

The LEGO® House

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures: HispaBrick Magazine and The LEGO Group

For my family and for me personally the LEGO Company has really always been much more than just a company and our products much more than just products. Children are learning through playing with our products and this is really the whole LEGO idea. (Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen)

My name is Astrid Müller and I am the Event and Programs manager of the upcoming LEGO House. I work in the LEGO House project in Billund, Denmark.

HBM: Were any other locations for The LEGO House taken into consideration?

AM: From the very beginning it was clear that it should be placed in Billund because that is where the LEGO Group comes from and that's where everything started, so finding a place in Billund was very important.

Billund is the hometown of LEGO. It is the town where my grandfather started making wooden toys already back in 1932 so it is very natural for me that we build the LEGO House here in Billund. And furthermore we have together with the community the ambition that Billund should become the Capital of Children and I see of course the LEGO House as a major contribution from our side towards that vision. (Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen)

HBM: Could you explain what "LEGO House" is?

AM: It is an experience centre (hands-on, minds-on) and it will be a place where you can be inspired by LEGO bricks and where you can experience fantastic activities with LEGO bricks. It's all about being inspired by the bricks and actually the LEGO House will be the one and only place on the globe you should go to, to be inspired by the endless possibilities of LEGO bricks.

I am very passionate about play and how children learn through play and this is really what the LEGO House is all about. (Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen)

HBM: Why did The LEGO Group think this project should be carried out?

AM: Because it is very important. It is so close to the LEGO idea values and to show this fascinating story of the LEGO Group and the LEGO brick and also because we realized that the LEGO Idea House is so popular. So having that LEGO Idea House with a very limited capacity it was more natural to think further how the LEGO idea could be brought to more people.

HBM: The architect of the building is Bjarke Ingels. Did he have any restrictions and/or recommendations when designing the building?

AM: No. There was a competition and within the competition he handed in this proposal and it was so close to the LEGO idea. It was referring to what you can do with bricks. The building looks as if it is made out of 21 bricks and so it was so natural to follow his proposal.



HBM: Did Bjarke look at the values of the LEGO Group, the AFOL movement, the Community, etc... when he designed the building?

AM: Yes, we know that he did and even at work he is using LEGO bricks for doing models and he really is into the LEGO values, so yes, he did.

HBM: What impact will the construction of The LEGO House have in Billund?

AM: It will attract much more visitors to the centre of Billund, at the moment visitors are more focused on the attractions outside the centre. LEGO House will drive a lot of visitors and interest into the centre of Billund, so it will be much more alive and much more active.

HBM: Did you have any complaints from the citizens? And from the shops around the place where the LEGO House will be located?

AM: No, and actually maybe you already know, the citizens and the shop owners of the centre have been involved in the process at a very early stage. So there have been dialogue meetings and they have always been informed and we started a weekly update about the construction site, so we are in very close dialogue and so we can learn from each other very well and so it works really well. And actually LEGO was proposed for a CSR award – you can also read about it on the website – there were three candidates for community relationships and the LEGO Group with the communication of LEGO House to the city of Billund was proposed for this award.

HBM: Who is the target visitor?

AM: LEGO fans of all ages

The LEGO House will be a very active place where LEGO fans of all ages can have a lot of different building experiences they can create themselves. They can express themselves, they can

get new ideas from what others have done, they can see some fantastic creations made by our adult LEGO fans. So there will be many different activities and they can also off course learn much more about our history, our values, so this will be a very learning rich experience. (Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen)

HBM: What will we find inside?

AM: You will find 4 experience zones and of course a history zone that will be based in the basement and the LEGO® Store.

HBM: Will there be specific areas for LEGO themes like City, Space, Technic, MINDSTORMS...?

AM: We have decided not to tell about the actual content of the house. One reason is that it is work in progress another is that we want to keep it as a secret until the opening date come closer.

HBM: In the first video that was released we have seen that there will be a kind of underground bunker. It looked like the famous "vault". Any clue about what will be there?

AM: In that video it was more a design study to show the inside of the house and the purpose for each area. At that time there was no decision or idea even of what could be in. Of course we will have a history zone, but it will look different. And that's something we'll keep secret.

HBM: Will there be any special lounge where AFOLs could actively participate?

AM: Of course the house is also going to be a community house and very much based on community thinking and how to get connected and share with each other. We are in very close dialogue with AFOLs, we even have a workshop in summer where we talk about what should be from events and programs side inside. We will have a very special focus on AFOLs and if there will be lounges I cannot say now, but of course we know that it is very important to make it special for AFOLs. We are working on it.

All the guests who have visited the LEGO Idea House have been thrilled by getting an in-depth experience of what is the LEGO idea, what are the values behind the company and how

has the product developed? So this has inspired us also to give the broader public an opportunity to get that kind of experience and therefore we are making the LEGO House. (Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen)

HBM: But there's not only life inside the LEGO House... What is planned for the terraces and the main square?

AM: Both terraces and main square, called LEGO square, are public and we hope that people from all countries and all ages will use it as a meeting place to gather. We also would like to develop an event calendar so we can say there are some events happening on the terraces and also on the LEGO square.

HBM: A lot of AFOLs are avid collectors of special LEGO stuff. Will there be something exclusive in the shop, available nowhere else, like the model of the LEGO House?

AM: I think it would be strange if there would not be anything.

HBM: Why is construction delayed?

AM: That is due to the complexity of the building. The LEGO House looks like it is built in LEGO bricks but actually it is built in concrete and steel and concrete and steel has no clutch power. One big challenge is the fact that the LEGO square will have no visible bearing structure like columns. To make this happen is much more complex than we anticipated, actually we realized it is more like building a bridge. Building that bridge takes more time and that's why the opening date has been postponed.

HBM: How many visitors are expected per year?

AM: 250.000

HBM: What is the relationship between the LEGO House and the "Capital of Children"?

AM: We see LEGO House as a major contribution to the vision of Billund to become the Capital of Children.

#

