THIS PROJECT IS ABOUT
Finding creative strategies for care-full architectural practices in Norra Sorgenfri, Malmö

SITE
Norra Sorgenfri is located southeast of the center of Malmö, Sweden’s third largest city, formerly an old working-class city but undergoing many changes in recent years. The City of Malmö has made extensive plans to regenerate this area for housing and work spaces, shops, schools and services.

The area produces an interstice in relation to the more controlled urban fabric surrounding it; it is vast, scattered with industrial ruins and left-over spaces. It is more loose and in some ways more open to diverse modes of occupation and use, accommodating activities and groups that otherwise can have a hard time to make a space for themselves in the city. It is groups as these that I am interested in engaging with through my care-full and participatory design approach.

PHOTO detail of final booklet and the interactive map, A Care-Full Companion

PHOTOS from field studies - visits, walks, talks and observations

Interstices represent what is left of resistance in big cities - resistance to normativity and regulation, to homogenization and appropriation. They embody, in a sense, what is still “available” in the city. Their provisional and uncertain status allows for a hint, a glimpse of other ways of creating a city that are open and collaborative, responsive and cooperative. *

Pascal Nicolas-de Nyrat
CARE

Applying feminist ethics of care to an architectural project means using real life practices and focusing on values such as compassion, empathy and solidarity. In the 1980s feminist ethicist and psychologist Carol Gilligan introduced care as an attached way of human connection, requiring listening and understanding differences and needs, in contrast to what is perceived as male ethics of justice and hierarchies. The concept of care points towards networks of and relationships between people (and non-human actors). In this light, I have tried to define a design practice where sustainability is understood in relation to responsibility and actions oriented towards other people. I am influenced in this care-oriented practice by Atelier d’Architecture Autogérée, especially their work and writings exhibited at 2012 years Venice Biennale, as well as Muf Architecture and Art London.

The notion of “Care” is closely related to the notion of Commons. Within the disappearance of the welfare state, we need new collective contexts for care to take place. [...] Care can activate networks and make structures and connections within and between groups, communities and places. These connections are those of responsibility, of sharing, of reciprocity, of democratic organisation and of welfare.

Atelier d’architecture autogérée


I have taken on the role of a facilitator and transmitter of the knowledge that I have gained through my interactive and participatory research, in an aim to re-definition what an architect can be, and ways to alter what an architectural practice can be seen to be. As such, I am proposing new approaches that contain: how to read, care-fully observe, interpret and act - as an urban-caretaker.

This means, Urban caring, is about 1) carefully seeing and using what is here, 2) the small-scale, minimal and subtle that make up everyday life, but might go unnoticed in planning and architectural projects.

The concept of care applied to the site, manifest itself in the following design proposals and methods: 1) critical mapping as a central participatory task, 2) as part of the mapping and from an intimate understanding of the site a creation of a manual of care, 3) a series of tests based on the mappings and the manual’s strategies, policy making and small-scale interventions – marked in pink and with pink crosses, as well as the circles) 4) a manifesto that suggests ways that this knowledge can be transferred to other sites and 5) the care-full companion.

The term “social sustainability” is in my opinion often mis-used today, and one of my aims is to give it more substance through the theoretical framework of care. Kim Trogal, an architect who just finished her phd at Sheffield University, writes:

I am proposing ... how to read, care-fully observe, interpret and act - as an urban-care-taker.

Kim Trogal

Atelier d’architectures Autogérées, a feminist approach to the ethics of care and community in contemporary urban practice.

MAPP of care-connected observations in the project’s first week

Collage illustrating my role as a facilitator and the importance of engagement with the site.
I am exploring what an architectural proposal can be, where the process and the her-e-and-now are valued as very important. As a responsible and care-full designer I wanted to avoid a situation of ‘before and after’ that ends in one privileged and overdetermined design solution. I believe we need to be far more care-full than that. Urban caring offers an open-ended process, enabling the site to develop in a number of directions.

My role here is not to over-determine what the outcome might be, but instead to facilitate a way, as a tool, of enabling positive change towards possible futures.

This is a map that I used as a working tool throughout the project, to try to understand the complexity of an urban site in transformation and to include several perspectives. The map has been informed by my research method of experimental and care-full, field studies, with many visits, walks, talks, and a personal engagement in the site, all as a way to try to catch what might be hard to get and what might risk being overseen in urban projects. The ‘care-full companion’ is a prototype of a tool that can be used in workshops and participatory processes. It demonstrates the open-ended process of the project, with an appearance that is variable.

In the coming pages, I will illustrate four proposals or design tests (possible interventions among a multitude of other approaches) I will then go into the history of Norra Sorgenfri and the city’s plans for the area.

My research method has been informed by my perspectives. The map, strategies and policies.

This theory that motivates my practical engagement, contains both analyses and proposals and filling in the gaps as a way through the process, enabling the site to develop in a number of directions. I am exploring what an architectural proposal can be, where the process and the her-e-and-now are valued as very important. As a responsible and care-full designer I wanted to avoid a situation of ‘before and after’ that ends in one privileged and overdetermined design solution. I believe we need to be far more care-full than that. Urban caring offers an open-ended process, enabling the site to develop in a number of directions.

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MANUAL OF CARE

By looking at activities that take care of social needs I have identified another set of "smaller" stakeholders than the city, who works towards property owners and building companies. Field studies and site research lead me to create a set of caring icons, activities that I categorized into five different kinds of care.

The filled circle illustrates how the mapping of activities and interventions turn into a propositional mode.

PHOTOS showing how the circles, and crosses, can be interacted with the other material, such as analysis and maps.

Alterations that I have encountered on site, that are creative and aesthetic responses and interventions, traces of desires and longings, I call ephemeral care. I looked for the hospitality and generosity of the place. In a quite rough area like Norra Sorgenfri, with a lot of car traffic, wide asphalt planes and fenced property, what aspects of the public place are generous towards people? This includes features of the urban environment that take care of more basic needs, as warmth, shelter, shadow, rest etc.

To illustrate, one example is to care for the history of a place. The wall with inscriptions behind migrationsverket. The migration board is going to move on to a new place, but what does the presence of asylum seekers mean to the place?

During my research and interaction with the site, I divided the caring activities in other different categories. Informal care is what I named the social and collective networks of care and everyday activities that care for social needs, for meeting and sharing. These activities take place in cheap rental spaces outside of the home and are cultural associations, small-scale production, handicraft and more.

Institutional care is what I call the care by the municipality or the state, sometimes forced.

The fifth category that I name commoning care led me to look closer at a key point in the area, Olsdotter. Here are practices and activities of claiming, "making one’s own", appropriations and informal transformations. The term commoning also points to the will to create and maintain together, produce and use after people’s needs, in contrast to private ownership and profit making. These practices are potentially challenging in sustainable structures and question that economical growth equals development. The commoning care show resources for other ways of living in cities than the normative...
This is a manual in learning from directing the eyes to details and listening carefully and close. To train the abilities to see what is not obvious or seen in a planner’s perspective but important in the creation of social space and belonging. It is also a catalogue of caring interventions, to save what might otherwise get lost in a changing area. I want the manual to be a helping hand to decode, interpret and value the small-scale and everyday. A manual that can inspire to action. The mapping switches from merely research to a propositional mapping that suggests new ways of engaging with a site.

The manual, zoomed in page above, and all spreads as miniatures to the right. Original size of each page is 297 x 297 mm.
ÖDETOMTEN - A NEW PARK OF COMMONING

As mentioned in the section about commoning care, the old industry property referred to as "Ödetomten" has become a site for diverse self-initiated activities.

This collage visualises the diverse activities, uses and qualities at work on Ödetomten today, as a strategy to value and build on what is here. Self-building, gardening, picking of nettles and blackberries, informal settlements and art exhibitions are some examples.

SKETCHES of physical elements/qualities at Ödetomten that can be amplified in a future park.

COLLAGE today’s and recent activities on site, most photos are from Jörgen Andersson’s blog documenting Norra Sorgenfri since 2009, norrasorgenfri.blogspot.com

SKETCHES of care-taking and -giving in the activities present at Ödetomten, commoning and ephemeral care.

VALUE WHAT IS HERE

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SKETCHES of care-taking and -giving in the activities present at Ödetomten, commoning and ephemeral care.
The areas around Norra Sorgenfri are often criticized for not having enough of green spaces and parks. The bigger park that was planned in the area is getting considerably reduced in size. We need to look for other open green spaces. Why start from zero when you can use what already exists?

In stead of building bostadsrätter (private co-ops) here, which is planned, I suggest to plan and build a park when you can get one bottom-up, for free? A headline from Sydsvenskan, the local newspaper, reads: “Parken slutade som fabrik (the park ended up as a factory)”, a future headline could read “Fabrikstomt har blivit trädgård (Factory site became a garden)”. What could start the chain reaction, making it bottom-up, for free? A headline from Sydsvenskan, the local newspaper, reads: “Parken slutade som fabrik (the park ended up as a factory)”, a future headline could read “Fabrikstomt har blivit trädgård (Factory site became a garden)”. The symbol illustrates how the mapping is turned into a proposal, in this case how the current activities at Ödetomten are utilized into a new park in the area.

The size of Ödetomten is around 2.1 ha (a bit bigger than the first proposed park of 1.6 ha).

To make use of the current commoning care and amplify the commoning practices there today, I suggest to continue these practices in making a park from bottom-up, that would compensate the loss of green, open space in the area.

2

PROPOSAL:
ÖDETOMTEN - A NEW PARK OF COMMONING!

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ÖDE-TOMTEN - A NEW PARK OF COMMONING!

The areas around Norra Sorgenfri are quite often criticized for not having enough of green spaces and parks. The bigger park that was planned in the area is getting considerably reduced in size. We need to look for other open green spaces. Why start from zero when you can use what already exists?

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PARK OF COMMONING!

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ÖDETOMTEN - A NEW PARK OF COMMONING

The current uses of Ödetomten have not been taken into account in the development plans. A strategy of seeing the activities and features of the site today as valuable, visualising and naming them, will make it possible to augment them and give them formal “rights to exist”. The black text describes the existing qualities, the pink makes the existing propositional for a park.

I propose a delayed development, where activities can go on here and be made as a resource for the whole area. The time factor of creating things, which makes it harder to ignore what is going on, create new stakeholders that can influence the development of the area. Ödetomten can be the “heating heart” of Norra Sorgenfris, the social core. This place could continue to accommodate groups of people who might not easily make their voice heard, or un-employed - a way of really connecting different parts of Malmö, enabling people to engage in their urban environment.

STRENGTHEN THE COMMONING CARE

A proposal to strengthen the commoning care at work on Ödetomten. Through a delayed development the activities here can grow stronger and become a resource for the whole area. A commoning park deals with questions such as alternative economies, own food production and other ways of living in a city.

AAVOOMETRIC DRAWING showing how existing qualities can be used for a future park. Scale 1 : 800

VALUE WHAT IS HERE:

FENCE GUERILLA
KNITTING WALL FOR CREATIVE COMMUNICATION
RUDERAL PLANTS
WILD GARDEN
PLANTS AND INTEGRATED SEATING
EXHIBITION ON PLANK INTERACTIVE WALLS
HMAPED ENTRANCE SECRET GARDEN ENTRANCE

2 NURTURE THE POSSIBLE AND ADD WHAT IS MISSING:

WALL FOR CREATIVE COMMUNICATION
PLANTS AND INTEGRATED SEATING
INTERACTIVE WALLS
WILD GARDEN
SECRET GARDEN ENTRANCE
WALKING PATHS
SELF-BUILT OVEN
WORKSHOPS FOR BUILDING / MAKING
OUTDOOR DANCING /
PARTIES
OUTDOOR STONE-CUTTING WORKSHOPS
OUTDOOR KITCHEN
COMMUNITY CENTER AND COMMUNICATIVE WALLS
FRUIT AND BERRY ORCHARD
COMMON GARDENING
PROTECTED PLACE
EXHIBITION WALLS
WALLED GARDEN - INTERACTIVE WALLS
NEW CORNER ENTRANCE
I propose additions that are simple constructions with minimal means, easy to build, cheap materials. A suggestion of using available materials in the area is how pallets can be used as a base for furniture.

Pallets as a base for furniture and structures in the park of commoning as well as self-built structures. Pallets are widely available in the area today.
Instead of only planning for new inhabitants and looking at future uses, I made this map to augment the potentials in the many caring activities that go on in the area today. The map not only makes the local resources visible for policy makers and developers, it can also initiate a dialogue, giving featured actors a way in to the conversation, and making them stakeholders in the development project. Assets, engagement and community action can therefore be utilised for a collective development.
LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

This is a proposal on how the Local knowledge map can be taken further. The building gymnasium can be involved in constructing structures for the common park, as well as interested unemployed going to JobbMalmö, the allotment gardeners can share their knowledge of gardening, the artist associations of exhibition making, the greek culture association might be interested in cooking, children from Rörsjöskolan can be involved in maintenance of gardening, while being a pedagogic tool for their education.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND ASSETS

Strategy to look at what is here and use the local knowledge as community expertise for the development of Norra Sorgenfri. The proposal illustrates how today’s small-scale actors can be stakeholders in changes in the area. Therefore it is also a strategy of strengthening the role of smaller actors in the area, while their presence give impact on the changes the area go through.

SCENARIO IN STRENGTHENING ÖDETOMTEN AS A PARK OF COMMONING, AND HOW LOCAL KNOWLEDGE CAN BE INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF IT:

- Schoolchildren do gardening as a part of their education and become one of the local maintainers of the park.
- Zenith allotment gardeners share knowledge.
- Greek association cooking and outdoor parties.
- Students at Norra Sorgenfri gymnasium build furniture, storage etc as part of their education.
- Unemployed at JobbMalmö can be involved in different activities at Ödetomten.
- Artists (Cirkulationscentralen, Addo) are involved in decoration and exhibitions.
Historical and material conditions

Future: the city’s plans

Before I go on explaining a fourth care-full test, I will illustrate some historical and future layers of Norra Sorgenfri:

My interest in speculating and critically imagining other ways of developing cities and making space informed this project. It led me to look at a current and celebrated urban regeneration project (illustrated on this axonometric drawing/collage). The current planning process is analysed and critiqued through the lens of care, celebrating the ambitious aims and trying to fill in the gaps.

The 48 ha big area include building housing for 5,000 people, and workspace for 2,000 people. The goal is to work with small scale building companies and various forms for building, owning and renting on small plots.

Drawing estimated by studying material from the city planning office, Malmö.

Agents

Inhabitants in the new housing of which 20% is rental apartments (the city aims)

Artists

Culture associations

Consumers

School children

Unemployed going to Jobb Malmö

Workers offices and other institutions

Workers service

Workers industries

Axonometric drawing scale 1:4000
There are currently four new detail plans of the area. I have analysed three of them and the plan program through the lens of care. My analysis is marked with yellow. Combined with research of on-going activities there today, I have identified a set of care-full approaches or cues to it that we need focus more on. The circles make up an asset mapping of the proposed development.
**Kvarteret Brännaren 19**

**Proprietary by real estate companies Habo AB and Rinkeby**

**WHAT:**

Detaljplan knykt Approved detail plan

**AIM:**

To develop the property for housing and facilities according to the regulations of Länsstyrelsen.

**PLAN ON NUMBERS:**

New 200 to 3500 m². The aim is to develop the property with commercial premises and residential areas. Necessary as well as school and hotel use for a proposed project.

**DETAIL PLANS - ANALYSIS**

Detaljplan laga kraft/ Approved detail plan

**Area:** 0,36 ha

Small spaces for shops, service, library, restaurant, handicraft with sale or like-wide.

Possibilities for “center activities” such as shop, service, school and health care to a restricted extent. Offices only to a restricted extent. In the area, the remains of old fruit orchards are available for rent.

Centrumfunktion, butik, service, bibliotek, restaurang, hantverk med försäljning eller likvärdigt skall finnas i bottar.

För att säkerställa att det finns större lägenheter i området bestäms i detaljplanen att varje kvarter ska innehålla minst 3-4 bostadslägenheter på över 100 m².

För att inte balkonger ska bli för dominerande begränsas deras utbredning och uttryck i detaljplanen.

Flera fastigheter kan även dela tekniska installationer. Genom tredimensionell fastighetsbildning kan en större parkering under mark skapas som delas av flera fastigheter.

**THE SITE’S CURRENT CONDITIONS:**

Platsen är en gångavstånd från de nya bostäderna, kan bilberoendet minska till gagn för miljön. Det är också viktigt att visiter i området och besökare i området ovan mark. Flera fastigheter kan även dela tekniska installationer.

**USE OF TREES AND PLANTS:**

Use of trees and plants to take care of a fensed-off area.

Care of a fensed-off area.

Use of trees and plants to take care of a fensed-off area.

Could the strategy to make use of trees and plants to take care of a fensed-off area be possible?

**THE MEDICAL COMPANY QPHARMA**

Q Pharma, the medical industry that owns the property states some wishes they have for the continued development. Their care and school are allowed to a restricted extent.

**WHAT:**

QPharma AB meddelar i skrivelse 2011-08-15 att företaget i stort sett inte har några invändningar mot detaljplanen.

**PLANS IN FUTURE:***

Detaljplan laga kraft/ Approved detail plan

**Area:** 1,05 ha, 110 x 95 m

**WHAT:**

To develop the property for housing and facilities according to the regulations of Länsstyrelsen.

**AIM:**

Could the strategy to make use of trees and plants to take care of a fensed-off area be possible?

**THE SITE’S CURRENT CONDITIONS:**

Brännaren - central and important in the material.

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**AIM:**

Could the strategy to make use of trees and plants to take care of a fensed-off area be possible?

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Norra Sorgenfri used to be located at the fringe of Malmö and much of the land was owned by the city. It is named after a farm located here, Sorgenfri means Free of sorrows. The location explains why in the 19th Century the dead were buried here, the poor were put in a work detention home, the sick were isolated in the epidemic hospital and the gas for the city was stored here. The area has a history of institutions dealing with care in a dubious way.

18 to 19th Century farmland, cemeteries, institutions for poor and sick. The farm Sorgenfri (Free of sorrows) will later give its name to the area, which is located at the fringe of the city.
HISTORICAL AND MATERIAL CONDITIONS

INDUSTRIAL GLORY DAYS

Late 19th Century to 1980’s, the growth and peak time of one of many industries in Norra Sorgenfri.

In late 19th Century industries were established and the area was a major production place until the 1990’s crisis. The histories of the site can be traced to the activities and institutions in Norra Sorgenfri today. The Migration board currently has its receptions here, as well as municipal institutions for long-term unemployed and forensic transition. As the city has grown Norra Sorgenfri is now centrally located, and today the area is seen from the possibility of connecting the wealthy parts of Malmö with the poorer parts.

The histories of the site and its special character, the in-betweeness, has made it possible for informal and small-scale practices to flourish. Why would not this phase of the site be valued as much as the industrial phase of it?
From studying the informal and creative care in the area, I learnt that these kinds of activities are dependent on low rents. The proposal to the right show a collection of buildings that all grew out of the Addo factory in the 20th Century. The tenants there today have short-term leases and are not included in the dialogue with the city, since they can’t be promised to stay. I propose a strategy of keeping it as it is, or more correctly restoration with minimal means together with involved tenants, to avoid increased rents. The old industrial buildings in Norra Sorgenfri offer valuable cheap spaces, that enables a rich ecology of caring activities.

A minimal restoration can be to change the broken windows, with simple wooden frames that can be altered by the artists/association in each room. This gives lets the tenants presence also give impact on the physical environment, which would give them a stronger position in the development of Norra Sorgenfri.

**PROPOSAL**

**VALUE WHAT IS HERE WITH MINIMAL RESTORATION**

Minimal, but essential, restoration that the tenants can do themselves to avoid increase of租金. At Addo factory the tenants are dependent on the unique collection of buildings that all grew out from the Addo factory during the 20th century. The tenants are not included in the dialogue, simple they can’t be promised to stay.

**THE TENANTS ARE DEPENDENT ON LOW RENTS.**

I propose that we see and value the activities, people, and uses of the spaces today. They should all be seen as assets for further development. The run-down buildings are valuable cheap spaces that enable small-scale actors and groups.

**TAKE CARE OF THE EXISTING ECOLOGY OF CARING ACTIVITIES THAT MAKE NORRA SORGENFRI A UNIQUE PLACE**
I started my thesis with a desire to explore how the role of the architect and discipline of architecture can be altered, and how a relationship with fragile urban sites such as Norra Sorgenfri can be care-fully approached and augmented. What I have proposed here is an expansion of the field of knowledge as it relates to architecture. I have explored and proposed ways of engaging with sites as an urban care-taker.

My own contribution to this aim has been in the form of participatory and careful mapping as a central and crucial process, the development of a care-full manual, the creation of a manifesto which potentially enables you to transfer knowledge and method from one site to the next, as well as a series of localised and situated design tests.

The care-full companion helped me along the way, and can continue to function as a tool to collect information, talk, propose, experiment, create knowledge, utilise the existing, visualise - to enable urban care-taking.

## CONCLUSION

### MANIFESTO FOR THE URBAN CARE-TAKER

- Use compassion, empathy, sensitivity and attentiveness
- Connect, communicate, surface, strengthen and empower
- Be in dialogue
- Start with the everyday activities that make up the spaces around us, value these activities as important and see what is already here
- Listen and look carefully and close to what is hidden or not easily comprehensible
- Find and appreciate the local knowledge as valuable assets in urban development
- Give and acknowledge agency to the people involved in networks of spatial practice and use the expertise of the “user”; empower those who not easily get their voice heard
- Value the slow and see delayed development as a potential for the small-scale and informal to be strengthened over time
- Question the conventional role of the architect as isolated from “the messiness” of the world with an abstract distant gaze on it - be engaged
- Envision a socially and politically aware architectural practice, with a spatial awareness of society, political and social contexts
- Find ways of real participation in design processes, for democratic spatial production and building cities for all, not only the economically and/or culturally prosperous
- Inform and strengthen citizen rights through urban pedagogy
- Envision other uses of the city than profit-based consumption and find models for other economical models of production