

organizations often separated the kitchen from the living room, thus making it more difficult for the mother to interact with the rest of the family¹². Since she was seen as the carrier of the Fenno-Swedish culture, it became logical to place her work station as a part of the family room.

Work was explicitly interpreted as the woman's chores. Since one of the most important parts of the mission was to keep Swedish-speaking women from moving to the cities, her conditions had to be improved. According to the association, this was done by installing running water, plumbing and rational kitchen cabinets¹³. The interest in rational kitchens awoke in Finland in the early 1920s. Several female architects visited exhibitions abroad and returned with the ideas from the *Frankfurter küche* or Swedish standardisation efforts. These ideas were incorporated in the association's plans for kitchen cabinetry, which became the most popular of the associations products as about 5000 were sold. As many did not have means to build a new house, modernization of old farmsteads was generally recommended, and especially a new kitchen and a washroom were stressed as minimum requirements.

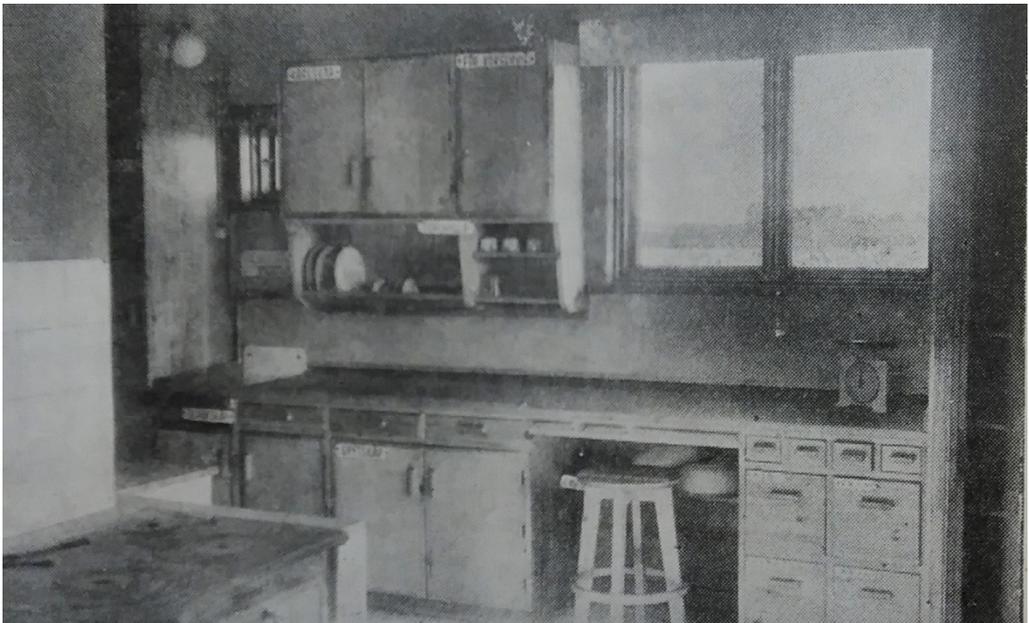


Fig. 2. The kitchen in "Mönsterstugan" from 1946. The cabinets consisted of modules which could be arranged as needed. Photographer unknown.

Source: Collections of Eva Kuhlefelt-Ekelund, Museum of Finnish Architecture.

Rest and healthcare was another part of the ideology. Since the early 1920s the *Folkhälsan* association promoted improving the general health amongst the Fenno-Swedes as a strategy for maintaining the minority's position. The Fenno-Swedes were to thrive if they practiced cleanliness, personal hygiene and took positive eugenics to heart by making sure only people with "good" genes procreated. In order to make the group

¹² See for instance [3], chapters 6 and 7.

¹³ See for instance, the presentation *Husmoderns krav på bostaden* (the housewife's demands on her dwelling) which was held at numerous events by *Bostadsföreningen* representatives.

expand, each “good” woman should have at least four children¹⁴. These messages were implemented in the drawings as well. All houses had room for accommodating at least four children, often more. The parents and children of different sexes had separate bedrooms and no beds were placed along outer walls. It was claimed that it was “the Fenno-Swedish way” to place beds along inner walls to avoid draft and thus diseases. For personal hygiene, all type-plans contained a small washroom. Mental hygiene was taken into consideration by making sure the buildings were large enough. Every family member should be able to find a quiet space inside the home.

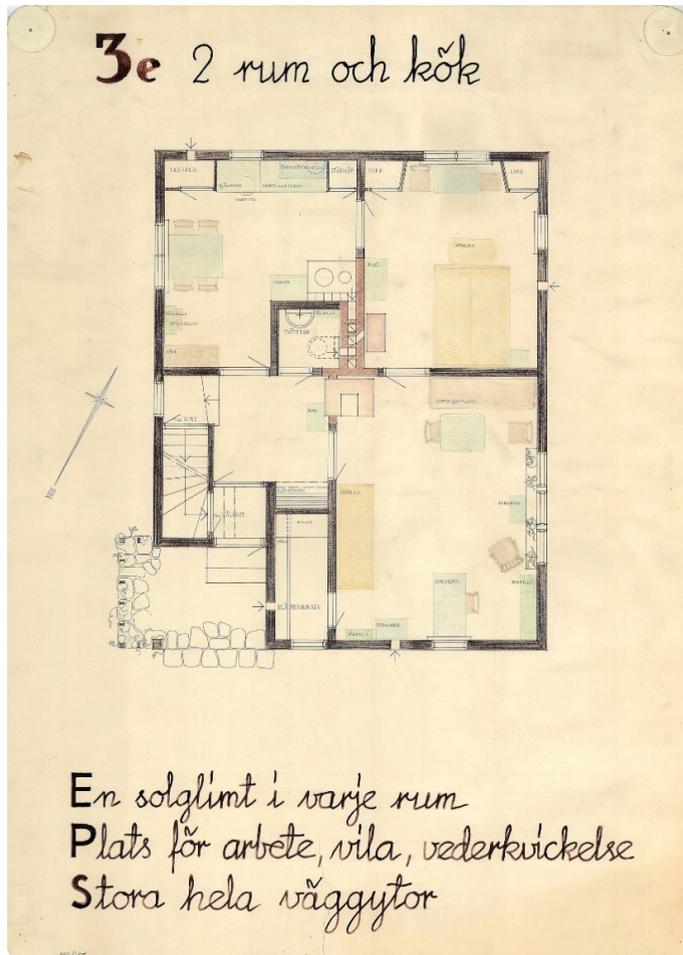


Fig. 3. This type of poster was included in the association’s dwelling exhibitions. This one depicts type 3 e, one of the most popular models.

The texts say: “A ray of light in every room,
Place for work, rest and invigoration, Large, undivided walls”.

Source: Collection of Eva Kuhlefelt-Ekelund, Museum of Finnish Architecture.

The *Bostadsföreningen* architectural endeavour can be understood in the light of the perceived threat against the Fenno-Swedish minority. The political need to stop the flight

¹⁴ In a Finnish context, the same questions were debated. For example, Väestöliitto (the Finnish population and family welfare federation) campaigned that four children were an absolute minimum while six were positioned as the norm. [3: 61]

from the countryside turned into a process of creating a safe haven for the minority, consisting of homes where the characteristics of the Fenno-Swedes could be projected and cultivated. The visual expression of a Fenno-Swedish identity in architecture was a combination of two main ideological nationalist traditions in the early 20th century. On the one hand, the use of modernist architecture in order to unite a group of people that did not have much in common follows a global pattern. By promoting modernist values, as Lawrence J. Vale has concluded, the troublesome past or internal differences can be overseen, when the view is turned towards the future. On the other hand, as stated by Aspa Gospodini, the interest in local vernacular culture functions as a reminder of the common history, making claims for Fenno-Swedish belonging legitimate in a historical perspective.

In the architecture promoted by *Bostadsföreningen* the values are combined as well. Good architecture was well composed, practical, harmonized with the surrounding nature and the inhabitant's station in life as well as making good use of all the latest research in effective housing and home economics. The association clearly made a connection between what the architecture represented and the Fenno-Swede. Through improved housing conditions, an understanding of how to take care of home, health, economy and education, the Fenno-Swede with the perceived unique Swedish cultural and genetic heritage, would be able to continue living at his homestead, thus keeping the Fenno-Swedishness as well as the "Swedish soil" intact for future generations.

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Short Resume

Mia Åkerfelt is a post-doc researcher in architectural history at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. Her thesis on Hilda Hongell, the first female master-builder was defended in 2011. She worked as teacher at the department of Art History between 2010 and 2013. Recent research projects have dealt with the connection between identity, minorities and architecture as well as the historiography of the concept of architecture in Finland in the 20th century. Åkerfelt has also been teaching design and fashion history at the Open University at Åbo Akademi.

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