OP229

VISBY (SE)

THE GREAT VISBY

A tall city-wall enclosing the medieval city, skeletons of ancient churches raising in the squares, an irregular maze of colorful houses shaping the urban fabric. This is the heart of Visby, narrating, through its architecture, a thousand-year-old history. Nevertheless, this narration seems to stop roughly looking outside the city-wall, where detached single-family houses, medium-intensive low-cost slabs, and qualityless malls characterize the urban landscape. The project defines a strategy to sew up the medieval city and the outer developments through the integration and enhance, within a new mixed district, of the spatial and functional qualities of the urban fabrics currently present in Visby. The project aims to keep alive the memory and allure of the ancient city, adapting to the contemporary standards, to the new economy, and to sustainability requirements. The urban qualities that characterized the beauty of the ancient city for centuries won't stay just as the memory of a majestic past, but will become the foundation of a new, Great Visby.

MEDIEVAL FABRIC

The oldest part of Visby is enclosed within Ringmuren, the old city-wall. Its medieval medium density urban fabric is composed by single-family town houses and multi-family row houses. Several irregular blocks shape the urban space, defining streets and squares.

DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSES

Outside the city-wall, the urban fabric is mainly characterized by low density sprawl where blocks are composed by detached single-family houses surrounded by wide private gardens. Separate-use zoning identified these areas as solely residential.

MEDIUM-INTENSIVE HOUSING

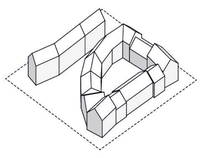
These recently built city portions are composed by 2/4-storey low-cost multi-family housing. Buildings have a regular and simple shape and they are totally residential. Main services are not in proximity.

SPECIAL BUILDINGS

Malls, multi-storey parkings, and productive premises can be considered as special typologies within Visby's urban fabric. These buildings extend on the whole plot and are mono-functional.

INTERVENTION

The project defines a strategy to sew up the medieval city and the outer developments trough the integration of the four urban fabrics currently present in Visby within a site that works as a hinge between all of them.



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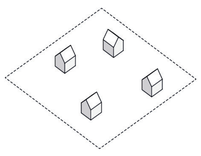

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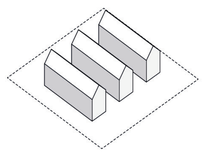

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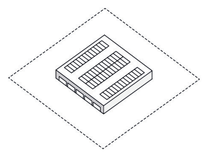

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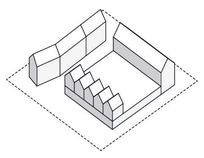

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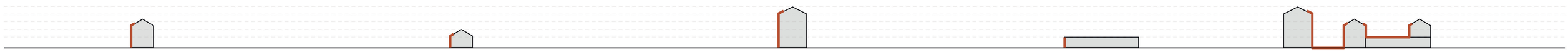
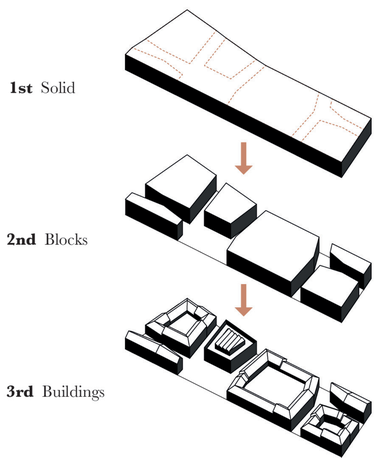
The perception of urban space from outside the blocks evokes the proportions of historical city and that of medium-intensive housing. From the courtyards, proportions are that of single family row-houses provided with gardens.



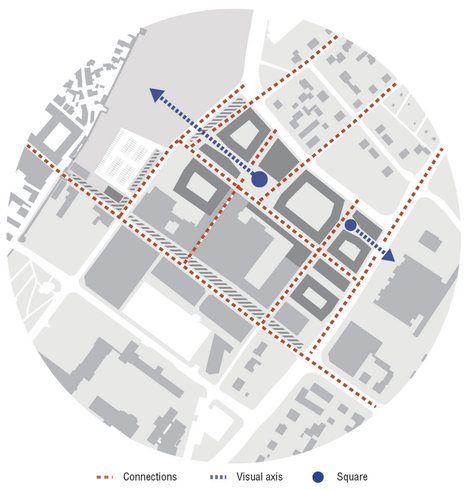


MOLDING THE SITE

The molding of the site is made up of three main steps: 1st the extrusion of the project site as a 5 storey high solid that marks the limits of the plot. 2nd the solid is eroded following the axis of existing roads and visual axis. Squares ore opened in their intersections.
3rd The blocks are shaped into typologies. Courtyards are excavated and building heights adjusted. This step fosters the creation of two environments: a public space in continuity with the paths system and an enclosed resident's shared space.

MASTERPLAN

The masterplan is based on three main interventions. The first one tackles the rejuvenation of Österväg through a landscape operation that alters the section of the street by introducing vegetation and new functions while adjusting its perspective axis on the basis of the ancient gate. This perspective is emphasized by creating a new building in the proximity of the gate (for shops and taxi station). The second one consists in the architectural definition of the project site into a functionally mixed district. The third focus tackles the area of the Coop Forum mall and the southern block, envisaging an expansion coherent with the intervention.



CONNECTIONS AND AXIS

The mass design is generated following the axis of existing roads, extended in order to cross the project site and connect. Two visual axis are opened towards the city-wall and the southern expansion of the city.
Two squares of different dimensions are defined in the hinge-points of the project where paths and visual axis intersect.
The wider square opens up between the existing mall and the new hybrid building. The second one opens in the extension of Schéelegatan that connects to Österväg.

ROAD NETWORK

A new road network and functioning has been studied within both the study and project areas. Car flow is limited outside the site and directed through Jägargatan to the entrance of the parking garages. A three-storey parking for the 350 lots to relocate within the site is designed within the belly of the big central block, while additional parking spaces for new constructions are planned at level -1. The pedestrian system is planned within the site and towards the gate through the commercial area. It is also accessible for emergency and logistics. A third order of roads is intended for restricted access to residents and logistics (30km/h limit).

GREEN SYSTEM

The landscape project extends the green belt that surrounds the city-wall in order to mirror the perception form Kung Magnus väg. A green strip is indeed placed within the project site, acting as a buffer zone between the city-wall area and the new settlement. Resident's shared roof gardens with vegetable gardens are opened within the courtyards of the blocks, while a greenhouse is envisaged on top of the hybrid building. Pedestrian lane Österväg is modified through the insertion of a green strip - able to host kiosks and temporary market stalls - that adjusts its perspective axis on the basis of the ancient gate.