The development of educational spaces and how they can interplay with nature in an urban context
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Photograph from the permanent exhibition at Tyresta Naturrum.
Abstract

Educational spaces that interact with nature can give children in the city a start in experiencing the nature close to them. First hand experiences have the potential to influence and inspire children to continue learning about the environment that they are a part of.

The Urban Nature Center aims to bring the concept of Nature School into the urban setting of Tantolunden in Stockholm city in order to invite the public to experience the urban nature. It creates a link to further explore the nature areas surrounding the city.

By developing educational spaces that interplay with nature, focus has been on the relationship between inside and outside and on creating different levels of openness. Providing spaces for teaching both in groups and individually. The interior spaces either focus inwards on the activity taking place or outwards towards the nearby environment by filtering the view between inside and outside.

Pedagogiska miljöer som interagerar med naturen kan ge barn en start till att börja utforska sin närmiljö. Förstahandsupplevelser i naturen har potential att påverka och inspirera barn att fortsätta lära sig om miljön som de är en del av.

Centret syftar till att ta konceptet av Naturskolan till stadsområdets miljön i Tantolunden i Stockholm för att bjuda in allmänheten att uppleva den urbana naturen. Centret skapar en länk till utforskande av naturområden runt om staden. I utvecklingen av dessa läromiljöer har fokus legat på relationen mellan inne och ute samt på att skapa olika nivåer av öppenhet. De interiöra utrymmena fokuserar antingen inåt på aktiviteten som äger rum där eller utåt mot den närliggande miljön genom att filtrera utsikten mellan insidan och utsidan.
Background & starting point

Today most people live in urban settings; cities that grow larger and denser to house a bigger population. When cities grow denser, spaces for children are often ignored and reduced to a minimum asphalted area per child. Children’s contact with forests and bigger areas are getting more limited. As found in pedagogical research, first hand experiences with multiple senses involved are key to develop a better understanding of the learnt and of your surroundings. To be able to gain knowledge about the environment and the climate change and to understand our own impact, we have to see and experience this ourselves first hand.

“*If we can understand nature, we can understand that we are a part of it*”

– Susan Humphries

Introduction

This project explores interior, educational spaces for children and how they can interplay with nature in an urban context. This project will bring the idea of Nature School combined with a visitors center into in an urban setting of Stockholm city, creating an Urban Nature Center that invites the public to experience and explore the urban nature. The center works as a starting point for further exploration of nature areas, starting within the city and linking the visitor to the nature areas surrounding Stockholm; trying to fill a gap in between nature reserve areas and the urban nature.
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STAKEHOLDERS & RESEARCH
Nature

When I write about nature I refer to it as the biological concept of all living things, like plants, animals and ecological concepts, that is the common definition as used in relation to the natural sciences. By using the term *nature* in relation to references I use their view of the word.

While defining *nature* I also come across the wording of *nature areas* and *green structures*. *Nature areas* I refer to as larger coherent areas of greenery that seem not to be touched by human hand, such as nature reserves. Almost all nature is in some way, or has been at some point cultivated by man. By using the wording of *green structures* I refer to a concept commonly used by architects to define greenery like plants and trees from scales of parks to smaller planted areas. The term of *green structures* is mostly used in an urban context.
Nature Schools work as a supplement to the ordinary teaching about nature, ecological concepts and thematic learning for school children from years 7-16 of age. They are facilitated by the municipality and are members of the organization Naturskoleföreningen. There are about 90 Nature schools in Sweden. Their motto is *Att lära in ute* (*To learn outside*). They follow the school curriculum but work with nature in relation to the seasons in Sweden. Their work is mainly with focus on natural science but they work thematically to weave in many parts of the curriculum. Doing so they work trying to involve different senses at the same time, providing first hand experiences, which has shown effective in learning processes (Barr, Nettrup & Rosdahl, 2014). For example while working around the theme of fire they involve chemistry, history, math and nutrition knowledge while picking material, setting up and lighting the fire. Explaining and discussing while doing is a key part of the teaching.

A central part of their work is sustainability and giving children an understanding of their own part in and impact on the environment.

In Nature schools the close environment becomes the teaching environment *Närmiljö blir Lärmiljö* (Barr, Nettrup & Rosdahl, 2014). They are often situated in nature reserves but can also come to the schools and work with the close environment and nature there.

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**Positive experiences in nature are the foundation needed to be able to explain and to understand ecological environmental issues. To be able to develop ones sensibility towards nature is the first important step. Knowledge about nature starts in nature!**

Positiva upplevelser i naturen är grunden för att förklara ekologiska samband och för att förstå miljöfrågorna. Att få utveckla sin känsla för naturen är ett första viktigt steg. Kunskap om naturen börjar i naturen!

– Utomhuspedagogik, hutiskolan.se
Naturum

*Naturum (Nature rooms)* are centers for presenting an environment and aim to be an entrance into nature. They are situated in a nature reserve and focus on the surrounding forest and species. They have exhibitions and activities for all ages. They are facilitated by a county, municipality, or foundation.

The architecture often relates and responds to the surrounding environment in both material and how the building is situated into the landscape.
Preschool & primary school

Teaching is a result of the fact that you can participate without boundaries in a meaningful environment.

– Podcast Staden

In Sweden the school and childcare system starts with daycare (Förska) that the child can attend until its five years old. The daycare years are followed by an introductive year that is called Preschool Class (Förskoleklass) and it is one year before school starts at seven years of age.

Primary school in Sweden is nine years of mandatory attendance and the curriculum for primary school is regulated by Skollagen, the Swedish school law. Often primary school is divided into grade 1-3 where the children are 7-9 years old, grade 4-6 with age 10-13 and grade 7-9 with age 14-16. In the first grades, 1-3, the school class has one teacher that teaches all subjects, and at this age many of them overlaps. In the later grades the teaching goes more towards dividing the subjects with teachers that are specialists in their field.
Pedagogy & architecture

The architect is the first pedagogue.

Arkitekten är den första pedagogen.

– Frida Brismar Pålsson

Research of educational spaces is a field where architects, pedagogues and others, agree on the importance of space. How space is arranged influences teaching, learning outcomes and play. For young children there is no distinction between play and learning (Björklid, 2005). Play and the type of play and games change depending on the room that it takes place in (Barr, Nettrup & Rosdahl, 2014). For young children it is important to have environments that support a tactile, senses based and bodily exploration (Björklid, 2005).

For instance at Vittra School by Rosan Bosch the educational spaces are arranged in a way so that they provide many different learning situations. It becomes clear that the type of pedagogy is what has been influential to how the space and objects are arranged.

“... playroom as well as rooms for learning should have a workshop character. Distinct corners for different areas. Students need environment that inspire different types of practical activities and actions.” (Björklid 2005). An example of this is how Herman Hetzberger has worked with many of his environments for Montessori schools; making them easy to adapt to the activity. By creating a hole in the floor for stools they can easily be used or stored away giving space for other activities.

In the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia the pedagogues assign the environment such big influence that they call the it “the third pedagogue” (Warg, 2008).
Outdoor spaces are important for educational spaces. The line between what is being taught inside and what is experienced outside is not clear for younger children. In preschool play and teachings happens continuously throughout the day, whether it is outside or inside of the school building.

Play and games in a nature areas or forests decreases the number of gender specific games and seem to contribute to a more equal play landscape where boys and girls play more together and on the same level. Children in preschools that have yards filled with nature elements play more differentiated games, are better at playing in groups and have more physically endurance (Björklid, 2005).

For children in school the outside and the yard are related to a pause from teaching. It is where play happens, where stimuli can be digested and a lot of the social interactions take place. The yard can also be an intimidating space, for instance in all pause areas where teachers don't always have an eye on what is going on. These are spaces where a lot of bullying takes place. How the yard is arranged is therefore very important and with different perspectives the priorities changes. For safety and bullying reasons the yard is best arranged with no elevations, no spaces where you can hide or be alone, because those are also unsafe places (Magnus Lindgren, Tryggare Sverige, Seminar). But if you have the perspective that you want to create playful, inspiring and differentiated spaces there will be a conflict here. These perspectives change depending on age.

Where a school is located and how it is located into its surrounding environment influences how and what the play landscape can be, and therefore influences the games that are played.
STUDY VISITS
At Sollentuna Nature School I met Hanna Heurlin and Gunnar Hallberg. They are both Nature Pedagogues and have a background in the natural sciences. They have been at Sollentuna Nature School for over five years. The school is situated in a part of Järvafältet where they are very close to a big forest. They have school children from preschool to high school.

They have one big classroom indoors where some of the teaching takes place, and where they store materials. Most of the teaching takes place outdoors on excursions, by a fireplace or in a tent (kåta).
Solna Nature School

At Solna Nature School Elisabet Brömster and Ninni Reinebo Engström work as Nature Pedagogues. The school is situated in Solna by Överjärva gård by an old farm with agriculture landscape. Teaching is mostly conducted outside, in different gathering places or at a creek nearby. There is two classrooms divided by age, with a café in the middle. The classrooms are mostly used when the weather is bad or for gathering the class.
Tyresö Nature School is located and has its base in Alby Nature reserve. It is for all elementary classes in Tyresö. There I met Jonas Hedlund and Martina Kiibus who work as nature pedagogues. They have no interior classroom instead they work with the forest as their teaching space. They have carefully chosen the different spots in nature to suit their pedagogical needs. For example a gathering space that is open yet secluded due to a small valley surrounded by big rock walls on one side and trees on the other. This makes it easy to overlook everyone and to be close. They also use a hilltop with a great view to give time and space for contemplation.
Nacka Nature School

Nacka Nature School is located in Velamsud where the facilities is located by a lake. Here Annika Wiberg and Malena von Huth works. They use their settings by a lot of water and work with a theme that they call: “The way of the water” (Vattnets Väg). They have built a pedagogical way to follow how water moves through our society. They also have a room with an illustrated water cleaning process that shows the different steps in and before a lake. They have three indoor educational areas with slightly different character.
Naturum at Tyresta – House of National parks

Naturum at Tyresta is located in Tyresta National park, south east of Stockholm. Naturum at Tyresta is a visitors center for Tyresta National park and the house of National parks meaning that their exhibition is about all the national parks of Sweden. They have displays with information for all ages.
As one of the studyvisits I got to follow Hanna Heurlin at Sollentuna Nature School when she taught a class with school Tegelbacken in the third grade. The day started with an introduction in their class room. Then we went to a nature area close to the school where the rest of the day was spent. The theme was winter and the kids got to do different exercies, for examlpe look for traces of animals in the snow.

It is important to see how the spaces are used by the cildren, the pedagouges and the teachers in order o understand and make the right conclusions. It was striking to see the movement and to try to grasp the volume of 30 pupils, how they moved and used the different spaces.
FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS
Institutions like Nature schools and Naturum that work primarily with educating children in sustainability, natural sciences and are providing them with outdoor activities are almost always situated in close relation to forests, nature areas and/or agriculture landscape. For obvious reasons.

But what if nature was not only something you would travel far to see, something ancient that we are drifting more and more apart from? What if nature was something that was seen and appreciated as something in our natural urban context? In this project I tried to create educational spaces for children, mainly from age 5-12, that is designed to provide an experience of the nature in the city. Giving children first hand experiences of the nature in close relation to the city such as plants, water and animal life that exists in the urban context.

The site of the project is the urban landscape, working with the close surroundings and giving children a sense and understanding of the ecosystems within the city. With Nature schools, Naturum and other institutions for natural sciences and outdoors life, as a role model the Center will work as a bridge between the built city landscape and the forest in Nature reserves.

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**The glitch; a design opportunity**

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While researching different context and stakeholders interest for this project many perspectives appeared. While working in a school or pedagogical environment there is many views and a lot of research to consider. Some of the findings from different perspectives that stood out were that the pedagogues main goal is to establish and create an interest for nature. An interest that could be something that continues through life if it is introduced in an exiting way from the start. Some of the kids talked about the unexpected activity from their everyday school schedule as something positive and fun.
Spatial analysis

During the study visits I analyzed the space that they used in the teaching. All of the pedagouges talked about the need for flexibility and the need of rearranging furniture into different settings.

It was interesting to see how they used the spaces both inside and outside and in very familiar ways. The way that the transition from inside to outside could be valuble in the teaching was the most striking. The change of climate and location can change the mood and the athmosphere of a goup.

This lead me into questions about what defines inside and outside, what characteristics could strenghten this further and how could I use this into the futher explorations.
part two
- developing space
CONCEPTS
Most institutions and businesses that teach and educate about the environment and about nature are located in nature areas for obvious reasons. Facilities such as Naturum and other visitors centers and nature reserves and nature hiking areas can have trouble to attract new visitors. Most people that visit nature areas are recurrent visitors.

The Center aims to bring the nature areas surrounding Stockholm closer to its inhabitants by making the visitor center close and easy to visit by placing it in the city center. The visitor center can hold information and attract visitors to further explore the nature areas surrounding Stockholm city.

The Nature School uses the urban environment as the ground for teaching. The teaching could focus on animals capacity to adapt and on how we humans are changing our environment.

The Nature School could either have its own school or it could work as supplement for surrounding Nature Schools to visit and to hold their teaching there as one of the themes throughout the year making this into a space for collaborations and exchange in knowledge.
URBAN NATURE CENTER

Nature school & Visitor Center

The center has to be...

Educational
- have spaces for teaching
- hold and display information

Gathering
- welcoming and inviting
- accessible and inclusive

Open
- playful
- flexible

Programme & aim

The urban nature center gives space for learning about the urban nature in the form of a visitors center and a Nature School. The center is made to focus mainly on three things; it needs to be learning, gathering and flexible.

The center has to provide space for learning and teaching. It has to provide spaces that can contribute to a good and fruitful environment for teaching and gathering.

The center also has to be welcoming and inviting in different ways. Welcoming and open to the public both in character and material. It needs to be accessible and inclusive to all visitors.

It also needs to be flexible in terms of furniture and activities. It needs to have a playful and open atmosphere that contributes to explorations and play.
Focus & spatial concepts

A starting point for the making of the center was to work with two spatial concepts. The inside/outside and the concept of focus/free. The relationship between inside and outside has been one of the main areas within this project. How could I use the different settings and senses of inside and outside? Should it be gradient or contrasting between, and how can the transitions and the openings be developed?

I wanted to work with creating a sense of focus, and work with how it could be directed and make a specific space. On the contrary I worked with spaces to be free, feel playful and be open-ended in what type of activity could take place there.
When I started making models it became clear that I was exploring different ways of altering with the openness of the volumes. I worked with the open space that could make you feel exposed, the semi-open in how to filter and a closed space for shelter. A space without floor, ceiling to enhance different moods or how to work with the window to create different views.

*Insides and outsides*
THE SITE
The site – Tantolunden, Södermalm, Stockholm

Tantolunden in Södermalm, Stockholm has a central location and is the city’s biggest and most central parc. It was created in the end of the 1800’s to be a romantic garden. Big parts of the parc are created using garbage and waste material. Looking and walking around in Tantolunden gives a sense of nature-like characteristics such as irregularity in height and in paths. This was all created with the ideal of a romantic garden where you were supposed to walk around slowly in the nature-like parc.

The allotments were built in the 1920’s.
Walking around in Tantolunden one of its many characteristics is the allotments and familiarity that these small dwellings brings. The smallness and irregularity in their placement makes for a very human centered scale. Making it possible and even inviting to walk around and experience the layout of the houses on an level that is inviting for everyone. The volume of the dwellings have a characteristic look for a typical swedish house, making it the small copy of a miniature villa neighborhood.

These characteristics is something that I wanted to continue to develop and incorporate into the project. Making the project to easier fit into its setting and providing a sense of recognition to the visitor. The placement of the volumes that has been developed over time provides an interesting way of experiencing dwelling that are closely connected. It gives a sense of playfullness that can be intriguing.
METHODS
I am not an architect, I am an interior architect and therefore I see space from the inside going out. In this project I have aimed to make that a strength, although I am designing a building and not only the interiors of a building and therefore I think that I look at space and the methods of developing space in a different way then an architect would do.

I once almost did not pass a course in architecture because of the reason that I “designed from the inside to out”. Instead of the teachers way; from the outside in. I find it to be the interior architects strength to look at space and environments from the inside out, from a human perspective. Otherwise we cannot understand how spaces effect us, and therefore they are impossible to change for the better.

In order to understand space and the configuration of space and movement I build and analyze models.

I aim to more clearly focus on the user of the space that I am designing for. To consider their experience of the space. In this project I do this in different ways, trying to grasp different perspectives and translate all opinions and requests into spaces, buildings and rooms.
WORKING WITH & ON SITE
On site

While working with the concept, models and the programme I often returned to the site. I analyzed it by looking at the movements and by seeing how people currently used it. I studied the current greenery; the trees and plants. I saw how paths had been made on site, giving me a clue of how people walked on site.

Framing the view

Trying to get a sense of the qualities on site, I picked out small parts by framing different views. Through different shaped holes I could see parts of the site that were cluttered before, giving me a help in understanding different parts.

Feeling the site – measuring the volumes

When developing the concept for the buildings I worked with the site, trying to blend the buildings into the surroundings while making the programme. I went to the site, measuring up the volumes with strings to get a sense of how the layout would be. Translating the paper drawing into an illustrated volume at the site.
I have looked at references that operates in a human scale and are trying to fit the building into its surroundings. A scale that is tangible and easily overlooked by the user or the visitor from a human eye level. Buildings and spaces that are not perceived as institutional but rather considerate and playful in materials and size. Much like Tham & Videgård; Garden House and Strömkajen by Marge Architects, they both have a size that is easy to grasp and are made so that the viewer wants to get close, to inhabit and to use it. They are both working with the site, strengthening it without overpowering the character of the site.

Both Strömkajen and Sou Fujimotos house have worked with arranging the space in a non-linear way where they have deconstructed it into smaller parts. Forcing the user to move around in order to experience the whole space, this makes it playful and intriguing.

Tellus Nursery School by Tham & Videgård have worked with a filtered view that softens the light and gives the building a strong concept in whole.
DIALOGUE
Meeting & asking kids

Children are phenomenal to locate the best place for their activity.

– Björklid (2005)

Alongside with exploring the project through models and researching the context I wanted to visit some of the users. This to get a better understanding of thier needs and wishes and to see how the teaching was carried out.

“It is really important that the children is participating but you should not take what they say too litteraly. You can not do that with adults eaither.”

– Dorthe Mandrup

I considered different ideas for the workshop and in collaboraton with Hanna Heurlin at Sollentuna Nature school we discussed different settings. I also discussed how to best plan with a middle school teacher. Some of the points that came up during these discussion was to keep it as simple and structured as possible and to work with materials and concepts that they were familiar with.
In collaboration with Waxmora School and the pupils in grade six I held a workshop at Sollentuna Nature School.

I decided to work with the concept of a Mind-map, this I knew that the pupils were familiar with.

**Setup**
Workshop assignment

The decided assignment was for them to create the “classroom of your dreams”. Each group had about 40 min to draw an individual map onto a paper. Using colored paper, pens, and inspirational images and describing words that I had prepared.

Before we started each session we first introduced ourselves, and then they got the assignment to quickly relocate themselves to a spot in the classroom where they saw fitted into the statement that I was to read. I asked: “Where is it best to read?” And then they got to go to a spot and then we discussed why they had choosen it. This was to get them thinking about space and how we use it in various ways.
Drömklassrum

Verktyg & Saker

Mysigt

Söderström

Matta

Bäcksten

Grottum

TOA

Erik Lam

Drömklassrum

Av: Linda

mykhörna

unik

"Sjunde Sten"-Skrivbord

ljug

bekvämt

kuddar

Salongen

Fönster

hyllor

Samarbets

Sätta

Lekfull

Matta

Lagarummet

mjuk

Redskap
Outcome

The outcome could be divided into three main groups; spaces for work, for seclusion and answers that were outside of the questioned are; comments and answers that were not a part of the assignment.

A lot of the maps were about the actual workspace; materials and furnitures. Some had ideas about how the walls could be tilted or how the light intake could be, to create a light and a focus on the teaching. Most of the maps included materials for classroom that they are familiar with such as whiteboards, smartboards, clocks and benches.

The other main group was Seclusion, many of the pupils had ideas about how they were in need of a smaller space located close to the classroom to be alone, to read, to pause or to do groupwork in. One girl had the idea of a secluded space where you could go to be sad, but it would have many bright colors so that you would get happy soon.

Many ideas and thoughts about school in general also came up, like how to get out of school. It is hard to direct the group into talking about the actual assignment and this differed a lot between groups.

Children are often though of as very free, and unlike adults have a free mind when it comes to how things should be. During the workshops it became clear that even though they were very “free” in one sense they could be extremely aware of rules in other cases. They were very imprinted with what they were used to. How things “normally” were arranged. For example they had a lot of ideas and had no problem to think outside the box with activities and kinds of furniture and layouts. But when they drew a table in the classroom it was in several cases a bench table where you can store your belongings under the lid. I learnt that a bench table is what they had in their classroom now, and it made it hard for them to think about other solutions. Even when asking about other types of tables they were consistent with the kind of table that they were used to.
MAKING
While making a strong focus has been to grasp the importance and influence of the connections between insides and outsides. Working with these in various ways, testing and experimenting in models I cut holes, make views and ordering the space. Different types of openings provide different kinds of flows and influences the way we move in space. An outlook just in eyesight gives the room a bigger meaning and a purpose; to look at what is outside. A window below or above eye sight could provide a focus inwards instead on outwards onto the surroundings. While testing I am constantly working with, stretching and developing the programme, which is guiding the decision making. But the way that the spaces are arranged are also providing the programme with new turns and opportunities that could develop it further.

Openings – connections between inside and outside
In model I explored different ways of creating open and closed spaces by using different levels on how open or how closed off the space was. I explored who this could be perceived and how it could influence the activity inside.

**Placement**

While continuing working with different types of volumes alongside I worked with the programme and the placement of the different activities that the center should include. Different levels of openness also meant for different types of activities such as:
- Open: smaller groups that are free and playful.
- Semi open: exhibition space and open to the public.
- Semi closed: smaller groups and individual studying
- Closed: bigger groups for an educational environment that focus inward.
- Closed: Staff areas for office and smaller meetings.
The filter

Through testing different levels of openness in models I decided to continue to develop the concept of filtering between inside and outside. By using wood bars that would go over the whole facade as a fencing onto the core, the closed surface the volume could be divided into two types. One solid core and bars as fencing over it. By cutting into the core of the volume I worked with different viewpoints. One that pierced through the core but not the bars and another window that had a different character. I wanted to make it as a core on its own, something that looked like it cut through the exterior facade and connected it to the interior. I wanted to create a window that was the contrary of the filtering, a view where you would see straight out and take part of the surroundings. I wanted to create an activity of looking out, making the viewer aware of the landscape outside.
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PROGRAMME & SPATIAL CONCEPT
URBAN NATURE CENTER

Nature school & Visitor Center

The center has to be...

Learning
- have spaces for teaching
- hold and display information

Gathering
- welcoming and inviting
- accessible and inclusive

Flexible
- playful
- open-ended
Spatial concepts

While developing the project I have worked with two different spatial concept in order to bring the buildings together and to connect the spaces to the program of the project.

By working in model I explored different ways of altering the spaces by working with various levels of open and closed. While making connections such as windows I worked with the concept of the filter. This by filtering the view between inside and outside through wooden bars.

When creating the spaces working with both the character of the spaces and with the programme I developed the concept of focus and free and inside and outside.

The concept of focus and free refers to the spaces that can create and point interest and focus onto the interior of the space and the activity taking place there. While free gives the viewer a flexible and more free way of approaching the space. Throughout the project I have worked with these different ways, combining and altering with the concepts in order to give the effect that suits the programme.
Altering with the connections between inside and outside I have chosen to either strengthen or to blur that connection. The combination of the concepts gives one two types of windows. One where focus lies outwards, making an opening and an unfiltered view. Here the window also creates an activity: to look outside and to take part of the surroundings.

The other contrary window is filtering the light intake and the view through wooden bars on the facade. This creates a focus inwards onto the activity, meeting or information inside.
The buildings – different levels of openness

The Center contains of three different buildings with different levels of openness and activities. The openness of the building differs based on the activity taking place inside. The view onto the outside is either open where it creates an activity to look outside or filtered that focuses inwards instead.

In its scale and material it tries to fit in at the site. It is blending into the landscape that has a steep slope on one side and a level side where the entrance is located. The buildings is put on the steep side where it sits on the hill. It makes space in front of it where the valley with its slope creates an interesting play landscape. From the entrance side the landscape is level to make the center accessible and easy to visit from the path.

The space in between the buildings makes it able to move around them that creates unexpected spaces and niches for play and seclusion. This refers to the scale of the allotments, making the center blend into both the landscape and to the buildings close by.

The center contains of an outdoor open space for play or gathering, a visitor center, educational spaces with an gathering area for teaching, a library and staff facilities.
INTERIOR SPACE
The interior spaces as well as the exterior is made of wood, except the toilets and the entrance floors. This is in order to create a clear concept that gives the building a whole from the inside to outside.

The wood in the bars and in the interior walls, ceiling and floor colors the light and gives it a warm touch. The wooden bars also create shadows in the interior, changing the atmosphere through the day, and through different seasons. This gives a space that is interesting through the year and is a reflection of the seasons, connecting the space to the teachings about the nature throughout the year.

The tree as a living material encourages you to touch and interact with the interior. This contributes to the sense of human scale and makes the building inviting. The wood gives a warm background to where focus should be; the view onto the close surroundings or the teaching taking place.
Staff facilities
Gathering space & classroom
Library & place for seclusion
Visitor center & Exhibition hall

Outdoor open space
Visitor center & Exhibition hall

The visitor center has its entrance close to the path going by the Center. This to lead visitors into the center where they can go to gain information about the urban nature, nature areas around Stockholm and see the current exhibition.

The space is divided into an hallway where you first meet the reception desk, with a small office behind. On the other side there is a wheelchair accessible toilet.

This is the part of the center where visitors have their first meeting with the center. It is made to be open and inviting to the public. It faces the path and sits on the same level making it accessible for wheelchairs and strollers.

When you first enter your eyes goes on to the inner wall facing the valley in front of the building. You see the different types of windows, the open one made for sitting where there is also stools and a bench to sit on that creates a social space. The filtered windows are percived as randomly spread out on the wall, giving a playful and intriguing character to the space. The different window types creates an activity that makes the visitor wanting to explore the different views. A window far down going close to the floor, one has to bend down to see or for a small child it is in a perfect level.

The space is made to be gathering to the public, creating a meeting point for information and activities. Flexible walls could be added into the center of the space, making it easy to create exhibitions.
From the big entrance you first reach the hallway with storage for clothes and toilets. Then you enter the big gathering space. It is an open space with only a filtered view onto the outside. This creates a calm and soft light when sun is filtered through the wooden bars.

The focus is created to be inward onto what is been taught inside of the space, on the dialog and discussion taking place between the pedagogues and the students.

The space is furnished with stools, making the arrangement of furniture flexible and easy to adjust to the number of people or the activity. The room is made square to give space to sit in a circle.
**Library and place for seclusion**

The library is located by the bigger gathering space, it is a space that can be used for contemplation and for smaller groups.

The space is divided into two, where the ground level part is made for a smaller group being able to sit down and work, or making it possible for individual studying. It has an open window where it is easy to sit and read or just look out.

The room also has one higher part reached by a staircase. The staircase is divided into two parts, one with deeper and higher steps making it possible to sit in the stairs.

The elevated part has a window where it is possible for one person to sit and look outside or to read. Due to its higher position it gives a sense of seclusion and creates a space for pause. This can be used for those who need a break from the bigger group.

**Staff facilities**

In between the bookshelves there is a storage space with cleaning possibilities that can be reached both from the inside and from the outside to make it easy to store and clean material.

On the other side of the gathering space there is the staff facilities. The open space with kitchen, table and sofa can be used for meetings and small gatherings or for eating or taking a break. The office is small and made for one person with the option to close the door and be a bit secluded.
EXTERIOR SPACE
**Exterior space**

The buildings are situated on a small hill, looking onward to the valley in front of it. The entrance of the visitor center is facing the path going by, inviting people who are passing by. A stair connects the entrance to the valley, a placement based on an already made path on the site. Now it is making a very steep passage easy to access and directing movement towards the valley.

The outside spaces in between and around the buildings are made to be intriguing and encourage play. It is easy to move around and explore new spaces. The randomness of the placement makes the buildings suit into the landscape. Adapting to the nature on the site, leaving the nature around it as it is without programming it to much. Leaving nature environments unprogrammed encourages kids to explore on their own and play with the materials that they find.
COMMUNICATION & EXHIBITION
For the exhibition I decided to make a model that would say as much as possible. I wanted to show the interior and the exterior in the same model. To show the connection through the different types of windows onto the landscape surrounding the buildings.

In front of the model was two podiums that introduced the project in an easy way to the visitors. The first podium contained of a folder with part one of the project in the same structure as this folder but with only selected pictures except an introduction. The second podium also had a folder but with part two and three.

During the exhibition I got the chance to communicate the project to a broader audience which made me refine and rethink details of the project in order to talk about the whole in a conclusive way.
part four – bibliography
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