



Bänken som Föll Mellan Stolarna A Bench that Fell Between the Cracks

A site-specific project in the public sphere
by Alvaro Campo

Introduction

This project was initiated for my final presentation of the one year postmaster course “Of Public Interest“, lead by Jonas Dahlberg at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. In the beginning, I had a much clearer idea of where I wanted it to go but it gradually found its own development and form, and today it should be seen as a work in progress.

The research began in the area where my Studio is located in Stockholm because it was so accessible and familiar to me, especially during the beginning of the COVID crisis. The crisis also accentuated the importance of a public space accessible to all, a space without programming or commercial interests, simply a place to be. In the context of the quarantine, during the beginning of the Spring of 2020 being stuck in their apartments many people had nowhere to go in the commercial public space. Cafes and restaurants felt dangerous and infected, and many places were closed. Many people found comfort in the simple pleasure of sitting in the sun on a public bench at a proper distance from each other.

Having said this I would like to share this project with you that situates itself around a public bench in the industrial area of Hagalund, in Solna, a part of the greater Stockholm area.

Part 1

Hagalund in Space and Time

At the end of the 1800s in Old Hagalund, before Blåkulla, land was sold cheaply, and people built their own houses. Many of these people were craftsmen. On the site, a small “city” was built organically, with no political directives and no urban planning. This gave rise to a unique architecture and organization, and 6000 people lived there at its most populated moment. But Hagalund was regarded by the authorities as a township. In the 60’s and 70’s came the "Million Program" and housing needed to be built for a much larger part of the population. Hagalund was one of the chosen sites. Old Hagalund was demolished and became what is today Blåkulla, and Hagalund industrial Area still exists just beside it.

During the transformation process of old Hagalund, a painter named Olle Olsson who had lived there all his life in a house built by his grandfather, succeeded in influencing public opinion. His intervention would lead to the preservation of a few houses from the old neighbourhood, including his own. Today this is known as the Olle Olsson Hagalund Museum.



Hagalund Industrial Area

Hagalund Industrial Area which is next door to Hagalund, is soon to be torn down and remodeled to create 4500 housing units. In fact, the process has already started.

The city of Stockholm is building a new subway line that will connect Hagalund to the city, which is to take 8 years to complete - [see program here](#)

An architect named Björn Johansson has written a thesis on the area and its transformation, and the proposal was completed some years ago. The central idea is to integrate the businesses together with the new housing and to preserve a large part of the industrial area with the intention of not pushing out all the small businesses and other operations running in the area and seeing if it possible to create a space where these can coexist and create a lively area. (more info: [download document here](#))



 Hagalund
 Hagalund industrial area

Invigning: Liljevalchs i samarbete med Humlegården kring konstnärshubb

Humlegården Fastigheter AB

2-3 minutes



Pressmeddelande den 26 augusti 2014:

Liljevalchs erbjuder konstnärer och kreatörer projektplatser i Hagalunds företagsområde i samarbete med Humlegården Fastigheter och Solna kommun. Konstnärshubben blir en knutpunkt där kreativitet kan utforskas, utvecklas och visas upp. Invigning och öppet hus hålls torsdag den 28 augusti kl 16-19 på Industrivägen 14 i Hagalund, Solna.

I lokalen på Industrivägen 14 finns projektplatser för såväl konstnärer som filmare, scenografer och fotografer. Här ges möjlighet till utbyte av idéer och samarbete. Verksamheten kommer också vara utåtriktad med mindre utställningar, seminarier och andra konstnärliga event.

Projektet är initierat av Liljevalchs och sker i samarbete med Humlegården Fastigheter och Solna kommun. Öppet hus hålls torsdag den 28 augusti kl 16-19 då performance-artisten Iris Smeds med Vaska Fimpen uppträder. Vid invigningen talar Madeleine Sjöstedt (FP), kulturborgarråd i Stockholm, Marianne Damström Gereben (FP), kultur- och fritidsnämndens ordförande i Solna samt Per-Arne Rudbert, vd för Humlegården Fastigheter.

"I Hagalunds företagsområde finns sedan länge både replokaler, konstnårsateljéer och ungdomsverksamheter etablerade. Liljevalchs Hubb ser vi som ytterligare ett bidragande tillskott till kulturlivet i området", säger Per-Arne Rudbert, vd Humlegården Fastigheter.

Syftet med projektet Liljevalchs Hubb är att skapa bredare kontaktytor mellan kreativa aktörer och det etablerade kulturlivet i Stockholmsregionen, att få till möten mellan konstnärliga utövare och institutioner samt företag och organisationer.

Välkommen!

Liljevalchs Hubb

In 2014 Liljevalchs, Humlegården Real Estate Agency (which owns most of the buildings in Hagalund and which has increased their investments in the area) and the city of Solna collaborated on the creation of Liljevalchs Hub, in old, rundown, unrentable office spaces. A studio complex for artists of various disciplines was born. It was inaugurated in the presence of the former minister of Culture, Madeleine Sjöstedt

“The purpose of the project is to create broader contact areas between creative actors and the established cultural life in the Stockholm region, to bring about meetings between artistic practitioners and institutions as well as companies and organizations.”

Two years later, Liljevalchs pulled out of the project and let the artists take over the leases through an organization of their own which today is named Gelb Ateljéer.

Tumba Byggtjänst

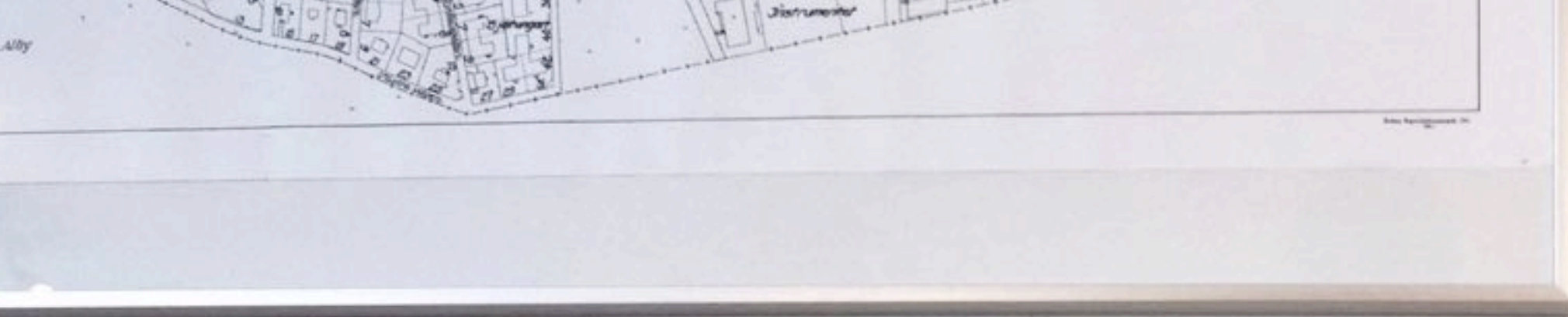
HAGALUNDSMUSEET

2 TR.



GAMLA HAGALUNDS VÄNNER





Hagalundsmuseet

There are several other artistic organizations in the building and neighborhood; some were already there, and others have joined later, attracted by the low rents. One of these organizations is Gamla Hagalunds Vänner. This association is made up of 300 members, most of whom grew up in Old Hagalund, and the main purpose of the association is preservation and exhibition of cultural memory. It acts as a museum sorts, run almost entirely by goodwill and voluntary work. Without proper funding and structure, it has been forced to move from several times in the last decade and so has a bit of a “temporary” feel to it.

The Museum collection consists of donated photographs, paintings, drawings, maps and collected historical documents but most importantly, the individual and collective memories of the members. However, there is also a series of remarkable “objects” housed by the collection, a series of models made by Kent Fernström and in particular one large scale piece that documents in minute detail the process of the destruction of Old Hagalund and the simultaneous reconstruction of the new on top of the old. The work’s title is ”Varje grop en grav.” English translation, “Each pit, a grave.”





The model was exhibited at Liljevalchs vårsalong in 2013.
([more info here](#)).

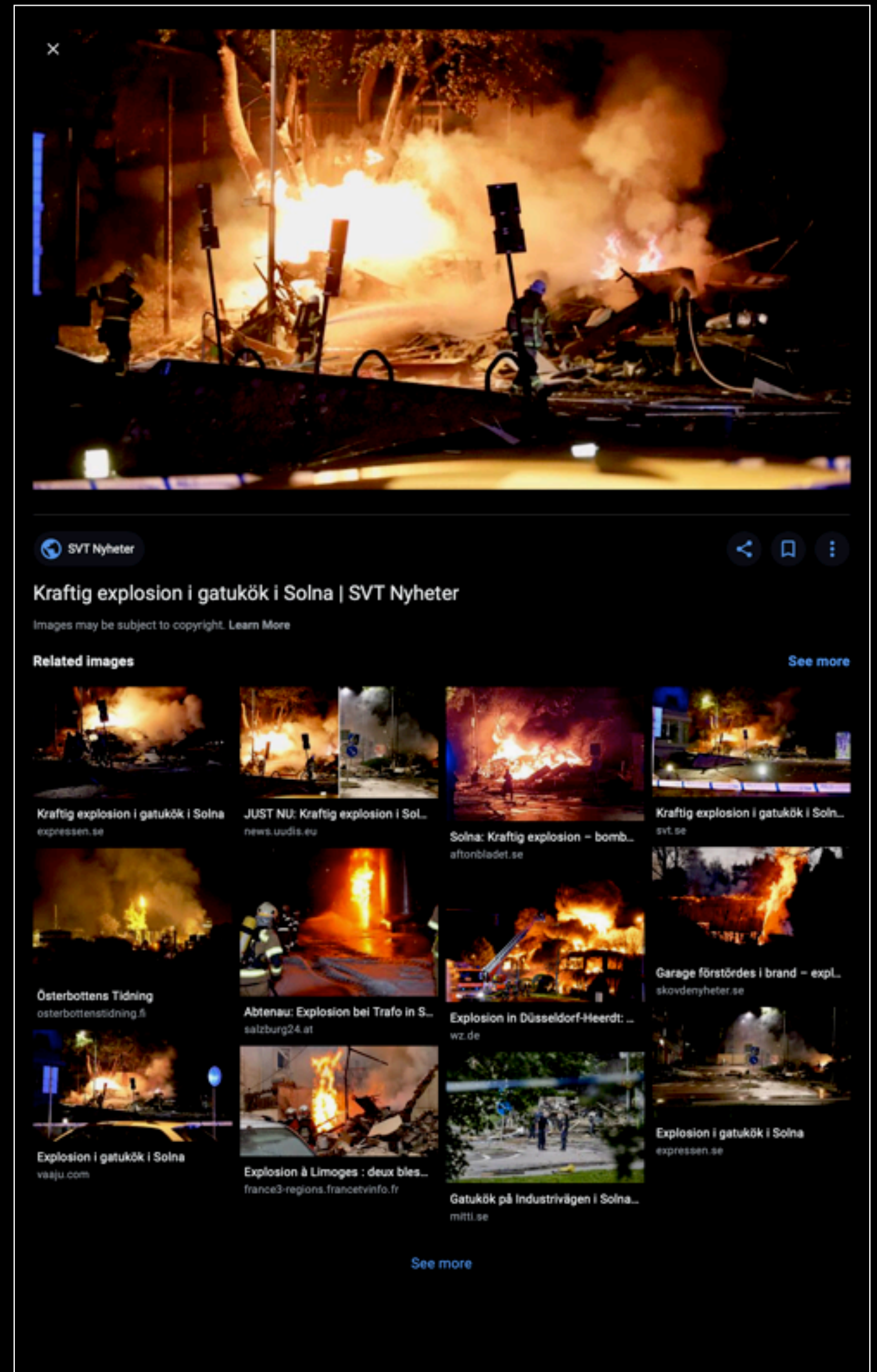


Hagalund Industrial Area : The Process of deconstruction has begun but in a rather unexpected way.

The Big Bang

On the 23rd of August an explosion is heard in the middle of the night from several kilometers away. Pita Baren, the Greek fast-food restaurant has blown up. The scene is one of devastation, a war zone-like situation with only bits and pieces left of the little lunch place that marks the entrance of Hagalund Industrial Area, and there are several damaged buildings.

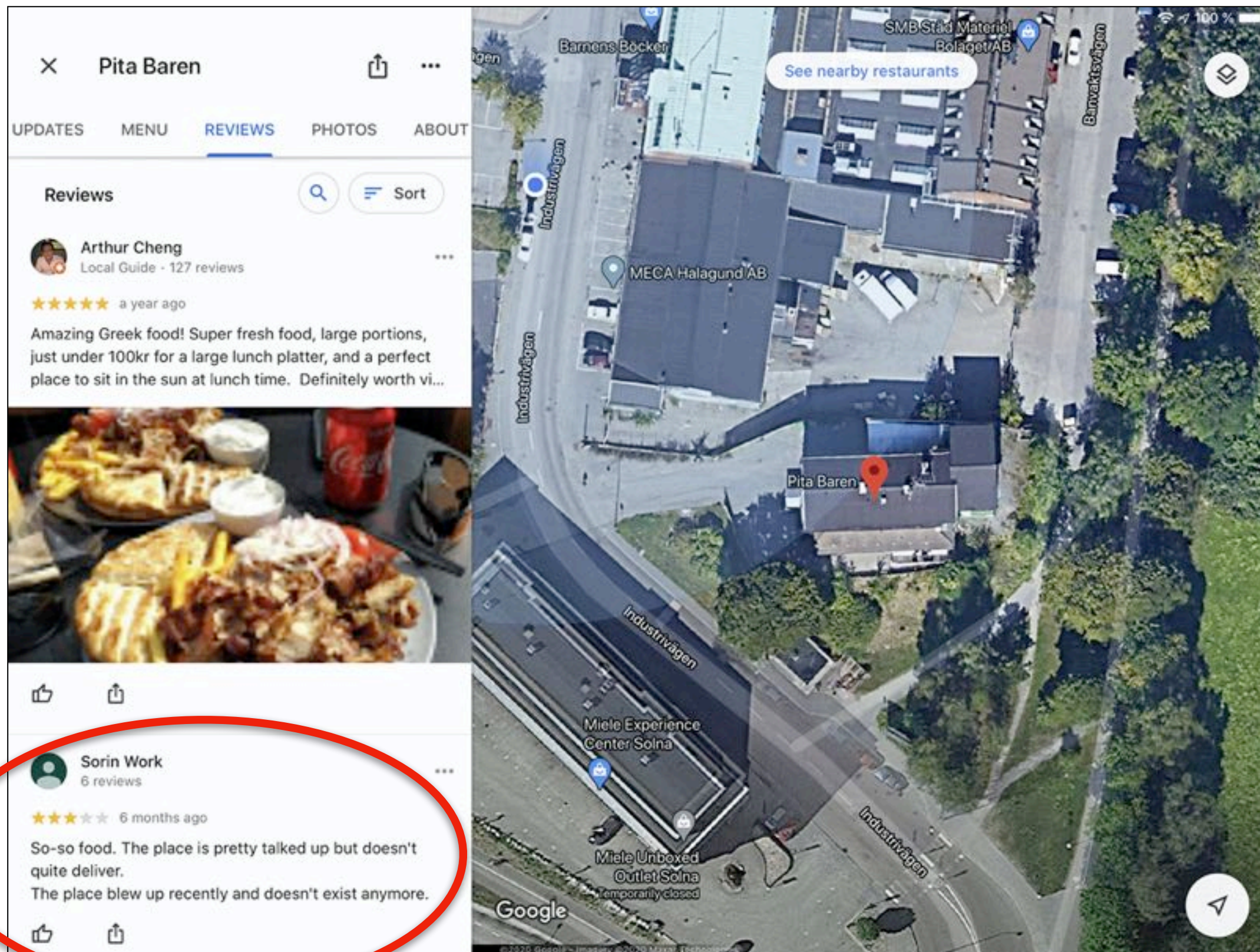
The scene was later investigated by the police, and the conclusion was that it was a criminal act, that the explosion was indeed planned, but as of today nobody has been convicted of the crime.





Industrivägen

Industrivägen



Today the Pita Baren still exists on Google maps where a local named Sorin reviews it and says:

“So-so food. The place is pretty talked up but doesn't quite deliver. The place blew up recently and doesn't exist anymore”

[Link on google maps](#)



7 months ago

This is what was left of it after the explosion, the remains were left untouched for several months. The green building in the background has been used as a refugee center. It is now being used for police exercises.

Images may be subject to copyright.

Like



At the moment, all that is left is a pit, a reminder of that night, a ground zero for the Pita Bar.



Polisen har övning

Torsdag den 16 april klockan 07.00-15.00 kommer polisen att öva i fastigheten på Industrivägen 27 (gröna "villan"). Vid iakttagelse av poliser och polisbilar under tisdagen finns det således ingen anledning till oro kring att det skulle ha inträffat något i området.

Vid eventuella frågor är du alltid välkommen att kontakta oss.
För bästa möjliga spridning vänligen se till att alla på företaget får denna information.

PS. Du har väl inte missat att du kan hitta praktisk information om din fastighet på vår hemsida? Klicka [här](#) och fyll i din adress eller fastighetens beteckning.

Med vänlig hälsning
Kundservice
Humlegården Fastigheter AB

HUMLEGÅRDEN



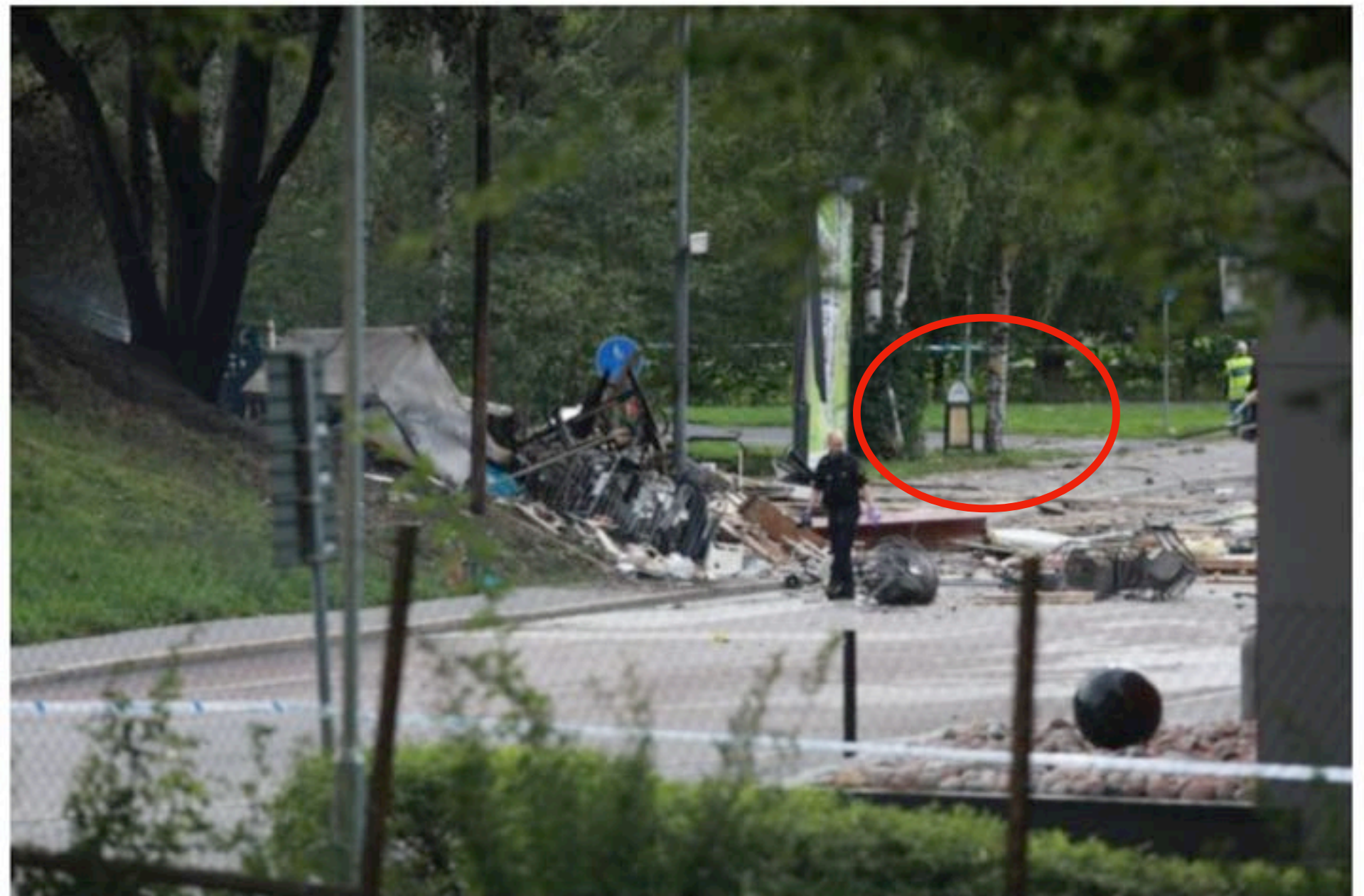
A message from Humlegården (Real Estate Agency) announcing that the police will be doing exercises in the green villa on Thursday, the 16th of April, and that there is nothing to worry about.



pang
DUMPLINGS

BROTT

Sprängladdning orsakade explosionen i gatuköket

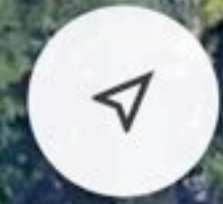


A curious coincidence, just a few meters away a sign for another roadside “food truck” that goes by the name of “PANG Dumplings.” (above) can also be seen in this newspaper clipping, the day after the explosion.

Gatuköket totalförstördes och fastigheter i närheten skadades. **Foto:** Christian Lärk



The second building to be demolished, this time, also a planned event, but in a more controlled way, was a car repair shop just a couple of hundred meters down the road. It still also exists on the [current version of Google maps](#). Its name was MECA, Hagalund.





16 Industrivägen



The empty space and traces left after a couple of months of demolition.

The Old School

Just across the street from this is a Montessori school for small children, [Björkbacka skola](#). It was run down and uncared for until just recently.



A link to [an interactive map of the location](#) before it was renovated some years ago.

tsområde har en rik och
ria som omfattar såväl
nnen som milstolpar i den
ngen. Det som idag driver
ökande mångfalden av
e i området.

und omdanades i slutet av 1960-
r Vattentornet bebyggd och här
gd 1930. Den centrala gatan hette
sig till Källvägen, Alpgatan och

namn efter Hagalunds repslageri
i bruk fram till 1937 då nya material
nla hantverket.

**”För mig har den här platsen alltid stått för febril
aktivitet... Jag har sprungit hos Bertil på Europabagarn
så länge jag kan minnas. Och nu är jag här igen med 200
högljudda ungdomar i släptåg.”**

/ Martin Taranger, ung kulturkoordinatör i Solna stad, vart verksamhet Black Sheep flyttade in på Gettögatan i mars 2015

Skolhusvägen

Gamla Centralskolan, byggd 1874, är Solnas äldsta bevarade skolbyggnad ritad av Axel Kumlien (1833–1913), mest känd som arkitekten bakom Grand Hôtel i Stockholm. Här etablerades Solnas första bibliotek 1914 finansierat av hundskatten. I början av 1970-talet bytte skolan namn till Björkbacka och erbjöd vårdutbildning i samarbete med Karolinska sjukhuset. Sedan dess har huset använts till en rad olika ändamål.

Pulsgeneratorn

På Industrivägen 23 uppfanns den första pace-makern 1958 av Rune Elmqvist. Han arbetade för företaget Siemens-Elma och

på uppdrag av Åke Senning, överläkare och hjärtkirurg vid Karolinska sjukhuset. Den första pace-makern bestod av två transistorer och ett batteri ingjutna i epoxyplast med en skokrämsburk som form.

Delä dina berättelser och bilder / Share your stories #solna

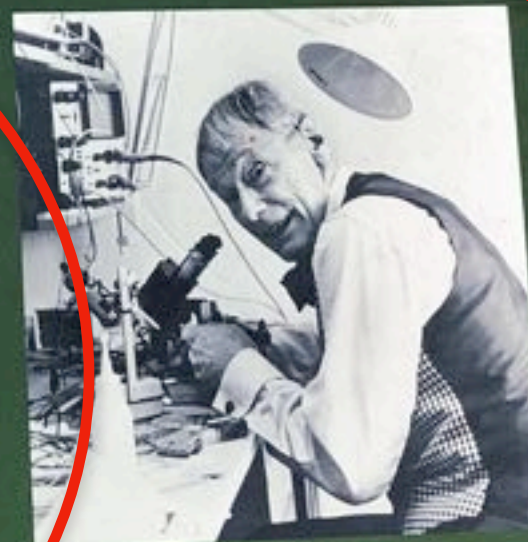
Summary

The industrial estate of Hagalund has a long and interesting history with a number of important milestones in the local history of Solna as well as in the Swedish industrial history.

In the preserved buildings from the late 19th century further down the street, one of the first public schools of Solna was situated. The school was active until the 1960's. At Industrivägen 23 the pace-maker was innovated in 1958 by Rune Elmqvist at Siemens-Elma.



Centralskolan 1907.
Foto: Bildarkivet, Solna stad



Rune Elmqvist, uppfinnare av pace-makern.
Foto: Sydsvenska Medicinhistoriska Sällskapet



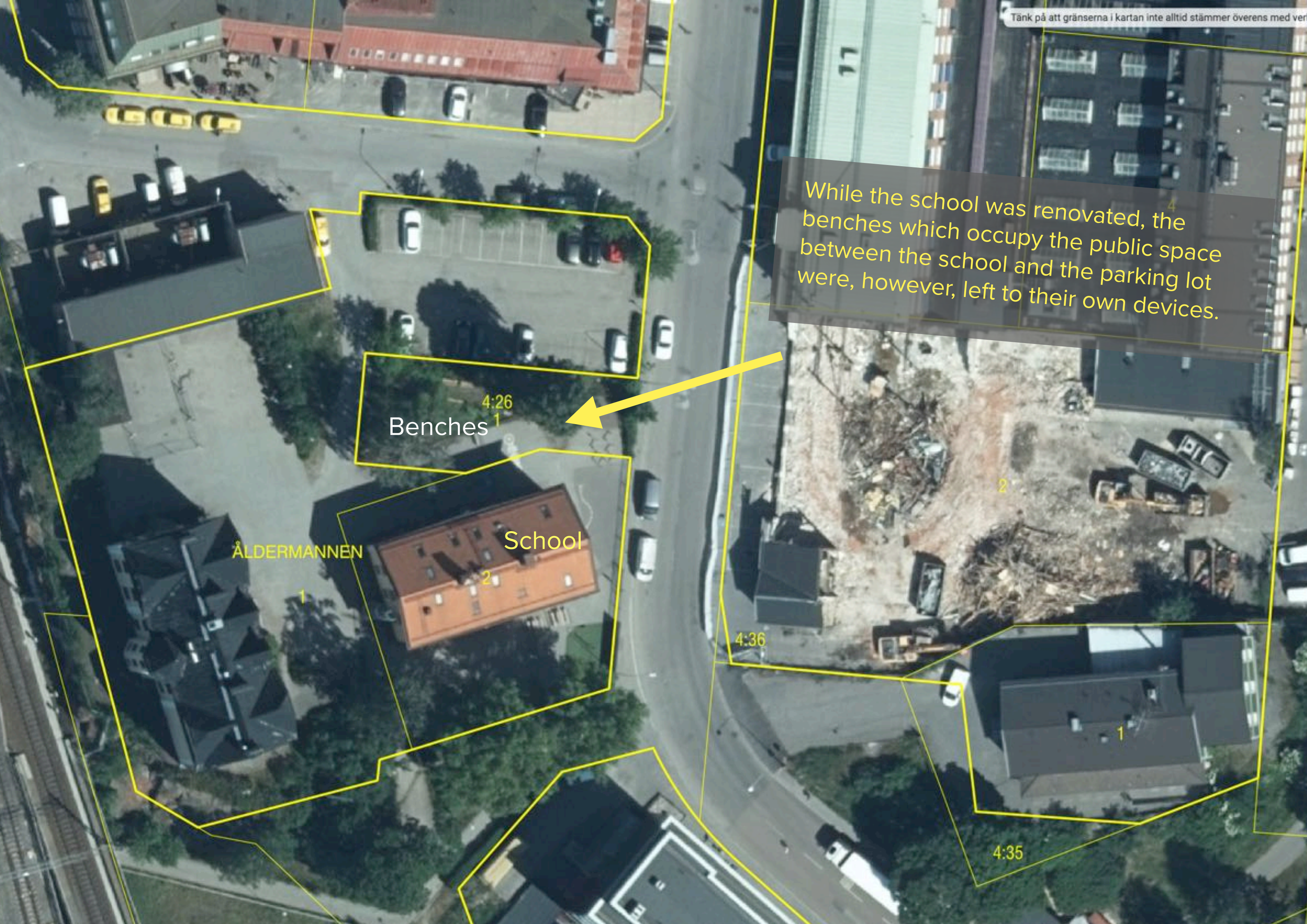
Öppen verkstad i textilkonst på Industrivägen 14, oktober 2014.
Foto: Lijevaiche Hubb

A sign on the side of the street was placed by Stockholm Läns Museum (the Stockholm County Museum) describes it as a building of historical and cultural value. It was built in 1874 and is Solna's oldest preserved school building. The students there got an education organized by Karolinska Hospital (located less than a km away) to work with public healthcare.

The benches

This is a view of the school from one of the windows in the building where my studio is located. In front of the school, from this angle, there is a little park with three public benches





While the school was renovated, the benches which occupy the public space between the school and the parking lot were, however, left to their own devices.

Benches
4:26
1

School
2

ÅLDERMANNEN
1


4:36

4:35
1



The graffiti in the background was made for an art project which was partly funded by the municipality of Solna

The benches in the winter of 2020



The benches in the Spring of 2020.
Note that the piece of wood on the
ground under one of the benches is
still there after a couple of months.



This detail plan map from 1992 defines the use of different land sections in the area and shows the little green patch with the benches as an area defined by Solna Municipality. The park and benches were at that time in the care of Solna Municipality. (See map here)



Återvinning	
●	Adress
Belysning	
●	Belysning
Markskötse	
■	Annuel
■	Asfalt
■	Baksan
■	Barkflis
■	Bruksgr
■	Buskar
■	Grusyta
■	Gummi
■	Hundra
■	Högvux
■	Klippt h
■	Klång- c
■	Konstgr
■	Konstru
■	Naturpa
■	Naturst
■	Perenn
■	Plattyt
■	Prydnad
■	Rabattr
■	Stridsa
■	Ängsyta
Lekplatser	
■	Lekplat
■	Lekplat
■	Parklek
Valdistrikt	
■	Valdistr
Detaljplane	
■	Pågåen
Fastighets	
■	Fastigh
Detaljplane	
■	Detaljpl

This map shows the actual detail plan for Solna, the areas for care and maintenance during the summer months of the year, here in yellow. It seems as though the little park has been forgotten in the current plan.



Lantmäteriet is the Swedish mapping, cadastral and registration authority. This is where ownership of land is registered in Sweden. This map shows the names, ownership and division of land parcels in the area.

Solna Hagalund 4:26



Adress och ägarinformation
26 maj 2020

Fastighet

Beteckning	Senaste ändringen i allmänna delen	Aktualitetsdatum i inskrivningsdelen
Solna Hagalund 4:26 Nyckel: 010333772 Anmärkning: Tidigare registrerad som a-solna prästgården 1:2	2014-01-14	2020-05-25

Adress

Adress
Äldermansvägen 8
171 48 Solna

Läge, karta

Område	N, E (SWEREF 99 TM)		N, E (SWEREF 99 18 00)	
1	6583582.5	671382.2	6582334.8	150846.4
2	6583506.1	671449.4	6582255.5	150910.1

Lagfart

Ägare	Andel	Inskrivningsdag	Akt
212000-0183 Solna Kommun Redovisning 4 Tr 171 86 Solna Expropriation: 1874-03-13 Lagfartsanmärkning: Anmärkning 36/1106	1/1	1922-09-18	22/25

According to this official document from Lantmäteriet, Solna Hagalund 4:26 has been owned by the municipality of Solna since 1874 when it was expropriated.



The proposal

The proposal is to restore one of the three benches to its original state. (the one on the left).

In the second phase of this project, I will research and document the origin of the bench and consult a carpenter in order to do a proper restoration.

As mentioned in the introduction, I have approached what was immediately and easily available to me, the public space right outside of my studio. But through the course of this project, it is now much clearer to me that the park's situation sheds light on questions in a much wider context, the grey zones which appear in the process of privatisation and consequently the neglected areas of responsibility.

Who will be responsible for these areas in the long run? What happens when citizens attempt to take them into their own hands?

Part 2

Solna Hagalund 4:26 : The restoration

Eager to start on the physical work and since the paint on the benches was flaking away, I peeled off a bit and went to the paint store NCS 3040-Y20R seemed to be the color.



It was only after scraping away a layer of paint that I realized that the original was transparent varnish that showed the wood underneath and that this NCS 3040-Y20R color had been used to try to simulate wood. The painter had only painted the upper side of the bench. I decided to unscrew a plank to have a closer look. The underside revealed the original color. It smelled like an old boat and looked like an oar.







At the boat club I met a man named David from Peru. He was scraping a boat. He had inherited it from a Swedish ambassador that he used to work for. The boat was from 1911.

The instructions were clear:

1. Scrape and sand away as much as possible of the old paint. Some people use machines, but doing so may get rid of too much wood, and the result might be that the hull becomes weak in some places. Going out to sea with a weak hull is not recommended. Doing the work by hand may take longer, but if you want your boat to last...
2. To be able to sand it, the wood must be completely dry.
3. Oil the wood with a mixture of 50% linseed oil and 50% turpentine.
4. Use boat paint, and sand lightly between each layer. Wipe off dust.
5. Apply a final coat of varnish.
6. Sail away into unknown waters.





Even though the month of June had been an unusually hot one, the wood was wet in some places, and the sanding process had to be interrupted in order to let the wood dry.





The sun's heat had not been enough to dry the damaged wood by itself. Water had worked itself in over a longer period of time and penetrated through the layers of paint.

Borrowing the bench and placing it in the studio in order to dry seemed like the most effective and simple way to go about it.

The invisible bench was also covered and made to look present in order to avoid worrying the neighbourhood over its absence.







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On one of the planks on the back of the bench a little plate under the first layer of paint became visible, and on the plate, the name of the company that had made the bench and a telephone number.

At Hags, a person named Anders Kyhlberg answered, and he was able to answer some questions about the bench.

1. That it most probably dated from the mid-nineties.
2. That the wood should be oiled first and then painted with glazing paint ('lasyr,' in Swedish)
3. That the color to use in the renovation process is NCS - 3050Y10R

And so the painting began...





In the midst of the second layer, the roar of electric saws suddenly made itself heard. A man was cutting the hedges around the parking lot. How fast would this process go? Were they going to cut the tall grass and bushes around the bench? Had the municipality finally sent people to take care of the place? Would they ask what I was doing, who I was working for?

When asked what he was doing and who he was working for, he responded that he was employed by the owner of the buildings, Humlegården. He said that he would not cut the hedges farther than the edge of the parking lot and that the benches were not included in this task. The boundary was very distinct - it was the far edge of the parking lot. He also mentioned that this was not a rare occurrence, that in fact there are many places where he has been working where this is the case, where the boundaries between the public and the private manifest in the shrubbery.





As the painting of the bench was reaching its final stage a white Volvo drove up and parked besides the park. A middle-aged woman climbed out and explained that she was the principal of the school. She asked who I worked for and complained that the lack of care for these green areas was tarnishing the school's image. She was clearly upset and wondered who to contact.







A couple of days later the process had finally come to an end with a third layer of paint. The bench, restored at last, was ready to return to playing its part in the public life of Hagalund Industrial Area.



TO BE CONTINUED...

