

# HEMLÖS

## OPEN IDEAS COMPETITION ON HOMELESSNESS IN STOCKHOLM

HEMLÖS is an ideas competition open to everyone with relevant thoughts and suggestions on the urgent topic of homelessness - i.e. what it means not to have access to permanent accommodation. It addresses both professional architects and designers as well as the general public.

The competition has been organised by Architects Without Borders in Sweden (ASF-SE) in collaboration with Stockholms stadsmission, the City of Stockholm and the Swedish Association of Architects. The purpose has been to raise the discussion from merely debating the causes of the housing shortage to encouraging the development of methods, strategies and hands-on project ideas to improve the situation for people living in homelessness.

### *Background and Purpose*

The Swedish constitution states that all citizens has the right to housing, but today this is far from reality. Many people lack proper accommodation - this might involve people with social problems, psychological illness or addiction problems. It can also concern elderly people with low pensions or young persons without regular income. A person doesn't necessarily need to sleep on the street to count as homeless. Homelessness involves a number of situations where a person is excluded from the housing market and thereby in the long run also the job market.

Practically all investigations point out that a dwelling of one's own is a precondition for a better life, but the housing shortage in Stockholm today is urgent and the market is strongly controlled by financial interests. By means of this competition, the organisers have wanted to bring out ideas on how the conditions for people living in homelessness can be improved and also create opportunity to channel these ideas and the engagement behind them. The aim has been to find ideas that can improve the situation through various ways of creating conditions for new dwellings and housing forms.

The Homeless competition hopes to promote ideas leading to change, creating the base for a wide discussion on the topic of homelessness and supporting projects that can contribute to a better everyday for homeless people and vulnerable groups in Stockholm.

### **Competition Task**

The competition brief posed an open and loosely formulated question. The issue of homelessness is complex and more than one way of tackling the question has been desired. The organizers have hoped to see proposals with different solutions in a variety of fields and sectors of society. Innovation and progress has been encouraged – for example regarding discovering unused places to build, developing new ways of construction, improving laws and processes, suggesting new housing models as well as finding synergy effects for the city so that more people can benefit from the solutions. The task was free to solve in numerous ways – by means of text and images – essential has been the proposal's driving force and will to formulate a clear idea that can change both the situation for and the way we look upon homeless people today. The competition proposals shall mainly be regarded as strong arguments in an ongoing political discussion on how to reduce the housing shortage in Stockholm, especially for the most vulnerable.

### **Evaluation criteria**

The jury has evaluated the proposals in relation to the following criteria, without particular order:

- Relevance for the homelessness situation
- Innovation
- Possibilities for development
- Possibilities for realization
- Qualities for the urban context
- Architectural design
- Function
- Sustainability

### **Jury**

**John Arthur Ekebert** - homeless, debater

**Lars Epstein** - journalist, DN

**Fredrik Jurdell** - CEO, Stiftelsen Hotellhem i Stockholm

**Karolina Keyzer** - city architect, City of Stockholm

**Per Kraft** - architect SAR/MSA, ASF-SE

**Jonas Rydberg** - socialchef, Stockholms stadsmission

**Henrietta Palmer** - architect SAR/MSA, professor at Chalmers University of Technology, Mistra Urban Futures, appointed by Swedish Association of Architects

**Ulrike Schartner** - architect MSA, mag. arch (UAK), Gaupenraub.appointed by Swedish Association of Architects

Jury secretary: **Tove Dumon Wallsten** - architect, Swedish Association of Architects

Competition officer: **Joanna Oleksak** - architect SAR/MSA, ASF-SE.

Organiser and competition brief: ASF-SE

A total of 37 proposals were received, including two that did not fulfil the competition criteria. The jury have assessed and approved the remaining 35 proposals.

### *The Jury's Opinions*

Homelessness can take on many different shapes and there is no universal solution that fits all. It is a complex problem and few of the proposals show full understanding of all of its various aspects. Altogether though, the received material displays an impressive spectrum – everything from design products for the urban environment to comprehensive structural organisation proposals; temporary as well as permanent solutions. In the best of all worlds, all proposals would be realized simultaneously to cover as many needs possible for people living in homelessness and combat segregation in the city.

The projects has been grouped in a number of categories: concrete building projects, suggestions for new places to build, new building typologies, new types of meeting places and social functions or various types of network based platforms for housing provision. The categorization is rough, many projects could have been placed in multiple categories and the division has merely been a tool for the jury to sort and compare the proposals internally despite their diversity.

### *Organisational proposals and smorgasbord*

Several of the proposals have made ambitious analyses of the full problem spectrum surrounding homelessness and suggest organisational structures comprising housing construction, social activities and education. Overall, these proposal suffer from being too general – even though some parts can be innovative and suitable for development, the proposals are neither detailed nor independent enough to be realizable or interesting as a whole. The jury see them more as a smorgasbord of useful thoughts and ideas.

### *Design solutions for urgent needs*

Other proposers have focused on temporary solutions for acute situations and needs and many proposals present designs for different types of street furniture or temporary night shelters. The starting point for a lot of these projects is to increase the visibility of the homeless. However, the jury's collective opinion is that these types of impermanent solutions are problematic; that the accommodation they offer is not dignified and safe enough and that they run the risk of further increasing stigmatization of homeless people rather than proposing actual solutions to the problem.

### *Social projects*

A number of projects present ideas with social focus; activities and functions that can be located in new or existing buildings. Plenty of innovative and interesting ideas to be inspired by can be found here, but few that are convincing on all levels.

### *Network and platforms*

Some proposals have looked into the possibilities new information technology can offer; networks for housing provision or creation of meeting places and making the homelessness problem visible. The jury see shortcomings concerning distribution of responsibility and practical realization of the proposals, who therefore unfortunately seem unrealistic.

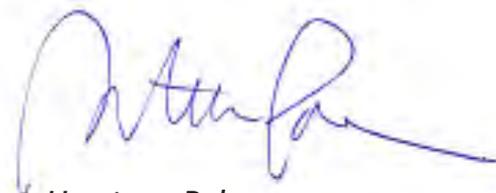
### *Hands-on building and site projects, new typologies*

A few proposals have worked on hands-on projects and with sites and processes aimed for realization. There are projects primarily focused on innovation and others more directly realizable. The jury find that the ones that have departed from an actual context often have reached thoroughly elaborated proposals with strong potential for development, and it is also among these that the winner has been chosen.

This competition has offered an extraordinary challenge and the jury especially appreciate the diverse but generous mix of proposals, pointing towards a more humane and inclusive society. As a whole, the proposals comprise a great idea bank that supplement existing solutions for both private, public and collective initiatives. The jury hopes that certain projects could be developed, rooted and eventually implemented to improve the situation for homeless people in Stockholm.

### *Jury's decision*

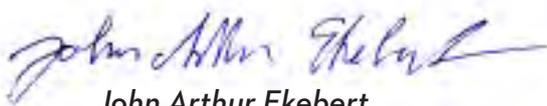
After completion of the assessment, the jury appointed suggestion KIL001 winner of the competition.



*Henrietta Palmer*  
Ordförande



*Per Kraft*



*John Arthur Ekebert*



*Karolina Keyzer*



*Ulrike Schartner*



*Lars Epstein*



*Jonas Rydberg*



*Fredrik Jurdell*

*Winner*

*KIL 001*

*Proposer: Malin Persson, Architect SAR/MSA, Stockholm*

Kil is an elegant and creative proposal that addresses the need for small dwellings in central locations, where the access to urban resources is greatest. The proposer identifies a kind of 'non-spaces' that are appropriated to densify the inner city in an innovative way. New, possible building rights are created in plots next to existing fire gables resulting from variations in street width in historical urban plans. The proposed 'plug-in-apartments' are extremely small, which makes it possible to exploit these invisible plots with exactly this specific program. It is a provocative and liberating idea, in a city that is increasingly segregated, that homeless people also can be given opportunity to live integrated right in the middle of the city. The mini-apartments could solve the housing shortage for certain homeless people and at the same time as constitute a positive, permanent architectural addition to the city.

As expensive as the real estate market in Stockholm is, it is likely to believe that these apartments would quickly be absorbed by speculative forces. Hence it is important that the accessibility for homeless people is secured through incentives, for example by forms of tenure and rent level policies. The proposal is distinctly presented but needs development in regard to implementation. Accessibility, building economy, etc also needs to be further looked at for it to really become realizable. Despite these deficits the proposal possesses a strong architectural power in its ingenious simplicity, where small dwellings are wedged into the existing structure and become a positive addition for the city as a whole.



*Illustration Kil 001*



*Illustration Kil 001*

*Honourable mentions,  
without internal ranking*

*Park+ 075*

*Proposer: Land arkitektur AB, landscape architects, through Rebecka Rosén,  
Sofia Nylén, Camilla Doms, Lina Andersson, StockholmStockholm*

Park+ is a project that doesn't handle the housing issue itself, but instead tries to improve conditions for homeless people by introducing a new type of public institutions in urban parks, open during daytime when night shelters are closed and many homeless people are confined to the public space. Referring to other park institutions, such as 'park-lek', Park+ illustrates just how the city's need and tolerance for different activities change over time and how the park is, and has been, a space where these needs have been met. Park+ proposes pavilions that offer toilets and space for laundry, food and rest. They are conceived as meeting places with various kinds of activities, social gathering and certain commercial activities, for example café establishments, which would generate a mingle zone with the public.

The underlying theme of the project - to increase tolerance in the parks and offer homeless people possibilities for better living conditions instead of rejecting them - is a strong contribution to the city's common spaces. Since the proposal doesn't tackle the dwelling itself it is no solution to homelessness but it means a democratisation of public space. It entails an inclusive attitude towards homeless people in the city's parks and would increase the qualities and comfort of the park, not only for homeless people.

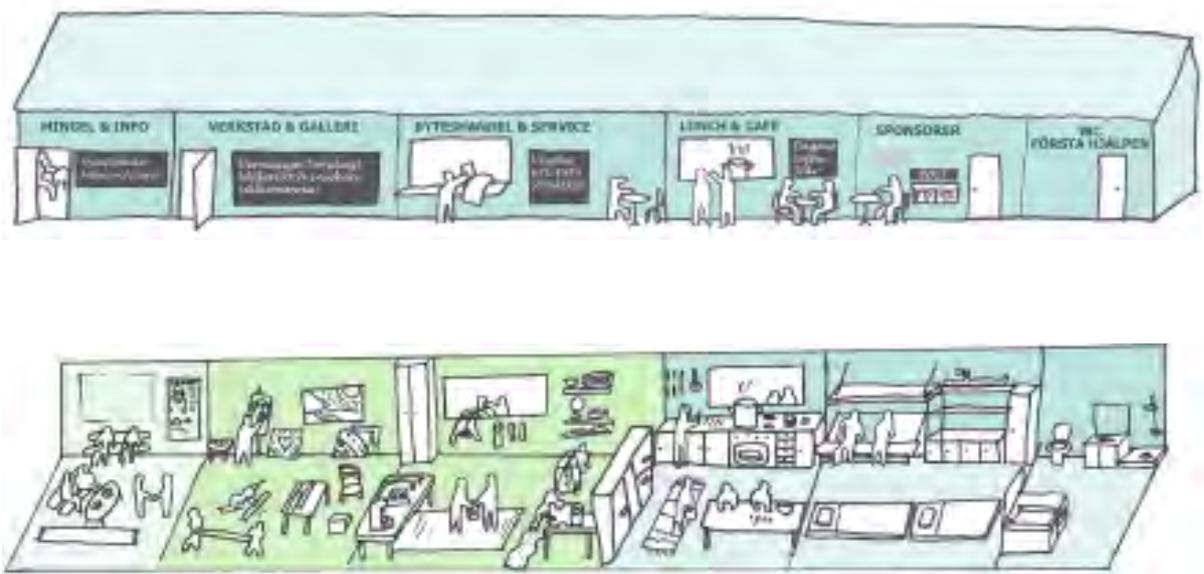


*Illustration PARK+075*

## GRANNSKAP 008

Proposer: Funkia AB, through Felix Melin, Emma Lindman, Frida Wilkne et al, landscape architects, Nacka

'Grannskapshuset' is an accommodation for homeless people that departs from the idea to create a social context and interaction between its tenants and their neighbours. The proposers draw on the fact that social relations and trust could develop in a neighbourhood between homeless people and local inhabitants due to its defined size, geography and the locals' daily needs and actions. Central to the proposal is the idea that every local municipality provide a so called 'grannskapshus' as an open institution where homeless people are offered accommodation, occupation and creative activities in dialogue with the locals. The building is presented in sketches illustrating the principles. The proposal adds an interesting level to the discussion on the need for new contact areas and possibilities for activities in connection to the dwelling. It also encourages a collective commitment where all participants' abilities and interests are considered and are allowed to express themselves through social interaction.



Illustrationer GRANNSKAP 008

### *Container 011*

*Proposer: Doc.arh. Milos Komlenic d.i.a., Slavica Rakovic d.i.a., Serbia*

Container is a well-studied example of how container housing could be constructed quickly to create new dwellings, also at locations that are temporarily awaiting development. The discussion on temporary emergency housing intersects with the nowadays almost classic solution of temporary units – here in the shape of reused shipping containers. The proposal is hands-on, if not totally original or innovative, and points out an inexpensive solution for nonpermanent housing. It could for example prove suitable in situations where the city's land use is under development and vast areas for a period are left deserted. After that the container housing could be moved to another location under development. The solution is not a permanent solution for homeless people but is perhaps rather suitable for students or young people that are aware that their housing situation is provisional. As such an emergency solution, the proposal is well designed and shows how the urgent housing shortage in Stockholm could be temporarily handled.



*Illustration Container 011*

## *Hembygge 125*

*Proposer: Anna-Maria Berggren Ericsson, architect, Lidingö*

Hembygge is a well grounded and pedagogically presented proposal that combines housing with education, capacity building and practical occupation. It is both a hands-on building project and a proposal for a new way to organise the process through self-building. The proposed process is well described - the construction is initiated by the municipality that recruit participants through social welfare offices and other organisations, who are then supervised by professionals through the building process. In this way, the future tenants invest part of their time in order to obtain permanent accommodation and are at the same time given opportunities for education, practice, networking and social interaction during the construction. The proposed architecture is sparsely but effectively presented as simple buildings with large flexibility through modular construction. Small apartments varying from single room to three bedrooms make sure that the buildings can be adapted to differences in plot sizes and topography or to odd plots that are difficult to exploit. The proposal seem developable but in such a process one needs to be aware of the difficulty for many groups of homeless people to commit to a building process over a long period of time and simplify that aspect of the project.



*Illustration Hembygge 125*

*The jury would also like to especially highlight five proposals as strong arguments in the debate:*

*Fågelholkar 072*

*Proposer: Hando Kask, arkitekt SAR/MSA, Stockholm*

Fågelholkar is a hands-on building project in the shape of a space efficient, pre fabricated free standing, octagonal building of ten stories with shops/café and social spaces on the lower levels and dwellings as small 'boxes' on levels 3-9. The jury is in doubt regarding the suggested location at Helgalunden and the design in relation to the selected plot. Even though the project needs further development on many levels it is a welcome contribution to the debate as a general solution, since it suggests a permanent - not temporary - solution of housing for people living in homelessness.

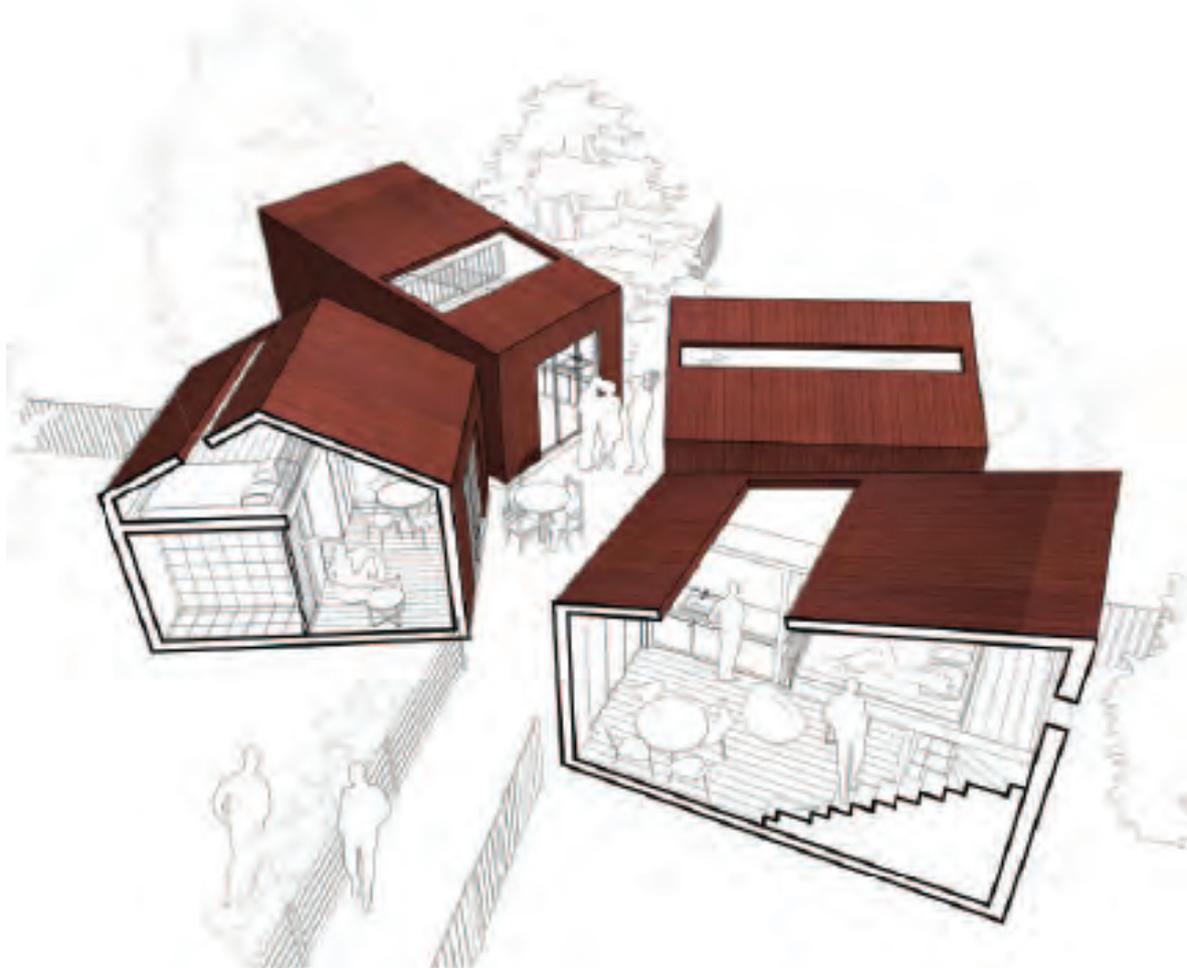


*Illustration Fågelholkar 072*

### *TILLSAMMANS 123*

*Proposer: Sahleström Spence Studio through Kristina Sahleström, Daniel Spence, architects, Hägersten*

A project that comprises solutions on both organisational and concrete building level which departs in the Attefall-house law and suggests that collaborating house owners construct complementary buildings of 25 square metres each for rent on their respective plots. The municipality compensates them financially by renting the houses. The jury appreciate both the presented design and the basic idea of densification and mixing of housing typologies and residents in these kind of areas, but also see many difficulties in the proposal regarding tolerance, accessibility and fire protection. In addition it is questionable if the incentive for the individual house owner is strong enough. The proposal is more relevant as an argument in the debate and the idea of transformation of the single family home garden city than as an actual solution for housing homeless people.



*Illustration Tillsammans 123*

### *Home 015*

*Proposer: Asplan Viak Arkitektur, through Martin Laino, Gianbattista Zaccariotto, architects, Norway*

Home is a simple and pedagogically presented organisational idea in which 'Stockholm community campus' would construct and manage smaller buildings with dwellings for homeless people as densification projects in each urban region. They also offer supervisors and proposals for activities/occupation in various pilot projects that would lead to commercial establishments and render knowledge and experience to the inhabitants. The proposal is illustrated with interesting international reference examples but suffers from being too general and abstract and lacking a synthesis. It is inspiring as a study of references and possible ways of tackling a general urban problem.



*Illustration Home 015*

### *SMVRKN 138*

*Proposer: Nicholas Nelson, USA*

SMVRKN aims to react on a social problem with a social solution, not an architectonic, and proposes an social network that by means of an app give those who wish to rent out rooms to homeless people the opportunity to find and select potential tenants in collaboration. The jury appreciates this simple, almost self-evident, idea that could work as acute solution for a certain category of homeless people. However it does not offer a way out for the big majority that are looking for a permanent dwelling of their own and in some cases are in need of care and social backup.



*Illustration SMVRKN 138*

## *HUNGERSÄNGAR 054*

*Proposer: Vi arkitektur, through Miguel Lara, architect SAR/MSA, Stockholm*

As the name suggests, Hungersängar is a provocative argument in the debate on homelessness. By means of a piece of street furniture – a heated and roofed bench – it aims to respond to the urgent need for night shelter for people living in 'hidden homelessness' that aren't covered by the city's 'roof-over-your-head-guarantee', such as refugees without legal documents. The proposal raises a lot of questions concerning what solutions there are when no alternatives seem to be at hand – isn't a warm bench a better refuge than nothing at all?



*Illustration HUNGERSÄNGAR 054*

## List of proposals and competitors

### MOTTO

### NAME

Fold 001		Elena Michel, USA
Raccoon brother		Raccoon Brother, Nikita Pakistan
Seamless 848		Jake Morris, USA
Sovgott247		Erik Schönning, Göteborg
Gudrun		Vicktoria Eriksson, Stockholm
Homelessismore015		Andrea Morri, Italien
Fågelholkar072	debatt	Hando Kask, Arkitekt SAR/MSA, Stockholm
Homeless112		Andrei Pomana, Sorina Vlaiescu, Iulian Popa, Rumänien
Inspiration 001		Karin Stenholm, Ängelholm
Charge 892		Giorgia Pierleoni, Ivan Bravi, Italien
Between365		Sang-woo Han, Ju-Sang Lee, Republic of Korea
Kil 001	vinnare	Malin Persson, Arkitekt SAR/MSA, Stockholm
Memento - 022		Satellit arkitekter: Emil Matsson, Henrik Bergstedt, Tijana Petrovic, Madalina Baetu, Stockholm
Ljuspunkten/147		Sundae: Caroline Lundin, London
Tillsammans 123	debatt	Sahleström spence studio genom Kristina Sahleström, Daniel Spence, arkitekter, Hägersten
135 cherry		Huy Hoang Quang, Vietnam
One 2 3 4		Linsey Patton, USA
Hjärta 001		Sweco Architects, Stockholm
En utvecklad stockholmsmodell		Jonas Bäckström, Jonsered
Home 015 debatt		Asplan Viak Arkitektur, genom Martin Laino, Gianbattista Zaccariotto, arkitekter, Norge
Water 015		Petar Iliev, Yuliya Dimitrova-Ilieva, USA
Park + 075	hedersomnämmande	Land arkitektur AB, landskapsarkitekter, Stockholm
Grannskap 008	hedersomnämmande	Funkia AB, genom Felix Melin, Emma Lindman, Frida Wilkne m fl, landskapsarkitekter, Nacka
Pod 126		Else Abrahamsen, Stockholm
Container 011	hedersomnämmande	Doc.arh. Milos Komlenic d.i.a., Slavica Rakovic d.i.a., Serbien
Sluta jiddra - börja trola		Michael Andram, Gustav Wiberg, David Berardi, Stockholm
Lyktan 100		Gisselberg arkitekter AB, Stockholm
Utsikt 159		Anonym
222 kasu		Anonym
Changes 015		Artemiy Gusev, Moscow
Hembygge 125	hedersomnämmande	Anna-Maria Berggren Ericsson, arkitekt, Lidingö
Smvrkn138	debatt	Nicholas Nelson, USA
Home107		Anonym
Integration888		Felicia Liang, Stockholm
Hungersängar 054	debatt	Vi arkitektur, genom Miguel Lara, Arkitekt SAR/MSA, Stockholm