

## The Tale of Tall Fūr

A re-enchantment of the architectural process  
and how a fictional tale can be used to influence  
and lead an architectural design

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The Tale of Tall Furr

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100 years ago, sociologist Max Weber claimed that our modern society has undergone a process of disenchantment - scientific and technical understanding has become more highly valued than belief in the mythical, mystical and magical. In this modern society, nature seems to have become knowable and manipulable, reduced to an object of consumption. This thesis applies Weber's disenchantment theory to an architectural context, and tries to recover enchantment through the architectural process.

The thesis begins with extensive literary readings as well as an early site analysis, spending time on the chosen project site with focus on the natural environment and engaging the imagination. During and after site analysis, a fictional tale is developed, connecting strongly to the characteristics of the site found during analysis. The main exploration of this thesis thus lies in using a fictional tale to find the story and narrative of the site. Through the fictional tale, the site narrative is then translated into a built design, connecting the architecture to the site by the means of enchantment.

Through studies of two architectural projects by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, a set of design strategies and tools for re-enchantment are defined. These strategies and tools deal with telling a narrative and a story through a built design. The architectural addition to the thesis' site is a single-family dwelling, which is used as a platform to try out the defined design strategies and tools. By working with them to tell the site narrative with the architecture, the fictional tale makes its way into the built environment.

The visual representation of the re-enchanting architecture is also explored, and model working in scale 1:1 is done to test some of the design tools. The thesis lands in a discussion about what possibilities architecture holds for a re-enchantment of our modern society and the creative abilities the architect has to work with strong narratives. By bringing back the magical and mythical through storytelling architecture and its surrounding environment, the architect could help recovering enchantment into our disenchanted world.

keywords: *disenchantment, re-enchantment, storytelling, narratives, Swedish forests*

## Thank you

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## Introducing the background problem

In the 1920s the Western world was diagnosed by sociologist Max Weber as disenchanted (Rüdiger, 2023). He suggested that modern society had undergone a process of disenchantment, meaning that scientific and technical understanding had become more highly valued than the mythical, mystical and magical. Disenchantment of the world, according to Weber, rested at the very heart of modernity (Jenkins, 2000).

In this modern society, the natural world has become widely understood as knowable, predictable and manipulable, and the view of the world is defined as anthropocentric (human-centered) (Jenkins, 2000). Nature – and in Sweden especially the trees – has become an object of consumption.

Trees are amongst the oldest living organisms on earth. There are fossils of tree stumps from the oldest known fossil forest estimated to be 385 million years old. The oldest living spruce tree on earth, that we know of, can be found in Sweden, on Fulufjället in Dalarna. Old Tjikko is its name, and is more than 9500 years old (Wohlleben, 2017, p.207).

The trees are many, as well, indicating their incredible success in survival – it has been estimated that there are 3,000 billion trees on the planet (Mancuso, 2019, p.51). In recent years, major scientific discoveries have been made of their communicative ways, their sensitivity, their social community, and more – something many traditional societies already knew (Wohlleben, 2017).

Even so, we give these extraordinary, large, majestic organisms the role of a servant, working in our industrialized plantations or cutting them down to make space for ourselves, our cities and our infrastructure. The Swedish way of working with forests in our forest industry is not an exception, but rather a perfect example of this. The relationship between human and natural environment seems to be wounded, and in desperate need of therapy. Can the architect help in healing this relationship by recovering enchantment through her architectural process and design?

*This thesis started in a frustration towards the Swedish forest industry – the way the forest is exploited and used for financial gain with little concern for the existing living ecosystems. I wanted to work with a critique on that, because it's something I've found myself quite passionate about.*

*However, it quickly became too depressing to work only in an attempt to address something so large as the forest industry. So a decision was made to take a big step away, and work in a separate, small world of my own, working intimately with the trees that live there.*

**“[I]f disenchantment is a source of environmentally destructive or uncaring attitudes, then [...] re-enchantment of the world [is] intended to offer an antidote to such attitudes, and perhaps also inspirations for new forms of managing and designing for sustainability.”**

**- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
(Brennan & Lo, 2024)**

## Purpose

The overall purpose of this thesis is to explore new methods of working in an architectural design project, both in regard to site analysis, aims of design and design choices in an architectural proposal, and visual representation of such architecture. The exploration lies primarily in how we as architects could re-enchant a project site and its natural environment through working with storytelling and narratives in the architectural process, and in this way create a strong connection to it and to the architecture placed on the site. In the end, the aim for this thesis is to encourage the architect to look at any regular property as a possible enchanted world of its own, where there live creatures beyond our wildest imagination. Maybe such a world can inspire to create something unexpected.

This thesis also aims to question what the relationship between the human species and the natural world looks like in the building sector.

The personal purpose of this thesis is to reflect on my own relationship with nature. To explore what this relationship means in a design proposal of a single-family dwelling. As a future architect, is this relationship with nature given any space in the architectural work I do, or is it pushed aside to make room for other values?

## Thesis Questions

How could methods such as re-enchantment and storytelling enhance and develop connections and understanding of a site and its natural environment, and how could these methods influence the architecture of the design proposal of this thesis?

Looking at a chosen group of reference projects, what specific design strategies and tools can be identified that create a story and narrative in the architectural design, and how could these be implemented in the design proposal of this thesis?

## Delimitations

The design proposal aims to showcase possible implementations of the design strategies put forward. The focus lies in highlighting the possibilities of re-enchantment and storytelling in architecture, and the building design acts as a vessel for that. The focus is not the program, function or any commercial potential of the building.

The forest and its natural environment is a complex piece of nature. Since I am not a botanist, I will try to understand the ecosystem to the best of my ability, but keep the focus on my role as an architect.

## Glossary list

### clear-cutting

also clearfelling or clearcut logging. A practice in forestry and logging, in which most or all the trees in an area are cut down simultaneously. The most common way of forestry in Sweden. Is debated to harm forest biodiversity (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2026)

### dsechantment (Weberian)

a process undergone by modern society, in which scientific and technical understanding has become more highly valued than belief in spirits and magic (Jenkins, 2000)

### enchantment

“a state of rapture and ecstasy in which the soul comes to the foreground, and the literal concerns of survival and daily preoccupation at least momentarily fade into the background” (Moore, 1997, p.ix)

### natural environment

includes everything in the existing flora and fauna of a living ecosystem

### narration (noun)

the act of telling a story

### re-enchantment

recovering enchantment (Moore, 1997)

### storytelling (noun)

the art of telling stories

## Disenchantment theory

Around 100 years ago, sociologist Max Weber diagnosed the Western world as disenchanted (Rüdiger, 2023). He argued that scientific and technical understanding had become more highly valued than belief in spirits and magic, and that disenchantment was a process of intellectualization highly characterized by rationality (Rüdiger, 2023). The variety of views and understandings of the world was now threatened by an 'objective' knowledge of the world. Disenchantment of the world, according to Weber, rested at the very heart of modernity (Jenkins, 2000).

Sociologist Richard Jenkins highlights two distinct aspects of Weberian disenchantment (2000). On the one hand, there is secularization and the decline of magic, and on the other hand, there is an increase in extent and power of the rationalities of science, bureaucracy, law and policy-making. Jenkins (2000) however, challenges this unwavering belief in disenchantment by Weber, and instead formulates a mix of disenchantment, re-enchantment and enchantment.

He means that we are forced to recognize the complexity of a world that is neither definitively enchanted nor

disenchanted. For example, even the most rationalized bureaucracy – a process dripping with disenchantment – is characterized by enchantment, with all of its office rituals, symbols, legends and traditions. He argues that there is actually a lot of mysticism in the world (Jenkins, 2000).

However, Jenkins still notes that the natural world and all areas of human experience seem to have become understood as less mysterious, and that this change in understanding should be taken seriously (Jenkins, 2000). Professor, psychotherapist and former monk Thomas Moore has written several books on this very topic, and similar to Max Weber, Moore sees disenchantment as standing at the heart of modern society. In his book *The Re-enchantment of Everyday Life*, Moore emphasizes the importance of a re-enchantment of our culture, so much so that he deems it absolutely necessary for our survival: “[O]ur culture often takes pride in disproving and exploding the sources of enchantment, explaining away one mystery after another [...]. We have yet to learn that we can't survive without enchantment and that the loss of it is killing us” (Moore, 1997, p.ix).

**”When a forest is no longer sacred, there are no spirits to be placated and no mysterious risks associated with clear-felling it. A disenchanted nature is no longer alive. It commands no respect, reverence or love. It is nothing but a giant machine, to be mastered to serve human purposes.”**

- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
(Brennan & Lo, 2024)



## About enchantment and re-enchantment

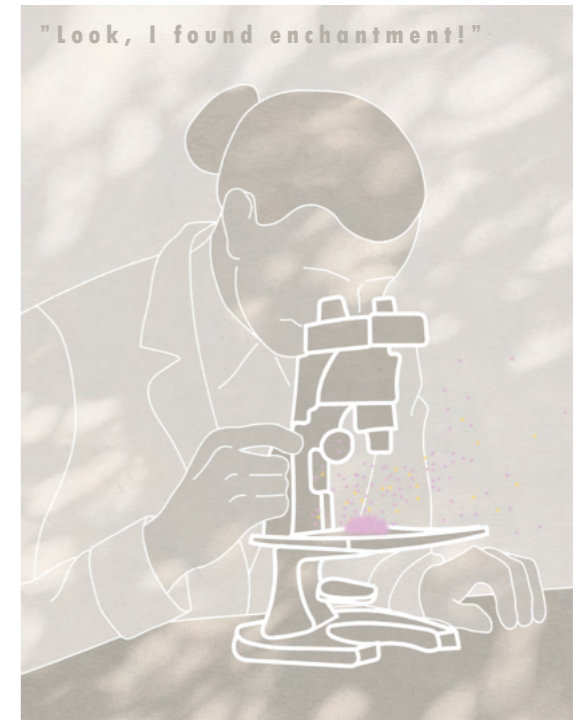
Amongst some environmental theorists, the disenchantment of nature is discussed as the reason for the human destructiveness towards nature (Brennan & Lo, 2024), and thus they advocate for a re-enchantment. Attempting to re-enchanted our world is argued to be a way to help save nature. This puts a very serious note on a topic (the topic of enchantment) that actually does not wish to be serious. As previously mentioned, professor, psychotherapist and former monk Thomas Moore emphasizes the importance of a re-enchantment of our culture, so much so that he deems it absolutely necessary for our survival (Moore, 1997). On this note, this thesis agrees with Moore – but what does enchantment actually mean?

The online dictionary of the Cambridge Library defines enchantment as “a feeling of great pleasure and attraction, especially because something is very beautiful” (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, n.d.c). This seems an alright definition, but still doesn't quite cover its various dimensions. And maybe it is difficult to define enchantment, because, by defining what it means, we take away the very essence of what it is – something that you can't really put into words. So perhaps, just like enchantment does not wish to be serious, neither does it wish to be defined. Moore, however, gives it a go, and perhaps because of its vagueness, his definition can be considered more suitable for this thesis: “Enchantment may be a state of rapture and ecstasy in which the soul comes to the foreground, and the literal concerns of survival and daily preoccupation at least momentarily fade into the background” (Moore, 1997, p.ix)

Moore also points out that science and enchantment are not opposites – which might be the general initial perception when discussing the topic of enchantment (Moore, 1997). Science actually has the power to enhance a sense of enchantment of the world, translating itself into wonder and intimacy with nature. Science can also help us find out what limitations nature asks of us (Moore, 1997). However, because we, according to both Weber and Moore, live in a disenchanted society, it means that we live in a culture that has lost its taste for enchantment. So instead, modern society takes the scientific discoveries, and quickly and efficiently moves onto exploitation, eventually resulting in abuse of both nature and people (Moore, 1997).

In conclusion, there seems to be a crucial need to live in a world of both facts and imagination. Enchanted living can serve practical, productive activity, and vice versa (Moore, 1997). So, even though imagination should not be taken literally, it should definitely be taken seriously.

This leaves us with a clenching thirst for re-enchantment – for recovering enchantment. But how can we recover enchantment? Moore argues that as we grow up, we leave the charming world we once knew as children, and we become sophisticated out of enchantment. The things that left us in wonder as kids, no longer do (Moore, 1997). Therefore, the first step in enchantment is “to recover a beginner's mind and a child's wonder, to forget some of the things we have learned and to which we are attached” (Moore, 1997, p.xx). The following page will continue on this thread, discussing the power of storytelling and working with child-like imagination.



Science and enchantment. Own illustration.

**“What if the businesspeople in a city bordering a river learned the history of that river, and songs and stories expressing its character, and what if they shed their modernism enough to engage in some rituals honoring that river – I suspect those businesses would be profoundly enriched in their personnel, their presence in the community, their image in the world, and the quality of their product.”**

**- Thomas Moore, The Re-enchantment of Everyday Life  
(1997, p.12)**

**”Hugging a tree has been considered activism. Can telling a story [about the tree] also be considered activism?”**

**- architect Naima Callenberg at mid-critique**

(personal communication, April 20<sup>th</sup> 2026)

## Winnie the Pooh

Deep in the Hundred Acre Wood, you will find the enchanted neighborhood of Christopher Robin and his friends Piglet, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo, Rabbit, Owl, Tigger and – of course – Winnie the Pooh. Winnie the Pooh (Pooh or Pooh Bear for short) is known for his loyalty, compassion, playfulness and simplicity – and his love for honey.

Author Alan Alexander (A.A.) Milne was born in London in 1882 and his writing career began in college and continued for the rest of his life (Aalto, 2015). In 1920, his son Christopher Robin Milne was born, and during Christopher’s childhood Milne wrote several children’s books – among them the books about Winnie the Pooh (IMDB, n.d.).

The setting of the books – Hundred Acre Wood – is based on real places. Ashdown Forest and the Five Hundred Acre Wood, which both lie near the village of Hartfield in East Sussex, are places that both Milne and his son spent countless hours in, walking and exploring the heathlands and woodlands.

Owl and Rabbit were inspired by the wildlife here, while the rest of the animals introduced in the books have all been stuffed toy animals of Christopher’s (Aalto, 2015).

The illustrations of Ernest H. (E.H.) Shepard presented in the books are equally iconic to the stories of Milne. Like Milne, Shepard also spent much time in Ashdown forest, observing nature and drawing off the landscapes (Aalto, 2015). Shepard’s illustrations together with Milne’s writing became an incredibly successful collaboration, filled with warm mutual appreciation of each other’s work. The books of Pooh are to many iconic staples of childhood, and recently polled as the no.1 favorite children’s book of the past 150 years (Aalto, 2015).

## The powers of storytelling

Before Winnie the Pooh, Ashdown Forest and the natural environment of East Sussex were already cherished and valued, especially in an ecological and botanical sense. It is one of the largest remaining areas of lowland heath in southern England, hence becoming a threatened and rare habitat, and it also inhabits diverse and certain vulnerable species (Aalto, 2015). In the summer of 1860, Charles Darwin spent time in Ashdown Forest to study its botany and specifically the carnivorous sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* (Aalto, 2015).

As Winnie the Pooh was introduced, Milne and Shepard added another layer of importance to the place – a beloved literary one. It did not reduce the importance of the other layers, but enriched the sense of place. Landscape historian, author and designer Kathryn Aalto has spent several years

researching the lives and works of Milne and Shepard, as well as the area of Ashdown Forest. She argues that the stories of Milne have helped turn Ashdown Forest into more than just a natural area – they’ve made it a cultural landscape (Aalto, 2015).

And this in turn can affect aspects of preservation. In her working life and as a writer herself, Aalto has reflected on the power of storytelling to shape our appreciation of the natural world and how works of literature can inspire conservation efforts. Aalto’s idea is that storytelling like Milne’s can be a powerful conservation tool. When people connect with a place through narrative, they’re more likely to value and protect it. And if said narrative is also introduced in childhood, the deep emotional attachment formed can make people even more protective of a place (Aalto, 2015).



Figure 1. Illustration by E.H. Shepard in *The House at Pooh Corner* (Shepard, 1990).

**”Trees are extraordinary beings in every respect. You do not become the primary source of a planet’s life by chance.”**

**- Stefano Mancuso in Plant Intelligence  
(p.54, 2019)**

## The extraordinary life of a tree

In his book *The Hidden Life of Trees* (2017), author and forester Peter Wohlleben is uncovering scientific tree-related breakthroughs and by doing so he is establishing the forest as a social network. It is a book exemplifying that science can truly enhance a sense of enchantment of the world, translating into wonder and intimacy with nature (Moore, 1997).

### Trees talk with each other

The communication skills of trees have increasingly been scientifically uncovered during recent years. For example, trees have a secret language of scent. If a tree finds itself being eaten, it gives off a warning gas that signals to neighboring trees that there is danger in the area. The neighboring trees then immediately start pumping out toxins in their leaves. Trees also communicate through sound waves. Their roots crackle and other roots respond (it has been measured to up to 220 hertz) (Wohlleben, 2017).

In fact, tree roots extend more than twice the spread of the crown, and this root network below, together with a vast fungal network, is by the science community referred to as the ‘wood wide web’ (Wohlleben, 2017). The fungal connections help trees exchange news about insects, drought, and other dangers by transmitting signals from one tree to the next.

Not only trees but also shrubs and grasses communicate underground. So, the community of the forest seems a chatty

one, Wohlleben argues. Sadly, trees that are weak might also lose their ability to communicate, and since they might miss out on communications about danger, a weak tree is also an easy target for pests (Wohlleben, 2017).

### Trees help each other

A general concern amongst gardeners is usually about trees growing too close together. This concern comes from the commercial forest industry, where the goal for the tree trunks is first and foremost to grow as thick as possible before logging when they are only between 60-120 years old (Wohlleben, 2017).

But studies show that e.g. beech trees thrive when huddled together. The trees help each other with food (nutrients and water) through exchanging underground. The crowns of course remain small and cramped, which might seem unhealthy to us, but the beech forest is actually the most productive and healthy when cramped together (Wohlleben, 2017).

Nutrients and water are divided between the trees (with the help of fungi down in the wood wide web) so that all trees can grow into the best version of themselves (Wohlleben, 2017). If we “help” individual trees by removing the trees nearby because we think of them as competition, the trees that are left are now communicating with the roots around them without receiving anything back, since those neighboring roots

now are only stumps above ground and no longer create food through photosynthesizing or collect water through their leaves. The social security network of the “helped trees” is lost (Wohlleben, 2017).

## Trees help in climate crisis

The impact the trees have on the global climate is astounding. Through photosynthesis they capture carbon and lock it up for centuries (The Woodland Trust, n.d.). Right now, 1 billion tonnes of carbon is stored in the woodlands of the United Kingdom alone. In addition to that, trees help with the effects of climate change by e.g. preventing flooding, reducing city temperatures, reducing pollution and keeping the soil of the earth nutrient-rich (The Woodland Trust, n.d.).

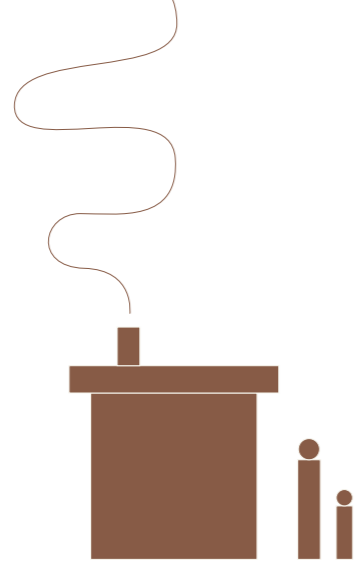
Even so, these remarkable, social, helpful organisms have been given the role of a servant. They are minimized into units of production on our industrialized plantations, and they are cut down to make space for ourselves, our cities and our infrastructure (Albert et al., 2019, p.21). This thesis argues that the most common Swedish way of working with the forests in our forest industry is a perfect example of this:

## The Swedish forest industry

The surface of Sweden consists of 70% forest land (Naturskyddsforeningen, 2026). The term forest land includes natural forests but also clearcut lands, where there is no actual forest anymore. Since the 1950’s, we have harvested more than 60% of our forests at least once, by clearcutting (Naturskyddsforeningen, 2022). This is the most common way of harvesting timber in Sweden, and it is a practice in the forest industry in which most or all of the trees in an area are cut down in the same way and at the same time. It also includes the use of very heavy machinery (Naturskyddsforeningen, 2026). Clearcutting can wipe out entire ecosystems on very large areas, and it can be argued that this practice take very little consideration to the slow life of trees or the valuable biodiversity of a forest (Wohlleben, 2017; Naturskyddsforeningen, 2026).



*Scot's Pine. Own illustration.*



A single-family dwelling as a platform to test re-enchantment strategies.

The thesis began in an extensive literature study (1) which kept on going parallel to the rest of the work until the very end. Simultaneous to the readings, time was spent on the chosen project site (1). The focus of analysis lay on existing nature and imagination. The aim here was to rid of my deeply embedded rational mindset at the very beginning of the architectural process. The choice of site lay heavily on familiarity, something which is discussed more in depth later in this thesis. The site analysis phase ended in an Enchanted Map of the site, holding the characteristics of the site that stood out and that had the potential to be transported into a fictional world, and a fictional tale.

After spending time on the site, this fictional story started to take form (2), which was strongly connected to the place. The basis of both the storyline and the fictional characters that appear in the story lies in the experiences of walking around in this 'world' – e.g. animal tracks, the winter landscape, the bark on a tree, etc. This fictional tale would eventually lead the design process of a single-family dwelling upon the site analyzed.

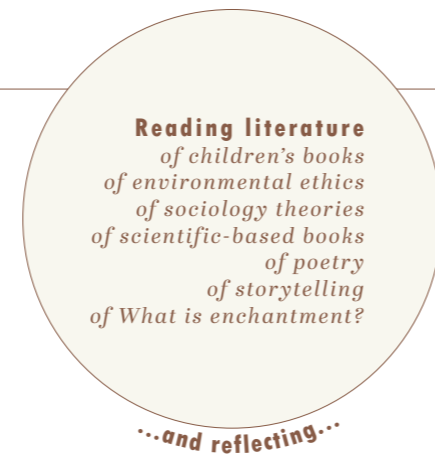
A set of architectural references were chosen that have worked with a story or narrative in its built design, to analyze how a fictional story or narrative can be embedded in architecture (3). Because I recently visited Barcelona and buildings drawn by Antoni Gaudí, that in my experience was both enchanting and narrated, Gaudí's

architecture was chosen as these references. Looking at Gaudí's work, a set of design strategies and tools for re-enchantment were rather freely defined. These would help in translating my own fictional story into the built design.

Three main elements were extracted from the fictional story, to help in the translation between tale and design proposal and to be the basis of application of the strategies and tools of re-enchantment. The single-family dwelling has been treated as a platform to test these design strategies and tools (4). The design phase was a mix of sitting with architectural sketches and drawings, of exploring the design tools in the workshop (5), and also of continuously engaging with the imagination of the fictional tale.

Further explorations have included the visual representation of my design (5). There, the focus lay on a re-enchantment of the classical architectural line drawing through visually integrating the narrative and story. For this, the main tools used have been hand-drawing tools, as well as working with the written word to complement the drawings.

Lastly, the thesis ends with a discussion (6), in which I reflect upon how the methods of re-enchantment and storytelling have enhanced and developed my connection and understanding of the site and its natural environment, and how these methods have influenced the architecture of the design proposal.



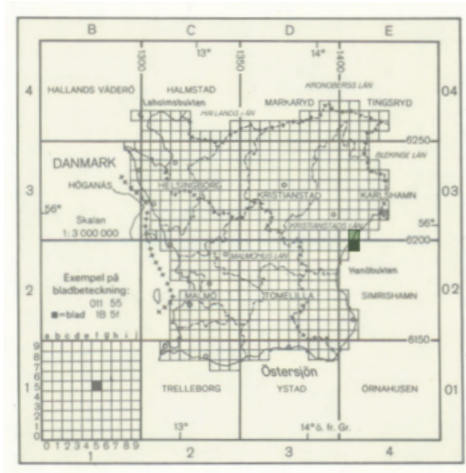


Figure 2. Orientation map - Skåne (Statens Lantmäteriverk, 1974).



Figure 3. Placement of project site (Statens Lantmäteriverk, 1974).

## Introducing site context

The chosen project site is situated in Åhus, a village on the north-east coast of Skåne with around 10 000 inhabitants, apart from in the summer, when that number can grow up to 50 000 (Kristianstad Kommun, 2024). On the east side of the village, next to the sea, you will find sandy white beaches. Starting in Åhus and stretching about 20 km south along the coast, the shoreline is wrapped in a dune landscape. The sea water is famously cold even in the summer – still, several of the locals winter bathe. The open dunes next to the sea are covered with lyme-grass and marram grass. This dune landscape has also resulted in lagunes and sandbars inhabited by a number of birds, attracting bird watchers from all over (Naturkartan, n.d.). But it is not only a bird paradise, it is also a bird sanctuary with forbidden access parts of the year (Naturkartan, n.d.).

The bird sanctuary is a part of a larger nature reserve called Äspet nature reserve, which is connected to parts of the above-mentioned shoreline and is covered in hiking paths. In the nature reserve (as well as in the surrounding residential areas in which the chosen project site lies), all the ground underneath your feet consists of old sand dunes (Naturkartan, n.d.). In Kronoskogen – the woodland area situated in the middle of the nature reserve – pine trees were planted more than 100 years ago to tie the sand and stop it from drifting (Naturkartan, n.d.). Now

there is also spruce, oak, beech, birch, and more. Although the old sand dunes result in quite a short list of species flora, the nature reserve contains high natural values, especially when it comes to lav and insects (Naturkartan, n.d.).

### Why this site?

This site is a natural plot without any built structure. The topography gives an interesting variety of rooms despite being a rather small area (around 1500m<sup>2</sup>). The sea is close, both in amount of footsteps and amount of noise, although not by sight. All this was considered as aspects that could give fun opportunities in the exploration of storytelling, narratives and imagination.

But more importantly, this site is a familiar place. I know it from the early years of my life, as I partly grew up in the village. The flora and fauna found here is also known to me, as I have spent many hours in the nature reserve nearby. This seemed in some ways similar to A.A. Milne and his books. He wrote stories about the forest he knew from countless walks amongst the heathlands and woodlands, and created a literature rooted in a familiar place (Aalto, 2015). For this thesis, I wished to create and venture into a world that was also rooted in familiarity. This would hopefully form a deeper connection between myself, the site, and eventually also the proposed architectural design.



Orientation map - Sweden

Sand dunes with marram grass. Own sketch.



Äspet nature reserve and Kronoskogen



Sandy white beach and cold cold water. Own photo.

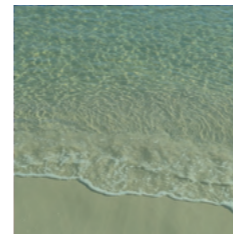


Figure 4 (to the right). Map over Åhus and Hanöbukten from 1974 (Statens Lantmäteriverk, 1974).

The choice of analysis methods lie in an aim to try and rid of my deeply embedded rational mindset that otherwise tend to take the first seat during site analysis. Choosing different, more poetic ways to analyse the site is a product of this aim. The choice of methods was also allowed to be heavily influenced by the amount of snowfall at the time. The 'poetic analysis methods' include a written text called "Hello site"; looking in my own footsteps in the snow; following animal tracks; naming a tree, hand drawings; and more.

Also, the methods chosen are not focusing on the surrounding area. Instead, the focus lies on creating a picture of a separate, alive, magical world of its own, where imagination is allowed to take up space, and nature is the main protagonist. E.g., postcards from my visit were sent, both as a help to sort out the most telling photographs from the vast amount that was taken, but also to immitate the feeling of being in another world.



Lingonberry plant from site. Own illustration.

## Hello, site.

At the end of the road, close to where the land meets the ocean, lies our project site.

First impressions: hilly, soft, wild, wise, old and calm. Nestled.

It is a private property, nestled in between several other properties of about the same size. Some contain residential houses, some are more untouched. Our project site is the latter.

We stand on the site. Underneath our feet, below the moss, the grass and the endless amount of heather, the soil is almost entirely made of sand. 100 years ago, pine trees were planted here, with the promise of stopping the sand from drifting. To this day, the trees' vast root system is keeping its promise. Pine trees are therefore the major inhabitant of our project site, but there are other trees as well, which makes it a "mixed woodland". We can find several spruce as well as birch. There is also one very special tree that has been able to grow into a tall teenager – a platan. But the most majestic tree of them all, is a pine situated at the top of the highest hill on the site. We call it the *Tall Förr*.

The *Tall Förr*. A majestic tree indeed. How old might it be? I count the age rings that are visible after the cutting off of a large branch. I count at least 50. Surely the tree is much older than that, if one of its branches became 50 years before it was cut off?

The branches of *Tall Förr* are so many, and they twirl as if they want to give me a hug, or protect me. I am immediately drawn to it, every time I visit the site. I feel safe there. One time I lay down on the ground underneath and look up on the extraordinary canopy.

I ask my gardener friend who is with me on the site one day – why are the branches so twirly? They grow like that because they are searching for sunlight, she says. They have tried to find gaps in the canopy to maximize light absorption. They might also have adapted to environmental stressors like wind and gravity.

The bark of *Tall Förr* is also very captivating. It looks like snake skin, or maybe even dragon skin, and on a rainy day it shifts to darker, redder colors. But I think *Tall Förr*

does not want us to forget about all other trees on the site - they also have captivating bark. They tell tales of age, of hideouts, of rough times. They shift in color, they are covered in growths, they have cracks and scars.

This year, the winter has been cold and lingering. The snow stays on the ground, hiding what is underneath. At first, this becomes an object of frustration – how can we analyze the site when it is covered in white? But then the snow becomes a tool for site analysis. Animal tracks become exceptionally visible. Deer and hare. So much life and movement on the site, especially when we are not there! The snow also creates a vast white canvas in-between the trees – it erases the ground. It is as if the snow desperately wants to emphasize the presence of the trees. See them! Hear them! Don't forget them, they are so important.

The snow also allows us to see clearly where we set down our footsteps. What vegetation can I see in my footsteps? I zoom in and I see some wintergreen plants, hibernating under the snow. But now I have woken them up, so I ask for their names (see upcoming pages).

These wintergreen plants are evergreen perennials (vintergröna perenner), meaning that they keep their green foliage over winter. The vegetation covering the ground is also very fragile, says my gardener friend. Heather, as an example, is very precious, she says. How is it precious, I ask her?

Because once it has been destroyed or damaged, it is impossible to restore. Also, heather is quite wonderful because it does not dominate, it grows where it is comfortable, and it is not dangerous for other plants. And it becomes purple in the fall, creating a beautiful contrast against the otherwise green vegetation.

And this was the wonderful initial story of the project site.



*Own photos from site.*



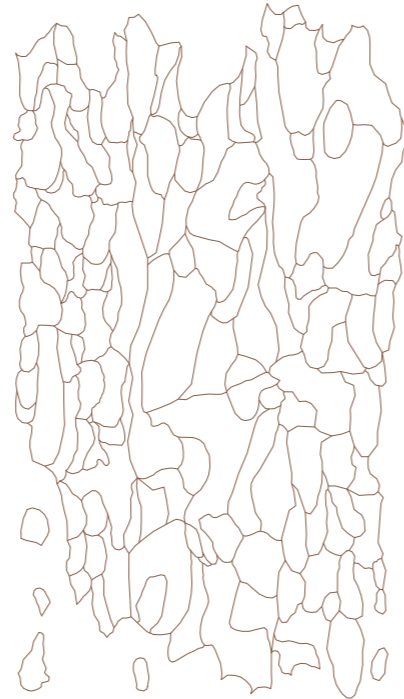
Pine tree. Own illustration.

## The tree society

The tree society of this site is a tall one. The pines especially, they tower up towards the sky, 10-15 meters high. And the birch, standing mostly huddled together at the edge of the site, is not far behind in the competition of height. A few spruce trees are visible as well in the mix, one the height of the pines, the other two a little bit shorter. But there are not only tall trees, of course. On the site you find both children and teenager plants, growing fast around their mother tree, trying their best not to lose the race (they however are not seen on the site plan to the right).

Looking at the beautiful skin of the trees on this site (the bark), it is as wrinkles of an elderly person. Or are they perhaps like fingerprints? The patterns of the bark are similar on many trees, but never identical. They show life, but also pains of scars, bleedings and damage.

What goes on underground on this site is surely at least as special. The initial task of the pine trees, when it was planted more

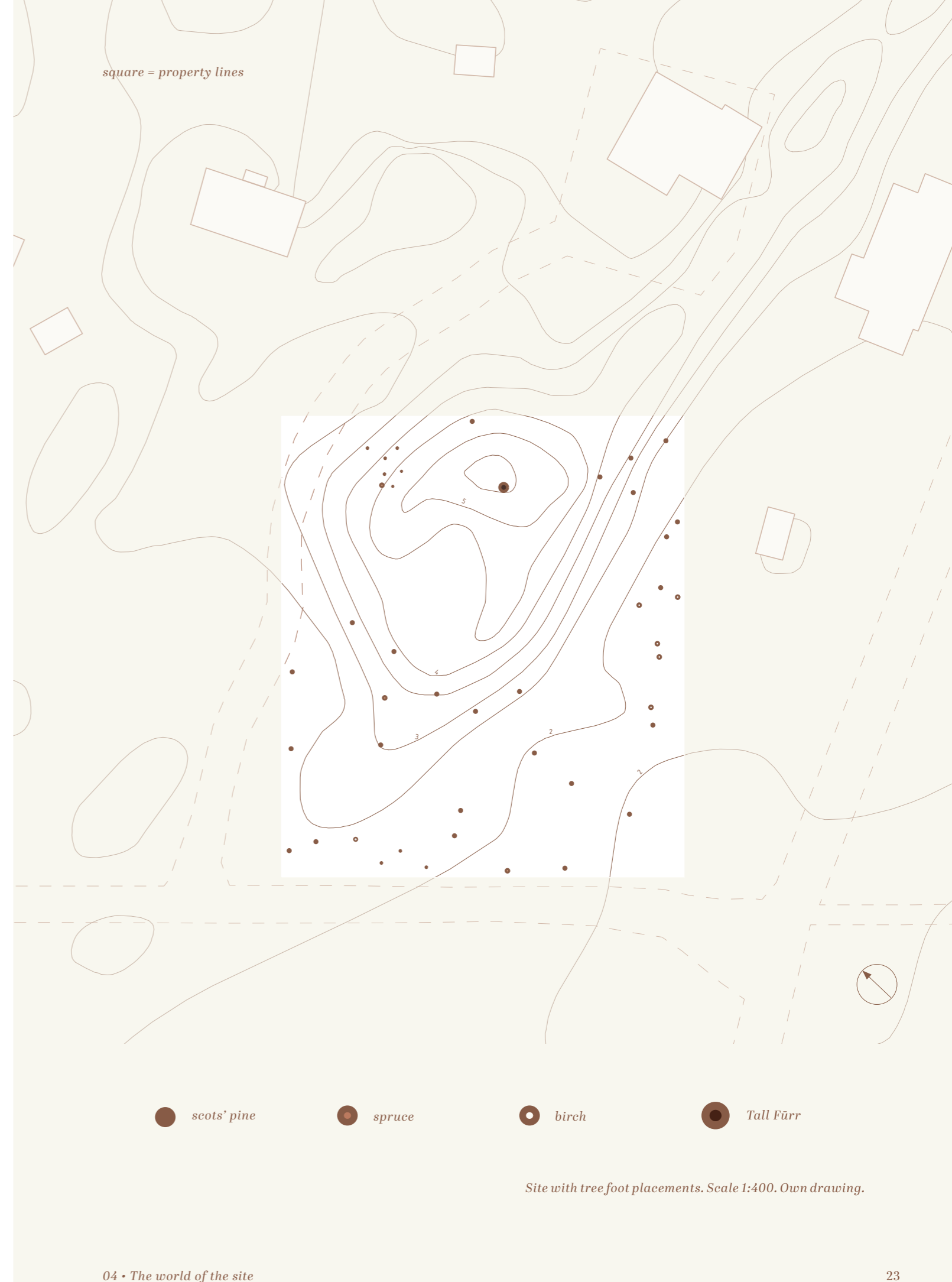


Pattern from pine tree bark on site. Own drawing.

than 100 years ago, was to stop the sand from drifting. The wood wibe web have done its task well. And the heather growing amongst the trees, sticking up its head above the quilt of snow, is a plant that also enjoys to join the underground community, connecting and living together with the root and fungal network.

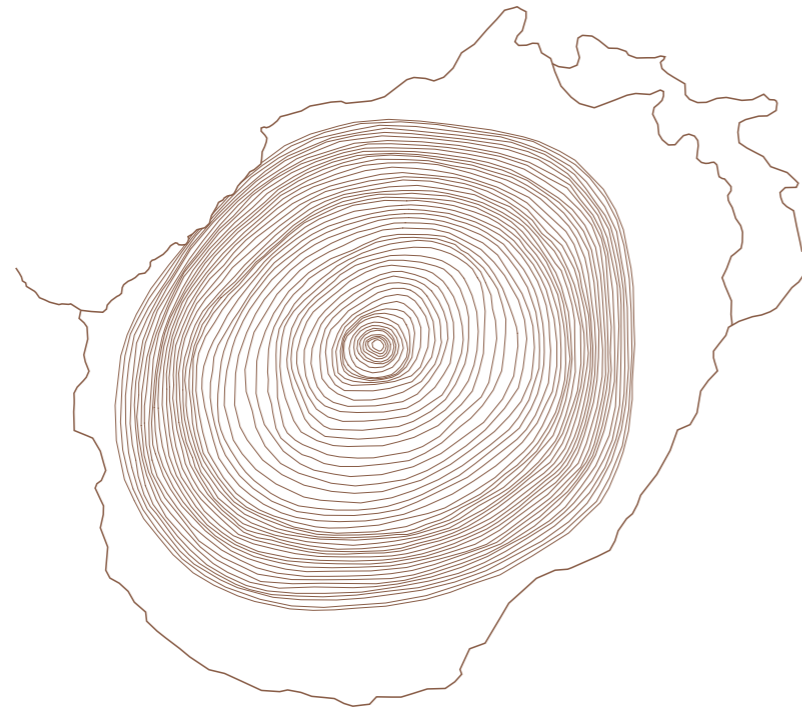
Down below they all feed each other with nutrients and water. The motto is: "a tree can only be as strong as the forest surrounding it"! And down below they are a chatty group indeed. When danger lurks, send out an alarm! Either down below, or in the air with scents. The production of toxins will then be first priority. And when the time comes for the snow to melt and the spring to blossom, this is when the scents instead become really lovely to attract pollinators. The trees and heather can't wait!

*This text was based off of the theory on page 6 - The extraordinary life of a tree.*



Site with tree foot placements. Scale 1:400. Own drawing.





Signs of age on cut off branch from Tall Fūrr.  
Own drawing.

## Tall Fūrr

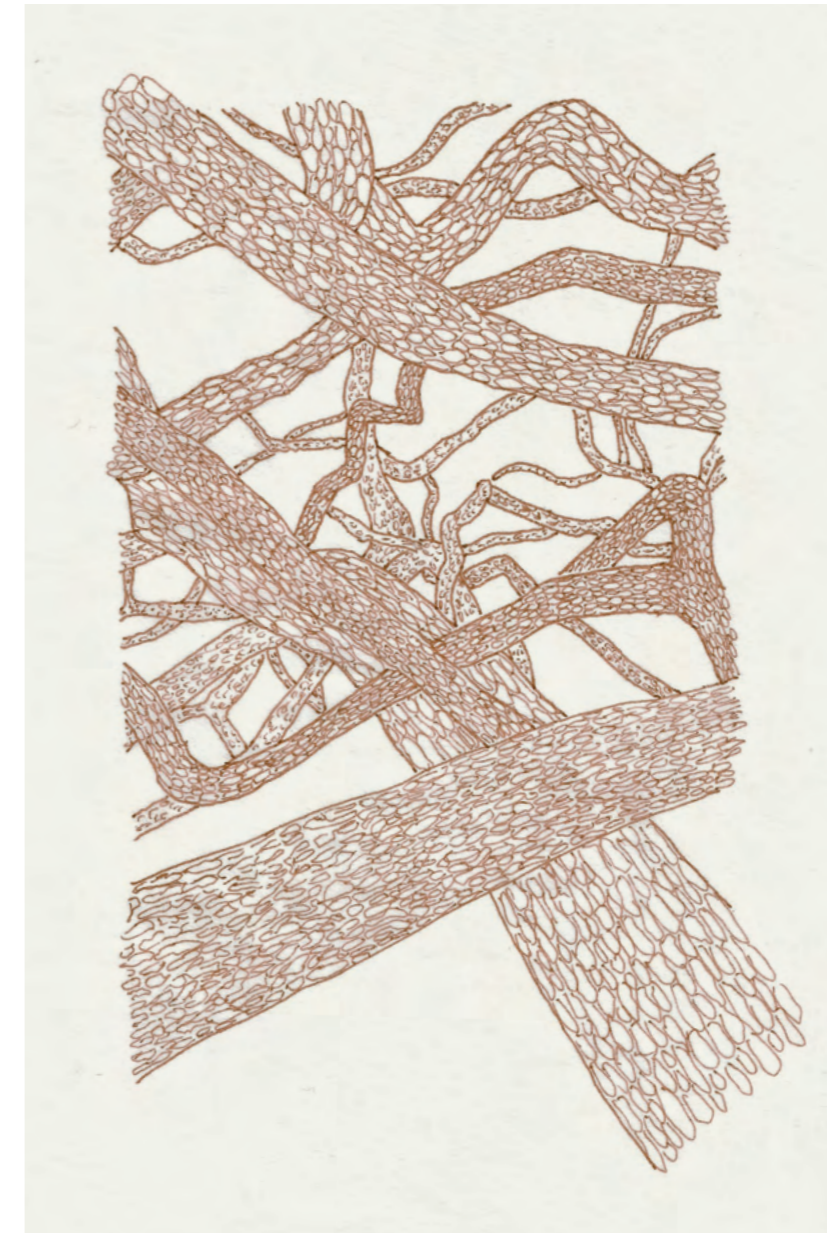
*“But the most majestic tree of them all, is a pine situated at the top of the highest hill on the site. We call it the Tall Fūrr.”*  
- from 'Hello site', page 19.

Fūrr is an Old Norse word for fire (Dictionary.com, n.d.). This name choice was inspired from the bark of the tree – the scale-like skin of the branches. When imagination is activated, the bark look likes dragon's scale. This tree breathes fire when we are not looking.

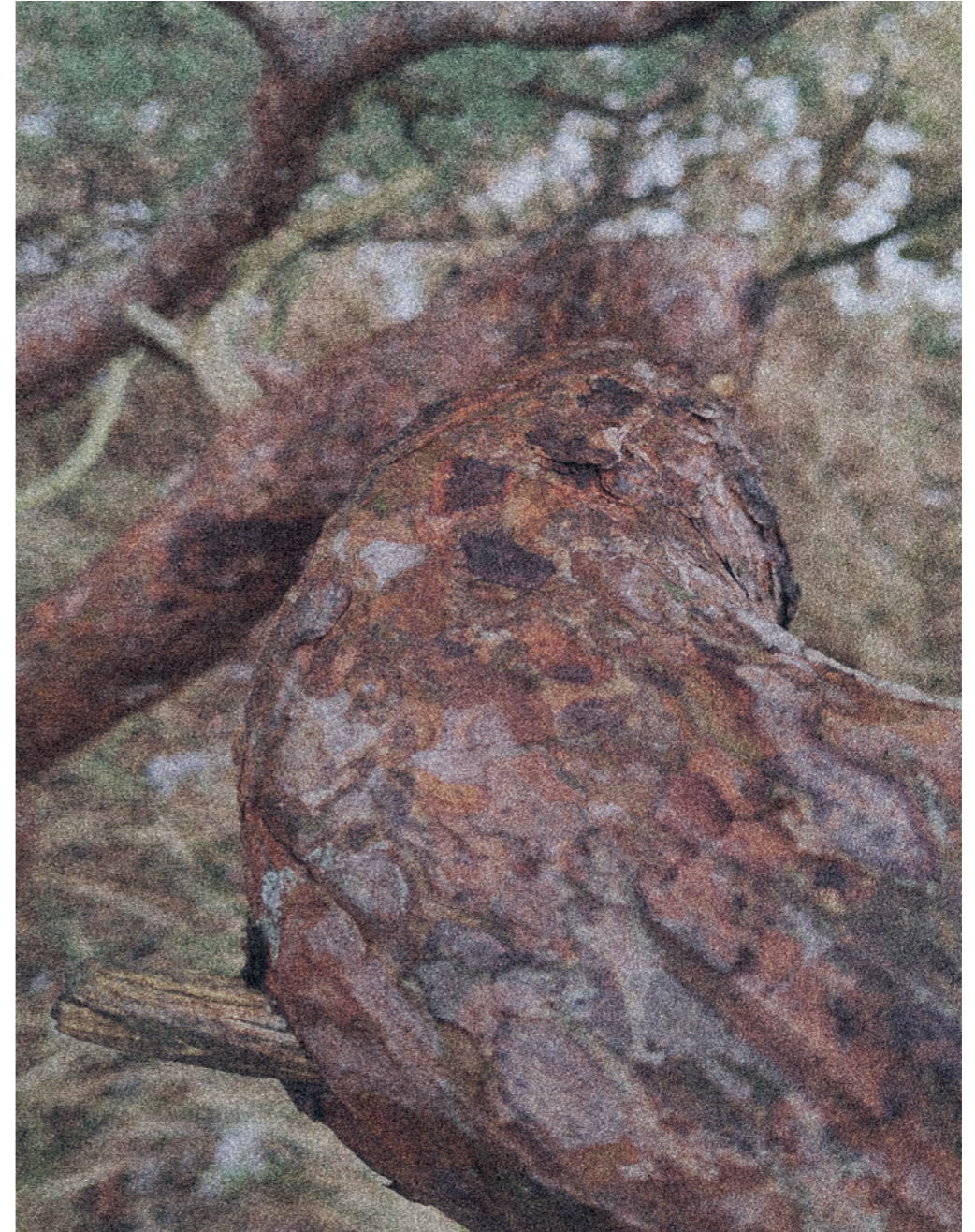
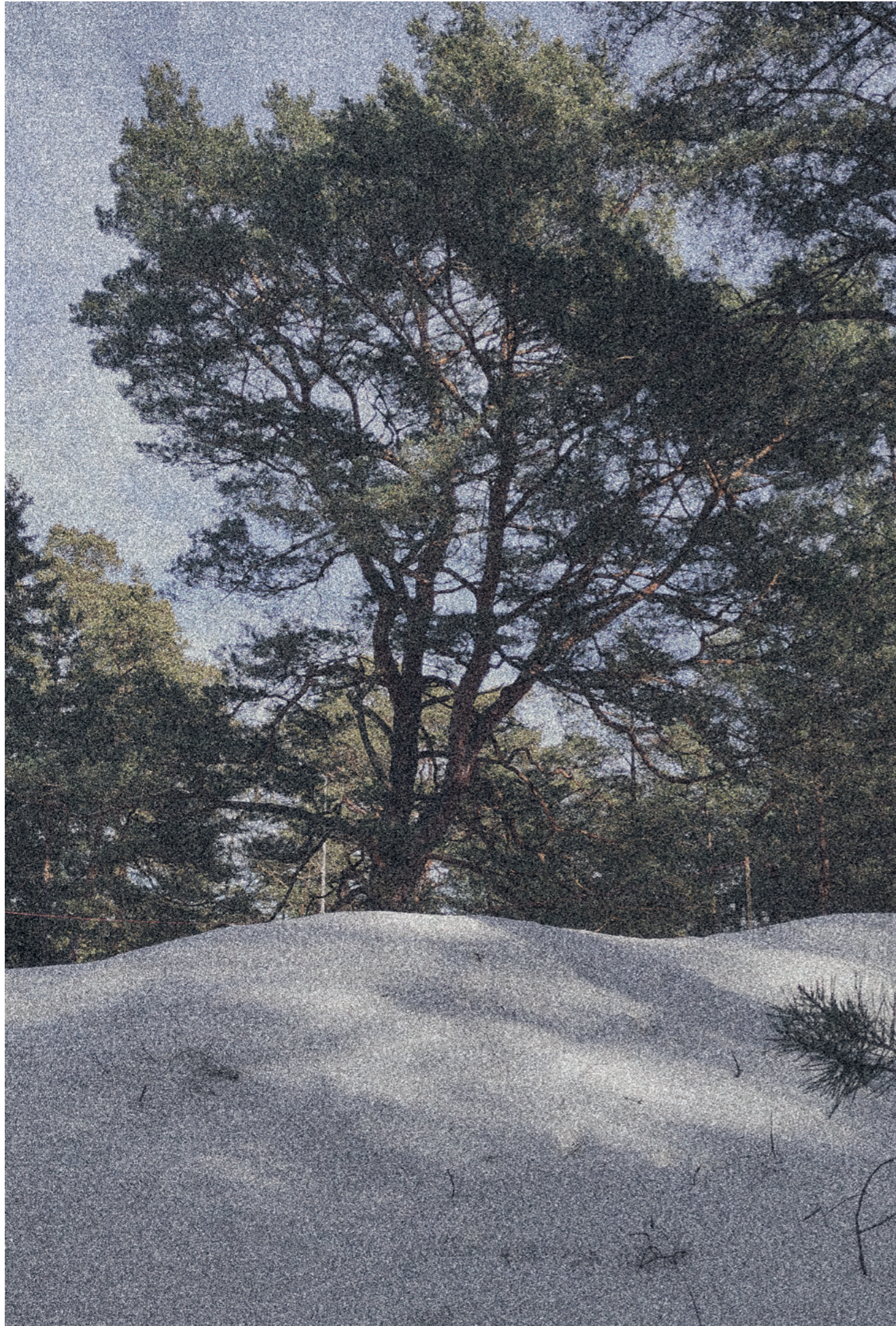
But it is a kind dragon. It wants to hug and comfort us, especially on a cold and grey day. The branches swirl around us when we stand close to its stem. We feel protected. The branches have swirled and twirled in order to grow, when they searched for sunlight

through gaps in the surrounding tree canopy.

We do not know how old *Tall Fūrr* is. Perhaps it was already here before the other pine trees were planted all those years ago. If we were to imagine, perhaps it has grown for 500 years? It certainly has a character of being the old and wise one of the tree society. Standing on top of that hill, having a thicker waistline than any other pine tree around. So perhaps it is not only the twirling branches of hugs, but also this character, that brings along that feeling of safety, comfort and protection, when we stand beside it.



Drawing of Tall Fūrr, standing close, looking up. Own illustration.



*Photos of Tall Fűr from site. Own photos.*



Hare tracks from site.  
Own illustration.



Deer tracks from site.  
Own illustration.



Squirrel spotted in  
the tree canopy.  
Own illustration.

## Tracks in the snow

On this rather small site property, there is still space for a lot of animal movement. The snow has announced their presence in a way that must be noticed. The non-human dwellers of this site have made themselves known, whether they planned it or not. From a site analysis perspective, footprints seems a very powerful way of being noticed. It is hard to ignore a physical footprint.

Apart from the deer and hare that have made themselves known by the snow, a squirrel was spotted up amongst the tree canopies.

## My own footprint

What vegetation can I see in my footsteps? Wintergreen plants become visible, that otherwise hibernate underneath the snow. What are their names? I ask my gardener friend.

### Swedish name

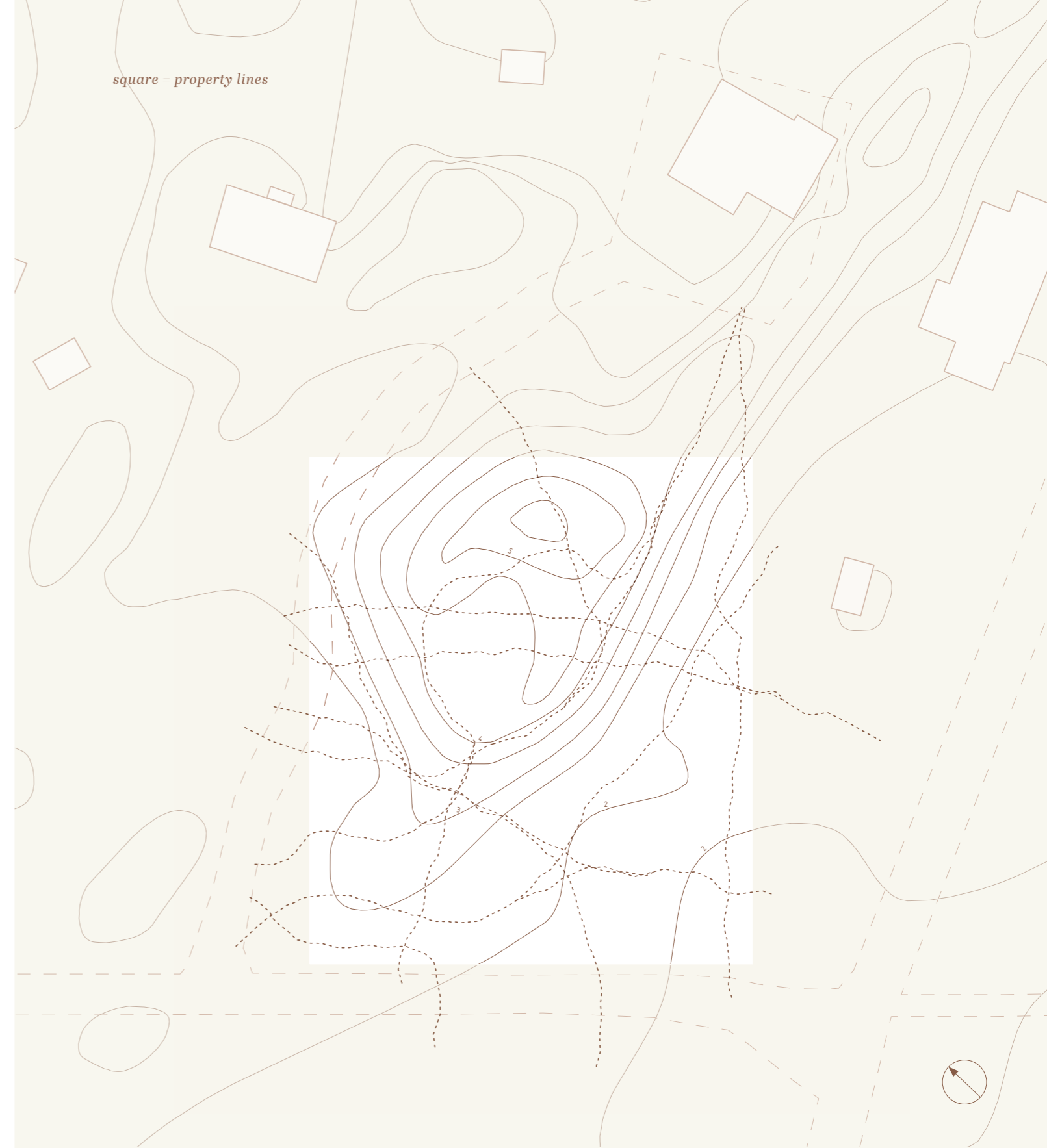
Väggmossa  
Vågig kvastmossa  
Höstljung  
Fönsterlav  
Kvickrot (ett ogräs)  
Strandråg (högt gräs)  
Lingonris i mängder!

### English name

Wall screw-moss  
Wavy-leaved broom moss  
Heather  
Reindeer lichen  
Couch grass / quackgrass  
Lyme grass  
Lingonberry bushes aplenty!

### Latin name

*Tortula muralis*  
*Dicranum polysetum*  
*Calluna vulgaris*  
*Cladonia stellaris*  
*Elymus repens*  
*Leymus arenarius*  
*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*



Site with animal movements. Scale 1:400. Own drawing.



*Photos of animal tracks from site. Deer and hare.*

## Postcards

Because the focus lay on creating a picture of a separate, alive, magical world of its own, where imagination is allowed to take up space, a suggestion was made by my supervisor to write and send postcards from my visit to this world. This would imitate the feeling of being somewhere else than home.

So, whilst on the site during those cold, snowy days in February, a photo was selected, one each day, that spoke to me in a specific way. Some lines were written to accompany the photo, with words conveying my experience of the world on that day.



Hi,

**Friday** Today the temperature rose from -13 to -3 in just two hours. Quite wild. Sun out almost the whole afternoon. Today the plot felt much more "open" than it has during my previous visits. Perhaps it's because of the white blanket of snow... it softens and erases the ground between the trees. And at the same time, the presence of the trees themselves becomes stronger. It was beautiful.

Wishing you a lovely Friday evening!  
Vilma



Hi,

**Sunday** Today's postcard is a photograph of the pine tree on the plot that has captivated me the most so far. It has thick, winding branches covered with bark that reminds me of snake—or dragon—scales. The snow continues to melt away. Now it's time for coffee.

Wishing you a nice Sunday!  
Vilma



Hi,

**Monday** Today's postcard comes from the project site. I was there today with my gardener friend Lisa—it was lovely. All the plants I've spent time observing, but which have remained somewhat anonymous to me, she recognized instantly by name. In the photo: wavy broom moss (vågig kvastmossa). Such a beautiful name, I thought.

Have a nice evening!  
Vilma



Hi,

**Tuesday** Today's postcard shows one of the birches on the plot. I think what I've enjoyed photographing the most when visiting the site is the bark of the trees: cracks, scars, small growths, little hiding places, shifts in color, signs of age.

Today the snow had almost completely disappeared from large parts of the plot.

Wishing you a continued nice evening!  
Vilma



Hi,

**Wednesday** My final postcard is a double. Tuesday was my last day on the plot (for now), and I laid down for a while on the ground beneath the dragon tree. Difficult to capture the grandeur of the canopy with my small phone camera, but here is an attempt.

Now we are back in the city. See you this afternoon!  
Vilma

## The enchanted map

The site analysis phase ends here in an Enchanted Map of the site. It holds the characteristics of the site that stands out and that have the potential to be transported into a fictional tale.

Included below is also a zone diagram of the single family dwelling, the building which will be the platform for testing out the re-enchantment strategies and tools. The zone diagram is also a result of time spent on the site.

The building will be located on top of the Great Picnic Spot. The main entrance to the building lands on top of the Small Soft Hills of Moss and Heather. The public spaces of the building faces The Big Road, while the private spaces face The Steep Slope and The Five Birches. Possible outdoor spaces can be explored on top of The Big Big Big Hill, connecting with Tall Fűr.



Zone diagram. No scale. Own drawing.



A map over the site as connected to my experience of it. No scale. Own illustration.

## The tale of Tall Fūrr

**O**nce upon a time there lived a girl so very sweet,  
in a village at the edge of a forest with birds that  
sang tweet-tweet-tweet.

*Her cheeks were rosy, her eyes were green, her hair was  
curly and quite fun, and every day on her head she wore  
a knitted hat the color of the sun.*

*She was often very happy, singing songs and being glad,  
but lately she had been feeling a little blue and a little  
sad.*

*One day when she was in the forest so tweety and so  
green, she discovered a hill of moss that she had never  
before seen.*

*At the bottom of the hill was a hole – the girl stepped in  
to have a look, and in front of her stretched out, a tunnel  
as from out of a storybook.*

*I*nside the girl went and after a while she reached the very end. She stepped out onto the other side and found in front of her another forest extend.

*It was a glittering winter landscape, quiet and soft around her feet. Far away in the distance she could hear the sounds of a roaring ocean beat.*

*The girl started to wander around this winter white display. The snow then started falling down and on her knitted hat it lay.*

*And even though – or maybe because it was – a landscape so nice and cozy – little tears trickled down her cheeks so very sweet and rosy.*

2

*S*uddenly she noticed some odd tracks down in the snow. In front of her a little creature appeared, that she did not at all know.

*It looked like a fluffy white raspberry with feet so small and so petite, and it was digging with its nose into the snow for something to eat.*

*She dried her tears and approached the little creature of wool and cotton. After a few steps she was so close that she could touch the little creature's bottom.*

*But the creature suddenly noticed the girl and frightened it jumped up, going high up in the cool cool air it ran away like a scared little pup.*

3





**T**he girl started to run after, and up up up a big hill the creature raced. They reached the top of the hill and there was a tree, so big around its waist.

*Its branches curled around as if it wanted to hug them nice and tight. The little creature jumped into a hole in the big big tree stem and out of sight.*

*The girl pulled her knitted hat over her ears, took a breath so very deep; and followed the little creature, despite her cold and tired feet.*

4

**T**he girl jumped into the hole in the tree, and down it went – vroom vroom! She went up and down like a merry-go-round, and then landed in a room.

*It was quiet and calm, but no windows at all, and no roof above her head – only a tree canopy far far above, between its branches some sun rays did spread.*

*The floor underneath her feet was oh so very nice and soft, and everywhere in the room there were pots of plants standing around the loft.*

*Amidst the plants stood a tiled stove so very tall and high, that it reached far far up to the tree canopy and even touched the sky.*

5



**T**he girl looked around and the little creature was nowhere to be seen, but amongst the plants in the room there was something else in between....

A dragon lifted its head and discovered the girl behind a planter pot. It was covered in white and silver scales, and had kind and warm eyes to spot.

It sensed how the girl was so very tired, sad and cold, that it breathed fire into the tiled stove for her to become consoled.

The girl slowly relaxed, took off her knitted hat with the color of the sun. She curled up on the floor in front of the fire oh so warm and done.

6

**S**uddenly, the little creature appeared, and it had now brought two little friends. Plop plop they began to lay down berries in front of her to make amends.

The girl thanked them with a little pat pat pat on each of their little heads, picked up the berries in her hand and turned her mouth all sweet and red.

7



**B**ut now the girl was tired and she lay down close to the dragon so sweet and warm. Then she noticed that the dragon had wings and a question started to form.

*May I fly with you up to heaven? The girl asked. That's where my mum lives now. But because the girl was so tired, she fell asleep before the dragon said:*

*Another day, I vow.*

**S**uddenly the girl awoke, she sat up and saw that she was home. There was no longer any snow on the ground, any little creatures or any dragon so warm.

*At once she felt the tears trickle down her cheeks – but something was different now. Her body felt warm both on the inside and out, that the tears felt not as heavy as they once had somehow.*

**T**hen she noticed that she was holding something in her little hand.

*She opened it and looked – little red lingonberries from her winter wonderland.*

10

**The end**



*How can a story be told through a physical built environment? Through studies of two architectural projects by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, this thesis looks at how they tell a narrative and a story through their*

*built design, and a set of design strategies and tools for re-enchantment are defined. How can Gaudí keep telling narratives and stories to the visitor through the actual built environment even 100 years later?*

## Casa Batlló

The architecture of Casa Batlló works with childlike imagination, through hinting design that takes us to a world far away, or reminds us of specific legends and fairytales.

Casa Batlló is a transformation project by Catalan architect and designer Antoni Gaudí, requested by the textile industrialist Josep Batlló who owned an old apartment building on Passeig de Gràcia, in the midst of Barcelona (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026a). The renovations were made between 1904 and 1906, including full transformation of the facades and a redistribution of interior plan, making the interior a “true work of art” although still being extremely functional (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026a). Casa Batlló belonged to the Batlló family until the 1950s, after which both businesses and private individuals took residence there. Since the 1990s, the building has been owned by the Bernat family, fully devoted to restoring the house. In 2005, Casa Batlló became a UNESCO World Heritage site, drawing 1 million visitors each year (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026a). It is an icon of Barcelona.

Casa Batlló is a strong example of architecture with narratives and stories deeply embedded into the building design. The interpretations of Gaudí’s designs for Casa Batlló are many. One popular interpretation is connected to the legend of Saint George, the patron saint of Catalonia (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026b). Saint George killed a dragon with a sword, saving the princess and the people from the beast. The shape of the roof symbolizes the sword piercing the dragon, and the bone-shaped columns of the façade represent the victims of the beast. Throughout history, Casa Batlló has been called both the House of the Dragon as well as the House of Bones (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026b).

Salvador Dalí spoke of Casa Batlló as an aquatic, marine landscape, declaring that the house is built according to “the shapes of the sea” (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026b). Others interpret the aquatic landscape as an adaptation of Monet’s series of paintings “Water Lilies”, with the glazed ceramic cladding and broken glass pieces creating the colorful façade (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026b). Inside, there are even more specific shapes, materials and colors that push your imagination towards a narrative or story. For example, there are skylights that to many visitors resemble turtle shells and ceilings that swirl like seashells. The staircase in the lobby has a railing carved from fine wood and is seemingly shaped like the spine of a large animal (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026c). The attic space consists of sixty protruding catenary arches, suggesting that the visitor might be inside a large ribcage. On the rooftop, you will find the roof ridge and roof panels covered in colorful shapes, popularly known as the dragon’s back (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026c).

Gaudí himself never explained his work (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026b). Instead, the building gives us an extraordinary collection of sculptures, symbols and effects, for each visitor to interpret for themselves: “[H]e left us a House full of symbols, a fantastic imaginary, a canvas that tells a story almost indecipherable so that each person completes it with their own imagination” (Casa Batlló S.L.U., 2026b). In summary, the narrative of Casa Batlló is not an exact one, it is not decided for us. Instead, multiple interpretations are welcomed, and you choose how to interpret the story of the building. Through a careful choice of materials, shapes and sculptures, the imagination of the visitor is sparked, and in that moment, a narrative is being set.

## La Sagrada Familia

Basilica de la Sagrada Familia is a church dripping with symbolism, although much more explicitly pronounced than that of Casa Batlló. Gaudí took over as head architect in 1883, and the different designs of the church has been clearly expressed by him (Tomàs, 2026). The church is still under construction.

The façades of the basilica is drenched with clear, recognizable details forming different narratives of the Bible, clear to the viewer (at least if you are familiar with the stories, or listening to the audio guide). Specific people are visible, and scenes are set – sculpted biblical stories can be seen on the Nativity Façade in the east, the Passion Façade in the west, and the Glory Façade in the south (Tomàs, 2025a). The 18 towers symbolize the 12 apostles, the four evangelists, mother Mary and Jesus Christ (UNESCO World Heritage, n.d.).

The interior holds a little more to the imagination, although also here much of the symbolism is explicitly pronounced by both Gaudí and the audio guide. E.g., the

pillars seem to hint towards something like tree stems, spreading out its branches at the top – apparently Gaudí thought of a typical Catalán Mediterranean forest (Tomàs, 2025b). The sense of walking around a forest with thick-stemmed tall trees made of stone is quite an experience. But what might be felt as the most striking design aspect of the interior (for myself, at least) is the natural lighting inside the basilica, hinting towards a narrative yet also being explicitly explained.

Switching depending on the time of the day you are visiting, the natural lighting intends to explain the life and death of Jesus Christ through light and color (Tomàs, 2025a). In the morning, the sun shines in through the east Nativity Façade (birth), and colder blue and purple nuances, suitable for the dawn light, dance around the church. As the evening approaches, the sun shines through the west Passion Façade (death), and warmer red and orange nuances fill the rooms, like the evening light, ending the day (and life of Jesus Christ) (Tomàs, 2025a).



Casa Batlló, Barcelona. Own photo.



La Sagrada Familia, Barcelona. Own photo.

## Extracting design strategies and tools

The following is an attempt to extract and categorize the different ways in which Gaudí has evoked the imagination of the visitor through his architecture, ultimately resulting in a tangible story or narrative in the built design. The strategies and tools have been translated from the built references of Antoni Gaudí by reflecting on both my own experience of them, and on the read interpretations of the buildings (that were put forward under headings Casa Battló and Sagrada Família on previous spread).

The different strategies are named Handed Design and Hinted Design. I call them strategies of re-enchantment, but it can also be argued that the strategies are for creating a story or narrative in the architecture, and through those stories and narratives, re-enchantment is created.

A set of tools have been defined and are explained on the following page. All tools can be used for both strategies (apart from the Accurate Detail tool which tends to work only with the Handed Design strategy).

### The two design strategies of re-enchantment:



#### HANDED

The Handed design strategy gives little to no room for an interpretation of your own, working with precise detail. The interpretation is handed to you. Here the key is undeniable recognition.



#### HINTED

The Hinted design strategy is less obvious, and can be interpreted in more ways than one. It is noticeably up to each and every person to interpret for themselves with their own imagination. Through careful choices in the design, the imagination of the visitor is sparked, and in that moment, a narrative is being set. Here the key is abstraction, opening up to multiple interpretations.

## The Tools

### Accurate detail



Through working with accuracy in details, the visitor experiences a directed and led narrative in the built design. The strength of an accurate detail lies in the appreciation of a quickly recognized object. Also, the same experience could be shared by many, when recognition of a detail is undeniable.

This tool works only with the Handed Design strategy

### Sculpting form



Through working with specific sculpting forms or shapes, recognition can be heightened in a design that is either Hinting or Handing. The imagination of the visitor is activated as she tries to find similar forms or shapes from the world around her – or possibly even from the imaginary world. The form is here defined as the 3D-outline of a design element. It is different to surface texture (see following page for examples).

### Surface texture



Through working with surface textures, recognition can be heightened in a design that is either Hinting or Handing. Surface textures have the possibility to enhance or play with Light. Textures also tend to encourage an engagement in the design, if the visitor decides to experience the design texture through touch.

### Material choice



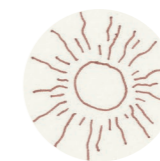
Through working with specific materials, recognition can be heightened in a design that is either Hinting or Handing. The chosen material can play with reflections, color, weight, movements, heat, cold, and more. It can also connect specifically with what it wants to hint towards (e.g. wood for possibly hinting towards a tree).

### Pattern



Through working with pattern, recognition or interpretation can be strengthened for a design that is either Hinting or Handing, as the viewer tries to trace similar patterns to the world around her. Compared to Surface Texture, the Pattern is 2D.

### Light



Through working with light, both natural and artificial, recognition or interpretation can be strengthened for a design that is either Hinting or Handing. A specific strength of Light is the ability to change over the course of a day (if natural) or sudden change (if artificial).

### Color



Through working with color, both natural and artificial, recognition or interpretation can be strengthened for a design that is either Hinting or Handing. E.g., using the colors of a rainbow, even though it is set in a non-rainbow design, the color can help strengthen a recognition of a narrative.

### Movements through space



Through working with specific flows and movements in a built environment, the visitor can through this experience imagine herself to be in another, particular space – or perhaps even imagine herself to be another being. Movements can occur both vertically or horizontally in a space, and occur in both large and small scales. This tool works only with the Hinted Design strategy.

### Related object



Through working with an object or building component in the built design that has a similar function to the function of the hinted, recognition can be heightened in a strategy that is either Hinting or Handing. By looking at an object and its function, and translating it into the story narrative, the interpretation can be shaped. E.g., hinting towards a design of nostrils can be strengthened if this design is seen on the air vents (arguably the building's own nostrils).

## Re-applying the strategies and tools to the references

### Doors of ivy leaves

#### HANDED

- Accurate detail
- Sculpting form
- Color



The entrance doors on the Nativity façade of La Sagrada Família is covered with leafage and other objects from the natural world. Ivy leaves, Virginia creeper, squash flowers, lily flowers, wild roses, as well as beetles, ladybirds, ants, and butterflies. They are sculpted into form – i.e. not just in 2D – and colored in green, yellow and pink. The design is Handed, with little room for own interpretation of what it is meant to be.

### Pillar trees

#### HINTED

- Sculpting form
- Related object



Although Gaudí has plainly expressed the interior pillars of the basilica to resemble a typical Catalan Mediterranean forest, the design in itself is a Hinted one. Through sculpting the form of the pillars – thicker in the bottom and more slender at the top, and with constructional parts spreading seemingly organically at the ceiling to hold up the roof and towers – the pillars hint towards the resemblance of trees. Additionally, the pillars work with the tool Related object – a pillar is constructed to hold up a ‘roof’, and so is a tree stem (the canopy as the roof), further strengthening the recognition.

### Lobby staircase of Casa Battló

#### HINTED

- Movements through space
- Sculpting form

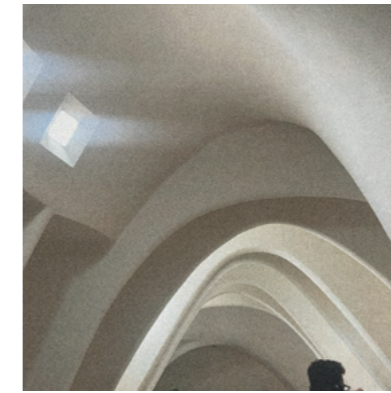


The staircase in the lobby has a railing made of fine wood, carved and sculpted into a form resembling spinal vertebrae. It follows the staircase in a circular motion upwards, hinting towards that this spinal vertebrae is of a creature that can twist its spine. Through sculptural form and working with movements through the space, the staircase seems to hint towards the spine of a large reptile-like animal.

### Attic of Casa Battló

#### HINTED

- Sculpting form
- Related object
- Color



In the attic of Casa Battló, the structural beams are vaulted and organically shaped. This attic, because of its beams, has been referred to as the ribcage of a large animal. Through sculptural form and working with related object (a ribcage arguably the structural beams of a torso) the design is hinting towards interpretation. Also, the color can resemble that of bone.

### Atrium railings of glass

#### HINTED

- Surface texture
- Material choice
- Light

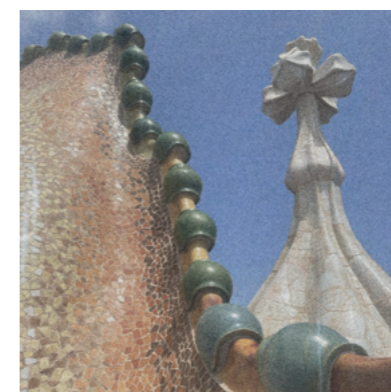


The inner staircase of Casa Battló vertically follows an atrium with a skylight, inviting the natural light. Here, the railings of the staircase landings work with a Hinted design. They are made of glass and has a surface texture that plays with the natural light, and skewing the view when looking through, in a way that to me strongly resembles water surface. Through working with surface texture (a surface like a wavy water surface) and material choice (glass transparent like water) the railing strengthens a recognition.

### Roof ridge and panels

#### HINTED

- Pattern
- Sculpting form
- Color
- Related object



The roof ridge of Casa Battló is sculpted into an organic shape with colorful bumps placed rhythmically along it. The roof panels are covered in a colorful pattern of mosaics and tiles, hinting towards the reptilian scales of an animal. Using Pattern, Color, Sculpting form – but also Related object, as the spine of a building can be imagined to be the roof ridge – Gaudí’s rooftop has famously become known as the “Dragon’s back”.



## The Three Elements from the tale

By extracting elements from the tale, and working with the re-enchantment strategies and tools for these specific elements, a distinct connection can hopefully be made between the built architecture and the tale narrative. The three elements extracted from the tale of Tall Fűr are these: the Forest, the Winter and the Dragon.

The child, and the imagination of a child, has also been given space in the design proposal. But she is not viewed as an element from the tale, but rather as a client to the house – to eventually grow older and live here as an old woman.

### Forest

Forests – or here more specifically trees – are largely green. They are tall. You can climb in them, and they can be filled with nooks and hideaways. Their canopies can spread natural light in a very distinct way. Trees have a lot of beautiful and recognizable characteristics – an oak leaf, a pine needle, a bark pattern. Design strategies of re-enchantment can be both Hinted and Handed, and tools can include Movements through space (upwards), Accurate detail (such as a leaf), Surface texture (the bark), and more. Gaudí used trees as pillars in his Basilica de la Sagrada Familia (Related object).

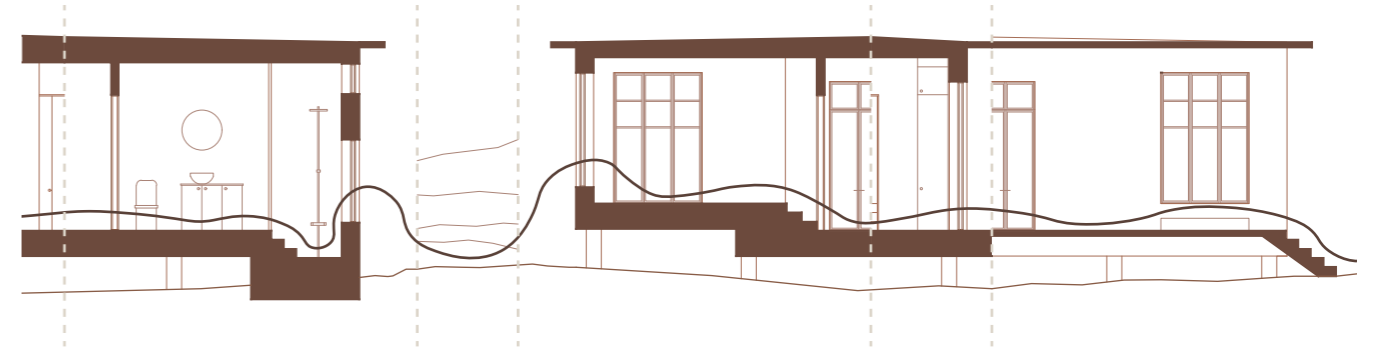
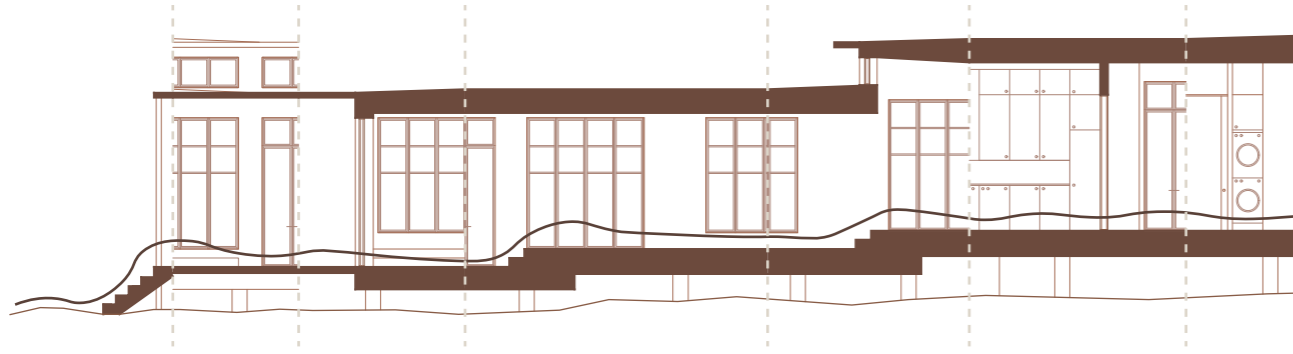
### Winter

Winter – or here more specifically a snowy winter landscape – is cold. It is white. It is quiet and calm. Many species hibernate in winter – they sleep and recover. But winter is also joyful and playful. You can make snow angels, you can have snow fights, you might even be able to build an igloo. Design strategies of re-enchantment can be both Hinted and Handed, and tools can include Movements through space (hibernating underground), Color (white) and Light (white), and Material choice (cold materials), and more.

### Dragon

A dragon is reptile-like. It can breathe fire. Maybe it can even fly. Maybe it has big nostrils and long whiskers. Maybe its skin is covered in scales like a snake, or maybe it's furry. Actually, a dragon can be anything, since it is a character of our own imagination. Design strategies of re-enchantment can be both Hinted and Handed, however Hinted might be preferred, when it is so clearly a character of our own imagination. Handed design is for undeniable recognition, which would be difficult here. Tools can include Pattern (the scales), Sculpting form (the shape of a reptile), Material choice (the lightness of wings, moving in the wind), and more.





**The dragon as a section line** *See floorplan further on.*

Scale 1:150 (A4)

Reflections during the process

## To re-enchant an architectural drawing

What could it mean to re-enchant a classical architectural drawing?

In this thesis, the focus lay on a re-enchantment of the classical architectural line drawing through visually integrating the narrative and story of the world (site) and of the fictional tale. Imagination could then enter as a component to interpret the architecture.

By incorporating the fictional, the magical, the mystical in the drawing, imagination enters the room. For example, by adding trees indoors, that could not necessarily be there either in theory or in practice, imagination must step in to help interpret the drawing. These trees in the room might also be hinting towards the narrative that is the most crucial to the design. The trees might be the largest part of the architectural concept – perhaps they are the client, even. Or, perhaps they had to be cut down to make room for the architecture – so they move into the building instead. To find, suggest or present a story in the drawing like this can further push the viewer to use their imagination.

To present a narrative and a story by intentionally working in incorrect scales,

could also invite the imagination of the viewer. A giant woman hovering over the treetops, or a petite house under a leaf. What can this mean? Imagination could also be invited if we choose to visualize peculiar angles for perspectives and not necessarily the eye level of a human. Maybe from the corner of the ceiling, or from the corner of the floor. Architectural illustrations have the power to quite literally narrate into new perspectives.

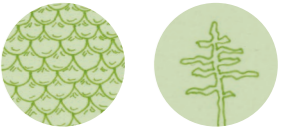
Or perhaps re-enchanting an architectural drawing through integrating a narrative and story could mean using the written word. Carefully choosing the words that are shown in the drawing, or naming drawings with carefully chosen words of enchantment. Gaudí named the facades of basilica de la Sagrada Familia not just East, West and South façade, but the Nativity, Passion and Glory facades (Tomàs, 2025a). And by doing so he leads the narrative, even 100 years later.

The following drawings and illustrations of this thesis, sometimes with accompanied texts, are explorations of these reflections.

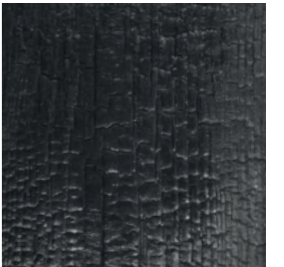


**The Pine Façade** *Exploring the invitation of a story narrative.*

Scale 1:150 (A4)



+ see also model explorations



The facade panel.



**The Fūrr Façade** Exploring illustrations of the surrounding environment.

Scale 1:100 (A4)



There is a house made of fire  
standing in the woods  
waiting for someone to warm

**The Fūrr Façade showing shou sugi ban / yakisugi**

Exploring the drawing accompanied with the written word.

Scale 1:100 (A4)



**The Evergreen Façade** Exploring quirky scales and an illustrated story narrative.

Scale 1:100 (A4)

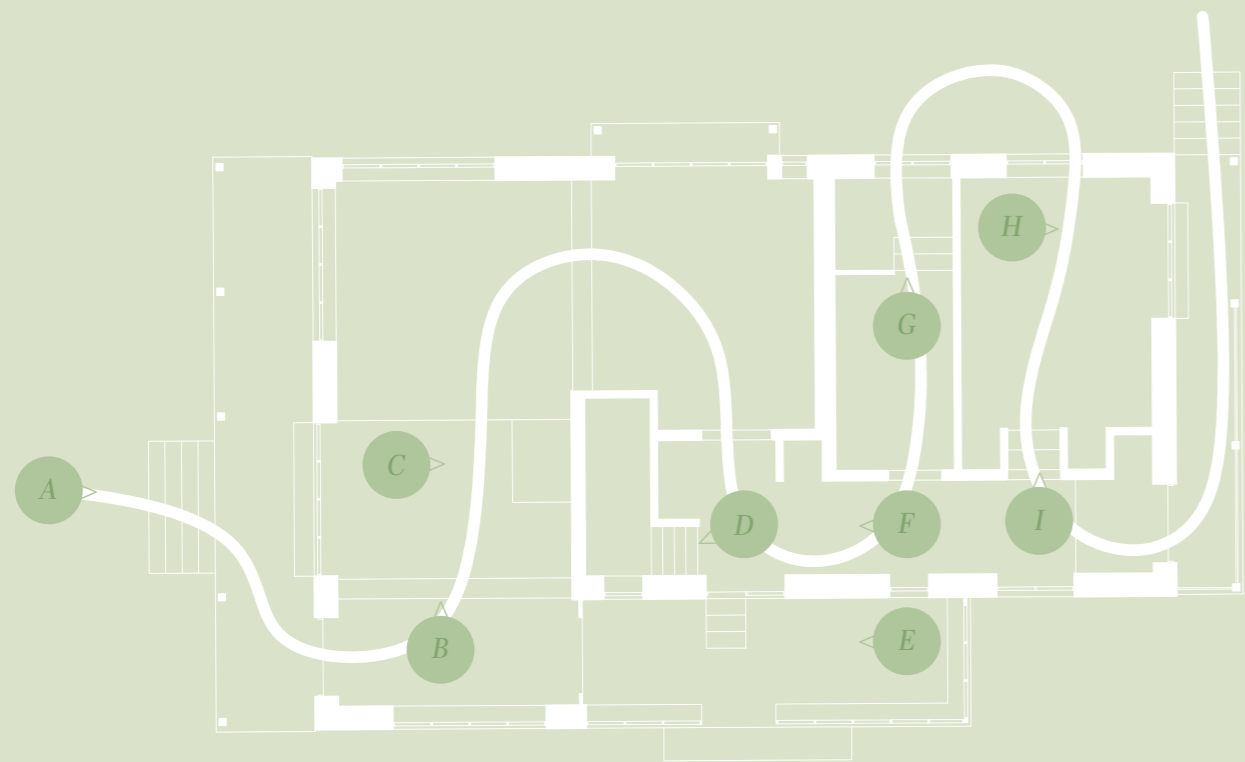
Tall Fűr

**The Floorplan**

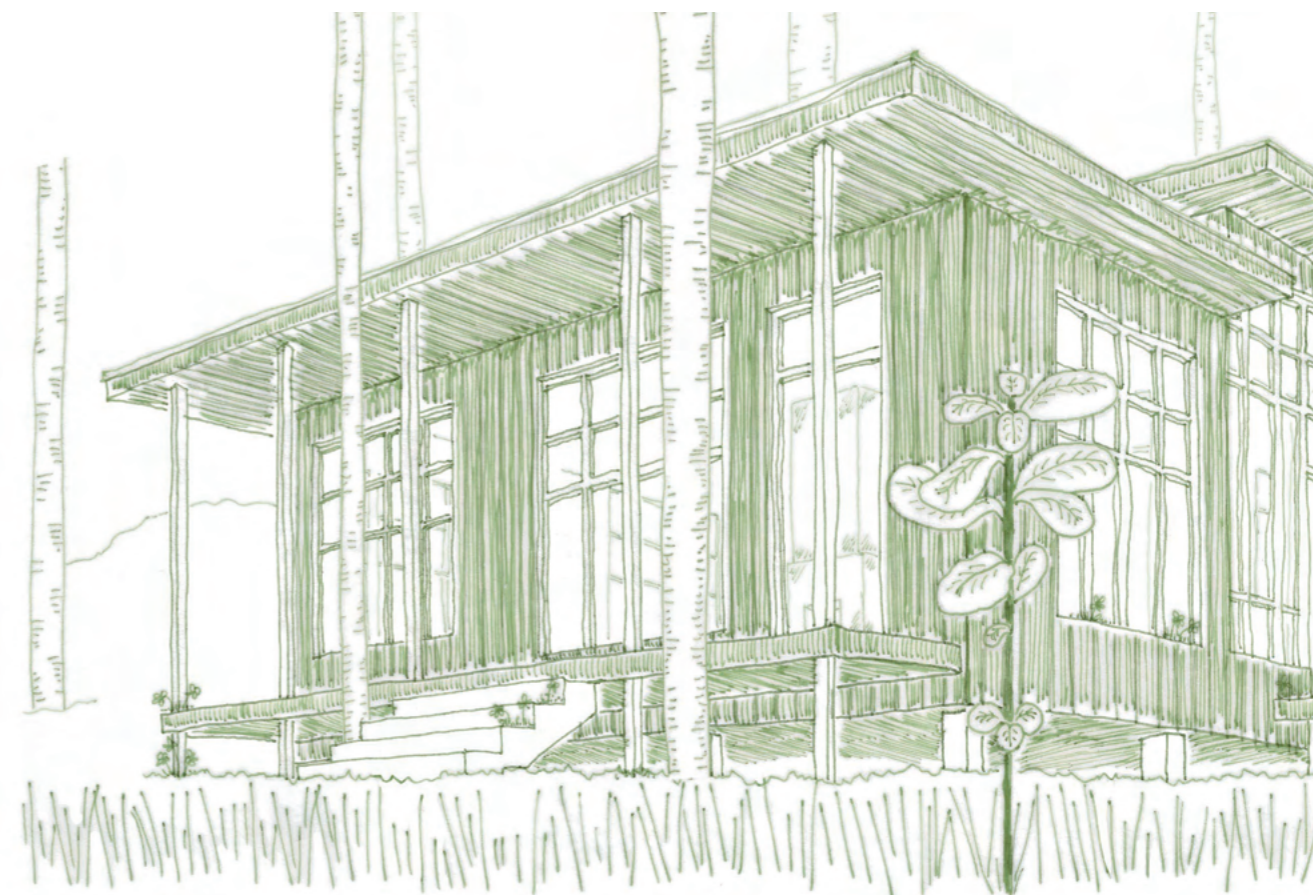
Scale 1:100 (A4)

Exploring illustrations of movements through space together with a story narrative.





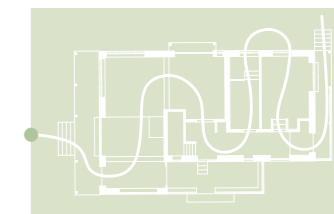
Orientation plan for perspectives, They are presented in the order in which they appear following the path of the dragon. The icons show what elements of the tale is worked with in that part of the house. The strategies and tools worked with are also presented.



**Perspective of a lingonberry. Pine entrance.**

**HINTED**

- Material choice
- Color
- Light
- Related object

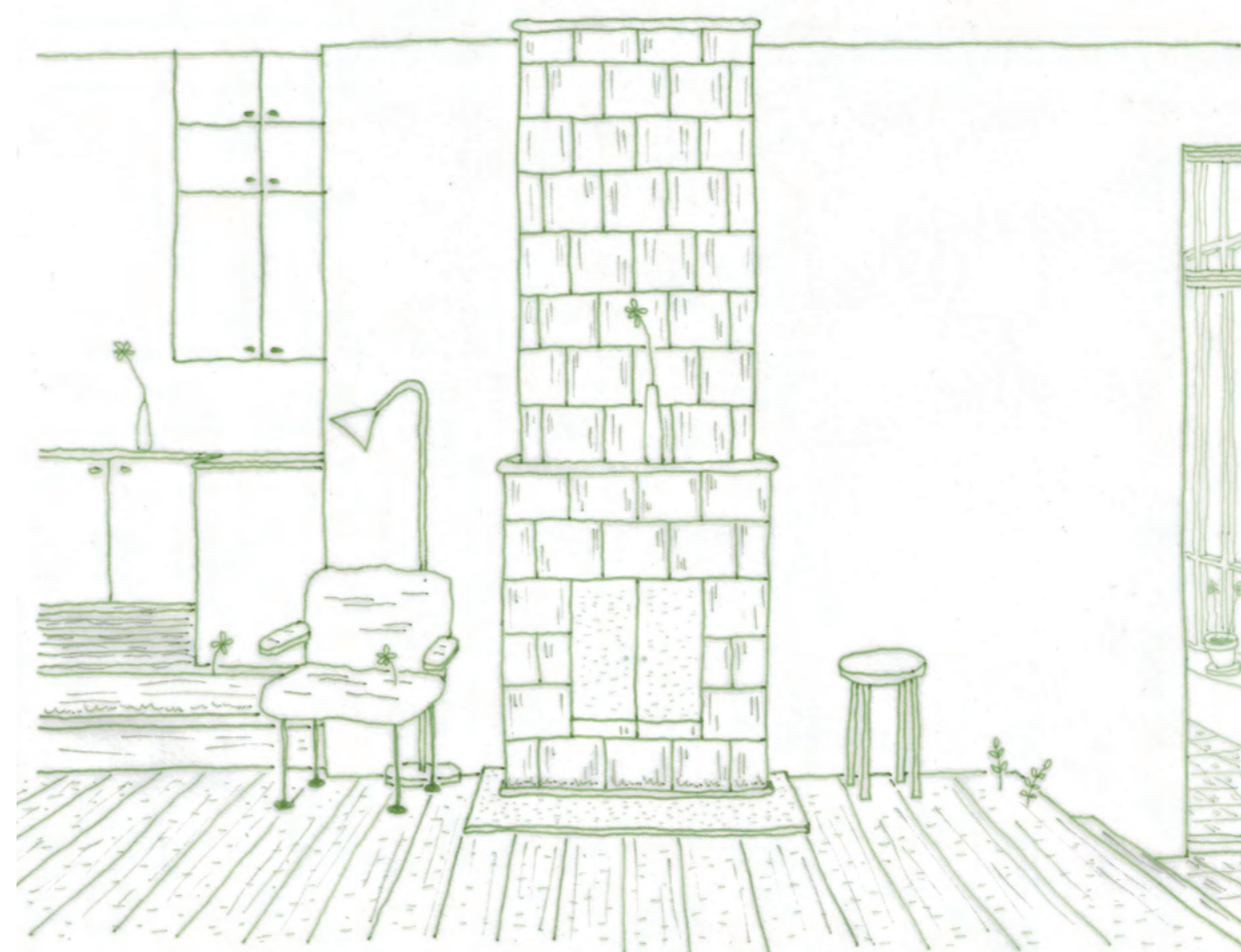
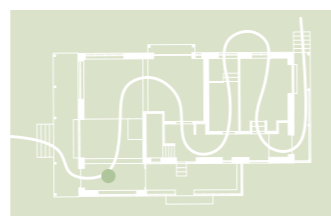




**Perspective. Entering the livingroom.**

**HINTED**

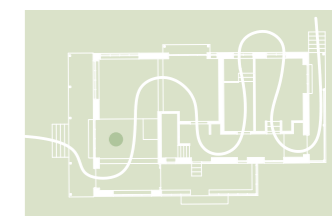
- Sculpting form
- Surface texture
- Material choice
- Pattern
- Related object

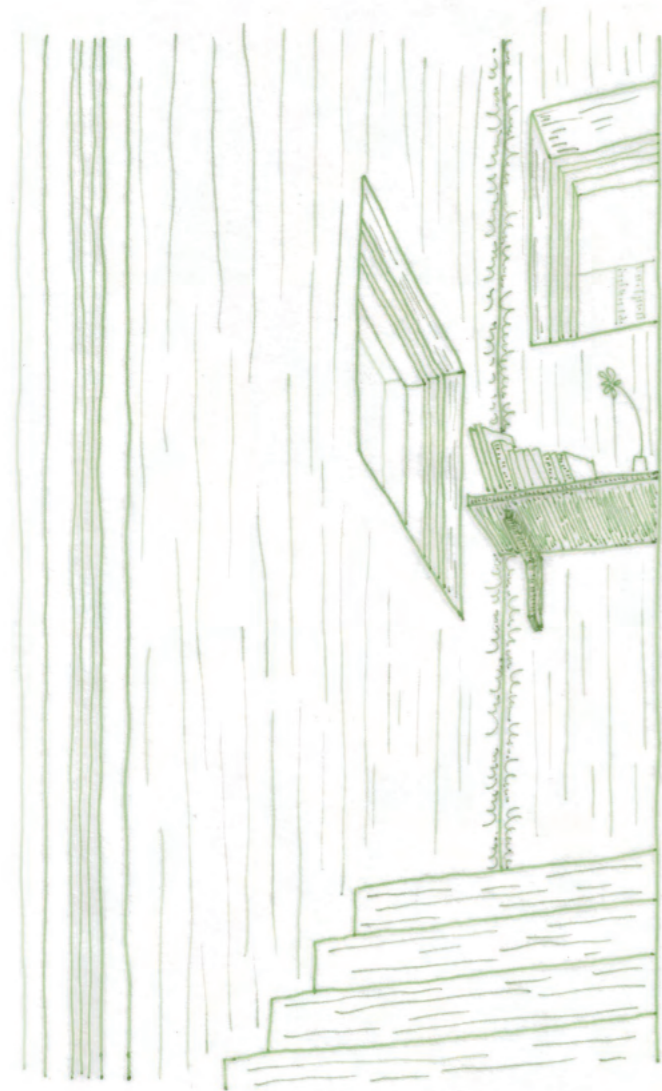


**Perspective. The tiled stove.**

**HINTED**

- Surface texture
- Material choice
- Pattern
- Related object





### The Winter Windows

The windows of Tall Furr house are double-glazed and they might even be pre-loved (re-used). So during some parts of the year as the temperature drops, there is a need for extra inner windows. When winter comes, the inner glass windows are brought out and attached, accompanied with the following words:

"Winter has come."

The movement becomes a yearly ritual for Tall Furr House.

### HINTED

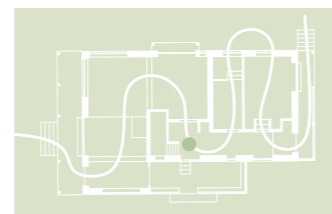
- Movement through space
- Color



### Perspective. Tree nook/upper hideaway

### HINTED

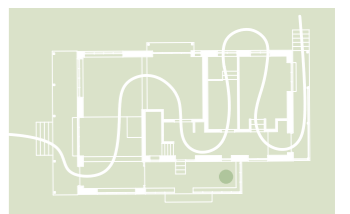
- Material choice
- Light
- Movement through space

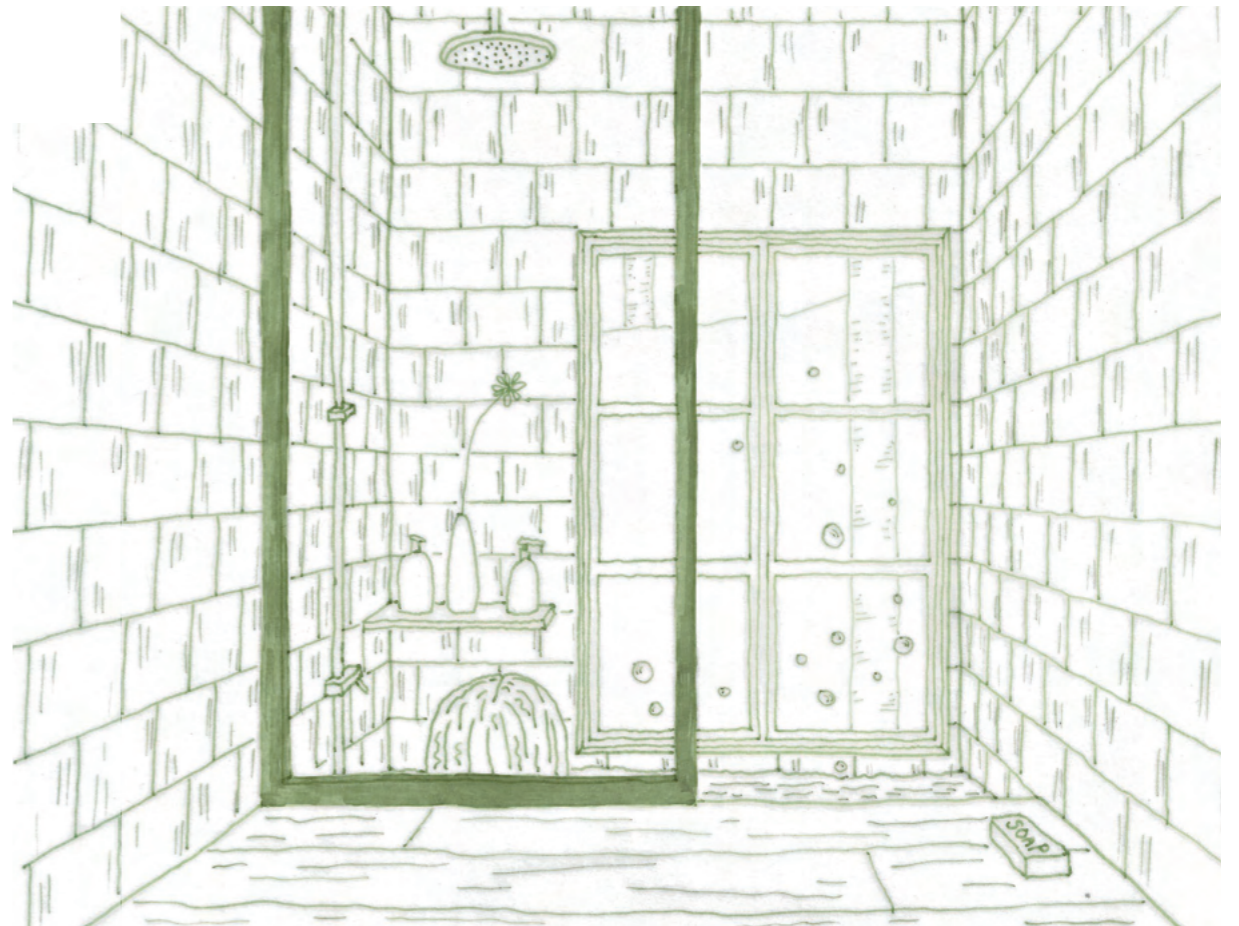


### Perspective. Winter garden.

### HINTED

- Material choice
- Color
- Light
- Related object

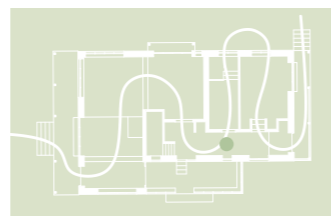




**Perspective. Corridor of wings.**

**HINTED**

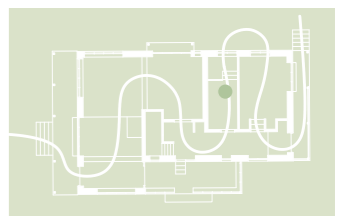
- Material choice
- Color
- Light
- Related object

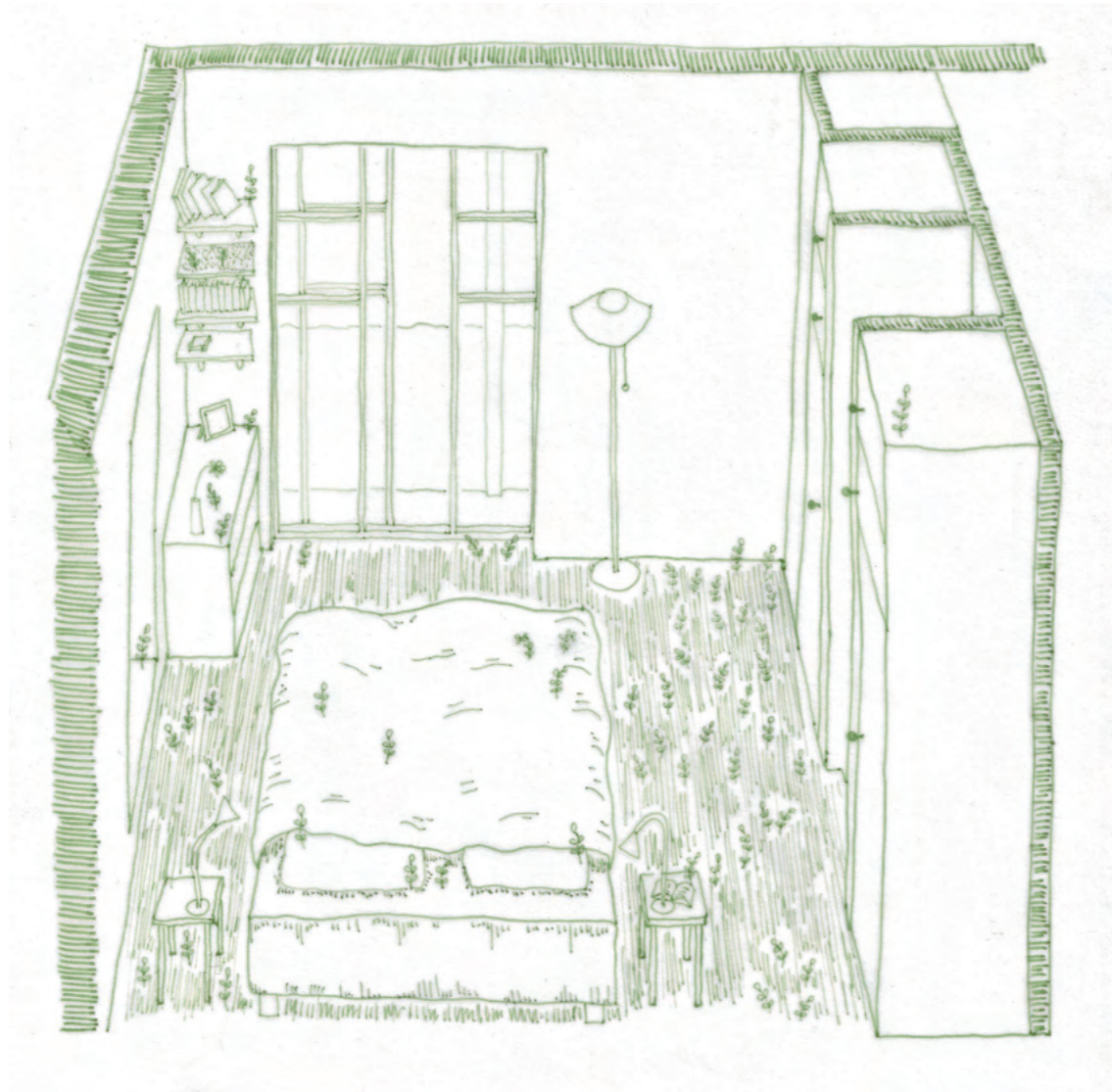


**Perspective. Hibernation bath.**

**HINTED**

- Material choice
- Color
- Light
- Related object
- Movement through space

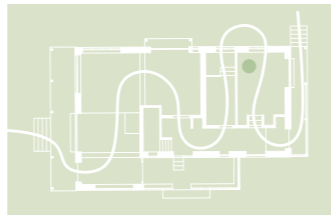




**Perspective. Forest sleep.**

**HINTED**

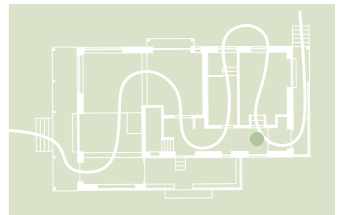
- Material choice
- Color
- Movement through space



**Perspective. Tree climb.**

**HINTED**

- Material choice
- Color
- Movement through space



## Model explorations

The following explorations in the workshop were made to explore parts of the design proposal that work with specific tools of re-enchantment – Surface texture, Material choice, Pattern, Sculpting form and Related object. Apart from reflections by myself, they have also included tryouts and reflection sessions with friends and colleagues. Two very special test subjects of the model explorations were Ruth 5 1/2 years old, and Meja 4 years old. They have also helped me in creating the door knobs designed for the Tall Fūrr house.

### The door knobs of Tall Fūrr House

The child, and the imagination of a child, has also been given space in the design proposal. The child is seen as a client to the house – to eventually grow older and live here as an elderly woman. This brings us to the door knobs of Tall Fūrr house. They are the hand hugs of a child, or more specifically of Ruth (5 1/2 years old) and Meja (4 years old). Through hugging a piece of clay, the shape sculpted is the imprint of the hand hug.



Hardened hand hug imprints. To be made into door handles scale 1:1. Own photo and sketch.

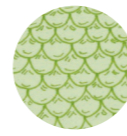
Each time a door opens in Tall Fūrr house, your hand touches what the child's hand was holding on to before. Maybe it was some red lingonberries, or a childlike wonder?

Working with clay as a material gives the possibility to shape something organic. The surface is smooth yet very impressionable, giving way to any wrinkle or dent.

This piece of design works with Sculpting form as well as Related object (hand imprints - for door knobs).



Meja with clay. Own photo.



### HINTED

- Surface texture
- Material choice
- Related object

### The façade panel

This exploration is influenced by the Japanese technique Yakisugi. It is a technique of burning facade timber with fire to make the timber resistant to rot and mold, to withstand harsh weather conditions, and also to become fire resistant (Kolsvart, n.d.). The Yakisugi technique also emphasizes the beauty of change over time. Nature is allowed to affect the aesthetics of the building, since over time, the burnt timber will lose its outermost black layer and expose the lighter timber underneath (Kolsvart, n.d.)

The timber explored here is pine wood, which is common to use for wooden facades,

as well as connecting the material choice to the specific site of this thesis. With great help from my supervisor Peter, the timber has been burnt with a burner and afterwards painted with a boiled mix of linseed oil and turpentine (50/50 parts), to avoid the black soot from spreading.

The burning of the timber has created a beautiful surface texture. The layer of oil and turpentine has also given the burnt surface a reflective quality, almost silver-like in certain lights. According to friends and colleagues, the timber piece also smells like wood, fire and forest.

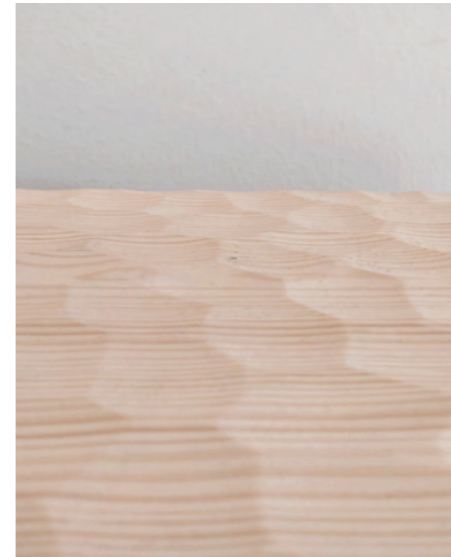


The facade panel. Own photos.

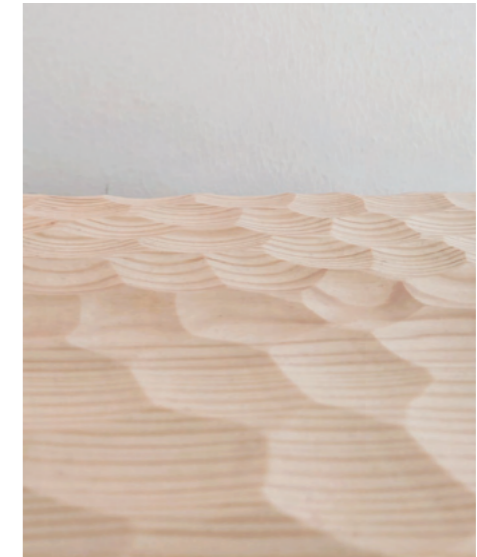




Ruth on floorboards. Own photo.



2.5 mm maximum depth



4.5 mm maximum depth



## The livingroom floor

The floor explorations have been twofold: firstly, testing handcrafting tools vs digital tools to reflect on what happens to the surface texture; and secondly, testing the sensitivity of the foot sole by working with different depths in the surface texture.

The explorations had to be done in scale 1:1 in order to be able to appropriately test walking on it as a floor. During the testing of handcrafting tools such as a gouge (a chisel with a curved blade for scooping or cutting holes) timber like birch, oak and linden wood was used. When using handcrafting tools to create this texture in scale 1:1, it resulted in a surface texture “within” the surface texture. It was not possible to create a smooth surface in the holes – holes (texture) within the holes (the actual texture) developed. This was rather beautiful, but not the intention. So I moved on to digital tools.

The digital tools used to create the large floor models was Rhino for creating a 3D model, and the CNC machine in the workshop for carving. The timber of the large floor models (scale 1:1) is pine wood, which is commonly used for wooden floorboards. It also connects the material choice to my site. The first large floor model was made with a 2.5 mm depth in the holes, and the second

one was made with a 4.5 mm depth in the holes. These models have then been tested for sensitivity of the foot sole, discussing the different depths in the surface texture.

In discussions with friends and fellow colleagues Aida Stenered and Matilda Furster, the surface texture’s reaction to light was the first to be acknowledged. For the more shallow floorboard, it was as if we seemed to see the pattern only in certain lights, which felt quite magical. It was almost like the effect that glitter can have with light – in certain moments it reveals itself. This type of surface, compared to a flat one, definitely seemed to activate our imagination.

We also discussed if possibly the shallow one could suit surfaces for the hand, and the deeper one for the feet – adapting the surface texture depending on what parts of the body we want it to interact with.

But the most striking this was the fact that this floor (the shallow one especially) felt soft, despite actually being made of a hard material. It is as if the surface texture has taken wood and made it into a soft rug.

The girls Ruth (5 1/2) and Meja (4) simply enjoyed running over them, lying on top of them, and Ruth wanted a floor just like that in her room.



### HINTED

- Pattern
- Surface texture

## Discussion

Looking back at the purpose of this thesis that was stated in the very beginning, new methods have been explored as well as developed in order to re-enchant both the architectural process, a project site and its architecture.

The focus of the site analysis was nature and imagination. Giving a tree on the site a unique name turned out to be rather powerful. This name did change a couple of times during the process, but even though the name varied, the fact that the tree had a name, quickly gave it extreme significance – both in the tale and ultimately in the design proposal. Now it could not be ignored – and neither did this thesis want to ignore it. Naming trees or other parts of the natural world seems a significant tool within site analysis, that could help make it a re-enchanting process.

The fictional tale ended up having multiple tasks. It became a tool for re-enchanting the site; a tool for connecting personally with the site during the process; a tool for connecting the site with the proposed design through common elements; and eventually also a tool for connecting the reader with the site and the proposed design. The fictional tale was an effective and continuous reminder to actively work

imagination into the architecture and architectural process.

Since the fictional tale was the main lead in the design phase, together of course with the design strategies and tools defined, what I otherwise might not have focused on, suddenly got priority. Surface textures to work with the narrative of the tale; movements through the house both vertically and horizontally; working with warm and cold spaces; thinking about characteristics to building components' (are pillars of the house its feet? Is the roof its hat? etc); and giving an element like the fireplace a significant space. These are all results of letting the fictional tale lead in the drawing process. And the translation between elements and built design required a lot of imagination – I had to engage it as a very active tool. What are characteristics of forest and winter that can be used in architectural design? And what even is a dragon?

The nature of the chosen project site needs to be mentioned. The project site could be viewed as seemingly perfect for a storybook, with a dramatic topography and an unexploited woodland environment giving wonderful opportunities for imagination to roam, which is also one of the reasons it was chosen. But could the re-enchantment

process explored in this thesis translate onto a site that is e.g. a flat plot of grass? Hopefully, the answer is yes. A grass plot is still a natural environment, just with another type of biodiversity than that of the project site in this thesis. Perhaps the analysis requires zooming in, looking at the grass straw, or maybe a focus could be what is happening underneath the grass. Animals or insects surely dwell here too. Maybe even a rare flower or two. Zooming out could also give something magical – perhaps the plot of grass lies near a lake with mermaids and mermen.

The focus point of this theses did not lie on the policy-making and rules of our profession. Instead, it was a delimitation – the focus was not the function of the building. This however does not mean that the thesis believes a re-enchantment of our process to be the opposite of the policy-making and rules of our profession. Re-enchantment could be applied together with them. So, a re-enchantment of the architectural process is not viewed as an opposite to the policies per say, but it might be that what the policies do to our mindset is what needs to be re-enchanted.

To sum up, the fictional tale was effective in re-enchanting the architectural process, it was a continuous reminder to actively work imagination into the architecture, the visuals, the design choices, which was very fun. Using fictional tales to enchant the architectural process and the way we look at a project site, could have the possibility of becoming a soft but powerful, conscious and reactionary architecture – in order to save our world from disenchantment.



**Vilma Mases**

Gothenburg, Sweden

**Hello!**

My name is Vilma. I was born in the city on islands Karlskrona, and I have spent the past five years studying architecture at Chalmers University of Technology, with my master's degree complete in 2026. Before beginning my architecture studies, I had the opportunity to study at Uppsala University as well as work in a variety of different workplaces, all of which have been enriching experiences in various ways. Over the years I have also had the privilege of living in countries other than Sweden—South Africa, Norway, Iceland, Ireland, Canada, and Australia—which has given me a strong

enthusiasm for cultural exchange. I have also started a small hobby business where I make crocheted bowties and sell in collaboration with the climate organization Greenpeace.

Some of my personal interests include a strong commitment to sustainability issues. I see the climate crisis as one of the greatest challenges of our time and likely of my entire professional career. I am therefore eager to contribute to a creative architecture that can help in this major challenge.

**University studies**

- Master's programme at Chalmers, MPARC-programme
- Bachelor's programme at Chalmers, TKARK-programme
- Nurse degree (d.n.f.) at Uppsala University

**Courses in MPARC**

- ACE400 Architecture in the Anthropocene
- ACE380 Sustainable Development and the Design professions
- ACE465 Urban Prototypes
- ACE350 Building Climatology
- ACE445 Design Systems
- ACE370 Master's thesis preparation: Academic approaches and general structure
- ACE425 Master's thesis preparation: Design approaches and narratives, with profile Architectural Experimentation
- ACE490 Building on Contexts and Buildings
- ACEx35 Master's Thesis

**Additional courses**

- AFO170: Kropp, rum, bilder
- AFO190: Berlin excursion
- AMA010: Paris excursion
- ASB130: Rome excursion
- Furniture Woodshop (Medborgarskolan)

**Other engagements**

- BARK - Study circle of Ecological Sustainability & Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology
- NOAKK hobby business, Gothenburg - founder and developer @noakk.bowties

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## Image references

**Figure 1.** Shepard, E.H. (1990). [No title] [Illustration]. In translated copy *Nalle Puhs Hörna [The House at Pooh Corner]* (p. 2). Bonniers Juniorförlag AB. (Original illustrations by E.H. Shepard from 1928 in original work *The House at Pooh Corner*, A.A. Milne).

**Figure 2-4.** Statens Lantmäteriverk. (1974). *Ekonomisk karta över Sverige [Map]*. In *Lantmäteriet. (n.d.), Historiska kartor*. Retrieved October 17, 2025 from <https://historiskakartor.lantmateriet.se/hk/positionsearch?e=456812&n=6196760>



**The End**