

4 The structure of the thesis

In this and the following chapters the perspective that I write from is that of the architect working to realize their ideas. Any references to "we" or "us" refers to that perspective and is to a very large extent based upon my own thoughts and reasoning around general statements made throughout my education and in the literature I've read. Of course many other participants in the building process also have ideas they want to realize, I will touch upon some of that later, but for simplicity my main focus is the architect's point of view.

For readability all Swedish quotes have been translated to English by me and marked with single quotation marks ('x') instead of double quotation marks ("x"). The originals in Swedish are included next to the body text.

The thesis is structured to reflect the various parts I attempt to understand in order to create an architectural product.

Entrepreneurship can be seen as the art and science of active innovation which takes place through a combination of ones ideas and values. An entrepreneur can be an advocate of change, of creative destruction, transforming and evolving ideas and values though innovation. When working within their profession architects are expected to create something new and innovating, something of value to their clients (and others), an idea made tangible that changes society in varying degree through the built structure. How could then entrepreneurship manifest in architecture? Taking my basis in the need for collaboration with other professions this chapter is taking a wider look at the building sector and the building process with the intent of identifying existing structures, possibilities and opportunities. Despite the conflicts and very different stances, there is a lot in common between the different actors. The overlapping parts of the building process, could they become the forefront for collaboration? Sources of shared strength rather than sources of disgruntlement or opposition?

Values define the worth, or lack thereof, we entitle things and ideas. As a concept it is also connected to ethics, economy, quantity, lightness, mathematics and personal ideals. Values of many kinds influence architecture as it is being made (e.g. we need to make it sustainable) and many values are given architecture once it is done (e.g. that house is so ugly). Values influence what ideas are made real, and in turn, ideas form the values each and all of us maintain and manifest as attitudes. What kind of attitudes and values permeates the architectural firms and the architectural profession? The overlying theme for this part is the architect in collaboration with other architects.

Innovation is in my eyes one of the quintessential aspects of architecture since many buildings starts with the spark of an idea that is then evolved into a building. An idea can range from a way to meet a very simple need (e.g. roof over my head) to more complex and convoluted (e.g. if we build a Guggenheim museum here, we'll get a Bilbao effect). Someone getting an idea can spark the most amazing buildings ever made, if it is an idea considered good by someone who has the money to finance it being built. This chapter has a minor theme of might go on within an individual architect, yet we are all different and the role of the architect is as many faceted as all the individuals encompassing the profession. Innovation through ideas can both be the means to a result and an actual result. What does it really take to create an innovative product? Not all innovations are fanciful, yet their impact can be more encompassing and have a greater impact then a mere building. This thesis however isn't about what makes a good idea or not. Instead it is a search for the qualities that make ideas grow.

The final chapter summarizes some of the more general findings I have made and returns back to the three questions with the hope that I will have answered those sufficiently.

The purpose of the overall structure is based on a gradually narrowing focus into what I believe creates change, namely the innermost beliefs of an individual.

5 Definitions

An *Architect* is described by for example Edwards (1999: 10) as "a person trained in the art or science of building or constructing edifices of any kind for human use." An alternative usage also described by Edwards (1999: 10) that is to say "a person who plans, devises, contrives or constructs so as to achieve the desired result; the object doesn't have to be a building, it can be a social security system or other goal without walls." The meaning I'm using within this thesis is a combination of both,

the focus being the architect's role as an actor within the building sector and the relation to the artifact primarily used as housing for people.

Developer is an English term that doesn't quite describe the group of actors calling themselves "construction clients" on their own home page (byggherre.se). Despite the fact that the construction clients do not want to call themselves developers (Björs 2011), for lack of a less cumbersome and better equivalent I've chosen to use the term developer anyway since the term implies the business and industry of building which is the perspective I am aiming for. In Swedish terms it describes an actor responsible for the creation of new building projects that are built in collaboration with an architect and a contractor. The developer arranges the financing, decides what values should be invested in and ensures that the outcome is profitable. The public inquiry SOU (2002: 65) stresses that the developer 'must have a clear idea from the beginning what he want to achieve, no other actor can understand that better'. However currently the developers have been losing their skills as a knowledgeable builder and the focus have been moving even further, from maintenance of the existing, into quick profitable deals. (SOU 2002: 87) By Swedish law the developer is ultimately responsible to ensure that pertinent laws are obeyed, that quality is maintained and that safety is ensured for all participants of a building site. Some of this responsibility can be legally transferred though contracts, but not all. (SOU 2002: 66) Usually the developer is the person taking the largest financial risk in order to reap the largest financial reward.

Contractor is the term defining the actor who on the developer's behalf takes the assignment to erect, change, maintain and repair buildings and structures. (SOU 2002: 69) It has become a position consisting mainly of administration and coordination where the actual laborers are hired in for a specific project without any contact with either the developers, the purpose or the goals of the project. In Sweden the larger construction companies have begun to build themselves through

their own initiative, on their own land, for their own profit and rarely in order to manage themselves. (SOU 2002: 87-88) A direct result of this is also that in 2001 69% of the nation-wide construction was for condominiums which make a more profitable project for the contractors. (SOU 2002: 88)

Entrepreneur in this thesis defines a person who is willing and able to convert a new idea or invention into a successful innovation. The very creation of new combinations is what characterizes the entrepreneur (Schumpeter 2008: 39) and when the person settles down and runs their company like any other business they stop being an entrepreneur (2008: 42) and revert back to their original profession. This is the defining difference between doing business and being an entrepreneur. My point of view, like Schumpeter's, is that entrepreneurship is a role professionals most often take on for a period of a time, to augment their already existing skills and knowledges. It's a multi layered approach to the meaning of the word; ranging from the embrace of ideas and chance, the mindset and attitudes of entrepreneurship, knowledge of business and a profession within the field and boundaries created by economy. In the same line Sarasvathy (2001: 262) describes the work of an entrepreneur as "an effectuator: an imaginative actor who sizes opportunities and exploits any and all means at hand to fulfill a plurality of current and future aspirations, many of which are shaped and created through the very process of economic decision making".

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

"Entrepreneurship is neither a science nor an art. It is a practice."
Peter Drucker

1 *Locating entrepreneurship* within architecture. 2 *Building sector* as its described by its actors. 3 *The building process* and the relationships between the actors. 4 *Embracing entrepreneurship* through a discussion of what it might mean.

I chose entrepreneurship as a general thematic subject for my thesis since I wanted to explore that concept from many stances. And also see how I as an architect could through entrepreneurship find ways to turn my ideas into reality; more specifically how we could actively organize and influence the process that turn our ideas into a product, and the ways ideas can be developed and grow within this larger perspective. To enable that I both need to learn more about the attitudes of the building sector and the building process that turn the product into a reality. As much as I would like to paint a more precise picture of this very broad subject, it is clear that to achieve that I would have to write the thesis in collaboration with a number of different actors from the building industry. Hence the focus will remain the point of view of an architecture student since that is what I am and accurately reflects the knowledge I carry with me and have had time to gain.

During the research I've found a habitual theme of demands for more collaboration. It is requested more or less by all the various actors, be it generally within the sector or more specifically within a given project. Therefore the collaboration of architects with other actors becomes the boundaries for this chapter.

1 Locating entrepreneurship

However, the reader may ask; what does entrepreneurship have to do with architecture? As I described in the end of last chapter I take my basis in the fundamental meaning of entrepreneur, namely an embrace of ideas and chance and the mind set and attitudes that enables the creation of something new. In my line of thinking, those words within the context of building and urbanity could as easily be applied to Architects. So I decided to try to look upon architecture with new eyes, try to figure out ways for me to work within the profession in the future.

As I see it, both architects and entrepreneurs deal with the generation of ideas, of services rendered, and also the sales of a finished product which enables us in extension to create more. As architects we work as a sort of knowledge entrepreneurs; selling our ideas and fruits of our imagination to those willing to pay for our services. We are specialists and generalists; having in depth knowledge about architecture and because of that is forced to have a broad spectrum of skills and knowledges enhanced with design thinking. We balance between causation and effectuation; having a very clear goal and searching for the best solution using our tools. Our work is both rational and irrational in the aspect that many of the aspirations driving the designs we make are highly subjective (I.e. what is beauty?) and can't be proven, yet we operate within the boundaries set by our client's economy. There are no given plans how to work, there are no exact paths to follow since beauty and function and any combinations of the two don't follow any laws. Some architects make the same style over and over, their unique brand being that it's clearly a work of them. Other architects use the same methodology over and over; achieving very different results in each project, but using the same tools.

As with many things, there is no right and wrong in this, instead I see the above examples of generating architecture as two key concepts of describing how ideas are generated and take three dimensional shape and form. And ideas are one of the

keys to our work as architects. Edwards describes in her doctoral thesis about the architectural practice that one of the most reoccurring activities for the architects is "looking after the whole or keeping track of the idea". This since "Architects […] seem to think their principle obligation is to manifest an idea, an architectural gestalt, in concrete form." (1999: 13) This is a statement I find pertinent because of the consequences of this line of thought.

What ideas are then allowed to profligate and what processes allowed them to do so? As a result of this focus upon ideas, when the architecture students step into the building industry, they step into a reality where they will need to share their idea. This as noted by Edwards "That while it may arise in the mind of the architect first, it also arises in the mind of the client, the builders and the users." (1999: 13) The collaboration of ideas and the execution of them is explicitly what is stated as missing in many examples (some given below) yet it is a key consequence of the way the education and later on our work is organized. I cannot answer why it seems so hard to start the creative processes as a team, to collaborate on a shared project that is a product of all that are in the team. Instead it appears that architects often develop their ideas alone, and then hand them over to someone else. Someone without an idea what the actual final result will become since the other haven't been part of the creative processes. Imagine instead if you will, what could be achieved through a better collaboration, a better attitude, shared trust and incentive.

And it isn't only the architects that desire this: the following quote in Grange (2005: 30) was very clearly stated by the Swedish construction company NCC:

> 'To unconditionally be allowed to engage your whole competence and together with others to solve an important task is significantly more stimulating then to build a house according to the drawings and conditions someone else has designed.'

"Att förutsättningslöst få engagera hela sin kompetens och tillsammans med andra lösa en viktig uppgift är betydligt mer stimulerande än att bygga ett hus helt enligt de ritningar och förutsättningar som någon annan dragit upp."

Grange (2006: 30)
citat ut NCC AB 2003; (otryckt källa)
Skärpning gubbar! - remissvar från NCC AB genom NCC Construction Sverige, s.6

This shared objective and common ground in ideation should become a fertile ground for a very diverse group of architects in their profession, yet I find there are re-occurring reports and exclamations in doctoral thesises (Grange 2005), architectural magazines (Näslund 2010: 24-30) in Sweden and elsewhere on how the architects need to try new positions within and outside the building industry. This in order to avoid becoming more and more marginalized, instead functioning as a consultant for a short time of the duration of the project. Emma Jonsteg (2011) brought up the issue of the architect's needing to take things into their own hands if a change will ever occur. Yet what steps will need to be taken if this change would ever occur?

In view of this perceived need for change, individuals and their projects (for example Lauri 2010:10 & Gunne 2011: 29-29) have been published where the alternative of the architect as developer or builder or even a combination of all three have been presented in many ways and iterations. All stating it's a way for them to make their ideas come to life. I don't believe it is the only way to go. But in the end a wider spectrum of what the different actors do, no matter what profession they belong to, will in the long run create more chances for us all. In order to find out more about the thinking for a person taking this transdisciplinary path I interviewed Per Thurfjell, a partner in the local architecture firm Helhetshus (=wholeness house).

DETOUR - interview with Per Thurfjell
"The choice to go from contractor to architect and then onwards to starting Helhetshus is a logical path of development" is his reply to my question how he came to start the firm. "It was not so much the act of finishing, instead the gradual development of something new." He describes some of his experiences as a contractor in a prestigious public project where he met only once with the architect despite being responsible for the main entrance. "Thought that was remarkable since it was an extravagant project and in some form important for the city [of Gothenburg]."

"During my architecture schooling at CTH I did some research into the role of the architect during the 50'ies." Through interviews and essays he made the conclusion that the architecture of the time had a continuity and the architects competence was wider and visits to the construction sites were a given and likewise also participation in the decision process. "I believe this in turn gave developers a larger respect for the architect's knowledge." His own thesis was the planning, drawing and project management of a detached house with the examination in the finished house.

As an employed architect Per says there was only one project in seven years where he was in some way actively involved during the construction phase. "The architectural result turned out good, and to a remarkably low cost." The continuity is something he returns back to and describes how the combined acts of drawing and building is a great satisfaction for him, more so then only of them. The experience feedback is another advantage, both in one's own experiences, but also through collaboration with site managers, metalworkers, plumbers etc. "All those can contribute to a better architectural result through their experience." For Per not utilizing all experience available becomes a clear waste, especially since in his own words house building and society planning is both difficult, expensive and important. Likewise the focus upon technology and economy so common amongst the men leading the projects should also be complimented by beauty, through planning and design. "No matter what it will be expensive, or rather no matter what it will cost a lot of money [building a house]."

We turn to the wholeness concept, how do they achieve it?
About Helhetshus he says they don't have the same contractor for all projects, adding, at least not yet. "We've toyed with the idea of building a company with our own craftsmen, but so far it's just a notion. We shall see what the future brings." For the projects they wish to implement in the way they want to in regards to the qualities they desire, they are dependent upon the collaborating contractors sharing the same ambition. Especially the shared values and the interest in architecture. A contractor only focusing on making money can not reach the result the partners at Helhetshus strive for. "So a large part of our time consists of making connections and building a network with such actors. We meet new people all the time and have continuous discussions about collaborations in various forms with various actors."

"In order to create wholeness the implementation and collaboration are only some of the conditions. Something that in my experience is even more important is this: The building is controlled by whoever is in power." He reasons that since in the times we live now, money is power. And very few architecture firms have accumulated sufficient capital from their consultancy to truly affect either the planning of our societies or the building process in general compared to the way the four large construction companies are doing right now in Sweden. Helhetshus is currently carrying out a project in-house as developers and Per says the economic questions are absorbing a huge part of their time. "As the project is bringing to a close we can consider the fact that if the houses had been twenty kilometers closer to Gothenburg the asking price could have been hundreds of thousands SEK higher, which in turn affects the execution."

He says he have felt a deep satisfaction throughout this project, being the one who have the proverbial power. He continues "In order to keep having that power one needs to have good bank contacts, make smart deals, be more interested in developing beyond the architectural profession. And making sure the profit margins are large enough to both see this project to the end and be able to implement other projects."

Per describes feeling a bit boring to talk so much of the financial aspects in terms of power, risks and money, yet he returns to their importance. "In my eyes this is what it's all about: to build in-house is in the end about having the mandate to prioritize the architecture. But in order to gain that mandate you need to own the financing yourself. You need to be able to handle both financial and legal risks. You need to either yourself, or through contacts, have access to extensive expertise on legal, accounting, marketing, engineering, real estate and surveying issues."

Considering all these aspects it seems almost impossible for a single firm to get up and running, I ask him how Helhetshus got started.
Per answers that it was a conscious effort both to start the firm and the decision to build in-house. Before even working full time with the firm they started out by locating a municipal lot where they would be able to develop the property alone in collaboration with the municipality (Markanvising in Swedish). "In parallel we supported ourselves through regular consultancy jobs while arranging financing, negotiations with the municipality about details in the follow through, creations of legal documents and making a call for bids." Their first project encompassed 8 houses to a value of 40

million SEK and Per is clear that it would probably have been more reasonable and less complicated to just start with one house on a smaller lot. He reflects that "TThe start depends upon what experience you have with you since beforehand. With less experience you should probably begin in a smaller scale, but then again it's not rocket science." He emphasizes the support of knowledgeable lawyers and accountants in projects like this. "And if you aren't wealthy to start with you'll need a financier too. Banks have the potential to function as financiers but currently they are very careful. A venture capitalist could become necessary."

In the end I ask Per about the roles in the firm
They are two partners; Per who started out as a contractor in the 1980'ies before studying architecture at Chalmers. The other partner Mats isn't an architect, instead he studied to become a project manager. "Mats have a great interest in architecture, and we discuss when he has time to do so. Personally I'm very involved in the call to bids and client contacts in the cases we build in-house." The design is discussed between the two partners and early on in the projects they discuss building technology and economy questions. He finishes by adding "I believe that the others in the firm experience that it is the focus and that they will learn a lot about it with us."

NB: The interview was conducted over email in Swedish and has been translated to English by me. See the addendum for the original.

This is to me one example of entrepreneurship within architecture; the deliberate redesign of one's own practice in order to create new chances and possibilities. It would seem a logical choice yet except the educational article and home page neither I nor the librarians can find much literature on this subject of Architect Entrepreneurs or even Architect Builders; it seems it's a transdisciplinary subject that hasn't been much explored by academia. Yet is important enough for the Swedish Association of Architects (SAA) to actively promoting architects to step outside of the bounds of traditional architecture, to broaden the field where architects operate. In the home page of SAA's start up information (Sveriges Arkitekter 2010) it says specifically that: 'In a tough industry a certain measure of entrepreneurial spirit is needed to succeed.'

"I en tuff bransch krävs ett visst mått av entreprenöranda för att lyckas."

(Sveriges Arkitekter 2010)

With that in mind I stepped onwards, asking what kind of industry is it then? What characterizes it, what parts interconnect and what seems to be missing?

2 The building sector

The Swedish building sector is relatively large, about 10% (SOU 2002: 55) of the workforce or 450 000 individuals are involved in it one way or another. It consists of a sprawling group of actors; developers, users, architects and other consultants, contractors, suppliers, government, municipalities, various unions, financiers and insurance companies. In 2007 the turnover for the whole sector was 450 billion SEK. The largest companies within that sector were and (still are) the three construction companies Skanska, PEAB and NCC who together had a turnover of 78 billion SEK and 30 000 employees. (Karlsson 2007)

For anyone studying the Swedish building industry it is important to know some about the past since changes initiated 25 years ago have drastically changed the framework for how building is done in Sweden; from the government-cradled days of the Million Homes Program with huge subsidizations to the economic vagrancies of today where things happening on the other side of the world will affect costs and access of materials. This change of track has caused a lot of upheaval within the sector, ranging from initial massive unemployment to what is actually built today. Drastic change has happened and is still happening, yet there are still plenty of plaintive remarks on how things used to be. Especially the years before the Million Homes program seem to hold some illustrious lure for nearly all actors, as illustrated by the quote below from SOU (2002 : 86-87) a public inquiry by the Government (the title of which aptly means Shape up old men!).

> 'In conclusion it can be said that the building sector previously was characterized by carefully hand-picked local master builders and craftsmen from a 'multitude' of knowledgeable clients, that themselves or with assistance built for their own long term management. Nowadays the

> situation is such that a few national construction companies, on their own initiative, with their own staff or sub-contractors and contracted suppliers produce buildings that are transferred to the management of someone else.'

Also architects appear "peculiarly vulnerable to a nostalgic backward glance at a bygone age in which the architect was the undisputed boss" (Building Futures 2011: 5). Interestingly enough during a seminar described in IVA (1998) the developers request that architects should take a wider and more coordinating role since they could thereby meet the needs of the developer-clients much better. Today the developers claim, the architects does not have an adequately holistic view due to their lack of knowledge in economy, project management, processes and collaborating skills. (IVA 1998: 24) The same is expressed as a strategic choice between limiting the architecture profession to design and planning or include management, project leadership and other commissioning functions in a study by RIBA from 1993 which is also included in the IVA discussion. (1998: 25)

Another point brought up by Building Futures (2003: 26) is that "until the early 19th century, a building's owner, financier and prospective user all tended to be the same person." The elementary changes that the building sector has undergone in the last century are still causing aftershocks and it seems there is a huge lack of adaptation still affecting the sector. I can't help but wonder why is it so? Why isn't change embraced within the building sector to a larger extent?

The current procedure as described where each participant is just looking to their own part and not the whole have its consequences, often in the quality of construction. There have been several scandals where improper usage of materials have for example led to wide spread mold in 95% newly built houses with plastered facades (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 18), or for example improper handling like in the Hammarby Sjöstad project that caused the houses to rot before the construction is complete. (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 19).

"Sammanfattningsvis kan sägas att byggsektorn tidigare präglades av ett "myller" av kunniga beställare, som i egen regi eller med hjälp av omsorgsfullt handplockade lokala byggmästare och hantverkare byggde för en egen långsiktig förvaltning. Numera råder en situation med ett fåtal stora rikstäckande byggbolag, som på eget initiativ och med egen personal eller kontrakterade underentreprenörer och leverantörer producerar byggnadsverk som överlåts till förvaltning av någon annan."

SOU (2002: 86-87)

There are plenty of these kinds of examples to be found within the building industry, from environmental disasters and improper construction practices to cartels, bribes and corruption. As exemplified above the industry have become fragmented and is dominated by a few who's individual needs comes first. Currently construction companies in their chase of increased turnover purchase materials from low-cost countries, hire Baltic and Chinese contractors, labour work from Eastern Europe, and consultancy serviced from India. (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 15) This globalized view upon building is probably something we'll have to live with since local isn't necessarily better, though it takes adaptation from the norms of old. A very pointed remark about city planning, yet it is as applicable to nearly any part of the building industry, regarding this is made by Torbjörn Einarsson (Forshed et al 2011 : 22) where he states that

> 'Our Swedish building industry is rich with people that <<knows what people want>>. And specialists who each individually monitors and maximize their sub-aspects, unknowing to the extent their sub-optimization complicate the qualities of the whole'

"Vår svenska byggbransch är rik på folk som «vet vad folk vill ha». Och specialister som var för sig bevakar och maximerar sina delaspekter, omedvetna om i vilken grad deras deloptimering försvårar kvalitéerna för helheten, om man i detta fall ser stadsliv som den önskade helheten."

(Forshed et al 2011 : 22)
Torbjörn Einarsson

The voices and advocates for change have increased in all parts of the building sector, yet Kristina Grange (2005 : 33) quite clearly sets her finger on one of the main problems for the Swedish building sector. Namely the fact that while there is nearly mutual agreement across the professions that old structures, attitudes and mind sets need changing, there is confusion as to exactly *what* within those structures, attitudes and mind sets that needs changing. So despite a wide will for change it is difficult to go about and get change. Another issue brought up by her (2005 : 45) is that the lack of shared soft values like collaborations, long term planning, compassion and social responsibility. This lack of factors to bring the actors together could well be part of the reason why the building industry is so splintered and egocentric, characterized by focus on processes and systems. Yet this splintering is another problem, caused by the different actors claiming separate parts of the sector

as their own territory according to Grange (2005 : 117), thus the shared knowledge is diminished. The processes that once worked thanks to a shared point of view and knowledge shared by several, are today governed by a complex system of institutions.

The fragmentation of the sector is furthered by the insularity of the architecture profession. By not perceiving ourselves as a part of the building industry, part of a larger collaboration, we stand back from risk, but we also stand back bring being able to take significant chances and thus causing change. Building Futures touches upon this where a group of clients and consultants explicitly claims this is a fundamental value that needs to change. (2011: 13) As architects our skills are the one thing separating our work from that of laymen, since after all designing buildings can be done by anyone inclined to do so albeit with varying result. For us as a profession it becomes crucial that we can communicate our knowledge and what qualities we can contribute. While working within the building sector we architects navigate somewhere in between the more intangible that the public will appreciate and something "that economists [...] do not put a price upon". (Fisher 2000: 31)

Change is also a needed factor in order to adapt to the issues climate change will bring us. And since that it is more than likely caused by human actions, change becomes a very acute subject matter in a thesis discussing the building sector. In Sweden most houses stand for at least 100 years, and the energy usage within the building and property sector is about 40 % of all energy used. About 40% of all waste is generated by the sector and it uses ca 50% of all electricity. (SOU 2002: 89) The sum of these numbers needs to change if we will ever reach a sustainable lifestyle. And in order for the Swedish society to provide a socially sustainable lifestyle as we define it today, the production of new homes needs to be somewhere between 30,000-40,000 homes per year. (IVA 1998: 41) Bridging this paradox is essential.

Yet when studying the building sector it is clear that its fragmentation causes a missing drive and incitement. It simply is not clear who should be the one leading the new progress, the different actors are looking to each other to take the first steps for change. Without clear leadership and clear goals, development becomes something only the companies large enough to generate investment money can achieve. The smaller firms throughout the sector are too busy just holding on to think about what could be. It seems stricter rules and demands are expected and welcomed by most within the building sector (Kyrkander & Linde 2008:29), yet the government and municipalities are holding back. Some planners even expressed during discussions at the recent Architect's fair (24th of October 2011) that their own rules and regulations prevented them from creating the society that the politicians have mandated them to enable.

The current rules and regulations are to a majority based upon an economic incentive, like the upper limit for how much energy a building may use per sqm per year. The good economy of using less energy becomes a stronger incentive then using less energy for the sake of the environment. In essence the altruism of thinking for the generations to come takes a step back from the private gains of individuals. Yet of course, change have to start somewhere and since we currently exist within a market economy change perhaps happens most effectively when following the ideals of the market.

As architects we will work primarily with the constraints of the building process, where Edwards expresses that the architect is one of many "participants in this process who contribute to the financing, development, construction and maintenance of buildings". As architects our work touches all activities and "gives them meaning". (1999: 11)

3 The Building process

In order to get some inkling for the entrepreneurial idea potential within the building process I will try to paint a general picture of the many parts it consists of. Nevertheless the sheer complexity of the actual process, my own dearth of knowledge and experience and the time limits of the thesis prevent me from becoming too detailed. For brevity's sake I am describing the process for a new building being built.

In Sweden we have a long and complex procedure for building, more so then in many other countries. The complexity of it, especially the municipal planning process, was even addressed as a major problem by the Minister for Public Administration and Housing in a recent debate article in one of the major newspapers (Attefall 2011). It is also the subject of a public inquiry since September 2011. I'll attempt a very simple description of it all based on information in Svensk Byggtjänst (2010) and Stintzing (2005). While I have arranged the process liner manner they various parts overlap and run partially parallel throughout the process. The very last part, and longest, is the management of any given building which I have omitted in this description. Partially since architects usually are not involved in the maintenance and the architect's role traditionally do not encompass this phase at all unless it is to change what is being maintained.

It should be noted that the Swedish building process have their own terms and words, in order to avoid confusion with the procedures of other countries I'm using the Swedish terms alongside with a translation by me in order for the non-Swedish reader to understand the basic meaning of the terms.

Stintzing (2005: 29 ff) points out that in most cases the ones taking initiative for a new construction project are developers and the managers of an existing organization. It can also be various companies in need of new complexes for different

purposes. Underlying all the projects are an idea or purpose, in order to achieve the desired outcome it becomes very important to anchor the idea both with the general public, the local authorities and the people working on the project. Hence the first part of any building process is immaterial, consisting of a great amount of information and exchange of services yet very few actual tangible things.

During this pre-phase, a lot suiting the needs of the client/developer needs to be located, financial calculations of the developer; calculating the need for external investors, cost of capital, costs for maintenance, operation and repairs, get an idea what taxes, fees and insurances are needed, analyze life cycle costs, gaze at the business cycles and try to guess in what direction they will go, calculate what income the rent will bring, approximate the end value of the building and search for finances. Often some research also needs to be done once a lot have been located to establish that there is nothing preventing a new building being constructed. The developer also needs to decide if she'll manage everything herself, or hire a project manager.

The process then continues with the programming of the actual building. What specifications should it have? In order to answer that, a Förstudie 'prestudy' can be done where the conditions and possibilities for the project are examined. If everything still says go, the actual Program 'programming' is then carried out. Consisting of several steps, inventorying the lot, taking stock of any existing buildings, establishing a description of what activities will take place in the building, describing what parts, functions, technical requirements and areas etc are needed.

Most architect are drawn into a project at the end of this stage when Förslagshandlingar 'proposal documents' are made based on the decisions taken previously. They are for example a bid from an architect, or the participation in an architectural competition. A large amount of the training in Swedish architecture schools (and elsewhere) is focused on this part.

Enabling the realization of the project

The next phase is a sort of in between part where the theoretical groundwork is made before the construction begins. This is where the Systemhandlingar 'system documents' are made or Projekteringen 'the planning' is started, detailing the position of the building, the plans, the sections, preliminary schedules, fire safety is initially addressed along with safety, sound and other requirements. Basically all the design bits are finalized during this stage and the drawings become the basis for more detailed financial calculations. The developer will need to supply a work environment plan, a quality plan, an environmental plan, make calculations for cost, management, time and deadlines, organize meetings, call for bids etc. The first orders will need to be posted for materials and components. In tandem with all of the above, the developer will also need to acquire the necessary building permit and making the required notifications. And with that the project starts to step into the material part with actual tangible artifacts being produced.

In order to achieve this Bygghandlingar 'construction documents' are made in accordance with the laws and established regulations. They consist of Projekteringsunderlag 'planning documents' (often made by the developer/project manager) where any sub-contractors will have enough information to make their own calculations. Descriptions of administrate regulations, descriptions on either how to build, or the technical requirements of the different construction parts, a full room description, specifications for colors, amounts needed for various parts, sustainability demands for the project, the quality plan and the work environment plan. Part of the construction documents are all the drawings of various parts, functions and details consisting of situation plans, placement plans detailing what parts of the lot the contractors can use for various purposes, plans for any demolitions, plans for safety devices. The plans, sections and facades of the building are included in this, including all elevations and lists of materials, building details, fire safety plans and plans for coordination of installations.

Construction
This is the phase when the physical artifact is being built, during which the architect often steps out of the project. In Swedish this is called the Produktion 'production' stage and it is mostly the developer/project manager who have head responsibility to call for bids (if it's not already done), evaluate bids, organize meetings, organize the site, organize control and oversight of the building and the site and coordination between all who will work with the project. The materials needed need to arrive at the right time so they are not stocked too long; risking damage, theft and incurring extra costs, nor too late so the whole construction is delayed.

The final official part, as seen from an architect's point of view, is the establishment of Förvaltningshandlingar 'management documents' detailing information for maintenance, operation and repairs. Relationshandlingar 'relations documents' are a part of these documents, containing all the drawings of the building as it was actually made.

During all of this the developer/project manager arranges meetings, contacts with the various authorities, communications and oversees the work environment for all working within the project.

As I mentioned above this rather simple description doesn't take into account the parallel nature of the building process with several parts occurring overlapping and in tandem with each other and with cost control running like a red string though it all.

The point with listing the building process like this is to illuminate the different roles of the actors. While the description is simplified, I hope that it is also clear to the reader that there are a huge amount of instances in this process where faults can occur, either by ignorance or carelessness. Stintzing (2005 : 23) lists the most

mistakes as occurring due to unclear decision processes, incomplete programming, faulty or unclear planning of the construction, lack of coordination, stress while working at the site, badly planned building site, contractors and suppliers who are financially pressed, lack of knowledge/commitment and nonchalance for the actual physical demands and circumstances like weather conditions, drying times, logistics and storage of materials and components.

The nature of the provided leadership is an important factor in this, inspiring or disillusioning workers. The matter of how specialized and thus fragmented a work task is can also be a strong motivator, or create disincentive and boredom from tasks perceived as meaningless. (Blau 1998: 25) By shedding responsibility and liability to sub-contractors, architects loose influence. Whoever takes the risk is increasingly driving the design. (Building Futures 2011: 24) Blau makes the example that "just as a structure of risk can lead to ruin, it also contains the seeds of success because it us a basic configuration for challenge and a creative response." (1998: 15)

While the scope of the thesis is primarily for architects, there are factors affecting the other actors that in turn also influence our work. One example of this is the costs of construction that have increased rapidly, almost doubling, since 1998. However the consumer price index has only risen with about 15%. (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 13) The implications of this are that the construction companies will make less profit if they sell at a price the average customer will afford. Instead the companies mostly build high cost speculative housing in order to keep their profit margins. An example of this situation is the fact that the construction companies use about 70-80% of their turnover for materials and services. (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 22) Instead the authors suggest that instead by streamlining, standardizing and prioritizing long term cooperation with the suppliers, a construction company can instead create both a more effective work process that is more

sustainable and generate more profit for themselves. (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 22)

A radical example from Brand (1994: 191) based on the cost cutting line of long term thinking is a contractor suggesting that instead of taking a mortgage and buying a big complete house the homeowner could use the down payment to pay for a small livable home and spend the monthly installments to finance extensions over time to suit the changing needs. In return by taking a long term view the client will spend more money and provide the contractor with more work.

4 Embracing entrepreneurship

As I've stated previously, entrepreneurship within architecture do not need to mean a focus singly upon finances and profit as it is often interpreted. Entrepreneurship is as much a matter of creation and ideation. It is making something new of what already exist. The need for collaboration and teamwork are reoccurring themes in many of the books I've read this fall of 2011. Likewise there have been references to attitudes in the literature and how important it is in order for collaboration to function (for example Kadefors 2002: 18).

Combining those ideas with the wider definition of what architects and entrepreneurs do, creates one direction the architecture profession could well take in the future. Not all individuals are willing to take on a role of leadership with all that it entails in forms of responsibility and risk. However a role as an enabler of what could be, physically in the shape of the project but also within the team, could perhaps become part of what architects do. This idea is also expressed by representatives of the demand side of the building sector, that the architect could step into strategic consulting and upper management. A position where they believe that our training will be extremely well suited to handle the complexities of the built environment. (Building Futures 2011: 12-13)

Speaking from a wholly personal perspective; the immersion in new attitudes was one of the main purposes of our internship in the Bay Area with the stated hope from VINNOVA that we would subsequently embrace this and spread it upon our return to Sweden. While many preconditions cannot be changed, attitudes are one of those very effective leverages to induce change. After being "over there" I agree with the statement that you cannot read about entrepreneurship, you need to practice it too. Theory alone will not cut it when it is a change of attitudes that is needed as described by Jonsteg. With that in mind I decided to include some parts of the entrepreneurial spirit of Silicon Valley as it was expressed to me repeatedly during a two month period. This is of course very subjective as it is entirely based upon my own experiences and how I interpret them.

One of the most blatant differences that I came across during my stay in the Bay Area, is how people respond to your ideas. I don't know how often I've heard "That would never work" here in Sweden. When I was there, the norm was more like "That sounds interesting, have you talked with this guy/tried googeling this/ thought about using this?" Just by something as simple as being positive and supportive towards each other and each other's ideas; said ideas, businesses and especially people flourish.

Connected to this is the impact it has on networking. By being supportive you make a mark in people's lives, however small that impact might be. It will most likely increase the chances of collaboration, of your name and brand being spread in a positive way.

Positivity includes the concept of asking yourself what you can give, instead of what you can get. If you just look to your own needs you will not establish trust and confidence. Do not be afraid either to connect with those working with something outside of your profession. An outsider's view can be of much use for creative

processes since they aren't blinded by preconceived notions on how something should be.

Once you have a great idea, share it!
In our complex world it is rare to be able to develop something totally alone; nearly all projects are created in teams. By helping creating an environment where more ideas can grow, the ones that aren't viable will be weeded out sooner. This also helps create a "we" attitude within a team, where ideas are brought to fruition together instead of being the seed of a single person. Also as a profession our ideas don't

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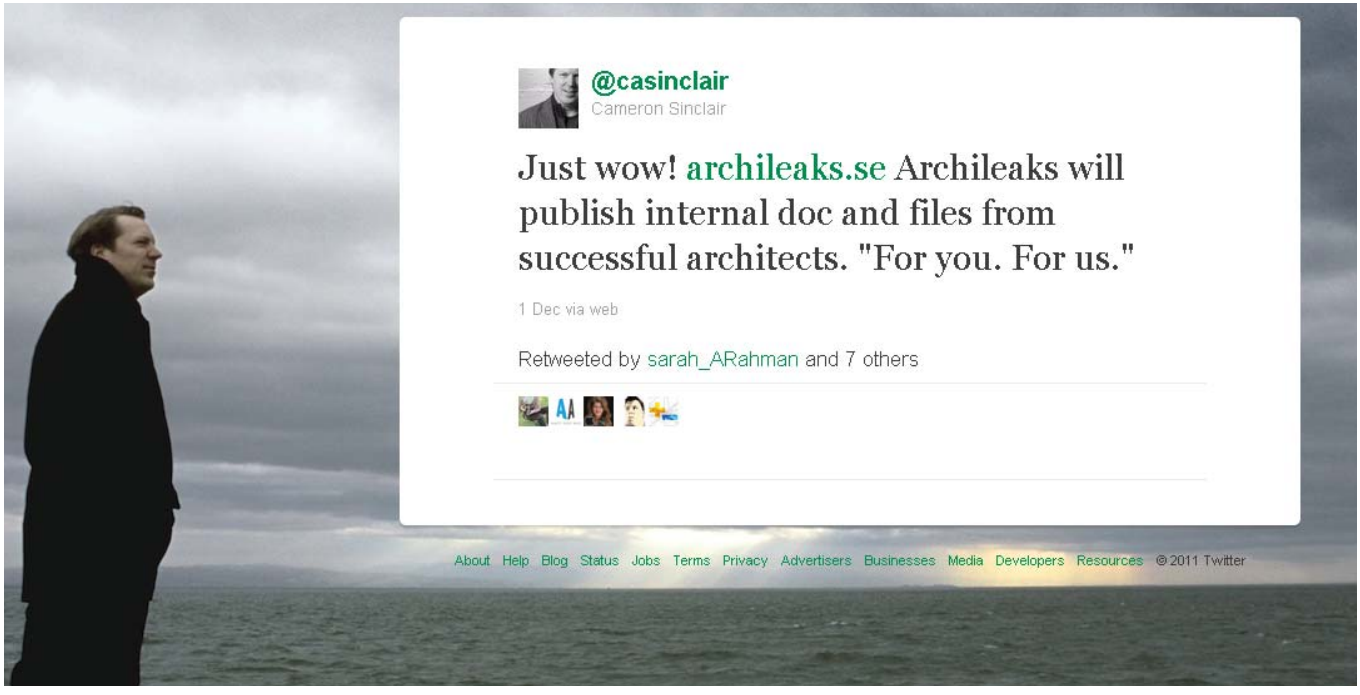


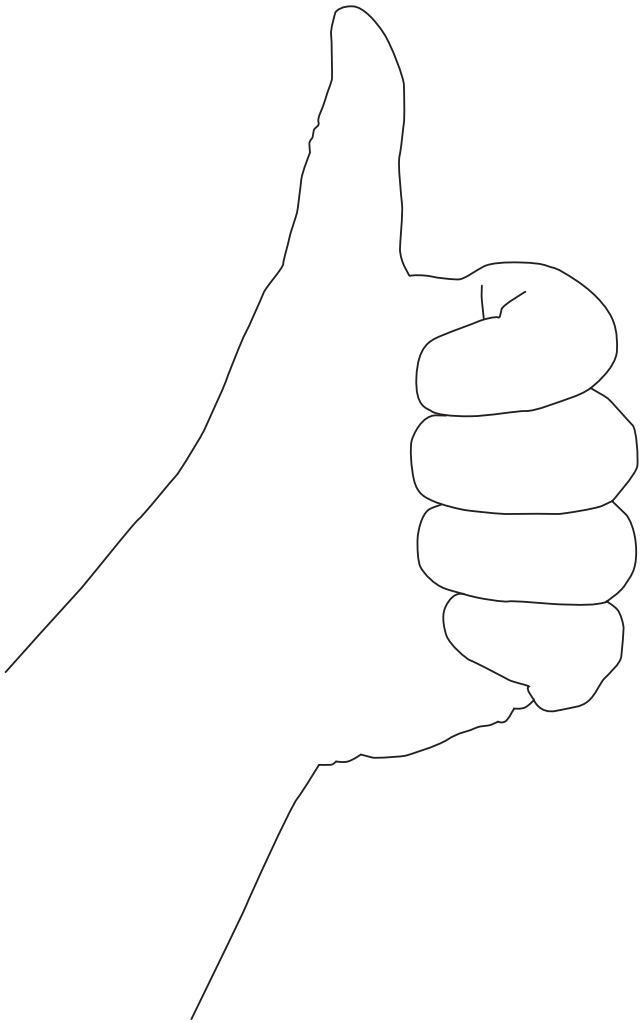
An example of entreprenurial attitudes.
Image a print screen from https://twitter.com/#!/casinclair/status/142330570972733441sa

need to be as perfect as we think, success can come as ideas (and businesses) are refined as we go.

Failing early means that the cost of failing will be less. By initiating more and simpler processes in the beginning, ideas and products can be developed and tested further then if they are sheltered and protected.

By looking more widely at what an education actually teaches you, I.e.: how you approach a problem, gather information and then find solutions opens doors of possibility. If you are an architect dissatisfied with the way things are, try using your own design thinking and creativity upon your own situation. Maybe you'll come up with something as good as Archileaks. Which is the best embodiment of this, for me, entrepreneurial line of thinking I've seen so far.

There are of course many other factors influencing entrepreneurship, but I believe the crux of the matter is the individuals' openness to ideas as stipulated by their inherent values.



Valuable, or not?

VALUE

"Try not to be a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value."
Albert Einstein

1 *The shape of value* pins down some of the many ways values are talked about. 2 *The architecture firm* takes a look at how those values take shape in the everyday work of architects. 3 *The architecture profession* helps form values. 4 *Creating value* examines how some values are enabled and suggests some alternatives.

Values are the foundation the design process; they are the very basis for the judgments made that defines the outcome of the project. The need for a new home is not created by the architect; instead it is something she enables in order to create value. Primarily as value for others, but also to herself since a job well done will lead to more assignments. These values can take a multitude of shapes, some concrete and easily measured and agreed upon. Others are immaterial, yet as important to the finished product.

The personal values of the architect and the client will greatly affect the finished result. Likewise, to varying degrees, the personal values of the other actors involved with a project will also determine the outcome. Considering how these often unspoken traits can have such a big impact, it really is no surprise that conflicts develop between individuals.

In tandem with the overlaying theme for this chapter I'm taking a look at the architecture firm and profession, both strongly influenced by the communal and individual values of architects.

1 The shape of Value

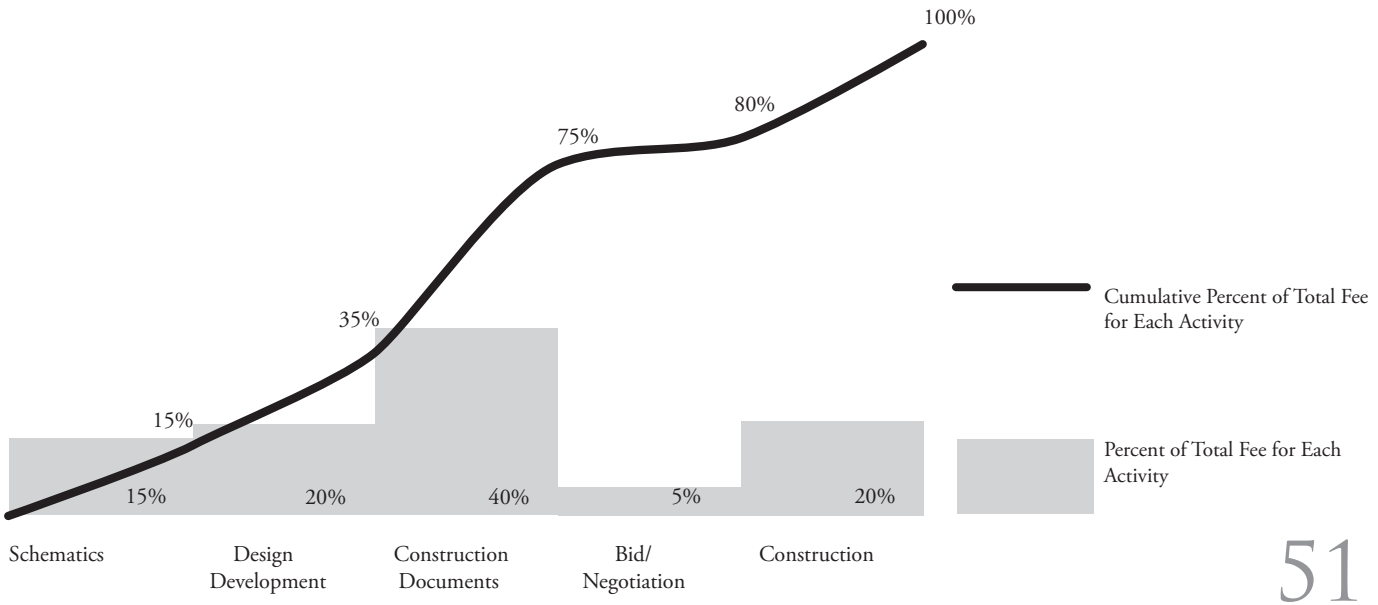
Value is a word defining those usually undefined core ideas that help characterize a society and form part of an individual's self-identity. The paradox as described by Holm is that the values are interpreted individually. (2006: 44) This makes values diverse, ranging from tangible to ephemeral and causes them to lack neutrality (2006: 47). Despite that, they are deeply ingrained and affect our behaviors. (2006: 53) As design movements, values transform the built environment according to what is currently in vogue. (2006: 57)

A seemingly very concrete way of looking upon value is the monetary value of a building. But it has the potential to be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic value in the meaning of a buildings worth, based upon the materials used, the man-hours put into its creation etc. This is the value that is likely easiest defined, it is often quantifiable and thus easy to calculate. The extrinsic value of a building bases itself upon how well the users enjoy the building, what reputation does it have, is it agreed upon being a splendid piece of architecture. A local example of these types of values is the Swedish so called "million program homes" and the turn of the (previous) century "Landshövdingehus". The first often have a very low intrinsic value since they were constructed with low-cost materials, they are now in need of renovation and energy upgrading. Likewise the extrinsic value is also low since the homes have a bad reputation, from the neighborhoods they are placed in, and from the lack of satisfied tenants. The second will often have a higher intrinsic value in terms of the judged worth and the cost of acquiring, despite an often similar need of renovation and upgrading. Their extrinsic value will often be very high, the areas well in demand and with nice reputations despite that the plans will often be less

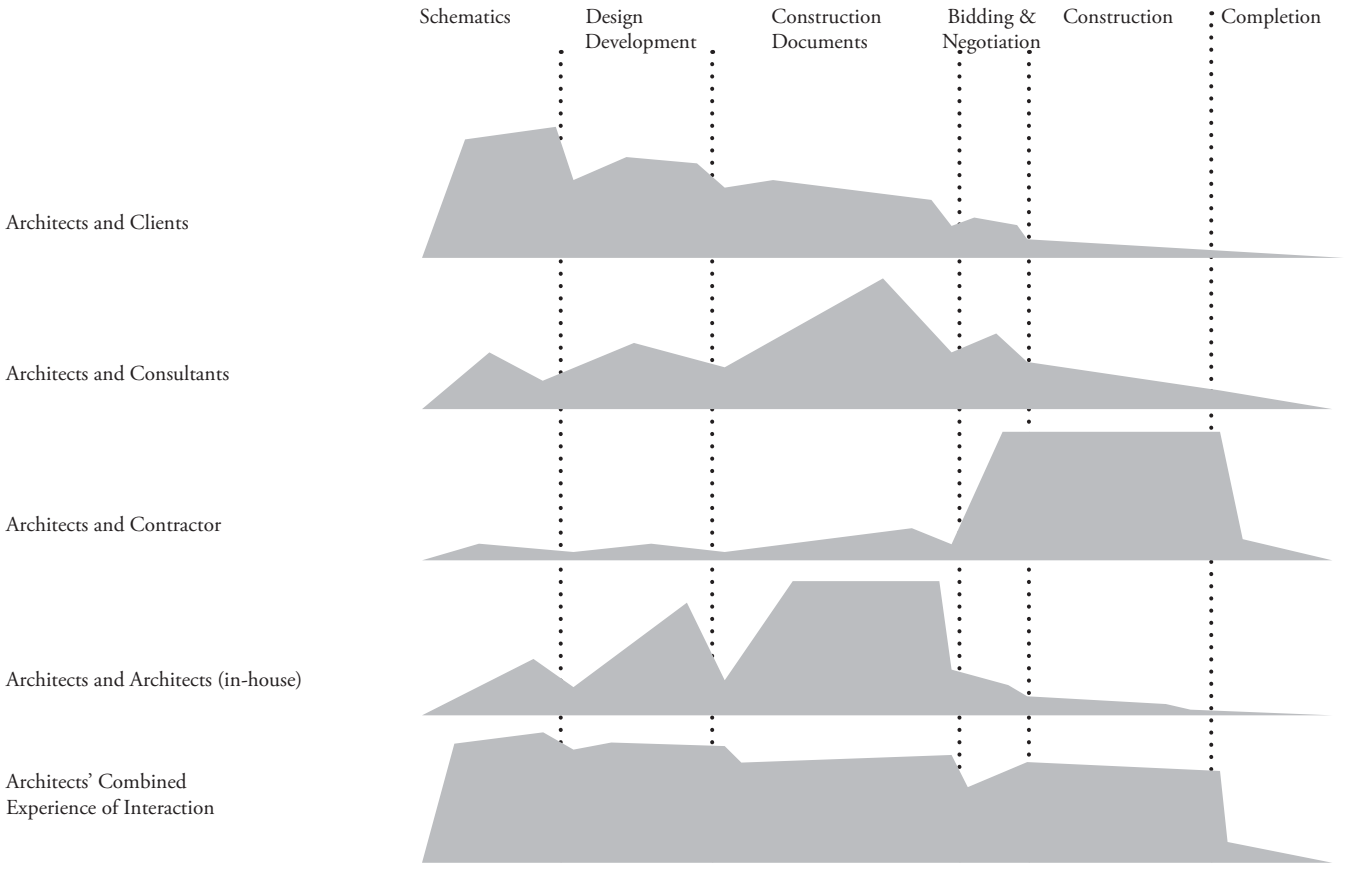
adapted to modern needs and the soundproofing equally bad, if not worse than most million program homes.

Time is a clear and distinct value for architecture, yet it can also hold a multitude of meanings. From the more conventional of making a building to stand the test of time, to the time spent perfecting a project, or the time not spent upon a project. Either in order to generate more bang for the buck. Or by generating a single paycheck in the here and now, or by creating publicity and increased future earnings.

AIA's Handbook of Professional Practice from 1988 have a very interesting diagram, reproduced in Cuff (1991: 73) and below by me. It can be seen as an approximation of how (American) architects in general spent their project time. Or at least were recommended to spend their time. It would be very interesting to see what it looks like today for an average firm.



Combined with Dana Cuff's own diagram of architects' interaction (1991: 175) also reproduced below by me. While schematic they both present a picture of how time was spent in practice in the early 1990'ies. The last showing some of the mud-died and interlacing nature of the building process and practice.



The "charrette ethos" as coined by Dana Cuff (1991: 70) is a value held in regards by some architects and architecture firms. In essence it is the glorification of working unpaid overtime since the art of architecture is considered more important than one's own health or the financial compensation for the time spent. Interestingly enough, Cuff points out that Vitruvius expressed the perceived higher value of art in regards to business acumen. (Cuff 1991: 71 and Vitruvius 2008: 150) It is quite remarkable that these values expressed over 2000 years ago still help define core values of the profession. Another example of the complexity of value affecting professionals is that

> "in a world that elevates the marketplace, value is defined not by the degree or license one holds but the effectiveness of what one does and the success of the results". (Fisher 2000: 3)

An alternative way of defining value is by looking at what is *not* value. Josephson & Björkman have studied waste within the building sector. Waste in their definition is something absorbing resources but that doesn't create customer value (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 21). Resources in this case having an equally very wide meaning. In their point of view, by systemically analyzing individual processes it becomes possible to make value visible and thus waste removable (2011: 55). By identifying the causes of waste within five different head-groups that are interconnected and influence the final result (2011: 28) they focus upon customer value. The business potential in identifying the waste is huge, either as a new business venture or just to gain competitive advantages (2011: 69).

Each and all of the architecture firms will have their own set of inherent values despite the fact that "another result of our cultivation of iconoclastic individualism is that we have difficulty articulating our values and relating them to those of the larger society." (Fisher 2000: 30) The values often become norms, based upon the founding individuals personal values (Cuff 1991: 160), and are kept in place by the

architects taking permanent jobs within the firm since the values in essence become part of their own professional identity. Those architects dissatisfied will most likely move on until they find or found a company matching their own inherent values. How are these values then usually embodied in architecture firms?

2 The architecture firm

Build LLC, a Seattle based architect-builder firm has a very interesting blog where they share a lot of their thinking, practices, methodology and ideas. One of the blog posts contain concrete advice for anyone thinking of starting up their own design firm. While it might seem flippant to quote a blog post in a thesis I decided to include parts of it since it is a statement of values of a modern firm based on actual practice and experience. A lot of the information one can reach as a student is how things should be, not as they are. One of the most interesting points brought up by them is the fact that despite the recent economical downfall they think now is the right time to establish your own firm since the struggle in poor times turns to a very clear financial value once the economic cycle turns. .

> "While the market will remain slow for a while (probably over another year), when it does pickup, the architects left standing will be flush with work. We see the economic recession as a good time for positioning. While there isn't a lot of work out there right now, there is much to do to make sure you get work later."
> (Build 2009)

Another more positive influencing factor on architecture firms starting up in Sweden is the opening of Archileaks on the 19th of October 2011. It is an attempt to gather professional knowledge and sharing it under a Creative Commons license. So far it is only in Swedish, but hopefully English content will also be created. Making not only the administrative aspects of architecture open source but also detail drawings, templates and just about any file any architect would like to share (Archileaks 2011). Rickard Stark, one of the initiators of Archileaks, adds in an

article (Jensfeldt 2011) that the difficulty in finding professional documents and standards for checklists, documentation and templates becomes an obstacle for new firms. Taking unnecessary time and focus that can be spent in a better way. Build also emphasizes the importance of sharing:

> "Being a good architect is not about precious details locked up in your desk – it's about being the type of professional who goes out and implements them. And remember, rising tides raise all boats." (Build 2009)

The equipment needed to start an architecture firm has varied quite a lot the past 20 years; Boström (1991: 17) describes how a firm can be started without any investments at all since the only expense is the salary which the individual architect can simply control by deciding how much they will pay themselves. CAD was just starting to be used in Sweden so there were no requirements to purchase either the software or the hardware to use it on back then. He theorizes how CAD could eventually become an obstacle for establishment, yet in order for it to become a useful investment one would need the skills to handle it too. (Boström 1991: 25) Fast forward to here and now and there can't be many architecture firms who are without CAD. Now however, as exemplified (Build 2009), it is possible to surf into eBay and purchase legit copies of AutoCAD 2011 for $220 USD and Adobe Creative suite CS3 for an equal amount of money. Many other softwares commonly used can also be purchased second hand online, a lot of necessary software can even be found for free like Google docs. There are an increasing number of free apps available for book keeping, project planning, invoicing and just about anything that could assist a start-up.

An important tool for Build is the smartphone since it functions as a mobile office, documentation device, navigator, timekeeper and connects not only the partners and associates of the firm but also is a way to reach out to the general public through various social media. (Build 2009)

Through social media a firms values can be spread to the general public and potential clients. I have not located any research on the impact of social media upon architecture firms, yet the free marketing potential in its own is great. (Just look at the twitter reprinted at the end of last chapter for example.)

Today the brand of a firm is usually of a great importance, no matter within what profession they operate. Interestingly enough it appears that traditionally architecture firms place very little effort upon marketing. (Boström 1991: 38) One architect quoted in Cuff expresses that "We don't go out searching for work - it just walks in the front door" (1991: 105). In light of the actual need to bring in the payroll, even if it's just for oneself, it is something that doesn't make sense.

During my studies I've heard architects express that they will not work for any project that isn't billable, yet it seems little effort is placed upon procuring the work. In the same instance this lack of a wider focus can lead to a disproportionate focus upon the project instead of thinking of how the individual or company would like to work and could find ways to make that so. (Grange 2005: 155) Architecture firms are very dependent upon the clients' subjective idea of what is beautiful, yet it is of course important for a firm to have a record of solid production and values in congruence with the client. A survey from 1989 emphasizes that architects greatly value clients with knowledge and trust for the architect. (Boström 1991: 39)

The size of the firm makes for a very big difference and not just in monetary matters but also the values and their impact and connection to the workers. Blau gives the example how in a large firm the workers can have less impact and influence on the decision processes of the firm than the more direct voice of those in a small firm. (1988: 34) The larger firm will in general also have more formalized rules and probably a larger percentage of technicians then its smaller equivalents. (Blau 1988: 32)

She has also in the course of her research divided architects into three different types based upon their functions within a firm; The owners, partners and associates who all have managerial roles, those with design responsibility and those who engage in technical professional work like detailing, drafting and specifications. Their stated order also reflecting their descending power within a firm. (1988: 35-36) Blau's research shows that the multiple benefits of having more individuals being able to have direct client contact and sharing responsibility in a project, the higher evaluations the quality of the project will have, the higher the client repeat rate will be. Yet the more individuals sharing responsibility of a project will also lead to less awards for the firm and have lower referral rate of the person in charge is someone else then the principal. (1988: 43) The size of the firm and it's organization have a very tangible value not just for the architects themselves but also how it is perceived by their peers and their clients. Verticality becomes an important value in Blau's research. It is a characteristic of firms oriented into project teams where the responsibility can become shared, engaging and the project would be followed by the same group from start to finish. (1988: 57-58)

Some architecture firms develop a two-party approach to their business, combining the skills of separate professions like architect-engineer, architect-builder or architect-developer. This in order to keep more control of the product (Cuff 1991: 32) Based upon this concept I decided to look into the thoughts and happenstances behind the success of one of the more prominent architect-developers; John Portman.

DETOUR - The first steps of John Portman

As one of the first modern architect-developers, John Portman's life work makes an interesting read. Since my focus for the thesis is how architects get started to making their ideas a reality this is a summary of the first 10 years of his practice. While there are other architect-developers and even architect-developer-builders, Portman is more published, discussed and mentioned. That said, nearly all of the information I've written about John Portman, unless otherwise said, is based upon the book The Architect as Developer by himself and Jonathan Barnett.

I've tried to weed out the facts and circumstances that enabled Portman to take the steps he did. Without his own approach and attitudes however, I am uncertain if he could have become as successful as he is in regards of monetary wealth and the amount of buildings designed by him and his staff.

During his studies and after until his licensing Portman worked as an architect in firms specialized in retail. Once Portman had opened up his own practice in 1953 he eagerly set out, only to find he was losing clients since his company was new and unestablished. In 1956, through mutual acquaintances Portman got to know the leading real estate man in Atlanta, John O'Chiles. By striking a deal with him, supplying architectural advice in exchange for learning more about real estate Portman realized a way to further his own architectural practice. Or as he put it himself in a recent interview:

> *"I realized that if I found the site, came up with the idea, and figured out the financing, then there would be no question about who was going to be the architect."*
> *(Architects Newspaper 2010)*

The same year Portman started on his first venture into real estate with a local small real estate firm. In the end they didn't find enough tenants so the project ended with a $7500 loss for Portman. Instead of giving up the idea of development, the project ended with him deciding to venture into this alone, without dependence upon others. In order to retain his architectural practice, draw more clients and take this step in to realty, Portman contacted one of his old professors Griffith Edwards (specialized in construction specification) in order to start a shared company. This proved to be a success and the partnership lasted until Edwards retired in 1969. Free from the practicalities of organizing an architectural firm, Portman dived into the world of real estate development, one of the first projects from 1957 ending up becoming the world's largest furniture and home decorating store; AmericasMart. It is still owned and managed by the Portman family. This is the story of how it came to be:

While attempting to get an architectural commission for turning a garage into an exhibition space, Portman found out that the owner would rather like to lease the property and let someone else worry about it all. Searching out people who might be interested in collaborating with him,

Portman ended up with a small company. Consisting of him, Randy Macon who was working as a manufacturer's representative for a furniture company, John la Rue who worked as a product salesman and Herbert Martin who was working as the assistant manager of a local hotel. It turned out the furniture mart was so successful they expanded from using 40,000 sqm initially to the whole building of 240,000 sqm within a year. They decided to expand to 2,000,000 sqm, the largest piece of land with single ownership in Atlanta was at the corner of Harris and Peachtree Street. This was the start of what would become the Peachtree center in Atlanta, now encompassing 17 blocks of downtown real estate.

Initially though they had to struggle to get the mortgage commitment, what they were proposing was a specialty purpose building where none such had been built before. The lenders where highly skeptical. Finally they convinced a loan officer to come and see the success of their existing mart. And in collaboration with a major landowner and developer Ben Masell, they finally got the OK to get started. They broke ground in 1959, the building was opened to the public in 1961 and it did so well that they could buy out Masell by the second year of the mart's operation.

As the Peachtree location was being developed Portman decided to build an adjacent hotel since the demand for hotel rooms in Atlanta kept rising, partially thanks to the mart and the business it generated. In partnership with a local investment company and an investor from Dallas, Portman obtained an 99 year lease for a lot just opposite the mart. In this project Portman came to the conclusion that a larger indoor atrium would both be a economic solution and add a very pleasant experience for the hotel visitors, or in his own words: "I wanted to explode the hotel; to open it up; to create a grandeur of space, almost a resort, in the center of the city." (Portman et Barnett 1977: 28)

The hotel was financed by O'Chiles and while surprised by Portmans unconventional design, the cost effectiveness of it coupled with the obvious success of his previous scheme for the mart deterred any doubts the financier might have had. However seven separate strikes and a new president for the investment company decided that they shouldn't be involved in any hotel building caused a lot of problems and increased costs. After approaching Hilton, Sheraton, Loews and Western hotel chains they finally managed to sell the hotel to the Pritzkers of Hyatt House Corporation, thus creating their first down town hotel and a very successful future relationship. The rest, one thing leading to another through collaborations with the Rockefellers and Henry Ford, is history.

When reading about Portman something strikes early; he always jumps at a chance, testing it, developing it. And he doesn't hesitate to make use of his contacts; hearing about properties for lease, contacting them for exchange of knowledge, finding partners etc for business ventures. By identifying a way to make the architect become a partner early in the development ventures Portman have opened up whole now possibilities for the architecture, though demanding plenty of new knowledge. In The Architect as Developer this range of necessary skills are summed up as:

1) The structural organization of the city and its existing growth pattern
2) The real estate market and the effect of design and cost on marketability
3) The preparation of studies that measures feasibility: economic, social, and political
4) Projections of total development cost, by which building cost is a substantial percentage but by no means the whole story
5) Projections of income and expenses over a long period of time, usually called the "financial pro forma"
6) The financial market and the ways to put together the financing of a building
7) The renting and operation of the completed building
(Portman et Barnett 1977: 148)

Through his own belief that architects should become the "master coordinators for the physical development of entire cities" (1977: 135) he is following the intentional footsteps of many others, like Le Corbusier, Lúcio Costa (planner of Brasilia) or Jaime Lerner (Curitiba). Of course it could be argued that Portman focuses only on the middle class and others wealthy enough to make use of his services.

From my own visits to the Embarcadero centre in San Fransisco I can tell that the relative peace and change of pace 2 floors up from the bustling streets was a remarkable contrast. It really made an oasis within the city, lush with greenery and stark in its combination of patterns formed by crème tiles and bare concrete. Despite their relative age and location at the water front, exposed to wind, salt and moisture coupled with the fumes from a bustling city the buildings gave a fresh appearance. The simple materials and plain but fanciful detailing seems to give the buildings a robustness, few repairs were visible.

In another recent article by himself, John Portman describes his world view:

> *"It may sound absurd, but I've never been too focused on profit. I've been more focused on contribution. But the two don't have to be at odds--unless you make them. The emphasis on contribution often results in greater long-term profitability, because you're focused on the long term and the greater good rather than short-term financial gain. It's what drove me to become a developer-architect. Rather than concentrating on one great building, I could design and develop a great community, taking into account how people would interact with the adjacent structures."*
> *(Portman 2009)*

A regular company usually makes its revenue from offering a product or service that solves a need or problem the customer encounters. Architecture firms however seem to base their business upon their own personal set of values, few focusing upon investments that will give financial returns. Instead the firms aim to have enough profitability to cover the wages and rental of office space. With the focus upon design, expansion becomes undesirable since that entails that someone will have to spend more time upon administration than what is perceived as production of architecture (Boström 1991: 18).

The limitation of the firm to work with production only in collaboration with the client also disables any chances to produce some semblance of a stock which could provide some sort of profits or other benefits (Boström 1991: 19). Cuff cites a management theory that firms are either strong in ideas, service or delivery (1991: 195). The same was expressed during the lecture by Sandén (2011), in terms of architecture companies those could be interpreted as typical catalog house companies (delivery), the hard working more anonymous companies (service) and the starchitects, be they local or international (ideas).

It is difficult to say exactly what shape an architecture firm will take in a generation to come, I've looked upon a few of the aspects that I believe (after going through

the information I've had access to and time to read) will most likely shape what will be, yet there are several facets I'm leaving out. In Building Futures architects expressively states that "in 10 years we probably will not call ourselves an architecture practice, it will be something else entirely" (Building futures 2011: 29). It that basic structure will change, how much of the architecture profession will remain?

3 The architecture profession

The characteristics of a profession according to Cuff are that they "impart knowledge and skills related to tasks of high social value." (1991: 23)
In Sweden (and most likely many other countries) the profession consist of a group of individuals, nearly all working within the field of architecture. Furthermore the vast majority are trained in an architectural or planning school. As members of the profession, they are recognized by the community as professionals and those within the professional organization have a code of ethics they are obliged to follow as expressed by the organization. Apart from most countries however, the title architect is not licensed here.

A key characteristic of any profession is that it consists of individuals holding specific knowledge where the work is gained by others lack of that knowledge. Conversely without the knowledge base, there will not exist any viable foundation for the profession. (Holm 2006: 74) It is a conundrum where the professional will in the end have to act out of the clients interest in order to maintain their status as supplying "high quality advice [and that] the fee will be set fairly" (Building Futures 2003: 23) instead of catering primarily to their own needs. This debate seem to have raged since architects formed professions during the 19th century, Dickens' caricature of Pecksniff standing as an early example (Saint 1983: 51ff) Oddly enough Vitruvius's maxim that architects should be broad in both training and skill still stands after two millennia (Blau 1988: 6), and seems to some extent be the unifying view upon the idealized architect.

Many likenesses have been drawn between architecture and the medical and legal professions by the various authors (Blau, Fisher, Saint, Holm), however Building Futures touches upon a fundamental value difference between architecture and other professions:

> "Where other professions (like accountancy or law) allow regulation and policy to steer them towards the public interest, those who enter the professions of the construction industry generally do so in order to shape the built environment for the better." (2003: 26 and similarly stated in Boström 1991: 19)

The primary question that comes to mind is for *whom* are architects then shaping the built environment? A second more pertinent question is what sort of judgments is made depending on who is given priority? Another difference from the other professions is architectures lack of monopolized knowledge base; nearly anyone can build their own home without hiring an architect. In fact in 1971 only 1% of all US single family houses were designed by architects. (Saint 1983: 154)

The profession's belief system is part of what the field of Sociology term social construct. It is used to describe a norm that has been agreed upon, often subconsciously, in the social context of a particular group of individuals. What is significant for it that it is a created concept, obeying no laws of nature or physics. It is something that affects the perceived reality and is reproduced by people's actions; enforcing it, or diminishing it. As a consequence in order to maintain status quo, the construct becomes institutionalized, a modus operandi and made into tradition. A typical example of an architectural social construct is the move into modernism where all that was old and old fashioned was considered undesirable, unhealthy and above all, unbuildable. Much of these social constructs are created and maintained within the architecture schools, as expressed by Dana Cuff:

> "My own work indicates that in school, professionals learn the roles, values, vocabulary as-

sumptions and set of reasonable expectations appropriate to the subculture." (1991: 44)

It seems to me that in order to surpass potential conflicts architects have isolated themselves to some extent by turning to their own for opinions, and glorifying the myth of the lone architect winning competitions etc. Yet that seems to lead to greater isolation instead of any improvements. Quite a few of the authors I've read this fall, expressed the opinion that architects will end up shunning themselves out of work. This since by withdrawing from the building sector and using art as a justification they not only alienate their clients but also their colleagues from different professions. In reserving the critique and awarding of architectural projects often to only architects, a discrepancy is created "relegating the clients' judgments to a secondary status". (Cuff 1991: 36)

Further obscuring clarity and cognizance is the sometimes problematic issue of architects viewing their architecture only as art. It can have the end result that our exploratory approach becomes a weakness, creating and uncertainty for the clients. Our own design thinking becomes a hindrance if we wield it incorrectly and hide our work behind obscurity. By doing so architects effectively disregard the work performed by the other actors within the building sector, despite the fact that the building and its surroundings in nearly all cases cannot come to be without participation between professions. All playing equally important and codependent roles; I.E. no matter how pretty the architect's drawings are, the result also is influenced by just about anything else that any other party within the project is responsible for.

Another tactic achieved by claiming the architecture as art, enables some architects to further their influence upon the project by playing upon how they with their knowledges have "the power to decide what is best for the client". (Cuff 1991: 41) While this point of view is to a large extent a value judgment, it will affect what ideas are realized and thus I will return to this in the discussion about the role of

the architect in the Idea chapter. Catering to this arrogance is the before mentioned charrette ethos, an idolization of sorts regarding ideals of a time long past; when the architect often worked alone, winning competitions while living and breathing for their art. Today many architects will be employees to architecture firms, far removed from old conventions. I would hold that in a modern company things like administration, bureaucracy, communication of the values etc will need to be in balance to art or design work. An overload to either way can end up stifling a firm. Likewise if the employees see themselves primarily as independent artists and thus become alienated from the actual organization (Cuff 1991: 51 ff), conflicts will most likely arise and become potentially very damaging to the firm.

Clearly there are some very deep inherent conflicts within the architecture professions belief system, from the claims of artistic autonomy to the factual lack of independence, the downplay of the impact of economy knowledge and business skills resulting in cad slaves and a company in continuous survival-mode, the idolizing of heroes and ideals long since gone (if it wasn't a myth already back then?) resulting in burned out individuals, personal guilt and crashed relationships.

4 Creating value

Perhaps the most difficult part of any project is identifying the value adding activities, especially since value will mean different for nearly all participants. E.G. how important is the customer focus versus the end user focus if the two are not the same; for architects, for developers, for contractors, for manufacturers? Josephson & Björkman claims the sector as a whole lacks customer focus if looking at how the customer's money is spent. (2011: 23) and the intended improvement work causes increased administration and more costs for the customer. The search for improvements and extra value becomes an added expense, a catch 22.

In school I've been told that some architects do not want to visit their projects

once they are done and it is also mentioned by Cuff (1991: 243); supposedly those particular architects cannot stand the changes imposed upon the building by others. I believe like Thomas Fisher that instead the focus should be to find out what worked, and what did not. By documenting the consequences of our actions we will create value by developing arguments and tools to counter "the perception among too many people that architecture is an expense to be minimized". (Fisher 2000: 32f) Certainly the value comparison between architect-made buildings and those that are not would be a very interesting read.

In the literature I have been studying, often the business and administrative side of the architecture practice appears a neglected part. Both in the older material, (Boström 1991: 30ff), and the very fresh (Jensfeldt 2011) where one of the founders of Archileaks expresses that

"Om alla har tillgång till alla document kan alla istället fokusera på gestaltning och vi kan börja konkurrera med idéer istället för administativa verktyg."

Jensfeldt (2011)
Rickard Stark

> 'If all have access to all [administrative] documents we can all instead begin focusing on design and we can begin competing with our ideas instead of administrative tools.'

I will touch very briefly upon the matters of economy and finance. It is a subject I have not studied previously and while it makes a great impact for the built environment, I do not think I have enough grasp of it to draw adequate conclusions. That said, a very concrete way of looking at value is the expenses and incomes on many levels; the project, the firm, the client's cash flow etc.

A very concise advice about generating more revenue from Building Futures (2011: 18) is that small architecture practices should offer "a one-stop-shop design [...] containing all the services required for a small-build project within one company". Although some companies handle this by breaking up the work process into smaller parts, each that they can charge a separate fee for. (Building Futures 2011: 33) Yet other architects feel that by using the title architect they cannot charge a fee

for work that fall outside of the traditional role. (Building Futures 2011: 28). Much of what is sold today is fancifully packaged both physically and with imagery. Creating an image of something desirable and valuable, something that the customer can attain if only they would buy the product. To some extent that exclusiveness is ubiquitous within architecture, since just the mere act of hiring an architect is not for everyone. Yet many clients are reached thought contacts and networking, not marketing. This makes a lot of sense in a way though, the need of building a new home is not decided upon frivolously. The client will probably spend a lot of time doing research trying to find the "right" architect for the job. Yet should not the exclusiveness lure more clients to hire architects, especially in view of recent years focus upon the home and hearth in media?

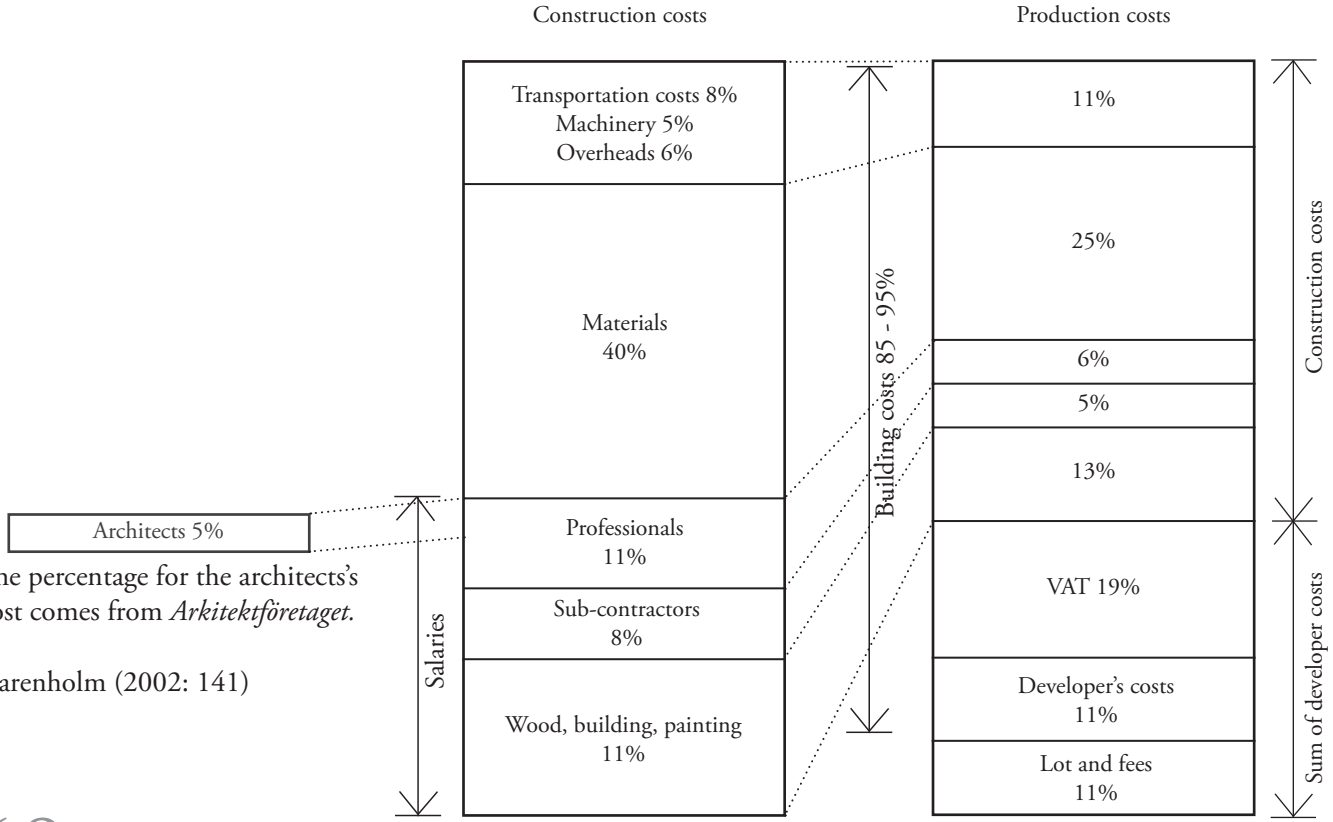
Instead, by focusing on differentiation between the various added values, multiple services can be offered in different price ranges. In order to figure out what needs the client would like to pay extra for:

> "Small and medium sized practices must spend time learning about the financial, social and commercial environment in which their client operate". (Building Futures 2011: 34).

Fisher points out that by creating a long-term partnership with their clients, lawyers have managed to generate a financial model requiring much less work spent upon in locating new clients. (Fisher 2000: 6) A similar relationship used to exist within architecture before the 19th century where a single architect got several commissions from the same patron. Yet if the firm is small, dependence upon only a few clients can become a weakness due to changed corporate policies or political climate. (Boström 1991: 39)

For some reason it has become common for architects to charge a percentage of the construction (Kyrkander & Linde 2008: 52). But since the client will want as little

costs as possible, it is inevitable that the architect's fee will become limited in such a system. In extension it will be difficult to charge a fee in relevance to the benefits and extra values added by the architect. The diagram below based upon SOU (2002: 193) illustrates the costs of the building process as it looks like in Sweden. I have added the architect's fee which is 5% of the 60% that the construction fee amounts to in average to set it into perspective with the whole.



The percentage for the architects's cost comes from *Arkitektföretaget.*

Carenholm (2002: 141)

Advises regarding monetary matters are legion. Some very specific and transdisciplinary as to make use of shared pro forma sheets and for architects to make realistic analyses of the increases in property value. And to base the costs upon a very clear quality program in order to be

> 'on equal footing with the counterpart when it comes to making arguments for the shared vision - the feasibility of the project must be in focus for all parties.' (Forshed et al 2011: 15)

"Då är du lika bra rustad som din motpart när det gäller att argumentera för den gemensamma visionen – projektets genomförbarhet måste ju alltid vara i fokus för alla parter.

(Forshed et al 2011: 15)
Eva Sjölin

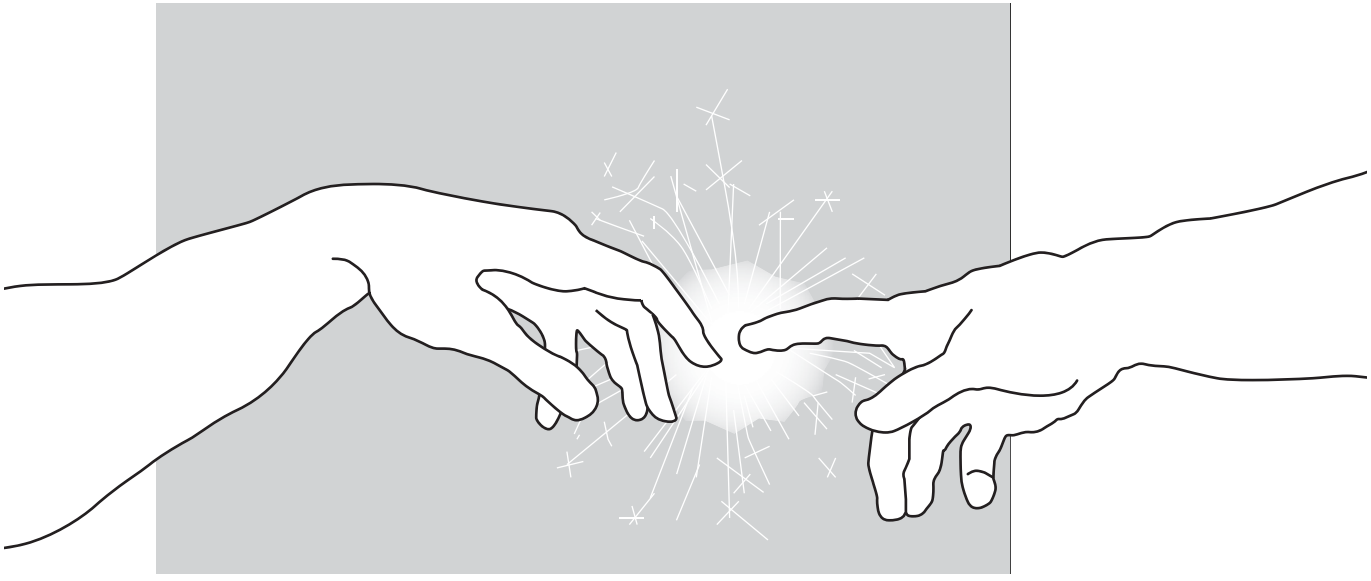
Despite the attempts to speak the same language, the difference in what is perceived as a value can lead to changes and set-backs of the original ideas. Another example from Forshed et al is when

> 'the property development is handling over to the construction department the economical logic changes - cost benefit thinking transforms resolutely into cost minimizing thinking.' (2011: 23)

"När avdelningen Property Development lämnar över till avdelningen Construction byts den ekonomiska logiken – costbenefit-tänkande övergår mycket resolut till cost-minimizing-tänkande."

(Forshed et al 2011: 23)
Torbjörn Einarsson

What they, and others, describe is a situation where the interchange of ideas has become stunted. In essence rendering ideas unable to cross the value borders between departments and professions. From my reading it seems a reoccurring problem, more the norm then the exception. Yet the idea is the fundamental basis of creative work.



The spark

INNOVATION

"New ideas pass through three periods:
1) It can't be done.
2) It probably can be done, but it's not worth doing.
3) I knew it was a good idea all along!"
Arthur C. Clarke

1 *Finding ideas* is a key part of what architects do and is the defining characteristic of innovation. 2 *The role of the architect* defines how we look upon ourselves and how other think about us. 3 *Generating room for ideas*, or rather the processes that enables them is discussed in the last sub-chapter.

From my point of view, innovation and ideation seems to be claimed as the basis of many of not most architecture firms. The majority of new projects we make are all expected to be part of the multi layered stratum known as society, yet be original and distinct as parts of the here and now in all aspects.

As a profession we are encouraged to borrow ideas from each other, but only if we do it in a cool innovative way. Blatantly using the same solution is frowned upon, as is the forbidden pastiche, a social construct, of creating buildings in the same style as older houses. A held by some is that we should look upon each project with fresh eyes, create an innovative proverbial wheel anew with each client.

Perhaps, we are looking at the wrong part of ideation? Perhaps as professionals we should look less at the product and instead at the process and see how we can change that?

1 Finding ideas

Architects have long been catalyzers of ideas, from Brunelleschi to Le Curbusier, using the built environment to test visions of what could be. From the large perspective of the Voisin Plan transforming the cluttered inner city Paris to a series of insular towers in a park to the more modest ideas of Beate Holmebakk's designs for prisons, ideas help shape the built environment and our everyday lives.

While many ideas spring from an architects' "out of the box"-reasoning generated in turn by their design and in some cases their system thinking, I can't help but feel after these that it's only the currently architecturally approved ideas that are allowed to amplify. No matter where it stems from, the mentality that only some styles of architecture are more beautiful and thus better than others dilapidates the range of possible ideas that are created since many architects are socialized into thinking architecture should be a particular way.

Many of my friends have described their creative process as getting an idea. Then the architectural process consists of finding out how it could look like, verifying its validity and enabling it. The idea can be the development of something already existing, or a new and innovative way of creating something.

In the entrepreneurship sphere this is sometimes referred to as Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies where the Red Ocean denotes the already existing markets where competition between companies is often cut throat and the products are differentiated by price, quality and niche. Whereas the Blue Ocean consist all the markets that aren't yet in existence, where customer demand, conscious or subconscious, defines what products will emerge. There is are larger potential for profit when creating a Blue Ocean market due to the innovation value, the higher the innovation value the less competition there will be. (Sandén 2011)

One problem facing the architects is their current, often singular, focus upon design which

> "Consequently [blinds them to] aspects that are of importance to the society and the clients like cost, rent ability, users' convenience, ease of maintenance" (Holm 2006: 119)

The economic realities of our everyday practice cannot be ignored, we need to learn to go with the flow and encourage the way it turns of we will most likely be without projects. With the words from Holm in mind, it makes sense for an architecture firm to create a business system where part of the architect's work of creating the drawings for home is already done yet can be charged for; it enables an extra income to the architect that will keep ticking in as long as the product is sold. It is a way of "working that enable the production of the same product using less resources." (Josephson & Björkman 2011: 21). Yet is this in accordance to the perceived role of the architect?

2 The role of the architect

The architect-client relationship is one of the key items separating this profession from other professions since it's still characterized by a patron-practitioner affiliation. (Cuff 1991: 33) Perhaps some of architectures overtures of being an art form stems from this old tradition where a wealthy client would pay for something unique? I would like to return to that concept once again since it seems much of the architecture as art mentality today derives from romanticized views upon the roles of the classic and mediaeval architects. Saint (1983) discusses how this notion as exemplified by for example Goethe (1983: 19), Ruskin (1983: 31) or even to some extent Ayn Rand (1983: 1ff) and proliferated through the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (1983: 80). Stemming from this particular philosophy is a cadre of architects choosing the profession since:

> "An individualized view of architecture attracts architects because it enables them to see themselves not only as top dogs in the construction process but also as creators and romantics, heirs to a tradition that offers them a chance of fame and remembrance from posterity." Saint (1983: 6)

Saint also joins in the critique that architects holding on to the 'art'-mentality can use it to elevate themselves and create a locus of control over the client (who is obviously not educated as an architect). (1983: 155) A similar statement is made in Building Futures where architecture is described as "a profession that has an unenviable reputation for being notoriously insular and more focused on what it can offer then its client wants". (2011: 7) The dangers of maintaining this mentality, Saint warns, creates architecture as "a gift to the coarser proponents of commercialism."

Professionalism is supposed to stand guard between art and commerce, yet having no lure of its own, it becomes weak. Instead Saint suggests that "if architects wish to preserve the better elements in professionalism and to prevent their calling from degenerating, except in a few instances, to a mere trade, they must find a way to break the barriers limiting the concept of imagination to art and design." (1983: 164)

Blau on the other hand is the only author expressing herself somewhat positively about this viewpoint. Her opinion stems from the extrinsic value of buildings where architecture is more then it's physical trappings, or as she puts it herself:

> "Most importantly, buildings are commendatory or not in terms of standards of beauty, aesthetic pleasure, and expression. It is no wonder that architects profess to be artists." (1988: 46)

During the course of her own research she have interviewed 422 architects, about 98% of them state that creativity is the distinctive feature of architecture compared to other professions. (1988: 49) However Blau also finds that despite the self-

proclaimed trappings of individual artistry most architects end up as “anonymous craftsworkers”. (1988: 50) As Blau says it’s a paradox where “owing to the singular master value of design creativity, most architects are destined to fail and they know that.” (1988: 59) Holm illustrates this clearly in a quote where it says that “no western society licenses (or provides legal sanction in any other way) for its artists.” (2006: 93)

What position an architect should have is very clearly pointed out in many publications, for example in Svensk Byggtjänst (2010: 7) where it is stated that the architect is the client’s fiduciary and independent advisor. Either in a lesser role as a sub-consultant or as the project manager. Yet what does that really mean, what implications does it have? Are we helping the client or serving the client? (Holm 2006: 105) The viewpoints are significantly different.

The implications become even more convoluted when the undisputed power of a building process sits nowadays with the project manager, who is in charge of the projects economy on the behalf of the client/developer. Sometimes that person can be an architect, though most often that isn’t the case.

Grange describes in her studies of the evolution of the architectural profession from the 1920’ies to the 1960’ies, how in accordance with the increasing importance of economical and rational values started to threaten the architects standing. And how architects instead turned to a much larger extent to the artistic values as a natural reaction. (2002: 23) It was considered a relief from

> ‘hindering building traditions, including economical, political and technological limitations and compromises that the architects did not have to deal with from the moment architectural knowledge started to distance itself from the craft-like practice, instead becoming abstracted to encompass only design drawings’. (Grange 2002: 18)

“Hindrande byggnadstradtitioner samt ekonomiska, politiska och tekniska begränsningar och kompromisser beskrivs också som vad arkitekterna “slapp” i det ögonblick då arkitektkunskapen började distanseras från den hantverksmässiga praktiken och abstraheras till att primärt gälla ritningen.”

Grange (2002: 18)

What surprises me the most is that Kristina Grange is the only author who actually talks about the remarkable lack of unification between architects and engineers. Many of the authors are frankly bashing the more "artiste" architects, yet few of them offer any discussions on how to merge the separate paths into intuitive design versus irrefutable logic that the master builders of old have divided into today. The discussion becomes easily instead one-sided and the merits of creative freedom are neglected.

Returning back to this division of risks and labor as exists today, perhaps one reason for it stems from the implications of Cuff's statement that: the architect as manager is profoundly more suited to "define the appropriate relations among actors in complex architectural negotiations" then the artist-architect alter-ego. (1991: 40) Yet the artist-architect has an imagined greater creative freedom and thus the ideal of the architect-manager seems to live a pining life despite many attempts to bring it out from its confining closet. Another older example trying to encourage the architect-manager role comes from a 1968 policy document from RIBA and is quoted in Saint:

> "There are three reasons why architects should set themselves to provide this comprehensive service. The first is that they are there, trained however imperfectly to think more comprehensively then other relevant disciplines, with a cast of mind that veers habitually (unlike the engineer's) from the particular to the general. The second, less disinterested, is that if they do not achieve this capacity they will find themselves sooner then they expected on the fringes of decision-making rather than at the centre, acting as stylists for other people's products. The third is that experience in countries where architects occupy this fringe position, shows that such societies get inferior buildings in every sense of the word. "
> Saint (1983: 146)

In these many different ways upon viewing the architects role the concept of acting like an architect is a notion I've come across multiple times. My fellow students buy "architecty" glasses, dress in black or grey, or even make it a subject of their Master's

thesis. Kinda like I have done.
Underlying these superficial facades is of course a wish to belong within the profession. Acting like an architect is also brought up by Holm, where he states that it could be implied to mean the difference between designing a building and constructing it which is not in par with acting like an architect. (2006: 86)

Boström sums up a typical architectural behavior as weighing the demands and needs from the developer, the contractor and the end users. (1991: 40-41) And a similar conclusion is drawn by IVA (1998: 55) where the architect needs to weigh the demands and needs of society, the users and the developers coupled with adequate skills to interact with contractors and a commitment to the built environment.

All those different views and needs limit the possibility to achieve a balance when the ideas created and realized are dependent upon the client or user for the values to be maintained. Often the main client is not the end user, and if the latter in turn do not understand the values embodied in the project they can end up using the building in a way that distorts the intended idea. An actual example how the usage of energy in the locally built passive houses in Lindås is twice as high by the top user as the one using least. (Kyrkander & Linde 2008:19) Then the survivability of the idea becomes a matter of how much of the information regarding the usage of the building been transmitted, and how much do the users care?

Recent statistics from RIBA show over 50% of the UK architect's workload is for contractor clients (Building Futures 2011: 30) I haven't found information of what might be the similarities and differences between various clients. Though I would guess there are perhaps more similarities, especially for the more successful architect-client relationships where the result ends up far better than either one expected initially. Three such examples are given in Cuff (1991: 199 ff). Some of the characteristics of those examples is the mutual respect, the mutual level of the demands

and the mutual visions becoming a coherent whole through collaboration.
The collaboration between architects and clients is clearly dependent upon shared ideas. Yet architects in the UK have expressed dissatisfaction in the word Architect since it limits the work they are commissioned to do, dictates an assumption of what they will do, how they will do it and also what their behavior will be like. (Building futures 2011: 10) The very idea generated by the word "architect" can become a negative because of it's connotations in the minds of people.

A very interesting take on what an architect do and does not do is the following definition made by Fisher; The designer [...] would be someone who works intuitively, structuring and then solving ill-defined problems". The foundation of this line of thought is not what architects produce, but how they think and work. (2000: 49)

Being an architect seems very much like a balancing act, between art and function, between ideals and costs, between the client and the needs of those who cannot speak their opinion. The subjective nature of architecture is in itself also a balancing act between the qualitative facts that supports the vision and the vision itself.

The subjectiveness of the value of an architect's work in itself becomes part of the problem. Especially with the dominant financial values of today if the architect cannot express herself clearly and show the logical and economical reasoning for the end result. By demystifying the ideas and techniques behind them, the ideas become easier to understand and support. If an architect uses an overly academic tone with a client or contractor, who are they really aiming to have a discussion with?

When I present myself as an architect or architecture student, people often get something dreamy in their eyes. The public view in Sweden of what an architect do and does not do seems to glorify the profession and carry with it a certain naivety.

The naivety of what architects can do is something that I have observed amongst architecture students too. We design our little plans and ideas of a good building and a good society, adding in our own aspirations and assuming that people living in an apartment complex will want to have their own little gardening lot, just like us. There is a very big danger when discussing and presenting architecture like this, presuming too much about the end users. Since we cannot predict the future correctly those kinds of ideas can become limiting rather than enabling. Often we will portray our projects from the best possible circumstances: when the sun is shining, when the cherries are in bloom and the zeppelins are up in the sky. Something that seems less talked about is the matter of the people moving into the houses, what *their* attitude is.

While individual proponents is without a doubt beyond a mere architect to decide over, I would like to point out that we can create and support systems that will influence people, like individual meters for water usage and power switches for all electrical outlets in individual rooms. Considering that perspective the situation in the Swedish Hammarby Sjöstad project where the energy and water usage is much higher than calculated could have been avoided to a larger extent. Instead the end users moving in do not have a energy or water saving attitude no matter the wishes and desires of the politicians. (Pandis & Brandt 2009: 30)

With these negative trends in motion today, what does the future hold? In a recent survey carried out by Building Futures a number of representatives from the demand side of the profession; clients, house builders, consultants, engineers and project managers, expressed a belief that the role of the architect would irrevocably change in the coming 15 year period. Due to the increasing complexity of the building technology they believed that the architect would become a "technician who composes all the constituent parts of a building" that is then designed by a subcontractor (Building Futures 2011: 12).

3 Generating room for ideas

Mental maneuvering space is the part of a person where there is space for new ideas, space to make the necessary changes in the thought process that will come up with new ways of doing things. The term is used in Josephson & Björkman's report (2011: 24-25) and their research show that about 75% of the 457 individuals they have questioned think that it's possible to reduce costs within the building process with 10-30%. As pointed out by them, simply by seeing the possibility for change, it also creates chance for new ideas to emerge.

Ultimately does it becomes a question of who owns the ideas and how do the ideas get started? The informal process that takes place before the formal decision to start a project is the subject of a current research project at Chalmers. On October the 28th 2011 Göran Lindahl presented some of his findings during a lecture at the Centre for Management of the Built Environment. This research have not yet been published so I will summarize the lecture here with his permission One of his key points is that often, before any formal decisions are made, there is a highly informal communications and decisive processes taking place. Ending up setting much of the framework and context for a project, before any formal conclusions are made. One of the interviewed of the project described this as a sort of "buzz", going on that get the ideas started, setting the different needs in a value hierarchy. After the buzz, an informal communication take place, further formalizing the unvoiced, or voiced, ideas, aims, goals of the project.

During this pre-initial phase only a select few are participating. Rarely those who will actually use the building. Decisions made on subconscious grounds end up becoming the foundations of the project. These internally formed informal ideas are highly affected by the participating individuals reasoning and driving forces. Do I need add that the buzz is often made between developers and financiers whose main prerogatives is making a good deal? Likewise Cuff gives an example of the

informal discussions between client, architect and contractors becoming eventual design parameters and decisions. (Cuff 1991: 192) It makes me wonder how many clients and architects are aware of the great impact these conversations and consequently assumptions make on the final design?

I believe this could well be one of the reasons why there is such dissatisfaction within the building industry and about the results achieved. The “good ol’boy network” have, however subconsciously, set the bar - rendering it very difficult to affect already entrenched values. If the plan from the start is to “make it twice as good” (an example from Hammarby Sjöstad where it became a defining characteristic after a politician had stated it), how could a project ever evolve past that limit to become as good as it absolutely could be? As a soon to be professional I ask myself how many architects are actively participating in that kind of buzz and informal discussion as described by Lindahl?. What do we need to do to become part of it and how could we affect the buzz and the actual projects that emanate from it?

The current lack of housing is a very real problem in Sweden today. The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning have estimated that the country would need to build about 40,000 new homes each year (TMF 2010:2) to meet the actual demands. In reality 19,500 homes were built in 2010 (SCB 2011). It is primarily the larger university cities that have the greatest need for more homes, especially low cost rental units since a vast majority of those searching for homes are youth with unstable income (TMF 2010:3). According to the network jagvillhabostad.nu (in translation: I want housing now) about 216,000 youth are already in need of housing and about 640,000 15-19-year olds will be in need of housing in the coming years. 128,000 new flats are needed just to meet the needs of today. It just not the youth that are a significant group that have difficulties in the housing market. About 17% of Sweden’s population are 65 or older. With the current 1940ies generation reaching their retirement age this number is expected to

increase to over 21% (SOU 2007:103). The elderly are expected to manage their health care needs in their homes to a much larger extent than before, yet in order for that to work their homes must function under changed circumstances. Right now almost 400 000 elderly over 80 are still living in their homes, compared to the 100 000 of the same age group who are in a service home. This number of 80+ individuals are expected to rise sharply from 2020 and onwards, thus creating a large future need of safe and accessible apartments.

While almost 50% of the elderly today live in detached houses, the norm is that many who move to apartments will do so when the children have moved out and they have reached their retirement age. About one fifth of all widows/widowers also move within 2 years of their significant other's departure. While women in general have significantly lower income than men, it is still the elders with a higher income who spend more time thinking about moving and what kind of home they would like to live in up until the point when the woman becomes alone. Then it's often a move necessitated not so much by choice, but by need. These factors together make it difficult both to calculate how large the need of accessible buildings will be in the future, and whether they should be condominiums or lower priced tenements.

Another overwhelming housing need is the renovation of the million program houses that were built in Sweden from 1969 to 1979, about 500 000 to 1 300 000 of the homes built then will need extensive renovation (Boverket 2003:16). With these real, and acute figures, it doesn't make sense that Sweden builds half of what the rest of Scandinavian countries are producing individually. Juxtaposed to the needs described above, the fact is that most new housing built today are condominiums, catering to a market with costs far beyond what most youth and poor elderly could ever afford. At Arkiteturmässan, northern Europe's fair for architecture and urban planning, this very subject was brought up by the jagvillhabostad.nu's representative Daniela Zachrisson (2011). One of the best solutions according

to her is to set a limit for how much the housing project would be allowed to cost and some of the biggest obstacles for this kind of housing are the developers and contractors hesitance in building something they haven't done before. Another suggestion stated by one in the audience (whom I unfortunately did not manage to get the name of) in the same lecture was that in order to make a difference we should look at who needs housing, what they can afford and build accordingly.

A very thoughtful standpoint brought up by Lüchinger is that

> "One could draw the conclusion from all this that all we have to do is design empty shells, as unemphatic and neutral as possible, so as to allow the inhabitants optimal freedom. However paradoxical this may seem, it is highly questionable whether such a degree of freedom would not result in some sort of paralysis." (1987: 73)

This however brings back the description of the type of pre-configured "freedom of choice" described in Building Futures (2003: 92). In light of that view, is the availability to choose between 5 different trimmings better then just having to settle with what you get? Is it beneficial to use a simplified system to encourage a more diverse building for all, instead of just the privileged?

I cannot say if the implementation of an idea like my contribution to the Venture Cup competition (see the addendum for more info on this) will ultimately help deteriorate the architecture profession or not. Whatever happens I will need to create ideas that give me projects and income. But what values would I base my decisions upon? As stated before, thinking outside of the box about one self and one's work could well become an idea generator. By simply redefining the architect as someone who uses design thinking to find "optimal solutions to difficult and complex problems" (Fisher 2000: 92), then whole new possibilities arise because of the connections associated to in our brains. Both in regards to what is produced, how it is produced and who uses whatever is produced. Saint however argues that:

"But in the absence of any institutionalized context for social architecture similar in some way to the facilities offered by law centers of public health clinics, the decision as to which of these is built and, ultimately, as to who designs them, does not lie with the architect. He is the prey of economic forces which he cannot significantly influence, even if he aspires to be a Poulson or a Portman."
(1983: 166)

Bring it lovingly into being

Conclusions

"All of a sudden, I found myself in love with the world
So there was only one thing that I could do
Was ding a ding dang my dang a long ling long"
Ministry lyrics from Jesus built my hot rod.

So far I've looked from a very wide perspective at the sector within I'll be working, the work I will be busy doing, how it could be organized and eventually tried to narrow it down to the actual consequences this could have for the individual. In some ways the thesis is a manifesto of sorts, exploring how I, and others, could work in our own future by creating our own paradigms.

In this apparently bleak future containing climate disasters, seemingly inevitable wars over water and financial collapse facing us all, it is easy to become discouraged. Likewise the chaos of the building sector as described previously, fractions standing against fractions, all looking to their own self-interest and ignoring the long term consequences of their product can disparage the most optimistic. It is perhaps easier to feel like there is nothing I can affect within the boundaries of my chosen profession and it's easier to just let things be the way they have been.

A bitterness permeates many of the conversations I have had with professionals this fall and the very same bitterness is seeping already into some of my fellow students. Even as I was presenting my thesis idea, one student questioned the validity of my entire idea since entrepreneurs (in his mind) where those who were preventing the architect's idea from being realized.

Instead of descending into a morass of hopelessness it seems to me that some architects are forgetting a fundamental thing; Namely that "the structure of practice is itself a design problem" (Fischer 2000 : 11).

This is the best straight out answer I have found to my question about what kind of possibilities can be developed with a different thinking within the architecture profession?

Throughout the text I have gathered information on past, current and future possible ways of practice. And the possibilities are endless; it is truly our own imaginations that set the boundaries. Despite that it seems to me that architects miss out on the many chances they have to change, even design, their own conditions. Instead of playing along and doing what "everyone else" does, architects can instead create their own systems and thereby create their own chances, especially if they focus more upon the business parts. This lack of focus upon the business side of building is something that has reoccurred in much of the literature. Yet it is something we as architects need to learn, both to be able to make good decisions for our own firms. But also since business plays the proverbial drum whose rhythm we follow; We should learn not only how to march in step with it, but also how to influence the beat, how to evade it, how to weave together different rhythms and forces of economy and finance. This is where the entrepreneurial spirit comes in.

I would like to point out that I have so far made very few references to current managerial/entrepreneurial literature. I have also written many more questions than obvious answers throughout the text. It is deliberate. As I mentioned in the introduction the under-lying purpose of this thesis is to record, encourage and find a way to handle change within the field of architecture. I believe that change is strongest when it comes from within, from the values each and everyone have within us. No matter how much good advice I would be able to bring together, I think it

is more effective to ask questions then to provide answers. For me, questions make me pause and reflect, reconsider what I take for granted. And from the information I have gathered, it seems a lot of things are taken for granted within the building sector since requests for change is such a common theme from many actors.

As architects, we ourselves are most suitable to identify the steps we will need to take to create change once the pain of not changing becomes strong enough. Building futures (2003: 66) bases part of their reasoning upon the identification of the drivers of change as an equation where the sum of Dissatisfaction x Visions of a better future x Methods of achieving that future must outweigh the Pain of having to change.

> D x V x M > P
> Building futures (2003:66)

This formula for innovation driven by need leads in turn to the answer to how could the entrepreneurial spirit manifest within the architecture profession?

As exemplified in the previous chapters, by creating not only buildings for our clients, but also creating a deeper understanding for ourselves of the field within we'll be working, architects and the other actors of the building sector can create stronger chances that our ideas will come to be. This is just not about doing business or being ruled by greed as I hope the reader has understood by now. Instead by looking upon the whole instead of our own little piece, the leverages of the system can be tweaked for our own, or shared advantage for the entire building industry. By embracing a more entrepreneurial viewpoint, where they collaborate and learn outside of their own discipline in order to create innovative designs, architects can through their design thinking enable ideas with a greater value for themselves, the profession and the built parts of society. Of course these are broad generalizations, but it is the geist of my research.

I take the basis for this statement in my own reasoning that both architects and entrepreneurs deal with the generation of ideas, of services rendered, and in the sales of a finished product which enables us in extension to create more. It is ideas similar to this that lead John Portman to realize that he would not be able to work as a traditional architect if he would be able to build the buildings he wanted. Same with Per Thurfjell, the partners of Build and numerous others who have chosen a less travelled path in order to promote cohesiveness.

In parallel to this are the seemingly re-occurring exclamations that architecture is being marginalized, even that it is dying (Saint 1983: 154). Yet I would guess, even without looking at any statistics, that there are probably more architects employed today then have ever been before. And considering the amount of people worldwide that are moving from rural life to urbanity it doesn't really look like the work for architects is ending anytime soon. The marginalization seems as much a result of our own attitudes as well as our traditions within the building sector. An architect interviewed for Building Futures said that

> "The invasion of the Architect's role shouldn't be seen as a threat but as a natural change that can be exploited - we must find our own new opportunities and education should shift to accommodate that." (2011: 28)

As I see it (and I am obviously not alone in this) in the times we currently live in, it comes down to architects and professionals worldwide deciding once or for all if they are here to create the world anew since the world belongs to them or because they belong to the world. (Nilsson 2002: 21 quoting Jean Nouvel.)

And that leads me to the final question I asked myself in the beginning of the thesis: What values and attitudes are the foundation now for the architecture profession?

Most of the discourse I have come across during my schooling misses in my eyes a balance between Venustas, Firmitas and Utilitas, as Vitruvius once so eloquently described it. The overlying focus upon Venustas, I.E. beauty, creates a dissonance and a swaying architectural goal. In other words is it for the greater good of the public that architects are pursuing their profession, or do they just want to raise themselves up on pedestals? Today it seems the design becomes a negotiable commodity and clashes of interest arise as conflicting viewpoints doesn't see what the other is talking about.

While the architecture profession states it is taking a position of power that it is obviously not even close to grasping since it has to a large extent given up risk taking and thus lessened the influence it might have upon the building process. There is a fundamental discrepancy when most architects (80% according to Boström 1991: 62) state that the architect should be more of a central figure and a leading force in the building process, yet in fact the architects' fee stands for less than 4% of the actual costs of the building process. In my eyes that last figure is perhaps more representative of any power an architect might have as things stands today.

Instead of focusing upon old ideals, today it is more important for architects to learn how to express their work in a language that is understood by the ones who are actually in control of a building project. If we cannot express the value of our designs they will become less important to those who decided what get built or not. This clearly makes a very big difference in how we act and are responded to. If we architects understand what the costly parts are in a design, and what parts can function equally well, we can both diminish the building costs and focus our design where it makes most use, both aesthetically, functionally and seasonably.

In the end, something that stands clear is that the current paradigm of architecture is not adequate to handle the complexities of today's world. Stating that the

architect is a key player in the building process, holding it all together, doesn't make it so. Nor does the education or from what it appears most practices provide the foundation for it to become so by providing a curriculum of economics, finance and time management. With the current growing complexity and lack of adaptation from architects to meet this evolving change, is the ideal of the architect-in-charge even a desirable role for architects to embrace? A more thorough reflection upon what roles are we socialized into and how they actually correspond to reality seems in order. And from the quotes in previous chapters (where for example British architects state that they avoid using the title architect since it is limiting to them) it seems to cause dissatisfaction with the current status quo.

From my point of view architecture steps on the boundary between function and craft since buildings is a kind of (very expensive and permanent) utility amongst many others. The craft of architecture, or even the artisanship of architecture is perhaps a topic that should be raised more instead of the viewpoint of architecture as an art. Just talking with my classmates about these two vantage points we agree that our own values tell us craftsmen are more likely to collaborate then artists. This since the values we ourselves during our discussion revealed put into the concept of craft as including while art was considered to be excluding. In light of this I would ask the reader that we as professionals in the future will question more the decisions what is right, or wrong, to build.

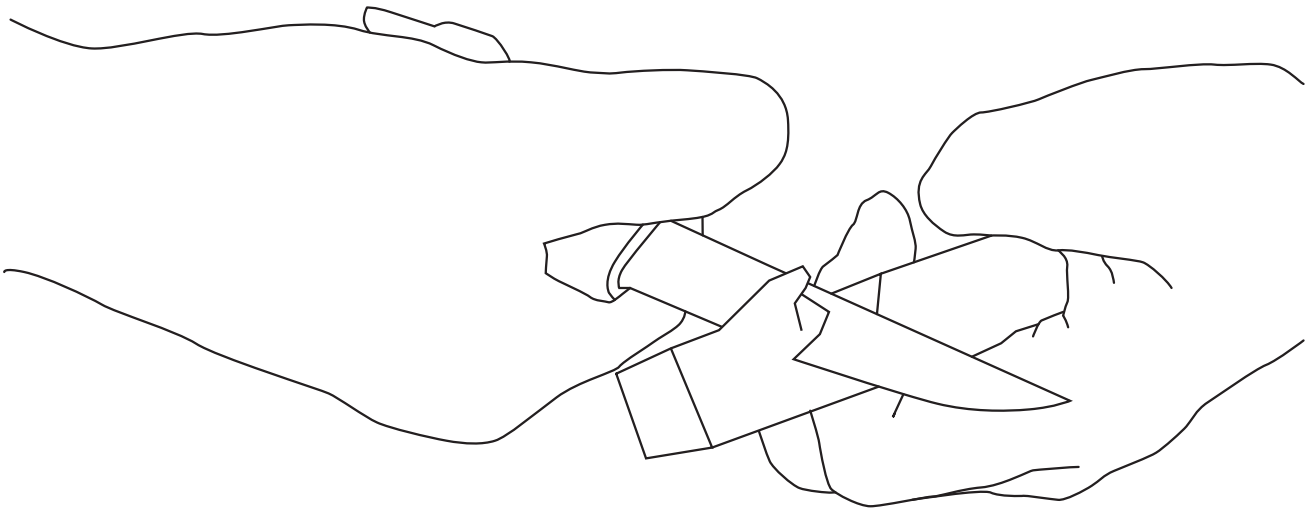
If someone states that something will diminish the role of the architect, isn't it more logical to try to find ways to make it into something that will strengthen architects instead of it being seen as a liability? With that reasoning it became obvious to make a competition entry into the before mentioned Venture Cup where I as an architect would describe a plausible way to make low cost housing without making it cheap. Is the solution perhaps counter intuitive since who else could crate joyful homes for anyone and make sure they could afford them then the architect?

Through making good architecture an accessible for item for nearly anyone, how could that ever decimate the profession? Especially if good architecture becomes a standard?

In the end, what is most important, is what you make and how you make it. By using the ideas that works for you, evolving them to their greatest potential whatever they might be, throughout our professional life. And innovate by making your ideas into reality.

> "The future can't be predicted, but it can be envisioned and brought lovingly into being. Systems can't be controlled, but they can be designed and redesigned, We can't surge forward with certainty into a world of no surprises, but we can expect surprises and learn from them and even profit from them. We can't impose our will into a system. We can listen to what the system tells us and discover how it's properties and our values can work together to bring forth something much better than could ever be produced by will alone. "
> Donella Meadows 2001 (published 2004)

“We must dissent.“ Sister Miriam Goodwinson



Whittling away

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Interviews with

Per Thurfjell, partner Helhetshus
Ola Torrång, owner Torrångs arkitektkontor

Intervju

Under tiden som jag skrev mitt exjobb bestämde jag mig för att försöka få kontakt med en svensk arkitekt som arbetade med en utökad arkitektroll. Jag ville försöka få en bättre bild på ett exempel på hur man skulle kunna arbeta här. Även om John Portman är intressant så går det nog inte att dra helt övertygande parareller mellan förhållanderna han arbetade i för snart 50 år sen och den verklighet vi är i nu. Per Thurfjell på Helhetshus var vänlig nog att svara på mina frågor både över telefon och via mail. Jag är väldigt tacksam för hans mycket utömmande svar.

Nedan följer vår mailkonversation för dokumenatation.

Malin Berglund
2011-09-26

Hej Pär,

Pratade med dig i telefon tidigare idag, tack för att jag får möjligheten att föra en dialog med dig om detta.
I skolan har vi alltid ett fokus på vad som kan jämföras med tävlingsdelen av ett

projekt, så jag vill i mitt exjobb titta lite närmare på hur jag som arkitekt kan göra mina idéer till verklighet. Jag vill gärna publicera kontentan av vårt samtal i mitt exjobb, självklart inte utan att du har läst igenom det och godkänt det.

Som inledande frågor till dig så är jag nyfiken hur det kom sig att du och Mats gick från att vara entreprenörer till att gå vidare till att bli arkitekt respektive projektledare?

När ni startade er firma, började ni om från början eller var det en vidareutveckling från era förra yrkeskarriärer?

Vad var den främsta motivationen för er att starta helhetshus?

Mvh ,
Malin Berglund

Pär Thurfjell
2011-09-30

Hej Malin,
jag kan inte svara för Mats del 100%igt. Dock tror jag att våra svar skulle bli liknande.

Valet att gå vidare från entreprenör till arkitekt till att gå vidare till att starta Helhetshus är egentligen en linje i en utveckling, och mindre av att man avslutar ngt

för att påbörja ngt annat.

Några exempel / hållpunkter som för mig känns viktiga:

Som entreprenör var jag ansvarig för foajédelen på Operan. Den arkitekten träffade jag bara en gång. Tyckte det var anmärkningsvärt eftersom det ju ändå är ett påkostat hus, och i någon form viktigt för staden.

Jag jag gick på CTH gjorde jag en del arbeten där jag på olika sätt (intervjuer, uppsatser) studerade arkitektens arbetsroll tidigare, tex på 50-talet. Skrev en uppsats om på vilket sätt byggmästare samverkade med arkitekter på den tiden. Min bild var, och är, att arkitekten på den tiden fick en kontinuitet. Fick möjlighet att besöka byggen och delta i beslut på byggen. Detta bidrog till att arkitektens kompetens blev bredare. Och jag tror att detta i sin tur gjorde att beställare mfl fick större respekt för arkitektens kunskap.

I mitt exjobb så ritade jag en villa och ledde bygget av den. hade examinationen i det färdiga huset.

Som anställd arkitekt var det nog bara i ett projekt på sju års tid som anställd där jag på ngt sätt blev aktivt engagerad under byggtiden. Detta gav ett bra arkitektoniskt resultat, men var samtidigt ett hus som blev anmärkningsvärt billigt.

Så för att knyta ihop säcken:
Att både rita och bygga hus är en ambition som för min egen del ger mig stor tillfredsställelse: jag tycker det är roligare så än att bara göra en av sakerna.
Men sedan tror jag att kontinuiteten ger fördelar; man får erfarenhetsåterföring. Man kan ju även faktiskt lära sig en hel del av umgänget med platschefer, plåtslagare, rörläggare mm. Och dessa kan bidra till ett bättre arkitektoniskt resultat

genom sin erfarenhet.

Sedan är det ju så att husbyggande och samhällsplanering är både svårt, dyrt och viktigt. Ett vanligt tillvägagångssätt är att byggande leds av män med ett intresse- och kunskapsfokus på teknik och ekonomi. Men om man nu skall bygga ngt så kan man ju lika gärna göra det bra/snyggt/välplanerat. Att inte dra nytta av all tillgänglig kunskap blir ju fel.

Dyrt blir det ju oavsett, eller rättare sagt det kostar ju en massa pengar oavsett.

Hoppas detta kan vara svar på dina frågor

med vänlig hälsning

_____

Pär Thurfjell
Arkitekt

Malin Berglund
2011-10-03

till Pär
Hej Pär,
Tack för alla svar, jag uppskattar det jättemycket.

Några lite mera konkreta frågor;

Hur jobbar ni på helhetshus just för att skapa den helheten som ni söker? Har ni tex alltid samma byggare som jobbar med er?

En annan fråga relaterad till det är hur pass mycket du och Mats växlar era roller, eller har ni en väldigt klar arbetsfördelning?

Var starten av helhetshus en medveten satsning, eller uppstod den för ni hade en kund som var med på noterna? Har pratat med en annan arkitekt som ritat typhus och hans första kund var hans föräldrar.
Funderar just på hur man tar steget.

Mvh,
Malin

Pär Thurfjell
2011-10-08

Hej Malin
ursäkta att det dröjer mellan svaren.
Det är många mail i inkorgen... Jag svarar gärna på dina frågor. Om du efter dagens svar känner att du har fler frågor så är det kanske en god idé att träffas. Annars finns ju risken att det dröjer väldigt lång tid innan du fått svar på det du undrar över :-)

Vi har inte samma byggare. åtminstone inte ännu. Vi har lekt med tanken på att bygga ett företag med egna hantverkare, men än så länge är detta en nog mest en "lek". Vi får väl se hur det blir i framtiden.

För att kunna genomföra de projekt vi vill genomföra, och göra det på det sätt vi önskar är vi beroende av att de entreprenörer vi samarbetar med delar vår ambition att göra ett projekt med de specifika kvaliteter som eftersträvas: delar våra värderingar, har ett intresse av arkitektur mm
Om dessa "bara" har fokus på att tjäna pengar når man nog inte det resultat som i alla fall vi strävar efter.

Så en stor del av vår tid handlar om att knyta och bygga upp ett nätverk med sådana aktörer. Vi träffar nya människor hela tiden och har ständigt pågående diskussioner om samarbete i olika former med olika aktörer.

För att skapa helhet, som du skriver, är dock genomförandet och samarbetena bara en del av förutsättningarna. Något som jag upplever som ännu viktigare är detta: Byggande styrs av den som har makten (för att använda ett laddat ord, men jag kan inte komma på ngt bättre). Makten har den som har pengar, och i dagsläget är det mig veterligt ganska få arkitektkontor som har tillräckligt med kapital för att på detta sätt verkligen påverka vare sig samhällsbyggande eller byggande i allmänhet. beroende på att deras verksamhet har bestått i att på konsultbasis erbjuda expertis inom arkitektur och samhällsbyggnadsfrågor, och inte att ägna sig åt finanser inom samhällsbyggnadssektorn, vilket de stora byggbolagen ju gör.

Vi genomför just nu ett projekt i egen regi, och de ekonomiska frågeställningarna i detta projekt tar en enormt stor del av vår tid. Vi kan så här i slutfasen reflektera över att om husen tex legat två mil närmare Gbg så hade utgångspriset kunnat lega hundratusentals kronor högre vilket naturligtvis påverkar genomförandet.

Det har genom projektet funnits en stor tillfredsställelse över att i detta projekt ha varit den som haft "makten", men för att fortsätta ha den så måste man ha goda bankkontakter, göra smarta affärer (och man kanske är mer intresserad av att utveckla sin kunskap i andra områden som arkitekt) och så måste man se till att man har så stor vinstmarginal att man både klarar av att genomföra det projekt man håller på med och för att kunna genomföra nya projekt

För att sammanfatta detta med hur man uppnår helheten...Känner mig lite tråkig som snöar in så mycket på pengar och risker, men i mina ögon så är det nog detta det handlar om: att bygga i egen regi handlar om att i slutänden ha mandat att prioritera arkitekturen. Men för att få det mandatet så måste man kunna äga finansieringen själv, man måste kunna hantera risker både finansiella och rättsliga, och själv eller knutet till sig ha tillgång till en omfattande expertis avseende juridik, bokföring, marknad, byggteknik, fastighets och lantmäterifrågor.

Angående att komma igång
Starten av företaget och genomförandet av projekt i egen regi var en medveten satsning. Vi sökte en kommunal markanvisning redan innan vi arbetade heltid med företaget. Parallellt med att vi försöjde oss genom vanliga konsultuppdrag så ordnade vi sedan finansiering, förhandlade med kommunen om detaljer i genomförandet, upprättade en förfrågningshandling och handlade upp en totalentreprenör

I vårt fall började vi med ett 40 miljonersprojekt och åtta hus på en gång. Det hade nog varit vettigare att börja med att köpa en tomt och bygga ett hus och sälja det då det var klart. Då blir alla moment ovan mindre komplicerade, det handlar om mindre pengar mm

Starten beror väl på hur mycket erfarenhet man har med sig sedan tidigare. Om man inte har så mycket erfarenhet av finansiering, byggande mm så bör man nog

starta i mindre skala. men det är ju ingen raketvetenskap, och tillsammans med en kunnig omgivning så kan man efter hand öka sitt åtagande.

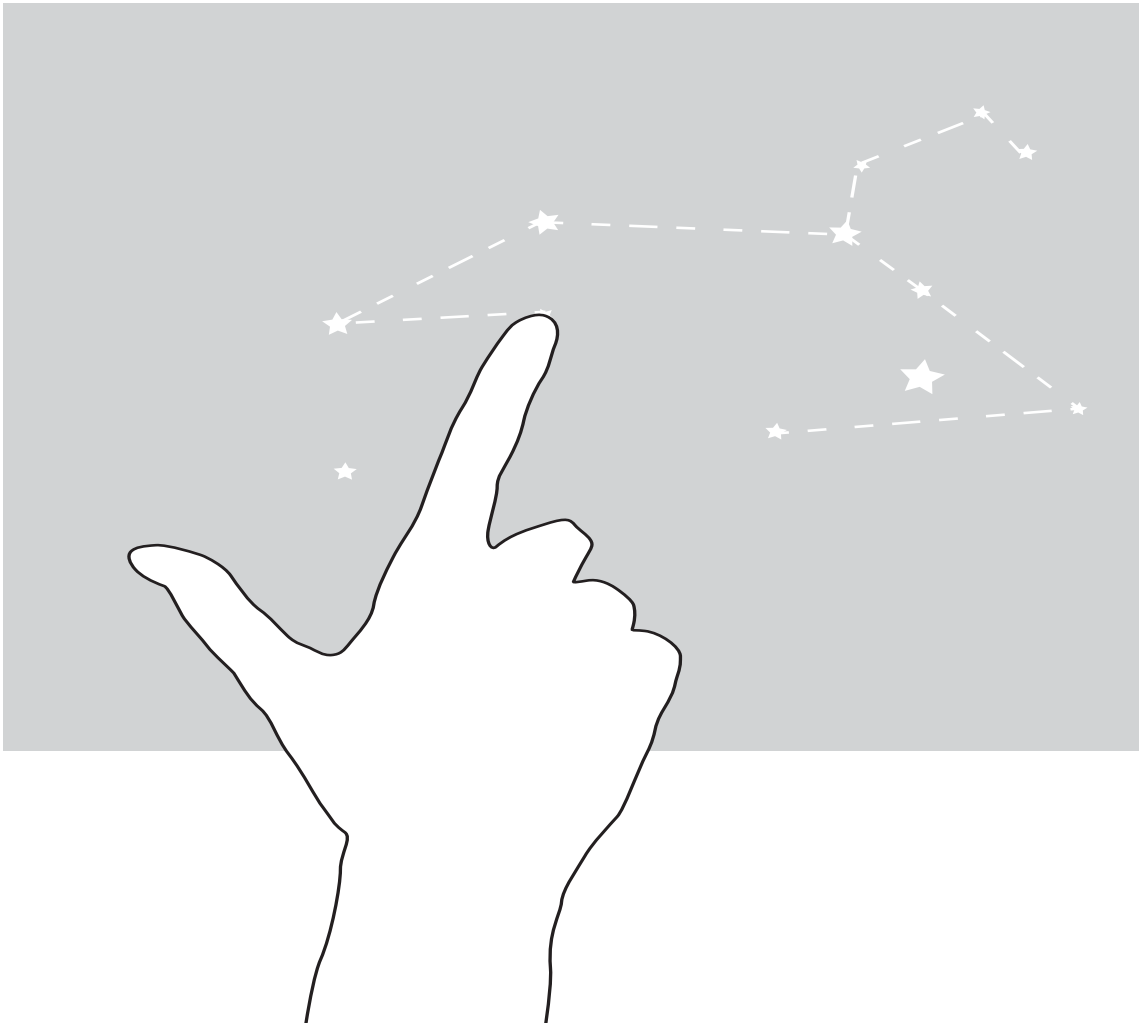
Med kunnig omgivning så menar jag att det är en nödvändighet att man har tät kontakt med både jurist och revisor i projekt av detta slaget. Om man inte är rik sedan tidigare så bör är det nödvändigt att ha med sig en finansiär också. Banker har ju potential att fungera som finansiärer men är i dagsläget väldigt försiktiga. Då kan en riskkapitalist vara nödvändig.

När det gäller våra roller
Mats är inte arkitekt. Dock har han ett stort intresse för arkitektur, och vi diskuterar A-frågor med Mats (i den mån han hinner med att lyssna)
På samma sätt är framförallt jag mkt involverad i upphandling av byggare, och kontakter med kunder i de fall vi genomför projekt i egen regi.
Jag är van att diskutera utformning med Mats och tycker att vi har en mkt kreativ dialog som väldigt tidigt omfattar byggteknik och ekonomi. Jag tror att de övriga på kontoret upplever att kontoret har ett fokus på dessa frågor och att de upplever som att det är en miljö där man lär sig mycket om sådant.

med vänlig hälsning

_____

Pär Thurfjell
Arkitekt



The great kettle in the sky

AN IDEA

"Creative thinking: The process of having original ideas that have value."
Sir Ken Robinson

In parallell to the research for the thesis I developed an idea for a business idea competition called Venture Cup. Here is the idea translated, followed by the feedback that was given me.

Purpose

The Asterism architecture and homes concept is to offer the clients a housing system with architectonic qualities, that they design themselves, adapted for their needs, with clear costs utilizing modern prefab methods.

Problem

The current lack of housing built for middle and low income tenants is growing into a social problem in Sweden, especially in the larger cities. It is primarily young adults who are forced to live with their parents despite having an income of their own. But there are also an increasing amount of elderly, especially recently widowed or single women who have great difficulties finding homes. In response to this, the government is tasking the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) to come with suggestions on how this can be solved. In addition an increasing amount of interest groups are being organized for the

building of new kinds of homes, where the functions are differently organized and managed in a long term perspective.

Business idea

An asterism is a personal grouping of starts, home made constellations if you will. Inspired by the possibilities of individualization, a flexible building solution based upon functions and the creation of components that are combinable in a number of ways, enabling individual homes to be produced using prefab mass production methods. Thus allowing the individuals to create a home catered to their needs and their finances.

Instead of presenting the clients a finished design that will necessitate to be adapted to their needs, the rooms will be components, assembled by the clients in the way they want and adapted to their way of life. Through creating a new way of viewing architecture, the majority of the work will be done once and then reused for each new project. Without compromising the materials and detailing. Allowing the homes to be constructed environmentally with little waste.

The homes are built with a load bearing structure in cross-laminated massive wood. While currently slightly more expensive (about 5-10% depending upon the calculations) then concrete, massive wood stores CO2 and allows for a diverse and highly adaptable construction, both when erecting the building and meeting future needs and renovations. Using modern technology it's possible to create an interface for the system, allowing customers to log in and plan their dream home: Be it a detached house, semi-detached, row house or a multi family housing unit. For the latter three, limitations could be set up for each project like locking the kitchen and bathrooms in order for the utilities shafts to run fluently though the different floors, allowing the rest of the design to be free.

Customer value

The customer value is created by offering the clients a completely individualized product with a clearly presented price. Using current technology the client will be able to sit with their ipad/computer in their sofa and assemble the parts and functions they want in their future home. At the same time seeing the projected building costs and/or monthly fees each choice will bring them. This way they will save money, both by initially adapting their home to their budget but also by cutting some of the costs of the planning.

Market

As stated earlier the current construction of housing in Sweden doesn't come close to meeting the current or future needs of homes, especially lower cost rental apartments. The organization jagvillhabostad.nu (translating to: I want housing now) calculates that 128 000 new homes are required to be built to meet the housing need of the currently 216 000 young adults looking for a place to live. Within a 10 year period 640 000 more young adults will be searching for homes as all the children born in the 1990'ies come of age. Adding to this one of the Kingdom's public inquiries from 2007 found that 400 000 (about 4/5) of all elderly over 80 years of age live in homes without any kind of adaption to their health care needs. As the amount of elderly increase, more will be in need of adapted homes.

In this vast current and future need of about 500 000 new homes there are many possibilities to create new forms of housing. The product is primarily focused upon individuals collaborating to create their own multi family housing, but it is fully possible to offer the product as a single family solution. Either new, or as additions to existing homes. After some preliminary contacts with one of the local municipalities and an organization for elderly who want their homes to be a co-housing solution there is an existing and clear interest for the concept.

Competitiveness

Despite the recent decrease in housing construction in Sweden, much due to the global financial crisis, lack of adaption to modern construction techniques and speculative building for the high income individuals, there are many opportunities for new construction due to the great need for new housing. A smaller, more agile company, focusing upon a hitherto mostly ignored clientèle can corner a niche in the market so far unused. There are two lager companies in Sweden focusing upon low-cost multi family homes: IKEA and Skanska's BoKlok concept and NCC's P303 system, neither offering a similar variable concept.

Business model

In order to get established as a company the initial focus will be upon different organizations to support and enable their work for new low cost housing though the Asterism concept. Contacts are being established with construction and property development companies that could be interested in using the concept.

The product is currently under development in order to figure which construction solutions and materials are most suited for the industrial process and sustainable long term management. The tentative construction cost will be around 11,000 SEK per square meter, this based upon current examples both in Sweden and Denmark. As a comparison many Swedish homes built using regular construction methods come in around 20,000 to 40,000 SEK per square meter.

For an architecture firm some of the work to develop this concept can be done in parallel to regular projects. The profitability starts once the same concept, construction methods and detail drawings can be reused over and over again in many different projects; Both generating new work and a steady income for work already done.

The key to fully enable this, apart from locating lots that are buildable, is the

creation of a homepage and database to use as the interface for the clients. Swedish housing laws have some very clear parameters which should be easily programmed, allowing for a clear and simple interface where already prepared components can snap to each other in order to create the individuals solutions. Each choice made will add a tally to the total cost, creating a clear and concise understanding of the total sum for the client.

The homepage could also be used for direct comparison though links to relevant pages, depending upon the choices made. Also the gathering of data how people would prefer to organize their homes could be assembled and sold to other companies. For ease of use the interface should be primarily graphic and adapted to use on an iPad/tablet, perhaps it could even be marketed as an app, in order to generate more money, more clients, more data and more marketing. A number of functions could be tied into this, making the app a relevant choice in it's own for any prospective house builder.

The initial cost for the implementation of the idea is calculated to be around 200,000-300,000 SEK, most of which is the cost for developing the homepage. About 5-7% of this is the cost for the programs needed to develop the architectural product. Costs for the structural calculations and utilities will be added to this, preferably as part of the costs of the individual projects. Without the functions of the homepage, the start up costs are around 15,000 SEK for required programs.

An number of contacts and collaborations will need to be established to realize the concept. Primarily within construction, but also within economy and management. A company or individual that develop apps and homepages will need to be hired to create the functions of the homepage. Equally important is to offer a solution that is within reach for low income individuals and attractive to municipalities that want sustainable housing to be built, both socially, cost wise and energy wise.

Feedback

Below is the feedback I got from the competition.
The next step is to create a fully fledged business plan.

Business idea

This is good:
What an exciting idea! It is clear you have considered this concept many times, looked at the forerunner Freiburg, talked with potential clients and compared the offers of leading actors. Customer service and usefulness appear very clearly in the separate parts.

It is exciting to see you make the comparison to Dell - a one-stop solution that not too long ago made the foundation for the “hem-PC” program – that was run in collaboration with state, trade and industry. With the right contacts and channels this could be subsidized in a similar way. Much of the strength of the idea is in the sustainability – both the economical, social and environmental.

Through helping the weakest link in society conditions are created where the mood and feel of a whole neighborhood and in the long run a whole district. (A possible

option to start developing to solve the problems of the million program homes maybe?)
This can be developed:
As a reader you become interested to learn more on how the different components are planned to link together. Later you emphasize that it is the possibility to link them in numerous ways that is the competitive advantage against the competition. A tip from the Venture Cup checklist is to already here also quantify in numbers in order to convince the reader that the idea will work.

Market

This is good:
The section market has a good structure and it is easy to follow your line of thinking. Positive with headlines that clarifies customer usefulness and competitiveness.

It is clear the need for housing is large among students and elderly and that it will grow in the years to come. Your own little research though preliminary contacts with an organization and municipality is a great first step. Keep working with the price and simplicity as your competitive advantage.

This can be developed:
Ask yourself who your 10 first customers will be and work according to that when you keep seeking response and feedback from the market. The part about competition is interesting when it states that the two largest competitors are IKEA and Skanska – is there a risk these actors will plagiarize the Asterism concept if they find out about it? Are they also promoting a thought of collective creation? Do they turn to customers that would want an architectonically high-grade home?

Business model

This is good:
There are concrete plans and thoughts on how to build up the business mode once some deciding factors have been clarified. Your calculation examples are exemplary for this stage of the competition.

This can be developed:
The value chain has great developmental potential. Factors that should be in the description of the value chain is production, ideation and recycling. The thought of a homepage that enables a client to puzzle together their own house is a realistic start. The cost you have assumed seems reasonable if you do not consider the costs of creating 3D drawings and plans.
I am critical however that a source of income shall be advertising on the homepage. Ask yourself how you would react if you were going to make the investment of your life and were met by ads on the homepage of a private actor. Other questions to consider: Will you create all the building plans in a voluntary basis? What type of competence is needed to develop the Asterism company to what you imagine it to be? Here is also added a budget to the next hand in (use the format on the Venture Cup Home page).

Communication

This is good:
Your business idea hand in is clear, exhaustive and well structures. The language is generally of a high level.

This can be developed:
Possibly use bullets to clarify key features and a slightly smaller font. It would have been fun to see illustrations (I'm guessing you are skilled at using graphical programs)

The whole

This is good:
Your business idea feels solid and exciting. The red tape shines through strongly and as a reader there are no question marks regarding what you want to achieve. You show an enormous strength and drive by daring to tackle such a large and laborious problem as the housing issue.

This can be developed:
Keep working with the concretization of your ideas. Get it down on paper, talk with various actors, create budgets and logistics plans – all to get a clear idea of the value chain! Good luck with the continued development, I am already looking forward to reading the second hand in!