# Villa Røde: A Youth Home in Oslo

Sabina Gabriela Brunstein

Master Thesis

Spring 2022

Oslo School of Architecture and Design

# PROGRAM

What, where who

Akersveien 26C, Oslo

4 Adults (Health workers)

6 Juveniles

A Youth Home in Central Oslo

10 people total
Over time, the amount of people having lived in the youth house will be many more, but only 10 people live there at the time.
Site conditions
Site lifted from the street  No facades meeting existing building
Site area: 700 sqm
Buildable area: 500 sqm 20 x 25 meters
Materials
Pigmented conrete
Wood laminated frames
3 layer glazed windows
Concrete foundation

## PROGRAM

Main floor Loft 7 sqm each 20 sqm each Youth bedrooms: Bedroom lofts: 42 sqm total 40 sqm total (6 single rooms) (small lofts above the bedrooms) 7 sqm each Adult bedrooms: Shared big loft: 76 sqm 14 sqm total (2 rooms, can sleep  $45 \ sqm$ 1 or 2 in each room) Terrace:  $20 \ sqm$ Bedrooms loft: 4 sqm Bathrooms: 16 sqm total 141 sqm (4 bathrooms) Loft total: 10 sqmEntrance: Main floor: 342 sqm Summary: Loft: 141 sqm  $25 \ sqm$ Kitchen: 483 sqm total 25 sqmLiving room:

30 sqm

33 sqm

Atrium: 32 sqm

Front terrace: 52 sqm

Entrance terrace: 23

107 sqm total

Visitor room: 18 sqm

Winter garden:

Outdoor areas:

Storage:

Circulation: 22 sqm

Main floor total: Interior: 235 sqm
Exterior: 107 sqm

Total: 342 sqm

### ABSTRACT

### The lost home

In architecture the home is a central place. It is, in one way, the essence of what we design. It's our safe place. It's where we live with of family, friends, or alone. It is where we feel proteted, yet free. To do exactly as we wish, to relax, to play, to eat, to sleep, to think and look out through our little holes to the outside. But not all homes are harmless, peaceful and happy places. Some are troubled, and not filled with freedom and safety. People might, or might not, remove themselves from that home - if they can. But sometimes they need help to remove themselves.

The question this thesis is trying to explore and propose and answer to is; How do you replace a lost home?

## A new home

In Norway there are around 12, 000 children living in foster homes. When children are taken from their parents, it is usually due to violence and abuse, physical, emotional or sexual. Either towards one partner - or the child. The list of reasons is long, but may include drug abuse, mental illness, abandonment and lack of care, leaving the child alone or neglect of basic needs. Water, food, a clean and safe home.

For young children under the age of 12, it usually works to put them in a foster home, with a new family. From this age on, it gets harder. The child is more aware, and struggles to fit in with the existing family. They might be moved from the foster home to a temporary home, to a new foster home - over and over. They struggle to develop trust, because they are continuously let down.

## A need for stability

What they lack is stability and consistency. In these cases, a traditional family might not be the right solution for them. As a teenager, you can't just get a new mom and dad. So maybe, the solution is a community. With people they can relate to, similar of age. By definition, this is an institution. But this is an institution that is also a home and a workplace. The focus for this diploma is how to create what on paper is an institution, but that feels like a home.

And this raise the questions; What types of spaces do we associate with a home? And, what is a good home?

## A Youth Home

A youth home is an institution, made for teenagers age 13-18. They exist all over the world, and in Oslo we have around 8 existing youth homes. In most cases, "barnevernet" (child protective services) rents a house, and transforms it into an institution.

Around 4-8 juveniles live in one house. Some stay there only temporary, and others stay for years. Each teenager has its own room and access to shared facilities. 3-5 adults (health therapists) work in a youth house. There are adults are always present, and they usually work 3 full days in a row, and then have 7 days off. The juveniles live there voluntarily, and it's not legal to use any type of force. They have freedom to go out, visit friends, they're not forced to eat or even go to school. They're allowed to have friends and family over, and stay away for a night, as long as they ask. Some juveniles manage their everyday life by themselves, and others need to be checked on often. They all have individual agreements. The adults arrange daily meals and some form of activity every weekend. They are always available if they need company or help.

### ABSTRACT

#### Back to basics

The program was my main starting point, as well as the chosen site. But what I have been really doing this whole semester, is going back to basics. Villa Røde is a small and precise project, with every inch measured and every corner of the house touched upon - many times. In the last weeks the changes have been small, but important. Choosing the right scale, height, colour and material is basic, but crucial. In a home, no space is left unused. A family buys or rents what they need and can afford. Exactly the rooms they need, no more no less. Some need a workshop, some need extra bedrooms. A part of the exercise hase been to reduce unnecessary space, and to create a natural flow In the home, with as many interesting and different spaces within a simple and easy to understand system.

## The home vs. The institution

In a typical institution the main focus is practicality, you often walk through endless corridors, rooms aligned in a row. Common rooms are big and filled with furniture, and stairs are wide and big.

A home is more cramped, and rooms are spread all over. The rooms are often not exactly the same, and you walk from one room directly into another. We don't have a definition of what a home is, and no one will agree completely. But with this project I have been trying to explore my own thoughts about "What is the essens of a home?".

Wether or not a place feels like home is not defined by it's label, but about the space itself. We can label something a home, but it might not feel like one. We can label something an institution, and it can feel like a home.

## Open yet protected

The two important keywords for this thesis are *Open* yet *Protected*. Open spaces relate to freedom. To move around freely, to be able to see far away, and to move in all directions with nothing stopping you. Protected spaces relate to safety, and a protected space is more closed than an open one. If we change as little as the ground material or colour, the space reaches the first step of protection - by defining it. We can look at as a scale, *open* on one end and *closed* on the other. Where a space is completely open there is nothing there. But as soon as we staring putting bricks and elements in that space, we divide and define that space. When a space is so defined that it can't connect with any other space - the space is closed.

If the cloes and protected space defines, I argue that the open space connects. These have been my basic tools for designing. Definition and connection, and even though it's basic - it hasen't been easy.

Usually, we find ourselves in spaces that are in the middle of this scale. Slightly open, still somehow defined. Villa Røde is trying to explore all the space on that scale - from the most private zones, to complete open ones, and all those in between. Sometimes we want to be completely private, and sometimes we want to connect with the outer world. And many times, we want to be in the middle.

Where do you feel free, but yet protected?



















