

Million housing program in Sweden

Courtyards and outdoors environment



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1 Introduction

In Sweden there is no social housing in original sense, but the Million Housing Program is as close as you can get to the concept. The purpose of the million housing program was that these areas would be built quickly and cheaply and solve the overcrowding and the lack of dwellings. I will discuss pros and cons of these areas with a focus on the outdoor environments and courtyards. I will mention Backa Röda in Gotheborg and talk about what problems they had in the area. I also want to exemplify with an area in Lund called Klostergården which is considered one of the better areas for being a million housing program. Then I intend to look at some areas from Manilla and compare the courtyards with Klostergården.

2 Literature Review

In Sweden, a large housing crisis occurred in the late 40s and in the 1950s. Many of the Swedish homes were in poor condition and very worn. In 1964, the politicians decided that the government would speed up the construction of new housing during a ten-year period. A total of one million new homes would be built. It was required that the dwellings should be built quickly and new technologies was used, such as site casting. Much of the planning was left to the engineers, which led to much of the architectural expression in the external environment being lost. Examples of this are the design of the façade, variation in the location of the houses and the design of the outdoor environment. (Nylander, 2018, pp. 180-183).

The Million Housing Program has long been a heavily criticized project. This is especially true for the outdoor environments and its relation to the large scale of the houses. The criticism also acknowledges that the areas are located far from the city center and thus contribute to today's segregation. In the original planning vision, there was a focus on the neighborhood ideal, family life and the local community which would counteract the alien city life. There was also an idea of an integrated placement of housing, workplaces and service in these areas. The visions also meant green areas and public transport nearby. It would be walking distance for the residents to a local center with shops and services, and sometimes also culture. The areas would have cycle paths and walkways so that they became

car-free. But in practice, the outdoor environments became incomplete and monotonous. The culture and service offer came too late or not at all. The center facilities often became large-scale and dependent on cars for their accessibility. (Nylander, 2018, p.115).

From having had perhaps the worst housing standard in Europe, Sweden becomes one of the best in this regard together with Denmark after the mass production of housing. There was a strong political will-formation that the population would not be overcrowded and that health would be better with more hygienic housing. This was a major problem of poverty in the past. You also want bright and well-planned apartments (Nylander, 2018, pp. 190-193).

During this time of acute mass production, one also became critical of the architect's role. There were changes in the education so that the architect's skills would be adapted to mass production of housing and a predetermined way for urban planning where residential areas were laid outside the city's main center. The new and modern way of building required a different type of competence. (Nylander, 2018, p.194).

Criticizes functionalism

Jan Gehl is a Danish architect who in the 1970s criticized the functionalism of that time. He believes that one should focus on how people moves in the spaces between the houses and therefore take into account the human scale. Gehl speaks among other things about necessary activities and optimal activities. The former is everyday chores such as getting to work, shopping etc. Optimal activities are when you enjoy something, such as sitting on a bench and reading a newspaper. If there is not so much space for more than the necessary everyday activities, there will also be no optimal activities. (Gehl, 2006, pp. 9-11). He also believes that an effect is created even if nothing happens. If nobody moves out then no one wants to go out because there is no one out there. A third concept that Gehl deals with is social activities. The content of these is dependent on what happens in the public space. These social activities can be children playing, conversations between

oncoming people or other types of joint activities. Other types of such activities are described by Gehl as a passive contact as one as "spectator" sees and hears other people. Examples of this can be private patios, gardens, balconies and public spaces such as squares or workplaces where we can have a more observing role. This means that life in public spaces is a mix of all these types of social activities that contribute to creating life between people. (Gehl, 2006, pp.12-13)

Gehl points out that seating in an area should not be located in the middle of an open public space. Then no one will sit there. Instead, the seats should be placed along the edges of an area, such as along a facade or along the boundaries of the physical room. If there are, for example, restaurants or something else similar in the environment, it also contributes to being attracted to seating in its vicinity. The presence of sun and wind also has an important importance for the attraction of the seats. (Gehl.2006, pp.155-161).

How to look at the Million Housing Program today

The government research council for sustainable development – Formas -- has published a book where different researchers give a contemporary viewpoint on the Million Housing Programs from economic, social and environmental perspectives. The researchers emphasize that there are many positive aspects in these areas, eg. they are separated from traffic, the presence of greenery and park facilities, child safety, good views from the apartments and connection to nature in the immediate surroundings (Research Council Formas, 2012. p. 75). It is difficult to find a solution that should appear to be the best and only solution for this housing areas. The researchers believe that for each specific area, a specific analysis must be made in order to make the special choices that are needed in relation to the goals you want to achieve (Research Council Formas, 2012. p. 76).

Between 1975 and 1986, government grants support environmental improvements in areas that included a total of 650,000 apartments. In many places, extensive improvements to the common environment, both indoors and outdoors, have also

been carried out without grants, not least in recent decades (Research Council Formas, 2012, p.39).

The record year's building stock is varied both in categories and numbers. It was now the modern Sweden, among other things, got schools, hospitals, roads, municipal buildings and sports facilities. The welfare society was built up physically and socially (Research Council Formas, 2012, p. 78).

Another aspect is the idea of sustainable society, which one can implement in the housing estates when renovating these areas. Examples of this are local food supply, the opportunity for local cultivation, small-scale renewable energy, reuse, sharing of resources, local economy and the ability to adapt to new conditions such as a future without access to cheap energy. Then you can find qualities that are found both in smaller communities and in the Million Housing Program areas. In this context, the Million-Program suburbs can be seen as an asset because they often already have surrounding green areas for recreation, cultivation and space for local renewable energy. They often have local services, trade, schools and are close to public transport. They have common functions such as laundries, rooms for voluntary associations, and often a strong local association life. The housing estates have space for all these qualities that areas in the center of the city do not have in the same way. (Research Council Formas, 2012. s. 89-92).

Courtyards

In a dissertation by Eva Kristensson (2003), the residents' experience of interior courtyards is investigated. She takes up the overall trend of a denser city, but instead it creates darker courtyards and cars that come closer to the houses. How does one's living environment become human? She has done interviews and asked people about their inner courtyards in different types of residential areas. Those who mostly use the courtyards are families and children. A larger courtyard is often perceived positively as one feels that one gets space there. A small courtyard is perceived more negatively when one feels that it is often occupied by someone else and that one does not give enough space. There are many who like their courtyards, although you do not use it when walking through the area. (Kristensson, 2007, p.429).

Eva Kristensson (2007) has previously done another study on reconditioned courtyards and outdoor environment in the million housing program. In this study she came to the conclusion that the ground surface and the spaciousness were a significant factor for how the inhabitants perceived the design of the living environment. One considered the million housing program as an asphalted and boring outdoor environment with "grass islands", but Kristensson points out that it is precisely the generous spaciousness that constituted a basis for creating what the inhabitants value. The large courtyards have room for the creation of many functions and they are easier to divide than smaller courtyards. It was thus easier to create a multifunctional outdoor environment with these courtyards as a starting point. You could then make room for the greenery which was the most important for the nature contact in everyday life and also the aesthetic experience. You also get a privacy when the houses could be allowed to be placed a bit apart.

During the 1980s, densification became the new way of thinking about urban planning, e.g. extensions were made to existing buildings. When this was to be carried out in the Million Housing Program areas where Kristensson had interviewed the inhabitants, the residents became upset and thought that their immediate environment would be destroyed and the whole thing was perceived as an intrusion. This shows that the free and open areas are very important for the residents. During the 1990s, there was a renewal of the old quarter structure of the urban buildings, but now with a higher density of buildings than before. There was then a wish for an alternative to the Million Program's design. But these also received criticism because it often created dark and cramped courtyards and cars that came closer to the homes. Kristensson's point is that she criticizes the housing density and highlights the importance of the spaciousness between the houses. (Kristensson, 2007, p.11)

The Million Housing Program provides good spaces between the houses for the residents. In today's discussion about a densification in the city, you do not see the spacious courtyards as an important asset for the residents and as a possible area for them to use. The housing areas built during the 1990s do not have the same space on their courtyards. The outdoor environment was simply utilized for the densification of the city (Research Council Formas, 2012; Kristensson).

Klostergården in Lund

Klostergården was built between 1962-1968 and has a clear division between traffic, service, accommodation and relaxation. The area is located in the southern part of Lund. The center is concentrated and is separated by a green belt in



Picture 1: Overview over Klåstergården 1968 when the fields are still around the area.

relation to the housing units. In the center there is a church, grocery store, kindergarten and youth club. The residential area is car free and there are only walkways and cycle paths that

run through the area. The dwelling houses vary between eight-storey long narrow apartment blocks, together with lower residential buildings with two or three floors. The area has recently undergone exploitation through the establishment of a beltway. In addition to various extensions, more residential buildings have been built both north and south of Klostergården, as well as an outdoor bath (Källbybadet). (Hansson & Rabow, 2006. p. 9). Because there are now many actors who manage the buildings, only a minor maintenance of each operator is required to get a well-managed area as a whole. New buildings have been added to the outer edges of the area. But this has not encroached on the area's original courtyards. Some original buildings closest to the center have been demolished, such as a youth club and been replaced with students rommes. (Hansson & Rabow, 2006, pp. 45-48).



Picture 2: Beach with shadow. The room make a scale different from the 8 stories building.



Picture 3: Openings between the courtyard and cycle path. This make a connection between these to rooms.



Picture 4: The caretaker is out with a small car and fixing with the greenery.



Picture 5: The small farming boxes in the courtyard.



Picture 6: The edge with flowerbed, between the house and the courtyard



Picture 7: A bench where a hedge separates from the houses in the courtyard

Own impressions

When you are at Klostergården during the day at 14 o'clock, there are a lot of people in motion. For example, the elderly are out with their dogs, but also people who cycle or walk through the area. It is very green and there is variation on the scale of the houses. When you come to the different courtyards, they feel homely and have a variation in their greenery. It feels like an attempt to create different rooms and functions, which can be seen in pictures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. The property managers have done this with a clear care of the area. One could also see several caretakers or managers moving around in the area.

Röda Backa - Million Housing Program in Gothenburg

Ola Nylander and Anna Braide Eriksson have written a report on Röda backa in Gothenburg where they interviewed different families about their experiences of the Million Housing Program area. The area has had problems with youth gangs. This has resulted in that people do not dare to release their children to the courtyards and playgrounds. Many do not dare to go out when it is dark. The housing company, Bostad AB Poseidon, has activated these young people through an employment program called "Hope for jobs" in collaboration with SDF Backa Röda. They are targeted to the unemployed between 18-25 years for three months. The task assignments begin at Backa Röda, which prepares them so they later on can be passed on to gardening companies and contracting companies for a longer period of one and a half years. The youths have also opened a cafe in the area which is supported by Bostad AB Poseidon. They have also opened a meeting place for young people over the age of 18. The young people have also started their own courtyard association. Through this, they have gained access to a cottage to meet in. After these efforts, the people in the area experience that it has now.

Some differences between Manila and the Million Housing Programing

Through the urbanization in many places in the world, much new housing has been needed when people have started moving into the cities.

In India's suburbs and in the poor areas, open-to-sky space is an important part because you usually only have one room. Open spaces between the houses are important for the inhabitants here - the courtyards and terraces for sleeping or cooking, the front door for children to play, and the water tap and the open space for the whole community. Because it is so hot, much of the daily activities can happen outdoors in the courtyard or the terrace, definitely approaching 75% of the activities during 70% of the year's days. But since the land is expensive, one wants to have as much housing as possible. Therefore, a lot of boxes are built on each other and the public rooms are forgotten. Many who have made a living on jobs within these courtyards, can in these cases become unemployed. This also means that it becomes difficult for the residents to do many of their everyday tasks. Everyone cannot afford to live in these homes because they are quite expensive and that they are built with expensive materials. This leads to the fact that many build their own homes on the ground. Even in these cases, no planned outdoor environment is created. (Correa, pp. 106-107).

Compared to Sweden today, you do not have that kind of direct need for courtyards as in India. In a Swedish city, people do not support themselves in the same way. Here is not the same climate that makes you stay outdoors as much as in India. Then it is necessary to have more rooms indoors here for the purpose of not being cramped. The idea of the million program was precisely that you would have a lot of nature experience and outdoor areas.

It may seem that the Million Housing Program areas have different types of problems that are difficult to solve. But there are many benefits to these areas that are forgotten. As the city grows, these areas may no longer be on the outskirts of the city, but built into the city. In Klostergården, for example, some of the houses have been converted into private housing cooperative, which makes a mixture of people. New houses have also been added around the area, which means that the location is perceived to be close to the city center. Many green surfaces make people go through the area and in that way there will be a lot of people in motion. There is a lot of responsibility on those who manage the area such as Backa Röd in Gothenburg, where they tried to solve the problem of youth gangs. It is also obvious how much care you put into the outdoor environment. You can see this at

Klostergården where they, for example, planted flowerbeds along the houses and developed the courtyards with different versions of room for vegetation, and all caretakers who take care of this. All this means that residents are encouraged to stay outside, perhaps with their dogs, or they simply think it is safe to walk in the area. Gehl's thoughts on the importance to think on a human scale for how people perceive their environment, are a relevant value in order to reason about this type of change in modern residential areas.

As Gehl mentions, it is important with the social activities that make you want to participate in it. Because if no one moves the area nobody wants to be out if you feels insecure. There are many who just pass by bike or as walking, but also places and outdoor activities that call for a break like barbecue areas, benches and playgrounds. Since the center has two grocery stores and a bakery, it also feels like there is a lot of movement in that area.

On the courtyards there are many seats and rooms that make the scale feel smaller even though some houses are eight floors high. If you look at picture 8, you can see how it looked like from the beginning, and it is a big difference. Previously,



Picture 8: Playground when the area is new build 1968. The greenery is not her, and the courtyard is a big open space.

there were completely empty surfaces between the houses.

After the visits in Manilla, one had to think about the scale. It was usually the

same house height as no more than 5 floors, because otherwise you have to have a lift. Another example was the Sant Hannibal area, when it was tight between the houses. There were two farmhouses with three meters between the houses and a lot of greenery. Since it was so tight between the houses, one created shade in the heat. But the public spaces were not many. One had private spaces in the form of space outside in the aisle or one lived on the ground floor a small patio. Otherwise

there was a little basketball plane and a little surface with a roof on. But the public spaces were not many. One had to make use of the place that existed. But as it was so green it still felt homely. What is equal between the Million Programs and these social housing areas we look at in Manila, so much read those who lived in the area. Because one was responsible for one of the houses. They had meetings together that were responsible and helped if there was any problem. This can be likened to a housing association in Sweden. Even that these homes are being built up quickly and as cheaply as possible.

Whether it is large-scale projects in developing countries with rapid urbanization or modern urban planning in the Western world, the architects are important as a defender of the human dimension in the residential areas. The architect's role is to, together with other actors, create the basic conditions for the built environment's planning and realization. In addition to the involvement of builders and politicians in an initial stage, the architect's visions also include a long-term perspective on how the area is used and age. Therefore, it is important to include users' needs and their everyday lives when designing an area. It is also important that the managers of the area subsequently follow up the ideas in terms of function and aesthetics, and thus constitute a clear extension to the architect's work.

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Photos

Bid 1: Found 2 may2019:

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Bild 2: Photographer: Emilie Roos, date : 2 may

Bild 3: Photographer: Emilie Roos, date : 2 may

Bild 4 Photographer: Emilie Roos, date : 2 may

Bild 5: Photographer: Emilie Roos, date : 2 may

Bild 6 : Photographer: Emilie Roos, date : 2 may

Bild 7 :Photographer: Emilie Roos, date : 2 may

Bild 8: found 2 may 2019:

https://www.google.com/search?q=klosterg%C3%A5rden%20Lund&rlz=1C5CHFA_enSE794SE794&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiSq9HT_obiAhVollIsKHVYKDqIQ_AUIDigB&biw=1440&bih=748&fbclid=IwAR0Qja3EOVYyHNfGkkRt3mvgkmYbIMe4BxiK45lQFzUJB7NziD4niwm6A_s#imgrc=6qG9fPWol4A00M: