

Layers Unfolded
an open ended continuation of the city narrative

Pål Henrik Winjum Eikås

Tutors:
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Project Description

The Site

The site, colloquially known as Lille Uranienborg is an urban quarter located on the old western threshold of Oslo. As a consequence of time and location, it consists of a multitude of typologies and variety in scale and styles. It also forms a junction between three very distinct subcultural areas of Oslo, on the eastern side the main shopping street, Hegdehaugsveien, towards the west, an area with large residential villas that are mostly converted into embassies, and to the south, the cultural strip with amongst others The House of Literature, The Royal Castle and The Artist's House. The quarter itself embodies this liminality in itself containing this aforementioned richness in scale and typology.

Background

In these times of historically unparalleled densification and re-development of large parts of Oslo, this area is subject to the same pressure, and local engagement has led to a full stop of further development in the area, pending a new overall plan for the entire quarter. There is simultaneously an ongoing architectural competition for large parts of the quarter. The urgent situation of large scale development and the acknowledgment of the qualities from the gradual development of the city forms the background for my thesis. The initial outset was to work with different methods of unfolding narratives from the site and to try to find qualities that could be reimplemented in a further continuation of the quarter in the form of two architectural additions.

Strategy

This led to the development of an urban strategy that encourages a gradual and piecemeal continuation of the urban fabric, as opposed to a more common situation in which large parts are re-developed over a short period of time. This strategy, I would argue, would be particularly applicable to this, and other situations in which the logic of the growth, spatial, material, and stylistic richness is a consequence of a gradual adaptive process that has taken place over time. Inspired by found qualities and analysis of the site, I have added

two architectural additions and opened up for passage through the courtyard spaces of the quarter. The two additions are different in program, cultural, historical interpretation, yet both aim to demarcate urban space and are carefully adapted to their adjacent situations in different ways.

Architectural Additions

The architectural additions are a co-housing apartment building, and a public bath.

The idea of the co-housing project was to be generous with shared space and combining it with a public passage, a café, and a shop. In terms of spatial concept it could be read as a reinterpretation the nooks and crannies of the place, elevating the common spaces, such as the circulation through the building. It is placed in an urban setting, one side street facing, the other towards the courtyard spaces. The volume has been carefully adapted to blend in with the neighbouring apartment buildings from different time periods.

The public bath is a reintroduction of bathing as a social and communal arena, inspired by and adapted to the old bath of Karlsro, dating back to the 1850s. In this project I have been more radical in my approach to the theme, aiming to merge the act of bathing in a more permanent way to the adjacent back alley, that formerly was a part of a public street called Badehusgaden. (The Bath House Street). The project also has spaces for medical treatment and contemplation and overall aims to be function as a seclusion from the busy city, a set of spaces that are introverted in nature and encourages calmness and well-being.

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Diploma Program

Pål H. W. Eikås

Tutors:

Francesca Torzo, Hedvig Skjerdingsstad



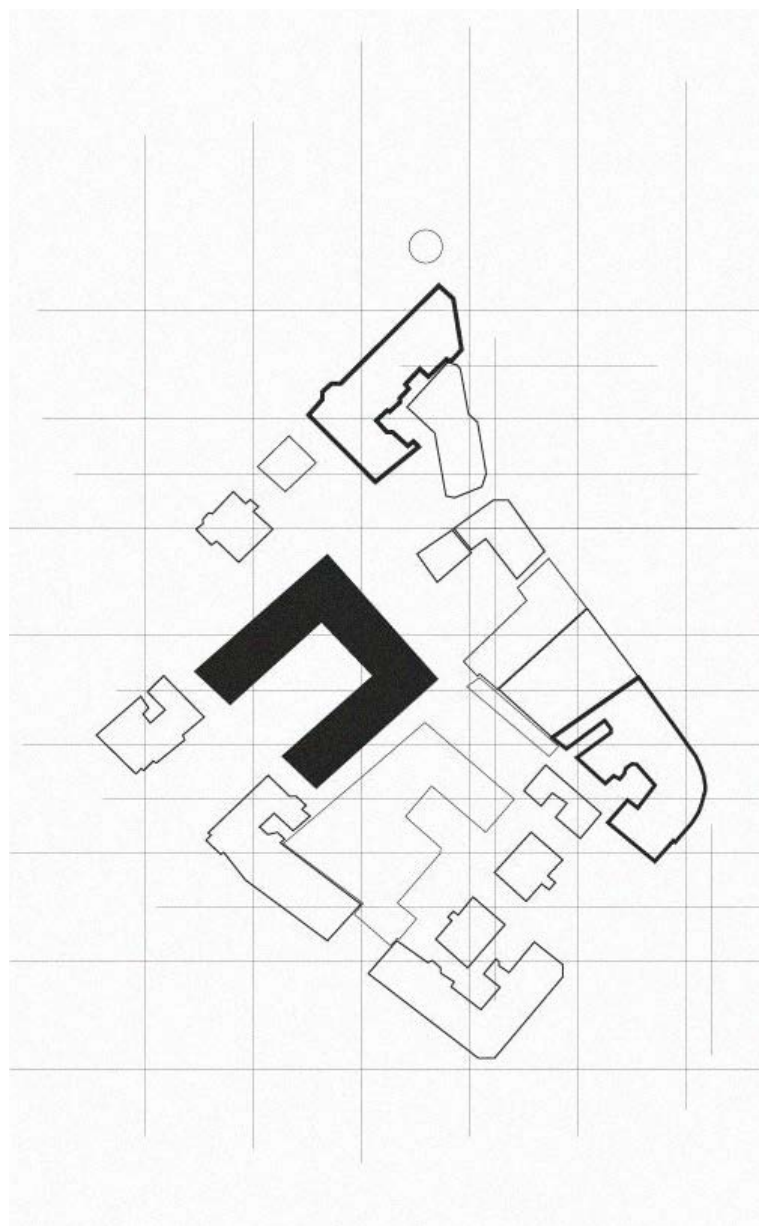


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Project Intentions

Lille Uranienborg will serve as both the contextual situation and as a library of information for this diploma.

Context & library

As a contextual situation, it is definitely an urban situation, and like many places in Oslo, it features a few oddities, and a strange richness in scale.

There is also a patchwork of "under-utilized" space, that makes it unpredictable, and I would say too, quite enchanting. Is it, within this settled, well aged mixture of formally planned space and accidental or vernacular space, that true urban quality lies? If so what does it consist of?

Quality

What are these qualities and is it possible to continue these qualities? How can we build within urban and in particular protected building environments in a way that is feasible with present day demands, yet harmonious with existing qualities?

Method

I envision this diploma to be site-based and design-focused, I will use the site as both the contextual situation to design in/for, and also what I have coined a library to extract information from, that could be used to inform design and programmatic decisions.

Scales

I aim at having the city block as the default scale-reference, both in size and time as an ideal because it forms the immediate context for any building or space within, and has its sense of place within the city. The quarter is the place in the city. Within this place in the city are its buildings and voids.

This approach would lead to a period of the diploma in which I would document the existing situation through models, sections, elevations etc. that in turn will make a solid foundation for architectural intervention and through this process I aim at unlayering qualities and one or two specific sites, in which making new architecture would make sense and be integrated into the unique spatial complexity of the site as well as providing for present day societal needs/ or desires.

In essence this approach would be an attempt at rigorous "site first" architecture, in which the site as today defines the logic, and through studying the different layers, spaces and actualities of the site the rest should reveal itself.

The Situation







Situation 1:5000



Prime Narrators

The site is a quarter in Oslo that has remained structurally unchanged for the last decade or so.

The owners of large parts of the quarter are currently pressing on for a development of the area between the protected villas (5, 6, 7) and the semi-protected residential building (A)

The old workshop (4) is currently used as a gym and garages. Previously the building that now features the gym has been a workshop. Although it is not protected it features some historic qualities, mainly from the fact that it functioned as industry in such a central location.

There are pressing concerns from the inhabitants of the quarter as well as some of the businesses located there that with un-checked residential development, a lot of the potential of the place could get lost. Currently there is a building ban in the whole quarter due to this pressure, and there have been strong calls for any new building in the quarter to have to be subject to a holistic plan for the whole quarter.

On the north-east end of the quarter a fragment of the old Badehusgaden remains. (1) is the old Bath House, where people would be bathed with buckets once a week. (2) is a villa that now features a specialty toy shop and (3) is the old forge of the Royal Castle.

These buildings along with their surrounding spaces is the departure point for my project.

My aim is not to make a political or regulatory project, but rather work as an architect with this understanding as a framework.

I want to engage in an open approach in terms of investigating the qualities of the site, in terms of spatiality, atmosphere and materiality, as well as unfolding the history of the place, and work with architectural and programmatic additions that aim at continuing the narrative of the quarter.

I want to speculate on the potential of the site, through an acknowledgement of the inherent (found) qualities of the site and its history before settling on a new program.



1. Karlsro Bath House (1850s)
2. Badehusgaden 55 (1850s)
3. Old Royal Forge (1850s)
4. Work Shop (1930s)
5. Bertelosten (1840s)
6. Camilla Collett's House (1840s)
7. Romance Factory (1840s)

Cultural Heritage

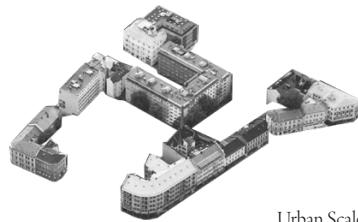
One of the most intriguing aspects of the courtyard is its historical remnants from the time that this area was on the city threshold coupled with a gradual urbanization that has taken place for over a 1 and 1/2 decade.

Therefore the area contains a variety in scale, and the impression is that it is a representation of the city and its narrative compressed to one courtyard.

There are back houses and a variety of smaller scale historical buildings that are hidden from the main streetscape, and that could become re-activated for the benefit of the public.

I view these buildings and their respective in-between spaces as a part of a narrative, on one hand they are cultural artefacts, but not only so in their quality as objects, they are there as a part of the layered city context, and as I elaborated on in my Social Anthropology Essay they are, as their more urban counterparts part of a continuity of adaptation. A witness of human shaping of our environment throughout time, space and in different technological and cultural paradigms.

Could this quality of piecemeal and gradual continuation of the city narrative be implemented in our present day?






Urban Scale

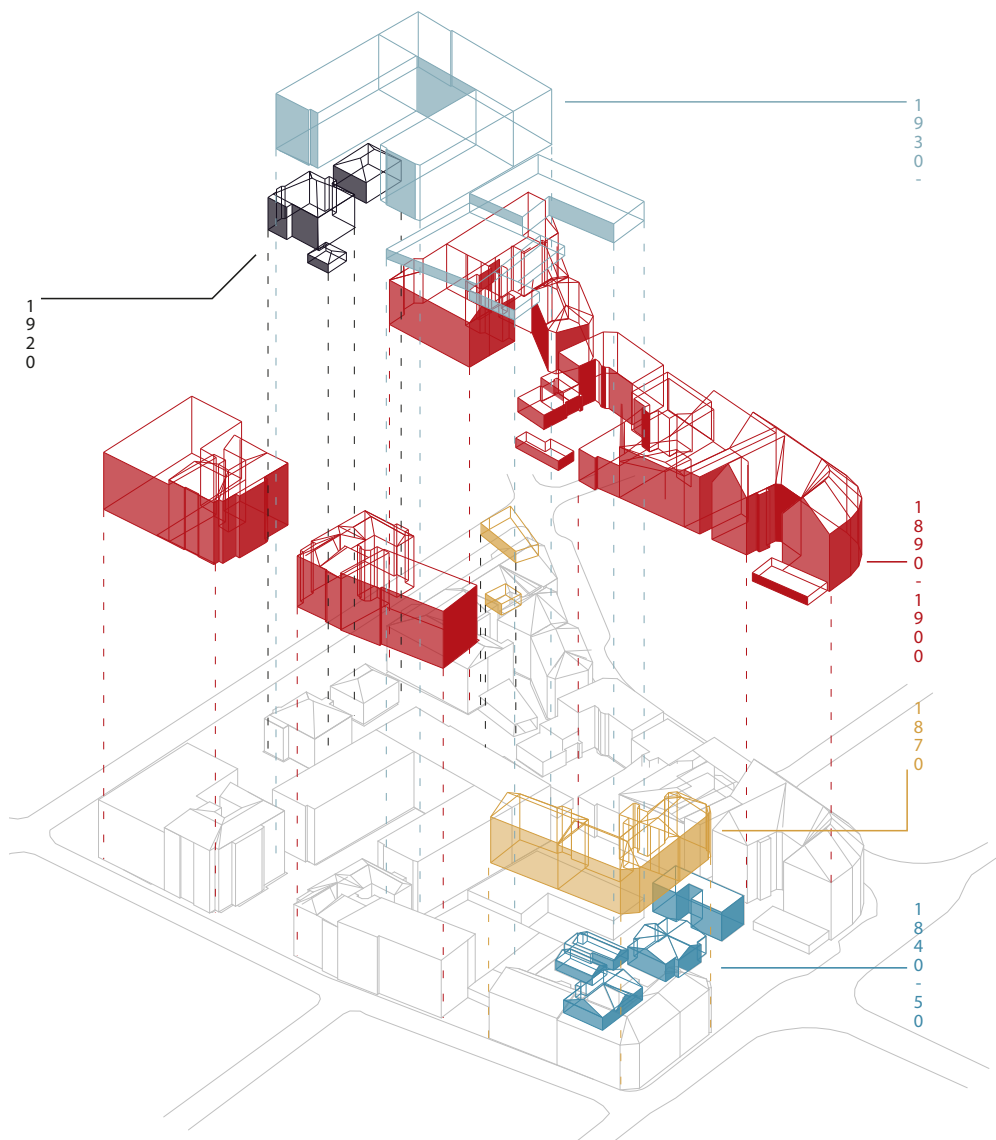


Site in 1956 and today

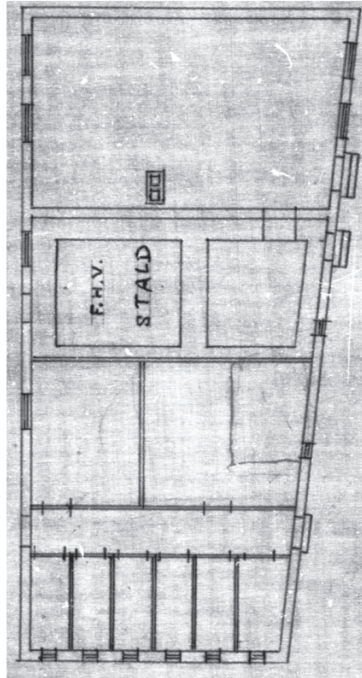




-  Listed by Riksentikvaren (Cultural Heritage)
-  National List
-  Municipal List



1. Karlsro Bath House



Plan showing the 1950s application to repurpose into a cold storage. At that time it was a stable. Originally it was the first community bath house in Oslo. Built in the 1850s.



2. Badehusgaden 55

Built in 1855, this villa used to be part of Badehusgaden, a street of which the last remnant today is found in this location.

At present it is home
to
Marthe's Playhouse,
an independent
specialty toy store.

It is one of
the last wooden
villas of
its time



3. Old Royal Forge

A piece of royal history.
Who would guess?

At the time of completion
of the Royal Palace in 1849,
This tiny building a stone
throw away was built to
serve as forge for the Royal
Guard.



4. Workshop and Garage

One of oldest living
historical markers
of the arrival of the
automobile. This
was a workshop
and garage for
Bertel O. Steen, on
of the pioneers of
automobile import
in Norway

Today, it is most
likely to be torn
down pending
property develop-
ment in the area.

The building is not
protected by law at
any level.



5. Bertelosten

The first brick villa in Oslo and the nation. It was designed in a neo-renaissance style by Johan Henrik Nebelong (1817-1871) who aided Linstow with the design of the Royal Palace. Since 1915 it has been property of Bertel O. Steen, and colloquially it has been named Bertelosten because of its resemblance of a cheese.



[5]



[6]

6. Camilla's House

Jacobine Camilla Collett (born Wergeland) (23 January 1813 – 6 March 1895) was a Norwegian writer, often referred to as the first Norwegian feminist. She lived here as one of the first tenants after completion in 1845. Today the house is a hotel after being renovated under the guidance of the cultural heritage management.



[1]



[2]

7. Romance Factory

The oldest wooden villa in Oslo. Once home to the cultural elites of the romantic era of Norwegian art. Thus it became known as Romancefabriken

Halvdan Kierulf (1815-1868) was a Norwegian composer who lived here in the 1860s.



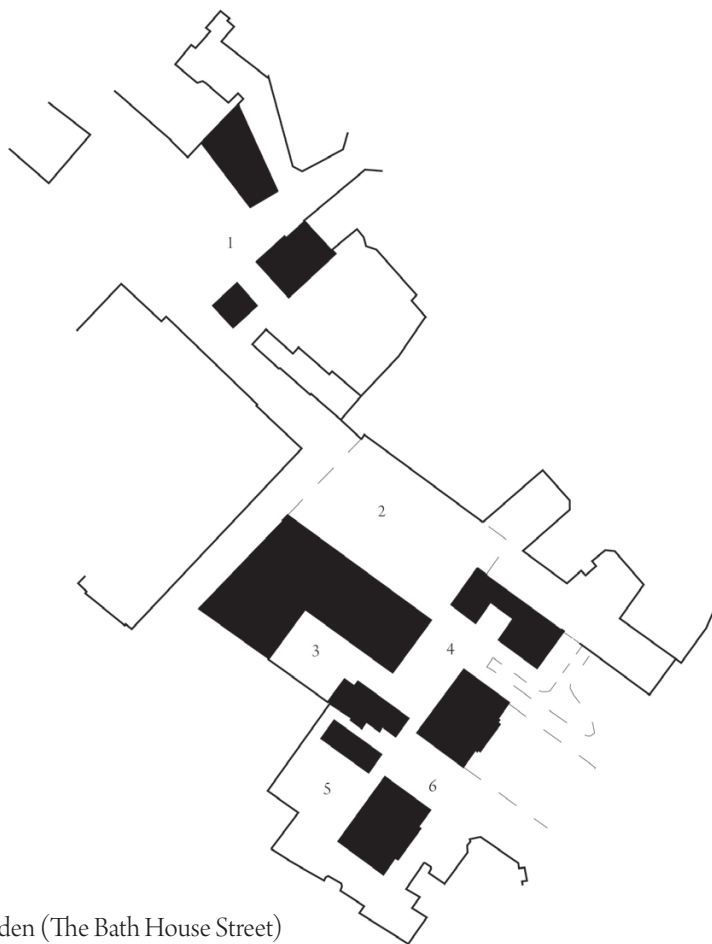
[3]



[4]

In-between Spaces





- 1- Badehusgaden (The Bath House Street)
- 2- Brick wall space
- 3- Entrance area of workshop
- 4- In between space
- 5- Between two Wooden Villas
- 6- Hotel Garden

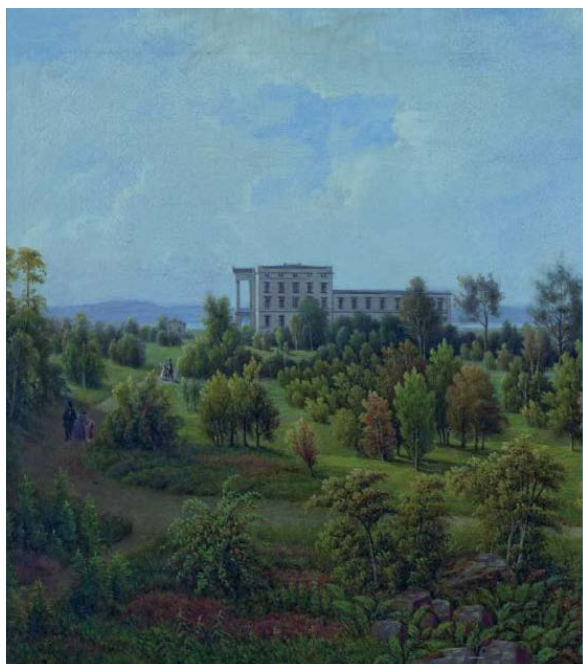




Social Anthropology Excerpts

Towards a New Urban Localism On how we build within the city continuum

This essay discusses the concept of seeing the city as a continuum of adaptation through sources in Social Anthropology, Psychology, Philosophy and Architectural Theory.



[8]

Background

My diploma thesis, *Unfolding Layers* (an open ended continuation of the city narrative) is an attempt at site to site architecture. An architecture that is rooted in the situation built up until now, with its specific qualities being a key informer for future development. The site is limited to a city quarter in Oslo, that is colloquially named Lille Uranienborg, Camilla Colletts Quarter and The Village behind the Castle all implying that this quarter is seen as a specific place within the city. The most urgent concern is the plans for development/ densification countered by a strong local engagement that seeks to influence these plans. This is a situation that clearly illustrates the need for a holistic plan for the whole quarter. My idea is to work out methods of identifying inherent qualities, be it through the historical sense, how it forms a narrative, how it forms culture, how it forms identity and how these qualities could be mediated with the architectural, legal and technological paradigm of today.

Intentions & Method

The pretext of this essay is my interpretation that the main quality of the built environment is in its cultural significance, and thus can be defined as a continuum of adaptation, that through its gradual adaptive process gives it cultural meaning(s). In which the essential quality is in the very change that takes place gradually and that the layers of historical information and knowledge are paramount to the formation of identity within a place. Also, I think the key to preserving this continuum of adaptation lies in local engagement, where inhabitants take an active role in the shaping of their built environment.

I will use sources from social anthropology, philosophy, and psychology for broadening my own understanding and to benefit and clarify my role as an architect in designing within this framework of understanding.



[9]

1. The Role of the Architect (in society, time and culture)

“When an architectural design draws solely from tradition and only repeats the dictates of its site, I sense a lack of genuine concern with the world and the emanations of contemporary life. If a work of architecture speaks only of contemporary trends and sophisticated visions without triggering vibrations in its place, this work is not anchored in its site, and I miss the specific gravity of the ground it stands on.”

Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*, 1998

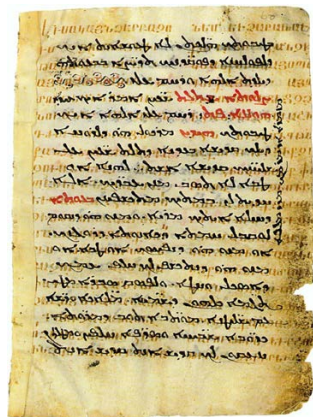
How do we as architects most fruitfully build within the context of our built environment? It is a given in almost all situations in which an architect operates, there's a site, a client, and a budget. The most important problem is what role, or understanding the architect takes on personally, given the framework he is operating within.

Whatever is currently outside his/her power, are topics for the broader architectural field. What is then the responsibility of the singular architect besides satisfying the demands asked for by the client, while respecting the regulations and laws? Some speak of added value. This is obviously interesting for the client, but what about the commons? Are we only producing a product that we sell? Who is our ultimate client? (...) Making architecture for a client (whatever their wishes are) is ultimately the bread and butter of the profession, but to find meaning in our work, there is a great motivation to take from the idea that what we do can have a profound impact on people's lives. (...) We, as architects need to realize that we are not all-powerful and that we need to operate to our best ability within our power. I think the noblest of intentions we can take on is to aim

for a balance or equity.

This balance/equity could manifest itself through approximations towards a middle ground between complexity and order. Between the past and the future, as a mediator between different, often contradicting interests. This does not mean that we have to make average

architecture at any stretch of the imagination, it means that the reading of the overall situation we build in becomes an increasingly important informant for implementing new architecture.



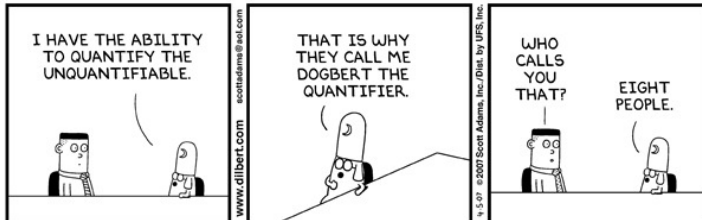
MS 375
Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae, folio 100v,
Monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai, 4th c. and 1st half of 10th c.

[10]

2. Quantifying Quality (?)

“The modernist idiom has not generally been able to penetrate the surface of popular taste and values seems to be due to its one-sided intellectual and visual emphasis; modernist design at large has housed the intellect and the eye, but it has left the body and the other senses, as well as our memories, imagination and dreams, homeless”

Pallasmaa, Eyes of the Skin, 1996



[12]

2.1 For who?

The famous Norwegian architecture firm Snøhetta has, for instance, initiated its own certification program, in which they evaluate the added value of their projects for their clients, an attempt to quantify the value of their work. This could be an effective tool to make quantified proof to back up abstract arguments. So, what about the non-client? How can we make sure that new works of architecture in the city improves the commons?

By that, how well does it complement the larger context, does it fit in with its neighbours? The overall quality of the built environment as well as satisfying the client. (...)

A very important factor for this is the power balance between different interest groups. The dweller, visitor, developer. When this power balance is now shifted heavily in favour of large developers, whom interest lies primarily, and understandably in making profits for their shareholders, the negative by-product of this is more often than not, standardized “copy-paste” architecture, the cheapest materials, several rounds of cuts that at best weakens the initial concept, in most cases, destroys it entirely, making the final

work a manifestation of the values that made it.

The losers are everyone else, I would argue, the architect as well. (...) Could we see more socially sustainable development of the city if we were to empower the other two groups? I think so, and the key to achieving this is the increasing societal consciousness around matters concerning the built environment. In particular, we need to raise the discussion and awareness of the unquantifiable.

2.2 On the making of architecture

(...) as Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa (1996) critically argues that living with modern technology flattens our multisensory capacities. (...) The benefits of this inevitable technological adaptation are perhaps most beneficial economically, not so much culturally. (...)

3. Qualities of Place and Social Production

"One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places. The city is the locus of the collective memory. This relationship between the locus and the citizenry then becomes the city's predominant image, both of architecture and of landscape, and as certain artifacts become part of its memory, new ones emerge."

Aldo Rossi

3.1 Time

One can see the city as a narrative, an area of human dwelling and work over several cultures. A library of living fragments telling the story of a place. This story is one that we live within, at present and it is therefore never static.(...)

3.3 Manifested Participation

Marianne Gullestad talks about the continuous improvement of the home as a way for the family to work for common tangible goals, and through this process find meaning. (Gullestad, 1992) The same way I would argue communities/ neighbourhoods could again be empowered to participate actively in how their built environment is shaped. (...) SETHA M. LOW agrees with Lefebvre that "space is not only supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations" a notion that makes sense in reading the city as an adaptive continuum of adaptation. (...) Social production in my estimation is perhaps best achieved through local participation across classes, although residents of neighbourhoods or parts of cities with a higher income tend to be more able to influence their

built environment than residents from poorer areas. A speculation from my part is that this could be seen as both a social product of their spaces, being in spaces that were not adapted, and not adaptable, and not informed by social participation in the first place, and through that laid the ground for passivity and apathy instead of participation and a sense of ownership. (...) Where Foucault sees architecture as a political technology through "canalization" of everyday life. The aim of such, to create a "docile body" through surveillance, enclosure and organization of individuals in space. (Low, 1996)) which is manifested in elitist social architecture of the past century, I see the possibility for a localised, place-centric and social architecture. This would be a mutually beneficial relationship between architects, who would use their competence to the benefit of people in their respective communities and the larger society as a whole.

4 & 5

Communication, complexity and legibility

“The existing literature suggests that environments which are perceived as stimulating, usable and aesthetically appealing can improve or facilitate cognitive performance both in young and older age. Importantly, optimal stimulation for cognition seems to depend on experiencing sufficiently stimulating environments while not too challenging.”

Marica Cassarino, Annalisa Setti (2016)

4.0 Communication

To achieve a cultural understanding of architecture there are obstacles such as language and in particular the lack of common ground between professional architects and laymen. This is a power balance in favour of architects, wherein we as architects have a somewhat elitist position. The authority of architects is of course derived from a perceived competence and training (...) For this competence to be justified I think there is currently a need for a clearer common definition and understanding of the role of the architect, both among architects and laymen. (...) The knowledge has been reduced to the shape of the roof. There is no common perception of quality in architecture in our culture if not quality is understood as work being typical for its time. This is a result of the highly individualized and subjective facets of architectural education and architectural culture for good and bad. (...) This question of quality is also seen in that the government has changed the name of Statens Byggeskikkpris to Statens pris for Byggkvalitet in which many factors outweigh the actual

architectural qualities, such being technical innovation, energy consumption and universality. All important factors, but not of direct cultural significance. To define quality in architecture is perhaps not a realistic endeavour, but to aim for it we do need an increased understanding of the significance of architecture in cultural terms.

5.0 The answer is somewhere between chaos and order?

The right balance between complexity and order is the ideal for cognitive performance according to Marica Cassarino and Annalisa Setti (2016) In where they argue that environments that are stimulating, usable and aesthetically appealing can improve cognitive performance, In situations where this stimulation is too challenging or illegible the opposite effect takes place. (...) Cassarino and Setti argue that animal studies have shown that exposure to rich, complex environments, can have a direct impact on brain structure and cognition, leading me to speculate further on the biological and evolutionary grounds influencing ideal environments for human beings. (...)

Conclusion/ Discussion

The role of the architect and problems relating to the many complex factors that informs urban planning and design is for many architects today, highly relevant issues, especially in these rapidly shifting times, in terms of technological change and political/economic instability. I am sensing a longing for some kind of anchoring of architecture and the built environment in culture and *vica versa*, and a clarification of possible ways in which architecture can become meaningful to practice, live in, and among. I am arguing that to find meaning in life, we need to set goals and aims at improving something (within our power). This gradual improvement or adaptation throughout time in the city is thus the manifestation of meaningful endeavour. In this train of thought I have muddled with the aforementioned issues and also expanded into theories of social anthropology and psychology. I remain of a strong conviction that we as humans are strongly in favor of surrounding ourselves with an environment that has a long history, that came long before us, a context for which we can

adapt, continually. This is supported by the way we come from nature. The built environment is our natural environment in a way, and the more humane it is (that it manifests artistry, craft etc) the better. Let's say that you set out to create an entirely new town. Then you might try to artificially induce organic qualities, winding streets, different styles of buildings, the sometimes irrational scale of buildings. I have tried this, and it is extremely difficult with a top-down approach. I would therefore advocate for what I have labeled a new urban localism, in which local processes and participation in the shaping of the smaller subsets that make up the larger city are paramount. This would make the foundation for democratic and social participation of our built environment. Herein the architect would become the provider of competence for the benefit of the communities with regard to the *genius loci*. To even begin to have such a foundation we need to rediscover our sense of culture, community and belonging. We need this cultural "myth" or else we perish. If that happens $2+2=4$ becomes irrelevant.



[13]



[14]

Work & Calendar

Develop methods of working with the situation. Speculative documentation through models, mapping, sections, facades and plans.

Key words:

- Spatial
- Material
- Atmospherical

1:1 interaction with stakeholders and people with a personal relationship to the place in particular and Oslo as a city.

Research on the history of the quarter and the current situation.

Focused on scales going from meso to micro with a clear macro contextual understanding of the quarter within the larger city continuum.

Work intuitively and personally with the site aiming to develop my own sensitivity to the site and ability to respond architecturally.

Mapping spaces. The useless left-over spaces could be an important element in giving the urban quality and identity.

Make an project that, based on a holistic understanding of the place that will be decided through the investigative/ speculative phases, should aim at being integrated well with the logic of the place, and form a continuity in both time and place, furthermore the project should have a program that works well with the found qualities. The final project should not be seen as a final answer to how to deal with these complexities, but rather as a contribution to the ongoing issues regarding densification in established urban situations.

The final project will be shown in:

- Situational Map
- Situational Model
- Model extract (project within situation)
- Detail model(s)
- Concept model(s)
- Materiality studies
- Plans & sections
- Facades
- Diagrams and illustrations

January

Week 2

Clearance meeting, social anthropology lectures

Week 3

Social anthropology

Week 4

Social anthropology/
Diploma program

Week 5

Diploma program delivery/ 1. diploma presentation/ Social anthropology presentation

March

Week 9/10

7-8: 2. presentation, conceptually, different scales. Models, drawings

Week 11

Evaluate and work on feedback from presentation

11-12: Workshop "Postcards from the future"

Week 12 & 13

Week 14

May

Week 19

Week 20

Week 21

Week 22

February

Week 5 & 6

Study trip preparation

Week 7

Week 8

Week 9

April

Week 15

Week 16

Week 17

25-26: 3rd Presentation

Week 18

Evaluate and work on feedback from the presentation

June

Week 23

Exhibition work

Week 24

Exhibition work

Week 25-26

18. Exhibition preview

24. Exhibition deadline

25. Dugnad

Week 26

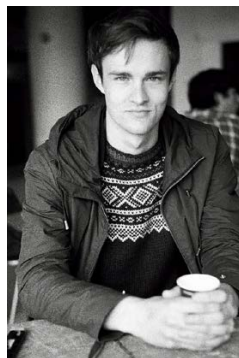
27-30 Exam

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CV

Education

Master in Architecture, Bergen School of Architecture (BAS)
2011-present
Art History, one year study, University of Bergen (UiB)
2010-11
Fine Arts, one year study, Hardanger Folkehøgskole
2009-10
High School, Flora Vidaregåande Skule
2004-07
Exchange Program, G-Star School of the Arts, West Palm Beach FL, United States.
2005-06

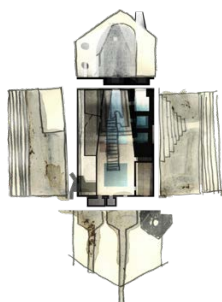
Work Experience

Intern Architect, Salt Arkitekter, Florø
2018
Customer Agent, Canal Digital, Sykes Enterprises, Bergen
2017
Video editor, TV 2, Bergen
2011-17
Quality Controller, Ramco AS, Florø
2008-10
Museum Receptionist, Bergenhus Festningsmuseum, Bergen
2007-08

Voluntary

Participant Hurtigpraksis, student internship, Oslo
2017
Database Researcher for Sports Interactive
2013-present
Student Representative and board member,
Bergen Arkitektforening
2011-13

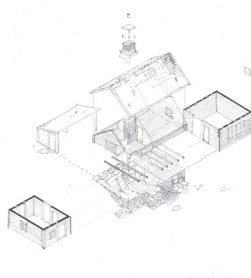
1



2



3



Master Courses

4th year:

1. Dale noreg Remote Place(s)

Tutors: Thomas Wiesner, Hedvig Skjerdingsstad

2. Productive Landscapes

Tutors: Håvard Austvoll, Ådne Trodahl

5th year:

3. Urban / Rural Homes

Tutors: Joakim Skajaa, Cecilie Andersson,

Philip Kvalbein Hauge, Charlotte Erckradt

Sources

1. Section drawing: Fortidsminneforeningen, 2017.
Camilla Collets kvartal, Oslo:
Fortidsminneforeningen Oslo og Akershus
avdeling.
2. Exterior photo: Aspelin-Ramm Eiendom
3. Facade drawing: Lund Hagem Arkitekter
4. Interior photo: Bertel O. Steen Archive
5. Facade: Lund Hagem Arkitekter
6. Photo: Aspelin Ramm Eiendom
- 7.
8. Painting by Linstow c. 1847-51 (Stenseth, 2013)
9. Theater of Pompey, near Campo dei Fori. Photo:
<http://viewsfromrome.blogspot.com/2014/07/spolia.html>
10. Example of palimpsest: A snippet of text from a palimpsest page found at Saint Catherine's
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/saint-catherines-monastery-palimpsests-lost-language-undertext>
11. Interview with Marianne Skjulhaug, OSLO - Learning to fly (2018)
12. Dilbert
13. (Husker ikke, skal finne ut senere?)
14. Front facade of the "Haus ohne Eigenschaften". Redrawn and based on drawings by Ungers. Source: Aphorismen zum Häuserbauen. Found in: Judging Architecture. On the Role of Beauty in Describing & Representing Architecture – Mathieu Boret