

Generative Care

Unlocking Potential: Giving Time to Centrallasarettet of Växjö

Centrallasarettet of Växjö holds immense potential as a large urban block in a beautiful location, seamlessly connecting nature with the heart of the city. Recognizing and fully utilizing this potential, *Generative Care* proposes a two-phase intervention.

1. Phase One involves keeping the hospital operational while integrating three interventions on the site. These interventions serve multiple purposes: initiating a dialogue with citizens about the neighbourhood's future, exploring the value of existing structures, and envisioning their transformation for new uses.

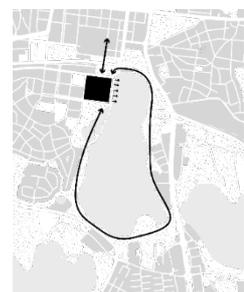
2. Building on the insights gained from Phase One, Phase Two will focus on a large-scale transformation of the existing structures. This transformation will involve reusing materials, adding elements, and restructuring streets to create a new identity and purpose for the area. Through this process, the qualitative public space will be revitalized, reconnecting it with the city and the natural surroundings of Växjösjön.

By providing the existing hospital with more time and engaging citizens in the process, the planning for the new hospital can be extended into the future, ensuring the right decisions are made. Experts, both internal and external to the project group, suggest that building a new hospital outside the city would be more beneficial in terms of engagement and functionality. However, the current economic situation calls for a deeper understanding and careful consideration, necessitating more time for the decision-making process.

By giving time, we aim to unlock its true potential and create a space that resonates with the community while respecting the economic realities of today. This patient and thoughtful approach will lead to a vibrant and purposeful urban development that stands as a testament to collaborative decision-making and sustainable urban planning.

Växjö: The Metropole of the Forest

Throughout its history, Växjö has held a vital position surrounded by forests, a position it proudly maintains today. Able to take care of itself, it still looks outward with its natural position as the metropole of the region. In the same way as the hospital, and the city of Växjö, have an attraction in the whole region around Växjö, there is a long tradition of a strong exchange in the other direction. The communities around the city play an equally important role in the forming of the society. Växjö, the metropole of the forest, is both the city and its vicinity.



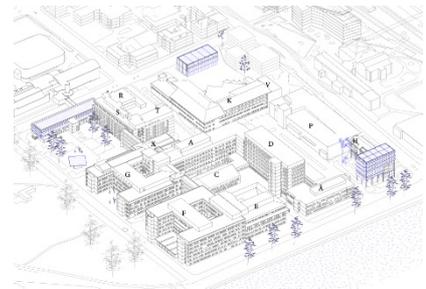
Presently, the hospital operates as a self-contained organism, isolated from the rest of the city, with only one real entrance. Its constant flow of activity generates a bustling pole within the city, much like Växjö's natural magnetism for trade and commerce, drawing people from across the region. The external commercial centre plays a significant role in establishing Växjö as a prominent player. Although some inner-city commerce has relocated, this activity still thrives, especially in its vibrant culinary scene.

Upon the hospital's relocation, the task is to seamlessly integrate the area into the city while creating a new radiant piece of the city that builds upon what is already there. The hospital's essence inevitably becomes ingrained in this new facet of its life through the reuse of existing structures. To achieve this, fostering constant exchange and interdependence within the site becomes essential, embracing a collective practice where both the site and its people become co-creators alongside official planners and designers. This approach, inspired by interventions from the initial phase, epitomizes a metabolic conception, where the site evolves organically with its inhabitants as active contributors.

The integration of the old hospital area will reinvigorate Växjö's connection to the green belt and the lake, resulting in a more generous and vibrant public space. The entire recreational area encircling the lake, also the connection between Strandbjörket and Linnéparken, will be perceived as a harmonious whole. Taking care of the existing hospital presents Växjö with an opportunity to pioneer a new model for urbanism, further solidifying its reputation as "Europe's greenest city" while embracing economic and social perspectives. This endeavour opens possibilities for creating a national attraction and providing a new framework for the local community to thrive.

Creating Engagement and Understanding in Phase One

Strategically positioned on three corners of the hospital block, three interventions seamlessly integrate with the hospital structure while maintaining a strong connection to the city. During their construction phase, they carefully minimize disturbances to the hospital's ongoing functions and are only influencing a limited number of movable programs. These interventions aim to bring together a diverse range of people, including researchers, students, hospital professionals, and international visitors from all over Växjö, to collectively reimagine, test, and shape the future of the hospital area.



Built with an architecture of wood, these interventions ensure functional versatility across both phases while contributing to the desired urban qualities of the transformed hospital area. Each intervention serves as a dynamic platform for dialogue, research, and exchange, effectively activating the entire site. Simultaneously, they act as guiding beacons, sparking discussions and creating opportunities for further exploration. Each intervention centres around a specific focus:

- A. Culture and Citizen Dialogue (located close to the water and the city)*
- B. Research of Reuse (featuring a spacious outdoor area in the west)*
- C. Research of Landscape (oriented towards the park)*

(A) In the corner facing the lake and the centre of Växjö, the *Culture and Citizen Dialogue* pole is established, combining both a new building and the existing structure. During construction, the current office spaces in building H are temporarily relocated, giving the possibility of a seamless integration with the new addition. The ground floor opens up to the street, creating a small square within the site and invites visitors to the upper floors of spaces for seminars and workshops. This new point of reference becomes the hospital's welcoming entrance, anchoring future development and empowering citizens to influence its outcome.

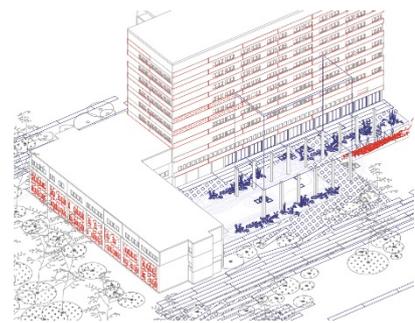
(B) The pole for *Research of Reuse*, with direct access to the street and a spacious courtyard, optimizes the structure of an existing garage in building M. Two floors of generous workshop spaces, high ceilings, and open spans offer versatile potential for various uses. Utilizing materials found on-site, offices for different research activities are installed on mezzanines, fostering a collaborative and creative environment.

(C) Recreating natural soil on a former car park, the pole for *Research of Landscape* provides a space for professionals and the public to meet and explore new possibilities in the site's natural domain. Open to the park Strandbjörket, ongoing research and solutions are showcased, creating an environment of collaborative creation. Building Q is repurposed to create a double-ceiling laboratory space, while the current program is moved to a new extension on the roof, also housing offices for landscape researchers.

These interventions not only seamlessly blend with the hospital and the city but also play a vital role in initiating meaningful conversations and fostering a deeper understanding of the hospital area's future vision. Equally important is their impact in instigating and gradually transforming the way people perceive and embrace the area, forging a new identity. Their collaborative nature paves the way for a vibrant and inclusive transformation, actively involving the community in shaping a brighter and more sustainable future for Växjö.

Embracing Metabolic Conception: Preparing for Phase Two

As the hospital departs, a collective and open-ended approach is needed to navigate the complexity of transforming the entire hospital area. Solutions and decisions must organically evolve alongside a deep understanding of the site's full potential—both in terms of materials and the social interactions connected to the hospital's activities. The knowledge gained from the interventions and their activities from Phase One will shape the strategy for Phase Two, which aims to discover new uses for old structures and materials, giving rise to a fresh identity for the area. The goal is to create a more intimate and enriched atmosphere in public and private spaces, anchored as a site of public care and collaboration.



The hospital building's intricate design and diverse materials pose challenges in its transformation into a new public space. Traditional methods of construction may not fully accommodate the inherent complexities and constraints presented by the existing structure. Therefore, we turn to a metabolic way of conception as a guiding principle to navigate through these complexities. To achieve these objectives, we propose a versatile *toolbox* of dynamic micro-interventions that will transform the hospital into a vibrant public space. This approach embodies adaptability, spontaneity, and innovative material reuse strategies, ensuring a harmonious integration into the larger vision of the public space. By empowering designers and builders to engage directly with materials, the toolbox allows for spontaneous adjustments and creative adaptations during implementation, resulting in a more organic and dynamic transformation.

In embracing the metabolic way of conception, we recognize the vital link between design and making. This approach dissolves the rigid boundaries between the planning stage and the actual implementation, allowing for a continuous flow of ideas and hands-on engagement with materials. By adopting this method, the resulting public space will not only possess vitality and character but also seamlessly integrate with the existing hospital, preserving its history while infusing it with new life.

The adaptability inherent in this approach enables us to respond to the ever-changing needs and aspirations of the community. It allows for a dynamic transformation of the hospital into a vibrant public space, evolving and growing alongside the people it serves. This adaptability ensures that the new public space remains relevant and functional, while also respecting the legacy of the hospital and its significance to the community.

By embracing the inseparability of design and making, we empower architects, builders, and the community to actively shape the transformation process. This collaborative engagement fosters a deeper connection to the space, as it becomes a collective effort and a reflection of the community's values and aspirations. It also promotes a sense of ownership and pride among the residents of Växjö, as they play a direct role in shaping their city's future.

Phase Two: Making a Piece of the City

Along the knowledge developed from the activities of the three interventions and the ever-developing toolbox, also a structural intervention is taking place at an urban level of the hospital area. Opening up new roads, for cars as well as for pedestrians, a new flow of people will traverse the site, making it a natural part of the city. The new openings will also be part in activating the roads around the site. In a similar approach, the public spaces and courtyards are created by the spaces in-between the existing buildings. At some places buildings are demolished to give open up for a more generous public space and more vegetated soil. In leaving the big gestures of the design to the existing a large variety of spaces are created, creating a potential of different types of use and activities to take place.



At this stage of the project, we have intentionally left the exact use of the existing structures open, allowing for a thorough exploration of the site's inherent potential. While there are plans to incorporate large portions of housing and workspaces, the true strength of the project lies in the process of organic development and learning that will take place over time. By adopting a patient and adaptive approach, we aim to allow the site to organically evolve and find its own solutions. This means embracing the dynamic nature of the city and the changing needs of its inhabitants, as well as respecting the unique characteristics of the existing buildings and their relationship to the surrounding context.

The activation of the ground floor within the existing structures and surrounding landscape is pivotal to integrate the area in the city. Through the creative reuse of old hospital buildings, we aim to integrate their historical significance with contemporary functionality. These renovated spaces will be strategically designed to accommodate various uses, such as cultural venues, community facilities, and local businesses. By activating these spaces, we will create a vibrant public environment that encourages social interactions and fosters a sense of community among residents and visitors. This transformation will not only invigorate the site but also act as a catalyst for economic growth, generating job opportunities and supporting local businesses. Through a mindful approach to reuse and a deep connection to the local context, the site will become a meaningful place that celebrates its heritage while embracing a promising future for Växjö.