

# Where strangers become Neighbours

Design for Diversity – A case study utilising a physical and social framework of a reception centre for asylum seekers




Master thesis in Urban Design and City Development  
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## MASTER'S THESIS

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Thank you to all the residents and employers at Dale reception centre for all the valuable information you have given to me in the course of my master thesis.

And to my mum and dad thank you for all the encouragement and time you have spent helping me with my education over the past years.

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# Introduction

This project is going to look at how the built environment, in this case a public space, can improve the well-being for people in a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees. The project is going to talk about the life in reception centres and how we better can plan for the diversity of people who live there. If integration can be introduced in an early stage of the asylum seekers arrival, then it also will be easier for asylum seeker, to prepare for integration if they have the opportunity to stay in Norway.

The Norwegian directorate for immigrants have regulations on how a reception centre should be run, and what the minimum requirements which are needed for a safe and secure living situation. I do find that although these regulations are a lot better than in other European countries, they do not take into account that people have to live in reception centres for several months and in many cases several years. We in society should also realise that an individual that is an asylum seeker or refugee should not be seen as a criminal, as this will prejudice their fair treatment.

Dale reception centre, situated in the municipality of Sandnes, is where this project takes place and can in some ways be compared to a typical neighbourhood, but in more ways it is very different. This is because it is, not only isolated on the outskirts of the town, it's the largest reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees in Norway. The fluctuation of residents makes it a challenging "neighbourhood" to study, based on its diversity and the individual needs of the people. The goal is to make a design proposal which is flexible, contemporary, and inclusive for different user groups.

It is important to recognise that even though this project focuses on asylum seekers and their diversity, in connection with the situation, and surroundings they have found themselves in, it is now becoming an important issue for many countries in the world where a multi-cultural society is the norm, and socially mixed neighbourhoods is common in many towns and cities.

# Aim of project

How can we use design methods to improve the well being for people who are living at a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees?

To understand the background of conflicts that might occur in a diverse neighbourhood.

To redesign a space that seeks to erase the conflicts that could occur in a diverse neighbourhood.

The study of this "closed" group and the resultant design is potentially something that is applicable to many socially mixed neighbourhoods that are common all over the world.



Photo 3 Model of the housing at Dale reception centre

# Methods

To obtain the data for this project I divided it into two categories of observations.

- Collecting data to identify the people
- Collection data to identify the landscape and physical framework

## **Collecting data to identify the people:**

This was done mainly by interviewing the people who work at Dale reception centre and residents who lived there. The interviews were partially guided and partial informal interviews. The interview questions were prepared beforehand, but the interviewee was free to talk away from the questions. This way the interview became more of a conversation, and the aim was to find out as much as possible about the life at Dale reception centre. When the interviewee can talk freely, one could tell when a topic became important to them.

The interview with the Eva-Maria Gärtner, Head of staff at Dale reception centre, was aimed at getting a better understanding of how a reception centre is run, and also generally what thoughts she had on future plans. The interviews were used to measure attitudes, perceptions and motivations as well as information about the area of Dale. All the interviews were recorded and documented.

Also photo and direct observations were used as a way to track people's movements and activities at different times of the day.

## **Collecting data to identify the landscape and physical framework:**

The data and information collected was analyzed and then used to obtain an improved understanding of a physical area, and used as guidance for future planning.

Photo and direct observations were also used as ways to observe and document the landscape and physical built framework.

Digital maps used in the project were supplied by the council of Sandnes, Norway.



# Structure of report

The report is divided into the following chapters:

## Chapter 1 – Setting the scene

This discusses immigration and asylum seekers in Norway in order to outline the case for this project.

## Chapter 2 – Theory

How we can plan for integration in socially mixed neighbourhoods and if it is possible to design for the individual needs.

## Chapter 3 – Analysis

The area at Dale where the reception centre is located will be presented through identifying the landscape and its built framework and also by looking at who lives at the reception centre. A process of interviews and analysis will be used to present the case study.

## Chapter 4 – The Site

This chapter presents the development of ideas for a design proposal on the chosen site.

## Chapter 5 – The Design Proposal

Chapter five is the plan, sections and perspectives of the design proposal. The concept and its associated ideas will also be presented. The Design proposal will be a product of implementing strategies discussed in chapter two with the boundaries set by identifying the landscape and people at Dale discussed in chapter three.

# Chapter 1 – Setting the scene



Photo 4 View of Dale reception centre from across the fjord

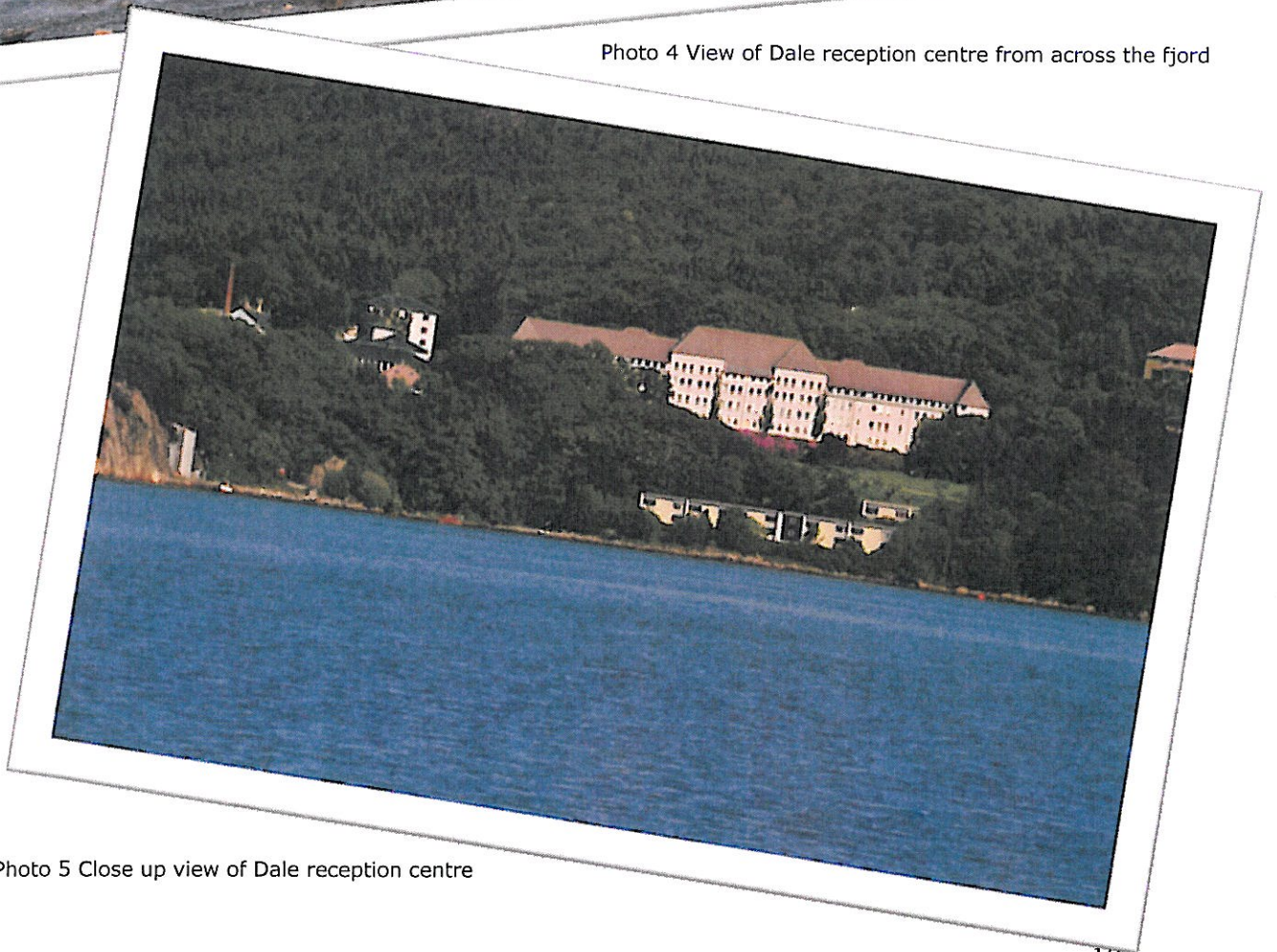


Photo 5 Close up view of Dale reception centre

# Immigration in Norway

Immigrants and those born in Norway to immigrant parents constitute nearly 508 000 persons or 10.6 per cent of Norway's population. They represent 214 countries and independent regions and came to Norway as refugees, labour migrants, to study, or to join family living in Norway<sup>1</sup>.

The largest settlements of immigrants live in Oslo and the surrounding county councils of Oslo. In Oslo 25% of the population are immigrants. This project takes place in the county of Rogaland where there are a little more than 10% immigrant population.

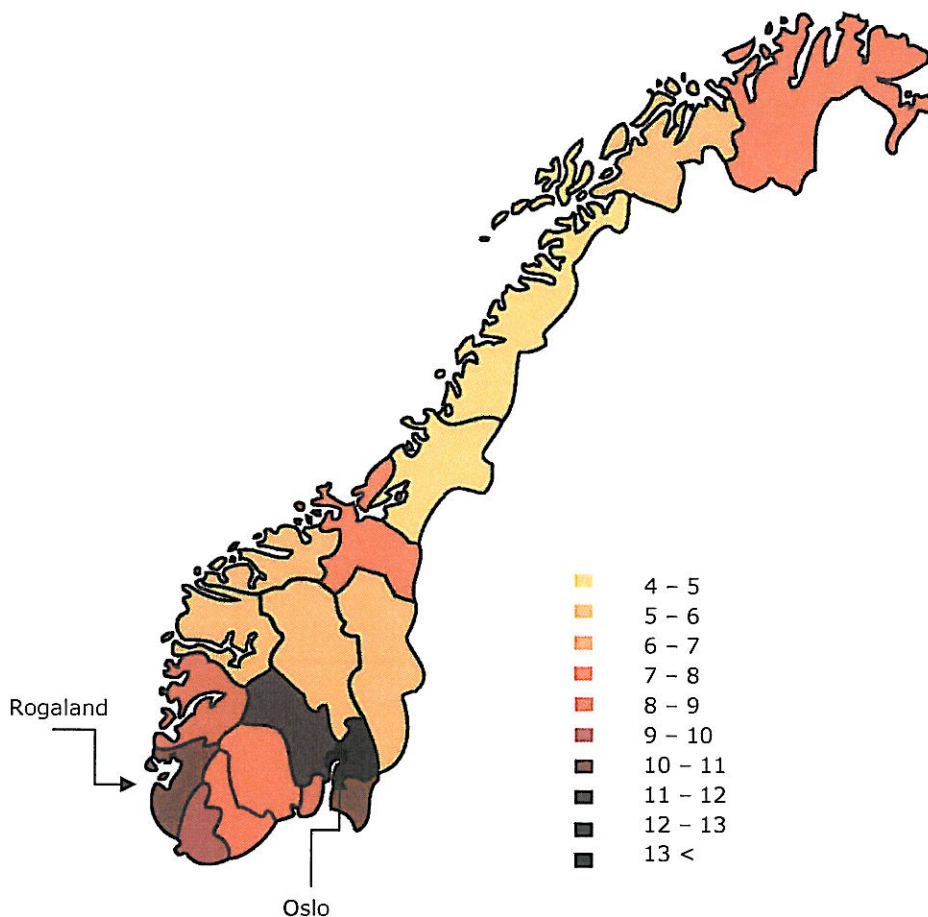


Figure 1 Immigration per county in percent

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Norway, [www.ssb.no/innvandring](http://www.ssb.no/innvandring). Numbers from 1.01.09

One of the chief goals of the Norwegian government's immigration policy is to regulate immigration in order to ensure stable economic and social development. The regulation of immigration shall be in accordance with international obligations and the need to recruit labour from abroad, and it shall contribute to cultural exchange and the exchange of knowledge<sup>2</sup>.

The government states this about integration and diversity:

*"The Government will promote a tolerant, multicultural society and combat racism. Diversity enriches our society."*

*"Rights, obligations and opportunities will be the same for all, regardless of ethnic background, gender, religion, sexual orientation or degree of functioning. Gender equality is also a precondition for an inclusive society."*

*"The government will combat discrimination, prejudice and racism in order to give everyone the same opportunities for social participation. At the same time we will make it clear that all inhabitants are obliged to participate, comply with the law and support the fundamental democratic values of our society."*

There are now few parts of the world that are entirely homogeneous and Norway is no exception. Its becoming easier and cheaper to travel and technology such as the internet allows us to communicate and interact in new ways. However there is a need for communication that is free of misunderstandings and misconceptions.

This communication needs to take place on many levels, and starts by being able to get along with your neighbour.

It is necessary that if people live beside one another that they interact or are interested in finding common grounds. This is where urban planners can form meeting spaces and influence the way people interact in this world of increasing socially mixed neighbourhoods. Integration of various activities and functions in and around public spaces allows the people involved to function together and to stimulate and inspire one another.<sup>3</sup> Public spaces can range from grand central plazas and squares, to small, local neighbourhood parks.

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<sup>2</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, [www.regjeringen.no](http://www.regjeringen.no) 2009

<sup>3</sup> Gehl, Jan. "Life between buildings", 6<sup>th</sup> edition. The Danish architectural press, Copenhagen. 2006. Page 101

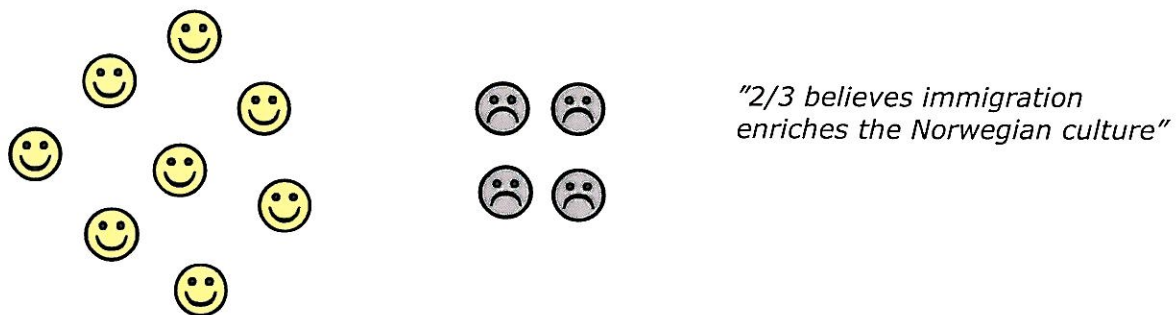
# Attitudes towards immigration in Norway

The opinions and attitudes of the Norwegian population towards immigration varies with demographic and social factors such as education, age, where you reside (city/countryside), county, level of contact with immigrants, political opinions and somewhat gender.

Attitudes towards immigrants in Norway have since 1993, when Statistic Norway started mapping people's attitudes through yearly interviews, had a clear turning towards greater tolerance and acceptance.

As an example of this, the proportion believing that most immigrants represent a source of insecurity in society has fallen by 13 percentage per cent. Moreover, there has been a drop from 40 to 24 per cent in the proportion reporting they would find it distasteful having a son-in-law or daughter-in-law with an immigrant background<sup>4</sup>.

This shows that even though Norway does not have a large population of immigrants, they are in a larger degree being accepted more than they were before.



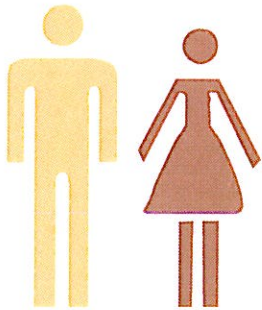
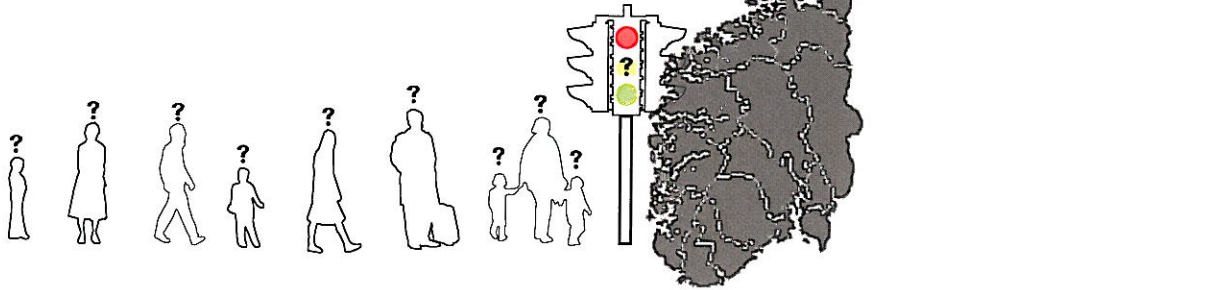
In relationship to opinions and attitudes in other European countries, Norway is in most areas on the clear liberal and tolerant side of the average opinion<sup>5</sup> This may also be due to the fact that immigration in Norway is regulated in a strict manner and for example asylum seekers when granted permits to stay are encouraged to integrate by living in different areas all over Norway.

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<sup>4</sup> Daugstad, Gunnlaug (red.). *"Rapport om Invandring og innvandrere"* (report on immigration and immigrants). Statistics Norway. Oslo-Kongsvinger, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

*"1/10 want a liberalization of asylum seekers entrance to the country, but 4/10 believe it should be stricter to stay in the country"*



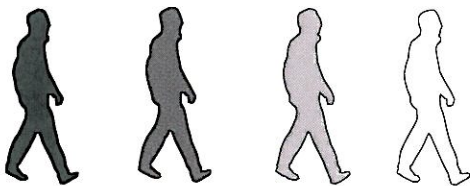
*"9/10 think that immigrants should have the same possibility to work as Norwegians, and 7/10 believe that immigrants make an effort when it comes to work"*



*"1/3 would dislike if an immigrant married in to their family"*



*"9/10 does not have anything against contact with immigrant neighbours or having immigrants helping around the home"*



*"4/10 believes immigrants should try and become as Norwegian as possible"*

Illustration 1 Immigration statistics

# Asylum seekers and where they live

This section is going to talk more specifically about asylum seekers rather than immigrants as it is asylum seekers who are the residents at the reception centre where the design proposal of this project takes place.

An asylum seeker is a person who, on their own initiative, and without advance notification comes to Norway and asks for recognition as a refugee. If the application is approved, the asylum seeker is granted refugee status. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI) is responsible for obtaining accommodation for refugees who come to Norway.<sup>6</sup>

Twice as many asylum seekers arrived to Norway in 2008 compared to 2007. This resulted in a particularly hectic year for the UDI and local authorities. In a major voluntary communal effort, 43 new immigration reception centres were established nationwide within a period of nine months.

"Despite the impression given in the media, the majority of municipalities consider it enriching to have a local reception centre<sup>7</sup>," says Ida Børresen, Director General of the UDI.

Norway's asylum and refugee policy states:

*"The Government will pursue a humane asylum and refugee policy characterized by solidarity and due process protection. The Norwegian regulations concerning protection against persecution are based on the UN Refugee Convention."<sup>8</sup>*

In 2008 14.400 people applied for asylum in Norway, 120% more than 2007<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> "Annual rapport 2008". The Norwegian directorate of immigration. 2008

<sup>7</sup> "War, love and work" <http://www.udi.no/templates/Page.aspx?id=9987> 20.05.2009

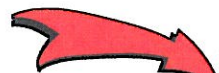
<sup>8</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. [www.regjeringen.no](http://www.regjeringen.no) 2009

<sup>9</sup> "Numbers and Facts 2008". The Norwegian directorate of immigration

*"Asylum seekers represented 106 different countries"*



*"2 out of 3 asylum seekers came unaccompanied"*



*"25% of asylum seekers were accompanied children"*



*"The families that sought asylum came mainly from Russia, followed by Iraq and Iran"*



*"3 out of 4 asylum seekers were men. 50% were represented in the age group 18-30 years"*

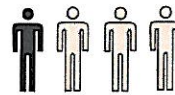


Figure 2 Asylum seekers in numbers 2008

The number of applications made by asylum seekers to stay in Norway has in the last four years increased from 2999 and 9300.<sup>10</sup> This means that the waiting time for asylum seekers living in reception centres was in 2008 approximately 7 months.

<sup>10</sup> Stenseng, Sverre. Article in the newspaper Aftenposten. "Asylsaker hoper opp." <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3097221.ece>



# Reception centres

The Norwegian immigration directorate (UDI) was established in 1988 over 20 years ago. The same year it was also decided that reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees should be run by the government and by UDI. It was 2006 that asylum seekers by law had to be given somewhere to stay while awaiting their application for asylum. Over this 20 year period there have been large fluctuations in numbers of asylum seekers which then also have also resulted in fluctuations of the numbers and sizes of reception centres around Norway.

It has been an aim of the government to place asylum seekers and refugees in reception centres all over the country to strengthen varied living patterns. Many refugees wish to stay on in the council where their reception centre was located, if they are granted residence permit<sup>11</sup>. This will prevent decreasing population growth in counties effected by this.

As discussed in the report "Reception centres through the last 20 years" It can be quite challenging in the first phases of opening a reception centre. Experience and lessons show though that a government run reception centre will support local industry, create a varied local environment and give the council input from people with a different background of experience.

In Norway there are different types of reception centres. The first place where asylum seekers stay is at a transit centre. They will stay there until they have had an asylum interview. Transit centers' are located in eastern Norway. After asylum seekers have stayed here for a week or so they will be sent to an ordinary reception centre, and if the asylum seekers application for residence is declined they will have to move to a departure centre. A departure centre is voluntary for asylum seekers who have received a final rejection of their application. In departure centres, activities are arranged to inspire residents to return to their country of origin. Other lessons discussed in the previous report were that different types of reception centres indicating where asylum seekers are in their application process prevents the immigration directorate sending out false signals.

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<sup>11</sup> "Asylmottak gjennom 20 år." Artikkelsamling fra mottakskonferansen 2008 (Collection of articles from a reception centre conference in 2008). The Norwegian directorate of immigrations. October 2008. Page 14

This project will talk about ordinary reception centres, where the asylum seeker is awaiting the decision on his or her application acknowledging they are seen as refugees and need protection.

## Decentralized reception centres vs. Centralized reception centres

In Norway there are two types of ordinary reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees, decentralized and centralized reception centres.

Decentralized centres are places within ordinary housing and are situated in local communities all over the country. An ordinary housing option gives more families an alternative to have as close to a normal family life as possible. Living in a house or an apartment gives more privacy than living in a centralized reception centre, where you will have to share a bathroom and kitchen and sometimes even the bedroom with someone else.

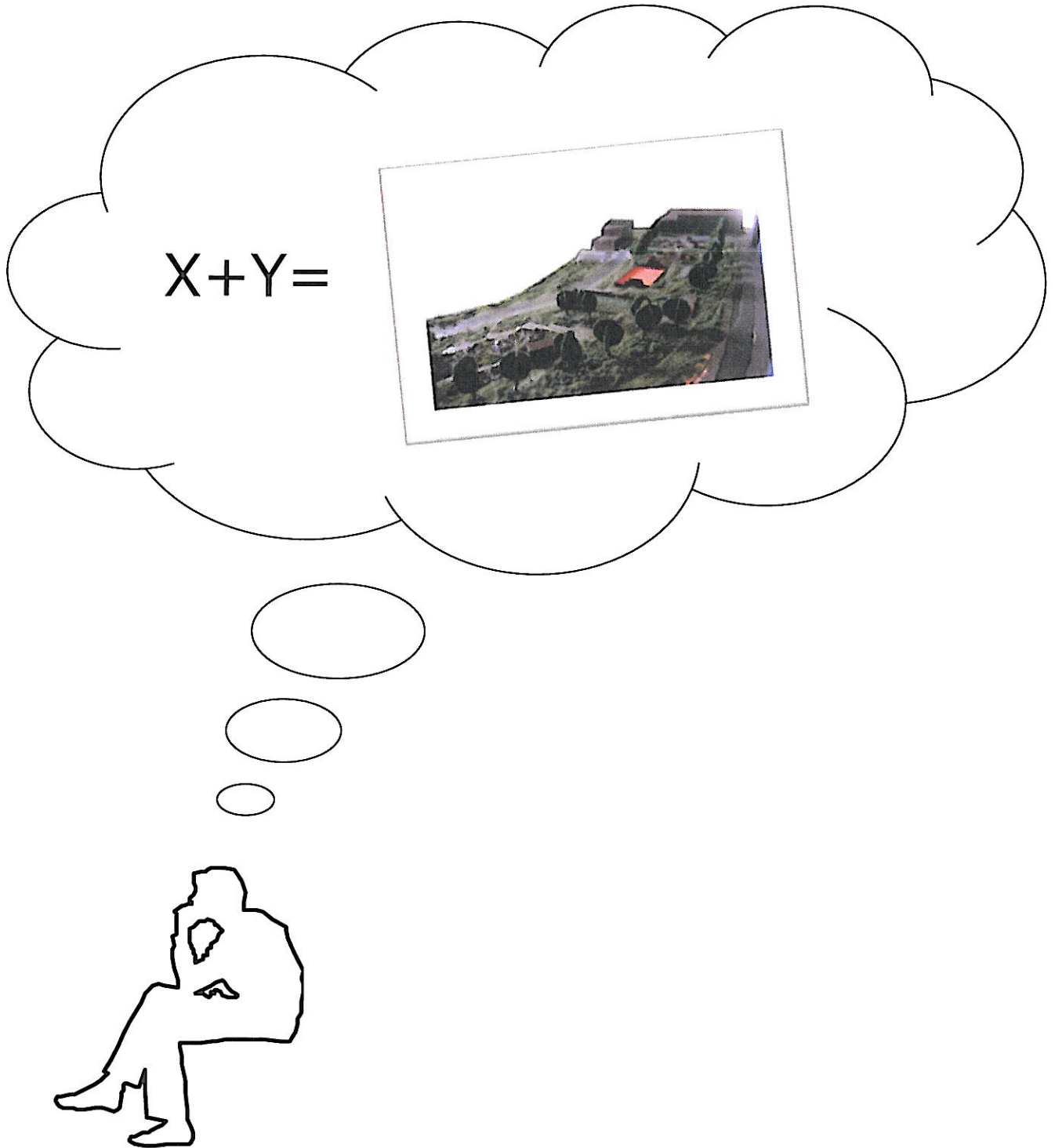
The Norwegian parliament's asylum and refugee policy, have decided that decentralized reception centres should be used to a larger degree. This type of living situation will increase well-being and allow better contact with the local community.

According to UDI, experience shows that local communities react more positively to having a family as a neighbour rather than a centralized reception centre that tends to resemble an institution. A decentralized reception centre makes it easier for asylum seekers and refugees to have a better basis for interaction and participation with the locals, if they are later granted a residence permit. Also it is easier to make small changes when the capacity of housing for asylum seekers rises or sinks.

In a decentralized reception centre the challenge is to follow up the residents in any information they may need, which is easier in a centralized centre. The unaccompanied residents may also feel isolated if they do not have a network around them for support and companionship.

Decentralized reception centres are more expensive to run than centralized reception centres according to UDI. UDI still wish for there to be both types of reception centres as both have their advantages.

# Chapter 2 - Theory



# Planning for a diverse community

There are many ways to support and plan for diverse cities as discussed in the book by Emily Talen in *Design for Diversity*. Before we talk about ways to plan for diversity what does it actually mean to be diverse.

Diversity or rather Multiculturalism refers to the ideology of including people of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Humans are formed and influenced by geography, topography, neighbourhoods, streets, cities and countries. All these factors shape where we as humans create our identities and from this categorize ourselves in this world. When focus on distinction becomes too sharp it can feed discrimination and prejudice – and these have caused disagreements, conflicts and wars throughout history<sup>12</sup>. It is important to recognize that people are different, no two people are exactly the same and from this diversity new ways of thinking evolve. Phil Wood and Charles Landry argue for intercultural exchange, so that we with differences can live side by side with greater ease. Intercultural exchanges between cultural groups are required within a society. A diverse community does not only mean to be culturally different, but it is also can be the mix of ages, living status, sex and personal identities or interests.

This project is going to adapt the methods from Emily Talen into a much smaller captive area and look at how we can plan for a diverse community in the form of a public space that will be for the benefit of all the residents living in a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees.

It is off course important to have regional planning for diversity, but there also needs to be an understanding of the diversity of people at the street level.

There are three requirements for a diverse neighbourhood – mix, connection and safety.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wood, Phil. Landry, Charles. *"The Intercultural City-Planning for diversity advantage"*. Earthscan, London. 2008. Page 16

<sup>13</sup> Talen, Emily. *"Design for Diversity-Exploring socially mixed neighbourhoods."* Architectural press, Oxford, UK. 2008. Page 113

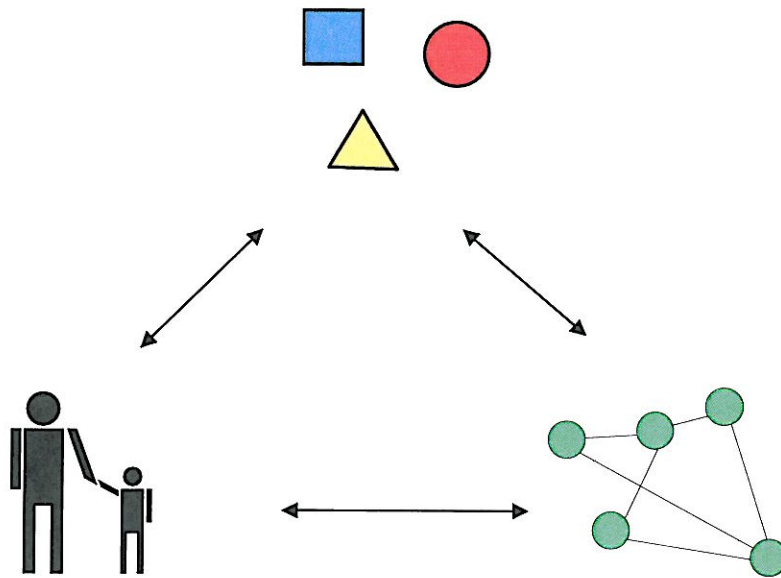


Figure 3 Relationship between mix, safety and connection

There are two types of strategies related to mix in diverse places: the mix of housing options and the mix of services and facilities needed to support a diverse set of needs<sup>14</sup>. Housing options that are mixed will vary in size and form, from single family to multi family. They will also vary from existing housing to new housing, so that people of different financial status can live beside each other.

Mixing of housing options can sometimes be juxtaposed and lack context. On the other hand this gives an opportunity to design transitional areas that can support connections where there is a lack of context. A transitional area can be a street, park or something grander that draws connections between different types of housing and other facilities.

Emily Talen focuses on four aspects of connectivity that are relevant to an existing diverse neighbourhood – identity space, collective space, institutions and networks. This project will only discuss the first two as they are relevant to the local scale of this project.

Identity space is the core in the city or neighbourhood where there can be a shared identity. The creation of some sort of identity to a place is important, possibly crucial<sup>15</sup>. These areas can be located where a diverse population crosses paths at intersection where there is housing mix or other mix of activity and should serve as neighbourhood centres or identity spaces.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Page 115

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Page 152

Collective space is less about forming an identity and more about finding opportunities for interaction<sup>16</sup>. A collective space does not need to have an agenda but can be used by multiple people for multiple purposes. The closer you live to a collective space the more you will use it, so these types of spaces should be situated where there is a high level of diversity to support integration. Designing to support interaction in a collective space at Dale reception centre can for instance be done by implementing the following criteria's.

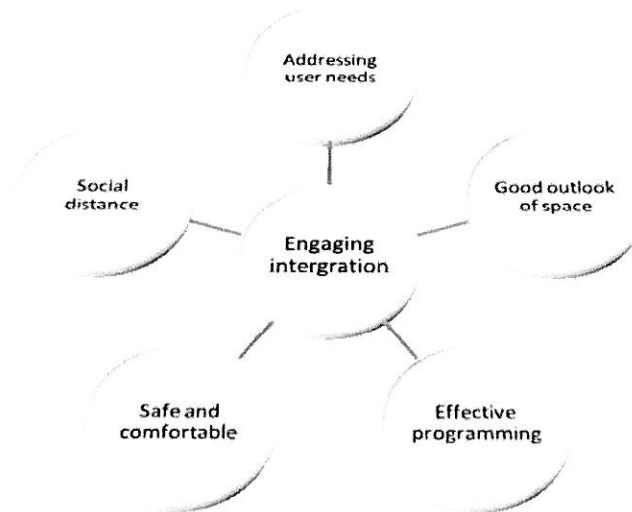


Figure 4 Design criteria`s engaging social integration

Addressing user needs in a public space, will in this project play a very important role as the site chosen for a new design proposal is for the diversity of the residents at a centre for asylum seekers and refugees.

User needs are defined as those amenities and experiences that people seek in enjoying public open spaces<sup>17</sup>. When designing a public space at a reception centre for refugees and asylum seekers there is often a language barrier that needs to be taken into consideration. This is one of the main issues the residents find when trying to communicate with each other and is often why they decide to keep to themselves. Finding other common interests will allow relationships to form even if they do not speak the same language, and as an effect of the relationship the language barrier can be overcome.

A design needs to feel safe for all user-groups, this way you will not exclude anyone. At the reception centre there is sometimes trouble with large groups taking control of the

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Page 160

<sup>17</sup> Francis, Mark. "Urban Open Spaces-Designing For User Needs". Island Press, Washington, 2003. Page 4

public room or space. If the environment with which you live in functions badly and is experienced as unsafe it can cause even greater challenges for the residence of a neighbourhood, because a hard living environment will only increase the already difficult life situation with which you are in as an asylum seeker<sup>18</sup>.

Safety can be addressed by using surveillance; even in the form of security cameras or by how the space is designed. It should be relatively effortless for people to keep an eye on things, as part of their everyday routines.<sup>19</sup> Promoting this type of natural surveillance can be done by having the surrounding built framework facing and engaging with the public space. This acknowledges the spaces social value according to Emily Talen (2008:184). Natural surveillance is especially important in a diverse neighbourhood because if you keep residents away from the public space, misconceptions and fear will only keep growing among residents.

Feeling safe in a public space is not always enough for further engagement with other users of the space. You can feel safe walking down a street, but not feel any need to engage in the surroundings. You also have to make the user feel relaxed and comfortable. This can be done by having places to sit and rest or providing shaded areas out of the sun.

A good outlook of the space is important not only for the safety of the residents in the neighbourhood but also so people can see that it is a public space and not a private garden or area. The realization that everyone can use this space is important to welcoming different user-group. Although a public area should also have elements that tempt curiosity, so that residents do not use the area as a go through area and rather as a go to area.

Effective programming can reduce or even eliminate many conflicts in spaces<sup>20</sup>. That there is a clear plan of the space allows users to identify how they are and can be a part of the space. This way, as a resident of the neighbourhood, you can take a collective ownership in the space. If a public space is a space that people frequently use and stay in, people may feel a commitment for the space and how it is used.

When designing spaces in which strangers are intended to interact, it helps to main social distance (especially greater social distance) when arranging individual positions, for example benches, table widths, playing positions etc. Hans Loidl and Stefan Bernard also

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<sup>18</sup> "Faghefte om Inkludering og konflikthåndtering i bomiljø (Report about handling conflicts and inclusion in the living environment)." Helse- og velferdsetaten, Oslo kommune. November 2007

<sup>19</sup> Talen, Emily. "Design for Diversity-Exploring socially mixed neighbourhoods." Architectural press, Oxford, UK. 2008. Page 183

<sup>20</sup> Francis, Mark. "Urban Open Spaces-Designing For User Needs." Island Press, Washington, 2003. Page 2

discuss in *Opening Spaces* that if distances between people in a space are too small it can cause unease or even aggression or tension, but on the other hand a greater pressure to communicate. If the distance is too large the opportunity to interact diminishes.



Photo 6 Friendship at Dale reception centre

Public distances can vary between cultures. To make contact with people we know, either the distance is reduced or we can use signs (waving, calling out etc.) Maintaining public distance from strangers is a clear sign of resistance to spontaneous communication.<sup>21</sup>

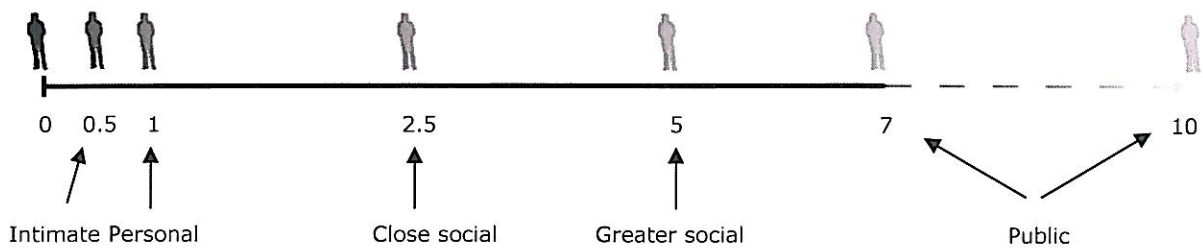


Illustration 2 Social distances in meters

<sup>21</sup> Loidl, Hans. Bernard, Stefan. *Opening Spaces-Design as Landscape Architecture*. Birkhäuser, Basel, Switzerland, 2003. Page 66





Photo 7 Busy Street in Morocco



Photo 8 Busy Street in England

# Large social variation – Can we plan for the individual needs?

The multiethnic community is recognized by a large social variation. Besides ethnicity there is a mixture of generations, families, single people and different lifestyles that will set the neighbourhood on trial.

In a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees there is a similar social variation. The similarities are the different ages; child, adult and elderly and also the combination of families and singles and not to forget a mixture of ethnicity and culture. The difference is that at a reception centre the residents do not own their accommodation as in a typical neighbourhood, and there is always going to be a regular fluctuation of residents that is not as common to a typical neighbourhood. These two differences make it challenging to study and plan for the individual needs of residents living at a reception centre.

Culture is elastic - knowing the cultural norms of a given group do not predict the behaviour of a member of that group, who may not conform to norms for individual or contextual reasons.<sup>22</sup> Integration or segregation of ethnic social groups or age groups is seen and found in the public sphere. This happens when people find each other in common spatial positions. Different cultures use outdoor spaces differently; sometimes this has to do with climate other times it has to do with the activities common to the group of individuals.<sup>23</sup> Very often mutual living-situations and common interest had a greater significance to make contact and integration than ethnic background did.<sup>24</sup> At a reception centre most of the residents are in a mutual living-situation, their backgrounds may be very different, but if a positive and open attitude can be encouraged maybe other similarities can be seen and setting culture differences aside.

There is a connection between humans and the environment with which they live in. The environment with which we live in can be divided into the social environment and the physical environment.

The physical environment is how we as individual humans perceive our surroundings that do not include other humans like space, house, colour, materials etc. The social

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<sup>22</sup> LeBaron, Michelle . "culture and conflict." <http://www.beyondintractability.org/>. July 2003

<sup>23</sup> Ormland, Ib. "OPUS I Stavanger 2008- en presentasjon (Research project Stavanger cultural city 2008". Page 7

<sup>24</sup> Sørholt, Susanne. "Hva kan vi gjøre for å styrke flerkulturelle bomiljø?(what can we do to strengthen multicultural living environments)"[www.bomiljonett.no](http://www.bomiljonett.no). Vestlandskboligbyggelag. Bergen 2006. Page 6

environment is how we as individuals perceive other humans and relationships between humans.

As town planners we are in charge of the physical environment and the physical environment effects the social environment. For example a child who lives in the top floor of a block comes out less to play than a child who lives in low-rise housing.

Ingrid Gehl looks at the requirements for different age groups in the neighbourhood environment. I have decided to group them a little different so that they can be adapted to the neighbourhood at a reception centre for asylum seekers at a reception centre.

	<b>Psychological needs</b>	<b>Connection to environment</b>	<b>Design solutions</b>
<b>Young children 0-6</b>	Strong need for parental contact. Knowing they are safe	Dependent on neighbourhood. Play close to home	Small structured spaces to play. Play areas adapted to their size. Room for exploring. Like being where things are happening
<b>Older children 7-14</b>	Less need for parental contact. The older the child is the more need for time on own to be social with same age group.	Less dependent on neighbourhood.	Group play not overly structured.
<b>Teens 15-18</b>	Large need for social contact with teens the same age	This group spends most time outside home and neighbourhood.	Informal/formal meeting spaces. This group likes to feel in charge of their surroundings.
<b>Adults w/family</b>	Important that living environment is good for children. Child dependent on adult who is dependent on feeling useful and needed.	Strong (especially for stay at home parent)	Areas for children to play close to home. Areas for families.
<b>Young adults (no children)</b>	Social contact.	Strong when building a future for family.	Group activities
<b>Adults (children grown up and left home)</b>	Stability and peace. Wishing there was more social contact	The older the more dependent on	Group activities

Table 1 Requirements for different age groups in the neighbourhood environment<sup>25</sup>

Adapting the needs of that of an asylum seeker and combining this with the needs of different age groups and status, it is possible to include everyone in a new design proposal.

<sup>25</sup> Gehl, Ingrid. "Bomiljø (living environment)". SBI Rapport 71. The Danish architectural press. Copenhagen. 1971

# Why Urban Design for a Reception centre?

People might say that a reception centre or anything done to improve it will not be looked after by the residents, and it is our tax money that is going to waste. On the other hand it is our responsibility, if we are willing to accept asylum seekers in to our country, should they not be given the same treatment and rights of a safe and comfortable place to live as any other resident of this country. Should we not lead by example so that asylum seekers can integrate easier by having a better understanding of the way life is here in Norway? This would make integration into Norwegian society a lot easier.

Since many residents stay at reception centres a lot longer than first anticipated, this can cause health and psychological problems. One may also question if this is the case why accept asylum in the first case. However there is a reason why we accept asylum seekers in to Norway and other countries, because they need help or protection from issues in their home countries. We have to recognize although some will take advantage of the system, most often they genuinely do not. The reception centre at Dale which will be presented later is very much a part of the town of Sandnes even though it is not in the centre. It is just as important to run and keep every corner of Sandnes municipality to the same standard. This way you embrace diversity and show that everyone matters.

The town of Stavanger was in 2008 cultural capital in collaboration with the city of Sandnes. In connection with this a focus on the public spaces became important as this is where several cultural programmes take place. The purpose was to show the diversity of cultural expressions. In a presentation of the research project Urban Public Urban Spaces which includes among others the town of Stavanger, it says that the research group are interested in more knowledge about how urban design strategies that have been successful in creating common urban places are important for integration.<sup>26</sup> This shows that in the aftermath of Stavanger cultural city of 2008 a greater focus is aimed at diversity and integration in public spaces.

As mentioned in the introduction it is important to recognise that even though this project focuses on asylum seekers and their diversity, in connection with the situation, and surroundings they have found themselves in, it is now becoming an important issue

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<sup>26</sup> Omland, Ib. "OPUS I Stavanger 2008- en presentasjon (Research project Stavanger cultural city 2008)". Page 7

for many countries in the world where a multi-cultural society is the norm, and socially mixed neighbourhoods are common in many towns and cities. By designing a public space in a reception centres you have a captive or closed group that is free from any distractions of other social elements such as the influence from one single society. This project will be a case study that can be integrated and used in other socially diverse communities.

Urban design can by effectively programming for activities, make it a more meaningful time for the residents at a reception centre. Lessons learnt by UDI after running reception centres for the last 20 years are that it is important that the residents at a reception centre have possibilities to participate in meaningful activities. It should also be arranged so that they can take responsibility for their everyday life (asylum through 20 years). By having meaningful activities, it will not only give the residents something to do but also encourage further participation and interaction.

The intercultural city by Phil Wood and Charles Landry argued that we should interact more with each other because we live side by side. Only then will we foster empathy by learning more of each other and reduce the distrust between people. Through shaping meeting spaces and laying the groundwork such interaction will be forced or encouraged.

This project could off taken place somewhere else, but only by doing it at a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees would you understand and see a true mix of people. The final outcome of this project will not only enlighten what it is like to live in a reception centre, but what it means to live in a diverse neighbourhood and how a public space can build bridges and reduce fear and misconceptions.

# Chapter 3 – Analysis



This chapter is going to present the area of Dale and the Dale reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees from two aspects; by identifying the landscape and built environment, and by identifying the people who live here.

# The Landscape

Dale is a small “village” tucked away in beautiful surroundings at the far end of the fjord Gandsfjorden, 7 kilometers from the town of Sandnes.

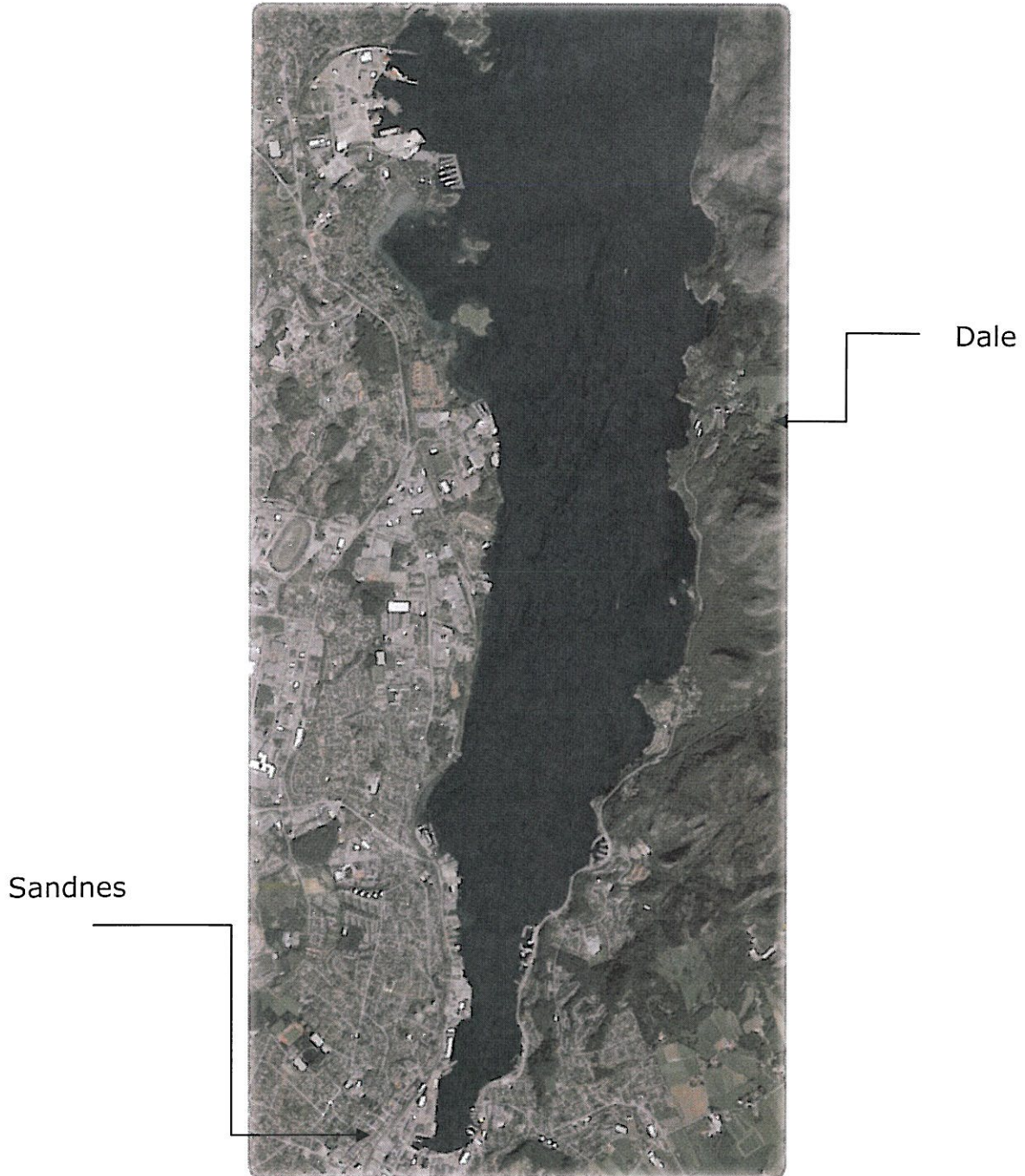


Photo 9 Location of Dale in relationship to Sandnes

Driving along the fjord to get to Dale, you assume you have come to the end of the road when you drive into the community of Gramstad. As you keep on driving and meet, what appears to be end of the road, a side road appears. This narrow side road is a jungle of turnings and trees and every so often an astounding view of the Gandsfjord appears. After a few minutes' drive you go up and around and find yourself in the core of Dale reception area. A huge white five floor building is to your right and in front of you the administration building and to your left a 4300 m<sup>2</sup> apple garden. Beyond the apple garden the views and surroundings are probably one of the most beautiful in Sandnes. Dale reception centre is home to just under 400 people, representing 20 nationalities. Some will stay here only for some months, and others will have to live here for as much as 10 years!



Photo 10 Main entrance in to the community of Dale



# Dales History - The Psychiatric hospital

The reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees at Dale used to be a psychiatric hospital and was opened in 1913. The hospital and its grounds were built up in an isolated area on the eastside of the Gandsfjord. The hospital plant was a self-sufficient community, consisting of a large farm, school, assembly housing, power station and other different types of housing for the employees at the hospital.<sup>27</sup>

In 1925 there was introduced a separate ward for female patients' and in 1973, with 583, the hospital had its` highest number of patients. From the year 1980 the hospital was no longer a repository centre, but an institution that worked to make the patients' well enough to leave the hospital.

In 1975 the hospital got an additional building which had a gym, swimming pool and cafeteria in it. A farm was also on the property's 450 hectares (4500 daa) and the patients participated in the farm work as part of the rehabilitation process.

In 1980 it was decided that the psychiatric hospital should close down, but it was not until 2001 the final patients' of the psychiatric ward moved out. There was a small ward for drug related psychiatry connected to the main hospital in Stavanger that stayed in Dale until 2004.

In 1993 Dale reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees moved in with its 300 residents.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sandnes Council." *Kommunedelplan for kulturminner og kulturmiljøer 2005-2017*" [www.sandneskommune.no](http://www.sandneskommune.no). March 2009

<sup>28</sup> Hæreid, Marit. "Dale - et samfunn i miniatyr" [www.Aftenbladet.no](http://www.Aftenbladet.no), Dale 27.02.2006

# Present situation – Dale reception centre

Today the area of Dale with its 450 hectare is owned by Rogaland county council. However it is Dale Eiendom AS who are responsible for operating, managing and developing the area.

The former hospital consisted of several types of buildings from different times in history that contributes to the history and culture of the region.

Dale reception centre rent the majority of the central buildings at Dale through Dale Eiendom.

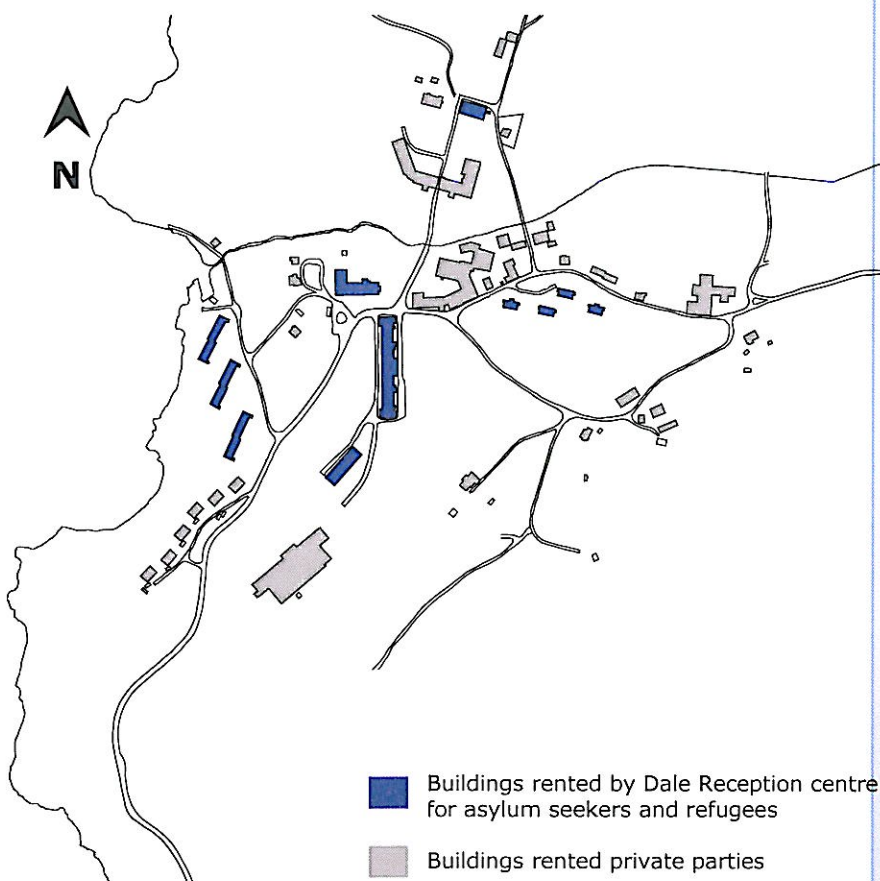


Illustration 3 Dale reception centre

## Rogaland county council

Public administration in Norway has a structure with the following elements: central government, county government and municipal government. Rogaland County Council is responsible for county policies within the following fields: Secondary education, cultural affairs, communications, dental care, economic development and regional planning, including the development of the road system.

## Dale Eiendom AS

Dale Eiendom AS was established in 1997. The property company is owned by Rogaland county council and has as an aim to develop Dale to what its regulated purpose is in accordance to the county plans for this area. Dale Eiendoms goals and analysis of the market and landscape indicate that a new residential area at Dale would serve the region and the general area.

*Vision*

*"We see Dale property developed to become the region's most attractive area- an area that is good to be in as well as live in"*

# Building topology

Dale reception centre is both a centralized and decentralized reception centre. The families that live at Dale have their own housing unit, while the unaccompanied often stay in the main building where they share kitchen and bathrooms. At the same time, Dale is very much isolated from town so the housing units for families or dormitories are not integrated into the local community.

There is a range of 3-5 floor dormitories, terraced housing and bedsits that are used by the Dale reception centre.

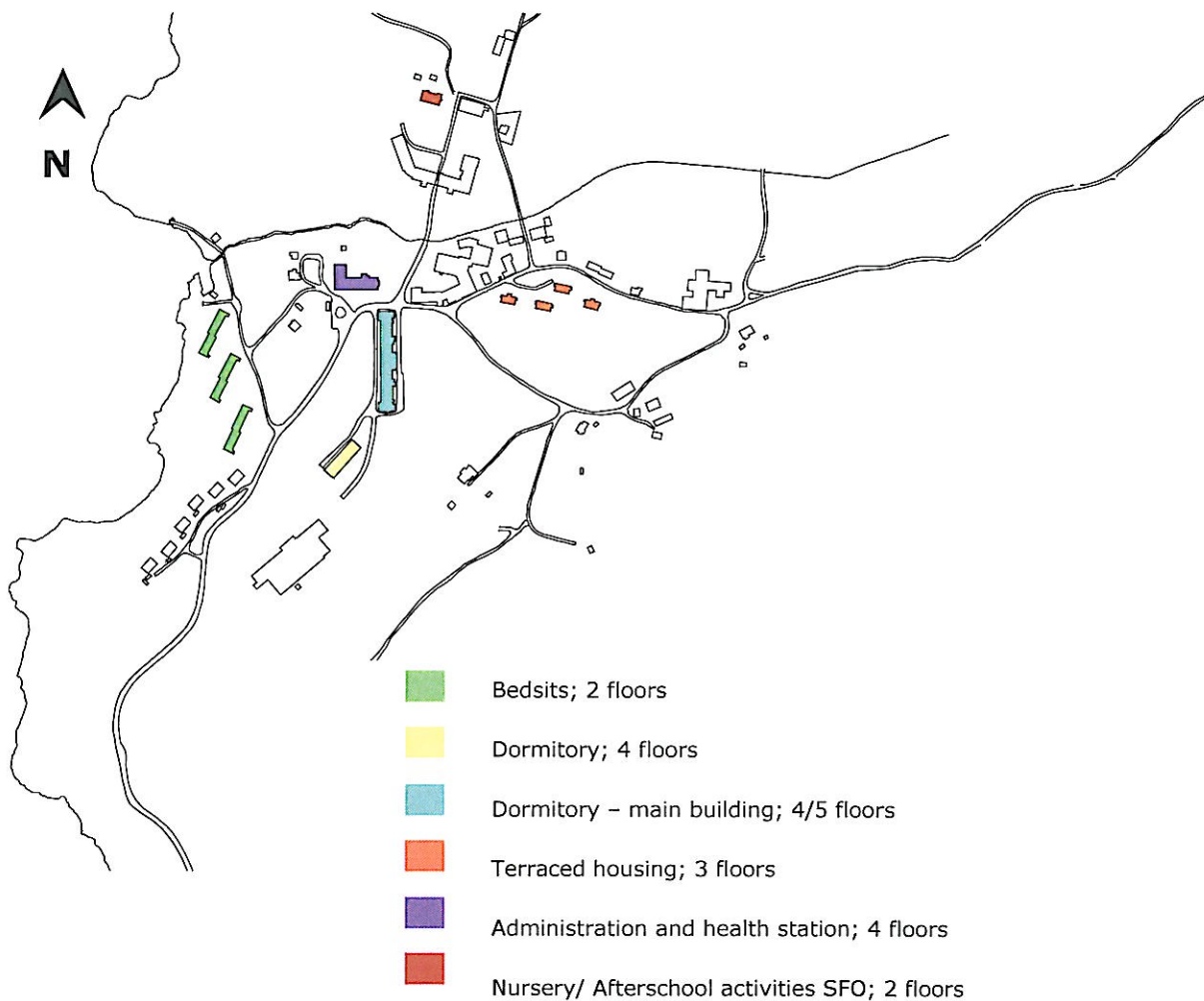


Illustration 4 Building topology at Dale reception centre

The largest hospital building has a monumental design and park-like surroundings. Isolated in magnificent nature surroundings, gives this area its own distinctive identity. In later years it has been discussed if the main monumental building should be restored

and protected or if it should be torn down. In accordance to the councils grade of protection, this building has a grad 3 (highest grad other than being preserved) protection but it is not graded as preserved.



Photo 11 Main building, dormitory

Most of the larger buildings are well used and do not seem like they have been maintained.



Photo 12 Administration building

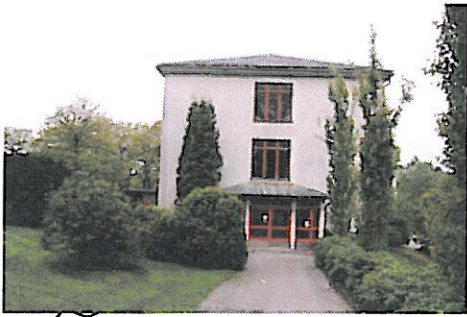


Photo 13 Health station



Photo 14 Nursery and afterschool activities SFO



Photo 16 Terraced housing



Photo 15 Bedsits



Photo 17 Dormitory

Although the buildings at Dale are organized in the same way as when the psychiatric hospital previously was located here, it is not only Dale reception centre that occupy these buildings. Dale Eiendom also rent housing units out to other private owners. A farm is still in use to the east of the area. The one floor community house is used by the reception centre as well as other private people who want to use it for different celebrations or training as the is an indoor gym.

The Nursery and the Lutheran school are for the asylum seekers at the reception centre as well as other Children who live in nearby communities. These buildings are in good shape and have been looked after.

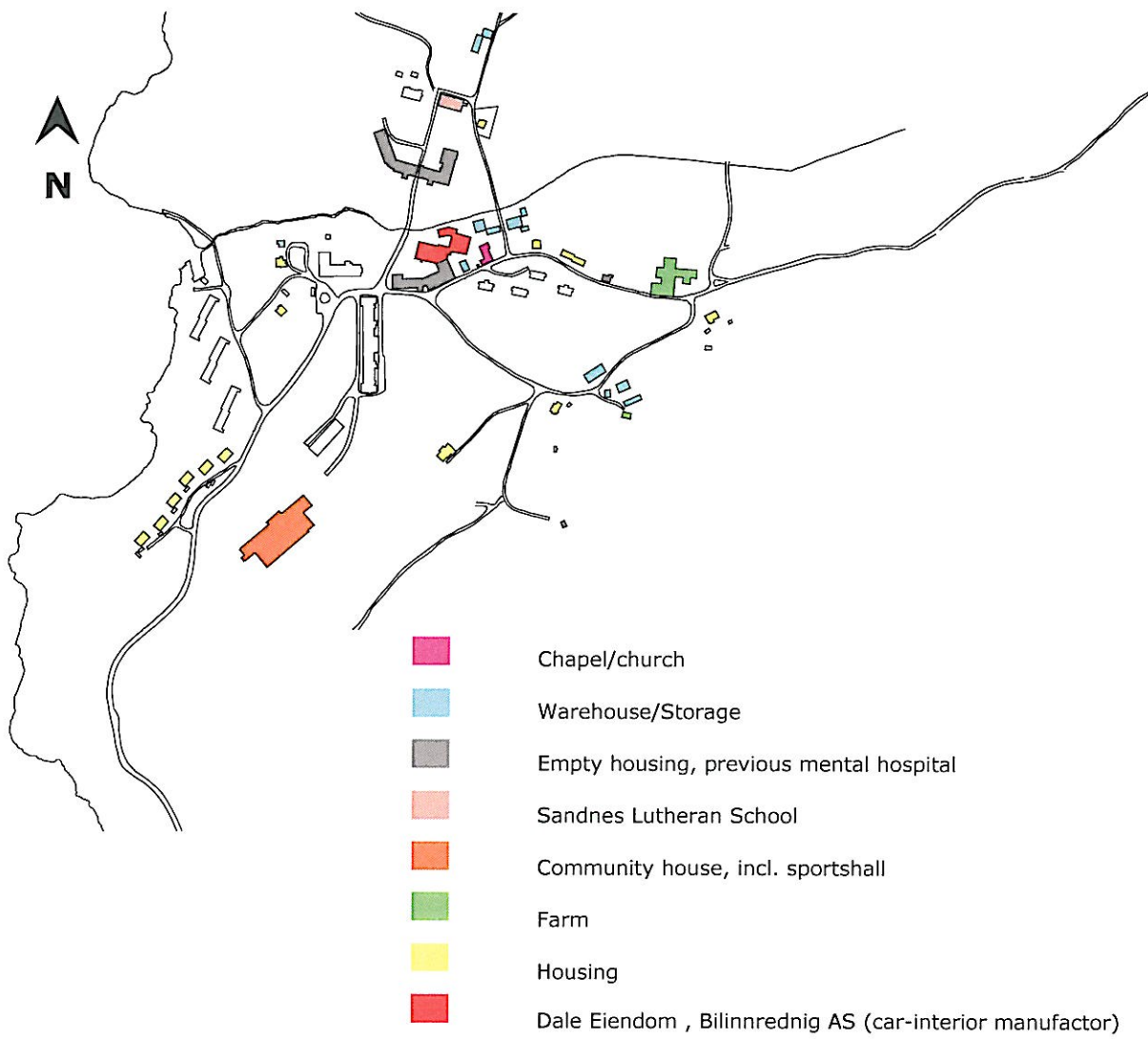


Illustration 5 Other housing at Dale



Photo 18 Previous mental hospital at Dale



Photo 19 Previous canteen building at mental hospital



Photo 20 Lutheran school



Photo 21 Community house incl. sports hall



# Green Areas and Topography

As mentioned Dale is situated in magnificent nature surroundings with a good view of the Gandsfjord. Dale has also very good sun conditions.

There are several public walks around the area of Dale and maybe one of the most famous ones is the walk to Dalsnuten (mountain situated behind the reception centre to the south).

The Buildings used by Dale reception centre are all situated between 15 and 30 meters above sea level.

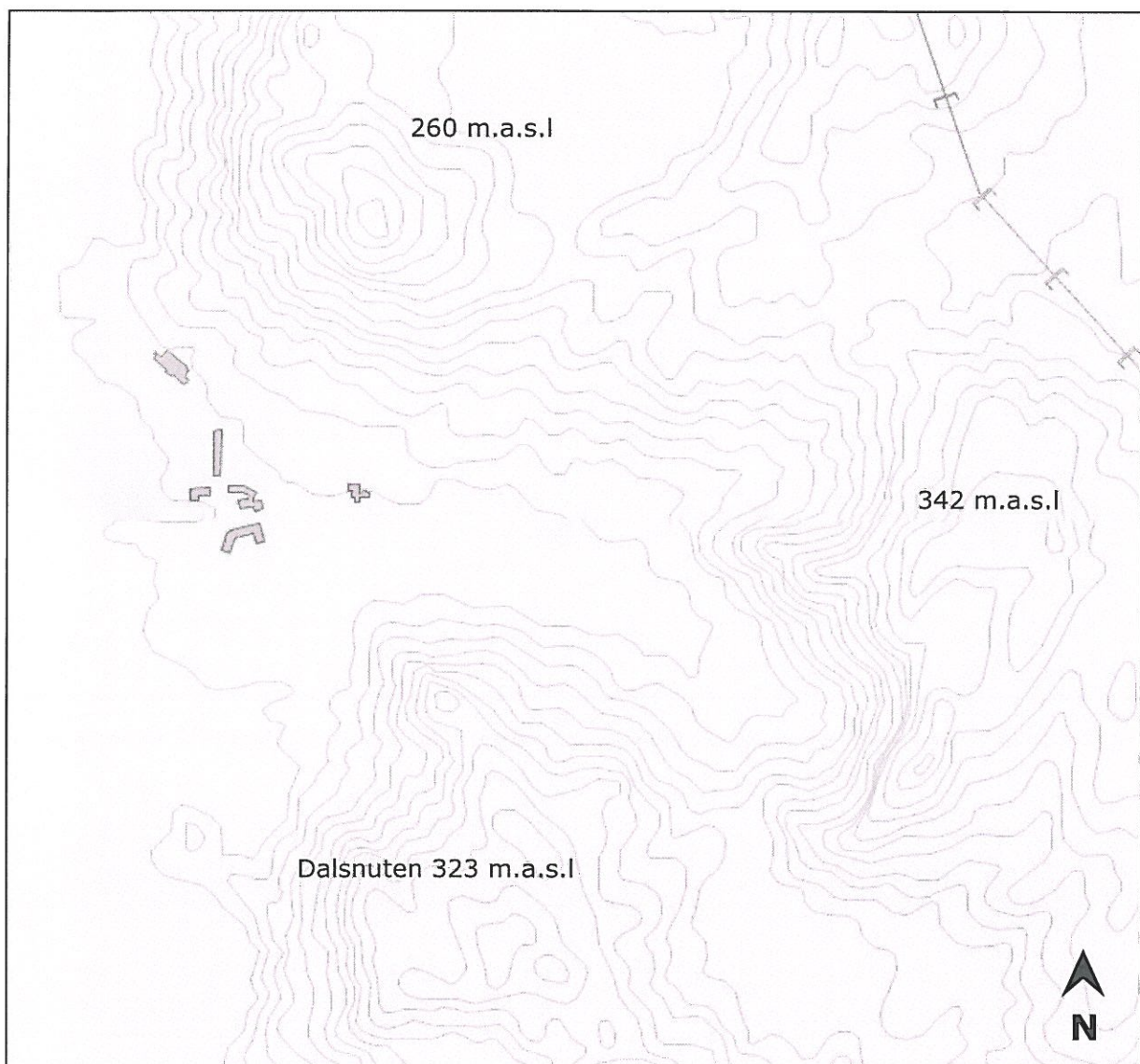


Figure 5 Three mountains surrounding Dale

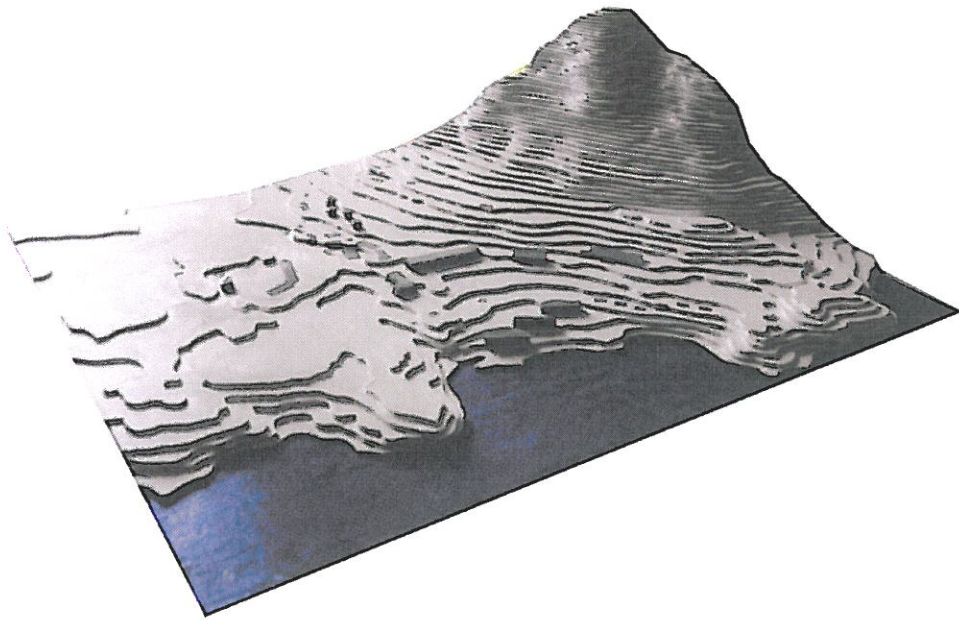


Illustration 6 Model perspective of Dale from Gandsfjord

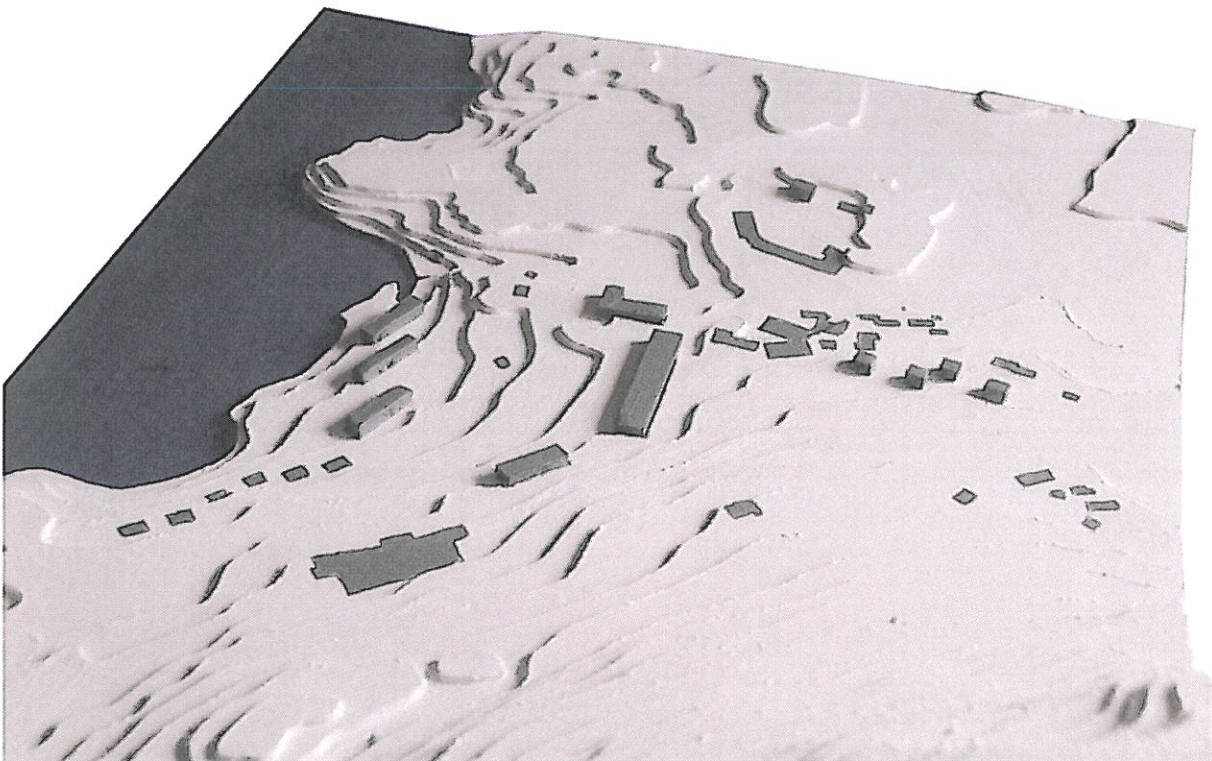


Illustration 7 Model perspective from the top of the mountain Dalsnuten



Photo 22 Mountain range surrounding the community of Dale

There is also a large apple garden in front of the main building.

In 2008, Stavanger/Sandnes was the European cultural capital. As part of this, one of the projects was to transform the trees in the apple garden to individual light sculptures, the different angles of the rays of light were to represent the diversity at Dale and also give light to people who have not seen too many bright days. These lights are set in the ground beside each tree, but were removed at the end of the year 2008. Locally and from across the fjord the lights gave a striking impression<sup>29</sup>.

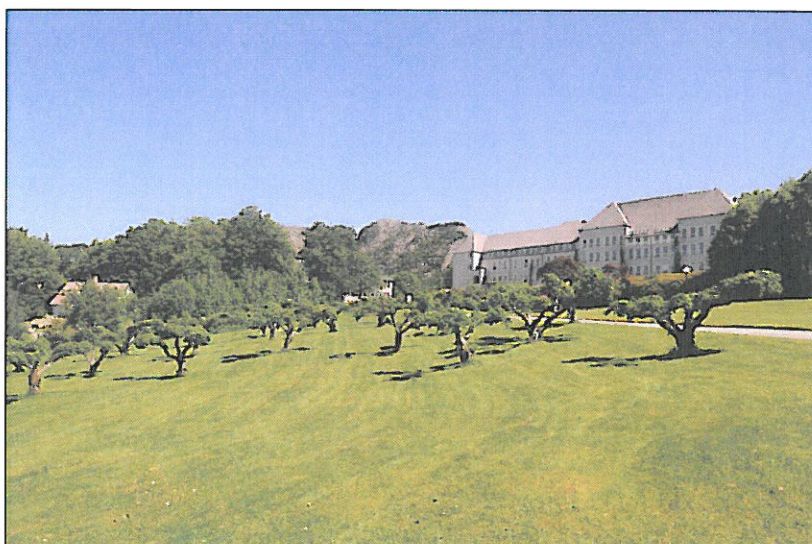


Photo 23 Apple garden in front of main building

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<sup>29</sup> [www.watercolours.no/Dale](http://www.watercolours.no/Dale). November 2008

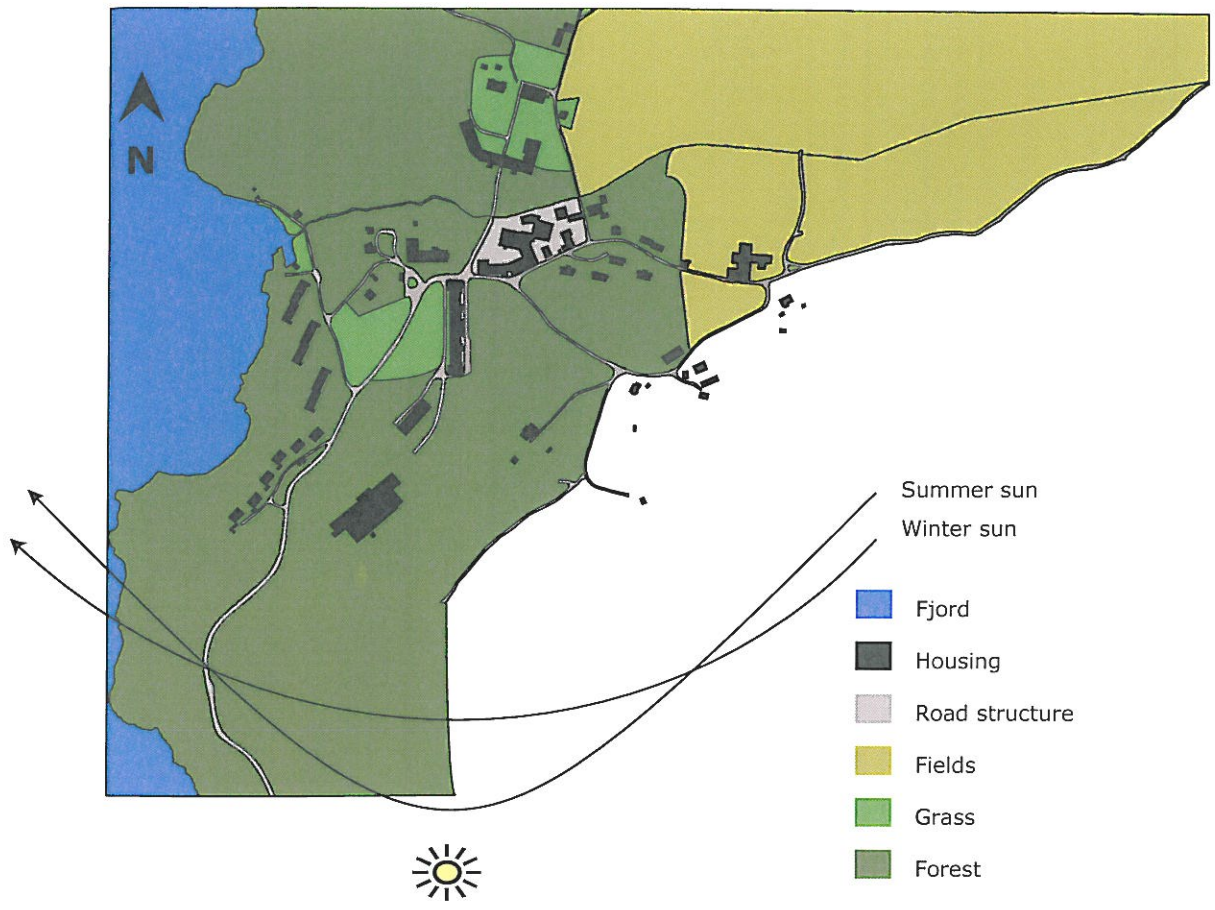


Illustration 8 Analysis of landscape



Photo 24 view from main building



Photo 25 Stream behind administration building



Photo 26 Pathway from nursery towards terraced housing

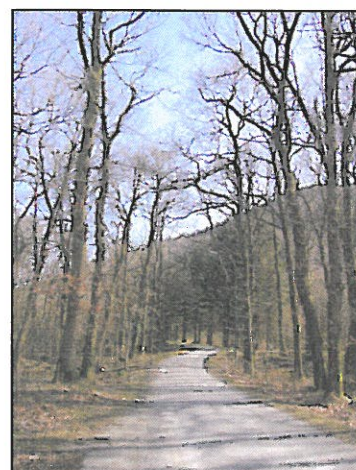


Photo 27 Pathway up into forest

# Municipal Land Use Plans

The "Kommuneplan for Sandnes 2007-2020" is the long-term political and financial steering municipal plan for Sandnes. Kommuneplan is governing for all planning in Norwegian municipalities.

Dale is regulated for several purposes, public buildings, public area (nature), LNF (Agriculture, nature and public areas) and areas that are bound by law on nature for. LNF areas cannot be built on unless there is given dispensation by the government.

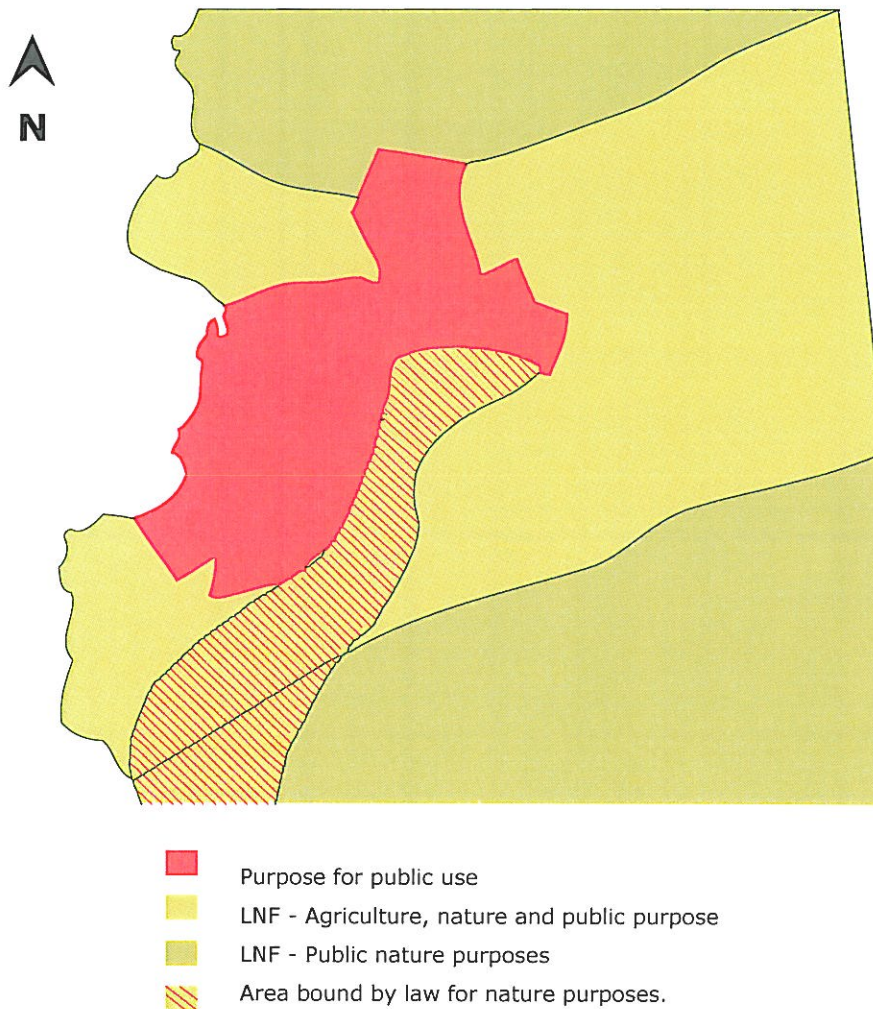


Illustration 9 Municipal land use plan for Dale

The community of Dale and its built framework are within the area for building purposes for the public.

# Traffic Flow

There is not much traffic during the day at Dale except during the morning and afternoon when employers start work or parents drop their children of at the Lutheran school.

There are no sidewalks for pedestrians along the main road into dale. There is a bus that travels to and from Dale to Sandnes. On weekdays it travels generally once every hour, on Saturday every two hours and Sunday approximately four times a day.

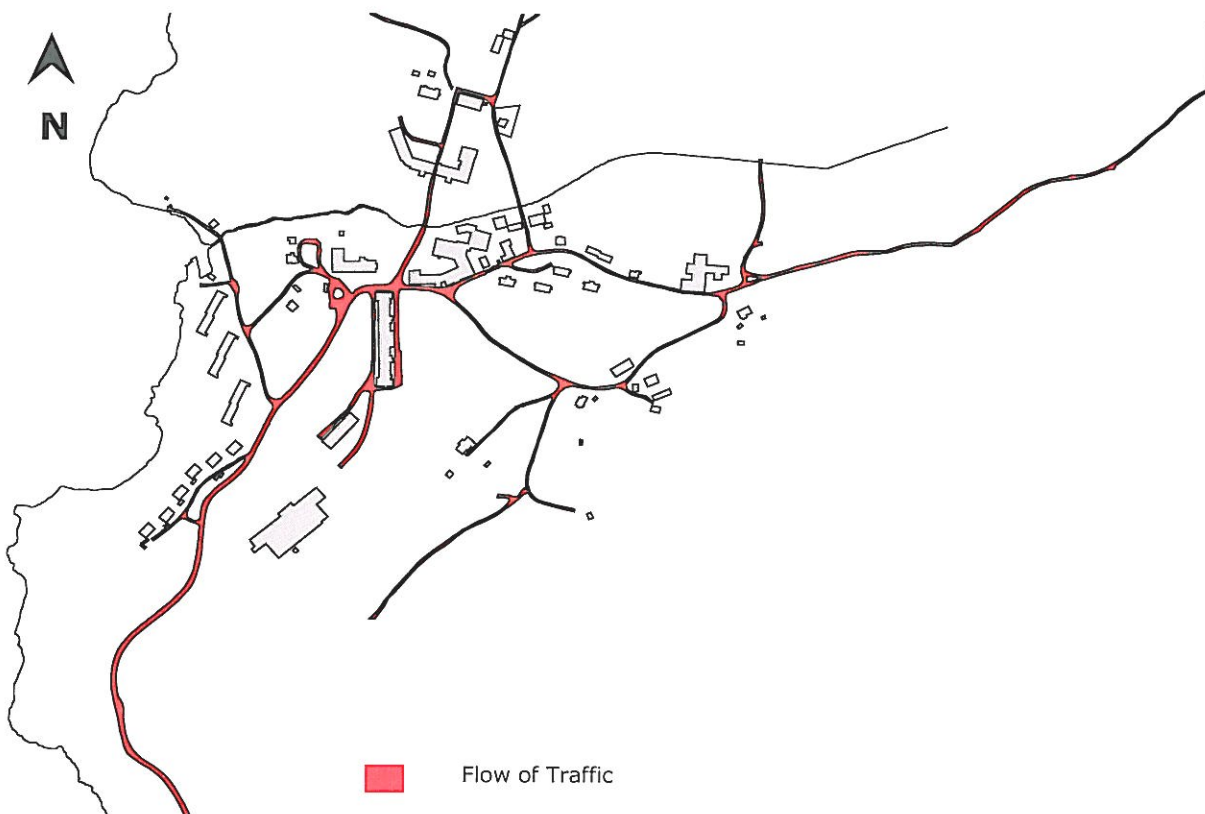


Illustration 10 Traffic flow at Dale



Photo 28 Main road entering Dale from Sandnes



# Future Plans

Dale Eiendom has estimated that the property at Dale is 450 hectares with a development potential of approximately 150 hectares. This equals to building 2-3000 new houses with corresponding necessary public services and industry<sup>30</sup>.



Photo 29 Future plans for Dale illustrated by Dale Eiendom<sup>31</sup>

In the design of a new residential area the highest density of housing is going to be situated around the existing centre, which is proposed partial rebuilt and rehabilitated to residential or industrial purposes. It has been emphasized that the buildings and outdoor spaces should have good connections to the fjord.

The existing centre is the buildings that are now used as a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees. It is highest likely that if these plans go through, the reception centre at Dale will have to relocate.

This plan was presented in 2007 by Mette Moen, managing director at Dale Eiendom. At the time politicians in Sandnes were very sceptical to the plans and decided that a bridge

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<sup>30</sup>Dale Eiendom [www.daleeiendon.no](http://www.daleeiendon.no)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

over the fjord and infrastructure needed to be in place before they could think of any development of area.<sup>32</sup>

Sandnes is growing by 1200 residents every year. To meet the needs of this growing population it has been proposed that to the East of Sandnes a residential area be developed. According to Marc Zanussi, head of land management in the council of Sandnes, and county plans for long term development, 40 000 people will be living in the eastern part of Sandnes in 30 years from now<sup>33</sup>. For these plans to go ahead the infrastructure also needs to be in place. Although a bridge across the fjord and a light tram has been talked about for several years, it is highly likely that in the near future because of a growing population this will go ahead as planned. We only have to wait to see when.

The county plans for cultural heritage and cultural environment state that they will have a challenge to ensure the values of the heritage and cultural landscape in the future development of the area.<sup>34</sup>

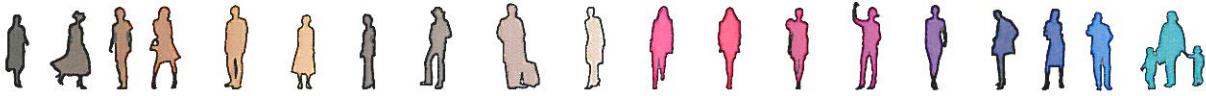
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<sup>32</sup>Hæreid, Marit. "Den nye Dale-bydelen (The new Dale) ". Article in Stavanger Aftenblad. 04.06.2007

<sup>33</sup>" Utbygging krever Gandsfjordbru". Nettmøte med Marc Zanussi. Stavanger Aftenblad. [www.aftenbladet.no](http://www.aftenbladet.no). 18.02.2009

<sup>34</sup> "Vel bevart i Sandnes?" Kommunedelplan for kulturminner og kulturmiljøer i Sandnes 2005-2017. Sandnes council. 25 april 2006

# The People



Dale reception centre is run by Hero Norge AS, who is Norway's largest operator of asylum centres for asylum seekers and refugees. One of Hero's goals is to encourage residential participation, and this is also the main goal at Dale reception centre.<sup>35</sup> Hero Norge AS follows the rules and regulations which are made by the Norwegian directorate of immigrations (UDI) on how to run a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees. Approximately half of the 60 employees at Dale have minority background which gives them a unique competence to run a reception centre and multicultural work.

Dale reception centre has 3 divisions and a nursery for the residents. The ordinary division has 344 residents, the department for unaccompanied minors has 31 residents and the reinforced department for women has 20 residents. The two latter departments have 24 hour watch. Reinforced departments offer adjusted care for people with special needs.

When an asylum seeker first arrives in Norway, normally he will be interviewed and health checked at a transit centre for his or her first one or two weeks. The transit centres are all in the capital region of Oslo. Afterwards, while awaiting the reply to their application for residence, they will be relocated to Dale reception centre or another centre in Norway.

To live in a reception centre is a voluntary housing option, although if you decide to stay with friends or family you will not receive financial support, food or other benefits. Very many do decide to stay at the reception centre. This will also be regularly checked, so that asylum seekers are not living at the grounds and at the same time receiving financial support.

The reception centre and employees provide the asylum seeker with a room, with bed and a wardrobe, and instruct them on the necessary routines. A key for the room must be signed for. In the first couple of days he or she is taken grocery shopping. According to the requirements for running a centre for asylum seekers, the residents should have the possibility to make their own food or have access to nutritious, varied and culturally adapted food. The families make their own food, while the night-watch will make

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<sup>35</sup> [www.hero.no/mottak/mottak/dale](http://www.hero.no/mottak/mottak/dale)

breakfast for the unaccompanied minors division. Sometimes the minors will make their dinners together and sometimes on their own.

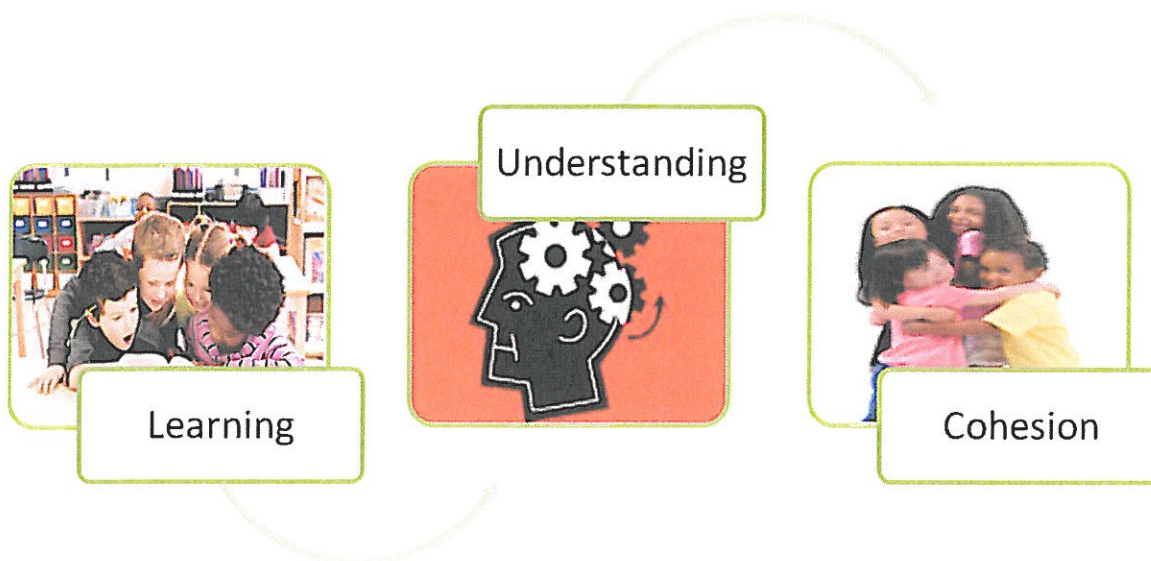


Figure 6 learning - understanding - cohesion

Dale is an intercultural place and strives to be integrative, inclusive and a rewarding place. Residents and employees at Dale have created several initiatives to achieve these goals. During spring 2009 there will be particular emphasis to creating a better multicultural cohesion through activities that also teach about other cultures and countries. Learning creates understanding and understanding creates cohesion.<sup>36</sup>

Hero`s motto:

“Not just a place to be, but a place to learn”

<sup>36</sup> Tone Paulsen. "An intercultural place. Can we take it further?" The voice. 1<sup>st</sup> edition . February 2009

# Social Variation

At Dale reception centre there are three separate units as seen in figure 7 below. Together these units make one kind of social variation at the centre ranging from unaccompanied residents to residents as part of a family. The ordinary unit is the largest and represents 87% of the total number of people living at the reception centre per April 2009.

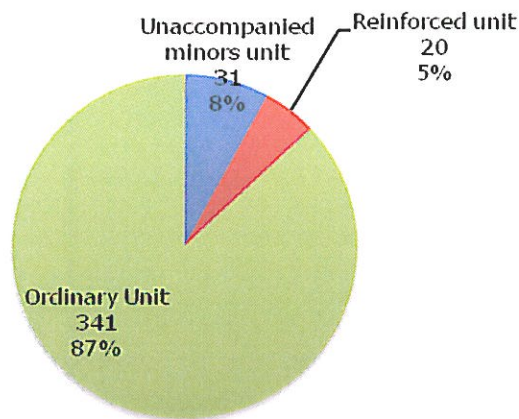


Figure 7 Units at Dale reception centre shown in numbers

These units can be broken down and separated to see the full scale of the social variations of men and women in different age groups (fig.8). All the individuals at Dale will have their personal identity that is shaped based on interest, culture, age etc.

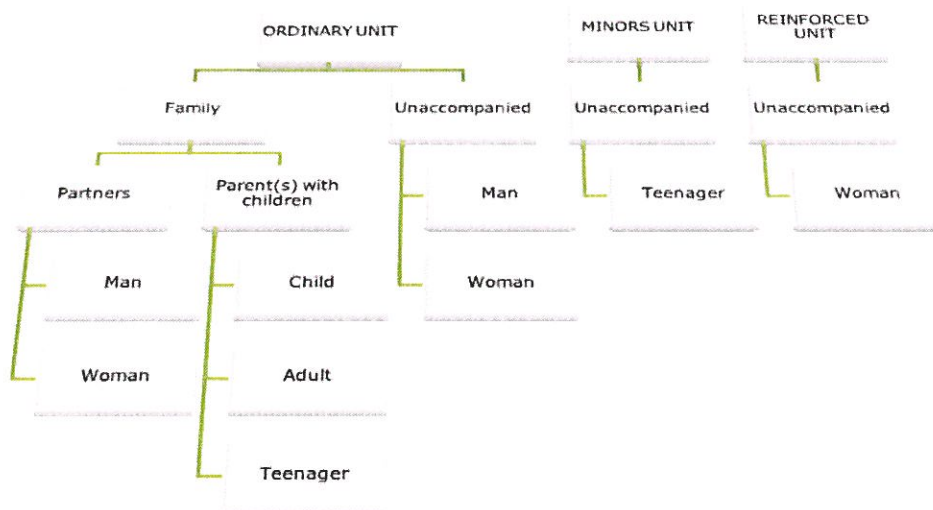


Figure 8 Social variations at Dale reception centre

By ungrouping the units at Dale reception centre a clearer picture emerges as to how we can draw connections as to planning for several individuals, and at the same time meet the needs of the individual.

In January 2009 more than 1/3 of the residences at Dale reception centre were women and less than 2/3 were men. The largest group approximately 1/3 were between the ages 19 and 29 and 1/3 were under the age of 18.<sup>37</sup> These numbers will not have changed in great deal in the last three months.

The next graphs show the different people who live at the centre in the respective units as of April 2009.<sup>38</sup>

Ordinary Unit: Total residents: 341  
 Represented nationalities: 27  
 Largest group: Russia 93  
 Smallest group: Algeria 1, Colombia 1, Kirgizstan 1, Libya 1

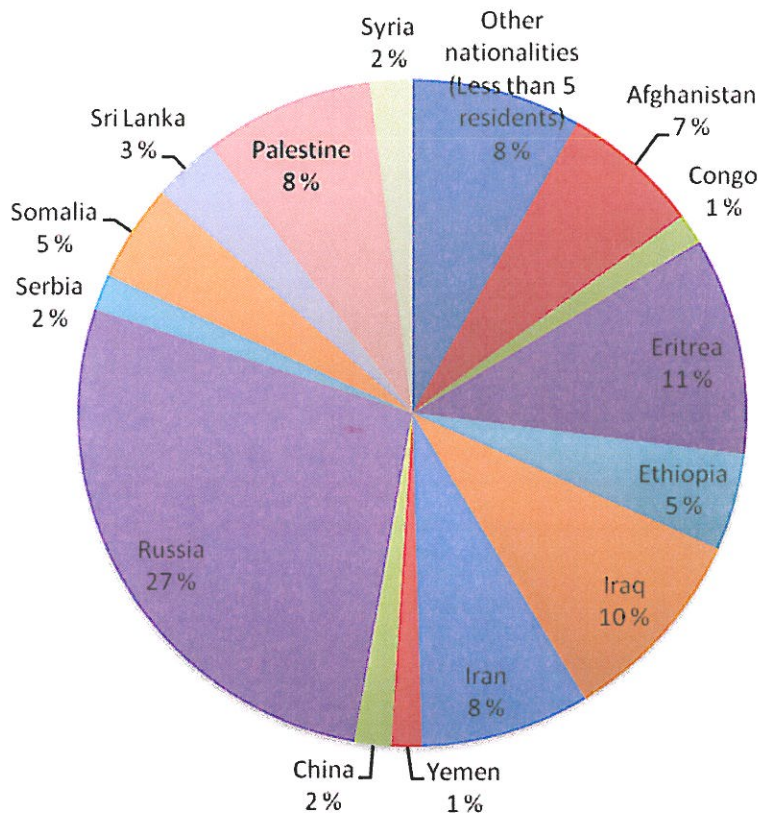


Figure 9 Ordinary unit in numbers

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Appendix C

Reinforced unit:

Total residents: 20

Represented nationalities: 9

Largest group: Afghanistan 4

Smallest group: Iran 1, Syria 1, Albania 1

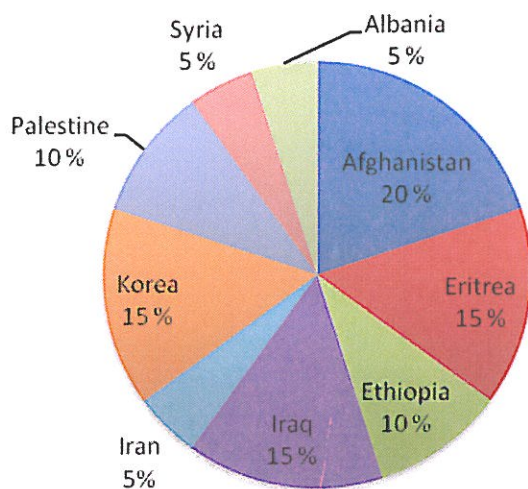


Figure 10 Reinforced unit in numbers

Unaccompanied minors unit (age 15-18):

Total residents: 31

Represented nationalities: 8

Largest group: Afghanistan 12

Smallest group: Korea 1, Lebanon 1, Nigeria 1, Ethiopia 1

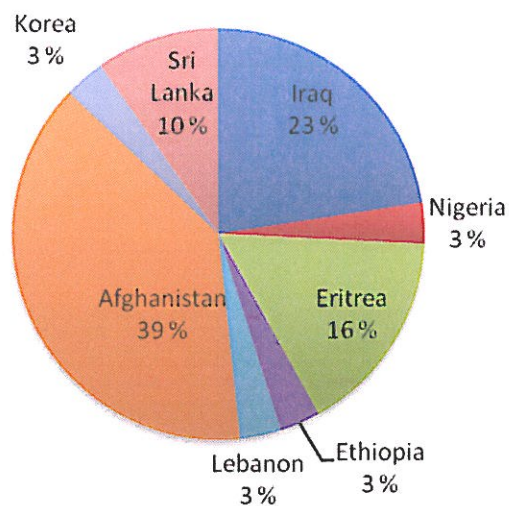


Figure 11 Unaccompanied minors unit in numbers

There is several different languages spoken at the reception centre; approximately 30 % speak Chechen, 20% speak Tigrinya, 20% speak Arabic, 15% speak Kurdish and 15% speak Amharic, Farsi, French, Spanish, Dari and Mandarin.<sup>39</sup>



Photo 30 Woman walking along pathway from administration building to bedsits

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<sup>39</sup> Tone Paulsen. *"An intercultural place. Can we take it further?"* The voice. 1<sup>st</sup> edition . February 2009



# The living quarters

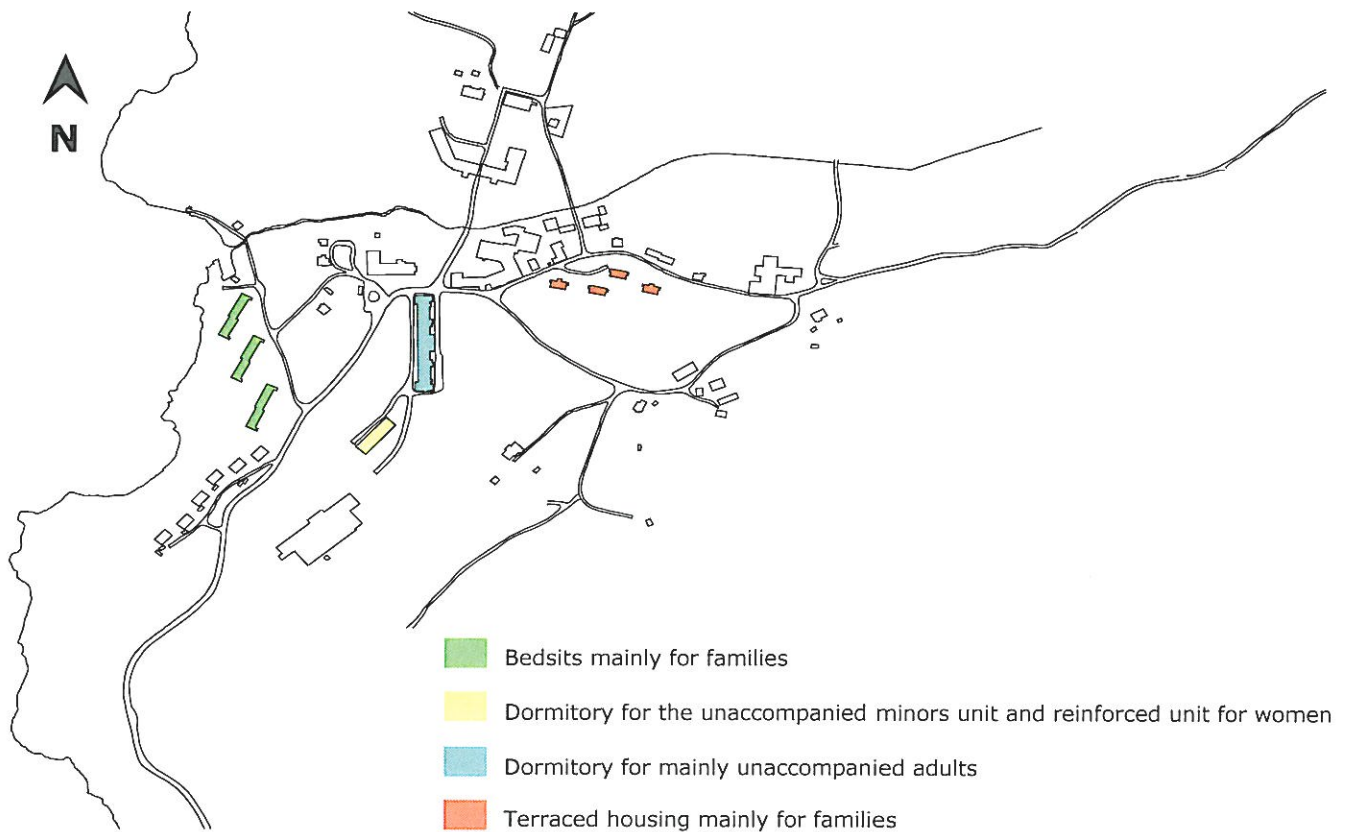


Illustration 11 Living quarters at Dale reception centre

The living units are not all centralized around the main building. Down by the fjord there are three housing units that contain bedsits, which have their own kitchen and bathroom, and up by the farm there is some terraced housing where they try and place all the families that come to the centre.

There are two large single houses, one called the "applegarden", which is the main building and the other "Dirgen", a former director building. The majority of asylum seekers that arrive here unaccompanied live in the main building. A little to the right of this is the E-building where the unaccompanied minors live. Only two floors are used in this building. Too the right again you have a hall, with a gym and events room. This hall is rented out by Dale Eiendom for all sorts of events and functions, and indoor training for local sports teams. The reception centre also uses it for gatherings and activities for the residents.

UDI says that government run reception centre`s should be a sober, but justifiable housing offer to ensure resident's basic needs and the individual's need for security.<sup>40</sup>

## Nursery and school

The children that arrive at the Detention centre have strong rights, and everything is done for them to have as normal life as possible. Norway has signed the "UN convention on the rights of the child." The Convention deals with the child-specific needs and rights. It requires that states act in the best interests of the child.<sup>41</sup>

The nursery at camp is compulsory for children of four and five years, however they can start at a younger age. UDI (Norwegian Immigration directorate) must then pay. Everyone under the age of 18 has a right to an education, whatever the status of their application for residence. The younger children up to approximately 12 years, go to Aspervika School and the older children attend an equivalent to a secondary school, Giskeungdoms School in town. There is also some that go to different videregående Schools (college/6<sup>th</sup> form).



Photo 31 Norwegian flags and children holding hands in the window at the Lutheran school

<sup>40</sup> "Kravspesifikasjon til driftsreglementet (specifications on how a reception centre should be run)". The Norwegian directorate of immigrations. Valid from 01.01.2008

<sup>41</sup> www.unicef.org – convention on the rights of the child.

When asylum seekers first arrive they are given 250 Norwegian lessons, which take place at the learning centre in Sandnes. Usually most of the residents start within 2-3 months. These lessons are used up very quickly, and they do not have a right to more Norwegian lessons until they have been given a residence permit.

## The common rooms and activities

There are a few common rooms for the residents, there is a gym, a computer room with ten computers and there is wireless internet in the reception area for those who have laptops. There is also a room that is used as a mosque and the club for women have a room they can use.

Dale reception centre has recently established a magazine, which is an efficient way to give out information and awareness about asylum seekers to employees, residents and others. The magazine called "The Voice" is given out at the beginning of every month, and articles are written by residents, former residents and employers. Inside the Magazine you will find information about activities taking place at the centre or in town, profile interviews, information from UDI and IMDI and other articles about the residences life at Dale reception centre.

There are several active refugees or asylum seekers in the camp that take time out to teach others skills or other interest they have. The resident of the month in the February issue of the voice said this:

*"Asylum doesn `t mean pausing our lives, we must keep working hard to achieve better opportunities for ourselves, and for the other asylum seekers"*

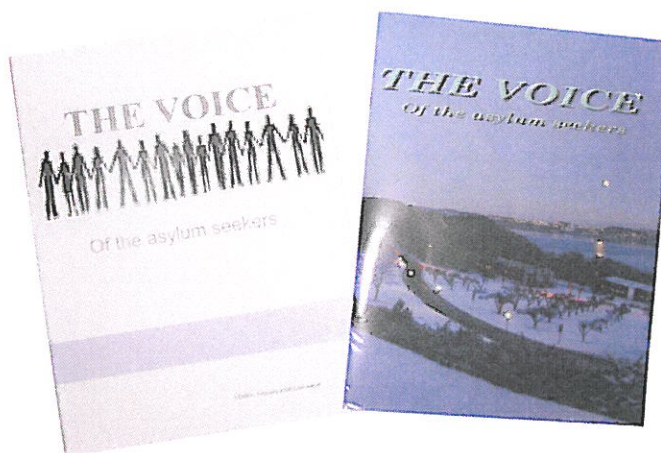


Photo 22 the magazine "The voice"

# Outdoor areas

Dale is situated in an area with a lot of opportunity for walking in the nature. On the main grounds of the camp, the nursery has a football field behind it and there is also a basketball net for the children. Behind the main building there is a volleyball pitch that does not look like it has been used very much. The area behind the main building is quite dark as the main building shades it from the sun. However there are one or two benches that people can sit on.

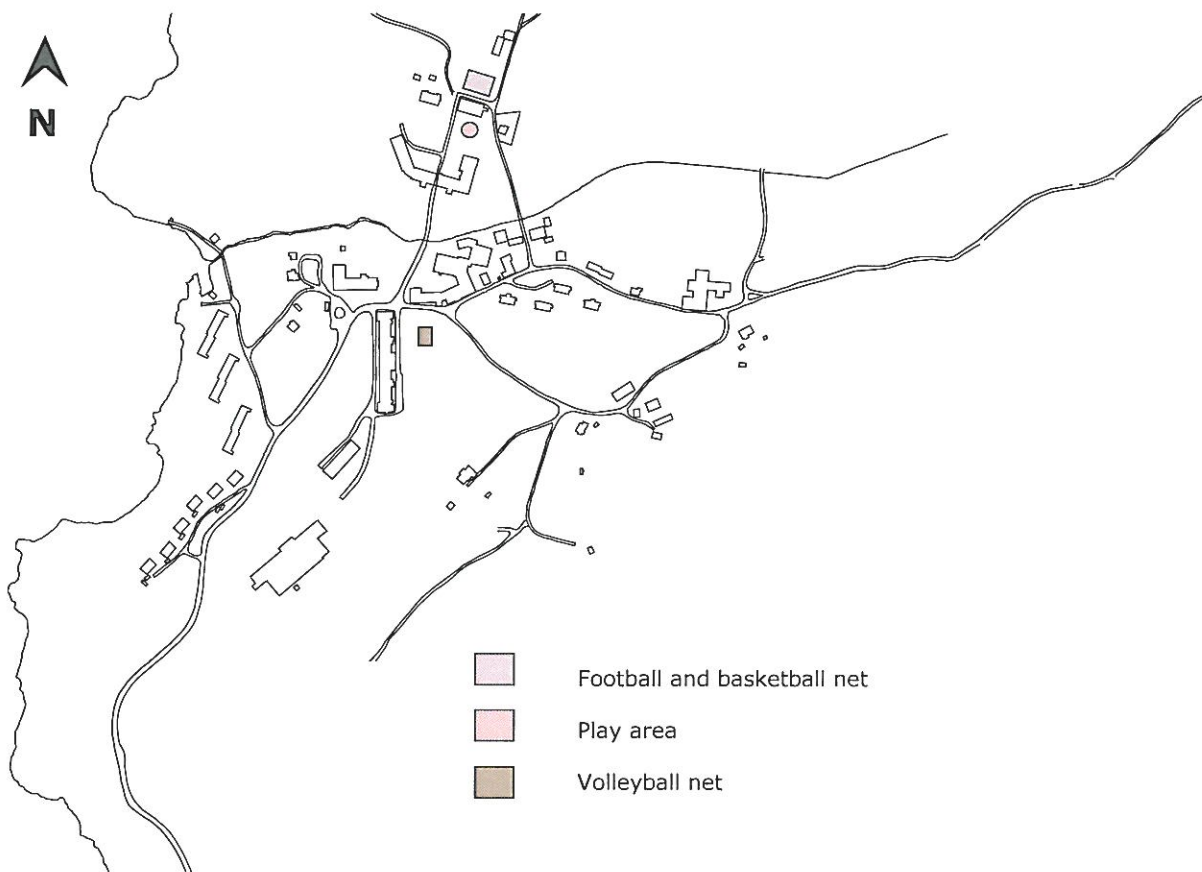


Illustration 12 Outdoor activities at Dale reception centre

In the nursery ground there are climbing frames and other toys for the children to play with. Outside the Lutheran school there is also a play area for children which can be used outside of the opening hours. One of the reasons why some of the play areas are not used a great deal is because they are not central to the housing units.



Photo 33 Football field behind Lutheran school



Photo 34 Climbing frame in front of Lutheran school



Photo 35 Children playing basketball outside Lutheran school



Photo 36 Volleyball net behind main building

Although there are opportunities for activities in Dale often it was registered that the minors were playing football behind the main building on the tarmac or the very young children were cycling or playing outside their housing unit.



Photo 37 Children playing near bedsits



Photo 38 Child riding bicycle outside bedsits



# Chores, routines and rules

The residents are in charge of washing and cleaning their room, and they take it in turns to clean the common rooms. This includes the kitchen, toilets, bathroom and hall.

The computer room is supposed to be looked after by the residents, but often they cause a lot of damage. Generally there is a lot of damage in reception centres, Eva-Maria Gärtner says, head of staff at Dale reception centre.

There are set rules for indoors, for example it must be quiet after 11 o'clock in the evening, this means no music.

Every now and then for all the residents it is compulsory to join in the cleaning campaign. The cleaning campaign encourages all the diversity of the 344 residents to come together and clean the outdoor areas as well as the indoor areas.

## Spare time

Despite the status of residence for the asylum seekers, they are free to join local sports teams or gyms. They are also freely allowed to leave the grounds and take the bus into town. Very many residents join all types of religious events; there is a mosque in Stavanger and Sandnes, and other types of religious churches in the community. At the moment there is many Christian orthodox's from Eritrea who attends the Eritrean church in Stavanger.

The residents also will visit the international house, the library or friends.

If you visit the Dale reception centre people were often gathered outside the administration building, chatting in small groups. Some people may be waiting for the bus, others will be collecting their mail from the administration building, some may be waiting to talk to an employee and others just have nothing else to do.



Photo 39 Group of people talking outside administration building



Photo 40 Person talking on mobile phone close to bus stop

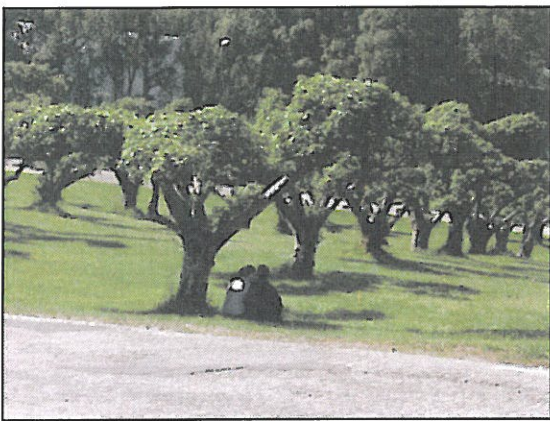


Photo 41 Girls finding shade from the sun under apple trees

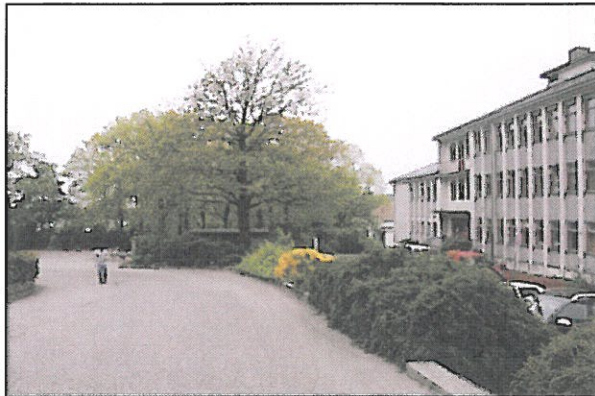


Photo 42 Man walking up from administration building



Photo 343 Man walking up towards administration building



Photo 44 Person waiting outside administration building

# Transport

One of the main issues when interviewing the asylum seekers at Dale was that even though they thought they could get a bus to town it was too expensive. When the residents needed to buy groceries or clothes or do any activities, they needed to spend money. For the families this then became very expensive.

Some had a bus card, and which was paid for by UDI, but the majority of people seemed to have had to pay for it themselves.

Dale is isolated from the rest of the town, and even though you could walk or even cycle, it is quite a distance to do so. The road in to Dale is quite narrow and has no pavements for pedestrians.

Some of the residents have a car, but not very many. The few that do have cars are from Russia. A Russian driving licence is valid in Norway for one year.

# Segregation

It is often quite segregated at the centre and this is often down to the language barrier. There are many nationalities here, and when you have large groups of the same nationality it leads to conflict. The group will take charge over the common rooms, making other people afraid of using the common rooms. This is the biggest problem according to Eva-Maria Gärtner. On the other hand most of the residents say they feel quite safe here, compared to where they lived before.

When interviewing the residents at Dale, only one mentioned that there were conflicts at Dale, but they hoped to get rid of them. He did not say what conflicts, but by the way his tone of voice went quiet and he looked down I got the feeling that his situation could be better. The rest did not seem to want to talk about this topic other than mention that there were conflicts between the children, when they had to share so few toys. Many of the people interviewed said they would like more activities for the children.

The television room has a couple of sofas around a TV in the reception area. This also is a problem when so many residents have to share one TV. Many of the residents would

wish for a separate room with more places to sit, so they could get together and watch the football.

## A stressed situation

The residents at Dale reception centre live in a tight space with many people. The majority do ask for private rooms, but the reality is that most people have to share a room. For some residents this works as a support, living together with someone in the same situation, but most of the time the asylum seekers ask for a private room. There are men and women living together and there are women who live in a separate unit. In this unit, the women have expressed they do not want to live with men. Some of these women have been subjected to remarks or sexual harassment, and find it very unpleasant.

For the children life is somewhat normal, but for the adults it's more stressful. They are waiting for a decision which they have no control over, because it is someone else who decides if they can stay in the country. Everyone that comes here wants to stay, and the reality is that approximately 60% will not be granted residence.

The wait is often not too long for the unaccompanied minors, maybe only 2-3 months, but they do not immediately get a housing opportunity. A couple of months is an absolute minimum and at Dale reception centre there are residents that have lived here for five, seven and even 11 years. This is a long time for someone to be living in a basic housing situation. Eva-Maria Gärtner said that, without it being stated anywhere, the asylum seekers time waiting for their application to be approved is not meant to be too pleasant. The reason for this is so they don't completely lose interest in going back to their home country. This is not stated anywhere, but Gärtner believes this is the thought behind the regulations for a reception centre. There are limited financial means for reception centres and UDI would not agree on using money for public areas for the residents.

The information in this section introducing the people and their lives at Dale reception centre was gained when interviewing Eva-Maria Gartner, head of staff (see Appendix A) and residents at the reception centre (see Appendix B)

# Evaluation

In terms of Urban design, a public space refers to an area or place that is open and accessible to all citizens, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. It does not state anywhere that public spaces should be excluded for asylum seekers.

It is suggested that inspired planning and design can make significant improvement in the lives of people.<sup>42</sup> If the lives of asylum seekers were improved would that not give a better starting point for further integration within the society they decide to settle?

In general people`s feelings towards immigrants and asylum seekers is becoming more positive, seeing them more as an asset rather than a threat to society. This is a step in the right direction to living in a diverse world, remembering that immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees are no less human than you or I.

The system for housing asylum seekers and refugees, run by the state, has only existed for the last 20 years in Norway. In this time the system has become more adaptable to the needs of the residents at reception centres. The new design proposal will take in to consideration that times are changing and more is being done in terms of integration. Why should not the residents at Dale have public areas where they can gather? A public space would support integration, emotional support, help overcome the language barrier, build confidence in an unfamiliar country especially if you came unaccompanied and help prepare yourself if you are granted residence to live in Norway. It is in urban space – in streets and in places that fellowship and mutual belonging is expressed.<sup>43</sup>

According to a rapport done among immigrants from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europeans and south and Central America, who have been working in Norway for a minimum of five years, nearly half of the immigrants experience a need for better education in the Norwegian language to function well in work relations. Even among those who have been working in Norway for more than 20 years, one out of four also experienced this. Could we not address this problem at an earlier stage?<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> L. Susan Everett, Executive Directorate, LAF. Foreword in: Francis, Mark. *Urban Open Spaces–Designing For User Needs*. Island Press, Washington, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Omland, Ib. *OPUS I Stavanger 2008- en presentasjon (Research project Stavanger cultural city 2008)* Page 3

<sup>44</sup> *Integrert, men diskriminert- en undersøkelse blant innvandrere fra Afrika, Asia, Øst-Europa og Sør- og Mellom-Amerika (integrated but discriminated)*. IMDi-raeport 9-2008. Page 46

The Norwegian directorate for immigrations states, that a reception centre should be a voluntary housing offer and it should provide for the residents basic needs. They also state that it should be a sober housing offer. For very many this is not a voluntary housing option as they do not have any means to live anywhere else, so wherever they are sent that will be their home for the next months or years. Also if you are one of the residents that will stay there for years, a sober housing offer could make the happiest of people depressed.

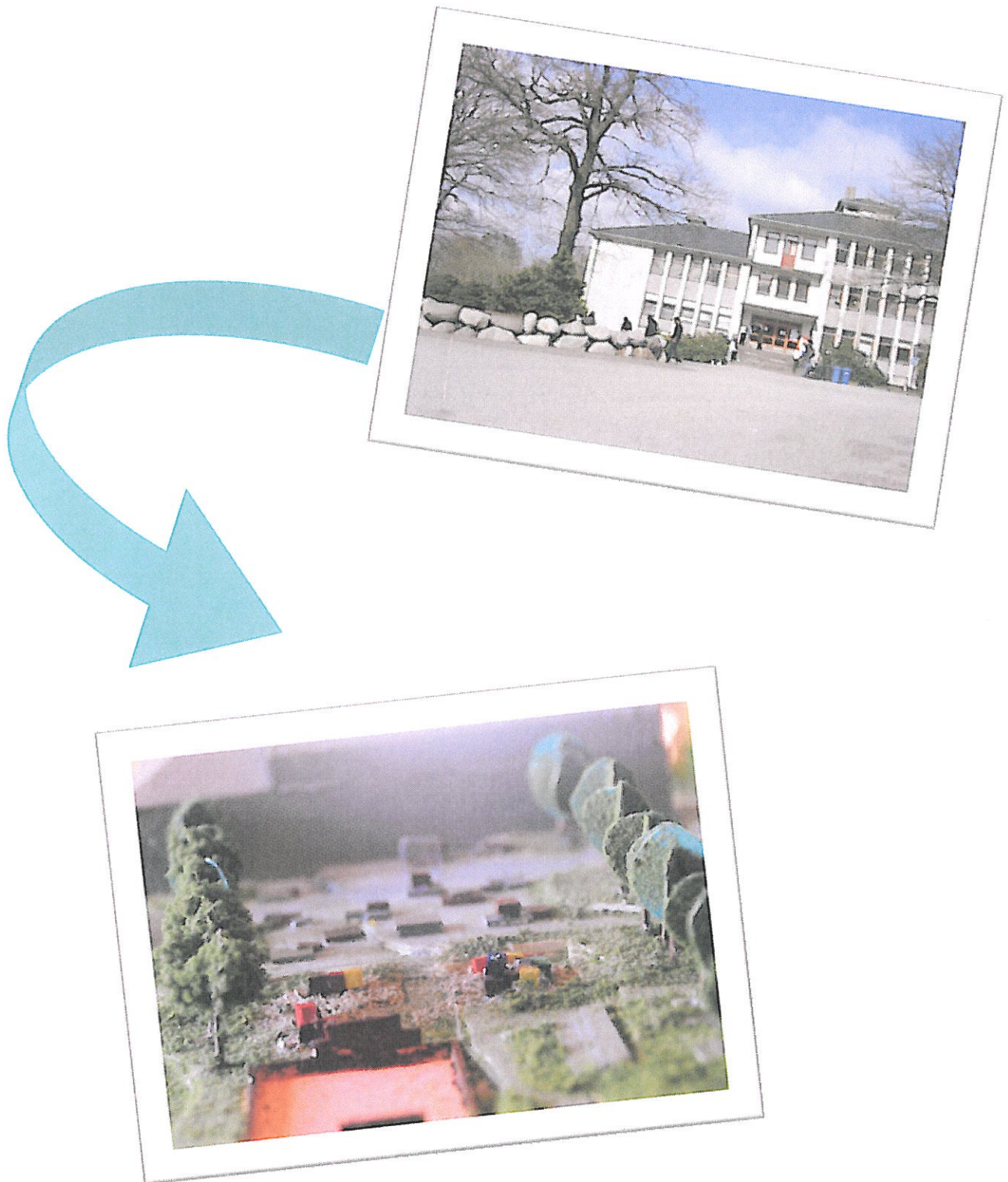
Asylum seekers must already suffer emotionally, from war, famine, rape and disaster in their country. Why would we want to make matters worse for them?

Arriving in an unfamiliar country and having to fend on your own, without a family, must be very frightening. To be living in a reception centre for as long as some do in Norway, there is not much to occupy their day with. Many of the asylum seekers at Dale expressed that they would like more to do as this would stop them thinking of their home country.

If I lived in a country suffering from famine, war and misery, I would hope to find a civilised country, to bring my family up in, educate myself and improve my standard of living. Wouldn't you?

The future plans and regulations for Dale state that Dale reception centre quite likely will have to relocate if the plans go through. This is because people generally do not want to live so close to reception centers out of fear and safety. This is a shame as generally the Norwegian population has the attitude that immigration enriches Norwegian culture.

# Chapter 4 – The site



# Development of the idea

The aim is to design a public space, or neighbourhood space that will improve integration between residents in a diverse neighbourhood. Secondly the design is to give the residents somewhere to participate in activities in an otherwise pressured living situation. The design will be part of a preparation stage for the residents to interact at a later stage if they are granted permission to stay in Norway.

The largest group at the reception centre are those between 19 and 29 and those under 18 and should be paid attention to but it is also important that we do not exclude other minority groups such as for example the reinforced unit with 20 females. The largest group at the reception centre is today the Chechens, but by next year it may be another group therefore a focus on the needs for different age groups would be more beneficial for a design proposal that would support integration and flexible for different users.

The design proposal is to harmonize with the landscape of the design site and its surrounding built framework, this way creating a calm, comfortable and friendly area to be in.



Photo 20 Model making and sketching



# The Site and Surroundings

The site chosen for a new design came quite naturally after visiting Dale a few times, as the site was where most people seemed to spend time other than indoors. This is because the residents enter the administration building from the site and also take the bus from the site in to town. The area is situated with good access and centralized in the middle of most of the living quarters. The area would be more welcoming, as it is seen from where the main road enters Dale.

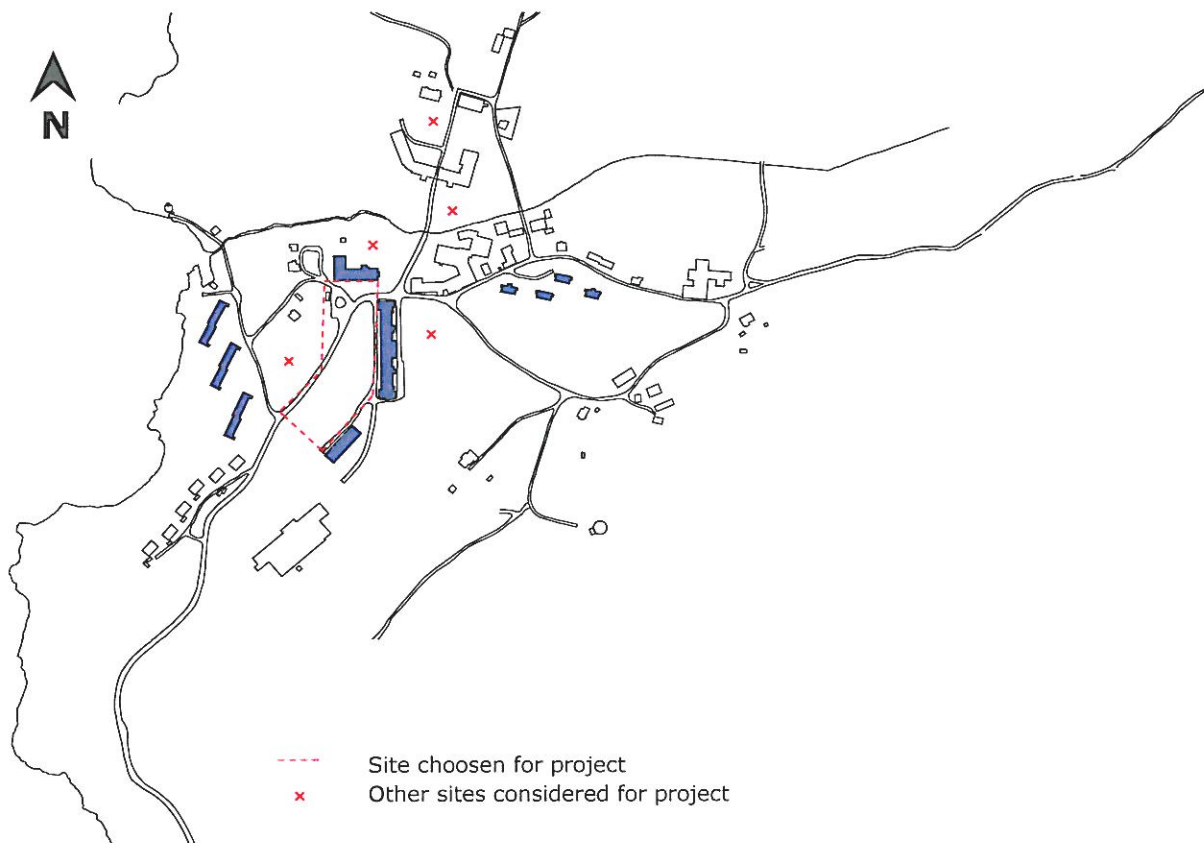


Illustration 13 Design site and other sites considered for redesign

Other sites were considered for a new design as marked on the illustration above as a red "X". These sites were all excluded as project sites, either because they were not in the central area that is surrounded by the reception centre or because they were too open. Some of the sites were also excluded because of lack of sun.

The site chosen for this project is what we in chapter 2 discussed as a collective space. This area is where most people and roads cross paved and is for very many living at the reception centre a route that is used daily. The site is also easily seen from most housing units which is what we discussed as natural surveillance in chapter 2 and will create a sense of safety. Other elements such as lighting can also contribute to making the site feel safe.

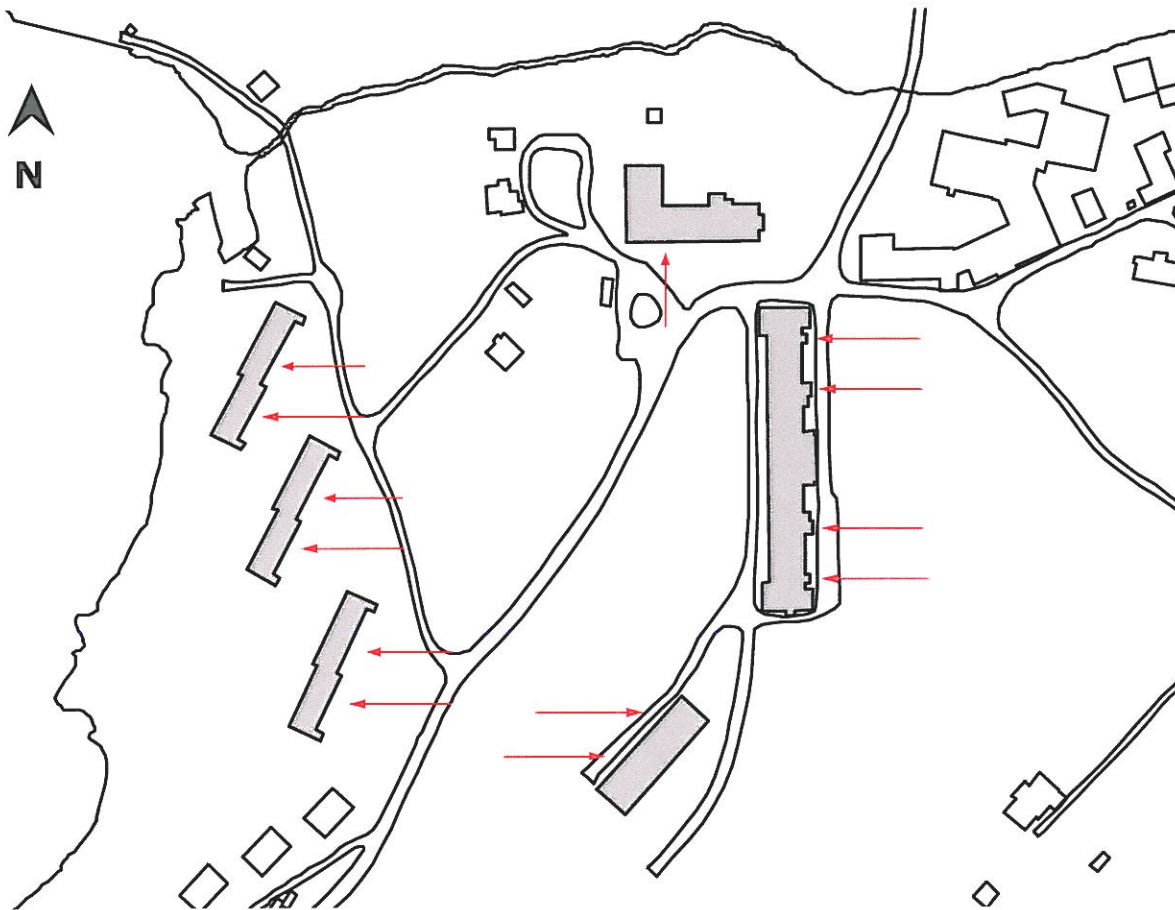


Illustration 14 Building entrances

The pathways and roads leading away from the entrances to the housing units all lead to the roundabout in front of the administration building, which makes this an important crossing point.

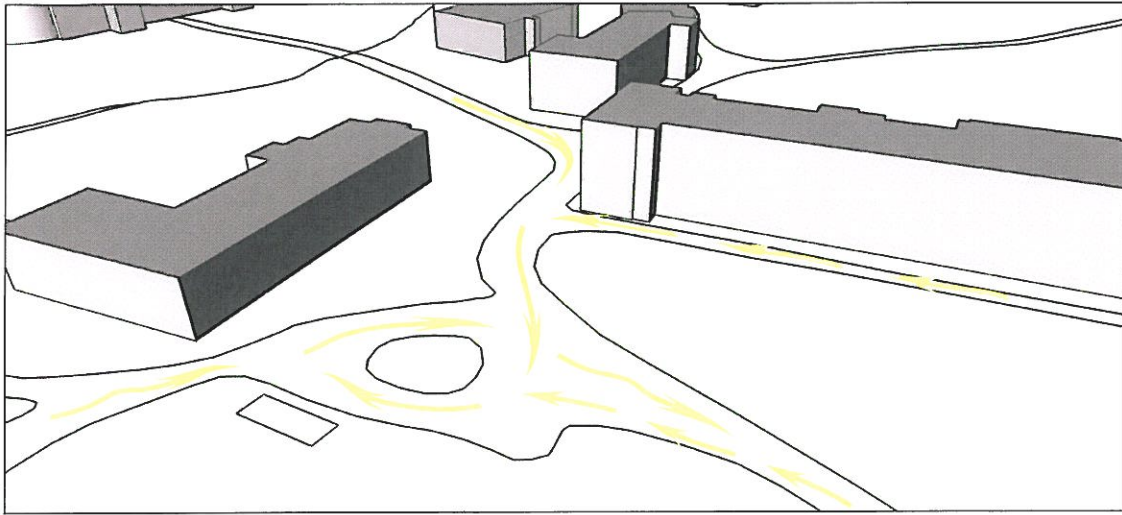


Illustration 15 Pedestrian flow

Other reasons for choosing this site is that it in connections with the diverse housing units would make a central area that represents a shared identity space.

The north end of the site is today used as a parking space for employees at the reception centre and turning area for the bus that travels in and out of Dale. In the design proposal the car park will be moved to the back of administration are, where there is room for a larger car park then what exists today. The bus that uses the roundabout as a turning area will now have to drive out of the area, turn around and come back down into site. This will increase safety around the administration building where people often are walking along the road.



Photo 46 North wall of site



Photo 47 Close up north wall, car park to right

The area of the site is approximately 12 000 m<sup>2</sup>, 65 m wide and 190 m long. The height difference is approximately 12 m from bottom of area to top. To decrease the immediate height difference on the area it is suggested to grade the area, to define the whole site as one space.



Photo 48 view from roundabout facing south



Photo 49 Lower end of site facing south



Photo 50 North view along road in front of main building

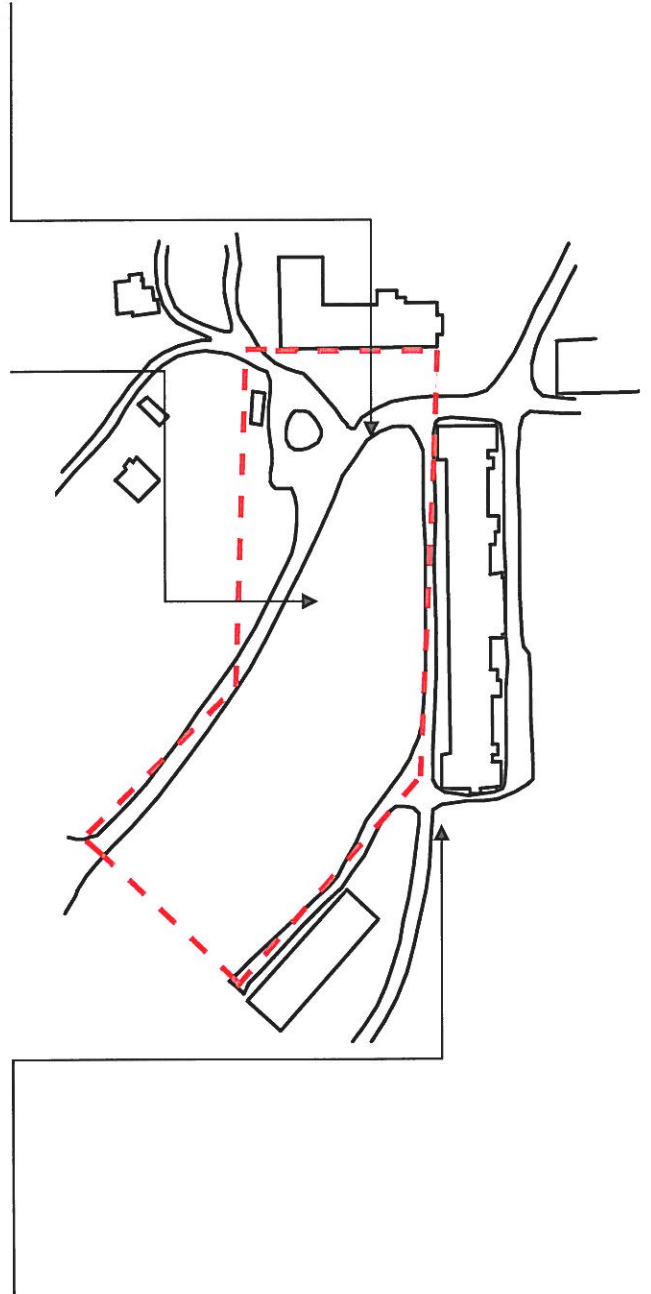




Photo 51 behind administration building



Photo 55 Bus stop

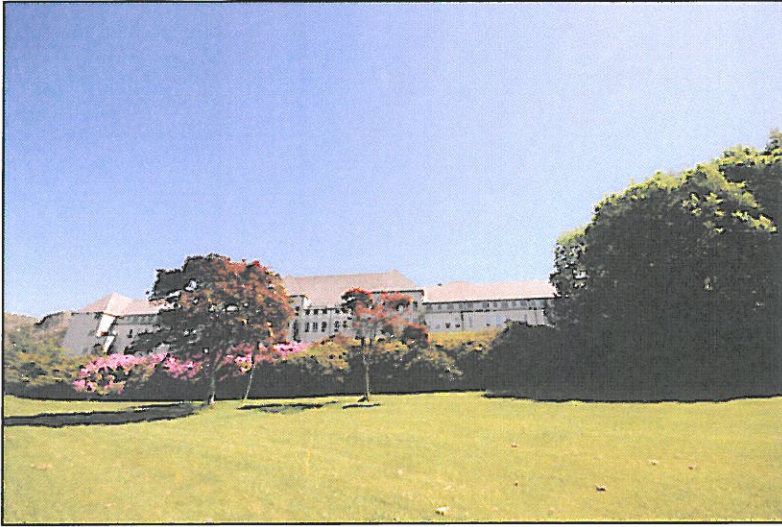


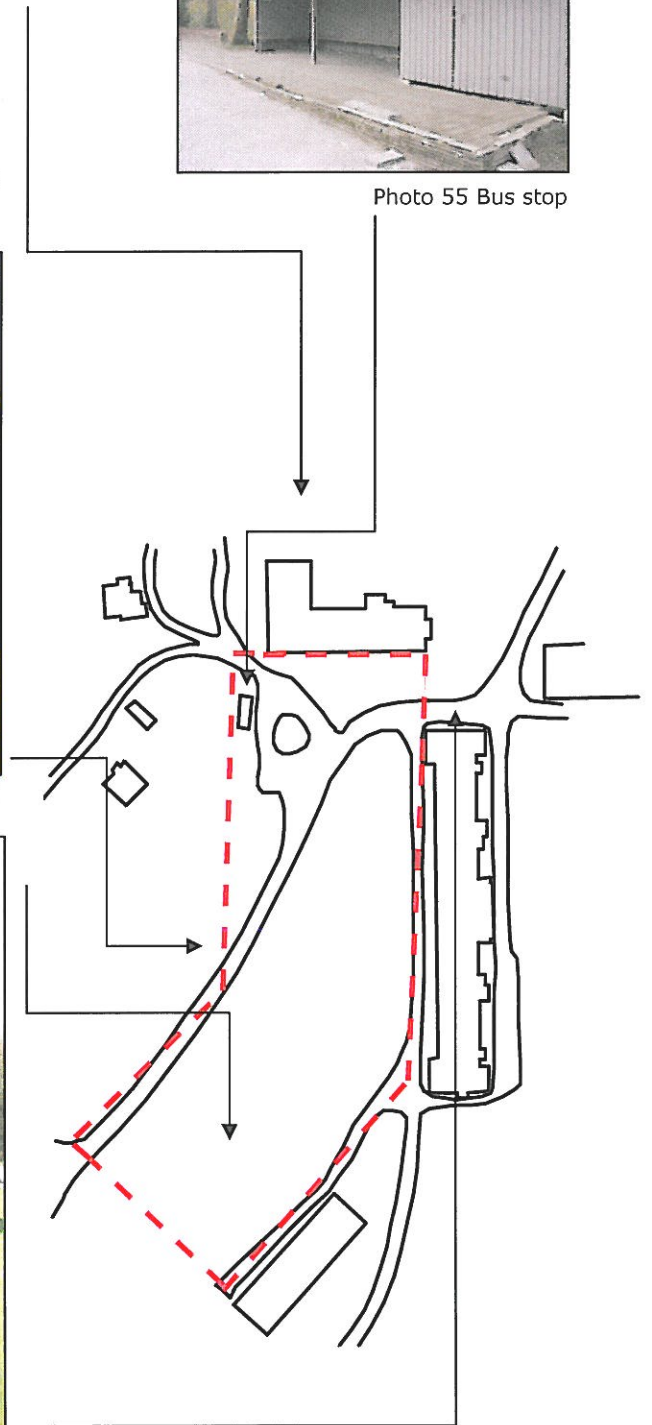
Photo 52 View facing eastern wall



Photo 53 Lower end of site facing southern wall



Photo 54 Southern entrance



The site is surrounded by buildings that range between 3 and 5 floors making the people feel very exposed in certain places on the site. To create a sense of a community space the road structure will change allowing more space to a central area and paths on to the site will be introduced to break connections between the housing units and administration building. As it is today there are no pavements and people are made to walk along the road. The shapes of the surrounding buildings are geometrical and the new design will also be geometrical, this way new design elements will weaken the height of the large buildings surrounding the site bringing it down to the level of people and making the site comfortable to be in.

## Neighbourhood survey

### What does an asylum seeker need – thoughts on redesign by the residents

At first when an asylum seeker arrives at the reception centre they need time to settle in and for some time to rest. As expressed by the residents interviewed who had been living there between two months and 5.5 years it is a situation that you need to adapt to or it will drive you crazy, after the initial settling in time reality is for them that there is not much to fill your time with.

All the residents in the interview agreed that when there were organized gatherings at the reception centre it was a day of much fun, especially for the children. This way you could make friends. Another way the residents suggested to encourage friendship was to have a television room where people could gather. Eva- Maria Gärtner says that it is hard for the residents to feel like they can take ownership in the community, but one of the residents signalled that he felt that they were being watched and therefore did not have a good living situation at Dale and kept to them self. Although everyone agreed that they had it better than in their home countries.

The residents would wish the reception centre to feel safer and more comfortable and family friendly. The children tend to play close to their housing unit as they are out of parental sight if playing further away. A playground and other activities closer to the housing units would be used.

Many of the younger residents interviewed expressed a lack of information and would like there to be easier access to the internet or other types of media. One of the main issues was the language barrier and also a way of people not interacting with one another.

Generally people living at Dale reception centre feel there is a lack of activities to fill their day with.

*Question A:*

*If I was to redesign an area here to meet the needs of people and make positive interaction between residents, what would you like the site used for?*

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation in home country</b>	<b>Status at arrival</b>	<b>Lenght of stay</b>	<b>Answer Question A:</b>
Nigerian	M	30	Lost job in the city	Family	3 ½ months	A place for families. Climbing elements for children. Television room.
Nigerian	F	28	Mother	Family	5 months	Wireless internet. Place for families.
Asia	M	22	Student	Unaccomp anied	5 ½ months	Wireless internet
Chinese	M	26	Student	Couple	1 ½ months	Better availability to the internet. Horse riding
Chinese	F	22	Student	Couple	1 ½ months	Better availability to the internet. Gym with different sports. Television room.
Palestinian	M	21	Electrician	Unaccomp anied	4 months	Access to information. Internet
Palestinian	M	30	Electrician	Unaccomp anied	7 months	Access to information. Internet.
African	M	45	Computer Engineer	Unaccomp anied	6 months	Access to information. More activities. Likes to read
Russian	F	24	Stylist	Single mother – came with daughter	5 ½ years	Make it comfortable and safe. Bookclub.
Chechen	M	43	Worked at a Mill	Unaccomp anied	1 year	Football, volleyball and fishing.
Chechen	M	22	Worked with computers	Unaccomp anied	1 year	Sports activities. Activities for children.
Chechen	M	36	Builder	Unaccomp anied	1 ½ year	Activities for children.

Table 2 Neighbourhood survey



Even though we have identified certain needs for certain age groups, and should program spaces accordingly, it is also important to look at how we can integrate these activities. This can be done by mixing activities so that for example the whole family can join in and families or groups can interact and form relationships.

The table below shows what activities on the site that can meet the interests or needs of different age groups and statuses as discussed in chapter 2 at the reception centre. The table also shows how different activities can also meet the interests of different age groups.

	<b>Young children 0-6 years</b>	<b>Older children 7-14 years</b>	<b>Teens 15-20 years</b>	<b>Adults w/family</b>	<b>Adults w/o family</b>
<b>Small play area (structured)</b>	✓				
<b>Large play area (unstructured space for exploring)</b>		✓			
<b>Informal/formal meeting spaces</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Sports</b>		✓	✓		✓
<b>Seated areas</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Community garden</b>				✓	✓
<b>Centre for communication</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3 Activities for different age groups.

# Limitations

In order to redesign an area for the residents at Dale reception centre there are certain limitations that are set by the government or controlled by the shape of the landscape that can influence the outcome of a design proposal.

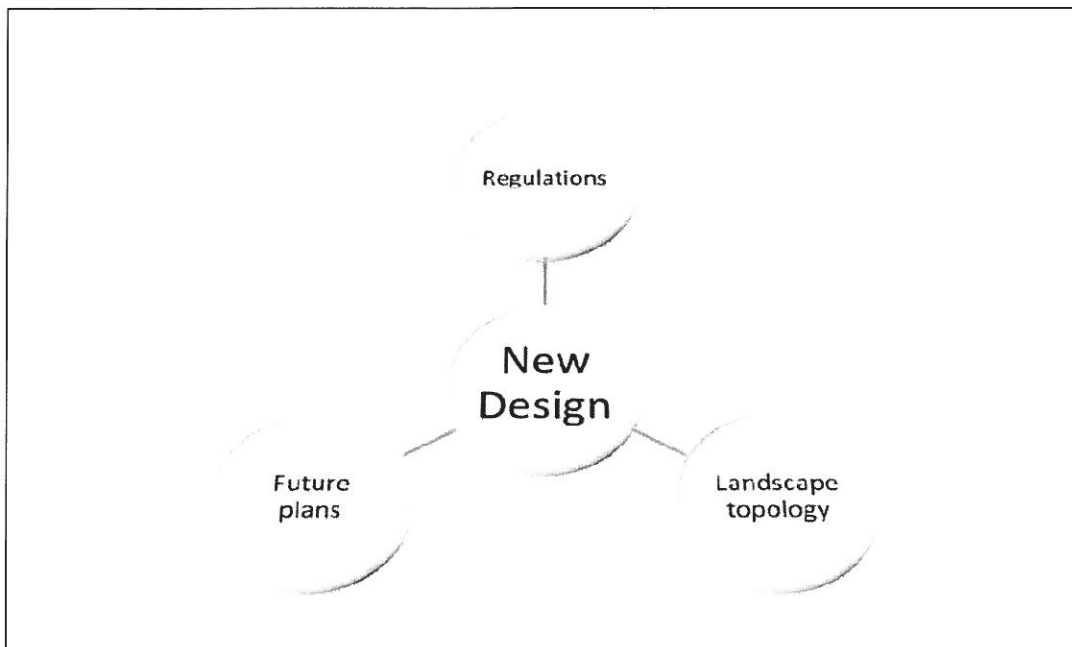


Figure 12 Limitations

There are several political regulations that effect Dale and what you can build there.

Municipal land use plan:

The area where the site is situated lies within an area committed to buildings for public use. Therefore a public space would not be in disagreement to this.

Norwegian Directorate for immigration:

UDI says that government run reception centre`s should be a sober, but justifiable housing offer to ensure resident's basic needs and the individual's need for security. Laws and regulations on how an Asylum centre for refugees and asylum seekers should be run, limits the financial means to support a project that is for the benefit of asylum seekers and their surroundings. The site will be in disagreements with regulations set by UDI and the economics possible to support this kind of project.

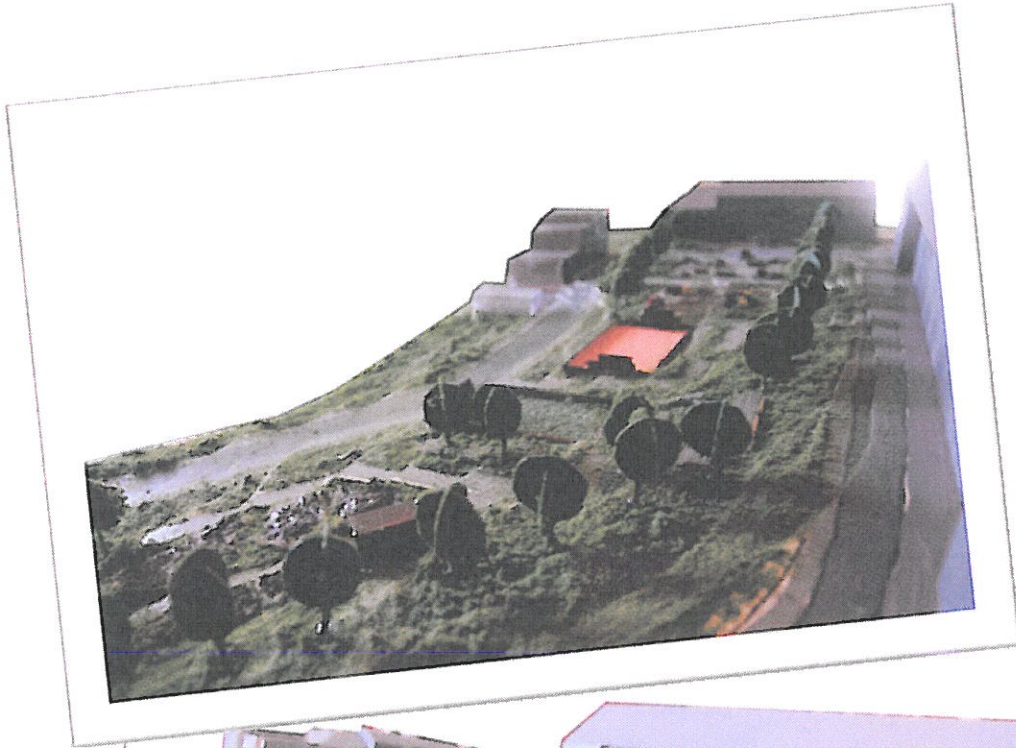
## Landscape:

The mountains surrounding the community of Dale set the boundaries for where the design will take place in order for it to be accessible for the residents at the reception centre.

## Future plans

Future plans for Dale would support public spaces for the community, but if the future plans go through most likely Dale reception centre would have to relocate.

# Chapter 5 – The design proposal



# Concept

The redesign of the public space will give an environment, for the residents at Dale reception centre to feel comfortable in and take ownership of. It is going to be a fun place to be in. The design will encourage integration and contribute to:

## Breaking down Barriers



Plan 1:500

# Design proposal

The diversity of the people is going to be highlighted throughout the design by using a variety of elements. Different textures such as wood, anodised aluminium and stone, the various heights of elements and the hard surface of the pathways mixing with the soft surface of the grassy landscape will represent the complex diversity of the people who live in Dale reception centre. All materials are to blend with nature and the existing buildings, although colour is added to the playground and sports area to brighten the design up and make it fun.

The road has been restructured giving more space to the central area and also defining the area. The road in direct connection with the site is to be an environmentally friendly street with a low speed limit for vehicles. There will be added pavements to both sides of the main road and they will integrate with the pathways through the site. The paths are three meters wide and are within the social distance where integration will take place. The intricate pathway which flows between the activities allows people to bump in to one another causing spontaneous meetings. A new path will enter to the right of the apple garden allowing a safe entrance to the centre for communication from the housing units below the site.

The upper area of the design closest to the administration building form a stricter formation where the hard stone rectangle surface shows this is a space with boundaries that end where the edging of the stone is. As you follow the new design and drop of landscape towards the bottom of the site, pathways guide the way onwards and the design becomes less structured and integrated with the landscape.

Trees surrounding the site make the site defined by setting boundaries between the road and site but they also make the area feel safe, comfortable and less open. The trees also help define where the activities take place. The areas that are covered with stone such as the shaded area outside the centre for communication and the barbeque are will also have some potted outdoor plants that contribute to the feeling of a comfortable place to be.

Integration is going to be supported by having activities that bring people together where there is no need of speaking the same language or having the same culture to be interested in the same activity. The design integrates with the diversity of the landscape but it will also integrate the people

# Program

## Learning:

The design will have a communication centre and will consist of a small library, computers with internet connection and other audio visual equipment which will contribute to learning the Norwegian language and culture, and finding information. The centre will encourage the people living at the reception centre to meet and participate in group activities, such as for example poetry, art or other cultural traditions that the individuals would like to teach each other about. The centre for communication will also be a means for breaking down the language barrier.

A cafe in the centre could be run by the residents at the reception centre and that way be encouraged to participate in the community.

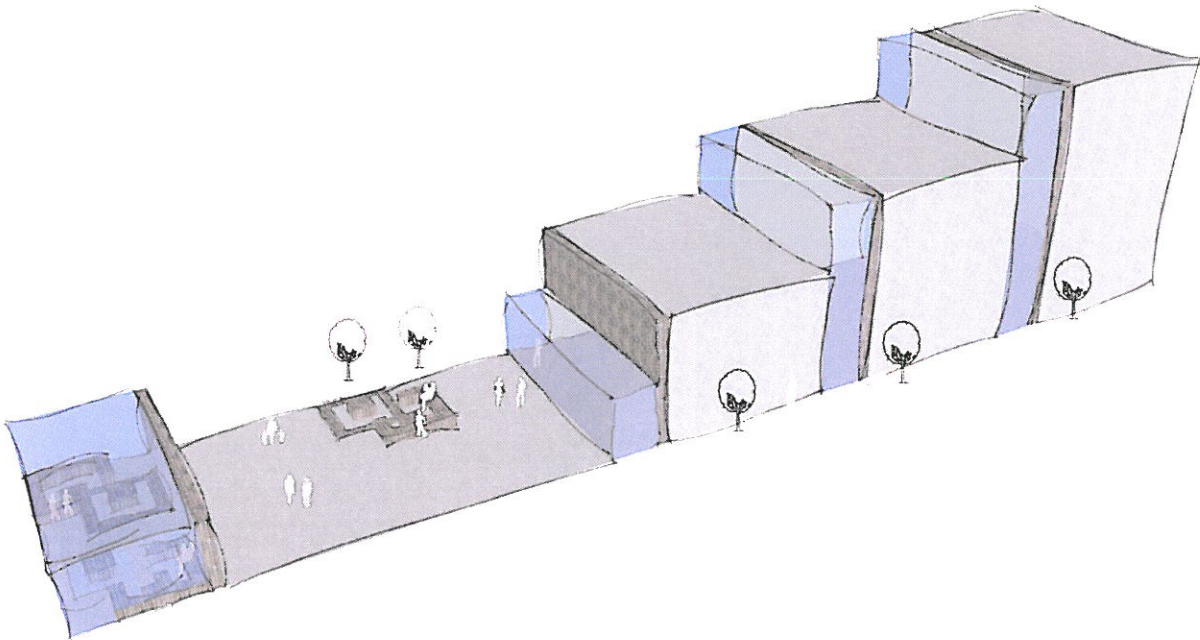


Illustration 16 Centre for communication

A centre for communication would be for all age groups.

The communication centre will have a geometrical shape and decrease in size one level at a time, for every time it stretches further out into the landscape. This will bring the heights of the other buildings down to the level of the landscape and the level of people. In contrast to the other buildings surrounding the site, the communication centre will have a similar geometrical shape and join the other buildings to define the walls of the site. As an elongation of the new centre there will be a shaded area directly across it. The new centre is suggested to be made out of materials which harmonize with the



surrounding buildings but at the same time have a modern look. The facades will consist of glass and give light in to the building, and will also not keep people from seeing the views even though they are inside. The sides of the building will be a mixture of anodised aluminium and wooden texture. Anodise aluminium can be given different colours, but a subtle silver will best harmonize with the neighbouring concrete administration building.

## Play:

A play area near the housing units would be used as shown through where the children play at the reception centre today. The play area will be built up using geometric shapes with which you can climb through or jump over. The geometric "boxes" will also great towers to look out from and hiding places, encouraging curiosity and discovery among the children. The play area will be for the younger children. The play area is to be colourful and vibrant an indication of fun and playfulness.

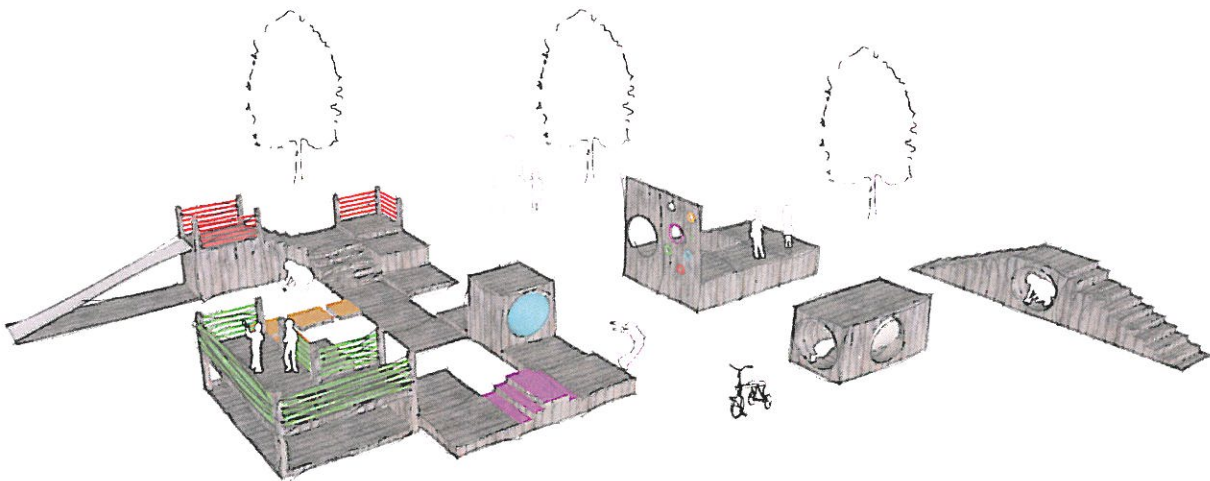


Illustration 17 Play area

Children have least problems when it comes to integrating with children they do know. Seating areas in connection with a playground encourages families to get to know each other.

## Seating area:

There will be several seated areas throughout the new design. The geometrical pattern of all the sitting areas will be the same, but they will vary in height and design,

representing the diversity of the people.

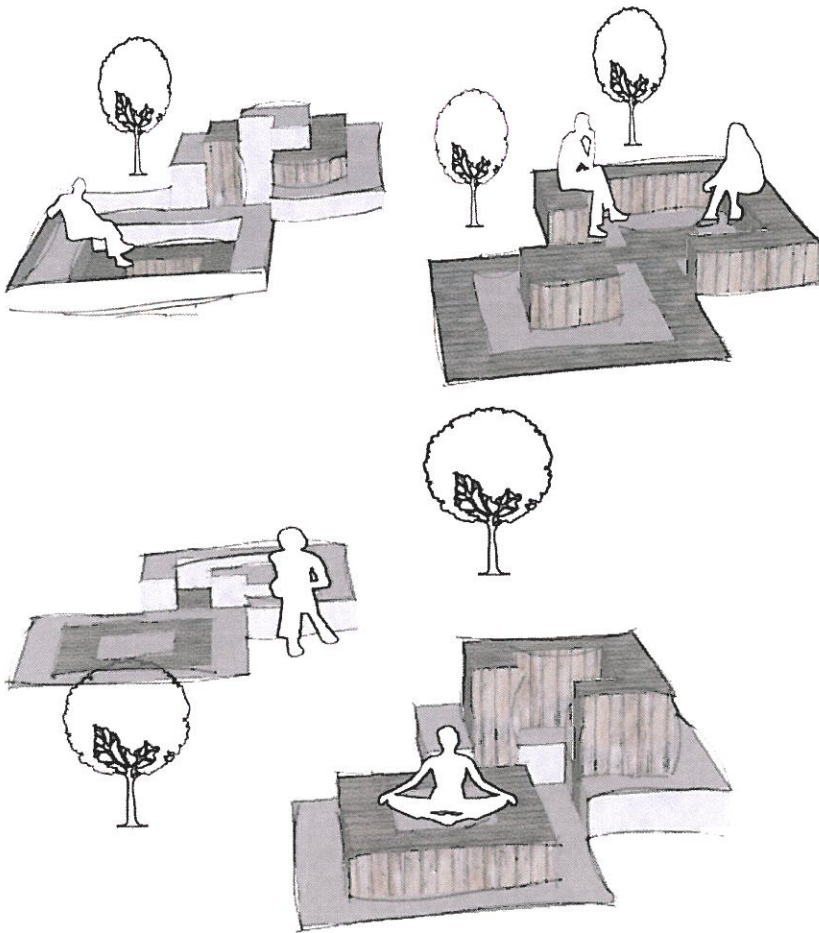


Illustration 18 various types of seating areas

The main meeting area with a barbeque will be close to the play area, so that parents can keep an eye on the very young children, but at the same time have the possibility to interact with other adults. This area should also give room for people to have outdoor functions and gatherings such as for example a community barbeque, celebration of national holidays, sports days etc.

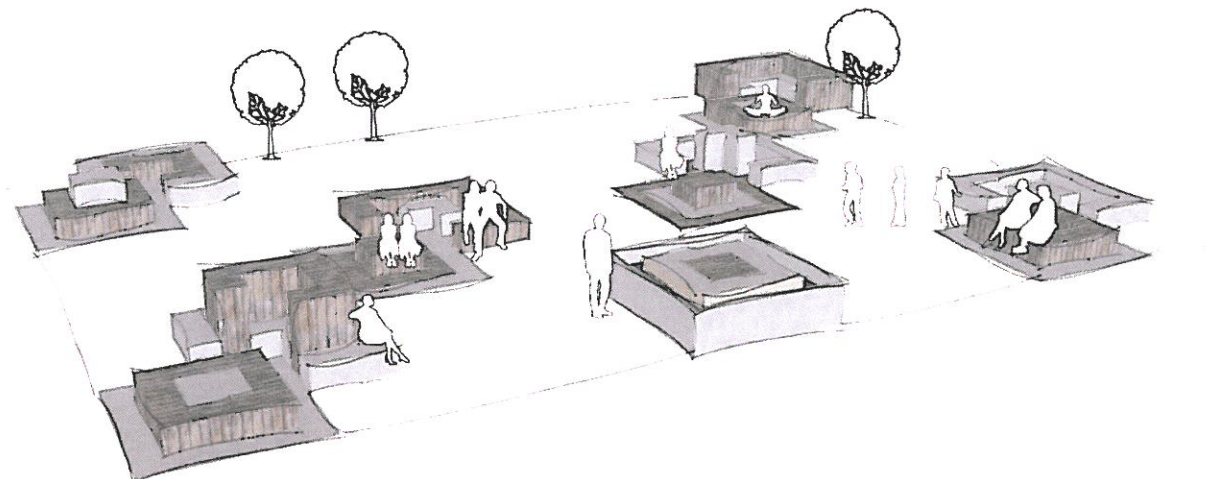


Illustration 19 Meeting and barbeque area

There will also be seating surrounding the sports areas for supporters, but these seating areas can also be used to purely enjoy the view or find shade under a tree. This why there are no trees on the lower end of the site where the sports area is situated so the view will not be blocked for those who wish to enjoy it. The seating areas should also be made out of a gray coloured stone and wood panelling for more comfortable seating.

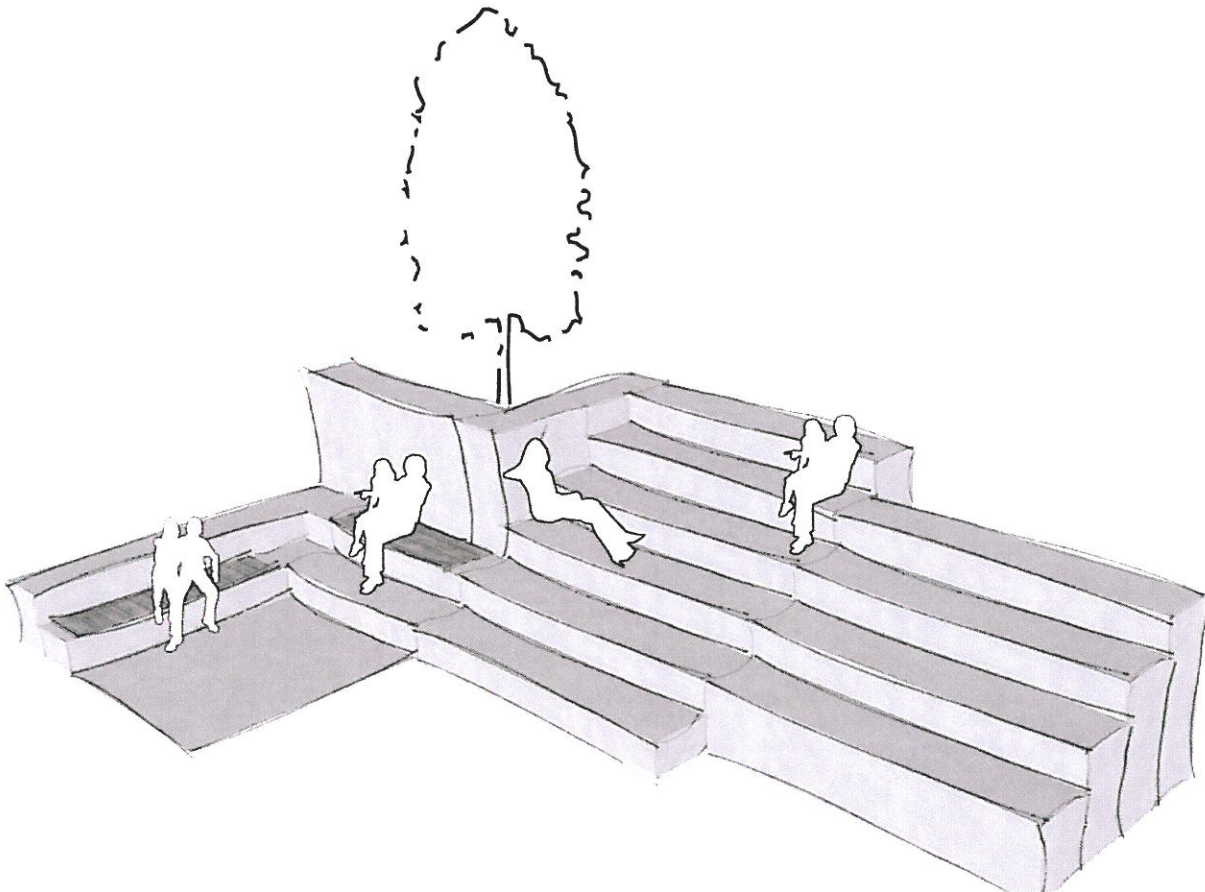


Illustration 21 Stands and seating

Even though the new design includes elements of seating the gradual grading of the site leaves grassy banks to sit on during the warmer summer months.

### The waiting area:

The waiting area will include a bus stop and places to sit and wait outside the administration building. This area will be the main access point with transport to and from town. From the waiting area there will be easy access to the site and to the centre for communication centre.

## Sport activities:

The site will contain two sports courts for 5 aside teams. This gives it a much more friendly setting rather than having full size courts that would take more room. One court will have football and the other court basketball. The courts should also be flexible so that they can be used for other sports such as handball, hockey, volleyball etc. Sport is a contributor to making friends and finding common interests. Sport is also an activity that you can do together even though there is not a common language.

The residents will be encouraged to have tournaments or weekly training and this way get to know the people they have been living along side without talking to. The sport areas will have artificial covering which will be maintenance free.

Sports facilities will be aimed towards older children, teens and young adults, though all can participate even if it's just as a spectator.

## Shaded area:

The main shading on the site will be trees, although there is a glass structure outside the communication centre that also protects one from the elements. In Norway the climate is colder, and for some cultures they may not be used to it. This is why there is also indoor space in the form of the language centre where the residents can meet up.

## Community garden:

The community garden will allow the residents to grow their own vegetables, plants or flowers. This way contributing to the upkeep of the site and taking pride in there surroundings. The garden is aimed towards the adults that do not have children and would like to come in contact with other residents with the same interest for gardening, but gardening can be fun for the whole family.

## Recreational and discovery area:

This area is furthest away from the core of the site and is meant to give the residents a place to relax and have a larger degree of privacy from the reception centre. The area is surrounded by trees and is less structured as to the other programs. The activities in this area can be left up to the imagination.

This area is aimed for all users, but also for teens that need a meeting space away from their housing unit.



Photo 56 Reference to material usage on site

# Sections

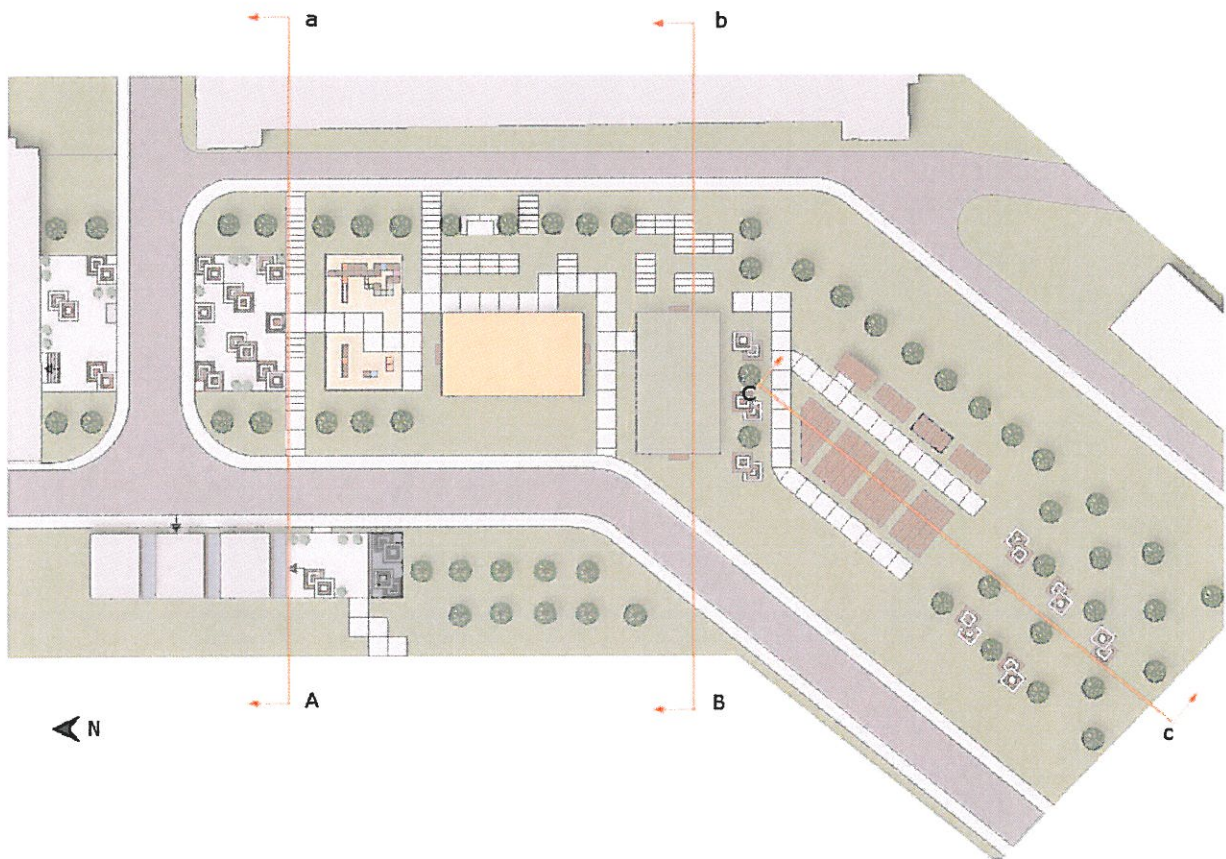
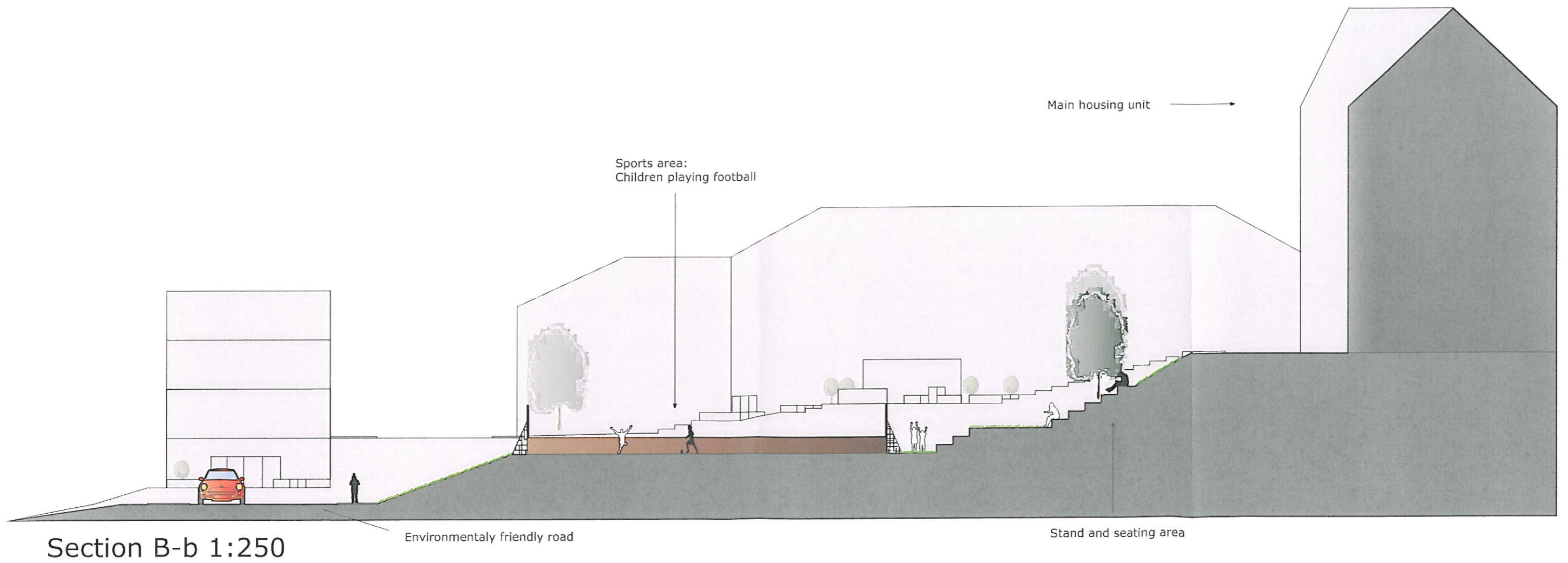
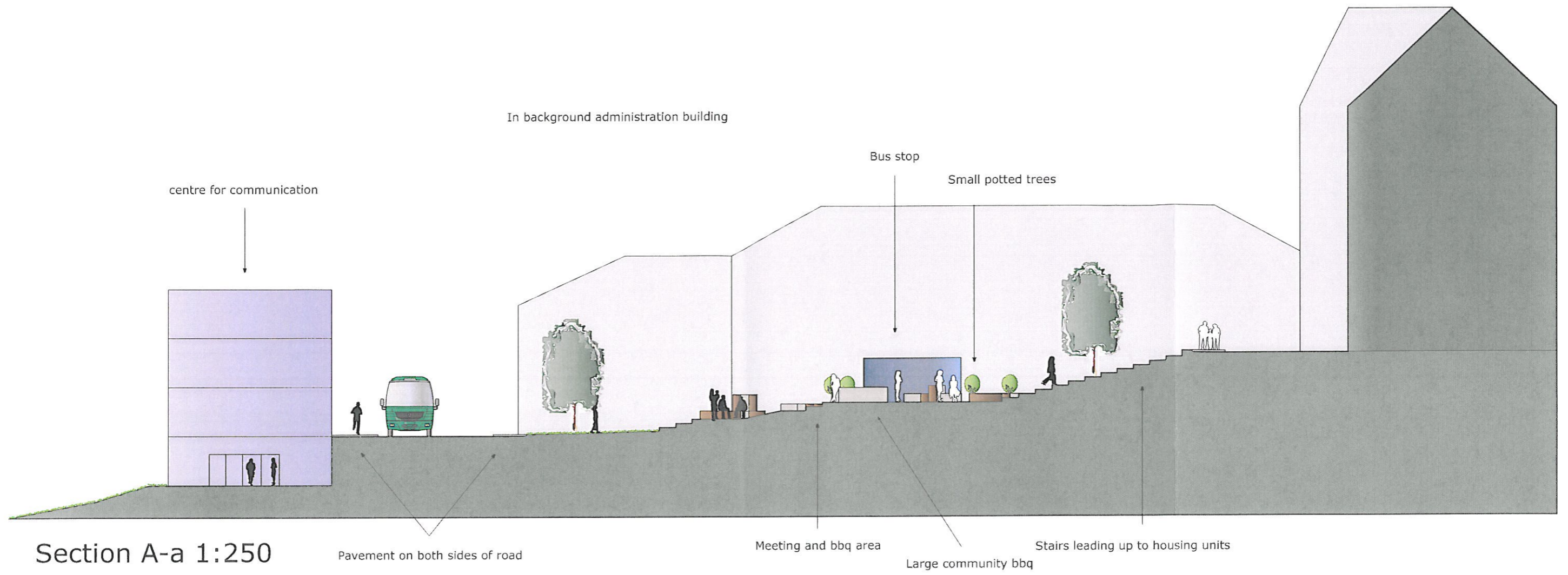
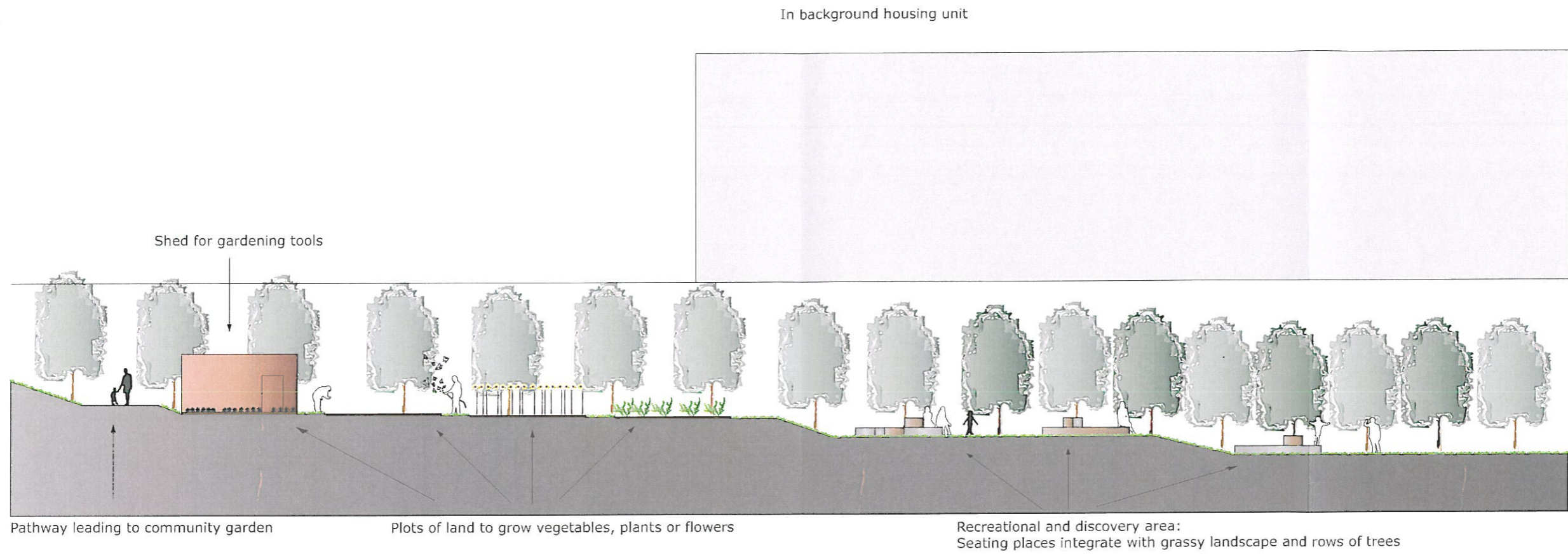


Illustration 21 where sections have been made on site





Section C-c 1:250



Section A-a 1:250

Section B-b 1:250

## Section C-c 1:250

# Illustrations

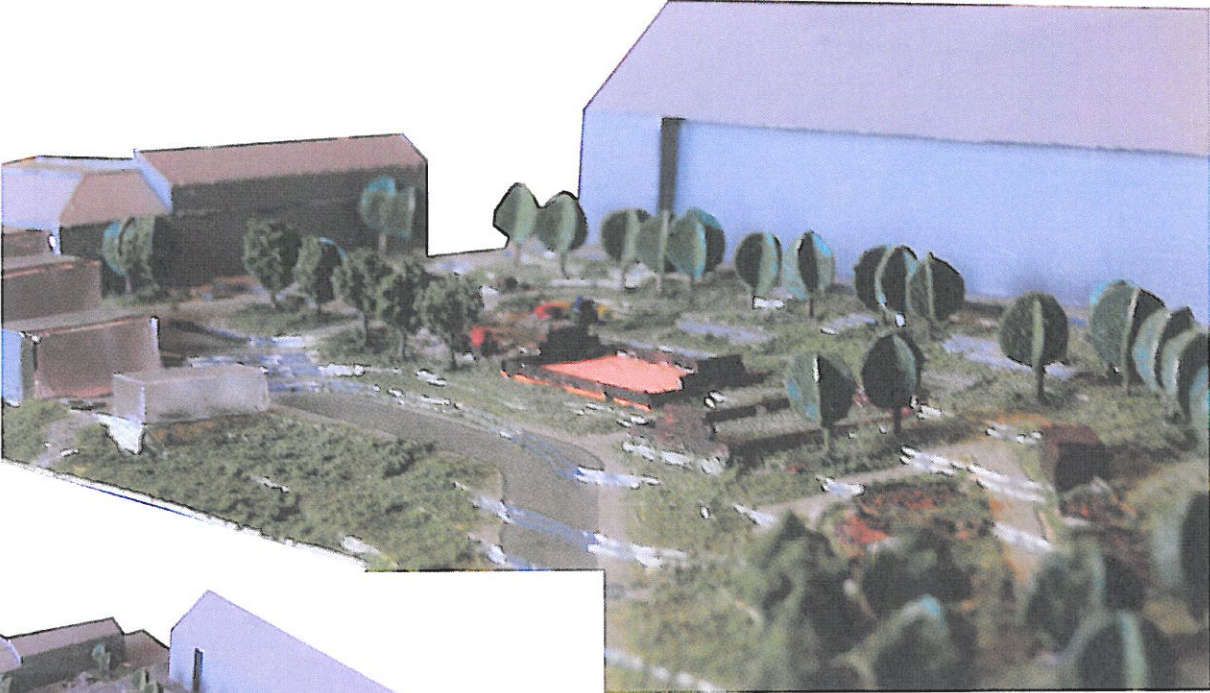


Illustration 22 View of model looking in to area

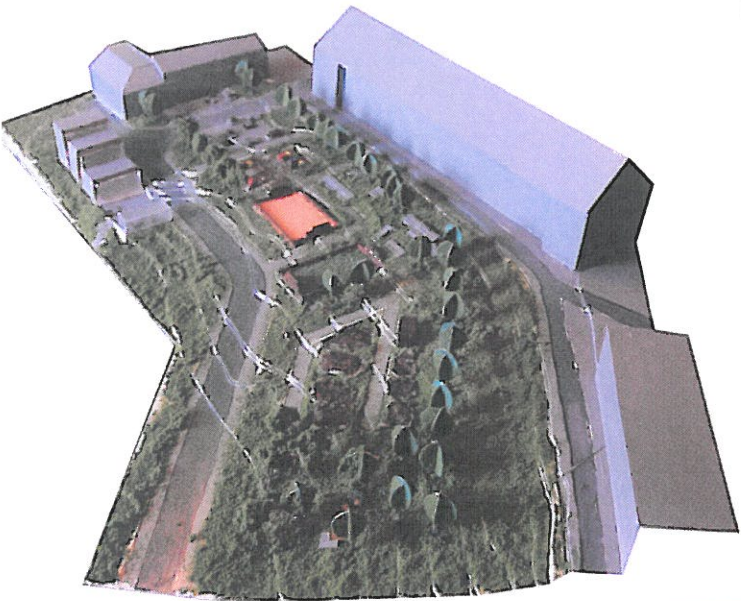


Illustration 23 Bird perspective of model



Illustration 24 Bird perspective towards sports on model

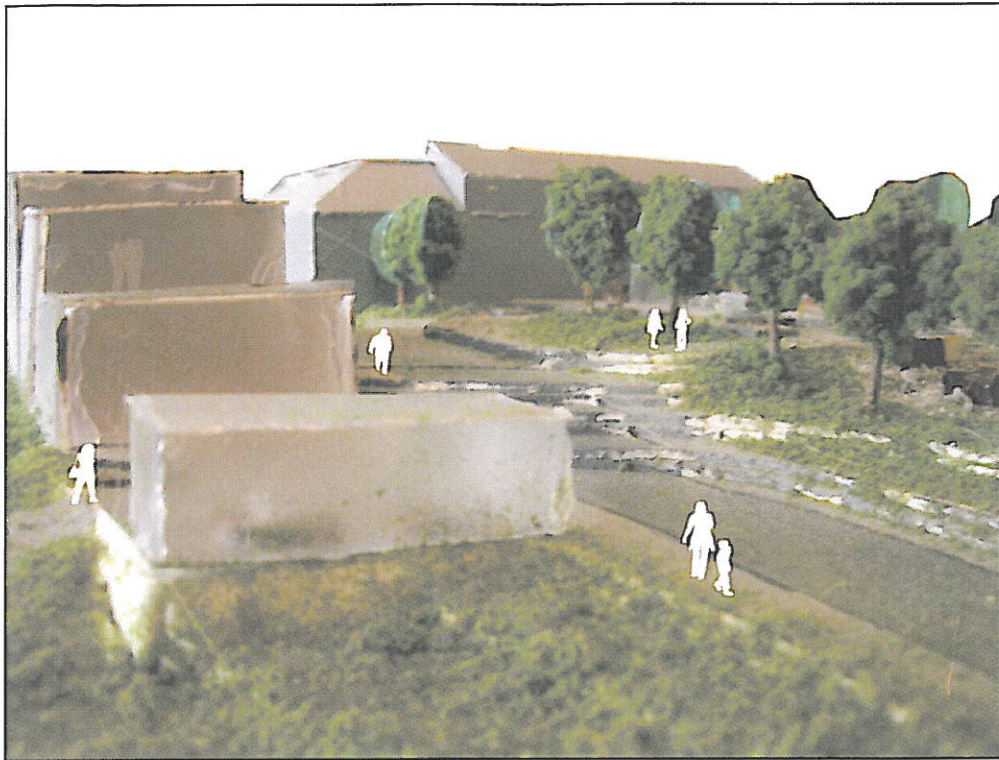


Illustration 25 People will be able to walk on safe pathways from all directions on the site to use the centre for communication



Illustration 26 the community garden allow the residents to grow vegetables, plants or flowers.

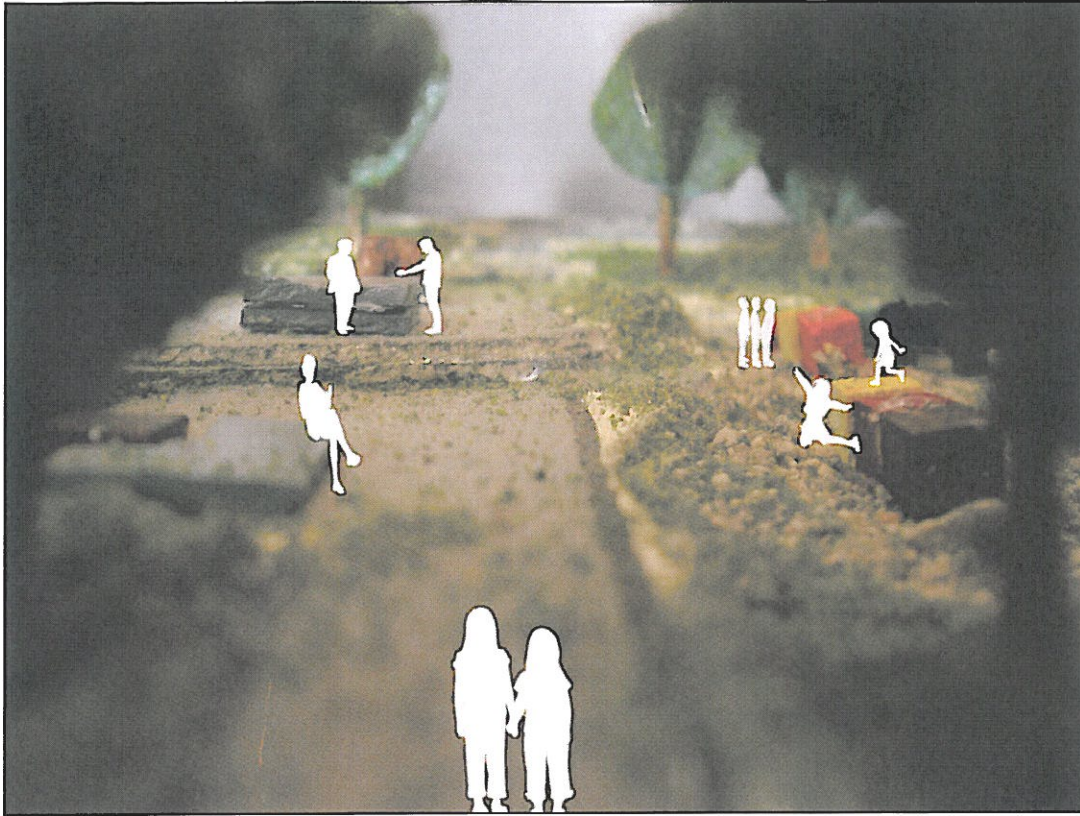


Illustration 27 Pathway to meeting area and play area.

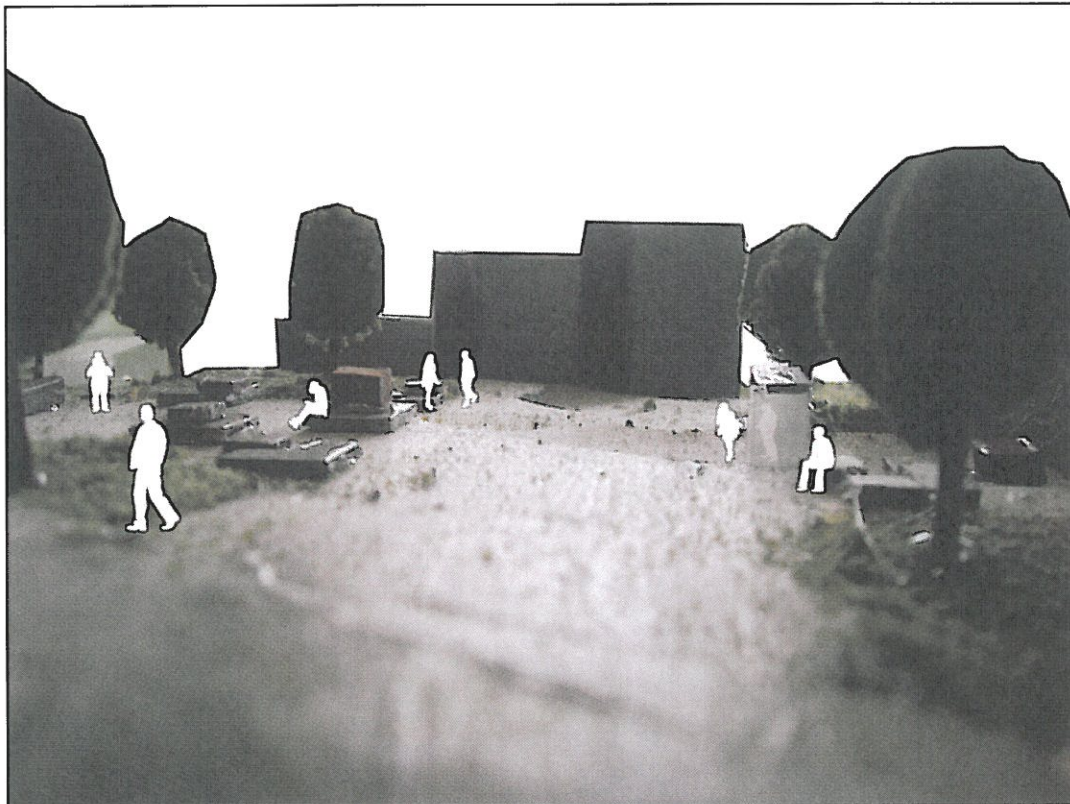


Illustration 28 Southern entrance to area and main entrance to site for housing units at the upper end of Dale.  
Easy access to communication centre and bus stop and activities on site.

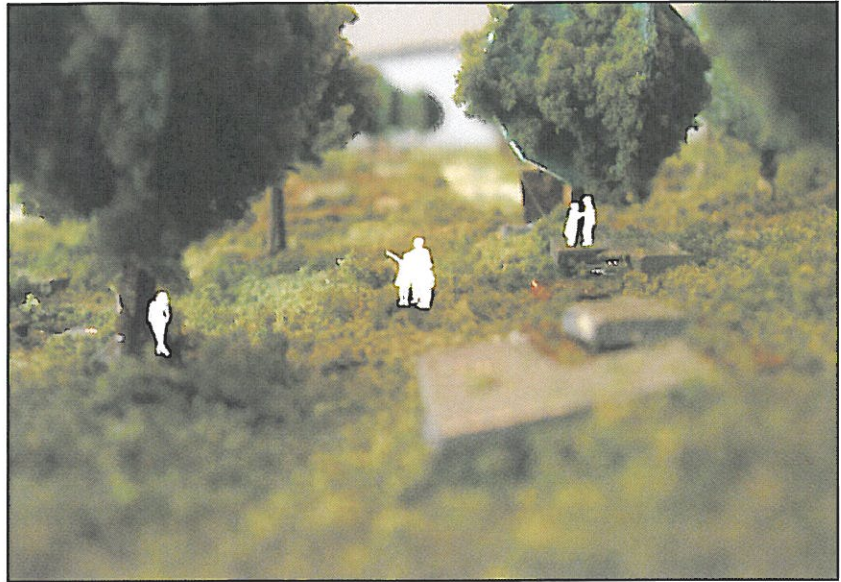


Illustration 29 in the recreational area people can relax or children can play



Illustration 30 Maybe you would like to relax with a picnic and good friends?

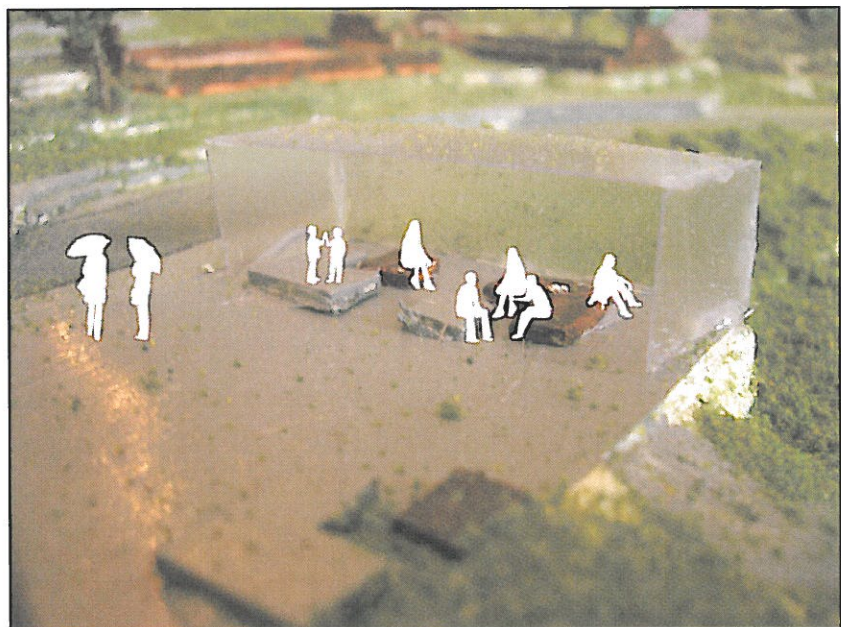


Illustration 31 The covered area allows for shelter from the elements with a view that still makes you feel like you are outside.

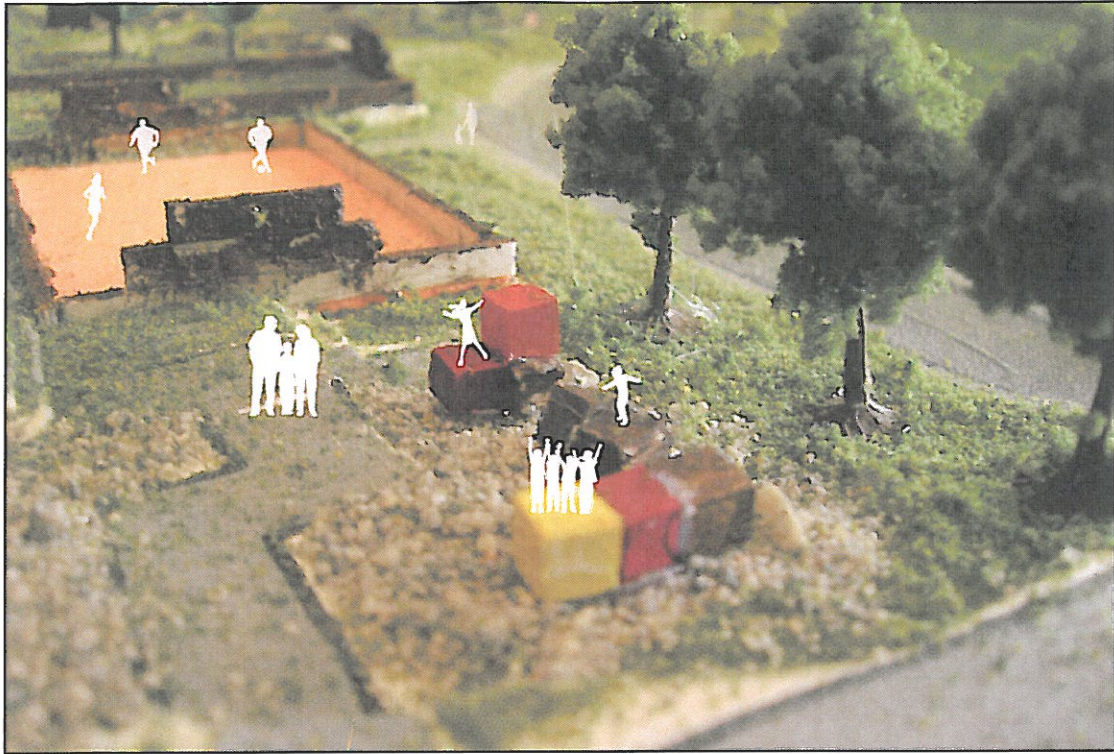


Illustration 32 Play area for children and sports area in background. Vibrant colours make this a fun area

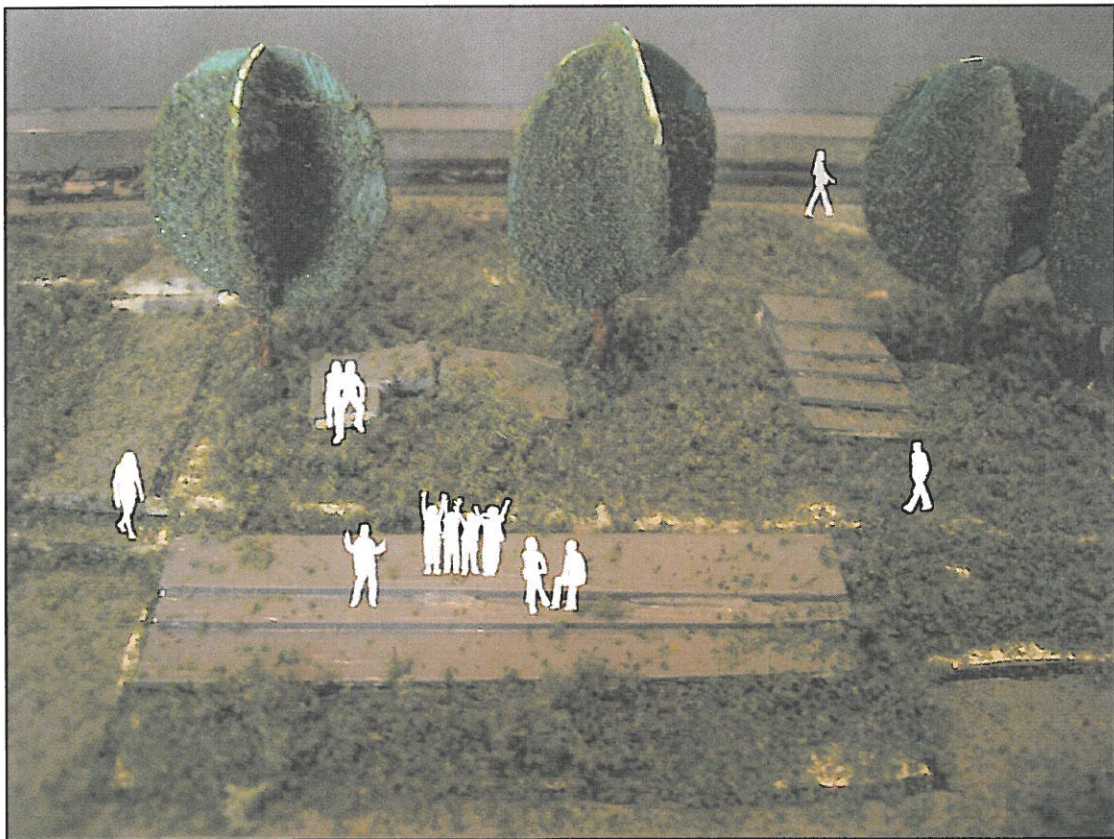


Illustration 33 People cheering on the stands

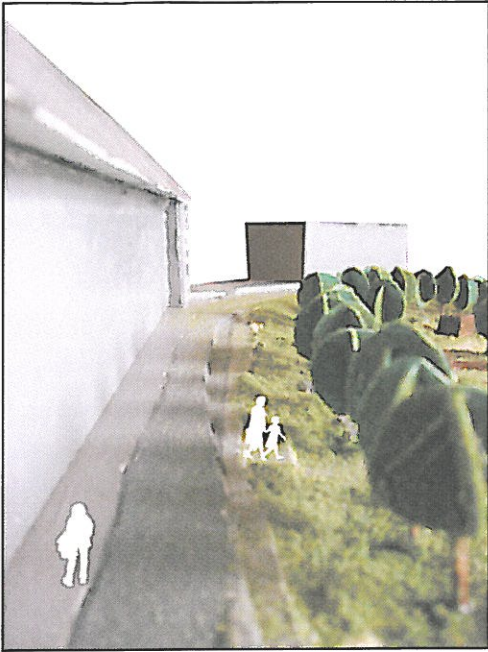


Illustration 34 Road above site. Easier access has been made by introducing pathways that lead on to site rather than around.



Illustration 16



# Conclusion

We live in a society where borders are falling in some countries; with war and unrest in others, which is creating complex patterns of immigration and movement of peoples. People with different religions and social backgrounds have to live and work together.

The world is becoming multi-cultural, and thought is needed to design for integration yet allow for diversity. It is important to stress that the environmental framework where strangers are becoming neighbours can function and inspire each other. This is not only important for residents at a reception centre, but also for the socially mixed neighbours that are also becoming common in society as a whole. In the course of this master thesis I have realized that to create places for integration it is important with common grounds where we can create collective ownership. Common grounds are areas where cultural differences can cross paths and find similar interests without creating misconceptions and fear.

By choosing Dale and its asylum seekers I was able to examine a snap shot of many issues that we would need to take in account for a physical design, which can encourage friendship and integration. This is seen as vital not only on a local scale, but for world society now and in the future.

This has been an interesting and enlightening process, and I feel that what I have discovered can be used as an important input for future designs. If we do not get on with our neighbour, how are we going to live together and work for a safe future that everyone can be a part of?

“Not just a place to be, but a place to get on”

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# Appendices

# Appendix A

## Interview with chief of staff at Dale reception centre

Name: Eva-Maria Gärtner  
Occupation: Chef of Staff, Dale Reception centre  
Nationality: German/Norwegian  
Date: 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2009  
Time: 13.00-14.00

### Understanding the people who live here:

Nicola: When the asylum seekers first come here, what are their immediate needs?

Eva-Maria: When they first come here, they receive a room with a bed and cupboard. Most of the refugees come here from other transit centres. In the region of the capital Oslo there are several transit centres; Dale was also at one point a transit centre. From Oslo to Dale the asylum seekers are often sent by train, and then they are picked up at the train station in Sandnes. Sometimes though, the asylum seekers come here by plane, if they have been moved from another reception centre somewhere in Norway. After they have been picked up and have been welcomed to Dale, they are immediately given a room, and have to sign for a key to that room. Afterwards they are given information about the routines at the centre, and what to do if a fire breaks out. In the first couple of days the asylum seeker is taken to do his or her grocery shopping, because at the centre they make their own food.

Nicola: Does this mean that even the division for unaccompanied minors make their daily meals?

Eva-Maria: In the weekdays the residents of the under aged division receive breakfast, and they all sit down and eat together. There are two divisions, an unaccompanied minors division and a reinforced division. These two divisions have extra staff on night watch, so it is the staffs that are on night watch that make breakfast for the morning. The

staff then wakes up the minors for school. Beside the breakfast being made for the minors, they make their own food. Sometimes though, the minors make meals together.

Nicola: Do they share a kitchen?

Eva-Maria: Yes they do and for some it is quite difficult for so many living together. There are few single rooms and the single minors are made to share their bedroom with someone.

Nicola: I suppose this works both in a positive and negative way. For some it might be a good support knowing someone is in the same situation?

Eva-Maria: Yes, not everyone finds it difficult sharing a room, but very many ask for a single room.

Nicola: How do the people here go about their lives, do they have daily chores? Do they have a lot of spare time on hand?

Eva-Maria: They have to wash and clean their individual rooms. There are lists to follow for when it is the individuals turn to clean the common rooms. This includes the kitchen, bathroom, toilettes and hall. If the residents do not do there chores, they have a 100 kroner penalty taken away from their basic monthly payment.

Nicola: For the minors, there is a nursery and a school for them to attend. There is a nursery on the refuge grounds, connected to the centre?

Eva-Maria: Yes, there is a nursery where four and five year old kids must attend. UDI (Norwegian Immigration directorate) must then pay. There are also many younger children that attend nursery. Everyone under the age of 18 has a right to an education, whatever the status of their application for residence.

Eva-Maria: The younger children up to approximately 12 years go to Aspervika School and the older children attend an equivalent to a secondary school, Giskeungdoms School. There is also some that go to different videregående Schools (college/6<sup>th</sup> form).

Eva-Maria: There is also a learning centre for the adults. All adult asylum seekers have a right to 250 hours Norwegian lessons. This is often given to them at the beginning of their stay at the reception centre; within 2-3 months most residents start the lessons. These lessons are used up very quickly, and they have no more rights to Norwegian lessons until they have their application for residence approved.

Nicola: Are the 250 hours Norwegian lessons a must to receive a settlement permit?

Eva-Maria: No, this is something different. To apply for a permanent residency, and later on for citizenship, you must fulfil tuition in 250 lessons in Norwegian language and 50 lessons in Civics. You cannot fulfil these lessons though until you have a settlement permit, which you have to apply for one year at a time, and then after three years you can apply for a permanent residency permit.

Nicola: Some people that come here are frightened and alone, what could we do for them to feel more comfortable and more easily interact with others?

Eva-Maria: Most of the asylum seekers say they feel quite safe here, compared to where they come from. There are some that feel uncomfortable. We are a very large reception centre, in the ordinary reception there is 344 residents, which is a lot. There are men and

women living together, and there is also a separate women's division. In this division, the women have expressed they do not want to live with men. There are of course some women that are subjected to remarks or encouraged to sexual acts, and find it very unpleasant.

Eva-Maria: All the residents live in a much pressured situation, because they are waiting for a decision that they have no control over, because someone else is deciding if they can stay in the country. Everyone that comes here wishes to stay.

Nicola: How long can it take before the decision is made whether the asylum seekers can stay or not?

Eva-Maria: It can vary, some stay for 2-3 months, whilst only last year a resident was found a new home outside the refuge grounds after living at Dale reception centre for 11 years.

Nicola: I read about him in the Newspaper; Stavanger Aftenblad. It is a very long time to live in this kind of situation?

Eva-Maria: Yes it is. There are actually still people living here that have been here for 5-6 years and even 7 years.

Nicola: It is quite sad, when they have to wait for so long for something to call their own.

Eva-Maria: The living units are not all centralized around the main building. There are many types of buildings here, down by the fjord we have three bedsit houses, and these are bedsits with their own kitchen and bathroom. Here we try to situate all the families that come here. We also have terraced housing up by the farm, where there also live families. Then we have two single houses, one called "eplehagen", which means the apple garden, and the other is called "Dirgen", a former director building.

Eva-Maria: The majority of asylum seekers that arrive here on their own live in the pink common house. The ground and first floor are used in this building, the second floor we do not use. There is

also a large common building called the E-building, up by the gym and events hall.

Eva-Maria: The unaccompanied minors division is situated in half of the first floor and the second floor in the E-building.

Eva-Maria: The administrations building is where my office is and my members of staff.

Nicola: What about this building? Is this used for anything?

Eva-Maria: This building used to be the old kitchen and canteen building when the psychiatric hospital occupied the buildings in Dale. We might consider renting two more floors in this building, at the moment it stands empty.

Nicola: What about this large building then across the river?

Eva-Maria: It is empty and very run down. It is in need of a lot of maintenance. This is the previous ABC-building.

Eva-Maria: Goes on to show me where the nursery is and the Lutheran school, which lies behind the ABC-building. There are many people that go on walks in the nature here.

Nicola: Some children have been brought up under poor circumstances, are they much different to Norwegian children, during interaction and play with others?

Eva-Maria: I do not have that much insight in how the nursery is run, but off course I have been there and I do not think there is any difference to other nurseries. It is a Norwegian nursery with staffs that are of different nationalities and can speak different languages, but it is a nursery that follows Norwegian regulations, so they have the same elements as other nurseries in Norway. They have organized play and are often out on walks in the surroundings.

Nicola: Could you tell me a bit about the common rooms there are at the reception centre for the residents?

Eva-Maria: There are a few common rooms her for the residents, there is a gym, a computer room and there is wireless internet in the reception area for those who have laptops. There is one computer for everyone to use in the reception area and 10 computers in the computer room. The computer room is situated in the basement of the main building, and it is the residents' responsibility to keep it nice. There is a lot of damage though; generally there is a lot of damage at reception centres.

Eva-Maria: There is also a room that is used as a mosque. The club for women have a room they can use, in this group there is actually a lot of nationalities that mix. It is not common that people mix too much, it is often quite segregated at the centre and this has often to do with the language barrier.

Nicola: I guess that when the asylum seekers come here, they seek out what they know and recognize?

Eva-Maria: Yes, this is correct.

Nicola: Are the asylum seekers allowed to leave the grounds? If so, what interaction do they have outside of the refuge grounds?

Eva-Maria: Some join all types of religious events. There is a mosque in Sandnes and Stavanger. Or they go to the different religious churches. Very many residents are from Eritrea, who are Christian orthodox, so they go to the Eritrean church in Stavanger. Sometimes the asylum seekers visit the international house or they visit friends.

Nicola: Do they spend time at the library?

Eva-Maria: I believe very many spend time at the Library in Sandnes or Stavanger. The teenagers also spend time at the Elixia, a gym approximately 10-15 min away. Here they would have a contract

with the gym. Some of the children join local football clubs and other similar sports.

Nicola: The asylum seekers are allowed to join local clubs and gyms despite their current status of residency?

Eva-Maria: Yes, but as long as they are staying at the reception centre, it is the centre that pays the fees.

Nicola: This is a good offer for the residents, and does not stop them from joining in society, even though they have not yet been granted residency.

Eva-Maria: For the families it is easier to maintain a kind of normality, if that is what you could call it. There are more daily routines for them to do, like wake up the children and take them to nursery or school. It is much harder for the unaccompanied residents. When they have used up their Norwegian lessons, there is not much for them to get up to. Some do have temporary work permits and do have jobs, but it is becoming harder for them to get work permits. The Norwegian immigrations have tightened the requirements in relation to proof of identity. To prove your identity quite often you need a passport to be able to get a work permit. Most of the asylum seekers do not have a passport, many destroy their identity papers before they come here and very many do not even have identity papers in the first place.

Nicola: What do you think about the public transport from Dale and to Sandnes? I guess there might be residents that do not have cars.

Eva-Maria: The buss that drives from Sandnes to Dale and back again, drives quite regularly in the morning compared to the afternoon. In the middle of the day, I believe, it only drives every other hour. The last buss returning from Sandnes leaves at midnight, and also in the evening the bus only drives every other hour.

Nicola: Is there any other ways of transport for the residents?

Eva-Maria: There is actually very many that have cars. The Chechens have cars, but it varies from nationality. Most of the residents have their car licence, but when you have a Russian licence it is valid in Norway for one year, before you must renew your driving licence and take a new driving exam.

Nicola: Can you think of any conflicts that could occur between people that live here (age-/ethnic-/cultural differences)?

Eva-Maria: Yes, there are many conflicts. There are many nationalities here, and some come in large groups. At the moment there are many Chechens living at the centre, approximately 70-80 people. This is a large group, and often a large group take charge over the common rooms. This makes other people afraid and they stay away from the common rooms. This happens often and I would say is the biggest problem.

#### Positive and Negative spatial incentives:

Nicola: What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of this place?

Eva-Maria: ...Reception centre, laughs out loud...

What incentives have been made to increase integration?

Eva-Maria: As mentioned we have these common rooms and we try to make them work. It is very challenging. We also have different types of events and get-togethers for everyone. On Thursday we are going Skiing in Sirdal.

Nicola: I bet there are many that have not been skiing before?

Eva-Maria: Yes, laughs... We also arrange for the residents to be able to celebrate their national holidays. This last Monday we celebrated "Nawruz", New Year in Afghanistan, and it was not just Afghans that came, but many other nationalities. For this occasion we made food, music and dance. Often we would rent the hall for this type of event.

Eva-Maria: We also have our own newspaper we give out once a month, there are two editions been made so far. Both the residents at the centre and the employers contribute and write about all sorts of things. The newspaper has articles in Norwegian, English, Arabic and Russian, and most people would understand at least one of these languages.

Eva-Maria: We also arrange communal work, but this more of a duty rather than fun. Then the residents have to help tidy the outdoor areas and wash the common rooms.

Nicola: Which outdoor areas are owned by the reception centre in the rental agreement with Dale Eiendom?

Eva-Maria: I am a little unsure if we just rent the buildings or if we rent the outdoor areas as well. Even though the people that live here are not restricted to where they can walk, so they can use the outdoor areas here. I think many of the residents find it hard to feel that this is their property, so the people do not especially look after the indoor or outdoor areas.

Nicola: It is a shame that there are not any outdoor areas, like for example gardens or a proper playground, that the residents can use and participate together to look after.

Eva-Maria: Very many do feel that it is too cold to be outdoors. Therefore it is rare that people use the outdoors. Some do go out, but the majority do not.

Nicola: The nursery does have a playground?

Eva-Maria: Yes, it has an outdoor area outside the nursery. There is a football pitch that is used a lot, and they also have a pyramid tent in the woods. The nursery has a very nice outdoor area, so they spend a lot of time outside.

Nicola: Many cultures in warmer climates spend much time outside in the parks and other public spaces. I might have to think outside the box, to address the residents and the fact that the

Norwegian climate is colder. Maybe we can build an indoor park, or a public area that has enough shading, so that people can meet and get to know each other.

Eva-Maria: Hmm I am not sure what it would look like. According to Norwegian regulations, a reception centre is supposed to be a sober housing offer, this is what UDI says. Sober but justifiable, it is not supposed to be luxuries, or especially nice. As of today 60% are rejected on their application to stay. Only 40% get to stay and the time before they get there application approved, without actually been stated anywhere in so many words, is not supposed to be too pleasant for the asylum seekers. This is so that they do not completely lose interest in going back to their home country. This is not stated anywhere, but I believe this is the thoughts behind the regulations.

Eva-Maria: For the children there is done especially a lot for them to live as close to a normal life as possible. Norway has signed the "The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child", so the children that come here have strong rights. There is a lot of focus on children, and many activities for them. It is a little worse for the adults.

Nicola: This is something to think about when I choose a design and for whom it should be targeted for.

Eva-Maria: We have limited financial means; we get rebates from the UDI for rent and other needs. UDI would not agree to use much money on the public areas.

Nicola: UDI has been looking for more housing recently to turn into reception centres. But Dale Reception centre has been here since 1993 and is the largest in the country, I would have thought they would see Dale as a more permanent centre?

Eva-Maria: They have been looking for housing because there are more asylum seekers than they anticipated this year. Even Dale reception centre has gone up and down in numbers of residents.

There has been between 49 and 500 spaces for residents here over the years.

In general:

Nicola: Do you feel that reception centres in Norway feel like institutions rather than homes? How could we change this?

Eva-Maria: Partially, the centralized parts of the centre here which include the division for unaccompanied minors and the reinforced division are very institutional. This feeling of institution is also increased by the all around the clock guard. The terraced housing and the bedsits feel more like a home. We also have reception centres that are completely decentralized and are just like any other house or home.

Nicola: In very many countries in Europe they have detention centres, how do you think the system in Norway works better or worse? How so?

Eva-Maria: Compared to other European countries the conditions in Norway are very good. This is why many asylum seekers come here that have been registered as asylum seekers or rejected in other countries. Because Norway is a member of the Dublin convention the asylum seeker usually gets sent back to where he or she was first registered.

Nicola: How long do they stay before they get sent out of the country, straight away?

Eva-Maria: No, it does take time. First Norway have to go into an agreement with the country it concerns, to find out where the asylum seeker as been. Today this is not too hard, because the asylum seeker needs to give fingerprints when they enter a country. I find the system in Norway, most of the time, a humane system, in comparison to many other European countries.

Eva-Maria: As it is voluntary to live at the reception centre when you are seeking asylum, it gives you other options to live with family or friends. Although, if you decide to live anywhere else than the centre, you will not receive the benefits of

money for food, clothes and other needs for living. These benefits are only for the people that stay at the reception centre so many are, in a way made to stay here. We do check if the asylum seekers are really here, and not staying at other locations.

Nicola: In the indoor and outdoor public spaces are there any rules the residents need to follow?

Eva-Maria: There are house rules, for example it should be quiet after 11 o'clock in the evening, so you cannot play loud music after this time. There are many conflicts around these rules all the time, because people live cramped and in a stressed situation. There are many people who live in a comparatively small space.

Eva-Maria: There are not too many rules in the outdoor areas which I know of. You are supposed to throw rubbish in the bin and not beside it. But beside that there are not too many rules here, especially in the outdoor areas.

Consequences of future plans:

Nicola: How do you think the future plans for Dale will affect the reception centre? Positive and negative sides

Eva-Maria: It is Dale Eiendom that owns this area, and they are owned by the regional county council. I think the future plans do not look very nice and they look very monotonous.

Eva-Maria: It will be very hard to sell homes when there is a reception centre for asylum seekers so close by. Our rental contract allows our landlords to resign from the contract, and gives us 3 months to move, at any time.

Eva-Maria: The future plans for Dale will only go through, I believe, if they build a bridge over the fjord. You cannot build a community with only one exit/entrance, which is a small single road, entering Dale that would make complications.

Nicola: What are your thoughts about making reception centres more integrated into society?



Would the asylum seekers benefit from this, in what way?

Eva-Maria: Hmm I am not quite sure how to answer this. I believe this has a lot to do with the general perception people have about immigrants and refugees. This perception is not especially positive to receiving refugees and immigrants. The majority do not know very much about asylum seekers and other immigrants. There is a general scepticism towards strangers and people the local population perceive as strangers.

Eva-Maria: Norway does not have very much experience with immigrants in comparison to other European countries. I do not know if it is any better other places though.

Eva-Maria: I have grown up and lived most of my life in Germany. In Germany they have much experience with immigration, at least more than Norway. Germany have had large immigration waves since the 50s, but these are what you call European immigrants from Italy, Greece, and Spain and are very integrated into German society. Then, you have other German citizens that are not as integrated even though they have a German passport.

Nicola: It is clear this is a difficult subject; I read an article that in Norway, it is not about how Norwegians and immigrants can integrate, but how immigrants can become Norwegian.

Eva-Maria: This is very true, when you listen to Fremskrittspartiet's (FrP, is a Norwegian right-wing, populist political party) declarations, I believe, that most people see it this way. When

non-Norwegians come here, they are supposed to be like us. There is a two-sided message going on, at one end there is encouragement to be like us and at the same time that person cannot quite become like us. The goal to become the average middleclass Norwegian citizen is an impossible task.

Nicola: We should have a system that is more open to learning about immigration?

Eva-Maria: Yes, this is obvious. We should be more open to what is considered as enrichment in different cultures. The cultural sides like food, music and dance are unproblematic. These are perceived in a positive way by most people and this in a way seeing it in a tourist aspect.

Nicola: In terms of urban design, what would you see changed or improved for the better welfare of the residents?

Eva-Maria: If I was to decide I would build over and warmed up... "Laughs". The parking space outside the administration building's entrance is a good meeting spot for people living here. We could install wireless internet and all types of audio visual equipment. "Laughs"... I am thinking completely out of the box, but I believe this could be good, and a lot of the residents would use this space.

Nicola: Is this an important meeting space?

Eva-Maria: Yes, this is where the bus turns around the tree and goes back into Sandnes. I think if you introduced the area where the bus turns and the parking space it would be a really nice public space for the residents.

# Appendix B

## Interview with asylum seekers at Dale reception centre

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2009

Time: 12.30-13.00

Contact: Tone Paulsen, Initiative consultant at Dale reception centre.

Asylum seekers who were interviewed:

NATIONALITY	SEX	AGE	OCCUPATION IN HOMECOUNTRY	STATUS AT ARRIVAL	LENGTH OF STAY	NAME
Nigerian	M	30	Lost job in the city	Family	3 ½ months	A
Nigerian	F	28	Mother	Family	5 months	B
Iraq	M	22	Student	Unaccompanied	5 ½ months	C
Chinese	M	26	Student	Couple	1 ½ months	D
Chinese	F	22	Student	Couple	1 ½ months	E
Palestinian	M	21	Electrician	Unaccompanied	4 months	F
Palestinian	M	30	Electrician	Unaccompanied	7 months	G
Eritrean	M	45	Computer Engineer	Unaccompanied	6 months	H
Russian	F	24	Stylist	Single mother – came with daughter	5 ½ years	I
Chechen	M	43	Worked at a Mill	Unaccompanied	1 year	J
Chechen	M	22	Worked with computers	Unaccompanied	1 year	K
Chechen	M	36	Builder	Unaccompanied	1 ½ year	L

Sex variation: 9 males, 3 females

Age variation: 20-45

Countries represented: Chechen, China, Nigeria, Palestine and Russian.

Names of the residents could not be documented, so they are represented by letters of the alphabet.

TONE PAULSEN, who is the initiative consultant at Dale reception centre, introduces me to the 12 asylum seekers that have been kind to spare some time for me to interview them about what it is like to live at a reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees.

I started by interviewing them in groups and made it through most of the questions, but anyone was welcome to speak at any time. In periods the interview went a little off course and some questions were missed as the interview took a different direction than expected. I did have a guide of topics and questions I wanted to follow, but at the same time I wanted the residents to talk freely about what was important for them. This way I got a better understanding of their life at Dale reception centre.

The residents that were picked out for me, by Tone Paulsen, were all English or Norwegian speaking. It was a little hard at times to get the residents to answer the questions; some were more enthusiastic than others. As the interview went on though some that had maybe not said so much in the beginning, felt more comfortable to speak their mind. The mood went from very submissive to very intense and this shows how many feelings are involved when you are dealing with people's lives.

The residents were most helpful in their answers; I felt that for some it was harder than others to live in a reception centre. This was expressed in their attitudes and reflected their status.

#### Interview with family: (A+B+2 young children)

Nicola: What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of this place?

A: I don't like it. They keep us in a place where we are not free. There are no Norwegians here, so if we want to go out we need transport.

Nicola: Do you feel safe?

A: I am safe and I am not safe. There is not any real security here, if anything happens to us here at the camp the police will come. But there is no real evidence of security here for example a camera.

Nicola: Do you find it easy to make friends here?

A: It is not easy to make friends here because most people do not speak English. I wish sometimes there were more people that spoke English.

Nicola: In your home country were there any activities/interest you enjoyed doing? Are there any activities you find are missing at the ground?

A: I like football, I like sports a lot. I would like more activities, like football, volleyball. There is nothing here.

Nicola: What do you think of how many times a day the bus goes into town from Dale?

A: It is not easy to get to town. I don't have a car and I don't have a bus card. If I spend all my money taking the bus my family will not have enough money to live. If I go to town, I do not have money for family. To go to town and back is 50 NOK, which is a lot, especially if the whole family takes the bus.

Nicola: Can you think of any conflicts that could occur between people here (age-/ethnic-/cultural differences)?

A: I don't really know me and my family keep to ourselves. Things are not going well here for us, there is not much to do and there are not especially many activities to engage in. When I am walking around I see nothing good.

Nicola: Would you rather the reception centre was in town?

A: Yes, it would be much better. If you take a walk here, you cannot see any Norwegians here, so we don't mix, and are kept outside.

A: If you want to do anything, you need to go to town. I cannot do my grocery shopping here or buy clothes. Every time I want to spend money, I need to spend money to get to town.

Nicola: If I was to redesign an area here to meet the needs of people and make positive interaction between residents, what would you like the site used for?

B: A place for families.

A: Maybe some little sheds for people to rest in. Some little design elements for children to play on.

Nicola: I was told that many people find it quite cold here in Norway?

C: In the city they have this kind of public space with shelter, but not here.

A: It is not cold.

B: Something for the families, it is not good here for families.

Nicola: What do you think about your accommodation?

B: For the family it is not good.

C: When I first came to Dale, there were no activities to be seen. Living here is like being at a cemetery. When you come back from school, there is nothing to do here. We have a television in the reception, but when they (employees at Dale reception centre) go back to their office or house, no people can watch the television. It would be nice to have a television room.

A: So everyone can sit down and watch together.

#### Interview with young couple: (D+E)

Nicola: What were your first impressions of this place?

E: It is a very nice place, but a little far from the city.

Nicola: So would you also like the reception centre to be in town or closer to town?

E: Yes

Nicola: In your spare time what activities do you do?

E: There is nothing to do. She translates to her boyfriend and he smiles and seems to agree.

Nicola: Have many of you taken Norwegian lessons?

D+E: we have not yet started Norwegian lessons.

C: I feel that every time I want to do something they (employees at Dale reception centre) are watching me. This is my honest opinion.

A: They do not care. They take my passport and all my papers.

C: I have an example. On Saturdays when you go to the discotheque, when it is time to go home this bus card does not work after midnight so I have to pay 65 NOK to get home.

*At this point there were a lot of discussions between several of the residents. It made it hard for me to hear all the conversations going on at once. I could sense the residents had very strong opinions about their conditions in which they are living. I believe it is quite hard to live in such a pressured situation, feeling out of control over your future.*

C: I have finished my lessons; they were used up very quickly.

A: I am not allowed to take any Norwegian lessons. (He shows me a letter where he has been rejected on the application to take any Norwegian lessons).

C: Excuse me; there is one thing I want to say. There are single people living here in family units that are getting the same money as a family would. This is unfair. They have their own bathroom, kitchen and space to be. All the single people in the main building have to share.

A: Why is it like this?

Nicola: Are there any activities you would like at the reception centre?

E+D: We went horse riding in our home country, so that would be nice to do again.

Nicola: Can you think of any conflicts that could occur between people here (age-/ethnic-/cultural differences)?

E+D: No there isn't any.

Nicola: If I was to redesign an area here to meet the needs of people and make positive interaction between residents, what would you like the site used for?

Interview with a group of three unaccompanied adults (F+G+H)

Nicola: What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of this place?

G: This place is very nice, but there is not much to do. Many things irritate me, about the internet, about the TV-room, about the activities.

H: First of all, we are separated from the town. Everything is in town. We are not prisoners. The TV channels we have are only very basic, we have TV 1, TV 2 and TV 3, and they do not give us any information or news. The TV should communicate. Everything is closed for information and we are kept here without access to information and this is very, very bad. We are here in this country and we don't know anything, for example the name of the president? The TV does not tell us this. Why is it that there is a lack of access to information?

H: On Sundays there is only one bus in the afternoon that goes to town, what about those who want to go to church.

H: I am a skilled person; I am a computer Engineer and have a work permit. They tell me to learn the language, but I still will not get a job. So I cannot leave here.

H: It is a hard situation to be in, living at Dale.

Nicola: If I was to redesign an area here to meet the needs of people and make positive interaction between residents, what would you like the site used for?

E: Maybe a better gym with different sports, a television room. I would like better availability to the internet.

D: Yes I agree.

E: I also think it is unfair how the rooms are distributed here. There is not enough space.

G: We hope to do so many things, but we cannot, because nobody can help us.

F: I would like more access to information. I would like more activities to do.

G: Yes I agree.

A: I would also like more activities for the children here.

H: The internet connection here is very slow. I don't why this is?

G: We are only allowed to use the computer 3 days a week

B: It is only those who can afford to buy a computer that can use the wireless internet in the reception centre. There should be more computer that we can use, and also wireless in the housing units.

Nicola: Can you think of any conflicts that could occur between people here (age-/ethnic-/cultural differences)?

H: There are some, but we hope to get rid of those kinds of things. There are many nationalities here.

Nicola: And do you find it easy to make friends here?

H: I like to be isolated all the time. I like reading, so I keep very few friends. I make some friends on the internet.

G: It is not easy to make friends here. It would be good to get together and make new friends in an activity room or TV room, but having different languages makes it hard.

All: Yes

A: This is the first time I have been sitting down with "G", but we have both lived here for a while.

H: If you want to watch Champions League, you have to go to Sandnes, and you have to come back at 12 O`clock. This is very bad.

H: The activities here are dormant, it is a mummy. Do you know mummy?

ALL: Everyone burst out in laughter.

#### Interview with single mother: (I+child)

Nicola: What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of this place?

I: I lived at the reception centre in Hauge I Dalane before I came here. It is not so different here to Hauge I Dalane, there was a woman's club once a week, and once a week we were out playing with the children with other Norwegian families. This was only for the first year in Norway.

I: The children can go to nursery and SFO (afterschool activity) in daytime. In Dale the activities are not so regular, maybe once a year we go to Kongeparken (a theme park outside Sandnes), maybe twice a year we go to the cinema. It might sometimes go 2 or 3 months before there is something arranged.

I: This is a long time to wait.

Nicola: In your home country were there any activities or interests you enjoyed doing?

A: We need an area where children can play, when they come home from school. My kid keeps saying I am going to play in the "bush".

B: My child attends the Nursery, and they only take them into the "bush".

A: They need also some climbing frames, and more toys, because the children here just argue over the toys. They should have a garden, with a train they can drive around on. Some balloons and things they can jump on. But there is nothing here.

A: I want my child to be happy, and not cry. I would like some sitting areas for the adults, so they can watch their children playing. Watch them on the swings and climbing on the climbing frames. He cannot play football in the "bush".

I: I really liked my job as a stylist, and I also really enjoy gymnastics.

Nicola: Are you part of a gymnast club in town?

I: No, but from the start of my stay in Norway I have been working, and this keeps me quite busy (she didn't want to explain what her work was). I am different from others, I try and keep busy and as a family there are more daily routines to follow. For a single person there is not so much to do.

I: After my child has been at school I can spend time with her. If you are on your own, you need to find things to occupy your time, if you don't want to go crazy.

Nicola: Would you rather the reception centre situated in town?

I: I live here, but only spend one day a week at reception centre, this is when I need to check my post-box. I am very busy all the time. I join a book

club in Sandnes and Stavanger and it would be better if you had this at Dale, so you could learn the language.

Nicola: You worked as a stylist in your home country, are you working here?

I: I am not allowed to work or take Norwegian lessons here.

Nicola: Can you think of any conflicts that could occur between people here (age-/ethnic-/cultural differences)?

#### Interview with three unaccompanied male Chechens: (J+K+L)

The youngest Chechen translates most of the questions for me and answers for the other two.

Nicola: What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of this place?

K: They say that they come here, and they don't speak Norwegian and don't understand Norwegian. They cannot work either.

K: I have finished all my Norwegian lessons; they were used up very quickly.

Nicola: Do you feel safe here at the reception centre?

K: They say that they like Norway, but there is a lack of information. They also say there are very little activities that go on here.

Nicola: What activities would you like there to be at the reception centre?

J: Laughs, and says many.

Nicola: Any examples?

J: Football, volleyball.

K: We have nothing here, only a football field for the Nursery. There are many here that play football.

I: What was said about the children, and having to share very few toys. It is not a very cosy place at the reception centre.

Nicola: If I was to redesign an area here to meet the needs of people and make positive interaction between residents, what would you like the site used for?

I: I think you should make it more comfortable and safe, because it is the opposite of this. It feels very cramped here.

Nicola: Do you play football for any clubs in town?

K: No, I don't think we are allowed.

Nicola: What do you think of how many times a day the bus goes into town from Dale?

J: A lot of money.

K: It is a lot of money, so we do not take the bus that often.

L: When you are a family with 2 or 3 children, it is a problem to take the bus, because of the cost. Also children do not just want to sit nicely, they want to run around and play. There are not so many possibilities.

Nicola: Would you rather the reception centre was situated in town?

K: Yes, if that would be possible.

J: But not in Stavanger, it is to big there.

K: He is saying that we went on a skiing trip a couple of weeks ago. It would be good if we could go on another trip, maybe a boat trip.

K: There should be more trips.

J: I really enjoyed the skiing trip.

Nicola: Can you think of any conflicts that could occur between people here (age-/ethnic-/cultural differences)?

K: There are not enough activities for the children, because they argue over the toys. Besides this, there are not any serious conflicts.

Nicola: If I was to redesign an area here to meet the needs of people and make positive interaction between residents, what would you like the site used for?

ALL: Everyone laughs.

K: He just wants to go on a boat trip.

J: I would like a place where I can put my boat.

K: It would be good if there were more areas for sports and activities, so the children can learn while growing up.

K: They say that they liked going to watch Viking play football, activities like this makes them think about other things than their home country. They want to forget about their problems in their home country.

K: But we cannot forget what is happening in our home countries when we are just sitting around at Dale all day.

J: When we are sitting here all day, we are just sitting and thinking and thinking.

Nicola: Do you think it is cold in Norway?

J: The weather is no problem.

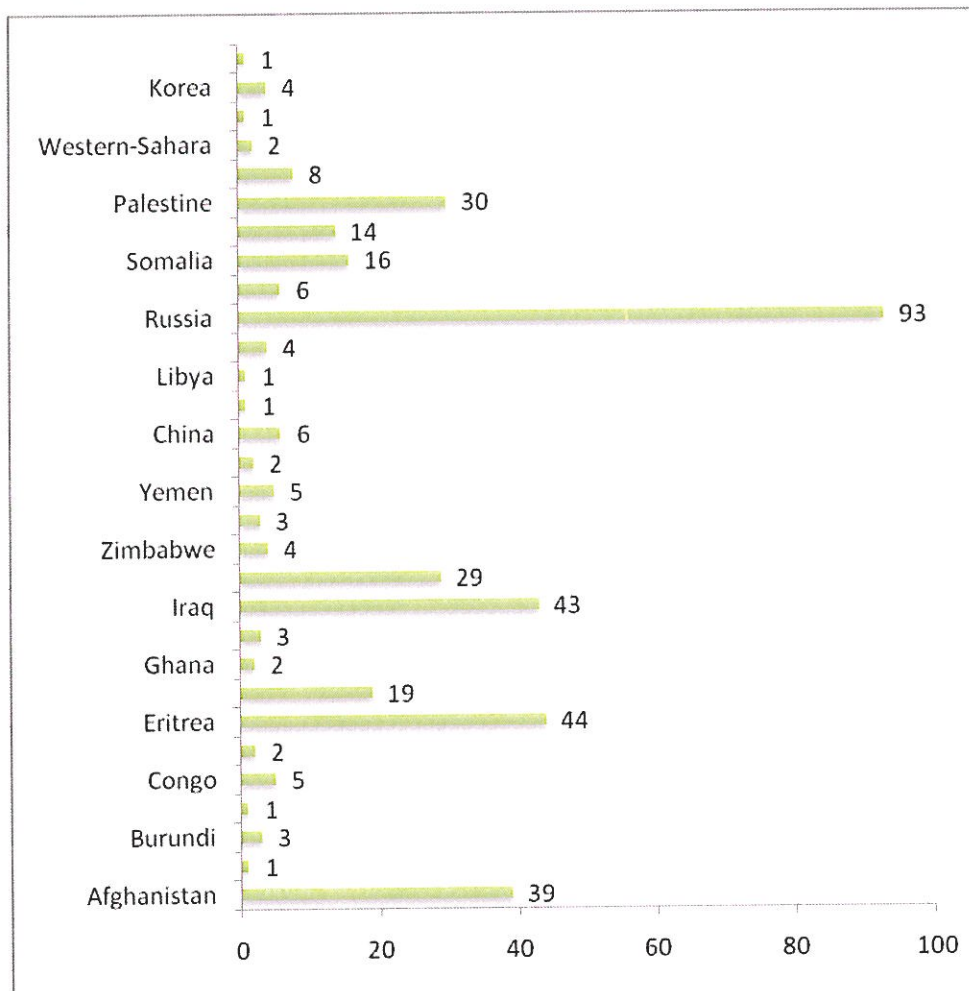


# Appendix C

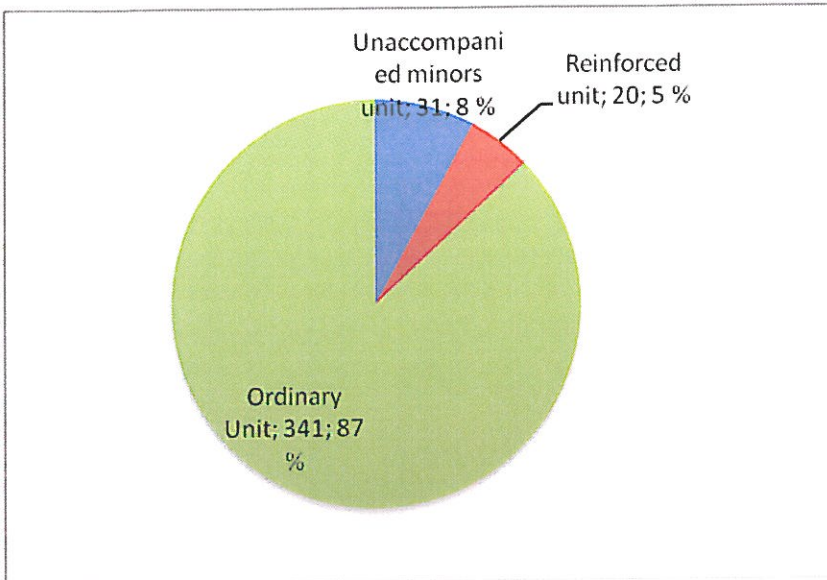
## Statistical data of variation of nationalities at Dale reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees

Information and statistics in this appendix is given by Tone Paulsen, initiative consultant at Dale reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees, and is current as of 1.05.2009.

At Dale reception centre there is in total 30 different nationalities and 392 residents and they are represented as follows:



There are three divisions or living units at Dale reception centre, they are represented as follow in comparison to each other. The ordinary unit is the largest and represents 87% of the total number of people living at the reception centre per April 2009.



Unaccompanied minors unit (age 15-18):

Iraq	7
Nigeria	1
Eritrea	5
Ethiopia	1
Lebanon	1
Afghanistan	12
Korea	1
Sri Lanka	3
Total	31

Reinforced unit:

Afghanistan	4
Eritrea	3
Ethiopia	2
Iraq	3
Iran	1
Korea	3
Palestine	2
Syria	1
Albania	1
Total	20

Ordinary unit (families and 18+):

Afghanistan	23
Algeria	1
Burundi	3
Colombia	1
Congo	5
Equatorial Guinea	2
Eritrea	36
Ethiopia	16
Ghana	2
Guinea	3
Iraq	33
Iran	28
Zimbabwe	4
Uganda	3
Yemen	5
Cameroon	2
China	6
Kirgizstan	1
Libya	1
Nigeria	3
Russia	93
Serbia	6
Somalia	16
Sri Lanka	11
Palestine	28
Syria	7
Western-Sahara	2
Total	341