



Students about features, qualities and community in the student housing of the future.

Dialogue process with students within the project New Holtermanska, Gothenburg

Spring 2021



**Chalmers**  

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**STUDENTBOSTÄDER**

## **Dialogue process**

During the spring 2021, Chalmers student housing invited students to discuss and shape the new student apartments around the area at Holtermanska. The group of 8 students met for 3 meetings to develop a pilot study and conformation program.

We got much interesting information during the meetings that we will take with us in the development of new student apartments.

## **Things that were discussed where:**

Things that we discussed were:

How do the students want to live? Alone or together with others, and how will the apartments be structured to meet their wishes.

How can the project facilitate for the students to live sustainable.

What facilities do the students want in the area and how can we do to create community.

*Accommodation is a large part of the experience during the student-time, and the student's relationship with his / her university. Being invited and becoming part of a campus gives a sense of belonging and the home should create conditions for the student to live, learn and develop. Therefore, Chalmers Student Housing has got many great thoughts from the group of students, and can further evaluate the new area at Holtermanska, based on the social needs that the students value.*

## **Dream living**

The dream home for the students, if the economy wasn't a problem, is a two-room apartment, so you can close the door and change the environment in your own apartment. Maybe you want to sit undisturbed from your roommate who has friends over or get the feeling that you leave school when you go into the bedroom. A well-zoned one-room apartment would also work well, or to share a home with a maximum of four people. The bedroom should be separated from the kitchen and social areas. The dream home is close to the university because it creates a safe social bubble where you are close to friends. And what about the rent? Preferably not more than a third of the CSN. To reduce the cost, you can imagine living with others and then preferably with people you already know. Collective housing attracts a little more when you are a new student and would like to have someone to share everyday life with. Regardless of whether you live alone or together, you want to feel free to live on your own terms.

The dream home has a large and functional kitchen where you can cook with friend. The kitchen should be a place for socializing, creativity and have a good storage. There should be nice outside areas and a balcony where you can take a break in the sun after hours with the books. In the yard, you want to be able to gather in groups of friends and let the conversation give a new energy. When it's time for a party, there should be good party rooms where you are neither disturbed or be disturbed.

***"What I miss most in my current home is the opportunity to invite friends home. On 19 m<sup>2</sup> without access to common areas, it is difficult to get and we are usually seen with someone who lives bigger than I do."***

## Access to an apartment

It is experienced as difficult to get hold of a home. The group of students believes that it is only possible to get a room in a larger apartment through contacts. The problem is that the person who is on the contract for a large apartment takes big risks financially and loses their queueing points, while the other tenants keep their queue days.

## Location, proximity and social context

The students in the group appreciated the location of the new area at Holtermanska since it strengthens Johanneberg as a student area. The students feel a sense of security and social ownership in the local area, which also gives them a sense of belonging.

Johanneberg and Landala are close to everything, that is important, it makes the everyday life easier. If you live in a small apartment, the area and facilities around are more important. The possibility to go out with friends or hang at a restaurant, compensates the small apartment.

*“Johanneberg is a great location. You reach everything you need in 15 minutes. It’s close to the city of Gothenburg, nature and the university. The “air of Chalmers” is close and you take care of each other.”*

## Insights

To protect students from being financially or legally disadvantaged, access to a student apartment should be made equal and fair. Continuing to establish student housing next to the universities creates strong social contexts for students - but it can exclude those who are not as committed to student life?

How should we think if we build new in other areas? It is important to create a sense of belonging even there.

## Floor plan, rooms and zones

When the group of students discuss different types of floor plans, they decide that the zone of the apartment is important, both for the social life and for practical reasons. The kitchen should be as big as possible and away from the bed. The social areas are important and most of all they want to be able to close a door to the bedroom. During the Covid-19 it got more important to be able to cook at home, switch setting in the own apartment and be able to study together. If you live together with other people, you want the bedroom and social areas to be separate. The background to the students reasoning is important aspects to feel comfortable. - To have friends over for dinner, to sleep undisturbed or study. In every case, you want to see smart and flexible apartments.

## To live alone or together

Students are a fragmented group of people with different kinds of needs when it comes to apartments. The group of students thinks that new students who just moved to Gothenburg or leaved their parents appreciate to live together with others. To always have someone to talk to and get help from is an important social function. The students could live in a corridor if it is working well with cleaning, common activities and more. You get tired of a messy kitchen and laundry room which affects the feeling for shared areas. As most, they could live four people in the same apartment. You might get tired of living with other people or get your own apartment and so on. It can be small things that gives a feeling of freedom - to leave the dish or have the furnitures you want.

*"To live in a corridor feels like a real student life"*

### **Insights:**

**Even in a smaller home, zoning is important and may require innovative design solutions to build bright, functional and cozy homes.**

**Different phases in one's studies can mean different housing needs. How do we make it possible to exchange housing within Chalmers Studentbostäder's portfolio to match housing with students in the best way?**

**There are different areas you can imagine sharing with others, but**

## The farm environment and common areas

A strong message from the group of students we talked to, is that common areas must be well planned and well-appointed if they will be used. Rather one great area than several that's not being used. The most popular common areas are party rooms and outside area. You want to be able to sit outside and have access to study outside. These areas should be private and only be used by tenants.

## Growing, recreation and community

There is a great interest in sports, recreation and exercise and the focus group proposes both sports halls, outdoor gym and volleyball courts. The possibility of growing is also expressed interest in, which is something many people find difficult in their current living environment. A common area for growing in pallet collars, where people with the same interest can be seen and exchange experiences, is seen as a very positive element in the home.

"A viewing point where you can have lunch or just sit and read your book and look out over your local area would be a good complement to the small home"

### Insights

The outdoor environment needs to contribute with functions that support the students both in their social lives and studies. How is a variety of outdoor environments designed for different seasons, weather and activities?

The party rooms are important social functions, but which can be disruptive for residents in the immediate area, how are party rooms arranged in the best way?

## Activities

The students says that most rooms for social association in the city, has a need of payment. Where is the places where you can hang out, play some games and spend some spare time without spending money?

Which activities complements the students lifestyle and has a value in the living area? The project Holtermanska is in the centre of Gothenburg and parts of the projects will be public. What these areas could contribute for the living area has been a subject that the groups of students were discussing. Many activities in Johanneberg are already customized for students with gym like Fysiken, student union house and bars. Somethings that's missing is a large grocery store, second hand shopping, bike workshop and a sports hall for example.

The students wants more than a basic functionality in the apartments. It's hard to achieve in a small apartment and therefore it is more pressure on the common areas.

*"Make demands on any businesses! If they are to be established in this super location at Chalmers, they should also offer sustainable alternatives."*

### Insights

Rooms for exercise, health and well-being are important complements to the housing functions. How can this be met in close proximity to the home?

Hobby room, tool lending and the opportunity to mech with your bike yourself is something that would support a sustainable lifestyle and also be able to become a place for community and "community feeling". How and where is room for this in the best way?

## Sustainability and the environment

The students want good opportunities to make sustainable choices. A full-size recycling room is important since many people do not have a car and can't go to an environmental center - but it is just as important to have space in the kitchen to be able to sort household waste. Having access to sustainable mobility can mean the opportunity to refill your bus card in the local area, borrow an electric car or be able to repair your bicycle. You can easily see an individual measurement of energy consumption and be able to be encouraged to keep it down, either because of the cost or why not compete against your neighbors? The group of students wants a second hand store for both furniture and clothes in Johanneberg.. They want better possibilities for recycling. Important things are also that the buildings have sustainable materials, inside and outside. Both for the climate and to feel proud about living in our buildings.

*"It is important that the choices you make when you plan, draw and build the house are communicated to the residents in the next stage. That those who live can take part in information about how it is intended that we should live here, how we should do to live sustainably and smart. "*

### Insights:

What can Chalmers student housing do to encourage sustainable choices even outside the neighborhood? Maybe collaborate with second-hand shops and electric car pools, or support with the removal of waste and furniture when moving out?

Can furniture in the apartments help to reduce consumption, so you do not have to buy furniture and household when moving in? It is especially important if you are an exchange student or only studying for a short period.



## A shared living, a sustainable home

A single apartment is expensive to build and expensive to rent. Is this typology reasonable given the high monthly costs? And reasonable given the climate and our common future? If we will work for reduced consumption in everyday life and in our living environments, we need to change our behaviors and our everyday lives from many more aspects than we think. Living with others to achieve this may not be a dream for everyone, but it can also be something you learn to appreciate over time. The students in the focus group reasoned that student apartments are often the first home of their own and the one where you start your adult life. New routines are shaped to a great extent here.

The group of students thinks that it is important that a shared home has the common rooms centrally so that they can be reached directly from the hall and then the social aspects of the home increase. The private rooms can be more secluded so you don't necessarily have to be social when you move between bedroom and bathroom. Your own room must be large enough that you can also have company in the room if the living room is occupied by another group of friends.

*"The economy becomes much easier when you live together. In addition to sharing the rent, food costs are also shared when you cook the food together. I experience that it is much cheaper to live together than to live alone"*

### Insights

What makes a small home get a high rent are the installation-tight kitchen and bathroom. In a shared home, there will be smaller construction measures per square meter, and this will reduce both the rent and the amount of building materials used.

"Affordability" (an affordable home) is important from both a student and a trustee perspective.

A home that is shared by several people needs a well-thought-out zoning of private and common areas. How do you get the best of both worlds in your home?

## Summary

A student home is an important part of the student's life and the home can enable better studies, social interaction and that you grow as a person and individual - because even if you only live here for a short period, it is one of the most important periods in life.

Students are a diversified group, but a common denominator is that many have limited finances during their studies. This means that the rent level is one of the most important factors for housing. The home must give great effect, which requires innovative design solutions to achieve a reasonable rent without sacrificing function and well-being.

We face major societal challenges where we must drastically reduce the climate impact that new construction stands for and create living environments that promote a sustainable lifestyle. It is a matter of the heart for the students in the group of students, and they believe that they want to be proud of their sustainable housing.

Many people still want to live alone, in their own home, but there is a great demand for shared housing. The students who lived in different forms of their own apartment have to a greater extent said that they experienced increased loneliness and anxiety when the social context through the education disappeared.

The common areas in the living quarters are what enable a functioning lifestyle that complements one's own home. This is where you study, eat, socialize, party, and meet new friends - this means that common areas both indoors and outdoors need to be well-planned and eventful.

In summary, you first need to meet the students' need for financially accessible housing, then safeguard the students' quality of life. With careful design, sustainable solutions and architectural quality that lasts over time, we can create student housing that provides the conditions for the big nicks of the future, strong relationships, and smart choices.

## Recommendations when designing new student housing

- A well planned housing can be smaller if you can separate social and private areas. Feel free to give the interior more function, for example: writing desk, wardrobes with mirrors and so on.
- The kitchen is about comfort and social interaction. No matter how the floorplan looks, the kitchen has to be an area for social interaction.
- Common areas in the building needs to be taken care of. Places for studies and so on is areas to relieve the small apartment.
- Make it simple to share, switch and borrow things from each other.

In the making of a new student housing, you need to think outside the box to make it sustainable in the future. How can you do to reduce the wear in the building, the things that are throwing away when people moving out and thing people by when they move in? How can you reduce all the food waste? What can be built in the building? Encourage to less consumption of energy, better possibility for recycling. Mabey a system for competitions and comparison? Look through the tenancy contracts to have the possibility for "Friends contract", or live together with other people that gives everyone the same opportunities when it comes to queue points and economy risks.

- The practical areas can be better for the tenants. Is there an option to make the laundry room an integrated part of the social areas. Is there an option to move the locker from the door to the washing machine so more people can wash at the same time?
- There is a big need of social areas and party rooms, how these will be placed is important to not disturb but also easily accessible.
- If the tenants have access to to a smart and functional communication platform, it can bring more communication and spread of information.