

# New Towns on the Cold War Frontier

*Crimson*  
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

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# Vällingby, Sweden

## TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE OR TOO BAD TO BE CREDIBLE – A TALE OF TWO TOWNS, THE SEQUEL

*Signe Sophie Bøggild*

Against a sky with cumulus clouds, the Swedish New Town Vällingby's logo is watching over you as a giant blue eye visible from every angle. Bent in neon the turning V-sign is striving after a utopia, however, reminding you that you are close to Sweden's capital Stockholm. Although the community centre *Vällingby Centrum* has acquired the Anglicism of *Vällingby City*, the similarity with the famous images that toured architectural journals worldwide five decades ago is striking: the same characteristic lampposts, the same typography snaking on signs, the same fountain with pigeons and locals, resting on benches. Yet, like an Indian saying, it is 'same same, but different'. While new cobblestones immaculately re-enact a 1950s geometrical pattern, the lower floor of the Edward Hopper-like restaurant *Vällingehus* is converted into a multi-ethnic food hall ranging from Lebanese to Thai. Between these contrasts, Vällingby's intimate and nationally listed community centre appears as a geological plate, rubbing between the Sweden of yesterday and the Sweden of tomorrow. Old New Town pioneers pulling suitcases on wheels, veiled women, playing children and busy shoppers, many of whom are carriers of traditional Swedish names such as Svensson, Jönsson and Andersson, mix moderately with counterparts with names like Khan, Osman and Hossein. Small-scale shops, the popular MacDonald's and the classic cinema *Fontänen* blend with public service anchors such as the assembly hall *Trappan*, the youth club *Tegelhögen*,

the library, and the Saint Thomas Church. Below, underground tunnels provide shops with goods while the public transport line *Tunnelbanan* connects Vällingby to Stockholm and other satellite towns. As a recently landed spaceship, Gert Wingård's lacquer-red fashion flagship *Kfem* claims space and attention as a new landmark. Embracing this core area, dwellings cluster in different tempi according to the natural topography – high-rise towers, followed by low apartment blocks and occasional single-family houses.

Few kilometres away, but on another *Tunnelbana* line, you have to remind yourself that you are only 25 minutes from Stockholm as a Babylonian crowd of people and products overflows the 'Siamese twin' New Town Tensta-Rinkeby. Like a beehive, the square in *Rinkeby Centrum* is attracting an intense form of life: A Somali 'chief' giving audience





Vällingby's iconic logo the V-sign – a successful marketing trick, visible from all angles. At the back you can see some of the point blocks in Vällingby Centrum, sticking up.

Small town idyll, urbanity, consumerism and welfare come together in Vällingby's listed shopping-cum-community centre. To the left the retro cinema *Fontänen*, to the right the assembly hall *Trappan*.



In many respects *Vällingby Centrum* resemble its 1950's image: the same lampposts, the same pigeons, the same circular paving, if not the same people resting on benches.





for gesticulating listeners, grey-haired Arabic men hanging out on regular cafés, dark-skinned women consulting stalls crammed with yam and okra, a dyed blond sipping cowberry juice in a tight outfit ... You could probably spend hours contemplating this multiplicity squeezed into the narrow proportions of the grid-patterned district centre, encircled by symmetrical belts of dense concrete slabs and tall lamella houses. Looking closer, however, the rigidity is not a corset. Within the tight planning scheme appropriations of spaces and self-organised activities are left a room for manoeuvre. Take the shop becoming bazaar and *saree* outlet, or the rental apartments becoming schools and mosques. Ten years ago Rinkeby was known as *Turk City* due to a big percentage of residents with Turkish background. Now, most of them have moved out just like the ethnic Swedes for whom Tensta-Rinkeby were originally built. Meanwhile, new inhabitants of Somali, Iranian and Iraqi origins have replaced them. This (im) migration process has created a new geographical frontier: On the one hand, the Vällingby-like fountain, the blue-white *Tunnelbana* sign, the assembly hall *Folkets Hus* (The People's House) joining clubs and social services, an insular Swedish flag in a forest of satellite dishes, and the hotdog stand offering sausage with mash and shrimp salad, unmistakably localise Tensta-Rinkeby to the Stockholm region. On the other hand, all the juxtapositions, described above, seem to question *where* and *what* urban living in Stockholm and Sweden might be in the globalised and multicultural welfare society of today.

## **Black Sheep, White Sheep**

In front of us we have two different and particular New Towns. Within a small radius, both are situated at the land area of Spånga, 12 -15 km northwest of downtown Stockholm. As a rare coming together of form and content, Vällingby of 1954 was part and parcel with the expansionist political program of *Folkshemmet* (literally *The People's Home*). Over a long period of Social Democratic hegemony, housing policies manifested as a 'social engineering', associating urban planning and the design of dwellings with the creation of 'the good life' and the 'just society'. Deep into the 1960s, architects and planners from near and far studied Vällingby as a pioneer New Town congenial to the *Swedish Model* of a Social Democratic welfare state with a prosperous economy. Embodying a political system, internationally known as *The Middle Way*, the individually designed New Town was even used as propaganda showcase during the Cold War, promoting the interests of the neutral country in a global society divided in two. Experiments with novel design solutions produced a new planning paradigm, the 'ABC-Town', innovatively integrating public welfare and private initiative with work,



Rinkeby Centrum.



Tensta Centrum.

People from over 100 nations meet on the square of *Rinkeby Centrum's* Babylonian beehive with intimate fixtures of Swedish Million Programme urbanism.



The diversity of the crowd, occupying *Tensta Centrum* strikes the visitor, arriving with *Tunnelbana* from central Stockholm.







5. The small square facing National Health and Social Assistance Centre (photo Olson).  
 6. Central shop building and restaurant facing south.  
 7. Looking south-west. Cinema and Civic Hall (photo Olson).  
 8. Cross-section of the central shop building.



Next page:  
 9. Centre from one of point-blocks in northern part (photo Bergne).  
 10. Central shop building, part of north-western facade.  
 11. Road for pedestrians to east.

Early impressions of *Vällingby Centrum*. Courtesy of Royal Swedish Library: images of Gentili, Giorgio: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958.

housing and community centre (*Arbeta* = work, *Bostad* = housing, *Centrum* = centre). For all these reasons Vällingby was appointed patrimony at the young age of 33 (1987).

A generation after the inauguration of Vällingby, Rinkeby and Tensta in the same plan became debated territory. As a product of the grand-scale housing scheme *Miljonprogrammet* (the Million Program), the general plan for the southern part of the former military area Järvafältet came as much out of need and pragmatics as the quest for visionary ideology and design. Vaguely echoing 5-year plans of the East Block, the Million program was presented as the magic potion that would finally cure the housing problem, plaguing Swedish cities in general and Stockholm in particular for decades. Following the tracks of building cranes, more than a million new dwellings (largely walk-up flats) were constructed in the period of 1965 – 1974. In its titanic scale, trust in universal standards and rationalised building methods, the program was a showpiece of the welfare state's efficiency and egalitarianism. Yet, the Social Democratic utopia quickly turned into a knotty odyssey. Due to its extent and pace the project might have been so rational that considerations of quality was swallowed up by quantity. Even before their completion, the Million Program New Towns scattered around Sweden's biggest cities (Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg, etc.) were criticised as grim and unliveable living environments.

Shortly after Tensta-Rinkeby's slabs and walk-up flats were in place, they were voided of ethnic Swedish fleeing to the new option, offered by a boom of affordable single-family houses in the late 1970s. Parallel to a wave of immigration, the empty flats were haphazardly converted into homes for people on welfare and of other ethnicities than Swedish.<sup>1</sup> Suddenly, unemployed and immigrants inhabited the Million Program dwellings, intended for working families. Crime rates and social problems grew while the architecture decayed and everybody refused to take the final responsibility. Thus, the reputation of Tensta-Rinkeby literally blackened in the media and socio-economical reports as 'prefabricated parking places' for a growing immigrant population and the least 'resourceful' among ethnic Swedes. The book *Rapport Tensta* (1970), published by three journalists of the tabloid newspaper *Expressen*, is a classic example.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the urban imaginaries and ghosts surrounding the two New Towns continue to linger: Over the years, Stockholm's first New Town Vällingby has largely been depicted as an urban success - as cutting-edge design and a monument of the Swedish Model. Meanwhile, Tensta-Rinkeby, one of the last satellite towns to be realised around

1. Thus *Svensson* – one of the most common 'old Swedish' names – has become slang for 'ethnic Swedish', while *Miljonsvensker* (Million Swede) is a synonym for 'Swedish of other ethnicities', many of whom live in the walk-up flats of the Million Program. Christopher Caldwell: "Islam on the Outskirts of the Welfare State", in *The New York Times*, February 5, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/magazine/05muslims.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=2&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/magazine/05muslims.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2&oref=slogin).  
 2. See Olle Bengtzon, Jan Delden & Jan Lundgren: *Rapport Tensta*. Stockholm: Pan Express, 1970.



The journalist Jan Delden's photo of a child on a bicycle in the middle of a building site in Tensta became the cover of the critical book **Rapport Tensta** (1970), starting an outcry towards the brand new New Town. (Armstberg, Karl-Olov & Björn Erdal (ed.): **Därute i Tensta**. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998.)

Sweden's capital, has continuously been considered an urban fiasco. It became an image and a container of a Social Democratic welfare state in crisis, coinciding with Modernism turning into a Dying Swan. Although Vällingby has faced some problems, it is still frequently presented and officially listed as a national pride and treasure of the Swedish welfare state. As Owe Swansson from White, the architectural office in charge of the redevelopment of Vällingby's community centre since 2002, states in an interview:

*'Vällingby has been a major professional challenge. It deals with one of the crown jewels of Swedish architecture and finding the right balance between the old and the new.'*<sup>3</sup>

In an article, "Vällingby regerar!" ("Vällingby rules!"), about the 're-premiere' of *Vällingby Centrum* a.k.a. *Vällingby City*, March 27, 2008, the architecture critic of the newspaper *Aftonbladet*, Lars Mikael Raattamaa, echoes Swansson's appraisal of Vällingby: 'Sweden's most internationally well-known work of architecture in all categories (Asplund and the City Library are just a nice little *Mumintroll* figure in the margins).'<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, Tensta-Rinkeby is still repeatedly portrayed as the 'Other' of Swedish society where it is easy to locate problems such as segregation and Multiculturalism that are also imminent in other parts of Stockholm/Sweden. As argued in a report of 2002 about the media representation of the Million Program New Towns:

*'Already in the planning phase, before they were built, Tensta and Rinkeby were chosen by the mass media as places for the failed project of modernisation. Thirty-five years later these places were chosen to represent non-Swedishness, with everything this might imply.*

3. Owe Swansson in Peter Nilsson: "Vällingby is still at the Front Line of Architecture", March 31, 2008, <http://www.en.white.se>

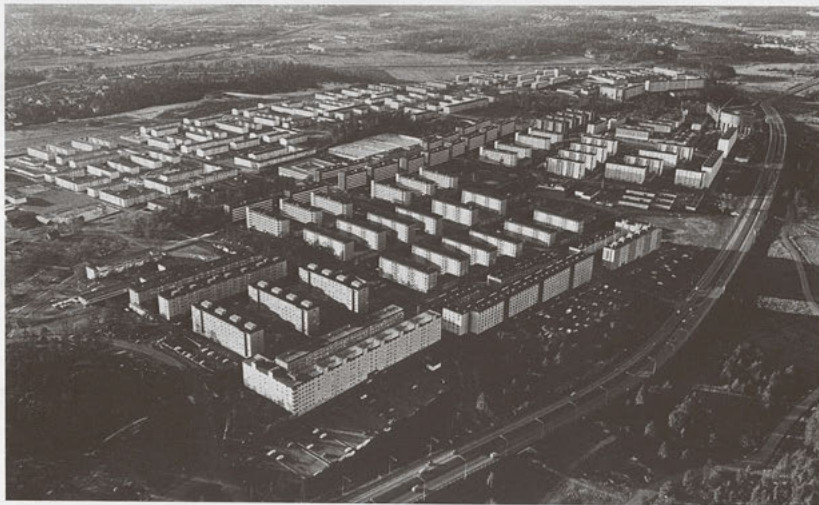
4. Lars Mikael Raattamaa: "Vällingby regerar!", in *Aftonbladet*, March 29, 2008, <http://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/article2149021.ab> (author's translation)

## 50-talet: VÄLLINGBY



Vällingby: En stadsbyggandets innovation av högsta klass. Planerings- och beslutsprocessen relativt rak med få starka aktörer med vida befogenheter. Individuell gestaltning av de enskilda byggnadsobjekten. Mjuk anpassning till ursprunglig topografi. Begynnande rationalisering mot stora förvaltningsenheter. Patriarkaliskt förhållande förvaltare—boende. Foto: Gösta Glase — Vällingby: innovative urban building of the highest quality from the 1950's.

## 60-talet: TENSTA



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After the heyday of the Million Programme the architects Sture Ljungqvist, Jon Höjer, Ingvar Thörnblom, and Jack Poom juxtaposed Vällingby as icon of 1950s urbanism and Tensta, representing the 1960s, as two systems and values. Writing in 1977 they wished for future urbanists to realise the ABC-Town's potential. Courtesy of Höjer, Jon; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby i Tensta i Kista i Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977.

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*If Swedishness is defined as cultural liberation and modernity, these areas are seen as rich in culture and unmodern; if the self image of Sweden is of a secular and egalitarian society, these areas stand for the exception and the antithesis with their religiosity and so-called murders of honour.<sup>5</sup>*

In the logics underpinning such media representations, myths and stereotypes, Tensta-Rinkeby appears as the 'evil twin' of Vällingby. According to 'common view' and mainstream writing of the history of architecture, there is a tendency to distinguish between a good, early and innovative Modernism and a bad, late and bureaucratic Modernism. In our case, such a historical narrative manifests as a binary opposition, juxtaposing the older New Town as the 'white sheep' and the younger New Town as the 'black sheep' of Stockholmian urbanism after World War II. In the following, we will reconsider this relation and historical narrative that has shaped the general image and identity of Vällingby and Tensta-Rinkeby respectively. As we revisit the two sites, we might reach a broader perspective on some of the aspects and potentials that often remain hidden, forgotten, overlooked or are in the process of becoming.

## Scandinavian Tiger

Curiously, there are certain similarities between Sweden of the late 19th and early 20th century and the Asian Tigers of the late 20th and early 21st century. Not only did Sweden carry out vast building projects similar to the ones in East Asia at present. Like Far Eastern economies, the Scandinavian nation state developed from a poor and peripheral agricultural country to one of the fastest economies in Europe. With a growth rate of national income per capita of 2.1 percent per year between 1870 and 1970, Sweden outpaced the European average by some 40 percent.<sup>6</sup> Following an exodus

5. Urban Ericsson, Irena Molina & Per-Markku Ristilampi: *Miljonprogram och media: föreställningar om människor och förorter*. Stockholm: Riksantikvarieämbetet and Integrationsverket, 2002, p. 19 (author's translation).

6. Factors to push this development include: 'pre-take-off' development in agriculture, education and public administration, industrialisation elsewhere in Europe, creating a high demand for Swedish assets such as timber and iron, immigration coupled with capital imports leading to a system of large, highly capitalised corporations, and a rather laissez-faire economic regime.

Peter Hall: "The Social Democratic Utopia: Stockholm 1945-1980", in *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation, and Urban Order*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1998, p. 845.

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to the United States, creating a Diaspora of 1¼ million Swedes (approx. 20 percent of the population) between 1820 and 1930, Industrialisation spurred by innovators like Alfred Nobel (dynamite) and Lars Magnus Ericsson (the table telephone) got its grip in Sweden. With the growing mechanisation of agriculture and primary industries, farmers and miners migrated from rural parts of the country to offer their labour force in the urban centres. Like moths attracted to a flame, a desperate housing problem emerged in the Swedish cities, not least in the capital city of Stockholm.

Before World War II Stockholm faced some of the worst housing conditions in Europe. The density of the city was twice that of London and rent was the double of Copenhagen-level. The Stockholm County's initiatives to counteract this crisis included the Ebenezer Howard-inspired garden cities Enskede (1908) and Äppelviken (1913) as well as a self-build housing program of 1926. The former ones were built according to what the historian Bosse Sundin terms a 'red-green way' of progressive Social Democrats and Liberal radicals, fusing Swedish vernaculars with Rousseau's 'back to nature' credo and National Romanticism.<sup>7</sup> This attitude was in line with the anti-urban movement of the late 19th century and Howard's social critique, presented in a rational diagram for a decentralised and hierarchical garden city. Divided into different functions, Howard's utopia combined the best of the city and the best of the countryside into a self-sufficient unity, providing all the necessities for a modern everyday life, sheltered from the chaos of the un-planned cities of Industrialism.<sup>8</sup> Yet, applied to a Swedish context, the program proved less harmonious. Due to property speculation the Stockholman garden cities failed to cater for low-income groups in need of housing as they developed into pure white-collar communities. As a countermove, the City initiated a more affordable self-build housing program in the areas of Olovssund, Norra Ängby and Tallkrogen. The City of Stockholm organised materials in standard dimensions, building directions, and specialised labour – the rest was left to the coming inhabitants. By 1939, 3500 cottages accommodated 12.500 self-builders; 60 percent of the inhabitants were manual labourers and factory workers, 20 percent service workers, and 20 percent white-collar.

In the interim, the number of city-dwellers grew from 49 percent of the population in 1930 to 81 percent in 1970 as the Swedish capital underwent one of the most rapid urbanisation processes on a European scale. While the suburbs along the railways exceeded working-class income, the majority of Stockholmers squeezed together like sardines in a can in tenement blocks of the 19th century - public transport was

7. Ulrika Sax: **Vällingby: ett levande drama**. Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 1998, p. 22.

8. See Ebenezer Howard: **Garden Cities of To-Morrow**. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965 (1902).



Poster of 1946 warning rural-urban migrants against trying their luck in Stockholm, suffering from the housing shortage in the years after World War. Source: City of Stockholm/Stockholm's Office of Urban Planning.



'Social democratic' propaganda-esque mural in Akalla in the northern part of Järfvålltet.

practically non-existent.<sup>9</sup> As suggested by a warning poster of 1931, it was almost impossible for newcomers to settle - 21,000 were already searching in vain for a place to live. Inquiries of the late 1930s and early 1940s put things in perspective: 32 percent of apartments in Stockholm consisted of one room and a kitchen, 20 percent had one or two rooms without kitchen, while the rest was composed of two rooms and a kitchen. On top of this, the majority of housing units was characterised by congestion and lack of basic facilities: for every 100 rooms - counting kitchen and living room - there were 101 residents; half of them had access to bath or shower and central heating.<sup>10</sup>

In this precarious situation, the political focus on housing and urban planning increased in tandem with the dawn of Social Democratic hegemony in Sweden. From 1932 to 1976 the Social Democratic Party was governing either alone or in coalitions, however, almost continuously heading the government. From 1942 – 1975, 2,5 million apartments, redefining housing types and modern life, were built in the thinly populated country.<sup>11</sup> Hence, it is hardly a mere coincidence that the punch line of the new political program, defining the common project of the country, was *Folkhemmet*. Based on the assumption that a safe home has no privileged members, the idea was that socio-economic equality and economic efficiency should reinforce each other. As the architectural historian Peter Hall writes:

*‘Just as a family would take care of its members in misfortune, so the Folkhemmet would look after the unemployed, the sick and the old...essentially, the Social Democrats intended to use housing policy as the means*



1930s election poster of the Social Democrats, positioning themselves between the poles of Hitler and Stalin. (From the website <http://svarten.blogspot.dk/search/label/valaffisch>)

*to building the kind of economy and society they wanted... the largest state-controlled, more or less self-contained economic sector in any Western country.*<sup>12</sup>

Like a concerned *pater familias*, the governing Social Democratic Party sought to please and protect as many as possible. Satisfied voters would guarantee the sustainability of the plans and policies that would create a new welfare society. An important event to spur this development was the so-called *Saltsöbaden Agreement* - a compromise between the two main parties of the industry, the labour union LO and the Swedish Employers' Federation. In return for government tax breaks and subsidies, workers approved on unrestricted expansion of private enterprise, while employers accepted the principle of full employment. With the formation of a mutually reinforcing system, the two parties practically divided Sweden between themselves. Industrial peace became a national institution: On the one hand, Swedish economy relied on private corporations who were encouraged to manage themselves for maximum efficiency. On the other hand, a cradle-to-grave welfare state was instigated as consumption became increasingly collectivised. Sandwiched between these two positions, the Social Democratic Party was certified to 'keep track' with the Swedish population (potential voters) through a ramified system of monopolised public services. Based on new norms of improved and universalised living standards for the working-class, this system created an all-encompassing Clientilism. Meanwhile, consensus in the welfare state was obtained through the wage bargain described above - soon to be known as the Swedish Model - allowing the capitalist machinery to run in top gear.

## Sweden: The Middle Way and the figure of Sven Markelius

Early on, Sweden obtained an international reputation as a Social Democratic Utopia, a model society where Capitalism and Socialism were working hand in hand. Foreign onlookers were impressed by the Swedish welfare state, at once looking after its citizens and allowing private enterprises to prosper. Abroad, the Swedish Model was often associated with Marquis S. Childs' bestseller of 1936 *Sweden: The Middle Way*. At a press conference in June 1936, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a copy of Childs' book lying next to him, told reporters about: 'an especially interesting situation

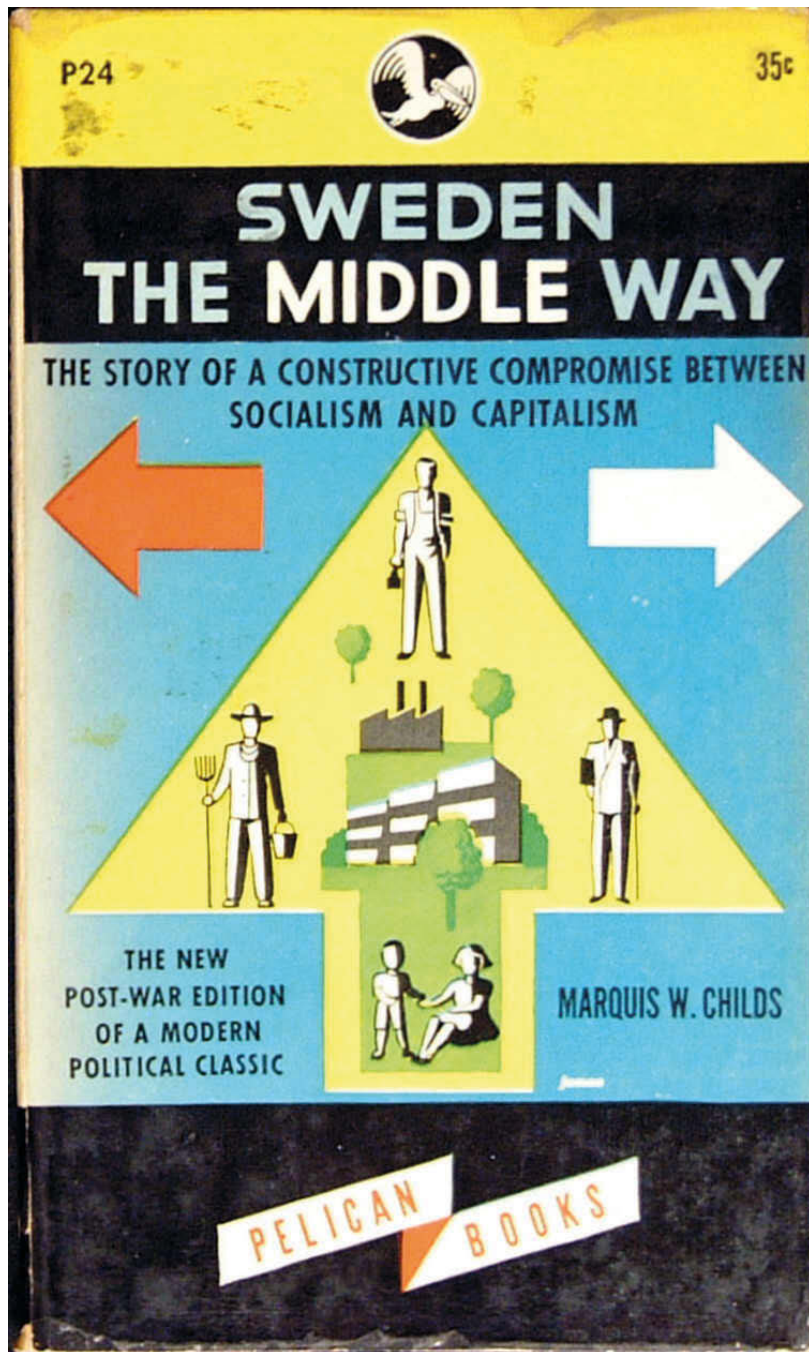
9. In the 1930s, waiting lists for a young couple in Stockholm were exceeding ten years. Thus, an anecdote goes that a young man announced that he and his fiancée would have to postpone their wedding because they couldn't find a place to live together. Why not move at his parents? They were still living at his grandparents!

Peter Hall: Op. cit., p. 857.

10. Ibid.

11. Familjebostäder: **Tensta: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter**. Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 2002.

12. Ibid., p. 847 and 855.



Sweden forms a neutral alternative between the superpowers' absolute truths on the cover of the revised post-war edition of Marquis Childs' neoclassic **Sweden the Middle Way** (1936).

in Sweden' where 'a royal family, a Socialist government and a capitalist system are working together carefully side by side.'<sup>13</sup> The New Deal President was so enthusiastic that he sent a group of investigating experts to the Northern country that seemed to have found the Philosopher's Stone. (A quarter of a century later, in 1960, a delegation of another famous Democrat John F. Kennedy would repeat the mission.)

One might wonder if the inspiration also went the other way: Certain similarities can be pointed out between the gradually collectivised Swedish housing policy and the cooperative way of the Tennessee Valley Authority Project (TVA) of May 1933.<sup>14</sup> Similar to the agenda, governing the American TVA project, some of the ideologists behind the Swedish Model argued for social reforms and the state's involvement in the development of public services as a way of transforming poverty into prosperity. Nonetheless, the public engagement and service level took a more radical form in Sweden. The economists Gunnar and Alva Myrdal formulated the thesis that expenditure on education, health and housing equalled investment in human capital. Yet, such new ideas about the common goods of 'the people' needed time to absorb in the population: Just like the appreciation of the modernist architecture, imagined for the new welfare society, the new political project of solidarity and collectivism was something the citizens needed to learn to appreciate. Although *Folkhemmet's* public housing programs stressed equality and democracy, urban (re)development took place in a top-down direction. Architecture and planning were left to politicians, architects and other experts who knew what was best for the laypeople. In the publication *Arkitektur och Samhälle (Architecture and Society)* of the early 1930s, architect Uno Åhrén and Gunar Myrdal compared this learning process of the new welfare architecture and planning with internalisation of the habit of brushing one's teeth:

*'Construction of public housing could...support rational solutions and gradually prepare itself to getting people used to live practically, raise them to a properly arranged housing requirement from their own point of*

13. Franklin D. Roosevelt in Per. T. Ohlson: "Still the Middle Way?", a talk presented at Columbia University in New York, September 28, 2006, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/swedish/events/fall06/PTOChilds92806Web.doc>, p. 1.

14. In the beginning of Roosevelt's presidency TVA, a federally owned corporation, was created by a congressional charter to provide navigation, flood control, electricity generation, fertilizer manufacturing, and economic development in the Tennessee Valley, a region particularly plagued by the Great Depression after 1929. The TVA was regarded as a regional economic development agency, specifically aiming at a modernisation of the region's economy and society. Thus, Roosevelt's delegation to Sweden was part of a longer European study trip, researching similar cases of cooperative initiatives. For further discussion of the Tennessee Valley Authority see Richard A. Colignon: **Power Plays: Critical Events in the Institutionalization of the Tennessee Valley Authority**. New York: State University of New York Press, 1996.

view. Actually, consumption needs to be directed in the consumer's own interest. People must get habituated to brush their teeth and to eat tomatoes, before they come to appreciate this sort of consumption, and it is the same thing with rationally ordered dwellings.<sup>15</sup>

While progressive modernist architects in most other countries worked from the margins during the pre-war period, Sweden made an exception. This was probably due to a rare ideological and aesthetical overlap between the Social Democratic Party in power and the socially engaged architects of Swedish Modernism. Sharing faith in progress and modernisation, architects sat at the negotiation table with politicians and vice versa at the drawing table. These parties became different limbs of the same bureaucratic system when avant-garde architects of the 1920s and 1930s were appointed city planners and functionaries of the large public building task of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, eventually materialising a new society. To give a few examples: In 1935, the CIAM member Uno Åhrén, who had co-authored the seminal *Bostadsfrågan såsom socialt planeringsproblem* (*The housing question as a social planning problem*) with Gunnar Myrdal in 1934, was appointed head of the city planning office in Gothenburg. In 1939, another CIAM member and glowing Social Democrat, Sven Markelius, became chief of the Royal Board of Planning and in 1944, he was made director of Stockholm's urban planning office.

Anticipating the zenith of the major building programs, implemented under Social Democratic rule, two congenial writings of the 1930s associated the acute housing problem in Sweden's cities with a radical change of society: In 1931, *Acceptera* (*Accept – both infinitive and imperative*), the manifesto of Swedish Functionalism, was published. It was deeply influenced by social, modernist housing schemes by the international avant-garde and was signed by the Swedish CIAM group Uno Åhrén, Sven Markelius, and Eskil Sundahl as well as by Erik Gunnar Asplund, Gregor Paulsson, and Wolter Gan. In the manifesto they declared their goal 'to accept the existing reality – only if we do this will we be able to control it, to master it because we want to change it and realize a culture which is life's supple instrument.'<sup>16</sup> *Acceptera* was inspired by international contacts made by Vällingby's key planner Sven Markelius - a bridge figure between

15. Gunnar Myrdal and Uno Åhrén: "Kosta sociala reformer pengar?", in Sven Markelius (edit.): *Arkitektur och Samhälle*. Stockholm: Spektrum, 1932, p. 43 (author's translation).

16. Gregor Paulsson et. al in Nils-Ole Lund: "Three Times the Reuse of Modernism in a Lifetime: How Modernism Relates to Modernity", in Hubert-Jan Henket & Hilde Heynen (edit.) *Back From Utopia: the Challenge of the Modern Movement*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002, p. 102.



Gunnar Asplund: *The Stockholm Exhibition, 1930.*

*The Stockholm Exhibition* of 1930, organised by Gunnar Asplund, the Swedish CIAM-group, and architects, signing the functionalist manifest *Accept*, resonated among Sweden's designers as well as foreign onlookers like Siegfried Gideon and Marquis Childs, author of *Sweden: the Middle Way* (1936).



Sven Markelius: *The Swedish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, 1939.*

Markelius Swedish Pavilion at the New York World Fair (1939) impressed critics and coined Swedish design's international reputation as humanist and civilised. Courtesy of Markelius, Sven and Göran Sidenblad: "Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic", in Th. Plaenge Jacobson and Sven Silow (eds.): **Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture**. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949.

Swedish and international architects as well as between the modernist avant-garde and the Social Democrat establishment. In 1927, he visited the Bauhaus in Dessau and admired the workers' housing project Törten by the director Walter Gropius. Discussions with Gropius about social housing, based on sociological studies of minimum requirements for workers' apartments, left a lasting impression on Markelius. Continuing to Stuttgart, he was taken by the *Werkbund Exhibition* where Mies van der Rohe's formalism and Le Corbusier's 'living machines' were exhibited.<sup>17</sup> The foreign impressions showed at the Swedish counterpart, *The Stockholm Exhibition* of 1930, around the theme of functional and affordable housing. Organised by the grand old man of Swedish architecture Erik Gunnar Asplund and the art historian Gregor Paulson, the exhibition echoed internationally, e.g. in the appraisal of Siegfried Gideon in the magazine *Stein Holz Eisen* of the same year. Markelius miraculously fitted living room, eating room, kitchen stove, two bedrooms, workroom and bathroom into a 55 m<sup>2</sup> flat in two levels with multifunctional furniture and built-in flexibility in the plan.

As the first Scandinavian CIAM member, Markelius invited his foreign heroes Gropius and Le Corbusier to lecture in Stockholm in the beginning of the 1930s. In 1938, the Hungarian Fred Forbat, Gropius' former associate at Siemensstadt in Berlin, joined the Swedish CIAM group for some time after having gone to the Soviet Union with Ernst May in 1932 and then to Hungary in 1933.<sup>18</sup> Although, Swedish architects were greatly inspired by *Neues Bauen*, they softened it into a Modernism of their own. Rather than Le Corbusier's monumentality and heroic materials in parallel slabs, Swedish architects stressed the varied and picturesque – brick, wood and stone in a mixture of high-rise and low-rise with coloured facades.<sup>19</sup> In 1947, the director of the *Stockholm Exhibition*, Gregor Paulson, did a preface to the book *New Swedish Architecture*. Looking back on the 1930s idealism, pulling the strings of a class-less welfare society, he wrote:

*'These two motives (the attempt to achieve a new style and the social struggle to reach a better standard of housing) were in their turn based on the development of democratic ideals. The new shapes in architecture denoted a style of liberty, their social functions were to express equality;*

17. Eva Rudberg: "Sven Markelius – 100 År", in *Arkitektur*, Vol. 7, September, 1989, p. 26.

18. Eric Mumford: *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928 – 1960*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, UK: MIT Press, 2000, p. 166.

19. Eric Mumford: *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928 – 1960*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, UK: MIT Press, 2000, p. 165.



*the idea bring to remove class contrasts and differences also where the community's outward appearance was concerned, and to raise the standard of the surroundings in which the neglected strata of the population lived.'*<sup>20</sup>

An advocate of the Social Democrat cause, Markelius edited the journal *Arkitektur och Samhälle (Architecture and Society)*, worked for the Social Democratic newspaper *Fönstret (the Window)*, prepared a debate series about architecture and urban planning for the Swedish Radio, wrote several articles, lectured frequently, and collaborated with radical sociologists and economists like Alf Johansson and the Myrdals, authors of another key text of the 1930s: the heavily debated *Krise i Befolkningsfrågan (Crisis in the Question of Population)* of 1934. Inspired by societal theories of Malthus, Keynes and Piaget, the book proposed concrete solutions of the problems presented such as low rent for families with children and municipal take over of the responsibility for construction and administration of housing in exchange of beneficial loans. The models were further explored in Alva Myrdal and Sven Markelius' *Kollektivhuset (The Collective Housing Unit)*, 1931, an experimental dwelling type for families with working mothers where social facilities like laundrettes and childcare were integrated as natural extensions of the design. In 1935, a moderated prototype was realised in the Stockholm street John Ericssonsgatan 6.<sup>21</sup> Later, such cutting-edge architecture for radicals and feminists became fixtures in the housing policies of *Folkhemmet*, particularly in Vällingby where public services included daycare, collective housework, recreation and meeting facilities.

Thus, an international public associated Swedish architecture and planning with such collective and egalitarian ideals long before Vällingby was a reality. This was partly due to the aforementioned bestseller of Marquis Childs, *Sweden: The Middle Way*, partly to the person of Sven Markelius, designer of the Swedish pavilion for the New

York World Fair in 1939.<sup>22</sup> From this event onwards, Sweden became closely linked to a certain 'democratic' and 'humanistic' approach to architecture and urban planning, while Markelius worked as an avid lecturer at Ivy League universities such as Yale University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornell University, and Berkeley University well into the 1960s. As a critic of the American newspaper *The Nation* wrote about his Swedish pavilion: 'The happy little Swedish pavilion is civilization.'<sup>23</sup> In line with this argument, the pavilion's theme was the progress of democracy and welfare in Sweden on levels such as work, health, and motherhood. Hence, a model of Markelius' and Alva Myrdal's Collective Housing Unit was exhibited in addition to paraphernalia of industry and crafts.<sup>24</sup> Happy and Swedish in one sentence – that is still how Sweden is often perceived from the outside. In a lecture given in Britain, 1949, Alva Myrdal came up with the following explanation of the unique case of the Swedish Model where happiness signified equilibrium between the security of the welfare state, the freedom of the trades and industries and a unique tradition of culture and education:

*'If you had come to this country a hundred years ago you would have found it very different from now. In all the things that you now believe to be worthy of study – production methods, housing, industrial development etc. – you would have found us a very backward country rather than an advanced one...It may be that we avoided modern civilization and industrialism for so long that when it came, we were ready for it, perhaps more so than other countries had been. But I would like to stress my own explanation: that we improved our culture and education before we improved our industrial methods.'*<sup>25</sup>

20. Gregor Paulson in Nils-Ole Lund: "Three Times the Reuse of Modernism in a Lifetime: How Modernism Relates to Modernity", in Hubert-Jan Henket & Hilde Heynen (edit.) *Back From Utopia: the Challenge of the Modern Movement*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002, p. 102.

21. It was mostly leftist intellectuals and artists, resembling Markelius and Alva Myrdal, who moved into this progressive experiment house. In the article "Kollektivhuset ett centralt samhällsproblem" ("The collective housing unit a central problem of society") Markelius argued for shift from the traditional focus on individual housing to collective housing: 'Families...where both spouses have – simply put – a work, are not satisfactorily serviced with the now prevailing dwelling types...especially if they can't afford a nanny.' In his opinion, untimely planning allowed one to fall back to the conventional view on the 'natural' work division between the sexes; working women was often seen as asocial individuals - also in view of the 1930s unemployment. Yet, reverberating Alva Myrdal, Markelius reformulated the question: 'the lack of workplaces is an effect of lacking organisation, lacking regularity.'  
Sven Markelius: "Kollektivhuset ett centralt samhällsproblem" in *Arkitektur och Samhälle*. Stockholm: Spektrum, 1932, p. 54 – 55 (author's translation).

22. For more information about the successful reception of the Swedish Pavilion at the New York World Fair of 1939 see for instance Talbot Hamlin: "Sven Markelius" in *Pencil Points*, 20, June, 1939, p. 357 – 366.  
The American hype of Scandinavian architecture was further accentuated by the Finnish Pavilion by Alvar Aalto at the New York World Fair of 1939 and the Aalto exhibition at MOMA, New York, taking place in the same year.

23. Ibid.

24. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that Sven Markelius, a Swedish architect, was appointed to design the ECO-SOC Hall for economic and social questions at the UN headquarter, New York in 1947. Markelius worked in a heterogeneous team of star-architects such as Le Corbusier and Brasilia's architect Oscar Niemeyer.

25. Alva Myrdal: "Development of Population and Social Reform in Sweden", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 17 and 19.



Social democrat Prime Minister 1946 – 1969 Tage Erlander (right) and Sven Markelius (left) at the inauguration of Vällingby. Ulrika Sax: "Vällingby - ett levande drama". Stockholm: Stockholms stadsplanekontor, 1998.

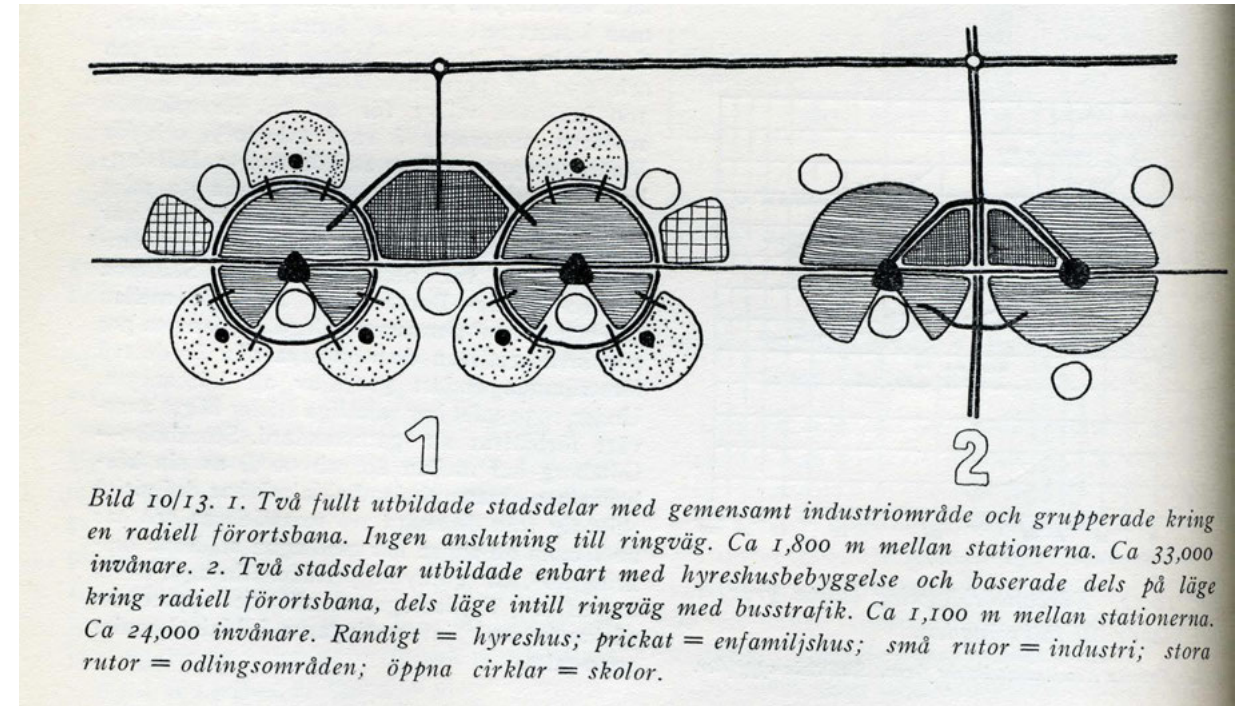
Stockholm's satellites were planned along the Tunnelbana like pearls on a string. Models of two different districts. Stockholm's City Planning Administration: **Generalplan för Stockholm 1952**. Stockholm: Stockholms stadsplanekontor, 1952.

Vällingby became a monument of this modernisation process involving a transformation on a physical level via architecture and planning as well as on a mental level through education and culture.

## From Ugly Duckling to Garbo

From 1904 to 1945 the City of Stockholm acquired and appropriated land from the municipalities bordering it. The goal was to keep control with the urban sprawl of the city where urbanisation was freewheeling and housing severe.<sup>26</sup> Parallel to the consolidation of the Social Democratic Party's hegemony over Stockholm and Sweden, the City wished to decide over its own destiny. Rather than leaving urban regeneration and development to profit-seeking entrepreneurs with little interest in affordable housing for 'common people', the public authorities preferred to have the last say in building matters. In a situation characterised by lack of space, high rent, low technical and hygienic standards, it was Stockholm's ambition to repeat the social ascent of a famous townswoman - the Ugly Duckling Greta Lovisa Gustafson. Against all odds, she grew up in slummy Södermalm (now a fashionable neighbourhood), but was revamped into the Hollywood icon Greta Garbo. In a similar vein, Stockholm underwent a

26. In 1949, prior to the ramified regeneration of Stockholm, Sven Markelius and the urban planner Göran Sidenbladh, his right-hand man at Stockholm's urban planning office, describes some of the reasons causing the grave housing situation: 'Just now, Stockholm's town-planners are wrestling with several problems. A rapid increase in population has taken place simultaneously with a shortage of both labour and materials. A great deal of our present difficulties are due to the fact that during the early part of World War II, domestic building dropped to about one-tenth of the level reached during the late thirties. But there was no corresponding decrease in migration into the city. Further, there was a sharp rise in the number of marriages, followed by a great increase in the number of births, which reached its peak in 1944.' Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenbladh: "Town Planning in Stockholm", in **Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture**. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 62 - 63.



makeover into a modern and spotless, however egalitarian, European capital with a strong identity in the decade when Sven Markelius was director of the City's urban planning office from 1944 - 1954.

A report of 1946 by the Royal Commission on Housing and Redevelopment made the vision concrete. Emulating on ideas, presented by the Myrdals in the 1930s, top-priorities included elimination of dwelling shortage, raising of housing standards via construction of units with two or three rooms and a kitchen, rent levels under 20 percent of industrial wages, encouragement of non-speculative building through favourable loans, and priority of public finance and construction by local authorities.<sup>27</sup> Triggering this agenda, the parliament *Riksdagen* decided to grant public housing companies loans up to 100 percent of the making costs, cooperative companies up to 95 percent and private companies up to 85 percent.<sup>28</sup> Another important event was the developer Baltzar Lundström's foundation of AB Svenska Bostäder (the Swedish Housing Organisation), February 16, 1944. In 1947, the company was bought by the

27. Peter Hall: Op. cit., p. 854.

28. Thomas Millroth & Per Skoglund.: **Vällingby en Tidbild av Vikt**. Stockholm: Almlöfs Förlag, 2004, p. 31.

City of Stockholm and from then on it was decided to build independently with own personnel.<sup>29</sup> Later, Svenska Bostäder became the most important non-profit housing organisation in the Stockholm region, simultaneously undertaking construction and administration of large parts of Vällingby.

A key concern in Stockholm's expansion was to develop an efficient public transport. Thus, the story of the hen and the egg seems relevant in the integral planning of housing in satellite towns, located along the metro line *Tunnelbanan*, so unique for the Swedish capital. Recollecting Howard's garden city utopia, Markelius and Sidenbladh sums up these considerations in a lecture in Britain (1949), shortly after the incorporation of the southern part of the land area of Spånga (approx. 200 hectares), where the pioneer New Town Vällingby was to be built, following lengthy negotiations with the municipalities of Solna and Sundbyberg:

*'It ought to be considered an axiom that the maximum travelling time from suburb to centre, from door to door, must not be more than 45 minutes. If for any reason the city has to expand still farther, such growth ought to take the form of satellite towns. These self-contained units should be located on the main railway lines, well away from the parts that are served by suburban railways and busses. The main idea of the satellite town is not new – it is older than Howard's book "Tomorrow". A settlement of precisely that kind – Sundbyberg – was in fact established in 1876 on the then new railway line to Västerås at a distance of nearly 7 miles from the centre of Stockholm.'*<sup>30</sup>

Although Stockholm's urban planning office was conscious of the explosive expansion of car traffic in the United States and Western countries, priority of collective

transport fitted the ethos of Social Democratism.<sup>31</sup> The Stockholm County pulled the strings for the *Tunnelbana* as early as 1941. Nonetheless, Stockholm's general plan (1952), *Generalplan för Stockholm 1952*, was particularly influenced by Copenhagen's *Fingerplan* (1947), intending to distribute a bunch of satellite towns along 'fingers' with public transport. As primary landowner of much land outside the City's borders, Stockholm had practically free hands to carry out a similar, yet, much more widespread, plan. Moreover, the market value increase of land in Sweden contributed to the funding of the *Tunnelbana*'s construction costs.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, Copenhagen found itself rather restricted; the *Fingerplan* remained an unfinished torso because of the plurality of land ownerships. Copenhagen was not in control of much of its periphery; it was forced to negotiate itself to the land area required for the planned New Towns – often in vain. Thus, Sweden's capital outdid the Danish capital by far since Stockholm disposed over vast land resources that allowed it to think big.<sup>33</sup>

Stockholm had another initial advantage. Unlike most of the countries surrounding the neutral Sweden (like the occupied Denmark, Norway and Finland) Swedish infrastructure and industry had not suffered severely from the demise of World War II.<sup>34</sup> Yet, inspired by the tabula rasa planning of the neighbouring countries in its aftermath, the solution of the Swedish housing problem was not the only ruling agenda in the post-war period. Like other revolutionary movements, the Social Democratic Party agreed with the modernist idea that destruction is necessary to pave the way for something new. In short, the policy of *Folkhemmet* requested a tabula rasa to realise its ambition of a new society from the root. More consensus-seeking than revolutionary, Social Democratic politicians like their architect supporters were attracted by the drastic-optimistic urban transformations in the era of the Marshall Plan, signed June 5, 1947 and operating well into the 1950s. This attitude is already underlining the text of Stockholm's preliminary general plan *Det fremtida Stockholm – Riktlinjer för Stockholms generalplan (Stockholm in the Future – principles of the Outline Plan of Stockholm Det Fremtida Stockholm)* of February 1945. It was written few months after Markelius became director of the City's urban planning office, shortly before the war was cooling:

31. Car-dependent American suburbs are presented as 'fear scenarios' in Stockholm's preliminary general plan *Det fremtida Stockholm – Riktlinjer för Stockholms generalplan (Stockholm in the Future – principles of the Outline Plan of Stockholm)* of 1945. Still, the number of cars in Sweden grew three times between 1940 and 1960.

See (Stockholms stads stadsplanekontor: *Det fremtida Stockholm – Riktlinjer för Stockholms generalplan*. Stadskollegiets utlåtanden och memorial – bihang, 1945, No 9. The report was reprinted in 1946 as *Stockholm in the Future – principles of the Outline Plan of Stockholm* with English captions and summary) and Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 27.

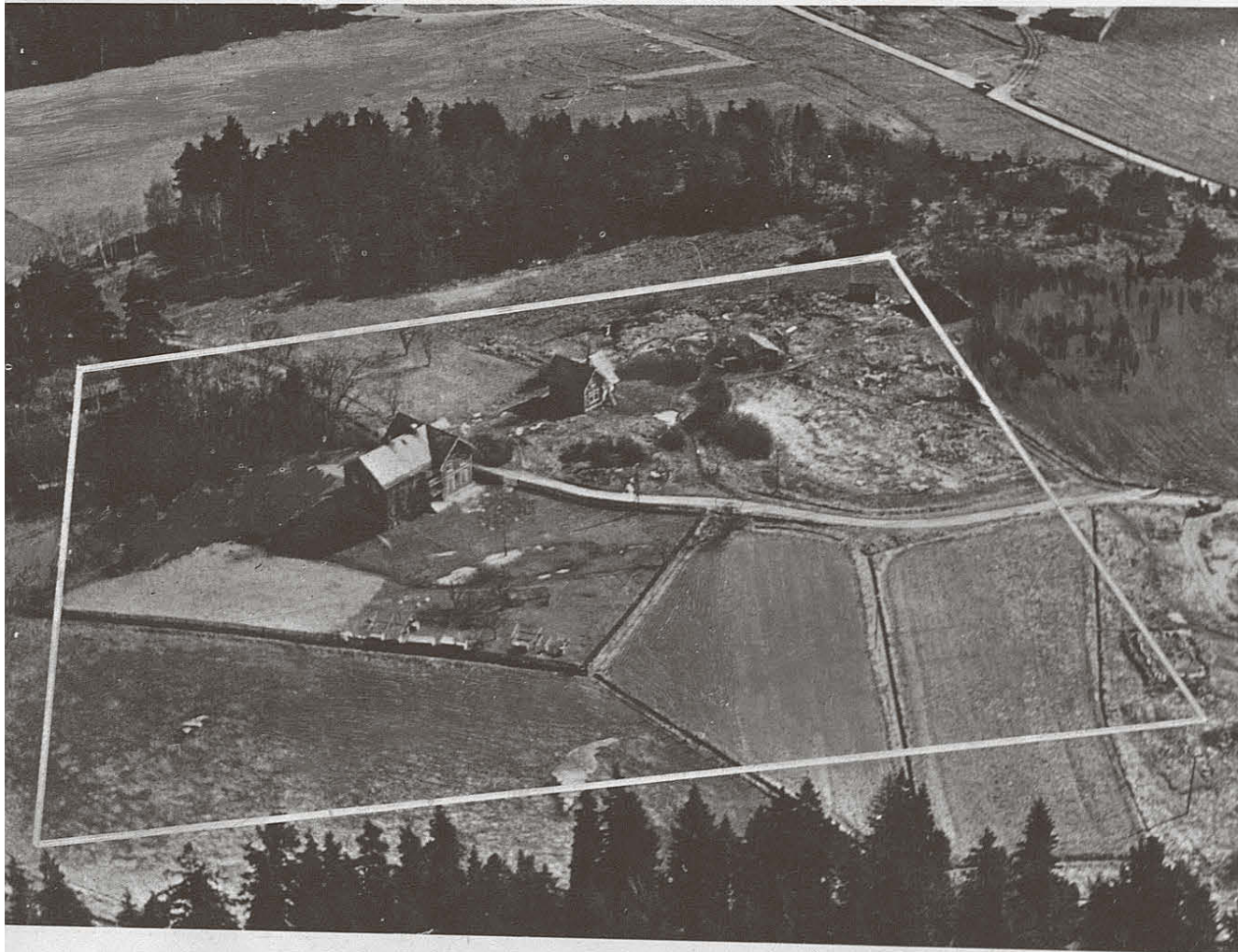
32. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 28.

33. For a comparative study of the different urban development patterns around the Scandinavian capitals see Pierre Merlin: "The planning and new towns in the Scandinavian capitals", in *New Towns*. London: Methuen & Co, 1971.

34. Some argue that Sweden in fact prospered on the war as German trains crossed through the neutral country to the annexed territories of Denmark, Finland and Norway, while Swedish steel were melted into German arms. Christopher Caldwell: Op. cit., [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/magazine/05muslims.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=2&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/05/magazine/05muslims.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2&oref=slogin).

29. Svenska Bostäder's website: [http://www.svenskabostader.se/PageTwoCols\\_1136.aspx](http://www.svenskabostader.se/PageTwoCols_1136.aspx)

30. Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenbladh: "Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 74 – 75.



# 1951

såg Vällingby ut så här

Endast några år senare hade centrum växt upp ungefär på det område som markeras av de vita linjerna. 15 år efter det bilden togs avslutades den utbyggnad, som gav Vällingby dess nuvarande utseende och omfattning.

Det är Vällingby av i dag — 1966 — som presenteras i den här skriften. Vidare uppmärksammas denna ytterstadsdels korta men dynamiska historia och spekuleras något litet i dess framtid.

Den inledande artikeln har skrivits av Albert Aronson, ledare för det kommunala bostadsföretaget Svenska Bostäder, som planerat, byggt och förvaltar Vällingby Centrum, huvudparten av bostäderna i Vällingby och en stor del av lägenheterna i andra delar av området. Kompletterande detaljuppgifter ges i kortfattade presentationer i form av text och illustrationer och i en avslutande sammanställning av vissa statistiska data. Skriften har utgivits av AB Svenska Bostäder — med huvudkontor i Vällingby.

The Vällingby area in 1951 before the New Town was realised.  
**(Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966)**

*‘In question of the many European cities that were fully or partially destroyed by bomb attacks, and under influence of the general radicalisation that followed the war, reform projects that would otherwise have been executed only slowly or not at all have suddenly become relevant. To the degree, that it will be possible to build New Towns successfully without the disadvantages of the existing towns, this will surely influence us. Even radical proposals about a rearrangement of the built-up area in Stockholm should therefore be taken up to discussion at this point.’<sup>35</sup>*

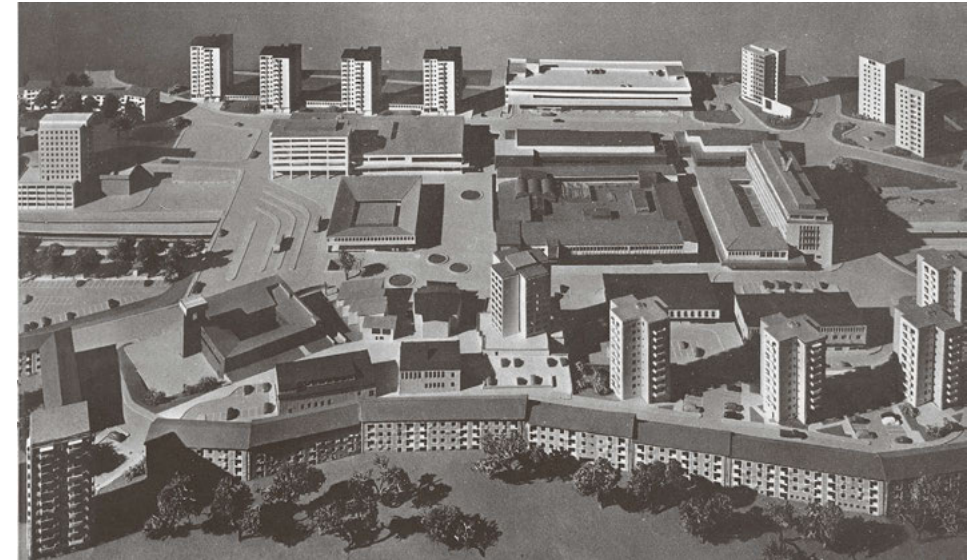
Hence, planning the development of the inner city and its periphery simultaneously, the undertaking of a comprehensive general plan for Greater Stockholm (1952) went two-ways: Not only would there be dramatic changes of Stockholm’s dense historical core. A series of economically independent, however, politically dependent New Towns would be distributed in the periphery, reachable through an optimised public transport system. Parallel to the expansive reconstruction programs in the war-torn Europe and Japan assisted by the Marshall Plan and modernist planners, the City of Stockholm decided to erase and redefine the historical neighbourhood of Nedre Norrmalm in the city centre, frequently labelled as the ‘Stone Desert.’<sup>36</sup> Moreover, a series of generic satellite towns were to rise on what was mostly farmland and forest around the ‘mother-city’ like pearls on a string defined by the arteries of the underground railway *Tunnelbanan*. By the same token, Markelius stressed that it was just as important for the new satellite towns to obtain a sufficient number of workplaces and other facilities as to prevent the growth of workplaces within the city core, furthering housing and traffic congestion, etc.<sup>37</sup> (The ABC-Town Vällingby led the way.)

35. Stockholms stads stadsplanekontor: **Det Framtida Stockholm: Riktlinjer för Stockholms generalplan**. Stadskollegiets utlåtanden och memorial – bihang, 1945, No 9, p. 31 (author’s translation).

36. For a detailed discussion on the redevelopment of Nedre Norrmalm see Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenbladh: “Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic”, in **Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture**. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949 and Sven Markelius: “Stockholms struktur”, in **Byggmästaren**, 1956, A3.

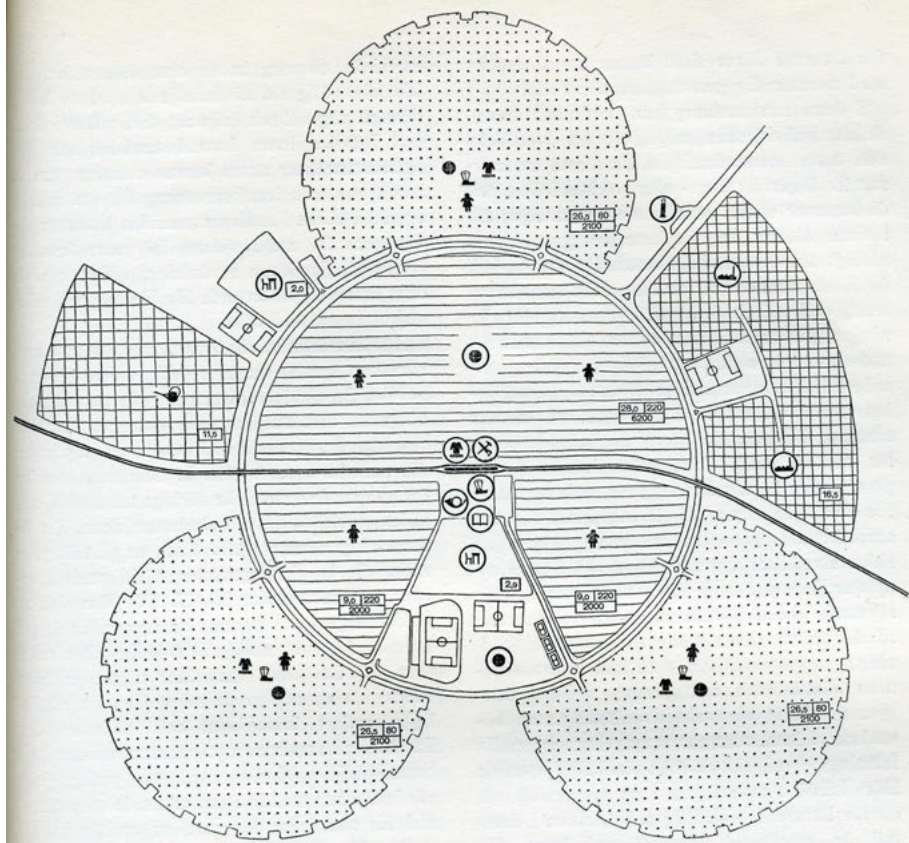
37. In an 1956 article Markelius states that it could have been possible to expand the inner core concentrically, if serious efforts had been launched before: ‘Theoretically, it would have been possible – if one had started in time – to expand the inner city concentrically to a million city of the compact kind of which so many older cities around the globe can serve as examples.’  
Sven Markelius: “Stockholms struktur”, in **Byggmästaren**, 1956, A3, p. 50 (author’s translation).

Model of the now listed Vällingby Centrum and some of the core area. (Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966)



## Learning the New Town Alphabet

As a token of strong reliance on sociological research of Swedish architects and planners, neighbourhood planning was an essential feature of the pioneer New Town Vällingby. The concept was introduced in the early 1920s by the American sociologist Clarence A. Perry in the book *The Neighbourhood Unit. A Scheme for the Argument for the Family Life Community*. Via Perry the planning principle wandered into the New York regional plan of 1929. With the publication of Lewis Mumford’s classic of 1938 *The Culture of Cities*, translated into Swedish as *Stadskultur* (1940), it reached a greater, international public. In 1944, the newly appointed director of Stockholm’s urban planning office Sven Markelius contacted the Danish architect Otto Danneskiold-Samsøe, active in Sweden from 1937 to 1953 and a connoisseur of contemporary English planning. Eager to translate the principles of forty years of garden city activity by Frederick J. Osborn and others as well as the neighbourhood planning, applied in London’s M.A.R.S. plan (1933 – 1942) and the Abercrombie plan (1943), into a Swedish context, he persuaded Danneskiold-Samsøe to write a book. The publication was to present the ideas of neighbourhood unit, community centre, zoning of built-up areas in enclaves without trespassing traffic, and the laws regulating urban development in and around London. When finished in 1945, *Nutida engelsk samhällsplanering*



d 6/2. Förslag till schemaplan för stadsdel med förortsbaneförbindelse.

Totalt invånare:	
Hyreshus	ca 10,200 62 %
Radhus + Småstugor	» 6,300 38 %
<b>Totalt</b>	<b>ca 16,500</b>

Byggskearealer:	
Hyreshus	ca 46,0 ha
Radhus + småstugor	» 80,0 »
Stadsdelscentrum	» 1,0 »
Grannskapscentrum (3 st)	» 1,0 »
Skolor (2 st)	» 5,0 »
Drott och fest	» 7,0 »
Industri	» 16,5 »
Kolonilotter	» 11,0 »
<b>Totalt</b>	<b>ca 170,0 ha</b>

Befolkningstäthet:	
Hyreshus	220 inv/ha
Radhus + småstugor	80 »/»
Avstånd från stadsdelscentrum:	
Till hyreshusgräns	450 m
» småstugegräns	900 »
» industri	600 »
» kolonilotter	600 »
Avstånd från grannskapscentrum:	
Till småstugegräns	300 m
» stadsdelscentrum	600 »

Symboler:

- Ⓜ Butikscentrum, större
- Ⓜ » , mindre
- Ⓜ Kulturellt centrum
- Ⓜ Postanstalt
- Ⓜ Hantverkeri
- Ⓜ Industri
- Ⓜ Tvättereri, större
- Ⓜ » , mindre
- Ⓜ Servicestation för bilar
- Ⓜ Daghem
- Ⓜ Folkskola
- Ⓜ Idrottsplats
- Ⓜ Träningsplan
- Ⓜ Tennisplan
- Ⓜ Lekplats, större
- Ⓜ » , mindre
- Ⓜ Kolonilotter

Stockholm's preliminary general plan *Stockholm in the Future – principles of the Outline Plan of Stockholm* (1945) presents an example on this type of zoned planning scheme, divided into different functions and neighbourhood units, used as a guideline for the outline of Vällingby. Linked to the city via a *Tunnelbana* connection, the model proposes rental housing in apartments for 10,200 people (62 percent of the inhabitants), while row houses and single-family houses comprise 6,300 persons (38 percent of the inhabitants). There would be 220 inhabitants per hectare for rental apartments and 80 inhabitants per hectare for row houses and single-family houses. Maximum distance to the district centre (*stadsdelscentrum*) would be 450 metres for the former and 900 metres for the latter; 600 metres for industry as well as for allotment gardens. Intersected by a *Tunnelbana* line, a post office, a cultural centre, craftsmen's workshops, a school, a sports ground, a tennis court, two big playgrounds, and a large laundrette around a bigger district centre, would constitute the core area with rental apartments. Meanwhile, smaller neighbourhood centres (*grannskapscentrum*), kindergartens, playgrounds, and laundrettes were to be spread out in three surrounding neighbourhood units with row houses and single-family houses. Special zones would contain allotment gardens and industrial areas plus another school and a service station for cars. (See Stockholm's stadsplanekontor: **Det fremtida Stockholm – Riktlinjer för Stockholms generalplan**. Stadskollegiets utlåtanden och memorial – bihang, 1945, No 9. The report was reprinted in 1946 as **Stockholm in the Future – principles of the Outline Plan of Stockholm** with English captions and summary.) (Stockholm's City Planning Administration: **Generalplan för Stockholm 1952**. Stockholm: Stockholms stads stadsplanekontor, 1952.)

(*Contemporary English Society Planning*), with foreword by Markelius, became a 'bible' for new municipal laws on urban planning in Stockholm.<sup>38</sup>

From 1944, a key contact was established with Patrick Abercrombie, the planner of the *Abercrombie Plan* of 1943, the *Greater London Plan* of 1944, and the *County of London Plan*, co-authored with Forshaw in 1944. While the war was still hot, Abercrombie sent these plans and other documents on English planning to Stockholm's urban planning office via coal ships. Göran Sidenbladh, Markelius' collaborator and successor at Stockholm's urban planning office from 1954 and co-planner of Vällingby, describes the visionary post-war period:

*'Sweden did not avoid to get smitten by the eagerness and the seriousness by which the war-torn Europe tackled the problem of the building of New Towns. Early on, we tried to find literature on this topic, in particular from the United Kingdom. Some of these books came as returns on the fast boats transporting coal from Lysekil to England... (T)he radical city builders – waited on tearing down old ruined mess and really build new and rational, regardless*

38. In a lecture given to a British audience in 1949, Markelius and Sidenbladh acknowledge the impact of British and American urbanism in Stockholm/Sweden: 'Contemporary planning in Stockholm – and in Sweden as a whole – is greatly influenced by the ideas and work of British and American planners. Lewis Mumford's *The Culture of Cities* has been translated and published here, and the ideas contained in it have been widely circulated. During the war, contacts with England were rare and difficult, but we were able to acquaint ourselves with many of the plans for the reconstruction of Britain's blitzed cities, and our new Building Law of June 11th 1947 was much influenced by Britain's "Town and Country Planning Bill of the same year.'

Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenbladh: "Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 62.

*of earlier real estate divisions and ownerships...In their workings, the new ideas were not so new. However, we were eagerly susceptible and they fitted to the existing problems of 1945. They provided a programmatic foundation of both the commissioned general plan and the plans for Stockholm's new suburbs. The key word was 'neighbourhood planning', grannskapsplanering.'*<sup>39</sup>

In January 1946, the English New Town Committee finished its first report, giving directions for the construction of Stevenage, the first New Town north of London. According to Sidenbladh, Stevenage became a kind of 'older brother' that Vällingby looked up to while finding its own identity - the English New Town became a standard reference to its Swedish 'baby brother'.<sup>40</sup> By the same token, social reforms in Sweden were influenced by the case of Britain. As Alva Myrdal argues at a conference in Britain in 1949:

*'Social reforms have to create good surroundings for people to live in and secure economies to live on. With particular regard to the last mentioned phase – social security – we started by looking towards Great Britain as the model country...There are, however, two further developments with regard to social reform which have no counterparts in your country. One is that in line with Swedish traditions we have much less private benevolence – just as we have less private enterprise – and much more social responsibility...The second difference has to do with the new phase of the social family policy, as we*

39. Göran Sidenbladh: *Planering för Stockholm 1923 – 1958*. Stockholm: Liber Förlag, 1981, p. 236 - 237 (author's translation).

40. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

*have definitely moved from the therapeutic, reparational outlook on social reform to what might be called an investment attitude. The nation as such is willing to invest in health, efficiency and happiness of the next generation.'*<sup>41</sup>

As collective happiness became a state investment in Sweden, the influence also went the other way. The impressive number of articles on Scandinavia and Sweden in the British architectural journal *Architectural Review* testifies to the great interest in modernist architecture of the northern country. Not least the case of Stockholm had an effect on post-war Britain's effort to resurrect as a modern welfare state after war wounds and a traumatic process of decolonisation.<sup>42</sup> 'Swedish Modern' was seen as the logical architectural expression of the resurrecting British welfare state.<sup>43</sup> In the article "The New Empericism: Sweden's Latest Style", *Architectural Review*, 1947, J.M. Richards salute Sven Backström and Markelius as 'more objective than functionalists' and as architects who 'bring back another science, that of psychology, into the picture.'<sup>44</sup> In April 1946, the New Town Committee visited Stockholm's urban planning office in order to discuss mutual challenges and tie personal bonds. Peers like Lord Reith, the spokesperson of the New Town Committee, Lewis Silkin, the Labour Minister of Town and Country Planning in the United Kingdom, and an entourage of experts escorted Patrick Abercrombie. The foreign interest in Stockholm remained a trump card Markelius and his staff could play in most situations of the political game with decision makers.<sup>45</sup>

In the summer of the same year, the visit was reciprocated: Arne S. Lundberg, the state secretary in the communication department, and members of the City of Stockholm's urban planning office accompanied Markelius to the urban planning congress in Hastings arranged by The International Federation of Housing and Planning. Planners from across the world presented their visions for a new paradigm, discussing the English planning models in relation to the age of reconstruction and renewal. In this forum daring tabula rasa plan of Nedre Norrmalm as well as

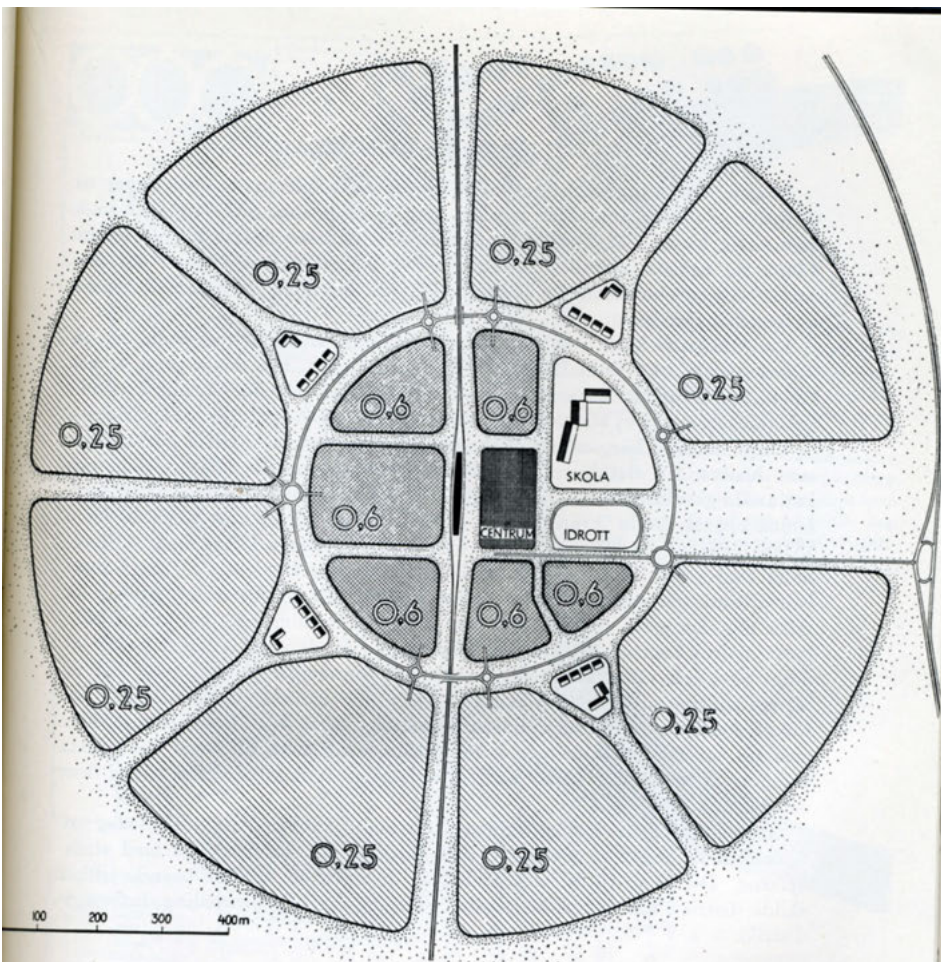
41. Alva Myrdal: "Development of Population and Social Reform in Sweden", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 22.

42. See Lionel Esher: *A Broken Wave: The Rebuilding of England 1940 – 1980*. London: Viking, 1981 and the Architectural Association student J. Millar: "Visit to Sweden", *Plan* 3, 1946, p. 4 – 7.

43. The architectural historian Eric Mumford estimates the 'Swedish Modern' as an inspiration of the English New Towns: 'Many housing and planning initiatives similar to those in Sweden were begun, such as the implementation of the New Towns program after 1946...' Eric Mumford: *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

44. J.M. Richards: "The New Empericism: Sweden's Latest Style", in *Architectural Review*, 101, June 1947, p. 199.

45. Eva Rudberg: *Op.cit. Sven Markelius, arkitekt*. Stockholm: Arkitektur Förlag, 1989, p. 156.



Schemaplan för ett förortssamhälle med cirka 10,000 invånare. Området är avsett för sådana som arbeta i stadens centrala delar, varför bebyggelsen är grupperad kring en förortsbanestation. Intill denna ligger centrum, folkskola och idrottsplats. Närmast stationen är bostadsbebyggelsen relativt tät — exploateringsstal 0,6 — med hyreshus utrustade med kollektiva anordningar. Utanför den ringformiga matargatan ligger gles bebyggda områden — exploateringsstal 0,25 — med radhus och en del småstugor. Varje delområde innehåller där cirka 1,000 invånare. För två sådana områden finns ett lokalt centrum med ett par livsmedelsbutiker och ett daghem för barn. Gatorna står i förbindelse med en huvudtrafikled — längst till höger. Gångvägarna skall gå inom parkstråken — de prickade ytorna — skilda från gatorna, så att man kan nå skola, centrum och förortsbana utan att komma i kontakt med körtrafiken.

Planning scheme for a suburb with a population of 10,000. (Stockholm's City Planning Administration: **Det fremtida Stockholm – Riktlinjer för Stockholms generalplan.** Stadskollegiets utlåtanden och memorial – bihang, 1945, No 9. The report was reprinted in 1946 as **Stockholm in the Future – principles of the Outline Plan of Stockholm** with English captions and summary.)



Vällingby was built on old farmland.

preliminary sketches of a general plan and some detailed plans for Vällingby caught the attention of an international public.<sup>46</sup>

According to Sidenbladh, later a co-planner of Tensta-Rinkeby, the Hastings experience 'had fundamental impact on the layout of the suburbs in Stockholm during the 1950s and 1960s.'<sup>47</sup> The impression manifested as planning around a main community centre and the distribution of smaller district centres.<sup>48</sup> Although Stockholm's urban planning office was particularly inspired by the New Towns of London, the English model was adjusted in significant ways: Whilst the British capital chose to expand via independent and self-governed New Towns, the Swedish capital designed a series of satellite towns managed by the City of Stockholm. Until this day, Vällingby and other New Towns have remained satellite towns governed from the town hall of Stockholm. Concomitantly, the Swedish New Towns would keep their 'umbilical cord' to the 'mother-city' through the construction of a ramified public transport network of the *Tunnelbana*, the underground railway.<sup>49</sup> The difference between the independent English New Towns and the semi-independent Swedish New

46. Ibid., p. 156.

47. Göran Sidenbladh: Op.cit., p. 238 (author's translation).

48. Thus, Sidenbladh also mentions the publication **Community Centres** by the Ministry of Education in London of 1946 as an important source in the planning of Swedish New Towns. Other key texts debated at Stockholm's urban planning office were books such as **Bygg Bättre Samhällen (Build Better Societies)** by C.F. Ahlberg et al. and Uno Åhrén's **Ett planmässigt samhällsbyggande (A Society Building According to the Plan)**, 1945, in addition to sociological studies like Gunnar Boalt et al.'s **Sociologi (Sociology)**, 1951, where Edmund Dahlström and Roland von Euler discuss the concept 'to plan to the benefit of the majority.' Ibid., p. 238.

49. Sven Markelius recognised that Stockholm's satellite towns would differ from their British counterparts: 'I studied the New Towns, of course, with great interest, but the solution in Stockholm had to satisfy the special conditions of Stockholm... I have no feeling that Vällingby is copied from the New Towns, even though they were planned at about the same time and there are some general ideas they have in common.'

Sven Markelius in David Pass: **Vällingby and Farsta – from Idea to Reality: The New Community Development Process in Stockholm.** Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, UK: MIT Press, 1969, p. 116.



### Stockholms stads struktur

Stadsrådets indelning i stadsdelgrupper av sådan storleksordning att de kan utgöra underlag för verkliga stor-centra är ett nytt och väsentligt drag i Stockholms stadsplanering. Genom decentralisering av olika verksamheter eftersträvas inom begränsade enheter balans mellan arbetsplatser och bostadsbestånd. Även innerstadens sanering planeras med denna utgångspunkt. Det centrala arbetsområdet, innerstadens bostadsområden och de närmaste förorterna i väster och söder utgör ur dessa synpunkter en lämplig enhet (inom heldragen gräns). Utanför denna utbygges ytterstadsdelar med en viss grad av egenförsörjning med arbetsplatser, kulturella anläggningar m. m. (inom sträckade gränser). Dessa stadsdelar eller stadsdelgrupper är från söder räknat Farsta, Högdalen, Märhöjden-Midsommarkransen-Sätra-Jakobsberg samt Vällingbykomplexet omfattande de nya stadsdelarna Bläckeberg-Räcksta-Vällingby-Hässelby Gård-Hässelby Strand med »uppland» av omgivande äldre samhällsbyggnader: västra Bromma, norra Spånga och gamla Hässelby.

### The structure of the Town of Stockholm

The division of the whole town area into groups of suburbs, of such a size that they can conveniently form the basis for main centres is a new and important feature in the town planning of Stockholm. By decentralisation of various activities, balance within limited units between working place and residential quarters is aimed at. The redevelopment of the inner town is also planned on this basis. The central working district, the residential area of the inner town and the nearest suburbs in the west and south thus form a suitable unit (area indicated by unbroken line). Outside this, suburbs are built with a certain degree of self-support with working places, cultural establishments, etc. (areas indicated by lines of short dashes). These suburbs, or groups of suburbs, are, counted from the south, Farsta, Högdalen, Märhöjden-Midsommarkransen-Sätra-Jakobsberg and the Vällingby group comprising the new suburbs Bläckeberg-Räcksta-Vällingby-Hässelby Gård-Hässelby Strand with hinterland of surrounding older built-up areas: western Bromma, northern Spånga and old Hässelby.

Plan from 1956 indicating Stockholm's planned expansion with satellite towns, here referred to as 'group of suburbs' that can form the basis for main centres. (Byggmästaren, A4, 1956.)

Towns become evident in the scepticism towards the *Tunnelbana* expressed by British consultants. According to *Vällingby Centrum's* first director Albert Aronsson, they mistrusted the easy access, created by this public transport line, linking Vällingby to the big attractor, the capital city of Stockholm. In their view, this would mean that the urban centre would overshadow Vällingby's main centre. In spite of such arguments, the Swedish New Town experiment seemed to work.<sup>50</sup>

## Re-writing the ABC in Vällingby

Stockholm's virgin New Town was made possible when the City bought the land districts of Räcksta Gård in 1927 and Hässelby with belonging farms in 1931. In January 1, 1949, the land area officially became a part of Stockholm County when most of the poor farmer municipality Spånga was merged with the City, while smaller portions of the area were merged with the municipalities of Solna, Sollentuna and Sundbyberg after years of negotiations. Prior to the planning of Vällingby, other plans had been proposed for the land area, formally named Södra Spånga (Southern Spånga). In 1940, one suggestion was to fill up the entire site with dense housing – including the recreational area of Grimsta Woods. At the time, the *Tunnelbana* was not yet in the ladle, so this plan depended on a costly and complex system of pick-up busses to transport more than half of the estimated population in the area.<sup>51</sup> Relying on the *Tunnelbana* as a structuring 'spine' and main transport artery, later plan versions of 1946, 1948, 1949 and 1950 were more sustainable on an economical and infrastructural level. By 1950, the planning work reached a stage where it was accepted as the general plan of Södra Spånga, and in 1952 changes and additions were added, largely constituting the final layout of Vällingby.

Prior to Vällingby there were some historical cases of 'satellite town-like' developments in Stockholm's periphery, connected to the city via a public transport line. One case is Sundbyberg, established along the new train line to Västerås in 1876, by 1920 merged with ordinary, neighbouring suburbs. Another case is Nynäshamn (1900) at the south coast of Stockholm, a self-governing community for industrial workers,

50. Thus, Aronsson recalls intense discussions with English experts: 'There were no previous examples. Neither in this country nor on the Continent. Nor over there, in the USA. Britain completed its expansion of its satellite towns decisively. It was true and interesting. USA built its shopping centres without social life or cultural elements. Vällingby was different with its cultural and social content. The English New Towns are satellites, deliberately isolated from the city. In 1951 I visited some of these New Towns in order to share some of the experiences and preferably also some viewpoints on Vällingby, existing as a plan at the time. – The plan of Vällingby has failed, was the blunt message given to me by the chief architect of one of these New Towns. Why? Because it will be linked to Stockholm via a first-class *Tunnelbana*. Those living in Vällingby will turn their back on their own centre, take the *T-bana* to City. It was a black day. It wasn't only about Vällingby's reputation, however, the entire new program with a network of town areas around Stockholm, infrastructurally connected to City. Yet, after some years of excitement it turned out that our planners had judged the social organisation of our country, the people's wishes and needs correctly. The New Town principles persevered.'

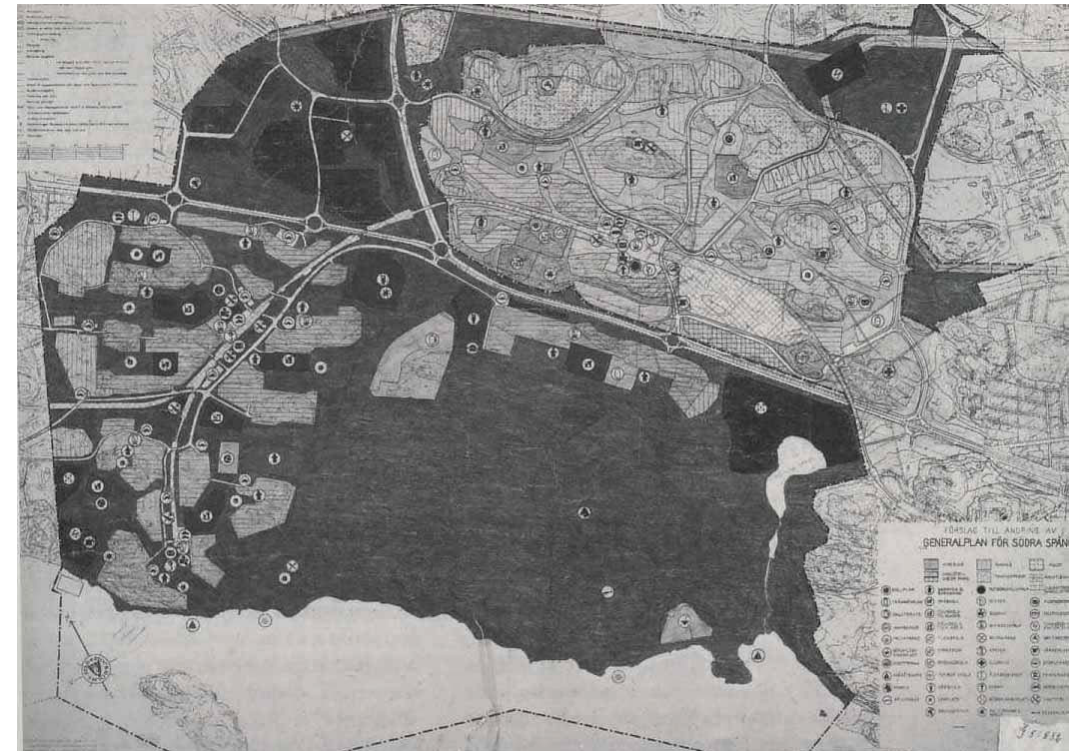
Albert Aronsson: "Från Bondby till Stor-Vällingby", in Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 1 (author's translation).

51. Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 6.



Masterplan for Stockholm (1950) with future satellites and indication of their planned population. Järvafältet north of Vällingby where Tensta-Rinkeby would later locate is still a white blank.

Revised masterplan for Södra Spånga alias Vällingby. (Ulrika Sax: "Vällingby - ett levande drama". Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998.)





Masterplan of Vällingby, scale 1:10,000. The red areas represent *Vällingby Centrum* and adjacent district centres, distributed like pearls on a string along the blue *Tunnelbana* line. From east at Tunnelbana stations Blackeberg, Räcksta, Vällingby (with Grimsta), Hässelby Gård, and Hässelby Strand. The brown stains mark working areas. The green-yellow areas indicate areas for cultural and leisure activities. (*Byggmästaren*, A4, 1956.)

erected and controlled by a private corporation together with the train line, linking Nynäshamn to Stockholm (1901).<sup>52</sup> Yet, when Sven Markelius, assisted by his ‘right-hand man’ and successor Göran Sidenbladh, and his supporting team at Stockholm’s urban planning office, initiated the planning of Vällingby there were few contemporary examples of urban experiments in a comparable scale and scope. Although the planners were acquainted with the New Towns of London, there were only rare cases such as Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh, the double governmental town of the Indian states Punjab and Haryana, and Kitimat, an industrial town built by the Aluminium Company of Canada (Alcan) in British Columbia. Regardless of the limited reference material there was one thing that Markelius knew instantly: He stressed the importance of avoiding to foster yet another ‘sleeping town’ (*sovstad*) like the car-dependent American suburbs with the shopping mall as the only public space, mentioned by Albert Aronsson, or the modern peripheral districts built around Stockholm during the 1930s. Based on functionalistic ideas they were situated far away from traffic and industry with flats in 3 to 4-storey freestanding houses where air and light could easily flow through. In the late 1940s, sociological reports described such outer districts like Hägerstensåsen and Hökmossen as ‘sleeping towns’ because of their lack of local ties: Short of adequate workplaces and services the inhabitants were forced to commute to the City in order to work, have a good time or shop. As a result, there was no common ground for a community to evolve between the residents.<sup>53</sup> Learning from this experience, Vällingby was envisioned as a complete town section in extension to Stockholm inspired by the principles of neighbourhood planning (*grannskapsplanering*), thought to create community, well-being, and, as it were, good, democratic citizens.<sup>54</sup>

As mentioned, the neighbourhood unit was a bounded housing environment with service devices, school and other common arrangements. Together, clusters of neighbourhood units (a district) constituted the basis for a larger centre. In 1947, an important step was taken when the ‘pre-New Town’ Årsta, based on neighbourhood planning, was initiated by Uno Åhrén and projected by the architect brothers Erik and Tore Ahlsén. *Årsta Centrum* was the first community centre in Sweden, combining the now classic New Town facilities: health care, childcare, medical care, dental surgeries, shops, a chemist and a post office. Yet, without the *Tunnelbana*, and with only a small

amount of private enterprises and local workplaces, *Årsta Centrum* had focused too biased on public services. Instead of becoming a prototype for *Vällingby Centrum*, it became a living proof of the argument that future community centres would have to be backed by large commercial developments. After this experience, Vällingby’s planners collaborated consciously with Stockholm Retail Federation. Thus, a lesson taught by Årsta was the rule-of-thumb that the success of a new satellite town relied on certain aspects, defined by Markelius and Sidenbladh in the following:

*‘One of the most important conditions for the successful establishment of a satellite town is that it should attract a fairly large population within a reasonably short time. The general view is that such a town should have not less than 20,000 inhabitants, and that the initial rapid growth should not slow-down before it has reached 10,000. Local industries should be able to provide jobs for both men and women.’<sup>55</sup>*

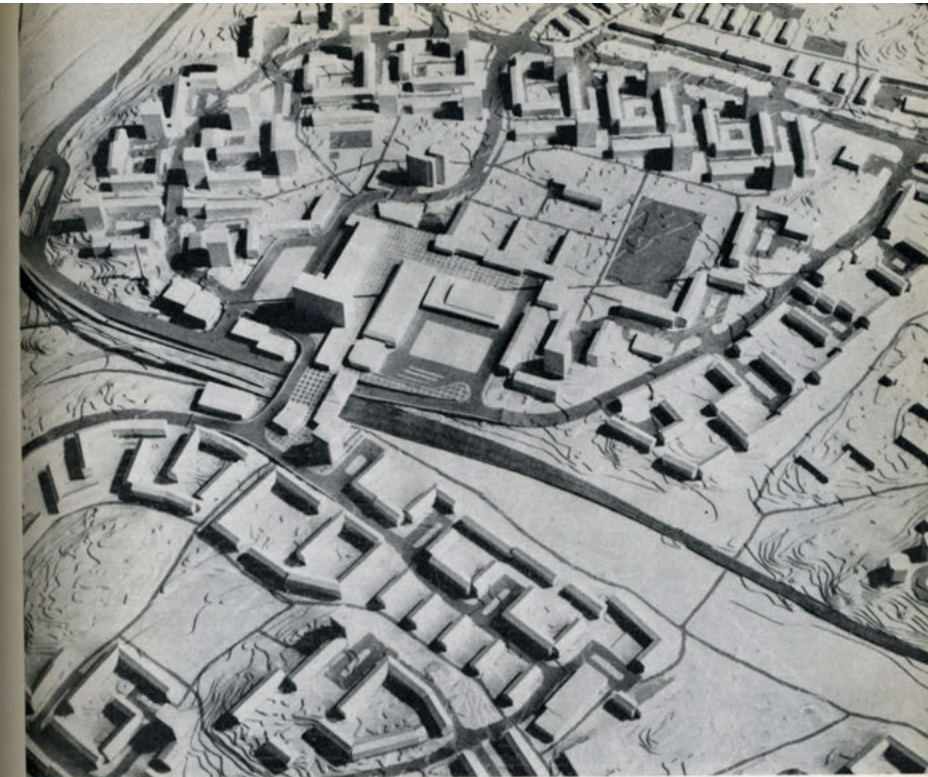
Still, compared to previous experience of neighbourhood planning, in particular Årsta’s attempt at satellite town planning guided by these principles, Vällingby was unique in its scope. Exceeding the range of most urban developments in the world and by far those in Scandinavia, the ambition was to transform a tabula rasa - old farmland at the southern part of the land area Spånga - into a real town with all the service devices, required for a happy, modern life of the average Swede. Joining five main districts plus one, developed separately a few years earlier, the so-called ‘Vällingby Group’ (*Vällingbygruppen*) was planned to work as a partially independent town, inventing its own life, while physically connected to the capital city via the *Tunnelbana*. Whilst Årsta had merely been a district centre for a cluster of neighbourhood units, Vällingby ambitiously aimed at becoming a *storcentrum* (literally *large centre*), integrating home, work, shopping and leisure on different scales: at the one hand a local ‘anchor’, providing for a local population, and at the other hand a regional attractor, servicing a population spread over several districts in an area of approx. 20 square kilometres: Disposing over an almost uninterrupted area of farmland of approx. 10,36

52. Both are examples are mentioned by Markelius in Sven Markelius: "Stockholm's struktur", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, A3.

53. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 25.

54. Alternative strategies to plan Stockholm's expansion had been suggested: In the publication *En planmässig samhällsbygganda* (*Systematically planned society building*) (1945), Uno Åhrén shared Gropius' preference for planned, village-like communities, presumably creating social and collaborative individuals and workers: 'If one wanted the opposite characteristic one would recommend urban sprawl, which offers neither a natural collective context nor social interests in common.' Meanwhile, staff members at Stockholm's urban planning office had considered an expansion of existing urban hubs in the region such as Södertälje (18,000 inhabitants in 1949) in tandem with the development of satellite towns, built from a tabula rasa condition. Uno Åhrén: *En planmässig samhällsbygganda*, Stockholm 1945, quoted and translated in Jim Kemeny: "The Political Construction of Collective Residence: The Case of Sweden", in *Housing and Social Theory*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 145 and Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenbladh: "Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*, Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 76.

55. Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenbladh: "Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*, Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 75 and 78.



Övan och på vidstående sida: Högdalens centrum. Exempel på ett försök att i de olika kvarterskomplexen kring gårdsbildningar kombinera användningen av 3- och 12-våningshus med 2-våningslängor för garage samt atalier- och liknande arbetslokaler. Parkstråk, lekplatser mellan centrum och den samlade hyreshusbebyggelsen. Planskilda gångförbindelser

Above and on the opposite page: Högdalen's centre. Example of an attempt to combine in the various block formations around courtyards the use of 3- and 12-storey buildings with 2-storey buildings for garages, studios and similar working premises. Green belts and playgrounds between centre and concentrated flatblock areas. Footpaths cross traffic streets on different levels

nings smalhus förekommer i begränsad omfattning och därutöver en bred zon av enfamiljshus huvudsakligen av radhustyp.

Stadsplan och arkitektur

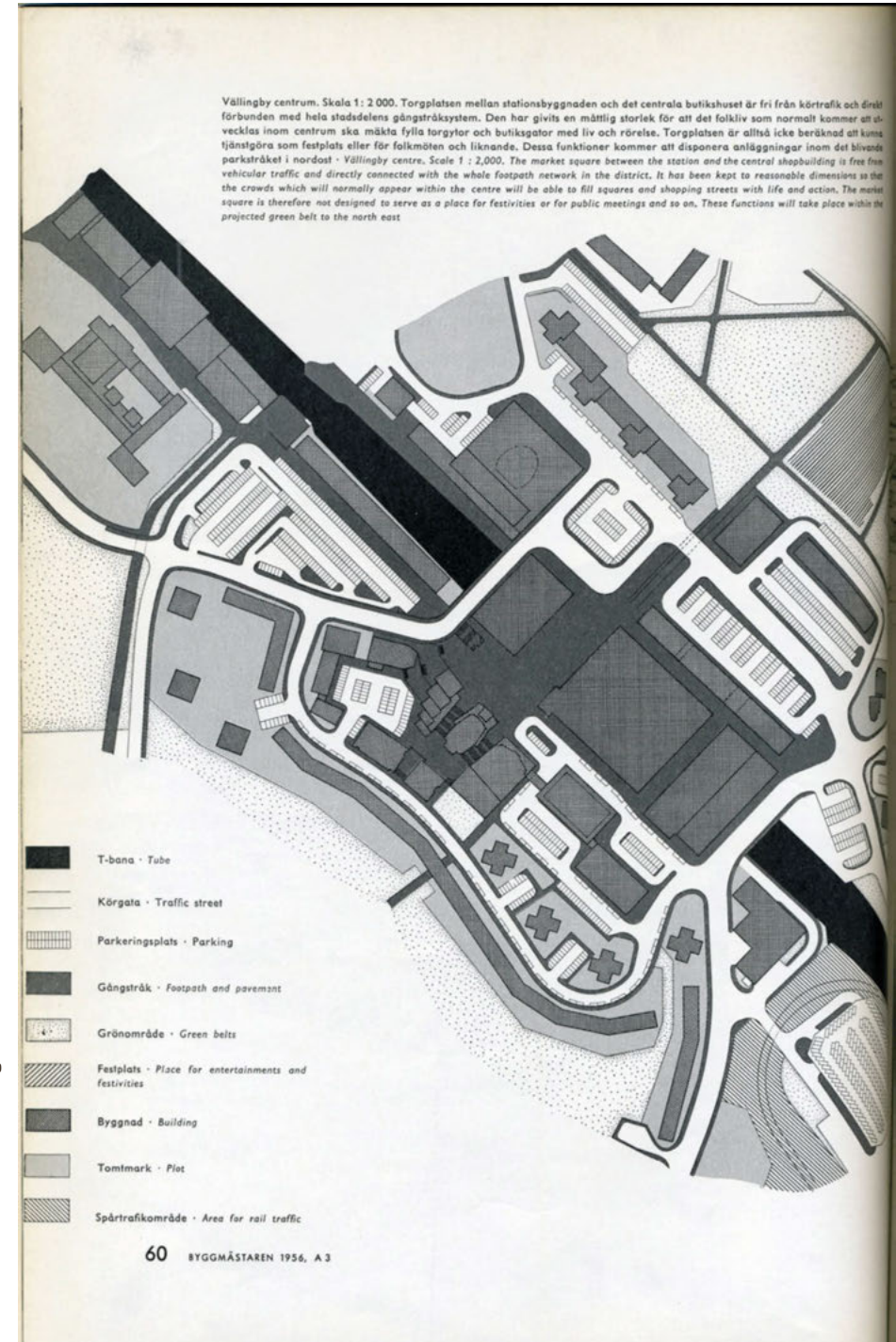
Stadsplanens uppgift är ju inte bara att skapa garantier för att vissa allmänna praktiska och hygieniska krav blir uppfyllda i fråga om förläggning, dimensionering, belysning, trafikutrymmen, friområden etc. Den har också en annan uppgift: att skapa miljö. Mycken och berättigad kritik har riktats mot lamellhusrader och punkthusgrupper, som i sin schematiska områdesplanering och arkitektur gett 30- och 40-talets stadsdelar i de flesta svenska städer en prägel av trist enformighet. Denna blir särskilt kännbar, då den kommit att stå i motsättning till en närbelägen äldre bebyggelse med förfina skala och en »inbodd» och uppvuxen behagfullhet.

Under de senare årens planering av nya bostadsområden i Stockholm har strävandena gått ut på

att åstadkomma slutenhet och rumsbildning inom begränsade enheter. Husblocken kring en sluten gårdsbildning får icke lamellplanens konsekventa solinriktning. Med smalhusets genomgående bostadsplaner behöver detta icke innebära olägenhet. Stundom kan variationer vara till fördel genom att olika väderstreckslägen kan motsvara växlande vanor och önskemål hos de boende.

I de nya ytterstadsdelarnas stadsplaner har höghuset som redan framhållits grupperats samman med lägre hus i två eller tre våningar. Avsikten har bl. a. varit att trots höghusens stora skala åstadkomma en lättöverskådlig närmiljö med slutna, vindskyddade uterum. Ett begränsat antal människor rör sig i varje särskild enhet. Det kan finnas delade meningar om vilket som är att föredraga, den intimare skalan och den naturliga grannkontakten, man på detta sätt uppnår, eller anonymiteten och den känsla av distans och rymd, som kan ernås i en miljö dikterad av höghusens skala, med stora mått och en stor anhopning av människor. Det finns anledning att tro att den

Sketch of Vällingby where you can see the distribution of different typologies: C = centre, H = multi-family houses, R = terrace houses, LC = local centres, V = villas, I = industries. (Markelius, Sven: "Stockholms Struktur. Synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem", in **Byggmästaren**, 1956, A3.)



Vällingby centrum. Skala 1 : 2 000. Torgplatsen mellan stationsbyggnaden och det centrala butikshuset är fri från körtrafik och direkt förbunden med hela stadsdelens gångströksystem. Den har givits en måttlig storlek för att det folkliv som normalt kommer att utvecklas inom centrum ska mäta fylla torgytor och butiksgrator med liv och rörelse. Torgplatsen är alltså icke beräknad att kunna tjänstgöra som festplats eller för folkmöten och liknande. Dessa funktioner kommer att disponera anläggningar inom det blivande parkstråket i nordost - Vällingby centre. Scale 1 : 2,000. The market square between the station and the central shopbuilding is free from vehicular traffic and directly connected with the whole footpath network in the district. It has been kept to reasonable dimensions so that the crowds which will normally appear within the centre will be able to fill squares and shopping streets with life and action. The market square is therefore not designed to serve as a place for festivities or for public meetings and so on. These functions will take place within the projected green belt to the north east

Plan of *Vällingby Centrum* where you can see how the *Tunnelbana* runs below the main shopping building. The market square between the station and the central shopping building is kept pedestrian and is linked to the whole footpath network within the district. Festivities take place in the green belt to the north east. Scale 1:2000. Courtesy **Byggmästaren** 1956. (Markelius, Sven: "Stockholms Struktur. Synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem", in **Byggmästaren**, 1956, A3.)



Beautiful nature intersects the pathways between the Vällingby Group's districts.

square kilometres some 14 kilometres northwest of downtown Stockholm, the 'Vällingby core area' - a.k.a. inner the districts Vällingby, Räcksta and Grimsta - was planned for a population of approx. 23,000. Although Vällingby is usually associated with this core area, the *storcentrum* community centre, *Vällingby Centrum*, was designed as a shopping, leisure and work centre for 60,000 more people, accommodated in a series of interacting districts plus hinterland: First, the *Vällingby Group* constituted by the districts of Räcksta, Grimsta, Vällingby, Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand (in the beginning named Loviselund), planned for approx. 44,000 inhabitants. Second, the district Blackeberg, planned for 9,000 people parallel to but independently of Vällingby in 1946. Third, the hinterland with a population of around 20,000, inhabiting older residential areas in Hässelbyköping, Norra Spånga and Ängby.<sup>56</sup>

Like a giant croissant, the different districts of the Vällingby Group plus Blackeberg encloses the Grimsta Woods recreational area with its 2 kilometres shore towards the Lake of Mälaren, marking their southern border. Detailed planning took place within each district, equipped with a smaller district centre close to the *Tunnelbana* station, and subdivided into neighbourhood units for 2,000 – 4,000 inhabitants.<sup>57</sup> Protected from vehicles via traffic separation, each neighbourhood constitutes a functional unity around a small neighbourhood centre with park and playground, schools and childcare.<sup>58</sup> Integration between the main districts is obtained via the *Tunnelbana*, linking them together as well as to the 'mother city' of Stockholm. Thus, the *Tunnelbana* line run by tunnel under Blackeberg, viaduct over the central traffic artery Bergslagsvägen, under *Vällingby Centrum* and terminates at Hässelby Strand with view over the lake. At a conference in Lisbon (1952), Markelius described the key aspects of this broadening of the neighbourhood planning principles, constituting the so-called 'ABC-Town' concept, applied to Vällingby:

*'In the planning of residential quarters, the main goal, as I see it, should be to create plans that provide possibilities for building a townscape, or a milieu, with all its components, that satisfy the demands*

56. Sven Markelius: "Stockholm" s struktur", in *Byggnästaren*, 1956, A3, p. 53.

57. Svenska Bostäder: *Vällingby*. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 6.

58. Already 12 years after the inauguration of Vällingby, many of the local shops had to close due to growing competition of the larger centres. Ibid.

*we have on life to-day...A residential quarter should, as far as possible, meet the required dwelling standard of to-day from the sociological point of view, taking into account not only building technique and the layout of the different dwelling groups, but the layout of the residential quarters as a whole and the provision of shops, communal premises, public buildings, playgrounds and sports fields and other open spaces. Within reasonable limits, the wishes of the population concerning types of dwellings, houses and buildings should be met. The proximity of residence to the workplace must be considered as one of the most vital problems requiring solution and an important point is, therefore, to strive for a suitable balance between dwelling and workplace within a limited area.*<sup>59</sup>

Pioneering the 'ABC-Town' concept, Vällingby was planned as an integral, sustainable whole of public services, local workplaces, private enterprises, a varied architecture, and careful landscaping. Thus, ABC was short for *Arbeta* = work, *Bostad* = housing and *Centrum* = centre, an ensemble that would make Vällingby famous. Intending to create a higher number of local workplaces compared to other parts of the Stockholm region, new jobs were to be generated by local industries, offices, services and institutions, estimated to employ around half of the local work force. In line with this ideal of 'co-planning' and linkage of different functions and aspects of life, 'integration' (as opposed to segregation), indicating harmony and synthesis, became a key word in Vällingby. In Markelius' opinion it was of utter importance for successful New Town planning from a tabula condition to create a modern and diverse housing environment in pact with a rich natural landscape.<sup>60</sup> Harmony was also planned in accordance with new ideals of

59. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in **The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter**, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 36.

60. In an article in **Byggmästaren** Markelius argues: 'Only where nature has been generous is it possible to establish right from the beginning that co-operation between architecture and landscaping which, in the openness of the modern milieu, is an essential factor to comfort and happiness and which has to wait when, as so often happens, one builds on open fields.'  
Sven Markelius: "Stockholm's struktur", in **Byggmästaren**, 1956, A3, p. 64.

happiness, envisioning life as a balance between work and leisure time, the urban and the rural. Thus, the ABC-Town concept resonated with the welfare ideals forwarded by Markelius' old collaborator of the *Collective Housing Unit* Alva Myrdal at a British housing conference (1949):

*'[W]e must look forward to the time when we shall not plan life for production activities as the utmost aim, but instead for recreation, personal life and private happiness...it is my personal belief that we have not given the architects a real foundation for their construction and planning if we have not given them an idea of how to live, not merely how to build.'*<sup>61</sup>

On the basis of this visionary and wishful 'welfare planning', linking life and architecture, the first 6 families of New Town pioneers moved into the street Jämtlandsgatan 70, July 1, 1952. October 1, 1952 the first shop opened at Jämtlandsgatan 120, and in October 26 of the same year, the first *Tunnelbana* line Hötorget-Vällingby was on full tracks - 12 times per hour and 24 minutes journey to downtown Stockholm.

## **Welfare Planning**

While the general plan for the land area Södra Spånga (a.k.a Vällingby) was accepted in 1950, some adjustments and changes were added in 1952. In parallel, detailed plans for the different districts and neighbourhood units were produced by the architects Carl-Frederik Ahlberg, Hans Uddenberg, Per Holmgren and the traffic engineer Carl-Henrik af Klercker. Similar to the planning scheme, presented by Markelius in the architectural journal *Byggmästaren* in 1945, the general plan for Södra Spånga (1950) intended row houses and villas to become principal housing types in the New Town:

61. Alva Myrdal: "Development of Population and Social Reform in Sweden", in **Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture**. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 29.

*‘Relatively concentrated rental house dwellings should be suitably connected to a main centre of shops, social services and community spaces for leisure and entertainment. A park belt around this central area should leave space for schools, kindergartens and day care for children, playgrounds, and sport stadiums. Outside this park belt row houses with minor shops, garages, crafts and small industry companies, kindergartens, etc. Villa and single-family house areas are directed to the more peripheral spaces.’<sup>62</sup>*

This procedure was in line with surveys, indicating that a majority of Swedes – social and economical background notwithstanding - preferred to live in single-family houses, situated in a green environment.<sup>63</sup> In spite of his Social Democratic ideals, Markelius largely agreed on this viewpoint: the general plan for Södra Spånga of 1950 suggested a higher percentage of single-family houses than what was habitual at the time.<sup>64</sup> A considerable part of these single-family houses were to be built in the Grimsta Woods. Yet, other considerations became decisive. Although, Vällingby was a ‘love child’ conceived at a moment of innovation, pragmatic concerns like time schedule, economy, and optimal land use also shaped the outcome of the New Town experiment. In the revised plan of 1952, the number of inhabitants, living within the districts of the Vällingby Group, was raised from 42,000 to 44,000. At the same time the planned construction of single-family houses in the Grimsta Woods was put on a halt, so the green space could be used as a recreational area with playgrounds, riding clubs, small marinas, and a swimming pool. As a result, the level of density was raised in Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand, while more apartment blocks and lamella

62. FIND??? Sven Markelius: Byggmästeran, p. ??? (author's translation).

63. Peter Hall: Op. cit., p. 879.

64. In 1952, Markelius advocated for the single-family house as ‘ideal housing’ and thus a significant part of a New Town: ‘The one family house (detached, semidetached or row house) is obviously the best answer to families with several children and sociologically represents ideal housing. Although it requires considerably more ground per family than any collective housing, it should be found in at least limited numbers in all suburban developments... Even if strictly economical use of the land based on higher densities ought to be planned, it should not be carried so far that the quality and social standards of the newly developed residential areas are imperilled. A sufficiently extensive programme of one-family house building must always be maintained.’  
Sven Markelius: “Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter”, in **The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter**, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 37 - 38.



High-rises are numerous in the outer, younger districts Hässelby Gård and – in this case – Hässelby Strand where houses rise gradually in terraces from Lake Mälär.



Many houses in Hässelby Strand have lake view.





Hässelby Strand  
towards Lake  
Mälaren.

houses were built in the two outer districts.<sup>65</sup>

Most urgent, yet, was the guarantee of an adequate population, accommodated within an acceptable radius of the *storcentrum* or community centre of *Vällingby Centrum*, concentrating the majority of the public services offered. After protracted discussions at the City of Stockholm's urban planning office, with many protests in favour of the proposed 'single-family house solution' by the director of Stockholm's real estate office Axel Dahlberg, it was also decided to increase the level of density in the core area (Vällingby, Grimsta and Råcksta).<sup>66</sup> As it was formulated in an official document of Markelius and his close staff member C.F. Ahlberg:

*'One condition for a main centre to evolve with progress and to claim itself as a suburban city seems to be that the local population in its close surroundings is already of a sufficient size for a commercial service beyond the standard that a normal district centre in a peripheral area can provide. In this regard, the urban planning office has strived after giving the neighbourhood Råcksta-Vällingby the most ramified built-up area and the highest number of inhabitants as possible.'*<sup>67</sup>

From these considerations the final layout emerged: A compact belt of walk-up flats in eight to ten-storey 'elevator apartments' in high-rise blocks with different kinds of collective housework service, intended for 'bachelors, spinsters and families with no or few children', encircles *Vällingby Centrum*. Presumably, these verticals would provide 'a not unwelcome emphasis on the centre from the viewpoints of orientation and advertising.'<sup>68</sup> By the same token, multi-family three-storey houses substituted many

65. As Markelius commented: 'To counterbalance the expansion of land coverage caused by the inclusion of single-family houses, it may be justifiable to give the central apartment house nucleus around the station and cultural centre a stronger concentration and higher density. The building of concentrated eight to ten storey apartment houses ought to replace to a great extent the perhaps too exclusively adopted three-storey types.'  
Ibid.

66. For details about this controversy between Stockholm's urban planning office and Axel Dahlberg see C.F. Ahlberg: "Tjänstutlåtande rörande förslag till stadsplan för del av Spånga (bostadsområde norr om Råcksta station, s. 5: 192". Document to Stockholm's urban planning office, December 9, 1949.

67. Sven Markelius and C.F. Ahlberg: "Tjänstutlåtande angående förslag till stadsplan för del av Spånga (*Vällingby Centrum*, Vällingby II), s 6:399 och s 6:402". Document to Stockholm's urban planning office, November 14, 1950, p. 3 (author's translation).

68. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in *The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter*, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 38.

of the planned single-family houses. Since detached or terraced houses require more labour and material than walk-up flats, the compromise between the single-family house and the high-rise block, the three-storey house (often lamella-houses), became the most common building type in Vällingby.<sup>69</sup> Such collective, rental housing were also more in agreement with the Social Democratic ethos of egalitarianism and collectivism. Single-family houses were often presented as 'asocial' dwelling types.<sup>70</sup> Markelius diplomatically remarked that apartments offer: 'a good, as well as inexpensive, family dwelling. It is denied, moreover, that the high apartment house is less suitable for family dwellings.' Still, he mentioned certain inconveniences of such collective dwelling types: 'e.g. the inconvenience of the lift for children in certain ages and the lack of contact between the housewife working in the home and the small children in the minor playground.'<sup>71</sup> Because people's needs vary, there would still be some single-family houses in the Vällingby Group. As argued by Markelius multiplicity and flexibility of housing types was crucial in the New Town, whereas housing sections were planned individually and experimentally:

*'The use of different types of dwellings is dependent on many factors. A suburb should be composed of a variety of buildings so constructed that the consequent mixing of inhabitants results in the formation, in a natural way, of a complete and rather independent community. There should, therefore, be made available dwellings suitable for all ages and types of household.'*<sup>72</sup>

Hence, the suite from *Vällingby Centrum*, surrounded by an inner ring of tall high-rise blocks in walking distance of the *Tunnelbana*, followed by environments of three-storey (lamella) houses with inner courtyards no more than 500 meters from the

69. Popenoe: Op.cit, p. 44.  
The journalist Olle Bengtson of the tabloid newspaper *Expressen* sarcastically called the three-storey houses for 'bastards', neither house, nor high-rise - neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.  
Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 46.

70. See Peter Hall: Op.cit.

71. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in *The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter*, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 37.

72. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in *The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter*, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 36.

View over Vällingby Centrum in 1956 with Hjalmar Klemming's the tall point blocks surrounding Vällingbyplan Square, Reinius and Backström's low shopping architecture with the restaurant Vällingehus sticking up. Car-ownership quickly accelerated after the picture was taken, so the centre had to expand. Markelius, Sven: "Stockholms Struktur. Synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, A3.





Impressions from Vällingby Centrum where you could stroll as a flaneur in the shopping street. Markelius, Sven: "Stockholms Struktur. Synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, A3.

*Tunnelbana* station and *Vällingby Centrum* or the local district centre. Further out, an outer ring of single-family houses (row-houses, terrace houses and villas) are located at a maximum distance of 900 meters from the *Tunnelbana* station and *Vällingby Centrum* or the local district centre. This radius largely determines the total size of the New Town.<sup>73</sup>

Favouring interaction between green spaces and architecture, a new 'minimum rule' of the distance between the individual structures equalled the double height of the building. Because of the 'undesirability of looking from one house into the window of another', it was agreed to set this minimum to twenty metres, while the distance between high-rise housing was allowed to be the height of the block.<sup>74</sup> For the nature-lover and dedicated walker Markelius it was essential to preserve un-built areas of 'genuine nature' close to, however, detached from the neighbourhood units.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the planning scheme considered the change of seasons; snowy winter Stockholm differed considerably from hot summer Stockholm. School holidays lasted two – three months and every seventh family led an altogether different life in their summerhouses in Stockholm's archipelago during the summer.<sup>76</sup> Like a micro cosmos of the equally democratic and nursing Swedish Model, adventure playgrounds where children could construct their own unplanned playing houses, were popular at the time and distributed around the green areas of Vällingby. As written in the *General Plan for Stockholm 1952*:

*'For children over 5 or 6 years the adventure playground is a right form and it should be found in every part of the town. Here they can actively produce something themselves, unbound of the adults' idea about what ought to be fun.'*<sup>77</sup>

Allowing for variation in the layout of the plan, directions and sections differ according to the topography of the site and in respect for the recreational and

73. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", p. 37, in *The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter*, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952.

74. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in *The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter*, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 39 - 40.

75. See Eva Rudberg: *Sven Markelius, arkitekt*. Stockholm: Arkitektur Förlag, 1989.

76. Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenblad: "Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 77.

77. Stockholms stads stadsplanekontor: *Generalplan för Stockholm 1952*. Stockholm: Stockholms stads stadsplanekontor, 1952, p. 205 (author's translation).

aesthetical qualities of the natural greenery. (One wonders if it is possible to collect wild blueberries in other New Towns?) Softening the right-angled planning schemes of the 1930s, orientation of the dwellings became more elastic and adjusted to optimal fulfilment of the inhabitants' need of sunlight, view towards greeneries or shore, quietness, etc. As argued by Markelius:

*'The conditions on which the orientation of the dwellings are dependent have thus been of a very changing nature. The experience gained in this respect during the continuous studying of the modern housing problem has therefore led to a relaxation of the rules regarding orientation. It is now accepted that it is no longer possible to generalise and that other considerations – the terrain, vegetation, view, shelter from prevailing winds, landscape planting, total aesthetic effect, etc. – must be more than before allowed to influence planning.'*<sup>78</sup>

Intending to scatter and situate the institutions and social services of the New Town according to the demands of their everyday users, Vällingby's inner structure is zoned into different sections. Like a modernist variation of a Chinese box, the layout resembles the aforementioned neighbourhood principle: A series of buildings, flanking a playground with space for baby carriages and a sandpit, easily observable from the windows, constitutes the smallest unit of the New Town (this was only realised to some degree). Such clusters of housing forms a larger unit of a size supporting a shopping centre, a nursery, a kindergarten and a large playground. Significantly, the layout of this greater unit protects pedestrian traffic from highways as well as normal roads or feeder streets. Two or more of such units (5 in Vällingby's case plus Blackeberg) make a satellite town with a centre linked to a *Tunnelbana* and adequate car communications.<sup>79</sup> Working areas with industries are located north, service industries and *Tunnelbana*

78. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in *The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter*, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 38.

79. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in *The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter*, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 39.

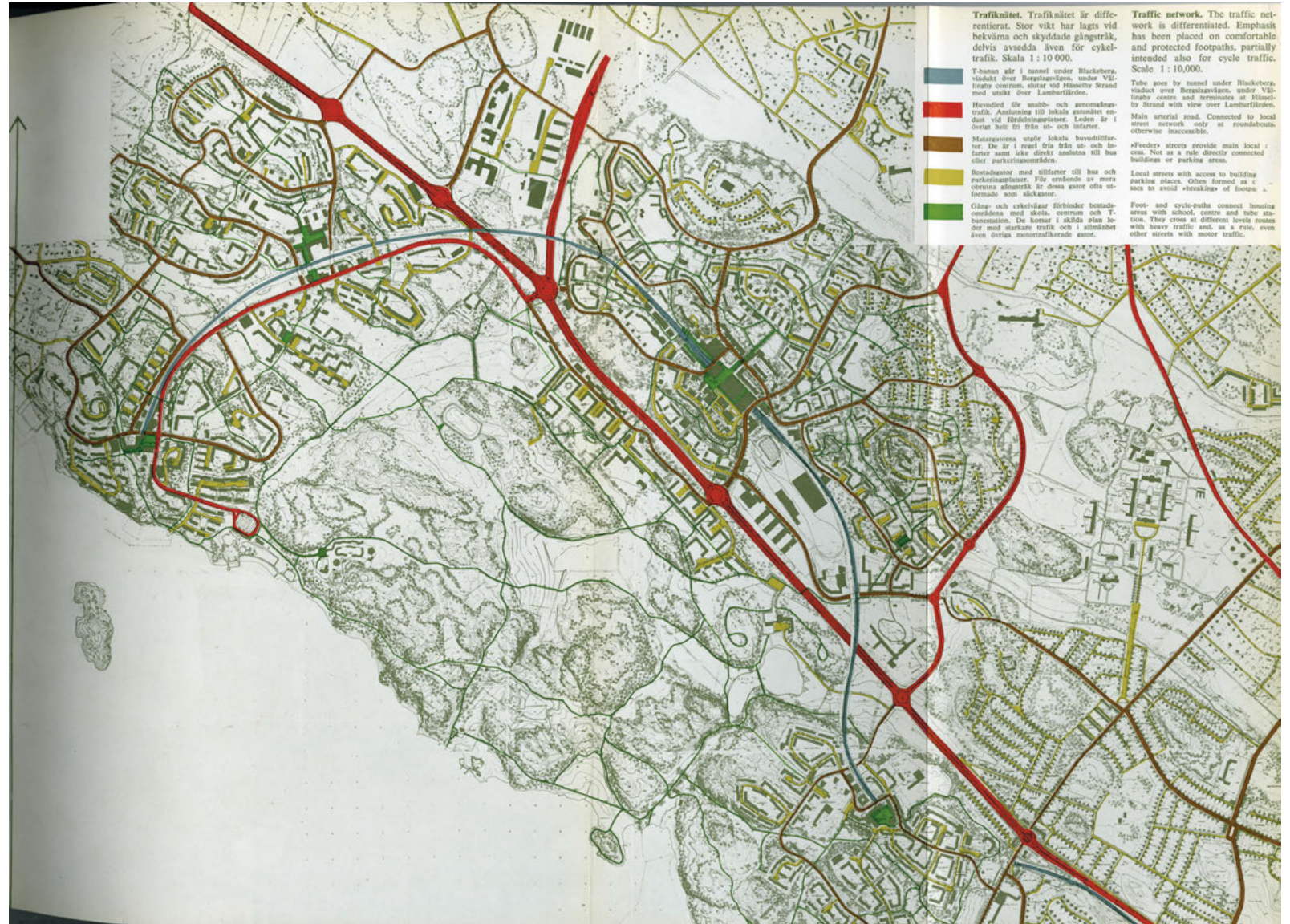
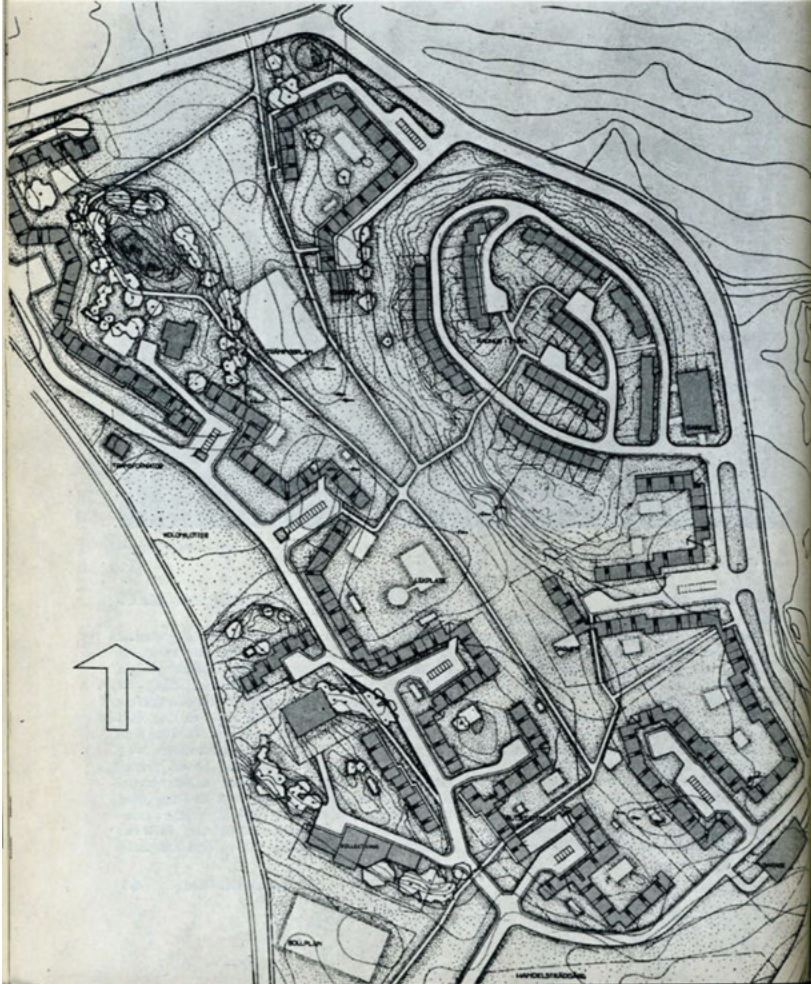


Early photos of the kindergarten Gudmundrågatan. Such new institutions became part of the modern lifestyle in Vällingby. Ulrika Sax: "Vällingby - ett levande drama". Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998.

Räcksta. Bostadsområde med genomförd trafikdifferentiering. Bilgatorna med parkeringsplatser i områdets periferi; det centrala stråket med för bebyggelse ojämnig mark är utformat med centrala gång- och cykelvägar, planskilt korsande motortrafikgator, anslutna till lokala butiker och daghem och annan service och ledande till skolor, storcentrum och tunnelbanestation. I bostadshusens omedelbara närhet och överblickbara från de genomgående lägenheternas fönster har småbarnens lekplatser förlagts. Stadsplanen åsyftade en konsekvent genomförd kontakt mellan bostäder och lekområden vilken tyvärr endast i ringa utsträckning kommit till stånd. Räcksta. Housing area with complete traffic segregation. Traffic streets with their parking places in the periphery of the area; central green belt on ground unsuitable for building laid out with central foot- and cycle-paths crossing motor

traffic streets on different levels, connected to local shops, crèche and other services and leading to schools, main centre and tube station. Playgrounds for small children have been placed in the immediate vicinity of the dwelling-houses and visible from the windows of the flats. The town plan aimed at an effective contact between dwellings and playgrounds, but this has, unfortunately, been realised to only a limited degree

På motsittande sida: Förstadstadsdelen mellan Drevviken och Magelungen bygger på en stark koncentration kring storcentrum. På motsittande sida: The first town part between the lakes of Drevviken and Magelungen is based on a strong concentration around the main centre



Plan of the district Räcksta close to Vällingby Centrum. Here traffic separation is complete. Traffic streets with parking facilities in the periphery of the area, central green belt on ground unsuitable for building laid out with central foot and bicycle paths, crossing motor traffic streets on different levels, connected to local shops, crèche, and other services and leading to schools, Vällingby Centrum and Tunnelbana station. Playgrounds for small children are situated just next to the dwellings and are visible from windows of the flats. The plan aimed at an effective contact between dwellings and playgrounds, but this was only realised partially. Markelius, Sven: "Stockholms Struktur. Synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem", in Byggmästaren, 1956, A3.

Plan of the traffic net in Vällingby. Byggmästaren, A4, 1956

station are situated south of the main centre, power plants are kept in the west, and hospitals lie towards the east and south.

Pedestrian or bicycle traffic was given priority over car traffic, since public transport was not planned within the different districts and neighbourhood units of the New Town. Supplied with a ramified path system, largely undisturbed by motor traffic, Vällingby's planning scheme resembles that of Radburn, New Jersey, by Clarence S. Stein and Henry Wright (1929). Similar to the infrastructural structure of the American town, there is traffic separation between 'soft' pedestrian traffic and 'hard' motor traffic, usually with tunnels designated for pedestrians, while vehicles are channelled over bridges.<sup>80</sup> According to the scale of the child, schools, playgrounds, shops and the *Tunnelbana* station are planned strictly for pedestrians. Meanwhile, park areas with playing fields and sports facilities are interconnected; parkways and feeder streets run either towards or away from the centre.

As far as possible, greeneries with pedestrian and bicycle paths run through the different neighbourhood units like an unbroken chain. For instance, walk-up flats in the district Räcksta are facing parking lots and streets as well as the central park way and playgrounds. Bicycle and pedestrian paths lead towards the shops in the southern end and towards the school in the north end of the district.<sup>81</sup> In order to increase traffic safety, the street network is subdivided into three different categories: First, main thoroughfares for rapid, heavy traffic with few intersections and without side streets. Second, local main streets and feeder streets, distributing traffic from the thoroughfares, without access from dwelling groups. Third, various kinds of side streets, canalising the traffic from the feeder streets to each dwelling.

Arriving with the *Tunnelbana* from Stockholm, the visitor moves from the inner older to the outer younger parts of the New Town, mirroring their number in the production process from 1952 – 56: The district Räcksta (planned for a population of 5,000) consists of two principal neighbourhood units: One with terrace houses situated on a hill and one consisting of a long meandering formation of straight flat-blocks along the feeder street to *Vällingby Centrum*. The buildings are linked together as a single unit, forming a ring around an inner park, a recreational area of grass and woods with footpaths. There is also a footpath crossing the long meander via a portico. Parking places occupy the spaces within the meander externally facing the street, while those inwardly facing the park play-lots are visible from the windows of the inhabitants.

80. Clarence S. Stein visited Markelius' villa in the Stockholmian suburb Kevinge. Here they discussed how Vällingby could learn from Radburn that had always been among Markelius' favourite references, for instance in *Generalplan för Stockholm 1952*.

81. Stockholms stads stadsplanekontor. *Generalplan för Stockholm 1952*. Stockholm: Stockholms stads stadsplanekontor, 1952, p. 328.



## BOSTÄDERNA

Bostadsbebyggelsen i Vällingby kärnområde utgörs till övervägande del av trevåningshus. Punkthus av olika höjd kompletterar och är accenter i stadsbilden. Här finns också exempel på arkitektonisk experimentlusta, uttryckt i bland annat stjärnhus, runda hus och terrasshus. Även byggtekniken har medverkat till variationerna — här finns såväl murade hus som plattsjuttina betonghus och elementhus. Medan trevåningshusen utgör huvuddelen av Vällingbybebyggelsen kom höga punkthus och skivhus ett spela en mera framträdande roll vid utbyggnaden av de yngre stadsdelarna i Vällingbygruppen, Hasselby Gärd och Hasselby Strand.

Bilden överst till höger visar miljön i en grupp med trevåningshus och höga punkthus. Här ses också den sista resten av den gamla bebyggelsen i Vällingby — en torpstuga som sparats som kulturminne. Framför terrasshusen på den undre bilden — i kanten av ett av de grönstråk som sammanbinder bostadsgrupperna — ligger ett av kärnområdets daghem. Såväl dessa båda bilder som fotot till vänster med de fyra punkthusen är exempel på hur arkitekturen anpassats till topografin, med omväxlande och levande miljöer som resultat.

20

The main typology in the Vällingby core area is three-storey houses, while point blocks (punkthus) of different heights accentuate the overall cityscape. Neighbourhood playgrounds, crèches, and laundrettes are part of the ensemble. Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966.

Beyond the two neighbourhood units there is a main traffic artery outside of the housing area with bays for parking.

With a diverse architecture and landscaping, complexity is higher in Vällingby and the adjacent district Grimsta (planned for a population of 18,000) where the proximity to *Vällingby Centrum* generates variation and activation. Vällingby's unique townscape is constituted by clusters of lower lighter buildings between more massive 'point blocks' (*punkthus*). A differentiated street network cares for the needs of motor traffic and parking, while a system of pedestrian arteries links the different neighbourhood units of the district. Each of these neighbourhood units is tight together by community services such as collective laundrettes, smaller shops, childcare, and playgrounds. (As an example of the multiplicity of the district, the three-storey houses are not only designed like 'narrow blocks' according to the custom, but in daring designs like 'star houses', low



The district centre of the slightly older district Blackeberg where Tomas Alfredsson's social realistic vampire movie *Let the Right One In* (2008), based on a novel by John Ajvide Lindqvist, takes place.

point blocks, terrace blocks with maisonettes, and circular blocks.<sup>82)</sup>

Stressing density, average building height is considerable taller in Hässelby Gård (planned for a population of 14,000) and in Hässelby Strand (planned for a population of 13,000), than in the other districts of the Vällingby Group. With denser and smaller apartments designed for small families and bachelors, focus has shifted from square meters to concentration and proximity to the local centre, the *Tunnelbana* station, shops, and day care. Compared to the usual planning principles of 1945 – 1950, playground space in relation to floor space has decreased.<sup>83</sup> Point-blocks are many in Hässelby Gård – both along the lengthy walking street of the district centre and in the remaining neighbourhood units of the district, although there are also some lower three-storey houses. A green belt with schools and playgrounds indicates an organic border between Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand. In the central area of Hässelby Strand, rocks and trees intersect with numerous specimens of a new building type - slab blocks with six or more storeys, piling up like a wall. Much more intimate, smaller groups of terrace houses picturesquely face the Lake Mälaren, the natural limit of the New

82. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 9.  
83. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 12

Town. Following the natural topography of hills and slopes, buildings rise from the water in terraces, so all the dwellings have an optimal lake view, ringed by slim birch trees. From the district centre and the exit of the *Tunnelbana* station there is a view over Lake Mälaren with a park area, encircled by ancient oak trees.

Situated on two plateaus intersected by a valley, Vällingby's 'adopted son' Blackeberg (planned for a population of 9,000) is a quiet residential area between Grimsta Woods' southern slopes and the main road to Stockholm. Facing calm streets, the dominant housing type is apartment houses of straight flats with inner courtyards and playgrounds. Care has been taken to provide secure and intimate surroundings for playing children as well as an environment with trees, rocks and lawns. The valley, separating the two main neighbourhood units, has been transformed into a park, containing the only four high-rise blocks in Blackeberg plus schools, outdoor facilities and sports activities. (The square in the middle of the district centre, *Blackeberg Centrum*, is surrounded by inwardly facing shop buildings.)

The biggest industrial area Johannelund with own *Tunnelbana* station is located within the core area of Vällingby-Räcksta-Grimsta. Detailed plans for different parts of the area were drawn up in 1953, 1954, 1956 and 1962. As mentioned earlier, Vällingby was planned according to an ideal of equal influx to dwellings and workplaces with

plans striving after creating local employment for 50 percent of the adult workforce. In addition to services and craftsmen's workshops in *Vällingby Centrum* it was planned to locate new industries in Johannelund. Alas, this was a most difficult undertaking, seizing many obstacles from vision to reality. One thing was the initial problems of persuading corporations and factories to move to the industrial zone occupying 200,000 square metres or 23,5 hectares, directly west of Vällingby and north of the main artery Bergslagsvägan – in 1958, only 13 hectares of the area were developed.<sup>84</sup> In the 1952 brochure *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad* (*Vällingby: the Future Town of Companies*) by the City of Stockholm's real estate office the future scenario was depicted beautifully:

*'Vällingby has been planned so that workplaces and dwellings can expand in parallel; the employees shall have their dwelling within walk or bicycle distance. Thus, a local workforce is at the Vällingby companies' disposition. In regard to workforce these companies will have unusually favourable conditions.'*<sup>85</sup>

Regardless of such sales campaigns it was difficult for company owners to imagine a thriving business community in what appeared as a clay pit, 15 kilometres from downtown Stockholm where the workers' dwellings were still under construction.

Moreover, the infrastructure was not habitual; there was no traditional railway line, but it was planned to erect a *Tunnelbana* station between Vällingby and Hässelby Gård. For these reasons, it was only *after* dwellings and organisation of the surrounding districts were in place that most of the industries had the courage to settle in Johannelund or the other industrial area Vagnhallen at the main traffic artery Bergslagsvägan, near the entrance to *Vällingby Centrum*, consisting of five three-storey buildings for smaller industries in a park area with parking spaces. As a result, many of the employees of the companies that did in fact settle in Vällingby from an early date faced difficulties with getting a home close to their workplace.<sup>86</sup> Thus, in 1953 the sociologist Lennart Holm predicted that in spite of an 'inverted migration' from the

overcrowded city to the new satellite towns, Stockholm's central business district would grow and comprise 120,000 to 180,000 jobs, 'at least ¼ of those living in the outlying areas cannot find work there', creating an intense public commuter transport.<sup>87</sup> 280,000 of the population in satellite towns were expected to take the *Tunnelbana*; 75,000 would use bus connections and 40,000 existing railway lines.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, in 1956 Markelius estimated that central Stockholm would have 'at least 290,000 workplaces, whereas the outlying areas together will have 160,000 maximum'.<sup>89</sup>

While industrialists were sceptic about the profitable of moving out of the city centre, the national government were sceptic about the prospect of these new industries. In their view, there was a danger of an over-expansion of emerging industry around the capital, possibly counteracting the planned decentralisation of industries to provincial areas.<sup>90</sup> Yet, Johannelund never became a threat to such plans. Whereas industries developed on private initiative, Vällingby also became part of the government's plan of decentralising the state administration from the capital city, e.g. the relocating of the headquarter of the National Power Board Vattenfallstyrelsen to Räcksta.

There has never been any heavy industry in Vällingby, however various smaller industries, some demanding skilled labour and high education, others manual labour, some providing service, and yet others utilising the female work force. In 1960, there were 9000 jobs (for 36 percent of the population) within the Vällingby Group and Johannelund; by 1966 the number had grown to 13,000 (3,000 in Johannelund and 7,000 in the other districts).<sup>91</sup> One of the biggest employers was the headquarter of the power plant Vattenfallstyrelsen in Räcksta with approx. 1,900 employees, while the fine-mechanical workshop AB Arenco with 600 employees was one of the first to move to Johannelund. Thus, a number of larger and smaller plants for industry and workshops were established between 1960 and 1980 when companies such as IBM, Standard Radio, Arenco, Liber and Konsumentverket settled in Johannelund. In the year 2000, there were 160 companies in the area with a total number of 2500 employees.<sup>92</sup> Still, one of the main sources to workplaces was of course *Vällingby Centrum*.

84. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 5.

85. Stockholms Stads Fastighetsnämnd/The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office: *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad*. Stockholm: Hera/lvar Hæggsströms, 1952, p. 4 – 5 (author's translation).

86. Svenska Bostäder: *Vällingby*. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 22.

87. Thus, after the maximum limit of 900,000 was reached, Holm expected the population of regional Stockholm to decrease within a decade 'so that the outlying areas will house 500,000 inhabitants as against 400,000 in the central areas'. Lennart Holm (ed.): "The Master Plan for Stockholm and Master Plans for Some Other Swedish Towns", in *Att Bo*, Special issue (1953), p. 6.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

89. *Ibid.* Even though Markelius acknowledges the difficulty of most people changing their jobs more often and easier than they move to another dwelling, he gives the example of L. M. Ericsson AB in Midsommerkranen where 70 percent of the workers settled locally. Sven Markelius: "Stockholms struktur", in *Byggnästaren*, 1956, A3, p. 53.

90. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 5.

91. Svenska Bostäder: *Vällingby*. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 22.

92. Siv Bernhardsson & Göran Söderström: *Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nittiosju Stadsdelar i ytterstaden Grimsta, Hässelby Gård, Hässelby Strand, Hässelby Villastrand, Kälvesta, Nälsta, Räcksta, Vinsta, Vällingby*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag: 2003, p. 38.





## Vällingby Centrum

Contrary to the pessimistic prospects expressed by British New Town consultants, Vällingby's community centre or *storcentrum* (literally 'large centre'), *Vällingby Centrum*, was planned with great optimism, comprising commercial, social, leisure and cultural services for 80,000 people. It is here that the integral approach of the ABC-Town planning is most visible: As a crossbreed between a traditional city centre of old towns and an American shopping mall, *Vällingby Centrum* is both closely connected to the local dwellings and serving several districts. Planned for different scales, future scenarios boldly predicted that the *Tunnelbana* would carry as many consuming and entertainment-seeking Stockholmers to *Vällingby Centrum* as vice versa. Remarkably, this was indeed the case back in the happy pioneer days.<sup>93</sup> Surely, this 'inverted' influx from what was traditionally considered 'centre' to what was usually designated as 'periphery' was reinforced by the intensive marketing campaigns, launched in brochures, newspapers, exhibitions, etc., attracting settlers, customers, enterprises, and investors.<sup>94</sup> Vällingby's curiosity was further backed up by new shopping typologies such as the retail stores Kvickly and Tempo, both names indicating the faster lifestyle and consumerism of the 1950s. Shopping, a dentist visit or other errands were made an easier and more intimate experience in the design of the centre: More intimate and manageable than the city centre, shoppers could stroll in lanes, flanked by low and dense buildings with shops in street level (the bigger ones spread over two floors) à la Rotterdam's Lijnbaan. Via a long tunnel penetrating the hill on which *Vällingby Centrum* rises like an acropolis, the *Tunnelbana* delivered continuous flows of people. Escalators carried them up to the *Vällingbyplan*'s 'piazza', and from there, bright neon signs easily guided them to the desired shops and public buildings. In between bustling activity, calm gaps of public space were provided by the main square as the core area of the walking street, connected to the surrounding dwellings. As the eyewitness, the American architecture critic G. E. Kidder Smith, remarks in 1957: "There is a vitality here which is almost fair-like, with a general atmosphere that is highly conducive to spending."<sup>95</sup> Emerging from tabula rasa 33 years earlier, *Vällingby Centrum*'s unique ensemble was made listed patrimony in 1987.

93. Siv Bernhardsson & Göran Söderström: *Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nitiosju Stadsdelar i ytterstaden Grimsta, Hässelby Gård, Hässelby Strand, Hässelby Villastrand, Kälvesta, Nälsta, Räcksta, Vinsta, Vällingby*. Stockholm: Stockholms Förlag, 2003, p. 42.

94. Thus, it took some persuasion for shop owners to leave the city centre behind for Vällingby. Axel Wennerholm, former managing director of the Stockholm Retail Federation, highly influential on the planning of *Vällingby Centrum*, later recalled: "Shopkeepers felt they would be taking a great risk and said: "My business had been in the downtown area since my grandfather's time. What the hell, who is going to live out in Vällingby? In mean, just think of the name off it – Porridge Town." But retailers did accept shops there, and those visionary – or lucky – ones made a fortune." To be precise *välling* actually means gruel and not porridge in Swedish. David Pass: *Vällingby and Farsta – from Idea to Reality: The New Community Development Process in Stockholm*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, UK: MIT Press, 1969, p.123.

95. G. E. Kidder-Smith: p. 100.

During the planning process, Sven Markelius advocated for an integration of various functions according to the ABC-Town concept: "Thus, it is suggested to draw up the urban planning provisions so that the borders between public rooms, business, crafts, offices and dwellings become elastic under certain circumstances and within certain limits."<sup>96</sup> As a *storcentrum*, *Vällingby Centrum* was planned to satisfy the needs of locals in the close vicinity as well as for the entire Vällingby Group and bordering suburbs. Similar to the smaller district centres in other parts of the New Town, Stockholm's



The library represented one of the bastions of welfare and enlightenment.

urban planning office proposed the following kinds of shops for the 6,000 inhabitants, estimated to live in a radius of 300 meters from *Vällingby Centrum*: 2 groceries (in three parts), 2 supermarkets, 3 fruit and sweets, 2 sewing kit and stockings, 3 tobacco and newspapers, 2 sports and bicycle, and 2 bakeries. Meanwhile, other shop types were planned to serve the greater regional public: 2 flower, 2 dry cleaners, 2 bookshops, 2 radio, photo, gramophone and electricity, 2 ironmongers, 2 furniture, 2 shoe shops, 1

96. Sven Markelius and C.F. Ahlberg: "Tjänstutlåtande angående förslag till stadsplan för del av Spånga (*Vällingby Centrum*, Vällingby II), s 6:399 och s 6:402". Document to Stockholm's urban planning office, November 14, 1950, p. 4 -5 (author's translation).



**Vällingby Centre.**

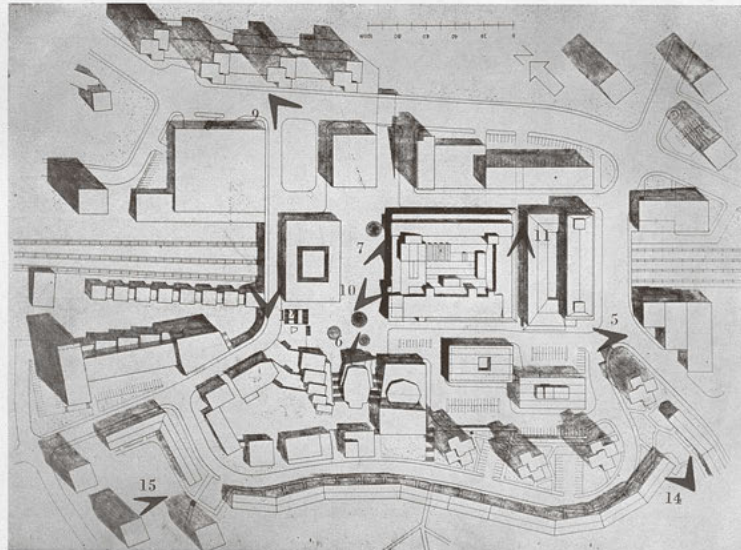
Architects: Backström and Reinius

1. The Centre's shops.
2. Inauguration of the Underground.
3. Aerial view (photo Bladh).
4. Plan of Centre and surroundings. The points from which the photographs are taken are shown in colour.

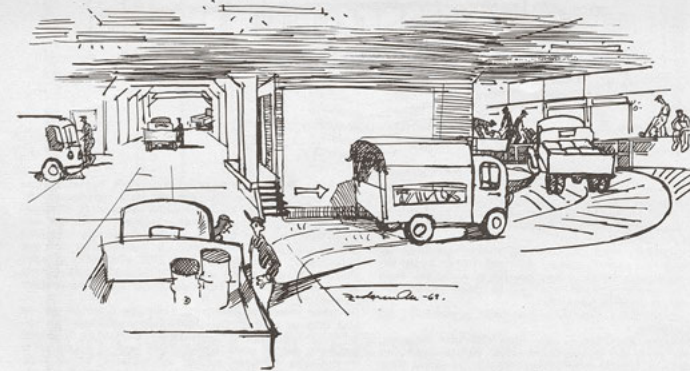
versities, scientific institutions, libraries, museums....) as well as the fascination and pageantry that only a bustling and pulsating metropolis with its historical monuments and cheerful crowds can offer. In reality, this dependence on the mother city has not been reduced to the extent anticipated. The slogan «satellite town» given at the beginning to the residential areas has been replaced by the more accurate and realistic terms «suburban group» or «town district».

*The plan of the Vällingby area*

We shall now see to what extent the complete organisation pattern envisaged in the plan has been realised in the Vällingby group, which consists of the nuclei Blackeberg, Räcksta, Vällingby, Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand. We shall then make a comparison with the Farsta group. As mentioned above, a pattern of this kind assumes in the first place a balance within the district between the population and supply of places of work. In the second, it is based on the possibility of being able to offer the population a wide assortment of consumer goods, and, in the third, on the presence of cultural and social life and on access to entertainment and recreation and social and medical services. This grouping of community facilities was experimented with as early as 1934 in Arsta and progress has since been made with various suburban centres subsequently built. With regard to the first point, official sources report as follows. «The Räcksta-Vällingby



**DISTRIBUTION UNDER JORD**



Ett underjordiskt distributionssystem var förutsättningen för att i Vällingby skapa ett så renodlat gångcentrum som möjligt. Systemet utgjordes från början av två gator parallellt med tunnelbanan, en söder och en norr om denna. Vid utbyggnaden förlängdes den norra och fick utfart väster om centrum och en förgrening för de nya butikshusen. Detta har möjliggjort enkelriktning av trafiken, vilket betytt ökad kapacitet. Vidare har en lastficka ordnats för att även Vällingby-postens ständigt ökande transporter skall kunna förläggas under mark. Planen till höger visar hur distributionssystemet ser ut i dag och hur det når de olika centrumbyggnaderna. Den mörkgrå markeringen visar de ursprungliga lastgatorna och den svarta de nybyggda gatorna och postens lastutrymme. Pilarna anger körriktning.

Underground distribution tunnels, running parallel to the Tunnelbana - one north, one south - made it possible to keep Vällingby Centrum free of vehicles. Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966.

Vällingby Centrum, designed by Leif Reinius and Sven Backström, with the Tunnelbana tracks and underground distribution tunnels underneath. Gentili, Giorgio: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in Urbanistica, 24 - 25, September, 1958.



T

Pressbyrån

TUNNELBANA

ÅLLINGBY

SUBWAY

SUBWAY

Klänning

fabric and clothes, 1 milliner, 2 health and perfume, 1 clocks and optician, 1 glazier and picture framer, 2 banks, 1 *AB Stockholmssystemet* (a liquor store administered by the Swedish state), and 1 pharmacy in addition to a central post office, a social care office, a district medicinal consultation, a childcare central, a central sick-benefit association, and a home help office. In addition, the *Folkets Hus* was to contain 2 assembly halls, 4 smaller collective rooms, a library with reading room, 10 smaller rooms for study circles etc., 5 rooms for scout activities, 20 smaller rooms for different societies and clubs. Sports facilities encompassed a handball hall, rooms for boxing and wrestling, table tennis, sauna, and a selection of clubs.<sup>97</sup>

Markelius specified that he wanted skilled and experimental architects to do the signature buildings in *Vällingby Centrum* and engaged the architects Sven Backström and Leif Reinius to design the cinema *Fontänen*, the assembly hall *Trappan*, the youth club *Tegelhögen*, and the public library along with some shops and the main centre building. Hjalmar Klemming designed the headquarter of the housing organisation Svenska Bostäder. At the more spiritual end of the spectre, two churches are situated in the centre: Peter Celsing's Saint Tomas Church (1959) and Carl Nyrén's *Västerorts kyrkan* (1956). Meanwhile, Svenska Bostäder was the responsible developer of the centre.

The plan of *Vällingby Centrum* was deliberately gentle and broad in its formulation of building restrictions, considering future expansions and renovations. Encouraging variation, it only determined the main grouping, the degree of exploitation, and the principal architectonic design in dialogue with the principles of an 'illustration plan', drawn up in collaboration with Sven Backström and Lars Reinius.<sup>98</sup> Yet, Backström and Reinius were strictly bound by the infrastructural complexity of the site when they projected the architecture of *Vällingby Centrum* as was decided to let the *Tunnelbana* run directly under the main shopping building.<sup>99</sup> Two to three floors over street level, the main shopping building is a 70 by 80 meters rectangle in carved concrete where the support is partly determined by the placement of the *Tunnelbana* tracks. Originally, two department stores Tempo and Konsum, occupied the lower floor of this core centre building, encircled by a square, streets and the remaining centre buildings. One floor up there was a restaurant, the second floor contained shops, offices, and at the top floor there was a larger office. Under street level, there was storage, deliverance of goods, a garage, and *Tunnelbana* localities. Much emphasis was put on bigger volumes such as the canteens, the banquet hall, the winter garden, Tempo and Konsum's light courts

97. Göran Sidenbladh: "PM angående utbyggnad av Vällingby Centrum". Document to Stockholm's urban planning office, ?????, p. 2 - 3.

98. Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 8. Ibid.

99. In 1951, the main developer, the housing organisation Svenska Bostäder pushed Reinius and Backström to project and built the main shopping building in tandem. Sven Backström and Leif Reinius: "Centrumbyggnaden i Vällingby", in **Byggmästaran**, 1956, A4, p. 80.

Glemme's spherical lampposts adorn Vällingby Centrum. Kidder Smith, G. E.: *Sweden Builds*, New York: Albert Bonnier, 1950/57.



and the upper exhibition space of the furniture shop. The underground 'distribution street' with one southern street and one northern street, running parallel to the *Tunnelbana*, made it possible to keep *Vällingby Centrum* as a pedestrian centre. Divided into two underground floors, the storage area consists of a lower part with warehouses, loading bays and the traffic ramps, while the upper part contains service premises and storerooms for shops.

Dimensions in *Vällingby Centrum* are kept in a relatively small scale so visitors can 'fill squares and shopping streets with life and action.'<sup>100</sup> Thus, activities like festivities and public meetings are designated to take place in the green belt towards the northwest. Although it is possible to drive relatively close to the shops, vehicles are not allowed on the market place between the *Tunnelbana* station and the main shopping building, connected to the local pedestrian path system. A number of parking spaces surround the centre. In accordance with this kind of 'flaneur traffic', one of the curiosities of *Vällingby Centrum* is the abundance of delectable 1950s details such as circular fountains, Stig Åke Möller's neon signs and Erik Glemme's balloon-like lampposts with white globes of glass. Glemme also designed the circular paving pattern, covering the square and the streets of the main centre in different types of stone. As a daring experiment wavy eternit plates adorn the facades and the waiting hall of the *Tunnelbana* building, designed by the architect Magnus Ahlgren with a plan disposed according to the distribution of the ticket office, a square hall in two floors surrounded by shops and various offices.<sup>101</sup> Next to it there is a terminal for regional busses.

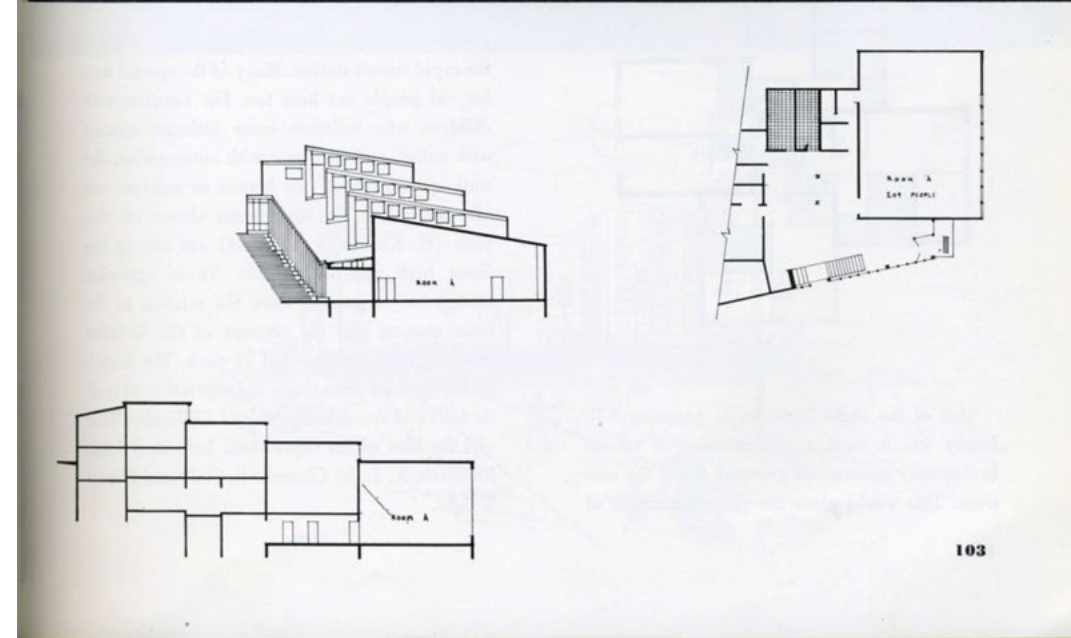
Extravagant panels of teak wood decorate the former restaurant *Vällingehus* while the cinema *Fontänen* is fifties-fashionable with a façade of yellow and black mosaic. Heading the main shopping building, the majority of buildings for non-commercial functions are situated parallel to a hillside, so they are in close contact with the surrounding dwellings and the *Tunnelbana* station. At the assembly hall *Trappan* the four meeting rooms are stepped down the grade, so they benefit fully from natural light. With a capacity of 65 and 209 persons, each room are equipped with individual cloakroom, toilet and pantry. The four rooms are connected internally and with the main square via an enclosed glass stair.

Only months after the inauguration of *Vällingby Centrum*, it became clear that the centre was not geared to all the visitors in cars. As a result, some planned shop and office buildings were sacrificed in addition to the envisioned environment of craftsmen's workshops favoured by Markelius.<sup>102</sup> Probably, this was also due to the pace of the

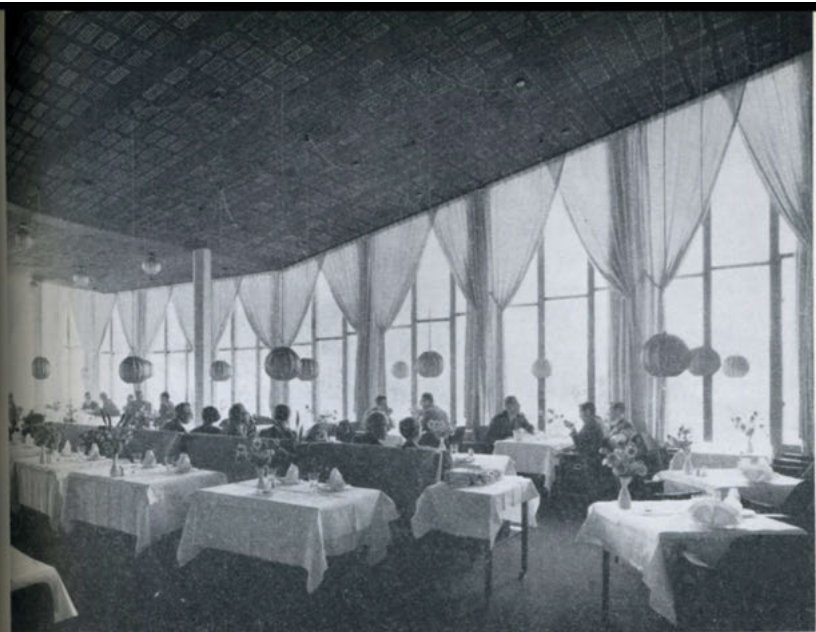
100. Sven Markelius: "Stockholm" s struktur", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, A3, p. 60 (author's translation).

101. For further details see Magnus Ahlgren: "Tunnelbanestationen Vällingby Centrum", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, No A4.

102. Albert Aronson: "Vällingby Centrum från idé til verklighet", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, No A4, p. 79.



View towards the assembly hall Trappan. Kidder Smith, G. E.: Sweden Builds, New York: Albert Bonnier, 1950/57.



Interior from the restaurant Vällingehus. The first floor remains intact, while the lower floor has transformed into multiethnic food hall. Markelius, Sven: "Stockholms Struktur. Synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem", in Byggmästaren, 1956, A3.



Ovan: Korridor i våning 1 tr  
T. v: Stationsbyggnadens södra hörn  
Nedan: Interiör av biljetthallen  
Foto: Harry Dittmer

Ticket office of the Tunnelbana, street view and corridor in Vällingby Centrum. Markelius, Sven: "Stockholms Struktur. Synpunkter på ett storstadsproblem", in Byggmästaren, 1956, A3.



building process, motivated by different interests: During the construction phase, the first director of *Vällingby Centrum* Albert Aronsson stressed the necessity of a tight time schedule and coordination. All facilities had to be in place when the first inhabitants moved in to avoid a ‘total and psychological failure.’<sup>103</sup> Instead of the originally scheduled 6 -7 years, it took 3 – 4 years to finish *Vällingby Centrum*. As Aronsson pragmatically remarked in 1956:

*‘[T]he result could have been better from a technical viewpoint...much of what has been added are improvisations...Time for afterthought hasn’t been found. Neither long negotiations or natural maturing processes. However, does people thrive in perfection? Perhaps the time trouble has been the best designer’<sup>104</sup>*



*Different collective establishments are concentrated in the centre of town sections and residential areas. Commercial establishments — primarily self-service shops — occupy almost half the area of a centre for a minor residential section. The other half is devoted to various facilities for recreation, child care, and social welfare.*

*The cooperative laundry is part of the collective services of the new areas. Both technically and economically, it is superior to the ordinary manual laundry.*

Collective, efficient and modern: Cooperative laundrettes and women buying groceries in modern supermarkets. Holm, Lennart (ed.): "The Master Plan for Stockholm and Master Plans for Some Other Swedish Towns", in *Att Bo*, Special issue (1953).



Neighbourhood centre shops in Grimsta.

103. According to Aronsson, young urbanites, waiting in the queues of Stockholm’s housing organisations, would: ‘not accept to wait for the ideal society while planners, projectors and builders thought about what could be the best. They wanted a centre corresponding to what they wanted to spend their money on, not just satisfying a basic need but enjoying the possibilities of choosing what they want under festive conditions...’  
Albert Aronsson: "Vällingby Centrum från idé til verklighet", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, No A4, p. 78 (author’s translation).

104. Albert Aronsson: "Vällingby Centrum från idé til verklighet", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, No A4, pp 78 (author’s translation).



While districts of the core area (Vällingby and Grimsta) were located in walking distance of *Vällingby Centrum*, the more peripheral districts of the Vällingby Group were given their own district centres. Located close to the *Tunnelbana* stations, district centres include Blackeberg, Räcksta, Hässelby Gård, and Hässelby Strand. Concentrating several shops and some public services, the inhabitants were still dependent on those provided by *Vällingby Centrum*. In addition, there were small businesses within local neighbourhood centres, providing basic utensils, e.g. the grocery-shop *Snappköb* (Quick Buy) and a hairdresser. As the car became a common means of transport, many of these shops closed or changed their character according to contemporary demands - pizzerias, kiosks, etc.

## Vällingby Architecture

From the above, it becomes clear that Vällingby was a prestige project in the history of urban planning in Sweden. The cost of Vällingby amounted to the – at the time - astronomical sum of half a billion SEK of which 40 million were spent on *Vällingby Centrum*.<sup>105</sup> Accordingly, the planners of the New Town requested high architectural quality. Developers were not allowed to appoint architects before Markelius had accepted them.<sup>106</sup> Even so, dwelling design was not considered a prestigious occupation for a Swedish architect in the 1950s. As a result, many younger architects, interested in innovation and social aspects of architecture, became designers of Vällingby's built-up area. In accordance with the principles of the 1952 general plan, walk-up flats are placed within a radius of 500 metres from the *Tunnelbana* station, while single-family houses are positioned at a maximum distance of 900 meters from there. One of the strong features in Vällingby is the sequence of 'point houses' or 'point blocks' (*punkthus*) of various designs, constructed by Svenska Bostäder or HSB: freestanding high-rise housing, centralising several (usually four) units on each floor around an elevator core or staircase similar to urban apartment houses, but here situated in a park-like environment à la CIAM. Similar to their predecessor 'broad houses', the point houses only supply ventilation at corner locations and sometimes they were planned as 'collective houses', concentrating various services for families with two working parents (dumbwaiter, janitorial work, baby sitting, etc.) Not least, the garland of 15 tall monoliths with smaller rental apartments, surrounding the main square of *Vällingby Centrum*, caught the eye of the contemporary public. Following the hilly topography,

105. Albert Aronson: "Vällingby Centrum från idé til verklighet", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, No A4, p. 79.

106. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 44.



heights vary from eight to ten storeys, although the architects had probably opted for more decks if the neighbouring Bromma Airport had not been a hindrance.<sup>107</sup> (As mentioned, the objective was to locate a large percentage of inhabitants in the vicinity of the *Tunnelbana* and the shopping centre.) Among the most noticeable of these dwelling towers are Gunnar Jacobsson's flexible, cylindrical towers at the street Kirunagatan 98 – 100 that can be subdivided into one- or multiple roomed apartments and Hjalmar Klemming's 'cross-shaped' houses in a park landscape.

Yet, the dominant housing type in the core area Vällingby-Räcksta-Grimsta is the three-storey walk-up flats in different cross patterns, broken units and long attenuated buildings; primarily thin, long slabs (*skivhus*) or lamella houses, varying in colour schemes, roofing, façade material, entryways, etc. (Thus for Markelius, one of the significant Swedish inventions of the 1930s and 1940s, was the transition from 'broad houses' of 14 – 16 metres wide to lamella houses, 8-10 metres wide. This was due to the idea that an 'hygienic' and liveable apartment must cut across the building from wall to wall in order to receive light and air from both sides.<sup>108</sup>) Open to experimentation they are constructed in daring designs like 'star houses', low point blocks, terrace blocks with maisonettes, and circular blocks.<sup>109</sup> Adjacent porticos assure that children can run safely from one inner courtyard with plants and playgrounds to another without trespassing trafficked streets. Worth mentioning in this category of low multi-family housing are Paul Hedquist's cross-shaped houses, surrounded by greenery. Allowing for maximum natural light, the standard size of the then spacious apartments is 3.8 rooms (including the kitchen), distributed over 60 square metres.<sup>110</sup> On a general level, 36 percent of the flats consists of two rooms plus kitchen and bath, 27 percent has three rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom, 11 percent has four rooms, 5 percent is larger than four, whilst 21 percent are of miscellaneous sizes, e.g. special flats for elderly.

Other dwelling types include terrace houses with maisonettes adapted to the terrain such as Jon Höjer and Sture Ljungqvist's 'accordion-like' houses at Mörsilgatan (1953 – 54), east of the *Solursparken* (the Solar Clock Park), but also curvy 'Y houses' or 'star houses' (*stjärnhus*), 'chain houses' (*kedjehus*) and round houses. Adding to the general impression of variation, construction methods vary from brick wall, over in situ carved concrete to prefabricated elements. In 1953 – 54, Svenska Bostäder executed the first 'experiment houses' in Grimsta, one point block and three lamella houses:

107. Sweden's first point blocks at Danvisklippan (1944 – 45), designed by Reinius and Backström, became internationally famous and worked as a model for the early high-rise blocks in Britain. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 45.

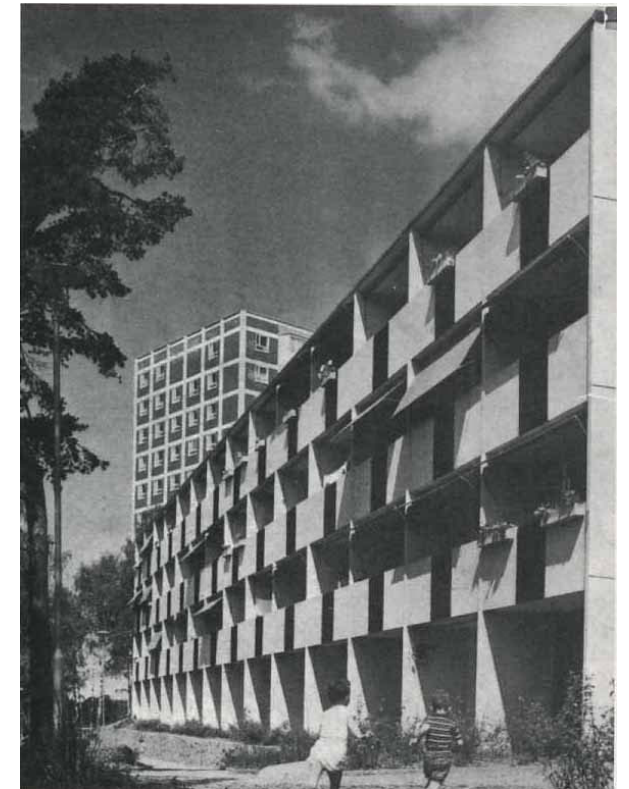
108. Sven Markelius: "Relation of dwelling type and plan to layout of residential quarter", in **The relation between dwelling type and plan and the layout of residential quarter**, Lissabon: International Congress for Housing and Planning XXI, 1952, p. 38.

109. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 9.

110. In the pioneer years the average rent in Vällingby was \$ 430 per year – 95 percent was rental housing while 5 percent was cooperative housing in 1957. Kidder Smith: Op. cit., p. 110.



Domino-like terrace houses were able to follow the site's topography in an organic way.



This so-called 'experiment house' in Grimsta integrated new industrialised building methods as one of the first. Ulrika Sax: "Vällingby - ett levande drama". Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998.

the outer wall is a traditional brick wall, while the inner wall is of concrete, allowing for an experimental floor plan with direct access to the bathroom from the kitchen. Thus, the minutely designed Vällingby experimented with the industrialised methods, later associated with the Million Program New Towns. In 1956, Svenska Bostäder implemented full prefab construction in the 'experiment houses' of the neighbourhoods Silvret and Uranet. 24,000 elements (inner walls, bathroom floor, joists, beams, etc.) for 432 flats were transported to Grimsta on special truck devices from the company's enterprise in Edsberg, Sollentuna.<sup>111</sup> New production methods were also used in Hjalmar Klemming's apartment houses, made of prefabricated concrete panels: By means of a travelling crane, the two-storey industrialised units were dry-erected in situ. All the apartments have two balconies, facing each side, a utility core in the centre, separate toilet and bathroom; access to the bedrooms goes through the combined kitchen-dining room that was cutting-edge at the time.<sup>112</sup>

Next to *Vällingby Centrum*, the new row house typologies were among the architecture, most frequently visited in the New Town. Although row houses were not a widespread dwelling type in Sweden, the young architects of Stockholm's urban planning office Sture Ljungqvist, Jon Höjer and Josef Stäck considered them to be a pragmatic and 'sufficiently egalitarian' solution for families: Contrary to freestanding single-family houses they occupied a smaller part of the total land area and they could



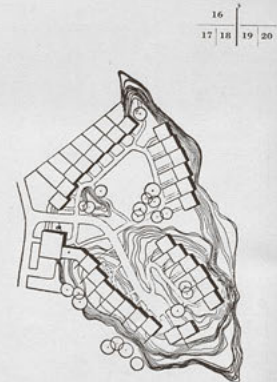
Row houses in Vällingby that also contains classical single-family houses, previously nicknamed public functionary villas.

111. Ulrika Sax, p. 45 -46.

112. Kidder Smith: Op. cit. p. 113.



Images of Jon Höjer and Sture Ljungqvist's celebrated Atlantis row houses with kitchen-living room, housing Prime Minister Olof Palme and many architects. Gentili, Giorgio: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958.



Vällingby: « Atlantis »  
16-17-18-19-20. Different views of « Atlantis », a residential area in northern zone of Vällingby. Architects: Höjer, Ljungqvist, Karlén and Stäck (photo Sundahl).



The row house neighbourhood Atlantis was one of the most celebrated in the 1950s with ultra-modern kitchen-living room.

Palme-Nyhets Legendary Social Democratic Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme posing à la Kennedy with his family in front of his 102 square row house on Tornedalsgatan 18 located in the housing association Ateljén in the villa and row house area Vällingbyhöjden. They lived here since the area was built in the 1950s until they moved to another row house in the housing association Atlantis in 1968. In the beginning of the 1980s Lisbet and Olof moved to a flat in the inner city of Stockholm where they lived until the unresolved murder on Palme in 1986. The prominent citizen underlines the importance of Vällingby in the narrative of the post-war Swedish welfare state. Photo: Jan Deldén.



easily be located within walking distance from *Vällingby Centrum*.<sup>113</sup> Skilled landscape architects worked carefully to situate the row houses optimally, so each household has a tiny garden plus access to a large collective green space, nurtured by the inhabitants. In addition, most row house neighbourhoods include a collective building with a laundrette, sauna and playschool for children. Situated in attractive car-free park environments with playgrounds, many of the architects chose to settle in these row houses themselves.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, they were relatively cheap and could be administered as rental, co-operative or own homes. Some of the row houses that made Vällingby famous, such as Ragnar Uppman's *Omega* or Sture Ljungqvist and Jon Höjer's *Atlantis*, are located further away next to residential villa neighbourhoods. Integrated into the solid granite rocks of their site on the outside, the interior centre of *Atlantis* is the 'everyday room' (*dagligrummet*), a combined kitchen and living room.

From the beginning, these attached row houses were administered as a housing co-operative under a multi-ownership scheme, a so-called *borättsförening*. Initially, Stockholm's real estate office and politicians demanded that households in *Atlantis* had minimum two children or one expecting and that they gave up their former dwelling to the City's accommodation bureau.<sup>115</sup>

After the abandonment of the original plans of single-family houses in the Grimsta Woods, such dwellings were only built north of the *Tunnelbana* line. Many of the freestanding 70 – 80 m<sup>2</sup> single-family houses on 500 m<sup>2</sup> plots were a product of the single-family housing bureau of Stockholm's real estate office, SMÅA. There was a long queue of people waiting for constructing their own house with 3 – 4 rooms, kitchen and an excavated basement, financed with a loan of 90 percent of the value - the rest relied on the coming inhabitants' own effort.<sup>116</sup> Nicknamed 'public servant villas', single-family houses (row houses and chain houses) were also constructed on contract where the owner paid an investment instead of contributing with his own labour.<sup>117</sup>

While young families were the typical Vällingby segment, there were some attempts on designing for a more mixed population. Svenska Bostäder built some integrated dwellings for elderly in Vittangigatan with one room and kitchenette, constructed in a way so they could easily be fused with the neighbouring apartment. Another category of desired inhabitants for the modern and culturally 'progressive' New Town were artists. Svenska Bostäder's architects designed special studio dwellings like the row

113. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 46.

114. Ibid., p. 48.

115. Ibid., p. 47.

116. According to the brochure *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad (Vällingby: the Future Town of Companies)*, 1952, many single-family houses were 'to be built by the house owner himself.'

Stockholms Stads Fastighetsnämnd/The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office: *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad*. Stockholm: Hera/Ivar Hæggsströms, 1952, p. 7.

117. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 49.

house area *Ateljén* for the bohèmes of Stockholm's artist enclave Klara, transformed into a tabula rasa during the urban development of Nedra Norrmalm. In many cases, the studio dwellings proved too expensive for an artist's economy - yet, they also projected as part of the architecture in the younger districts of Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand with Jöran Curman and Nils Gunnartz's artists' houses at Strandliden, close to the lake Mälaren (1956 - 1957).<sup>118</sup> While different designs of three-storey houses dominate in Vällingby core area, 'point houses' and elongated slabs (*skivhus*) came to play a more important in these later districts. In Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand apartments are generally smaller, while density is higher than in other districts of the Vällingby Group. (As the Italian architect Giorgio Gentili remarks: 'Despite the preservation of the woodland character, a dramatic impression of the surrounding massive building can be experienced here and there.'<sup>119</sup>) Yet, some variation is obtained through juxtaposition between taller multi-storey blocks and lower three-storey buildings. In the central area of Hässelby Strand, rocks and trees intersect with numerous specimens of a new building type - slab blocks with six or more storeys, piling up like a wall. Following the hilly terrain, smaller groups of terrace houses picturesquely face the Lake Mälaren, the natural limit of the New Town.

## Added value to the Crown Jewel

Although most architecture in Vällingby was constructed prior to 1960, some additions and refurbishments have taken place in the subsequent decades. Only twelve years after the inauguration in 1954, *Vällingby Centrum* underwent a redevelopment, encouraged by a growth of users with new habits and living standards. Thus, one of the fault lines of Vällingby's planning scheme, relying on the *Tunnelbana* as main traffic artery, was the underestimation of the attraction for families to own a Volvo or Saab as a flexible means of conveyance - especially if they were not among the lucky ones working locally. If a driving visitor could find a free parking space in *Vällingby Centrum*, short parking permissions granted little time to stroll, shop, browse, hang out, attend a meeting or a dentist appointment in the centre: just 24 minutes for shoppers and 33 minutes for people, frequenting offices, shops or restaurants in the debut years.<sup>120</sup> Hence, 40 millions SEK were invested in the expansion of the centre with a new parking house, extending the total number of parking spaces from 600 to 1250. According to

118. Ibid., p. 52.

119. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 - 25, September, 1958, p. 12.

120. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 - 25, September, 1958, p. 6.

Collective housing in the outer districts Hässelby Gård and Hässelby Strand where housing is generally taller and denser. Gentili, Giorgio: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 - 25, September, 1958.



21. View of Grimsta-Vällingby. Architect: Klemming (photo Olson).  
 22. Hässelby Gård. Point-block on main road. Architect: Bjarström.  
 23. Hässelby Gård. Collective house in local centre. Architect: Klemming.  
 24. Aerial view of Hässelby Gård (photo Bladh).  
 25. Aerial view of Hässelby Strand showing Centre in process of building (photo Bladh).

21	21
22	23
24	25

Vällingby Centrum's first director, Albert Aronsson another planning blunder was that shopping areas were not planned flexible enough for the expansions, urgently needed for practically all the shops within a decade. Furthermore, there was a huge problem with the indoor climate, caused by the frequent use of artificial light sources inside the shops, demanding a rethinking of the ventilation system.<sup>121</sup> At the re-inauguration of Vällingby Centrum in 1966, a new building next to the cinema *Fontänen* with a hotel, primarily serving employees of the medical centre, a police headquarter and shops had been added. In addition, a building by VIAK with a department store, shops and offices and a special shopping building, upgraded the centre to the lifestyle of the 1960s. Located between the streets Pajalagatan and Ångermannagatan, the latter one actually consisted of two interconnected volumes. Known as the cobbler houses (*kopparhusen*), they mixed many functions: a ballet school, a dentist, a *systembolag* (an liquor store owned by the state), Bredenberg's fashion store and an insurance company. In 1967, a swimming bath and a sports hall were opened.

After the expansion, the size of Vällingby Centrum had increased to 100,000 square meters, of which Svenska Bostäder constructed and managed 87 percent. Within a decade the total shopping area had almost doubled, office space had expanded by 45 percent and storages grown considerably. The two department stores Tempo and Konsum were now twice as big, while 20 new shops had opened.<sup>122</sup> In the mid-1960s, Svenska Bostäder also installed a series of public art works, including sculptures and the solar clock at the green park area *Helikopterfältet*, directly north of Vällingby Centrum. The rebuilding and growth of Vällingby Centrum in 1966 mirror the development of building methods over 15 years: While the original part of the early 1950s were constructed almost entirely with traditional building methods, the later parts of the 1960s preferred prefabricated elements.<sup>123</sup>

In 1972, another extension of Vällingby Centrum happened towards the west with two new office buildings, e.g. the social services department. Vällingby's 'silverwedding' (1979) was an occasion to reflect upon the future of the New Town. From the following debates an idea competition about further expansions was launched in 1984. At the same time, some of the small apartments in a *punkthus* at the main square were converted into offices for the regional police. In 1987, the National Heritage Foundation (*Riksantikvarieämbetet*) listed Vällingby Centrum as patrimony of 'kingdom interest', while a health centre was added to the medical centre. After new debates about the potentials of the now listed New Town and an idea competition for customers and

121. See Albert Aronsson: "Centrum", in *Byggforum*, nr. 7, 1963, p. 9 - 15.

122. Albert Aronsson: "Från Bondby till Stor-Vällingby", in Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 2 - 3.

123. Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 11.

inhabitants, organised by the Business Association (*Företagereföreningen*) in 1988, Vällingby's 35th birthday was celebrated with an exhibition and other discussion fora. Suggestions included new office and apartment spaces for elderly and young people, expansion of parking areas, extension of the bus terminal, a new culture house and additional park areas. During the 1990s some of these ideas were put into practice: In 1990, 80 new flats, a day care and a garage were built by Svenska Bostäder in Arkivbläcket, in 1993, a new glassed shopping arcade in the main centre building opened with various new shops, and in 1994 the library was rebuilt. While blocks of walk-up flats were built on empty plots along the streets Kirunagatan 24 and Lyckselevägen 31 in the early 1990s, the police headquarter in Vällingby Centrum was redesigned into flats for elderly in 1996.

In spite of all these renewals and occasional change of functionalities, the original features of the listed patrimony of Vällingby Centrum are cherished and many details have been renovated into their 1950s appearance. For instance, Svenska Bostäder has restored the façade of the cinema *Fontänen* (1956) with the characteristic mosaic and aluminium gutters. Yet, the iconic cinema has been completely transformed: The architectural office Scheiwiller Svensson has redesigned it into a *Filmstad* (Film City) with several screens and the newest technology in underground level, so the alterations are invisible from the outside. Thus, the recent refurbishments are of different degrees of visibility. In 2006, a new master plan for Vällingby by the City of Stockholm, Svenska Bostäder and the architectural office White won a prestigious planning award and in March 27, 2008, Vällingby Centrum was re-inaugurated.<sup>124</sup> Re-baptised into Vällingby City, Gert Wingård's blood-red retail store *Kfem* became Vällingby's new landmark. The idea is to keep the centre open and welcoming although a rainproof glass roof, sheltering the customers, is now covering it. Combining the local and the global, the paving in the walking street, traversing the main square, has been reconstructed as a replica of the 1950s geometrical pattern, while the lower floor of the 'authentic' restaurant *Vällingehus* has been converted into a multi-ethnic food hall. In the coming years, the regeneration process initiated in the centre is meant to generate further conversions, renovations and construction of new dwellings with a mix of ownerships in other districts of the Vällingby Group. Thus, new plans are in the ladle for the district centre of Hässelby Strand. The old centre by Stig Ancker, Bengt Gate and Sten Lindegren with low and dense buildings, recalling Rotterdam's shopping area, is to be torn down and replaced by new centre buildings with more dwellings.<sup>125</sup>

124. White Architects' website: [white.se](http://white.se)

125. The website of the City of Stockholm: [www.stockholm.se/Fristaende-webbplatser/Fackforvaltningssajter/Exploateringskontoret/Ovriga-byggprojekt-i-Vasterort/Hasselby-Strand/](http://www.stockholm.se/Fristaende-webbplatser/Fackforvaltningssajter/Exploateringskontoret/Ovriga-byggprojekt-i-Vasterort/Hasselby-Strand/)



Today, Vällingby Centrum has become Vällingby City. Additions includes this glassed roof.

In an interview made during the research for this article, an employee of Svenska Bostäder, still the administrator of most rental flats in Vällingby, stated that in many cases the 1950s standard is better than that of the 21st century.<sup>126</sup> The housing organisation has done some reparation work, e.g. new kitchens and bathrooms, yet the original planning solutions often stay unchanged. There are only few cases of major rebuildings where the inhabitants have been evacuated and flats have been fused together. Still, many consider the standard size of the 1950s apartments too small for a family and new housing experiments have taken place, e.g. the 16 self-build single-family houses in Grimsta. Constructed as Stockholm's first self-build row houses with right of habitation, they were constructed by the inhabitants on initiative of Svenska Bostäder in the early 1990s.

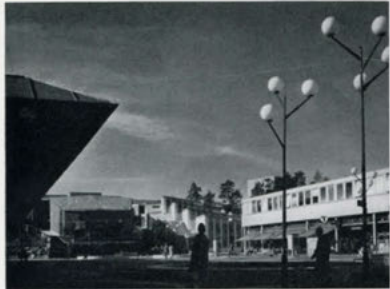
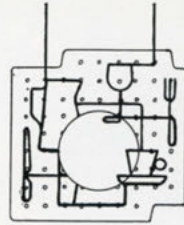
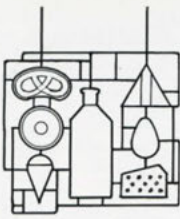
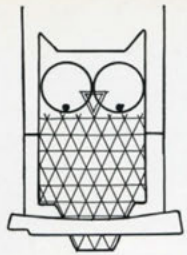
## City of the Future or The Queen of White Slum

Vällingby is worth studying for cities and towns of our time, launching costly campaigns in the 'urban competition' of branding an identity, attracting the 'right' inhabitants, investments and enterprises. Early on, the ABC-Town understood the importance of mention and marketing - it was one of the first to be promoted so consciously and consequently. Long before it was realised, Vällingby became an event and a brand: Stockholm's real estate office hired a PR-man, while AB Svenska Bostäder engaged the part-time 'branding consultant' Axel Vänje. Two of Vänje's brilliant ideas were Vällingby's logo, the turning V-sign in neon, visible from all angles, and the design of illustrative signs, signalling the character of the shops in *Vällingby Centrum*. In two weeks, the exhibition *Vi bygger en stad* (We Build a Town), October 25 - November 9, 1952, curated by the City's real estate office, attracted more than 100.000 visitors. As moviegoers would step into curious sci-fi universes in 1950s film theatres, spectators dived into a 3-D spectacle of designs, presented as the 'City of the Future'. Models of Vällingby were displayed along with furnished 1:1 sample-apartments. Adding a historical memory to the generic New Town, future Vällingbies could also visit archaeological diggings of a Bronze Age settlement (some local shops - e.g. the grocery store *PärLAN* - were named after ongoing excavations).<sup>127</sup>

The popular interest in Sweden's pioneer New Town repeated at the inauguration

126. Telephone interview with Kerstin Ahlin from AB Svenska Bostäder in Vällingby, conducted by the author in Stockholm, July 17, 2008.

127. Today, only a single small house remains from old Vällingby, the so-called *Jan Pers stuga* - a two-family house with apple and lilac trees from the second half of the 18th century near the streets Vittangigatan and Jämtlandsgatan. The previous owner had to move, because he could not afford to live in Vällingby. Antiquities include two offering stones, *Älvkvarnstenarna*, remaining at their original site, while *Fornkullen*, a graveyard from 550 - 800, has become part of a green park space.



The designers of the shopping section, not content with making the ground on which one walks merely safe from cars, have also made it festive and gay. Circles of fountains convolute with circles of mosaics and are taken heavenward with spheres of rampant lamps. There is a vitality here which is almost fair-like, with a general atmosphere that is highly conducive to spending. One of the smaller enlivening touches is the series of imaginative signs marking many of the shops. Drawings of three of these appear above. The photograph, top left, is of the main mall looking toward the cinema and meeting rooms. The middle picture shows the wide overhang wrapped about the main shopping block. The shape of this gives one a feeling of comfortable protection without the overhead oppression which a flat soffit tends to produce. The night scene, at bottom, shows among other things the inexcusable signs which day and night desecrate too many commercial buildings throughout Scandinavia. The picture on the opposite page was taken down the entrance mall, which is bounded on the right by the public buildings, shown under construction. The first building on the left is an excellent restaurant by Backström and Reinius.

The 'spin doctor' Axel Vänje invented Vällingby's V-sign logo as well as these iconic shop signs. Kidder Smith, G. E.: *Sweden Builds*, New York: Albert Bonnier, 1950/57.

of *Vällingby Centrum* November 14, 1954, attracting a public of 75,000. Staging the event as a happening with speeches, performances, shop openings and fireworks, the first director Albert Aronson made good use of his previous profession as a journalist. After one year, *Vällingby Centrum's* birthday was celebrated with a big jamboree and ever since, jubilees and extensions of the centre have been fêted as important events, asserting a common identity and co-ownership. (Many well-liked performers began their career in *Vällingby Centrum*.<sup>128</sup>) Thus, Aronsson recognised how mass media played a crucial role in the success of Vällingby and knew how to press the right buttons. With popular statements he communicated the top-down vision of planners, politicians and investors to laypeople, while inviting them to leave their own mark on it through living, working and (not least) consuming in the New Town:

*'It is people's own engagement in what is happening and taking place, what is good and bad that makes a town lively. We who are busy with the problem of town building should not go too far in our endeavour of serving everything on a plate... Yet, the game – life itself – shall be formed by those who work, live and are active there. It is the inhabitants who shall act.'*<sup>129</sup>

In most medias the mention of Vällingby was exceedingly positive: Close to the inauguration, the 'lobbyist' Axel Vänje made a deal with the Social Democratic newspaper *Morgontidningen* about a special Vällingby edition. Here, the New Town was depicted as the quintessence of the Swedish Model, rather similar to Nehru's Congress Party's perception of Chandigarh as an emblem of postcolonial India. Soon, the word spread outside of Sweden, i.e. as reportages in architectural journals worldwide and documentaries by Danish and American television. Yet, there were exceptions; not everybody sang along on the hymns.<sup>130</sup> In 1955, the magazine *Se* did a photo reportage entitled "Is Vällingby the right solution?" Describing the New Town as 'pure porn', a product of what is ironically described as a uniform and inflexible 'five-year plan', the

128. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 71.

129. Albert Aronsson: "Centrum", in *Byggforum*, nr. 7, 1963, p. 13 (author's translation).

130. Albert Aronsson: "Vällingby Centrum från idé til verklighet", in *Byggmästaran*, 1956, No A4, p. 79.



reportage proclaimed: 'People have got Vällingby fever.' Se's list of symptoms of this 'illness' was long:

*'Vällingby is a blunder! One doesn't solve the housing problem in a city by forcing people to move to the countryside.*

*The whole centre idea is done in a wrong way. There is already traffic chaos. Where is the 'tomorrow' in the buildings.*

*The same old uniform 3-storey houses between the high-rise buildings. They create melancholy and heart diseases. Doesn't one think about the old people?*

*Does standardisation necessarily imply monotony of the apartments? Much attention has been drawn towards Vällingby as a self-sufficient town. Will one ever reach this goal?*

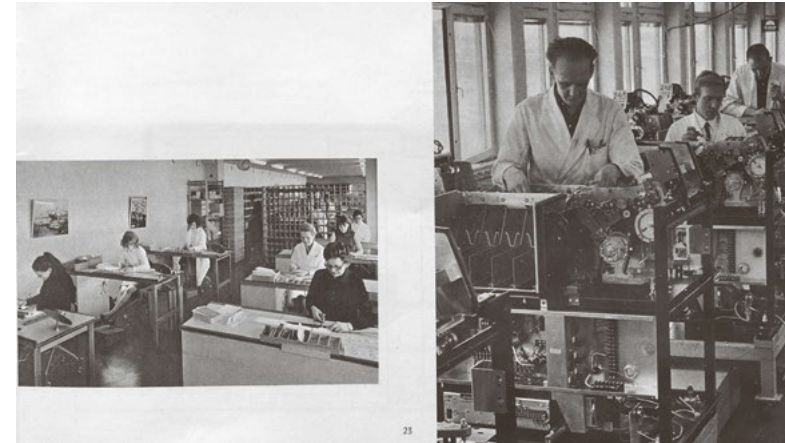
*Does one really think that it is possible to create a town with one restaurant, one cinema, one theatre and some assembly halls in the centre when the inhabitants have a city around the corner?*

*Will Vällingby within foreseeable time become something else than an affected society? Just look at folks on the streets. Even the people are rectified. Hardly any teenagers or elderly. How can there be any traditions? How shall Vällingby ever become something other than a sleeping town like all the others?'<sup>131</sup>*

Echoing such unconvinced arguments, a 1956 article in the tabloid paper *Expressen*, criticised 'the commercial bubble Vällingby'. The writer Per-Anders Fogelström describes the New Town as a 'sleeping town' randomly superimposed on some 'leftover farms', creating an undesirable (sub)urban environment he designates as 'the queen of white slum':

131. Se reportage: "Is Vällingby the right solution?", in *Se*, October 21 – 28, 1955, p. ?? (author's translation).

*'All the talk about the town at the countryside and sun and greenery and the children at the green paths – it probably lies well in a speaker's mouth, nothing but beautiful words. Postcards with summer greenery. However fall - with stinking mud against white facades, smashed lamps at the green path, storm around the thoroughfare streets, the impossibility to get the baby carriage down the Tunnelbana stairs...Through an exertion one wanted to make the dream about the island in the forest to cogent reality. And what did it become? I insist on what I have said: the queen of white slum.'<sup>132</sup>*



Some Vällingbies had local jobs, although not as many as envisioned. Mobilisation of female employees contributed to Vällingby's image of the 'City of the Future'. Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966.

In *Byggmästaren* (1956), Markelius gave an answer to such accusations, explaining that it was too 'hasty' to judge about the success of the social experiment Vällingby after two years. At the same time, he admitted that the marketing campaigns, stimulating public interest had been 'more popular than exact'. Even so, he highlighted the wonder

132. Per Anders Fogelström in Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 60 – 61 (author's translation).

of a society, rising from tabula rasa in five years time in spite of severe housing shortage and other restrictions on urban development. Moreover, he emphasised that Vällingby and later New Towns in the Stockholm region were never planned to become fully independent like their British counterparts: The distance to important workplaces in 'the magnet Stockholm City was way too short'. Stockholm's consistent labour market, benefiting employed and employees alike, hindered that 100 percent of the local labour-force would be able to bike or walk to work. Efficient *Tunnelbana* and bus connections made it easy to commute from the satellite towns to the city, whereas the distribution of local workplaces and the attraction of settling outside of the city core produced nicer living environments and smoother infrastructure between different districts of the Stockholm region rather than high pressure in one direction (towards the city centre):

*'The independency, the self-sufficiency is a question of wellbeing, convenience and sensible organisation. However, it does not mean isolation. The Stockholmer in Vällingby, Högdalen and Farsta still remains Stockholmer just like people from Östermalm, Södermalm or Kungsholmen.'*<sup>133</sup>

Similar to the media craze, surrounding contemporary reality TV shows like Big Brother or Robinson, the social experiment Vällingby caught the attention of myriads of people that wanted to see for themselves. Busses with Swedish and international tourists – a broader public than the usual suspects of architects and historians - did sightseeing in the ABC-Town sensation far into the 1960s. Among the new jobs, created for the recently mobilised female workforce, the most out of the ordinary was no doubt the career as *Fröken Vällingby* (Miss Vällingby): coquettish hostesses in stewardess-like uniforms who smilingly guided groups of visitors around. Perhaps, the huge outbreak of 'Vällingby Fever' in the pioneer years can be explained by the fact that the foundation of a new Swedish lifestyle, based

The career as stewardess-like hostess, guiding groups of tourists around the 'City of the Future', was the most exotic among job possibilities for the newly mobilised female workforce.



133. Sven Markelius: "Stockholm" s struktur", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, A3, p. 54 (author's translation).

on the neighbourhood principle, was laid in Vällingby.<sup>134</sup> Centred on the vision of the neighbourhood to create local ties, community and well-being, Vällingby may have been the 'City of the Future', after all.

## Pleasantville - Instant Community

Planned according to common standards, meant to guarantee happiness and prosperity to as many as possible, Vällingby has often been envisioned as an ideal society, embodying the Swedish Model. Markelius' ABC-Town concept was an 'integrated' planning, underpinned by an egalitarian Social Democratic utopia, striving to find equilibrium between binaries like integration/segregation, homogeneity/heterogeneity, collectivism/individualism, Socialist/Capitalist, private/public, work life/private life, etc.

Equating life and architecture, Markelius and Sidenbladh participated in the social engineering of the welfare state in pursuit of harmony and happiness:

*'All of us [Swedish planners and architects] are doing our best to create a human milieu for people's work and leisure. And we are trying to make real their dreams of new homes – better, brighter and more convenient than they live in now.'*<sup>135</sup>

Continuously focusing on the healthy, the educating and the edifying, Vällingby with the victorious V-sign logo was never intended as one of the New Towns, functioning like a NIMBY valve, relieving the inner city for people outside the norm: it did not become a container of institutions for handicapped, mentally ill or incurables.<sup>136</sup> Nor did it cultivate a support group for the Algerian liberation movement FLN or a branch

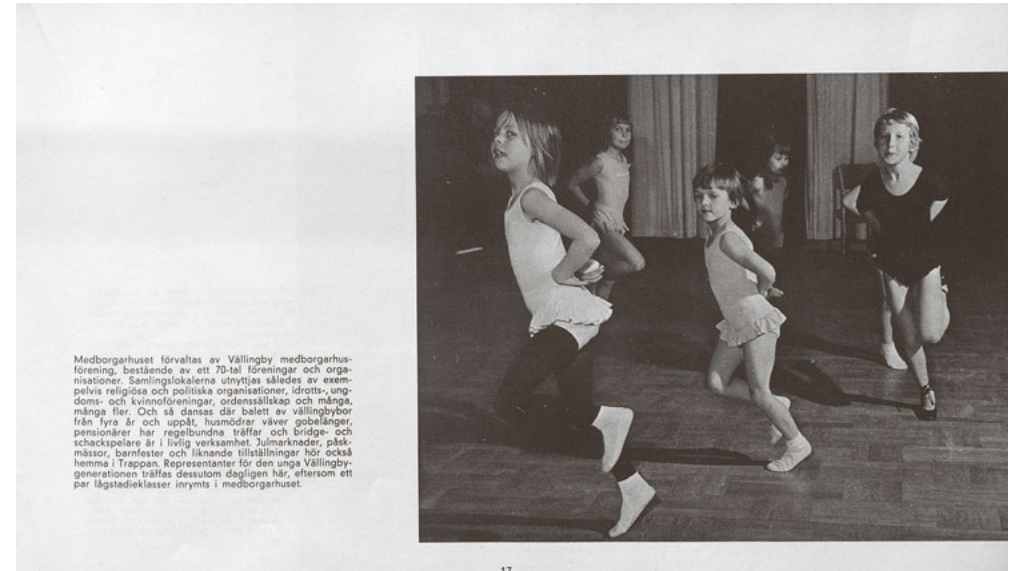
134. Thomas Millroth & Peter Skoglund: Op. cit., p. 107.

135. Sven Markelius and Göran Sidenbladh: "Town Planning in Stockholm: Housing and Traffic", in *Ten Lectures on Swedish Architecture*. Stockholm: Svenska Arkitekters Riksförbund, 1949, p. 78.

136. Here I am referring to a quote by the sociologist Lennart Holm: 'The master plan for the suburbs also includes certain establishments, such as mental hospitals and institutions for incurables, which do not need to be centrally located.' Lennart Holm (ed.): "The Master Plan for Stockholm and Master Plans for Some Other Swedish Towns", in *Att Bo*, Special issue (1953), p. 8.



Youngsters in the youth club Tegelhögen, in the '60s.



Medborgerhuset förvaltas av Vällingby medborgerhusförening, bestående av ett 70-tal föreningar och organisationer. Samlingslokaler utnyttjas således av exempelvis religiösa och politiska organisationer, idrotts-, ungdoms- och kvinnoföreningar, ordensällskap och många, många fler. Och så dansas där balett av vällingbybor från fyra år och uppåt, husmödrar väver gobelänger, pensionärer har regelbundna träffar och bridge- och schackspelare är i livlig verksamhet. Julmarknader, påskmässor, barnfester och liknande tillställningar hör också hemma i Trappan. Representanter för den unga Vällingbygenerationen träffas dessutom dagligen här, eftersom ett par lägstadieskolor inrymts i medborgerhuset.

Children taking dance class in the assembly hall Trappan. In 1966, it was managed by the local assembly hall association, joining about seventy local organisations. Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966.



Kindergarten children and the active library in Vällingby Centrum in 1966. Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966.



Youngsters in the youth club Tegelhögen, 1966. Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966.

of the leftist post-1968 counterculture.<sup>137</sup> Even though some fights took place between the tough beer-drinking, skinhead-like *sunar* and the more peaceful, longhaired *mods* in the mid-sixties, the local youth culture could largely be contained in the youth club *Tegelhögen*.<sup>138</sup> In agreement with the ABC-Town ideal, Vällingby became a bastion of democracy and participation (although many activities were planned as public services). In 1956, approximately 30 local associations, organisations and clubs joined in a self-governed association, *Vällingby medborgarhusförening* (Vällingby assembly hall association), administrating public rooms and facilities. In 1966, the number of organisations and clubs (political, religious, women, sports, elderly, youth, hobby, etc.) had grown to 70.<sup>139</sup> In the assembly hall *Trappan* Vällingby inhabitants from 4 years up danced ballet, while housewives weaved tapestries, voluntaries did education work, and pensioners played chess or bridge. All of them joined in festivities like Christmas markets, Easter celebrations and children's parties.<sup>140</sup> There was a lively church life around a Swedish state church, an ecumenical church and other religious communities. A subsection of Stockholm's *Stadsteater* (city theatre) was built into *läroverket* (the high school), whereas more social needs were satisfied in a mothers' organisation, a public dentist, an employment service, and two medical centres, a public *and* a private. There were a premiere cinema and a library with Sunday openings, discotheque, author's talks, concerts and 175.000 annual loans. During the day the youth club *Tegelhögen*, managed by shift, was a meeting place for students with different day courses, homework assistance and a hangout with soda pop and newspapers; at night it opened for other activities such as record listening, pop concerts, ceramics, woodwork, and cooking classes.<sup>141</sup> In the Vällingby core area (Vällingby-Råcksta-Grimsta), there were three schools (two for lower and middle levels and one for all three levels) with 3,800 pupils in 160 classes, a gymnasium with 500 students, a *grundskolehögstadium* (upper level of compulsory school) with 650 students, three daycares plus another two in preparation, nine playschools, and two after school centres for children of working mothers in 1966.

At least on the surface, the media-conscious New Town looked like the happy 'Pleasantville', early associated with its planning and lifestyle, presented in glossy magazines and propaganda campaigns. Meanwhile, a lively debate about qualities and failures of the New Town – hidden school toilets, expansion of football fields, etc.

137. While a few hardcore enthusiasts frequented *Forum Vänster* (Forum Left) in Vällingby, such activism had much more support in neighbouring villa suburbs like Bromma.

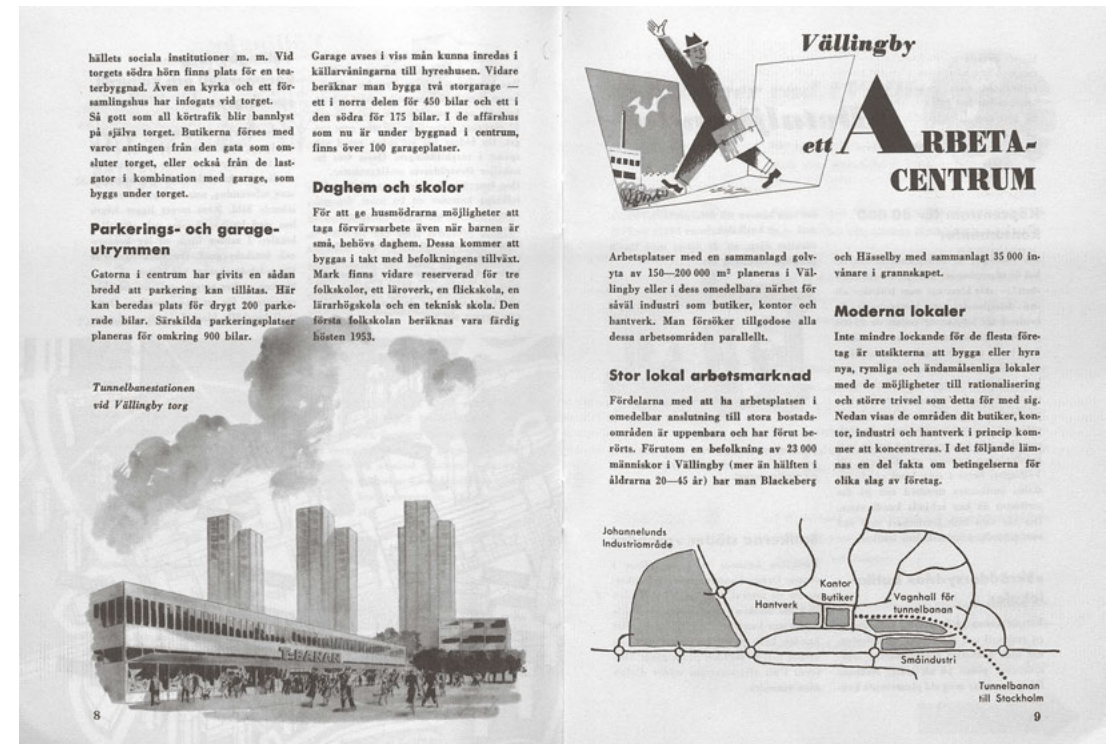
Thomas Millroth & Per Skoglund: Op. cit., p. 16.

138. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 129

139. Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 6.

140. Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 17.

141. Albert Aronsson: "Från Bondby till Stor-Vällingby", in Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 4.



The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office promised that dads would be able to eat lunch at home thanks to the ABC-Town's integration of work, housing, and shopping-cum-community centre. The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office: Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad. Stockholm: Hera/Ivar Hæggsströms, 1952.

unfolded in the pioneer years.<sup>142</sup> By the same token, *Vällingby Centrum's* director Albert Aronson used a rhetoric against the grain at the inauguration, November 14 1954, although Vällingby was usually envisioned as the perfect embodiment of the Swedish Model. Acknowledging imperfections and the value of bottom-up inputs of daily life experience, he expressed hope for Vällingby to become a real town - 'a living drama' rather than a 'pattern town'.<sup>143</sup> In 1956, Aronsson described a shift from a planned utopia to a lived heterotopia:

142. Albert Aronson: "Vällingby Centrum från idé till verklighet", in **Byggmästaren**, 1956, No A4, p. 79.

143. In an article in **Byggforum** published at the occasion of the re-inauguration of *Vällingby Centrum* in 1966, Aronsson recalls how he concluded his opening speech 12 years earlier with the hope for the New Town to become a 'living drama': 'When will Vällingby be completely finished? Never!...No living town will ever be finished. The richer life in Vällingby, the more need for constant additions, expansions and extensions. Now we wait for the social tensions and conflicts of the industrial companies, the competing businesses, the institutions and the fight over the souls to become so big, lively and changing that it creates a living drama – a drama that prevents Vällingby from becoming a 'pattern society'. The worst thing that could happen...The best thing about Vällingby are the mistakes.' Albert Aronsson: "Centrum", in **Byggforum**, nr. 7, 1963, p. 9-10 (author's translation).

*‘A part of the life that takes place there [in Vällingby] is propaganda products. Meanwhile, this directed propaganda has faded out. However, life in Vällingby doesn’t just go on like it began but becomes richer and more intensive each month. Now the people act themselves without injections. What was suggestion has now become reality.’<sup>144</sup>*

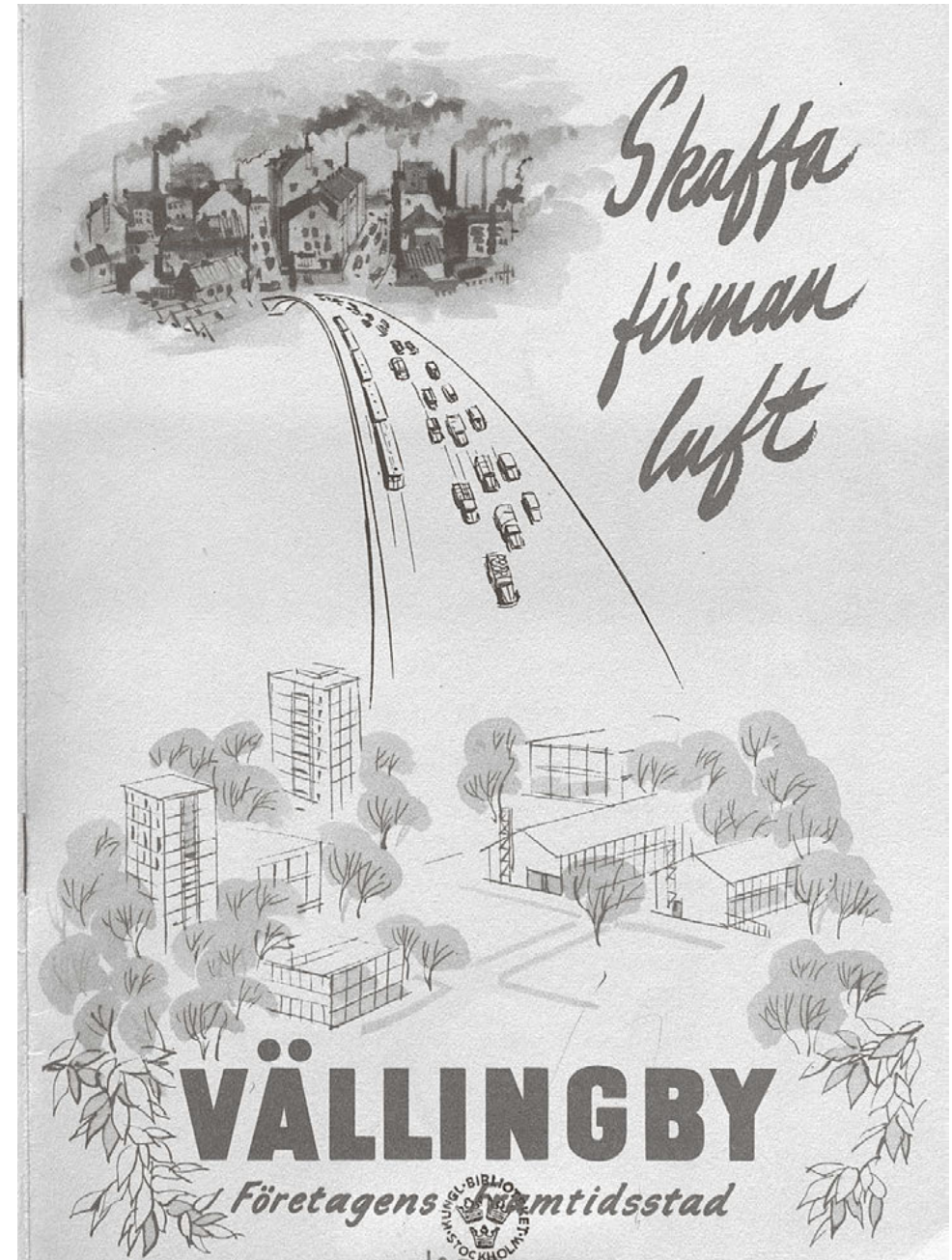
The creation of the novel ‘pattern society’ Vällingby, imaging a microcosm of the welfare state, was largely a product of the ruling Social Democratic Party, backed up by a group of sociologists, culture workers, debaters, architects, and popular movements. Situated in between the urban and the rural, the ABC-Town was intended to balance life between the poles of industrial progress and harmony with nature. Workers would become more productive and lead better, healthier lives thanks to fresh air and short distances to their workplace. Integration of professional and private life was planned according to Markelius’ ‘walk-to-work’ ideal by means of a rigorous path system, local workplaces and easy access to the *Tunnelbana*. Intending to spur this development, the City of Stockholm published the brochure *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad* (Vällingby: the Future Town of Companies) 1952. Companies, industries and businesses were encouraged to strike camp and settle in Vällingby in order to create happy and efficient providers:

*‘The majority of the inhabitants are estimated to live so close to the work place that they have to walk or bicycle 15 minutes there at the most. They shall be able to eat lunch at home and have more time left for recreation and their family. Result: better wellbeing with better work conditions, more efficient performance.’<sup>145</sup>*

144. Albert Aronsson: "Vällingby Centrum fra idé till verklighet", in *Byggmästaren*, nr. A4, 1956, p. 78 (author's translation).

145. Stockholms Stads Fastighetsnämnd/The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office: *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad*. Stockholm: Hera/Ivar Hæggsströms, 1952, p. 5 (author's translation).

The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office published a brochure to attract trades and industries (1952) under the banner 'Fresh air for companies', typically juxtaposing the polluted, congested city and the clean, ordered New Town. The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office: *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad*. Stockholm: Hera/Ivar Hæggsströms, 1952.





Rendering of the pedestrian-friendly Vällingby Centrum: 'No car traffic will disturb the shopping housewives.' The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office: Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad. Stockholm: Hera/Ivar Hægströms, 1952.

Unfortunately, the brochure's prophecy proved too optimistic. The amount of actualised local work places never matched the visions of the master plan although a series of flagship projects paved the way: Zoning laws provided a whole industrial area, Johannelund, with its own *Tunnelbana* station, while headquarters of Konsumentverket and Svenska Bostäder opened in *Vällingby Centrum* in addition to that of the National Power Board Vattenfall in Råcksta. Insecure about the prospects of the New Town, many businesses and industries awaited the outcome of the New Town experiment. Most enterprises settled in *Vällingby Centrum* or industrialised zones like Johannelund almost 10 years later than planned. New jobs were few because this moving out happened *after* the pioneer inhabitants were accommodated and the media success of the New Town was a reality.<sup>146</sup> For these reasons, there were more shops and office jobs although Vällingby was planned to have the majority employed in industries – in 1956 there were 507 employed in industry compared to 1,447 employed in shops and offices.<sup>147</sup> According to the art historian Thomas Millroth, growing up in Vällingby as a

146. Axel Wennerholm, former managing director of the Stockholm Retail Federation, highly influential on the planning of *Vällingby Centrum*, later recalled: 'Shopkeepers felt they would be taking a great risk and said: 'My business had been in the downtown area since my grandfather's time. What the hell, who is going to live out in Vällingby? I mean, just think of the name of it – Porridge Town. But, retailers did accept shops there, and those visionary – or lucky – ones made a fortune.' (To be precise välling actually means gruel and not porridge in Swedish.) David Pass: *Vällingby and Farsta – from Idea to Reality: The New Community Development Process in Stockholm*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, UK: MIT Press, 1969, p. 123.

147. Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 5.

child of New Town pioneers in the 1950s, the lack of local workplaces undermined the original intention of strong neighbourhood ties. While the children of his walk-up flat block in *Jämtlandsgatan* met in school, at the playground or at the day care between the houses, they rarely visited their playmates privately. Collectivism and community were encouraged everywhere in the planning of Vällingby. Still, there was a lack of a genuine meeting ground of professional communities around the workplace that was constituted naturally in inner city Stockholm. Neighbours in Vällingby were rarely colleagues, so the reason for socialising could sometimes be difficult to find. Somehow the planned community was not a real community mirroring the production.<sup>148</sup> Yet, Vällingby succeeded to rethink the labour market in tandem with the *Collective Housing Unit*, invented by Alva Myrdal and Markelius some 20 years before: The planning of Vällingby considered the resource and potential of a new female workforce. Thus, various social services (day care, playschools, laundrettes, etc.) were incorporated into the plan as natural components of a good and functional living environment for busy inhabitants. New 'feminine workplaces' also produced more welfare and spending power than families, relying on one provider.<sup>149</sup>

Hence, new facilities for the 'common good' took over many of the functions that had previously been people's own responsibility as part of the private sphere: Janitors looked after the courtyards, kindergartens took care of the children, the youth club *Tegelhögen* gave teenagers homework assistance and entertainment, Svenska Bostäder arranged the town's Christmas decoration, ready-to-go meals could be bought in the supermarket, etc. By the same token, the habits and everyday life of the main characters of the New Town 'drama' - Vällingby's pioneers - were scrutinized by experts of the state and municipality. An on-the-spot report in the magazine *Se* describes the relationship between residents and public authorities in 1955:

*'And then one can never be left in peace. People are staring through the window so one has a feeling of being social guinea pigs, registered in every unthinkable way. The authorities answer: - Yes it is true that we investigate. Vällingby invites to it. However the scrutiny is pure*

148. Thomas Millroth & Per Skoglund: Op. cit. *Vällingby en Tidbild av Vikt*. Stockholm: Almqvists Förlag, 2004, p. 25.

149. Hence, propaganda brochures such as the brochure *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad* (Vällingby: the Future Town of Companies) underlined that more than half of the population in Vällingby would be between 20 – 45 years old, many of them 'conveniently younger, married women'. Stockholms Stads Fastighetsnämnd/The City of Stockholm's Real Estate Office: *Vällingby: företagens framtidsstad*. Stockholm: Hera/Ivar Hægströms, 1952, p. 4 – 5 (author's translation).

*statistics and naturally it never gets personal. Moreover, it is for the benefit of the Vällingby residents.*<sup>150</sup>

Statistics and sociological reports, registering Vällingbies' preferred shops and goods, transportation habits, the relationship between home and shopping for housewives etc., worked as a disciplining instrument and a guinea pig for future New Towns with a *storcentrum* main centre like Farsta and Högdalen.<sup>151</sup> As objects/subjects of investigation of well-meaning planners and experts, some inhabitants began to long for intimacy and privacy. Although, the social engineering in Vällingby was practical in various ways, families sometimes felt the need to withdraw into the private sphere: On the one hand, some residents agreed with the happy statement of a Vällingby pioneer from the row houses in Grimsta: 'When Vällingby was new it was an idyll here... Vällingby is so finely planned and is a wonderfully green area.'<sup>152</sup> On the other hand, other inhabitants aspired to create their own space outside the conventions of 'correct behaviour', implicitly present as ritualised guidelines in many of the New Town's social services.<sup>153</sup> Like the popular character of Pippi Longstocking, there were those (like the self-made man the boxer Risberg and local rockbands) who were inclined to push the boundaries of the normativity and uniformity inherent in the Swedish Model of collectivism, integration, identity and egalitarianism.<sup>154</sup> While some residents enjoyed the common facilities and participated actively in organisations, located in the assembly hall Trappan, others stopped using the collective laundrettes with special rules of conduct and invested in their own washing machine. Instead of going to the cinema Fontänen some people bought their own television, whereas more Volvos and Saabs began to compete with the *Tunnelbana*. Still, compared to the buzz of Stockholm there was a more relaxed and easy atmosphere in Vällingby that might be due to its smaller scale, the shared 'pioneer experience' and the natural surroundings. Thus, Albert Aronsson

150. **Se:** "Is Vällingby the right solution?", in **Se**, October 21 – 28, 1955, p. ?? (author's translation).

151. One example of this the researcher Lars Persson of the Business Economic Research Institute at the Business School of Stockholm (*Företagsekonomiska Forskningsinstitut vid Handelshögskolan*). In 1960, he authored the report **Kunderna i Vällingby: en undersökning om verksamheten i Vällingby Centrum och köpvanorna hos ivånarna i omgivande bostadsområde** (The customers in Vällingby: an investigation of the activity in *Vällingby Centrum* and the shopping habits of the inhabitants in the surrounding housing area). Stockholm: Företagsekonomiska Forskningsinst. vid Handelshögskolan, 1960.

Giorgio Gentili comments on the use of such reports: "It is obvious that knowledge as to these delicate phenomena in the function of a shopping centre is regarded as an extremely useful and indispensable base in the designing of suburbs to be built in the future."

Giorgio Gentili: "The Satellite Towns of Stockholm", in **Urbanistica**, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 6.

152. Vällingby pioneer in Ulrika Sax: Op.cit., p. 141.

153. As Aronsson argues, a town is a collective and social entity per se and this fact invited the state to intervene in its development: 'The town is the most ramified society formation created by man and perhaps after language the most advanced cultural product he has accomplished so far. The town presupposes coexistence between people, adaption and community. Nobody can manage alone. On the contrary – the more developed society becomes, the more complicated life becomes. And society itself must intervene in order to organise services on different levels, childcare, schools, medical care, elderly care, employment service, leisure.' Albert Aronsson: "Från Bondby till Stor-Vällingby", in Svenska Bostäder: **Vällingby**. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 4 (author's translation).

154. Millroth compares Vällingby to a crystal castle: as people began to see the castle as dogma and structure, they invented their own rules in its half shadow. Thomas Millroth & Per Skoglund: Op.cit., p. 107.

hails the intimacy and friendly attitude of the shops in *Vällingby Centrum*: 'Friendly! Yes – the modest volume create conditions for friendliness. And friendliness is a good salesman among city people suffering of hunger for "love to thy neighbour"'<sup>155</sup>

A contributing factor to some of the developments, described above, was probably also the fact that planners and politicians were ignoring or overlooking the class differences imbedded in the New Town. A smaller segment lived in row houses and villas, while the majority inhabited walk-up flats. This social gap became clear in *Vällingby Centrum's* shopping mall where state planning and the capitalist market intersected in the formation of consumers' identity and ability to buy: It became an important matter if you did your groceries in Leja or Kveckly, Crescent or Monark. Ipso facto, the New Town was designed as workers housing according to the ideology of Social Democratic egalitarianism, dominant at the time. Yet, in the late 1940s and 1950s Swedish architects and planners gave up the category of 'housing for workers', common in the 1920s and 1930s. At the end of WWII, it was not politically correct to talk about class anymore. Or rather, after the consolidation of Social Democratic hegemony and the implementation of Folkhemmet's progressive housing policy, it seemed 'self-evident' that Sweden was a post-class society free of segregation and inequality.<sup>156</sup> Based on a thick structure of sociological reports, statistics and other scientific measurements, Vällingby were presumably planned for everybody.<sup>157</sup> When needs were no longer decided by class (however underpinned by working class standards) a series of standard facilities became universal: laundrettes, refuse chutes, hot water, shower, bicycle cellar, public transport, childcare, schools, etc. Practically everybody who moved into one of the rental flats in Vällingby, Räcksta and Grimsta during the 1950s got their new dwelling through the public housing service. Far into the 1960s, the immense housing queues in Stockholm made people accept whatever they could find and for many it was a coincidence that they ended up in Vällingby.<sup>158</sup>

As the welfare state of the Social Democratic Party gained momentum, the planning of Vällingby coincided with a new cultural policy, favouring education rather than agitation. Enlightenment of the people was a high priority and aesthetics was incorporated into the planning of the new society: In past generations, cooperative movements, study circles, trade unions, etc. had generated change. In the post war period, libraries, art galleries, art in public space, public art organisations such as

155. Albert Aronsson: "*Vällingby Centrum från idé till verklighet*", in Byggmästaran, 1956, No A4, p. 79 (author's translation).

156. As an example of this attitude, the paper Skogsindustriarbetarn (The Forest Industry Worker) printed this victorious statement in 1945: 'The Swedish working class is now more of a ruling class than it is submissive.' Ibid., p. 54 (author's translation).

157. Albert Aronsson specifically mentions the sociologist Dahlström's report about the neighbourhood Söderort and Lennart Holm's analysis of habits and patterns among the inhabitants in Svenska Bostäder's apartments in Svedmyra and Kärtrorp as influential sources to the planning of *Vällingby Centrum*.

Aronson, Albert: "*Vällingby Centrum från idé till verklighet*", in Byggmästaran, 1956, No A4, p. 77.

158. Ulrika Sax: Op.cit., p. 136.

Föreningen för konst i skolan (The organisation for art in the school) of 1947, and the construction of 100 new assembly halls, the so-called Folkets Hus from 1945 onwards became new cultural and political bastions. A good and happy life became synonymous with a productive work life and a leisure time filled with healthy and meaningful activities. In Vällingby the library, the youth club, public art, the assembly hall Trappan, the cinema Fontänen, and the sports clubs offered myriads of activities for the residents. As Thomas Millroth writes:

*‘Vällingby was created in the displacement from village to city from privatised economy to collective state, from an old-fashioned country marked by farm society and agriculture to a modern welfare state, from the organically growing city to the planned society; the suburb Vällingby became the materialisation of the ideological hopes that anticipated and followed the transformation.’<sup>159</sup>*

## Vällingby A Shrinking Town

In 1966, Albert Aronsson happily describes how ‘Greater Vällingby’ (the Vällingby Group plus Blackeberg, Norre Ängby and Södra Ängby) ‘belongs to the affluent parts of Stockholm’: The population has grown from 22,500 inhabitants in 1948 to a population of 85,000 with an average income of 12,000 SEK for all persons over 16 years old (considerably more than normal Stockholm standard).<sup>160</sup> Yet, looking at the Vällingby core area, Aronsson’s optimism is perhaps a chocolate-box description. In the end of the 1950s, when the population in Vällingby peaked, 24,000 persons lived in the core area of Vällingby, Grimsta and Räcksta. In the mid-1960s, *Vällingby Centrum* was extended with half its size, although there were now 22,500 Vällingbies. Approximately a decade later (1974), the number of inhabitants had decreased to 15,600. In the late 1990s, only 13,400 residents lived in the inner parts of Vällingby. Thus, the social evolution of the by now ‘old’ New Town mirrors a general pattern of Swedish housing: The social mix in

many neighbourhoods with multi-family housing was relatively diverse in the pioneer years. Meanwhile, a series of row houses and single-family houses were built in the neighbouring districts Vinsta, Nälsta, Kälvesta and Hässelby Villastrand during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some families, primarily functionaries and merchants, who felt short of space, and afforded the extra square meters, fled to these houses.<sup>161</sup>

Writing in 1998, however, the ethnologist Ulrika Sax explains Vällingby’s demographical changes with scarce construction of additional dwellings and lacking maintenance of the Vällingby Group in general and the Vällingby core area in particular. Originating from the 1950s, practically all dwellings in Vällingby, Grimsta and Räcksta needed reparations and improvements of water, sewage and electricity devices along with roofs, facades, windows, balconies and entryways. Since then, a renovation process has begun and accelerated in the inner districts as part of the aforementioned 2006 master plan by White. Nevertheless, many have moved because standards of space and comfort have changed over the last 54 years. Another factor to the change of demographics in the ‘old’ New Town is the aging of the population compared to the pioneer years (until 1966) when the population was young: 30 percent was children and only 2,6 percent elderly. Thus, a series of new dwellings for elderly, the majority Vällingby pioneers, have been built since the 1990s: many of the 1950s walk-up flats lack adequate facilities such as elevators and footpaths from single-family neighbourhoods to the *Tunnelbana* station or the centre can be long for a senior citizen. For instance, the former police headquarter in *Vällingby Centrum* has been renovated into flats for elderly. By the same token, pensioners now also use the youth club *Tegelhögen* as a meeting place for activities like card playing and gymnastics.<sup>162</sup>

Although Vällingby is both an aging and a ‘shrinking town’, a large percentage of the younger generations, the children and the grandchildren of the New Town pioneers, decide to stay or move back to Greater Vällingby (the Vällingby Group plus Blackeberg, Norre Ängby and Södra Ängby). Parallel to this ‘local patriotism’ a growing geographical dispersal shifts the scale of the local and national towards the regional and global. Some of the most obvious metamorphoses being the lower floor of the traditional Swedish restaurant *Vällingehus*, transforming into a global food hall, or the local *Vällingby Centrum* expanding into the regional attractor *Vällingby City*. Nonetheless, globalisation has left its imprint on other, less visible, levels. Like many other countries in the age of globalisation, many of the jobs in industry and trading of goods have disappeared. Important workplaces – especially within industry and trading goods – have disappeared or reduced in size since the mid-1980s (35 percent from the

159. Thomas Millroth & Per Skoglund: *Vällingby en Tidbild av Vikt*. Stockholm: Almlöfs Förlag, 2004, p. 107.

160. Albert Aronsson: "Från Bondby till Stor-Vällingby", in *Svenska Bostäder: Vällingby*. Stockholm: AB Svenska Bostäder, 1966, p. 3.

161. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

162. Ulrika Sax: *Op. cit.*, p. 139.



1988 to 1998).<sup>163</sup> During the 1990s, the corporation Konsumentverkat moved from the industrial area Johannelund, while many enterprises and offices emptied. Moreover, the number of employees in the large office building of the National Power Board Vattenfall in Räcksta has decreased in tandem with the vacating of the company's offices in Hässelby Gård.

At present, less than half of the working population work locally, while the percentage of car-dependent commuters (with jobs spread out in the region) has gone up. In 1998, 15 percent of the total working population in Vällingby was employed locally, whereas 22 percent worked in another municipality.<sup>164</sup> Meanwhile, the current revamping of *Vällingby Centrum* a.k.a. *Vällingby City* are expected to create more job possibilities. More women work in Vällingby than men; female workers frequently hold jobs in the manufacturing industry, service and care, at workplaces situated close to the home and on part-time basis while the children are small. As in the 1950s, most local workplaces are located in *Vällingby Centrum*, Vattenfall's headquarter and the hospital in Räcksta, and enterprises in Johannelund, now renamed into *Vinsta Företagsområde* (Vinsta Company Area). Many of the small neighbourhood shops are closed or are transformed into night open shops such as pizzerias, video shops or tobacco shops. Other empty shops are converted into offices and workshops.

In spite of these shifts, there is still an active association life at the sports grounds, the assembly hall *Trappan*, the four park playgrounds, managed by the private company Vällingby Fritids AB (Vällingby Leisure Ltd.) or in the youth club *Tegelhögen*. Of course the nature of activities have altered according to taste and hype, so the youth club now offer hiphop dance, solarium, skateboarding, etc. Apart from such global youth culture phenomena, globalisation is manifest in another way in *Tegelhögen*. Kids from the neighbouring New Town Tensta-Rinkeby, most of them of 'other ethnic origin than Swedish', take the bus from the southern part of Järvafältet to hang out in the public and, as it were, free youth club. Especially, the Saturday night discos are well visited by hundreds of young lads from the outside, around 90 percent of the visitors. Because of occasional fights between rivaling 'gangs' from Tensta-Rinkeby, many of the local youths prefer to hang out on cafés or discos in central Stockholm – if they don't meet at the local Macdonald's, one of the few places in *Vällingby Centrum* that is open after 11 pm.<sup>165</sup> Several teenagers in Vällingby commute the other way to the upper secondary school Tensta Gymnasium. Ten years ago, most youngsters preferred to buy clothes in chic fashion stores in inner city districts like Södermalm, while their parents and

grandparents continued to shop in *Vällingby Centrum*. Rebranded as *Vällingby City* with the fancy fashion store *Kfem*, this might change: After a long and difficult rebuilding period where clients and shop owners deserted the centre, many now have the desire to move back as new client groups are attracted to Vällingby.<sup>166</sup>

Regardless of such optimistic prospects, the difference between certain parts of Vällingby and Tensta-Rinkeby are probably not as drastic as you might think, browsing through the newspapers. In a recent report, Johan Rådberg, director of a large research project about segregation and attraction in the Stockholm region (1995 – 2000), describes a general tendency to polarisation within the region. According to Rådberg, villa suburbs and regenerated parts of the inner city experience fast social upgrading, while neighbourhoods with collective housing with a high concentration of 'resource-weak' and 'immigrants' become 'declassé'. Juxtaposing, 'attractive' and 'unattractive' housing, he attributes much of the blame to the (once celebrated) architecture:

*'The problem of segregation not only concerns a handful of stigmatised 'problem neighbourhoods' of the Million Program (as it is sometimes presented by the mass media). All neighbourhoods who are dominated by unattractive architecture risk social declassification.'*<sup>167</sup>

Rådberg argues that it is not only the Million Program New Towns, habitually depicted as 'ghettos', but also New Towns with high-rise built in 1955-65 who live through 'fast declassification'. Specifically, he mentions Farsta, Högdalen and Rågsved, south of Stockholm in addition to Vällingby, Räcksta, Blackeberg and Hässelby.<sup>168</sup> Although Vällingby has experienced an influx of inhabitants of 'other ethnicities', following the liberal Swedish immigration laws in the decades after the inauguration in 1954, Vällingby has not turned into a 'ghetto' New Town like Tensta-Rinkeby where 'resource-weak' immigrants and their relatives are a majority. As mentioned, many of the New Town pioneers and their younger generation family tend to stay or move back to Vällingby. Yet, for 'resource-weak' families it can be a problem to find another place to live whether they move from a rental flat in say Tensta or Hässelby Gård

163. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 153.

164. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 153.

165. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 151.

166. Telephone interview with Kerstin Ahlin from AB Svenska Bostäder in Vällingby, conducted by the author in Stockholm, July 17, 2008. See also *Vällingby City's* website: [www.vallingbycity.se/](http://www.vallingbycity.se/), *Kfem* Retail store's website: [www.kfem.se/](http://www.kfem.se/) and White Architects' website: [white.se](http://white.se)

167. Johan Rådberg: "Segregation och attraktivitet", in *Arkitektur*, Vol. 2, March, 2006, p. 40 (author's translation).

168. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

because of high real estate prices and long queues for dwellings in 'high status' neighbourhoods.<sup>169</sup> In this process, 'socially ambitious' people from Tensta-Rinkeby ('ethnic Swedish' as well as 'new Swedish') alternatively move to Vällingby. While crime rates grew during the 1990s with vandalism, robberies and occasional drug selling, it has diminished in recent years. Different safety initiatives were launched by Svenska Bostäder: Locks were installed on cellar doors, trees and bushes were trimmed, new lampposts and cameras were placed strategically, and mobilisation campaigns were initiated in order to inspire the inhabitants to feel ownership and take responsibility for their neighbourhood.

Segregation was probably always present within the social gaps between the different neighbourhoods and dwelling types, represented in the integral ABC-Town. Nevertheless, it has become more visible as publicly allotted rental flats have become *déclassé* (or perhaps even stigmatised) housing. While non-profit organisation Svenska Bostäder continues to be the dominant administrator of dwellings, there have been experiments with alternative ownerships and housing typologies in some neighbourhoods, following Rådberg's advice to 'built nothing unattractive' and 'change the unattractive so it becomes attractive!'<sup>170</sup> One example is the 16 self-build row houses in Grimsta, constructed by the inhabitants in the mid-1990s on initiative of Svenska Bostäder as Stockholm's first self-build row houses with right of habitation. The residents take care of their housing environment and some functions themselves. As an effect of the housing cooperative, water prices in the neighbourhood has been reduced considerably. Moreover, a residents' association manages the houses.

A real community has developed around the self-help houses, but communities can sometimes be exclusive: New senior dwellings (for old Vällingby pioneers) were built next to the self-build houses. Svenska Bostäder planned that the inhabitants of the self-build houses could use the shared laundrette, located in one of the senior houses. After continuous complaints made by the seniors, the housing organisation had to construct a new laundrette for the row houses. The same story repeated at the shared common room. The seniors were disturbed by noise from parties organised by the inhabitants of the self-build houses as well as the children playing under their windows in the evenings. As Jonny, originally from Rinkeby, but now living in the self-build houses, explains: 'We came here at the same time as the seniors and would

169. As Rådberg argues: "The problem can be put this way: the housing market in our big cities contains a big surplus of low-attractive neighbourhood typologies that moreover lie concentrated in certain areas. This is the reason for the increasing polarisation in the cities. It is a problem that doesn't go away by itself. It will follow us for at least a generation, even if we begin to attack it immediately."  
Rådberg: Op. cit., p. 41 (author's translation).

170. Rådberg: Op. cit., p. 38 (author's translation).

like to have contact, yet it became zero contact.'<sup>171</sup> On a micro level, this neighbourhood conflict between old Vällingby pioneers and the newcomers of the self-build houses, some originating from Tensta-Rinkeby, mirrors an ever-present tension between old and new, inside and outside, in the listed 'old' pioneer New Town Vällingby.

## Happy in the Middle

As we have already seen, Vällingby was a product of the historical break after World War II, a time equally uncertain and open to new solutions. Born in such a political climate, one could describe Stockholm's first New Town as a testing ground for post-war urbanism: Located between shifting geopolitical and architectural paradigms, it came into being under the impression of the *tabula rasas* of bombed city centres and the hardening of Churchill's Iron Curtain. While the new super powers were drawing the borders of a new map, dividing the world into a Capitalist and a Communist part, Vällingby was planned as a manifestation of Sweden's *Middle Way* position between the poles (the Swedish Model). Neither part of NATO nor the Warsaw Pact, the country remained (supposedly) neutral ground outside the geopolitical conflicts governing the faith of the world.<sup>172</sup> With a constant Social Democratic ruling mandate during the first three decades of the Cold War, the neutral democracy was free to make choices, transgressing the 'either...or' dichotomy of 'Communist' and 'Capitalist' planning systems: Vällingby exceptionally combined public control and education (common social facilities with certain norms of conduct like laundrettes, rules of colour schemes for balcony coverings, collective standards according to sociological 'facts', public schools and kindergartens, edifying modernist art, politicised activities in the assembly hall, etc.) with stimulation of private business initiatives (the Retail Federation Board's engagement in the development of *Vällingby Centrum*, strategic marketing and branding campaigns, the focus on consumerism, the invitation for private enterprises to settle, the collaboration between public authorities and the business sector, etc.). In the words of Thomas Millroth, growing up in Vällingby in the pioneer years: "The zone of childhood that was established in saga books and the whole pedagogy of the welfare program was crossed by the business man."<sup>173</sup>

This rare combination of socialist welfare and capitalist consumerism makes

171. Ulrika Sax: Op. cit., p. 148-149 (author's translation).

172. Although a strong army backed up Sweden's neutrality with weapons from the national factory Bofors AB, one can discuss whether the country remained completely neutral ground, probably leaning more towards the Western side of the Berlin Wall. See Christopher Caldwell: Op. cit.

173. Thomas Millroth & Per Skoglund: Op. cit., p. 15.

Vällingby the rule of exception among the New Towns at the Cold War frontier. The ABC-Town concept is closely linked to the consolidation of a new society in the mould of a Social Democratic utopia: Vällingby constitutes a possibly unrepeatable urban phenomenon, conceived at a moment when consensus and common interests were reached between the Social Democratic Party in power and visionary urban planners as well as between public works and private initiative in the Sweden of *Folkhemmet*. It is in this sense that the New Town can be said to embody the Swedish Model. Yet, for the same reasons Vällingby might also be seen as a New Town ‘in the middle’; a ‘neutral’ and ‘happy’ New Town which caught the eye of architects and planners from the East Block and the West Block alike: During the construction process, the CIAM Council Meeting took place in Sigtuna, located within the Stockholm County. Between lively discussions of the proposed *Charter of Habitat*, excursions were arranged to modern Swedish architecture and Markelius presented the plans of Vällingby (1952).<sup>174</sup> Shortly after the inauguration of *Vällingby Centrum* the American architecture critic G. E. Kidder Smith, already a supporter of Swedish architecture and urban planning, was smitten by the ‘Vällingby fever’. In 1957, he revised his 1950 book about Swedish urban planning *Sweden Builds*, adding a chapter on Vällingby and a foreword by Markelius. For Kidder Smith Vällingby was a model New Town with global potential:

*“This new “town section” in west Stockholm has more lessons to offer the cities of our time than any development yet built. It shows to a beautiful degree how the suburbs which increasingly envelop the world’s cities can be well planned, parklike, viable centers, and not haphazard accretions strangled in transportation, mired shopping and frantic for enough schools and public facilities. Every road, every building location, every need for its inhabitants was minutely planned before ground was broken. It is the embodiment of Sweden’s intimate relationship between*

174. One of the issues, discussed at the CIAM congress, was the relationship between dwelling design and the role of working women; a question Markelius had explored with Alva Myrdal two decades before in *Kollektivhuset* (the Collective Housing Unit). Eric Mumford: Op. cit., p. 220 – 21.

*architecture and the land on which it stands. Virtually all major decisions in the moulding of Vällingby were good ones: strict preservation of the landscape and trees; free planning in spaces with fingers of green everywhere; separation of pedestrian and motor traffic; integrated transportation, parking and shopping; full cultural and entertainment facilities; a great variety of housing types; one central plant for heat and power. One can quarrel with the minor decisions – especially with some of the architecture – but the basic concept and its execution is superior.”*<sup>175</sup>

Architects of ‘the Old World’ in Europe also showed enthusiasm towards the new experiment in the far north: In 1958, the Venetian architect Giorgio Gentili did research in Stockholm for some months with a UN scholarship. In September that year, he published an article about Vällingby and Stockholm’s second New Town Farsta in the Italian periodical *Urbanistica*. Although Gentili is disappointed with the number of local workplaces and considers Vällingby too dependent on Stockholm, he is impressed by the Swedish capital’s project ‘gradually to replace Stockholm’s “monocentric” system of yesterday with a “polycentric” system.’<sup>176</sup> Moreover, he judges that ‘the planning has given an extremely satisfactory result in regard to the activity in Vällingby Centre and, particularly for the shopping centre which is its most flourishing part. The commercial independence of the district can really be regarded as almost complete.’<sup>177</sup>

With the growing legacy of Vällingby, the further planning of Swedish satellite towns continued to attract international experts. One of the more in depth studies was carried out by the American planner and economist Edwin D. Abrams who spent the summer of 1961 at the City of Stockholm’s urban planning office. Here, he analysed and advised on the relationship between residents and district centres as well as the bigger

175. G. E. Kidder-smith: *Sweden Builds*, New York: Albert Bonnier, 1950/57, p. 94.

176. Giorgio Gentili: “The Satellite Towns of Stockholm”, in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 2.

177. Giorgio Gentili: “The Satellite Towns of Stockholm”, in *Urbanistica*, 24 – 25, September, 1958, p. 5.



Vällingby's traffic separation, in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, A3.

Sketch showing Vällingby's traffic separation, inspired by Clarence S. Stein's Radburn. Kidder Smith, G. E.: *Sweden Builds*, New York: Albert Bonnier, 1950/57.



*Storcentrum* community centres, connecting several districts.<sup>178</sup> In the same year, Sven Markelius and his right-hand man Göran Sidenbladh were awarded with the Patrick Abercrombie Price for the (re)development of Stockholm in general and Vällingby in particular. The award was particularly motivated by the originality and sustainability of Vällingby's ABC-Town concept: 'A satellite town, a neighbourhood, a traffic separation and a centre in a successful combination.'<sup>179</sup>

Under impression of such positive reports from the Scandinavian country, it is not surprising that many foreign professionals went on a pilgrimage to Stockholm, offering their expertise, while open to the new planning methods. Working for different political agendas and ideologies, foreign architects and planners came from hither and dither to learn from the New Town in the middle of the Cold War frontier. The cosmopolitanism of Markelius' own architectural office is emblematic in this sense: After his retirement as director of Stockholm's urban planning office, parallel to the inauguration of *Vällingby Centrum*, 14 November, 1954, architects from Denmark, Norway, Finland, United Kingdom, Italy, United States, Poland, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Switzerland, Israel, Australia, Japan, and even China worked side by side at the Stockholm office.<sup>180</sup>

## Lack and Large-scale - Housing by Millions

Contrary to the recurrent celebration of Vällingby's innovative and 'healthy' 1950s Modernism, the large-scale urban planning of the 1960s is often perceived as a 'decadent' Modernism, a product of visionary planners becoming pragmatic producers. Swedish 1960s planning is also frequently depicted as a result of a welfare state, burdened by bureaucratisation. Or rather, a system working too efficiently and powerfully – too perfectly. In the article "*Vällingby · Tensta · Kista · Vadå?*" ("Vällingby · Tensta · Kista · What Then?"), 1977, the architects Jon Höjer and Sture Ljungqvist, together with two colleagues, forward a critique, exemplifying this attitude. Both active in Vällingby and in Tensta-Rinkeby, they construct a historical narrative of Swedish urbanism, juxtaposing the cases of Vällingby and Tensta-Rinkeby: Vällingby's 1950s view of human nature characterises 'a variant of the philosophy of *folkhemmet*' guided by a vision of a 'rich social life for all sections of the population, like a housing standard

178. One of Abrams' findings was that the two district centres in Håsselby Strand and Håsselby Gärd were somewhat overshadowed by the main centre of *Vällingby Centrum*. Abrams then came up with the rule of thumb for future planning of New Towns that a population of 10,000 would require 40 shops, yet, only 20 shops if the neighbourhood unit was situated close to the inner core of a larger community centre. Göran Sidenbladh: (1981) *Op. cit.*, p. 341.

179. The Patrick Abercrombie Price committee, quoted in Ulrika Sax: *Op.cit.*, p. 59.

180. Eva Rudberg: *Sven Markelius, arkitekt*. Stockholm: Arkitektur Förlag, 1989, p. 163.

and an agency in level with what only richer groups were able to win before.<sup>181</sup> While the state guaranteed the implementation of this egalitarian utopia, 'vision was more qualitative than quantitative.'<sup>182</sup> Then a shift came by in the 1960s:

*'In the 1960s, the innovation of the 1950s frequently became a production by routine in the hands of administrators and technicians, stressing rationalisation and short-term economy. In that way, the view of human nature also changed. The administrative and economical scheme of things appeared in the terminology with concept types like optimisation, quantitative execution methods and the like...Urbanisation and housing shortage made it easy to argue for a quantitative perspective. The original comprehensive political view of human nature separated into a number of measurable (normative) qualities, together guaranteeing the good life. But perhaps more, it reflected the administrative structure and its power relations than the needs of human beings.'*<sup>183</sup>

What such critiques tend to play down is the severe magnitude of the housing shortage, plaguing Swedish cities for decades. Vällingby was hailed as an eloquently designed New Town, catering for every need of its inhabitants with plenty of leisure activities and social services. Yet, an old snake was lurking behind the Social Democratic utopia: By 1955, the housing situation of Sweden's overcrowded cities was no better than prior to World War II. The number of names on waiting lists exceeded that of Don Juan's women, apartments and rooms were minuscule, maintenance was poor, half of the people in the three biggest cities lacked proper washing facilities,

181. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 16 (author's translation).

182. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 16 (author's translation).

183. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 16 (author's translation).

and one quarter of the dwellings were without central heating and indoor toilets.<sup>184</sup> In 1960, the number of Stockholmers rose to the unseen number of 808,294 inhabitants. Because of the construction of new New Towns, public authorities anticipated that the population in the City would decrease, but increase on a regional level. Official calculations expected a growth of the national population to 25 millions Swedes by 1970 (in 2008 it was only approx. 9 millions). Politically, there was a consensus that something had to be done!<sup>185</sup> Large-scale was the weapon, mobilised to fight lack of housing.

Meanwhile, new possibilities and construction methods were offered by the giant technological quantum leap, taken after Vällingby.<sup>186</sup> (As Höjer and Ljungqvist dryly comment: 'Nothing seemed impossible: mountains were not a hindrance, just a source of irritation.'<sup>187</sup>) Importantly, this happened in a welfare state raging of optimism and high growth rates. As it became possible to built in an unseen scale and pace, Social Democratic politicians, welcomed the technological progress as an instrument to solve the housing problem in the big cities once and for all. With general improvement of living standards, and thus new demands, housing became a flagship in the ramified web of social security. According to the logics of the period, it seemed evident that housing lack could be turned into housing abundance by means of the new materials, building components and industrialised construction methods. Such rationalised building schemes were also beneficial because they would spare some of the workers' hands, both Swedish and imported labour force, needed for Sweden's expanding export industry. Although new planning procedures and building methods generated a more uniform built-up area than Vällingby's, and the average urban Swede had to make do with a relatively standardised home, a final solution to the housing problem via the construction of New Towns with a high concentration of high-rise, slabs and walk-up flats was regarded as an urgent and prestigious project of a bright future by contemporaries.<sup>188</sup>

After the inauguration of Vällingby in 1954, the City of Stockholm completed approx. one new satellite town per year: First, Högdalen, Hagsätra, Farsta, Bredäng and Sättra inside the City's own boundaries, then Skärholmen and Värberg on bought land,

184. Peter Hall: Op. cit., p. 853.

185. Magnus Andersson: *Stockholm's Annual Rings: A Glimpse into the Development of the City*. Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998, p. 181.

186. One of the key inventions was the system of concrete elements, created by Ohlson & Skarne, enabling Swedish entrepreneurs to built 1,000 identical apartments with the same technique and at the low cost, required for getting a contract. Prior to its fusion with Skånska Cementgjuteriet, the company became the biggest constructor of housing in Sweden.

Familjebostäder: *Tensta: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter*. Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 2002.

187. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 17 (author's translation).

188. As the architect Jöran Lindvall writes: 'The belief in the possibilities and techniques of the development as a good force seemed almost unlimited. One built for a bright future – for people who had left the old behind and were going to create a new world together. Income and living standard improved, people's spending power increased and accordingly their demand for better dwellings.'

Jöran Lindvall: "En Miljon Bostäder", in *En Miljon Bostäder: Arkitekturmuseets Årsbok 1996*. Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet: 1996, p. 7 (author's translation).

and finally, Bollmora in Tyresö plus Fittja, Alby, Hallunda and Norsberg in Botkyrka as a collaboration with the neighbouring municipalities. Like Vällingby, Högdalen with the districts Bandhagen and Rågsved, as well as Farsta between Drevviken and Maggelungen, each constituted a *Storcentrum*, serving a large hinterland (Farsta 70,000 people). Following lively discussions on housing policies, the big issue at the national election of 1962, a new mobilisation of the building effort was launched: Within the framework of the so-called *Miljonprogrammet* (the Million Program), accepted by the national parliament *Riksdagen*, Sweden constructed a million new dwellings between 1965 and 1974, beating a record in time and efficiency. Today, these dwellings constitute 25 percent of Sweden's total housing stock.<sup>189</sup>



Some facades in Tensta stay intact, although exposing the varying quality and durability of the prefabricated building elements. Still, the environment of this courtyard is intimate and green like in Vällingby.

As exemplified by Höjer and Ljungqvist's 1977 article, the Million Program has been a subject to critique - justified and unjustified - over the years. Thirty years after, journalist Christine Demstæder writes:

*'These neighbourhoods, hailed residential heaven when they were built in the seventies, were soon to become viewed as the nation's housing from hell...Reputation precedes the most notorious neighbourhoods: Rinkeby, Tensta and Skärholmen in Stockholm, Hammerkullen, Angered and Bergsjön in Gothenburg and Rosengård in Malmö.'*<sup>190</sup>

The problem of the sometimes unbiased reception of the Million Program is that many critics apply the same yardstick to a diverse phenomenon. Although the image of the Million Program has become synonymous with a dull landscape of concrete slabs, it did not evolve as an unconscious duplication of the same dwelling type over 9 years. Rather, it manifested as individual satellite towns, distributed around urban centres like Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, mirroring changes within the period. Moreover, it involved various planners and architects, designing a third single-family houses, a third low collective houses and a third high-rise apartment blocks of different qualities and characters. Moreover, architectural diversity can be found within the category of the lower collective houses. Scale and grouping recall the building tradition of the 1940s and 1950s that made 'Swedish Modern' famous, even if it is coarsened and stereotyped; increased prefabrication was visible in structure and details. In this part of the Million Program, architects experimented with new building types, uniting a human scale and site-specificity with new demands for rationality and economy. Meanwhile, the natural landscape was transformed into an accessible tabula rasa, paving the way for the building cranes to work optimally while lifting the building elements. This machine-like appearance became particularly evident in the large-scale housing estates. 'Planning adapted to production' became the ideological mantra among a new generation of Swedish planners and architects.<sup>191</sup>

190. Christine Demstæder: "Concrete Jungle: Sweden's Surburbs Become Cool", in *The Local*, February 9, 2007, [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

191. Jöran Lindvall: "En Miljon Bostäder", in *En Miljon Bostäder: Arkitekturmuseets Årsbok 1996*. Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet: 1996, p. 8.

As cogwheels in the production process, architects were expected to design buildings that could be erected in the cheapest and quickest way. Even so, there are also examples of variety and landscaping in the large-scale parts of the Million Program (e.g. monolithic high-rise blocks, towering up on rocky heights in Tensta). Yet, most of the Million Program's large-scale planning is characterised by repetition of simple shapes, arranged in monotonous grid patterns (this is often the case in Rinkeby). According to preference, one can picture this as pragmatics (if one likes cheap and rational housing), minimalist beauty (if one enjoys simplicity and systematisation) or sad (if one prefers diversity and human scale in housing environments). But other factors motivated this kind of planning. From the time of Vällingby to Million Program New Towns like Tensta-Rinkeby, an important change had taken place, limiting the possibilities of creative land use. A veritable boom in car ownership demanded a new system of traffic security with hierarchical road systems, taking up big pieces of land and making up new borders and distances between people. Furthermore, the Million Program's planning machine was challenged by a new complexity on political and administrative levels.

## The Järva Bomb - The Becoming of A Million Program New Town

Although Järvafältet is one of the oldest parts of the Stockholm region, inhabited since 500 B.C., a historical palimpsest superimposed by layers of archaeological traces of Iron Age settlements, Viking Age rune stones, a Romanesque church, an ancient cemetery and old farms, it is the last large area on 'virgin soil', developed into New Towns by the City of Stockholm. Spelled *Rynkaby*, Rinkeby is mentioned for the first time in 1347, designating a medieval town with four farms, while the name Tensta, appearing in 1538, referred to two church homesteads.<sup>192</sup> One can revisit the ancient history of the site via historical structures in the valley between Tensta and Rinkeby and 'memorial signposts', scattered around the New Town area that was transformed into a tabula rasa before construction began.

After the expansion of the *Tunnelbana*, Stockholm's southern and western land resources were emptied, and once more the City invested in land outside its borders.<sup>193</sup> Development of the area towards the southwest was initiated by the purchase of

Sättra with Bredäng and Skärholmen, followed by Tensta and Rinkeby at Järvafältet, a military area since 1905 northwest of Stockholm.<sup>194</sup> In the Social Democratic Party's campaign for the 1962 national election, it was promised that 160,000 new dwellings would be realised at this former training-ground within eight years. August 29, 1960, *Tunnelbana* travellers were offered freshly printed flyers, promising that this plan would be realised before the end of the decade! 90,000 people would be accommodated inside the City of Stockholm, while the remaining population would live in the neighbouring municipalities.<sup>195</sup> Presented as an unexpectedly simple solution, triggering passionate election debates, this *deus ex machina* spin stunt was soon nicknamed *Järvabomben* (the Järva Bomb).<sup>196</sup>

As early as 1938, a public report launched the idea of appropriating Järvafältet for the purpose of housing. After 1949, the contract of the military tenants was only prolonged on a yearly basis when the area, owned by the poor farmer municipality Spånga, was incorporated into Stockholm; an event paving the way for the neighbouring New Town Vällingby.<sup>197</sup> Yet, because of interest conflicts with the state and the military, the five municipalities involved in the planning of Tensta-Rinkeby (Stockholm, Solna, Sollentuna, Sundbyberg and Järfälla) had to await the exit of the army before the land area were finally bought by the state for the sum of 240 million SEK in 1966. The promise of an implementation of 160,000 new dwellings at Järvafältet within 8 years proved deeply exaggerated. For once, negotiations between conflicting interest groups delayed the process: there was no concrete plan for the military moving out. Moreover, state authorities wished to allocate governmental institutions in the area, the last major plot within reasonable distance of the city. Finally, 'the battle of Järvafältet' became a serial story in the press and a political game, occupying most of the (municipal) mandate period, 1962 – 1966.<sup>198</sup> At the 1966 county election, voters punished the Social Democrats for breaking their election pledges. When the cranes started to operate in the area, a few months after the election, the Non-Socialists gained the majority at Stockholm's town hall.

192. **Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nittiosju stadsdelar i yterstaden.** Stockholm: Stockholms Förlag, 2003, p. 399 and Familjebostäder: **Tensta: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter.** Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 2002.

193. In the late 1970s, 27 percent of the 1,6 million acres of Stockholm County were in public ownership, the largest land bank of any metropolitan area in Western Europe. Ownership was divided between the national government, the county, the city, and most of the 22 municipalities in the county. Peter Hall: Op. cit. 859.

194. To be precise, Järva-Spånga-Järfälla-fältet, commonly referred to as Järvafältet, constituted a land area of 5,300 hectares, owned by the state. While 4000 hectares were reserved for military purposes, the remaining part was rented to farmers. Ingemar Johansson: **StorStockholms bebyggelsehistoria: Markpolitik, planering och bygganda under sju sekler.** Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987, p. 587.

195. The day before the distribution of the flyer, the Social Democratic Prime Minister, Tage Erlander, had personally delivered: 'the historical message to Stockholm's inhabitants that the government has decided to pass arrangements to move the military units from Järvafältet and instead allow the field to be left at Stockholm's and the neighbouring municipalities' disposal for construction of housing.'

Tage Erlander in Ingemar Johansson: **StorStockholms bebyggelsehistoria: Markpolitik, planering och bygganda under sju sekler.** Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987, p. 590 (author's translation).

196. See the brochure Familjebostäder: **Rinkeby: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter.** Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 1998/2001.

197. Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): **Därute i Tensta.** Stockholm: Stockholms Förlag, 1998, p. 16 and 19.

198. An editorial in the newspaper **Dagens Nyheter** (1962) posed the question: 'Will the planning of Järvafältet be 10 years delayed?' By the same token, an editorial in **Expressen** (1965) carried the headline: 'The profit desire of the state hinders Järva to become a model town'.

Ingemar Johansson: **StorStockholms bebyggelsehistoria: Markpolitik, planering och bygganda under sju sekler.** Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987, p. 590 – 592 (author's translation).

In reality, the planning of Tensta-Rinkeby anticipated all these formalities.<sup>199</sup> Initiatives to a general plan for the southern part of Järvafältet, who was never directly affected by military works, were taken in autumn 1962, shortly after the detonation of the *Järva Bomb*. Based on an already existing sketch for a master plan by the Regional Planning Office, Stockholm's urban planning office finished a preliminary proposal for Tensta-Rinkeby's general plan. By 1964, the master plan for the New Town with the districts Tensta, Hjulsta and Rinkeby was in place. After consultation with different administrations, the municipal principals accepted the plan, April 1965. Only, the politician Jan-Erik Wikström criticised the outline, finding it driven by 'regularity'. He questioned if the 'beautiful formulations' would be matched by an equally imaginative architecture.<sup>200</sup> To a certain extent Wikström's doubts proved justified. Primary responsibilities for the shaping of the outer environment were handed to the building owners. Not rarely, their perspective on urbanism and architecture was guided by pecuniary interests and technical logics of production. It also caused some difficulties that no less than 22 different building companies each constructed their part of Södra Järvafältet.<sup>201</sup> What united them was the common goal to create a new society from scratch for a population of 35,000 within 5 years. Without real previous experience, matching in scale and time schedule, the Tensta-Rinkeby experiment exposed all the advantages and drawbacks of a large-scale expansion, compressed in time and space. Yet, the great building efforts in the Stockholm region had already peaked in the preceding years, so the relative extent of the Million Program in and around the capital was half as large than elsewhere.<sup>202</sup>

## Satellite Urbanism

In 1956, Stockholm's retired urban planning director, Sven Markelius wrote that if one was to exploit the land resources of the city to a higher degree than it had happened in Vällingby, one had to reconsider traffic convenience as well as the choice of dwelling types.<sup>203</sup> Assisted by the planners Igor Dergalin and Josef Stäck, Markelius' successor at the City's urban planning office, Göran Sidenbladh followed the advice. Thus, the planning of Tensta-Rinkeby produced new guidelines for urban development, compiled in the document *Planstandard 1965* (Planning Standard 1965), January 7, 1965, advising on

every detail necessary in a multi-family housing area and presented together with the general plan.<sup>204</sup> Framed by these norms and standards, Tensta-Rinkeby's planners ambitiously claimed to invent a new satellite town typology, adding a 'new urban feeling', transferring some of the qualities of the inner city to the New Town. Spearheads of the plan included: densification of housing, traffic separation, a selective, but optimal use of greeneries, and a break with the ideals of Howard's garden city as well as the functionalistic paradigm of housing in a park landscape. Trained as an architect in Greece, Igor Dergalin was inspired by contemporary European debates on urbanism about the qualities of a town. In the Swedish interpretation, urbanism (*stadslighet*) basically meant density, intensity and structure. With the formulation of the general plan: 'an urbanism, that is to say a regularly designed and concentrated grouping of the building volumes and an effective co-planning of buildings and land.'<sup>205</sup>

Situated at the southern part of Järvafältet, the interconnected New Towns Tensta and Rinkeby are located in a hilly terrain, sloping down towards the valley stretch in the south. This green belt, containing the Romanesque Spånga Church from the 12th century, a cemetery with Viking Age rune stones and wooden houses from the 18th century, constitutes a 'natural' border between Rinkeby and Tensta including Hjulsta. Meanwhile, the main traffic arteries of Bergslagsvägen and highway E18 indicate the northern border, separating Tensta-Rinkeby and the wild nature resort at Järvafältet, the biggest green area in the region. Like building crane tracks, the general plan follows straight angles in an easily readable grid structure, intending to form an integrated and consistent townscape. (While it was a main objective of the plan to conserve the existing landscape image, no nature was left untouched between and around the buildings. Woods growing on the hills were replaced by a dense built-up area, paused by new-planted greeneries of modest proportions.)

By allowing building heights to follow the topography according to a structure of the so-called *bandstadsmönster* (band town pattern), the 'patrimony' valley stretch is left untouched by the New Town's tabula rasa architecture: First, the 'backbone' of the satellite town is constituted by an 'outer band' of housing with tall lamella houses (*skivhus*) up to 6 or 7 storeys. Situated on the northern hills facing the natural resort on Järvafältet, these elongated slabs, resemble a fortress with the infrastructural arteries of Bergslagsvägen, Hjulstavägen and highway E18 as a moat. Second, another 'middle band' further south, designed like a walking street, distributes Tensta, Hjulsta and

199. For an insider's account of this process see Göran Sidenbladh: "Introduktion till dispositionsplan för Järvafältet", in *Arkitektur*, 1, 1969, p. 6 - 7.

200. Ingemar Johansson: *StorStockholms bebyggelsehistoria: Markpolitik, planering och bygganda under sju sekler*. Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987, p. 594.

201. Together the city's four non-profit housing organisations were responsible for production and administration of half of the approx. 11,000 planned apartments. Other contractors included all the main cooperative housing companies and 12 different private housing companies. Ingemar Johansson: *StorStockholms bebyggelsehistoria: Markpolitik, planering och bygganda under sju sekler*. Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987, p. 594.

202. Magnus Andersson: *Stockholm's Annual Rings: A Glimpse into the Development of the City*. Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998, p. 183.

203. Sven Markelius: "Stockholms struktur", in *Byggmästaren*, 1956, A3, p. 59.

204. Guidelines indicated new standards for distances to building entrances and between feeder roads, designs of crossings, and advice on open spaces, housing types, flats, communal facilities, etc.

The office of urban planning of the City of Stockholm: *Beskrivning til generalplaneförslag för området kring Rinkeby, Spånga Kyrka och Tensta inom Järvafältet*. (Bilaga till Stadskollegiets utlåtande nr 92 år 1965), appendix in Olle Bengtzon, Jan Delden & Jan Lundgren: *Rapport Tensta*. Stockholm: Pan Express, 1970, p. 100.

205. *Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nittiosju stadsdelar i yterstaden*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 2003, p. 430 (author's translation).



Hjulstavägen är en bestämd gräns mellan bostadsbebyggelsen och de öppna områdena i norr. I förgrunden Tensta, längst bort Rinkeby.

The Hjulsta road forms a distinct boundary between the housing and the open areas to the north. Tensta is in the foreground, Rinkeby beyond.



Hjulstavägen går på stor bro över dalgången mellan stadsdelarna Rinkeby och Tensta

A viaduct carries the main road over the valley separating Rinkeby and Tensta



På de kuperade norra delarna av planområdet uppförs bostadsbebyggelse som i regel är i högst sex våningar

The irregularly contoured northern part of the district covered by the plan is devoted to housing, generally not higher than six storeys



På de svagt sluttande ängarna i planområdets södra del är all bostadsbebyggelse i högst tre våningar

Housing on the gently-sloping former meadowland in the southern part of the area is restricted to three storeys



Images of Tensta-Rinkeby under construction. Images from Arkitektur 1, 1969

The main pedestrian route from Tensta Centrum to Spånga Church with a pedestrian bridge over a sunken lower road in the foreground and sketch of the traffic separation. Images from Arkitektur 1, 1969

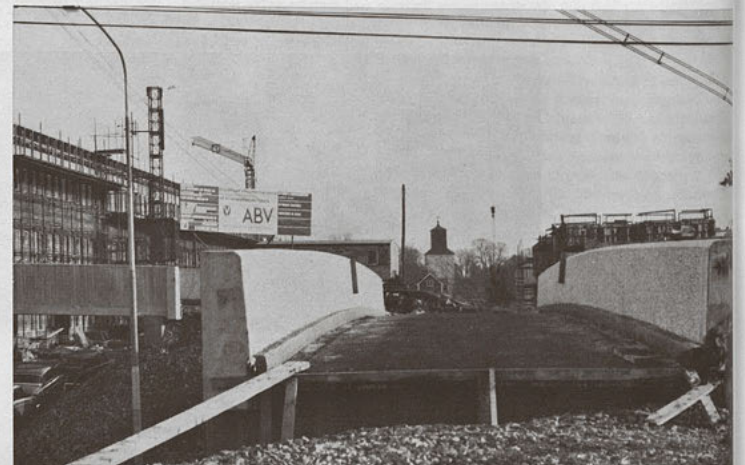
Kring Spånga kyrka har bebyggelsen hållits låg. Söder om kyrkan har hyreshus i två våningar uppförts.

Development round Spånga church is exclusively low-rise: the blocks of flats south of the church are only two storeys high



Matargatorna genom bostadsområdet är nedsänkta och all gångtrafik förs planskilt över gatorna på gångbroar. Genom denna utformning sammanbinds områdena på ömse sidor av gatan såväl funktionellt som visuellt, och biltrafiken stör de närliggande bostadshusen mindre.

Local roads in residential areas are sunken and pedestrian cross by bridges: an arrangement which links areas on opposite sides both visually and functionally, while reducing the nuisance of traffic for people living near the roads



Huvudgångvägen från Tensta centrum mot Spånga kyrka. I förgrunden gångbron över den nedsänkta matargatan Tenstastråket.

The main pedestrian route from Tensta Centre to Spånga church, with a pedestrian bridge over a sunken local road in the foreground



Schoolyards function as playgrounds for local children.



The middle strip of the tripartite strip city continues from Tensta Centrum's walking street deeper into the district animated by life and activity.

Rinkeby's district centres along a wide axis with three *Tunnelbana* stations, various services, schools, a gymnasium, highschools, a swimming pool, etc. Third, a last 'inner band' with housing, primarily three-storey houses, lower slabs and lamella houses, runs southwards, while a neighbourhood with terrace houses is situated closest to the green valley around Spånga Church. Like a Greek amphitheatre, this layout with a gradual decline of building heights and variation of volumes, offers a view towards the unbuilt parts of Järvafältet to the majority of the inhabitants. In this sense, the plan for Södra Järvafältet cooperates with the structure of the natural terrain, although Tensta-Rinkeby is often criticised for the strictness of its grid structure and taming of the landscape. As Igor Dergalin and Josef Stäck writes in 1964: 'The principal lines of the landscape is underlined with this grouping of the built-up area and one obtains a townscape, directed towards the sun.'<sup>206</sup>

Mixing large-scale and small scale, the general plan also describes a cosy everyday life, taking place between the houses, recalling some of the values of Vällingby: 'The plan attach great importance to the outer environment of the everyday – the walkway to school and centre, the playground at the house, the playing-field in the neighbourhood.'<sup>207</sup> Educational institutions are described like local hubs for social meetings and leisure activities, the 'beating hearts' of the different neighbourhoods. Preschools and mid-level schools are situated close to the housing areas in conjunction to greeneries and pedestrian streets. This layout assures the safest and shortest walking distance for the school children as well as a full use of the playing fields in the few park-like areas. Moreover, the school courtyards are included into the open-air areas of the different neighbourhoods.

Obliging the needs of families with children, a key concern of the plan was to increase the amount of lower housing and the standard size of flats. In particular, it favoured facilities such as indoor toilet, shower and refrigerator, becoming fixtures in media advertising as well as in political propaganda, and of course fast delivery of dwellings for those on waiting lists. (Yet, bigger, better and faster flats meant fewer and smaller green spaces: Greeneries within Tensta-Rinkeby are limited to modest outdoor spaces with walkways, planted growths and playgrounds, while larger green areas outside the double New Town are within walking distance via the pedestrian tunnels from E18 and other ringroads.) Originally, the intention was to build 28,000 room units (*rumsenheter*) and two *Tunnelbana* stations at the southern part of Järvafältet. However, when it was decided to construct another *Tunnelbana* station, the number of room

206. Igor Dergalin and Josef Stäck in Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): *Därute i Tensta*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998, p. 22 (author's translation).

207. The office of urban planning of the City of Stockholm: *Beskrivning til generalplaneförslag för området kring Rinkeby, Spånga Kyrka och Tensta inom Järvafältet*. (Bilaga till Stadskollegiets utlåtande nr 92 år 1965), appendix in Olle Bengtzon; Jan Delden & Jan Lundgren: *Rapport Tensta*. Stockholm: Pan Express, 1970, p. 99 (author's translation).

units increased to 35,000. In the end, the number multiplied to 44,000 room units for approx. 30,000 inhabitants. First, the minimum distance between 3-storey buildings was 24 meters, but in the final plan it decreased to 17 meters.<sup>208</sup> Pushing the density level of the built-up environment, the land reserve could be exploited to a higher degree. Furthermore, it permitted a rethinking of the common Million Program solution of high-rise blocks in a scale, alarming public opinion in the southern New Towns, e.g. in Bredäng and Skärholmen's monolithic built-up area with a shopping mall, criticised for commercialism by Socialists.<sup>209</sup> Likewise, densification of housing was a strategy, guaranteeing an adequate number of inhabitants, frequenting shops and services in the district centres without building tall.

Densification also implied that parking spaces are mostly designed in two levels. Initially, a parking area for 2000 cars was planned south of Hjulsta in the Spånga Valley. Still, it was never realised and already in 1974, the area was used for the more romantic purpose of allotment gardens. Before the planning of the big parking area, there were also plans to establish workplaces in the area along with offices at the northwestern and northeastern part of Tensta. By the same token, the disposition plan for the northern part of Järvafältet from the end of the 1960s, mentions the neighbouring areas Hästa and Stora Ursvik as potential workplaces for the inhabitants in Tensta-Rinkeby. At present, the industrial area Lunda is within walking distance. Compared to Vällingby's integral ABC-Town planning, Igor Dergalin was a pragmatic, combining maximal land use with the best possible housing environment. Land areas close to the *Tunnelbana* station were reserved for enterprises with an efficient land use, but the general plan never brings up the possibility of direct integration between dwellings and local workplaces. As Dergalin later remarked:

*'For the expansion of dwellings there is a well-established control mechanism, politically and socially as well as technical and economically. For workplaces, established outside the city of the region, such control mechanisms do not exist today.'*<sup>210</sup>

208. Björn Erdal: "Därute i Tensta", in Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): **Därute i Tensta**. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998, p. 21 - 22.

209. Initial sketches represented the architecture in Tensta-Rinkeby as 12- to 14-storey blocks, however, this average was dwarfed to six, maximum seven, storeys like in the inner city. Björn Erdal: "Därute i Tensta", in Karl-Olov Arnstberg & (edit.): **Därute i Tensta**. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998, p. 22.

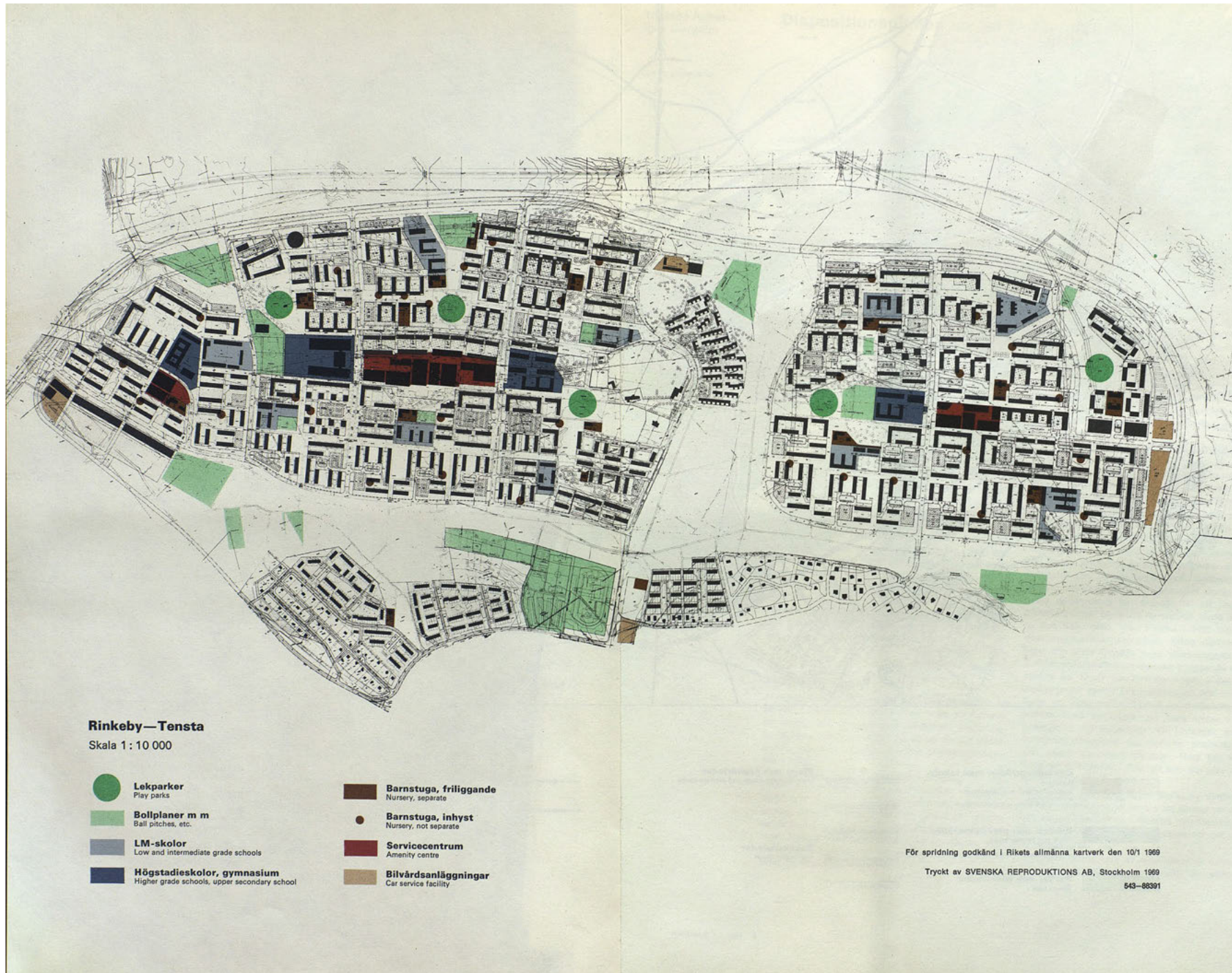
210. Igor Dergalin & Thomas Atmer: "Dispositionsplanen för Norra Järvafältet", in **Arkitektur**, 1, 1969, p. ????? (author's translation).

In order to intensify the land use in the three district centres (*Rinkeby Centrum*, *Hjulsta Centrum* and *Tensta Centrum*), some offices were planned instead of money- and space-consuming dwellings, demanding instalment of playgrounds and safer traffic conditions. Following guidelines of the aforementioned document *Planstandard 65*, making status of Stockholm's 'old' New Towns and determining new planning standards, housing is located at a maximum distance of 500 meters from the *Tunnelbana*, while car parking is within a radius of 100 – 150 meters from the dwellings. As suggested by the general plan:

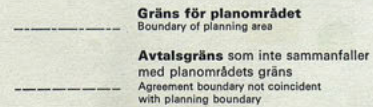
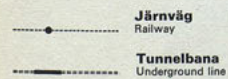
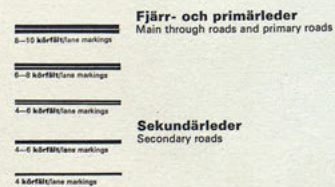
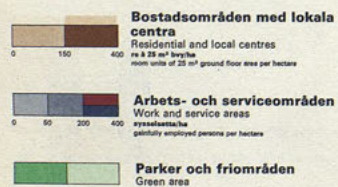
*'Among others the goal of the work with the general plan has been to obtain a partially new outer city environment. A housing environment that adds some of the inner city's intensity, concentration and order to the outer city's greenery, spaciousness and freedom from disturbances. The present standard height adds new demands to outdoor spaces and comfort. This makes it necessary to concentrate built-up area and to exploit every piece of land intensively in order to have enough basis for collective service such as Tunnelbana, schools, shops, etc. At the same time, concentration makes possible an intensive urban environment that only a dense built-up area can give.'*<sup>211</sup>

Thus, together with densification of housing, the goal of 'a greater urban feeling' was planned through a rectangular structure, recalling the street network of the inner city with buildings and streets, distributed in two main directions. A characteristic feature of Tensta-Rinkeby is the almost complete traffic separation between 'soft' and 'hard' road users, complying with the multiplication of vehicles throughout the 1960s. In contemporary Million Program New Towns south of Stockholm like Bredäng, Sättra, Skärholmen and Vårberg, traffic separation with cars on the higher level and

211. The office of urban planning of the City of Stockholm: **Beskrivning til generalplaneförslag för området kring Rinkeby, Spånga Kyrka och Tensta inom Järvafältet**. (Bilaga till Stadskollegiets utlåtande nr 92 år 1965), appendix in Olle Bengtzon; Jan Delden & Jan Lundgren: **Rapport Tensta**. Stockholm: Pan Express, 1970, p. 99 (author's translation).



Masterplan of Tensta-Rinkeby,  
scale 1:10,000. Arkitektur  
1, 1969



**Dispositionsplan för Norra Järvafältet**  
Layout development plan for North Järvafältet  
Skala 1 : 40 000



pedestrians on the lower level was a leitmotif. The planners of Tensta-Rinkeby did exactly the opposite. Inspired by the Italian town-state of Venice, a pedestrian network of paths and walkways is entirely segregated from car traffic by means of bridges, crossing feeder roads at regular intervals.<sup>212</sup> Vehicles are channelled through the New Town from either the main route or two north-south feeder roads according to a hierarchical order. In continuation of the feeder roads, short cul-de-sac streets are connected to parking areas with parking spaces close to building entrances.<sup>213</sup> As an important part of Tensta-Rinkeby's 'satellite urbanism', this new traffic flow intended to create a dynamic 'sort of rhythm.'



Igor Dergalin was inspired by Venice's bridges and canals whilst planning Tensta-Rinkeby's traffic separation with bridges for pedestrians and tunnels for motorists.

## Architecture in the Tracks of Building Cranes

The architecture of Tensta as well as Rinkeby is structured according to the tripartite *bandstadsmönster* (band town pattern), mentioned in the general plan, with tall lamella houses along the main road in the north, the district centre with a walking street, *Tunnelbana* station and services in the middle, and lower slabs towards the green valley in the south with Spånga Church. Building layouts are adjusted to an overall grid-pattern, intending to give the New Town a shape that can be easily read as a tight townscape, surrounded by nature.<sup>214</sup> Following Dergalin and Stäck's vision of a new satellite town 'urbanism', Tensta consists of a dense built-up area, linked by the two *Tunnelbana* stations, Tensta and Hjulsta, with adjacent shopping centre. As mentioned, 22 different non-profit, cooperative and private developers contributed to the construction of Tensta's built environment. Although this meant a certain lack of coordination in the hurried building process (5 years), it also gave the satellite town a relatively varied architecture, compared to Rinkeby and other Million Program New Towns. One has to remember that this was a time in desperate need of housing, where the norm for contractors was to be able to produce 1000 identical dwellings at the lowest cost and the highest pace. Yet, there are twenty different neighbourhoods in Tensta with dwellings in different designs – primarily rental apartments; the smallest section is constituted by a single building, while the largest one gathers 48 buildings. Within each group of dwellings there is some variation, but three housing types are predominant: 1 to 3-storey lamella houses, 3 to 7-storey balcony access blocks (*loftgånghus*) and 5 to 7-storey tall lamella houses/elongated slabs (*skivhus*), appearing as perpendicular plates. The typical combination in Tensta's townscape is tall elongated slabs and low lamella houses juxtaposed against each other, creating variation of heights as well as visibility to the courtyards between the buildings. Like a wall facing highway E18, taller and longer slabs situated on a hill add monumentality to the northern part of Tensta. As a contrast, the average height of the architecture in the direction of Spånga Church is built in a smaller scale of 2-3 storeys.

In certain ways, these contrasts of building heights echo the traffic separation in Tensta: From the window of a car, driving at the highway E18, the image of Tensta resembles the stereotype of the large-scale Million Program – repetition of symmetrical belts of tall, grey elongated slabs. According to Dergalin and Stäck this architecture contributed to give Tensta a consistent townscape, while providing many of the inhabitants with a view over Järvafältet's unbuilt area.<sup>215</sup> Seen from the south, this

212. Thus, when Dergalin showed the ambitious bridge system, he presented it together with images of the bridges/channel system in Venice in order to persuade the politicians to agree on the costly plan.

Peter Lundevall: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): **Tensta utanför mitt fönster**. Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 2006, p. 212.

213. Magnus Andersson: **Stockholm's Annual Rings: A Glimpse into the Development of the City**. Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998, p. 193.

214. Björn Erdal: "Därute i Tensta" Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): **Därute i Tensta**. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998, p. 22.

215. Peter Lundevall: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): **Tensta utanför mitt fönster**. Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 2006, p. 220.

architecture frames the remaining part of the New Town (with 63 hectares of taller building blocks and 56 hectares of lower houses). Pedestrians and bicyclists can visit Tensta from the south via Spånga Kyrkväg along the green Spånga Valley with sports fields, Spånga Church and two to three-storey houses, 'climbing up' at the southern border. East of the church lies an award-winning neighbourhood (the *Ytong Price* 1974) by Jon Höjer and Sture Ljungqvist who created some of the most experimental architecture in Vällingby. This is Sörgården, Tensta's only original single-family house neighbourhood, consisting of 76 row houses with wellkept courtyards. Significantly it was constructed as a self-build program under guidance by the organisation SMÅA in 1955. According to the urban planner Peter Lundevall most of the inhabitants in this idyllic enclave between Tensta and Spånga refer to themselves as Spånga residents.<sup>216</sup> In the northern section of Tensta, smaller neighbourhoods of elongated slabs and low lamella houses represent a more geometrical building structure with individual details and pleasant courtyards. These parts of the New Town are designed by wellknown architects such as Lars Bryde, Olle Zetterberg, Ernst Grönwall, Gunnar Larsén and Bernt Alfreds.

Hjulsta's district centre *Hjulsta Centrum* is the work of the architectural office Boijesen & Efvergren. The ensemble consists of two low buildings with shops, the *Tunnelbana* station and a youth club, anchored by a six-storey balcony access house and low houses with chalk stone facades. Meanwhile, *Tensta Centrum* is designed by Gunnar Andersson and built by Svenska Bostäder in 1969, but as new facilities were added, it underwent various transformations. Shops are spread in one level with underground storage facilities (NED? of which some parts were rebuilt into the art gallery *Tensta Konsthall*, opening 1998). *Tenstagången* is *Tensta Centrum*'s main walking street with square-like features such as fountains, a sculpture by the artist Raimo Utriainen and a paving of concrete plates, forming a stylised flower pattern. At the inauguration of *Tensta Centrum*, November 27 1969 there were 23 shops, post office, bank and *systembolag* (alcohol shop administered by the state). Originally, it was intended that the centre would serve as a *stadsdelsgruppcentrum* (district group centre), serving the districts of Tensta, Rinkeby and Spånga. Yet, when the much larger and better-equipped *Kista Centrum*, the last *Storcentrum* in the Stockholm region, opened at the northern part of Järvafältet in 1977, most of the big chain of shops vacated *Tensta Centrum*.<sup>217</sup> In order to break the negative curve, the centre was revamped by the architect Kornél Pajor. Two walkways, facing the shops, were covered by a glass roof and provided with

216. **Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nittiosju stadsdelar i yterstaden.** Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 2003, p. 432.  
Peter Lundevall: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): **Tensta utanför mitt fönster.** Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 2006, p. 218.  
217. Familjebostäder: **Tensta: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter.** Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 2002.

new open entryways towards the walking street *Tenstagången*. The revitalisation was celebrated with a re-inguration event, December 1989, coinciding with Tensta's 20 years anniversary. Among the prominent buildings in the centre are the *Tunnelbana* station, the parking house with a decorated concrete façade, the office house of *stadsdelsnämnden* (a local branch of the county), Gunnar Andersson's building for social services with the artist Josephine Siskind-Nylander's façade paintings (1982-86), and the so-called Blue House, containing a theatre, a café and a boxing club. South of the centre lies a park with scarce natural vegetation and one of the few conserved pre-New Town buildings. Close to the park is the Tensta Church, built by Spånga Frikyrkoförsamling in 1973 after drawings by architect Joachim Labitzke.

Located west of *Tensta Centrum*, the upper secondary school *Tensta Gymnasium*, the Tensta Hall with swimming pools and sports facilities plus the assembly hall *Tensta Träff* with library and common rooms, are grouped around a Japan-inspired square with bronze sculptures and trees. Gösta Uddén and Olle Wählström's design in red bricks and untreated wood and concrete (1982-1984) sharply contrasts the New Town's other school buildings from the late 1960s. Repeating the same composition of concrete elements, they are the work of Sven Backström and Leif Reinius who did most of the architecture in *Vällingby Centrum*, while the landscape architect Walter Bauer designed many of Tensta's school courtyards. In the meantime, the schools have been renovated with alterations such as new roofs, change of colour schemes, several extensions and restructurings of school courtyards.

In Tensta's younger neighbour Rinkeby, there are five main neighbourhoods, constructed by thirteen different developers, four of them non-profit housing corporations under the City of Stockholm such as Familjebostäder and Svenska Bostäder. The dominant architecture in the three neighbourhoods, located in the southern part of Rinkeby, is 2 to 3-storey lamella houses or corridor houses with facades in plaster or brick wall, designed by the architects Ernst Grönwall and Björn Näsfall. In the same place, Lars Bryde's elongated slabs and corridor houses with green plaster facades, window bands, symmetrical lines and corner balconies recall the 1930s' Functionalism. Buildings are placed either parallel or perpendicular to each other, occasionally intersected by green courtyards. Ernst Grönwall also designed the 5 to 7-storey tall lamella houses/elongated slabs (*skivhus*) and two-storey lamella houses, both with plaster facades, in the larger fourth neighbourhood towards the west. Although the houses in this neighbourhood are completely identical, they are the labour of five different developers.<sup>218</sup> In the fifth main neighbourhood, buildings are designed by HSB Architects and built by Familjebostäder. Originally, the concrete

218. **Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nittiosju stadsdelar i yterstaden.** Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 2003, p. 401.





Peek into day care in one of the old pre-New Town houses in Spånga Valley, dividing Tensta and Rinkeby.

elements defined the architecture with different types of surface techniques, but now they are masked by plaster or brick wall.

Rinkeby's district centre *Rinkeby Centrum* consists of two main components: Rinkeby Square, embraced by low-rise shops, and another square-like area, comprising the assembly hall *Folkets Hus* and the local medical centre. The shopping centre, designed by Nils Sterner, has kept its intimate, small-scale character in spite of later transformations. In the early 1990s, an extension was added to the main centre building when new shopping facilities were added along the walking street north of Rinkeby Square. Shops and services encircle the lively meeting point of the fountain at Rinkeby Square. The assembly hall *Folkets Hus* with its arcade and strong outer roof was officially inaugurated in 1986, although it was put to use by the residents, eight years earlier.<sup>219</sup> Northwest of *Rinkeby Centrum* there is a former housing area for students with tall and low lamella houses. Those designed by Hans Borgström are connected through long corridors with staircases and elevator towers, rising up against highway E18 like a Brutalist castle. (Further north, a tall elongated slab block by Henry Letholm gives an impression of monumentality towards Kvarnbyvägen with its nine storeys. In spite of the large scale, details such as marble borders and teak doors recall housing of the 1940s and 1950s.)

Repeating the same standardised measures and components, all the schools in Rinkeby were realised by the Consortium 12 Schools. In the late 1990s, colourschemes on the facades of *Rinkebyskolan* (1970) west of the centre was redefined, while a new outer roof replaced the old. In 1997, the school's sports hall was



The People's House assembly hall in Rinkeby, inaugurated as late as 1986, is a testament of Tensta-Rinkeby's bad coordination of services compared to Vällingby. Today, an ethnic restaurant owner has taken over the lower floor.

219. *Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nitiosju stadsdelar i yterstaden*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 2003, p. 403.



In Rinkeby blocks are situated denser and straighter than in Vällingby – practical when aiming at realising one thousand dwellings in one go.

Yet, some architecture utilises the topography and natural site in a more integral way.



Courtyard between housing in Rinkeby.

Satellite dishes and oriental carpets testify to the increasingly multicultural population in Rinkeby.



demolished and substituted by the flamboyant curves of the so-called *House of the Youth* by Anders Bergkrantz, adding a stark contrast to the discreet school architecture. In 1999, Rinkeby had three daycares and playschools in addition to 6 kindergartens; one of them was the largest in Scandinavia with capacity for 150 children.

Reminiscences of the old village Tensta peep through in the Tensta-Rinkeby, built on top of old farms, lending the New Town names like Stora and Lilla Tensta, Elinsborg and Lackes. Although the construction of Tensta-Rinkeby caused a massive transformation of the existing agrarian landscape, fragments of the original, rural architecture are also conserved. Thus, the master plan for Tensta-Rinkeby was adapted to the small-scale, heritage architecture scattered around the tongue of land between Tensta and Rinkeby around Spånga Church. The foundations of this medieval church date from the 12th century, while other parts were rebuilt in the 17th century. Next to the cemetery, some 19th century wooden houses are conserved along with the soldier house *Torp Bussenhus* (1725) and the church waiters building (1965). Moreover, the small Nydal Torp north of *Tensta Centrum* was left intact. In the 1970s these heritage houses were renovated and given new functions such as park playground and assembly halls. Forty years ago, when Tensta-Rinkeby was new, building cranes made most of the original nature into a tabula rasa. Yet, today greeneries and plantations in the courtyards are abundant and some sections have been left 'wild'. Järvafältet is the longest (uninterrupted) green area in the Stockholm region and in the green valley between Rinkeby and Tensta there are many possibilities for organised and spontaneous sports and leisure activities like a barbecue or a picnic.

## Refurbishments and Heritage

Retrospectively, one might wonder how and why the Million Program planning, based on the scale of the collective and the child, has gained a rumour as exactly the opposite. Aiming to induce inhabitants with a new 'urban feeling', decent housing, and user-friendly traffic separation, Tensta-Rinkeby has often been criticised as a deserted and child-hostile living environment in an uninhabitable scale. For instance, the Finnish architect Leena Laukasto argued that the protected traffic separation (contrary to the belief of the planners) counteracts and voids the environment of life and urbanism. In her opinion, it would be more suitable to mix vehicles and pedestrians - the inner city is not only 'intensity, concentration and order', but also 'un-order'.<sup>220</sup> Such

220. Laukasto forwarded these arguments at a conference in 1989. Björn Erdal: "Därute i Tensta", in Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): *Därute i Tensta*. Stockholm: Stockholms Förlag, 1998, p. 23.

critical attitudes was underlined by the fact that many 'resourceful' inhabitants' vacated the Million Program walk-up flats for single-family houses elsewhere without the type of (social) 'un-order', frequently associated with Tensta-Rinkeby. Moreover, there was the problem of the durability of the architecture. Due to the original use of building materials of a variable quality and fast construction methods, renovations became imminent within two decades.

For these reasons, Sweden launched the so-called ROT Program (Renovation, Rebuilding and Adding) from 1984 onwards.<sup>221</sup> By the same token, an international urban renewal congress *Tensta-Stockholm-Sweden* was held in Tensta, June 1989. After a week of discussions, the expert panel concluded that Tensta's townscape had suffered from too much well-meaning 'caretaking' from the outside rather than being amenable to local initiatives from the inside.<sup>222</sup> One of the results was the *Samverkansprojekt* (the Cooperation Project), a series of collaborative projects, mediated by the non-profit housing organisation Familjebostäder (Family Dwellings), engaging the residents. Using the so-called *Work Book Method*, the tenants association, the inhabitants, Familjebostäder and the architectural office Loggia developed a programme of action for each neighbourhood. In some neighbourhoods, concrete renewals began immediately, while others were postponed until 1994 when the city of Stockholm launched the regeneration project *Ytterstadssatsningen* (the Outer Towns Venture) with various alterations, renovations and rebuildings.<sup>223</sup> In the neighbourhood Björinge a two-storey parking deck was demolished and replaced by a laundrette and a daycare centre. During the 1970s, the neighbourhoods (at) Krällinge and Glömningegränd were administered by different property speculators, leaving the dwellings in an ugly stage. Shortly after they were put under administration by the city, Familjebostäder took over responsibility and from 1992 to 1995, considerable transformations occurred. Following the cooperative guidelines of *Samverkansprojektet*, the Painters' National Union held an idea competition, generating initiatives like change of colour scheme of Krällinge's northern façades from grey monochrome to a harlequin square pattern in pastel shades. 'Dialogue-based' restructurings, were also performed in the neighbourhood Hämringe: Outdoor spaces, facades and courtyards were upgraded, new light entry halls were built, and the tall buildings along Glömningegränd were

221. Sweden's ROT Program influenced neighbouring countries like Denmark. Writing in 1990, the Danish architect Michael Varming is inspired by Swedish renovations of late Modernism: "it has been interesting to follow the incredibly efficient effort of the Swedes. There have been many errors, however, also many interesting improvements. For us Danes, Sweden has been a perfect catalogue of possible transformations."

Michael Varming: "Fra million-program til milliard-sanering", in *Byplan*, Vol. 4, 1990, Arkitektens Forlag, København, p. 117 – 119 (author's translation).

222. Familjebostäder: *Tensta: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter*. Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 2002.

223. *Ytterstadssatsningen* included 12 of Stockholm's 'physically and socially endangered districts in the periphery'. Eight of these districts were in Million Program New Towns like Tensta-Rinkeby, but also one of the Vällingby Group's districts Håsselby Gård. The other districts were: Akalla, Husby, Bredäng, Sättra, Skårholmen, Vårberg, Hökerängen, Fagersjö and Östberga. The main purpose was to fight social and ethnical segregation and the inhabitants were invited to participate in the process via collaborating working groups.

Peter Lundevall: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholms förlag, 2006, p. 220.



Grill adjacent to Tensta Tunnelbana station, the late sixties' floral pattern of the paving, and renovated apartment houses, covered by brick wall.

connected to a lower built-up area with different premises. In the neighbourhood Uppinge, façades were renovated with new colours and materials, while inhabitants and experts from the National Arts Council *Statens Konstråd* redefined the structure of courtyards.

A more drastic renewal happened to the school Enbacksskolan (1967). As a memorial of Tensta-Rinkeby's long lack of basic amenities, the school was made of temporary barracks, meant to last for 10 years – it was in use for 25 years! In the beginning of the 1990s, Enbacksskolan was torn down and substituted by a new school, designed by architects of Stockholm's real estate office. In 1991, Skanska and Svenska Bostäder launched the redevelopment project "From Tensta to Tenstad", intending to supply the area surrounding Tensta Allé with new workplaces and a varied housing environment, willing to use the multicultural character of the New Town as a resource to increase the 'urban feeling', forwarded in the old general plan.<sup>224</sup> In spite of all the good intentions and the critique of modernist top-down planning, it is difficult to judge how much influence the inhabitants have had on the regeneration process. (Yet, in spite of rebuildings in *Tensta Centrum* and the schools, plus some 'plastic surgery' on façades and restructurings of courtyards, many buildings in the neighbourhoods, involved in the process, still appear close to their original state.)

In 1987, the same year as *Vällingby Centrum* was listed as cultural heritage, a renewal process was also initiated in Rinkeby. Like in Tensta, the common goal was to alter the New Town's image through an upgrading of architecture in decay and a wider catalogue of flat types. In this case, the regeneration was not as 'dialogue-based' and bottom-up as in Tensta. On initiative of one main architect, Jan Lundqvist, Rinkeby's minimalist structure of five main neighbourhoods was subdivided into 11 smaller neighbourhoods. In the renovation process, lasting until 1996, a customised solution was found for each of these neighbourhoods. With a certain postmodernist eagerness, the makeover went deep. The overall ambition was to modify the large-scale and repetitive character of the architecture, and frequently it was almost only the supporting skeleton of the original buildings that was left untouched.<sup>225</sup> Over fifteen stages and in concert with the inhabitants, 1,362 worn-out apartments were replaced with 1,245 new. Buildings were demolished, sometimes floors were added or subtracted, installations were replaced, attic floors were added, and façades were altered by means of variegated colour schemes, balconies, new entrances (some in costly materials like oak), bays, and new materials like plaster, bricks or glazed tiles.

As an example of the radicality of this new gable architecture, the big buildings

224. Björn Erdal: *Därute i Tensta*, in Karl-Olov Armstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): *Därute i Tensta*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998, p. 24.

225. Familjebostäder: *Rinkeby: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter*. Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 1998/2001.



Tensta's newly build row houses with wooden facades in different colours seem to dream about (Disneysque) new urbanism, inhabiting a house of one's own, small town community, and individuality. Everything Tensta is not, according to stereotypes.

overlooking the main communication lines highway E18 and Hjulstavägen were given new attic floors, tile facades, balconies, bays and corbie-step gables. Hadar Tilja designed the façades in glazed tiles and the shimmering enamel plates in various colours. Meanwhile, asphalt courtyards were transformed into abundant garden environments, whilst art works were placed throughout the New Town. For instance, new brick walls and portals in Venetian mosaic by the sculptor Hans Pettersson were added to the courtyards along the street Degerbygränd. In search of 'multiplicity' and new enterprises, a whole housing block was altered into offices, e.g. for the local police and social insurance office. As a way to fulfil the vision of creating new life, a new shopping street was made: Old laundrettes were converted into rental premises, while

the bottom apartments along the street Parkstråket were expanded and replaced by shops, restaurants and other enterprises.

Of all the Stockholmian satellite towns, Rinkeby and the later Husby at the northern part of Järvafältet were the only ones without any single-family houses. In order to foster a more diverse housing environment, a small neighbourhood of row houses were realised at the street Rinkebystrådet in the beginning of the 21st century. (In the beginning the houses were rented out, but potential residents requested ownership over their dwelling. The non-profit administrator agreed on a compromise of a housing cooperative.<sup>226</sup>) Row houses were built in order to provide Rinkeby with a broader selection of dwellings and mixed ownerships, yet, 99 percent of the New Town's inhabitants still live in rental flats.

Everyday streetscapes in Rinkeby of the early 21st century differ significantly from the original renderings of the planners.



226. Telephone interview with Kerstin Ahlin from AB Svenska Bostäder in Vällingby, conducted by the author in Stockholm, July 17, 2008.

From all the refurbishments, described above, it becomes clear that preferences and standards for dwellings change with time – even if they are based on scientific research and rationality. After the heyday of the ‘Swedish Modern’ and the rupture of Social Democratic hegemony in 1976, renewals in Tensta-Rinkeby and other Million Program New Towns, have been based on a general critique of late modernist architecture (signified by the material of concrete) and the minimum standards, underpinning it. Blaming architecture as the culpable for the allegedly ‘declassification’ and, as it were, ‘ghettoisation’ of the New Town, the urban regeneration has largely remained at the physical level with a limited social and economic effect. 10 to 15 years after the renewal efforts, described above, the majority of Tensta-Rinkeby’s population still consists of ‘resource-weak’ ethnic Swedish and Swedish of ‘other’ ethnicities. ‘Resourceful’ families tend to move out of the New Town when they are able (e.g. to Vällingby). It is only now that a ramified reform program, *Järvalyftet* (the Järva Lift) integrating social, economical, environmental, cultural and architectural aspects and parties, including local groups, is in the ladle. Over a ten-year period, the city of Stockholm and Svenska Bostäder will spend 100 million SEK annually on what is called a ‘sustainable’ and ‘integrated’ renewal program with the purpose of increasing security, welfare and attraction at Järvafältet:

*‘The long-term investment is done within the framework of what is called the Järva Lift. It is the City of Stockholm’s job to make Järva a part of Stockholm that is known for its good economic and social development. An area where people and enterprises want to move – and stay.’<sup>227</sup>*

At present, the project is still in its planning phase, so it is too early to predict the character and effects of concrete initiatives. Yet, from the description material, it seems like the *Järva Lift* will operate with different strategies parallelly, intending to go deeper than colourschemes and bays on facades. Meanwhile, many previous renovations have suffered from a lack of awareness or recognition of the historical value of the Million Program. Ugly or not, it was a decisive architecture of the Swedish Model,

227. Svenska Bostäder: *Stadsförnyelse in Järva – en del av Järvalyftet*. Stockholm: Svenska Bostäder/Stockholms Stad, 2008, p. 3 (author’s translation).

framing and shaping the history of a modern and urbanised Sweden - just like the listed Vällingby. After the most intensive stage of the renewal process, some began to question the (uncritical) destruction and refashioning of the 'outlawed' architecture of the late 1960s and early 1970s according to contemporary aesthetics and values. Hence, postmodernist details and rainbow colours of the late 1980s and early 1990s substituted the repetition and monochromatic tonality at the time of the Million Program. The architect Claus Bech-Danielsen pushes it to extremes: 'the overly dull' was swapped for 'the overly festive' as 'brightly coloured chaos' replaced 'colourless dullness'.<sup>228</sup>

In 1996, the Swedish architecture museum *Arkitekturmuseet* in Stockholm published an anthology, critically reassessing the Million Program with its inherent limitations and qualities.<sup>229</sup> In a similar vein, the architect Johan Engström worried that, considering the blackened rumour and the lack of protecting laws of the Million Program, there might not be anything left of this important chapter in Sweden's recent urban planning history if the 'beautifications' continued. In a 1997 article in *MAMA (Magasin för Modern Arkitektur)*, he summed up his scepticism towards the reiteration of the tabula rasa strategy of the anti-historical modernists in the Million Program New Towns:

*'Today we are 20-30 years after the implementation of the Million Program. Around the country there are big housing areas, often with a shameful reputation and, perhaps even more frequently, of poor technical quality, making them in need of an upgrading. Yet, it is housing areas with a completely own and quite interesting history. How shall we set to work in order to preserve them for the future?'*<sup>230</sup>

Slowly, such heritage debates, initiated by architects and historians, are spreading as a new curiosity and awareness of the historical and cultural value of the Million Program.<sup>231</sup> In 1952, thousands visited 'the city of the future' via model apartments of a New Town to be at the Vällingby exhibition. As an inverted mirror of this event, 15,000

people re-visited the 'city of the past' at a living exhibition over ten days in August, 2006: The Stockholm City Museum reconstructed a Tensta apartment at the address Kämpingebacken 13 into its original 1972 appearance (green plastic tablecloth, orange-brown patterned curtains and a luxurious freezer compartment in the refrigerator). According to the artist and architectural writer, Mikael Askergrén, such renewed interest in the Million Program is history repeating itself: 50 – 60 years ago, Swedish urbanism inspired planners, architects and politicians to travel half the globe to learn from cases such as Vällingby. Similarly, Askergrén pictures the future of Million Program New Towns like Tensta-Rinkeby as monumentalist artworks and subject of *betongturism* (concrete tourism):

*'Why do people have such problems loving the concrete architecture of Sweden's structuralist residential suburbs of the 1960s and 1970s? Most people seem to agree that it is impossible to live a decent life there, but it should be possible to learn to love the architecture of these suburbs as monumentalist artworks; as sculpture. The future of the suburbs of the 1960s and 1970s is not to be lived in, but (much like the castles, palaces, and other monumentalist artworks of ancient times) to be emptied, to be restored into their original splendour, and then to become the subject of tourism.'*<sup>232</sup>

Although Askergrén's future scenario is radical (one might ask where the million+ inhabitants should live if the Million Program New Towns became living museums?), it is also thought provoking. By inverting mainstream mythologies and historical narratives, new potentials become visible in the existing. If modernist utopia was located in a future to come (Vällingby as 'city of the future'), present-day utopia is rather situated in a future linked to past experiences with an ever-changing history and memory as active forces and shapers of the present and the future (Tensta-Rinkeby as cultural heritage). Thus, history is the proof that everything has changed over time and most probably will do it again, depending on the persons, inhabiting and living

228. Claus Bech-Danielsen: "Ghettoer – et spørsmål om arkitektur", in *Politiken*, December 13, 2008, p. 6 (author's translation).

229. See *Arkitekturmuseet: En Miljon Bostäder: Arkitekturmuseets Årsbok 1996*. Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet: 1996.

230. Johan Engström: "Miljonprogrammet", in *MAMA (Magasin för Modern Arkitektur)*, Vol. 18, 1997, p. 27 (author's translation).

231. Christine Demstæder: "Concrete Jungle: Sweden's Suburbs Become Cool", in *The Local*, February 9, 2007, [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

232. Mikael Askergrén: "Betongturism", in *Plaza Magazine*, 5, 2002, [www.askergren.com/betongturism.html](http://www.askergren.com/betongturism.html)

it – narratives, myths, images, life styles, mentalities and of course spaces. Perceived as cultural heritage, Million Program Modernism has become a memory of the welfare state – traumatic and nostalgic - recognising the histories of the 25 percent of the Swedish population who either live or has lived in the Million Program architecture.

## New Towns on the Block

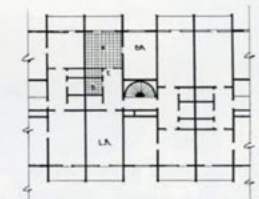
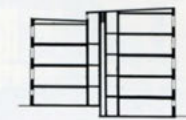
Regardless of the optimism expressed by Mikael Askergrén, the standardised architecture of the Million Program, politically framed to the period between 1965 and 1974, is still identified as the ‘Other’ of modernist urbanism in Sweden. Yet, standardisation anticipated the Million Program: Many forget that the celebrated 1930s Functionalism also forwarded the idea of industrial construction methods. The earlier mentioned *Stockholm Exhibition* (1930) and the manifesto *Acceptera* (1931) are examples on this. Likewise, industrialisation of building processes was a hot topic in books and magazines of the 1950s. Ideas were translated into practice, assisted by the building cranes, often associated with the Million Program architecture.<sup>233</sup> Thus, writing in 1957, the American architecture critic G.E. Kidder Smith, admired the implementation of prefabricated concrete panels and building cranes in Vällingby.<sup>234</sup> Breaking ground for novel production methods and planning in a larger scale, the success of Vällingby paved the way for a new boldness and efficiency among urban planners and decision makers to fight the negative curve of housing and overcrowding in Sweden’s urban centres.

Stockholm’s pioneer New Town Vällingby came into being in the post-war era, a time susceptible to architectural experimentation and high ideals. Although, the planners of Tensta-Rinkeby intended to redefine New Town planning according to new ideas of urbanism, it was also a planning that pushed the boundaries for how fast it was possible to build a New Town from scratch. Varying in shape and orientation, the 1950s (eternit and plaster) architecture of Vällingby is kept in a smaller scale, inspired by British neighbourhood planning. Building methods are less rationalised than in the Million Program New Town (i.g. single-family houses with self-build assistance provided by *Småstugabyrån* (the Single-Family House Bureau)).<sup>235</sup> In Tensta-Rinkeby the built-up

233. By the end of the 1950s, 700 tower cranes were operating in Sweden. Olof Eriksson: "Brännpunkt 60-Tal: Den politiska och tekniska bakgrunden", in *En Miljon Bostäder: Arkitekturmuseets Årsbok 1996*. Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet: 1996, p. 35.

234. On a study trip to Vällingby, Kidder-Smith witnesses the new experimentation with industrialised construction methods: 'From the production point of view, some of the most interesting experiments at Vällingby can be found in the prefabricated concrete panel apartments shown above. These two-storey industrialized units, designed by Hjalmar Klemming, are dry erected on the site by means of a small travelling crane.' G. E. Kidder-Smith: *Op. cit.*, p. 113.

235. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?"; in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 18.



Kidder Smith was particularly interested in Vällingby's experiments with industrialised methods with prefabricated concrete panels. Here, two-storey units by Klemming are dry erected on the site by means of a small travelling crane. Kidder Smith, G. E.: *Sweden Builds*, New York: Albert Bonnier, 1950/57.

in Vällingby (Höjer and Ljungqvist, architects).

The cylindrical towers (by Gunnar Jacobson) offer a great deal more flexibility than would be initially imagined, for they can be readily subdivided into one- or multi-roomed apartments as indicated in the plan above. However, as presently partitioned a dark and wasteful hall space results within the apartment. If the kitchen were merely a semi-divided section of the living room and the hall as such eliminated, the plan, at least by American standards, would be much cleaner and more livable.

From the production point of view, some of the most interesting experiments at Vällingby can be found in the prefabricated concrete panel apartments shown above. These two-storey industrialized units, designed by Hjalmar Klemming, are dry erected on the site by means of a small travelling crane. In plan each apartment has two large balconies, one at each end, with a utility core in the center. Toilet room and bath room are separate. It is curious to note that the bedrooms are reached via the kitchen-dining room, not the living room.



area is more monotonous, while the level of density is generally higher in relationship to green spaces. According to the new planning principle of 'a new urban feeling', the so-called *bandstadsmönster* with tall lamella houses on hills along the main road in the north, the district centre with *Tunnelbana* station and services in the middle, and lower slabs towards the green valley, Tensta-Rinkeby's layout follows the topography as well as the parallel lines of building crane tracks. In Vällingby the balance between the built and the un-built is different. Adding a feeling of coherence within neighbourhood units, buildings are situated relatively close to each other. Nevertheless, Vällingby's general plan is drafted in dialogue with the pre-existing landscape and the topography of the site, maintaining a certain distance and green 'oases' between the built-up areas. In both New Towns, infrastructural communication lines are structured according to an ideal of separation between 'hard' vehicle traffic and 'soft' pedestrian traffic – Vällingby's echoing Radburn, N.J. and Tensta-Rinkeby's hierarchical grid structure imitating an inner city street network. Finally, Vällingby's integral ABC-Town planning scheme incorporated all aspects of the inhabitants' life with public services, shopping facilities and local workplaces (although it took 10 years before most enterprises settled). In Tensta-Rinkeby, where coordination of the construction process was poor, it lasted several years before some of these functions were only partially in place.

On this background, many describe Vällingby as urban planning of a time when Modernism was fresh and innovative, whilst it was Tensta-Rinkeby's destiny to coincide with an engineer-like bureaucratisation of modernist planning schemes of the Million Program. In short, Vällingby was associated with quality, aesthetics and integration while Tensta-Rinkeby radiated quantity, pragmatics and segregation. What such a presentation tends to forget is that some of the later designs such as Hässelby Strand, Hässelby Gård and Grimsta initiated the inclusion of prefabricated building elements in Sweden. Another factor is that many of the same people such as the planner Göran Sidenbladh and Josef Stäck in addition to architects like John Höjer and Sture Ljungqvist or Sven Backström and Leif Reinius participated in the planning and design of both New Towns. Moreover, there are some individual designs in Tensta-Rinkeby, although they might not be as spectacular as in Vällingby. Parallel to Sweden's changing demographics, housing and living standards, the differences between the two New Towns might not be as clear as 30 – 40 years ago. The majority of dwellings in both Vällingby and Tensta-Rinkeby are social rental apartments, often allotted by public non-profit housing organisations like Svenska Bostäder or Familjebostäder to (low-income) people in need of affordable housing - not exactly the top priority dwelling type of 'resourceful' in contemporary Sweden. Still, Vällingby materialised in a relatively homogenous planning environment, largely controlled by Stockholm's planners and politicians, while the planning of Tensta-Rinkeby was marked by a complication of the

political administration in the 1960s. With an increase of conflicting planning interests and incompatible demands, tasks of administration, negotiation and mediation were added to the usual design role of the planner. Similarly, more responsibilities were given over to private contractors and developers.<sup>236</sup>

*'At the end one gets tired of complaining. Perhaps that is what they are waiting for'*<sup>237</sup>

Because of the desperate housing shortage in the Stockholm region, the first 30 families moved into Familjebostäder's two-storey walk-up flats in Tensta, June 1, 1967, few months after the first spit was taken November 2, 1966. In August 1967, the now 200 New Town pioneers had to walk one kilometer to the neighbouring district Spånga to buy groceries and go to the post office, while the children went to Solhemskolan in Spånga.<sup>238</sup> In May 1968, there were 1,000 inhabitants (mostly children's families) in Tensta – a year after the number had increased to 7,000, many of which had been on waiting lists for 10 years.<sup>239</sup> Although they probably liked their spacious and well-planned apartments, it was no doubt a chaotic and occasionally dangerous experience to live in the middle of a building ground. For years Tensta-Rinkeby was one big construction site with various contractors working on different lots within the same neighbourhood.<sup>240</sup> The miserable scenery took the shape of a tight schedule with serious delays and lack of coordination between the city's different administrations as well as between the many developers. Long time after almost all dwellings were completed in May 1971, housing areas appeared unfinished, while basic facilities were missing. In November that year, the district centre *Rinkeby Centrum* was also inaugurated although the *Tunnelbana* was not in place before 1975. This was exactly the opposite tactic than the one, used in the decade when Markelius directed Stockholm's urban planning office. Here one of the key principles had been to coordinate the construction of new satellite towns with the expansion of the *Tunnelbana*, not least in Vällingby's integral ABC-Town planning.

236. Jon Höjer, Ljungqvist, Sture, Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 18.

237. Tensta pioneer in Olle Bengtson; Jan Delden & Jan Lundgren: *Rapport Tensta*. Stockholm: Pan Express, 1970, p. 12 (author's translation).

238. Björn Erdal: "Därute i Tensta", in Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): *Därute i Tensta*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998, p. 26.

239. Ibid.

240. The gravity of the situation led the housing organisation AB Svenska Bostäder to publish a brochure, warning the pioneer inhabitants about the dangers of the site: 'We want to draw your attention on the fact that you move into a district to be. In other words, henceforward you will live on a construction site with everything this implies in a matter of dangers, especially for children. For them the environment to which you are moving is exciting and enticing – but dangerous.'

AB Svenska Bostäder in Ingemar Johansson: *StorStockholms bebyggelseshistoria: Markpolitik, planering och bygganda under sju sekler*. Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987, p. 596 (author's translation).



Idealistic poetry adorns the wall of Tensta Tunnelbana station, indicating the original good intentions, while planning the New Town: 'We need to build a sustainable world for us living now and for coming generations.'

Controversial images of unhappy inhabitants in a living environment, constituted by a provisional bus line, an arbitrary selection of groceries in interim barracks, unfinished pedestrian paths, children playing among building cranes and scaffolding, and non-existing or poor social services caused a major media outcry. With a title mimicking the sociological reports, so trusted at the time, *Rapport Tensta* (1970), a publication by three journalists of the tabloid newspaper *Expressen*, was the first to blow the whistle. The critique was delivered loud and clear in sensational interviews with unsatisfied tenants and dramatic headlines like: 'Deliberately set death traps', 'Warlike past', 'Civil offensive', 'Time bomb', 'From plan to chaos', and 'Splintered responsibility'.<sup>241</sup> Simultaneously, images of a growing immigrant population in the area led the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* to write, 'Tensta becomes a ghetto', and in April 1971: 'Tensta is everything but slum. Yet, there is a risk for Tensta to transform into an immigrant ghetto'.<sup>242</sup> Opposition politicians were not late to join in, blaming the Tensta-Rinkeby 'fiasco' as an offspring of irresponsible and untimely Social Democratic policies. Subsequently, a whole choir of voices has contributed to the construction of the shady reputation of the New Town, backed up by statistics, signifying 'ghettoisation' and segregation. As the historian Ingemar Johansson writes:

*'Within a small period, Tensta became a nationally known concept via the mass media, and soon it appeared as the symbol of failed urban planning in general and an inhuman housing environment in particular...a monument in concrete of the housing shortage in the 1960s.'*<sup>243</sup>

The critique of Tensta-Rinkeby's built-up environment resonated so loud and harsh in the beginning of the 1970s that the parties of the building sector washed their hands of it, presenting the Million Program as 'a political project'.<sup>244</sup> When it came to Tensta-Rinkeby, the normally cautious architecture critics Henrik Andersson and Fredric Bedoire were also clear. In 1973 they wrote: 'The ambitions in the planning of

241. See Olle Bengtson, Jan Delden, & Jan Lundgren: *Rapport Tensta*. Stockholm: Pan Express, 1970 (author's translation).

242. Peter Lundevall: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholms förlag, 2006, p. 219 (author's translation).

243. Ingemar Johansson: *StorStockholms bebyggelsehistoria: Markpolitik, planering och bygganda under sju sekler*. Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987, p. 595 - 596 (author's translation).

244. Olof Eriksson: "Brännpunkt 60-Tal: Den politiska och tekniska bakgrunden", in *En Miljon Bostäder: Arkitekturmuseets Årsbok 1996*. Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet: 1996, p. 35.

the area have to a considerable degree been sabotaged during the actual construction phase of the work.<sup>245</sup> These arguments were echoed (slightly milder) by Stockholm's urban planning office: 'the experience gained from Tensta will be very important in the future.'<sup>246</sup> Some lessons were indeed learned from the Tensta-Rinkeby experience, including a better coordination of the building process with fewer contractors, more diversity in designs and colour schemes, and an overall time schedule for the construction of dwellings, *Tunnelbana*, communal facilities and shops. The plan for the northern part of Järvafältet was done on the basis of a Nordic idea competition 'to throw light on different possibilities to exploit and to go into details with Järvafältet.'<sup>247</sup> Launched in February 1966, more than 50 teams participated and the result was published, March 1967. Towards the 1970s when the Million Program's excessive construction machine was close to overproduction, the planning scale decreased, encouraging low and dense building environments. From 1973 onwards, changes were visible in Stockholm's last New Towns at the remaining part of Järvafältet, also planned by Dergalin and Sidenbladh, but this time assisted by the planner Thomas Atmer.<sup>248</sup> The planning and architecture of the New Towns Norra Järva, Akalla, Husby and especially Kista differed significantly from the early Million Program period.

When Stockholm's great building era came to a closure in 1977, with King Karl Gustav and Queen Silvia's inauguration of the region's last *Storcentrum*, an indoor mall in Kista, Vällingby was still respected as a model New Town. Admiring the qualities of the pioneer New Town in comparison to the disappointments of the 1960s - Tensta-Rinkeby in particular - Sture Ljungqvist and Jon Höjer propose the idea of 1970s urban planning, elaborating – or even completing - the ABC-Town project, initiated by Vällingby:

*'Today it is difficult for us to imagine this [the ABC-Town planning of Vällingby] as a larger novelty. Nevertheless, the fact is that Vällingby has been studied by countless foreign study groups and is often designated as a model*

*in the literature on urban planning. It is doubtful whether something similar can be said about the 1960s. Rather, the usual structure was often utilised according to routine and in a quite unimaginative way. However, as is well known, it is difficult to repeat a successful performance. Perhaps, the 1970s can succeed completing parts of the Vällingby ambitions regarding a simultaneous construction of dwellings, schools, childcare and workplaces.'*<sup>249</sup>

Writing one year after the end of the Social Democratic hegemony in Sweden (from 1932 to 1976) and three years after the consolidation of the Million Program (1974), Ljungqvist and Höjer's statement expresses a schism of their time. Standing in a ford, they were unsure about the next step, questioning Social Democratism and Modernism alike: On the one hand, they were still in line with the old utopias; they talk about urban planning, implying 'a certain control of the social structure' and advocate for 'that the town building technique must develop into some sort of society building' (top-down).<sup>250</sup> On the other hand, imagining a Swedish urbanism of the 1980s, they begin to doubt these strategies, controlling individuals according to collective minimum standards (bottom-up): 'At the same time planning must become less abstract by establishing a direct contact with the individual human being or a small group of people instead of searching for her wishes among statistical tables.'<sup>251</sup> According to Höjer and Ljungqvist, a new planning ethics, at the intersection of the individual and the collective, bottom-up and top-down, was emerging. Although, this new utopia was not fulfilled in the 1970s, little openings appeared with individual choice of tapestry, removable, flexible walls, courtyard environments managed by inhabitants, half-finished planting areas, and other initiatives inspired by villa neighbourhoods.

The question was what the future obligations of Swedish urban planning would become: The longlasting housing shortage was no longer an issue - on the contrary there was a surplus of vacant apartments. When, the expansion and decentralisation of Stockholm, distributing a series of satellite towns in the periphery, was realised, it was no longer evident to use the rational construction methods and quantitative thinking,

245. Henrik Andersson and Fredric Bodoire in Magnus Andersson: *Stockholm's Annual Rings: A Glimpse into the Development of the City*. Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998, p. 195.

246. Stockholm's urban planning office in Magnus Andersson: *Stockholm's Annual Rings: A Glimpse into the Development of the City*. Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998, p. 1995.

247. Igor Dergalin & Thomas Atmer: "Dispositionsplanen för Norra Järvafältet", in *Arkitektur*, 1, 1969, p. 8 (author's translation).

248. The framework of the plan for the northern part of Järvafältet was presented October 31, 1968. For further details see Göran Sidenbladh: "Introduktion till dispositionsplan för Järvafältet" in *Arkitektur*, 1, 1969 and Igor Dergalin & Thomas Atmer: "Dispositionsplanen för Norra Järvafältet, in *Arkitektur*, 1, 1969.

249. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 16 (author's translation).

250. Ibid.

251. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 18 (author's translation).

forwarded in the 1960s and early 1970s. As mentioned, Vällingby's integral ABC-Town concept was still a model (e.g. for Ljungqvist and Höjer), but many things had changed since the 1950s. Reflecting a gradual process of individualisation, privatisation and differentiation in Sweden, the new category of the 'the user' (a.k.a. 'the consumer', 'the inhabitant', 'the individual', etc.) was introduced as an interested party in matters of urban planning as well as in other sectors of the political game. Only two years after the first spit in Tensta-Rinkeby, an editorial in *Arkitektur*, 8, 1968, invited people to direct their comments and wishes to the framework of the plans for the northern part of Järvafältet and the Gothenburg New Town Angered-Bergum, so they could be adjusted accordingly:

*'A great deal of work has been put into the planning of Järvafältet and Angered-Bergum. The planning areas are not locked in any larger sections. Accordingly, there is still a possibility to influence the planning. Arkitektur has gathered available material and offer the main features of both plan suggestions in this edition. The readers are invited to participate in a debate. Are we able to hope that those deciding on and participating in the planning study and perhaps even consider the viewpoints given? Are we able to expect that some user organisation edits the viewpoints and present them before the plans are materialised in reinforced concrete?'*<sup>252</sup>

Parallel to the counter-movement of 1968, a series of events with the user as a protagonist took place in Tensta-Rinkeby. As a kind of 'borderline case', equally marked by the rationalised planning of the 1960s and a new mobilisation of the inhabitants as 'users', individuals with desires and dreams about the meaning of 'happiness' and 'the

good life', the New Town denoted the evolution of Swedish urbanism. Contrary to the Vällingbies, inhabitants in Tensta-Rinkeby were not 'pampered' in an immaculate ABC-Town. Due to the opacity of the many interested parties, the missing coordination, and the long lack of basic facilities, Tensta-Rinkeby's inhabitants were forced to organise and 'build barricades' at an early stage. In Vällingby the inhabitants were merely 'onlookers' – sometimes row house groups built and administrated own community grounds, but collective housing around courtyards did not foster independent administrative units. Meanwhile, the tenants of Tensta-Rinkeby grew stronger and began to organise themselves in *byalag* (neighbourhood associations), attending to common interests and a neighbour-friendly communication, just like the active political groups of the New Town.<sup>253</sup> At different occasions, they demanded improvements of public amenities, conservation of the green area bordering the New Town and protested against relocating of a long-time promised gymnasium to Kista.<sup>254</sup> As a reaction to the disposition plan for Norra Järvafältet (1969), Tensta citizens initiated the organisation *Rädda Järvafältet* (Save Järvafältet) in 1970 and in 1972 more than 10,000 participated in an environmental march against *Regionplan 70*.<sup>255</sup>

Such bottom-up activism also happened in the 1972 incident of the elm trees in the park Kungsträdgården, following several protests against the demolition of historical buildings in the inner city (during the regeneration of Hötorget). In front of the rolling cameras of an international press, thousands of Stockholmers fought police and city authorities, resisting the felling of a series of long-standing elm trees. Politicians and planners were stupefied. One of them exclaimed: 'Now it is a question of the function of democracy and not about the elmtrees. Are we to have democracy or anarchy?'<sup>256</sup> As a victory for the citizens, the elm trees were indeed saved. On different levels, these events reflected a growing individualisation and where the Swedish state and the City of Stockholm with their usual bureaucratic procedures were in less control over urban planning matters. At the time of Vällingby, the 'patriarchal' Markelius and a limited number of strong decision makers had delegated from Stockholm's urban planning office. Meanwhile, the dynamics caused by a lack of coordination between non-profit, cooperative and private developers in Tensta-Rinkeby, followed by a new web of responding users' groups, pointed towards a more plural planning environment. On this background it is not strange that Ljungqvist and Höjer (in 1977) imagine the future as 'the turbulent planning environment', characterised by more debates and

252. The editorial also reflects about the difficulties for the 'user' to have an overview picture and a voice in an urban planning process: 'It is difficult for the individual to be able to study all material that are given in a planning matter and then to present objective viewpoints in a debate. What misses is an organisation that collects and reworks consumers' wishes regarding plans, not yet fixed, in different contexts. An influence from the consumers' party at the right time assure that the plan is revised and then presented again, perhaps with various alternatives.' Editorial: "Inom tio år", in *Arkitektur*, 8, 1968, p. 3 (author's translation).

253. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 19.

254. Björn Erdal "Därute i Tensta", in Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): *Därute i Tensta*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998, p. 36 and *Familjebostäder. Tensta: En stadsvandring i Familjebostädernas kvarter*. Stockholm: Familjebostäder, 2002.

255. Lundevall, Peter: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 2006, p. 219.

256. Municipal politician quoted in Magnus Andersson: *Stockholm's Annual Rings: A Glimpse into the Development of the City*. Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1998, p. 186 (author's translation).

interest conflicts in the various steps of a planning process: the political elite, fashion, fluctuations of the market and 'above all between the different groups of inhabitants with varying success of claiming the demands that appear in situations, impossible to master with the planning routines of today.'<sup>257</sup> For better and worse, the tendency of more negotiations and architects acting as mediators between interested parties, so often criticised as uncreative bureaucratisation, also meant more democratisation – or at least participation - in the shaping of people's living environments.

Another aspect of this 'turbulent urbanism' in the process of becoming was the increased influence of globalisation and Capitalist market forces, coinciding with new political values and ideals of the Non-Socialist opposition parties, winning the national election in 1976. As the housing situation became less desperate and people were able to make a choice, inhabitants in Tensta-Rinkeby and other Million Program New Towns became more critical and requested higher diversity rather than architecture, adapted to production and universal minimum standards. From the mid-1970s, the ideal of collectivism and unity were replaced by individuality and multiplicity; the dwelling was to reflect identity, not anonymity.<sup>258</sup> Generated by a change of the tax system, single-family houses popped up like mushrooms, while a liberalisation of the real estate market took place. At the same time as many Swedes realised their old dream of a house of their own, private developers were in the clover.<sup>259</sup>

From then, the exodus began - ethnical and 'resource-ful' Swedes, vacating their rental flat in Tensta-Rinkeby for a single-family house in one of the neighbouring suburbs. This negative spiral was – and *is* - a determining factor to the metamorphosis of Tensta-Rinkeby's demography. The tenant structure became unbalanced, while social problems grew. As the flats emptied, there was a surplus of dwellings, increasingly allotted by public authorities to those who could not afford to choose where to live. From an early date, Tensta-Rinkeby had a higher concentration of marginalised Swedes and representatives of the county's growing immigrant population compared to other parts of the Stockholm region: In the late 1970s, Rinkeby had approx. 7,500 inhabitants of which 35 percent was under 20 years old; 20 percent was of foreign origin, spread out on 20 countries, the majority coming from Finland, Greece and Turkey. In 1999, there were 15,000 residents; 35 percent was still younger than 20 years old, while 72

percent was now carriers of more 'exotic' names than Svensson or Andersson.<sup>260</sup> Today there are more than 100 different nationalities in Rinkeby. In 1972, the population in Tensta peaked with almost 16,000 inhabitants, but the composition and number of residents have changed many times since, following a demographic pattern similar to Rinkeby's. This contributed to further blackening of Tensta-Rinkeby's image: From mess and 'sloppy-ness', it went through low status, addictions and unemployment, to immigration, crime and ghettoisation.<sup>261</sup>

Hence, the paradox of Tensta-Rinkeby: Contrary to 'the city of the future' Vällingby, it was designated as a dated 'dinosaur', a product of a bureaucratised planning environment and an urbanism adapted to production, already as a 'new' New Town.<sup>262</sup> Yet, after decades of long waiting lists, thousands of homeless, presumably regardless of class or income, could settle in well-planned, spacious apartments. Framing a 'new modern living for good democratic citizens', the average of square metres (for the flats with 2, 3 and 5 rooms) was usually higher than Vällingby's.<sup>263</sup> (Some of the bigger flats had a 'room for rent' (*uthyrningsrum*) with private entrance and many of them had separate toilet and bathroom in addition to windproof balconies and flowing daylight illumination through their big windows.) As the Million Program expert Lisbeth Söderqvist puts it:



Gradually the population got more mixed in Million Programme New Towns like Tensta, built parallel to growing immigration to Sweden. Arnstberg, Karl-Olov & Björn Erdal (ed.): *Därute i Tensta*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998.

257. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 17 (author's translation).

258. Claus Bech-Danielsen writes about the motives of this parallel shift of mentality and change of housing: 'The dwelling mirrors our identity. That is why housing programs steal the peak viewing time on all television channels, and why so many owners of single-family houses use weekend after weekend, making additions to and renovating their dwelling. They want to leave their stamp on their dwelling, because in a time where individuality blossoms, we want to be different from the mass, so we don't appear as trivial fabrics sold by the meter or as a copy of our neighbour. Our dwelling must be something special. Naturally, inhabitants in public housing have the same need, yet, here the 1960s and 1970s blocks have a problem.'

Claus Bech-Danielsen: "Ghettoer – et spørgsmål om arkitektur", in *Politiken*, December 13, 2008, p. 6 (author's translation).

259. See Peter Hall: Op. cit.

260. **Stockholm utanför tullarna: Nitiosju stadsdelar i yterstaden**. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 2003, p. ??

261. Urban Ericsson; Irena Molina, and Per-Markku Ristilampi: Op. cit., [www.mkc.botkyrka.se/biblioteket/Publikationer/miljonprogram.pdf](http://www.mkc.botkyrka.se/biblioteket/Publikationer/miljonprogram.pdf)

262. As Höjer and Ljungqvist writes: 'Significantly, much of the critique against Tensta was aimed at the broken coordination in the building process... Now, the planning process is not only complicated and happens in large scale but is also dragged out in time; the product is 'out of time' when it is finally ready to be put into use.'

Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 17 (author's translation).

263. Sonja Vidén: "Folkhem och Bostadsillor", in **En Miljon Bostäder: Arkitekturmuseets Årsbok 1996**. Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet: 1996, p. 61 (author's translation).

*'These homes were built for everyone, not just poor people...the idea was to blend different people from different backgrounds. By doing so you would have a society that was stable and a society without conflict... People started to move in and everyone was happy... It was an expression of the welfare state that people had a modern functional home, with three rooms and a kitchen.'*<sup>264</sup>

Thus, a dichotomy of integration/segregation was imbedded into the egalitarian planning of the Swedish Model: Walk-up flats built for Swedish families, were increasingly vacated of natives and accommodated by a growing immigrant population, adding an unforeseen diversity to the Million Program New Towns. If Vällingby had been the incarnation of the homogenous, happy and egalitarian welfare state, Tensta-Rinkeby became the emblem of the fragmentation, multiculturalisation and social inequalities of *Folkhemmet's* Sweden. As Höjer and Ljungqvist writes: "Tensta [became] a concept as a symbol of "a failed town building"<sup>265</sup>

## **Segregation and Self-organisation**

Like many counterparts in the Western hemisphere, Stockholm in general and the New Towns towards the northwest in particular have undergone vivid transformations. Over the last decades, globalisation and (im)migration have generated major changes of urban and social geographies. Facing global urban competition (of investments, tourists, workplaces, tax rates, attraction of 'resource-ful' segments, etc.), public funds have been canalised into higher education, business parks and prestigious regeneration projects such as Hammerby Sjöstad and the Sankt Erik Area. Recent planning documents present Sweden's capital as the epitome of urban success and prosperity: 'the beautiful city at the water', 'a prosperous global city that upholds itself well in the international context' and the city's high-tech hub is designated as 'the world's

leading ICT Cluster'<sup>266</sup> Although one can give a little smile at the clumsiness of such city branding, it might possess a certain danger. It notoriously ignores or tones down the growing segregation that has always been the 'evil other' of the egalitarian and integrated ideal of *Folkhemmet's* Sweden.

The planning of Tensta-Rinkeby coincided with a gradual process of segregation in the Stockholm region from the 1970s onwards, partially produced by an influx of immigrants and refugees: First, Sweden experienced a 'controlled' immigration of foreign labour force from Yugoslavia, Greece, etc. in the 1950s and 1960s, then a 'sudden' wave of refugees from global focus points like Allende-supporting Chileans, Lebanese escaping the Civil War or secular Iranians fleeing from the Theocracy in the 1970s and 1980s, and finally family unifications in the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>267</sup> Many of these 'new Swedes' were accommodated in the walk-up flats of the Million Program, vacated by the 'old Swedes', moving to single-family houses of the 1970s or older apartments in the inner city. As a consequence, 18 percent of the citizens in Stockholm is of foreign descent, while the relationship between *Svensson Swedes* and *Million Swedes* are approximately the opposite in Tensta and Rinkeby with an 'immigrant' population of 85 and 75 percent, respectively.<sup>268</sup> Such statistics prompted Johan Rådberg, director of the aforementioned research project about segregation and attraction in the Stockholm region, to use the strong expression 'a ticking bomb' in his description of recent developments. In 2006, he writes:

*'Segregation is increasing in Swedish cities. If the trend is not broken we will – sooner or later – be hit by the plague that haunts many American and European cities, the cities become divided: a city for the rich, one for the poor, a city for an indigenous middle class, one for immigrants. Until a generation ago, this was unthinkable in the Sweden of Folkhemmet. Today, however, the threat has come closer. Perhaps it is legitimate to talk about a 'ticking bomb'. The*

264. Lisbeth Söderqvist in Christine Demstæder: "Concrete Jungle: Sweden's Suburbs Become Cool", in *The Local*, February 9, 2007, [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

265. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 19 (author's translation).

266. Lina Olsson: *Den Självorganiserade Staden: Appropriation av offentliga rum i Rinkeby*. Lund: Lunds Universitets Förlag, 2008, p. 246.

267. For a short history of Sweden's refugee and immigration patterns see Christopher Caldwell: "Islam on the Outskirts of the Welfare State", in *The New York Times*, February 5, 2006.

268. These numbers stem from Pontus Herin: *I Djursholm och Tensta Kindpussar vi hvarandra*. Stockholm: Frank Förlag, 2008, p. 26 and the brochure Svenska Bostäder: *Stadsförnyelse in Järva – en del av Järvalyftet*. Stockholm: Svenska Bostäder/Stockholms Stad, 2008.



New Swedes in Hässelby Strand district centre.



A mosque has taken over a basement in one of Rinkeby's housing blocks.



Afro hairdresser in one of Rinkeby's housing blocks.



New networks and realities emerge in the relation between the social and the architecture.

Vegetable market in Tensta Centrum.



The reputed high school Tensta Gymnasium, attracting kids from the entire region. The school is also used for activities of the local community and collaborates with the Royal Institute of Technology about an urban planning course.



Activities organised by the NGO Love Tensta and the Town Board in Rinkeby.



*development between 1970 – 90 can enlighten this. In the beginning of the period, the income profile in the majority of the neighbourhoods was relative mixed. At the end of the epoch, the group of mixed neighbourhoods shrank considerably: some developed into particular high-income areas, while others became low-income areas.*<sup>269</sup>

Although grey zones are frequent (Vällingby being one of them), there is a growing gap between downtown Stockholm, dominated by middle to upper class ethnic Swedish, and the Million Program New Towns with a majority of low-income, multiethnic inhabitants. Contrary to the situation 50 years ago, when Vällingby was marketed and visited as the panacea of future urbanism, the success stories told about present-day Stockholm, rarely extend to its satellites.<sup>270</sup> By the same token, the level of social and collective services in the Million Program New Towns at Järvafältet was long-time low in comparison to Vällingby's standard. These two factors might have contributed to the innovative appropriations of public space and self-organisation, 'activities that have not been assigned, nor designed for', taking place in Tensta-Rinkeby.<sup>271</sup>

Problems are no doubt many ('resourceful inhabitants' moving out, the image of *ghetto*, physical decay caused by low-quality building materials, and other aspects often designated as signs of 'ghettoisation') and it is both ironic and tragic to think about that the Million Program New Towns, built for the benefit of the welfare state, are used as a symbol in debates on segregation in Sweden. In 1998, two billion SEK was put into the so-called *Storstadssatsningen* (Metropolitan Development Initiative), a project intending to fight segregation via higher employment rates and educational standards among immigrants. Some criticised this state involvement for lack of sincerity, but there were successes like more teacher support, local job centres and a higher number of leisure activities for young people. Still, these improvements worked as a double-edged sword: those who got a job left and were replaced by another wave of immigrants.<sup>272</sup>

269. Rådberg: Op. cit., p. 38 (author's translation).

270. In this case, the richer suburbs dominated by privately or partially privately owned single-family houses make an exception.

271. In the context of Tensta-Rinkeby it is important to take into account that: 'self-organisation is a process through which subjects aspire to become involved in societal development and decision-making from below.' However, the direction is not only bottom-up: 'self-organisation always takes place in a social and spatial context that establishes the conditions, both restricting and enabling, for self-organisation. In other words, self-organisation refers to activities, and subjects, that are not completely autonomous in this sense.'

Olsson: Op. cit., p. 243 - 244.

272. Christine Demstader: "Concrete Jungle: Sweden's Suburbs Become Cool", in *The Local*, February 9, 2007, [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

A survey of autumn 2001 to spring 2002 showed that 80 percent of the inhabitants in Tensta were satisfied with their apartment, while 60 percent liked the architecture, the people and the district. Main complaints were about the level of cleaning, vandalism, shopping and public services.<sup>273</sup> (As suggested by the City of Stockholm and Svenska Bostäder's initiative at Järvafältet, *Järvalyftet* (The Järva Lift), a long-range effort (ten years+) combining top-down and bottom-up, are required to change such aspects. Operating on different levels, (architecture, integration, boost of job market, attraction of new residents, etc.), *Järvalyftet* will imply collaboration between various parties, including local communities, cultural organisations, women's groups, etc., presumably offering the users a higher degree of voice in the management.<sup>274</sup> The renewal plans are still at the idea stage, but at the ideological level they resemble Höjer and Ljungqvist's (1977) vision of future urbanism, stressing the importance of: 'giving the individual human beings responsibility for their own environment... Here, like on the social level, much relies on organisation and experiment. It is not something that can be launched from above, but rather it must grow through initiatives from below.'<sup>275</sup>)

From this bottom-up perspective, one can begin to discover a potential, escaping the cliché-image of a socially and racially marginalised *ghetto*, so often presented by the media and official reports. Thus, civil society in Tensta-Rinkeby has produced a series of non-profit organisations ranging from culture, education, sports, art, politics, to voluntary work and returning events like *Tensta Marknad* (Tensta Market), an annual culture festival in *Tensta Centrum* over two days in September, and *Rinkebyfestivalen* (the Rinkeby Festival) in *Rinkeby Centrum*. Rental rooms and apartments are transformed into mosques, bazaars and private schools, with 'mother tongue' and religious classes. Clearly separated by the green valley with Spånga Church, Tensta and Rinkeby each have their own identity – nobody doubts if *Rinkeby Amateur Theatre Association* and *Tensta Film Association* belong to Rinkeby or Tensta. Likewise, Tensta Gymnasium functions as a meeting place for the local community (not only the students) where various activities are organised.<sup>276</sup>

In this context, it is worth mentioning *Gringo Magazine*, an initiative of the Tensta-born Iranian-Swedish journalist Zanyar Adami. The concept of the magazine is that *Miljonsvenskor* (Million Swedes) write about life in Stockholm's New Towns from an

273. Peter Lundevall: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholms förlag, 2006, p. 222.

274. See the brochure Svenska Bostäder: *Stadsförnyelse in Järva – en del av Järvalyftet*. Stockholm: Svenska Bostäder/Stockholms Stad, 2008.

275. Jon Höjer; Ljungqvist, Sture; Poom, Jaak & Thörnblom, Ingvar: "Vällingby - Tensta - Kista - Vadå?", in *Arkitektur*, 2, 1977, p. 17 (author's translation).

276. See Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholms förlag, 2006.



Gambian-Swedish rapper Adam Tensta in front of his childhood flat in Tensta Centrum where he lives and has installed a music studio.

insider's perspective.<sup>277</sup> Starting from the position of a pariah, *Gringo Magazine* has recuperated Stockholm's mainstream media. An eight-page edition of the magazine is distributed monthly in the free newspaper *Metro*. The newspaper can be found at every station of the *Tunnelbana* - the physical link between the inner city and the satellite towns. From this alternative media platform, *Gringo Magazine* unravels cases of Million Program culture taking on active positions of production and creativity that often remain unknown to the world 'outside'. To get an idea about contemporary life in Tensta-Rinkeby, we will look closer at four such stories.

## Miljonsvenskor Life in Tensta-Rinkeby

Every summer since 1999 a football tournament for European-Somali communities has been organised in Rinkeby. Attracting a large public, the *Somali Week* gathers visitors from various parts of Sweden and abroad, participating in the wide catalogue of activities during the tournament. Apart from being a football event and a social gathering, it is an occasion of coming to terms with a troubled history, but also a platform for exploring new identities *between* cultures.<sup>278</sup> With activities (seminars, workshops, exhibitions, etc.) questioning different aspects of Diaspora culture, the *Somali Week* offers participants opportunities to share and discuss their experiences with others in a similar situation. Exploring new types of Somali-European identities, each team in the football match represent their new resident country or town. In this way, the event presents a positive and diverse image (e.g. black Rinkeby or Vällingby supporters) of a group that is often envisioned as one of the most difficult to integrate into the Swedish society.<sup>279</sup> As a temporary appropriation of public space and services, the *Somali Week* requires self-organisation on various levels in addition to commitment and financing of many individuals. The event is so popular that the *Tunnelbana* usually clogs, and it is always difficult to find sufficient accommodation and playing facilities. Since Rinkeby lacks the capacity to host the event single-handedly, the event spreads to sports grounds in neighbouring New Towns. Still missing its proper 'home arena', the

277. In a radio interview Meryam Can, managing editor of *Gringo*, describes typical media representations of Stockholm's ethnically diverse New Towns: 'Personally I think they write in two different ways. First they are "exotify-ing" the suburbs and the people who live there. They say that the suburbs are filled with exotic oriental food and music and that people's clothes are different. We're given that picture. Then we have the negative picture of people in the suburbs as frequently criminal - that he or she is poor - or has had a rough life. That's not the whole picture - that's not the whole reality.' Azariah Kiro: "Gringo magazine, or the changing face of multicultural media", radio program, September 29, 2006, [networkeurope.radio.cz/feature/gringo-magazine-or-the-changing-face-of-multicultural-media](http://networkeurope.radio.cz/feature/gringo-magazine-or-the-changing-face-of-multicultural-media)

278. Close to 2 million people fled to different countries during and after the civil war in Somalia in the early 1990s. Officially, 18,000 Somalis live in Sweden.

279. Much like the way sociology was used as an instrument to install a universal denominator for the modernist housing project of *Folkhemmet*, Western anthropology has played a major role in the production of this image of the Somalis. Public authorities, scientific reports and the media, often describe and 'handle' them as a uniform *culture*, loyal and defined by *clan*. Such analyses tend to forget that the Somali community is composed of several ethnicities, languages, classes and geographies all mixed with their new experiences in exile. Olsson: Op. cit., p. 254.

*Somali Week* doesn't have a stable foothold in such borrowed, but public, locations and often gets refuted as an external event. Yet, local politicians and civil servants back up the appropriations and self-organised activities of the organisers.<sup>280</sup>

This public support also include the informal business types, frequently referred to as 'immigrant shops', appropriating spaces in Rinkeby's housing areas. As creations of 'immigrant entrepreneurship', such shops are often considered as loopholes: Through private initiative their owners are independent of a formal labour market that can feel like a Sisyphean labour of unemployment and discrimination. Although Rinkeby was primarily planned as a residential enclave according to a tight zoning system, the first immigrant shops opened in previous laundrettes, storages and garages in the late 1970s. Decisive factors for this were public assistance, rent subsidies and bending of official planning schemes, permitting shops to temporarily locate and rebuild in residential architecture. Thus, the first shop owner-*bricoleurs* remodelled rented premises on a provisional state that got increasingly permanent over the years: As products of public authorities' generous interpretation of formalities in order to empower entrepreneurs with scarce means, what the Dutch call *gedogen*, the immigrant shops have become 'permanent exceptions' without formally recognised places. Yet, they have existed for decades and currently attract a mixed crowd of consumers from Greater Stockholm. Due to this momentum and regional attention, urbanist Lina Olsson regards Rinkeby's immigrant shops as new public spaces and 'cultural ambassadors'. Potentially, they are platforms for new intercultural meetings to take place when customers from different parts of the Stockholm region come together whilst shopping spicy groceries.<sup>281</sup>



This immigrant shop has taken over localities in a housing block in Tensta.

According to such progressive (perhaps too optimistic?) viewpoints, other parts of Stockholm and Sweden can learn from the Million Program New Towns. This was also the message of the housing exhibition *TenstaBo 06*, held in Tensta, August 2006. Since the *Stockholm Exhibition of 1930*, various housing exhibitions have been important sites for a debate about the housing situation in Sweden. From May 17 to September 16, 2001 the first international housing exhibition of the country *Bo 01 City of Tomorrow*, was launched in Malmö around the theme of 'the ecologically sustainable information and welfare society'.<sup>282</sup> Five years later, Sweden's first housing exhibition concerning the Million Program New Towns, *TenstaBo 06*, opened in Tensta, August 17, 2006. This time the focus was on the challenges 'when the suburb meets the future' and on 'highlighting the potential and possibilities of the suburbs'.<sup>283</sup> Thus, *TenstaBo 06* was different from most of the housing exhibitions previously held in Sweden. As promised by the website:

*'This exhibition will differ a lot from former housing exhibitions. There won't be that many newly produced flats, instead the ambition is to give a broad picture of Tensta. Different questions regarding housing projects and the suburb will be in focus.'*<sup>284</sup>

*TenstaBo 06* came into being in collaboration between inhabitants of Tensta and Stockholm's City suburban program. Documenting an ongoing process, the visitor could make his/hers own opinion about built, ongoing or planned housing projects in Tensta. One headline was 'Tensta as a housing development'. During the exhibition the public could visit the 'replica flat', already mentioned, restored and designed like in 1972, as a 'homage' to the original qualities of the Million Program, so often forgotten. Additionally, one could stop at 20 newly produced flats as well as existing flats that had been refurbished. During the exhibition, guided tours were available for the public with visits at 4 - 5 different flats, whilst informing about different housing projects.

Under the heading 'Tensta as a culture arena', culture and creativity was explored as drivers for development. Professional artists and local non-profit cultural organisations

280. Olsson, p. 254.

281. Olsson: Op. cit., p. 256.

282. For more information about the housing exhibition *Bo 01* see the website [home.att.net/~amcnet/bo01.html](http://home.att.net/~amcnet/bo01.html) and Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 2006.

283. Website of *TenstaBo 06*: [www.tenstabo06.se](http://www.tenstabo06.se)

284. Website of *TenstaBo 06*: [www.tenstabo06.se](http://www.tenstabo06.se)

gave music performances in addition to acts of stand up comedy, a poetry festival, the three-day *Tensta Market*, and an outdoor cinema. Various seminars were also arranged during the exhibition. Titles included: ‘Renewals of the Million Program’, ‘The suburb meets the future’, ‘Multicultural life and integration’, and ‘A housing market for everybody’. Moreover, a book *Tensta utanför mitt fönster* (Tensta outside of my window) was published as a steppingstone for further discussions.<sup>285</sup> Anticipating the national election by just two weeks, the timing of the exhibition was not chosen randomly. It was seen as ‘a good opportunity to discuss housing politics, cultural differences, the Million Program and different issues in the suburb’ as well as ‘how an individual housing can be made where several cultures meet’.<sup>286</sup>

A last example of the ‘melting pot culture’ of Tensta-Rinkeby is *Tensta Konsthall*, one of the most spacious and visionary contemporary art galleries in the Stockholm region, located in a renovated underground storage in *Tensta Centrum*. It opened in May 1998 as a part of Stockholm’s European Capital of Culture and has hosted exhibitions with internationally well-known artists such as Shirin Neshat, Susan Hillier, Tracey Moffat, Julian Opie, Wolfgang Tillmans, On Kawara, Kutlug Ataman, Rainer Ganahl, etc. Still, the most interesting projects are the educational wing and the site-specific, relational art works, produced in collaboration with the locals under the label TK Productions. One such project is *163 04/* made by students from Tensta Gymnasium and The University College of Arts in Stockholm. Referring to Tensta’s zip code, the project is part of a three-year educational program. Connecting social and geographical territories it is ‘creating new opportunities for trajectories through the collective and the individual experiences of the participants.’<sup>287</sup> So far, it has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, 2007 and The New Museum in New York, 2008. From fall 2008 to spring 2009, another project *Pimp my Kommunaltrappa* (Pimp my Municipal Staircase) is taking place as a part of Tensta Konsthall’s investigation of ‘how the art center can contribute to change and development in Tensta.’<sup>288</sup> Partnering with the urban development initiative in Tensta-Rinkeby, *Järvalyftet*, it investigates Taxingeplan, a square nicknamed Piazza Taxingeplan, next to Tensta’s *Tunnelbana* station, shopping centre and *Tensta Konsthall*, as a public space. Around a wide staircase, connecting the two levels of central Tensta, locals are invited to join in, while the square will host fairs, markets, cultural and outdoor events, continuing after the project period. Taking advantage of the multicultural composition of the local community, the gallery not only

285. See Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholmsia förlag, 2006.

286. Website of *TenstaBo 06*: [www.tenstabo06.se](http://www.tenstabo06.se)

287. Tensta Konsthall’s website: [www.tenstakonsthall.se](http://www.tenstakonsthall.se) See also the chapters about Tensta Konsthall in Anders Gullberg, (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholmsia förlag, 2006.

288. Ibid.



The art gallery Tensta Konsthall occupies a former storage in Tensta Centrum, close to the station. Next door a truck loads goods. The director museum, Swedish ‘star-curator’ Maria Lind, has put Tensta Konsthall on the regional and international art map.

offers guided tours in the usual languages Swedish and English for the 12,000 annually visitors, but also in Somali, Japanese, Polish, Czech, Turkish, Spanish, Persian, German, and Bengali.<sup>289</sup>

In different ways, the four cases, presented above, contribute to a renewal of the culture of the Stockholm region and of the architecture of Swedish New Towns. Combining top-down and bottom-up, Swedish and global culture, they evolve in dialogues between public institutions of the welfare state and private initiative of the locals. As a token of the importance of this kind of contact and interaction between the satellite towns and central Stockholm, fourth year students from the School of Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology in collaboration with Tensta Konsthall reinterpreted the city-satellite relation of the *Tunnelbana* with a piece of landscape architecture, May 2008: ‘Away from traditional models of planning and ill-disguised cynical trends towards a more down to earth, active and participatory approach to

289. Tensta Konsthall is a foundation supported by the the city of Stockholm, Kulturrådet, the Stockholm county, The Foundation of the Culture of the Future and the Swedish Inheritance Fund. For more information about Tensta Konsthall and its activities see the website: [www.tenstakonsthall.se](http://www.tenstakonsthall.se)

urban and spatial questions.<sup>290</sup> Downscaling planning to their own human bodies, walking through the landscape, whilst marking it with four colours of gaffa tape, the future Swedish architects designed a brightly coloured path. This temporary line of communication, *TENSTA CONNECTION* connected Tensta to Sergels Torg, the inner city's most important meeting place: A square in the 'tabula rasa' neighbourhood Nedra Norrmalm, designed when Sven Markelius was director of Stockholm's urban planning office. As one of the participants, Francesco di Gregorio, writes:

*'We redefine the position of Tensta, putting it in the centre of Stockholm instead of in the periphery. With four different colours, we not only build a structure of around 490,000 square meters but we also enable all of us to inhabit new mental territories.'*<sup>291</sup>

This event, tells how the relationship between the inner city and the satellite towns, as well as that between neighbouring New Towns like Vällingby and Tensta-Rinkeby, is not only about physical and architectural spaces, but also about mental and social spaces – territories.

## **The Sheep Turn Grey As New Grey Zones Erupt**

At this time, it seems relevant to repeat the question that was the starting point for this article: What made Vällingby stand out as the 'White Sheep' and Tensta-Rinkeby as the 'Black Sheep' of modernist planning history in the Stockholm region? Was Vällingby simply 'too perfect' to be repeated? Was Vällingby the climax of a specific historical moment and project at the intersection of a modernist utopia of the happy and integrated satellite town and a Social Democratic utopia of the egalitarian and democratic welfare society, the Swedish Model, having difficulties to adapt to new times?

As we have seen, Sweden held a famous and unique position in 20th century urban design. Together with the architecture of Gunnar Asplund, it is still 'the Swedish

Modern' of Vällingby and the post-war redevelopment of Stockholm, when Markelius was director of the City's urban planning office, that reappear when one talk about Swedish urban design (at least outside of Sweden). The decades after the beginning of the Million Program in 1965 never became international sensations and study objects. In order to find some of the reasons for this state of things, we might take a short detour to the Canadian design guru Bruce Mau. Prior to the opening of *Too Perfect: Seven New Denmarks*, an exhibition at the Danish Architecture Centre (2004), curated by Mau, he wrote an open letter to Denmark. Here, he accused Scandinavians (particularly Danish design in the 21st century) for focusing too much on details and perfection, whilst forgetting innovation and new ways of thinking after the heyday of modernist avant-garde:

*'Dear Denmark,*

*Remember the late 1940s? That was when a group of young Danish architects and designers decided to throw off the shackles of tradition-bound design. They formed a distinctly Danish movement, inspired by natural materials, organic forms, handcrafting and Danish humanism. Worldwide, Danish Modern became a sign of being innovative and experimental. Today it means nothing – an invisible image. Fifty-odd years later, Danish Modern is so pervasive in Denmark that it's become a stylistic canopy blocking the light necessary for new developments to flourish, a formal straight-jacket that's "too-perfect". Isn't time for a new generation to break free?...Should Denmark take the shape of the future - or should the future take the shape of Denmark?'*<sup>292</sup>

290. Production of Architecture's website: [www.unrealstockholm.org](http://www.unrealstockholm.org)

291. Francesco di Gregorio on TENSTA CONNECTION's website: [www.tenstaconnection.se](http://www.tenstaconnection.se)

292. Bruce Mau: *Too Perfect: Seven New Denmarks*, exhibition catalogue for The Danish Architecture Centre (DAC), 2004, [www.dac.dk/db/filarkiv/8382/catalogue.pdf](http://www.dac.dk/db/filarkiv/8382/catalogue.pdf)

Is Mau's version of the history of Danish Design also the story of 'the Swedish Modern', the post-war urban design with Vällingby as a canonized icon, blocking for new developments? Or was it actually the lack of individual details and space for variation on a social and mental rather than on an architectural design level in the subsequent decades that was the missing link of the Swedish Model to contain *all* Swedes? Was the social engineering of the welfare state, designed to integrate and please the majority, simply too inflexible and excluding?

As a rather homogeneous and self-contained *Middle Way* country, remaining neutral in both World Wars as well as the Cold War, Sweden has had trouble with identifying itself in the new paradigm of globalisation, individualism and multiculturalism. Although Sweden can seem like the happy, neutral and well-organised IKEA country on the surface, its later history of (im)migration and urbanisation has been both turbulent and rapid: Until 1930, more than a million Swedes immigrated to the United States, after that tenths of thousands of them migrated from rural areas to urban centres, subsequently thousands moved from the cities to the post-war satellite towns, then hundred thousands refugees and guest labourer immigrated to Sweden, and finally their relatives came to join them. It is in this context that Tensta-Rinkeby of the Million Program, mainly accommodating people of 'other' ethnicities than Swedish, can be viewed as the 'evil twin' of the listed 'crown jewel' Vällingby. Thus, the younger New Town has stripped bare the Swedish Model, so that its weaknesses has become apparant. As the homogenous Swedish society became increasingly manifold, the individual with different needs, interests and habits became more visible. The image of a motley multitude of inhabitants replacing ethnical Swedish families in standardised Million Program New Towns, pointed to the fact that every aspect of 'a happy life' could not be predicted and ordered according to a master plan, based on modernist and Social Democratic idealisms of universalism and collectivism. In short, it became more complex to talk about *Folkhemmet* in the singular when visionary utopia became lived heterotopia.

From this perspective, there is not that far from the model New Town Vällingby and the *ghetto* New Town Tensta-Rinkeby. Although both were planned as 'post-class' New Towns, socio-economical barriers and differences were imbedded in both. One might say that the 'White Sheep' and the 'Black Sheep' are turning grey as new grey zones erupt:<sup>293</sup> Just like the eloquently designed Vällingby, the industrialised, large-scale planning of Tensta-Rinkeby was envisioned according to sociological minimum standards and the Social Democratic ethos of *jämlikhet*: With the double meaning

293. As Lisbeth Söderqvist states: 'During the last ten to 15 years we have seen changes in opinion...If the image of the Million Homes Programme was black before, it's more grey now.'  
Lisbeth Söderqvist in Christine Demstæder: "Concrete Jungle: Sweden's Suburbs Become Cool", in *The Local*, February 9, 2007, [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

of economic and egalitarian equality and identical likeness, this concept is based on collectivity as well as homogeneity (*Folkhemmet*). Post-war Swedish planning was unique because it decided to make public housing a matter for all Swedes – not only low-income groups.<sup>294</sup> However, the common standard guiding the planning was monocultural; an ethnical Swedish family with a working father, a housewife mother, kids, healthy economy, and (after Vällingby) probably a Volvo or Saab.<sup>295</sup> Underpinning this egalitarian logic, architect Tom Nielsen characterises the project of Scandinavian urban planning after WWII as the planning of 'the welfare city'. This was a Social Democratic planning policy of designing 'the good life' for 'happy citizens', inspired by the utilitarian and Panopticon-inventor Jeremy Bentham's principle of satisfying the majority. The difficulty of this attitude is where it leaves the minorities who don't fit into its implied norm of the 'common good', of 'happiness' and of the 'good life'.<sup>296</sup>

With tremendous faith in the power of architecture and urban planning, both New Towns, dealt with in this chapter, used modernist urban design as an instrument to create a happy and modern life in a built environment, based on optimal and scientifically approved living standards. Notwithstanding the good intentions, Swedish cities in general and Stockholm in particular are having huge problems of segregation. People are continuously blaming architecture as the guilty party. Yet, the lively debates caused by recent publications like journalist Anders Sundelin's *Världens bästa land. Berättelser från Tensta, en svensk förstad* (The best country in the world. Stories from Tensta, a Swedish suburb) (2007) and Pontus Herin's *I Djursholm och Tensta Kindpussar vi hvarandra* (In Djursholm and Tensta We Kiss Each Other on the Cheek) (2008) have broadened the perspective to include other factors (social heritage, gentrification, media image, economical inequality, etc.). Especially the latter, a testimonial of an 'inverse class voyage' by a business journalist from the rich villa enclave of Djursholm, moving with his family from the exclusive inner city neighbourhood Kungsholmen to Tensta for two years, has shown that it is not only in the Million Program New Towns that enclavement is ominous.<sup>297</sup> Such a story is disturbing because it blurs normalised imaginaries and boundaries between good and bad neighbourhoods. It is somehow safe to keep a scapegoat, e.g. in the guise of a *ghetto*, as an inverted mirror through which we can see the negative of ourselves. Societal problems can be conveniently located and contained in 'Black Sheep' New Towns like Tensta-Rinkeby, so easily associated with the

294. Christine Demstæder: "Concrete Jungle: Sweden's Suburbs Become Cool", in *The Local*, February 9, 2007, [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

295. Birgit Modh: "Miljonprogrammet i förändring" in *En Miljon Bostäder: Arkitekturmuseets Årsbok 1996*. Stockholm: Arkitekturmuseet: 1996, p. 98.

296. See Tom Nielsen: "Ethics, Aesthetics and Contemporary Urbanism", in *Nordisk Arkitekturforskning – Nordic Journal of Architectural Research* (Theme: Welfare City Theory), nr. 2, Aarhus, 2004 and Cor Wagenaar et al. (red.): *Happy: Cities and Public Happiness in Post War Europe*. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2004.

297. See Anders Sundelin: *Världens bästa land. Berättelser från Tensta, en svensk förstad*. Stockholm: Leopard förlag, 2007 and Pontus Herin: *I Djursholm och Tensta Kindpussar vi hvarandra*. Stockholm: Frank förlag, 2008.

repetitious and criticised Million Program architecture. Most of us probably believe that segregation is something taking place *overthere*, in the *ghetto*, although, deep down, we are aware that it is a development in which we also take part. For instance, when we choose where to live and where *not* to live.

Thus, a lesson derived from the experience of the Million Program renovations in the 1980s and 1990s, mainly operating on an architectural level, is that transformation of a stigmatised New Town has to do with more than physical structures. As the Million Program expert Lisbeth Söderqvist remarks: 'Instead of having a straight path, they made it curvy... It looks nice of course but it won't break segregation. No Swedish family will move in just because there's a curvy path.'<sup>298</sup> No doubt, it is less problematic to solve physical problems than to change social and economical structures. Hence, the original *Catch 22* of Vällingby, was probably the integral ABC-Town concept, a ramified planning strategy encompassing dwellings, workplaces, education, leisure time, domestic occupations, etc.

Where does this leave 'our' two New Towns? From 2002, Vällingby's listed community centre has undergone a lip service, curiously invisible to the innocent eye. Touching on nostalgia, the parties responsible for the redevelopment, Svenska Bostäder and the architectural office White, are aiming at a conservation of the allure and the life style of the 1950s. As an aging beauty recreating her looks with discreet plastic surgery, brand new cobblestones are imitating the pattern at the time of the inauguration. Likewise, the mosaic façade of the classic cinema *Fontänen* is left untouched, although five new cinema halls with the latest technology are dug underneath it. Still, the re-branding and revamping of Vällingby don't get caught entirely in the 1950s. There are more visible changes like the lower floor of the old Swedish restaurant Vällingehus, converted into a global foodhall. Moreover, *Vällingby Centrum* is renamed into the more contemporary and urban *Vällingby City*, while a new flagship store *Kfem* is installed as an iconic landmark. Both are being used strategically as elements in an ongoing urban competition of identity, consumers and investments. At a time when Vällingby's shopping centre is not as modern and unique as it used to be, concentration is on leisure activities for a regional public as much as on new local workplaces: According to the award-winning master plan by the City of Stockholm and White, the new fashion mecca *Kfem*, designed by Swedish star-architect Gert Wingård, and the new *Filmstad* (Film City) by the office Scheiwiller Svensson, underneath *Fontänen*, will attract new consumers within the Stockholm region.<sup>299</sup> Yet, old and new came together when the makeover of *Vällingby Centrum* a.k.a. *Vällingby City* and the opening of *Kfem*

March 27, 2008 were staged as a re-inauguration: a re-enactment of the event that manifested the success of Vällingby, the inauguration of the New Town November 14, 1954. Thus, *Vällingby City's* website welcomes consumers to 'Sweden's most modern outdoor centre... full of pleasure, service, food and culture... the latest contribution to Stockholm's fashion heaven' where 'the 1950s meets the 2000s'.<sup>300</sup> Intending to keep up street credibility, blogs and websites about the event were launched on popular platforms at the Internet such as Face Book, MySpace and You Tube.

In spite of all these attempts on renewal of the old 'city of the future', the future might belong to New Towns of a more multicultural character such as Tensta-Rinkeby where the production of un-planned, temporary spaces and events proliferate. The self-organised activities and spatial appropriations of the *Gringo Magazine* written by *Million Swedes*, the Somali-Swedish football teams representing their home town at the *Somali Week*, the (potentially) trans-Stockholman meeting places of permanent-temporary immigrant shops, the location of a prestigious housing exhibition and a cutting-edge art gallery in Tensta, involving the locals, might be seen as platforms where refurbishments of the Swedish Model and Swedish identity can take place. Thus, the bluntness or anonymity of the Million Program urbanism, so often criticised, can be regarded as a quality. On the site of Tensta-Rinkeby, a new paradigm of Swedishness is currently being grafted onto the existing landscape of concrete slabs and tall lamella houses, equally 'haunted' by the ghosts of Modernism and the Social Democratic housing policy of *Folkhemmet*. Importantly, this is happening in an affirming and experimental way from the bottom-up, assisted by top-down.

Produced between the inhabitants of Tensta-Rinkeby, awareness of this rich *Miljonsvenskor*-culture could be a more productive attitude, than those critical voices, locking the Million Program New Towns in a stigmatised role as *ghettos*, whilst lamenting a welfare state lost. On a more immaterial level, music is the putty, connecting the young people in Tensta across occasional conflicts and territories between ethnical groups.<sup>301</sup> While most of them present themselves as an ethnical identity ('I am a Turk, Somali, Chilean...'), as a group they identify with their hometown as *Tenstabor* (Tensta inhabitants), not Stockholmers. They live in a young town, built from tabula rasa parallel to the first immigration wave in Sweden. Thus, 'the common' and 'the collective' (to belong to the crowd beyond ethnical, religious and cultural differences and to be a *Tenstabo*) are emphasised in Tensta. Transgressing the usual binary oppositions of 'integration/segregation', 'collective/individual', 'monoculture/multiculture', 'city/satellite town', 'Swedish/immigrant', 'local/global',

298. Lisbeth Söderqvist in Christine Demstæder: "Concrete Jungle: Sweden's Suburbs Become Cool", in *The Local*, February 9, 2007, [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se)

299. See Kfem retail store's website: [www.kfem.se/](http://www.kfem.se/) and Scheiwiller Svensson website: [www.ssark.se/index2.asp](http://www.ssark.se/index2.asp)

300. See *Vällingby City's* website: [www.vallingbycity.se/](http://www.vallingbycity.se/) (author's translation).

301. As the Benetton-mixed crowd of kids dancing together between Tensta's concrete slabs in the music videos of the nationally famous rapper Adam Tensta. FIND



Interior from Svensson pioneer's flat in Tensta. Folkloristic vernaculars take over standardisation in decoration of the home.



inherent in the Modernist and Social Democratic utopia in Sweden (1932 – 1976), ‘what unite is paradoxically the differences...in Tensta it is good to be an immigrant.’<sup>302</sup> Accordingly, Tensta-Rinkeby has produced a genuine and unique Million Program culture from the inside. With all the fault lines and mistakes of experimentation, the New Town is a laboratory, where one can test what the welfare state and the Swedish Model, positioned between the local and the global, might look like in the future.

Like 50 -60 years ago, when the ‘welfare city’ Vällingby was built and the foundations for the welfare state were being constructed, Swedish identity is again in flux. Nonetheless, this time it is challenged by heterogeneity and multiculturalism rather than homogeneity and monoculture, and active participation in international unions such as the EU and the WTO rather than neutrality and self-containment. Most Swedes - Svenssons as well as *Million Swedes* - are still proud of their Swedish Model. They want to preserve it at the same time as they explore new ways to adapt it to a new paradigm: At the last national election in September 2006, the Swedes broke with 12 years of constant Social Democratic rule. At the same time, the winning Centre-Liberals promised to leave the foundations of the Swedish Model untouched.<sup>303</sup> Vällingby anno 2008 seems to incarnate this ambivalence. To give an example: In the review of the ‘re-premiere’ of *Vällingby Centrum* becoming *Vällingby City*, March 27, 2008, the architecture critic of the newspaper Aftonbladet Lars Mikael Raattamaa wrote:

*‘Oh how I should have liked to be there when Alva Myrdal and Sven Markelius discussed how architecture can be an active party in the building of an equal world. I wish that there would be as little painful nostalgia in this thought as in the defence of the general child allowance. I wish that we could speak about suburbs in another way than as threat and failure.’*<sup>304</sup>

Positioned between past, present and future, patrimonial Vällingby might be seen as an opening into living with and finding the hidden potentials of our modernist heritage. Other countries are full of examples on demolition of post-war architecture, repeating the tabula rasa gesture of the anti-nostalgic modernists. Yet, Vällingby’s legacy and inherent qualities are abundantly acknowledged in its conservation as a listed monument. Stockholm’s pioneer New Town is praised for its collective co-housing, social services, public spaces and greeneries in an integral whole, according to the ABC-Town concept. Elsewhere, such modernist babies have often been thrown out with the bath water when alternative values and housing types have replaced them.

Perhaps, Lars Mikael Raattamaa’s review of the repremiere of *Vällingby Centrum* becoming *Vällingby City* above somehow mirrors a new attitude towards the ‘Other’ of Swedish Modernism, that of the Million Program. Like many ‘50 somethings’, Vällingby is facing a midlife crisis. With the paradigm shifts from collective to individual ideals, monoculture to multicultural, and the breakage of the Social Democratic hegemony, Stockholm’s oldest New Town finds itself challenged. It wants to renew itself with various additions and quests for new identities, ‘stretching’ the local and the national into a new scale of the regional and the global. In this sense, Vällingby could probably learn from Million Program New Towns like Tensta-Rinkeby where a manifold Swedish culture is evolving *in between* such parameters. Currently, a renewed interest in the 1960s and 1970s New Towns are spreading from architects and historians to the media, cinema, fashion photography, and in situ.<sup>305</sup> After all, one has to remember that for around 25 percent of the Swedish population this architecture is or once was indeed – *home*. ■

302. Peter Lundevall: "Tenstas planeringshistoria", in Anders Gullberg (edit.): *Tensta utanför mitt fönster*. Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 2006, p. 219 (author's translation).  
See also Örjan Björklund: "Där är något speciellt med oss här i Tensta", in Karl-Olov Arnstberg & Björn Erdal (edit.): *Därute i Tensta*. Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1998.

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