

Intergenerational care facility supporting community needs in Kolding



PROJECT:
Mariehjemmene Kolding



COMPANY:
Northern Horizon



LOCATION
Kolding, Denmark

Challenge

Kolding is Denmark's eighth-largest city and plays an important commercial and educational role in the southern region of Jutland. The municipality has experienced steady population growth of around 26% since 1980, reaching approximately 96,000 residents today. Like many Danish municipalities, it faces a rapidly growing elderly population and the number of residents aged 80+ is expected to increase by around 50% over the next decade¹.

With the need for additional care beds, the municipality of Kolding announced plans to establish 170 additional care beds. In its elderly care policy, the municipality is working strategically across four key themes, one of which is to create more housing options for the elderly, including privately operated care homes, that can foster strong communities.

One aim is to explore dual-purpose buildings that strengthen social interaction.

¹ In 2024, 199 elderly residents were on the general waiting list for a care bed, with an average wait time of 69 days; the addition of new private care beds is expected to help reduce this pressure once new data becomes available.

Solution

This project introduces the first private care home in Kolding municipality, adding 80 new care beds and helping reduce waiting times for elderly residents in need of 24/7 care. It is also one of the first projects in Denmark that combines a care home and a kindergarten, reflecting the municipality's interest in solutions that can foster community interaction across generations. The design intention is to enable meaningful contact between children and elderly residents while maintaining safe and independent operation for both services.

A third-party developer initiated the development in 2022, and Northern Horizon acquired it in 2023. The construction of the building was completed in summer 2025, marking the opening municipality's first private care home.

The asset consists of two buildings connected by a glass walkway to enable planned intergenerational contact while ensuring independent operations for both services.

Sustainability has been prioritised in the project with the aim of achieving DGNB Gold certification within



the first year after completion. The design of the asset focuses on both environmental and social outcomes, with emphasis on well-being, accessibility, and the benefits of intergenerational interaction.

Early DGNB pre-screening highlighted several decisive design measures such as a low carbon footprint, rooftop solar panels and biodiverse outdoor areas including a sensory garden and pétanque court.

The care provider is a Danish non-profit operator specialised in private aged care homes and care facilities, and the kindergarten is operated by a German private operator with 30 years of experience.

Results

- > 80 modern, high-quality, purpose-built care units for elderly residents;
- > Kindergarten facilities for 89 children aged 0–6;
- > Design concept enabling interaction between children and elderly residents;
- > Early observations indicate that the intergenerational concept is working well. Activities such as bi-weekly 'Musical Playtime' sessions have created positive engagement, with care staff reporting increased energy and enjoyment among residents.

- > Building pre-screened according to DGNB Gold level, with certification expected in H1 2026.

Outcomes

The completed asset translates the project's design and sustainability approach into tangible social and functional outcomes.

The two buildings have shared kitchen areas, accessible balconies and common spaces on all floors. A glass walkway connects the two buildings, creating a setting where two generations can benefit from one another in daily life.

The care home offers 80 units organised into five resident groups of 16, each with a dedicated staff team. Apartments are around 36 m² with living rooms, private kitchenettes and bathrooms designed to support mobility and care teams.

Outdoors, residents benefit from a courtyard, terraces, a pétanque court and walking paths with herbs and flower beds, providing a calm environment that encourages social contact and well-being. The care home includes nurses, care assistants and nursing aides, as well as its own kitchen preparing nutritious meals.

The kindergarten accommodates 89 children aged 0–6 and is based on a pedagogical approach focused on individual learning, creativity and emotional development.



Indoor spaces support role play, construction, art, science and movement, complemented by a large outdoor playground.

Since opening, early observations suggest that the intergenerational concept is functioning well in practice, with both structured and informal interactions contributing positively to residents' well-being.

Sustainability considerations are integrated throughout. DGNB Gold certification is expected, supported by a low carbon footprint, solar panels and biodiverse landscaping designed to enhance both environmental performance and user well-being.

On behalf of our investors, we have contributed 80 modern care beds in an area where the need is already significant and set to grow further. The project also integrates social well-being in an entirely new way, which we are very proud of.

Kasper Wehner, Investment Director at Northern Horizon Denmark



Source: Rubow Architects (now Nordic Office of Architecture A/S) projection of the project.

Northern Horizon

Northern Horizon is committed to helping alleviate the structural undersupply of modern care beds in the Nordics through investments in healthcare and social infrastructure real estate. With 160+ investments for its managed funds since 2007, Northern Horizon has established itself as the leading specialised social infrastructure asset manager in the region. Northern Horizon's two active funds in the social infrastructure space, ACIV and ACSIF, target new, fit-for-purpose care facilities as well as forward purchase/forward-funding projects in urban areas with a growing elderly population and a sustained demand for high-quality facilities.