



BUILT UPON A DREAM

STORIES ABOUT THE
EGNA HEM MOVEMENT

ELLEN IHRFELT

Master's Thesis at Chalmers School of Architecture
Master's Programme Architecture and Urban Design
Examiner: Morten Lund
Tutor: Naima Callenberg

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CHALMERS

THANK YOU

Barbro, Gunnel and Ingvor
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on two separate stories about people who built their houses through the *Egna Hem movement*. Although 70 years separate the stories and their circumstances are totally different, they have in common the dream of your own home.

The first story takes place in 1949. My grandparents, Lasse and Ella, built their own house on Frimästaregatan in Utby. They came from the working class and through the Egna Hem movement they got an opportunity to buy a city lot at a favorable price with the option to build the house themselves. The houses were built on former farmland outside the city center and were constructed from prefabricated elements. Because Lasse was interested in art and design, they were able to create a home with a strong identity. They painted the interior walls and surfaces with art and patterns and created a beautiful garden with a small pond, pear trees and limestone terraces.

The second story is placed in a present-day context, in the year 2019. It is the story of Lena, a 60-year old woman, who can buy a lot for a good price on Exportgatan, in Backa, with the option to build the house herself. This house will be built on the site of a former industrial park. Lena found herself in a difficult economic situation following a divorce. She has been living in an expensive rental apartment, but always dreamt of her own small garden, a strong social network in the neighborhood and to build her own house.

The purpose of this project is to take part in a conversation about self-building and standard houses. Can we combine mass production with people's own initiative and creativity? How does it affect people to be part of the building process? I use my grandparents' house as a mirror when I design an Egna Hem area in a present-day context. I have worked with situations, glimpses of the everyday life, that are based on photos from Frimästaregatan. My proposal reflects situations where Lena, a composite of several women I have interviewed, plays the lead role. The houses serve as a canvas for these people's stories.

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INTRODUCTION

STUDENT BACKGROUND

Bachelor of Architecture
Chalmers University of Technology
August 2013 - June 2016

Masters of Architecture
Chalmers University of Technology
August 2017 - January 2019

Internship
Arkkas Arkitekter
August 2016-June 2017

BACKGROUND

Housing fascinates me. All people have their own relation to a home. As an architect, I can create good conditions for a home, but I can never control the end result. It is the people living in the houses, who are responsible for the final appearance. I find this very exciting.

I started by considering the homes that have made a big impression on me, and was reminded of my grandparents' house. As a child I was fascinated by all the paintings and beautiful furnishings in that home. It was like everything told its own story. Thanks to my grandfather's interest in art and design, they created a home with a very strong identity. In the living room, a painting in blue and orange covered an entire wall. That wall is one of my strongest childhood memories. On the outside it looked much like any other house in the area. But on the inside my grandparents had built their own world, full of stories. I didn't know that the house was a result of the *Egna Hem movement* back then, but when I started reading about it, I found it very fascinating. I realized that my grandfather had built the house himself, based on standard drawings he received from the municipality. All the people in the neighborhood had helped each other to build their houses. They had worked in the evenings after work and on the weekends and put their energy and souls into their houses. The result was an area where the neighbors had come to know each other already before moving in; an area that contained houses with a homogeneous exterior expression but a great variety on the inside.

I realized that the benefits of organized self-building are endless. Why is it not more common with this type of project today?



Image 1: MY GRANDPARENTS HOME
(Own photo)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What would an Egna Hem area look like today?
How does it affect people to be part of the building process?
How should we relate to standard houses?

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to participate in a conversation about self-building and standard houses. The project is based on historical knowledge about the Egna Hem's movement, without being nostalgic. My proposal is solidly placed in today's context. The topic of standard houses is constantly relevant in a time of housing shortage and social inequality, a time when we are pressed to build quickly and cheaply. Can we still combine mass production with people's own initiative and creativity?

GLOSSARY

Egna Hem - Private Home

The Egna Hem movement - Movement created in the late 19th century in Sweden, aimed to give the working class accommodation. The idea was to create simple, healthy, cheap and well-organized housing that could be mass produced in the factory. The purpose of the standardization was to make it easy for people to build themselves.

METHOD

I have used my grandparents' house as a mirror throughout the whole process. During the first part of my project I studied the Egna Hem Movement in parallel with doing research into my grandparents' life. There is plenty of literature about Egna Hem and self-building. Regarding my grandparents' house, I've read interviews, texts and even love letters between my grandparents. I've looked at many old photos. I have interviewed my aunts and my mother who grew up in the house. I have also visited the house, where new owners live today.

When it comes to designing a self-building area in today's context, I have been in contact to Egnahemsfabriken, a platform and organization at Tjörn supporting people to build houses themselves. I have attended lectures and seminars and talked to the project managers. Through them I have come in contact with people interested in self-building.

The project is based on *Situations*. The basis is photos from Frimästaregatan; everyday life situations, glimpses of my grandparents' lives. The photos are combined with texts from interviews and letters. I juxtapose these situations with today's context, where Lena, a composite of several women I have interviewed, plays the lead role. The houses serve as canvases for their stories.

DELIMITATIONS

This project focuses on the people who build their own houses. It's about their stories, everyday life and dreams. The project focuses on two specific cases of self-builders, my grandparents and the character Lena. This thesis project does not go into detail about financial calculations and technical details. Information about construction does show up when it is relevant but that is not the focus. I located my work squarely in a Swedish context, more specifically in the Greater Gothenburg area. The proposal is intended as a model for working with this issue in an academic context.

THEORY

My main literature sources are books about Egna hem movement. *En modern boendehistoria: byggande och vardagsliv i Utby egnahem 1937–94* by Ekvall & Kahn, is the book I used the most. It contains both general history of organized self-construction in Sweden and in-depth facts about how Utby was built. The authors interviewed residents from three different generations, those who built the houses from the beginning and those who moved in later. It creates a picture of how the area has changed over time. Books like *Egen härd är guld värd: egnahemsbyggandet i Göteborg under ett halvt sekel* describe self-construction in more general terms, and how participation in the construction process affected the people involved. As regards the current housing situation, *13 myter om bostadsfrågan* by CRUSH is an example of what I have read. There are many myths about the housing policy, which the authors of this book present and analyze one by one.

READING INSTRUCTIONS

The booklet is divided into chapters according to how I have worked. In the first chapter, *Introduction*, I present myself and my work. Here I present my personal motivations and work process. The next chapter is a background explanation of *Self-construction*, the foundation of my project. It is based on literature, with a primary focus on Sweden. The reader will learn about the history of the Egna Hem movement and who the original self-builders were. In the next chapter, *Frimästaregatan*, we get closer to two self-builders, my own grandparents and their experiences, their dreams and their everyday life. The house on Frimästaregatan is the basis for my *Investigations*, which is the next chapter. I visited the house and its present owners to analyze its layout and determine if it still worked for a modern family. In addition, you can follow my discussions about our current conditions in today's society. My *Proposal* for a new Egna Hem area is presented on pages 59-83. We get to know the character Lena who moves into a self-built house on Exportgatan in Backa Industrial Park. Here you will find drawings, construction and details. The *Situations*, pictures from the everyday life are presented on page 85. The mirroring is visible, when the old photos meet the new ones. The booklet ends with a *Summery* and a *Bibliography*.

SELF-BUILDING

ORGANIZED SELF-BUILDING

The Egna Hem movement can be placed under a broader heading: organized self-building. Self-building means that the users themselves build their own houses. When the municipality takes a facilitating role in the process, it is labeled organized self-building. (Lundgren, M. 1981) There are many advantages of building yourself. First, it enables people with lesser means to own their own home. For the past ten years Sweden has had the most expensive construction costs in Europe. The Swedish construction industry is dominated by large actors, which makes it difficult for smaller companies to secure a position in the construction market. Land prices have increased dramatically in the past years, which restricts the availability of reasonably priced lots in residential zones. (Boverkett, 2014)

Differences between socio-economic groups have increased drastically in Sweden. People with higher incomes are living in larger domiciles than ever, while people of lesser means are crowding into smaller living space than ever before (CRUSH, 2016). It has become increasingly difficult to enter the housing market. Newly built houses are expensive, and many people feel they will never be able to afford to buy their own apartment or house. Self-building schemes can reduce construction costs enough to enable house ownership for even low-income people. In addition, building your own home satisfies a creative urge and offers a direct and tangible reward for your labor. The construction becomes not only a model, but a process. Olle Volny (1976) describes it as "The strength of organized self-building is that it declares the citizen as a builder and creates a process that benefits both the user and society."

The construction phase offers a natural way to get in touch with your neighbors. Helping each other and cooperating is built into the model. Because all houses are built on the same constructional principals, it's easy to help your neighbor with maintenance. There is also a sustainable aspect to self-building. When building your own house, your personal concern for quality increases. During the construction period, you learn in detail how the house works, which can facilitate better maintenance later on. Also, it becomes more obvious what is good and bad for the environment when you build yourself.

DEFINITION OF WORK

Definitions of work can be broad. We can think of work as a necessity associated with stress, a must to make life go around. But work can also be something positive, the center of our lives, a way of developing as a human being. Our way of working has changed throughout the ages. From traditionally distinct divisions between professions and concrete duties that often involved in physical labor, work has evolved to become more individualized, digitized and monotonous. Today it can be difficult to take an overview of what we do, since we have become an increasingly smaller part of a longer production chain. Work in front of the computer makes it difficult to have contact with raw materials and to affect our immediate environment. It is often difficult to see the direct results of what we do. This isolates us, making us not that dependent on the people around us. Many people spend long days at their workplaces, working full time, eight hours a day. When we get home, we want to spend time with family and friends and to have time to rest. In addition, we need to take care of our homes, washing, cleaning and cooking. Do we really want to spend the remaining time on self-building projects? If we consider all the time people spend on summer homes, gardens and on decorate their homes, people, nevertheless, seem to be willing to spend time on creative work. Before the Industrial Revolution, people often built their own homes, the user was the producer. The boundary between paid work and home work wasn't as clear. There wasn't anything called free time or vacation. People did what was necessary to obtain the good life. In return, they could enjoy the results of the work they had done. (Volny, O. 1976)

During a self-building project in our time, people are spending their free time on the building site. They must be prepared to work evenings, weekends and holidays. It usually takes 7-8 months to build a house. Many self-builders describe the construction time as tough but at the same time fun and exciting. Because they are working in groups with their neighbors, it never became lonely. Most seem to think it is worth it in the end. The satisfaction of moving into a house you have built yourself seems to be greater any suffering on the building site.

HUMAN'S ARE CREATIVE BEINGS



Image 2: SELF-BUILDERS
(Göteborgs egnahems AB. (1993))

It is human nature to create, to process our surroundings and to grow as individuals. People have created since the dawn of time. Not just explicit cultural creation, such as art, music and dance, but even practical work. A study trip to Pompeii this summer gave me an opportunity to experience this myself. Not only did all the buildings in that antique society filling an explicit practical purpose, they were all decorated in some way. Ornaments, individual signs, murals, patterned floors and sculptures. There is a will in human to leave a personal imprint. Even 2000 years ago, when the days were filled with heavy jobs and important duties, time was still devoted to decoration.

Today, when we have ever more opportunity to spend time on decoration and creative pursuits, it seems as if we have forgotten how to do just that. Having a nice and well-styled home is important, but we are very happy if we can just use a ready-made concept. We hire builders to renovate our bathrooms and consultants to style our homes. It is perhaps the case that in the past we had more time and less money, today we have less time and more money.

In areas where people have built their own houses there is a great variety and playfulness in the expressions. Even when houses were built from standard drawings, creativity is visible, not least on the inside. Over the years, those areas have changed with the times, but the tradition of self-building has survived in its essentials. According to Jarlöv (1982) the architect's role in the self-building process should be to create circumstances where people's creativity can be expressed and stimulated.

"The inside should be painted in bright colors, the house should have simple and beautiful furniture and white curtains should decorate the windows so that the sun can shine on the plants".



Image 3: LANDALA EGNA HEM
(A/B Göteborgs konstförlag)

THE CREATION OF THE EGNA HEM MOVEMENT

The Egna Hem movement was created in the late 1900's as a reaction to a growing population and increasing migration to cities. Initiative came from politicians who got their inspiration from English and German "Garden Cities". The movement aimed to create simple, healthy, cheap and well-organized housing for the working class.

At the time cities were expanding dramatically and industry flourished. There was a strong belief in the future. The lifestyle of the upper middle class became a model for all. A Swedish National Romantic style was developed in the early 20th century. Inspiration came from the medieval city, as a reaction to the grid city. Already in 1850, William Morris designed the Red House, using flowers, leaves and winding trees as inspiration for its decorative patterns. Morris was celebrating older building styles. The rest of the world was quickly inspired by the so-called Arts and Crafts movement. In his book "Das Englische Haus", the German architect Herman Muthesius emphasized the beauty of the uniformity of the streets, with a variety of details, standardization of details and low building costs.

Carl Larsson's paintings of beautiful Swedish homes became the design ideal for Egna Hem movement. The home would provide basis for a good family life, a healthy lifestyle that encompassed both education and discipline. The Swedish state established home loan programs, initially just for rural areas, but eventually extended to the cities. At first, the working class was unenthusiastic about Egna Hem, they considered the instructions to be far too specific. Furnishings and interiors were to be done according to a stipulated style, where even the color of the bedrooms was specified. The renowned feminist Ellen Key was behind the mandate to design houses in traditional style. The movement's guidelines recommend that "interiors should be painted in bright colors; the house should have simple and beautiful furniture and white curtains should decorate the windows so that the sun can shine on the plants". (Berg, Karin, 1993)

The National Romantic style is visible in the area Landala Egna Hem neighborhood in Gothenburg. In 1908 Albert Lilienberg took charge of the design. He had several specific solutions about how to build low-cost, quality homes. One idea was that streets should be narrow and follow the terrain, as only a few streets need to be trafficked. Landala Egna Hem has only one main street that runs around the whole area, with lots and smaller access streets located inside that. Intermittently, the streets open up into beautiful spaces, designated for playgrounds or small town squares.

The urban plan consists of both villas and row houses. The area has a homogeneous expression and is a well-planned residential district. Carl Westman drew the plans for the standard houses in Landala. All houses are built in wood, with uniform brown facades. They have a semi-private courtyard on the front and a completely private garden on the backside. Vegetation is an important feature of the area, enhancing the contrast between open and closed devices. This creates a rural feeling. Every street has a clear beginning and a clear end. Each house is characterized by closeness and unity. The buildings all have the same steady form that rests solidly on a visible stone foundation. These are robust wooden houses with relatively few windows. Every building is similar, yet every building displays its own details. (Berg, Karin, 1993)

STANDARDIZATION AND WORKING CLASS

In the 1910's a major housing crisis hit Sweden. Inside of four years, the cost of building houses increased by 75%. Consequently, housing production dropped heavily. Rents went up, and many families were forced into unhealthy temporary residences. At this time, it became even more important to build cheaply and sensibly. Architectural style shifted from National Romantic to Functionalism. The idea was to create simple and well-designed standard housing that could be mass produced in factories, leading to reduced prices. Standardization promised to make it easy for everyone to build, providing a rational solution to the housing issue at the time. The municipality bought land that they could sell to Egna Hem builders. The following principles for the Egna hem process were drawn up:

- The municipality would supply standard drawings and take responsibility delivering for building materials and seeing that there were supervisors on the building site.
- Labor of the Egna Hem builders was estimated to be 10% of the value of the house.
- All lots were relatively large, approximately 500 m2.
- Egna hem building sites were to be located on flat land, in order to minimize costs for roads and excavation work.
- Building sites should be close to industrial parks, to facilitate the production of the houses.

In Gothenburg, the Bräcke, Fräntorp and Utby residential areas were developed on former agricultural land on the outskirts of town between 1930-1950. Egna Hem builders could choose between several standard house plans but not alter the interior layout. Standardization extended to all the wooden materials, chimneys, kitchen, stairs and balconies. The outer walls were prefabricated, complete with doors and windows. Water, sewerage and electrical installations were done by professionals. The self-builders were allowed to choose colors and material for the interior and some brighter color variations for the facade. This resulted in a uniform exterior expression, with a large variation inside the houses. (Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna, 1996)

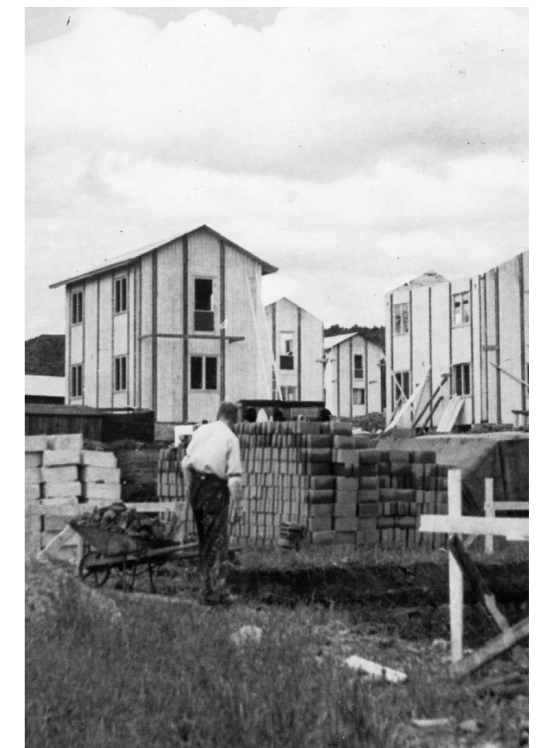
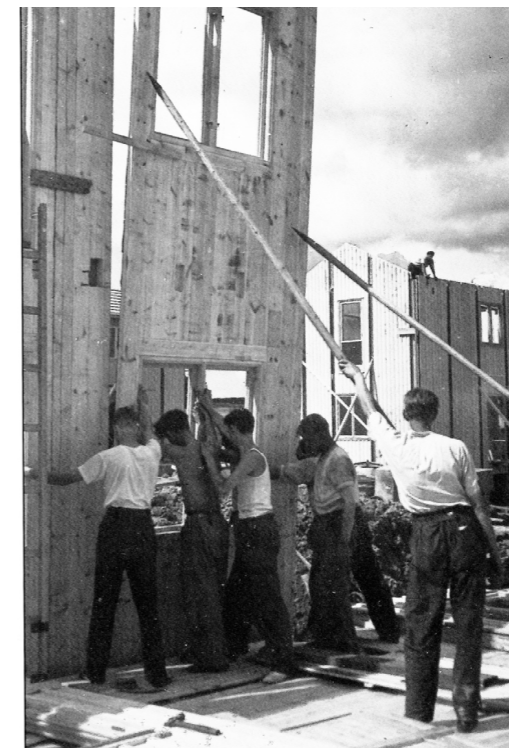


Image 4: USE OF PREFABRICATED ELEMENTS
Image 5: BUILDING SITE
(Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna (1996))

THE SELF-BUILDERS

In the evenings we used photogenic lamps. Three of them gave enough light for working. I built until half past two at night, and then I went to work the next morning. And I have never in my life been so happy as during that time, it was a feeling of a rush because I was so interested.



How lucky we were when the house was ready and we could go inside and have a look. I still remember the wonderful smell of a new wooden house.

Image 6: FAMILY ON THE BUILDING SITE
(Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna (1996))

Who were the self-builders? Newspapers and radio gave the Egna Hem projects a lot of publicity. Brochures containing descriptions were readily available. Drawings and calculations were distributed to anyone who was interested. Permanent employment and a regular salary were required to participate. In some cases there was an upper limit to family income. Most of the builders were working class families; they often had low incomes and lacked equity. Some had experience from construction, others not. The queue to participate in the Egna hem project during the 20th century was long and many had to wait several years to start building. Once they were approved, everybody was called to a meeting where the timetable was presented. They were then evaluated for good behavior and dependability. Participants were divided into different groups, by number of children and building experience. In the first group were families with many children, in the middle group families with one or no children and in the third group, elderly people and low income families.

The builders came prepared for to work hard, many living in tents or small sheds on their lots. Water was only available in a few taps places around the site. People built in the evening and into the night, still holding down regular jobs during the days. Neighbors inspired each other to be ready at each new phase. Everyone helped one another, and a strong cooperative spirit developed in the area during construction. Standardization not only reduced construction costs, it also made it easy for everyman to build, even those with no experience. (Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna, 1996)

The construction phase lasted for only a relatively short time but contributed heavily to bonding people together to solve their common problems. After the area was finally built, people continued to meet and organize social activities. In Fräntorp, a *Folkets Hus* was created to host cultural events. Several Egna hem associations were formed and continued long after the buildings were completed.

FRIMÄSTAREGATAN

LASSE AND ELLA

My grandparents, Lasse and Ella, got the opportunity to buy a plot on Frimästaregatan in Utby through the Egna Hem program. They were a typical Egna Hem family. They were newly married and had one child, Barbro, at the time they started construction. Lasse was born in 1920 and grew up in a small apartment in Bagaregården. Ella was born in 1921 and grew up in Mölndal. Both were working class. Later, they had two more daughters, Gunnel and Ingvor.



Image 7: ELLA AND LASSE
(Own photo)

I grew up just like many other children in working families in Gothenburg. We lived at Viloplatsen in Bagaregården. We did not have much money. Dad worked at SKF and when he lost his job during the crisis in the 30's, we had a very bad economic situation during some years. Our apartment consisted of one kitchen and one more room, where we lived five children and three adults, my grandmother stayed with us during that time.

When I got my own family, I thought my children would have it better than I had. They would not grow up in a one bedroom apartment, they would have one room each, therefore I built this house. I could do that because of Socialdemokraterna in Gothenburg, who run this project in the 40's and 50's, the Egna Hem movement of Gothenburg.

Lasse

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD

It was a very conscious choice for Lasse to build the house in an Egna Hem area. Lasse was a strong advocate for the movement. He held a lot of ideas about how to create the good society, for instance, about the importance of maintaining good relations with neighbors, opportunities for socialization in the course of everyday life, common spaces and shared communal tasks. He read a lot at that time, getting his ideals from Sartre and Marx. During the construction time, there were professional workers at the site to assist the builders. Lasse worked on his house during the evenings, nights and weekends, all the while supporting his family as a train driver and actively involved in politics. During construction, he got to know his neighbors well. He has described it as a very intensive period, but fun and exciting, nevertheless.

So, what did Ella do in the mean time? Like most women in the 40's, she stayed home taking care of the household. While Lasse built their new house, Ella took care of their first daughter Barbro in a one room apartment in Vidkärr where they lived at the time. Ella did all the family's household work. She sewed their clothes, cooked their food, took care of their finances, did their laundry and cleaned the apartment. She took no active part in the construction of their new home, but was a key participant in the larger project. When Lasse came home late at night, tired and hungry, he did not have to think of anything more than go to work the next morning.

Back in the 40's Utby was far from downtown. The area was chosen because it was flat, with ideal building conditions. It was located close to the factories, which was good when working with prefab building elements. In addition, it was close to two large workplaces, SKF and the Sävenäs train yards. For many of the self-builders, it was a great opportunity to build their own house, but not everyone was pleased to find themselves so far from town. The area was described by some as "a muddy field at the end of the world." Most of the people who came to Utby Egna Hem were workers moving from apartments in town. Most of them had grown up in small cramped apartments with bad conditions in town, in typical working-class housing, the Landshövdingehus found in Gamlestaden, Majorna or Landala. (Ekvall, Kahn, 1996.)

SITE PLAN

The house is in the Fjällbo area, which consists of mostly row houses. The area is close to green spaces, in the foothills of higher mountains and forests. The site was very carefully planned. Frimästaregatan is the main street. The other streets are narrower, often just walkways in between the gardens. In the middle there is a common playground, a natural meeting place for the children. In the northeast corner a common laundry building is located, which also used for common activities, meetings and parties.



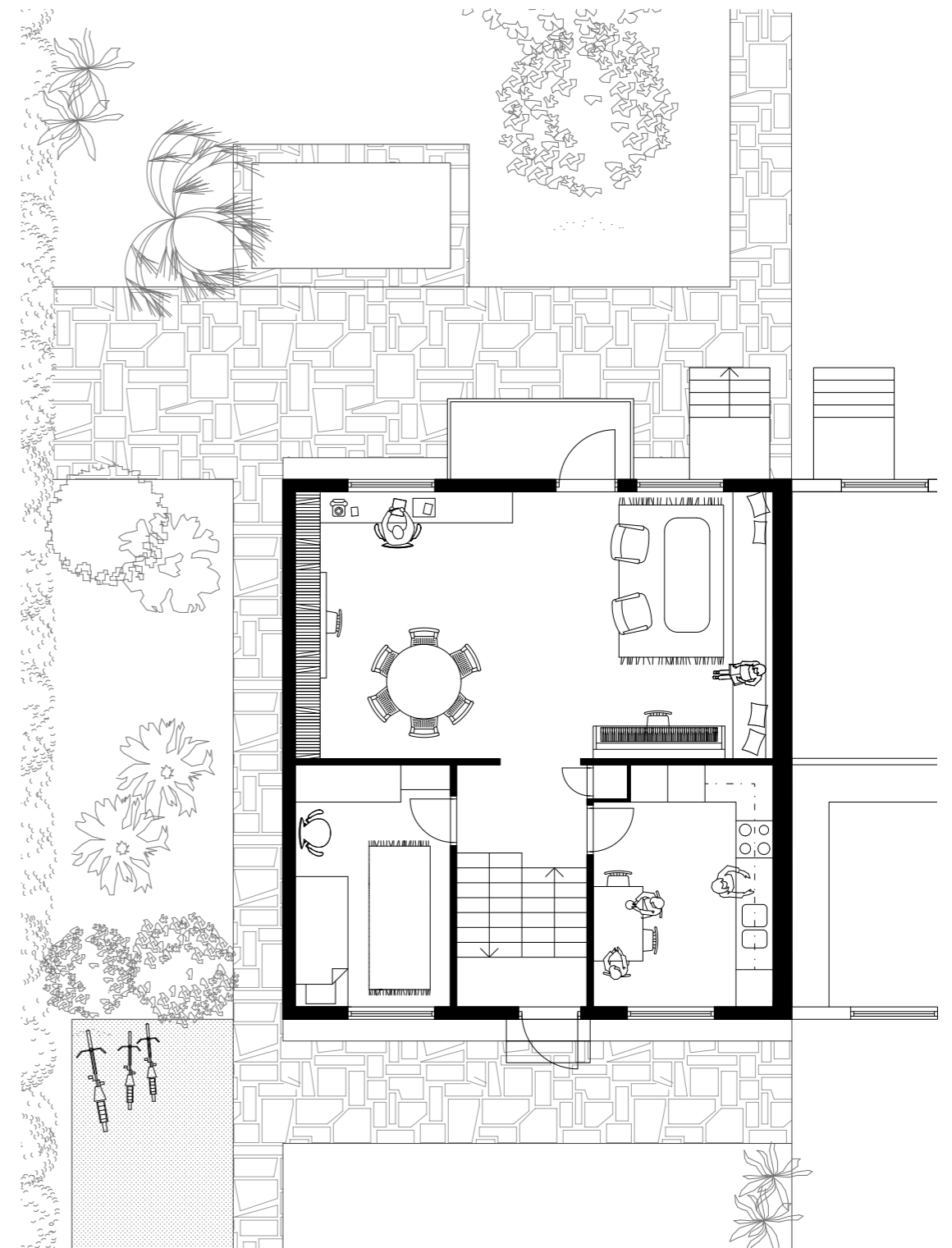
SITE PLAN
1:1500

STANDARD DRAWINGS
1:200

LAYOUT

The layout is well planned. The entrance is in the middle of the house. You first enter a small hall, you walk a half floor up, to an upper hall and you enter the living room, the core of the house. There are sequences of spaces in a straight line towards the garden. Kitchen and a bedroom are located on the sides. The house consists of three floors, each level is 60 m². There is an upper floor with two bedrooms and a toilet and a basement with one smaller room and a *gillestuga*, a larger room that can be used as a hobby space or an extra living room. There are also bathrooms and storage spaces down here.

The houses in Utby were intended as family homes. The size of the different house types was related to different family sizes. The residents in Utby could choose between four different types of houses. Functionalist and modernist expressions characterize the architecture. All houses are based on the same principle. The living room is close to the entrance in order to prevent it from becoming a closed parlor for only certain occasions. It was to be an active room for everyone in the family, not sleeping quarters. The living room faces the garden, often to the west. The kitchen is smaller than traditional kitchens, again to prevent its use as sleeping quarters for hygienic reasons. There should be room for a smaller table in the kitchen and some chairs, so that "the mother keep an eye on the children" while they ate lighter meals. The kitchen was designed as a work space where "mother could work efficiently and undisturbed, close to everything in the room". The kitchen always faces the street, preferably on the north or east sides of the house. The bedrooms are in different sizes, adapted to either parents or children. The rooms are well lit, often with windows to the south or west. Wardrobes and cabinets were standardized and mass-produced. There is plenty of storage space. Due to more modern standards, a basement was later added, which made it possible to have a high hygienic standard. (Ekvall, Kahn, 1996.)



ENTRANCE FLOOR
1:50

A HOUSE BECOMES A HOME



Image 8: FRIENDS ON VISIT
(Own photo)

Because Lasse could design the interior and the garden of the house himself, he was able to create a home with a strong identity. It is clear from the design of the house what he thought made for a good life. Art was integrated into the house, not only as paintings but even as wall cladding. He painted the walls and the interior surfaces with art and patterns. There were large fixed bookshelves in several rooms, with space for a large library. While he thought education was incredibly important, he also meant that the intellectual life should be combined with physical activity. In the basement he set up wall bars where he could do his gymnastics exercises every morning. In the garden he built a small pond where goldfish swam and water lilies grew. Next to the pond he planted a willow tree whose branches would hang over the water. He put in limestone walkways and terraces in the garden and planted plenty of fruit trees. His vision of the good life was very clear.

EVERY DAY LIFE

The Sörenson family created their daily life around Frimästaregatan. Ella ran the household, there was a lot to do during the days. Lasse worked on the railroad, and later as a politician in Sveriges Riksdag for the Social Democratic Party, which involved a lot of travel and hard work. They had two more daughters, Gunnel and Ingvor. On Sundays, the whole family gathered in the living room for dinner. Ella set the table nicely with a white table cloth and the finest plates and glasses.

The living room was the family's social space. Many neighbors kept the doors to that room closed and only use it on very special occasions. But in the Sörenson family, the room was an open space for everyone. There was a large bookshelf in here, with lots of books. Both Ella and Lasse loved to read. Ella read novels and Lasse read everything from political literature to biographies and classics. On the weekends they used to lie on the blue sofa with one book each. The couch was built along the entire wall and was used often by the whole family. The children played there, built huts or read comic books. When people came to visit, the sofa was a popular gathering place. There was a piano and a guitar in the living room as well. Ella used to play and sing with the children.

All three of the Sörenson daughters describe their childhood as very idyllic. They tell about the big unity in the area, both among parents and children. There were plenty of social activities in the neighborhood. The Laundry House stands out as an example of a common hub in the area. Meetings were held here, the mothers met as they did the family washing, there were rooms to rent for parties and events. In addition to the laundry room, the trading house was an important meeting place. In the start of Frimästaregatan there was a small center with a bakery, a sewing shop, a butcher shop, and a dairy shop. There was also a hobby club and a preschool in the house. The family went into downtown Gothenburg only rarely, maybe once a year. That special occasion was usually on *Valborgsmässoafton* to hear their dad sing in the railway choir, or on the 1st of May to participate in Social Democratic party demonstration.



COLLAGE OF ELLA AND GUNNEL IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE

Barbro and Gunnel went to swimming lessons in lake Bergsjön. Every day during the summer, all the children in the neighborhood walked two by two all the way there through the forest, and all the way home again. On Midsummer's Eve the children went in one big group to celebrate in Fjällbo Park. All three sisters danced ballet. Barbro's ballet lessons were held in the Laundry House. Gunnel and Ingvor had their class in the same house as the shops. The children always played outdoors in each other's gardens. They often picked fruit and berries and had picnics. Ella cooked jam and juice and made apple pie. In the kitchen the radio was always on.

Lasse was a little of a "celebrity" in the neighborhood. All neighbors knew that he was a politician. Many people would contact him. He received about 100 letters a day at the house on Frimästaregatan, and a lot of phone calls. When he was at home, he often sat at his desk and wrote articles and editorial pieces to different journals.

When the children got bigger, they got one room each. Ingvor lived upstairs, Barbro on the middle floor and Gunnel downstairs. They often had friends over to visit. In the basement there was a ping pong table.



COLLAGE OF CHILDREN IN THE GARDEN



Image 9: ELLA
(Own photo)

LETTERS FROM ELLA

The following are excerpts from letters Ella wrote to Lasse when he was away from home. She describes everyday life in an directly, with a lot of love.

There is a lot to do here during the days. I had planned to go on long walks with Gunnel. But I haven't had time. Miss Wallin has been here a few days. She has helped a little with the household. Barbro and I took the opportunity to go to the French exhibition. (...) Your father visited us this Sunday. He was cycling here in the horrible wind with the lawnmower on the package holder. He cut the grass everywhere very quickly. (...) When you get home, you will not get any hot bath. They are repairing the laundry and the work is expected to be completed around 10 Aug, then we can bathe again.

Gothenburg 23/7 1952

On Monday we had a sewing meeting with the "aunts". On Thursday we bought fabric for Barbro's graduation dress. We chose a white one with red dots. Great that we do not have to buy jacket for her this year! (...) Got a message yesterday that we can buy brick tiles at 0:50 SEK/ piece (they said it's a kind that is no longer made), this morning there were ten of them outside. It's good to keep them, right? The garden is so beautiful now, almost all the tulips are in bloom. Unfortunately, the wind has blown unbelievable hard today, the fruit blossoms are like white snow. But I guess there will be fruit anyway.

Gothenburg 1/6 1956

The children bring me flowers every day. If it is not Gunnel that comes with a long grass, it is Tomas or Kerstin. Yesterday Barbro came with a bouquet of lilacs which she picked in the garden. All small glasses with flowers are on the kitchen table. They smell of summer. I have had a lot to do lately, Barbro's skirt was finished in the beginning of the week. Since then she has been wearing it every night with a jumper. Nice, don't you think? Majbrits neighbor's wife told that last night someone had cut several lilac branches on their tree, which are standing just beside the balcony inside the garden. Doesn't that sound mysterious? (...) Today I bought 25 kg of potatoes for 10 SEK/kg from Maj-Britt's father. This means 40 öre/kg. In Konsum it costs 60 öre/kg and they are not as good. I haven't had time to cook them yet, hope they is better than Konsums.

Gothenburg 6/6 1956

I have dug up three rose bushes today. The frost has also destroyed bushes in several places. It was too much snow this winter, I guess. We should wait to dig up the pear trees, they might recover. Otherwise the garden is so beautiful, the tulips are still in bloom. I cut the grass today, it's tough but fun. The stone plants are also blooming. Last time I wrote, I complained about the cold. Now it has been very hot in recent days. The water in Bergsjön is 18 degrees. Yesterday, Gunvor Sundblom was here with Jenny, the nurse. We sat on the lawn and drank coffee and had a very nice time. (...) Last Saturday our girls were so cute (I will send you photos). Barbro finished school. I sewed a dress and a skirt for her the same week. I started on Monday and was finished on Thursday. The public exam itself was a rather boring event, mostly math and church songs, no play.

Gothenburg 9/6 1956

INVESTIGATIONS

VISIT FRIMÄSTAREGATAN

Now, a new family lives on Frimästaregatan. How do they relate to the house that Lasse built 70 years ago? What happened to all the paintings on doors and surfaces when the house got a new owner? I visited the house in September, during the second week of my thesis work. Hanna and Lars Berko have lived in the house for five years, they have two children.

It feels strange to visit after so many years, but at the same time very exciting. They have removed the Eternit asbestos fiber cement cladding that covered the façade for many years and exposed the original green wooden facade again. Many of the house's details remain, such as the door handles, floors and railings. Hanna says that the history, both the house's history and Utby's history, is important for them. A book about the Egna Hem's movement is visible on the table in the living room. They have kept the house's original floor plan. The children have one bedroom each and the parents are sleeping in Ella and Lasse's old bedroom. The living room is still the core of the house. They have a large dining table in the middle of the room for dinners and invitations. Plants, posters, and books fill the room and create a personal and contemporary expression. Some of the old paintings on the doors remain. Hanna and Lars kept the large wall painting in the living room for a few years but later painted it over to make the room brighter. Hanna has an interest in gardening and spends a lot of time there. The pond is gone but the fruit trees remain and bear new fruit every year.

Hanna told me that a new generation of people has moved into the area that wants to take advantage of the self-building tradition. They still have a great sense of community in the neighborhood and do most of their home maintenance themselves.

The layout of the house works well for a family, even in today's context. Thanks to the spaciousness and the many rooms, the house still works for different families in different times. But the question remains whether the layout would work for a newly produced house in an Egna Hem area.



Image 10: ONE OF THE PAINTINGS THAT REMAINS
(Own photo)

ANALYSIS LAYOUT

There are many positive features about the layout; good storage possibilities, sight lines, brightness, and well-organized rooms. But there are also some aspects that will not work today. First, the house is very large at 60 m² per floor. Land prices have increased dramatically in recent years, which puts a premium on building even cheaper and smaller today. The rooms are static, often designed for only one purpose. The kitchen is small and separated from the rest of the house, and the house does not meet modern accessibility standards.

In the description of the floor plan from 1930, we can read that certain rooms were intended for male or female activities. The separate kitchen is described as a woman's room, where she can work undisturbed and efficiently. The kitchen becomes a symbol of inequality in the home. The bedrooms are adapted to either parents or children. A larger room for parents and smaller for children. Today, families look very different. Maybe the kitchen should be placed in the center of the home to raise its status and no longer be associated with only one person in the family? Maybe the bedrooms could be in a standard size or more flexible?

I developed guidelines for a new design; The building should be smaller, work for different types of families and be possible to change over time, expanding or contracting as needed. I started by trying out features and furniture from Frimästaregatan in new configurations. I realized that the house could be a lot smaller. It would even be possible to fit an entire house in the living room on Frimästaregatan.

VISIT EGNACHEMSFABRIKEN

During the process I was in contact to *Egnahemsfabriken*, an organization that supports modern self-builders. One of the responsible architects, Tinna Harling, told me that interest in self-building has grown in recent years. Egnahemsfabriken offers supervision throughout the building process, access to their workshop and equipment, and recycled building material. In addition, they organize workshops, lessons and gardening events. An old barn in Svanvik works as work space and has become an important meeting place at Tjörn. The organization strives to include newcomers into ongoing projects, with internships and other opportunities for them to gain experience.

This work will discuss relevant changes that have occurred in housing production since 1949. Some of these changes have turned out to be serious challenges, such as the drastic increase in land prices. Another issue is that the general public's knowledge of construction techniques and carpentry is a lot lower today than in 1949, which suggests that today's Egna Hem houses are going to have be built around much simpler construction. At the same time, we have access to more advanced technology than was available in 1949. We have more efficient tools, more easy-to-use materials, digital knowledge and shorter supply chains. Housing costs can lowered even further by using of recycled materials and prefabricated elements and to speed up the process.

Egnahemsfabriken emphasizes that the benefits of self-construction are endless, it creates new friendships, self-confidence, practical knowledge and experience, develops a sense of local culture and collective problem-solving.



Image 11: CONSTRUCTION OF THE STANDARD HOUSE "EGNAHEMETT"
(Own photo)

TARGET GROUP

The target group for the Egna Hem project has changed since the 40's. The working class looks different today. It's not as easy to divide people into the same socio-economic groups anymore. People with low incomes do not necessarily belong to the working class; it has more to do with social context. It can be easier to divide people by age.

Young people have difficulty entering the housing market, especially in cities. 25% of the people aged 20-17 still live with their parents (Hyresgästföreningen, 2017). The number is increasing every year due to the housing shortage. Even older people find it increasingly difficult to solve their housing situations. Once children have left home, parents often find themselves living in a larger spaces than they had want to. Another group experiencing difficulties entering the Swedish housing market today are newly arrived immigrants. They often lack permanent jobs and contact networks. Since the housing queue means many years of waiting, this group is extremely vulnerable in the housing market.

Families themselves have changed since the 1940's. The number of divorces have increased, and more people live alone today, with or without children. Other, alternative family constellations have become more common. Friends live together with their children, divorced couples can be found living under the same roof, separated parents shuttle between apartments every other week so their children can live in the security of the same home or good friends simply choose to live together for a longer time. Today's target group for Egna Hem is turning out to be the growing group of people living alone, rather than nuclear families. Single women are especially vulnerable, economically, largely because women generally earn less than men. Last year women's wages were 11% lower than men's (SCB, 2018). Mothers usually stay home on longer maternity leaves than fathers and are more often at home with sick children. In addition, women take out more sick leave for stress at work than men do. All of these factors result in women getting lower pensions. A 65-year-old woman has an average only 75% as much pension as men of the same age (SCB, 2018). After many divorces, men take over the common house, while the woman are forced to move to an expensive rental apartment.

Tinna Harling on Egnahemsfabriken told me that many elderly single women are contacting in order to participate in their projects. This is a group of people that often have less money, prioritizes social networks and can imagine living on a smaller surface.

INTERVIEW MARIA, 58

I got in touch with Maria through Egnahemsfabriken. She lives on Tjörn and is interested in building a house in collaboration with the organization. She is currently negotiating what the process could look like for her. Maria is 58 years old and works as a project leader.

(Maria is a fictitious name, her real name is something else)

Excerpt from the interview:

* How did you get in touch with Egnahemsfabriken?

I read about the organization in the newspaper and on the internet. I currently rent a house, I do not own it. I don't own any furniture. I can't or want to stay in this house for a long time. I have always thought about the traditional housing queue. But then Egnahemsfabriken came along as an alternative. It was interesting to test the idea. Can I build myself? Do I want to build myself? Do I have the finances for that?

Because I live alone with only one income, I can't get a mortgage. Self-building is, after all, an alternative solution. It is extremely tempting to own your own little house and be free. Being free is very important to me.

* How has your housing situation looked over the years?

I have lived in rental apartments almost all my life. I grew up in a rental apartment. As an adult, I have moved around in rental apartments in different cities. I rented a small house on Tjörn. Then I moved to another rental house when I couldn't stay at the first one. And I can't afford to buy anything. The only time I have ever owned my home was with my former partner. We bought a row house that we lived in for a few years. When we separated, he stayed in the house because he had better finances than I had. I couldn't keep the house, there was no alternative. Today I live in a small house that I rent. I am in a housing queue everywhere now.

* What is most important according to your housing situation?

First, having a home that is mine, where I can stay as long as I want. Then I want freedom, calmness and light. I want my own little bubble. It would be great fun to be part of the design process. I have several friends who build or have built houses, I have always been the boring and disinterested friend. But when I started thinking about it, I had a lot of ideas. How much space do I really need and what should it contain? It doesn't have to be big. Ownership is not really important to me, but it would have been nice to be able to invest in a home. Since my pension will be low, it would have been good to be able to buy something so that the value may grow over time.

* What features would you be willing to share with your neighbors?

I would love to live with some people close to me. I have lived alone for a long time and miss having neighbors. I could absolutely share some surfaces with my neighbors. Laundry for example, and common areas, where one can meet and do things together. I could gather around some activities if it feels nice, but I'm not that much for scheduling. I like the idea, but there must be a lot of room for flexibility in it. I want the little bubble, where I have a kitchen and a bathroom. I must have my own space. I could have thought to live really, really small and have a camper van, a mobile home. When I get tired of the small home, I can go away and be somewhere else for a while.

* Where do you spend most of the time in your home?

I mostly sit in the kitchen. It has such a fantastic view from there. Large windows and a lovely kitchen sofa. I generally like to be in the kitchen. Outdoor space is very important to me. I love being out. A balcony has always been very important. I do everything on the balcony. Eating, reading, listening to music, resting.

* Are there any things or furniture that are extra important to you?

I have a few but important things I have received from people that matter to me or that I have bought at some special occasion. Things that have a story. A small figure I received from a Japanese student and old gadgets from my grandparents. Textiles are important to me. I always have a nice tablecloth on the kitchen table. I wove the kitchen towels myself.

INTERVIEW ANNA-KARIN

Anna-Karin Wikman has been involved in one of the few Building co-operatives project in Gothenburg, that involves that individuals or families working together to directly construct their own homes in a cooperative. The process took 14 years and resulted in the tenant-owner association *Kumlet* on Brännö in the southern archipelago of Gothenburg. Anna-Karin is 59 years old and works as consultant in the area of sustainable travel.

Excerpt from the interview:

* How did you come up with the idea of the building project?

I lived here at Brännö together with my partner. When we separated, I had trouble finding somewhere to live. I rented a summer house over the winter, and would probably have continued to move around because I couldn't afford to buy something on my own. I moved in with a friend at his house, who was also newly divorced. He had built the house himself and asked if we might build something together. We started to discuss it and asked some other newly divorced people if they were interested.

We first started looking for a lot, the idea was to build some kind of row house. But there are not that many large lots on Brännö. We finally found a municipal owned property. The municipality thought it was a good idea that somebody build on it but did not really know how to take it from there. They wanted us to turn in a proposal as to how it would look in order to work out the final plan. But we couldn't afford to hire an architect.

Finally, a friend did some sketches. It took several years and those who have been involved from the beginning started to drop off one by one, and we brought in new people. I have 67 cousins, one of them an architect who have designed a lot of wooden houses. He made the first real proposal. It took 13 years before we got started. During these years I lived in my friend's house. I slept in the living room and my son in the bedroom.

* How did you finance the project?

We decided to build two buildings with four apartments in each. In the first building we would live ourselves, in the second we would sell the apartments. The construction company borrowed us some money to start the project. If I had bought a newly produced apartment, it would have cost too much, and the standard would have been lower. The floor plan layout would not have been as good. This apartment is exactly what I wanted, the standard is great, and the location. It's a much better investment.

* What was most important when designing your home?

I wanted to have two bedrooms and a balcony that you could reach from the bedroom. On my wish list there was also a walk-in-closet. I like the open floor plan. I thought it was good that we built several apartments, because we didn't have to choose every little detail ourselves. Doors, windows, door handles and floors were already set.

* How has the building process affected the community in the houses?

It has affected us a lot. But it has not always been easy. It took about a year before we felt completely comfortable in our new roles. But we got to know each other very well along the way. We have had to be very open and honest with conflicts. The house itself took whole year to build. It was a very intense period. I was working at my full-time job and started with the construction as soon as I came home. We worked in the evenings and weekends, and it was cold! We climbed ladders high up in the air. My aunt and I painted everything outside. All windows, door posts and planks. We spent a lot of time, it took a year of one's life. But it was incredibly exciting, and I learned a lot. I think it's fun to learn new things, otherwise I would never have done this.

* How was it to finally move in?

The satisfaction of moving into something you built yourself was incredibly great. It was great to move in. I had read Interior Magazines for 10 years and longed so much for an own home. It would be a very big decision to move from here. I don't think I could get something that I enjoy so much. It is great to know everyone who lives here. It was worth a lot be part of the process! It was a lot of work, but it was worth it.

* Are there any things or furniture that are extra important to you?

My kitchen table and chairs are important, they are inherited from old relatives. I have moved around a lot during my life, so I don't have that much stuff. But I think the building materials are very important. This house is entirely made of wood, which I enjoy very much.

* How is it to live that close to your neighbors?

It is a great advantage to live close to other people. Because I'm single, it feels safe to have others close to me. You cannot choose people, but I've been lucky. We help each other with small things in everyday life, like babysitting or walking the neighbor's dog. We have a communal work day two days a year and several meetings. It is important that everyone is involved in the decisions that are made. I could imagine doing more things together with my neighbors. Some have started a book circle, for example. I could imagine having a shared kitchen, a common workshop or a sewing studio.

SITE

Recycling, both the reuse of land and materials, is a good solution to the problem of higher construction costs. I started thinking about reusable typologies. Existing barns outside town? Containers in the harbor? Old boat yards? Egnahemsfabriken has a policy of only building houses outside city limits, in order to strengthen rural districts. Tinna Harling is a big advocate of building housing in the countryside. And I agree with her. But there is something very exciting about cities and their development. Cities are in constant flux, changing with our lifestyles and needs. They contain remains of our history mixed with the very newest and most innovative. Gothenburg is currently undergoing major change. There are not many other big cities that have so much undeveloped space in the city center. Gothenburg's industrial history has left many traces and laid the foundation for our city planning. I think it is important that architecture is linked to the history of the city. There are several ongoing construction projects in Gothenburg that do the opposite, in my opinion. I want to show that it is possible to take advantage of existing buildings and the city context even more. For this reason, I have chosen to place my proposal in Gothenburg.

TYOLOGY

Initially, the villa was the symbol of the Egna Hem movement. To own your own house, your own property and a garden made the detached single-family dwelling a symbol of freedom. With time, it became unprofitable to build single-family dwellings. The row house became the new option. In Gothenburg, this typology became popular with Änggården 1915-1936. During the 1950's, half of the houses in the Egna Hem areas were row houses, and by the 1970's almost all houses were row houses. The main reason was the scarcity of land. A townhouse became more economic to build than a detached house. All the while, the garden, set up for vegetable gardening and fruit cultivation, remained an important element and use of the outside space.

One can question whether today's typology would be a higher houses, apartment blocks and multi family houses. Because land prices have increased, it is more efficient to build compact. But since the idea of the Egna Hem movement is to have access to your own garden, the plan typology has been one of my limitations.



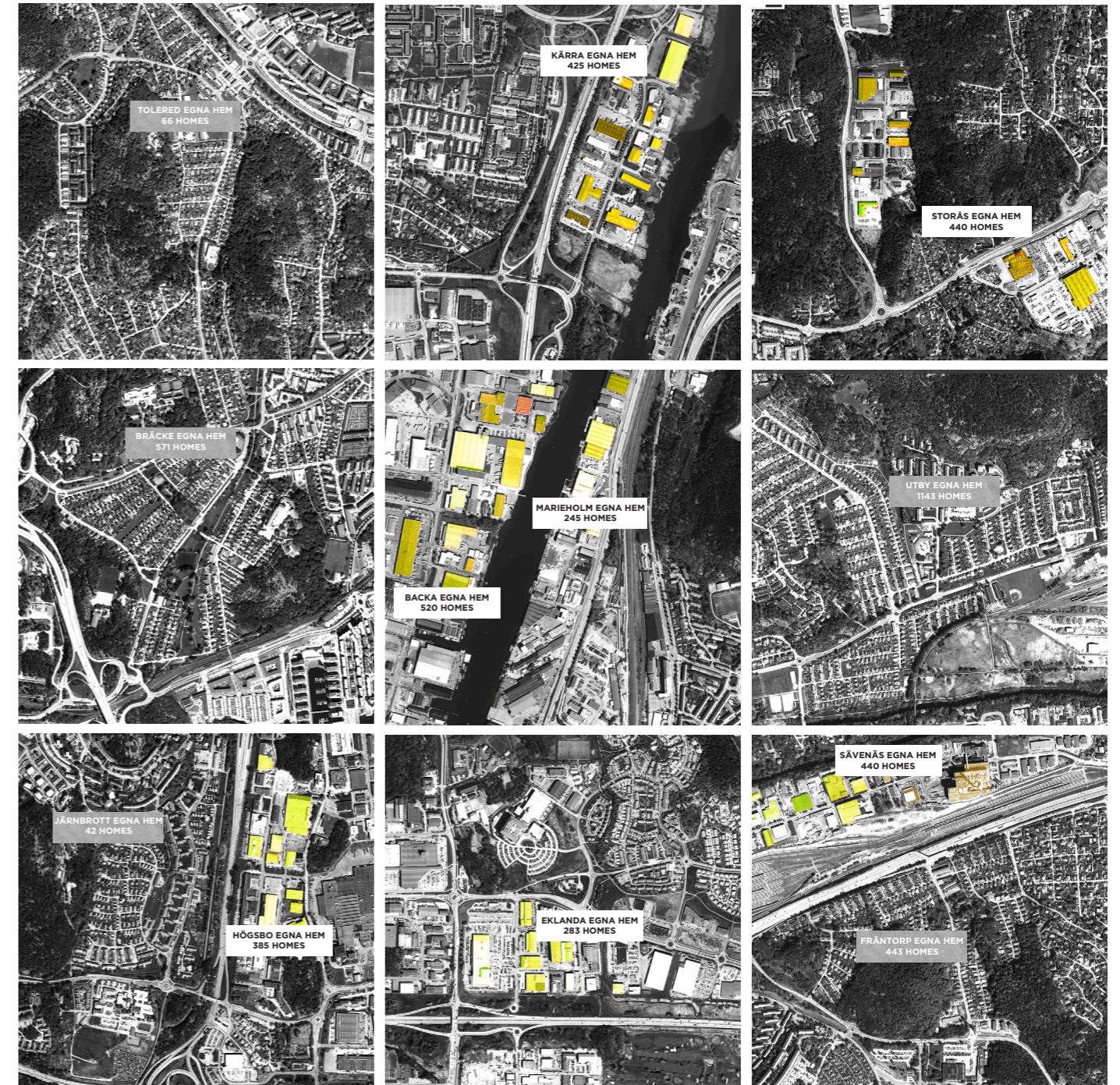
Image 12: ROW HOUSES IN UTBY
(Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna (1996))

PROPOSAL

GOTHENBURG

The Egna Hem Movement is making a comeback in 2019. Today, we have a new housing shortage. Cities are expanding and people with less money find it very difficult to enter the housing market. Existing Egna hem areas in Gothenburg such as Tolered, Bräcke and Utby are joined by new developments in Kärra, Backa and Sävenäs Industrial areas.

Housing is being built on formerly industrial zoned land. The fact that industrial areas in the cities are repurposed into residential areas is nothing new, but the process is often very radical and there has been little attempts take advantage of the surroundings. Gothenburg suffers from many such flawed conversions, Kvillebäcken being a glaring example. All existing buildings were demolished eat once, replaced by tall, densely spaced buildings. Almost all associations, small businesses and workshops were forced to evacuate. I propose a slower transformation, where the newly built Egna hem areas pop up one after another, filling the gaps between existing industrial buildings.



EXPORTGATAN

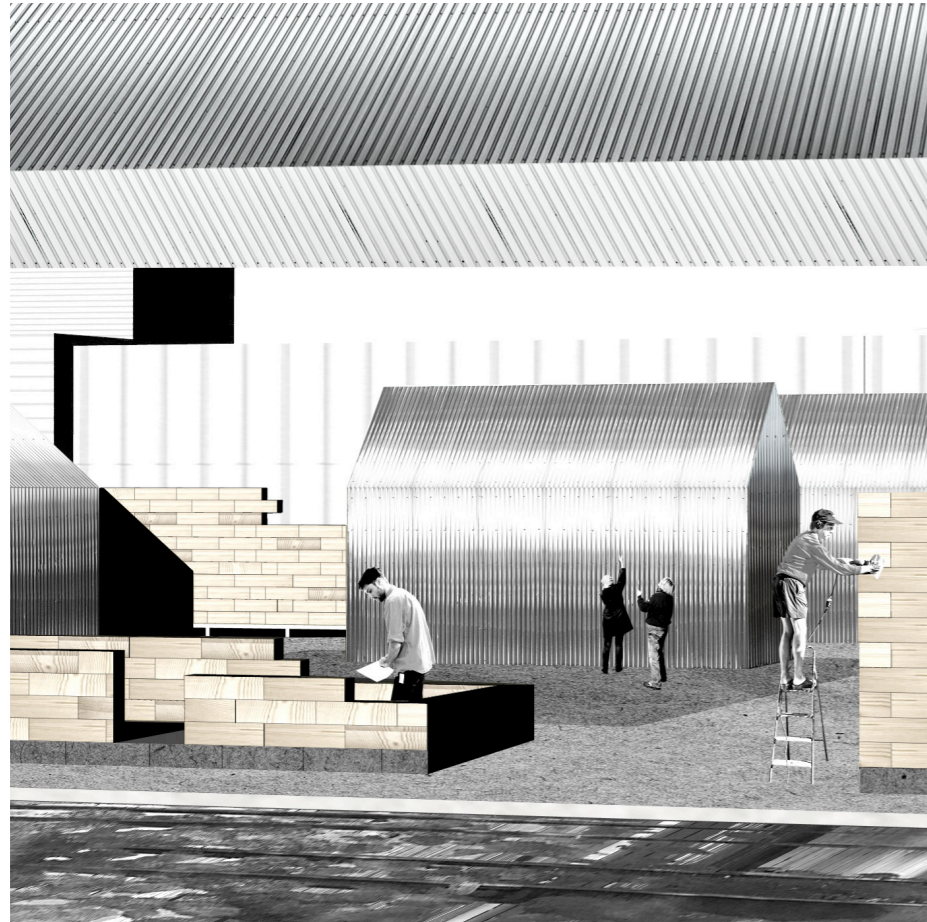


The houses are built on existing concrete slabs. Foundations are often a major part of the construction cost. Because water and electricity are already installed in the slabs, this is expected to lower costs. The first house that is built on the site is to be the Community building. It will serve as a gathering space and storage room during the construction period.

I longed for stability in my housing situation. Having a home that's mine, where I could stay for as long as I wanted. When I started thinking about building a house, I had a lot of ideas. How much space do I really need and what should it contain? It did not have to be big. I wanted my own kitchen and bathroom, and somewhere to sleep.



Lena is one of the self-builders on Exportgatan. She is 59 years old and works as a textile teacher. She has lived in rented apartments all her life. The only time she owned her home was with her ex-husband. When they separated her husband stayed in their common house, because he was the only one who could afford it. Because she lives alone and only small savings, she has problems getting a bank financing. Lena dreamed of her own little garden, a social network in the neighborhood and to build her own house.

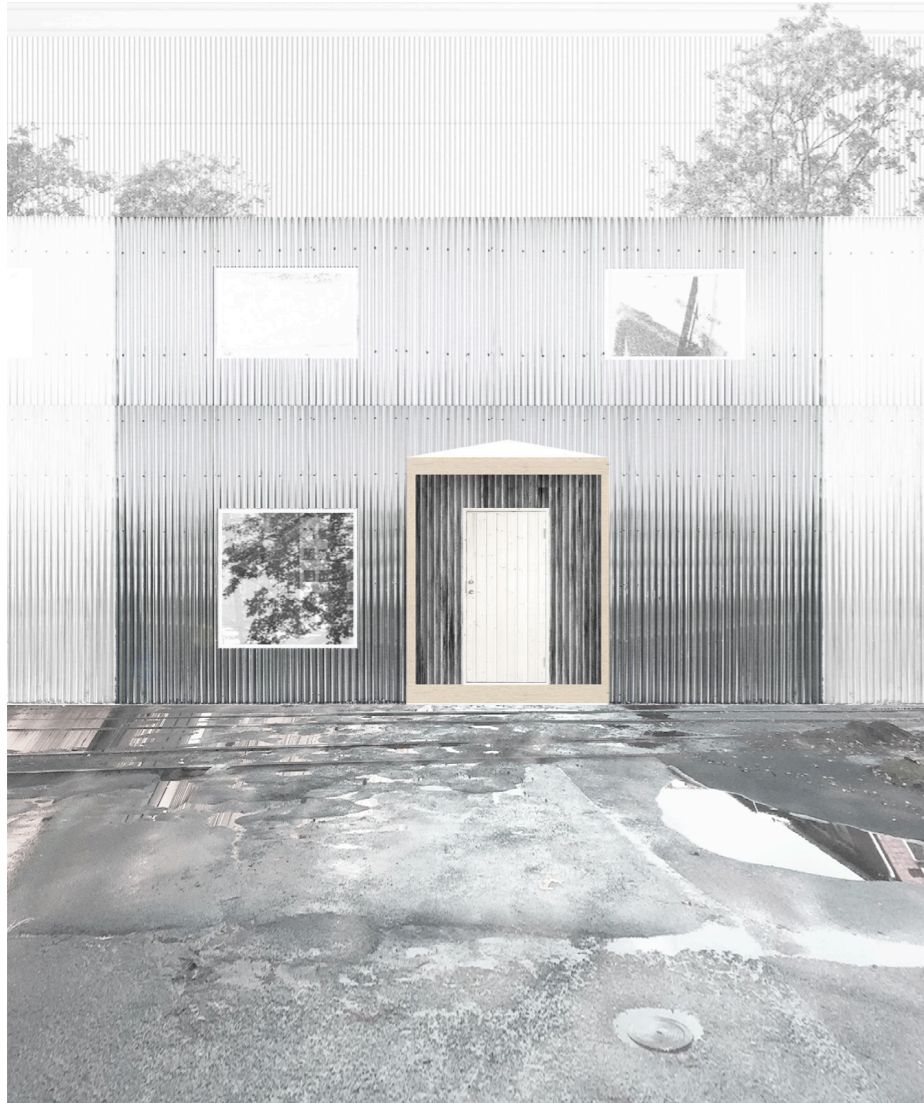


During the construction period, the industrial roof will serve as a shelter over the building site. Self-builders can work out of the weather, which speeds up the process. When construction is finished, the roof will be pulled down to let in light to the area. The self-builders will work in groups of three or four households. Members build with the neighbors that will live in the same row house. A professional is on the site during the construction time to help.

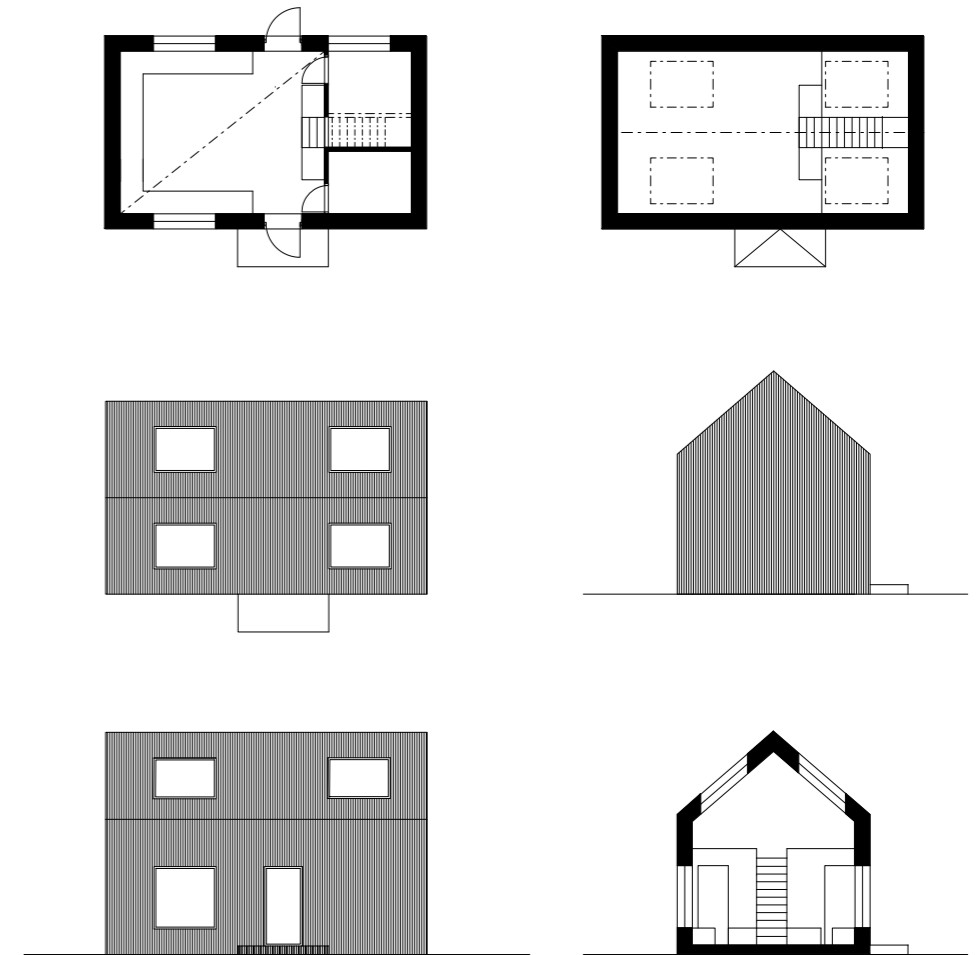
The satisfaction of moving into a house I had built myself was incredibly. It was a wonderful feeling. I had read Interior Magazines for 10 years and longed so much for an own home.



The outer walls consist of timber blocks that are put together as a puzzle. Isotimber is a wood-based building system made of blocks with pre-cut, insulating air pipes. The building system is easy to handle even for those who are not used to building. Wood is a good material to work with, easy to use and natural. In addition, it is one of the most environmentally friendly building materials available. The wooden structure is covered with plate material from the existing industrial building. In this way, all neighborhoods will get their unique expression.

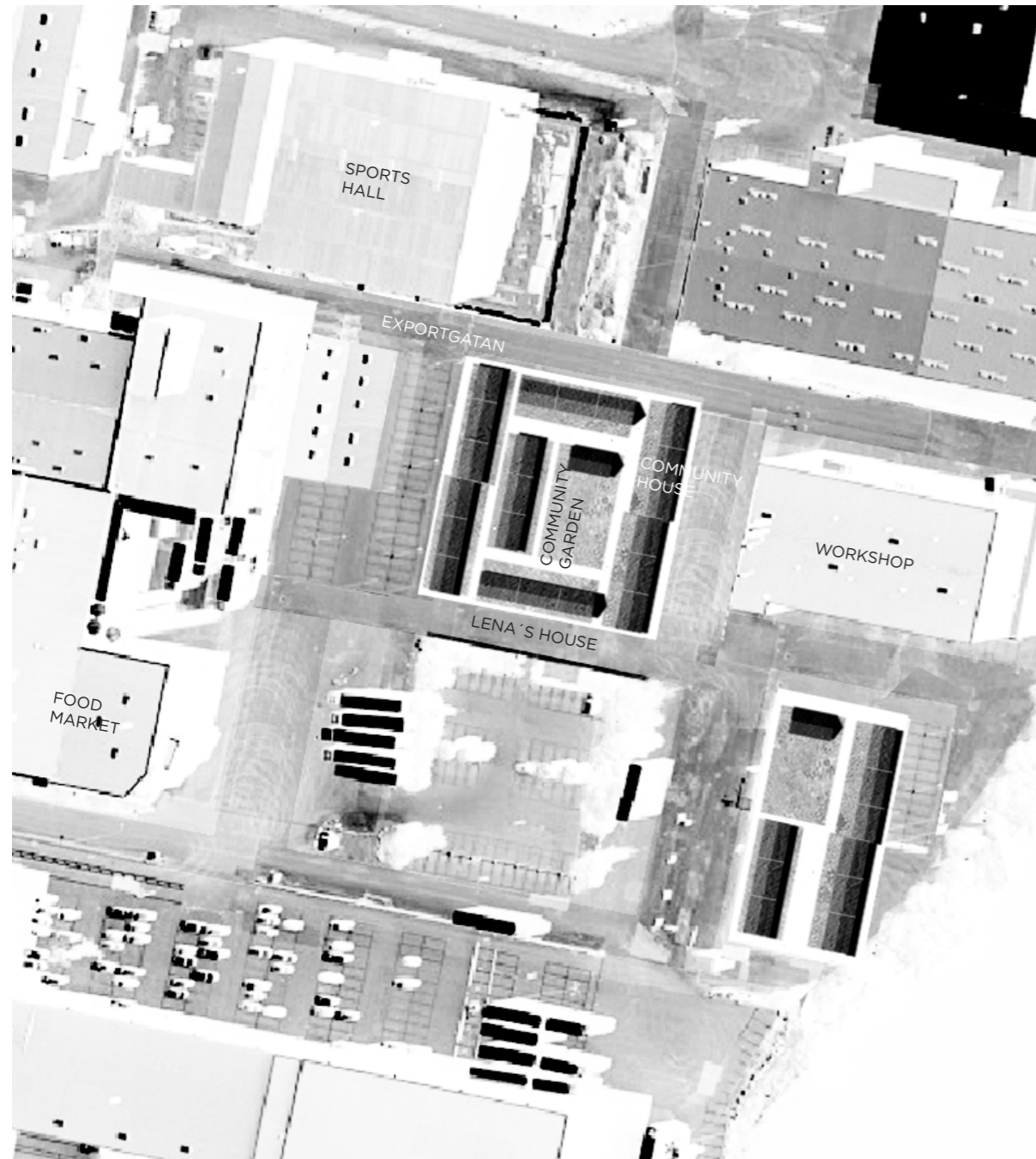


FACADE LENA'S HOUSE



STANDARD DRAWINGS
1:200

SITE PLAN



SITE PLAN
1:1500

The project is located in Gothenburg, the same city as Lasse and Ella built their house in 1949. Backa Industrial park is one of several areas in the city that could be suitable for an Egna Hem development project. The area is surrounded by active neighborhoods, there is a workshop, a sports hall, many cheap restaurants, outlets and second-hand markets close by.

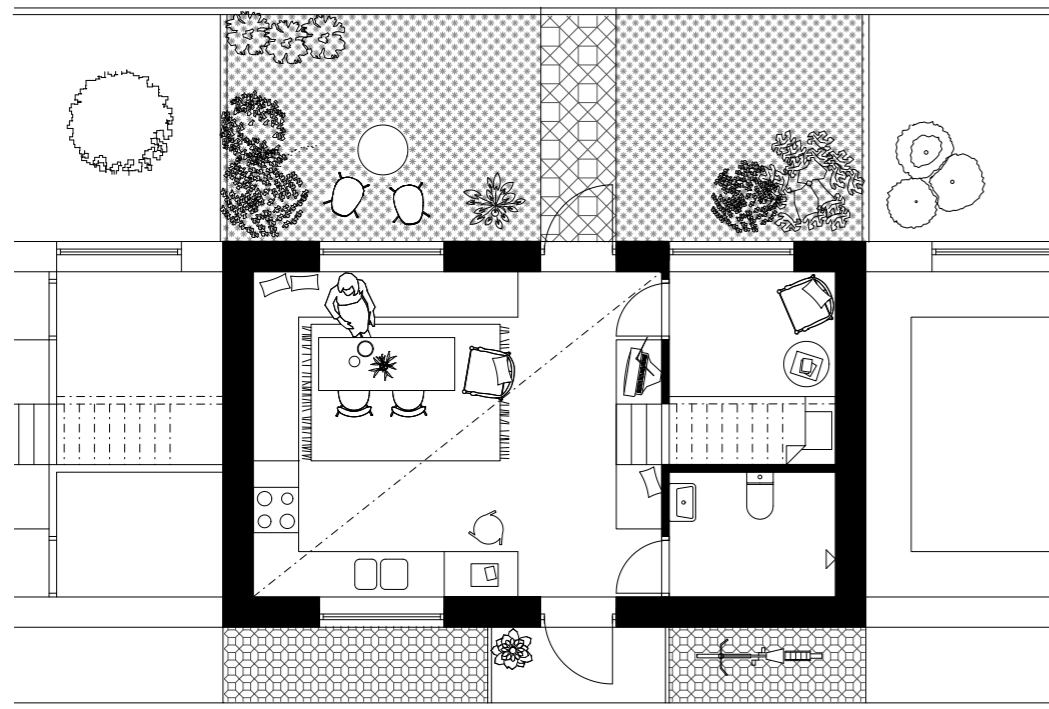
Buildings will be arranged to create a feeling of a small village, as on Frimästaregatan. Entrances facing the street and gardens are turned inwards, toward a common green space, where all residents have their own allotment plots. Each house has a small garden, with space for a seating group and vegetation.

The Community house contains a large kitchen, used for parties and common dinners. It will be the first house built on the site and will be used as a gathering space and storage room during the construction period.

LAYOUT

The house is 33 m². It works as a detached house or a row house. It is a simple and small house, inspired by the design of Frimästaregatan. You enter into the middle of the house and move in a straight line towards the garden. The house basically consists of one large living room, which is the core of the house. Bedroom and toilet are located on the side. Fixed benches run along the walls. The self-builders can choose if they want to build a kitchen, and if so, where to place it.

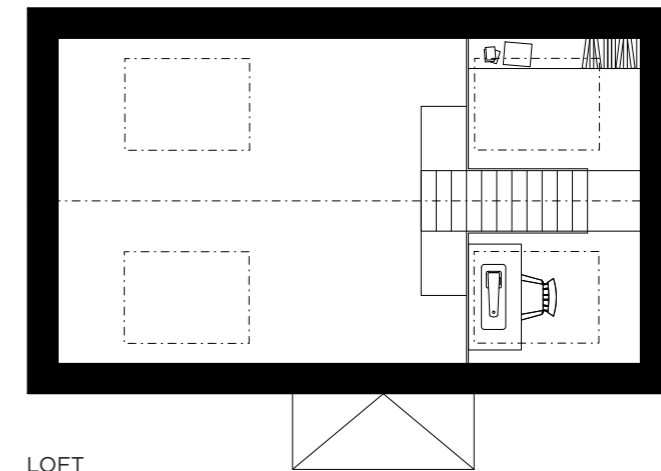
A staircase leads up to the small loft. There is an option to extend the loft if necessary. The idea is to make everything as cheap as possible in the beginning, allowing for later expansion as finances permit.



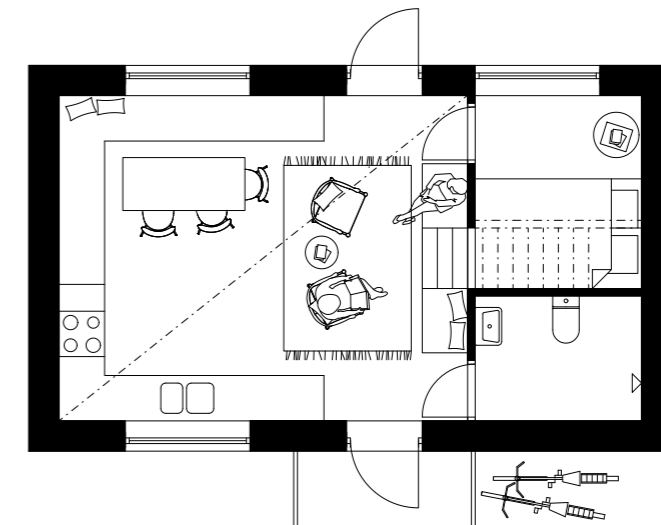
GROUND FLOOR 1:100
33 M²

LENA + PARTNER

When Lena's partners move in, they can still use the loft in its original form. It is a hobby space where Lena has her sewing machine and textiles. On the ground level, the large room is divided into two parts, a kitchen area and a living room. The benches around the stairs become a sofa in order to get more space to sit.



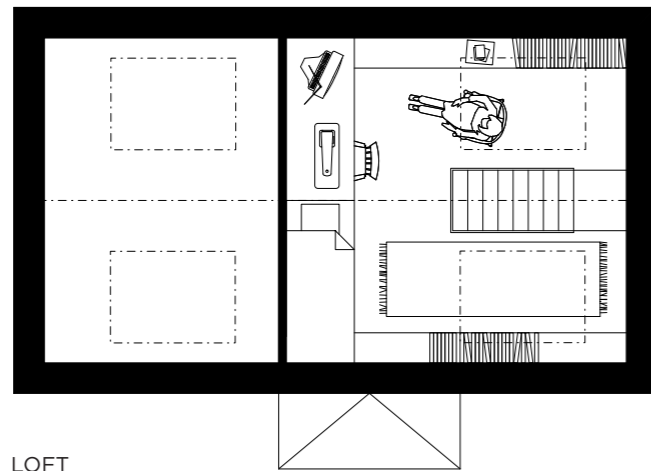
LOFT
12 M²



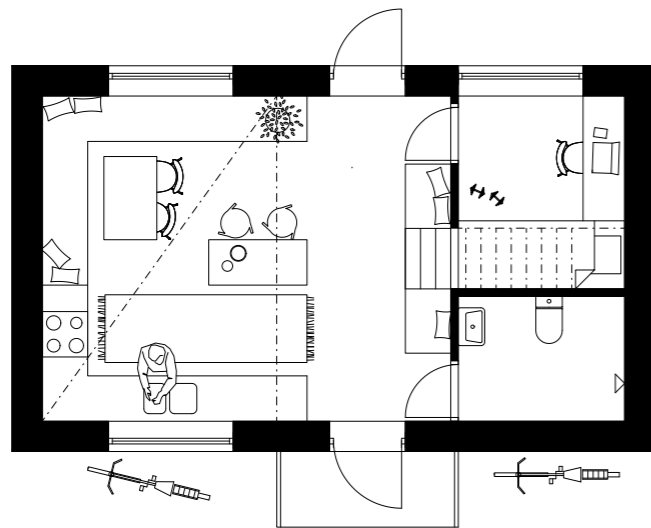
GROUND FLOOR 1:100
33 M²

LENA + TENANT

When Lena hires a room to a student, she expands the loft. She moves upstairs and lets the student live in the room on the ground floor. In the large room on the ground floor there is a kitchen island and a small dining table to create more separate dining places when occupants won't always want to share the same table.



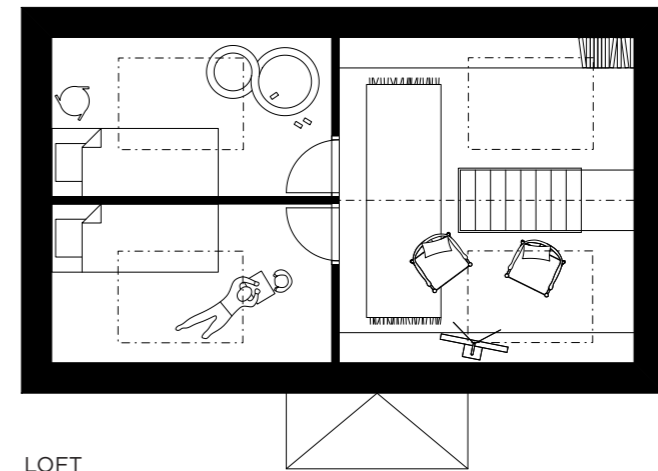
LOFT
21 M2



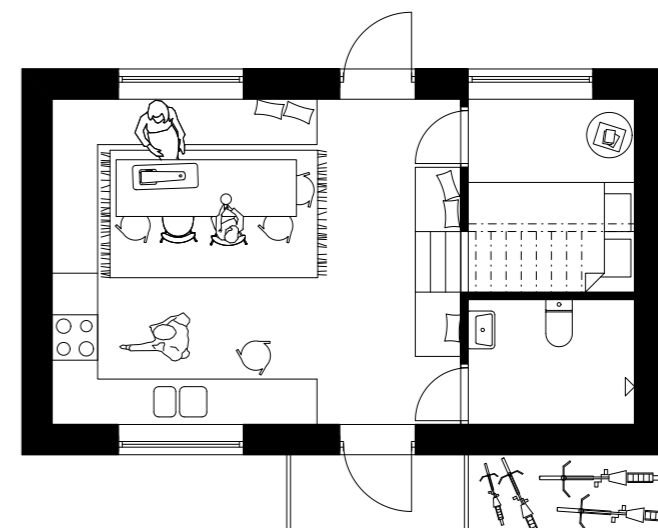
GROUND FLOOR 1:100
33 M2

LENA + PARTNER + GRAND CHILDREN

When four people live in Lena's house, the loft can be expanded to the maximum. Thanks to the roof windows, the upper floor can be divided into a several bedrooms. An upper hall can be repurposed as extra living room. On the ground floor, one large dining table is placed where the family concentrates all of their activities.



LOFT
33 M2



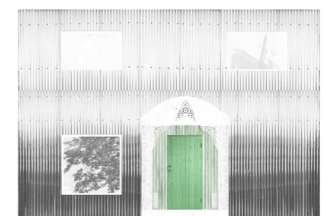
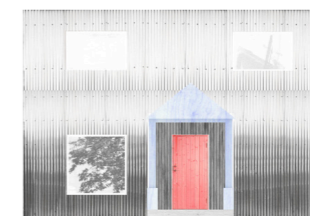
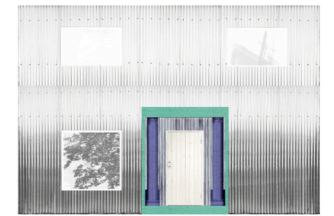
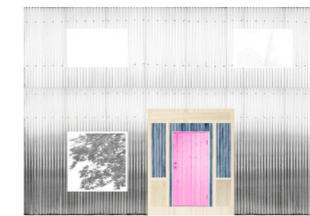
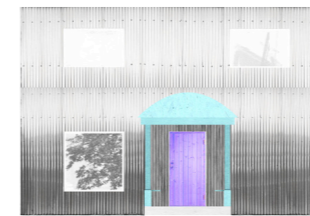
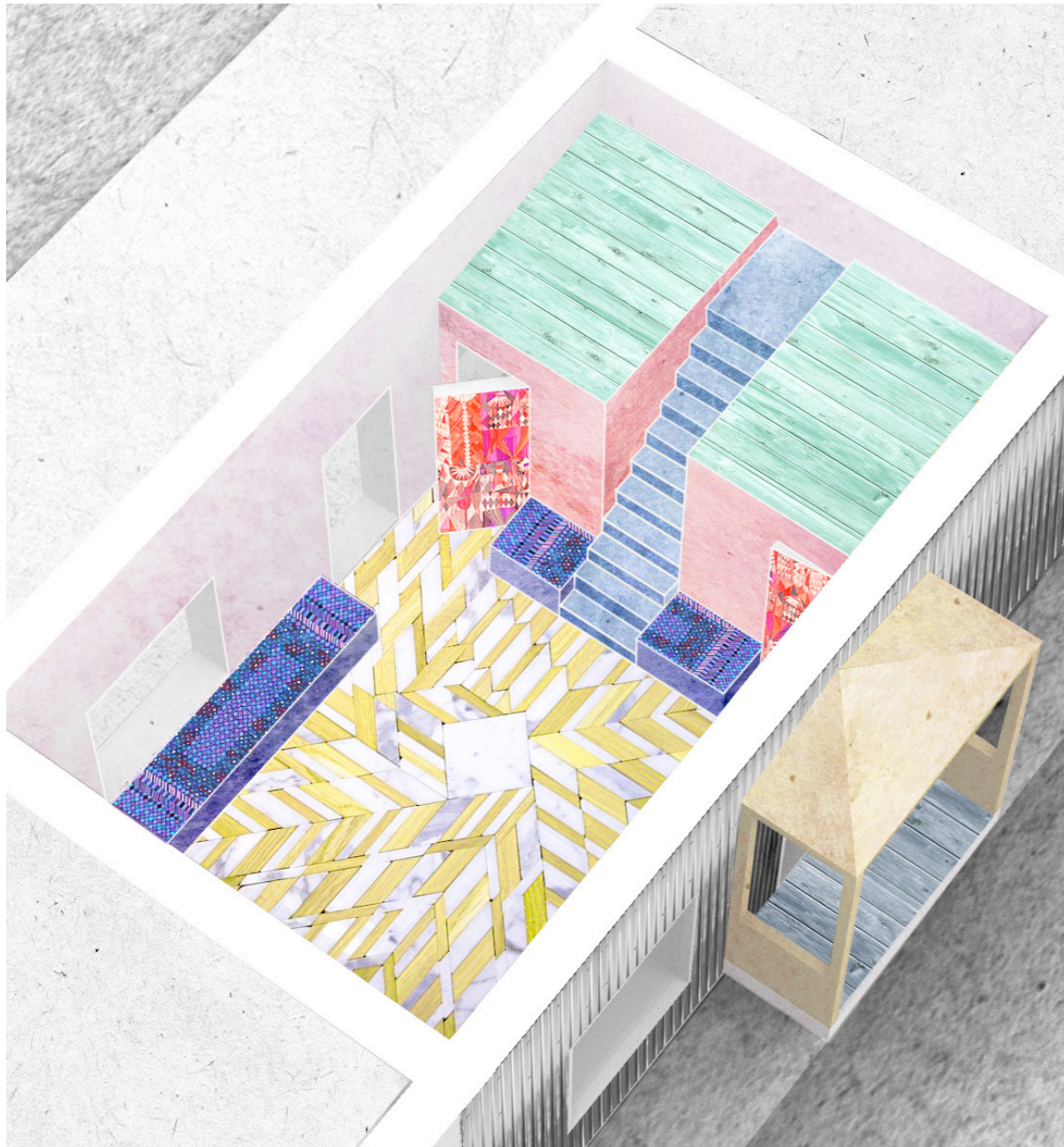
GROUND FLOOR 1:100
33 M2

A HOUSE BECOMES A HOME

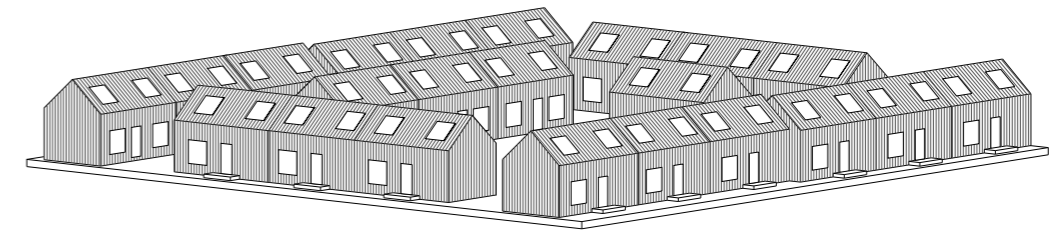
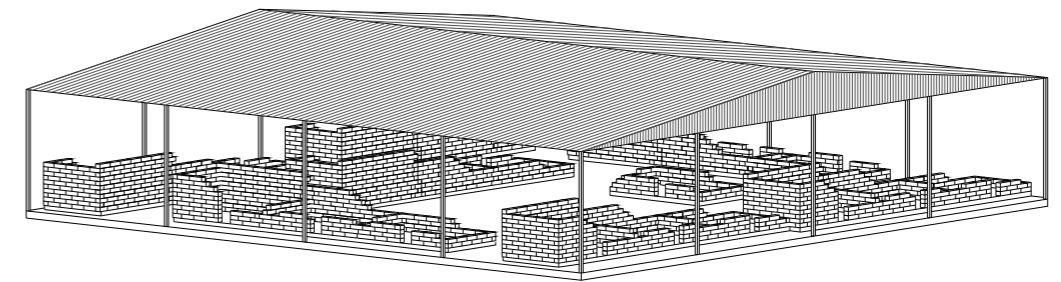
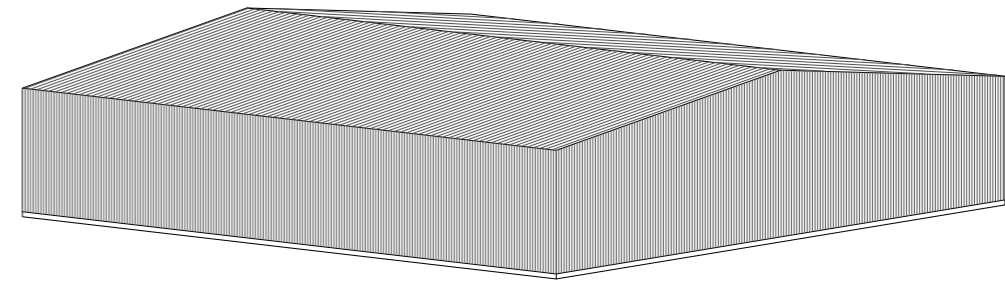
Because Lena can set up the interior of her house on her own, she creates a personal home. Building materials for walls, floors and stairs are included in the "house package". A frame for benches/kitchen is also included, but no major appliance or cabinets. Refrigerator, toilet, sinks, etc. are purchased by the self-builders themselves, preferably second hand.

Lena can fill the walls and floors with color and patterns of her own choosing. She has an interest in textile and fabrics. She chooses to paint the staircase blue and puts in a yellow-patterned floor. The fabric covering the sofa varies over time, the interior is in a state of constantly change.

Lena also can design an outdoor entrance, which makes her personal expression visible even on the outside, and creates a sense of moving in sequences. Lena's entrance is built in wood and serves as an extra space for plants and gardening tools. Other houses in the neighborhood start with a similar exterior expression, but change over time. Inside, the occupants build their own worlds as full stories, and through the entrances we can get a glimpse of their lives.







EVERY DAY LIFE

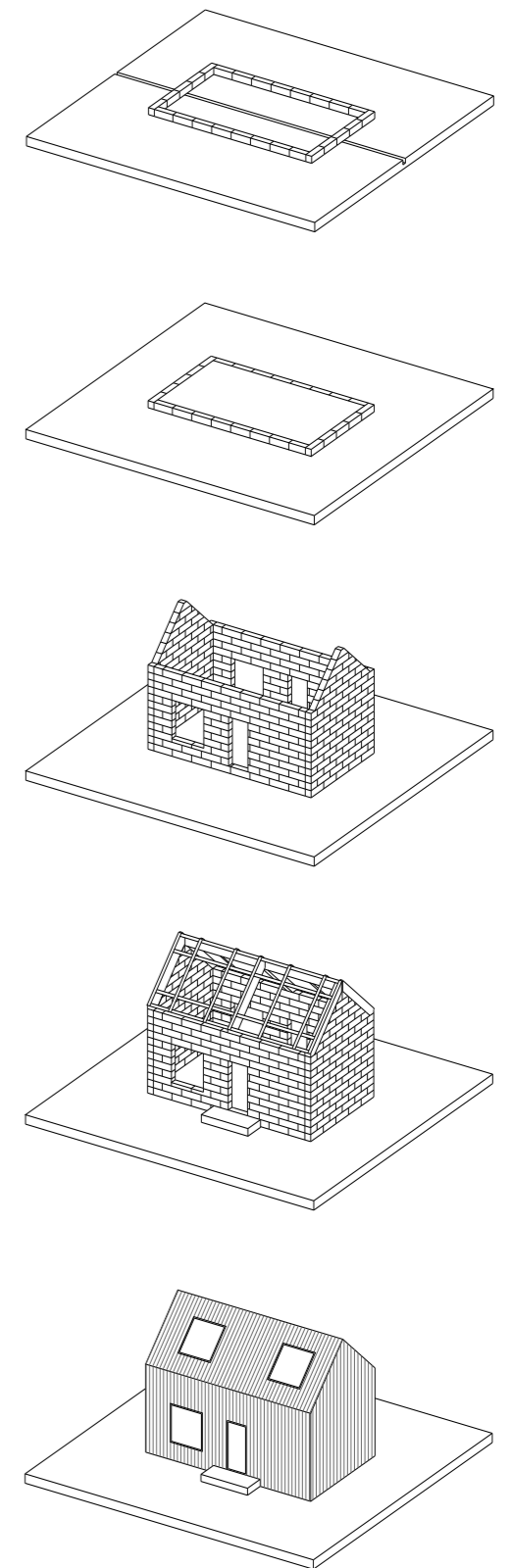
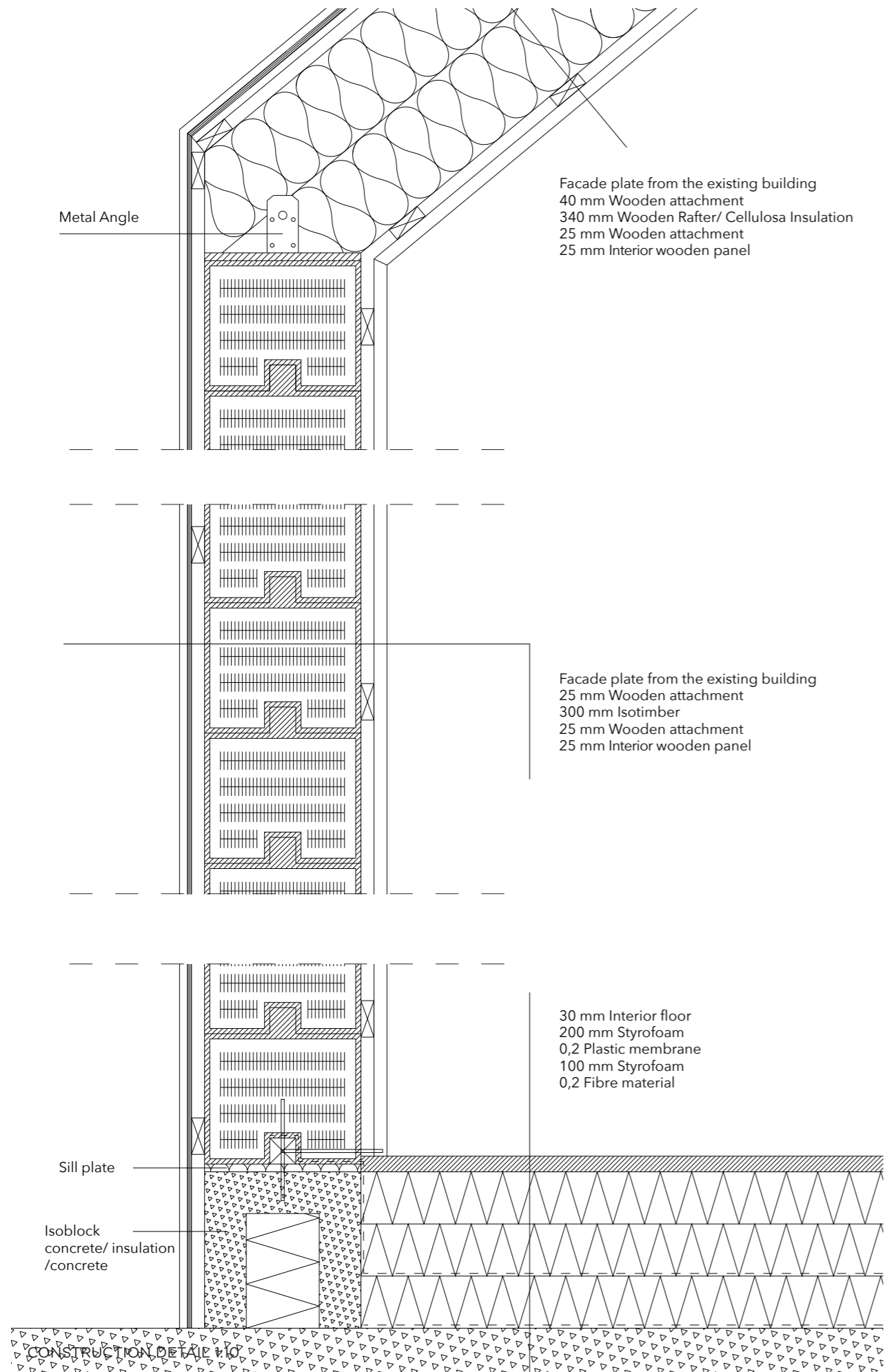
What is it like to live in an industrial area? Surrounded by asphalt, parking lots and containers? There may be fewer green spaces and large trees, but in Gothenburg many of the industrial areas are located close to the water, which is a big advantage. Residents can stroll along the walkways near the water and relax in parks with more urban character. Lena and her neighbors grow vegetables and spices in pallet collars and organize urban food markets. The large asphalt surfaces are used by children and young people for play and sports. There are plenty of skate parks and basketball courts. The surroundings are full of supermarkets, cheap restaurants and outlets. It's easy to get a job in the local area. Many of the residents run their own small businesses in buildings around the site. Some of the old warehouses are now used as workshops, others as sports halls.

In the Community House, the residents gather around common dinners. Some do not have their own kitchen, others only have a small kitchenette. They also take advantage of the restaurants in the immediate area. Many are perfectly happy to be able to stay in town without being ruined by house prices and live close to schools, events and festivals. The industrial areas in Gothenburg are slowly being filled with more homes, and people are moving in with all of their individual dreams.

It is a great advantage to live close to other people. Because I'm single, it feels safe to have others close to me. You can not choose people, but I've been lucky. We help each other with small things in everyday life, babysitting or walking the neighbor's dog.



NEIGHBORHOOD



1. Water, electricity and sewerage are drawn in cut-out tracks in the existing concrete foundation.
2. A frame of iso-blocks are built, filled with styrofoam and a wooden floor on top of it.
3. The walls are built of wooden isotimber blocks, as a puzzle. They are stabilized by the plate sheets in the facade.
4. The roof consists of wooden beams.
5. The structure is covered with plate material from the existing industrial building.



SITUATIONS



I built the house in 1949. I built on evenings and weekends and yes, all of my free time. It was a very expansive period. But exciting and fun, building something for myself was very exciting. /Lasse



It was a very intense period. I was working at my full-time job and started with the construction as soon as I came home. We spent a lot of time, it took a year of one's life. But it was incredibly exciting. I think it's fun to learn new things, otherwise I would never have done this. /Lena



Ella is taking Gunnel and Barbro to the food store. It is springtime but still a bit cold in the air. Ella has sewn a new jacket for Barbro. The trees in the gardens are bare, but soon the leaves starts to turn green.



Lena is on her way to the common bicycle workshop which is a few streets away. There is a car pool in the neighborhood, but she likes to bike the most. The surroundings are full of supermarkets, cheap restaurants and outlets. Lena is perfectly happy to be able to stay in town without being ruined by house prices and live close to culture events and festivals.



The children often come to their garden. They play in the grass, climb the trees and pick fruit. All the gardens look a bit different, and offer different specialties. In Lasse and Ella's garden there is a small pond, which often becomes part of the children's games.



Lasse and little Gunnel rests in the garden. Summer 1955 is the warmest summer in a very long time, measurements of 33 degrees have been made as certain places. They drink lemonade to cool off. Lasse has planted a willow tree by the pond, it gives a nice shadow in the heat.



The children prefer to play in the open spaces in the area. They usually hang out on the basketball court, skate park or in the parkour area. Most of them participate in some kind of sports activity in the evenings. Many sports clubs are located in the warehouses around the area.



Lena's own garden is not particularly big, but in the common garden in the middle of the neighborhood, she can grow her own vegetables and spices in a pallet collar. All households have their own small allotment. The common garden is a gathering place for everyone in the area.



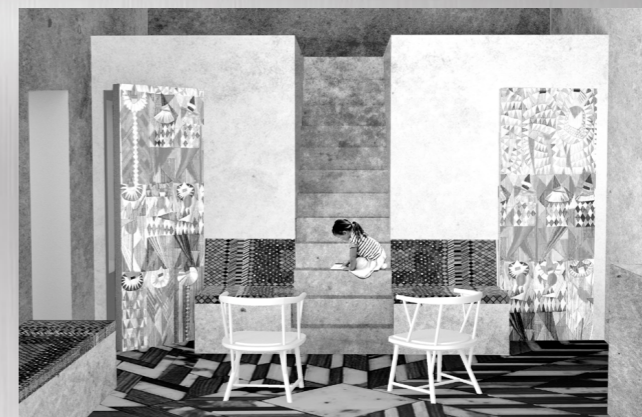
When she first got the troll on Christmas eve, she became so scared that she started crying. But eventually it became her very best friend. She brings the troll everywhere. She brushes the hair and make nice braids. She builds a small house for the troll in the blue sofa.



Maja plays computer games in the patterned sofa. She loves the evenings in her grandmother's house. People working in the area have left. The traffic and activity on Exportgatan has calmed down. The only thing that is heard is the seagulls yelling over Göta Älv.



Gunnel borrows her mom's sunglasses and poses in front of her fathers camera. The living room is the family's social space. There is a large bookshelf in here, with lots of books. Both Ella and Lasse love to read. On the weekends they use to lie on the blue sofa with one book each. The children play here, build huts or read comic books.



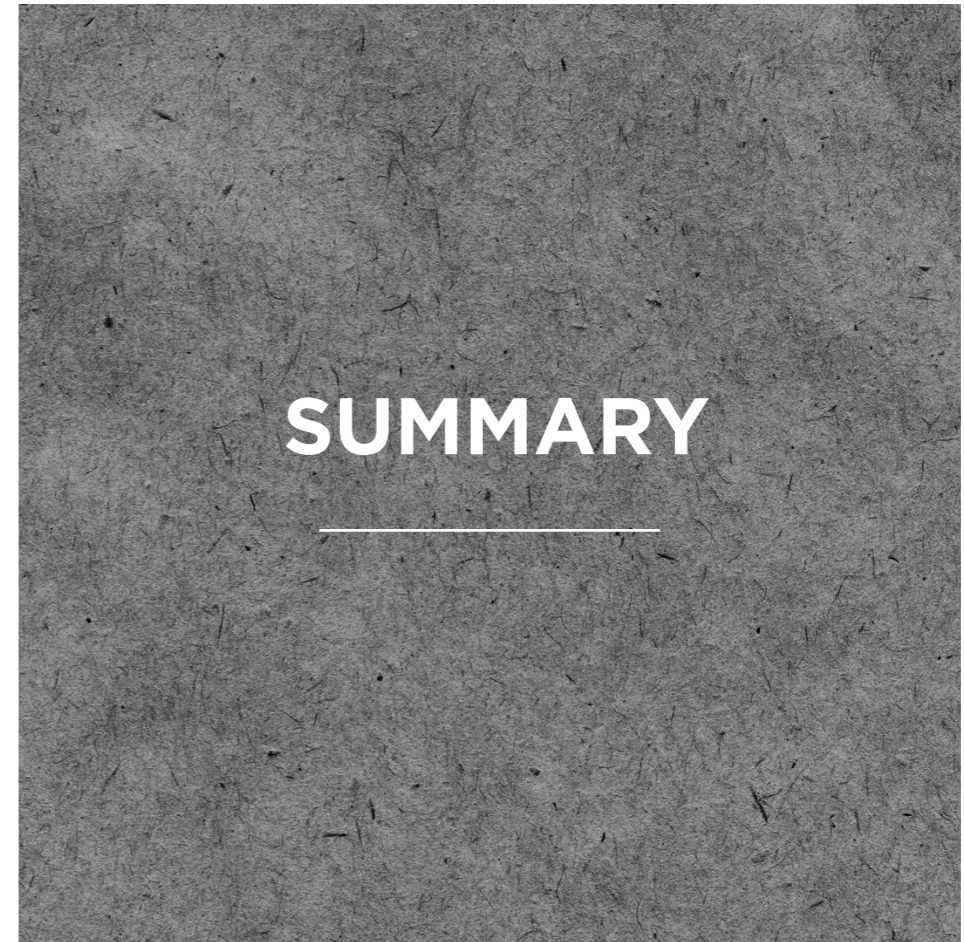
Maja likes to play in the stairs. The staircase is an important element in Lena's house and has several spatial features. It is used as extra storage space for books and gadgets. When they invites friends, it becomes part of the seating in the living room.



Every Sunday, the Sörenson family gather in the living room for dinner. Ella has sat the table nicely with a white tablecloth and the finest plates and glasses. They eat *Isterband*, cauliflower and mashed potato. For dessert, Ella has made rhubarb compote.



Every Sunday Lena has dinner together with her neighbors in the Community House. They take turns preparing the meals. On weekdays she usually buys dinner at one of the cheap restaurants in the local area.



WHAT WOULD AN EGNA HEM AREA LOOK LIKE TODAY?

In the proposal for a modern Egna Hem area, the houses are very small, only 33 m². Simply because the land prices are so expensive today. The building typology is row house. They are located in former industrial parks, based on recycled land and materials. The residents have a smaller private area and share more features with their neighbors. A Community house serves as a common kitchen and meeting place. The houses are based on a simple construction, wooden blocks stacked as a puzzle. The target group for the project is young people, older people and newly arrived immigrants in Sweden. Since the appearance of families can vary a lot today, the houses are flexible, a loft can be expanded or reduced. This is, of course, only one of all possible solutions to the problem. One can question several things in the proposal. To place the project in the city for example. Is it right to densify our cities even more? One can also ask if it is justified to live on such a small area. I think we must relate to the cities in one way or another, and also find new ways to relate to the home. Living on a smaller surface can be one of them. In addition, there are many advantages of sharing areas with your neighbors, both on a personal level and due to sustainability.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT PEOPLE TO BE PART OF THE BUILDING PROCESS?

It affects people a lot. Lasse described the construction period as very intensive, but at the same time exciting and fun. He said that it was a special feeling to build something for himself. The driving force was to create better conditions for the family. Anna-Karin Wikman describes the process as incredibly exciting but also tough. The neighbors got to know each other very well during the construction period, there were also conflicts and some difficult situations. Both Lasse and Anna-Karin describe that the process creates a strong connection to the home, and that they created a strong bond with their neighbors. Anna-Karin says that it would take a lot for her to move away from the apartment in *Kumlet*. Ella and Lasse stayed in their house the remaining part of their lives, until they moved into the retirement home. In some cases it not only affects self-builders in the "first generation", but also those who move in later. Hanna Berko says that the tradition of self-construction remains in the area, they still have a great sense of community in the neighborhood and do most of their home maintenance themselves.

HOW SHOULD WE RELATE TO STANDARD HOUSES?

Working with prefabricated standard houses is a necessity if we want to build quickly and cheaply. An area consisting of only standard houses can be perceived as monotonous, impersonal and boring. On the other hand, there may be advantages of a coherent architecture, so that people feel belonging to the area they live in. In Landala Egna Hem, the combination of a homogeneous exterior expression and a variation in the details is successfully made, according to me. I think it's a good idea to let the self-builders have the opportunity to create their own add-ons in some way. In this proposal, the builders can design their own outdoor entrance. The area has a homogeneous expression, but the entrances contribute to variation, the buildings is not perceived as monotonous and boring. On the inside it is important that the self-builder gets freedom in the design. I agree with Lena Jarlöv (1982) that the architect's role in the self-building process should be to create good circumstances where people's creativity can be expressed and stimulated.

REFLECTIONS

What has benefited this project the most, but also been a difficulty, is the broadness of the research questions. The housing issue touches many subjects and cannot be resolved overnight. I made the decision to use my grandparents' house as a basis, to narrow down the project. I am very glad I did that. It has been my anchor throughout the process and a strong driving force. It has been incredibly exciting to learn about the Egna hem movement through my grandparents and dig into my family's history.

The comments I have received on the project have been generally positive. On my final presentation I was told that it is a project that "engages and triggers". The comparison with my grandparents' house was appreciated, one teacher described it as a "personal project, but not private". One comment was that the project is "naive but at the same time brave". Part of the criticism was that I could have been even more radical in my proposal. Would it be possible to take advantage of the industrial context even more? One question that came up was why the residents cannot expand the houses on the outside, alternatively merge several houses into a larger villa. My argument for keeping them small in size is that they should not rise too much in price. My intention is that they will continue being compact houses dedicated to people with lower income.

The funniest part of the project have been the discussions, interviews and dialogs. At Egnahemsfabriken I talked to many people who are involved in self-building, which was very inspiring. Since I started working on this project, I have noticed that the discussion about self-building has appeared in several different contexts. It seems to be a very present topic. Egnahemsfabriken has received great media attention, most recently in an article in the magazine *Arkitekten*. It has also become popular to write about self-building at Chalmers. In 2017, the thesis project *To build a home* was made by Alice Valinger and Caroline Ekberg. I have done this project now and in spring 2019 another project about self-building will be completed. It is obvious that the housing issue triggers many people. It is a personal matter that concerns people's privacy. It is also a political issue, which can be provocative. The people I talked to about organized self-construction, architects and non-architects have a positive attitude towards it. Many of my friends would be interested in participating in such a kind of project. Egna Hem Project is something that has been part of Swedish building history for a long time, more or less present. It seems to be the right time to revive the tradition.

And finally, a small reflection about time. Much has changed in 70 years, especially in terms of technology and regulations. But we still dream about the same things, to have a home that is ours. A home that we share with the people we value, where we can stay as long as we want.

*/Ellen Ihrfelt,
January 2019*

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Image 2: Göteborgs egnahems AB. (1993). Egen härd är guld värd: egnahemsbyggandet i Göteborg under ett halvt sekel. Göteborg : Göteborgs egnahems AB.

Image 3: A/B Göteborgs konstförlag (1930). Landala Egna hem [Online Image]. Retrieved from <https://www.tradera.com/item/270107/317192988/landala-egna-hem-telestolpe-ca-1930-tal-goteborg-> (2019-01-03)

Image 4: Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna. (1996) En modern boendehistoria: byggande och vardagsliv i Utby egnahem 1937–94. Göteborg: Etnologiska föreningen i Västsverige.

Image 5: Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna. (1996) En modern boendehistoria: byggande och vardagsliv i Utby egnahem 1937–94. Göteborg: Etnologiska föreningen i Västsverige.

Image 6: Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna. (1996) En modern boendehistoria: byggande och vardagsliv i Utby egnahem 1937–94. Göteborg: Etnologiska föreningen i Västsverige.

Image 12: Ekvall, Gittan & Kahn, Anna. (1996) En modern boendehistoria: byggande och vardagsliv i Utby egnahem 1937–94. Göteborg: Etnologiska föreningen i Västsverige.