

# **Uppåkra Arkeologiska Center**

Diploma program

DIPLOMA AUTUMN 2020

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# 1. Introduction

Uppåkra is the name of an archaeological site located about five kilometers south-west of Lund in the region of Skåne, southern Sweden. The site, distinctly sitting on top of a hill in an otherwise plain landscape, was once the center of a what is believed to be the biggest iron age settlement in Scandinavia. Archaeological excavations has taken place continuously since the 1930's, but due to lack of funding and little knowledge and interest from outside the region, this has only been done in a small scale and only a small part of the site has been excavated so far.

Today, Uppåkra gives a modest impression, consisting of a small village and a church surrounded by fields of cultivated land. The traces of the rich history are hidden underneath the surface and is not particularly well known. The diploma project is to design a visitors center to Uppåkra with the purpose of mediating the history of the site. The center will also provide facilities for archeologists to conduct research, thus further un-earthening and spreading knowledge about Uppåkra and its history.

## 1.1 Approach and relevance

The diploma project's main contribution to a wider architectural discourse is to address the problem of constructing upon valuable land. In the case of Uppåkra, the term "valuable land" has a double meaning: it can refer both to the rich archeological findings hidden in the ground, but also to earth itself which is broadly considered to be the most fertile in the country. The "problem" itself refers to that the act of building ever too often is irreversible: using Uppåkra as an example, where less than 1% of the archaeological site is excavated, building with pre-accepted solutions, such as traditional foundation, may forever ruin the archaeological layers and prevent any further excavations on the spot where the building lies. Commonly, today the problem is addressed by either excavating the footprint of the building before construc-

tion, or to simply pick a spot on the site where the archaeological findings are less dense or precious. Although pragmatic, both these solutions circle around the problem rather than to solve it. In most cases, to excavate the footprint before construction is too costly and time consuming, which often means that the latter option of avoiding the problem altogether is chosen. It is my personal view that an approach like this limits some of the potential that lies in a work of architecture: to choose a site only based on rational parameters neglects the potential of the building to interact with the place and its surroundings, to capture its *Genius Loci*, and to mediate emotional values.

With this in mind, the diploma project aims to confront the problem of constructing on valuable land, rather than to avoid it, and wishes to explore the following questions:

*In Uppåkra, how can an architectural project contribute to...*

***...permit the act of building  
upon valuable land without destroying it for future generations?***

***...mediate the history of the site?***

***...understand the role and character of archeological excavations?***

***...offer venues for cultural activities in the area?***

***...being adaptable to future changes in the role and program of buildings?***

## 1.2 Structure

This document is divided into three main sections:

### The Site

This section contains an analysis and mapping of the site, seen from a regional, local and historical perspective. The intention is to establish a reading of the site that is used to inform the architecture, the program and what tasks to be solved by the final building.

### Program

This section contains a quantitative room program provided by "Uppåkra Arkeologiska Center", a non-profit organization aiming to raise awareness about Uppåkra and its history. Findings in the site analysis are used to critically discuss the room program, which is adjusted thereafter. The intention is to find a programmatical solution that strengthens the sense of place and mediates the site and its history, while also anchoring the program within the local community.

### Case studies

The last section investigates the visitors center as its own building category with the intention of answering the question "what **type** of building should this be?". The intention is that this can further aid the project by clearly establishing the purpose of the building. This is followed by a case study of "Naturum" (the dominating typology of visitors center in a Swedish context), from which concrete architectural concepts, elements and strategies are extracted. Finally, singular reference projects (not related to each other), are specifically chosen to exemplify an architectural solution or quality that can be relevant for the diploma project.

## 2. The site

### 2.1 Regional context

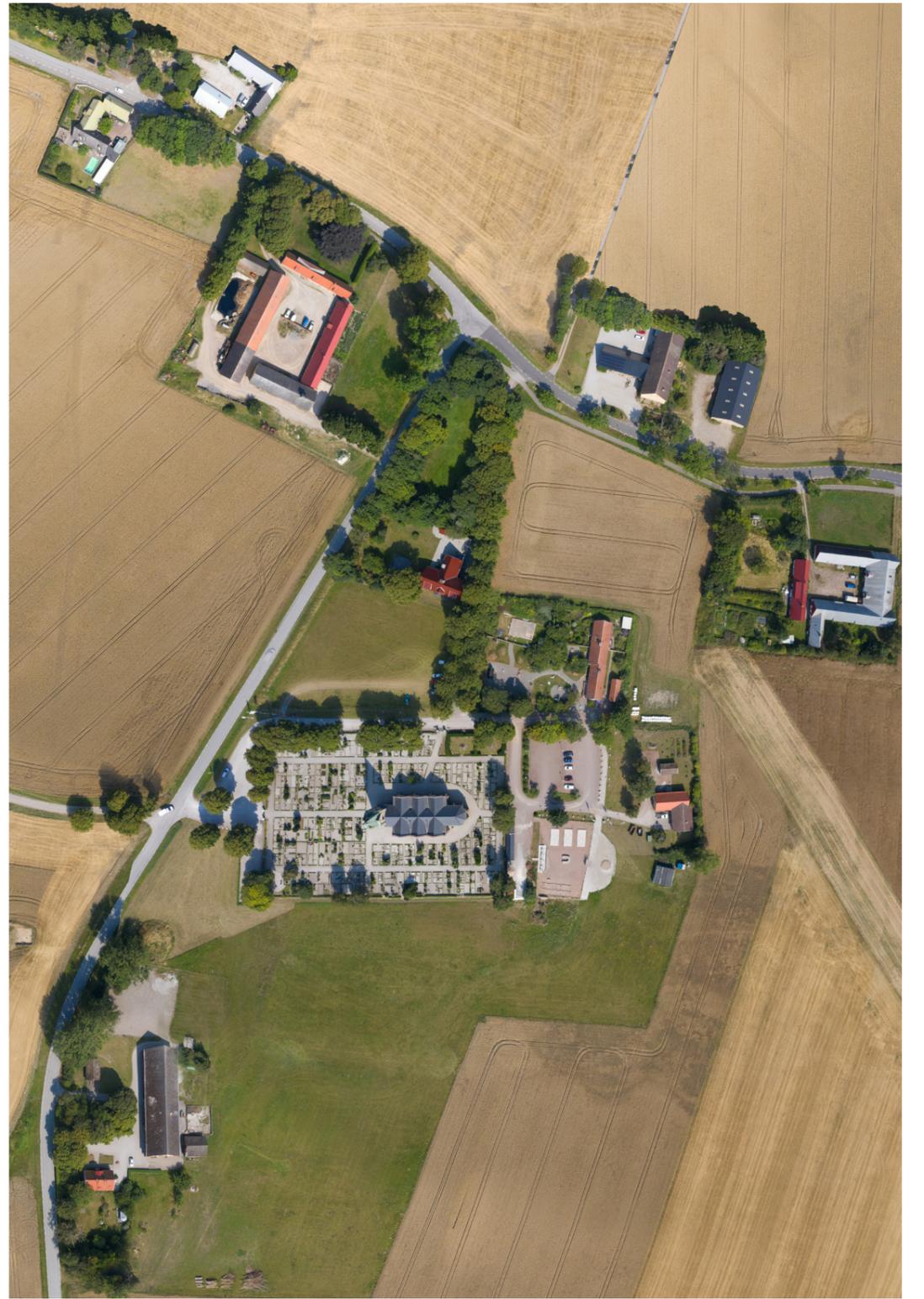
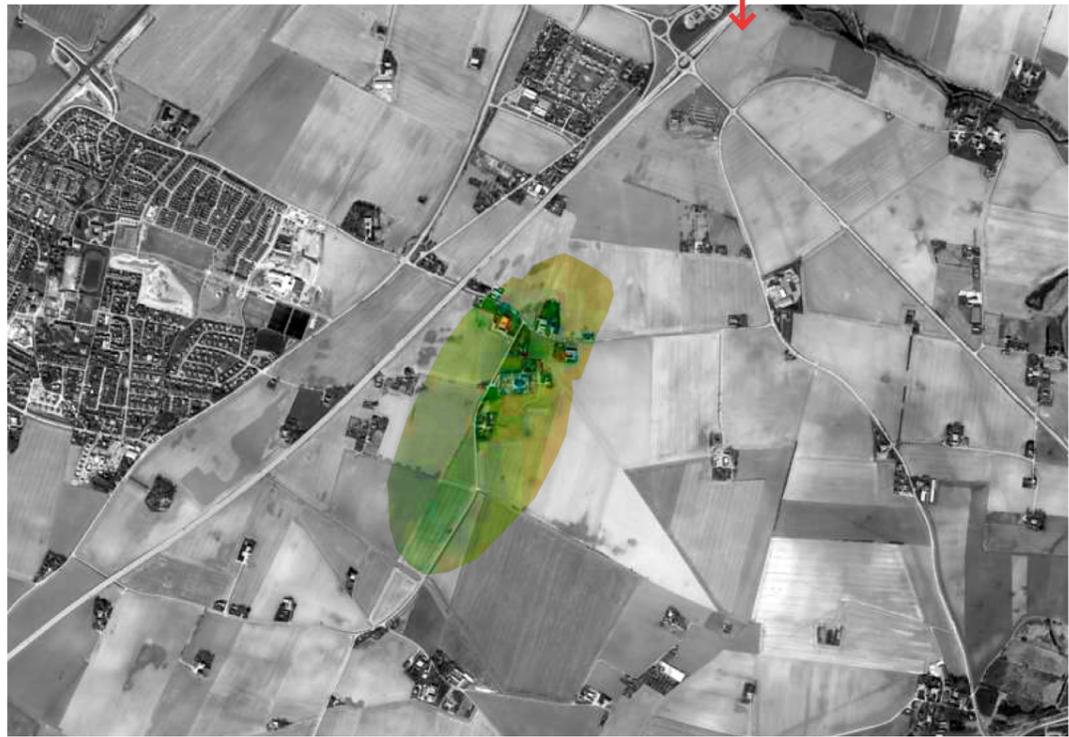
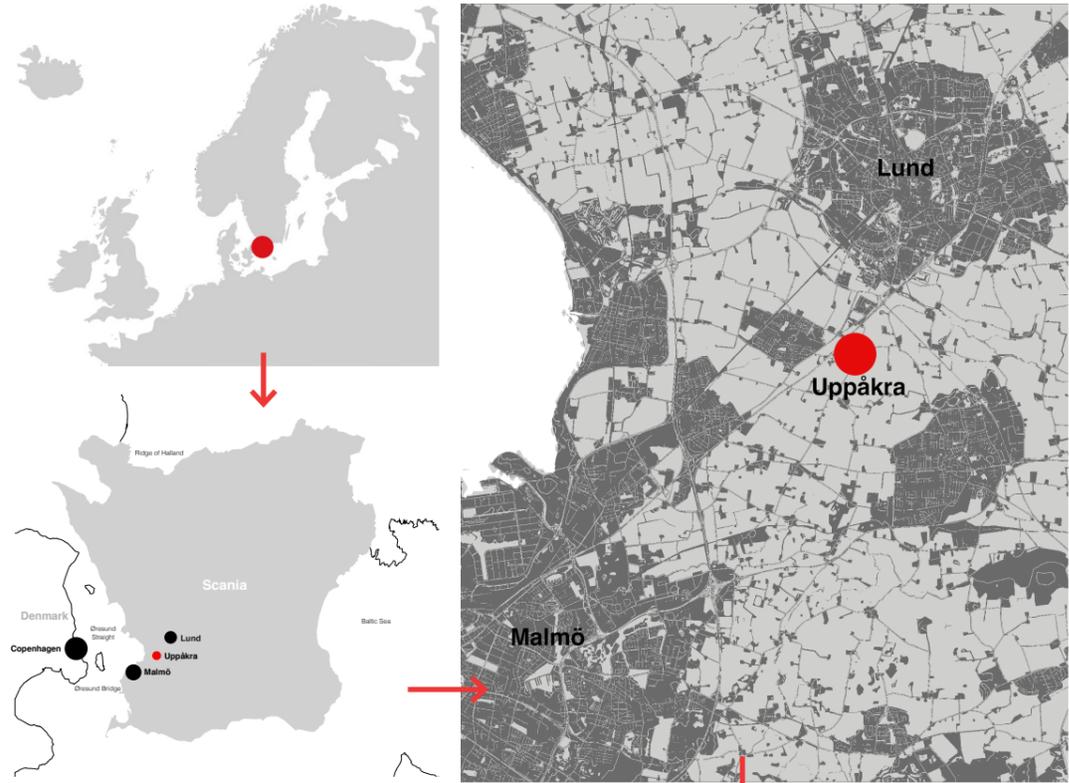
Uppåkra is located in Skåne, the southernmost province of Sweden. Skåne borders Denmark to the west, separated by the narrow Öresund straight, while the ridge of Halland and forests acts as barriers to adjoining provinces in the north. To the south and east, Skåne is bordered by the Baltic sea.

Historically, Skåne was a part of the Danish kingdom until it was conquered by Sweden in the 1600-hundreds. Even so, a close connection to Denmark has been maintained ever since, and Skåne is today a part of the wider Öresund metropolitan region – also known as “greater Copenhagen”.

#### **Character**

The region of Skåne is characterised by its generally flat landscape that distinguishes itself from the otherwise mountainous geography of Scandinavia. As the soil of Skåne is considered to be among the most fertile in the country (and, according to some, in the world), a large degree of the land is cultivated, which maintains an open, low profile of the landscape. This openness is also protected in building regulations, as it is considered to have cultural values, and city limitations are strongly imposed. This is somewhat ambiguous, as it strengthens both the rural and the urban character of the place: cities sit as dense, urban clusters in an otherwise rural landscape.

The character of an open, flat landscape enables for uninterrupted panoramic sightlines, where the horizon often is visible. However, there are few defined sightlines or framed views, as the landscape itself offers little for the viewer to focus the eyes on. Vertical elements, such as a building tower or a higher tree, are therefore easily distinguished as they break with the horizontal character of the landscape. They function as landmarks (points of orientation and identification), and due to the low topography and open views and vistas, these landmarks does in reality not have to be very high to distinguish themselves. In return, with the flatness of the land, even a slight rise in topography creates a viewpoint, which stretches the already long sightlines even further. The site of Uppåkra is located in the rural part of the landscape, distinctly sitting on a hill overlooking its surroundings. The site can be seen from far away, as it is marked by a church tower that breaks the horizontal composition of the landscape.



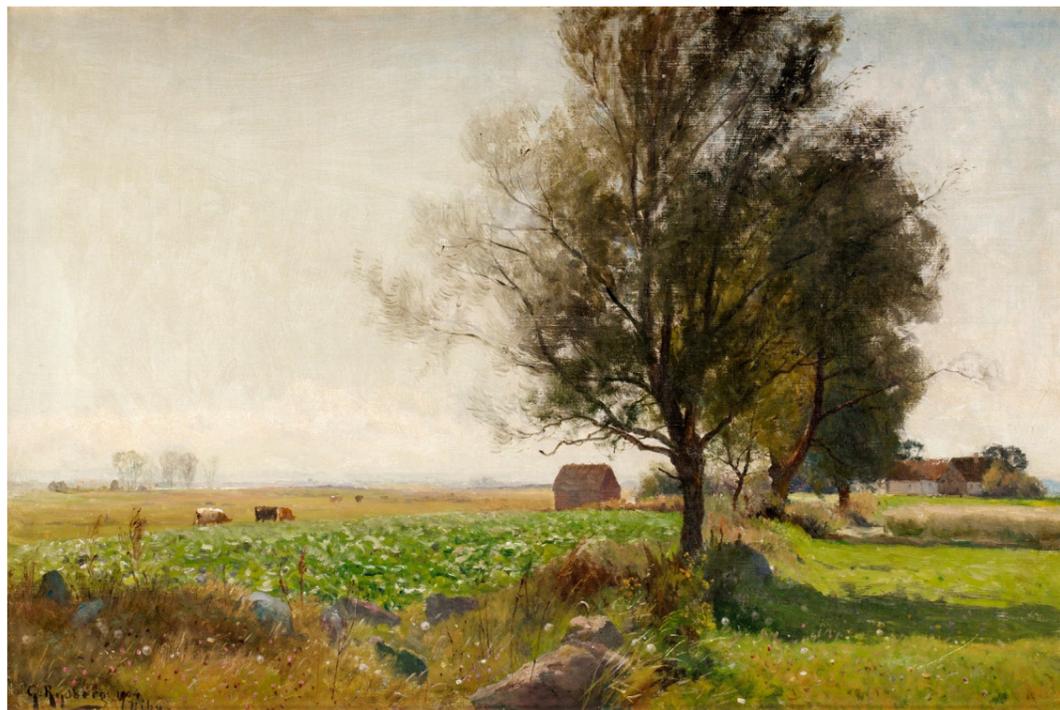
"In general we might say that the nordic landscape is characterized by an indefinite multitude of different places. Behind every hillock and rock there is a new place, and **only exceptionally the landscape is unified to form a simple, univocal space.**" (Christian Norberg-Schulz. *Genius Loci*. p. 42)



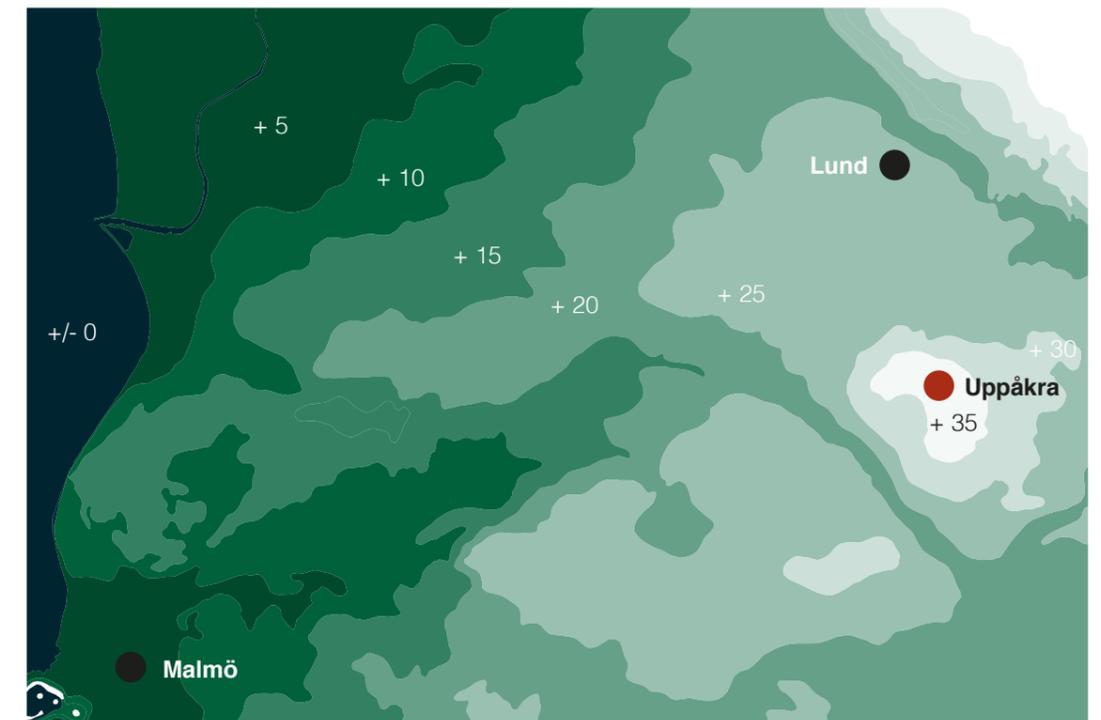
*"Multitude of places". Motif from Värmland, Gustaf Rydberg*



*Site of Uppåkra seen from distance*



*"Simple, univocal space". Viby, Gustaf Rydberg*



*Topographic map*



### Urban context and communication

Transportations within the region are generally good and accessible as there is a railway loop connecting Copenhagen to Skåne's two biggest cities, Malmö and Lund. Uppåkra is located right in the middle of this loop, about 5 km south of Lund and 15 km north of Malmö, effectingly linking the site to the rest of the Öresund region, and in extension to mainland Europe. Copenhagen is a 40 min drive, or 1 hour drive with public transport away, Malmö about 20 min with bus and Lund is within biking distance. A new tramline between Malmö and Lund has been proposed, with a stop suggested to be placed about 1 km from the Uppåkra site, although it should be mentioned that this lies years ahead in the future.

Lund was founded in the middle ages, and has a somewhat peculiar relation to Uppåkra, as the rise of Lund coincided with the fall of the iron age settlement at Uppåkra (we return to this topic in the section of historical context). Today, Lund has a strong academic profile, housing one of Swedens largest universities (The University of Lund). Malmö, which is the third biggest city in Sweden, has historically been an industrial town, with it's shipwharf industries once among the world's largest. Today, like many other harbour cities across Europe, Malmö has gone through a period of transition to revolve more around knowledge and innovation instead of industrial production.

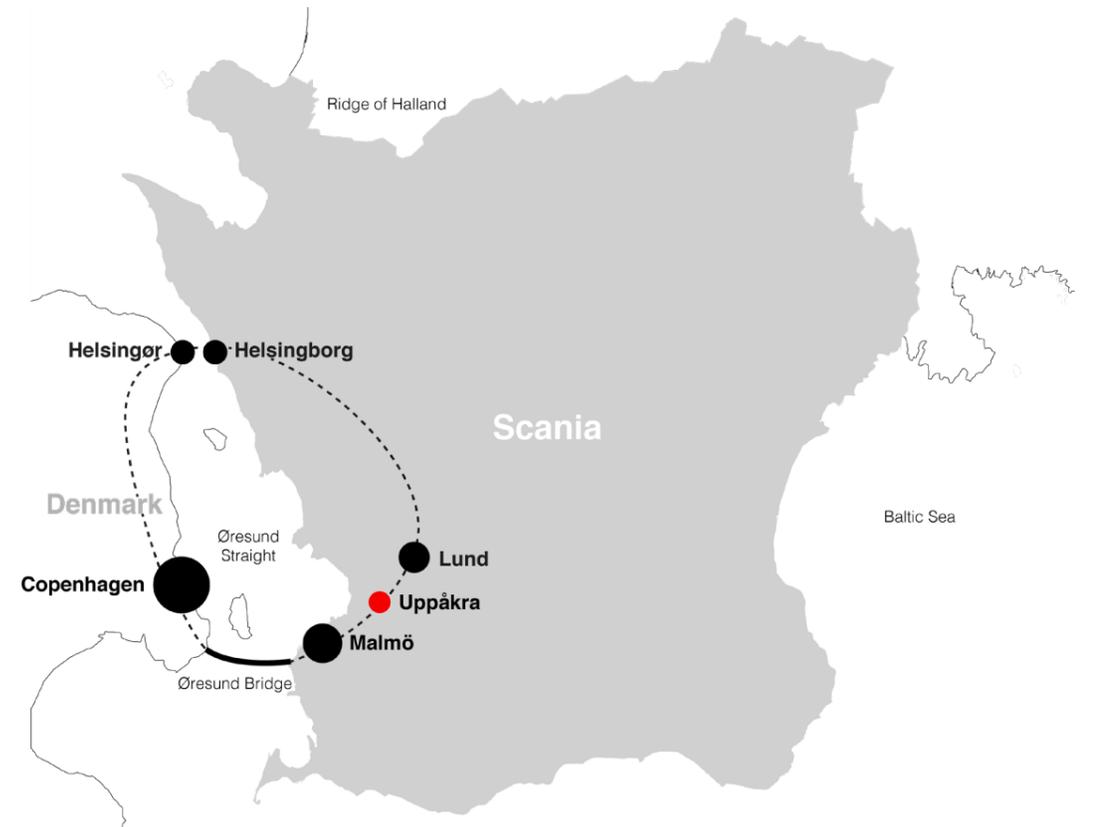


Diagram showing transportation loop within Öresund region

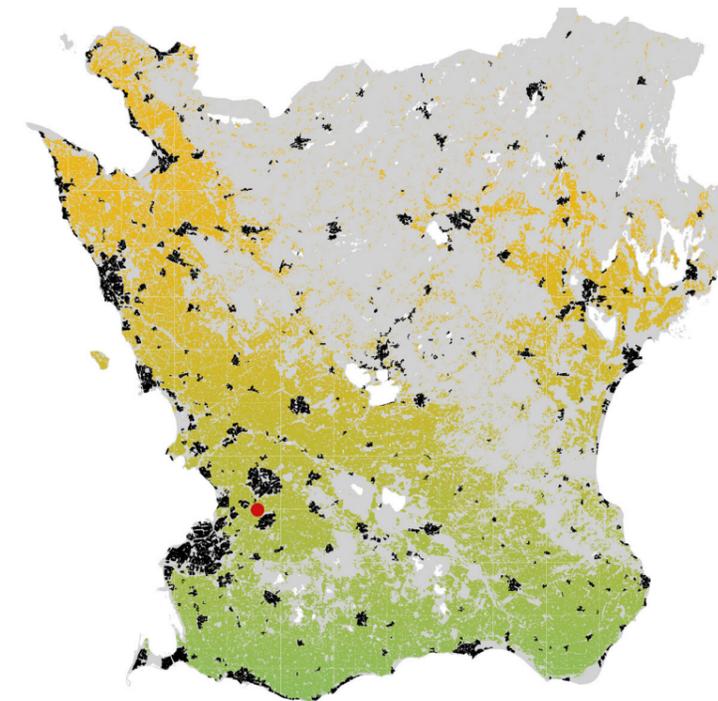


Diagram of Skåne. Green-Yellow marks agricultural fields, Black marks bigger cities.

## 2.2 Local context

"Uppåkra" means "cultivated land on top of a hill", and the site where it's located is true to the name. Uppåkra sits on a clearly visible highest point on a hill in the rural plain landscape of Skåne. On top of the hill, the church of Uppåkra is located, further strengthening the already distinguished hill as a landmark. The site offers long sightlines in all directions of the surrounding agricultural landscape. To the south, Malmö is visible in the horizon, and the silhouette of Lund can be seen when looking to the northeast.

### Site boundaries

With the aid of geophysical scanning, such as a metal detectors, the boundaries of the site are set according to the intensity of findings in the earth. The boundaries are not visible to the eye, but can be described by observing what surrounds the site today: to the west, a highway connecting Malmö and Lund cuts off the site from the neighbouring village Hjärup. A small stream called "Hjärupsbäcken" defines the site to the south, while a seemingly endless field of crops borders to the east. The site ends to the north with the intersection of the roads "Gamla Trelleborgsvägen" and "Stora Uppåkravägen", around which the village is centered.

### The village

Today, Uppåkra consists of a small rural village called "Stora Uppåkra" ("Big Uppåkra", as opposed to another nearby village called "Little Uppåkra"). The village is organized around the intersection of "Gamla Trelleborgsvägen" and "Stora Uppåkravägen", where the church, located to the south of the intersection, is the clear focal point. The village of today consist of a handful of buildings that are either agricultural farms cultivating the surrounding fields, or private residences. Most of the buildings are built as a local typology called "Skånelänga", a one story building with gabled roof, constructed with timber framing and infill with clay or brick. Besides the church, there are few public functions on the site. The old vicarge residence houses the organization "Uppåkra Arkeologiska Center", who offers tours of the site to tourist, and recieves school classes, and has sporadic café servcies during high season (June-August). The structure and layout of the village has been present on the site since the middle ages and bear no resemblance with the iron age settlement. The only visible traces that links iron age Uppåkra to the village of today are bronze age burial mounds called Storehöj ("Big hill") and Lillehöj ("Little hill").



*View to the south. Uppåkra church center left*



*View to the north-east. Uppåkra church center right.*



*Birdseye view from north-west. The church functions as as landmark*



*Aerial photo of Stora Uppåkra village*



*Aerial photo of site seen from south*



*South east view of Öresund*



*Aerial photo of village Stora Uppåkra from south*



*Aerial photo of village Stora Uppåkra from south*

## Arrival and points of entry

There are several points of entry to the site. If arriving with public transport from Malmö or Lund, the nearest bus station is located in connection to the village of Hjärup in the west, about 10 minutes walk from the site. One walks along a small gravelled road, going under the highway, connecting up to an axis where planted trees frame the church in a choreographed scene. This framed point of entry has the character of a gate, and one could have the sensation of stepping over a threshold when crossing over from the road, by the graveyard, into the church. An addition to the public transport is planned with a tramline between Malmö and Lund, with a stop about 10 min walk to the east of the site, using "Stora Uppåkravägen" as point of entry.

If arriving with car (or with a chartered bus), the most natural point of entry is by the road "Stora Uppåkravägen" to the east that connects to the highway E22 (which runs between Malmö with Lund,). It is also possible to arrive with car from the south through "Gamla Trelleborgsvägen", though this point of entry has a more local character, as the road runs between nearby villages and agricultural fields.

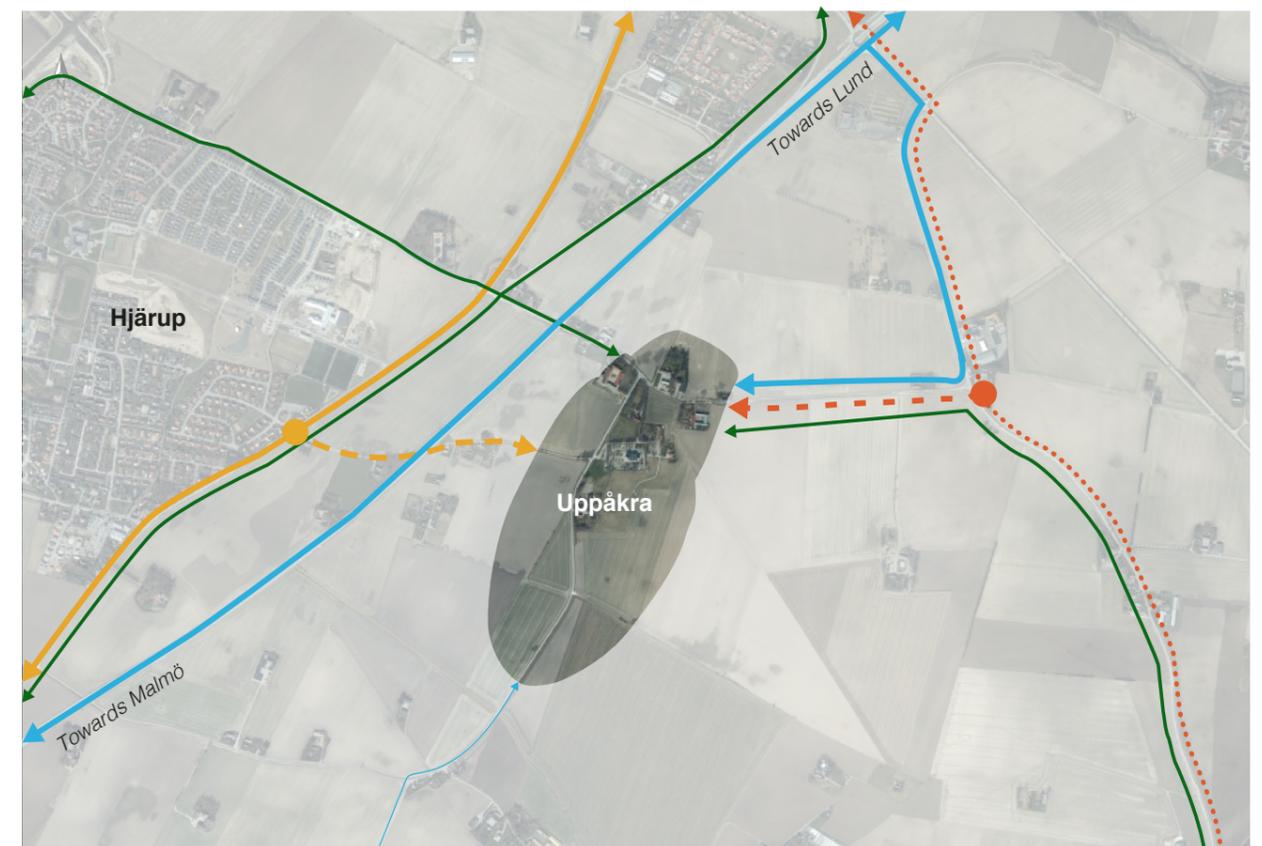
To the north of the site there is an intersection of bicycle paths connecting Uppåkra with Malmö, Lund and Hjärup. As the flat landscape is highly functional for biking, this path is commonly used by commuters. For comparison, the center of Lund is a 15 min bikeride away, while biking to Malmö takes about 45 min. Considering the close distance to Lund, and that biking is an accessible means of transportation, it is probable that some visitors will use the bicycle path as point of entry to the site.



Arrival - framed entry to church

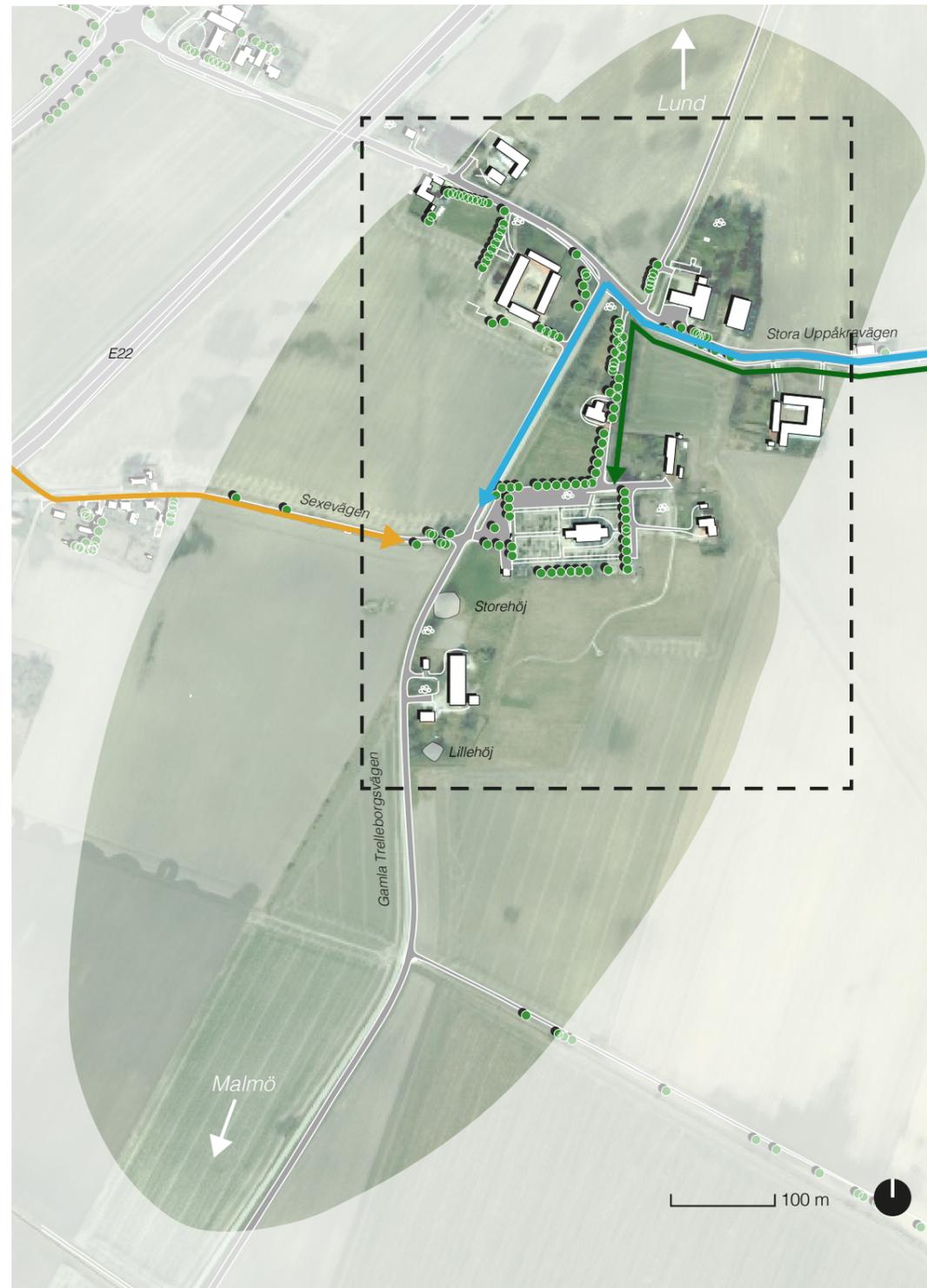


Arrival walking from public transport



Map showing means of transportation and points of entry to site. Dashed line symbolizes walking

- Car
- Public transportation (bus)
- Bike
- Proposed tramline



- Public transport/Walking
- Car
- Bike



- 1.** Church and cemetery **2.** Burial mounds "(Lillehøj & Storehøj)"
- 3.** Excavations **4.** Vicarage residence **5.** Former School
- 6.** Archeological school **7.** Vicarage farm ("Prästlönebostället")
- 8.** Former school **9.** Former poorhouse **10.** Farmhouse **11.** Farmhouse
- 12.** Former poorhouse **13.** Farmhouse **14.** Groundsmens quarters **15.** Parking

## 1. Uppåkra church and Cementary

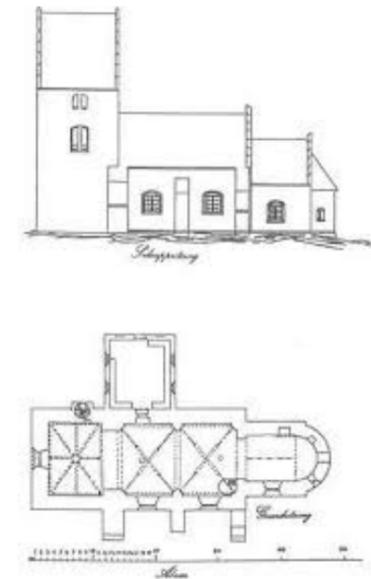
Today's church was constructed in 1863. It stands on the same spot on which the first christian church in Uppåkra was built, a stone church constructed in the middle ages (ca 1100 A.D), which was demolished. Archaeological excavations in the crypt have found traces of what is belived to be an even older wooden stave church. A bronze age burial mound was located in the ceme-tary, but was demolished during construction of the church in 1863. These findings confirm that the location of the church have functioned as a religious center from the iron age until today. The church is center of the parish for near-by villages. It operates year round, with typical activities such as weddings and Sunday church services. The program and activites of the church are discus-sed in higher detail in the section of "Program".



Interior



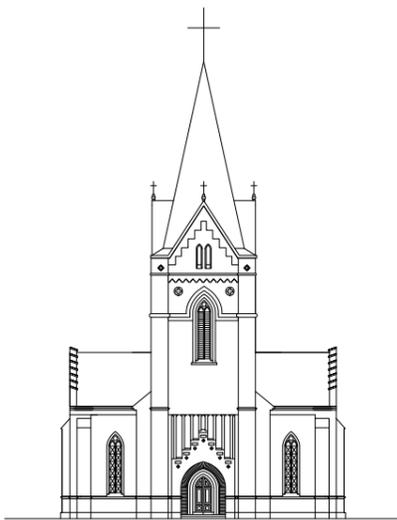
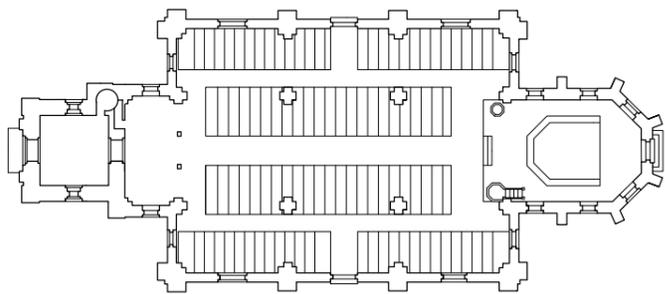
Church



Medival church. Demolished



View of church from south



*Orthophoto of churchyard*



*Cemetery*

## 2. Storehøj & Lillehøj

Storehøj & Lillehøj ("Big hill" and "Little hill") are two burial mounds that were erected in the bronze age, ca 1500 B.C, as a symbol for influential families. They are the only visible connection between ancient Uppåkra and today, as they have been present on the site for over 3500 years. Two more burial mounds are known to have existed at the site, both of which are demolished. One of them was placed in what today is the cementary, while the other lied just north of where Storehøj is located.



*Storehøj*



*Lillehøj lies under some trees in a private garden and is not accessible*

### 3. Excavations

The main archaeological excavations have taken place to the south of the church. The pits are covered with tent (a standard type commonly used for construction) that provide shelter to the archeologist. The tent's fabric let's in daylight to improve working conditions. Excavations are done in the warmer half of the year, typically April-October. When the excavations are in operation sometimes, the public are let in to watch. So far, this has not been done systematically but instead by the initiative of working archeologist that kindly let in curious visitors. When the excavations are over, the pits are filled with earth, leaving no traces. It is however possible to reopen and continue where the last excavation stopped.



*Tent used for covering excavations*



*Inside the tent*



*Typical tent used for covering construction*



*Depth of cultural layer*



*Finished excavation waiting to be filled in with earth*

#### 4. Former Vicarage residence

Former pastoral residence. Today it functions as offices for the organization "Uppåkra Arkeologiska Center". Reconstructions of excavated buildings from historic Uppåkra stands in what before was the pastoral garden. A cafe with limited opening hours operates during high season.



*The old vicarage residence*



*The garden*

#### 5. Reconstructed Hall

Reconstruction of ceremonial hall excavated south of church. Scale 1:10.



*Reconstruction*



*Interior*

## 6. Archaeological school

Fenced in area used for educational purposes, such as receiving school classes. Children gets to dig in the actual earth and search for findings, thus participating in the excavations. Tools and platforms for digging and filtering earth are all moveable light structures, placed on surface without foundations.



Archeological school fenced in.



Tools for filtering earth.



Platform with hatch for digging

## 7. Vicarage farm ("Prästlönebostället")

Farm belonging to the church with important role in the story of how historical Uppåkra was rediscovered. In 1934, when digging foundations for the barn, objects was found in the ground indicating traces of an earlier settlement - something that during this time as completley unknown. This prompted the start of organized excavations that later concluded the rich history of Iron age Uppåkra.



The farm today



First excavations



Photo from 1934 of newly constructed farm, church and "Storehøj"

### 8. Former school

Today it is a private residence and atelier for artist Clay Ketter. No public access.



### 9. Former Blacksmith

Today a private residence. No public access



### 12. Fomer Poorhouse

Today a private residence. No public access



### 13. Farmhouse

Service buildings for agricultural productions & private residence. No public access



### 10. Farmhouse

Service buildings for agricultural production. No public access.



### 11. Farmhouse

Service buildings for agricultural productions & private residence. No public access



## Vegetation

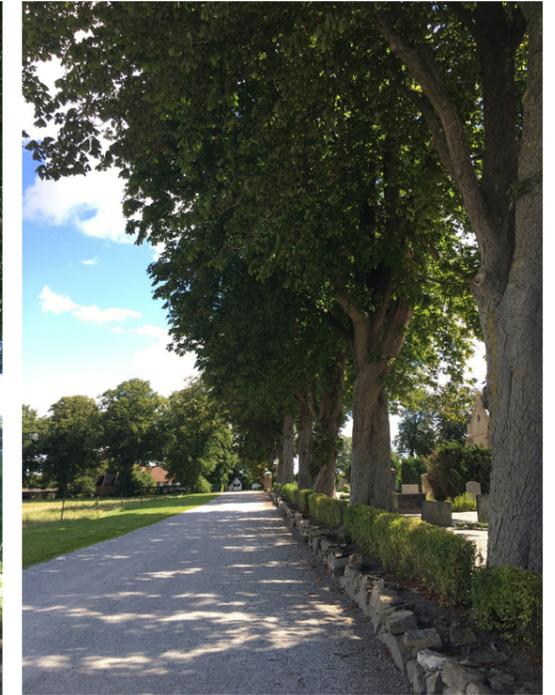
As mentioned earlier, the landscape is dominated by vast agricultural fields. Cultivated crops are usually rapeseed, sugar beet, barley and wheat, but varies according to seasons and demand from the market. The growth season is usually about seven months of the year (March-October). The cycle of the crops reinforces the sense of the seasons: not only by growing pattern (as sprouting in the spring and shedding leaves in the fall would be true for any type of vegetation), but also how the human activity of planting and harvesting almost becomes rituals inaugurating each season.

Historically, trees and forest have been cut down to make room for agricultural fields, an evidence of how the fertile earth always has played an important role for the site. Most of the trees on the site today were planted as a holistic part of the design for the Church, and are carefully placed to frame points of entry and to strengthen axes and the sense of perspective. The planted trees also function as a space-defining element, which can be seen as a response to the open character of the landscape which have few defined sightlines.

The cemetery is the closest to a park or a public space to be found on the site. It's boundaries are defined by planted trees, making the cemetery an enclosed outdoor space. It is carefully maintained with planted hedges and decorative plants.



*Planted trees used for framing sightlines.*



*Planted trees used for structuring and defining space, separating road from churchyard.*



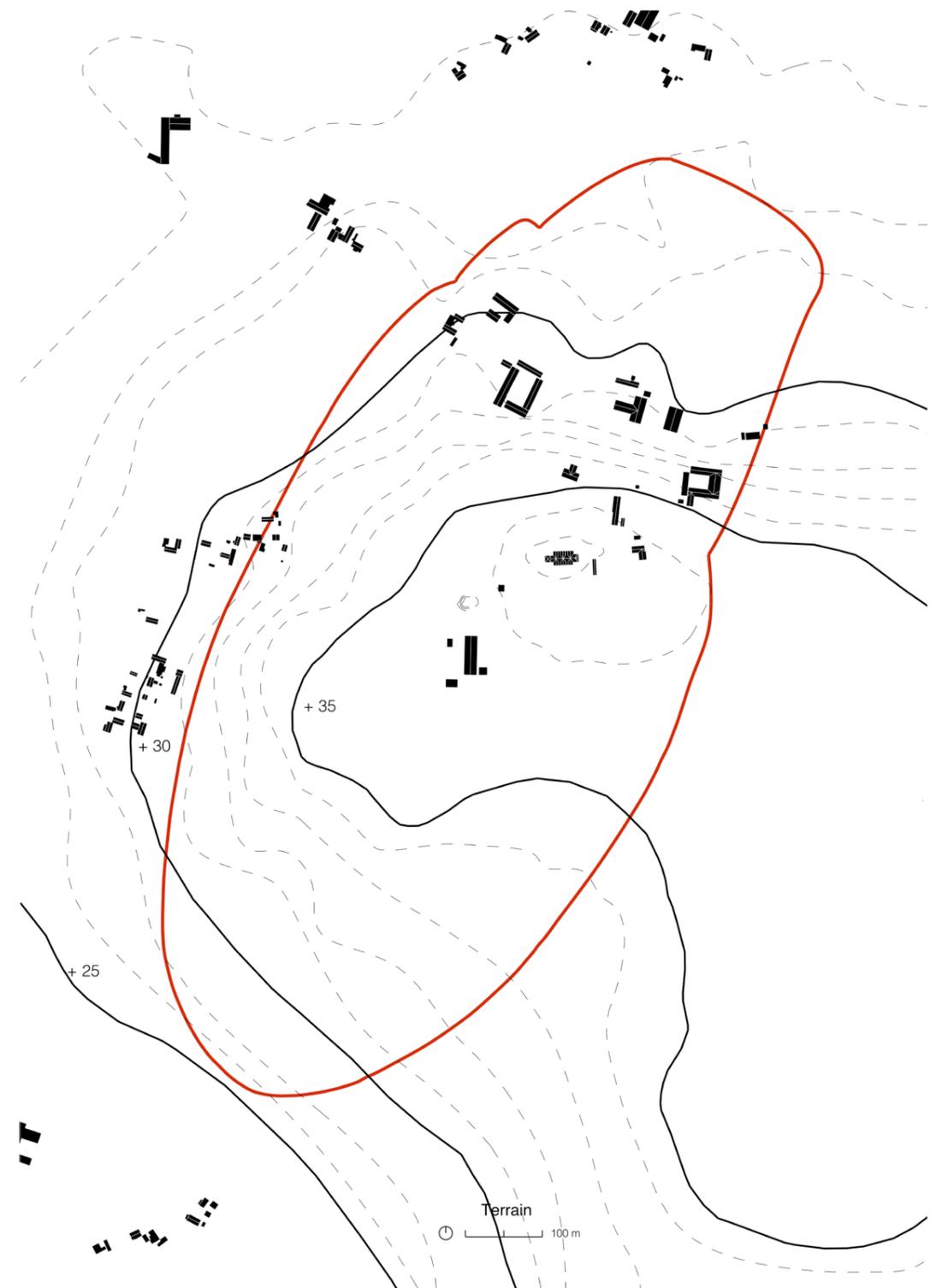
*Field cultivated with wheat*

## Topography

The church sits on the highest point in the landscape, on a small plateau 37 meters above the sea. The inclination is very subtle and undramatic: when walking towards the church from the bus, one does barely notice the rising topography, even though the height difference is several meters. Likewise, the site as a whole is also perceived as virtually flat. The exception is the two burial mounds. Although not higher than a couple of meters, they mark themselves almost as objects in the landscape.



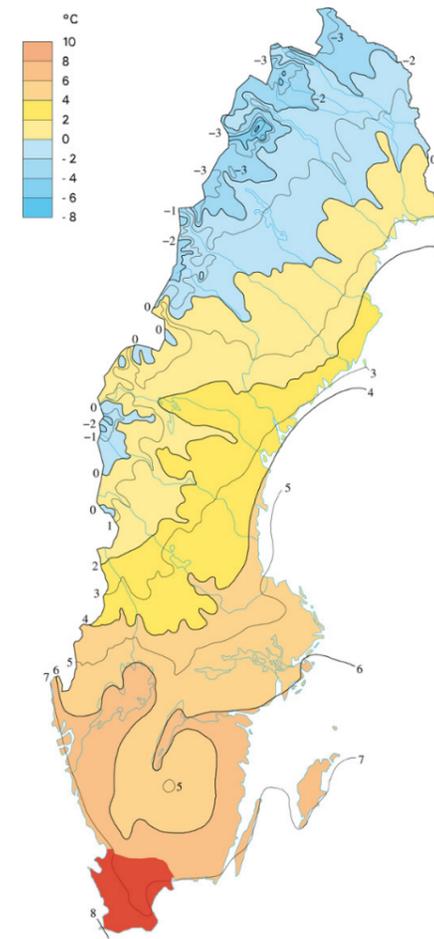
Section



## Climate

In general, the climate of Skåne is milder than what usually is considered to be the nordic norm. Due to its location on the southern tip of the Scandinavian peninsula, Skåne is by average the warmest region of Sweden. This works in tandem with the region's character as an agricultural landscape, as the warmer temperature prolongs the growth season. However, the open landscape provides little shelter, and lets the wind run free, resulting in what can be experienced as a constant breeze.

Due to this mild climate, factors such as snow load and snow depth, that are fundamental for calculating structures in most part of Scandinavia, are of less importance.



Yearly average temperature

Yearly average direction and speed of wind  
(meter / second)

Data from SMHI

## Sightlines

The topography of the site gives long panoramic views of its surroundings. Apart from the occasional tree or building, there are few elements blocking the view, and accordingly one is not confined to one specific spot or place in order to experience the panorama. However, due to the landscape's horizontal character and lack of elements that frame or define the views as sightlines, it can be difficult to distinguish what one is actually looking at - it is not certain for a visitor to be able to distinguish the silhouette of Malmö from the electrical mast crossing in front.

Due to the flat topography, and the site's location on top of a hill, even a smaller increase in altitude stretches the sightlines even further: a rise of few meters is enough to ensure a viewpoint. This also means that the scale of landmarks (an object marking the site, visible from far) in reality is quite small. For comparison, the church tower that dominates the site has about the same height as a five story building, which if placed in an urban context hardly would distinguish itself by its sheer size.

### Important sightlines:

- Lund (North)
- Agricultural landscape (East)
- Gullåkra bog (Southeast)
- Malmö (South)
- Öresund Strait (West)
- The church (visible from far when looking at the site itself)



## 2.3 Historical context

The first signs of human settlements at Uppåkra stretches as far back as 4000 years. However, it was during the Iron age, roughly between AD 100-1000, that Uppåkra as a society reached it's peak. It is believed that during this time Uppåkra formed a city-like settlement with over 500 inhabitants that functioned as regional center for political, religious and commercial powers. A large finding of roman coins suggests regular contact with continental Europe. Besides the agricultural properties of the terrain, the choice of place for the settlement has a logic reason: as described in the site analysis, Uppåkra sits on a hill from which the sightlines stretches almost all the way to the coast, thereby being visible for merchants, as well as being strategically easy to defend as any attacking enemies would be spotted from far away.

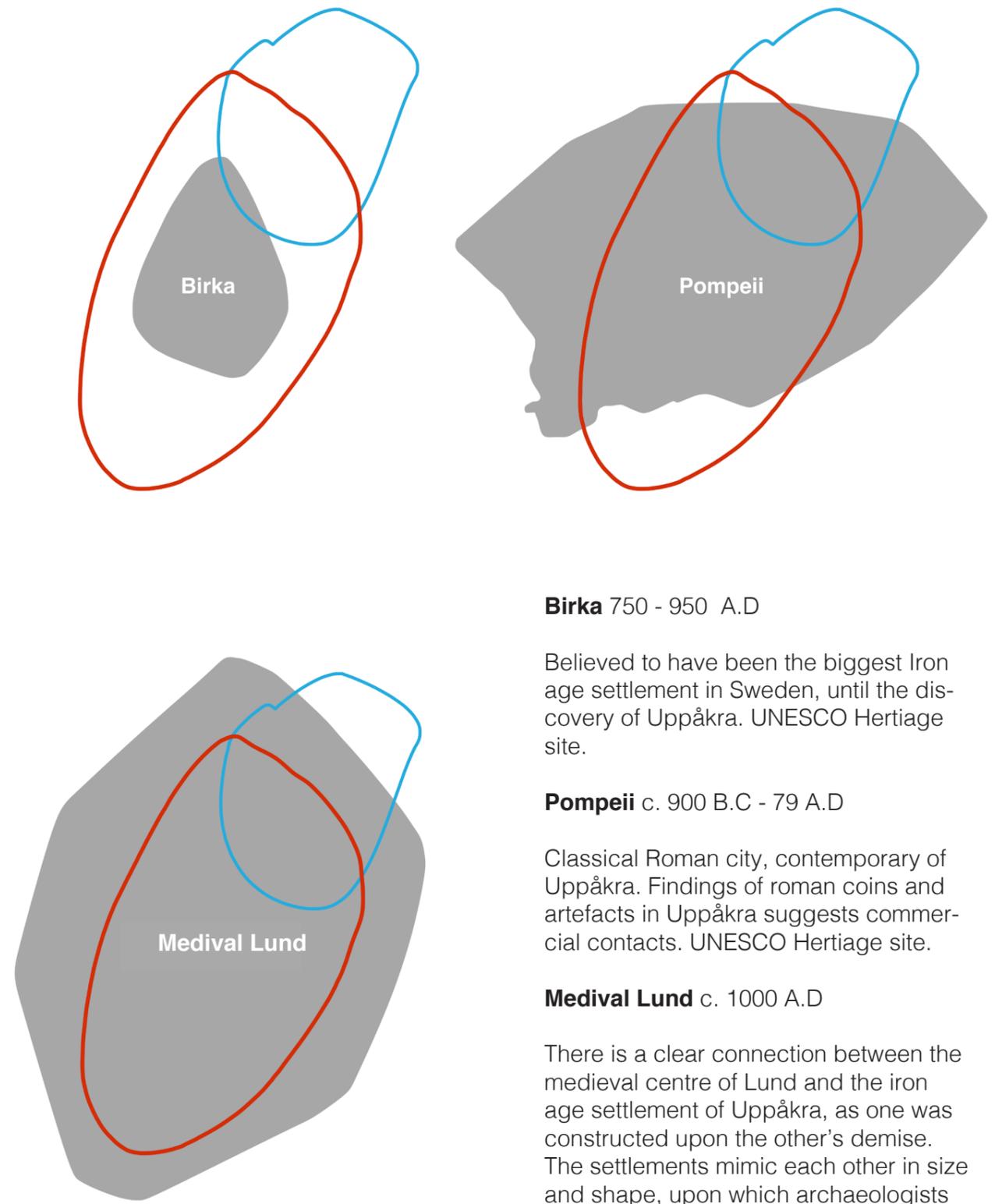
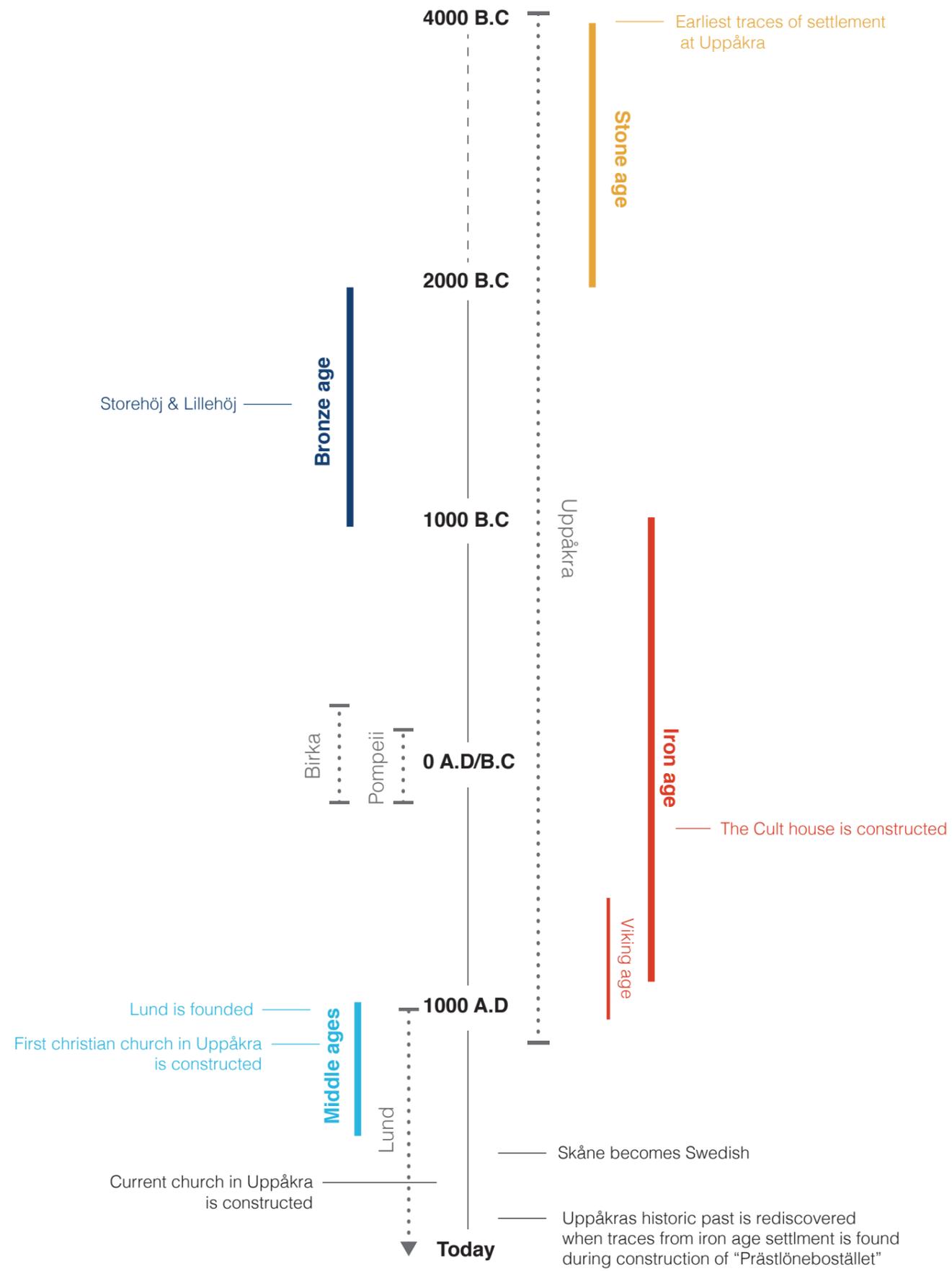
What is believed to be caused by the emergence of Christianity, by the end of the 90th century AD Uppåkra's importance diminished and the power was shifted to the newly established city of Lund. Exactly why and how the settlement ended is not yet known, but there are some findings that suggest that Uppåkra was burned to the ground as it was seen as a symbol for the pagan culture. The change from heathen rite to christianity was confirmed when a church was built on the same site as an bronze age burial mound.

In the middle ages, the layout of the village that remains on the site to this day was established, and the traces from the iron age settlement started to disappear into the ground. Coming into the 20th century, the notion of history from ancient Uppåkra had vanished, as it's existence is scarcely mentioned in written sources. The traces of the iron age settlement was rediscovered in 1934, when groundwork for the construction of a new barnhouse by surprise dugged up historical artefacts. Upon this, systematic archaeological excavations started to take place, gradually unfolding Uppåkras mysterious past.

Despite continous excavation and research taking place since, only a very small percentage of the site has been dug up so far: less than 1%, , effectivly leaving more than 99% yet to be researched. This number reflects the depth of the cultural layers (and not the lack of effort from archaeologists),

which in archaeological circles are considered to be unique: in a Scandinavian context there is no other known place where it is possible to study the evolution of a society for a continuous 1000 years.

# Timeline



## Birka 750 - 950 A.D

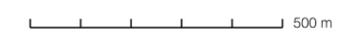
Believed to have been the biggest Iron age settlement in Sweden, until the discovery of Uppåkra. UNESCO Heritage site.

## Pompeii c. 900 B.C - 79 A.D

Classical Roman city, contemporary of Uppåkra. Findings of roman coins and artefacts in Uppåkra suggests commercial contacts. UNESCO Heritage site.

## Medieval Lund c. 1000 A.D

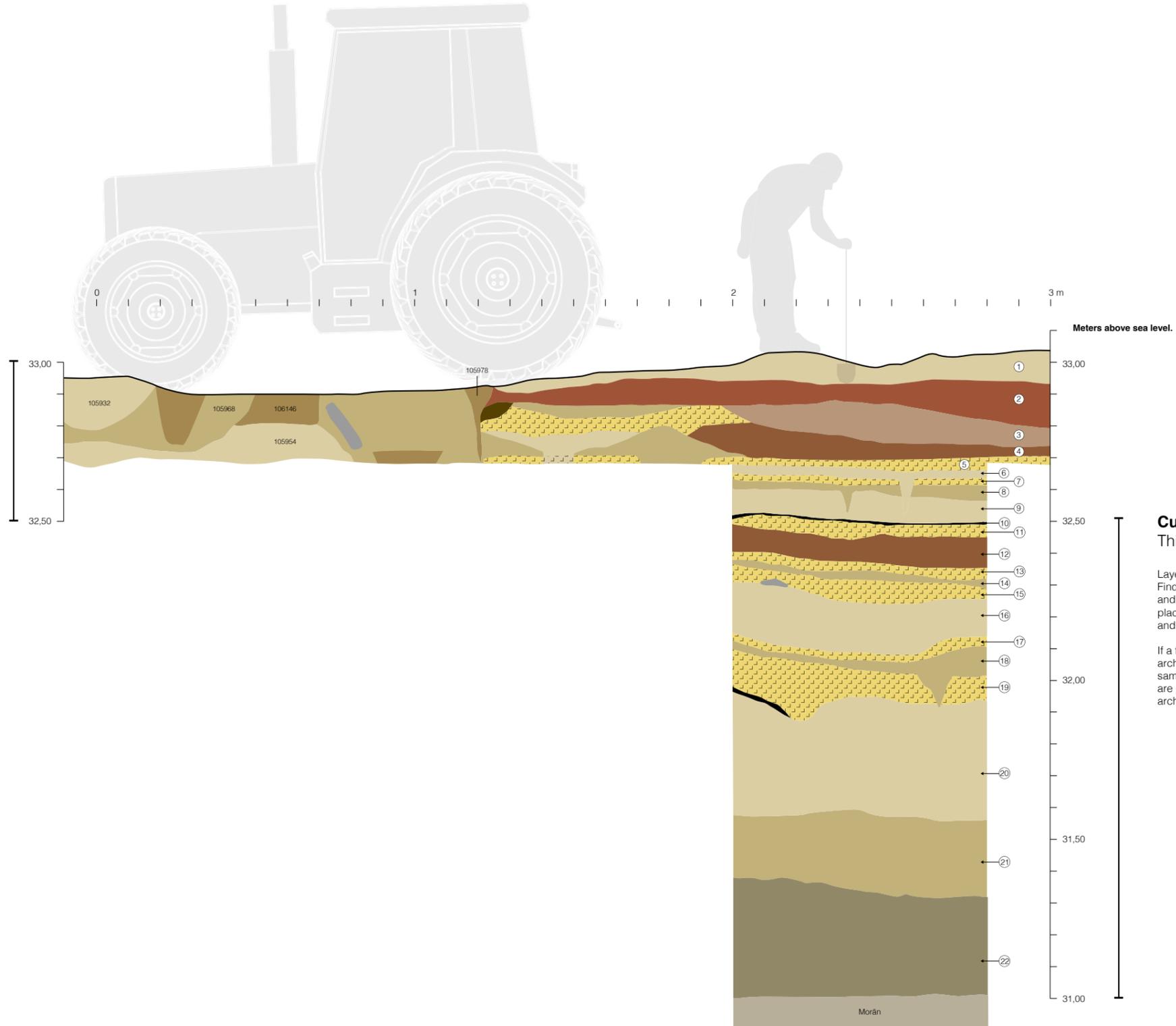
There is a clear connection between the medieval centre of Lund and the iron age settlement of Uppåkra, as one was constructed upon the other's demise. The settlements mimic each other in size and shape, upon which archaeologists believe that Uppåkra functioned as a "prototype" for Lund.



## Cultural layers

### Plowing layer Thickness 30 - 50 cm

Earth in same layer as agricultural activity. Archaeological integrity disturbed by cultivation and agriculture. Possible to find singular objects, but their position and relation to other objects is random, as masses have been moved by plowing.



### Cultural layers Thickness 0.5 - 4 m

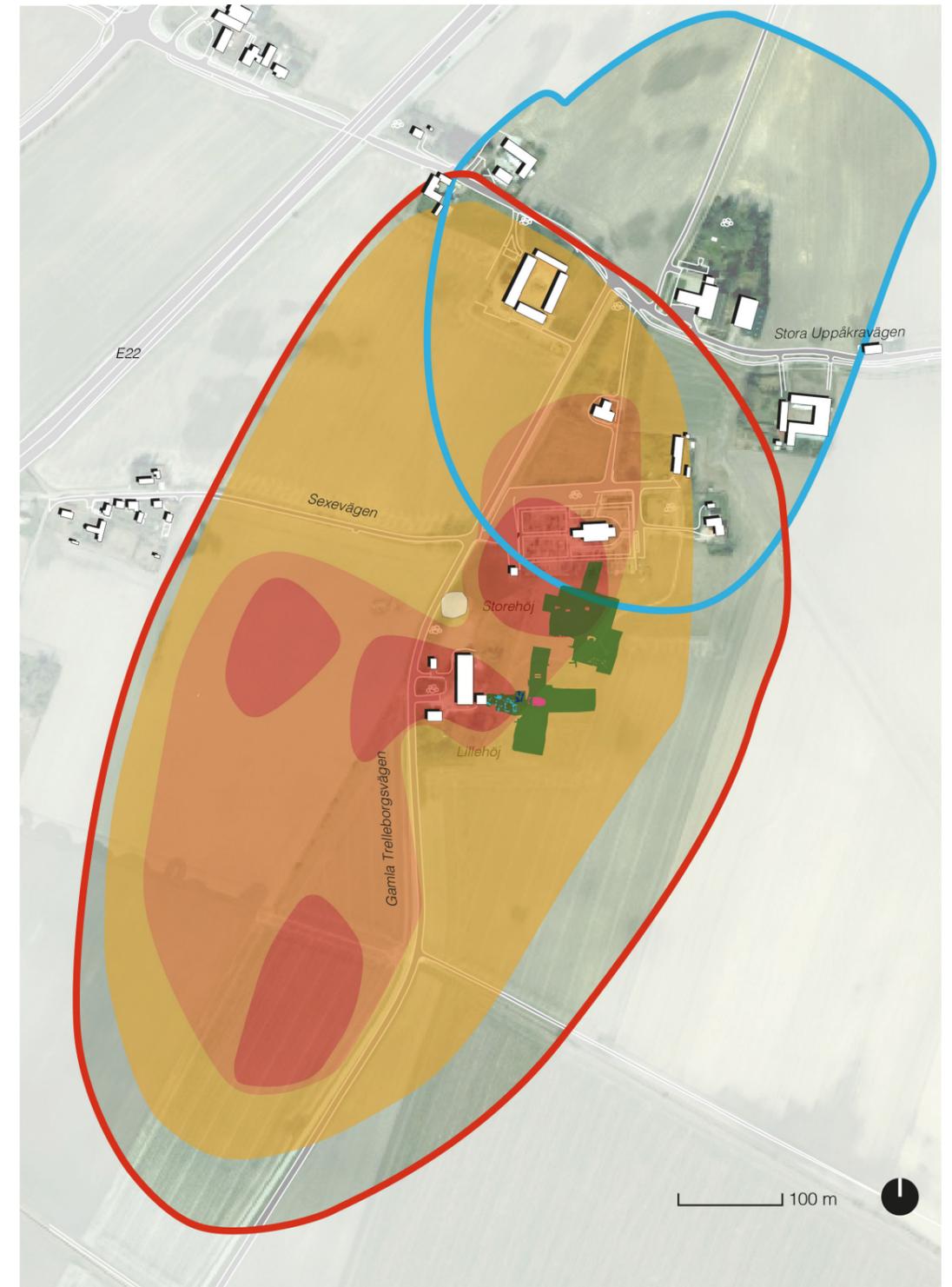
Layers with remnants of human activity and deposits of objects. Findings in these layers can by their position be logged with a specific time and place, and can together with other findings in the same layer, on different places on the site, be set in relation to each other, thus creating a context and a scenario for the site as a whole.

If a finding, lets say of a house, is made in the top cultural layer, archaeologist can by digging further down to see the development of that exact same spot throughout history. This is only valid as long as the cultural layers are preserved: if they are excavated for building, or masses are moved, the archaeological integrity is lost.



Map showing boundaries of iron - and middle age settlements

- Medieval village
- Iron age settlement

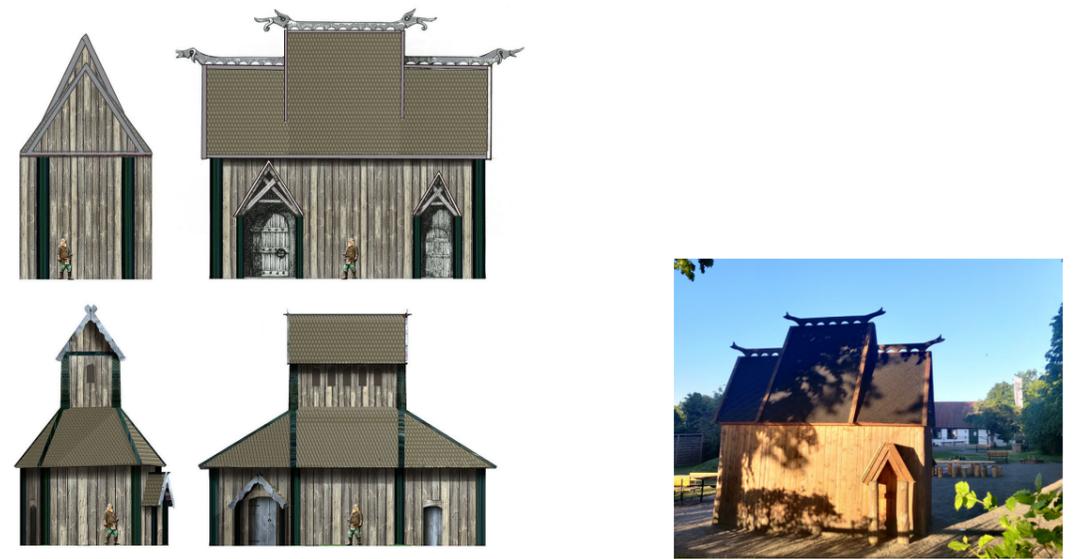


Map showing depth of cultural layers and major parts to be excavated so far (marked in green)

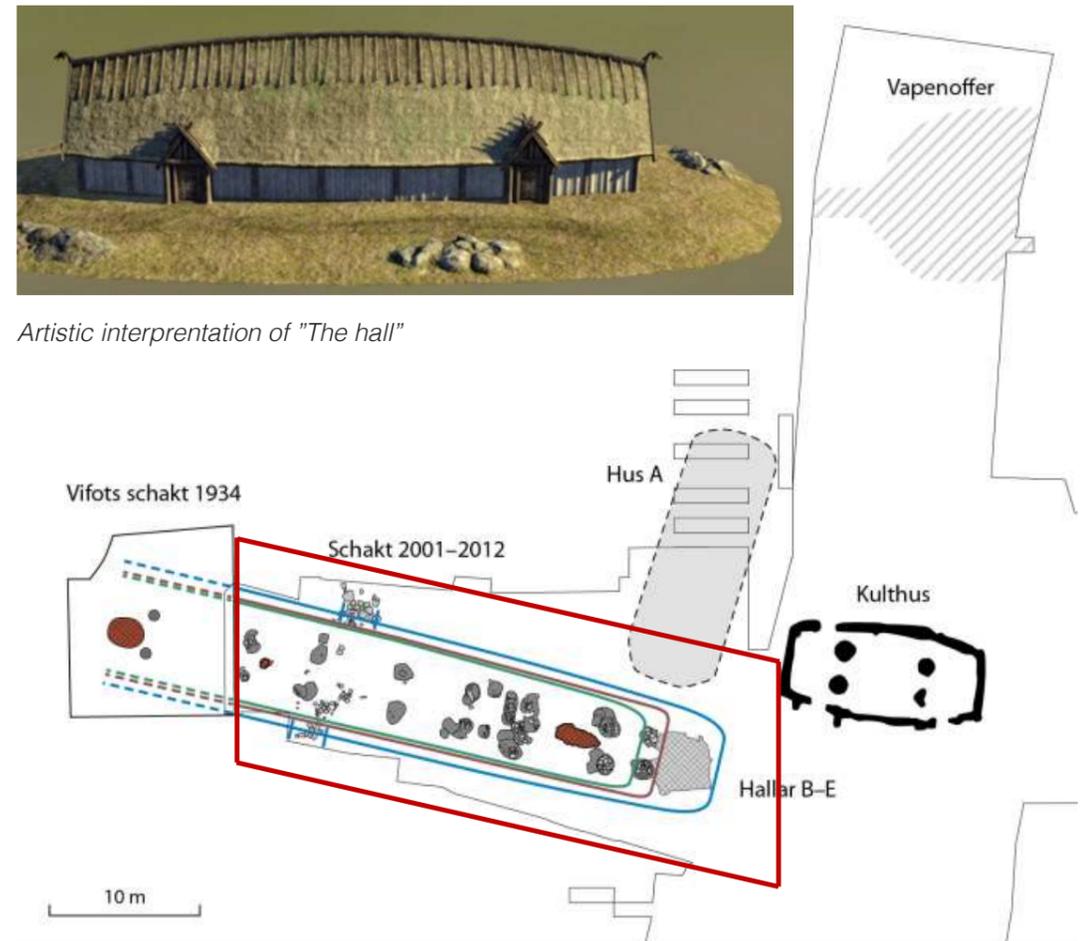
- < 0.5 m
- > 0.5 m
- > 1 m



- Excavated areas
- Series of Hall buildings.  
Parts continuing under building yet to be excavated
- The Cult House
- House A
- First Excavations  
"Vifots Schakt"



Artistic interpretation of "The cult house" - a Norse religious temple that was first constructed in 200 A.D. Possibly burnt to the ground around 800 A.D, coinciding with the emergence of christianity in Scandinavia. A scale model in 1:10 have been constructed on the site.

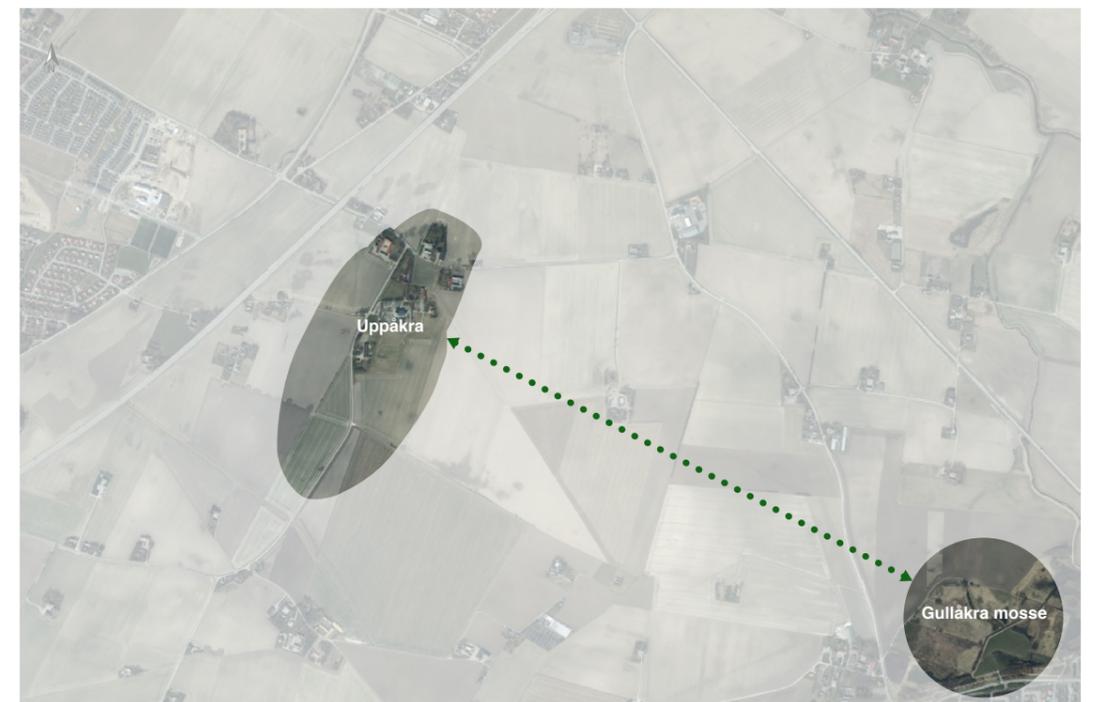


Artistic interpretation of "The hall"

Detailed plan of excavation



-  Historical road. Layout same since iron age, road still in use.
-  Demolished historical road. Layout no longer present.
-  Axis to iron age ceremonial place "Gullåkra Mosse"
-  Burial mounds. Appearance same today as in iron age.
-  Burial mounds. Demolished
-  Places with importance in the story of Uppåkra history.
  1. Current church - place has since iron age been center for religious purposes
  2. "Prästlönebostället" - place where the first traces of iron age Uppåkra was discovered in 1934.
-  Building with same placement since middle ages



Gullåkra mosse was used as a sacred place for ceremonies and sacrifice.

**Objects:** restored and curated



"Eyebrow arch" in gold plated bronze. Believed to have been a part of a ceremonial helmet. 550-800 A.D



Surgical instruments, possibly used both for medical purpose and ceremonial sacrifice. Iron age



Golden pendant of possible Etruscan origin. Similar items have been found in Pompeii, among other places. 1000 B.C



"Goldmen" - Golden tokens in the size of a stamp. Found at iron age settlements all across Scandinavia. Possibly used as interior decoration at temples



Glass bowl produced in area around the Black Sea. 500 A.D. One of many items brought to Uppåkra through trade with other continents



Fitting in bronze depicting the Norse god of blacksmith "Völund". 900 A.D



Statue of a lion fighting two snakes. One of the first Christian artefacts to be found in Uppåkra. 800 A.D



Fibula from 800 A.D. Thought to be motif of a lion, however the resemblance of Micky Mouse has made it a symbol for the iron age period in Uppåkra

**Objects:** no restoration or curation



## 2.4 Conclusion

The region of Skåne is characterised by its generally flat landscape that distinguishes itself from the otherwise mountainous geography of Scandinavia. This character is confirmed in the site of Uppåkra, which sits on top of a gently inclined hill, offering panoramic views of the surrounding agricultural landscape. However, there are few landmarks or frames offered in the landscape, meaning it can be difficult for the viewer to distinguish a motif. Therefore, complementing the landscape with framed views in the visitors center could be considered as a phenomenological tool to emphasise the character of the place.

Despite being situated in the midst of cultivated fields, Uppåkra lies in between the bigger cities Malmö and Lund, and is in extension connected to Copenhagen and the wider Öresund Area. This ensures that the visiting center is connected to a steady stream of visitors, even though the immediate context is rural.

The site can be entered from several different points. Public transport, car, walking and bike are all means of transport that can be used to access the site. The different means of transport and arrival points offers a situation where the traditional concept of arriving to one access point can be reinterpreted to better reflect the site and its character.

On the site today lies a village, with a clear focus point on the church that marks the site as a landmark seen from far away. Apart from two smaller burial mounds, there are few visible traces of the iron age settlement visible on the site today. To somehow make the invisible boundary of the iron age site visible to the visitor could be an intervention that mediates the history, as well as telling any passers by about the site's rich archaeological history.

There are several older farm buildings present on the site today. There is potential for incorporating parts of the program in the visitor center into one of these existing buildings, as it would both minimize footprint and anchor the center to the site's current context.

The biggest presence of vegetation on the site are the agricultural fields. Trees are generally planted in order to achieve an desired effect, such

as highlighting an axis.

The climate is generally milder than what is considered to be the Scandinavian norm. This puts less demand on the building envelope, and gives opportunities of working with different degrees of climatization in the design of the visitors center.

If compared to other archaeological areas, both the size of the site, the span and continuity of the Uppåkra's history can be put in comparison with other more famous places such as Birka and Pompeii (however, it should be pointed out that the character and type of findings of the mentioned places are vastly different from Uppåkra).

The term "cultural layer" refers to a series of layers in the ground with archaeological deposits. The depth of cultural layers indicate the richness of findings on a site: in the case of Uppåkra for example, the bottom of a 2 meter deep cultural layer is roughly equivalent of travelling back 4000 years in time. In terms of constructing this poses a problem, as building on top of deep cultural layers with common practice techniques would destroy its archaeological value. However, this can be seen as an opportunity to be solved in the final project, relating back to the initial question asked in the introduction: How can an architectural solution or concept permit the act of building upon valuable land without destroying it for future generations? At Uppåkra, the cultural layers are the deepest in the center of the site, around the church and the farm "Prästlönebostället". These are also the areas where most of the excavations have been taken place so far.

Among the findings from the site there are remains of houses such as a temple (The cult house) and a series of ceremonial hall buildings. Artefacts found include valuable items, such as jewelry, made of precious metals, but also objects of glass and surgical instruments. However, these valuable artefacts are in minority: the vast majority of the found objects, that most often does not get to be exhibited, have a less precious character, and some are also difficult to categorize – it can be small pieces of bones, teeth or ceramics. These less precious objects are not spectacular to watch as singular items, but seen

grouped together, thus exhibiting the quantity of the findings, they can represent the richness of the archeological site.

When an excavation is over, the pit is filled again with earth, leaving no trace. It is however possible to reopen and continue where the last excavation stopped.

## 3. Program

The purpose of the building is to mediate the history of Uppåkra and to and facilitate further research and excavations on the site.

The functions in the spatial program are developed from a feasibility study commissioned in 2011 by “Uppåkra Arkeologiska Center”, an organization aiming to raise awareness about the history of Uppåkra. The given program serves only as a starting point (an indication of main functions and number of square meters) and is processed with critical questions regarding users, activities, spaces, the border between front and back of house, and potentials for future expansion and mixed use.

### 3.1 Users, Activities & Spaces

Uppåkra Archaeological Center is thought as a typical visitors center, providing a mixed program to its visitors. A diverse set of activities are to take place. Firstly, historical artefacts from the site are to be curated and displayed in a permanent exhibition. A temporary exhibition space is also desired, where themed and travelling exhibitions from other institutions can be displayed. The exhibition spaces have the purpose to, through the presentation and contextualization of objects, mediate the history of Uppåkra. Mediation, however, can also be done through other programmatic means. Physical experiences such as live acting performances, themed workshops, lectures or arts and crafts fairs are examples of such activities. For this, the temporary exhibition space could be used, but it is also desirable to provide an auditorium as well as a more flexible outdoor scene or space. Visitors, such as tourists or a family on a weekend visit, will be the principal users of the exhibitions. To accommodate a comfortable visit, a café is also to be included in the program.

A recurring, almost weekly, user of the center will be grade school classes. As a part of their basic history education, many schools in Skåne already visit the site of Uppåkra to receive guided tours and partake in an “archaeological school”, where the pupils get the chance to – literally- get their

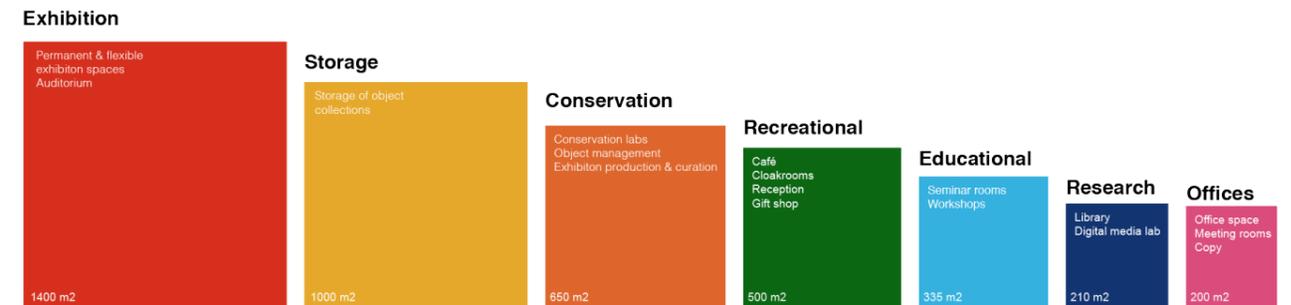
hands dirty and participate in real archaeological excavations. This activity is predicted to increase with the construction of the visitors center. Hence, educational facilities, such as spaces for workshops and seminar rooms, to receive the schools are needed. The "archaeological school" that today is placed in a somewhat temporal location (see site analysis) could also be incorporated in the center itself.

On a daily basis, archaeologists will use the building as their permanent workplace. At the moment, two archaeologists are employed full time by the foundation. The University of Lund has a bigger research group of about 10 people that work with researching the history of Uppåkra, although not on a full time basis. Site visits are made regularly, but the group has a permanent office and research space in the center of Lund, and would only have to be accommodated with flexible office spaces at Uppåkra. Occasionally international guest researchers arrive, sometimes for year-long periods, whom also would be a user of the mentioned flexible office space.

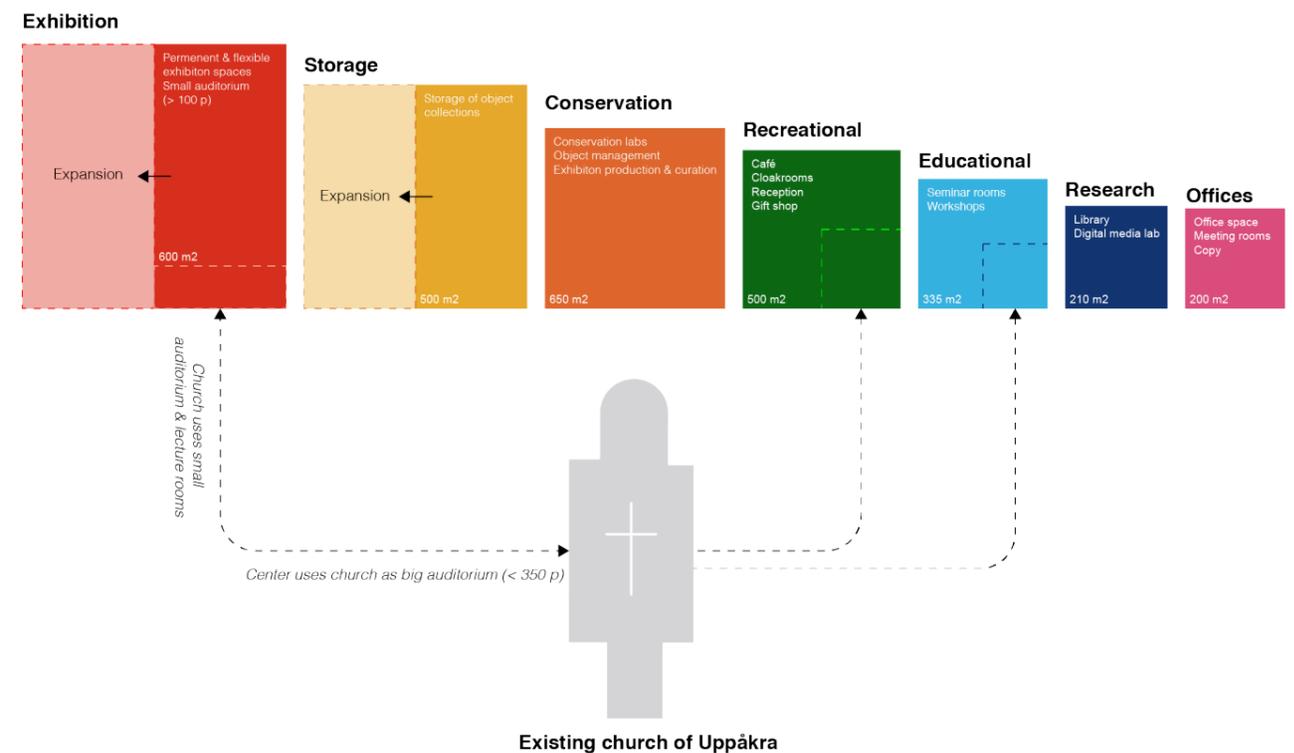
Excavations on the site are done regularly in the warmer half of each year, from April-October. As a part of the Bachelor and Master studies at the Archaeological programme at Lund's university, students participate in excavations in the beginning of each semester, normally from August-September. The students would take use of some of the office space, such as meeting rooms, but do not require any permanent spaces especially designated for them. Instead, a smaller research facility, such as a library and a digital media lab, spaces that both the archaeologists and the students need to conduct research.

Spaces for object care and management, and storage for collections, are also needed in connection with findings from the excavations and the curation of exhibits. These would primarily be used by the archaeologist and the students.

## Room program - suggested



## Room program - processed



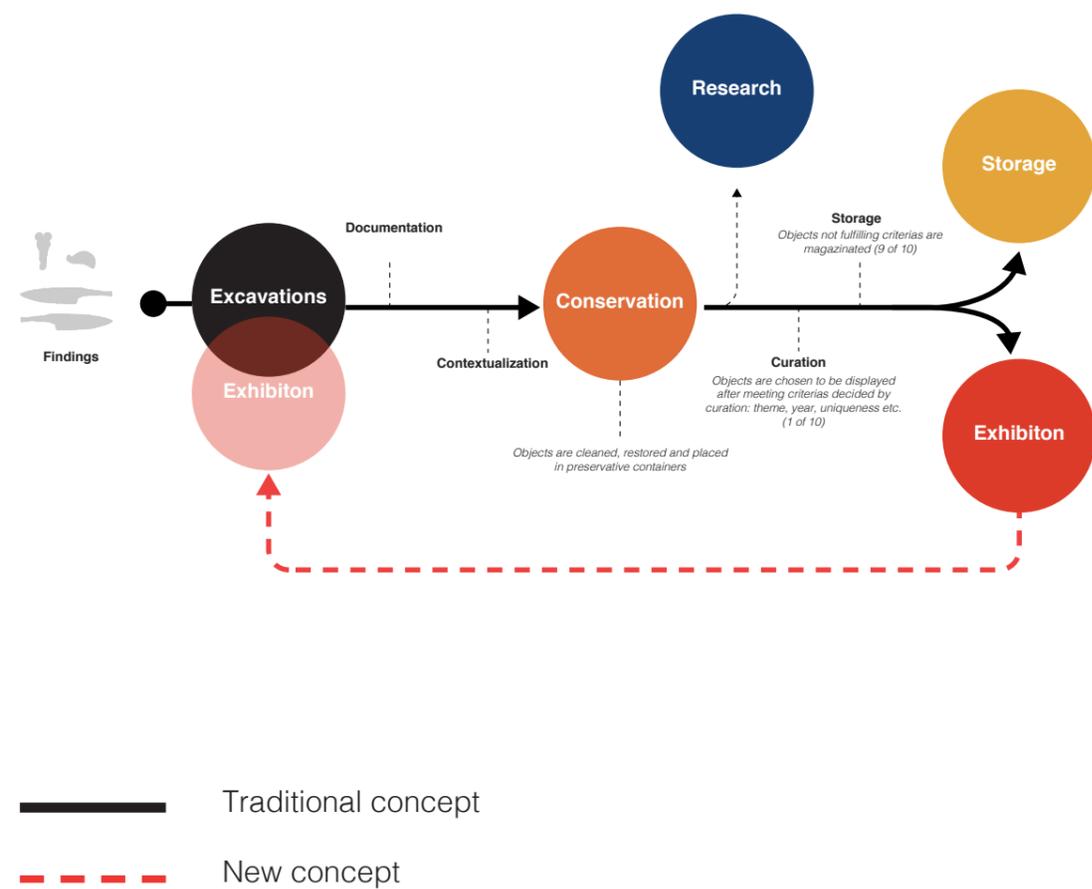
### 3.2 Front of House vs Back of house

As is the case with the visitor center, and similar building types such as the museum, there is a spatial situation where there is a clear distinction between front of house (spaces accessible to visitors) and back of house (spaces not accessible to visitors, but to staff that operates in the building). Spaces categorized as front of house include the exhibition areas, recreational spaces such as the café or gift shop, and auditoriums. Examples of spaces considered belonging to the back of house are object care and restoration, research and find management facilities, and collection storage. The relation between front of house and back of house determines the limit for where the visitor can move freely in the building. In order to avoid confusion, increase intuitive movement and maintain functionality for the visitor, this limit should have a logical character. It should not invite to different interpretations, but instead provide a clear notion of threshold. However, there are some potentials in the friction between the limit of front of house and back of house that can be exploited, and increase the building's purpose of mediating the history of the site. Although the position of the limit should be logical, it does not have to be more than a physical barrier: visual contact between spaces for object care and the exhibition hall can potentially increase the sense of place and history for the visitor. To exemplify, providing glimpses into how newly dug up artefacts are being cleaned and restored can establish a direct connection to objects in the curated exhibition, and give the visitor the notion of where the objects actually are coming from, decreasing the distance between the present and the past.

### 3.3 Potential for expanding the exhibition

As mentioned in the site analysis, one important characteristic of Uppåkra is how the reading of the site, its context and conditions seems to constantly be re-evaluated. Due to the fact that most of the history still is buried in the ground, new findings can bring forward a new interpretation of the site and provide a new context in which the place can be seen. Since the vast majority of the site is yet to be excavated, an increase of objects to be exhibited is to be expected in the future. This continuous reading of the site has potential to be translated into architectural qualities in the building. To exemplify, let's imagine that a typical viking ship is found inside one of the burial mounds: beside providing a precious object to the collection (calling the need for increase in exhibition space), this would also immediately turn the attention to a part of the site that perhaps have been neglected before, thus providing a new understanding of place for Uppåkra. If the building is constructed with an excess of space and square meters – to meet the demand for increase of space already before new findings are done - the potential to respond and mediate the new understanding of the site is lost. If instead the building's footprint is reduced, and the increase of space is taken into account but seen as a programmatical issue that is planned for instead of built - the building can grow and develop in the same rhythm as the site is uncovered, further mediating the sense of place for Uppåkra.

The concept of expansion can also be thought of as an extension of the traditional concept for exhibition. As excavations are to take place regularly, and are likely to happen on new places on the site, these can also be included to function as an exhibition space accessible to the visitor. The excavations do not necessarily need to be seen as a curated exhibition, as the act of watching an archeologist digging for findings (or even letting the visitors participate in the digging themselves) alone has the potential to mediate an understanding of the site.



### 3.4 Potential for mixed use program

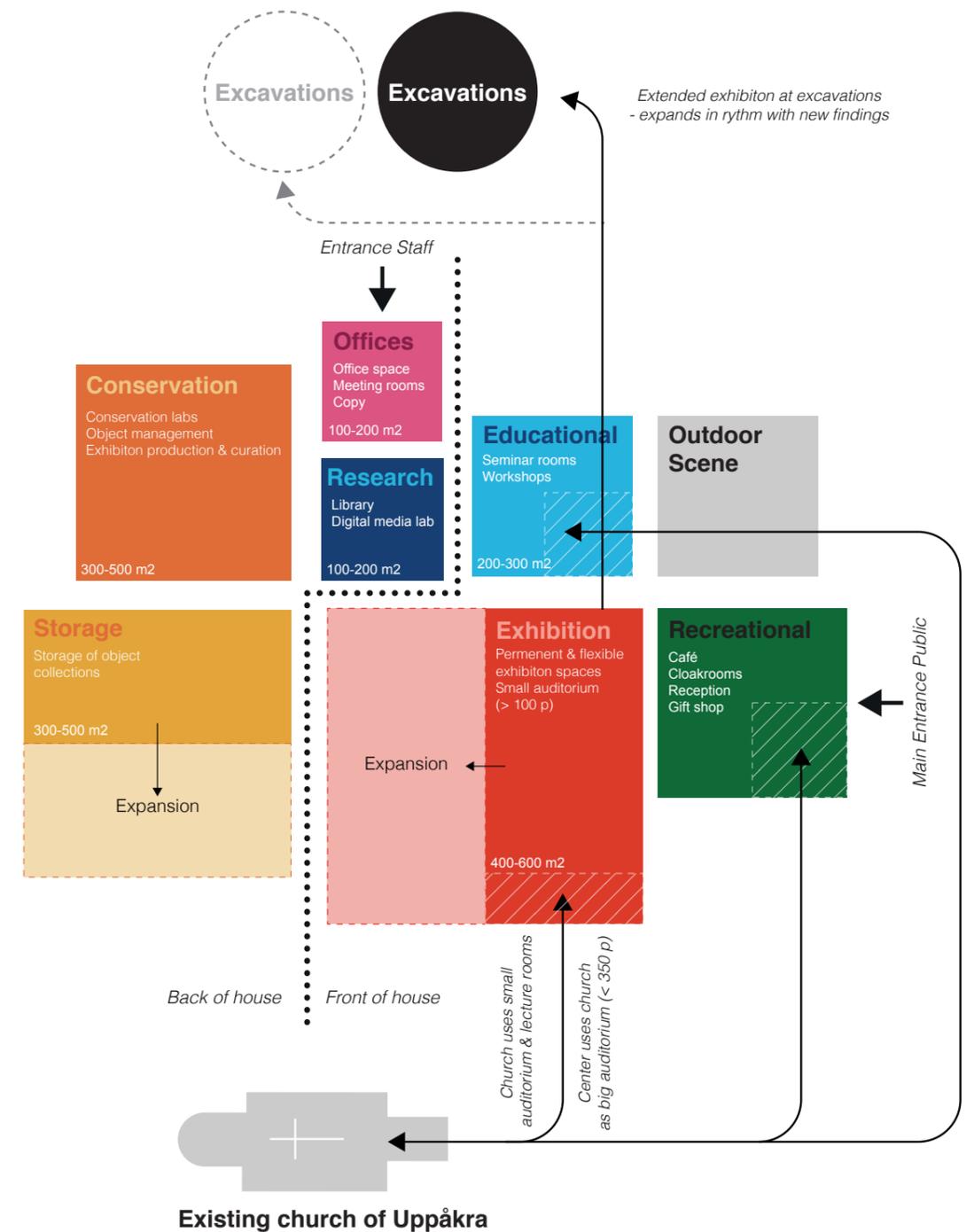
The visiting center as a building type has a weakness in that it is particularly aimed at tourism and visitors, which can have a neglecting effect on the local community. Ideally, incorporating a mixed used program helps to anchor the building in the local community and ensures that the center also provides a function for local people on a daily basis.

Today the site of Uppåkra is dominated by the church, both architecturally and programatically. It is a landmark that also functions as the main generator for activities. From the site analysis we can conclude that there are programmed happenings on a weekly basis, year round, with a slight peak in summer. Activities include weekly church service and mass, typical ceremonies (baptization, weddings, funerals etc.) as well as non-religious events such as live concerts. The church room, essentially an auditorium seating 350 people, is the nave for the activities, and is used regardless of the size of the event. When interviewing a representative from the church, it was pointed out that there currently is no place in the near surroundings to gather after, or in anticipation of, an event or ceremony. Likewise, there is neither any spaces to host smaller groups for seminars or similar gatherings: today, a venue provided by the parish that is located in Hjärup (about 2 km from the church) is used for such occasions. There is an opportunity to develop a mixed use program in Uppåkra Arkeologiska Center that can provide these spaces. An auditorium to host lecture and performances is part of the program but since the church already offers a big scene, the auditorium constructed for the center should be of a smaller, more intimate character, effectively complementing the church room instead of competing against it. This can provide a situation where the existing church and the center have a steady exchange of program and activities: when the center hosts a big live performance, the church room is being used, and likewise when the church hosts a smaller seminar, the center lends its premises. Also, the recreational and educational facilities of the center, such as the café, seminar rooms and workshops has potential to be part of the extended program. Spaces in the center can host gatherings after a ceremony in the church, such as reception after a wedding or a cup of coffee after choir practi-

ce, and the educational suite of the center can be used for the church's counseling service or discussion groups.

To establish a connection, both programmatically and architecturally, between the new center and the church can also strengthen the sense of place and history for the visitor, as the church and its location on the site has a historical significance for the history of Uppåkra. As mentioned, this connection is to be established programmatically through mixed use of spaces, but there is also potential to manifest it symbolically as an architectural quality, thus further mediating the sense of place.

It should be pointed out that even the church is here used as an example of a local actor that can collaborate with the visitors center, the mixed use program is not limited to be used by only the church, but instead is open to the whole local community. Cafe, auditorium and meeting rooms can be used as a community center, while parts of the exhibition also can double as public space, to name a few examples.



## 3.6 Conclusion

As the excavations continue, the collection of objects is expected to grow. The program should therefore take into account future expansion, particularly of exhibition and storage areas, as an integral part of the building's architecture. This means that the footprint of the building can be kept smaller, and that future expansion has a greater potential to respond to a new reading of the site and mediate the continuous development of the understanding of Uppåkras history.

The traditional concept of exhibition is re-interpreted to include the archeological excavations. The intention is to exhibit the whole archeological process, from digging up an object from the earth, seeing it being treated and conserved, to finally being exhibited.

In order to operate as functional building, the limit between front of house and back of house should be stated as a clear threshold. Establishing a connection, visual or symbolical, between front of house and back of house increases the sense of place and the mediation of history.

Incorporating the spaces and activities in the existing church as a part of mixed used program in the new center can benefit the local community, the functionality of the new center, and reduce the footprint of the building. Manifesting the connection through architecture can further heighten the sense of place and history of Uppåkra.

## 4. Case Studies

### 4.1 Building Type

*“The term building type was used in the past, and still is today, to indicate any group of buildings with some characteristics, or a series of characteristics, in common” (Cannigia, Maffei p.45)*

Upon starting work on the program for Uppåkra Archeological Center, one question in particular quickly came up: what type of a building is this? The program has a mix of spaces for exhibition, research and recreation, and by a first glance it is not clear where the emphasis should be put. Looking at the suggested room program, the square meters for exhibiton and storage dominates the footprint, a characteristic that is shared by the building type “museum”. If the building was to be seen as a “museum”, the exhibition and curation of objects would be in focus and the building itself would be considered as the main attraction, but since the main attraction of Uppåkra is the site – not necessarily a specific precious object - this approach would not be satisfying in terms of mediating the sense of place and it’s history through the architecture of the building. By starting to research the subject of building type, it instead became clear that Uppåkra Archelological Center belongs to it’s own category: the “visitor center”.

#### **The Visitor Center**

The term “visitor center” is more commonly used in fields such as tourism or marketing rather than in the discourse of building types. It covers a spectrum of buildings (such as the information center, the welcome center or the interpretation center) that perhaps have been overlooked as being their own category of building, and instead have been slotted in under more established etiquettes (such as the museum, as mentioned above). However, some research has been done on the subject. Mattias Kärrholm, professor at the department for Architecture and Built Environment at Lund University, has published a paper called *“On visitor centers, thresholds and the territorialisation of entrances”* where the “visitor center” is discussed as it’s own building

type. While building types traditionally are discussed through a historical or morphological perspective, Kärholm instead focuses on the purpose of the "visitor center" and discusses what role it takes in relation to the site. He says that "*The visitor centre is a threshold preparing the visitor for a new territory. It implies a boundary becoming a place of its own, and its actor role is to manage visitors with information and directions to the site*" (Kärholm p. 60). This perspective of what purpose the "visitor center" fills fits well with the task given to Uppåkra Archeological Center – to mediate a reading and the history of the site to its visitors.

### Thresholds

The notion of threshold and territorilization of a site, is of particular interest, as the site boundaries of Uppåkra are not visual, but imagined (although produced through scientific research). Another aspect that further enhances the interest in the site, is the potential of what is buried in the ground - not visible to the eye. Kärholm writes that a threshold essentially is the differentiation between an outside and an inside. Passing over from the outside to the inside is done by a *rite of passage*. For a "visitor center", the *rite of passage* would be the purchase of an entrance ticket, for example. The act of entering from the outside to the inside means that the visitor has become *aware* of a change of state, and the attraction has been tamed from being an abstract concept to a domesticated experience. However, the concept of differentiating between the inside and the outside does not necessarily have to be done literally (as when entering an "enclosed" house from an "open" landscape). As it is the act itself (passing over a threshold) that gives the notion of a change of state for the visitor, the threshold could also be manifested in numerous forms: stepping "on", looking "at", participating "in" etc. These abstract concepts can be translated into more specific architectural concepts: stepping "on" could be to differentiate between an open ground plane with a walking bridge, or looking "at" could be framing a specific view or extending the character of the place into an enclosed space.

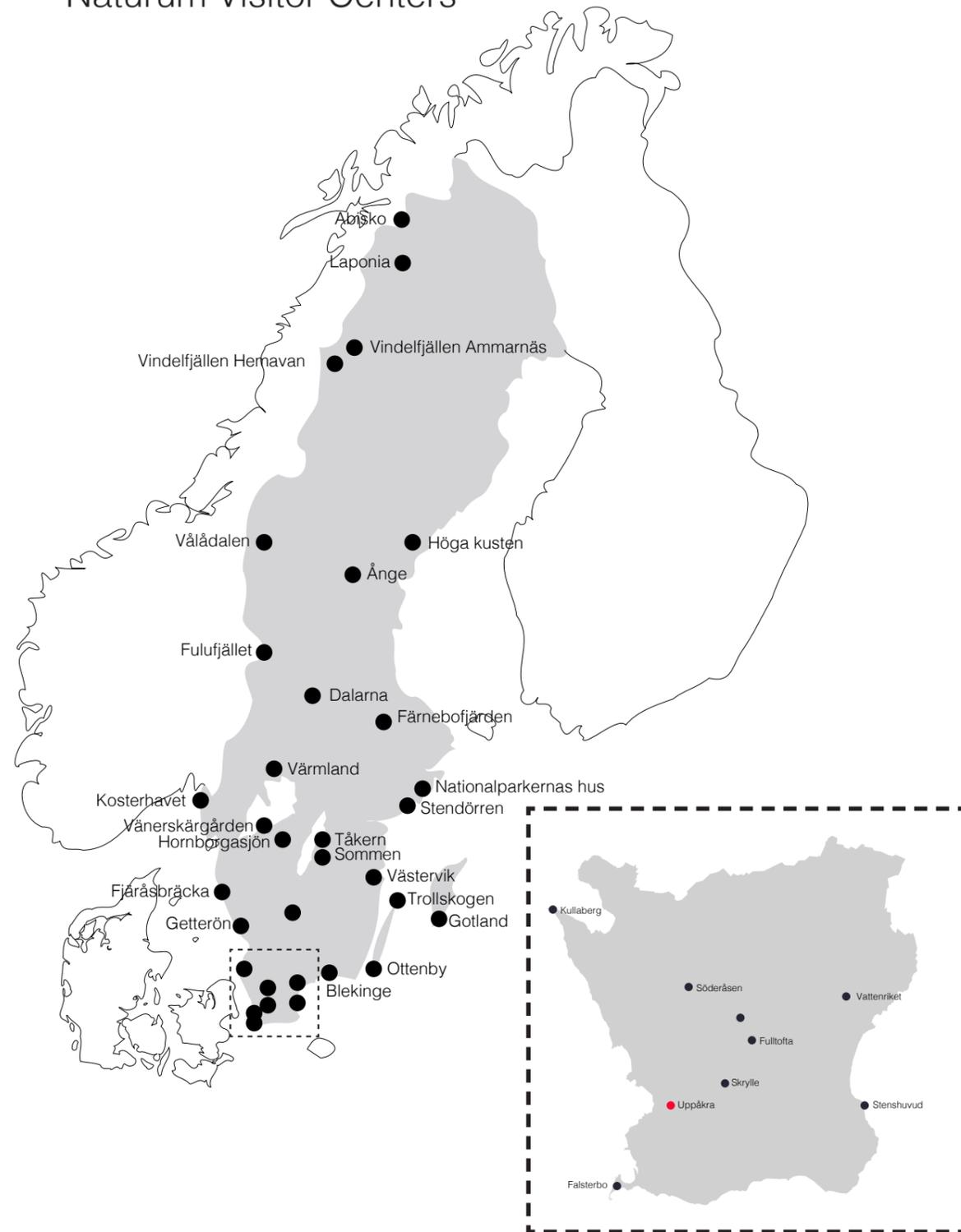
### Naturum

In a Swedish context, the leading typology of visitor center is a concept called "Naturum". It is a series of visitor centers commissioned by Naturvårdsverket (The Department for Environmental Care) built as entry points to national parks and nature areas across the country. The first "Naturum" was built in 1973, not as a specific building relating to the site, but as a modest information center housed in temporary structures. Likewise, it filled the role of a threshold and performed its task in preparing the visitor for the site. Over the years, with an increase of attention and number of visitors, the projects of "Naturum" have become more and more ambitious in terms of architecture and design. One can note a differentiation with *Naturum Hornborgarsjön*, built in 1986, where the building itself clearly interacts with the site, trying to further highlight and strengthen the attraction, more so than just to function as only a threshold. In some of the recent projects, such as *Naturum Tåkern*, this concept has been stretched even further, as the form of the building itself almost seems to mirror the attraction of the site (*Naturum Tåkern* is a wetland with rich birdlife, and accordingly, the main building seems to resemble the face of a hawk).

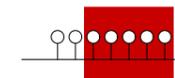
By mapping the different "Naturum" built today, we can investigate concrete architectural qualities or concepts used in typical "Visitors Center" to establish thresholds, a sense of place and territory.

## 4.2 Case Studies

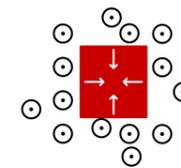
### Naturum Visitor Centers



## Concepts



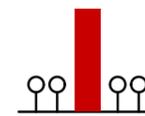
**Extensions** of the landscape are often an integral part of the architectural design, for example with a framed view. The extension, or stretching, of the landscape into the building can strengthen the character of the place, as the visitor are presented with a choreographed concept of how that character can be experienced.



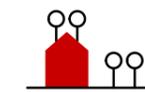
**Enclosures**, is the opposite of extension, and is used to prepare the visitor for the site, for example with a enclosed space for exhibition.



**Walking paths**, both over land and water, is used to determine a path or a route for the visitor to travel on and experience the site.



**Watching towers**, are placed out on the site, and can often be accessed by the walking bridges. They offer a new perspective from where the site can be experienced.



**Expression** of the attraction. This can be done by choosing to construct in a local material that is found on the site, to reference a local building typology, or in some cases, to let the shape and form of the building imitate the attraction.



**Housed in existing building**, is often used to minimize footprint of the visitors center, especially in areas sensitive to changes. Using an existing building is also sometimes done solely by economical motifs.

# Hornborgarsjön



Building



Attraction



Walking bridge

"Hornborgarsjön" is a lake with rich bird life. The building sits on poles on the shore of the lake, where the tide is constantly changing, and is made accessible by walking bridges. The concept of placing the building in the lake itself gives the visitor a chance to experience the lake as a phenomenon, as the building's position in the landscape will be read according to the conditions of the day of visit.

# Naturum Vattenriket



Building



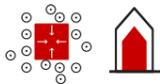
Attraction



Walking bridge

"Naturum Vattenriket" is visitor center for a large area of wetlands. The project consists of a series of walking bridges that connects the wetlands with the urban context, with the visitor center located in between. The walking bridges enables the character of the place to become an experience for the visitor - before the construction of the bridges, the wetlands were not accessible for most people, and thereby the character of the place is highlighted.

# Abisko



Building



Attraction

# Skrylle



Building



Attraction

# Naturum Kullaberg



Building



Attraction

# Naturum Söderåsen

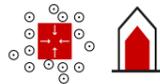


Building



Attraction

# Naturum Stenshuvud

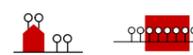


Building



Attraction

# Naturum Falsterbo

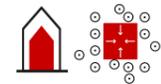


Building



Attraction

# Naturum Fulltofta



Building



Attraction

# Ammarnäs

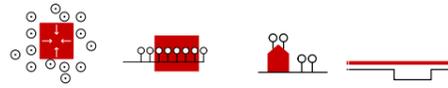


Building



Attraction

## Laponia



Building in winter



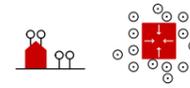
Attraction



Building in summer

The concept behind Naturum Laponia is an enclosed space with some surgically placed openings framing the surrounding landscape. The construction of the building enhances the changes of season: the stacked composition of the facade stores snow during the winter, camouflaging the building into the landscape. Come spring, the building "defrosts", giving it a distinct expression according to the season.

## Höga kusten



Building



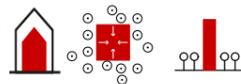
Attraction



"Rock" - skylight

The attraction of "Höga kusten" is a high coastline in northern Sweden. Due to the pressure of the inland ice, the coast is still rising. This is mirrored in the building, where several "rocks" are rising through the flat roof. Inside, these "rocks" become lanterns, dragging the light into the exhibition spaces.

## Vindefjällen Hemavan

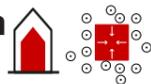


Building



Attraction

## Vålådalen



Building



Attraction

## Dalarna

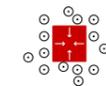


Building



Attraction

## Blekinge



Building



Attraction

## Ånge



Building

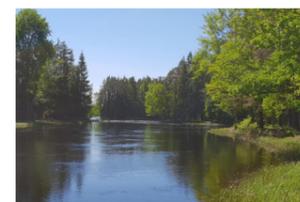


Attraction

## Färnebofjärden



Building



Attraction

## Gotland

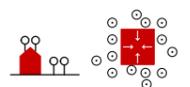


Building



Attraction

## Nationalparkernas hus



Building



Attraction

## Kosterhavet



Building



Attraction



Local typology

"Kosterhavet" is an archipelago on the west coast of Sweden. The architecture of Naturum Kosterhavet is a reference to a local typology of fishing sheds. The characteristic pointed roof is kept and is translated into an open space. The building acts as an entry point from where the visitors gets "briefed" about the area, its characteristics and its history.

## Västervik



Building



Attraction

## Fjärås bräcka

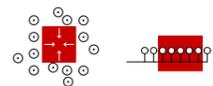


Building



Attraction

## Vänerskärsgården



Building



Attraction

## Sommen



Building



Attraction

## Fulufjället

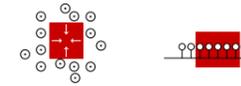


Building



Attraction

## Värmland



Building



Attraction

## Getterön



Building



Attraction

## Store mosse



Building



Attraction

## Ottenby



Building



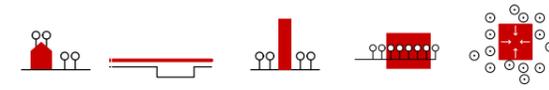
Attraction



Watch tower/Hiding place

"Ottenby" is a coastal, flat landscape famous for having the lighthouse "Långe Jan". The project consists of a main center with exhibits and recreational facilities. In the landscape, a almost camouflage "hiding place" sits, from where the visitors can observe the nature and the wildlife.

## Tåkern



Building



Attraction



Watch tower and walking bridge

"Tåkern" is a lake where rare birds thrive, and where ornitologist gather. The building's facade and roof is made in the same material - dried reed, a direct reference to the place, as reed is a characteristic vegetation for this kind of shallow lakes. The project has a main building acting as a first threshold, and a walking bridge leading to a watch tower from where birds can be observed.

## Stendörren



Building



Attraction

## Trollskogen



Building



Attraction

### **4.3 Case Studies**

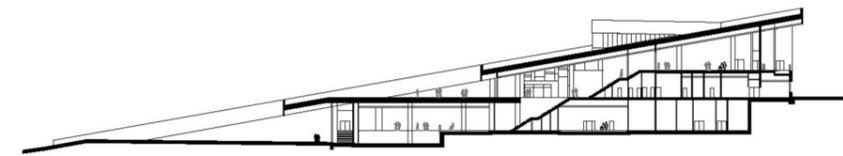
Relevant projects

## Moesgaard, Århus Henning Larsen Architects 2015

"Moesgaard" is a visiting center relating to an iron age settlement outside of Århus in Denmark. This makes a suitable case study, also because the character of the land shares some similarities with Uppåkra. The museum sits in a rural context, in a plain field surrounded by forests. By merging the visitors center with the topography, a new element in the landscape is created, and the roof of the building becomes a park and a lookout point. The creation of this plateau highlights - or even confirms - the character of the land. It offers the visitor a different perspective for experiencing its character.

### Relevance

Relevant reference as the building has the same program as Uppåkra Arkeologiska center - a visiting center for an iron age site. Enhances character of place by adding new element to topography

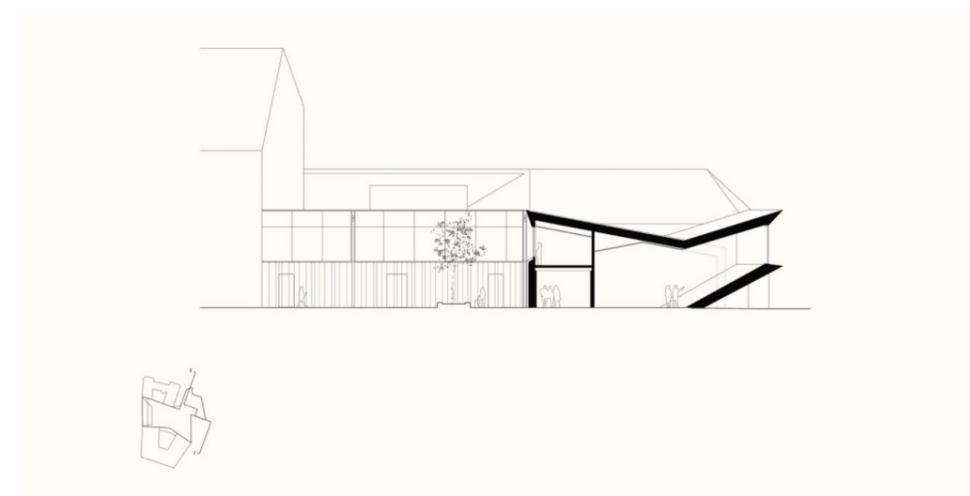
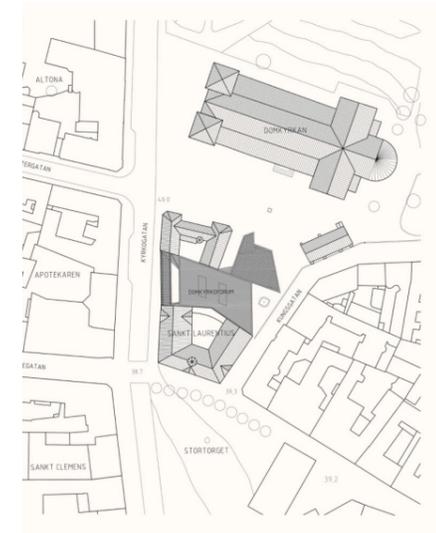


## Domkyrkocenter, Lund Carmen Izquierdo 2009

"Domkyrkocenter" is a visiting center for the Cathedral of Lund, which is the city's biggest tourist attraction. The new visiting center is designed as an "infill" project, patching a hole in between two historical buildings. Between the visiting center, an urban plaza is defined. The contact between the church and the center is maintained through a "lense" - a window framing the iconic twin towers of the cathedral

### Relevance

Although set in an urban context, opposed to the rural situation of Uppåkra, the project shares some similarities in how it interacts with the church. Through a framed view of the church towers, the project manages to create a link between the attraction and visitors center. This symbolic connection creates a portal, or a threshold, between the center and the cathedral, and establishes a clear hierarchy of where the attraction (the cathedral) is, and how the attraction itself wishes to be experienced.

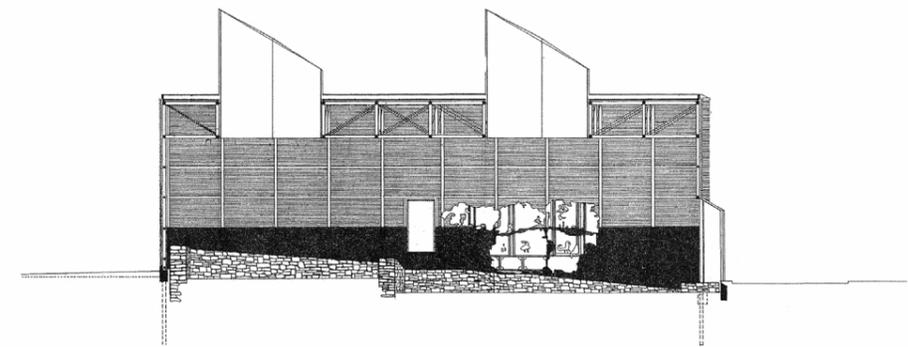


## Roman ruins, Chur Peter Zumthor 1986

The project is a set of pavillions built to cover ancient roman ruins. The design of the wooden pavilions functions not only as a protective cover, but also creates a framework for exhibiting the ruins themselves. The envelope of the buildings follows the outer wall of the ruins, thus giving a physical presence to the archaeological remains. The structure resembles a repetitive timber frame module, that is gently warped and shifted to fit the the archeological footprint. The pavillions are connected through walking bridges raised over the ruins, letting the visitor travel freely while also protecting the archeological remains. Skylights are strategically placed to enhance an important ruin, or exhibited objects. The added pavillions are only half climatized (protecting against wind and rain, but not insulated).

### Relevance

The quality of the project is how the bulding manages to mediate the history of a site through new construction on top of ancient ruins. The combination of half climitized pavillions combined with a modular structure can be used as a strategy for future expansion. Not having to break a climitized envelope when expanding the building lowers the threshold for implementing the strategy, while a constructive module that can be repeated also increases the probability.



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Interview (2020, May 13th, Phone) with Mats Roslund, professor in Historical Archeologi at Lund University

Interview (2020, June 2nd, Phone) with Anette Gottfridsson, clerk at Uppåkra Parish.