

AGNES ENGSTRÖM

ANDRUM

- exploring the use of biophilic architectural design in the context of a Gothenburg cancer support center



Every day 137 people are diagnosed with cancer in Sweden. The illness not only impacts the patient itself, but also family, friends, colleagues, and society. Tackling cancer is usually difficult, both physically and mentally, and those affected often feel lonely and misunderstood. Many of them consider the psychological care aspects missing or insufficient, especially after finishing treatment. A more holistic view on cancer care is needed, where the mind and body are treated as equally important. Therefore, this thesis work will propose a new cancer support center in Gothenburg: a place where people affected by cancer can meet others in their situation, get support, information, and rehabilitation. There are many successful examples of cancer support centers, but none currently exist in Gothenburg.

Research has shown how contact with nature can improve health, with a wide range of positive effects such as stress reduction, faster physical recovery, an immune system boost and a happiness increase, all aspects that could benefit people dealing with cancer. Biophilic design is a method where the human connection to nature is incorporated in the design, with the purpose of increasing wellbeing. The method is explored through research,

site analysis and sketching, with the aim to propose an environment suitable for physical and mental healing, in close connection to its natural surroundings.

The proposal also aims for ecological sustainability, through the 're-greening' of a city plot void of vegetation, as well as with high material standards. Merging the aspects of human healing and health with planetary healing and health is a strong combination, as they go hand in hand.

The project is based upon a Research Informed Design approach, including literature studies, interviews with patients, relatives and staff (n=6), surveys with patients and relatives (n=53), and reference studies focused on the relation between nature, cancer support and the built environment.

The result may contribute to a raised discussion about the spatial and psychological needs of people affected by cancer, as well as to the importance of including biophilic design in the development of health-promotive environments.

Keywords : architecture, cancer care, biophilic design, rehabilitation, sustainability

HEALTHCARE

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