

Searching for the Identity of a City

A Proposal for the Reconstruction of the block Ciselören 1, in Old town of Eksjö.

“An investigation aiming to explore contemporary interpretations of historical building concepts as framing for the reconstruction of a block in the Old town of Eksjö”

Master's thesis 2018 by Freja Elmsjö

Chalmers School of Architecture - Architecture and Civil Engineering

Master's Program: MPARC Architecture and Urban Design

Urban Challenges Studio

Examiner: Joaquim Tarrasó Supervisor: Kengo Skorick



CHALMERS

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External critic: Colin Fudge, Amalia Katopodis

ABSTRACT

Studying urban architecture is like time traveling. In our cities, buildings from different time periods share the space and together they tell the story of that specific area. Our cities are continuously changing and growing, and new buildings adds on to it, just like annual rings on a tree. The following thesis is addressing the subject of how to add an annual ring, how to add contemporary housing to an urban context without distorting the history of the city.

In august 2015, a big fire broke out in the heart of the old town of Eksjö. The oldest and largest wooden housing block burned down to the ground and in just a moment, a sequence of history was deleted, and the old town had lost its centrepiece. This was the starting point of a big debate in the city, how can we replace this cultural heritage listed building? Most people wanted the house to be rebuilt just as it was, using the same techniques and exterior design. Some people were so determined that they did not want any contemporary architecture on this site, so they preferred keeping the plot empty. This was when the thesis question was formulated – Is there more to the identity of a city than what's visual? What can we learn from the old wooden towns and how can that be implemented in contemporary architecture? The goal was to discover the hidden elements that together form the identity of the place and use that as the foundation for the new proposal for the site.

By methodical studies of the previous building and its surrounding area, its techniques, topologies, materials, circulation, program and functions, features typical for this town was found. Every feature was traced back to a few correlated concepts. The result was eight concepts that combined have formed the architecture of the old town. Through contemporary interpretations of these concepts, a framework for the proposal for the block was formulated. The implementation of the methodology is the proposal for the site. The proposal is not a visual replica of the previous building, but it originates from the same fundamental concepts. Can one therefore say that the identity of the town essentially has been preserved?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Kengo Skorick, my supervisor, for his patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and his willingness to give his time so generously. My grateful thanks are also extended to Joaquim Tarrasó, examiner, for valuable support and his useful and constructive recommendations on this project.

Special thanks should be given to Lucia Botero Hoyos, the city architect in Eksjö, who very generously shared her time and provided me with all the digital material about the site.

I am particularly grateful for the Studio team, also known as 'The Kengo crew', who all contributed to making this the best term ever.

Finally, I wish to thank my family, friends and especially Maximilian, for support and encouragement throughout my whole study, this would not have been possible without you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I started studying architecture at Chalmers, in autumn of 2013. I had then had a two-year long study break, where I had various seasonal jobs, for instance in the restaurant and hotel business. During this period, I travelled a lot, e.g. spending six months in the French Alps.

Being idle has never attracted me much and, in combination with being a curious person driven by learning new things, I have been able to fill my unofficial résumé with e.g. driving tractors, planting spruce trees, restoring centuries-old buildings and debating architecture on Spanish. My latest employment at Göteborg's Local administration was at a schoolyard project where all the schools in the city were inventoried and I gave proposals for improvements to make the schoolyards more equal and sustainable, and to increase their play value.

When studying architecture, it is as if you wear new glasses before your eyes; everything in everyday life is worth paying attention to and learn from. I therefore see my previous employments and commitments as an equal asset as my personal interests in travel, photography and handicrafts.

Education:

Östanå, Eksjö, Natural science (Upper secondary diploma -II)

Chalmers University of Technology (BSc. Arch. -I6),

Erasmus exchange at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (2016-2017)

Proyecto 4 & 7

Construction 3

Composition

Landscape and garden history

Analysing architecture

Chalmers University of Technology, MPARC (M. Arch. -I8)

Matter Space Structure studio

Urban Challenges studio





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BACKGROUND

In august 2015, a large fire broke out in the old town of Eksjö. The whole block, called Forsellska gården, burned down to the ground. This was once one of Eksjö's oldest and largest wooden houses. A big hole at a strategic location in the heart of the town appeared after the fire. This was the starting point for loud discussions; How to rebuild the block? Who is to decide what to build? The city architect, and many other architects, wanted to build a modern house, with contemporary design both exterior and interior, that were honest to the history of the town and its own addition to it. The public were upset and wanted it to be rebuilt just as it were, with the same exterior but with contemporary interior, by using local craftsmanship and materials. The public was afraid that qualities found in the old wooden houses would get lost in a contemporary design, some people was so anxious about the outcome that they preferred seeing the plot left empty.

This was the startingpoint of this thesis, a wonder if there can be hidden qualities that contribute to the identity of the town more than the obvious visual elements and if you by containing these qualities, still can have a more loose view on the visual design.

DISCOURSE

Our cities are shaped by the buildings and the spaces between them and any new addition to it will have to connect to the context it is placed in. Cities are continuously changing; buildings are rebuilt, demolished and added, as part of a natural development. Some cities are more appreciated than others, perhaps because of their connections rather than the solitary components. What if there was a site specific guide on how to develop the city that maintained the identity of the specific area rather than the visual expression of it?

Within this subject, there is a wide range of ongoing discussions; What are the qualities in old building techniques and in contemporary building design, what are the qualities that the people are afraid to lose when we replace old buildings with contemporary, how do we utilize local resources (knowledge, materials...), How do you maintain the identity of a city throughout urban development? By putting these questions into a complex context that I have a personal connection with, I will be able to keep the thesis reality-based and at the same time discuss these questions on a broader level.

SUSTAINABILITY

When the old town was built, the expressions 'sustainability' and 'cradle-to-cradle' was probably not used, but by using local materials, inherited knowledge, manpower and by treating their assets with respect, they were able to build a wooden city core that's been sustainable for more than 300 years. By learning from their methods and combine that with our knowledge of today, I believe that we can build wooden buildings more fire-resistant, with less materials, sustainable over long time and with reusable building elements. With contemporary design tools, we can test the limits of wooden structures and when combining that with inherited knowledge and local materials, the result can be a more sustainable building than the previous one.

METHOD

As my title indicates, this thesis consists of two parts; One is the searching for the identity of a city, the research part, the other is the proposal for Ciselören 1, the design/implementation part. My thesis has come to be more about establishing a methodology on how to systematic analyse a complex build environment, and less about detailing the final design of the proposal. My thesis is that, by using the result from the analysis phase as foundation for the proposal for the site, the building would essentially keep the identity of the town.

DELIMITATION DIAGRAM



Figure 1. Delimitation diagram.

THESIS QUESTION

Is there more to the identity of a city than what's visual? What can we learn from the old wooden towns and how can that be implemented in contemporary architecture?

READING INSTRUCTIONS

The word 'identity' is a complex word and the meaning of the word is different for each one using it. In this thesis, the focus has been on the built environment and what is characteristic for this town, regarding its architecture. My interest in the discussion, that occurred after the fire in 2015, started when I realized that the city's inhabitants identified themselves with their built environment, that it was part of their shared identity. My aim has been to find elements and features of the old town, in its architecture, which are necessarily not visible but still a part of its identity.

Unless otherwise stated, the author is the creator of drawings, diagrams and photos.

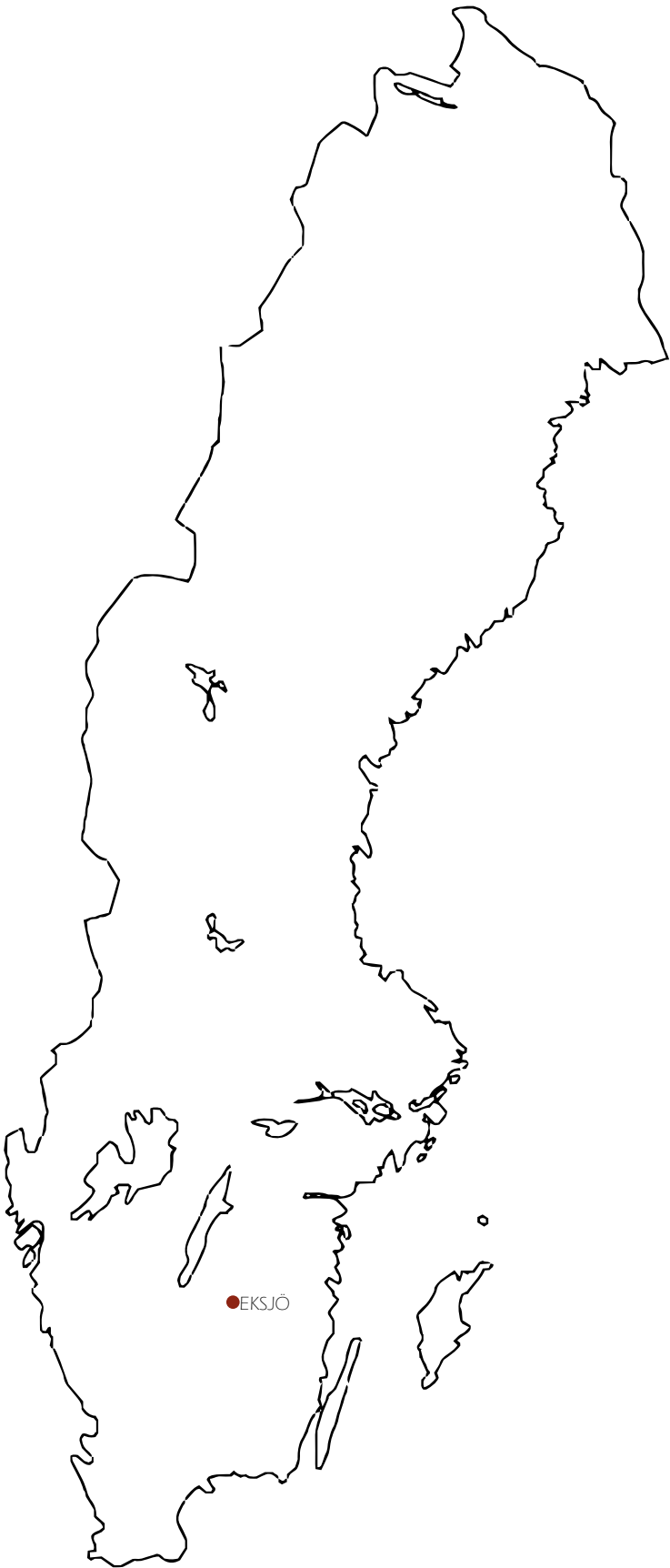


Figure 2. Location of Eksjö.

Eksjö "The unique wooden town"

The old Eksjö was founded in the intersection of two important roads, Stockholm-Kalmar and Jönköping-east coast. It was first mentioned in 1328 as a centre for tribunal and the town got its city status in 1403 by king Eric of Pomerania. A few years later it was named as a borough "köpstad". The town was, thanks to its location, a natural centre for trades but also crafts, agriculture and a military center. (Varenius, 1984)

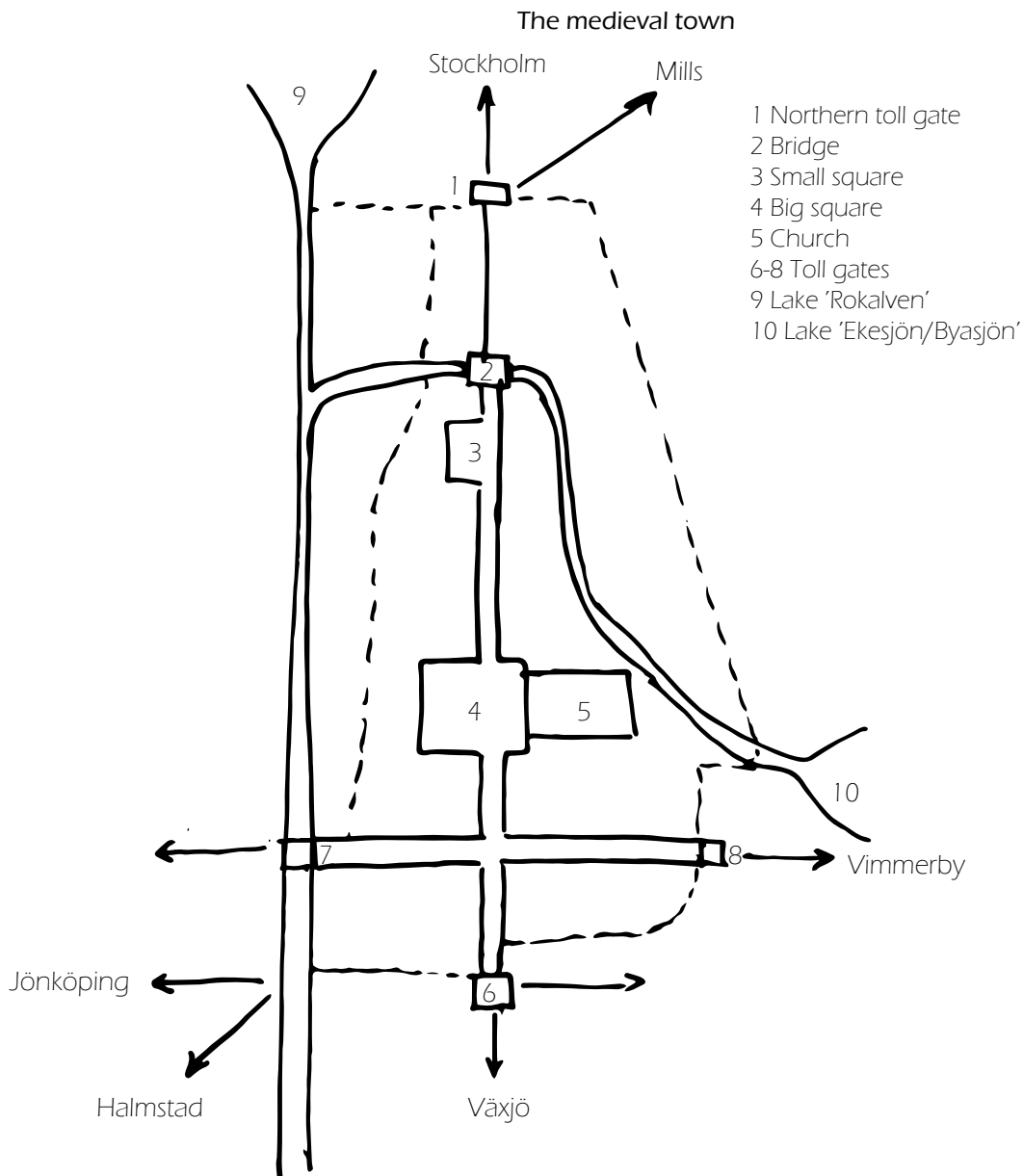


Figure 3. Diagrammatic map over old Eksjö.



Figure 4. Figureground of the city centre

Scale 1:4000

A city, proud of its heritage and identity

The city center of Eksjö consists mostly of pitoresque, small scale wooden houses, where the pedestrian gets invited to take part of the everyday life, and this gives a warm welcome to anyone visiting the town. The city center is clear and easy to navigate in, both because of the size of the town but also the configuration. The calm city tempo and lack of heavy traffic makes it easy to connect to the surrounding environment, both built and nature. The history is always present as the city consists of a continues development but at the same time a conservation of the built environment. The development of the town has mainly been pragmatic, practical and with pride of its heritage and this is what makes a walk through the city more than a walk through a city but also a time travel through the local history. The norhern part of the city has its structure from the medieval city planning, narrow, winding streets that follows the shape of the ridge and the stream, with low rise wooden houses thats been added and rebuilt when needed. The south part of the city has a totally different character with a strict grid of wide streets, plastered houses and more enclosed blocks (Hellström, Nord, 1988).

- Almost no buildings in stone (heavy materials).
- Houses enclosing a common yard with ornamental "warden" trees. Most of the yards are open for the public to visit. Intimate outdoor rooms in the city.
- The street (gatumiljön) and the yard (gårdsmiljön) coexist in a intriguing relation where the scale of intimacy has many layers.
- During 19th century, the facades facing the public street were painted in bright pastel colours and the core were painted in falu-red.
- Buildings are mostly two floors, some are tree floors high.

A fire that could have been the third city fire.

In 1568, during the Northern seven years war, the old city center was burned down as a defence strategy. The city was moved and the new city plan was made by Arendt de Roy and followed the nature and the ridges. The urban structure north of the big square still follows the original plan with small blocks with low rise buildings and narrow, winding streets that doesn't align. This leads to short sightlines and a small scale adapted to the pedestrians.

In 1856 a new city fire broke out and devastated the south part of the city. The city was determined to build a new city center based on the new ideals 'light, health and safety'. The result was, as still visual south of the big square, a grid with wide staight streets and low buildings enclosing bigger courtyards. The houses are reminiscent of stone houses but they are actually wood construction (timbered or stud frame) plastered and painted to resemble stone buildings. In the same time, the square was expanded and the old city church was replaced with a new one.

The city center of Eksjö has more or less stayed the same since the late 19th century. The city has expanded, as seen east of the church, with apartment houses and villas. In the norht east, a part of the regiment area is shown.

In august 2015, a big fire broke out in the heart of the northern part of the town centre and many feared that this would be the third city fire.

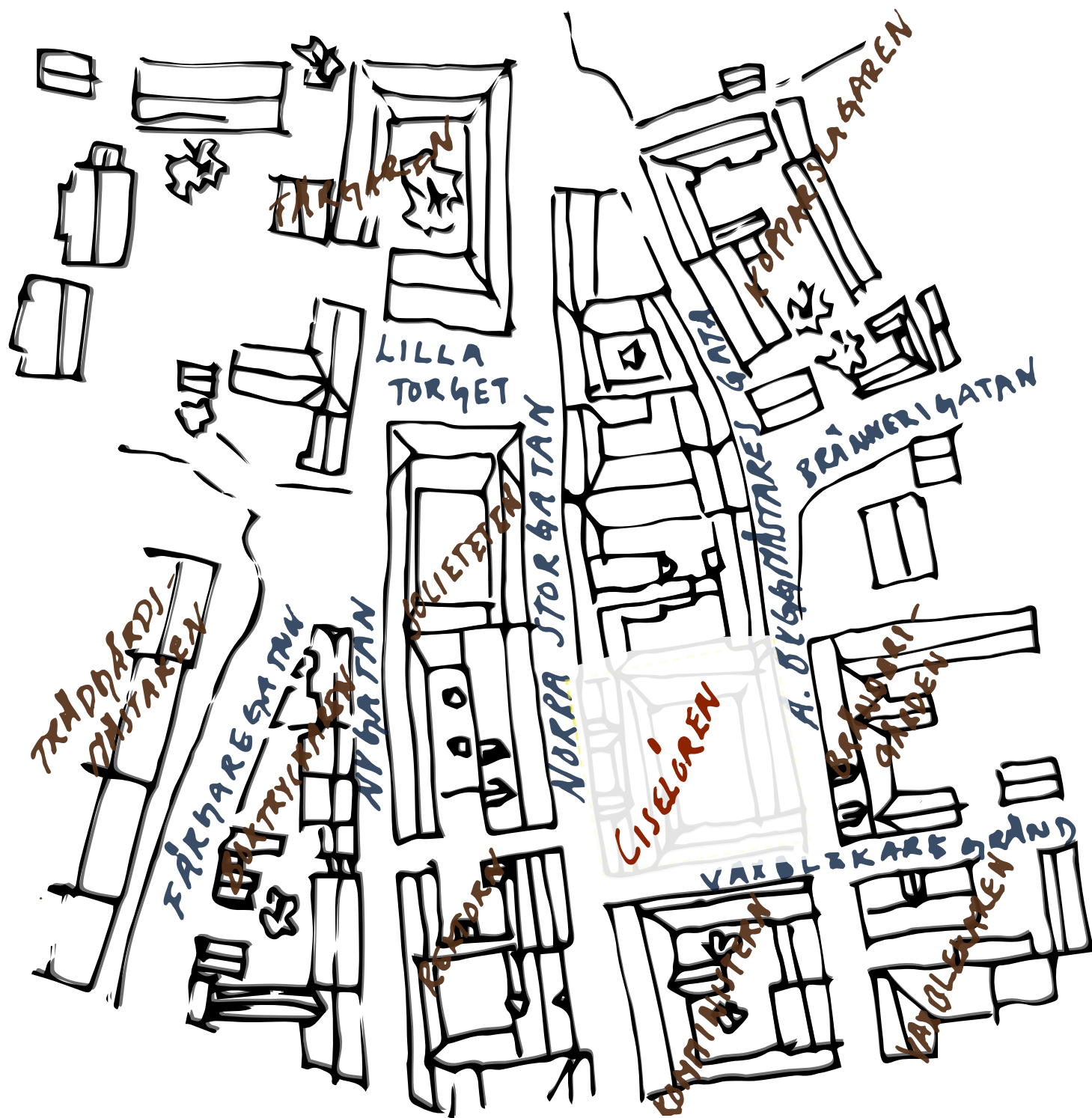


Figure 5. The block that was destroyed in the fire and its neighboring area.

A hole in the heart of the old town

An early morning in august, 2015, the people of Eksjö woke up to the sound of sirens. A thick layer of smoke covered the old town and people feared the worst- would this be the third city fire in the history of this town?

The fire had started in one of the biggest, wooden blocks, in the middle of the old town. Separated only by narrow streets, the block was surrounded by other densely built wooden blocks. The risk of that the fire would spread was high. Thanks to the effective work of more than 80 firemen, the fire was limited to just one block. Unfortunately, a young woman was found in her apartment and her life could not be saved.

More than 200 people had to be evacuated, but the majority could later return to their homes. What was destroyed in the fire was the block called Ciselören 1, and the building was also known as “Forsellska gården”, named after a former owner. The block housed shops in ground floor along the pedestrian street Norra Storgatan, but also storages, and sheds. Floor two and three contained 12 apartments, both small studios and big three-bedroom apartments. (Sköld and Petersen, 2015)



Figure 6. Gamla stan efter branden (Eksjö kommun, 2015). Reprinted with permission.

Cultural heritage protected area

A big part of the town is of national interest as cultural heritage. The northern part of the town is included in cultural heritage protection as a particularly remarkable building area and the whole area was declared as cultural heritage protection in 1993. In 1981, the municipality adopted an action program to protect their built cultural heritage and today there is 58 protected buildings in Eksjö (Grandelius, 2010).

Existing spaces before the fire

Cellar floor

- Several storages

1st floor

- Offices
- Premises with storage, kitchenette etc
- Shops
- Laundry room
- Waste disposal
- Storage and bicycle room

2nd & 3rd floor

- 12 apartments, mainly studios and 2 bedroom apartments



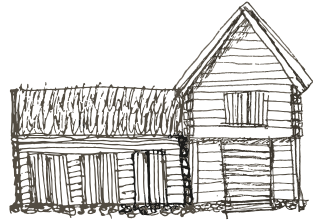
Protected elements preserved after the fire

Semi public yard

- Paving, cobblestone
- Warden tree, chestnut
- Entrances to old cellars



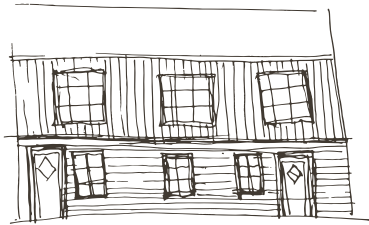
Sketches of various buildings from different eras in Eksjö



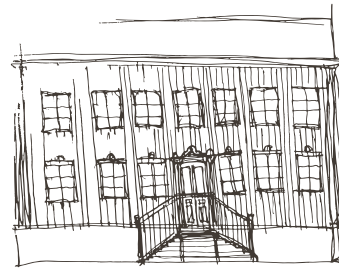
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1500-1600



1690



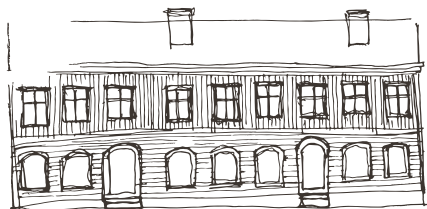
1823



1876



1910



1910



1940

Figure 7. Sketches of various facades in Eksjö.

Room configuration in traditional log cabins on the countryside
during 1600-1800's.

The old town started as a collection of small farms with dwellings, outhouse and farm building enclosing a common courtyard. The block contained both housing, workshops and cultivation. The houses were built based on old knowledge so the cityhouses reminded a lot of the countryside dwellings.

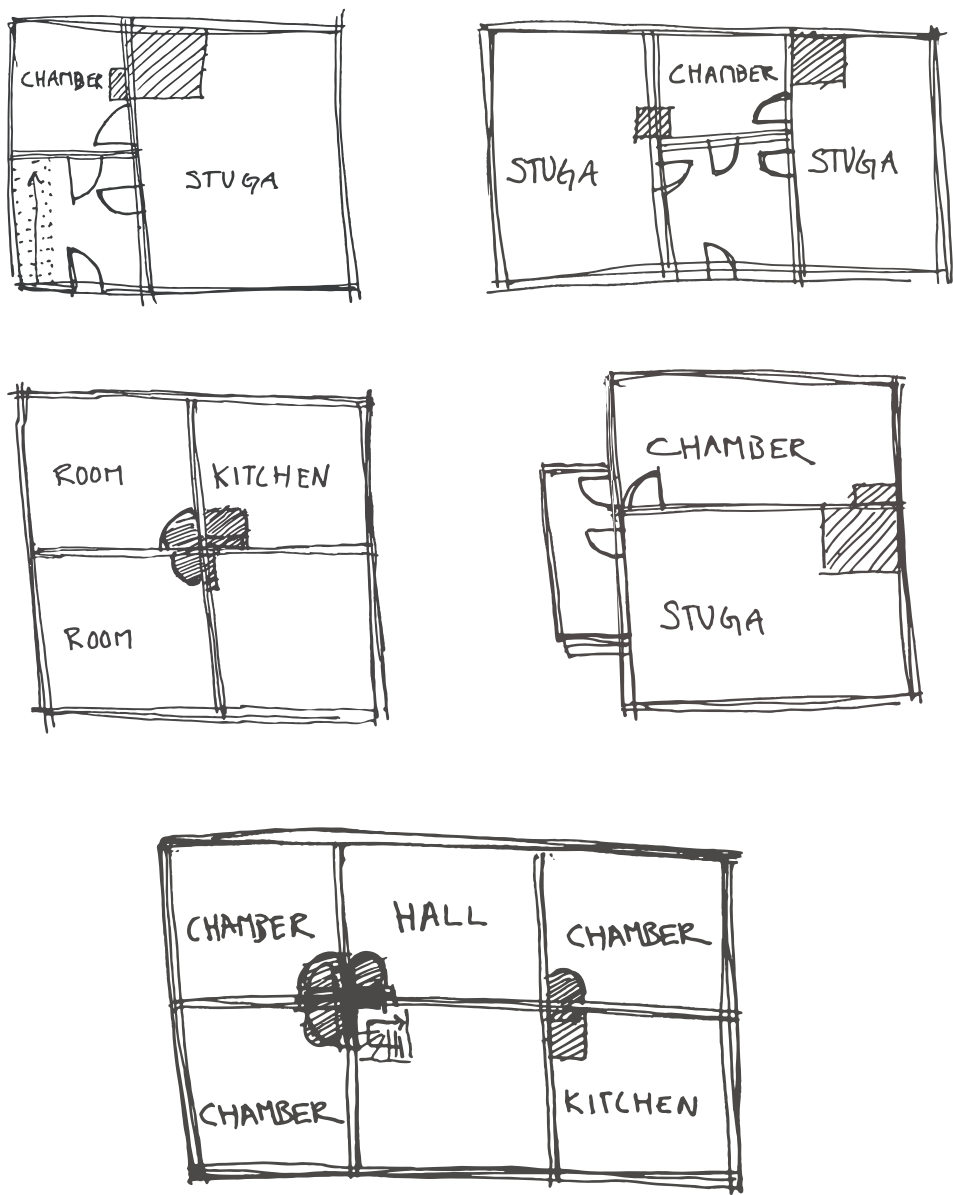


Figure 8. Sketches of old building typologies.

Common development of the block

Most of the houses started as one floor high and was later added with another one or two floors. In this way they were able to free space on the small courtyards instead. The timber construction was easy to work with and comprehend and you could easily add more logs on top of the old ones.

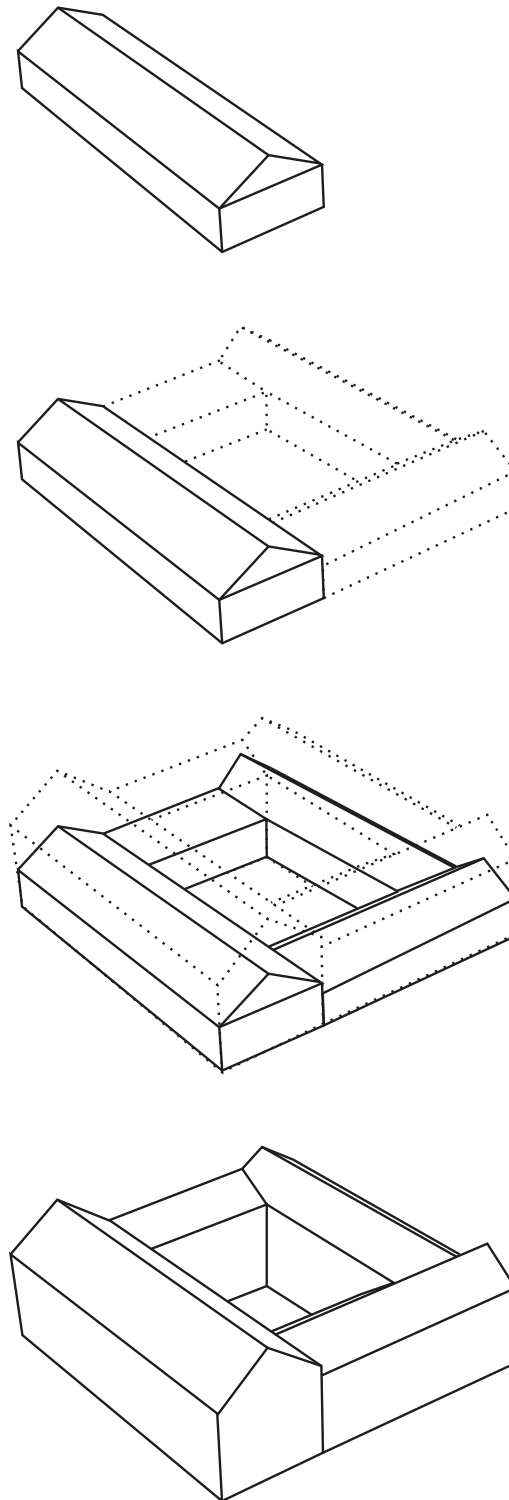


Figure 9. Diagrammatic development of the blocks.

Historical events of the block, Ciselören 1

The block called Ciselören 1 has been developed during more than 300 years. The logs found after the fire was studied, analyzed and it was found that the wood was more than 300 years old and that the seed was sown already in the 1350s.

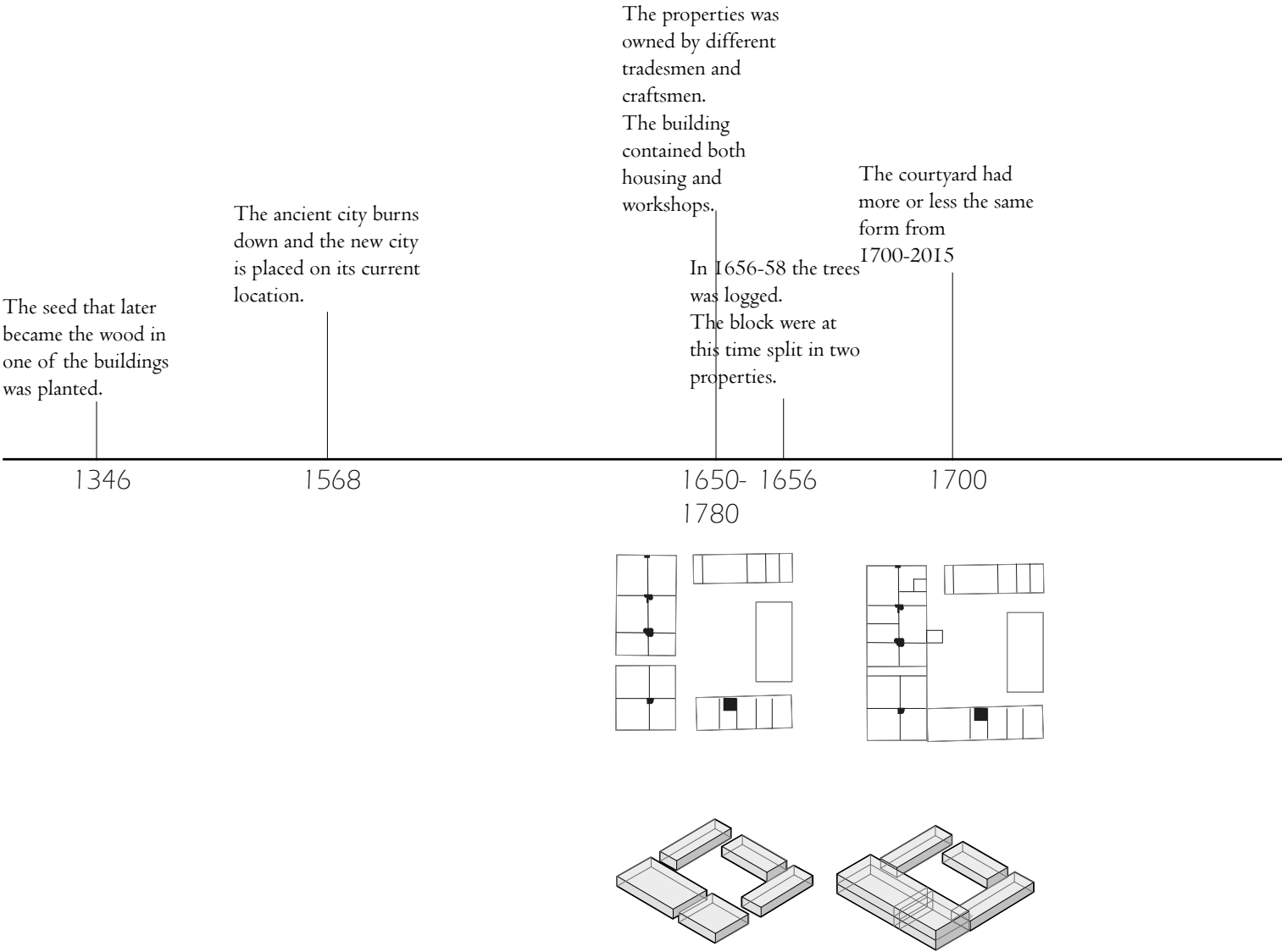
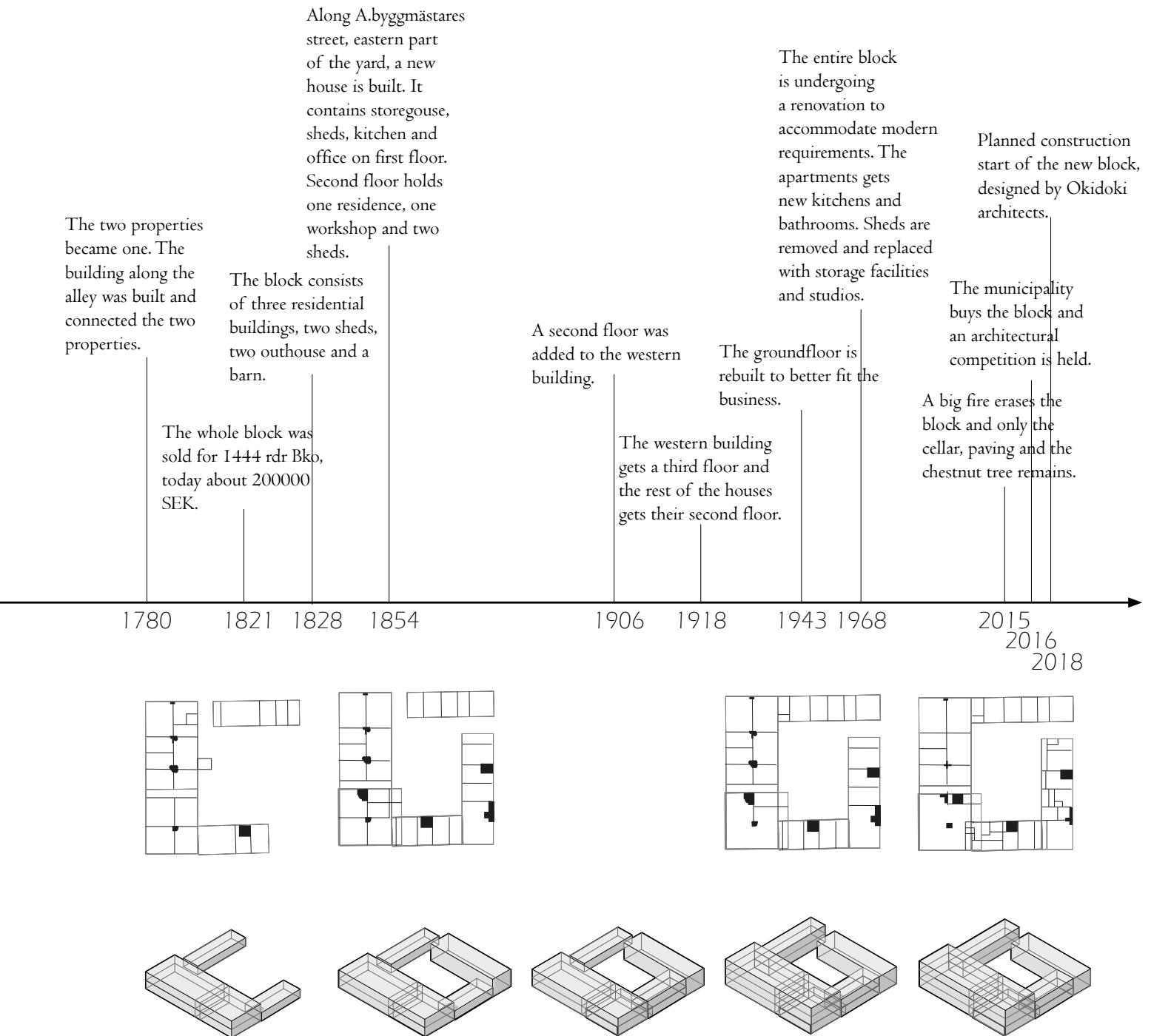


Figure 10. Timeline with plans and diagrammatic volumes showing the development of the block.



Program and function

A straightforward way to visualize the different programs is to categorize them and mapping them with various colours. The separation of functions is clear within this block, but how about the rest of the old town?

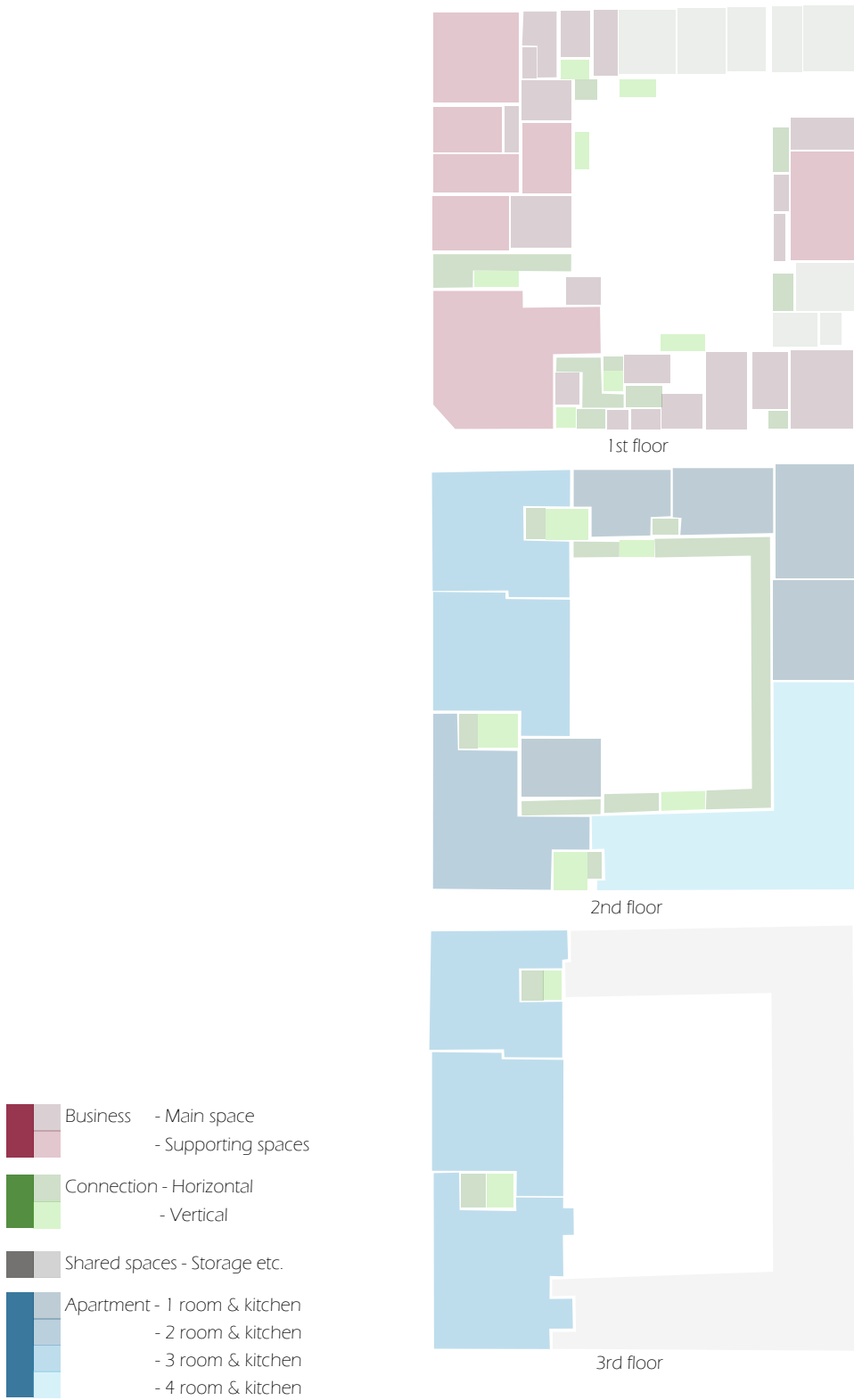


Figure 11. Mapping of the program of the previous building, Ciselören 1.

Program and function

Same mapping as previous page but for the neighbouring blocks. Floor plans (1st floor) from the same area and era. All plans rotated so that facade facing main street is directed downwards.

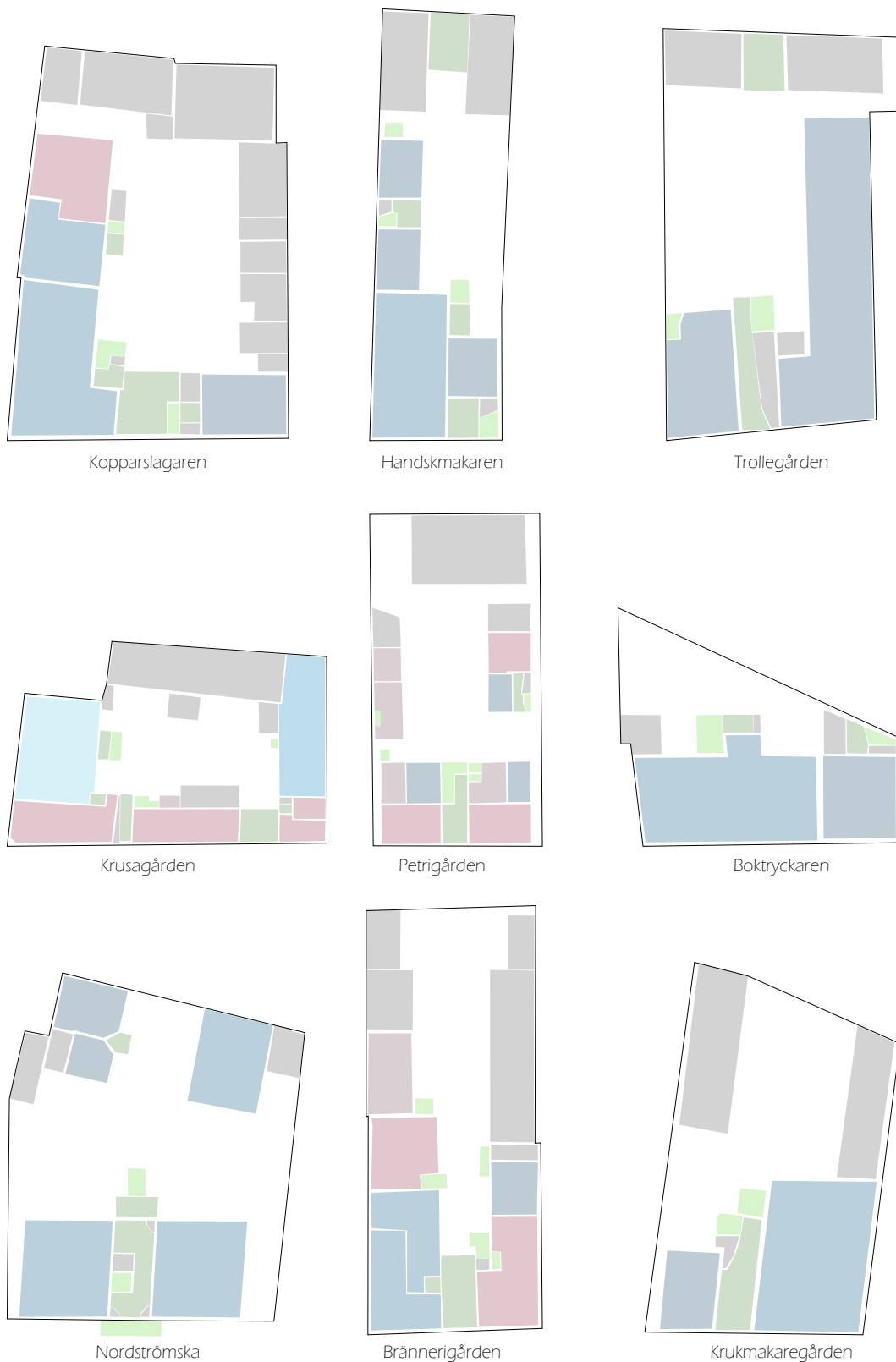


Figure 12. Mapping of the program of the neighbouring blocks in Old town of Eksjö.

All plans stacked on top of each other

By stacking all the plans on top of each other, one could easily discern similarities, a pattern.

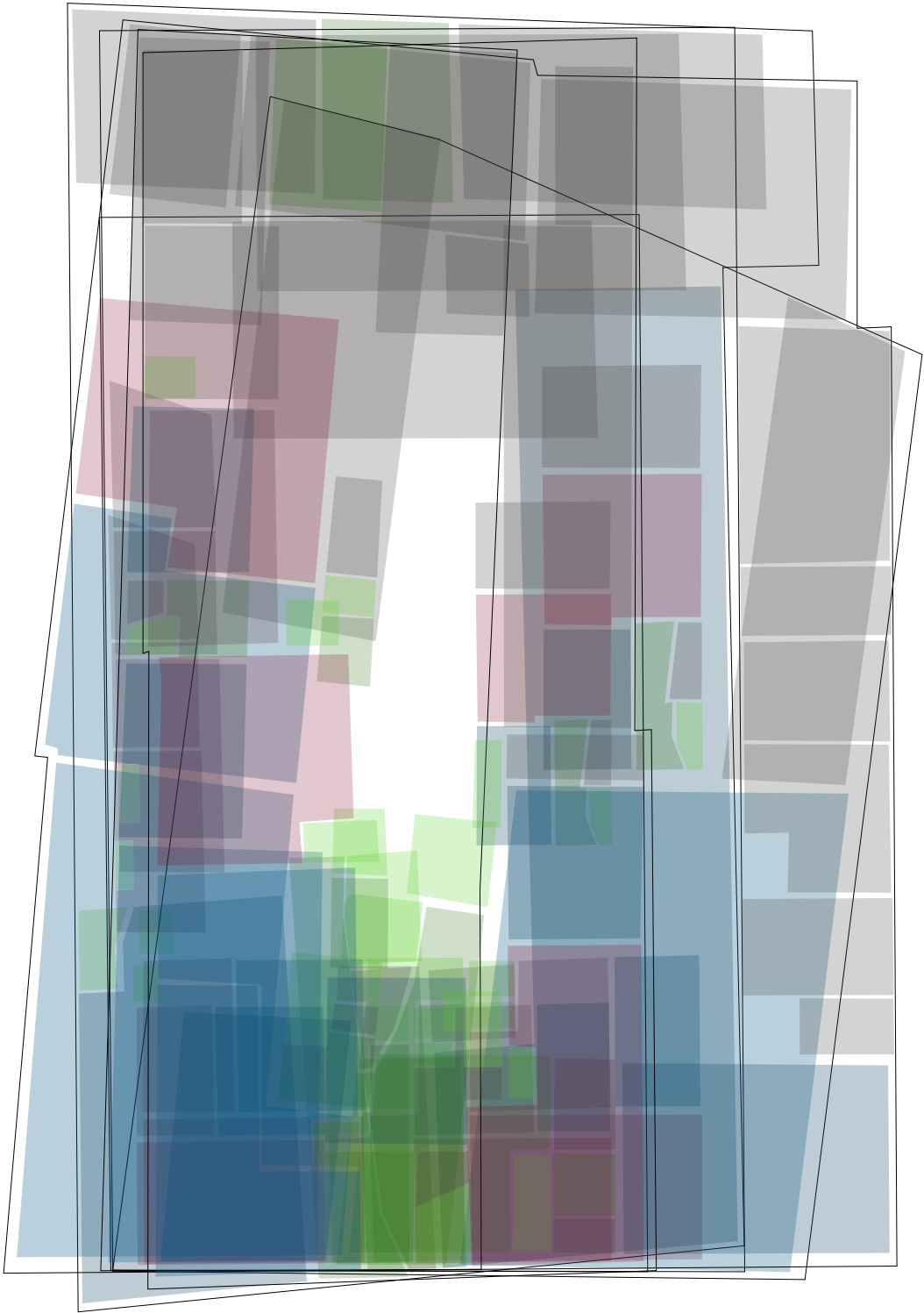


Figure 13. Mapped plans from previous page, all stacked on top of each other.



Figure 14. Simplification of previous mapping diagram.

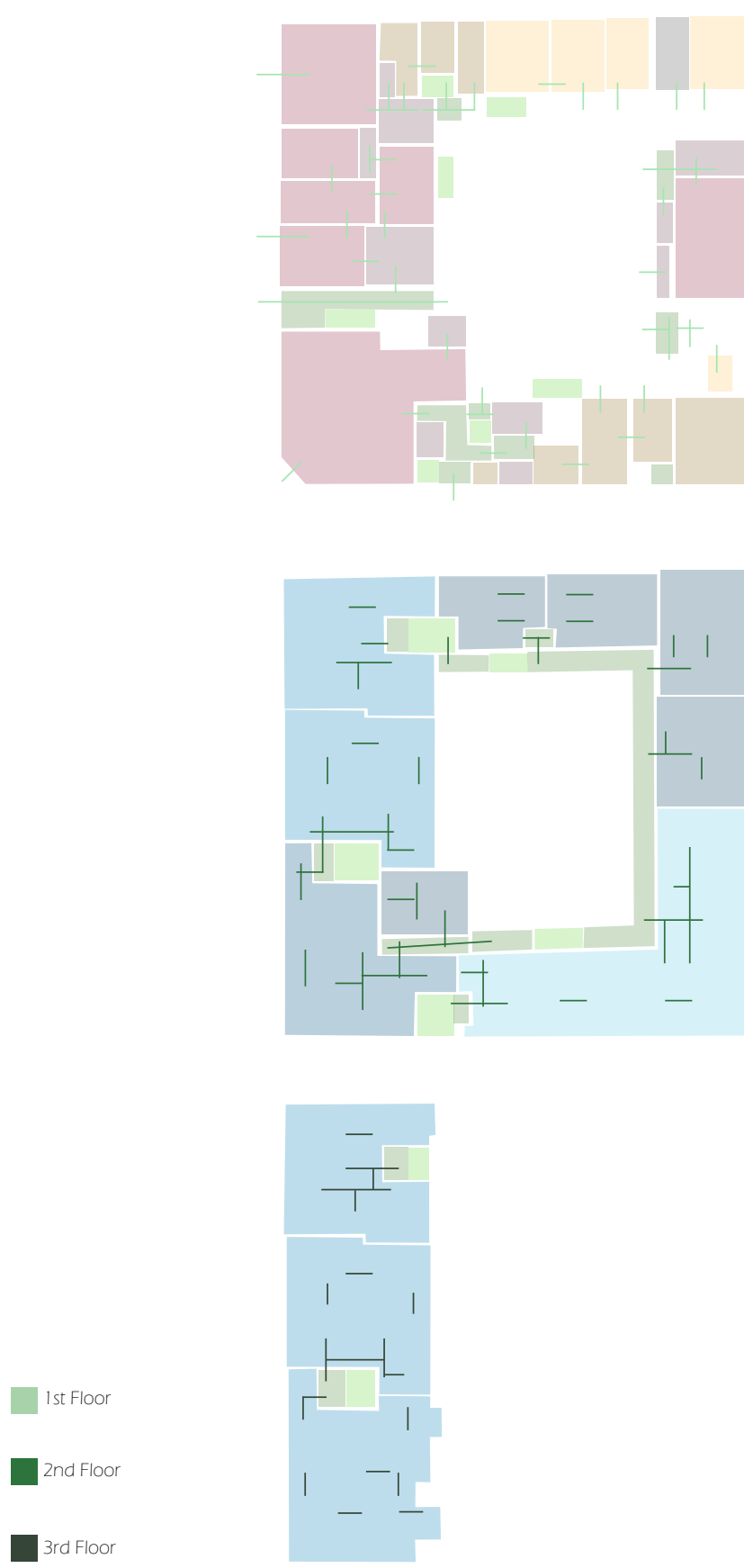


Figure 15. Mapping of the connections of the previous building, Ciselören 1.

Connections

The connections, vertical, are here shown as green lines. When stacking the diagrams on top of each other it's easier to see that the first and second floor differ, while second and third cohere more. This is probably a direct result of the different functions of the spaces on first, second and third floor. The first floor was developed for many years, without having to adapt to a second floor. The spaces changed as the function changed. The second floor was added later on and the main function hasn't changed since then. The same applies to the third floor.

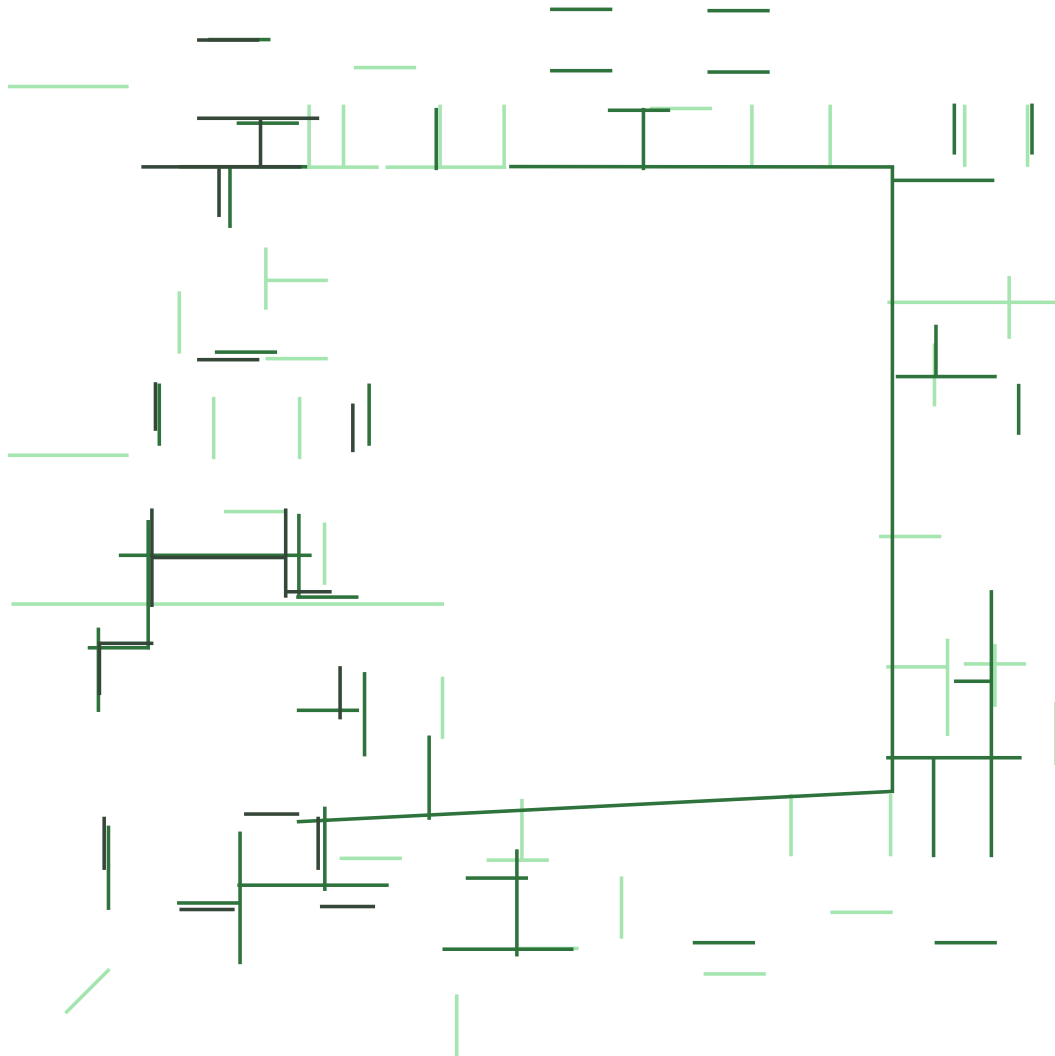


Figure 16. Mapped plans from previous page, all stacked on top of each other.



Figure 17. Figureground of Eksjö city centre

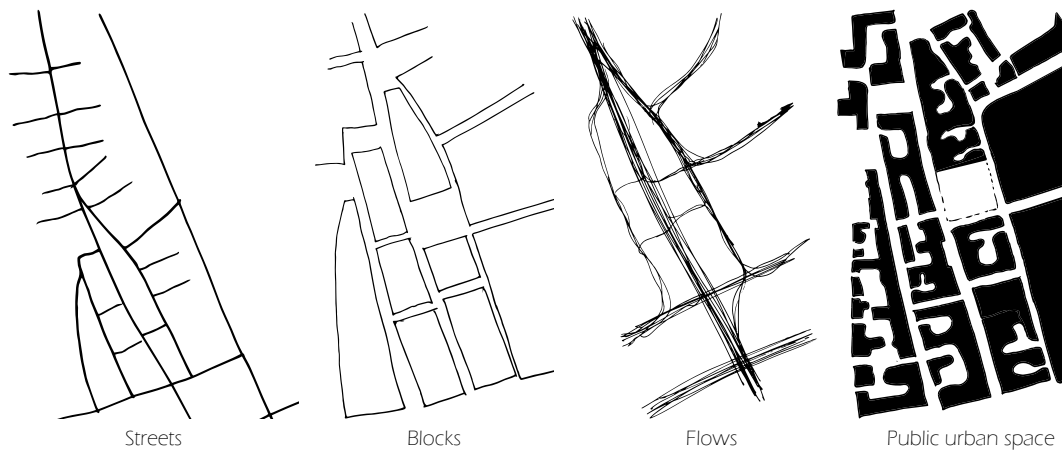
Scale 1:4000

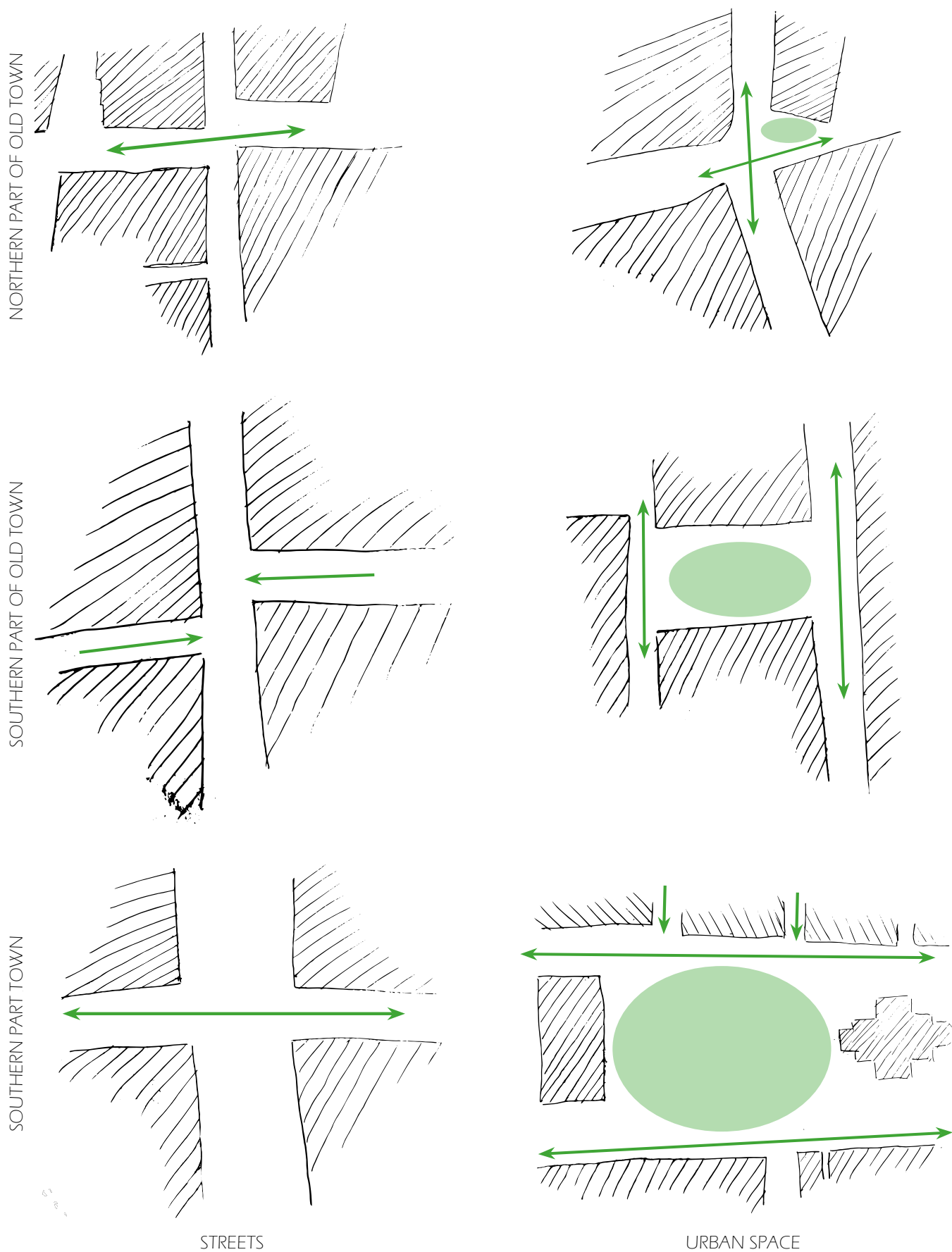
Eksjö - A mixture of several urban planning ideals

In 1568, during the Northern seven years war, the old city center was burned down as a defence strategy (Hagberg, 1982). The city was moved and the new city plan was made by Arendt de Roy and followed the nature and the ridges. The urban structure north of the big square still follows the original plan with small blocks with low rise buildings and narrow, winding streets that doesn't align. This leads to short sightlines and a small scale adapted to the pedestrians.

In 1856 a new city fire broke out and devastated the south part of the city. The city was determined to build a new city center based on the new ideals 'light, health and safety'. The result was, as still visual south of the big square, a grid with wide straight streets and low buildings enclosing bigger courtyards. The houses are reminiscent of stone houses but they are actually wood construction (timbered or stud frame) plastered and painted to resemble stone buildings. In the same time, the square was expanded and the old city church was replaced with a new one.

The city center of Eksjö has more or less stayed the same since the late 19th century. The city has expanded, as seen east of the church, with apartment houses and villas. In the north east, a part of the regiment area is shown.



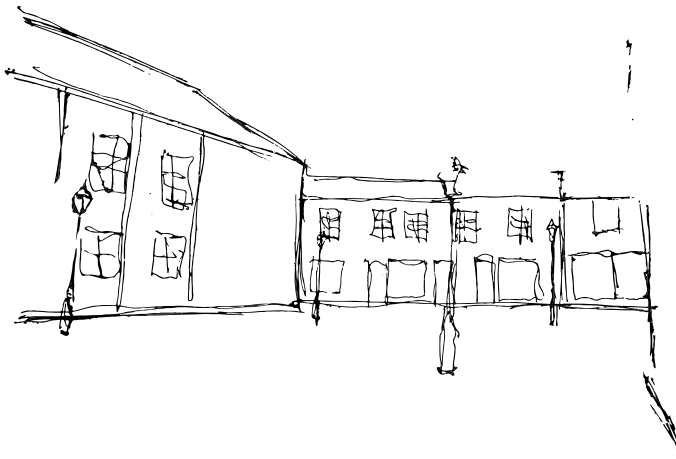


Figures 18-23. Diagrammatic sketches of various urban space strategies.

Sightlines and urban space strategies



Narrow, winding streets but still aligned gives sightlines with some interruptions. The urban space is formed when streets and buildings misalign.



The streets are narrow and always misaligned. This gives short sightlines where the background consists of facades. The urban space is a small square enclosed by facades with no long sightlines leading away from the space.



Straight, wide avenues with tree lines gives long sightlines with no clear fond. The square is huge comparing the northern urban spaces.

SIGHTLINES

Figures 23-26. Three characteristic sightlines in the city.

Pedestrian street - Norra Storgatan



Figure 27. Main street, Norra Storgatan, 6-8 m wide. Scale 1:100

One-way street with parking - Norra Storgatan

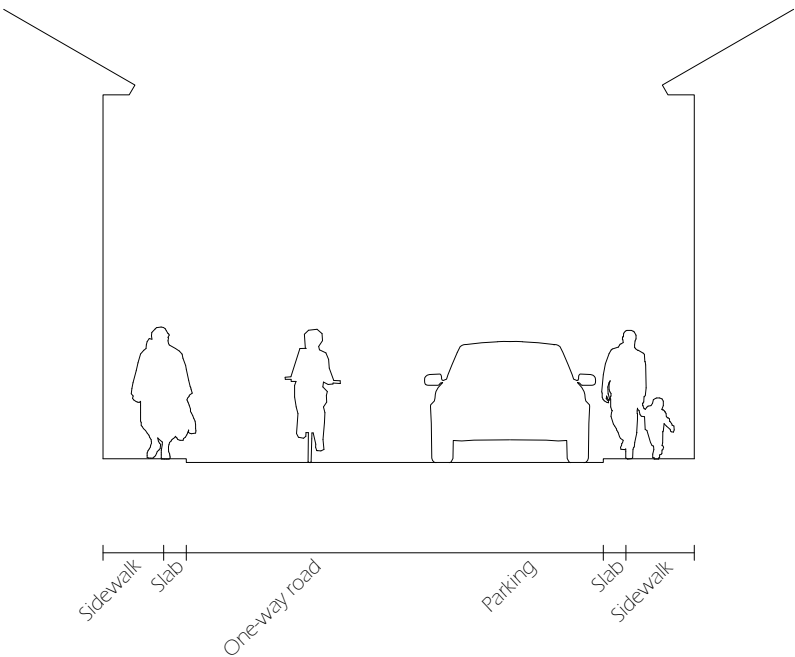


Figure 28. One-way road, Norra Storgatan, ~8 m wide. Scale 1:100

Narrow one-way street - Aren Byggmästares gata

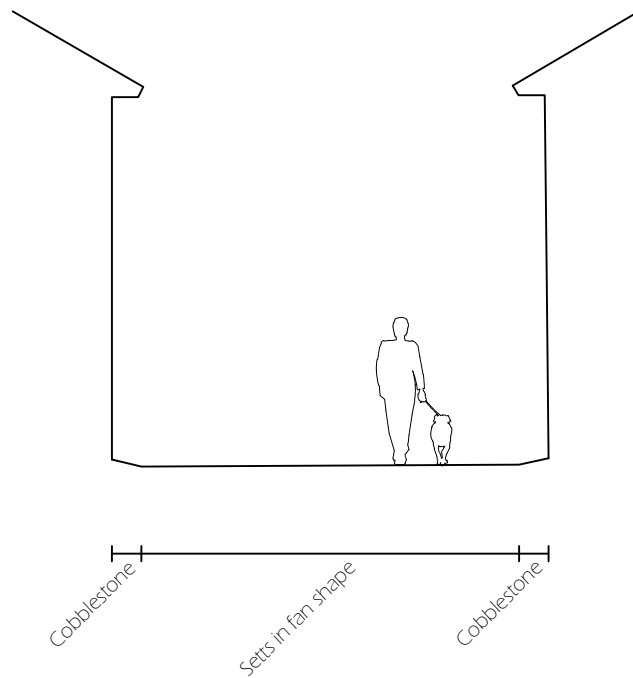


Figure 29. Back street, A. byggmästares gata, ~6 m wide.

Scale 1:100

Narrow alley - Vaxblekaregränd

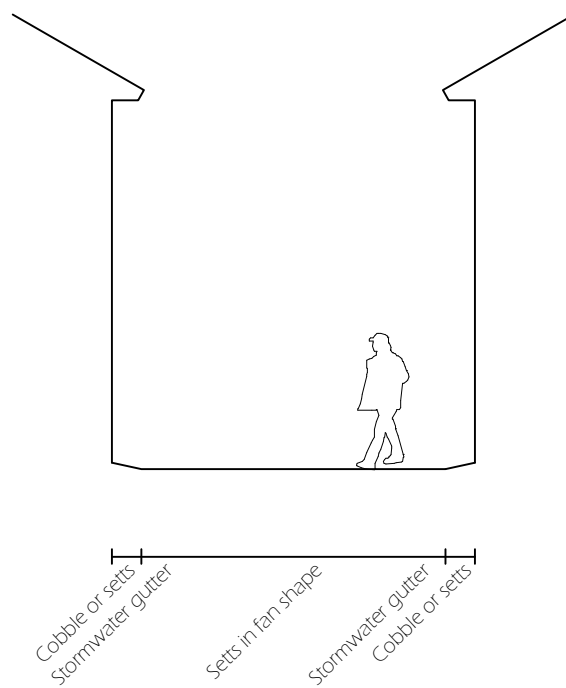


Figure 30. Alley, Vaxblekaregränd, 4,8 wide.

Scale 1:100

Pedestrian street - Norra Storgatan



One-way street with parking - Norra Storgatan



Figure 29-43. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

Narrow one-way street - Aren Byggmästares gata



Narrow alley - Vaxblekaregränd



Figure 43-54. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

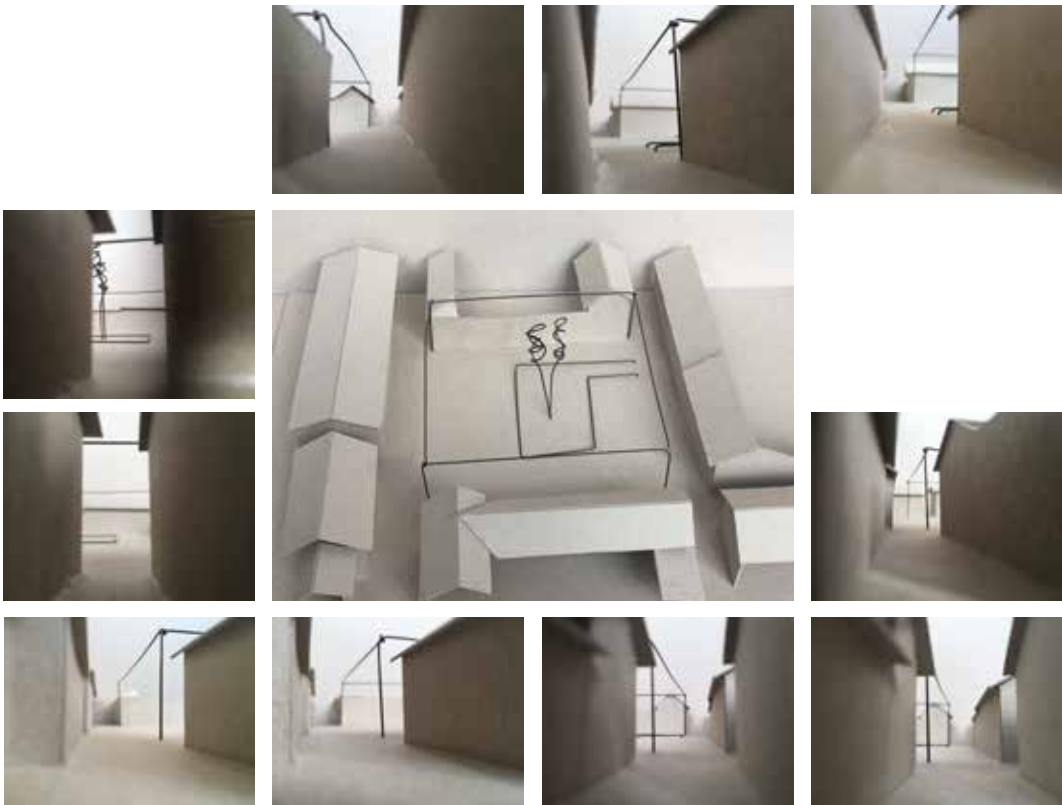
The previous building

The simple shape of the previous building works as a reference for the following studies.



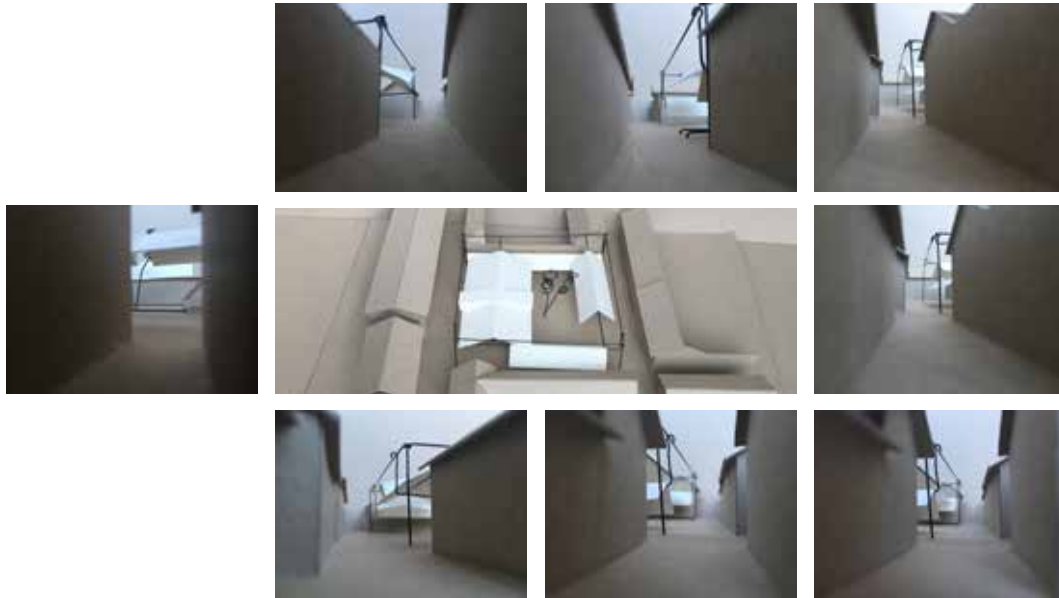
Limitations on the site

The wires shows maximum building height, (regulated by the detailed plan for the site), footprint of the previous building (regulated by cultural heritage protection) and the warden tree.



Spaces created under suspended roofs

Surfaces was shaped as roofs and suspended in the wire frame.



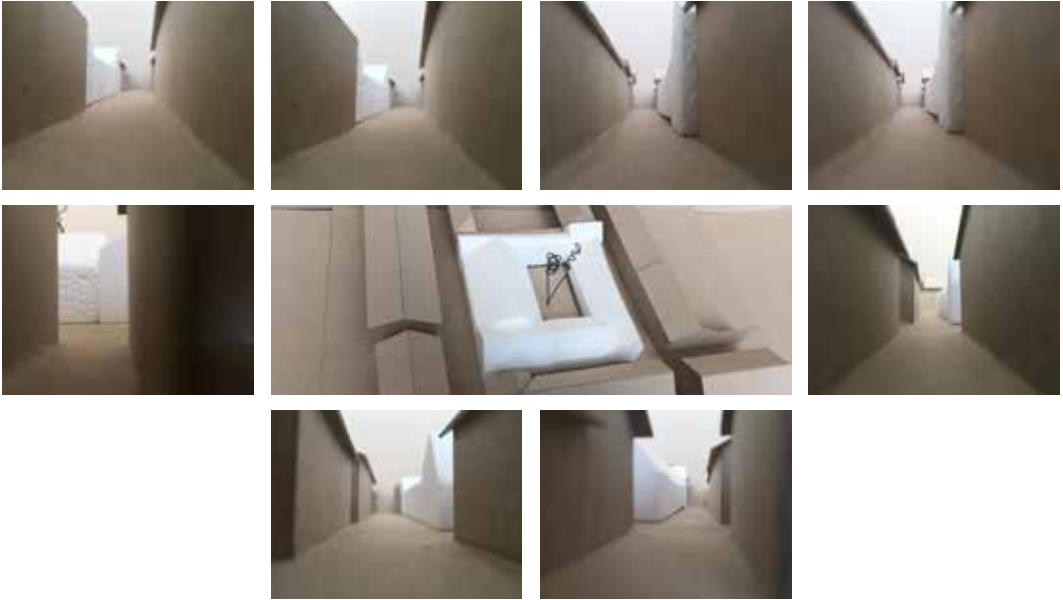
Heights - slopes

The heights were set to direct ones focus and attraction. The slopes pulls the pedestrians towards the attraction points.



Conventional roofs - new interpretations

Heights set to relate to the adjacent buildings. The volumes divided so that the shapes of the roofs accentuate directions and heights of the block.



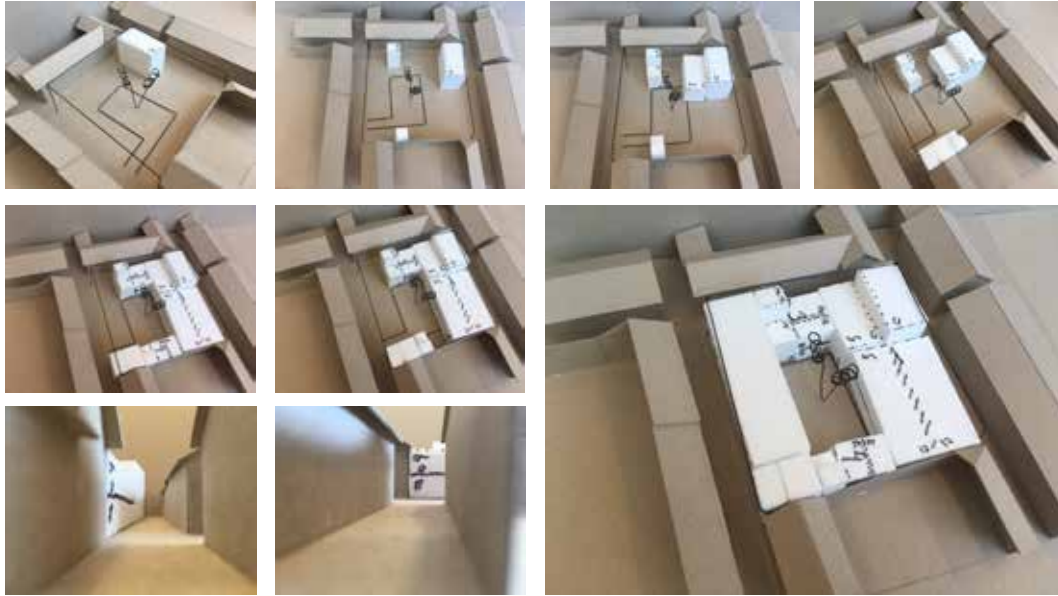
Substraction - direction - tree

Subtract shapes to accentuate direction towards the tree. The volumes were cut and skewed so that the pedestrian in certain directions have direct view towards the tree and the courtyard.



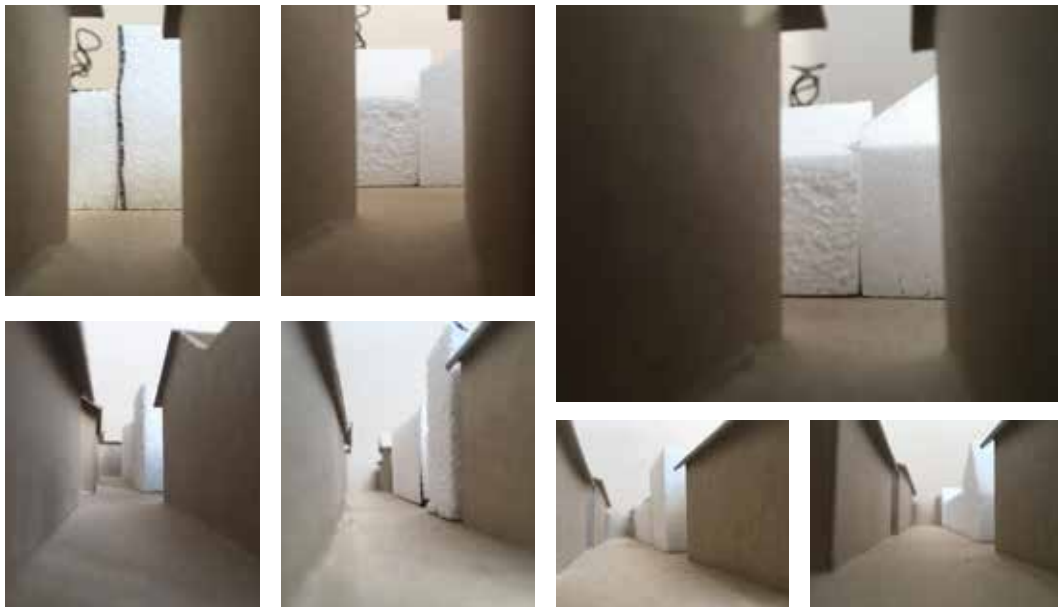
Step by step

The volumes were cut in a manner that reminded of the same strategy used when the walls of the previous building were developed. The volumes were placed on the site in a intuitive way.

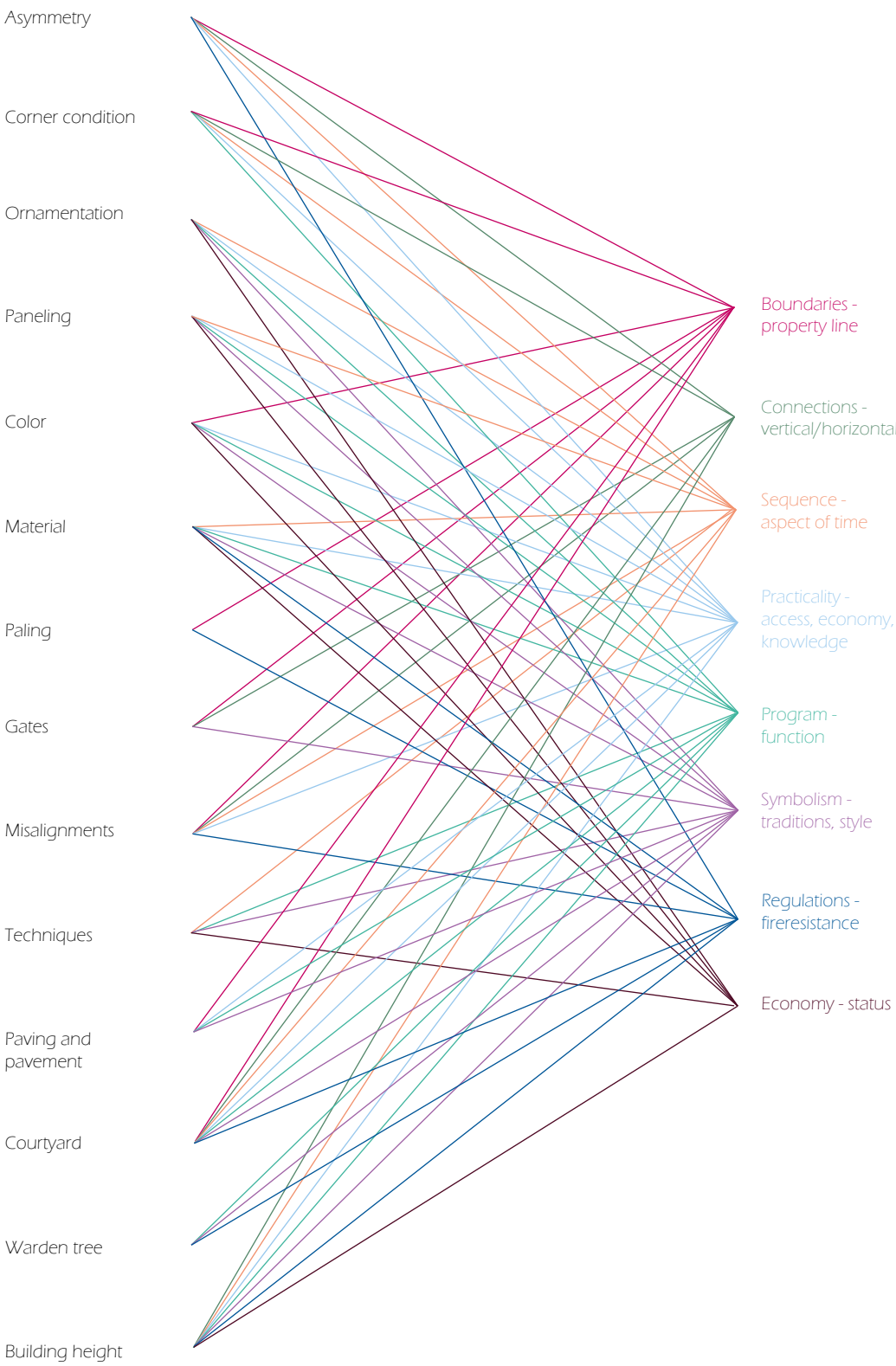


Important views and connections

Through the volume studies I found views and connections to the adjacent buildings that is important to consider.

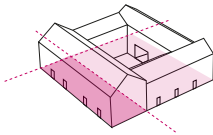


Finding the underlying concepts that gives the characteristic features of the town

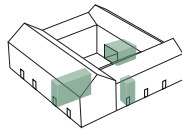


Asymmetry

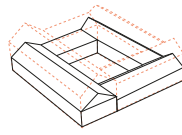
Boundary/
property line



Connection -
vertical/horizontal



Sequence - aspect
of time



Practicality -
access, economy,
knowledge

Regulations -
fireresistance

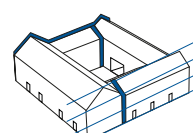


Figure 55-57. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

Corner condition

The corners have adapted to the changed conditions and programs, shops etc. benefit from a clear, strategic placement. Visual entrance for shops where different paths intersect

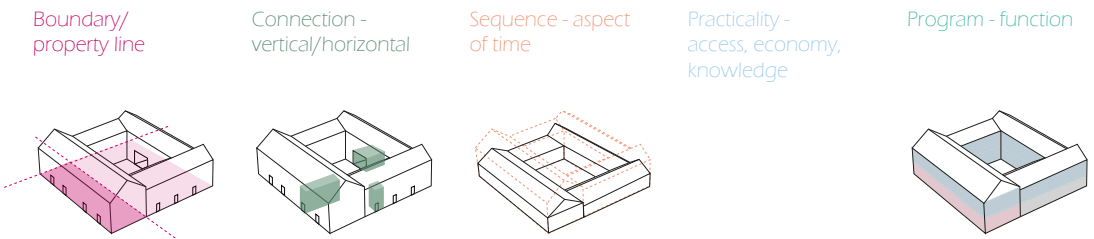
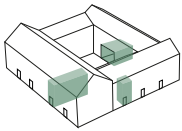


Figure 58-64. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

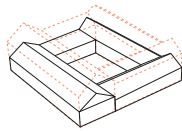
Ornamentation

The ornamentation articulates gates, entrances and junctions and the function can be read from the outside. Different views on style have varied over time and some components are unique for this area, for example the protruding second floors. Ornamentation was also a way of showing status.

Connection -
vertical/horizontal

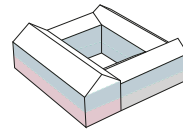


Sequence - aspect
of time

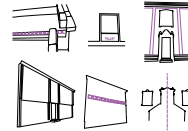


Practicality -
access, economy,
knowledge

Program - function



Symbolism -
traditions, style



Economy/ status



Figure 65-71. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

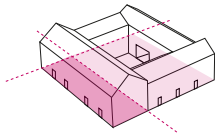


Figure 72-81. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

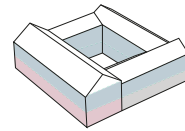
Colour

The bright color resemble of painted traditional stone houses and therefore, bright paint showed status, and houses facing the main street got the bright, expensive paint. The red color was cheaper, more accessible and easier to use, and were used for simpler houses and functions facing back streets and courtyard.

Boundary/
property line

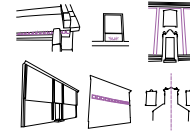


Practicality -
access, economy,
knowledge



Program - function

Symbolism -
traditions, style



Economy/ status

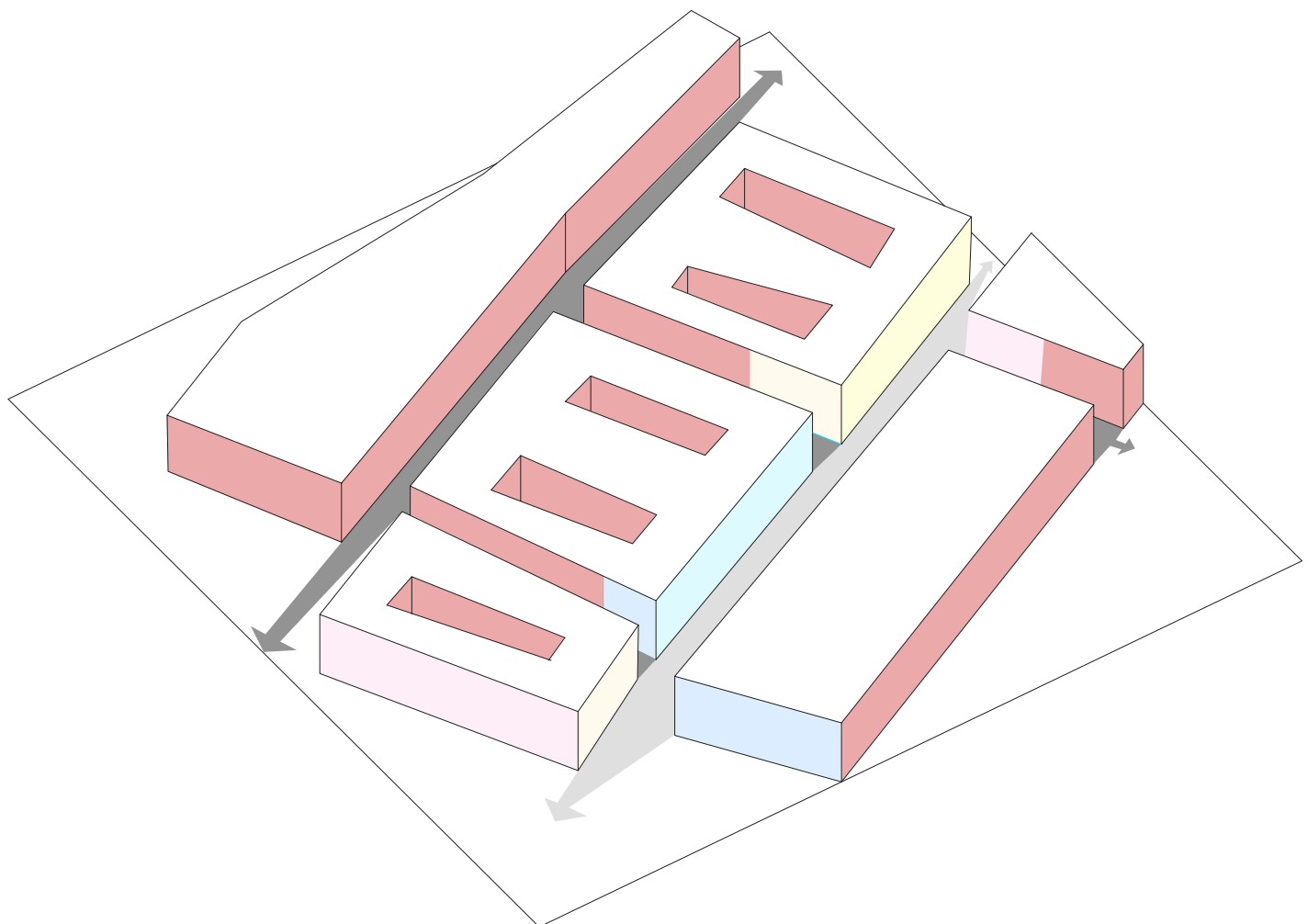
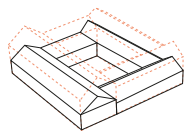


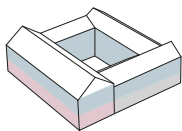
Figure 82. Diagrammatic illustration showing facade painting.

Material

Sequence - aspect
of time

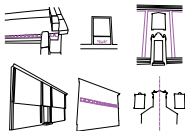


Practicality -
access, economy,
knowledge



Program - function

Symbolism -
traditions, style



Economy/ status

Regulations -
fireresistance

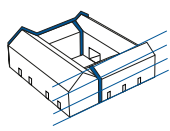


Figure 83-93. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

Paling

Boundary/
property line

Program - function

Regulations -
fireresistance

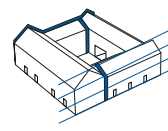
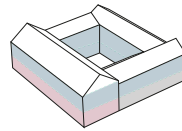
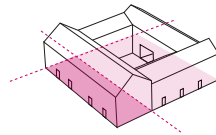


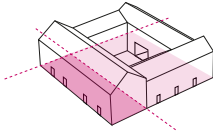
Figure 94-98. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

Gates

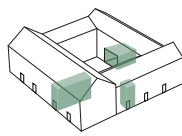


Misalignments

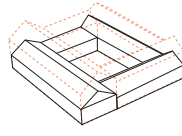
Boundary/
property line



Connection -
vertical/horizontal



Sequence - aspect
of time



Practicality -
access, economy,
knowledge

Regulations -
fireresistance

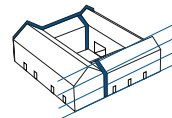


Figure 109-117. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

Techniques

Knowledge, style and material have developed over time. Joints and other details are results from a strong wood construction tradition. Chosen technique tell a lot of the program/function and status of the space. The function of the space can be read from the outside.

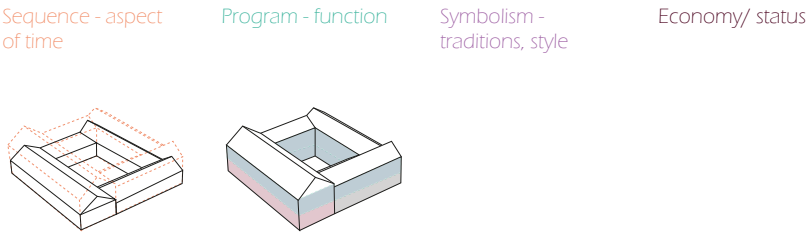
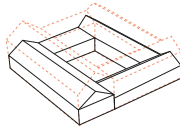


Figure 118-124. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

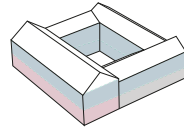
Paneling

Sequence - aspect
of time



Practicality -
access, economy,
knowledge

Program - function



Symbolism -
traditions, style

Economy/ status

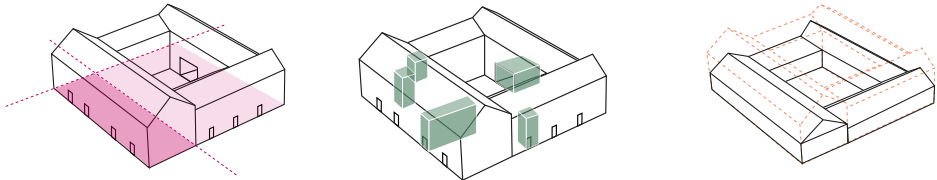


Figure 125-130. Photos of Old town of Eksjö, in spring 2018. Author's own copyright.

FEATURES FOUND IN OLD TOWN

CONCEPT

Asymmetry Corner condition Ornamentation Paneling Colour Material



Boundaries

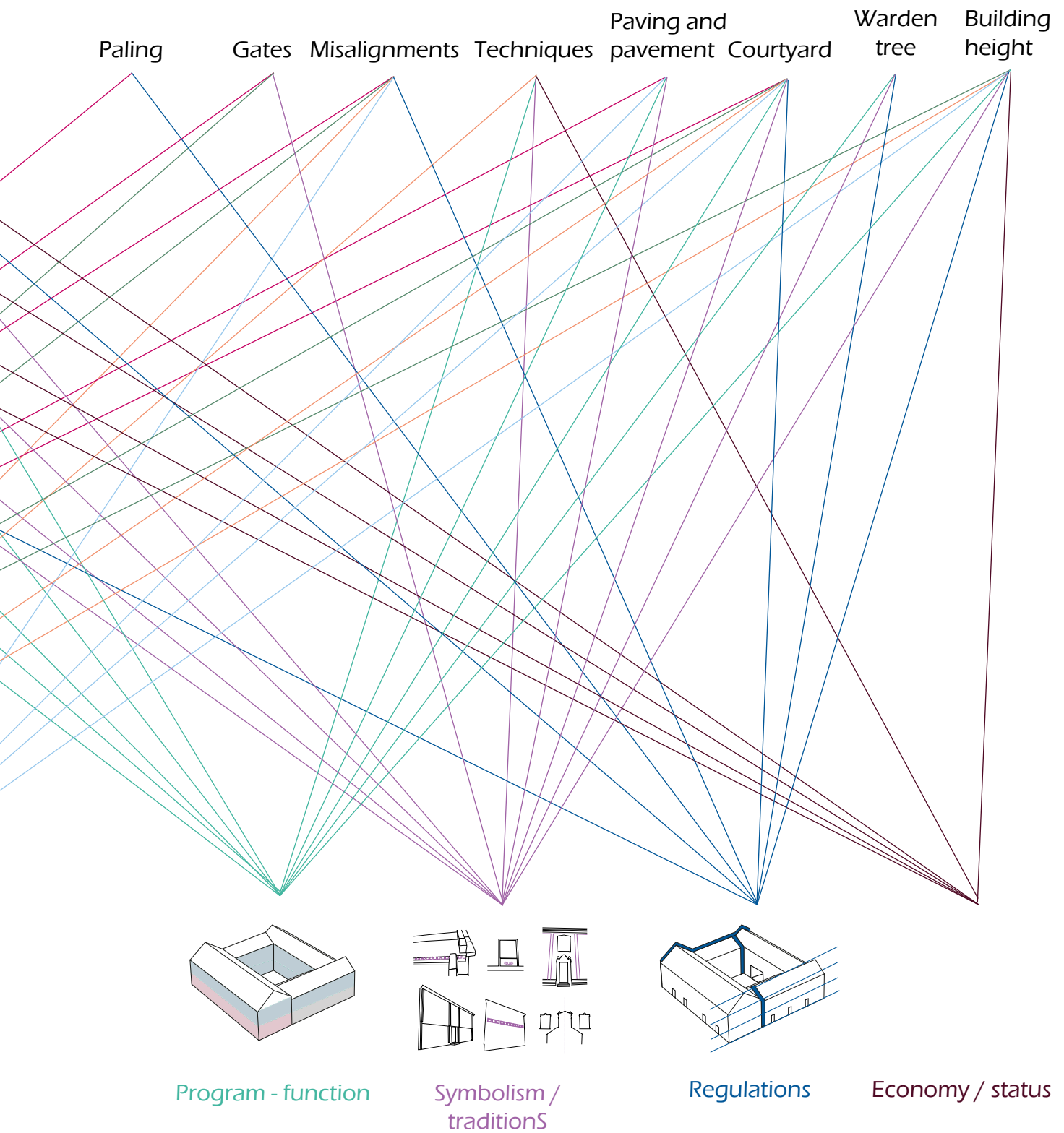
Connection

Sequence

Practicality -
access, economy,
knowledge

CONCEPTS OF OLD TOWN

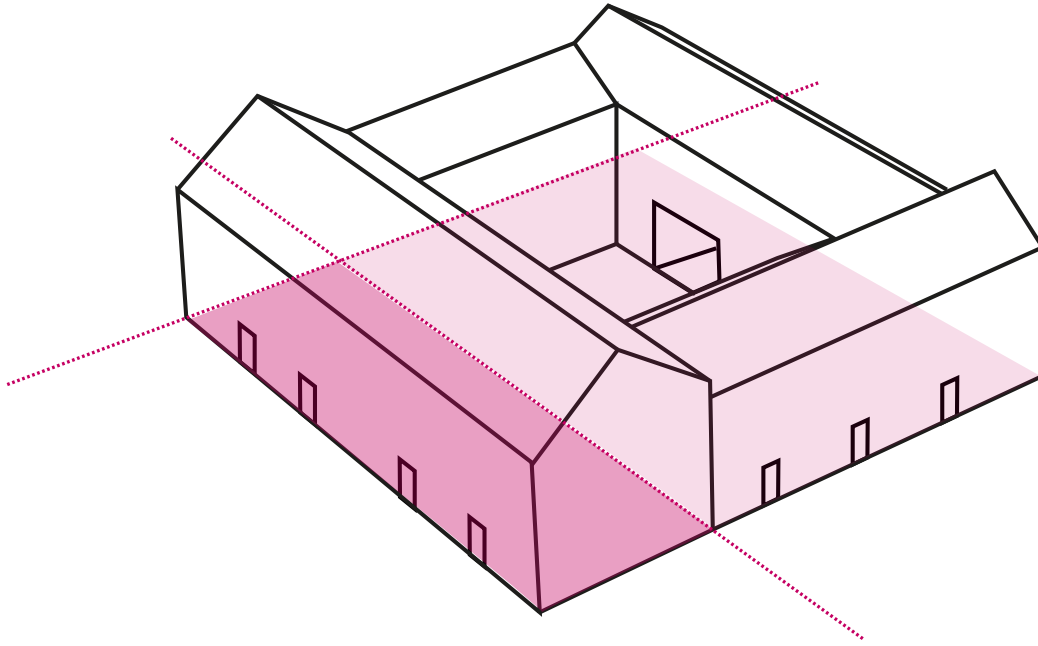
DIAGRAM



Boundaries/property line

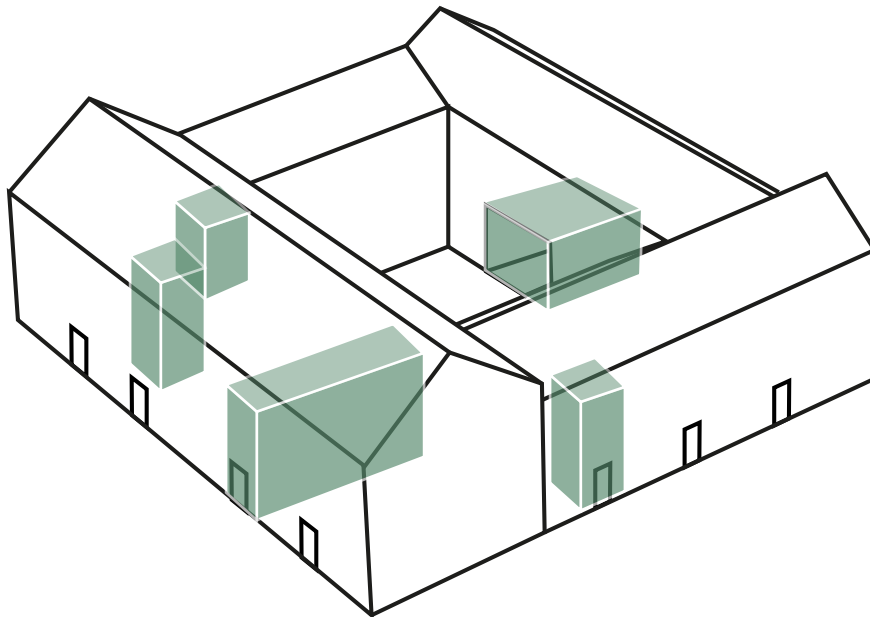
Many of the blocks was once divided into smaller properties. This could be the result of inheritance division between siblings etc. It was not uncommon that one child got e.g. three rooms and one third of the courtyard, while the other child got e.g. two rooms and the rest of the courtyard.

The block 'Ciselören 1' was once divided into two properties that merged during 1780s.



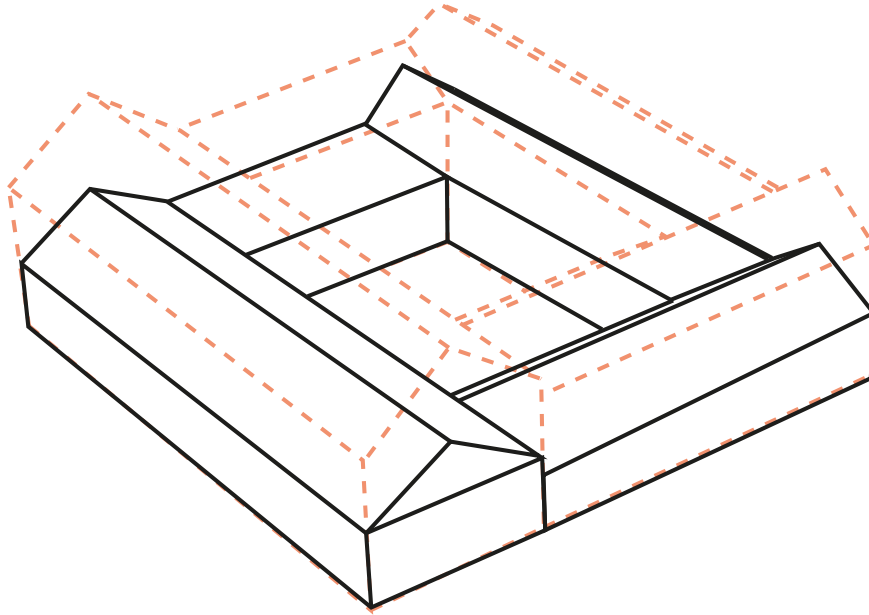
Connection - vertical/horizontal circulation

The main connections on first floor has a direct relationship with the old building typologies with traces from the farm typology where housing, barn and sheds enclosed a common courtyard. From the main street it was possible to enter the housing and the courtyard from a closed passage. Deliveries and transportation were made by horse carriage along the back street. Toward this street all the courtyards had gates so that unwanted guests were held outside and the animals were kept inside. The buildings were often one floor high and later added with one or two floors. This resulted in unconventional and creative solutions for the vertical connections.



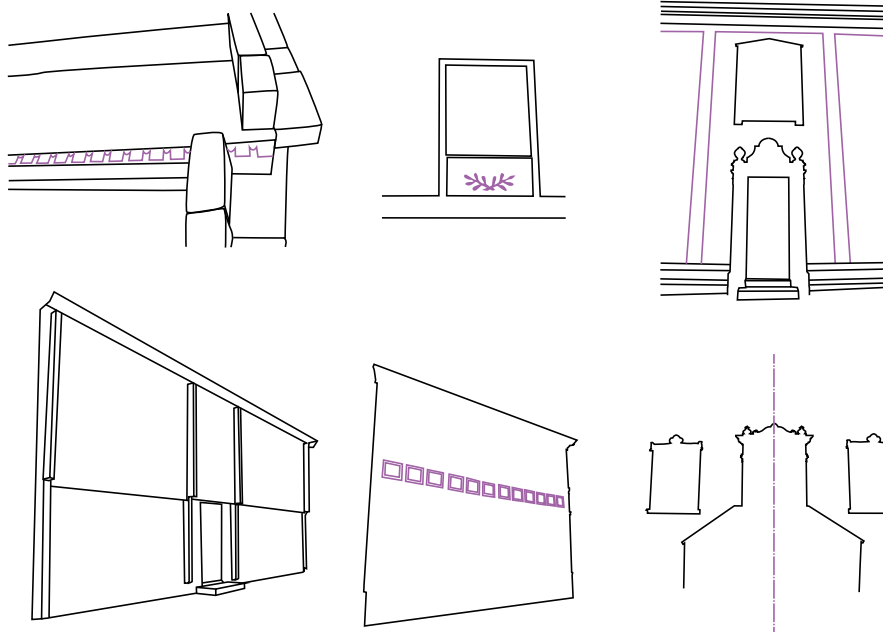
Sequence - aspect of time

Most of the houses started as one floor high and was later added with another one or two floors. In this way they were able to free space on the small courtyards instead. The timber construction was easy to work with and comprehend and you could easily add more logs on top of the old ones.



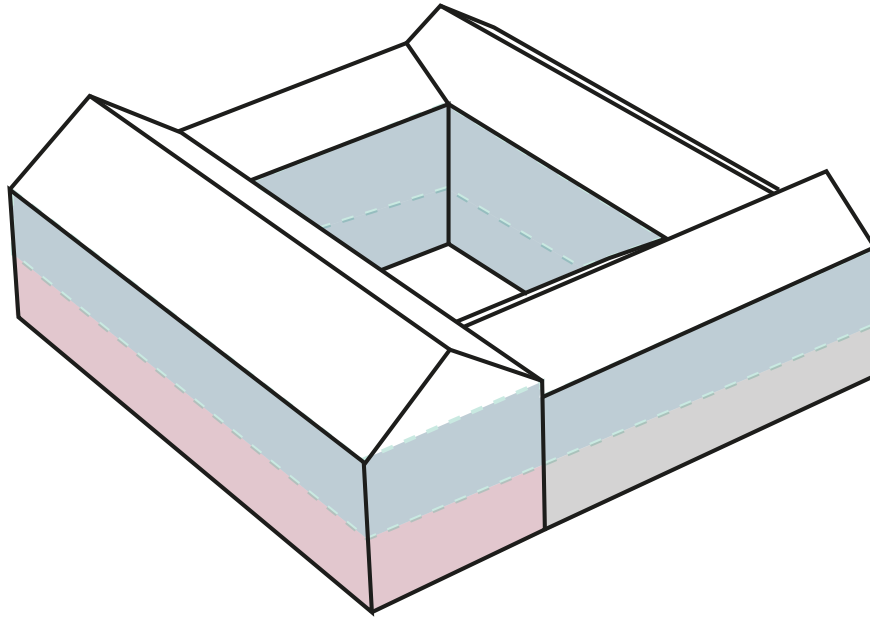
Symbolism - traditions, style

Locally preferred ornamentation and techniques narrates about a traditional style such as protruding second floor, emphasized center, polycentric/polyaxial symmetries, carpentry/woodwork, paved courtyard and coloring.



Program - function

The original function of the space had direct impact on chosen building material, technique, color etc. More simple buildings were used as storage, sheds or barn. The bigger houses were used both as housing, workshops and for their businesses.

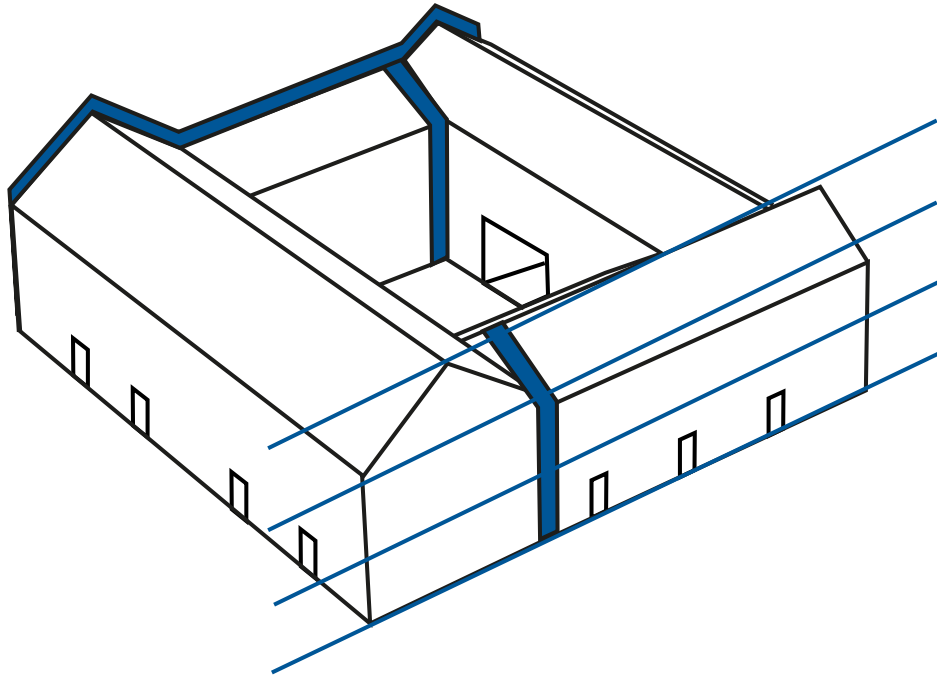


Practicality - access, economy, knowledge

Building from the knowledge and materials you found locally was once the only alternative. Almost all the features you find in the old town can be traced back to a very practical reason. Access to materials, costs, time efficiency has had the greatest influence on the built environment.

Regulations - fire resistance

Wood is the main building material in this region, it is easily accessible and to work with but with that, you must always have the fire protection in mind. Eksjö have suffered from several fires, some worse than others and this has led to actions and regulations. This affect building heights, street width and how the buildings connect to each other.

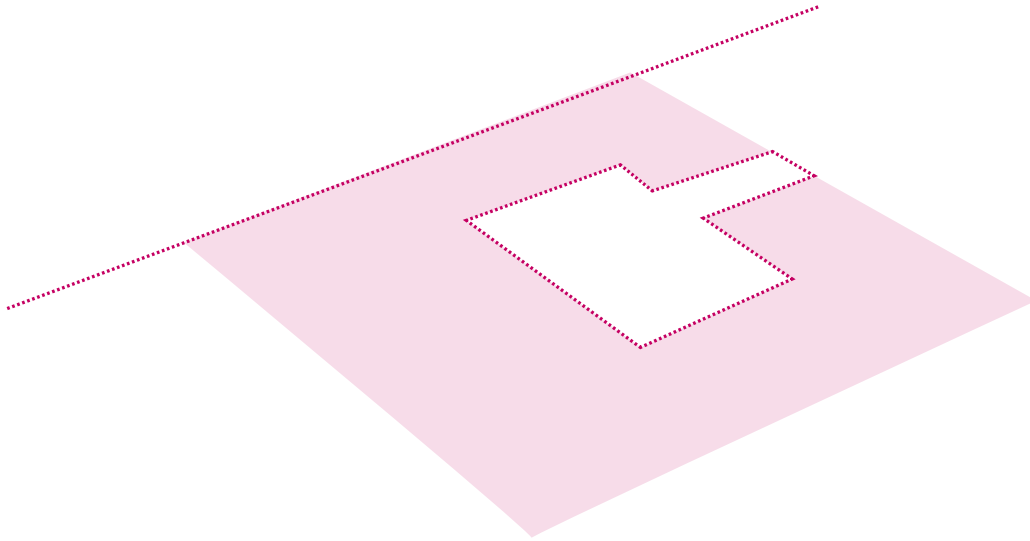


Economy/ status

The difference in colouring, materials and techniques used towards the main street and towards the courtyard has a direct base in how important it was to show status but at the same time be practical and economize with the resources. The facades towards the main Street, where the richer people were passing by, got the more expensive and bright colouring and were decorated with panelling and ornamentation etc. The facades facing the backstreet and courtyard was performed in more simple materials and colours.

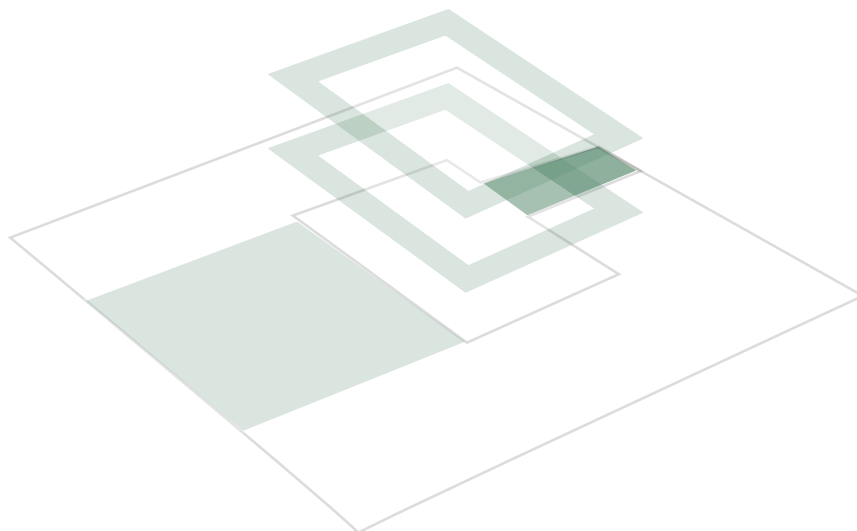
Boundaries/property line

The site today consists of one unity and is owned by one landlord, the municipality. The only property line that remains today is the one in north, where the block connect to the adjacent building. New boundaries have been drawn within the block since the footprint of the old building is protected by cultural heritage protection.



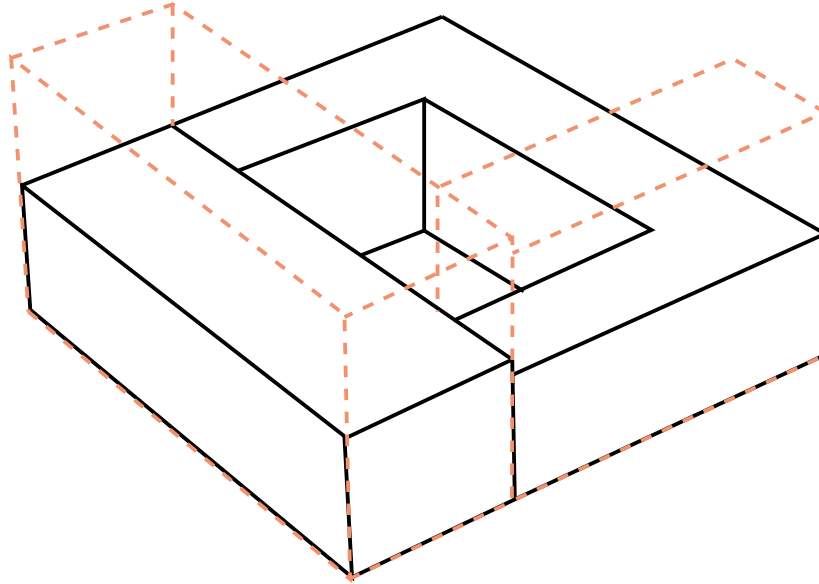
Connection - vertical/horizontal circulation

The main connection on first floor, the gate into the courtyard, is fixed due to the protection of the previous footprint. The rest of the connections can be placed more rational than before but a common stairwell in the central part of the volume along the main street is an essential element as it is an element found in all the surrounding buildings. Since the footprint is defined by regulations, an open gallery as access to the second and third floor is logical even today. Thus, no interior space is occupied only for horizontal circulation.



Sequence - aspect of time

As the building is now being built as one unity, it makes no sense trying to design it as if it was built in sequences. What is important is to enable future adjustments, so that the building can develop and sustain over time.

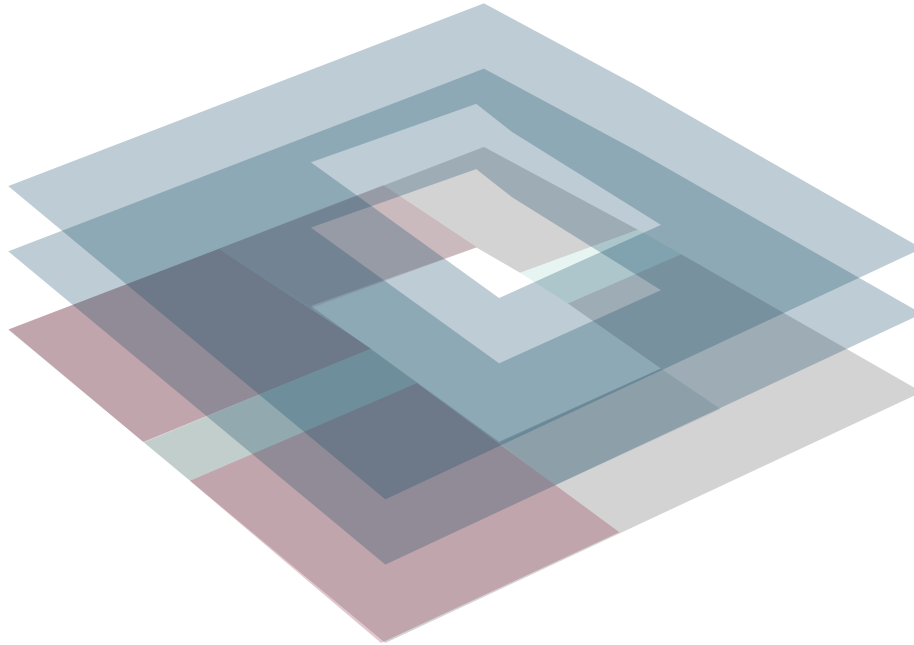


Symbolism - traditions, style

The adjacent buildings are still the same as before but nowadays inspiration can travel further than before. What is important is to find the source to the ornamentation. I have found that apparent in the old town is that exterior expression almost always have a interior counterpart. A contemporary interpretation would be to accent relationship between exterior and interior through contemporary wood details.

Program - function

A interpretation of the former program and function of the plot results in different zonation of the site. This is not as strict as former boundaries but still a guideline of how the usage and access to the site can be divided into private, semi private, public and semi public.



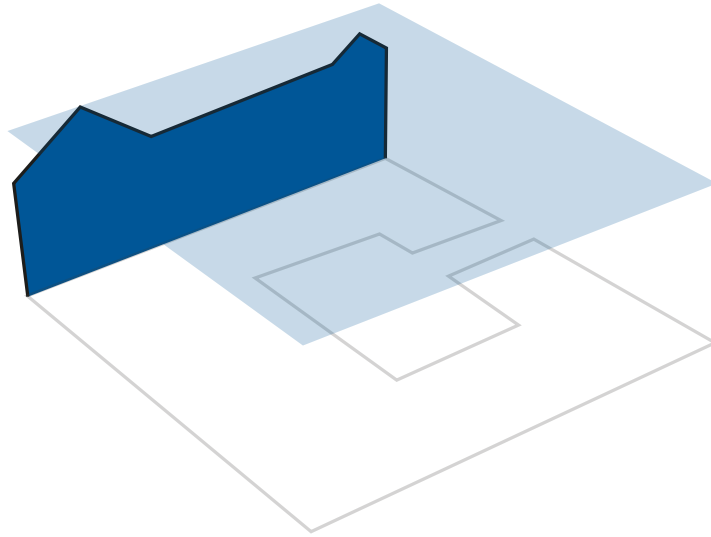
Practicality - access, economy, knowledge

Take care of local materials, knowledge and techniques.

- Long, strong tradition of forestry and wood industry
- Module housing factory
- Wood industry education for imigrants & job-seekers

Regulations - fire resistance

When building with wood in this dense area, you have to keep the fire protection in mind, then as in now. The density is regulated by the detailed plan where the maximum building height is set to 8 meters, no more than three floors high and with one third of the third floor furnished as an accommodation.

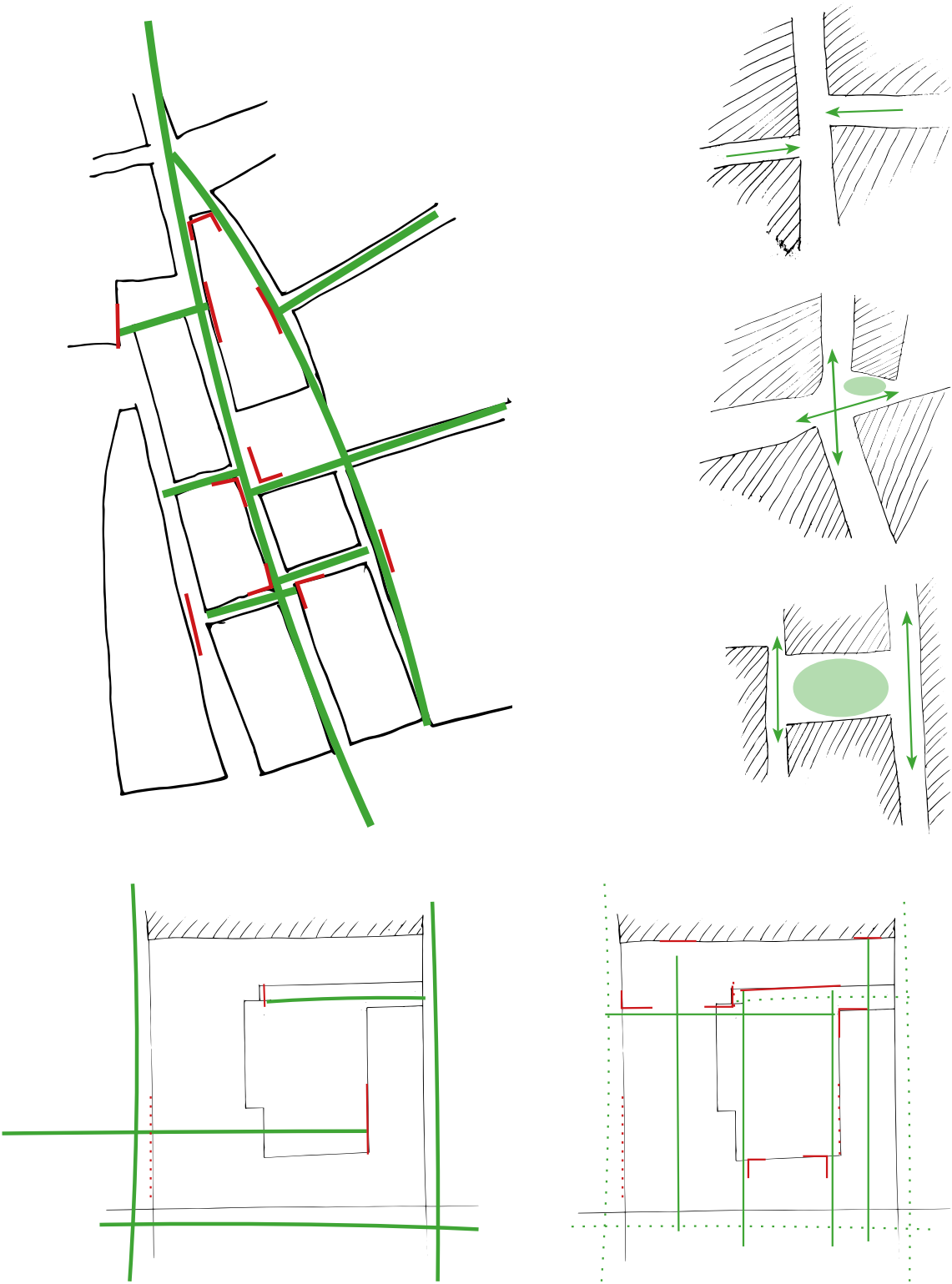


Economy/ status

To show status is still important today, the difference is how we show it and towards whom. My opinion is that sustainability and to show ones environmental awareness is a power factor today. My interpretation is that it is important to show to the public that the building is sustainable, through environmental friendly materials and techniques in the exterior (no matter which street it is directed towards) and at the same time show exclusivity in the interior.

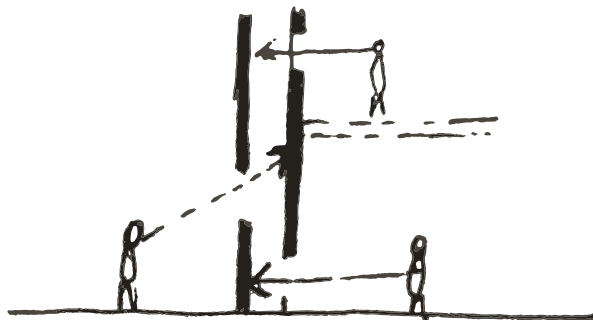
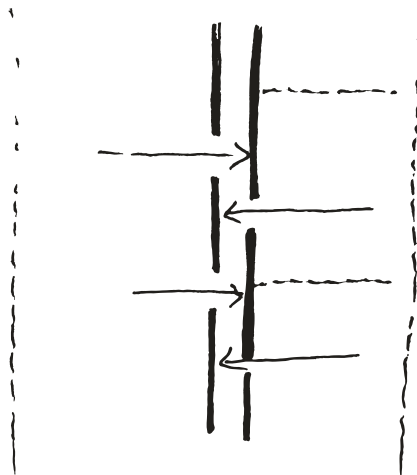
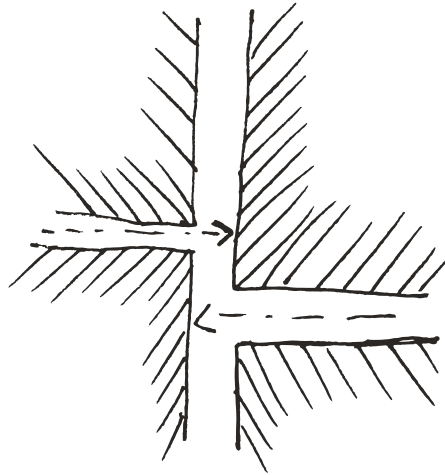
Analysing the urban space

Mainflow along N. Storgatan with misaligning crossroads creates short sightlines with focus. The backstreet becomes a buffer zone between public and private space. Squares and small urban spaces are formed by the misalignments. Flow and interruptions are important elements of the urban fabric. Special for this town is the misaligning crossroads, narrow streets and dense, low-rise blocks.



Streetscape brought into the site

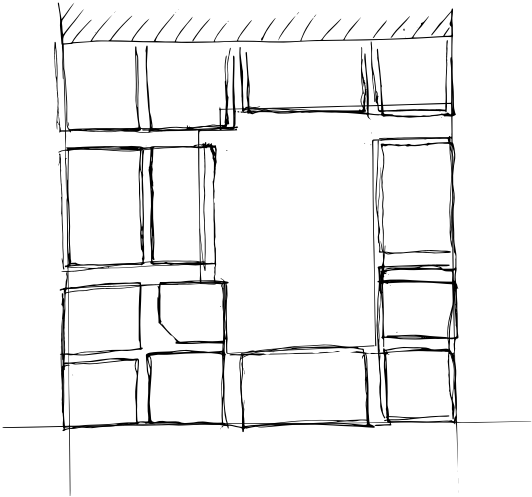
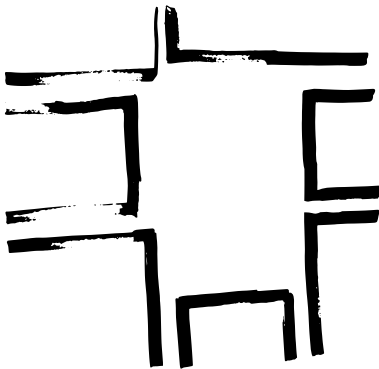
Streets becomes interior connections. Both exterior and interior flow is formed with the same strategies as found in the streetscape of the town. Misaligning openings creates unexpected sightlines with a glimpse of the adjacent space.



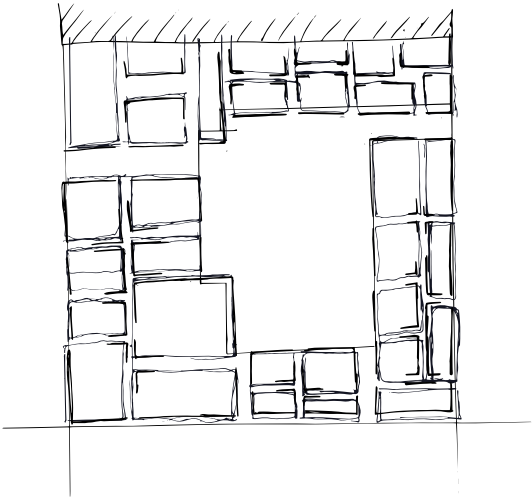
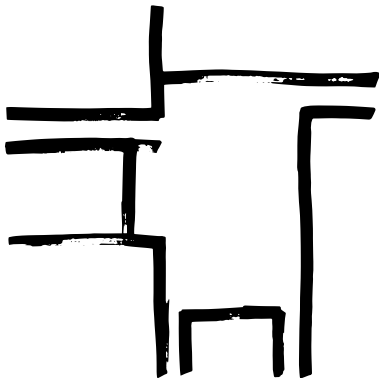
Bring streetscape into the plans

Three interpretations on how the typical streetscapes can be implemented in the plans. The interior streets/ connection space creates shared spaces that divides and organizes the rest of the spaces.

Northern part of old town



Mid part of old town



Southern part of town

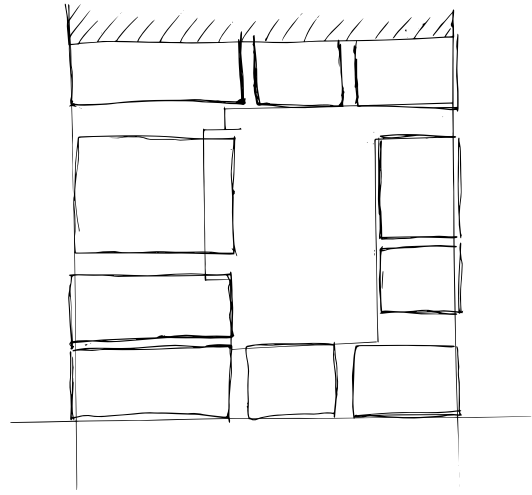
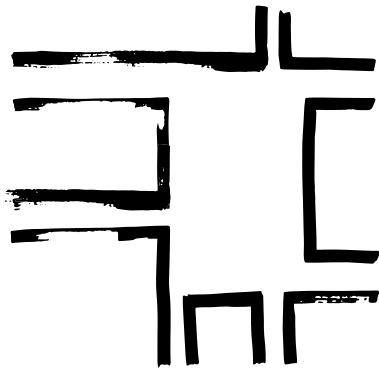
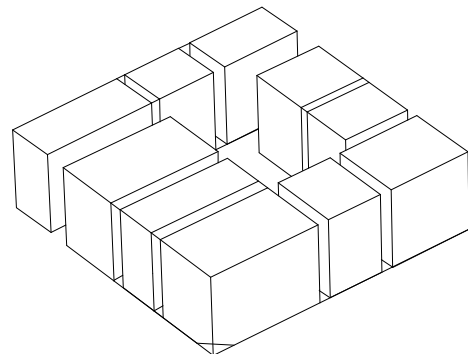
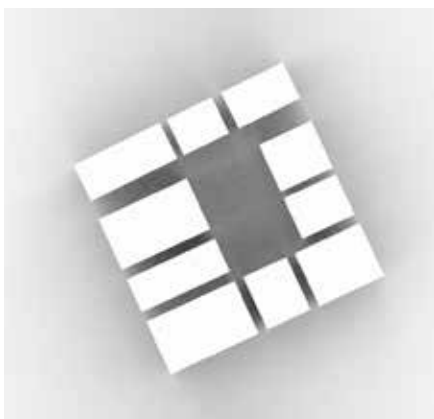
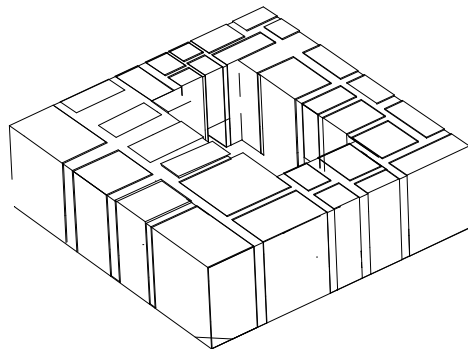
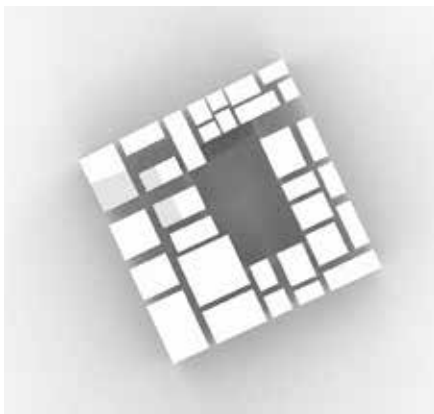
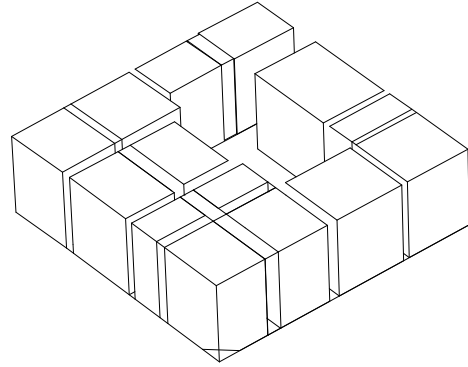
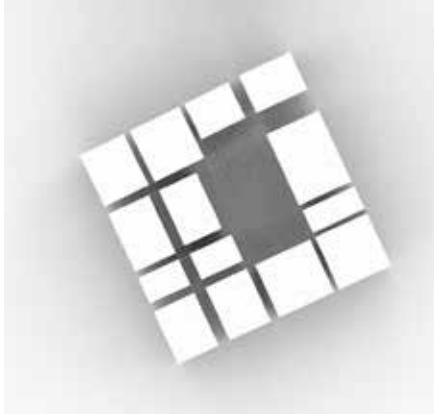


Figure 131-142. Sketches.



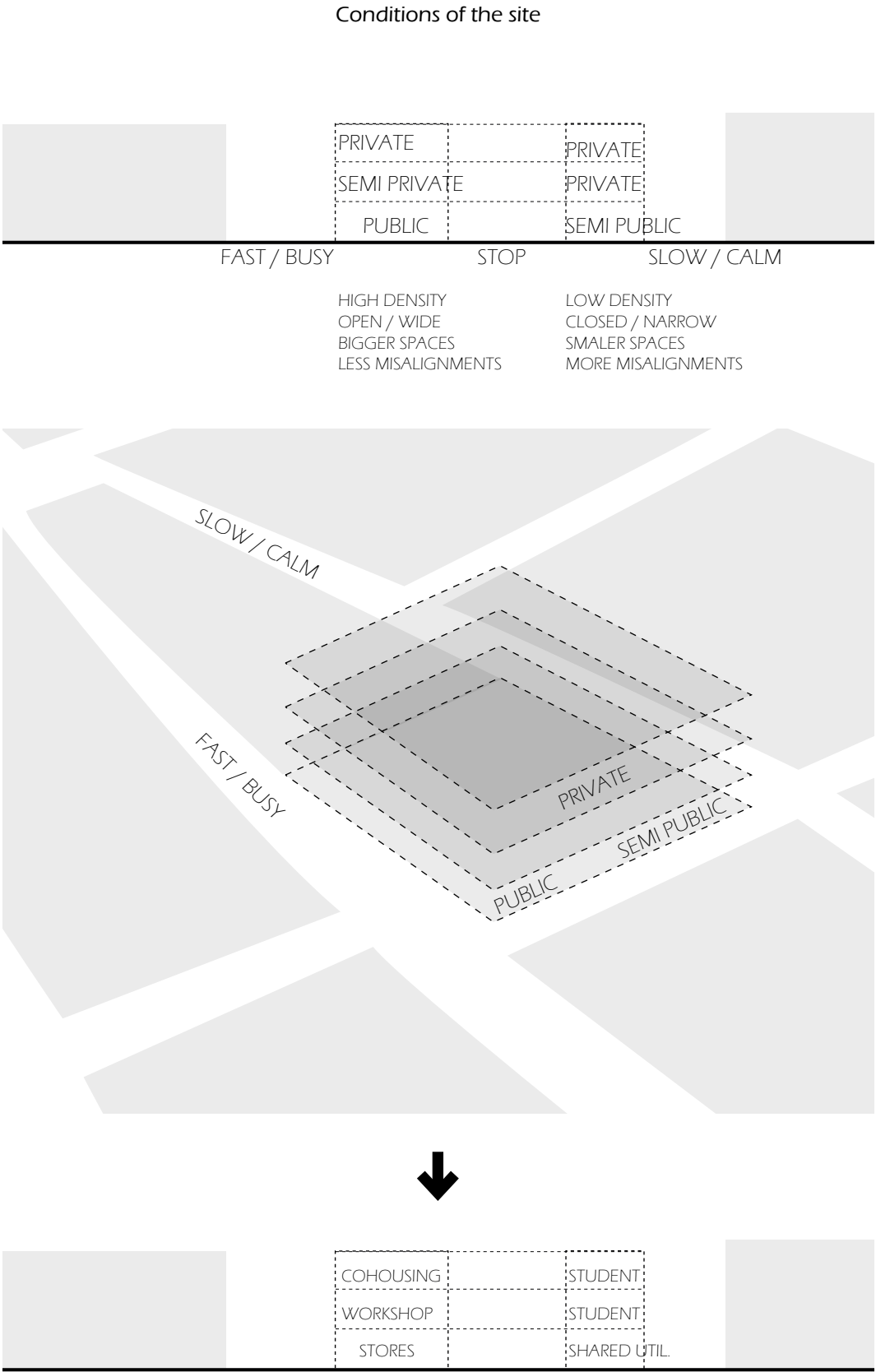


Figure 143-145. Diagrams over the site.

Connections

The in-between space connects the building and divides the spaces according to their function. The result is a network of spaces, from the most private ones, to the more public ones, with a lot of in-between spaces, shared spaces, connecting and organizing the whole building. Where two main connections intersect bigger spaces opens up, just as a square in the town.

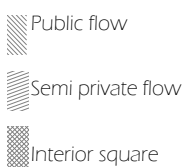
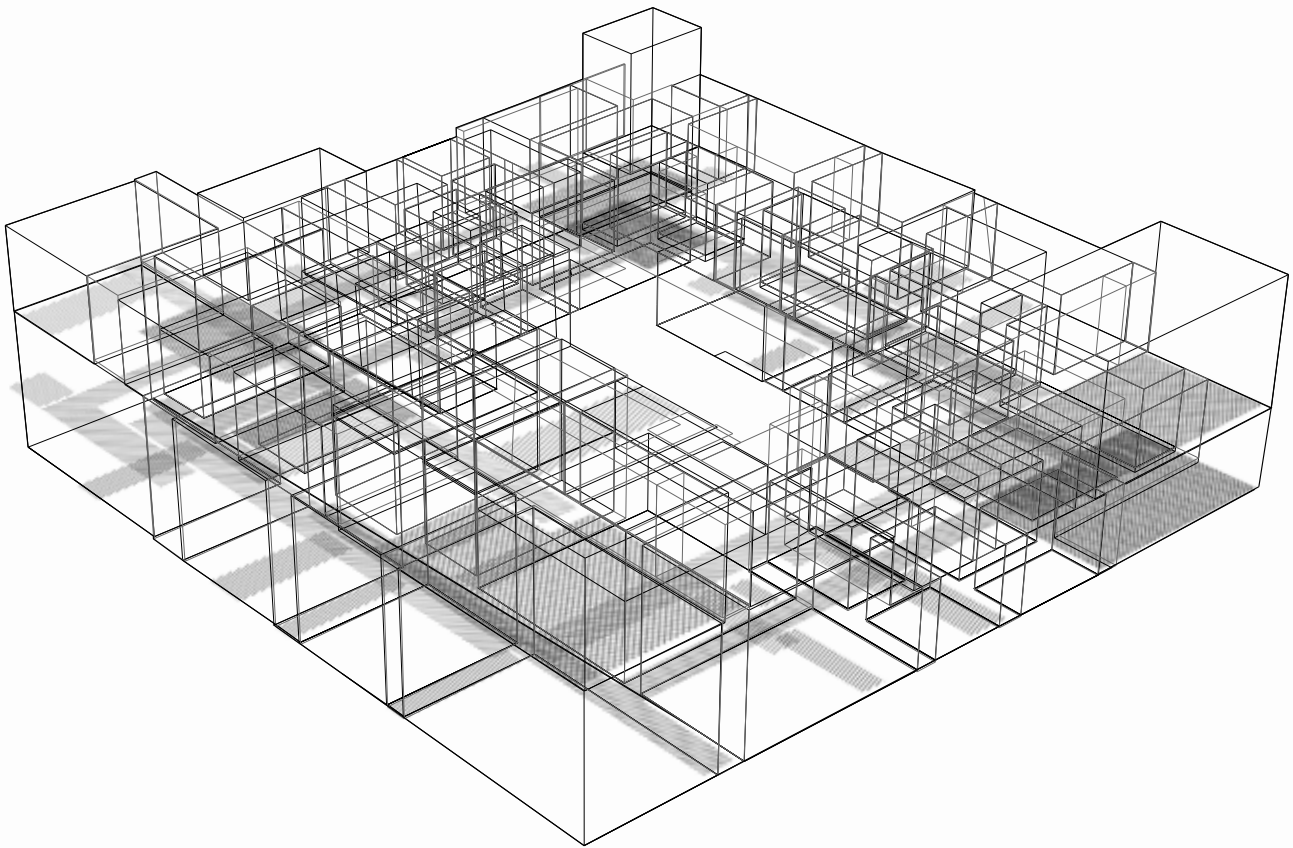


Figure 146. Diagram illustrating the in-between spaces of the proposal.

Connection

By reintroducing the urban structure into the building, the proposal got even more connections to the previous building and the characteristic way of circulating within and around the building, that one could imagine at first.

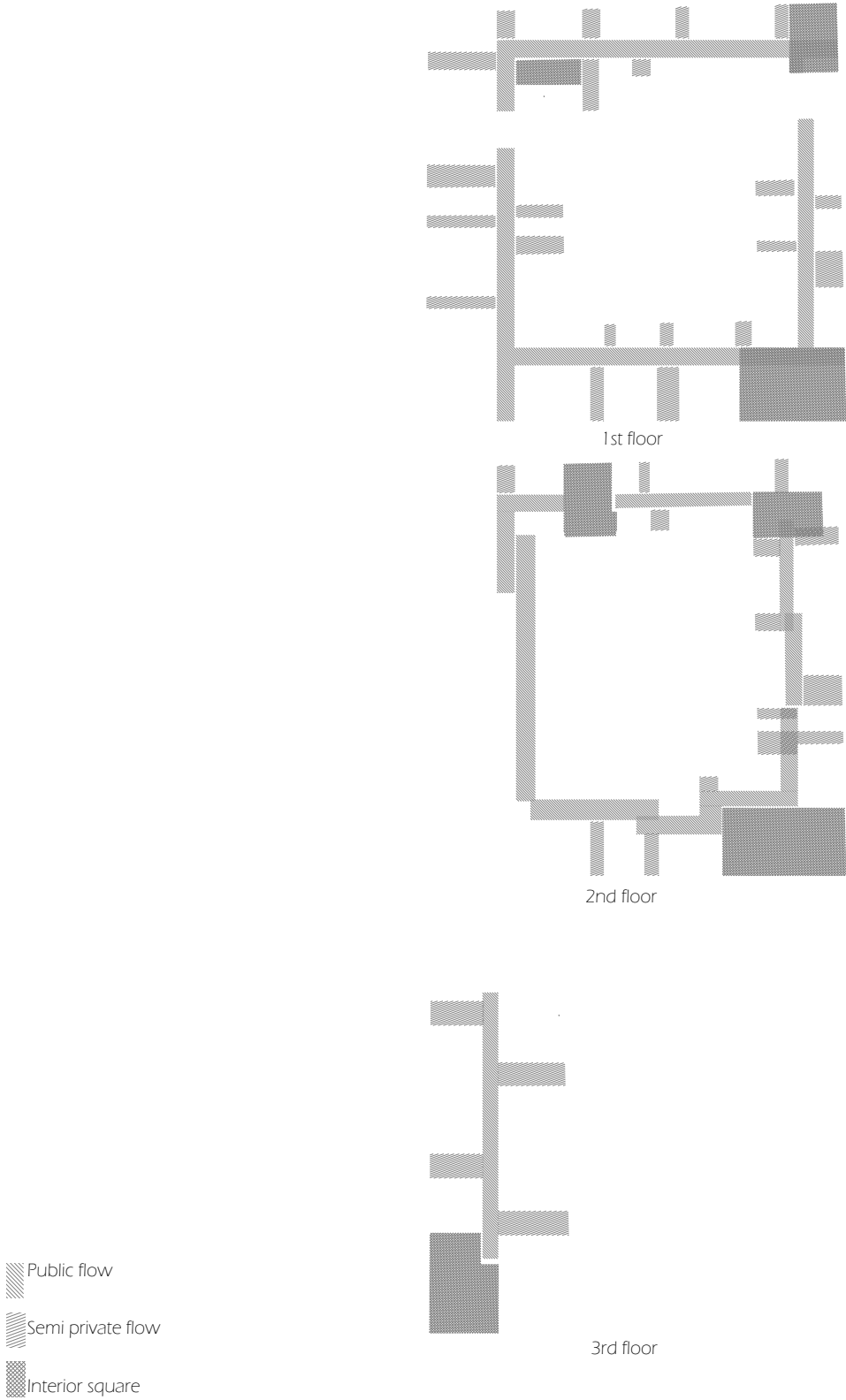


Figure 147. Diagrammatic plans illustrating the in-between spaces of the proposal.

Program

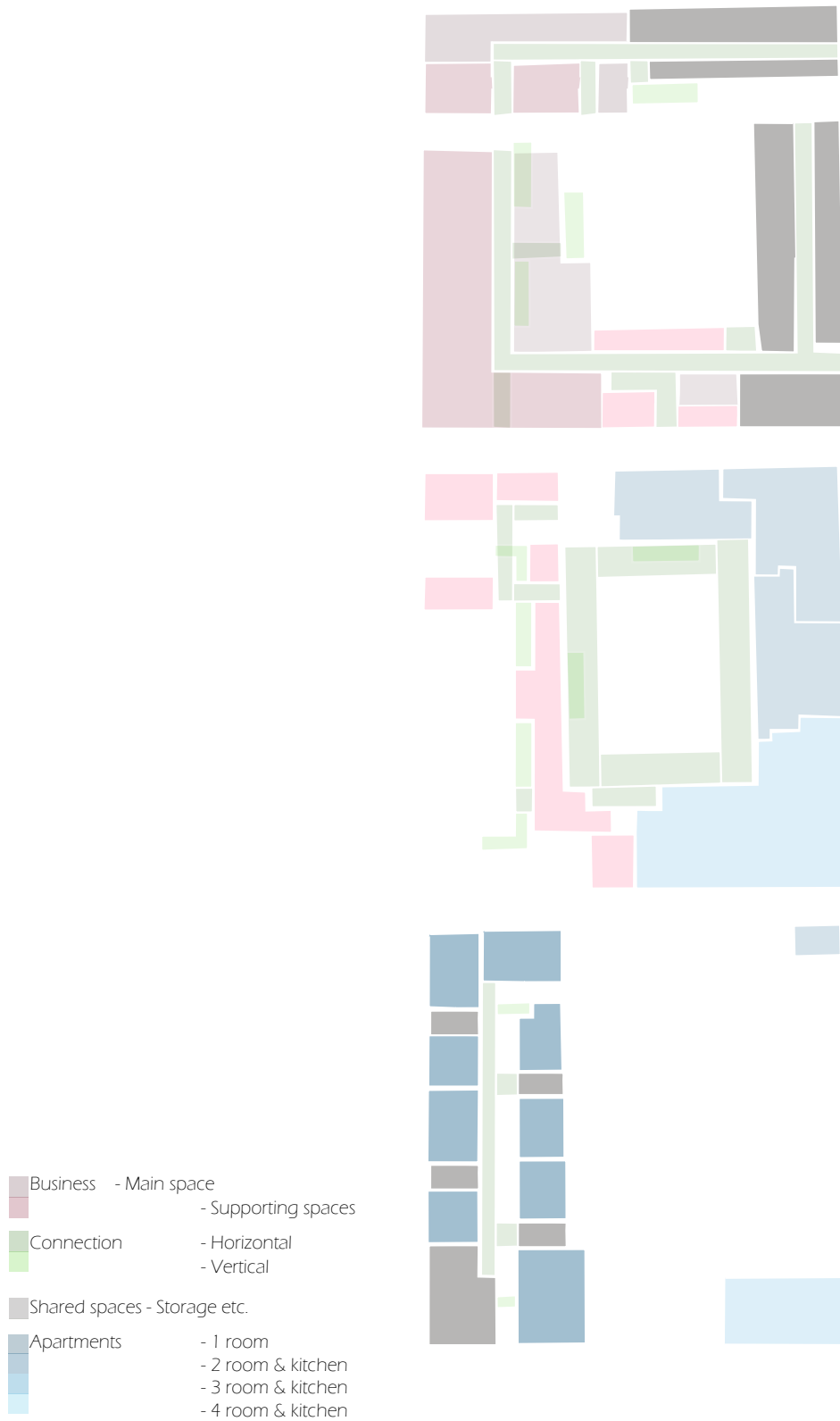


Figure 148. Diagrammatic plans illustrating the program of the proposal.

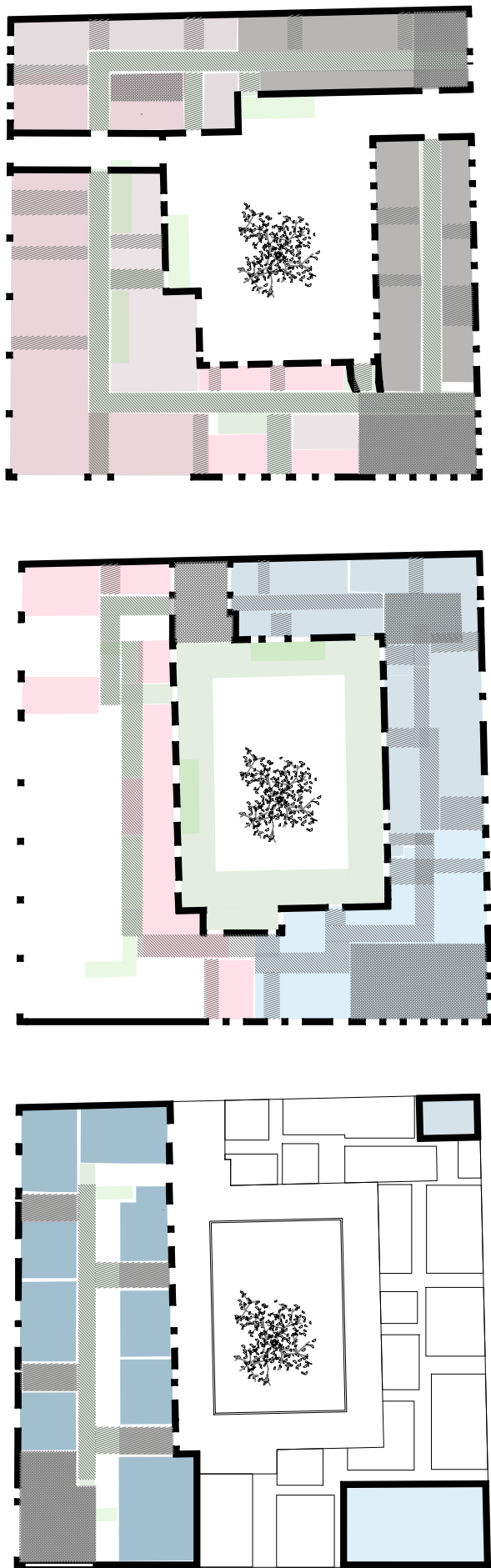


Figure 149. Conceptual plans 1-3

1:400

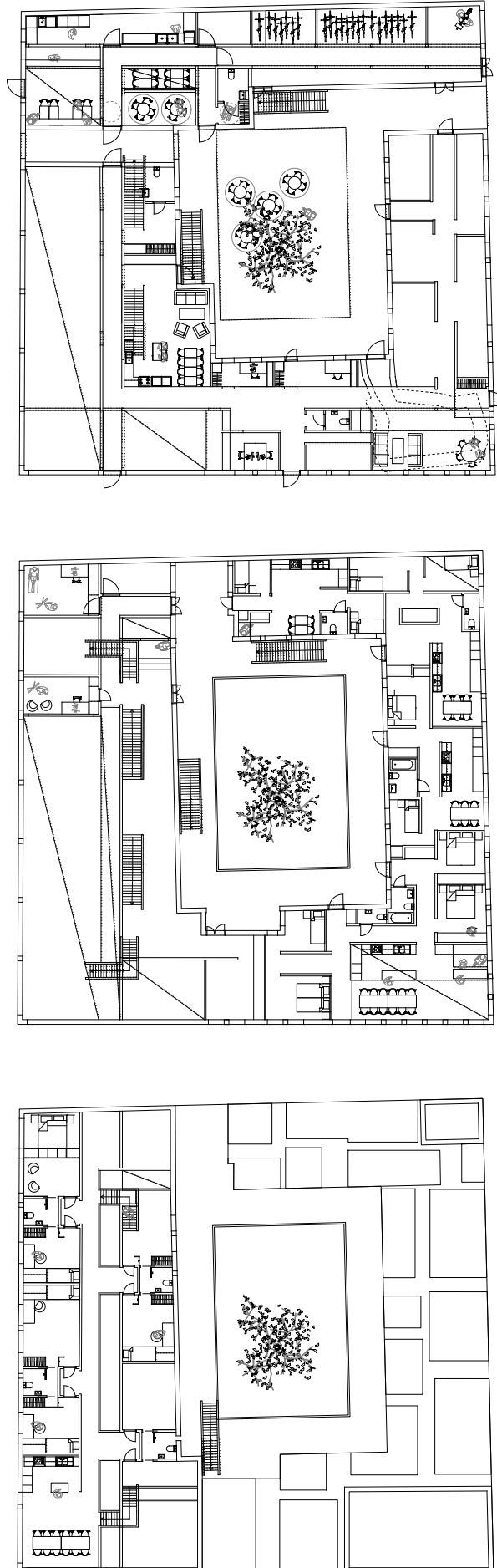


Figure 150. Plans 1-3

1:400

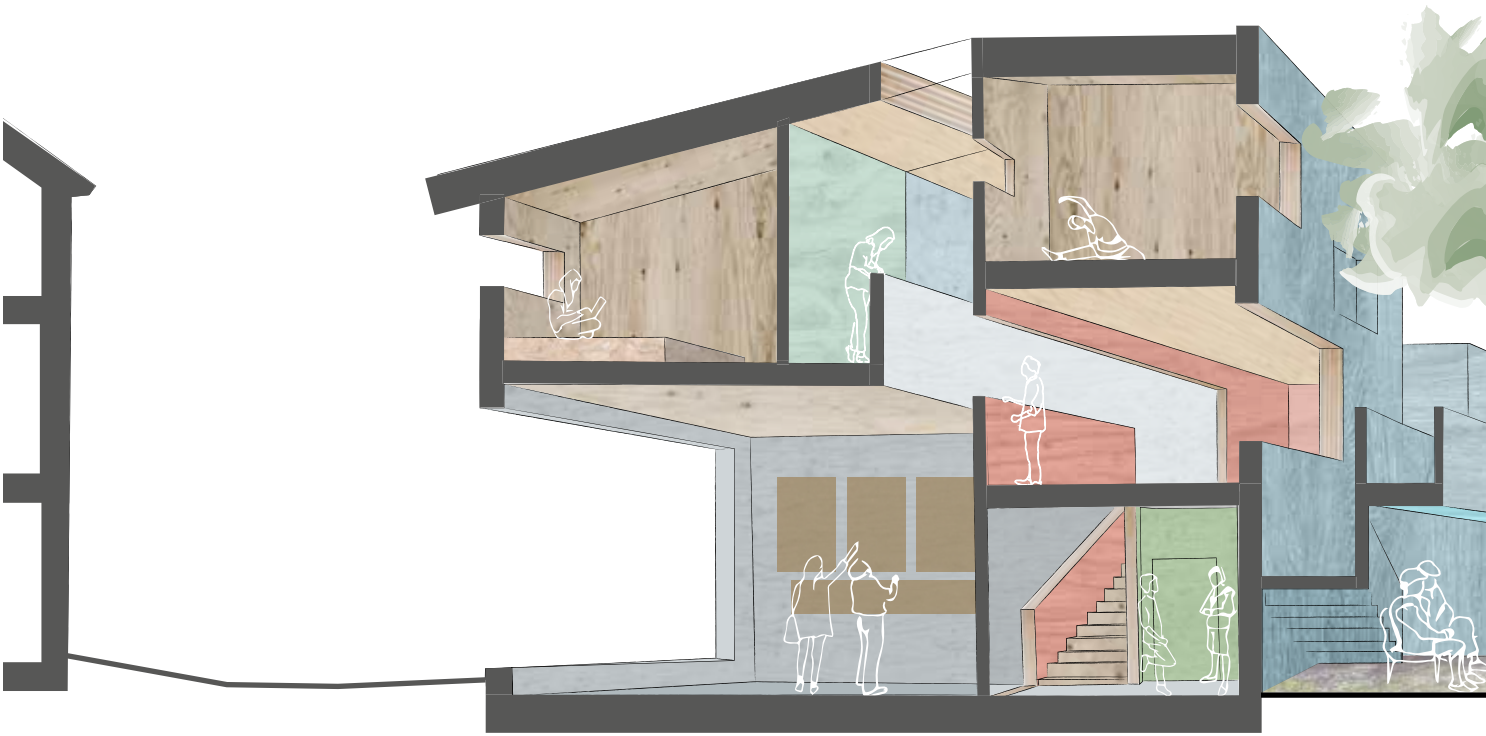


Figure 151. Section of the proposal and its adjacent buildings.

1:50

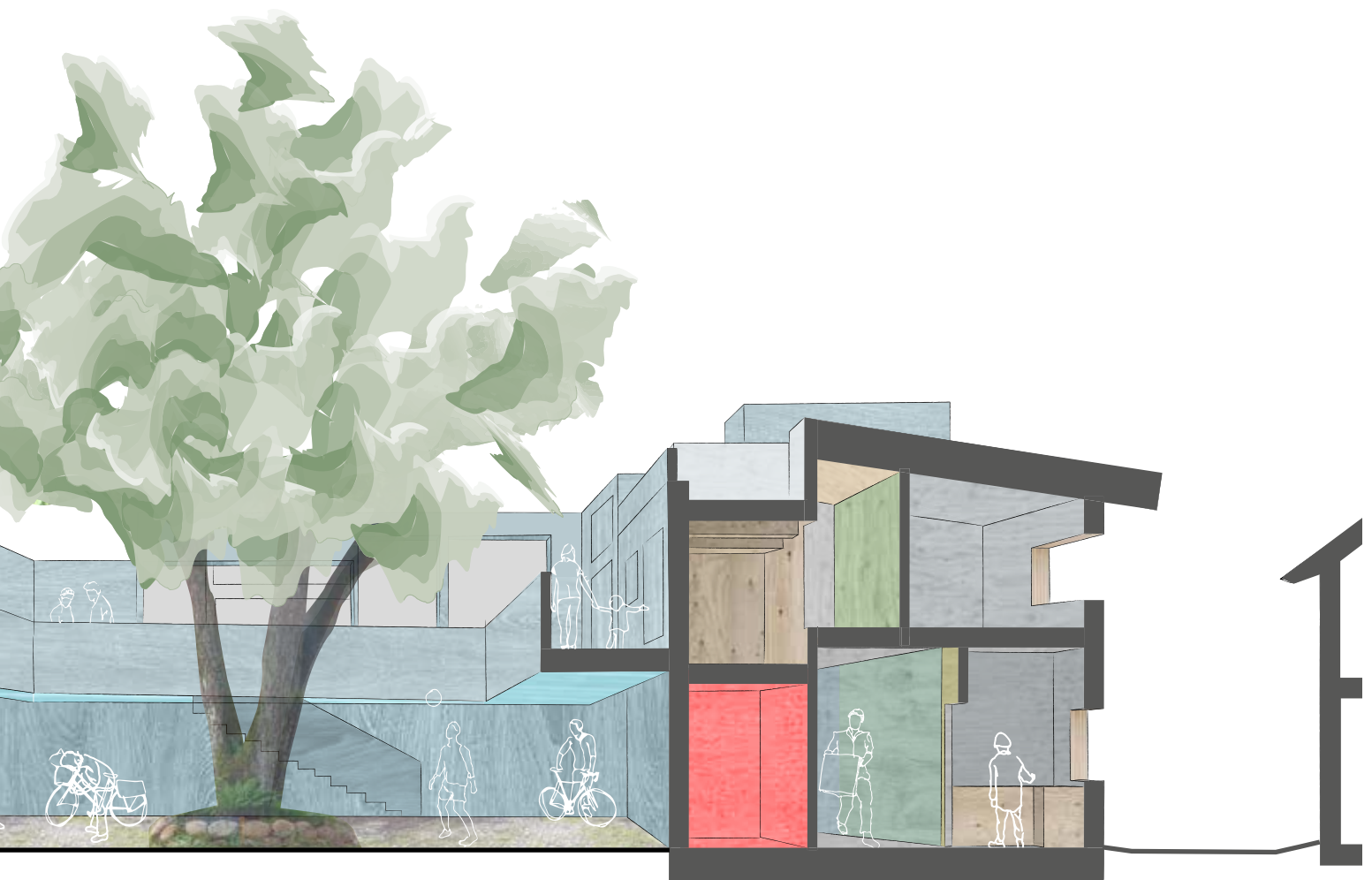




Figure 152. Interior perspective - Shop and exhibition area on ground floor.



Figure 153. Exterior perspective - Courtyard.

CLT - A modern timber construction










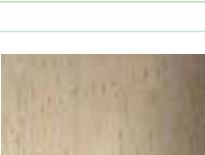

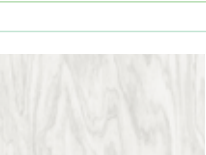



The area has a long, strong tradition of forestry and wood industry and wood is the main building material in this region. Wood is easily accessible and to work with but with that, you must always have the fire protection in mind. To be able to combine a rational, fire-resistant construction with a contemporary interpretation of the massive timber structure, the proposal is constructed with CLT elements, with complementary wall elements and furnitures made of plywood.



Figure 154. Interior perspective - Student housing - Part of a small studio.

Material and paint depending on program & function

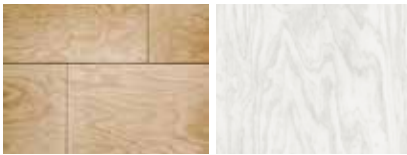
Just as found in the old town, colours and treatment of the surfaces varies, depending on the space and program within the space.
The building is divided into public and private spaces with connecting buffer zones inbetween them, that serves as semi-private spaces. In the inbetween space, colours and programing from the adjacens spaces meets.

Exterior public spaces				
Street	Old cobblestone paving Bright painted wood facade			
				
Courtyard	Old cobblestone paving Dark painted wood facade			
Walkway	New stone paving Dark painted wood facade			
Exterior semi-private spaces				
Gallery	Wooden decking Bright wood surfaces			

Interior public spaces

Shop/exhibition area and café

Wooden floor
White painted walls



Rentable offices

Wooden floor
Bright grey painted walls (int)
Colourful painted walls (ext)



Interior semi-private spaces

Vertical and horizontal connections

Wooden floor
Wall colour



Interior private spaces

Small apartments and student housing

Untreated wood surfaces (floor, walls and furnitures)
Colourful painted walls (exterior)



DISCUSSION

As my title indicates, this thesis consists of two parts. The first is the searching for the identity of a city, the research part, the other is the proposal for Ciselören 1, the design part. My aim was, at first, to give my own proposal for the site, the block Ciselören 1, a well-designed proposal based on the identity of the town, and along the way, become more sure about my own opinion regarding contemporary architecture in historical contexts. But to be able to do that, I had to find if there were any characteristic features in the town, if Eksjö had an identity hidden in its built environment.

During the process, the research part became more dominant and the focus was instead directed towards establishing a methodology on how to analyse a complex built environment, and less about the proposal itself, or detailing the final design. Through systematic studies of the old town and its buildings, I found a collection of typical features for the town and that they were all connected, they originated from the eight concepts.

The concept diagram is the tool, and in many ways, the result of this thesis. You start by pinpoint all found features, found through photo studies, from analysing plans, sections, the urban space and the historical development, visualizing them by stacking, mapping, categorize etc. and after that, search for their shared origin, a few concepts that connects them. When the concepts are found, that is the point when one can do their own interpretations – some of the conditions have maybe changed, but a proposal with features based on same concepts as the adjacent buildings, or previous building on the site, would, according to me, preserve the identity of the city.

My conclusion is that there is more to the identity of the town, than only what is visual. The architecture of Eksjö is characteristic, not only its ornamentation, or colours that you see on the façades, but even on a programmatic level, forming the way people use their spaces and how they are connected. I do think that we have a lot to learn from the Old town and, if you are observant, that it can easily be implemented in contemporary architecture.

The methods used for analysing the town, and the concept diagram, is what I take with me, and would find it interesting to test and implement at another site. Can this be a tool for similar projects in the future?

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