

About the ecovillage Understenshöjden

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Foto: Holger.Ellgaard

Understenshöjden is an ecovillage located in Björkhagen, Stockholm. The project was planned and carried out during the 1990's and is Stockholms first ecovillage. Understenshöjden is a housing cooperative within the housing cooperative organization [HSB](#)

The area hosts 44 apartments. The project was started by ecologically minded people who banded together and started an organization. Later the organization received building land from the municipality.

Coordinates: 

[59°17'16"N 18°07'19"O](#) / [59.28778, 18.12194](#)

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Background

In 1989 the EBBA (ecological housing in Björkhagen) was formed. The goal was to transform the idea of the ecological style of living into reality, there was also a heavy focus on having a democratically run housing cooperative. Specific goals was for the housing to minimize energy usage and interference with the nature.

Through joined efforts between the cooperative organization [HSB](#) and construction company SMÅA-hus the housing cooperative received appropriate building land in Björkhagen, a mere 4 kilometers away from the center of Stockholm

The planning phase was long and partly difficult. Several members left the project during this stage.



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Building process

Four years after the forming of EBBA the building phase was started. All the houses were build during the period of 1995-1996 by HSB Produktion AB. Architecture by Bengt Bilén.

The look and shape of the area was in many cases been tailored after the residents need. There was a large emphasis on using natural materials for wooden floors, wooden house front and roof tiles compromised of clay.

Apartments and housing

The area is compromised of 44 residential apartments differing in size. They can range from between 58 and up to 155 square meters. The roof height is at 2,70, 30 cm higher then the norm for Swedish apartments. The floors tiles are made out of solid spruce that has either been processed with soap or oil. In the bathrooms there are clinker floor tiles.

The houses are thermally insulated with cellulose wood. The wooden panel of the outer fasade is processed with iron sulfate that causes a graying effect on wood, making the wood blend with the palette of the surrounding nature.

The housing area also has a common space that you can book for different types of gatherings. This house is big and ther is a large kitchen and a play room for kids. You can also find laundry machines aswell as the central heating boiler

Heating

The heating comes partly from solar panels aswell as the central boiler, fueled by pellets. The houses all have water heating radiators.

Waste and compostation

All household waste is sorted appropriately. Biological waste is composted. Residual waste and recyclable materials are to be collected by the municipality. Understenshöjden also has a room for items that can be reused, for example clothing and books.

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