

# Hälsoforum

*“Sensory deprivation is as bad for the brain as the lack of stimulation is for the muscles”*

- Stefan Behling





Questions? Ask us.

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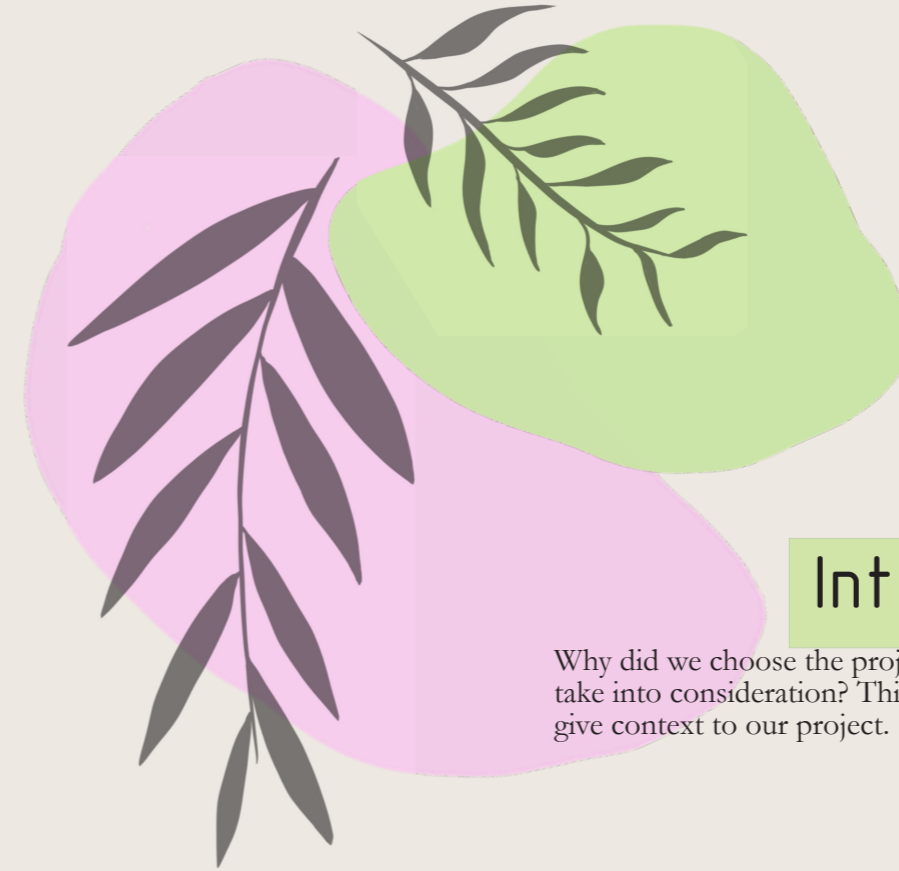


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## Introduction

Why did we choose the project that we did, what conditions did we take into consideration? This chapter is to present a background and give context to our project.

## Course description

This project is part of the course “planning and design for sustainable development in a local context” at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, at master level. Every year a municipality hosts the course, and the students get an opportunity to look into and explore the municipality. During the first part of the course the students closely observe the municipality and make a SWOT analysis. During the second part of the course, the students make projects as suggestions for the municipality, based on the analysis and SWOT. These projects don't have to be realistic, and can be an utopian idea. Hopefully this gives the municipality some help in identifying their biggest positive and negative aspects, as well as some ideas for steps that can be taken to make the municipality an even better place.



## Background

In Sweden, stress related mental illness is the most common reason for sick leave, and mental health issues have been on the rise in almost all regions and municipalities in Sweden since 2015, Bengtsfors included (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2018). Hälsoforum is part of the health center Nygård in Bengtsfors town, and they offer informational meetings and courses with different themes regarding mental health. Their studio is located in the basement (M. Blidstam, K. Schagerström, personal communication, November 11, 2020). A basement is not an architecturally appropriate space to utilise in the means of increasing wellbeing, since research has proven over and over again that, for the sake of our wellbeing, we need to open up our built structures, and bring nature in with us. Spaces that are in touch with, and share spaces with nature has been proven to have calming effects and lower blood pressure, increase learning abilities, and can even speed up the physical healing processes in our bodies (Sturgeon. A. 2019).

Thus, a new and developed Hälsoforum is needed in Bengtsfors, to be able to more effectively treat the increasing number of people suffering from different kinds of mental health problems, and in order to contribute to a transformation towards a more socially sustainable and inclusive Bengtsfors.

## Broader context

According to The World Health Organisation (n.d.), who made a self assessment study, mental health conditions are increasing worldwide, approximately one in five people have a mental health condition. Mental health conditions can have a substantial effect on all aspects of our life, such as school or work performance, relationships with family and friends and ability to participate in the community. In 2018, 14% of women and 10% of men in Bengtsfors municipality reported suffering from mental illness (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2018).





## Aim

Our aim is to create a new and better location for Hälsoforum in Bengtsfors. We want the facility to be within reach for the inhabitants and not hidden away, and we want it to be accessible for everyone. People of all ages, immigrants, people with disabilities - all are welcome and encouraged to visit. The placement and layout of the building, together with architectural qualities can help to decrease social stigma around mental illnesses.

The new facility will be a place that treats, and also aids in preventing, mental illnesses such as depression and stress symptoms. This will be done through courses and group meetings taking place in an architecturally appropriate space designed especially with wellbeing in mind. When the facility is not in use by the health center it can be rented out to actors with suitable purposes, such as for yoga classes, AA meetings, dance classes and more. The surrounding healing gardens are always open and welcoming for whoever wants to visit them, and by using biophilic design in the architecture we want to boost and support the healing capabilities of the indoor space as well.

To make the project more economically feasible, as well as cater to the many single person companies in Bengtsfors, we also want to create a co-working space. The place can help increase collaboration between companies, and helps smaller companies to get access to an office space and office supplies, as well as giving small companies an opportunity to have social coffee breaks, lunches and such.

## Delimitations

Our project is going to be small scale and is meant to serve the local inhabitants within the municipality. Our target group is people with less severe mental health issues, meaning people who would normally visit the health center and not the hospital or psychiatric clinic. For the main building and space we want to reuse an existing structure and transform it to meet our needs, which set certain limitations depending on which such structure we choose. Since our aim is to develop an already existing operation, the client for our work will be the actors in charge of the current Hälsoforum, which is the municipality in conjunction with the regionally owned health center Nygård in Bengtsfors.



## Hälsoforum today

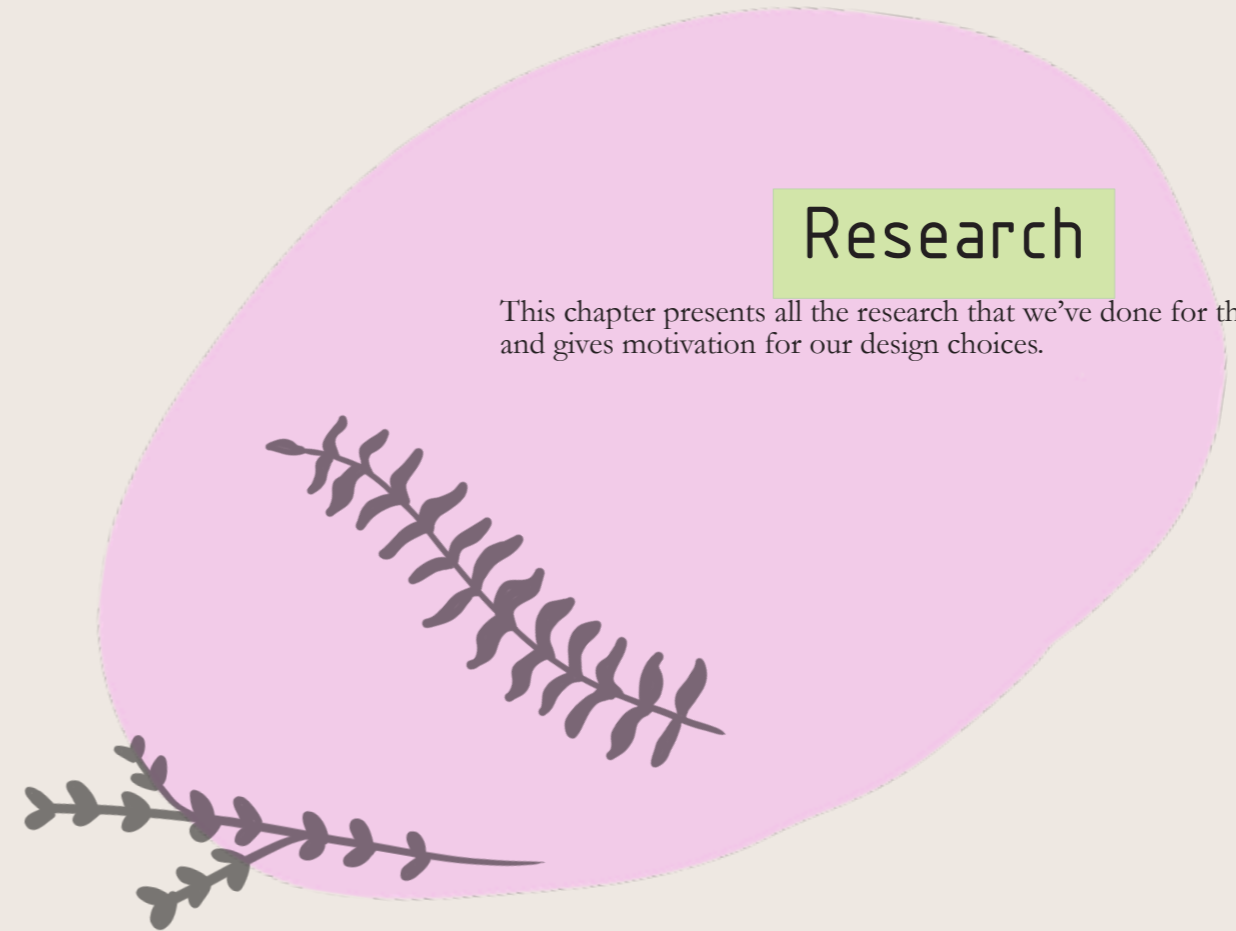
Hälsoforum was created by the municipality and health center as an initiative to increase mental well-being in the municipality, filling a gap in the resources for mental illnesses available in Bengtsfors. Hälsoforum usually offers group courses in sleep and mindfulness, but not right now because of the pandemic. Hälsoforum is driven by the people working at the health center and the courses take place in a conference room in the basement (M. Blidstam, K. Schagerström, personal communication, November 11, 2020).



## SWOT

Everyone in the course has made a SWOT-analysis together, and from that we chose some points that we wanted to work with in our project, mainly to do with health. We wanted to use the natural resources as a strength and build upon it further, bringing nature in even closer to the core of Bengtsfors town. We wanted to counter the effect of some of the SWOT weaknesses, mainly the impact many of them have on health. For example the uncertain future and the few possibilities for social interaction can both lead to decreased mental health. An opportunity we wanted to make use of was the many existing structures already available in Bengtsfors, and a threat we wanted to counter was inequality, making sure less privileged groups would get the care they need.





# Research

This chapter presents all the research that we've done for this project and gives motivation for our design choices.



# Methods

## Overall strategy

In order to get a deeper understanding of the current situation and operation of Hälsoforum, we have contacted and communicated with the people working there. To make the project more sustainable in terms of environment and economy, we have decided to implement our project in an already existing building, keeping a dialogue open with the municipality about suitable and empty facilities.

For the design method, we have been inspired by Biophilic Design and Therapeutic Garden Design. According to the award-winning architect and biophilic design expert Amanda Sturgeon (2019), nature can help people heal diseases and mental problems, and the design methods we have chosen are not only about bringing nature, greenery, fresh air, daylight and outdoor views back into buildings and its surroundings, but also to bring the sense of peace and tranquility when we are immersed in nature.



## Therapeutic Garden Design

A Therapeutic Garden is a place that facilitates interaction with the healing properties of nature through a plant-dominated space. Interactions within the garden can be either passive or active, depending on the user's individual needs. There are different kinds of Therapeutic Gardens, but they always focus on at least one of the following; healing, enabling, rehabilitation and restoration. There are also several attributes can make a garden therapeutic, but the basic features include wide and gently graded entrances and paths, raised planting beds and a sensory-oriented plant selection focused on color, texture, and fragrance (American Horticultural Therapy Association [AHTA], 2020).

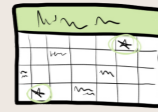


## The characteristics of a Therapeutic Garden

The seven characteristics of a Therapeutic Garden were initially developed in 1993 by the AHTA, and the theory is based on evidence based design principles.

### 1. Scheduled and programmed activities:

To increase the number of visits it's important to promote a program of activities and experiences in the garden that attracts visitors. These activities can be classes of different kinds that familiarize people with the garden.



### 2. Modified features to improve accessibility:

Zones, elements and equipment should all be selected to provide accessible spaces, activities and experiences. This is to ease gardening tasks and enhance the experience for everyone. A therapeutic garden is an inclusive space for all to enjoy in their own way.



### 3. Well defined perimeters:

Boundaries of the garden and specific zones meant for different activities should be intensified to redirect attention and energies of the visitor to elements within the garden.



### 4. A profusion of plants and people/plant interactions:

A therapeutic garden is a place where people are introduced to an outdoor environment which offers space for restoration, therapy, social exchange and horticultural education. It should be designed to be an easily accessible, plant-dominated garden with simple path-patterns and workplaces. The garden promotes four seasons of sensory stimulation.



### 5. Benign and supportive conditions:

A therapeutic garden should provide a safe, secure and comfortable setting. Usage of hazardous herbicides, fertilizers e.t.c. should be avoided. Sun protection should be provided, as well as other protective structures. The flourishing plant life and protective nature of the garden offer comfort and refuge to its users.



### 6. Universal design:

A Therapeutic Garden is designed for the benefit and enjoyment for people with a wide range of conditions, for all ages and abilities. The garden often stimulates the full range of senses as alternatives to the visual experience.



### 7. Recognizable placemaking:

Therapeutic gardens are often simple and easy to comprehend. Garden patterns and experiences should be recognizable to enhance its identity. This sort of placemaking heightens focus on plants, comfort and independence throughout the garden.



(American Horticultural Therapy Association [AHTA], n.d.).

## What we bring into our project

We've brought several characteristics into our garden design. We thought a lot about **accessibility** and included raised flower beds, a raised water installation and wide paths. We have **defined perimeters** with clear entrances to the garden, a fence around the food garden, and clearly indicated spaces to sit down and relax. There's a **profusion of plants** throughout the garden, but there's still room for further planting and development. We've also tried to encourage a **profusion of interaction** throughout the garden in different ways, with spaces for both private restoration as well as social exchange. In addition to this we've added **supportive conditions** through weather protection from sun and rain. We have aimed to plan for the stimulation of more senses than just the visual sense, by catering for the auditory sense with birdhouses and insect hotels, as well as the flow of water, the sense of smell is activated by the numerous flowers and the sense of taste can be stimulated by the food garden. Thus, giving the garden a more **universal design**. Last, but not least, we've implemented a **recognizable placemaking** by designing the garden in a way that isn't complicated but easy to comprehend and get a clear view over.



## Biophilic design

The word "biophilia" means love of nature and as humans we have an innate attraction to nature and its elements, because we have a built-up genetic connection to nature through all the thousands of years living in agrarian settings. According to Oliver Heath Design, we subconsciously long for it and when we're separated from it, our health suffers. It was the American biologist Edward O Wilson that popularized the term in the 1980's. He saw that the increasing rate of urbanisation was leading to an increasing disconnection with nature, and as a result our wellbeing worsened.

Biophilic Design is an applied solution to this disconnection with nature, and is based on integrating natural elements and processes into the built environment. Research has shown that Biophilic design can reduce stress, blood pressure levels and heart rates, and increase productivity, creativity and wellbeing. The ability to learn can increase with 25% and the use of pain medication can be reduced by 22%. (Oliver Heath Design, n.d.)

Biophilic design strategies can be categorized into three main experiences; direct experience of nature, indirect experience of nature, and experience of space and place.



### Direct experiences

- Natural daylight
- Natural ventilation
- Green vegetation
- Water
- Animals
- Weather awareness
- Fireplaces and hearths

### Indirect experiences

- Natural materials (wood, stone, earth e.t.c.)
- Images of nature
- Nature-resembling colours and patterns
- Natural shapes and forms
- Age, change and the patina of time

### Space and place

- Views to the inside and outside for prospect and refuge
- A variety of open and closed off spaces
- Prominent transitional spaces like gateways and porches
- Cultural and ecological attachment to promote a connection

(Kellert S. R., Calabrese E. F., 2015).

## What we bring into our project

We used biophilic design method as our main inspiration regarding the building, but it also seeps into the garden design in some ways.

For **direct experiences** we brought natural daylight into the building by opening it up more. We've added a lot of greenery, we've made the canal accessible to enjoy, added water features in the garden, and we have fireplaces both inside and outside.

For **indirect experiences** we've used natural materials and colours, as well as tried to shape the interior of the greenhouse more organically. And by using an old building we've included age, change and patina in the project.

And lastly, for **space and place experiences** we've opened up the house more so that there's more sight-lines, but also several closed off more private spaces, we have clear entrances to both garden and building, and we promote a connection to the place with the cultural attachment of using an old building with history.



## Interviews

We conducted interviews via email with the people working with Hälsoforum today, Kicki Schagerström and Margareta Blidstam. They told us Hälsoforum was started by Tove Noxfeld who was working for the municipality as a way to increase the mental health of the inhabitants in Bengtsfors municipality. Right now there are no activities in Hälsoforum because of the pandemic, but they are hoping to be able to start it back up again soon.

The space they are using today is in the basement, a boring conference room according to Blidstam. There is also some noise from the hallway that can be heard from the room, as well as almost no daylight or plants. She is hoping that they will get more light and more noise reduction when they renovate the health center (M. Blidstam, K. Schagerström, personal communication, November 11, 2020).

*Hälsoforum was created with the intention to increase the knowledge about mental health*

*According to me it's a boring space. Limited daylight, in the basement, and not well isolated against sound.*

*The interest to partake in classes was not very widespread among the inhabitants in 2019, but in 2020 the classes were fully booked before being cancelled due to the pandemic*

*Varying and stimulating tasks. I get control over my work situation and plan my days with Hälsoforum*





# Inspiration

## Ecosystem services

Ecosystem services is a term referring to all the products and services we get from nature. Everything from and in nature that benefits us is an ecosystem service. They are usually divided into four categories; the supportive services that are fundamental to life, the provisioning services that give us what we need to survive, the regulatory services that take care of the ecological cycles, and the cultural services that make life worth living (Block, M., & Bokalders, V., 2016).

<p><b>Supporting services</b> <i>Making life on the planet possible</i></p> <p><b>Sun, earth, water, air</b> Energy, nutrition, ecological cycles, the atmosphere</p>		
<p><b>Provisioning services</b> <i>What we need to survive</i></p> <p><b>Crops, lumber, fibers, herbs</b> Food, material, fabric, spices, medicine</p>	<p><b>Regulating services</b> <i>Responsible for ecological cycles</i></p> <p><b>Wetlands, bees and birds, decomposition, forests</b> Clean water, pollination, dispersing seeds, fertile soils, oxygen</p>	<p><b>Cultural services</b> <i>Giving us enjoyment</i></p> <p><b>Nature, animals and plants, cultural landscape, older buildings</b> Recreation, ecological insight, beauty, cultural history</p>

## In planning

There are a lot of ecosystem services that can easily be gained if the mindset is included in the state of planning. For example, trees can be used for shade and cooling in the summer, bodies of water as well as plants can be used for flood protection. Food can be produced even in urban areas, and flowers can increase biodiversity and help pollinators survive. Plants don't have to be at ground level, but can be integrated into green roofs and walls. Economically, buildings overlooking green areas can increase in value (Block, M., & Bokalders, V., 2016).

## In our project

In our project we focus primarily on cultural services, but of course benefit from other categories too. Trees give shade, clean the air and affect noise in the area, flowers give an aesthetic value and sensory input as well as increase biodiversity by attracting pollinators, and small scale food production feeds inhabitants as well as giving greater ecological insight about how food is produced.



## Elizabeth and Nona Evans Restorative Garden



## Facts about the project

Designed by Dirtworks, the garden is located within Cleveland Botanical Garden and is divided in three parts with different sensory experiences and activity, for contemplation, education and therapy, and socializing. The garden accommodates for all types of needs by integrating elements for elderly and people with physical and intellectual disabilities. The design shows the importance of accessibility in public relaxing outdoor spaces. Within the garden is a horticultural therapy garden and the garden is choreographed with the help of paths, materials and carefully made design decisions (Institute for Human Centered Design, 2016, and Dirtworks Landscape Architecture, 2018).

## What we bring into our project

This garden is a good and clear example of Therapeutic Garden design and has contributed to us getting a better grasp of the concept and method. The broad paths, raised flower beds and the use of different senses inspired us. The raised body of water is something we have integrated in our project. The elaborate but also simple ways this garden accommodates people with different prerequisites is elegant and something we aspired to do in our project.

## The Discovery Garden



### Facts about the project

Located in the Wellington Botanic Garden in New Zealand, the 1500 square meter Discovery Garden is placed on a steep hill and is a children's garden focusing on ecosystem services - what we can get from nature. Examples of this are food, fibre, construction materials and medicine. Designed by Isthmus' architects, the garden acts as an interactive classroom with spaces for construction and interactive bamboo races with water. At the heart of the garden there is a pavilion for school visits, events and workshops (Landuum Landscape, 2020).

### What we bring into our project

In contrast to the previous example, the Discovery Garden is directed more towards children and learning. The focus is on play and activity rather than serenity. In our project we have added interactive and social parts such as a food growing garden and a grilling spot, partly inspired by this project. Also, we've added things such as a Bug B&B for insects, and various bird houses can also be placed within the garden.

## Maggie's Oldham Rehabilitation Centre



### Facts about the project

Designed by dRMM, Maggie's Oldham is a support centre for people affected by cancer. The building is made out of a sustainable tulipwood cross-laminated timber as a contrast to sterile hospital environments, and the ceiling is made out of wood left over from the CLT process to limit waste. The building rests on pillars and a tree emerges from underneath, bringing nature inside even at the centre of the building. During the design process, dRMM took advice from people dealing with cancer, which is noticeable down to the smallest details, such as the door handles being made out of wood since metal can feel very cold in the hands of someone undergoing chemotherapy (ArchDaily, 2017, and UrbanNext, 2020).

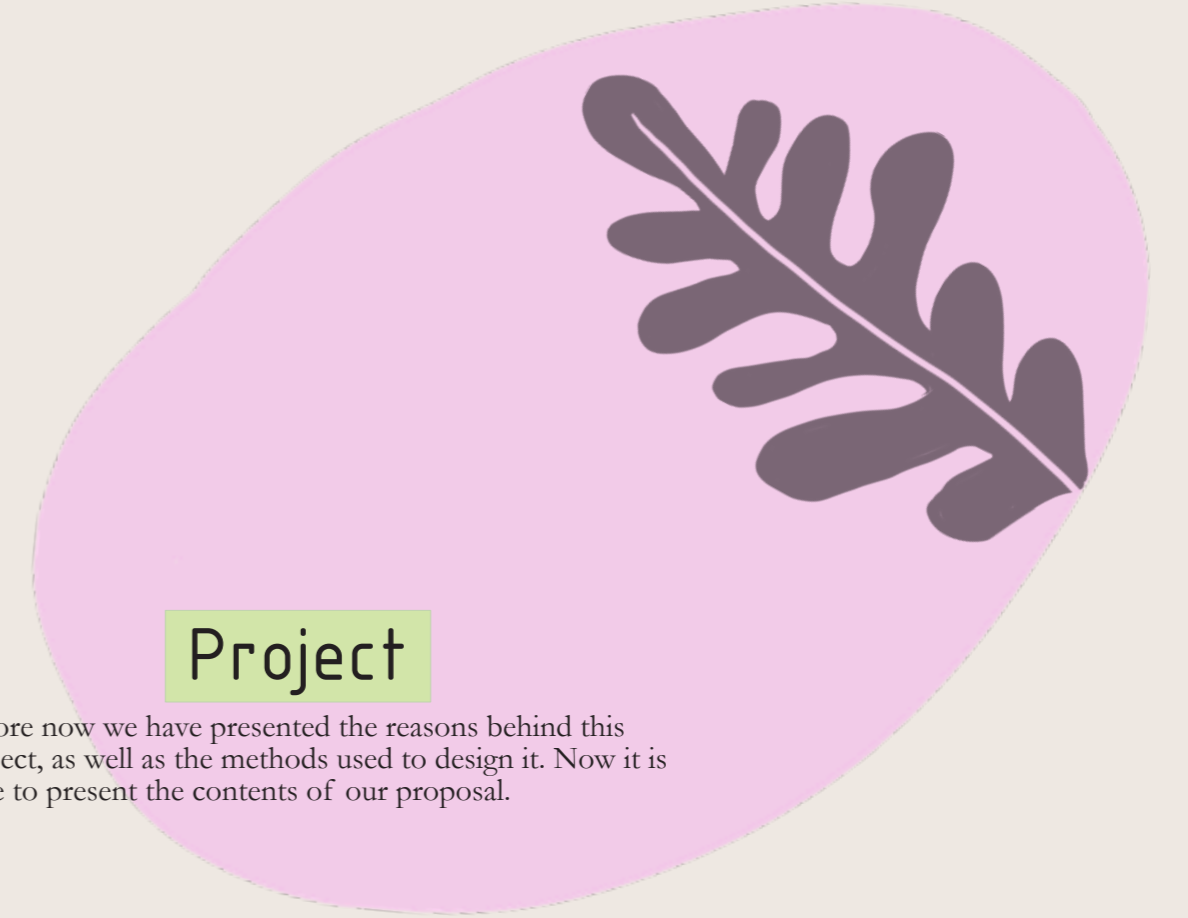
### What we bring into our project

When building Maggie's Oldham, a lot of care and consideration went into the project. No details were left out, and greenery was brought inside. They used natural materials and worked with Biophilic design, which has inspired us to try and do the same.



Before now we have presented the reasons behind this project, as well as the methods used to design it. Now it is time to present the contents of our proposal.

## Project





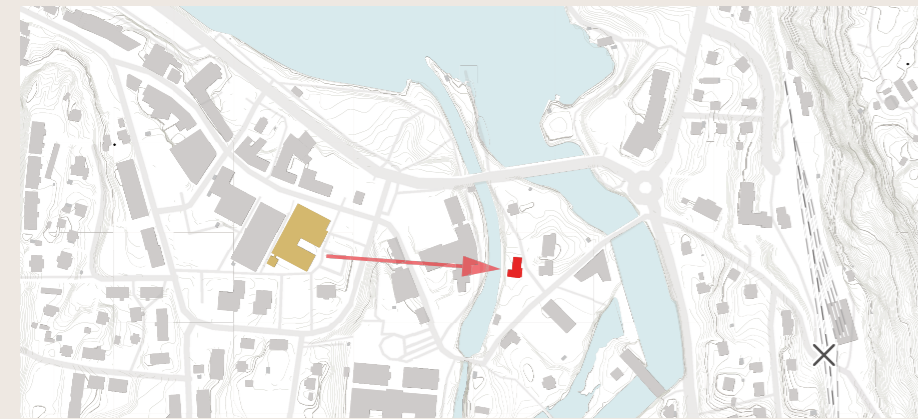
# Site analysis

## Location

When looking for a project location we set up some guidelines. We didn't want the new location to be too far from where Hälsoforum is today, at the health center Nygård in the middle of Bengtsfors town, because we didn't want to force the people involved today to have to travel/commute farther away.

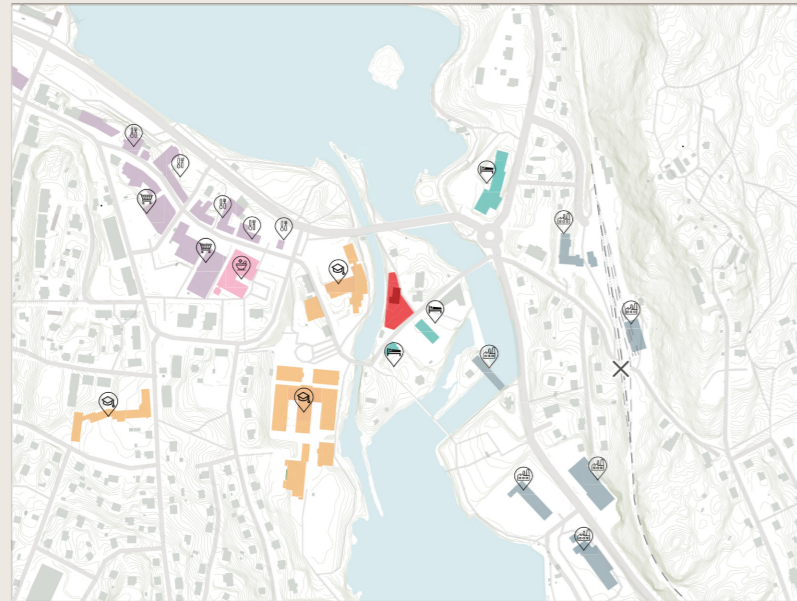
We also didn't want the new Hälsoforum to be placed in the middle of the busiest street of Bengtsfors, since some level of privacy and calm is beneficial to the project. But at the same time, we also did not want to hide it away, since this project is also about accepting mental illnesses as a part of the community and for everyone to reap the benefits of the project.

Therefore, the old building seen on the picture to the right, which is located on this beautiful little island, as seen on the map underneath, seemed like the perfect location.

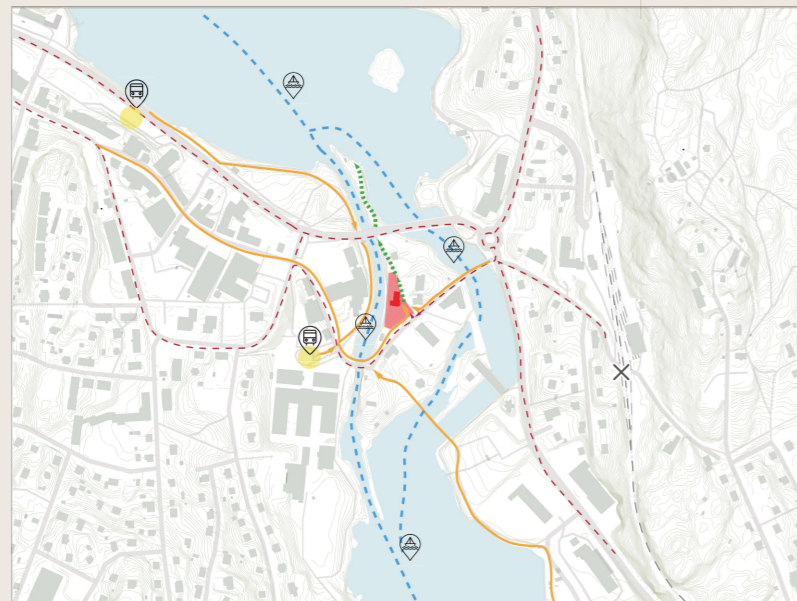







- Walking path
- Car traffic
- Boat traffic
- Walking and biking
- Municipally owned parking
- Island
- Garden
- Garden paths
- Deck in the canal
- Road
- Buildings





-  Project plot
-  Education
-  Commercial
-  Healthcare
-  Hostel and hotel
-  Industrial
-  Residential



-  Walking path
-  Car traffic
-  Boat traffic
-  Walking and biking
-  Bus stop

## The plot

The house is an old water mill building and has been standing vacant for the most part. Most recently it was temporarily used as a gathering place for teenagers (fritidsgård). In 2016 there was a suggestion to turn the building into an office and apartments (C. Blüme, M. Andersson, personal communication, 2020).

We feel that our suggestion is more in time with the needs of the present day. One thing that is not lacking in Bengtsfors, to our understanding, is places to live. Thereof, we feel it is better to build something that will contribute to the community in a bigger picture. However, we will also include it in our suggestion to make parts of the building into office spaces, or co-working spaces as we choose to call it. This is because we see a need to financially support our proposal internally so that the building pays for itself so to say. From the common SWOT analysis made by the class, we also found that there's a need for places where individual small companies can rent a space. Furthermore, the office idea would make our proposal more attractive and beneficial to the private landowner. When choosing to work with this specific plot, we were initially under the impression that the

municipality owned the entirety of it. But, some time into the project we were made aware that the building itself, as well as most of the surrounding garden, is in fact privately owned. Given that we, unfortunately, found this out pretty late in the process, we haven't been in communication with the private landowner. But, through our communication with the municipality, we got good inputs regarding the focus on mental health and the value of making use of an old historical building, as well as the importance of public access to the canal, which is something we have incorporated in the project.

We suggest a cooperation between the private landowner and Hälsoforum, where both parties negotiate terms that can benefit both. Hälsoforum was started through cooperation between the municipality and the health center in Bengtsfors, but it is today run only by the health center, which is regionally governed. Our suggestion is that the municipality yet again cooperate with the health center in order to collectively fund the renovation and maintenance as well as renting the space needed from the private landowner.

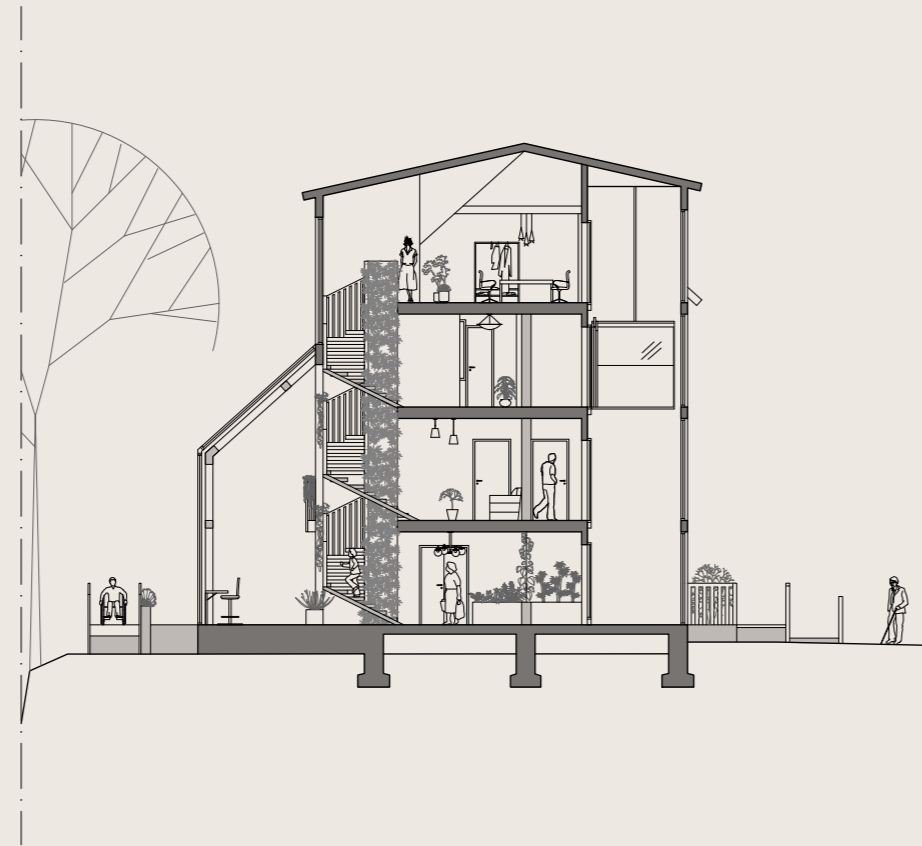
# Project

## Concept of Hälsoforum

We have decided to relocate Hälsoforum, to an empty already existing structure, in order to give it more space and make it more visible and accessible for the public. A big garden, designed with the Therapeutic Garden aspects in mind, surrounds the building which has been remodeled with the addition of a big greenhouse, which lets people enjoy the benefits of greenery all year round. The interior of the building has been designed to assist with a development of services offered by Hälsoforum, to further strengthen the concept of a health forum.

## The exterior

The exterior of the building is something we have been trying to preserve in our project, and even with big changes the design and overall look of the building is largely the same. The biggest addition is the greenhouse on the west side of the building, which replaces a smaller extension of the building. The greenhouse is added to let in more light and be able to offer plants and greenery all year round. The other big change to the building will be that of the elevator and roof windows.



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## Garden description

The garden is surrounded by a hedge with a few clear openings, creating a boundary between the garden and the street. The garden is divided in several parts, and there's plenty of room for developments and additions in the future. Some parts of the garden are social and inviting, such as the pavilion and the outside cooking area. The pavilion offers rain protection and shade, and a part of the cooking area is shaded. The deck by the water gives a stronger connection to the water and can serve as both a social space and a place for contemplation. North of the house is a fireplace, where social activities can take place even in colder months. Right next to the house is a food garden in connection to the house, with fruit trees and plant boxes. There is also a tool shed to store all equipment. The food garden can help in educating about food produce and be part of therapeutic practises.

Between the entrances to the garden there is an area with an insect hotel and bird houses, to bring animals and pleasant sounds to the garden. There are two installations with water, one of them is elevated to accommodate people with disabilities. Close to the water there are three different installations that allow for secluded reflection and solitude. One of them offers a roof above the head, one is partly see through made with wood and one is made of bricks with built-in seating.

## Connections

Overall the garden is made for everyone and offers shelter from weather, access to water and plants, a place to rest and social connection. It can also be a place for learning and exhibitions. Schoolchildren within the municipality can come to learn about gardening and growing fruit and vegetables, as well as building bird houses and insect hotels. The garden can exhibit art (of the weather tolerant kind), for example in cooperation with Stenebyskolan, and elderly care homes can visit the garden on field trips. The garden can also be used for different kinds of courses and workshops, for both companies and the public. Examples of such courses/workshops are gardening and food production, meditation and mindfulness, campfire cooking, to name a few. The garden also offers new job opportunities where, for example, a gardener will need to be hired for the maintenance and development of the garden.





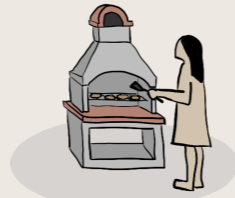
## Sequence of public, semi-private and private spaces

The garden is open for the public to enjoy all year round, and spaces for socialisation and solitude is quite mixed. There can be movements of people all around the garden, passing by here and there, and we want to offer people the opportunity to choose solitude for therapeutic purposes out in the open, not build secluded areas obscured from the view of society. We feel that therapeutic coping methods should be part of the everyday life for every citizen, regardless if one suffers from mental health issues or not. If mental health is an open public discussion, and socially accepted, it can impinge on people's lives in a positive way.

We have designed several rooms within the garden made for seclusion to different extents. By choosing where to sit down one can make a conscious decision on how open they want to be, and also make one's intentions known, since people are generally less eager to intrude on a space already occupied. For example, we have one space surrounded by brick walls, completely obscuring the person within, or a space surrounded by semi-secluding wooden trellis walls. Additionally one could choose to sit down, alone or as a group, wherever within the garden, under a tree, by the canal e.t.c.



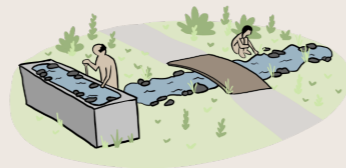
- 1 Space to read, reflect and have intimate conversations.



- 3 A space to cook and eat food.



- 4 A pavilion for smaller social gatherings and workshops.



- 2 Water on several levels to account for levels of mobility.



- 5 A deck on which to sit and enjoy the canal.



- 6 A place to grow food and plants.



- 7 A fire place to gather around and make use of the garden all year round.



- 8 An area with a bee hotel and bird houses.







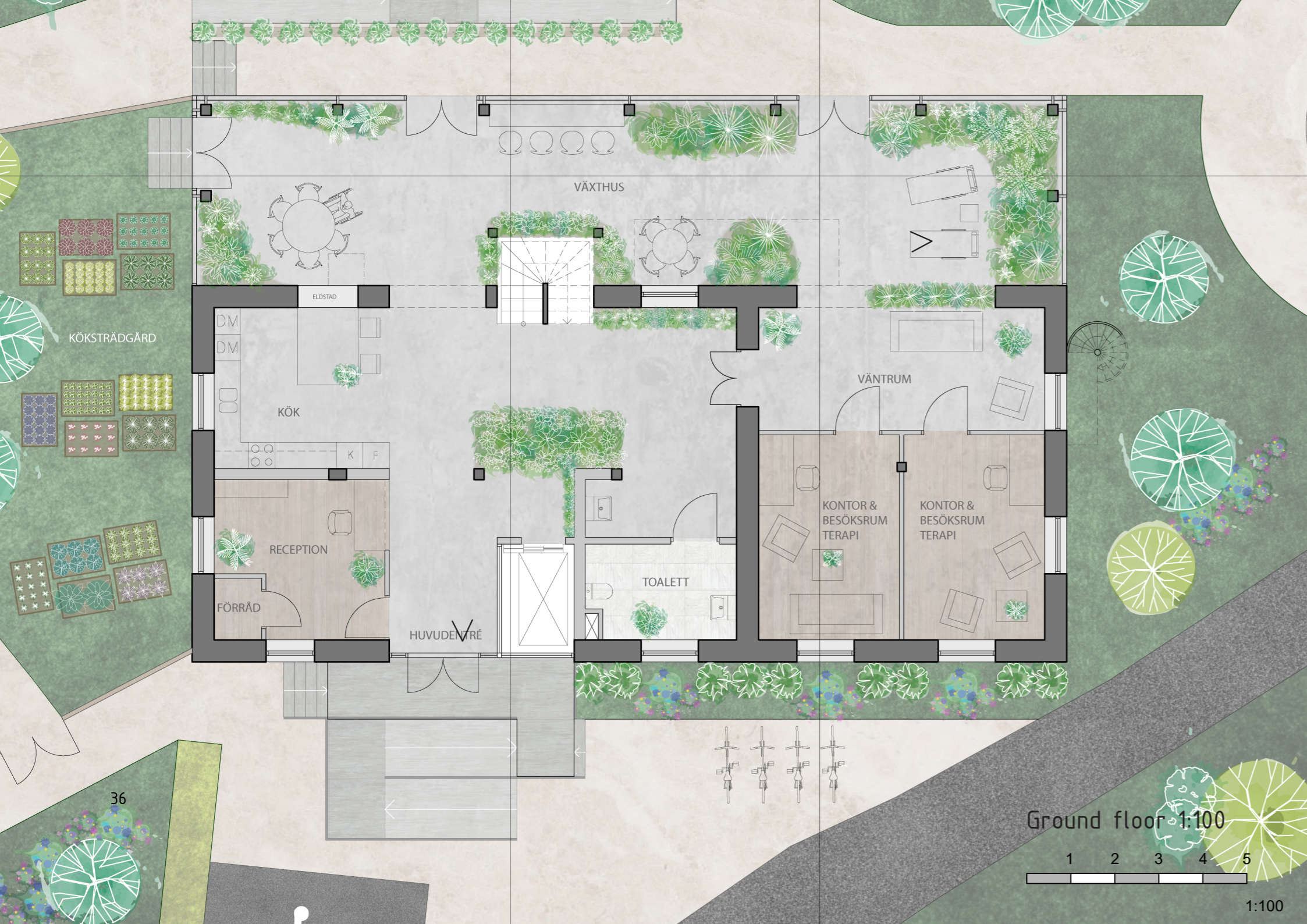
*The building as seen from the deck by the canal. The picture also shows a raised flowerbed, part of the pavillion and an area for making and eating food.*



*The picture shows water both at ground level and raised level to accommodate everyone, as well as some semi private areas.*







## Ground floor

Hälsoforum is located on the first two floors in the building. You enter through the reception on the first floor and can immediately see through the building and greenhouse to the outdoors. There is a kitchen to hang out in, warm your food or attend a cooking class incorporating the food garden outside. The old fireplace is remodeled and can be enjoyed both from the kitchen and the greenhouse. In the greenhouse anyone can sit and wait for an appointment, study or just spend some time alone or with friends. The individual therapy rooms can be found a short walking distance to the right from the entrance. You enter them through an open but still secluded space, and there are bushes outside the windows to reduce visibility from the outside. The stairs are placed halfway out in the greenhouse, helping to break the barrier between indoors and outdoors.

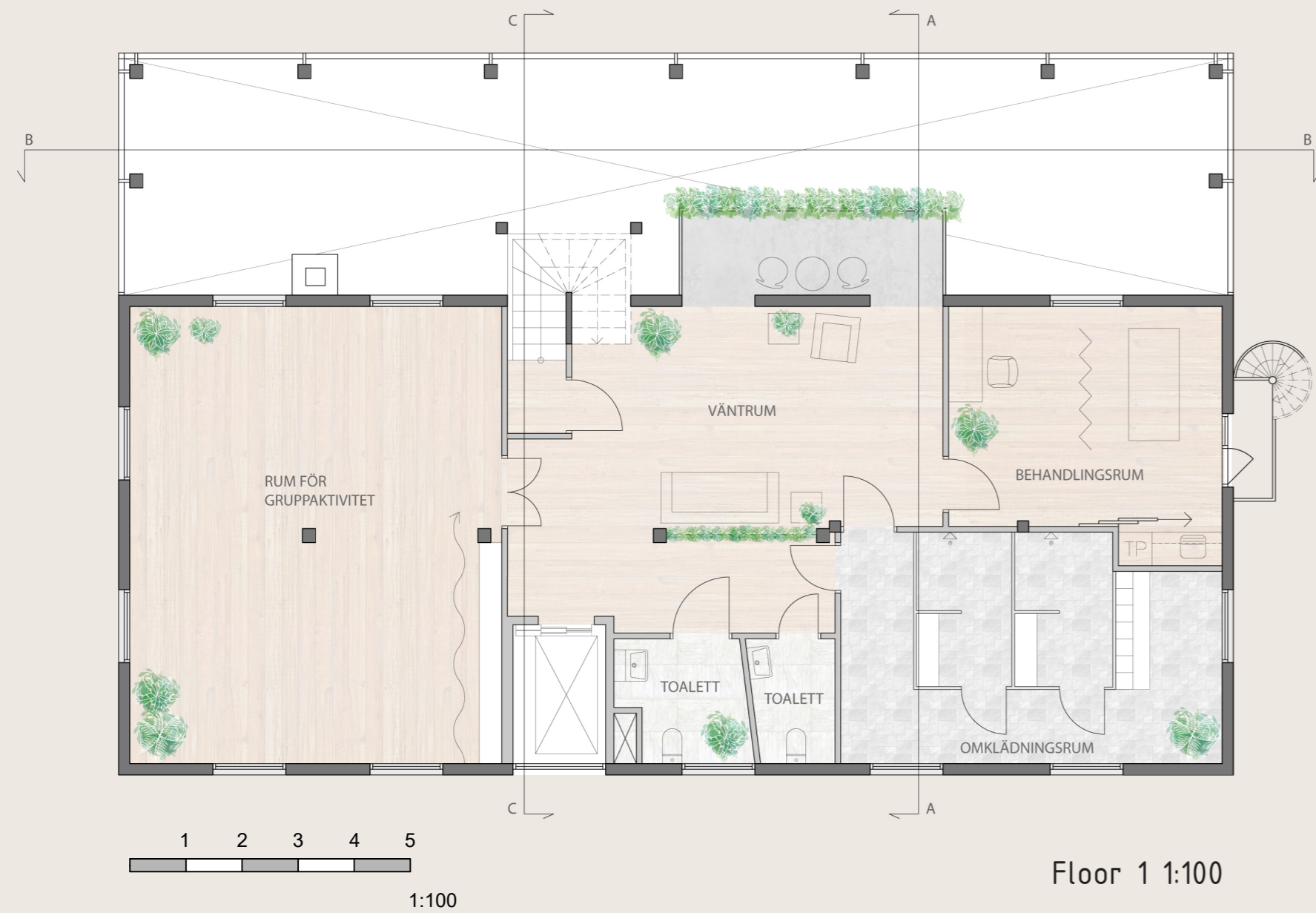
A new job opportunity is offered, since a receptionist will be needed in order to keep track of all possible activities and visiting people in the building and its surroundings. The therapists working for Hälsoforum have access to offices, but can also, when appropriate and for different therapeutic purposes, choose to work in the greenhouse and in the garden.

## Sequence of public, semi-private and private spaces

The therapy offices are secluded and private. Bushes and trees have been planted outside the windows to offer protection from the outside. The waiting room works as a semi-private medium between the public greenhouse, hallway and kitchen.







## First floor

On the second floor there is a group activity room made for class activities, such as sleep courses, meditation, yoga and lectures. The room can be rented to suitable actors such as for AA meetings or book clubs with a focus on health. There is a physiotherapy room for acupuncture, massages and such. The changing room is open for everyone attending a more physical class or treatment and has privacy booths for showering and changing, and lockers to store your things. There is an open balcony leading out to the greenhouse, helping you to feel connected to the outside and to nature.







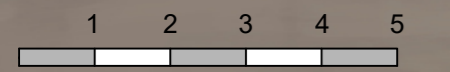
*The reception and greenhouse as seen from the entrance.*



*The greenhouse is open for the public to enjoy.*







1:100

42

Section A-A 1:100

43





Section B-B 1:100



## Co-working space

### Co-working concept

Bengtsfors municipality has a lot of companies, especially smaller companies with one or a couple of people working there. As a small company it can be hard finding good premises for your operation, on top of having to buy a lot of material that you may not use very often, for example a printer. Furthermore, the social aspect of having colleagues is often missing in a single person company. To solve this problem, we want to create a co-working space where you can pay a monthly fee in exchange for access to work space, a common kitchen and leisure area, a printer and such. This way small companies get to meet and network as well as having access to a work space. The co-working space is only for those who pay to be there, while large parts of the rest of the building is for everyone. Although the co-working space and the openness can seem to clash with the privacy sometimes needed in a health center, we believe that this can help destigmatize mental illness. The therapy rooms are located more privately in the building and the co-working space can be a great addition, rather than a threat to the concept of a health building. The co-working space will also help finance the renovation and upkeep of the building, making the project more economically sustainable.

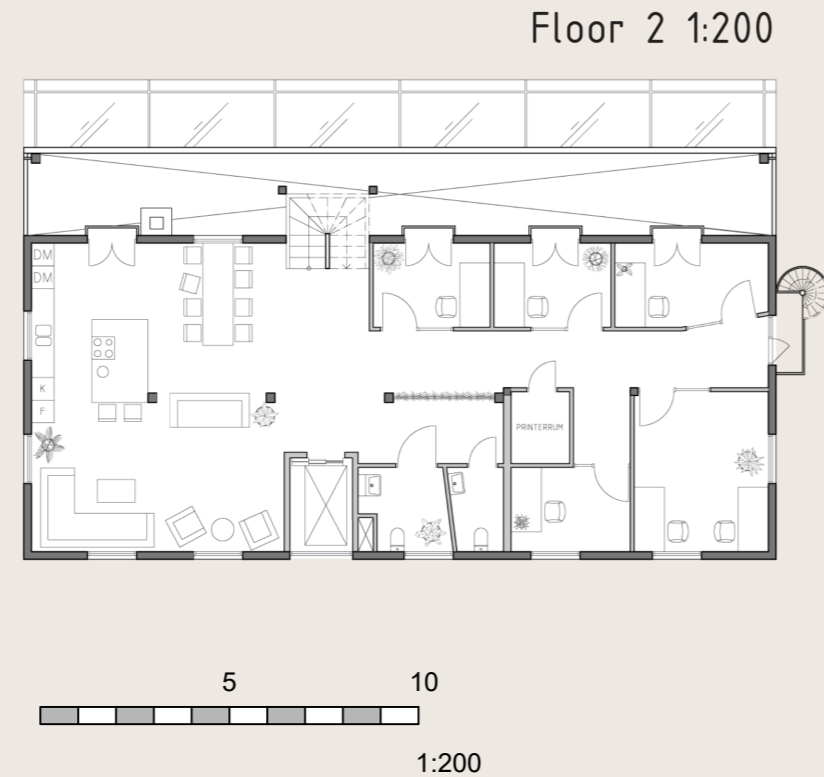


*The top floor of the co-working space with lots of windows and light coming in.*



## Description of floor 2

The co-working space is located at the top two floors of the building. When you enter the building you can choose to take the elevator directly upstairs or walk the stairs to enjoy the greenhouse. Floor two has a big social space with a kitchen, a big table for eating and a couple of couches and armchairs to take a social coffee break in. There are also four private office rooms where you can sit if you're on a phone call or need a quiet workspace, and a double office for colleagues to collaborate in. Some of the rooms have french balconies out to the greenhouse, that can be opened to let in light and greenery or closed to keep out noise. There is also a small printer room.

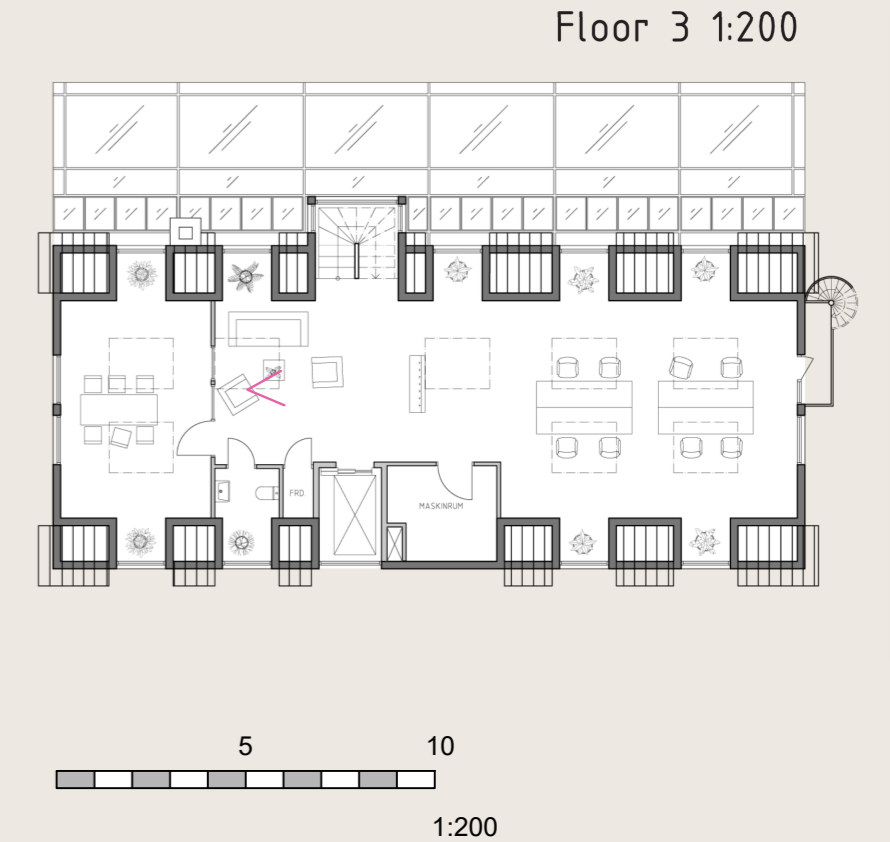


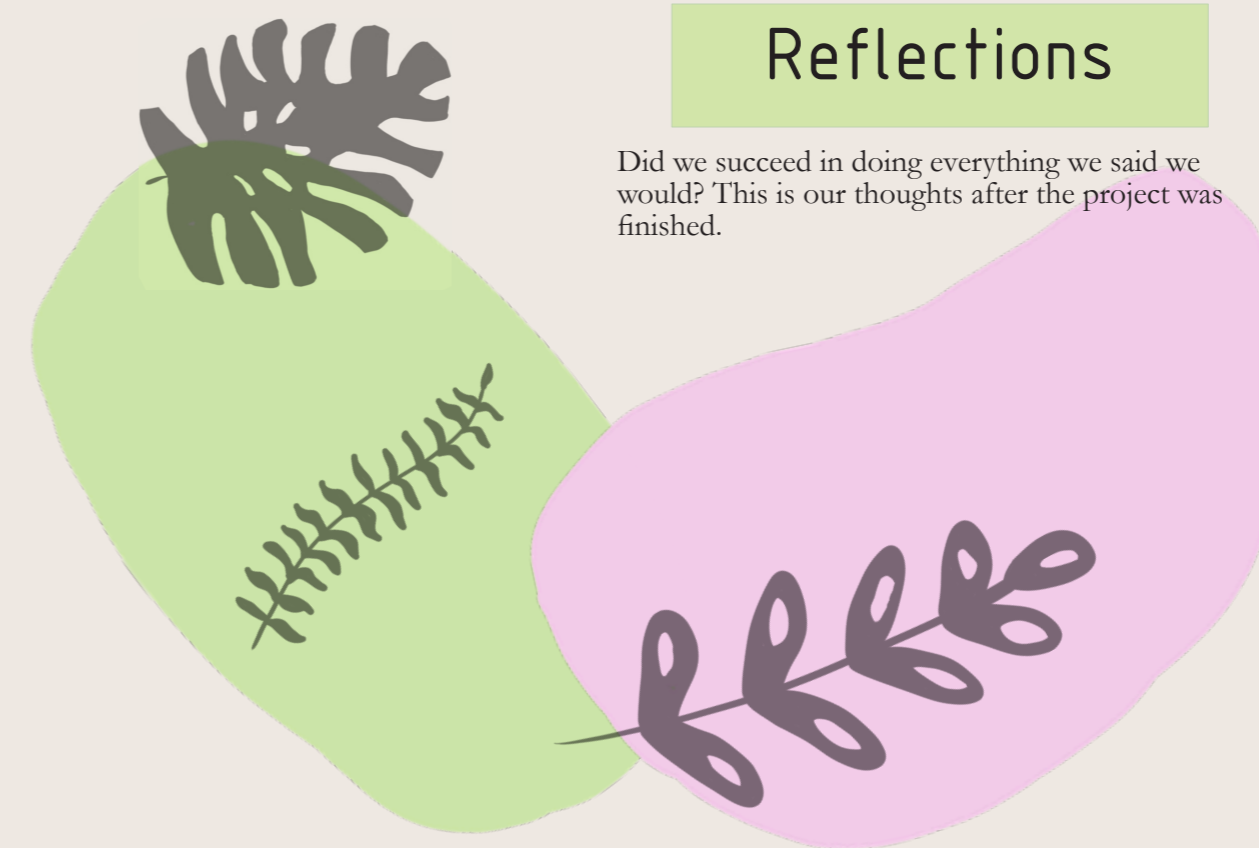
## Description of floor 3

On floor three there's a bigger conference room for meetings, as well as a smaller social space and a common workspace where you can sit at a desk to work on your duties separately, but in company of others. The roof is opened up with lots of windows to let natural light flow down on the workspaces.

### Public and private sequence

The openness of the co-working space makes it a rather public space, but with the addition of the smaller rooms a semi-private space is also offered. You can also expect to know who is going to be there, since a limited number of people will have access to the space. The addition of a co-working space will make the building, as a whole, a more public space and can help to welcome people into the garden and the building.





## Reflections

Did we succeed in doing everything we said we would? This is our thoughts after the project was finished.

We managed to design our proposal and at the same time utilize an empty existing building. Through the design process, we have implemented Hälsoforum into the building, which is designed with relation to mental health problems in mind. New functions, new meanings and new activities have been not only added into the building, but also the area around the building, which will benefit the quality of life and well-being of the inhabitants in Bengtsfors municipality. The research of the methods and guidelines have also been integrated into the design process, which gives us a new perspective about how to plan a building like this and its outdoor area. One purpose of our project was to eliminate the segregation of mental health issues in our society. In order to accomplish that goal, we designed the outdoor healing garden not only for the participants of Hälsoforum, but for all the people in society.

The limitation of the time has held us back a bit. We couldn't go further into the details of our project with, for instance, the sustainable aspect of our building design, the details of the energy efficient planning and the ventilation planning of the greenhouse. In a high latitude country

like Sweden, weather is also an important aspect that affects people's mental health. At the beginning of the project we wanted to design an illumination plan to brighten up our project in the winter season and during night. We also wanted to make some renderings illustrating different weather conditions, but unfortunately we didn't get the time. If given more time, we would also have wanted to work more closely with the different stakeholders, and possibly received some feedback from participants of Hälsoforum, if it could be done in an undemanding way comfortable for them.

We didn't get the chance to communicate with the private landowner in regards to our project proposal. Our suggestion of a cooperation between the owner, the municipality and the health center could be tricky, since there are multiple actors involved. These actors also have slightly differing interests and goals. We don't believe it to be impossible, but it's a unique situation with no clear answer or outcome.



## What our project could mean for Bengtsfors

According to Folhälsomyndigheten mental health issues have been on the rise in Bengtsfors since 2015. Due to the current situation, the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the uncertainty of the future in all aspects. Our project provides a refuge of spirit, if people feel stressed or depressed they can come to Hälsoforum to join a course or do some physical exercises, to relax and to heal. In our outdoor garden, we provide different kinds of spaces, people can stay alone in our privacy spaces to read a book, do meditation, or join workshops and communicate with other people. Our project could also act as a meeting place for the inhabitants of Bengtsfors. The healing garden could become an open living room for Bengtsfors municipality, where everyone feels involved and included, which can prevent mental health issues.

By mixing public spaces with semi-private and private ones, we wanted to highlight the importance of mental health and break down the stigma and shame often associated with it. We believe that if mental health issues and the design around it becomes incorporated with everyday life it could become more accepted, leading to more people reaching out for help in time.

## Vision vs. Reality - a reflection on the current built environment

Mental health issues are rarely considered in design processes, some built environments could in fact have an opposite influence on our mental health. For example some office designs give employees feelings of depression and anxiety. Although the biophilic design method has been talked about a lot and has been proved to have a lot of benefits to the human mind and body, due to the cost and the maintenance of the plants, there are still few projects that have implemented biophilic design in their design process. In our vision, we want the greenery and the experience of nature to always be around. When we are stressed because of work, we can find a place to relax, so that we can get a balance and be more efficient. But in reality, in the actual built environment, it's hard to find a refuge to ease one's mind. We have to reconsider the relationship between the human and the built environment, our buildings are not just containers for working machines, but should be more catering towards us and our mental health.



## Sustainability

Our project is more related to the social and cultural level of sustainability. The progress and development of our society are based on the sustaining efforts and labour of human-being. But in this generation, people are living with a high pace lifestyle. The urbanisation and centralisation is happening fast, and this polarizes our societies, increasing the inequalities and so on. These things are all part of why mental health issues are on the rise.

To achieve sustainable development, we must have a healthy mental support system in the society. Our project means to help the people who are already suffering from mental health issues, and to prevent the situation from getting worse. Our project can also help participants heal the soul from the pressure of the outside world, but also teach them to think and reflect on their lives and seek the meaning of life.



## Common SWOT

In the end, did we achieve the SWOT goals we said we would? We feel that we have touched upon more bulletpoints than we initially thought we would.



S

In addition to natural resources, our suggestion also makes use of the local business engagement and partly include Stenebyskolan with art installations in the garden.

W

In addition to countering mental illness, our project also offers more activities and a social space to hang out in, which is lacking in Bengtsfors.

O

Besides making use of the opportunity of existing structures, we also make use of an increasing awareness of sustainability by attracting sustainably aware people

T

Other than dealing with the threat of inequality, our project also aids in dealing with the threat of economic uncertainty by providing job opportunities and a work space.



## Our project SWOT

# S

- Develop local participation
- Make use of existing physical structures
- Make nature available
- Adding a meeting place
- Reuse the material from the old building
- Keep the characters of the old building, to keep a sense of history

# O

- The co-working space on the second and third floor can bring in money for the upkeep of the building
- The new Hälsoforum needs more workers, which could offer new job opportunities in Bengtsfors
- Highlighting the connection between mental health, the built environment and greenery
- Increased well-being

# W

- Lack of financial support for the renovation of the old building and greenhouse
- Our project is an added monthly cost for the municipality
- Both buying or renting the plot is a large expense

# T

- Too idealistic, may be difficult to attract people
- Due to the pandemic, it is difficult to open up a physical forum

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