

ROLL MODELS

Does living in a little house mean you have to be stuck with a small space? Not if you ask a team of design students from New York's Parsons the New School for Design, Stockholm's Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, and Saint-Étienne's School of Art and Design. The three schools recently came together to build seasonal dwellings at the new Formens Hus (House of Design) in Hällefors, Sweden, and put the Little Houses on wheels so they could expand into their surroundings.

The project was spearheaded by Tony Whitfield, chair of Parsons' product design department and a member of Formens Hus's advisory committee. "The House of Design is an institution that's really there for young designers," he says. "A large part of it is going to be a study centre and conference space." Therefore, it was necessary to create lodgings for visiting designers and scholars.

Taking initial inspiration from the Swedish *friggebod*, a small shed or cabin that provides basic shelter, the students designed a three-unit complex on a former train bridge over Sweden's Black River. Teams from Parsons and Saint-Étienne (which also has a representative on the Formens Hus advisory committee) designed one pint-sized living pod each, and a Parsons faculty member designed a larger unit that provides shared kitchen and bathroom facilities (this third pod was outfitted by the Parsons student team). Meanwhile, a team from Konstfack developed such products as camp stoves and sinks to outfit the units. The living pods can be rolled apart along the tracks to expand the overall space, providing a shared outdoor area. In case of rain, they can be moved closer together; when not in use, they can be docked as a single structure. A communal dining table functions the same way, allowing indoor meals to become outdoor picnics with a little push. The complex is self-sufficient, with a solar-powered fridge, a waterless composting toilet, and a shower attached to a pump that brings water up from the river.

Completed last August, the Little Houses will welcome their first guests this summer – and will surely help their visitors think big.

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With the goal of creating lodging for visiting designers and scholars, students and faculty members from design schools in New York, Stockholm and Saint-Étienne devised two living pods, and one larger unit containing shared kitchen and bathroom facilities. Part of a study and conference centre in Hällefors, Sweden, the units can be rolled apart to create a common outdoor area in favourable weather.