

# History of cohousing – internationally and in Sweden

Collaborative housing (here also called cohousing) has a long and fascinating history. In different periods various models for more neighbourly housing with shared services have been launched. These models have been motivated sometimes as social and political visions and sometimes as practical solutions to the needs of day-to-day life. The most important goals have been to share responsibilities fairly between men and women, to know and work with those who live nearby, and to have access to shared facilities. This article describes the main characteristics and antecedents of cohousing internationally and in Sweden.

Cohousing means housing with more space and services for communal use than are to be found in conventional housing. In cohousing there may live households from several generations and relationships who prefer to share spaces and certain facilities such as dinners. This article focuses on what in Swedish are called *kollektivhus*: a type of housing for various categories where each household has its own apartment, but with access to communal spaces such a large kitchen and dining-room and spaces for different hobbies. The concept ‘collaborative housing’ is used for the model based on the residents’ collaboration with cooking etc.

## Utopian communities

There are visions of ideal human habitats from the early European history. About 2,400 years ago, the Greek philosopher Plato described an ideal community where everything was organised collectively. In 1506 the Englishman Thomas More published the book ”Utopia”, meaning *no place*, which gave a name to such visions. In More’s ideal community people were to live in neighbourhood groups with common dining-rooms and various shared leisure facilities. His description of an ideal community was a way to criticise the existing society.

300 years later, the brutal changes that industrialisation brought in Europe provoked visions of an egalitarian society and where working and living were collectively organised. In England in the 1840s, Robert Owen sketched such an ideal society, which he called the *Parallelogram*. This would combine the best of the agricultural and the industrial society. Each community would be limited to 2000 inhabitants, who would collectively own the means of production. Men and women would have equal rights. The Parallelogram would have generous dining halls, schools and kindergartens, libraries and sports grounds, while the individual dwellings would be modest. Followers of Robert Owen migrated to North America and built such a community and called it New Harmony, but it disintegrated after a few years.

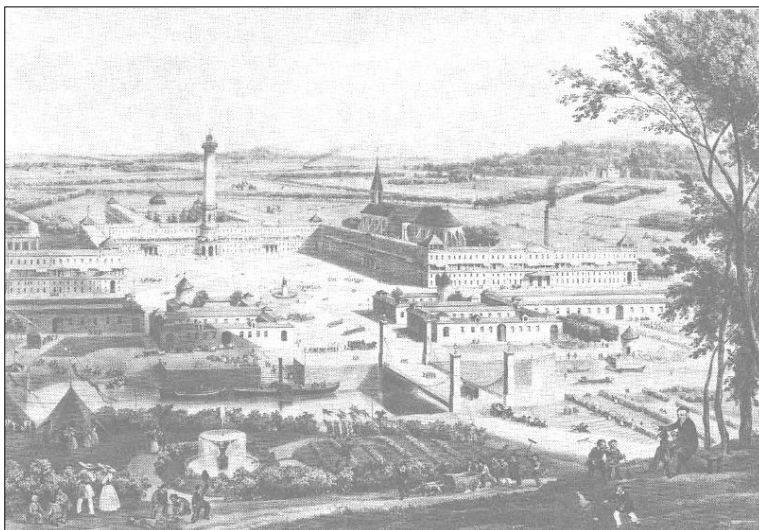


Figure 1. *Charles Fourier’s vision of the Falanstere, where the workers would own the means of production and organise nearly everything collectively. The arcade stretching through the whole building complex would connect the individual residences with the collective spaces.*

Perhaps the most famous utopian socialist, the Frenchman Charles Fourier, wrote a number of books in the first half of the 19th century on his

ideal society, which he called *Falanstere*. It looked like the royal Palace of Versailles, the most famous piece of architecture at that time. Fourier thought that workers should be able to live in such "social palaces", where they would also have workshops and facilities for processing agricultural products. Everything would be owned by the workers. The *Falanstere* would also have a collective kitchen and dining hall, schools, kindergartens, a theatre, a fencing arena (!), beautiful gardens and other collective facilities. Probably what most shocked contemporary rulers was Fourier's idea that workers could and should improve their own lot by owning the means of production.

Carl Jonas Love Almqvist was a well-known Swedish author who was inspired by the utopian socialists. In an essay from 1835 he envisioned what he called a 'Universal Hotel', where housework would be done collectively, to allow women to engage in gainful work. At that time this was considered impossible, but Almqvist explained: "*Is there anything more wasteful, stupid and unnecessary than that each household busies itself with preparing meat and vegetables for its own meals? Now every household has to have its own kitchen. In a large town, these are the equivalent of a foodstuff industry employing thousands of people.*" Almqvist thought that collective housekeeping would not only save time. Women would also be able to marry without demeaning themselves to mere housekeepers for their husbands. Love between man and woman would no longer wither away after marriage.

In France Fourier's followers were forbidden to realise his ideas, but one person was able to carry out a project inspired by the *Falanstere* idea. This was the iron stove manufacturer Jean André Baptiste Godin. As a leading industrialist and member of the Senate, he was granted permission to build what he called the *Familistere*, where everyone would live as in a huge family.

In Guise in northern France from 1858 onwards he built a factory and large multi-family dwellings, interconnected under a huge glass roof. The big covered courtyards were warmed up in winter. The workers owned the factory and looked after the collective spaces in the *Familistere*. The women were supposed to be treated equally with the men, but they were not considered capable of the strenuous and dirty work that the factory required and so many of them were out of work. Therefore individual family kitchens were built and the *Familistere* gradually lost its collective character. However, the factory continued to operate successfully even after Godin's death and the whole complex is to-day part of the national building heritage.



Figure 2. *Godin with a drawing of the Familistere. Note the large glass-roofed courtyards in the background.*

## The central kitchen idea

Industrialisation in Europe made people think about applying the technical innovations to other sectors of the community, for example the housing sector. The gas stove, the water closet and central heating are illustrations of this. Some people began to think that household kitchens were becoming obsolete in an age of large scale production.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a middle-class family was expected to have a house-maid and a children's nurse, but for the families on the way up, servants were expensive. Thus the idea arose that a group of families could share the task of preparing food by organising a central kitchen from which they could order meals for the family apartments. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century several so-called Central Kitchen Buildings were put up in the European capitals. The first was

built in Copenhagen in 1903 and was called “Fick’s Collective” because it was built on the initiative of Otto Fick. Similar projects followed in Stockholm, Berlin, Hamburg, Zürich, Prague, London and Vienna.

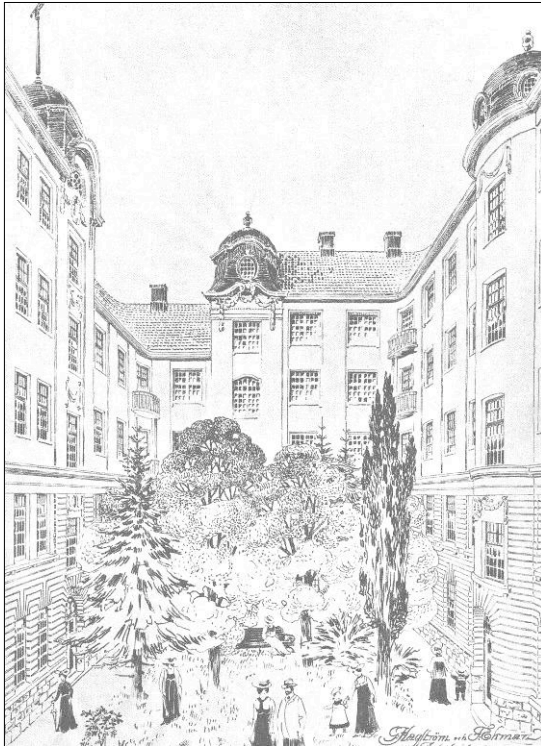


Figure 4. *Hemgården in Stockholm. The central kitchen was located in the basement.*

In Stockholm 1905-07, *Hemgården Central Kitchen* was built. There were 60 apartments, none of them with its own kitchen. Instead there was a central kitchen in the basement, connected to the apartments by so-called dumb-waiters, small lifts for a tray with food, crockery and cutlery. Via an internal telephone network, those who lived in the apartments could order breakfast lunch and supper from the central kitchen. There were no ideas about wives to go out to a job or participate in the collective activities. The idea was simply to “collectivise the maid”. The building was run as a Limited Company, but went bankrupt in 1918. Kitchens were later built in the apartments and the former central kitchen became a space for collaborative activities. No more buildings like *Hemgården* were put up in Sweden, but the idea of housing designed to simplify day-to-day life continued to be discussed until modernism arrived.

## The building on John Ericsonsgatan 6

As the utopian socialists had done before them, the functionalists wanted to change people’s behaviour. They were convinced that a new sort of housing would help to create a new sort of citizen, more rational and more democratic. In a rationally organised society, as many as possible would be engaged in productive work. They would improve their health with sport and other leisure activities. They would participate in study circles and political meetings. They would not need such spacious apartments, because they would principally just sleep in them and keep their possessions there. In such a context, cohousing seemed to be the perfect solution. The book *Acceptera*, published for the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930, prophesied that in the future a large proportion of new housing would be collectively organised. The idea was principally developed by social scientist Alva Myrdal and architect Sven Markelius. Alva Myrdal wrote in the magazine *Tiden* 1932: “*Urban housing, where twenty families each in their own apartment cook their own meat-balls, where a lot of young children are shut in, each in his or her own little room – doesn’t this cry for an overall planning, for a collective solution?*”

Figure 5. *Some of the ideas which were put forward by Alva Myrdal and Sven Markelius at a meeting of the Professional Women’s Club in 1932: A central kitchen and a dining hall on the ground floor. Small elevators that can send meals up to the apartments. A professionally staffed kindergarten somewhere in the building. Space for games and sun-bathing on the roof.*



The idea of collective housing stirred up opposition. A typical reaction was the following from the journal *Barometer*: “Women with a profession were thrilled by the idea of parking their children at night in glass cages, like wasp larvae in a nest ... Cohousing with its child care units would be an extreme result of the trend towards dissolving the family.”

The leading modernists had important posts in society, but still won no support for collective housing within the organised labour movement, except within its women’s association. Sven Markelius hoped for support for three large buildings in Alvik in Stockholm, but he did not get any public support. Instead he, together with his radical friends, had to realise as a private initiative Sweden’s first functionalist cohousing unit on a small site at John Ericsonsgatan 6 in Stockholm. This was built in 1935 with 54 small apartments, dumb-waitors from the restaurant on the ground floor, a small shop and one of the first kindergartens with Alva Myrdal’s pedagogic principles. Beside each dumb-waitors was a laundry chute. Those who lived in the building could send their washing down to the staff of a laundry in the cellar.



Figure 6. *Photos from the cohousing unit at John Ericsonsgatan in the beginning of the 1940s, showing that women did not need to think about the evening meal until they, on the way home from work, see the menu in the elevator. From the restaurant in the ground floor the wife orders dinner, which is then sent to the apartment through the dumb-waitor.*

Knowing the neighbours and working with them – the most important goals in to-day’s collaborative housing – were not goals for John Ericsonsgatan 6. Most important there was a more rational way of living, simplifying housekeeping in order to free women for a more productive contribution to the business and public sectors. The residents were not expected to meet in the dining hall, nor to work together to run the building. The small apartments did not attract families with children. Instead it was radical intellectuals who moved in. The building was a focal point for radical discussions about social questions. The collective service worked well for three decades but ceased during the 1960s.

## Progress and opposition

Some more cohousing were built in Sweden from the mid 1930s to the mid 1950s: one in Gothenburg, one in Örebro and about eight in Stockholm. The modernists of the 1930s had hoped that the social democrat governments, the co-operative housing organisation HSB and similar organisations would encourage cohousing, but they were disappointed. Instead it was a private builder who took up the idea. Building-contractor Olle Engkvist was inspired by John Ericsonsgatan 6 and during the following 20 years his firm built six cohousing units in Stockholm.

In 1938 on Kungsklippan, together with the Women’s Office Workers’ Association, he built *Smaragden*, designed for unmarried working women. A few years later the *Marieberg* unit was built. This had 198 apartments with a reception, dining hall, kindergarten and other common facilities. The dumb-waiter idea was abandoned and only those who lived in the building could eat in the dining hall. To

keep the dining hall viable Olle Engkvist introduced compulsory meal tickets for each adult, 24 meals a month for ten months a year. The dining hall was run like a restaurant, with a uniformed staff and a fixed menu made up by the dining hall superintendent.



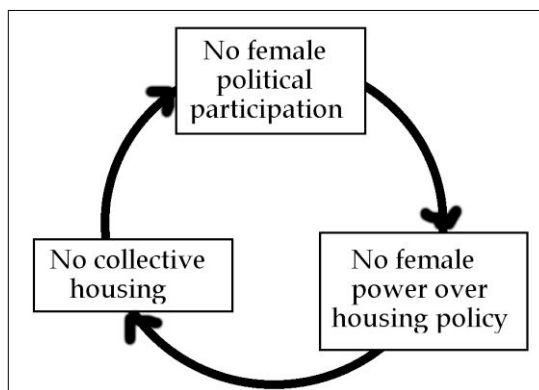
Figure 7. *The dining hall of Marieberg cohousing unit. The tenants were required to buy 24 meal tickets per month. If they preferred, they could fetch a meal in a basket and eat in their apartment.*

The apartments at Marieberg had two or three rooms and a kitchenette. At the start many families with children moved in, but as the Swedish standard of living became higher, families with several children moved out. Single mothers moved in instead. Collaborative housing was a very good solution

for them. Parents collaborated on child-care and there is a lot of evidence that this was a good environment for children.

Although the co-housing idea was progressing, it was also meeting powerful opponents. A government investigation – *Bostadskollektiva Kommittéen* - begun in 1948, illustrates this. The committee went on for eight years and published three reports. A report specifically on cohousing did suggest that more should be built and that it should get government subsidies. But at the same time a movement was afoot to encourage mothers to stay at home, and in Sweden on the whole the spirit of the 1950s was unfavourable to cohousing. The Swedish government investigation was influenced by a British investigation of kindergarten children. This maintained that children were more likely to have social problems if they were not brought up by mothers who stayed at home to look after them. Thus the Swedish government investigation concluded that cohousing was only interesting for a narrow elite and that such a housing type ought not to get government support.

Figure 8. *The vicious circle of women's lack of residential service. Women need service on the home front to enable them to carry out their job and family responsibilities. Without service they have no time to participate in politics. If women do not participate, housing is planned by men, without consideration for women's needs.*



During the 1960s it became more generally accepted in Sweden that married women should continue to work outside the home even when they had children.

A series of important political decisions led to more kindergartens and other service in normal residential areas. Apartments normally had refrigerators, deep-freeze and other equipment which made housekeeping easier. The vicious circle shown in figure 8 became less vicious, but not before 1979 did cohousing revive. In a society that was still patriarchal, cohousing was stubbornly opposed by men, many of whom wanted to have a wife who stayed at home and cooked and otherwise kept house for them.

## Hasselby family hotel – from service to collaboration

Olle Engkvist's model, with service from an employed staff and compulsory meal tickets, dominated the discussion about cohousing up to end of the 1970s. This model became increasingly obsolete as it became too expensive to arrange meals, cleaning and laundry in this way. The Hasselby story shows

how the old model was shown to be inadequate and how a new model grew up in its place, with the residents getting to know one another and working together.

The Hässelby “family hotel” was built in the mid 1950s and was Olle Engkvist’s last and biggest co-housing project. There were 328 apartments, a restaurant kitchen, a large dining hall on several levels, a smaller dining room, a room for parties, a club-room with its own cafeteria, a staffed reception, a shop that was open in the evenings (which was rare in the 1950s), a kindergarten, a laundry, a sauna, a prayer-room and a gymnastic hall shared with the adjacent school. The dining hall was run like a restaurant, with a manager who decided the menu. The staff wore uniforms and the guests dressed smartly. If they paid a little extra, they could have a specially-laid table with special dishes for guests. In other words, the family hotel was for privileged families.

In the late 1960s a new attitude could be seen, reflecting radical developments in the rest of society. The family hotel attracted tenants who were inspired by movements among students, by international solidarity and feminist movements. People began to dress less formally in the dining hall. The radical women’s “Group 8” had its meetings there. The tenants began to question the landlord’s numerous rules. The local chapter of the Tenants’ Association began to object to the landlord’s decisions on rents and reduced service.

At the start Hässelby tenants had contracts with a clause guaranteeing them meal service and so the landlord could not close the restaurant until the majority of the tenants no longer had such contracts. Nevertheless in 1976 the restaurant was closed, against the wishes of those who had participated actively in the building’s collective activities. More or less by chance after this defeat, these activists were allowed to cook in the restaurant kitchen by themselves. They noticed then that they managed very well without employing anybody and that they enjoyed working together. This led to a new sort of collaborative housing. The Hässelby tenants went on cooking their meals in the restaurant until they were thrown out by a massive police action in 1979 (because the owner wanted the premises for more profitable purposes). After that the residents have gone on cooking in more primitive facilities elsewhere in the building. The activists are a minority of the tenants in the building, but they have nevertheless managed to serve meals several times a week.

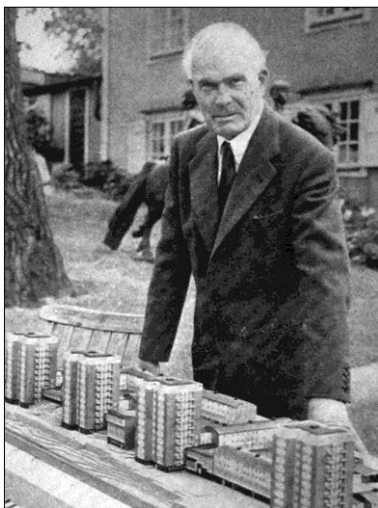


Figure 9, left: *The builder Olle Engkvist with a model of the Hässelby family hotel.*

Figure 10, right: *A big police force evacuating tenants who had occupied their own communal kitchen 1979.*



## A new collaborative model

The Hässelby family hotel was not designed so that those who lived there should cook meals or do anything else together. As the name “family hotel” implies, the objective was to support families where the mother was working outside the home. In practice, although there were at the outset nearly a thousand tenants in the building, they came to know and be friends with one another. Just taking advantage of the collective spaces was one of the ways that this happened. This collective feeling was strengthened by meetings that questioned the menu or service reductions. But the idea that the tenants

themselves should work in the kitchen only occurred when they started doing it in 1976 as an emergency solution.

The co-housing idea developed explosively when young people from 1968 and onwards adopted the idea of communal living. Their movement challenged the bourgeois nuclear family, which presupposed a housewife. The media presented the new alternative households as chaotic and immoral. But while society's officialdom deplored the alternative households' bohemian way of life, others saw the advantages of sharing household work and letting both men and women share the responsibility for housekeeping and child care.

One of those who saw the advantages was the housing expert Brita Åkerman. She had taken part in several government investigations on family and housing policy. As early as 1970 she was writing positively about collaborative housing. In an investigation on single parents, commissioned by the City of Stockholm's committee for women's interests, the idea of cohousing was put forward:

*"... there could be service buildings, accessible to all sorts of people. They would have apartments of different sizes, appropriate for single persons, for families with children, for young people and for elderly. As well as the individual apartments, there would be collective spaces where those who lived there could meet one another and help one another and in every way see to it that everyone had the help and opportunities that they needed."*

This committee found that earlier cohousing had had too many and too complicated service facilities. This had made the buildings expensive and difficult to run. It would be better to concentrate on the most important services and keep them simple. The committee did not think that healthy adults needed help with house-cleaning and laundry and suggested that those who lived in the building should have a say in how the collective spaces were used.

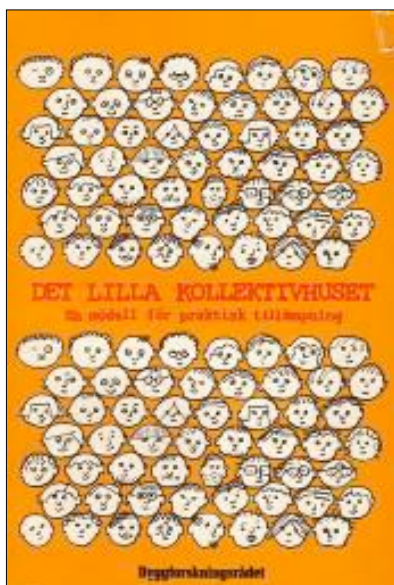


Figure 11. *The cover of the booklet "The small cohousing unit. A model for practical application", produced by the BIG group*

In the late 1970s the group BIG, *Bo i Gemenskap*, presented similar ideas, with financial support from the Swedish Building Research Council. In its final report BIG presented the idea of a "Working together model" which inspired a number of new co-housing projects. The BIG group turned away from the idea that housework was something to be kept to a minimum. Instead BIG argued that women had throughout history made a positive contribution to society and family life by their skills in cooking, care of clothes, hygiene and financial housekeeping. Housework was only undesirable when it was a service carried out every day by a woman in a diminishing household. Moreover, cooking less often but for more people would become something to tackle with enthusiasm. Working with other people would in itself be stimulating.

Eating from five to ten meals prepared by someone else would save a lot of valuable time before it was one's own turn to work in the kitchen.

## Practical experience of the BIG model

The BIG group's booklet came out just at the right time. Since the early 1960s many married women had begun to work outside the home. They demanded kindergartens and other forms of services. Almost all the women's organisation in Sweden demanded that some form of cohousing be built, but the opposition from the still-patriarchal society was powerful. Collaborative housing broke through first in the 1980s. Nearly all the old cohousing units, depending on a paid staff for service, had by that time become ordinary apartment buildings. The time was ripe for a new model.

The first building to use the BIG model was at Bergsjön in Gothenburg in 1979. This was a so-called problem area, with many social problems and apartments that changed hands often or stood empty. Professor Lars Ågren, the architect who had designed the area in the 1960s, became fascinated by the ideas of the BIG group. He offered the landlord, a municipal housing company, a solution for the unoccupied apartments by transforming a building into cohousing. The company was actually not interested in cohousing, but gave Lars Ågren a chance to carry out his idea. He advertised in the newspapers and soon had an enthusiastic association which worked together to rehabilitate the building. The sixth floor was chosen for the majority of the collective spaces. The building was to be run by the residents but still municipally owned. Lars Ågren himself moved in.



Figure 12. *The residents at Stacken, the first cohousing unit in Sweden following the BIG model. Lars Ågren is the tall man on the left.*

*Stacken* attracted people who had been active in the radical student movement and who firmly believed in cohousing. They had emphatic but very different ideas on what this meant. This led to conflicts and many of them moved out again. They disagreed on how children should be brought up, on whether to allow alcohol at parties, on allergies and domestic animals, and on whether decisions should be unanimous or majority. Later the building was bought by a group of young people who are confronted by once more rehabilitating the building.

The first building in Stockholm of the new model was *Prästgårdshagen* in Älvsjö. In this case the idea was taken up by the municipal housing company Familjebostäder, on the initiative of Vice-Mayor Mats Hulth. He had been impressed by Hässelby family hotel in its original form, but as it changed during the 1970s, he came to believe more in the collaborative model. He and a like-minded group pursued the idea so energetically that no less than 24 cohousing buildings were put up in Stockholm, of which 18 were according to the collaborative model.



Figure 13. *The ground floor of Prästgårdshagen. It was designed to stimulate spontaneous use of common spaces.*



Figure 14. *The carpentry workshop, open to all residents of Prästgårdshagen.*

Those who moved into *Prästgårdshagen* did not have such lofty ambitions as in *Stacken*. Many of the residents moving in saw collaborative housing as a practical solution rather than a grand ideological issue. As in *Stacken*, an association was formed to participate in the planning of the building. Follow-



ing the BIG model, the apartment area was reduced by about 10% to allow generous collective spaces without increased construction costs. The building was provided with a central kitchen, a dining hall, a laundry, a children's play-room, a meeting-room, a sauna, a photo-lab, a carpentry, a pottery workshop and in the cellar a music room. The municipality ran a kindergarten in the building. Every floor had a collective room, not dedicated to any particular activity. It could for example be used for informal meetings, as a place to share magazines or as a room for young people.

The municipal landlord showed its good will by allowing the residents' association to refuse tenants who could not be relied upon to participate in the kitchen teams. The residents were also responsible for keeping the building clean, for simple maintenance of the collective spaces and for looking after the garden and cutting the grass. The landlord paid the tenants for doing this and they spent what they earned in this way on equipping the collective spaces.

## Expansion and stagnation

About 50 cohousing units were put up in Sweden in the 1980s and the early 1990s. Most of them were of the BIG model, but there were also other models. The City of Stockholm appointed a working committee to organise a competition on different types of cohousing and to ensure that the municipal housing companies made practical experiments with different models. One of the companies was commissioned to try out one model in seven tower blocks in Fruängen. Here each building had its own collective spaces, but the residents had access to the collective spaces in all seven buildings. This company also built a larger cohousing unit, *Svärdet* in Södermalm, with 120 apartments, to be sure of enough people to support the collective spaces. But no way could be found to attract tenants where at least the majority could be relied upon to participate in the kitchen teams.

Another model was a combination of collaborative housing and service housing for elderly. The idea was that the younger residents would take advantage of the generous and expensive services for the elderly and so create a larger economic base for the restaurant, the club-rooms, the library, the meeting-room and so on. Service buildings for the elderly had been criticised for being too big and "institutional". It was hoped that including younger households would encourage social contacts and avoid age-segregation, but the model did not work well in practice. An investigation from the late 1980s showed that many of the elderly were too infirm to participate in activities for families with children. The service model called for a kitchen staff, but many of the families wanted to cook communally. In Karlskoga, Jönköping and Eskilstuna this way of running a building was abandoned after a few years. In two buildings in Stockholm the problem was solved by separating the collaborative housing from the service building.



Figure 15. Ground plan of Stolplyckan in Linköping – 184 apartments, connected under cover and with a staffed reception, dining hall, cafeteria, library, club-rooms, two day care centres, exercise-rooms, weaving workshop, carpentry workshop and several laundries.

*Stolplyckan* in Linköping was a more successful mixture of elderly and younger people. It was built by the municipal housing company Stångåstaden in the late 1970s, drawing on the experience of Hässelby family hotel. Although here too collective service was the core, no building was exclusively for those who depended on service. Instead 35 apartments for the elderly and nine for the handicapped were included among the total of 184 apartments. Two adjacent kindergartens and a school gymnasium and dining hall were also accessible from the co-housing. The apartment areas were reduced to keep down the overall construction costs. In this way 2.000 m<sup>2</sup> collective spaces became accessible for each tenant. Around each staircase the residents spontaneously assumed tasks like cooking, repainting, showing films for children, gardening, receiving visitors or producing an internal newspaper or website.

In the early 1990s a new cohousing model was developed, this time for those “in the second half of their lives”, that is to say those over 40 years old and no longer with children living with them. One of the aims of this model was to begin already in middle age a sort of mutual support that had been shown to be beneficial. The first building after this model was *Färdknäppen* in south-central Stockholm. Others were later built in Falun, Lund, Gothenburg, Mölndal, Malmö and again in Stockholm.



Figure 16 above: *Dinner in Tersen, Falun, where an association has taken over and adapted a former service building for elderly.*

Figure 17 left: *Färdknäppen in Stockholm, built in 1994.*

## Swedish Cohousing today

In 2006 the Swedish national association, Kollektivhus NU, traced all the known buildings in Sweden intended for collaborative living or otherwise dedicated to neighbourly cooperation, a fair division of labour between men and women and a simpler day-to-day life. 52 buildings were traced. Of these about 10 are no longer functioning according to collaborative ideas. Of the remaining 42 units 25 are running more or less according to the original ideas while ca 17 are not using all the original collective spaces. 30 are owned by municipal housing companies, while six are cooperatively owned and six have special tenure forms.

In a few cases the cohousing unit shares some spaces with a school, a day-care centre or facilities for the elderly. The unit of EKBO/Gebbers combines collaborative housing with eco-village features. Other Swedish eco-villages (estimated to be about 20 in all of Sweden) have been invited to join Kollektivhus NU, but they seem not to consider themselves collaborative enough to join. Almost all the Swedish units have common dinners as the main collaborative factor. But some deviate from this pattern. The unit *Lergöken* in Södertälje has no central kitchen or dining hall. Instead there is a children’s play room and a club-room where common activities take place regularly. The unit *Utkiken* in Stockholm developed a communal spirit when fighting against overly expensive refurbishment of

their apartment block at the end of the 1980s. Although the residents have almost ceased to cook communally they still feel as a collaborative housing unit.

	Alla gem.lokaler på bottenvån (och ev i källaren)	Kök och matrum på bottenvån. Gem lokaler även på andra plan.	Kök och matrum högre upp
<b>FLERPLANSHUS</b>			
<b>Ett trapphus</b>			
<b>A</b> - utan korridorer och loftgångar	Orion x 7 Tunnan Fullersta gård	Kattbuvudet Trädet Bergsviken Täljan	Stacken
<b>B</b> - med korridorer el. loftgångar	Jakobsberg C Märsta dal Södervära	Prästgårds- hagen Blenda Lina Hage	
<b>Flera trapphus</b>			
<b>C</b> - sammanbundna i bottenvån	Måttbandet Flygtrafiken	Fortuna	
	Blomstret Svärdet Kupan		
<b>D</b> - sammanbundna på flera plan	Yzan	Slottet Ångsviksgården	
<b>Centralhall</b>			
<b>E</b> - med el utan glastak			
<b>LÅGHUS</b>			
<b>F</b> - med korridorer	Gemensamma lokaler samlade	Gemensamma lokaler på olika ställen	
	Regnbågen		
<b>E</b> - med en central hall el gård	Björkåsa		

Figure 18. An overview of various types of collaborative housing, as analysed by architect researcher Karin Palm Lindén. 26 units are grouped into 20 types classified according to spatial distribution of communication and communal spaces in relation to private apartments.

In all there are about 2,000 apartments in cohousing units in Sweden. This is approximately 0.05% of the total housing stock. The figure does not include small communes in big apartments or single-family houses. In the beginning of the 1980s the total number of communes was estimated to exceed 500. How many they are today is not known since no investigation has been carried out. Even if the communes and eco-villages are included collaborative housing does not exceed 1% of the housing stock in Sweden.

This overview shows that collaborative housing is an exception to the conventional types of housing in Sweden. Yet it is a quite vital social movement, which has survived during 40 years. Recently the collaborative housing movement has started to gain momentum. Since 2004 seven new units have been built and some more are in the planning stage. The national collaborative housing organisation *Kollektivhus NU* has about 45 members, including four local associations of individuals, working for more collaborative housing in general or for concrete buildings for their members.

November 2008

Dick Urban Vestbro