

OBJECTS ON THE FIELD

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Architecture and the open field of possibilities

The growth of the Oslo region is activating energies and hopes as well as uncertainty and concerns regarding a transformation that seems radical and inevitable. Nevertheless while Norway is experiencing an unprecedented growth, the recent global history proved the ever-changing nature of the contemporary condition. Such a delicate moment of transition demands the elaboration of a strategy that could direct the urban development, but being at the same time open to adapt to unpredictable changes.

The proposal "En, to, tre...rødt lys!" is based on the conviction that architecture has the power can frame changes through space and over time. Rather than being subjected to the volatile desires of the market, architecture can be used as device to define an open field of possibilities.

Ås territory: objects on the field

The project start from a careful reading of the territory of Ås and the peculiar relationship between the nature, the agricultural landscape and the urbanization. Going beyond the generic classification as sprawl, we recognized the nature of Ås territory as being constituted by "objects on the field". Whether we consider the elegantly organized volumes of the UBM inspired by Fredrick Olmsted, the scattered and ordinary single family houses or the more recent and chunky condominiums, the public buildings that cluster in the center or the isolated farms that stud the fields, all the architectural artifacts seem to lay down on a continuous open field. Such a condition is the spatial result of a peculiar way to inhabit the territory, based on an strong and deep relationships with the landscape both as a productive and spiritual dimension.

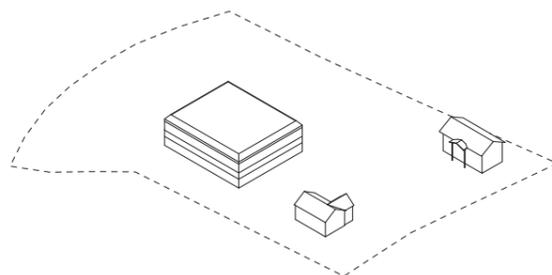
The strategy of growth

The project embraces the qualities of the existing territorial and cultural condition and, through few but precise strategic choices, defines a strategy to formalize them in architectural devices.

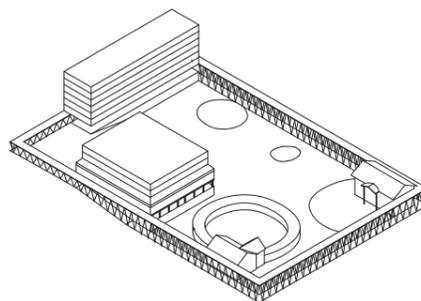
At first, the act of found a new civic dimension for Ås is marked through the definition of the space, through an enclosure. The enclosure is not a fence that exclude but a boundary that, establishing a distinction between interior and exterior, identifies a space and gives a form to an open field of possibilities.

Once the field is formally defined the growth can happen according to different speed and intensity. The project defines the strategy through which the density can vary: objects of various form, dimension, program and duration can be added and removed within the frame in order to respond to the changes of the economic, social and political conditions. More than a prescribe a specific number or dimension of the interventions, the scheme represents three scenarios, three steps of growth out of a field of possibilities.

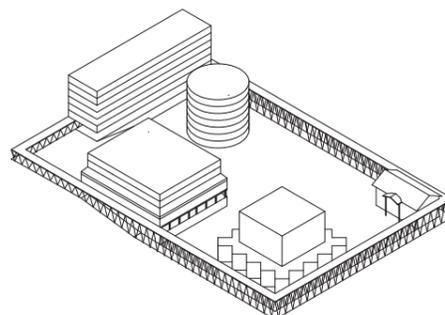
The strategy of growth



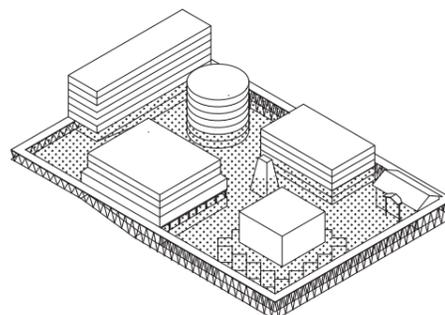
Existing condition



Objects on the field



Densification



Field of activities

Ås territory: objects on the field



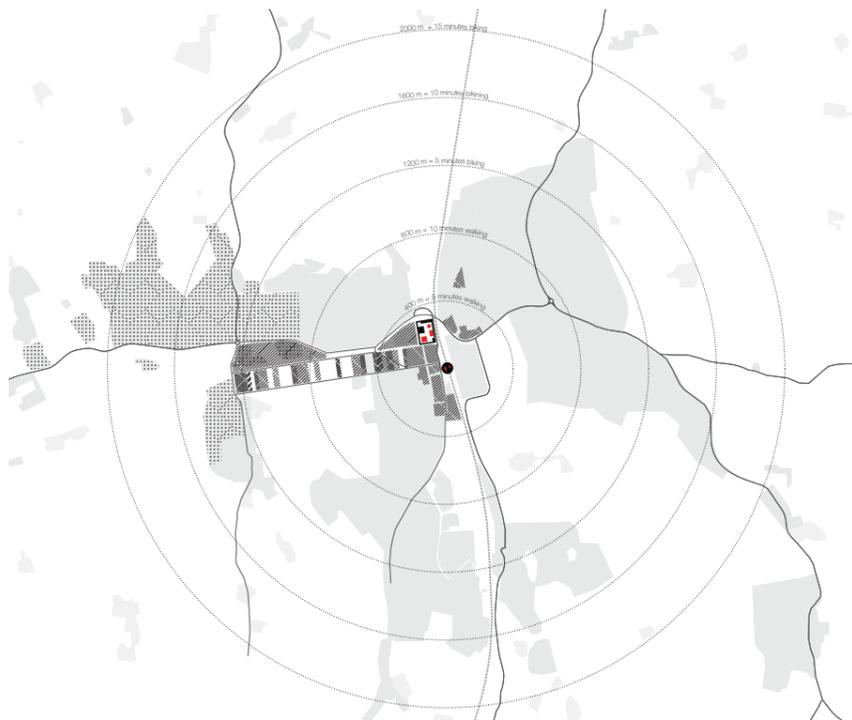
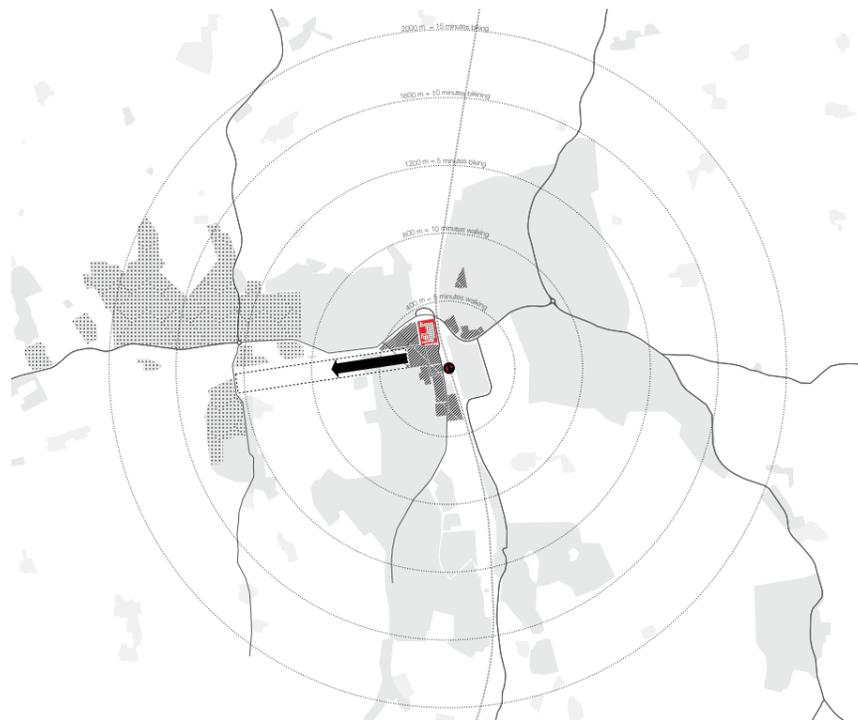
URBAN GROWTH STRATEGY

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densify to define the city

expand to connect lifestyles

city form to preserve the fields



The construction of a city environment should rely on the increase of the density as well as on the diversity of programs and subjects involved in the transformation. Therefore it is crucial that the beginning of the growth strategy is focused on the existing resources. On one side the increase of the density has to be concentrated in the town center, so that a critical mass in terms of housing, services and commercial facilities could be reached within the existing fabric, in proximity of the train station. On the other side the connection between the town center and the University has to be strengthened through an implementation of the transport infrastructure that could foster the stitching of the urban tissue toward the west.

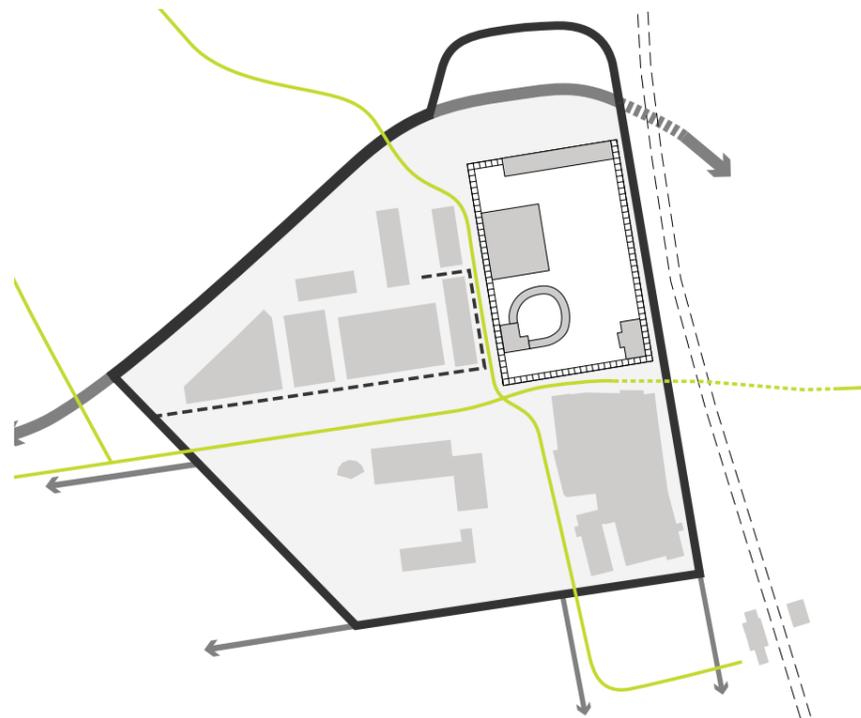
A further growth should happen along the axis East-West, starting both from the side of the town and from the side of the University. This new urban element will perform as an urban injection in the territory of Ås. Both in terms of diversity of program and circulation, such spine will be characterized by a truly urban environment with a pattern of crossing street rather than suburban dead end alleys and a series of mixed use buildings that could blend the need for cultural and leisure facilities with the demand of a diverse range of housing types. The construction of the East-West axis could support a further growth shifting the focal point of the city toward West and therefore facilitating an integration of the urban life with the life of the University Campus.

The intensified growth along the East-West axis will support a further development around the voids where the agricultural land is already surrounded by the urban fabric. The value of the agricultural land, as fundamental element of the identity of the place, should be absolutely preserved, acknowledging as well the high quality of living in direct contact with the wide open space of the fields. Therefore the development should be limited to a strip that would consolidate and redefine the existing limits between urbanized and agricultural land. Such form of city will allow to create "agricultural courtyards", wide open cultivated space on the scale of the urban fabric that would open an enriching dialogue between the city and the agricultural life.

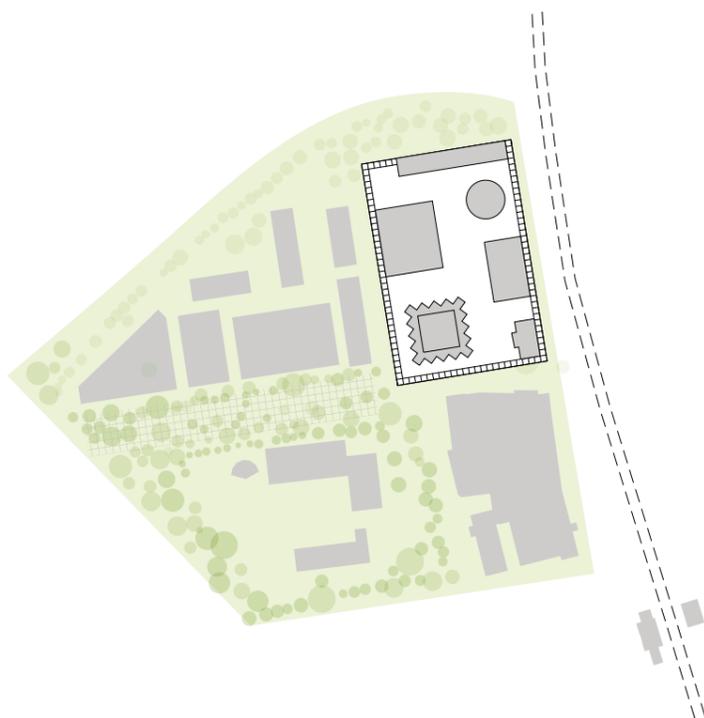
THE CITY ELEMENTS

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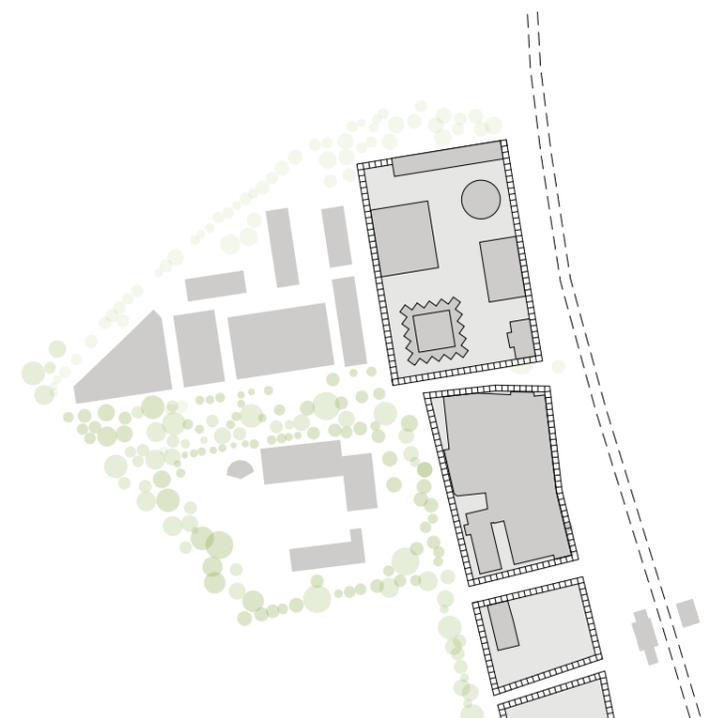
circulation



open space



urban device



The restructuring of circulation around the project site is to the development of a truly urban environment, based on an intensification of the pedestrian use of the central areas. Aiming to achieve a maximum effect through minimal means, the circulation scheme proposes the opening of a new diagonal street, following an existing bicycle path, that would connect the County road with the train station. This intervention will allow the formation of a "pentagon" as a loop of vehicular traffic around the civic center of Ås, liberating the field from car movement, favoring a smooth bike circulation and allowing a pedestrian re-appropriation of the space. Furthermore the ring will be the infrastructural starting point of the development along the East-West axis.

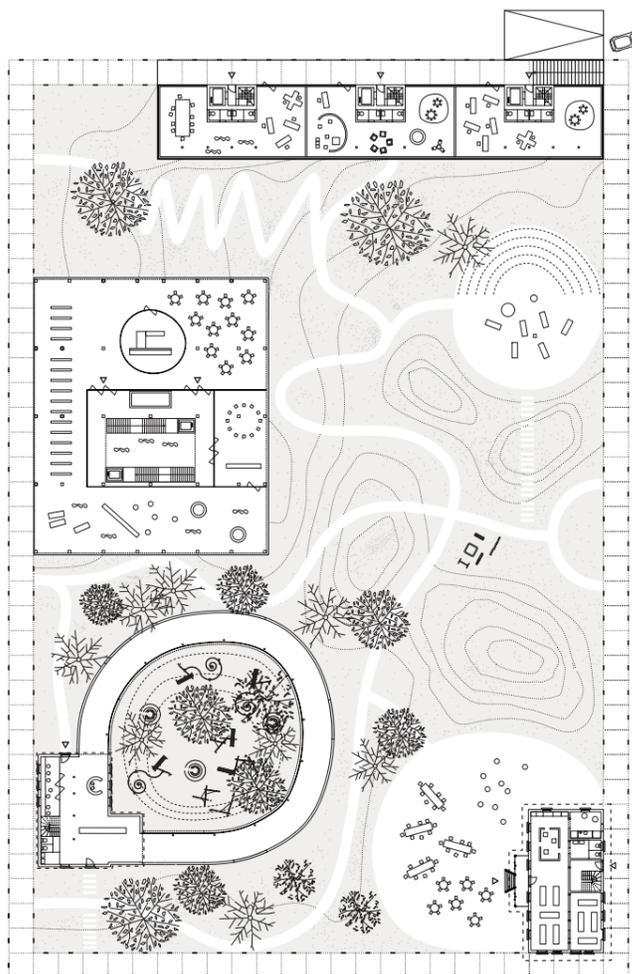
One of the results of the intensification of the growth in the central area of Ås and in the project site, will be the demand of a diversified and active public space. At the heart of the central "pentagon", Rådhusplassen, liberated from the vehicular traffic and from the parking spaces, is thought as a kaleidoscopic space with multiple uses and identities in different time of the day and of the year. On the hand side the square could bring together the civic character, already present in the area, with the urban character brought by the emerging cultural, commercial and working activities. At the same time it will blend with the adjacent public park and it could become a platform for temporary events such as markets, fairs and collective activities.

The enclosure is a symbolic gesture to express the foundation of a new civic space, defining the field in which the densification could potentially happen. But at the same time it performs also as an urban device that is capable on one side to manage the urban circulation, and on the other side to give a peculiar intensity to the urban environment. The enclosures as a matter of facts works like a portico that provides protection to the pedestrian circulation and at the same time redefines the aesthetic qualities of the existing buildings or plots in the central areas. The portico could therefore become a distinctive element of the commercial axis North-South, implementing the urban character of Raveien and Moerveien.

A SPACE OF POSSIBILITIES

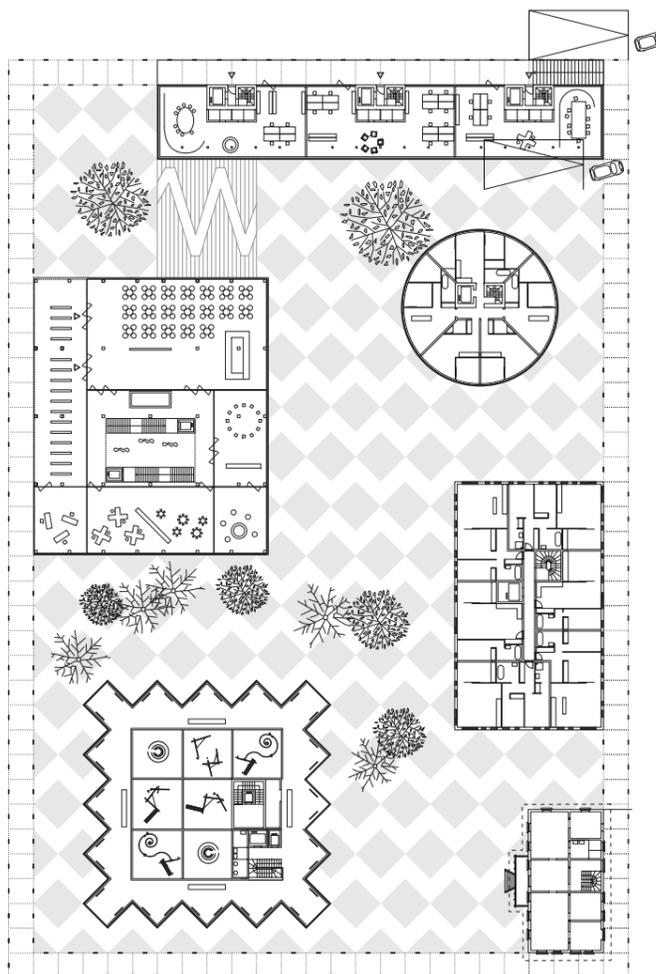
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striated space



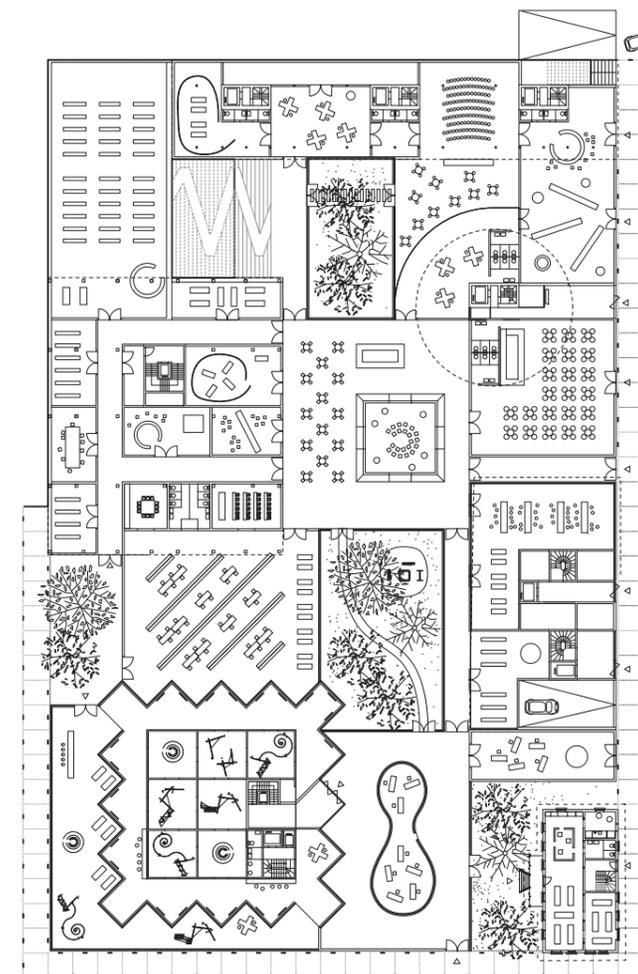
Museum 5.6% | Residential 40.2% | Student Housing 22.5% | grossBRA 14.875
Retail 18.1% | Offices 4.6% | Leisure 8.9% | FSI 0.9 | GSI 0.2

smooth space



Museum 6.6% | Residential 41.7% | Student Housing 13.6% | grossBRA 24.700
Retail 17.1% | Offices 10.3% | Leisure 10.7% | FSI 1.5 | GSI 0.3

sequential space



Museum 7.3% | Residential 35.5% | Student Housing 11.5% | grossBRA 29.050
Retail 25.6% | Offices 8.7% | Leisure 11.3% | FSI 1.7 | GSI 0.6

The insertion of the enclosure around the existing objects on the field allows to frame the space of possibilities for a new urban arena, fostering the transformation of the existing buildings. The Mega is imagined as an outpost of the University Campus in the center of Ås: an “city lab” where urban activities could be experimented to be than spread out in the city. The Tandberg building and garden will be preserved and open to the public through an extension imagined as temporary building/art installation, hosting part of the collection. The Blad, a thin slab with a mix of residential, retail and office spaces will define the north edge, bringing new inhabitants to the site. The Åsheim groundfloor can become a quality restaurant based on local products.

With in a scenario of city growth, the site will further develop, increasing its density in terms of building mass and activities as well. The Mega could consolidate its status as catalyst of urban experiments and collective activities. The Tandberg estate could become a proper Cultural Center for the Arts with an entirely new building replacing the old house, hosting the permanent collection but also spaces for temporary exhibitions, workshops, and learning activities together with office spaces on the upper floors. Two new buildings are imagined to be added within the enclosure, increasing significantly the density of the site and offering a wide range of housing typologies together with retail spaces in the ground floor.

At a stage in which the population will be doubled, and considering the implementation of a fast connection with Oslo, Ås will be fully part of a metropolitan system. We imagine the city to have reached a critical mass of urbainity that could support and demand a space active 24/7. Such a space is imagined as a platform having the same height of the enclosure (7m) hosting cultural, retail and leisure activities. The different program already present in the ground floor at that stage will be reinforced through the insertion of such a podium: a library could connect the Mega and the Tandbergheim, intensifying the possible collaboration and exchange while the museum itself could have a larger foyer exposed to the city center for temporary exhibition.

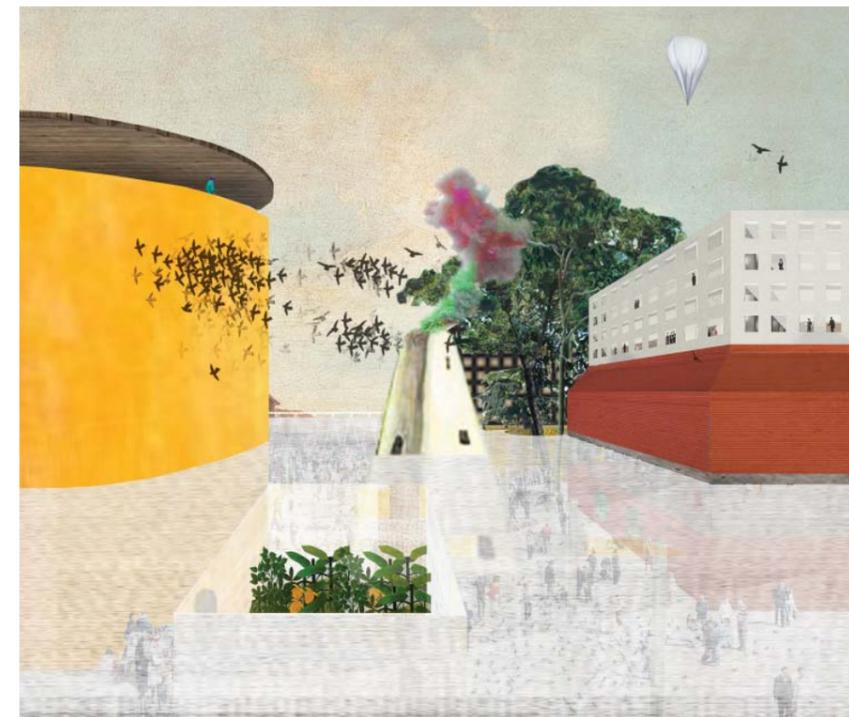
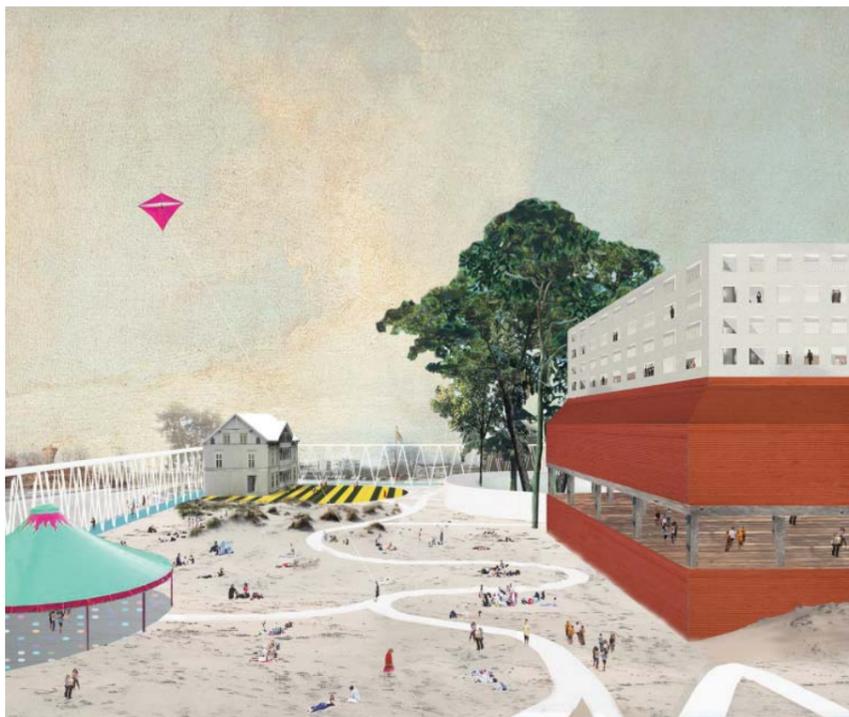
AN URBAN ARENA

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the playground

the square

the platform



Defining the field of growth through the enclosure will allow the space, in a first phase of the transformation, to acquire a distinct symbolic meaning and value. What is today a mere parking lot serving a commercial purpose could become an “urban playground” where a variety of activities and initiatives, could be experimented through temporary installations. At the same time the renewed Mega could offer spaces for workshops and cultural events, offering as well in the intermediate space of the building, between the retail and the student housing, an open covered square for multipurpose uses. We imagine the open space as a beach, a place where all men are equal, where the political debate to constitute the future of Ås can take place and form.

One of the results of the intensification of the growth in the project site, will be the demand of a diversified and active public space. Along with the insertion of new objects on the field, the framed open space will undergo a further transformation: from being a rather informal space, both in character and activities, the field should become a proper civic square that could combine a representative character with a degree of flexibility. We imagine to lay on the whole open surface a mineral pavement with an abstract geometric pattern. The uniform and isotropic character of the ground will perform as a stage for temporary activities such as a periodic market of local products, as well as a place of collective gatherings and public events.

Within a scenario of high urban density we imagine the enclosed space to be “flooded” with a glazed platform that would transform the open space into an interior space. Such a podium, pierced with a number of patios, will host retail program as well as leisure facilities and cultural spaces. The isotropic character of the ground floor will melt the objects into a kaleidoscopic field of activities defined by the enclosure as limit and the roof as horizon from which the distinct volumes will still emerge as islands of an archipelago. Being very flexible both in space and time and hosting a variety of permanent programs and temporary events, the platform will react to the character of the different seasons: a closed mall in the winter, an open square in the summer.

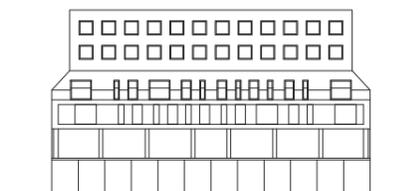
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En, to, tre...rødt lys!

OBJECTS AND PROGRAM

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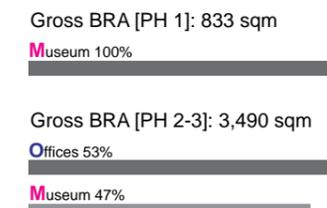
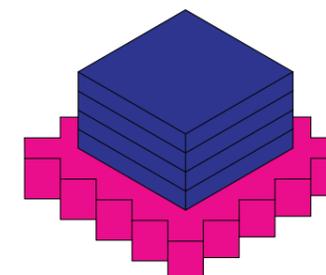
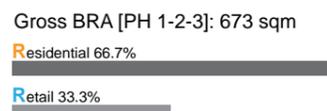
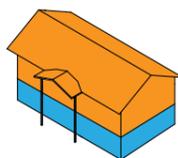
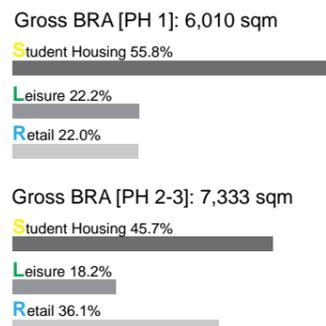
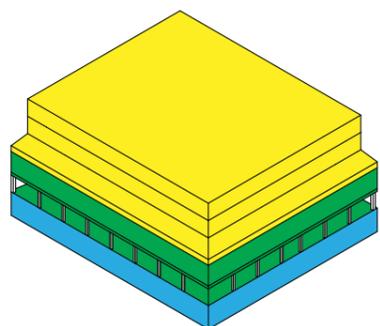
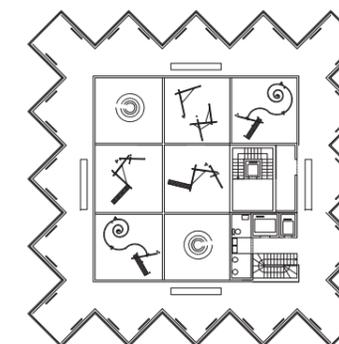
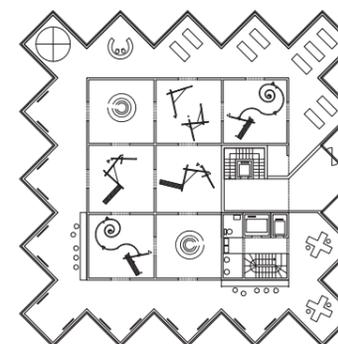
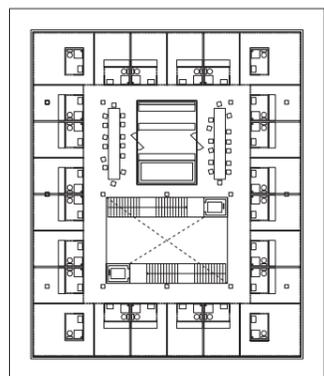
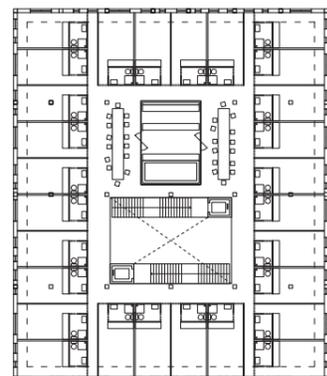
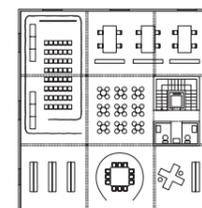
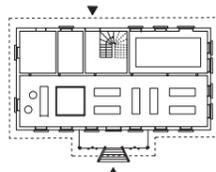
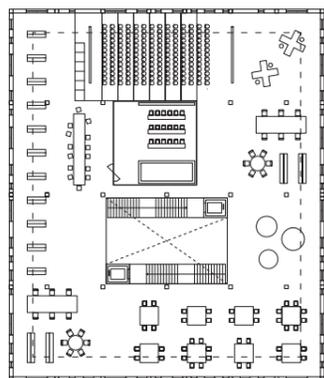
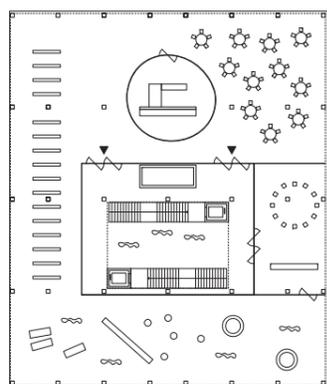
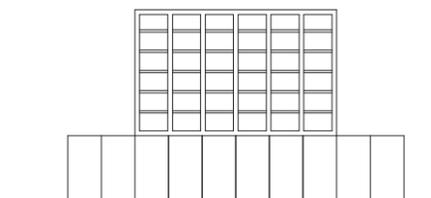
the Megaheim



the Åsheim



the Tandbergheim



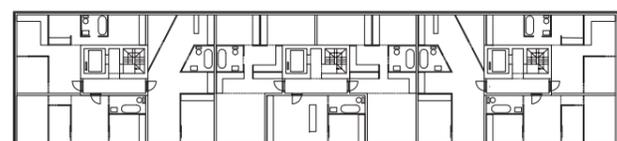
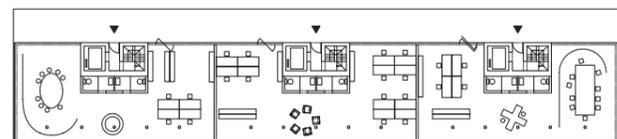
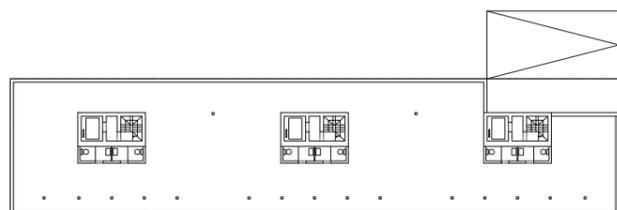
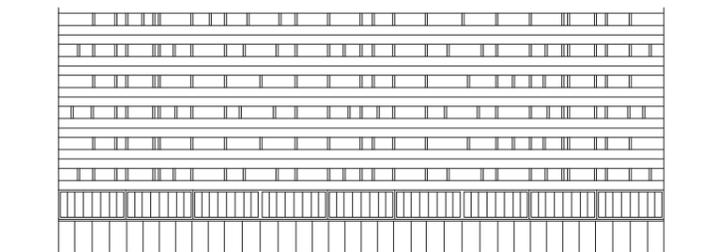
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En, to, tre...rødt lys!

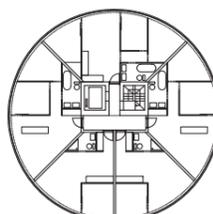
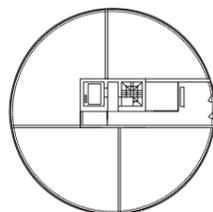
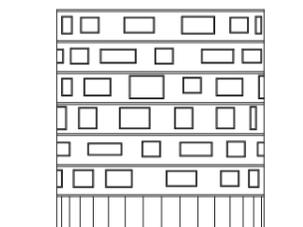
OBJECTS AND PROGRAM

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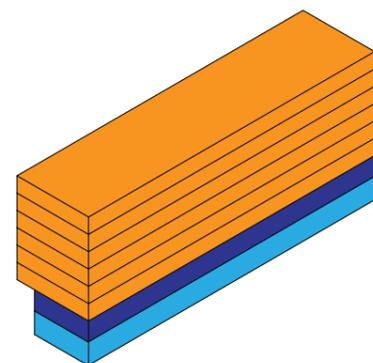
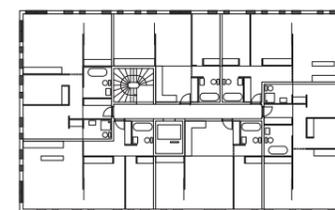
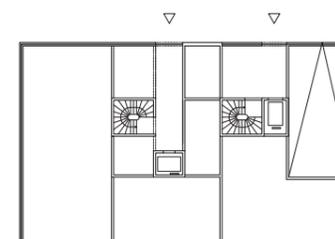
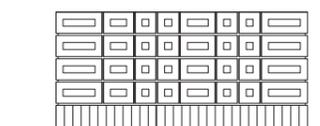
the Blad



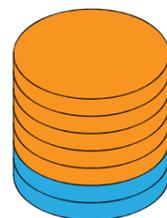
the Cylinder



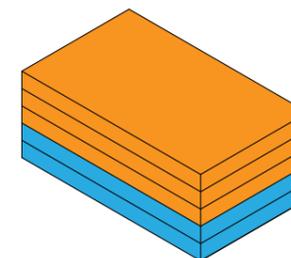
the Eske



Gross BRA [PH 1-2-3]: 7,357 sqm
Residential 75.2%
Offices 9.4%
Retail 15.4%



Gross BRA [PH 1-2-3]: 2,576 sqm
Residential 78.1%
Retail 21.9%



Gross BRA [PH 1-2-3]: 3,276 sqm
Residential 70.4%
Retail 29.6%