

VÄGSJÖSTADEN

The Central Hospital in Växjö is beautifully embedded between green recreational areas, the train station, and the city's central neighborhoods. As Växjö's population increases, the transformation of the current hospital area into an identity-creating place for culture and community is a crucial part of the city's development. The location by the northern shore of Växjösjön has a strong historical connection to Växjö's early development, as it was here that five roads crossed and formed the place for trade and residence that later became Växjö city. This is reflected not least in the name, where a combination of the Old Swedish Vaegar - road, and Sjö - lake, together form Växjö. To reconnect with the local history of the site, we propose that the new cultural quarter that is emerging in the premises of the central hospital is to be named Vägsjöstaden, a cultural neighborhood and the heart of future Växjö.

The transformation of the central hospital is part of a larger ongoing postmodern urban development that is taking place globally in line with worldwide urbanization. As industry and infrastructure move to the outskirts in favor of a vibrant city, the former functional zones are being transformed into blocks of housing and urban life. A common approach is to consider these places as a tabula rasa, a blank sheet to be filled with ideas of the good city. An attempt that often results in an urban fabric characterized by apparent small-scale, only vaguely linked to academic theories of urbanity, sometimes adorned with fetishized objects linked to the site's former function. We propose instead that the transformation of the Central Hospital should be treated as a palimpsest, where new programs and functions fit into the existing framework and are then adapted to their new function, thus even the spatialities bear clear traces of history, forming an urban fabric of superimposition and reuse. If we allow ourselves to be poets, we can compare the existing hospital to the material from which the sculptor chisels out her work. By removing material and working on the surface of the existing structure, Vägsjöstaden is gradually chiseled into existence.

When the central hospital relocates to new premises, the block can be refined and the overall interconnected infrastructure that characterizes a modernist hospital can be loosened in favor of street life, spaces for recreation and enhanced accessibility. By removing unnecessary passageways, re-cladding the existing structures in more appropriately designed envelopes and adding some complementary elements, the neighborhood can be adapted to the future without losing historical roots or extensively wasting resources.

In line with Växjö's slogan The Greenest City in Europe, we propose the demolition of three buildings in the middle of the central hospital block, in favor of a larger park space that better connects to the surrounding nature and road network. The grid planting of linden trees that defines the promenade continues into the new public space, defining a lush green living room, effectively taking up the slope between Strandvägen and Varendsgatan. A restaurant pavilion and an outdoor stage/skating rink are placed in the park space.



GIVES A SECOND LIFE TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

BY ADAPTING THEM TO FUTURE NEEDS

USING RECYCLED MATERIALS FROM THE SITE

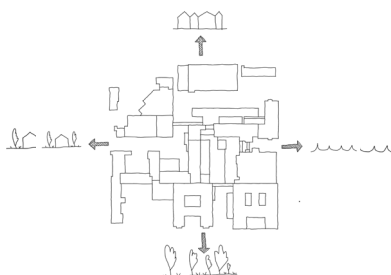
THEREBY BRIDGING THE PAST WITH THE FUTURE

**IMPLEMENTS GREEN CORRIDORS,
FOR BIODIVERSITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

**AND STRENGTHENS VÄXJÖ AS
"THE GREENEST CITY IN EUROPE".**



The former hospital area is incorporated into Växjö's urban fabric by cleaning up the introverted infrastructure of the hospital, in favor of an extroverted urban life. New paths balance the specific conditions of the site with the existing city grid. Most of the larger buildings of the area are preserved, but are clad with new facades that reflect Växjö's ambition to be an innovative and sustainable wooden city in the middle of the glass kingdom.



EXISTING SITUATION

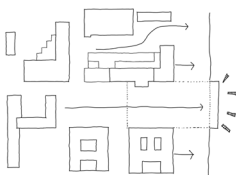
Today, the hospital area is large and compact. It is characterized by its many extensions and an inward-looking, complex infrastructure. The picturesque location by Lake Växjö contributes to the area's future potential, and the key is to rework the existing structure to give the area a new identity.

SURROUNDINGS

The surroundings of the hospital area offer good conditions for an attractive urban life. With Strandbjörket to the south, Växjösjön to the east, the garden city to the west and the city centre to the north, the district is surrounded by an attractive combination of nature and urban life, characterized by green paths and a clear grid plan.

ADAPTING THE BLOCK

Once the strictly functional logic of the hospital area is no longer needed, the underlying structure of the existing building can be refined and adapted to its surroundings. The large block is broken down into smaller components and unnecessary barriers are removed to create a more open, accessible and welcoming setting.



CONNECTIONS TO THE WATER

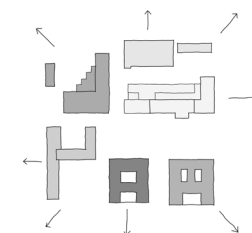
To strengthen the connection between the city and Växjösjön, the existing structure is cleaned up for a more defined east-west direction through the block. New paths and sight lines are created between the water and the grid city, incorporating the former supergrid of the hospital district into the city network.

COMMUNICATION

New ways of moving through the area are created by opening previously closed passages, for an urban fabric with more obvious walking and cycling routes. Bus line 9 gets a new stop for a more integrated public transport solution. Existing culverts are used for underground parking, freeing the area from traffic.

PROGRAM

The programming of the neighborhood aims to reinforce positive and successful aspects associated with Växjö, such as culture, wood construction, entrepreneurship, nature and sustainability. The new functions are arranged with regards to the surroundings character and transform the hospital area into a vibrant and diverse place.



TWO PUBLIC OUTDOOR ROOMS

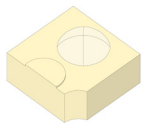
Two outdoor spaces with different characters are formed by the programs linked to them, creating a dynamic and varied outdoor environment. One space with a picturesque character filled with lush greenery, while the other space has more urban qualities, suitable for square activities.

SYNERGY EFFECTS

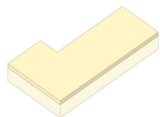
Vägsjöstaden is designed as a city of mixed-use, active around the clock. It strives for a new programming that balances the hospital's conditions with the immediate context. Public buildings face the water while creative spaces turn towards the city center. Housing connects to the garden city, while the hotel occupy the most central and prominent building.

CATALYST CONVERTER

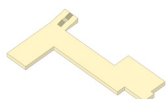
Through Vägsjöstaden, Växjö is gaining a new cultural hub that makes available the park, the water and the former area of the hospital, and creates a new and exciting place in the city. By activating the surroundings and offering various activities and functions, Vägsjöstaden contributes to the continued growth of the city.

**CULTURE HOUSE, 12 000 m² GFA**

The Culture House is a versatile venue that houses art exhibitions, congresses, a restaurant, café, children's library, concerts, theater and a culture and language centre. By placing public functions on the ground floor, Strandvägen is strengthened as a public and lively place facing Växjösjön. The rooftop is available for events, such as outdoor cinema viewings and concerts.

**MARKET HALL, 1 000 m² GFA**

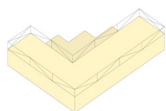
The market hall offers a place for local craft tradition and food culture, with restaurants and a trading point for locally produced foods. The roof terrace is nicely embedded in its surroundings, among the treetops of Strandvägen in the direction of the lake. The ground floor of the sales hall faces the lake promenade, while the park and square can host activities such as the farmer's market and food festivals.

**URBAN SQUARE, 7 000 m² GFA**

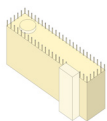
The urban square is a vibrant, lively place that lends itself well to various events. With plenty of space for markets, pop-up shops and other temporary activities, which coincide with activity linked to surrounding workshops, shops, cafes and restaurants.

**INNOVATION CENTER, 2 000 m² GFA**

The Center for Innovation houses an incubator, museum, exhibitions, café and a platform for community involvement and workshops/trainings on environmental issues and green technology. The rooftop is used for cultivation and greenhouses. The center will be a creative hub in the intersection of art, industry and research, closely connected to Linnéuniversitetet, for a platform that connects knowledge and entrepreneurship, and strengthens Växjö's position as a sustainable city.

**HEALTH CENTER, 10 700 m² GFA**

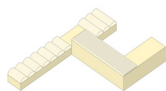
The health center builds on the area's history as a place of health and well-being. There is a gym, pharmacy and clinic here, as well as the opportunity for Linnéuniversitetet to conduct research activities related to sports and health. The rooftop is programmed with an outdoor gym, running track and multi-court for sports activities. The center is strategically directed towards the homes on Söder and towards the station, in proximity of the medical center and infection clinic.

**HOTEL, 9 600 m² GFA**

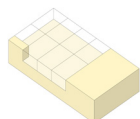
The hotel welcome anyone visiting the region of Småland. In proximity of the central station, it is located in the middle of Vägsjöstaden, in the area's tallest building, with a rooftop restaurant that provides a view over the whole of Växjö. The infirmary's lobby is reused and adapted for hotel operations and is surrounded by a glass-enclosed, double-height breakfast room that also connects to the market hall.

**ALLOTMENTS, 2 300 m² GFA**

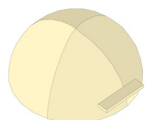
In the vicinity of apartment buildings and old people's homes, in prime south-facing location, allotments are available for residents and the public. Here, the local small scale farmer enthusiast can grow vegetables and other plants, with help from the Center of Innovation and the Workshop, who both offers support and the possibility to borrow tools for cultivation.

**ECO-LIVING, 9 800 m² GFA**

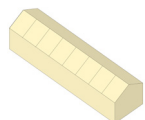
In connection with the park in the south-western corner, the current children's nursery is being built together with the buildings along Värendsgatan into a multi-generational residence with integrated environmental solutions for climate and food production. The "eco-housing" offers a way of living that promotes sustainability and community, where different generations can live and learn from each other and socialize through, for example, a collective dining room. On the northern side there is a shaded courtyard providing outdoor spaces for the ground floor pre-school.

**WORKSHOP, 6 000 m² GFA**

The workshop is housed in the former parking garage, transforming the robust concrete structure into a maker space with focus on recycling. Opportunities are offered to rent premises and tools for projects, and the workshop provide spaces for handling and storing materials and building details from hospital demolition. The rooftop is used as a flexible outdoor workshop for larger projects or temporary installations. The workshop is a gathering place that strengthens the city's cultural, sustainable and entrepreneurial spirit.

**THE PAVILION, 500 m² GFA**

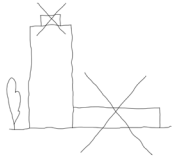
The pavilion is a central part of the new area, with a garden café and information about the development of the new block, which can be displayed here continuously in parallel with the area taking shape. The pavilion is erected early in the project, preferably at a temporary location in Strandbjörket, until the green landscape of Gläntan is completed, and is used to maintain a dialogue with residents and visitors throughout the life of the project. In this way, the pavilion becomes a clear marker for the area's vision and identity.

**ATELIERS, 1 800 m² GFA**

The studios are located in the north, near the workshop, and offers space for artists and creative industries, providing facilities for both production and exhibitions, as well as temporary residences for scholarship holders to live and work during a specified time. The studios strengthen Växjö's identity as a *creative city in the heart of the kingdom of glass and wood*.

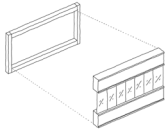
**GLÄNTAN PARK, 8 000 m² GFA**

The green parkscape of Gläntan creates a new glade that provides Vägsjöstaden with light and air, as well as recreational opportunities and ecosystem services. The public can enjoy the extended green lane connecting the lakeside promenade and the residential areas of Söder. An amphitheater enables open-air cultural activities, gatherings, lectures and events. During winter season, the lowest level of the theater can be used as an ice rink.



PRESERVE & REJECT

With care and precision, the buildings that need to be removed are selected to create an open and accessible space. The balance is between future-proofing as much of the existing structure as possible without compromising a healthy urban life. Existing trees in the area are preserved and the green infrastructure is strengthened through new avenues and green spaces, as well as green roofs.



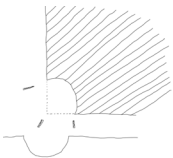
EXISTING STRUCTURES, NEW SHAPES

The existing buildings in the hospital area are being adapted to the future with a new, more open and well-insulated façade. The underlying structure of the area is preserved as far as possible, and the material that is dismantled is reused in the renovation.



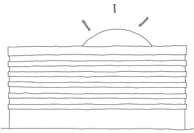
SUSTAINABILITY

In the new cultural quarter, sustainability measures are emphasized in an educational way, as integral parts of the aesthetic expression of the new quarter. There are rainwater ponds in the park that can be used to irrigate crops and landscaping, solar panels on the roofs, and new additions are made as far as possible by reusing existing materials.



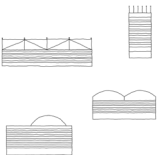
ADAPTATIONS

Careful adjustments adapt the existing structures to the surroundings and to their new program and functions. The buildings are detailed and adjusted for a more human scale.



ACTIVE ROOFS

All the rooftops are programmed for different uses, either passively through solar cells for energy production, or actively through cultivation and social spaces such as restaurants, recreational areas, exercise tracks and outdoor workshops for creative activities.



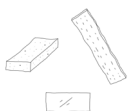
UNIFORMITY OF EXPRESSION

As the buildings in the area largely retain their existing structure, the houses also retain characteristic traces of their former hospital use. The facades are given a new and unified look, with glass and brick being sacked with lime to give a uniform tone despite the different shades of the recycled brick.



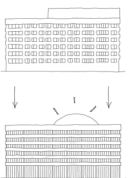
RECYCLED MATERIALS

As far as possible the dismantled materials are given new life. As interior flooring and façade materials on the renovated buildings, or exterior backfill, gravel and aggregate in new castings. The beautiful glass details from Kosta are collected and used to clad the Hotel's external elevator shaft, and quality stone are used in the foyer of the Culture House.



WOOD, GLASS, BRICK

The overhauled area is characterized by natural materials such as glass, wood and recycled brick. Glass and wood are typical of Växjö with its history of glass art and wood construction. The reused brick is taken from existing buildings, thus maintaining a relationship between the new additions and the former hospital buildings.



A NEW ERA ... WITH TRACES OF THE OLD

The transformation of the old hospital creates a new area with clear traces of its former activities. The nature of the former hospital block is to some extents preserved, while shaping a new identity for the future of Vägsjöstaden, characterized by sustainability, innovative timber construction and culture.

The development of the hospital area, from existing operations to the future cultural quarters of Vägsjöstaden, will be carried out in four phases, in order to maintain a vibrant city life open to the public from day one.

PHASE 1 lays the foundation for the new area by promoting social life, creativity and community. The existing buildings that can easily be adapted to new uses, are temporarily rented out as office spaces and housing, to accommodate startups, small businesses, students, youths and refugees or other people with urgent needs or lower demands for convenience. In parallel, Strandvägen's market hall will be established, starting with food trucks and outdoor markets near the water at Strandvägen, as part of a placemaking approach to attract visitors from all over Växjö.

The parkway pavilion is temporarily placed at the side of the site in Strandbjörket park, while construction of the parkway is underway, creating a platform for citizen dialogue that involves the local population in the development of the area. The former parking garage is used as a makerspace; a hub for industry, craftsmen and enthusiasts in Växjö, while material from demolition can be cataloged and stored here until it is used to develop the area in future phases. The north-west building that currently houses a pharmacy, transforms into a health center to maintain community-based health services in the area. The first phase ensures that people are able to live and work in Vägsjöstaden parallel to the demolition of redundant building structures, and activates the block in a local to semi-local perspective.

PHASE 2 focuses on the core values of culture and community. The new green courtyard replaces the demolished buildings and creates a park-like glade bringing light and air to the previously dense block. While awaiting completion of the large cultural buildings, outdoor events can be held in the new amphitheater, which is utilized by the yet house-less Culture Center. The connection between the water and the city is strengthened in the new block, helping to integrate Växjö city center through the extended waterfront promenade. The second phase shapes the area into an interesting site for culture, community and nature in the middle of the city, attracting visitors from a local, regional and national perspective.

PHASE 3 focuses on taking the district into an innovative and sustainable future. The innovation center develops into a hub for creative industries, with collaboration between industry, entrepreneurs and Linnéuniversitetet. At the same time, a new housing option is introduced - Ekoboende - which puts sustainability and community in focus. The apartment building contains generational living, and is characterized by both renewable energy solutions and social spaces such as the collective dining room and farming facilities.

The third phase strengthens the areas profile as sustainable and future-proof. It ends the temporary nature of phase one and two, where placemaking projects and temporary solutions gradually are cemented into a more permanent city block, as the buildings for the new activities are completed.

PHASE 4 starts with the inauguration of the Cultural House, and aims to inform and engage residents and visitors about the potential of the building and Vägsjöstaden at large, where an exhibition in the new cultural center highlights the district's rich cultural and creative offerings. A variety of activities, workshops and events will strengthen the community and provide information about the different functions of the area.

The fourth and final phase, in a sense, begins well before the physical framework of the area is completed at the end of phase three, and essentially involves businesses and facilities growing and maturing into their new neighborhood in parallel with its development. The four phases together form a dynamic and sustainable cityscape, highlighting and reinforcing Växjö's strengths, aspirations and goals, while accommodating and responding to the challenges and opportunities of the future.