“Åhaga - a collage of time”

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ÅHAGA - A COLLAGE OF TIME
BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Åhaga is a facility building for music, theater, sports, trade shows, product-launches and other events. The building is situated in Borås which is the second largest city in the region of Västra Götaland. With its location just at the outskirt of the city center, it is an important meeting place for the whole region.

Annually, over 100 000 people are visiting Åhaga during various events. It is owned and run by Åhaga Foundation whose main role is to run the business so that funds are in place to promote the cultural life in the region.

Åhaga locomotive workshop was built in 1903. This was the place for the repairation and maintenance of the steam locomotive for almost 60 years. The character of the building has been carefully preserved after the renovation that was completed in 2002. And since then the building is programmed for a different function where they offer tailor-made events.

The original building consists of a large open workshop hall, which was held in the two elongated so-called ship and is the main part of the building. In the south-east there is a smaller and lower part used for administration. The total area of 4500 m² includes also functions as repositories, restaurant & kitchen, rest rooms and other requisites.

On the exterior, façades of brick dominates and they are designed in a style that became typical for the time and function of the building. The design is simple classicist with pilasters and heavily marked cornices, masonry patterns cornices and segmented arch shaped headpieces. The main part of the building’s north-eastern façade from around 1920 is carried out in wood. Åhaga workshop is characterized largely by the large and numerous window surfaces and forms. The large windows are explained in the daylight accounted for the main light supply in the working premises.

Saw-tooth roof with its windows is an addition from around 1920 gives the building its true industrial character. Along with chimney this type of roof stand as the symbol for the building as being an industrial type. Window surfaces are generally directed towards the north as it is quite usual for this type of roofing. This is to let an even light that does not cast any shadows in the workshop room. The combination of steel and wood structure that carries and represents saw-tooth roof is not preserved in any other building in Borås, and is rare in other parts of the country. All windows in saw-tooth roof are new production after a renovation in 1996-98.

Today there are some developments going on in the area. The building is not standing alone on the site anymore. Recently two new constructions has been added quite close to Åhaga. One of them houses the big chain food company Ica Maxi and the other one Burger King, Flugger färg and other chain stores. And buildings that have functions as such has its own character and look. This adds another dimension in the context. The space in between the buildings is used for car parking for the visitors. Some hundred meters from the plot many housing projects are planned or are already finished. In the near future the area of Druvefors will develop into a more densed and urban area.
- The water tower mostly in brick.
- The chimneys were totally rebuilt.
- Wooden windows different from the rest of the original building to mark the administration part of the building.
- Windows of steel.
- Facade decoration includes among other things, pilasters and heavily corniced heavily cornices.
- Saw-tooth roof from the 20's facades in the same brick as the original building.
- Main entrance.
- Façade in red brick with pilasters and heavily cornices as decoration, windows of steel.
- The chimney was totally rebuilt.
- The extension from 1903 in brick towards the north-east and south-east and wood on the north-western façade.
- The original buildings from 1903.
- The extension from 1920 in brick towards the north-east and south-east and wood on the north-western façade.
- The extension from 1940.
When Åhaga was finished in 1903, most of the north-eastern facade was built in wood. Most likely, due to a possible extension of the building. Around 1920 when the building with saw-tooth roof was added, the original wooden facade was reused. It is important to take this into account with a new extension today. It provides a clear direction for the extension of building. Today, the city is growing towards the west and north of Åhaga, and with Söderleden east of the building makes it a show-case and less accessible. It is favorable with a new entrance towards the west and its new face towards the new square.

The building is visible from Söderleden and serves as a show-case for Åhaga and Borås. With its heritage value Åhaga has great importance and with the new addition, it is important that the most visible facades are not obscured.

Today the site on west and north of Åhaga is quite undefined as space. With an extension to the existing Åhaga the site could receive quite a boost.

An extension will help with a more defined space, creating an entrance situation from/to the location.

Possible site for an expansion

main building from 1903
extension from 2002 with kitchen/restaurant part
extension from around 1920
extension from 1940
THESIS STATEMENT

The aim of this project is to show how an extension adjusts and relates to cultural/historical context and together with the original building meet the new demands and functions while adding a new layer of time and thereby create an interesting architectural entirety.

Kevin Lynch in his work “What time is this place” shares a thought on the contrast of old and new. He writes that “the accumulation of overlapping traces from successive periods, each trace modifying and being modified by the new additions to produce something like a collage of time”. Each element becomes an indication of its own time even if it is a fragment of it. The idea of enhancing the contrast and complexity and “to make visible the process of change” as Lynch says has been the fundamental of this project.

The new addition will contribute to create a complexity that is architecturally interesting and furthermore adds another layer of time to an already diverse context.

PROGRAM

As the number of visitors per year is increasing and a lot of events are taking place in this building there are shortage of spaces. It is wishful for the foundation to provide more spaces for different future needs. Since the existing main hall is of a bigger scale with limited height, it gets problematic to furnish it for smaller events. Also it creates problem when it comes to the acoustics in case of events as concerts.

That’s why there is a need of a smaller hall which will work for itself but also can be used together with the existing building. Other function that comes with the new extension is the restrooms but also it is wishful if there is more spaces for staff and repositories.

- multi-purpose hall/ concert hall 350-450 seats
- 100-200 m² repositories/ storage
- 10 wc of which 2 hwc
- rehearsal room
- staff space

THE EXTENSION

The core function of the existing building deals with the questions of logistics even today. Due to the multi-purpose use it, it is in constant change and each day is different than the other. It is therefore crucial to take that in concern. At the same time the building needs to become more accessible and more part of an urban context. The ambition is that the new extension will be capable of strengthening the existing building while adding a new layer to it.

The proposal suggests that the current foyer/ entrance should be extended with the new foyer/ hall. This create a situation where the building is approached from two different directions, which is good for a larger building as such. In a city scale it is a strong feature, since the changes with the new parking spaces on the south-east of Ånga creates a whole new situation.

Additionally placing a new entrance towards the north-west strengthens the existing facade line which is another front-side of the building marked by the water-tower and the chimney. According to the proposal this line needs to be extended. The consequence of it is a more defined space outside of the building which in the near future will have the potential to be developed into something else than a parking-lot as it is today.

The linear direction of the building is fascinating since it is a strong quality in the building. All the layers, which have been added to original Åhaga, follow the direction of the east-west line giving the building its longitudinal form. To make the logistics and the new program work both in the new building but also together with the existing Åhaga and yet solve the problems from a city planning point of view, the footprint of the new addition is apposing to follow the same diretion as the lamellas.

Breaking the new building into two different, almost identical pitched roof houses is the proposal’s solution to the problem that comes with the footprint. Furthermore, it completes the north-western facade making it more of a unit. The building, both in the exterior and interior, accentuating the east-west orientation. The exposed bearing structure of it follows the same line and so do the other elements such as windows on longside facades, the texture of the copper sheet on the facade and the roof, the penstock and so on.

In order to make this type of verticality more evident, the gable facades and interior elevations use a different material and texture. Here they do the opposite, to emphasize vertical line. At the same time they follow the same language as the gable facades of the original Åhaga. The columns remind one of the ornamentation of the original building while making it possible to create spacious rooms and monumental spaces inside the new building.

The new extension is in two floors in the building closed to the existing and one level in the part where the big multi-purpose hall is. The inner volume consists of the foyer which leads to the existing foyer connecting the entrances. In this part of the building one can find the restrooms, staff areas and also storage. Repository spaces has replaced the conference spaces of the existing building while the conference room is shifted to the upper level of the new building. In the upper level there is also the plantroom and upper foyer/ hall.
MULTIFUNCTIONAL HALL
550 m²
REPOSITORY
35 m²
CLOAKROOM
44 m²
FOYER
WC
STORAGE
EXISTING FOYER
STAFF
17 m²
STAFF REPOSITORY
150 m²
STAFF REPOSITORY
286 m²
CONFERENCE
185 m²
UPPER FOYER
TERRACE
PLANTROOM REPOSITORY
98 m²
HALL
Exterior view of the building facing the main road which is one of the entrances to the city of Borås from the south. The new addition is seen to the right.
REFERENCES

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