



FUNDAMENTAL

.....
**DESIGN OF A YOUTH CENTER THROUGH APPEALING
ARCHITECTURE OF OPERATIVE SURFACES**

SENA AKÇIÇEK



Master Thesis of Architecture and Urban Design
Author: Sena Akçiçek
Spring 2019

Chalmers University Of Technology
Architecture and Civil Engineering Department
MPARC

Examiner: Emilio Da Brandao Cruz
Supervisor: Kengo Skorick

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents who have always supported me for following my dreams. They have been a source of motivation throughout the process of this work and even in the most stressful moments they made me feel their presence from thousands of kilometers away.

I would like to also thank my thesis examiner -Emilio Da Cruz Brandao and my supervisor -Kengo Skorick for their constant support and help, for me to get the best learning experience out of this work. Additional thanks for two more mentors, Joaquim Tarraso and Marco Adelfio, who have helped me in this process with their inspirational ideas.

All my friends and the Urban Challenges team have built a great network of care and support, which I will be thankful forever. It was great to have their encouragement in both cheerful and challenging times.

I would like to thank the Adlerbert Foundations for awarding me with Adlerbert Study Scholarship throughout my master's education which made it possible for me to reach to this day and graduate from one of the most prestigious universities of Scandinavia.

Finally, I must add a special thanks for Rita Ravari, a devoted and generous teacher, who has been an role model for me for her motivation to do best for her students and opening discussions with her surroundings to make people start thinking about issues of today's society. She has a great part in the process of finding the right questions to ask in this thesis.

A large, dark gray opening quotation mark is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the white top section and the gray bottom section.

The Youth Center needs to stand out – if you think the outside is interesting then you will be curious and want to go inside. It should be impressive and appealing.

A Young Person who took part in the participatory design process of Youth Centers within joinedupdesign project. (The Sorrell Foundation, 2010)



ABSTRACT

Culture, as a notion, may be one of the hardest words to be defined. Everyone has an idea about what 'culture' is, yet there is no definition that has been recognized by all. Goffman (1959) and Van Maanen (1979) say culture is observed behavioral regularities, while Smircich (1983) describes culture as a social or normative glue based on shared values and beliefs (see Pascale and Athos 1981) that holds organizations together. But in today's world where the individuals are not bound to live where they were born and mobility is key to better living conditions, what binds the communities that do not share similar socio-cultural backgrounds?

The technology age, has brought high-mobility and accessibility to humanity. Although as a side effect, it has broken the communities that were once formed with the resemblances of identity, behavior and manner. Since the industrial revolution, especially in the cities, the formerly well-bound, alike-group of people, that is to say again, communities, are replaced by the new societies that are built with people of different, and even-contrasting backgrounds. Some groups in this process, have been vulnerable and unfortunate to not get the same opportunities and chances as the others. The thesis aims to propose a solution to these loosely tied and unevenly-provided groups in the cities, through architecture which can act as an adhesive matter by creating spaces that are appealing and need-responsive to bring people together. Therefore this research is an investigation of forms that can resonate and take shape of the program it encloses and attract people by providing a variety of atmospheres which can engage with every individual with different needs and desires. With the belief that the change in society can only start if we learn to embrace the cultural differences from the younger ages, the final product of the thesis is defined as Youth Center proposal from the beginning. The investigation has resulted by defining a design methodology which gives the possibility to apply the process in different scales and locations.

The findings and the developed methodology are explained through a design proposal located in Angered, a community that have been overlooked in the city of Gothenburg. By doing so, it is aimed to raise attention and to attract more people to the area. The architecture of the youth center is expected to create a setting where individuals can interact, exchange and learn from each other but even be a didactic element itself. The form arises from the design of sections defined by the methodology and the designer's intuition. The project is narrated in multi-scalar manner by making unexpected switches between the scales.




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CHAPTER ONE

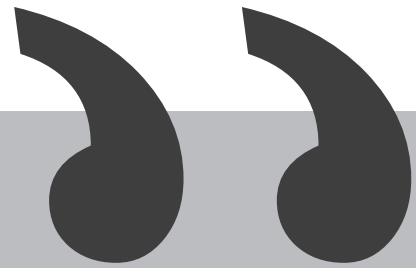
INTRODUCTION



BACKGROUND

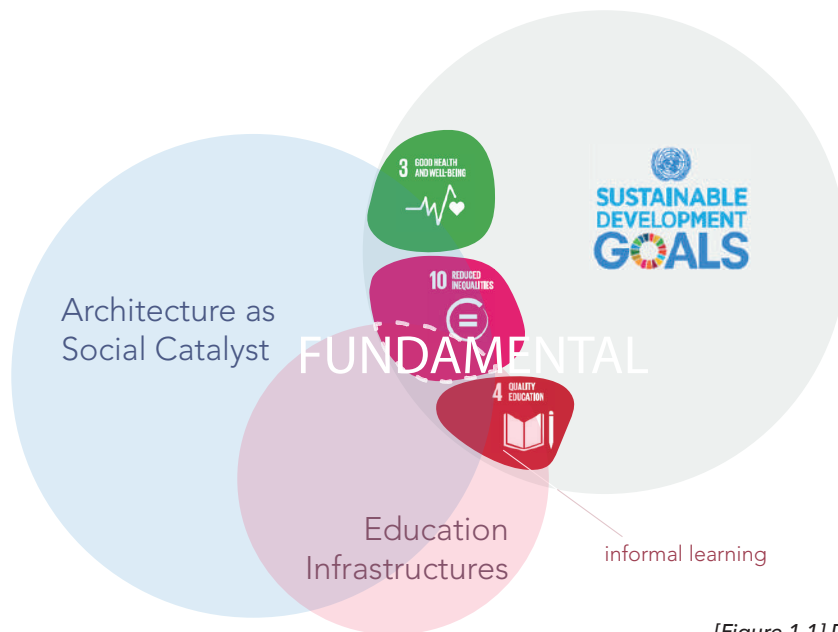
The background of this project does not derive from academic, literature or precedent references, but it is built on precise **occasions, people and stories**. One of which was a conversation with a middle school teacher in Gårdstenskolan.

After the discussion the feeling of frustration and despondency caused the following questions to be asked; Do I as a future-architect, have any power to spark a change? Can the architect bring communities together through appealing forms? Can architecture be a didactic element to prove the differences are what makes communities better? What kind of atmospheres are needed to attract to young people? And how one place can reach out to a great extend of youth? All these eventually formed the thesis question...



THESIS QUESTION

Can appealing forms composed of operative surfaces attract youngsters from all over the town and provide an inclusive space where young people interact and exchange with each other?



[Figure 1.1] Diagram of Discourse

DIAGRAM OF DISCOURSE

During my undergraduate and graduate education, I have academically filled-in myself on education infrastructures. Concurrently the academic culture I acquired, from Chalmers University of Technology, has formed a sensible perception towards every form of sustainability (not just ecological but also social, cultural, etc) Due to my interests on architecture's effect on social systems especially the spaces that become social catalysts/ nodes of interaction and of which gain more significance through its users experiences; this work is devoted to a real life problem that is currently happening all around the globe. This problem can be portrayed as the inequality of opportunities, specifically education and welfare standards, between the favored and unfortunate communities. In light of these, one can say 'FUNDAMENTAL' is a work that is shaped in the backdrop of my academic background and the interest to propose a solution to the inequalities in the cities.

Due to my current position, an overlooked area of the city of Gothenburg was defined as context with the aim of exploring how architecture can be a binder of cultures and a node for cultural exchange in a setting where there are not many opportunities and encountering to "the other" is not encouraged. Youth Center is selected as the architectural program from the beginning of the research to create a platform where learning in informal settings can occur. Therefore the discourse reaches out 3 points of Sustainable Development Goals; '10. Reduced inequalities,' '4. Quality Education' and '3. Good Health and Well-being'.



GAPS

Despite the existence of beautiful/enticing/functioning/interesting/attractive/inclusive/welcoming youth center projects, it seems like none of the built designs had the specific aim of bringing people together from different backgrounds especially contrasting individuals or groups such as locals/immigrants, sane/insane, young/old, wealthy/impoverished. On the ground of difficulties while searching projects with similar aims, one might say that this topic has not been explored yet, the researches has not been done about the case or even if it has been done, it has not been published.



RELEVANCE

The thesis work raises attention to architecture's binding quality and propose a solution to a present-day problem which is unequal distribution of public services and the fragmentation of the societal formations in the city . Therefore the work pursues societal, social/cultural sustainability discourses and the research of forms to inhabit the needs of youth and attract them to meet and exchange in one place.

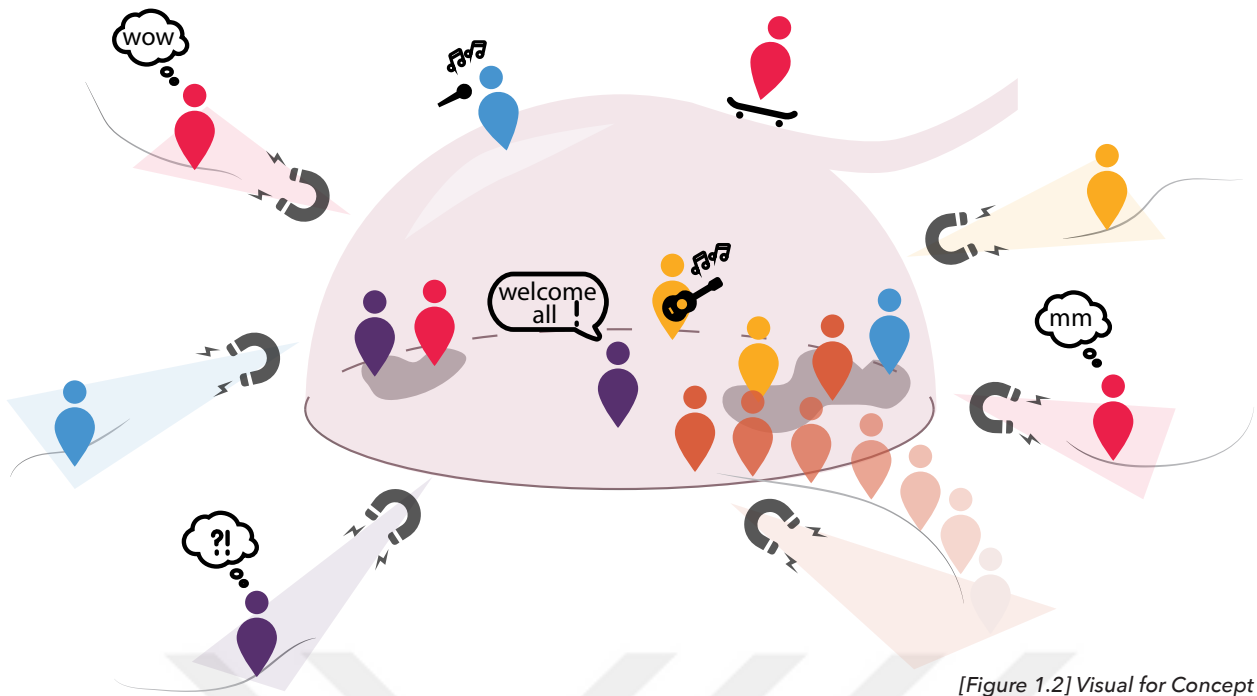


DELIMITATIONS

The study focuses on architecture's ability to change human behavior and interaction with each other. While it covers architecture's spatial qualities and the situations that it can embody, the work will not be able to go in detail in architectural techniques and construction details due to limited time. At the same time it will be limited to architectural scale. Urban analysis is conducted in relevant areas, nevertheless, the work does not go further in the application of project or its expansions in the urban scale.

The project will be a composition of spaces for cultural and avocational activities but will not focus on Swedish regulations for youth centers or any other technicalities. It will be dedicated to a very specific age group, while other age groups can also use the space.

During the user involvement part of the research, there might have been impediments due to lingual and cultural differences and the distinct background and perspectives. This part was not a deep research but a scratch in the surface to get the opinions of the 'youth' while designing for them but as a spin-off, this process has been educative for the participants and for me.

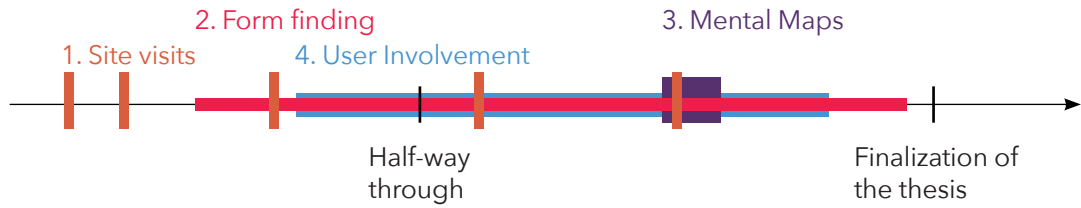


[Figure 1.2] Visual for Concept

CONCEPT

The work explores how to bring together the youth from different cultures and informal learning situations by using architecture as a binder. In this process, firstly literature review have been done to have a simple understanding of the culture of interaction from perspectives of psychology, linguistics, philosophy and anthropology. Site visits have been conducted to understand better the context in terms of its physical location, locals' norms, values and way of communicating.

User's opinion was taken in different points of the design process. It aims to get the perspective of youth on such an intervention, if they would use this kind of place, and what kind of activities would be interesting for them. Simultaneously, physical model making and digital analysis were conducted.



[Figure 1.3] Use of Methodologies throughout the process

METHODOLOGIES

4 main methodologies have been used in this thesis according to the time-line shown above.

1. Site Visits
2. Form finding through Emotion Maps
3. User Involvement
4. Mental Cognitive Maps

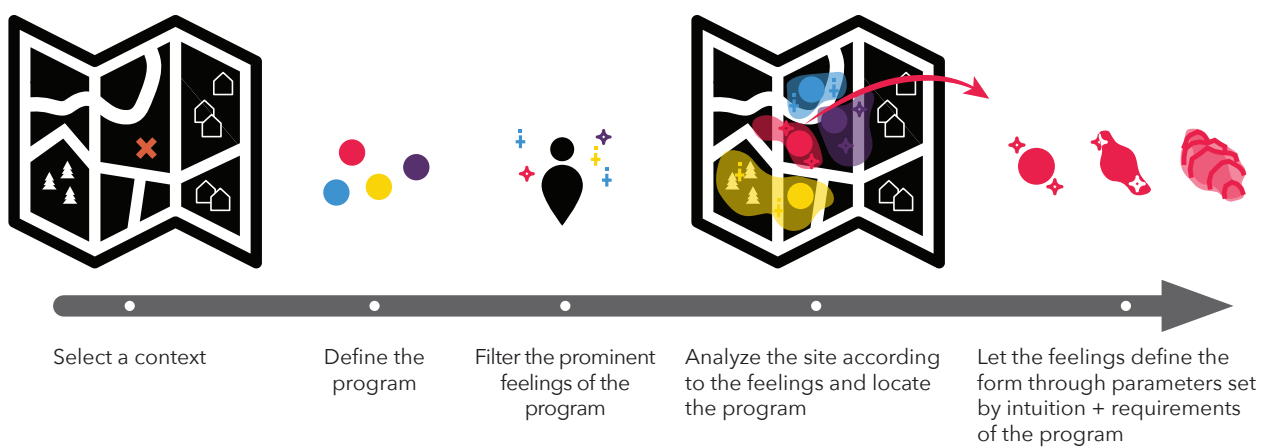
SITE VISITS

The context is essential in the process of design. To be able to visit the site as much as possible an area in close proximity was selected. To build a good idea of the place is crucial for the project. Consequently, observing and starting conversations with the locals in the area was planned to understand the local culture better. Interviews and user involvement has been done in parallel to site visits.

During the site visits, some casual encounters have been made with some young people in the area and questions were asked to understand their opinion about the chosen site. Additionally people were observed to see their instinctual way of interacting with the site that doesn't have any human intervention. Many photographs were taken. Some of them were used to analyze the naturally present materials and the existing color scheme. While others were used to correctly locate the natural elements in the digital model to have a correct physical understanding and memory of the place.

FORM FINDING THROUGH EMOTION MAPS

A self-structured method has been used during the design process. As the selected context carries great qualities, the architecture needs to preserve these qualities without degrading them. One way to achieve this was to apply the method below which simply picks the prominent feelings of the program to be added, analyzes the site with those qualities and finally reflects these on the architectural form through intuitively defined parameters.



[Figure 1.4] Form Finding Through Emotion Maps

USER INVOLVEMENT

User and possible-stakeholders' participation was used throughout the project to get their opinion. In the beginning the plan was to involve the young target group by conducting workshops and games where participants can actively engage. Nevertheless, it was not possible to arrange workshop due to long-term planning of school schedules and communication issues. But through Rita Ravari, (see page 31) it was possible to reach to some students. The initial number was bigger than stated, but in the last minute some of the students changed their mind to meet so the participation was low. In my opinion, it was because the meeting point was changed to a central point rather than Angered and the students did not feel comfortable to join.

Multiple interviews were conducted with Rita Ravari, to understand from a teacher's perspective who has close connections with her students and has a capability to understand her students' reasonings and motivations.

Additionally some interviews were conducted with people working at Blåstället. Some of the sentences were spread as quotations throughout the thesis booklet. The rest of the data gathered from these interviews were recorded only as audio and not documented as text. It was rather used as a background information during the design process.

MENTAL COGNITIVE MAPS

It is often difficult to define feelings about a particular thing from our daily lives. It has been repeated so many times that we may not be able to distinguish the negative things as negative anymore. It becomes 'normalized' over time. By asking the right questions these unnoticed obstacles of daily life can be brought up.

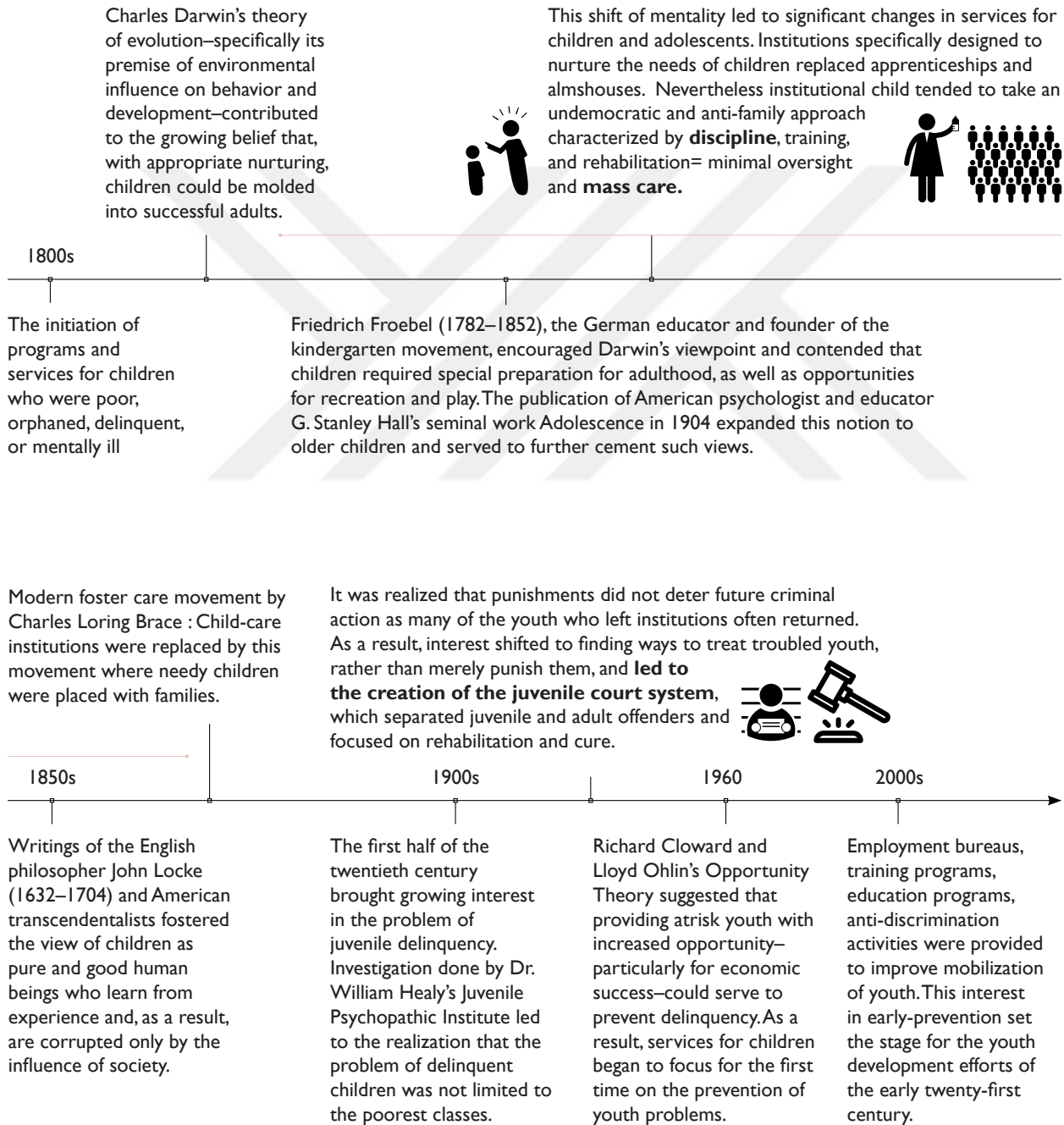
With this methodology the intention was to find the spots in the neighborhood where people feel unrest. If the public space intervention is located in such places, it can confront these kind of situations to bring the feeling of safety and comfort both for locals and visitors. So, this method will be used for understanding the dynamics of the neighborhood and choosing the site for the intervention but also to locate the future intervention points in the conclusion part.

CHAPTER TWO

PRESENTATION OF DATA

HISTORY OF YOUTH CENTER

Youth development programs seek to improve the lives of children and adolescents by meeting their basic physical, developmental, and social needs and by helping them to build the competencies needed to become successful adults. Throughout history youth development programs were provided under community services, mentoring programs, and neighborhood youth centers. (Van Alst, D., & Peterson, N.; n.d.) To understand today's Youth Centers we must have brief knowledge on the influential theories on children's development and history of the services provided for youth.



[Figure 2.1] History of Youth Development Programs. Data gathered from web source. (Van Alst, D., & Peterson, N.; n.d.)

TODAY'S ASPIRATIONS FOR YOUTH CENTERS

'Joinedupdesign' for myplace, a participatory design process project for 15 youth centers in UK, have published a report in 2010 where they display their research of 6 months collaborating with 160 young people over 155 meetings. This report presents the following key points for describing the ideal Youth Center from the perspective of young people. (The Sorrell Foundation, 2010)



Distinctive architecture

Young people want their youth Centers to look iconic and modern - buildings they can feel proud of and inspired by. They are clear that they should not feel institutional



A place to realize opportunities

Young people want places where they can discover talents, develop skills and showcase abilities. Their centers should act as a route to further education and work, providing them with guidance and training.



Accessibility and inclusivity

It is important to clients that their youth centers are open to people of all ages, genders, ethnicities and abilities.



Communicating a positive image

Design is one way to communicate the positive activities going on in the youth center to the community. Creating a shop window or a 'street' through the building, allowing people to see what goes on inside.



Enterprise and income

Young people are very entrepreneurial and want high quality facilities that can generate income. A café was a popular idea for revenue, along with ticketed events and performances.



Reputation and identity

An effective name and brand for their center is important. Youth wanted a strong brand that represents them in a positive way and will attract young people to the center.



Visibility

Young people want their youth centers to be highly visible landmarks, helping young people to feel respected, proud and valued.



Somewhere colorful

Young people ask for vibrant, dynamic, modern interiors that use color to enhance mood and help with way-finding. They like the idea of using large wall graphics to animate and explain different spaces.



Flexible spaces

Young clients recognize that having multi-functional areas can help overcome space and budget restrictions. A dance studio might double as a drama space or an indoor sports hall, for example.



Dedicated spaces

Youth centers also need spaces dedicated to certain activities. Young people ask for special areas for using computers, studying, holding meetings and learning specialist skills.



Outdoor spaces

Outdoor spaces are a priority for young people, providing alternative areas for performance, sports and socializing. Some were keen to develop kitchen gardens, art studios and skate parks.



A welcoming entrance

Feeling welcome and secure as they walk into their center is crucial for young people. Cafés or gallery spaces could be positioned at the front of the building to attract users and the wider community.

REFERENCE PROJECT

Project Name:
Kavel K

Architects:
Carve

Location:
The Hague, The Netherlands

Area:
1650.0 sqm

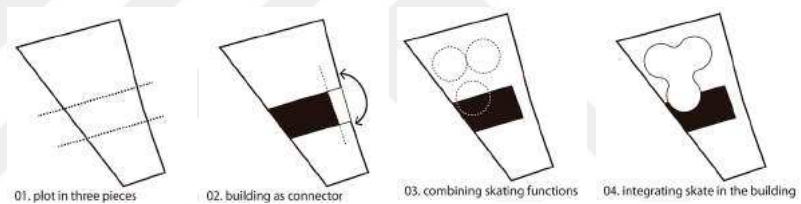
Project Year:
2014

Photographs:
Marleen Beek

BUILDING AS THE PROGRAM ITSELF

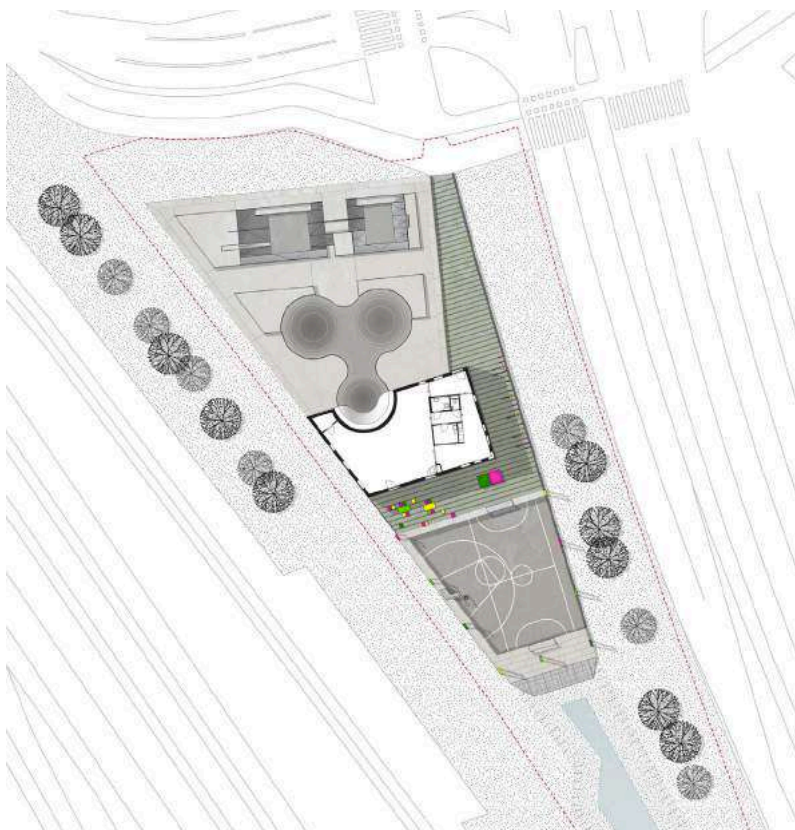


[Figure 2.2] Perspective from Kavel K



[Figure 2.3] Design process diagram

“the public space and the building are designed as a unity; the facade and the skate-cradle even ‘melt together’.”
(Archdaily, 2014)



[Figure 2.4] Situation plan

CALLING FROM THE STREET

REFERENCE PROJECT



[Figure 2.5] External view from Sticky Fingers

Project Name:
Sticky Fingers

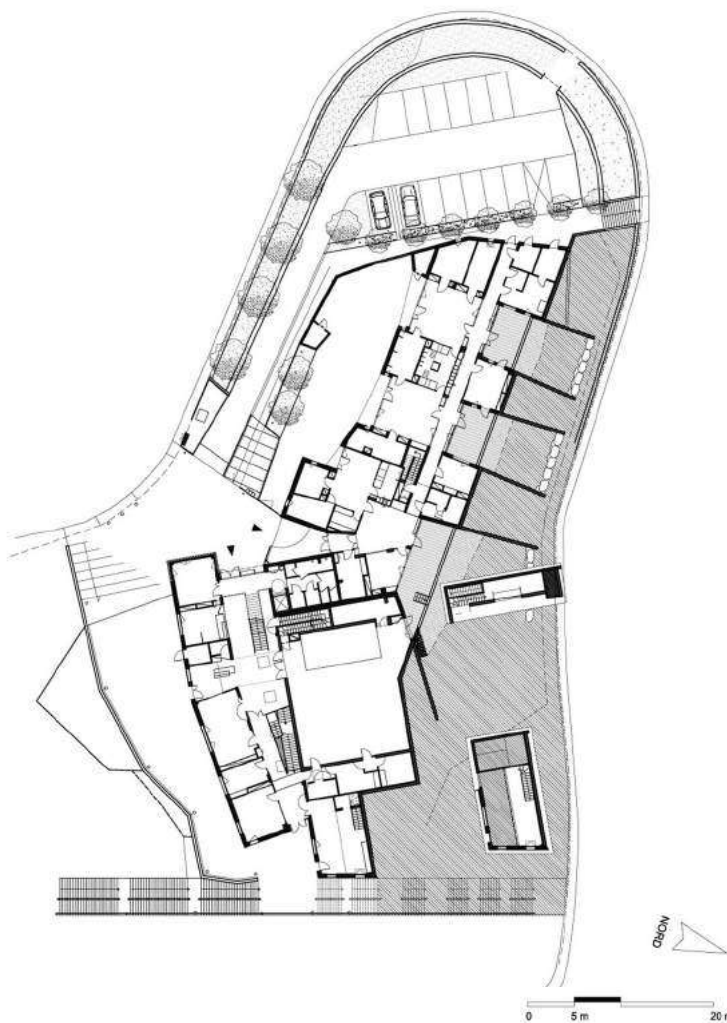
Architects:
Rue Royale Architectes

Location:
Lyon, France

Area:
2094.0 sqm

Project Year:
2013

Photographs:
Erick Saillet



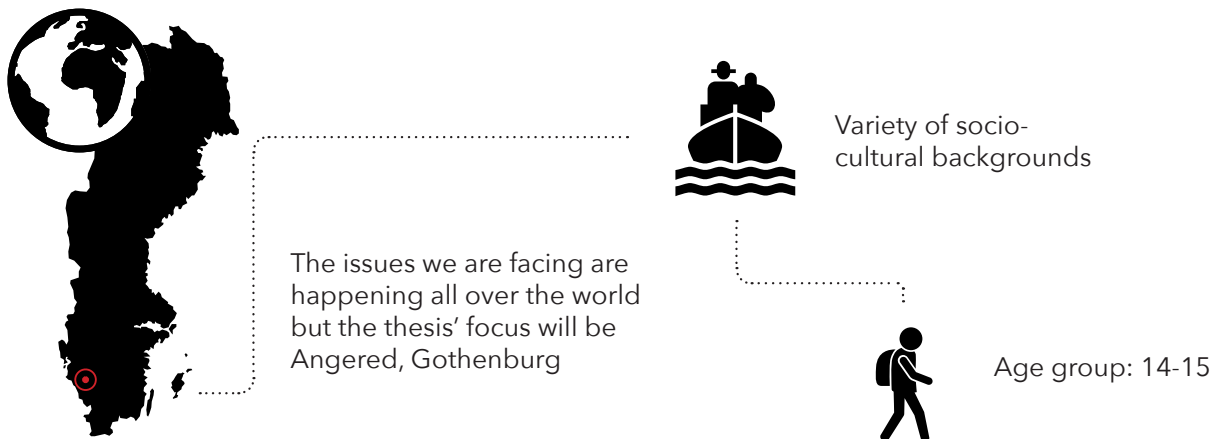
*“juxtaposing programs, rather than separating them”
(Archdaily, 2014)*

*“aim was to bring the different groups together, and to organize activities at different times”
(Archdaily, 2014)*

[Figure 2.6] Situation plan

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS



[Figure 3.1] Defining Users

DEFINING USERS

The limitation of the users is crucial since the design process takes shape according to the users which program addresses. As the diagram above describes, thesis work has a secondary aim to be applied in different location and contexts nevertheless for the project proposal part specific location and users need to be selected. The selection of the age was based on the students the main contact person has the reach. Since she was a middle school teacher at Gårdstenskolan this number was defined as 14 to 15 years old.

The age group was limited to two years span, considering the interviews. One of the conclusions was that in these age groups, even 1-year difference may change the communication among individuals.

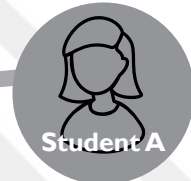
IMPORTANT FIGURES

The first interview was conducted with the main contact person, Rita Ravari and she has been following the process since the initiation of this project. There were two more meetings with her -one of which was with her students in a semi-formal format of interviews and discussions through prototype models. These interviews were important for understanding the stakeholders' perspectives and the most important findings are spread throughout the booklet in a quotation format.

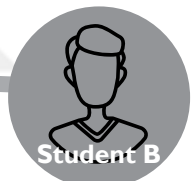
Blåstället has been one of the institutions in Angered that promotes cultural and leisure activities successfully. Therefore an interview with the head of Art and exhibition productions (Producent Konst / Utställningar) and the head of Kids and Youth (Producent Barn & Unga) was conducted. This interview gave an understanding of the opportunities present in the area. Nevertheless a finding was that, the youngsters living in Gårdsten do not come to Blåstället in a regular basis unless they are interested in a specific activity for example in Atom Culture (a Youth Club with breakdance focus), or crafts activity events. This interview was important for understanding the relation between proximity and usage. Despite the fact that Blåstället is a great facility, the participation from satellite towns (such as Gårdsten) to Angered Centrum is low. Therefore this finding have supported the decision that the choice of context needs to be close to the addressed target group.

The main contact person: Rita Ravari

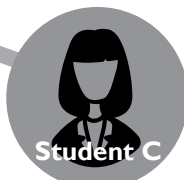
- A middle school teacher at Gårdstensskolan during the education year of 2017-2018. Now works at Frölunda area.
- At the same time was an SFI teacher after school hours.



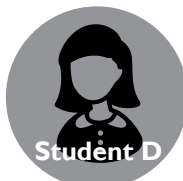
Student A



Student B



Student C



Student D



Student E



Blåstället - A Culture Center in Angered Centrum.

- Bibbi Forsman: Producent Konst / Utställningar
- Petra Ahlqvist: Producent Barn & Unga

[Figure 3.2] Defining Important Figures



[Figure 3.3] View towards Kryddhyllan

ANGERED

Angered, as Municipality of Gothenburg describes, is a neighborhood in Gothenburg hosting to approximately 53 000 people originating from a hundred different countries, giving the area an international character. It has an exciting mix of apartment building areas with residential and traditional rural areas. There are magnificent scenery points close-by the public, cultural and shopping places. (Göteborgs Stad, unknown)

Nevertheless, as Khorramshahi and Hellberg puts; the living conditions differ in a great extent in this point of the city compared to the rest. In 2018, Angered was the district of Gothenburg with the least educated population aged 25-64, about 15,6% of the population has a post-secondary education of three years or more (Göteborgs Stad, 2018.) About 25,1% of pupils have not completed primary education and so are not eligible to attend secondary school. 11,7% of the population between the ages 25-64 is unemployed. (Göteborgs Stad, 2018.) Inhabitants in Angered have low levels of trust, about half state they do not have trust in other people. Criminal gangs are show presence in the area and gang related violence occur openly in public spaces and is directed also towards non gang members as well as rival gangs. (Khorramshahi, Hellberg, 2017)

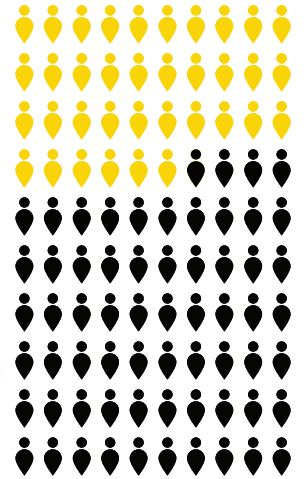
INFOGRAPHICS

More than **52,720** people live in Angered.

About half of the population is born in a country other than Sweden.



About 36% of all households in Angered are children's households.



29% of the population is between 0-18 years

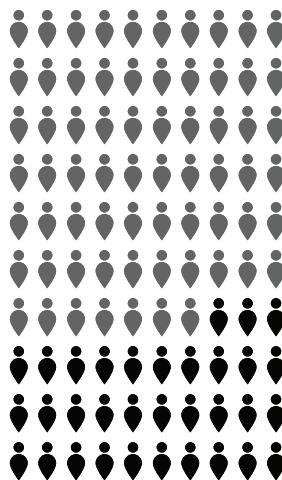


In Angered there are several different **forums and councils** that aim to give children and young people influence eg. youth councils, youth councils, Angered's Riksdag and young urban developers.

Data from Göteborgsbladet 2018 - områdesfakta report (Göteborgs Stad, 2018)

YET

67% of the population has education less than post-secondary education



25,1% of pupils are not eligible to attend secondary school.



11,7% of the population in Angered is unemployed.



Data from Särskilt utsatta områden i Göteborg (2016) and Khorramshahi, Hellberg, (2017)

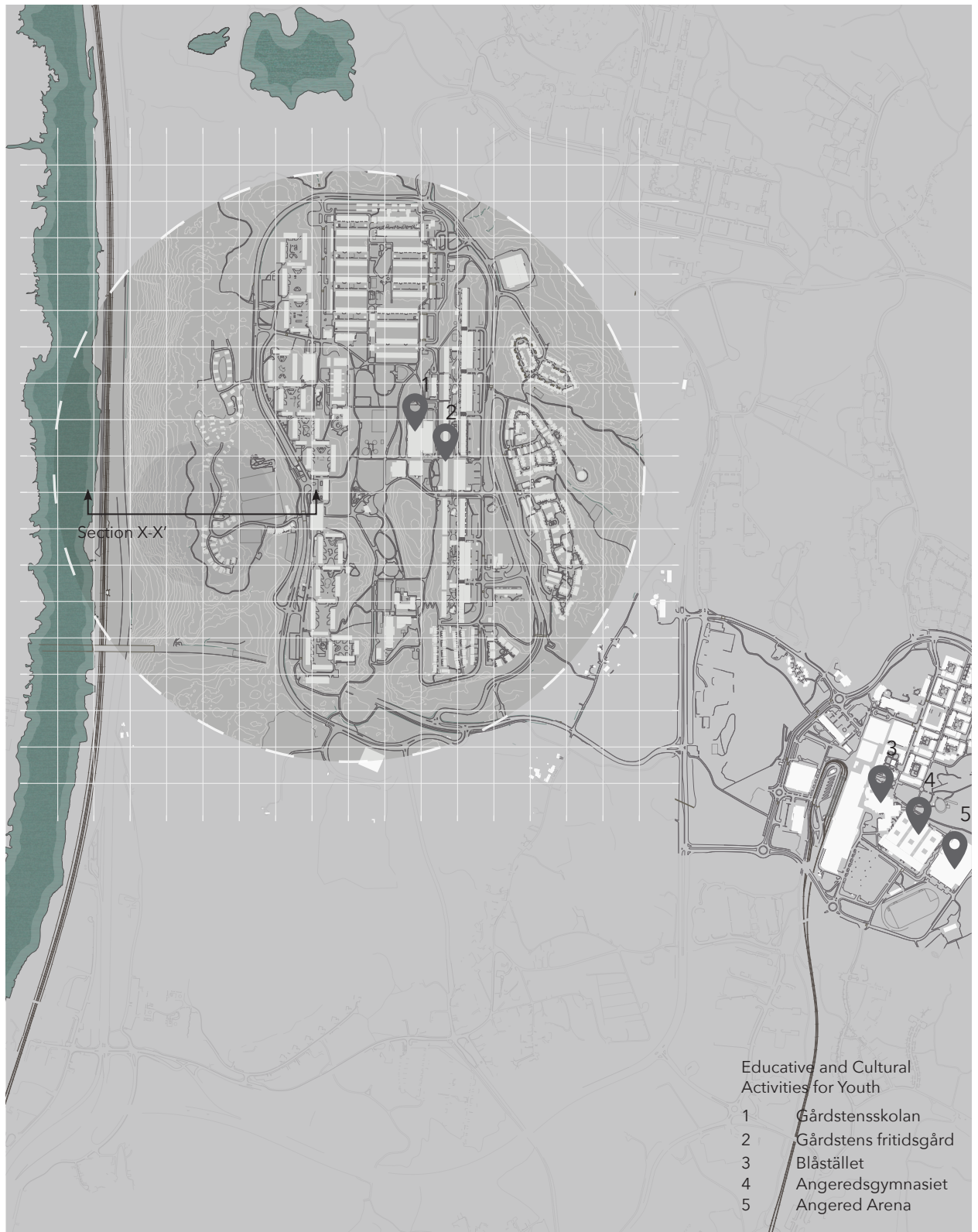
GÅRDSTENSBERGET



[Figure 3.4] Map of Gårdstensberget with public transportation stops



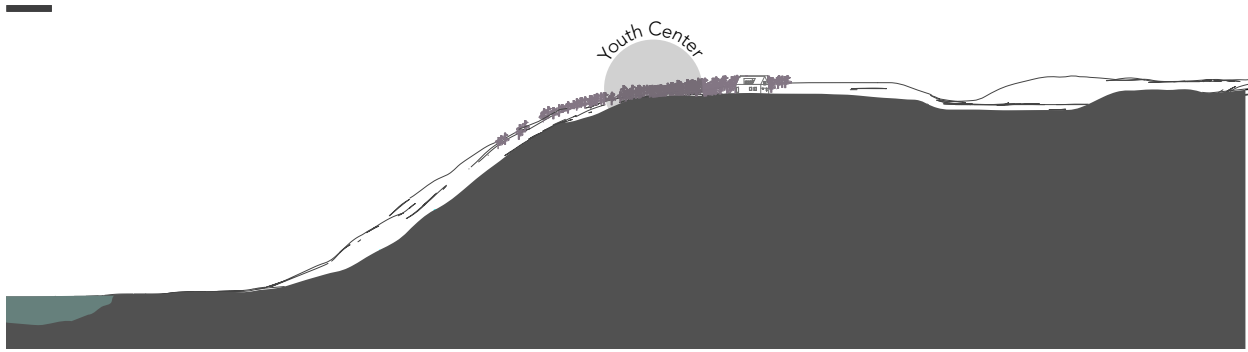
GÅRDSTEN



[Figure 3.5] Map of Gärdsten with Educational and Cultural Activities



URBAN SECTION



[Figure 3.6] Urban section X-X'

GEOLOGY AND VEGETATION



Rock formations



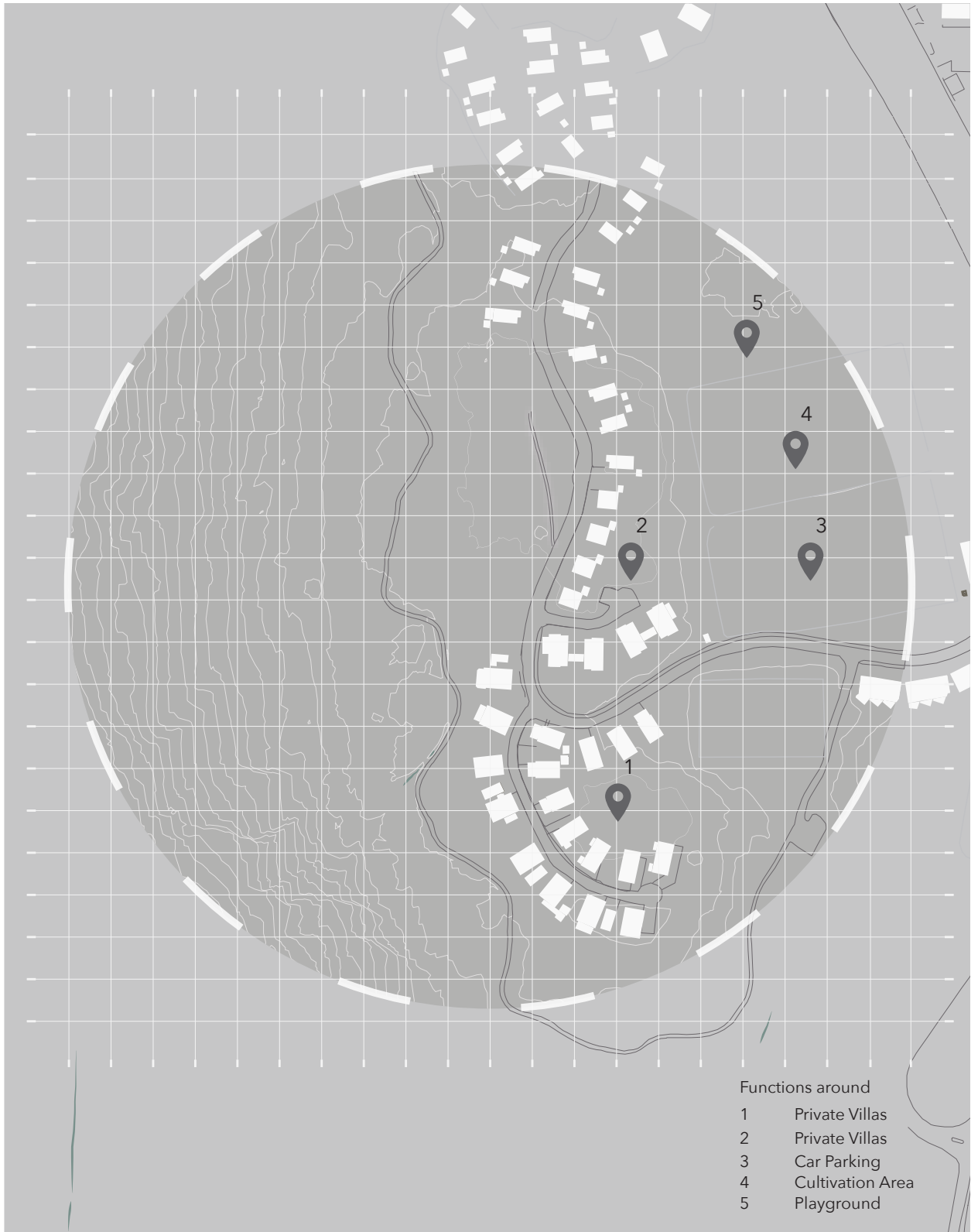
Trees



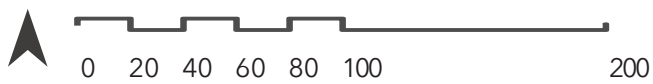
Bushes

[Figure 3.7] Analysis of Natural elements and the dominant colors

CHOSEN SITE



[Figure 3.8] Chosen Site and functions around





DESIGN STRATEGY

The system behind this project is very simple. The agents are People, Activities in Building's program and the View points at the possible buildings sites. The building is shaped according to these 3 elements which are uncontrollable and are directly deduced from the context and users.

On the other hand, operational surfaces, openings and entrances are design elements one can control. The term operational surfaces derives from the rejection of the common idea that surfaces that makes a building are either plain walls or floors. In this project this perception will be disregarded through making surfaces that are operational. This is expected to make the architecture more relatable and interactive while adding a value to its existence through engagement of the users.