The main facade of the courtyard house reinterprets elements from the traditional wooden housing, caracterized by a certain play with horizontality and verticality, marked window frames that follow a vertical grid, but is more free in the plan.

North Facade
Erling Skakkes gate
1:100

The pavilion is the place where the students and inhabitants of the block can make the public space come alive. Inspired by the simplicity of a shed, and the superposition of the paneling found on the surrounding blind walls, the pavilion can be used to organise private parties as well as public event. Perhaps a small conference, a exhibition or a weekly literary café? A concert or a film projection? Or a dance workshop?

Section A-A
Pavilion
1:100

There is always something going on in the pavilion. On this late summer night, the students are arranging an open air cinema, and a café in the pavilion.

A view of the interior courtyard of the corner house. The two apartments on each floor shares the introverted, yet open space and serves as living room, dining room, library, playroom, study, atelier... whatever comes to mind.

A story to be continued

Transformation of a city block in Trondheim, Norway.

Imagine that you are walking through the narrow streets of an old Nordic city, tightly enclosed by low wooden houses, when all of a sudden you stop at a void in the facade where a house used to be. Perhaps it has burned—the traces of its shape can still be seen on the neighbouring walls. The remaining composition of strange abstract silhouettes produces an intriguing image in the urban landscape. Not revealing what's going on behind it, the blind walls separate private and public, demanding for something to happen. One could open the wall, insert a window, build a balcony, use the wall as a canvas, occupy the public space, inhabit it…

The site—located in the heart of Trondheim's historical city—has been left half-emptied for almost fifty years, leaving behind a large unbuilt corner. Instead of offering a definitive architectural answer to the void, the project explores the idea of the unfinished at the scale of a city block—between what we build, and the prolonged potential that is revealed in the new situation. The pieces in play are the different buildings, continuously replaced and regrouped, each time reformulating the urban situation.

The intervention—a new corner house and a transformed lemonade factory—offer much needed housing for students. The heart of the block houses a pavilion where the inhabitants of the block can organise public events in an informal and autonomous manner, as a driving force to animate the voids for as long as they remain there. The buildings frame and define the public space, but leaves at the same time a margin for the unplanned, informal or unexpected to happen.

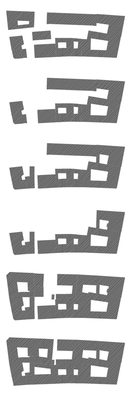
Ingrid Gjermstad, Projet de Master, EPFL, 2015

When is a building finished? Or rather, when does a building begin and cease to be finished? One can imagine that the building phases in and out of completion and incompletion continuously. Architecture does not have an ideal complete form that is valid at any time. Despite a supposedly achieved 'completion' at a certain point in time, the building will still continue to change, and the context that constitutes the basis for any architectural solution, will change too. The unfinished allows us to leave the task of completion to the imaginary world of our minds.

At first, architecture is only an idea in somebody's mind, and does not exist as physical form. After a process of drawing and construction, the building might enter its first moment of fulfillment. But in the same moment, the phase of degradation and fragmentation begins. The building adapts and is marked by its inhabitants, the weather or the movements of the ground. Architecture is always a response to a particular situation, and at any time a foreseen or unforeseen event can put the entire base for the architectural definition back into question.

The occurrence of events is mostly a result of chance, and can produce unexpected, ambiguous and sometimes even comical situations in the architectural experience. One cannot immediately understand why things have been done in a certain way; one starts to question why one ceiling is lower that the other, why a floor suddenly changes material at a seemingly arbitrary place, or why there is an extra door leading nowhere. Why all of a sudden a square is surrounded by twodimentional facades with no windows ?

Excerpt from the essay «A Moment in the Life of a Building» in *On the Unfinished in Architecure*, theoretical statement by Ingrid Gjermstad, EPFL 2015.



2015
A new house marks the corner and reinterprets the traditional courtyard house typology facing the street with its back to the centre of the block. An extension to the factory offers a new access to the centre of the block as well a new blind wall to attach to. In the centre of the block, the pavillion animates the remaining voids.

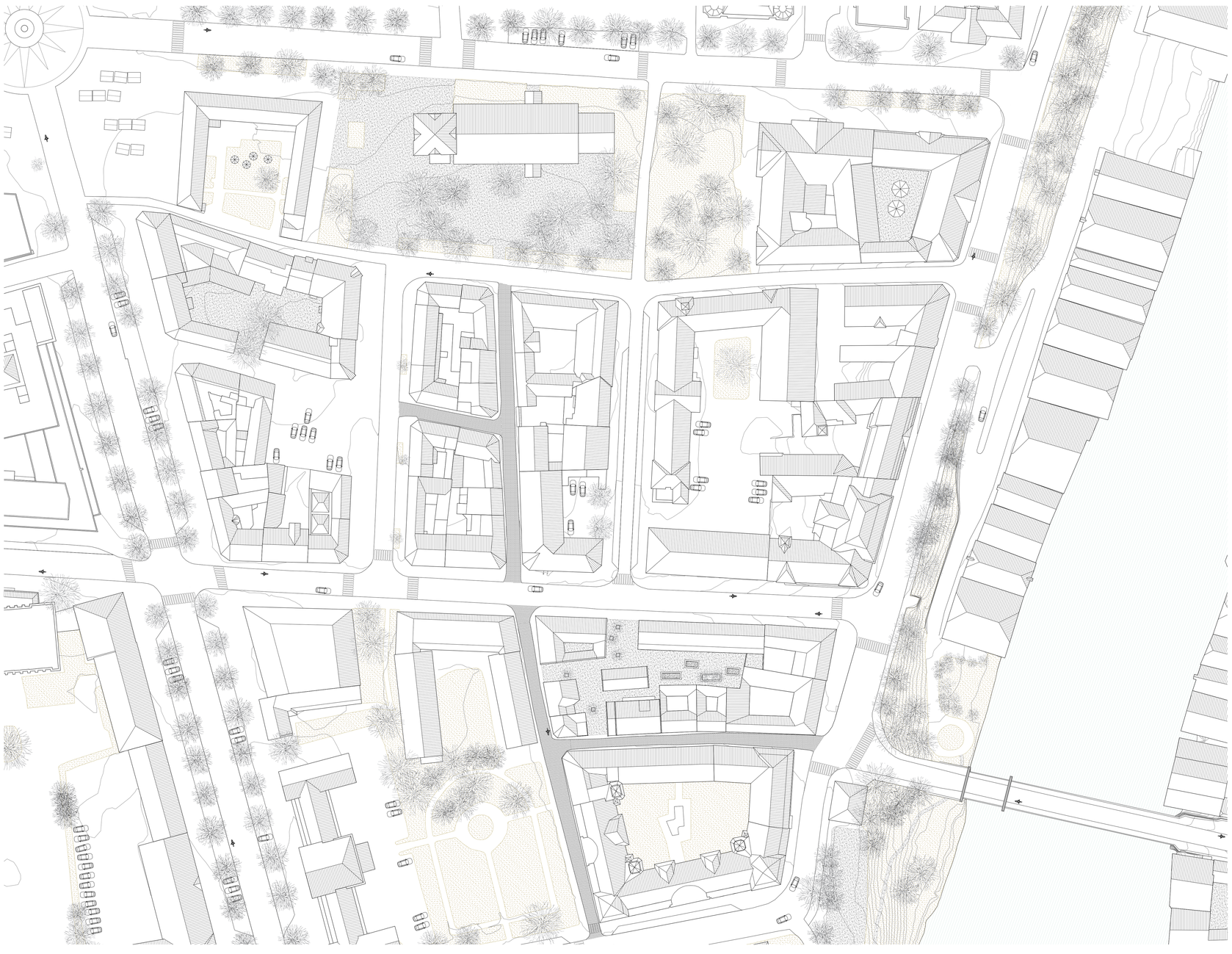
1990
The garage and backhouse of the limonade factory have been demolished after a long period of negotiation. The two houses in the west are preserved and renovated in 2005.

1973
A listed social housing complex is moved from another location in the city center to the north of the block to give room for a new bank. The structure is too old to be preserved, only the street facade is authentic. The house has access to all the apartments form a walkway facing the centre of the block.

1967
Three more couryard houses as well as the garage have been demolished during the sixties due to dereliction, leaving most of block open towards the street.

1910
Two houses have burned and been replaced by a temporary garage in wood and a limonade factory in brick with its main access and facade to the centre of the block.

1880
The block consists of a traditional courtyard house structure. The corner houses to the west are constructed after the fire in 1845, in brick according to the new fire protection law.



The block is situated along a medievial street (Kannikestrete), leading from the west of the city to the red City Brigde (Gamle Bybro), marking the entrance to city towards the east. The warehouses in the east as well as the curch and the buildings south of it were the first buildings to be raised as the city was founded, and the city spread westwards behind them. Thus this quarter is one of the city's oldest, contianing medieval heritage in the remaining cultural layers.

Situation
Trondheim city centre (south east)
1:500