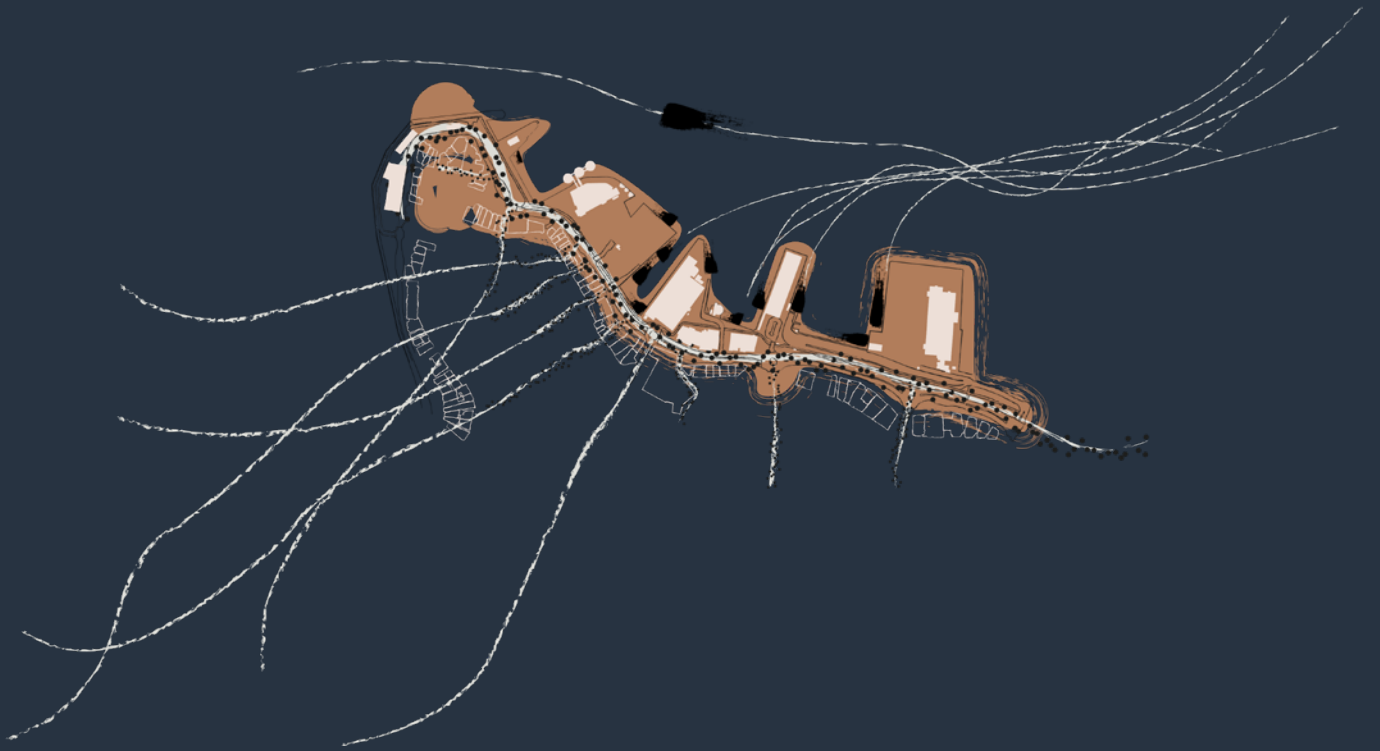


# PLACEHOLDER FOR AN UNDEFINED FUTURE

An Elastic Approach to Urban Development



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Diploma program 2024  
Bergen School of Architecture

# Introduction

## WHY STAVANGER

The decision to focus on Stavanger is rooted in my existing connection with the city as I grew up in the region, and for the last couple of years also lived next to the site. As I have experienced the site closely over time, this has provided me with a more intimate understanding of the site as an inhabitant. Through this firsthand experience, I've developed insights into various aspects of the site and have often contemplated and critiqued aspects<sup>1</sup> of the site that I believe could be improved or approached differently. My already interest in the site as the environment I live in, is one of the motivations to study this site from a professional point of view. Aiming to contribute to a positive change.

Footnot 1: Stavanger - Critical perspective

Tutors:

APP: Cecilie Andersson  
DAV: Vibeke Jensen

TTA: Kim Christensen  
1:1: Vibeke Jensen  
Sustainability: Nancy Couling  
Advice: Christof Mayer (teacher, architect)  
Helper exhibition: Håvard Auklend (architect)

# Time gap

In urban development projects, there is frequently a time gap between the current state and future aspirations. Within this transitional period when decisions are pending and future visions await execution, the destiny of a development area remains uncertain and undefined, often resulting in spaces being vacant and inactive with few programs and activities for people to take part in. A part of the research is therefore aiming for a strategy that could incrementally activate the area of interest in the time gap between present and future plans.

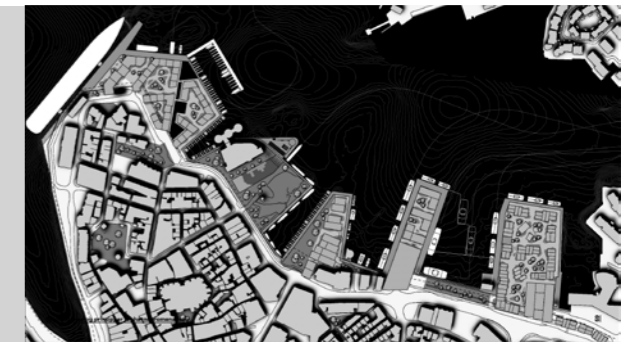
On a societal level, the project seeks to address the time gap as an opportunity for critical thinking, rethinking future urban development and change. The time gap could be a time period to discuss how we can steer urban development away from its current focus on permanence, as well as capitalist and economically driven trajectory towards a more ecological and sustainable direction<sup>2</sup>.

Footnote 2: Status quo

2023 - Situation today

14 years

2034 - Future masterplan

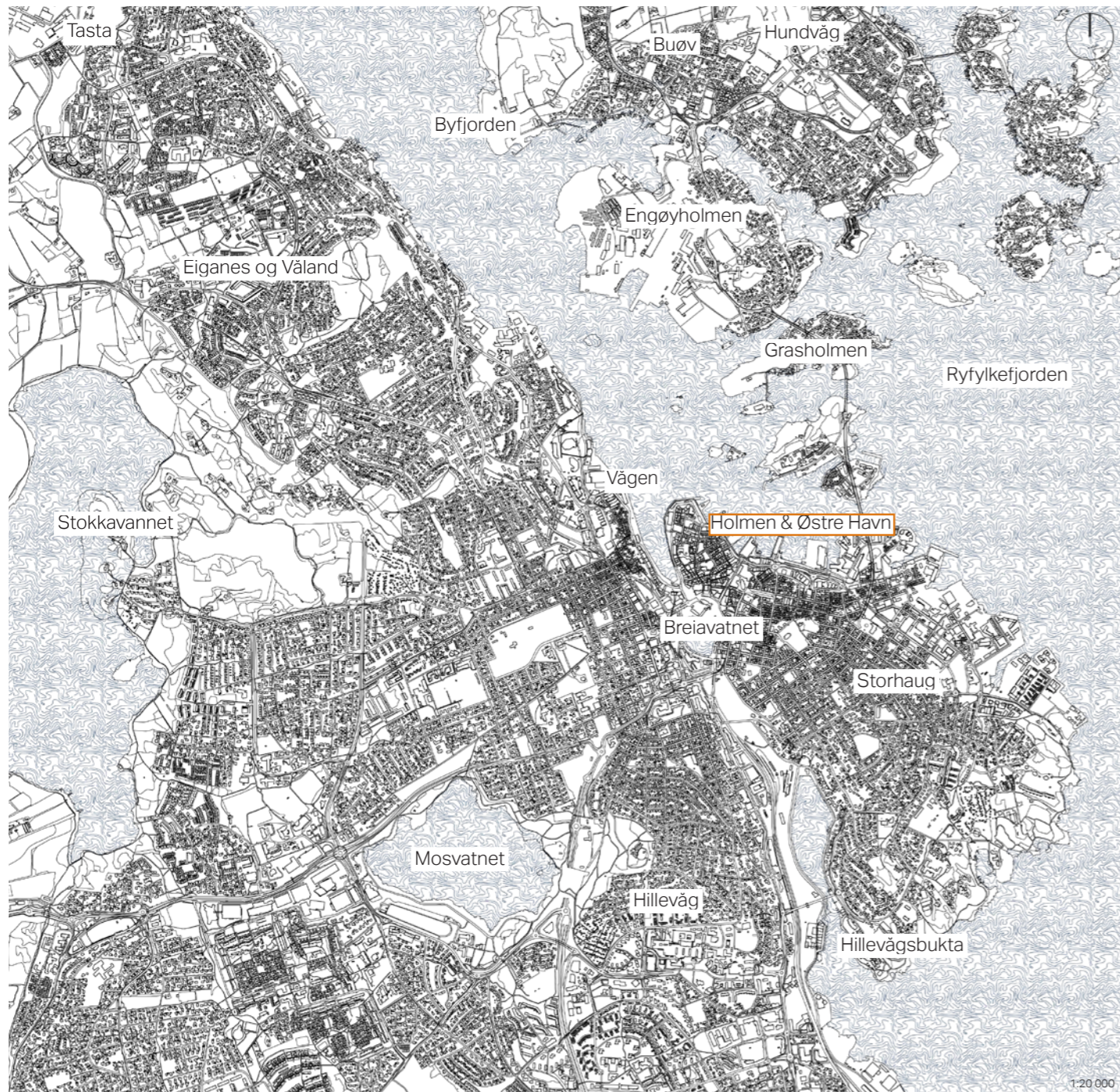


Time gap

The center plan was adopted in 2019  
The planning program was drawn up in the period 2020-2023.  
Detail regulation from 2024-

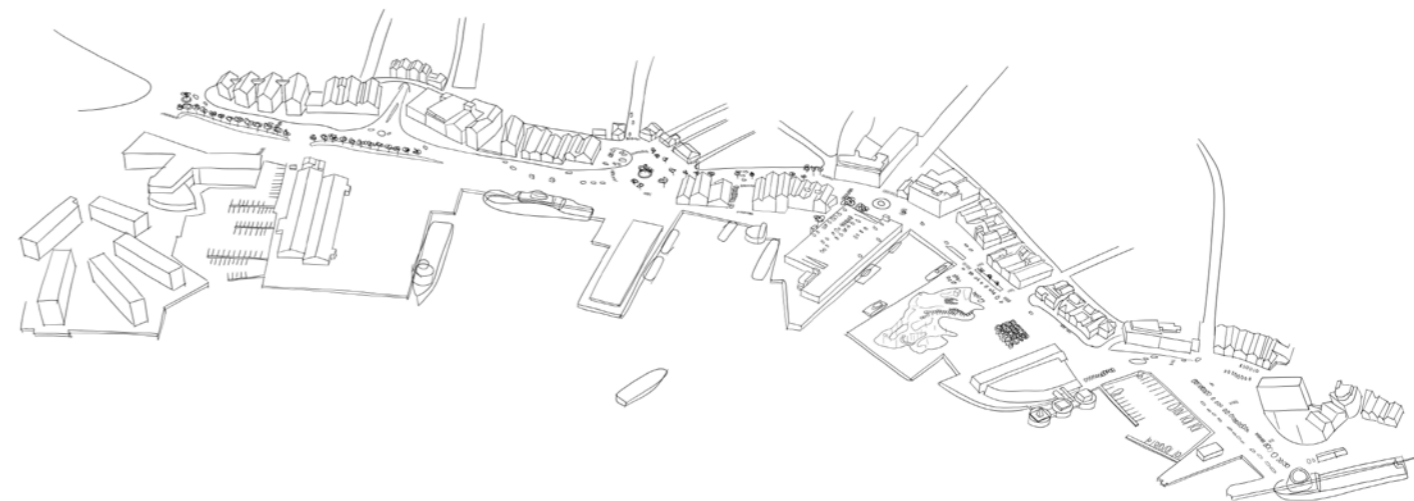
# LOCATION



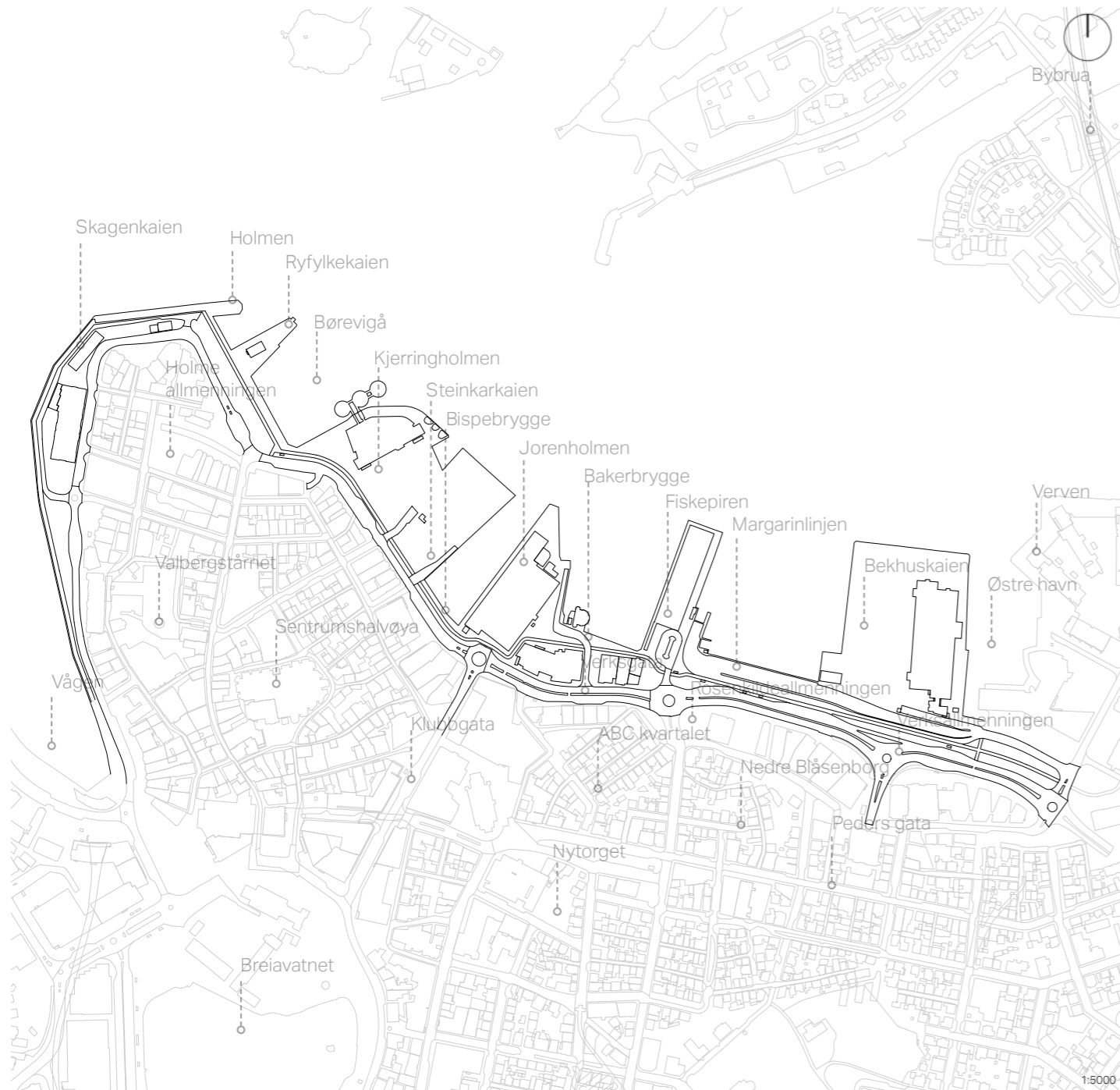


## Holmen & Østre Havn

The area of interest is located in the heart of the city center of Stavanger. The specific area of investigation is known as Holmen and Østre havn, and is currently the subject of significant debate. The municipality is engaged in an ongoing process to determine its future development, which holds immense economic potential due to its central city location and proximity to the ocean.

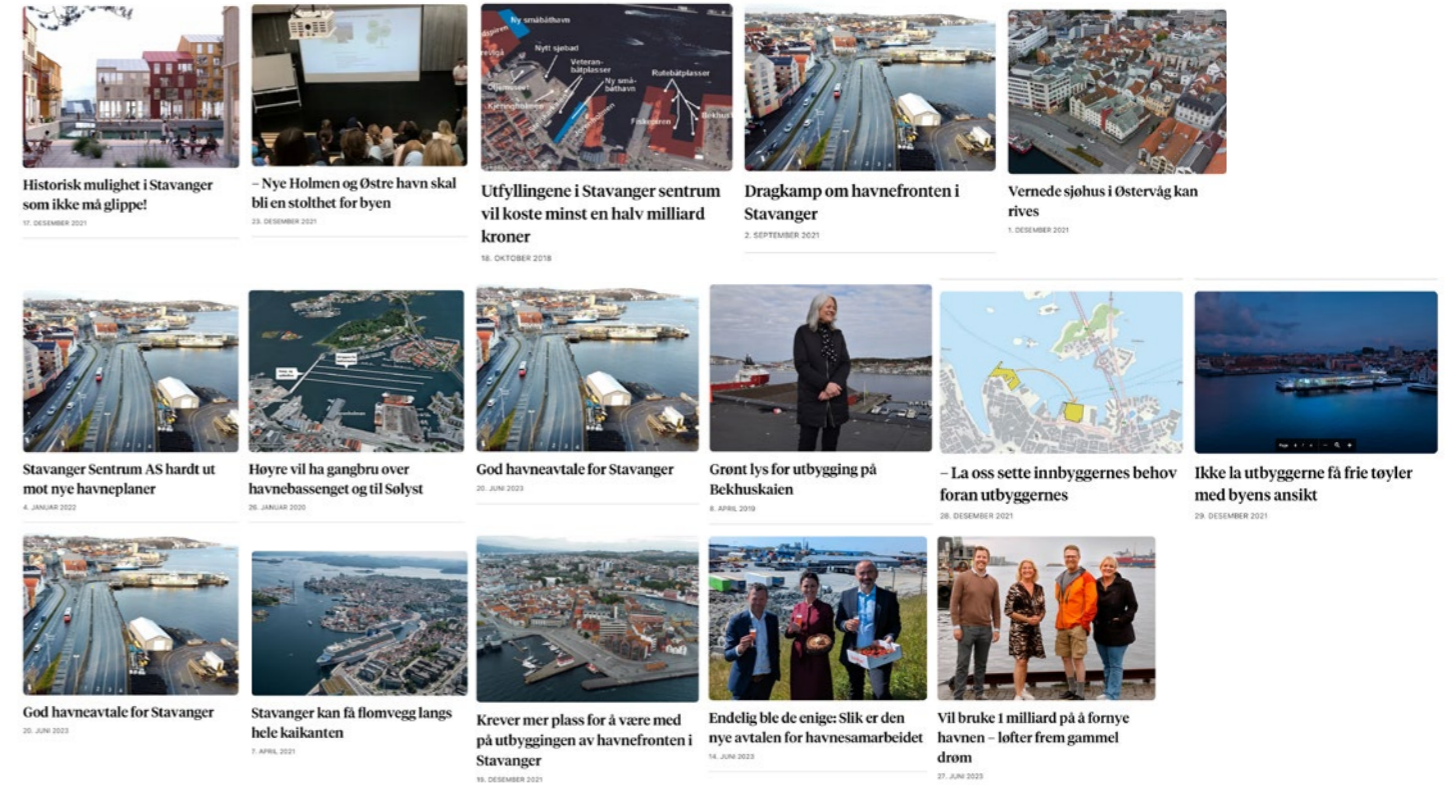


Zoom in, Holmen & Østre Havn



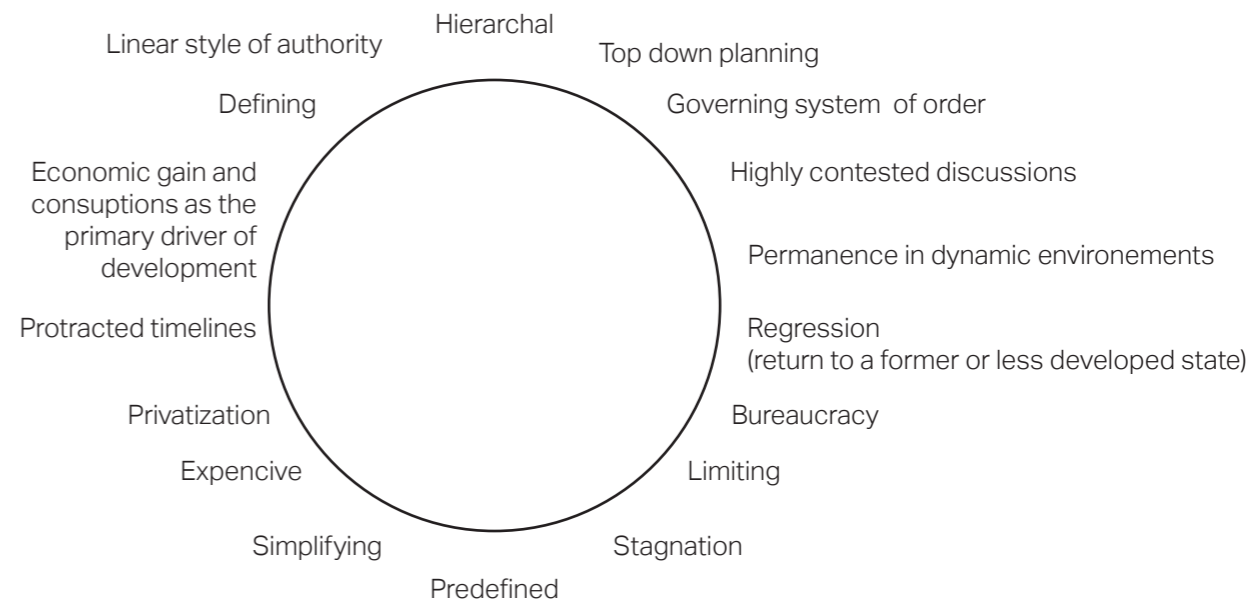
## Public debate

The complex interplay of various stakeholders and interests makes the process of urban planning slow and deliberate. Different visions and intentions often conflict, and the balance between public interests and those of investors can be hard to agree on. This is the case of the area of investigation, Homen & Østre Havn, where it is expected to take at least 14 years to execute the municipality's vision and master plan for this site.



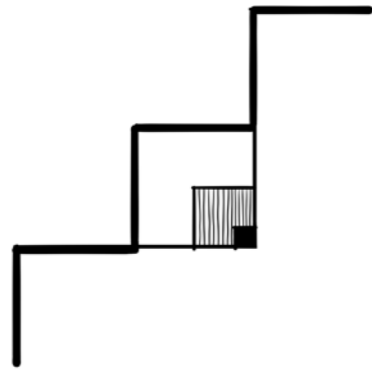
# Challenges with conventional urban planning

# METHOD

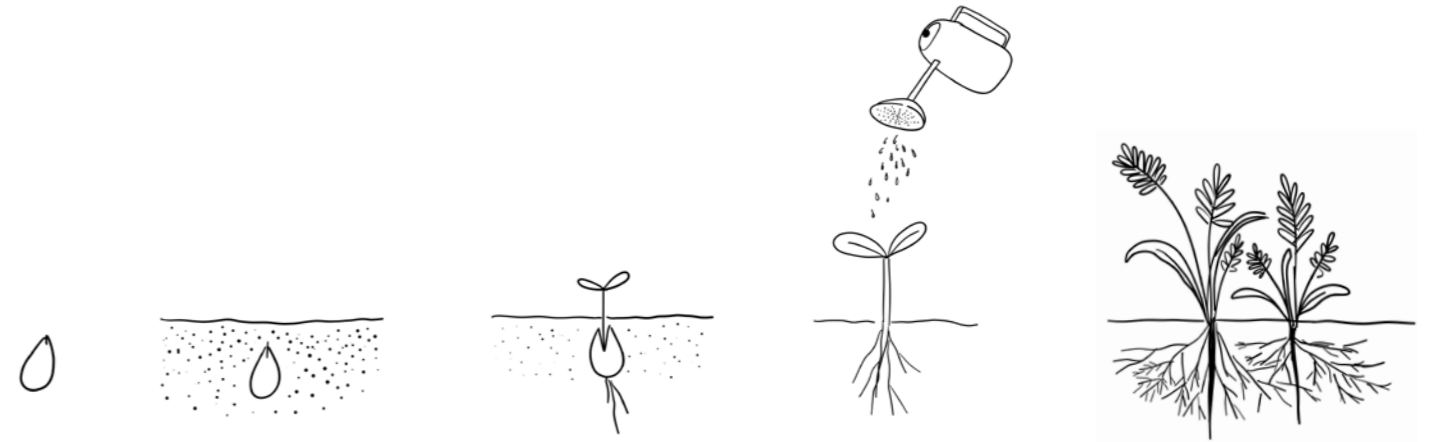


## Incremental/elastic development process

Given the slow and deliberate nature of conventional urban planning, an alternative vision for how this area could be activated incrementally/elastically over time and with low investment has been investigated. The vision involves a more inclusive approach to top-down planning, where inhabitants more actively contribute to the development of their environments. For instance, could private/public initiatives be temporarily allocated on site. If successful, these programs could be further developed and extended, but if not, they could be discontinued and other initiatives could be tested. Facilitating interim or meanwhile, use and programs could be a quicker and more informal way of revitalizing vacant areas while the policymakers are making their decisions. In other words; what could «a placeholder for undefined future» be, while pending on future decisions? The vision also advocates for the implementation of temporality in urban planning as an approach to make future cities more flexible and resilient to a society that is in constant flux.



## Gradual interventions

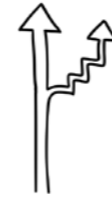


Temporality refers to the linear relationship with time, and the way in which time is experienced, perceived, and organized. The project aims to develop a strategy for gradual interventions within a temporal framework, as steps from what has it been to what it can become. The aim is to elucidate how an implementation of temporary qualities such as informality and adaptability, can contribute to foster resilient and vibrant cities. How can the elasticity of the temporary become the new permanence and mindset for urban development?





## Intentions



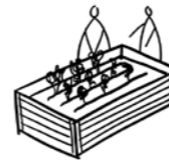
Develop an alternativ (incremental/elastic) development process

- Bottom-up approach
- Embracing change rather than resisting it, accommodating for evolving needs.
- Keeping urban development adaptable to the unforeseen, the unexpected, and the undefined.



Democratize common spaces

- Democratizing shared spaces - making them inclusive, participatory, and accessible to all.
- Ensuring everyone possesses equal rights and opportunities to utilize and shape the public spaces we share.



Activate inactive space

- Incremental activation over time, temporary use/program
- Programs that appeal to diverse groups
- Reestablishing connection to the ocean

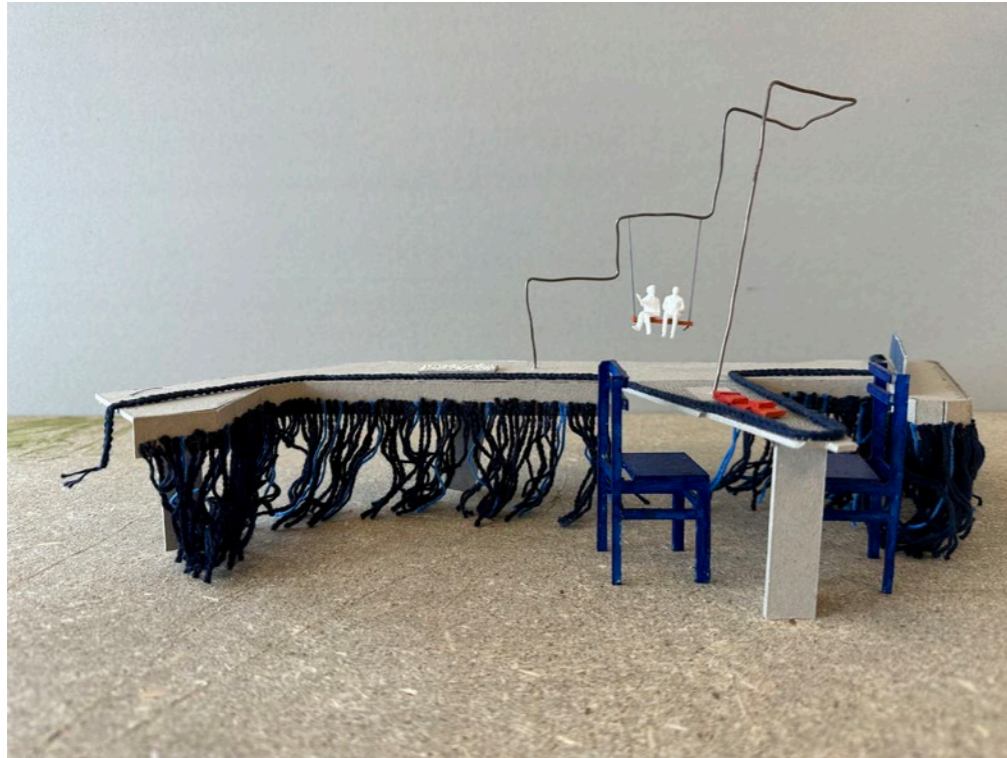


Discuss the role of temporary use/programming in fostering resilient and sustainable urban development for the future.

- Develop a concrete example that could serve as a benchmark for the remainder of the development process.

## Concept model

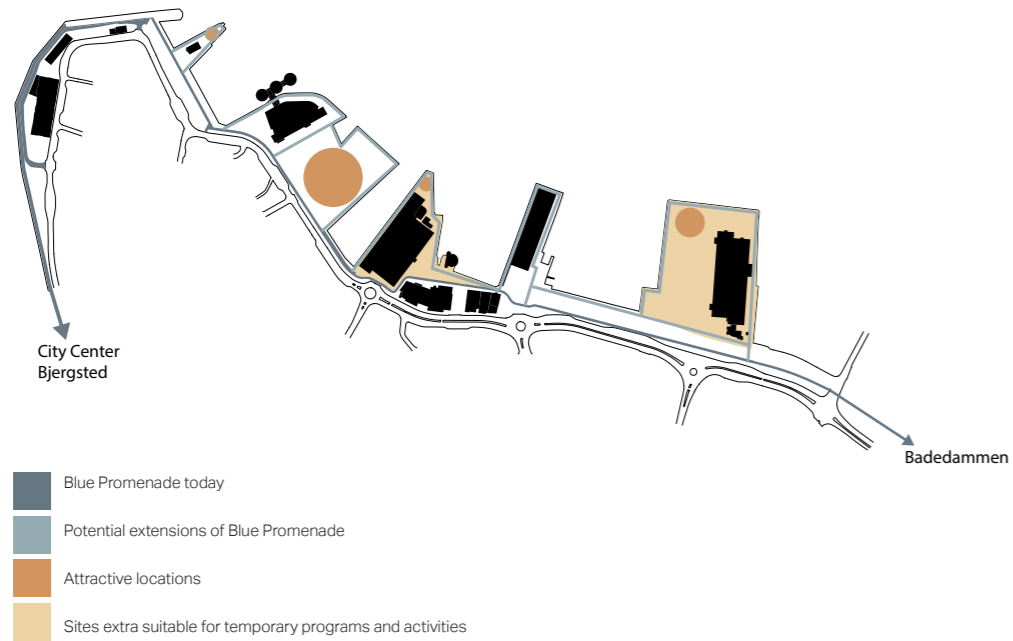
Urban development is an oscillation between scales, timeframes, actors, and visions. The time gap should be a platform for dialogue. An open collaborative approach prioritizing participatory processes, listening, inclusivity, and mutual respect to achieve change and engagement.



# URBAN SCALE

## Strengthen connection Blue Promenade

Blue Promenade, is a millennium site in Stavanger. It is a four-kilometer continuous pedestrian pathway along the city center's sea line and harbor areas, stretching from Bjergsted to Badedammen. The municipalities envisioned it as *"an elongated outdoor space with fresh air for the lungs—featuring benches and special places to linger, an evening promenade and jogging track for city center residents, and a tourist trail where the city's history is revealed through buildings, monuments, and informational boards."* However, the vibrant life the municipality once envisioned is not the current reality. The Blue Promenade is not very well connected today, it is disrupted by numerous traffic barriers, vague entry points, and a scarcity of appealing spots to pause and enjoy along the way.



The harbourfront of Stavanger has historically been an active and vibrant hub for daily life.  
Østre havn, 1930  
Image by: Mittet & Co AS

# General proposals for activating the site temporarily



## Form organizational structure and partnerships

Allowing for temporary initiatives at the site necessitates someone to oversee all activities. Who are the actors? Who could potentially be involved? How do these actors collaborate? This organizational structure could serve as a networking hub and promote community engagement.



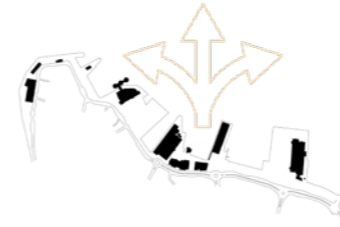
## Inviting public spaces

The area under investigation currently lacks green spaces. Enhancing the attractiveness of this area could be achieved by creating inviting public spaces, providing seating, and incorporating green elements.



## Meeting places

Offering temporary meeting spaces, both indoor and outdoor, opens up opportunities for other temporary activities to occur, potentially increasing the overall activity level at the site.



## Explore temporary programs and activity

What potential initiatives can be implemented in this context? What is the time frame? What are the premisses and league framework? The initiatives should promote a vision of communal neighborhoods across demographics, fostering cooperation and synergy among diverse stakeholders such as art, culture, and education. They should address social and cultural demands, promote collaboration, and sustainability, both environmental and social, and focus on the sharing of resources and knowledge. Embracing a creative and experimental approach to urban production is encouraged.



## Enhance biking lane

In the municipal plan, the Blue Promenade is defined as a part of the main biking lane of Stavanger. However, there are no clear indications that Blue Promenade is a biking lane. Cyclists do not have their own lane and must share the path with pedestrians and cars. Additionally, the biking lane is disrupted by traffic barriers. A temporary initiative could be to designate and mark parts of the roadway as biking lanes.



## Secure pioneer fields, develop and design special places

The site can be segmented into six different zones, each with its unique history and characteristics, representing different temporal aspects. Upon closer examination, the three sites—Bekhuskaine, Jorenholmen, and Ryfylkepiren—emerge as particularly promising for temporary use. Therefore, these sites should be kept accessible to the public for a period to observe outcomes. What strategies can be employed to enhance their development potential with greater precision?





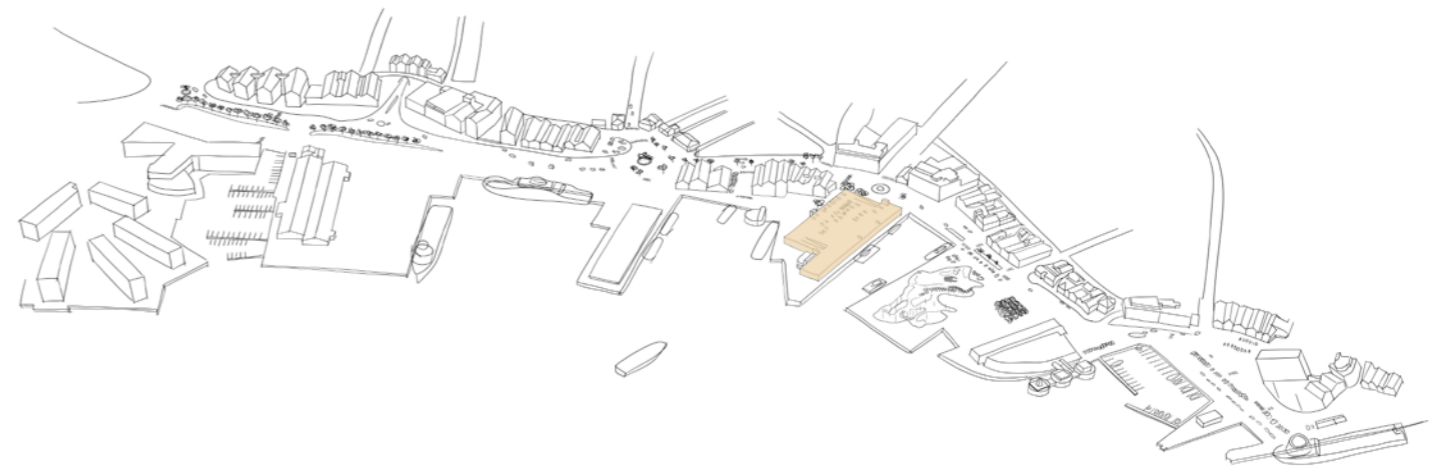
The presence of vacant shop windows contributes to the perception of the site as lifeless and inactive.



One of the few spots at the site that provides accessibility to the waterfront for people.



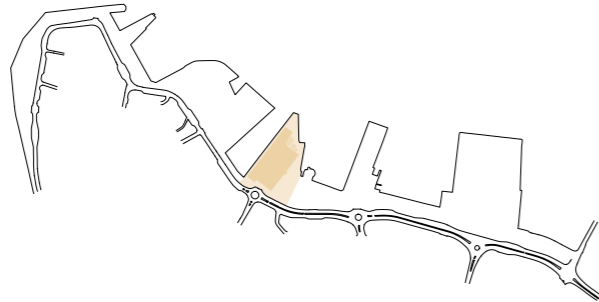
# BUILDING





## Joreholmen parking garage

The architectural exploration of the diploma work serves as an example project demonstrating how the urban vision presented earlier could be applied on a building scale, more specifically to the transformation of a parking garage from a space for cars to a space for humans. Joreholmen is the location for the further investigation.



Site owner: Stavanger Municipality  
Building owner: Stavanger Parking

Foot print: 4 460,4 m<sup>2</sup>  
Total square meters: 13380 m<sup>2</sup>  
490 parking spots



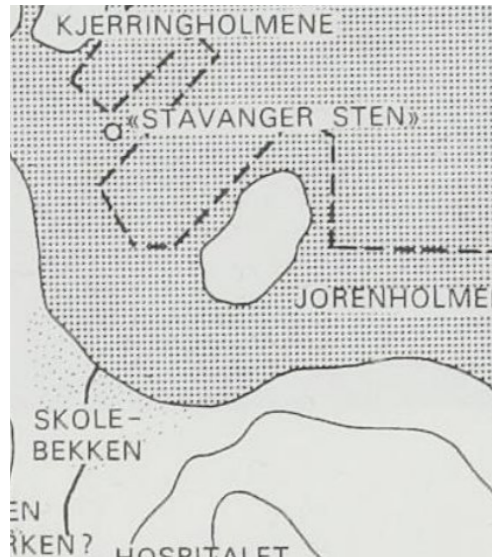
Joreholmen Parking garage  
Image by Stavanger Aftenblad

# Brief history

## QUICK FIX, NOT A SMART FIX

Jorenholmen was once a small island situated 100 meters from the mainland. The ocean in-between has gradually been filled in over time. With its proximity to the ocean and scenic views of the fjord, Jorenholmen served as a vibrant hub for Stavanger's inhabitants for decades, hosting various activities such as industry, commerce, social gatherings, and recreation. As cars became increasingly important, the need for parking spaces in the city center became important. Jorenholmen was chosen as the location for a new parking garage due to its convenient position. In the 1980s, a temporary parking garage with 490 parking spots was constructed in what many consider the «tenderloin» of Stavanger. While it served the city well for many years, not everyone was pleased, as the parkinggarage now occupied one of the most valuable area's of the site.

Jorenholmen, 1110



Jorenholmen, 1810



Illustrations from:  
En by tar form : Stavangers bebyggelse 1815-1940,  
Anders Haaland p.14

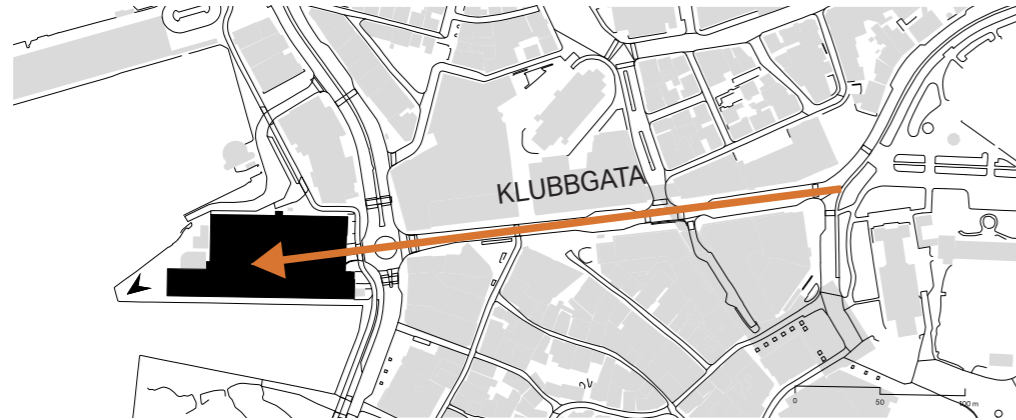


In 1978 Jorenholmen was already used as a parkinglot.  
Image by Egil Eriksson

# Intentions

## PROLONGING OF KLUBBGATA - RECONNECTION TO THE OCEAN

Today the building serve as a parking garage. It marks the endpoint of one of the most active and significant street in this area. The intention is not just to make this crucial street's endpoint a stopping point for cars but rather to extend it into a space designed mainly for human use. The idea is to seamlessly continue this significant street, thereby also serving as a means to reconnect with the ocean.



The view of Klubbgata, seen from the entrance of the parking garage





The entrance for pedestrians to the parking garage.



A green facade that contributes to creating a pleasant atmosphere.

# “The Fluxspace”

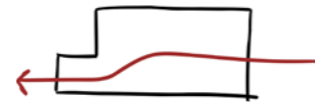
CORE: temporality, temporary, adaptability, informal, social  
 Facilitate for temporary programs and activities within a temporary timeframe

The transformation of the parking garage focuses on democratizing one of the most debated sites in this area and making it more accessible and inclusive by ensuring that everyone possesses equal rights and opportunities to utilize and shape the spaces we share.

For the architectural explorations, the project asks; what could space for adaptability be? As one answer to this question, the concept of the “Fluxspace” has been introduced. Fluxspace describes an environment in a constant state of change or flux, where elements such as people, ideas, or activities continuously evolve or shift. In a flux space, there may be frequent alterations, rearrangements, or transformations to meet changing requirements or preferences. This term highlights the fluidity and adaptability of space, emphasizing its ability to accommodate diverse needs and purposes over time.



Democratize common spaces



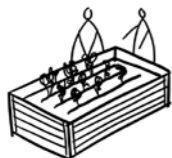
Prolonging of Klubbgata reconnection to the ocean



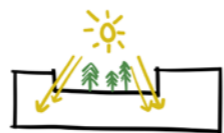
Re-programming from cars to people



Modules



Activate inactive space



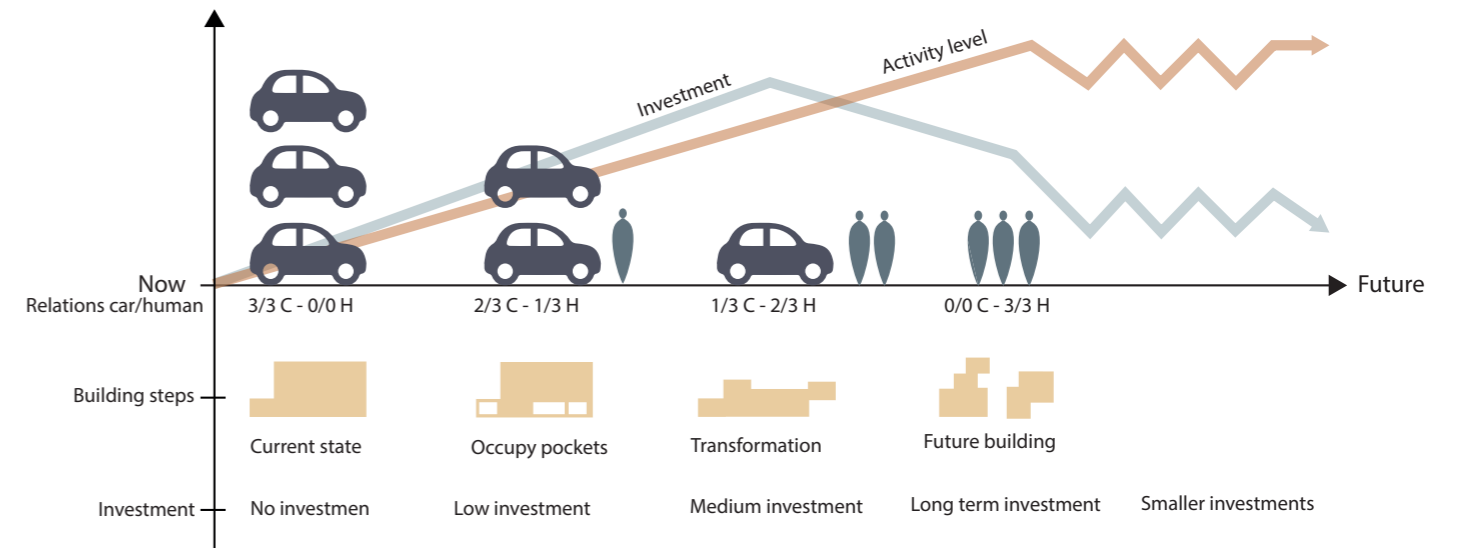
Opening up

# Activation strategy

Overall, the building is intended to evolve gradually over time, with basic infrastructure currently lacking being added incrementally to accommodate human activities.

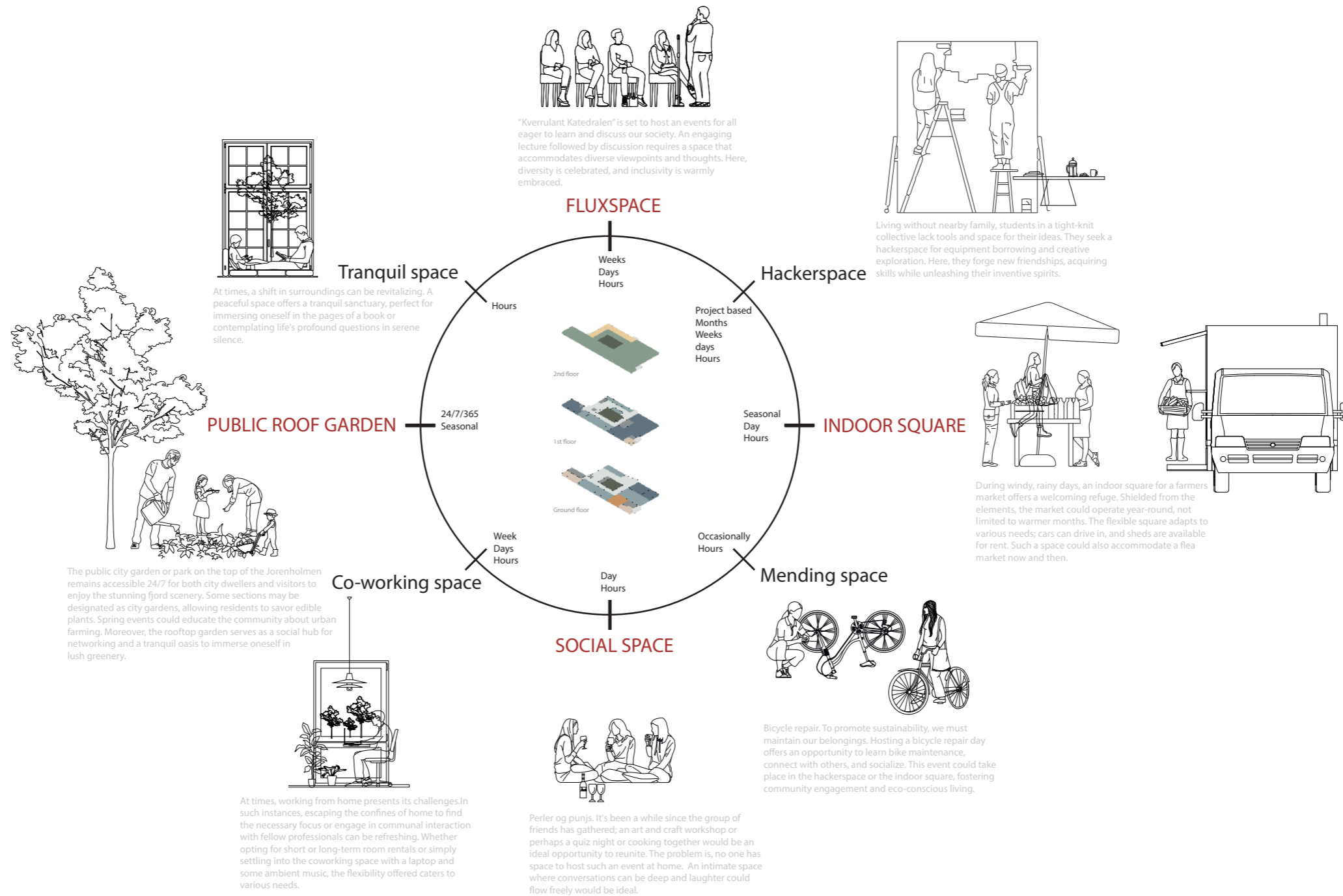
In practice, the physical space and appearance may change, and different building steps may happen simultaneously or go back and for to accommodate different needs like time rhythms, timeframes, seasons, activities, etc. Rather than being seen as a fixed design created by me as an architect now, the space should be viewed as the result of the temporary and participatory initiatives that turns out successful.

As the building becomes more and more accessible and its use is observed over time, there might be an opportunity in the future master plan to reconsider how the site/building can be programmed towards an extended time frame. Future plans should ideally be based on the insights gained from its temporary use to be adaptable, relevant, and attractive for a changing and unknown future.



# For whom - scenarios

## The city









The reduced height on the first floor creates a sense of compression within the space.



Lack of light. When the space is occupied by cars, they block the natural light.



The flooring, ceiling, and columns of the building collectively form the impression of a panoramic window, framing the view of the neighboring site.



Circulation ramp for cars

# Motivation

*“Ingen by er bedre enn sin offentlighet”*

*(Translation: “No city is better than its public”.) - Kverrulant Katedralen*

- Discussing challenges with conventional urban planning and approaches.
- A chance to improve social and environmental sustainability by incorporating an elastic development approach.
- An opportunity to make the harborfront more accessible to the city and its inhabitants during a transitional period.
- Interesting pre-history as a temporary building
- Uncertain and unknown future
- Highly debated building - polarized standing points
- The construction system employed in this building is not unique to this parking garage; it’s been utilized in similar structures worldwide. The project can serve as an example showcasing how such buildings can be transformed, reimagined, and repurposed to meet evolving needs and aspirations.
- Transformation potentials
  - Reuse of building mass
  - Reprogramming from cars to people



Pedestrian path on the eastern side of the parking garage.



Norwegian Petroleum Museum  
Stavanger 2024

## Stavanger

### CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Stavanger, often nicknamed "The oil and gas capital of Norway", stands as an example of capitalism's grip on energy resources. Its implications extend far beyond the city's borders, resonating globally as a testament to the inherent flaws of our reliance and dependency on fossil fuels. At its core, the city's economy revolves around the extraction and exploitation of fossil fuels, an industry that has thrived under the banner of profit-driven motives while often neglecting the broader implications for environmental sustainability and human well-being.

The extraction and refinement of fossil fuels contribute to the destruction of ecosystems, pollution of waterways, and contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Despite advancements in technology aimed at mitigating these effects, the fundamental contradiction remains: the pursuit of profit in a capitalist system inherently prioritizes short-term gains over long-term sustainability.

As we confront the urgent need to transition towards renewable energy sources and embrace more equitable and ecologically conscious economic models, Stavanger should serve as a pioneer. What could Stavanger after the oil be like?



Harbourfront of Stavanger, 2024

## Status quo

In the pursuit of greater wealth, status, and power, the capitalistic development model focusing on economic growth has been allowed to ravage freely. This has brought the world to a state characterized by a series of ongoing crises as; political polarization, economic instability, technological disruption and social inequality. The ruthless exploitation of natural resources at an alarming rate and overconsumption has led to an exacerbating of climate change and environmental degradation on a planetary scale, affecting not only humans themselves but also ecosystems and non-human life. The challenges we face are not fairytales, but science and facts. Continuing with the “business as usual” is unsustainable. To ensure a livable planet for future generations, we must approach these challenges with alternative values and mindset, such as moderation in terms of consumption, equal resource distribution, reuse of what we already have and sustainability, both environmentally and socially.

What makes a city resilient? Judith Rodin, President of The Rockefeller Foundation (2005-2017), has characterized resilience as: *“the capacity to bounce back from a crisis, learn from it and achieve revitalization.”* When looking into “UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies” one gets the impression that resilience is the response to intricate challenges in a complex world, operating under the assumption that the future is inherently unpredictable and uncertain. This uncertainty about the future profoundly shapes the present, providing a framework for how we navigate our current circumstances.

The concept of resilience is an all-encompassing idea. My interest lies in reflecting, rethinking, and building on already existing ideas on how we can enhance (social) sustainability and understand its role in creating resilient cities. Which values should guide architects and city planners as they design our built environments, in order to make our cities more sustainable and resilient within a world marked by challenges and uncertainty. Specifically, my inquiry delves into the concept of temporality in shaping cities and fostering social cohesion, understanding it as something closely linked to time and how time shapes our perception of urban environments.

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