

The background features three large, semi-transparent, light gray geometric shapes: a parallelogram on the left, a diamond in the center, and a trapezoid at the bottom right. These shapes overlap each other.

Strategic plan for Bergen School of Architecture 2015-2025

“To build, is to open...”

Contents

1

Role in Society

2

Grounding the Strategic Plan

3

Architectural Approaches

4

Aims and Actions

A

Education

B

Development, Research, Communication, Publication

C

Collaboration

D

*A Place to Learn and Work
(infrastructure and administration)*



*The school's library, built by
Master's course students in
autumn 2012.*

Role in society

The Bergen School of Architecture (BAS) provides training architects with the opportunity to think critically and be mindful of their responsibility in helping shape society. The education at BAS aims to cultivate professional values that respect individuals, society and our surroundings. With an emphasis on using participatory processes to understand and facilitate relationships between people and place, we seek to contribute to our local area and city, as well as engage local and national authorities.

Both as students, during the courses, and once fully qualified, architects from BAS should be able to challenge their clients and projects by taking an approach to architecture that is global in outlook, responsible and socially conscious.

DEVELOPING THE CONCEPTS OF OPEN FORM AND SUSTAINABLE

The original curriculum was built upon the concept of Open Form and later sought to encompass broader issues surrounding 'Holdbar' a Norwegian term that corresponds with Sustainability. Throughout the rest of the document the use of the term Sustainability refers to 'Holdbar'. Further detail can be found in Section 3.

Our approach to Open Form encourages inclusive processes and ambiguous designs, while creating situations that enable diverse kinds of development and collaboration.

Through tackling issues of Sustainability we shall challenge perspectives in discourse to climate change and resource management, exploring what it means to be responsible and professional, in situations where diversity and living conditions are at stake, both in local and universal contexts.

REVISITING THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT

BAS shall help to develop and challenge the profession's discourse concerning what an architect is and can be. Through our education, we seek to explore new methods of responding to complex realities and major challenges of the present.

Adding value to space requires innovation, but also a historical overview and suitable tools to understand the forces shifting our differing cultures. BAS shall prepare students to create articulate and polemical architectural visions.

A CUSTODIAN OF WESTERN NORWEGIAN BUILDING TRADITIONS

BAS feels a particular responsibility for acting as a custodian for Western Norwegian building traditions. This involves giving its students the theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience and practice needed to understand architecture and local building traditions in the context of resources, landscapes and a changing society. Through its involvement in the University of Bergen's UNESCO Chair for "Sustainable Heritage and Environmental Management. Nature and Culture" the Bergen School of Architecture hopes to broaden and deepen its academic expertise in this area.

KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

BAS shall voice architectural perspectives in public debate. We shall act as a resource centre for the profession and as a gateway to architecture for the general public. We shall take part in collaborative projects and public activities in order to ensure our relevance and give our students the opportunity to be actors in discussion surrounding our built environment.

A VENUE FOR DEBATE

The building that BAS inhabits in Sandviken will be a venue for the city's architects, the authorities and the general public to interact with our school community. The silo cellar shall be upgraded into a venue for cultural production, including performance art. The public nature of the library shall be emphasised through outreach activities and through a programme of late night openings. Regular lecture series will be accessible to the public to encourage broader debate and discussion.



Staff and students review the visual structure exercise on size contrast.

2

Grounding the strategic plan

With this strategic plan, Bergen School of Architecture (BAS) has moved from a 5-year to a 10-year planning cycle. This has enabled us to set targets based on longer term trends and to establish more ambitious plans and lines of development. It will be possible to revise the strategic plan as necessary during its period of validity, with the opportunity for additional short term action plans.

In drawing up the strategic plan, BAS has consulted with its Board, teaching faculty, administration and students. The process started with a seminar for the academic staff in the summer of 2014, followed by thematic Board meetings, lunch seminars for students and monthly thematic meetings for teachers. We hope that the process has resulted in a plan that will become a natural tool during discussions on academic issues, the administration of the school and learning outcomes for students. We encourage employees and students to familiarise themselves with the contents of the plan and to proactively challenge the plan's ambitions.

A focus group represented students, teachers, admin staff, managers and the Board drew up the draft and led the evaluation of suggestions from other contributors.

The focus group has had the following members:

Håvard Fadnes, student
Thomas Holm Radil, student
Siri Nordeide, student
Jack Dalla Santa, student
Aksel Stave Ervik, student
Winnie Westerlund, student,
Andrea Spreafico, teacher
Arild Eriksen, teacher
Sixten Rahlff, Vice- Rector
Cecilie Andersson, Rector
Ingunn Tepstad, Office Manager
Siri Skjold Lexau, external Board member
Bjart Nygaard, Chairman of the Board

They have authored the strategic plan, drawing on the suggestions of other students, lecturers, employees and Board members. Their starting point was the school's past planning documents, in order to ensure continuity between existing measures.



*The First day with
Svein Hatloy in 2013.*

Architectural Approaches

"To build, to form, is to open, not to close, complete or determine..."

Å byggja, å forma, er å opna, ikkje å lukka, avslutta, eller fastlegga for visst"

Svein Hatløy in the professional journal *Byggekunst* 1983/6

BAS is one of three institutions in Norway that offer a Master's degree in Architecture. The school was established as a private foundation in 1986, but for 18 years before that, starting in 1968, it had provided courses in Bergen and the surrounding area. It was given the right to set exams in 1990, and started receiving central government funding in 1996. That year it also moved to its own premises at Sandviken in Bergen.

Open Form

The formative architectural approach at BAS is based on the concept of Open Form as formulated by Oskar Hansen at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts and developed in Norway by his student, the Founding Rector, Svein Hatløy. Hansen taught at BAS from its foundation in 1986 until 1991, while Hatløy remained in post until 2007. The original curriculum was built around the idea of making individuals take responsibility and providing space for users as contributing members of society. Open Form has often been taught through the exploration of enabling, democratic and participatory architectural structures.

"You dialogue with people, you don't just deal with them. The people in a project have their own will and own rights. There must be space for their lives and their personalities. People must be given the space and opportunity to exercise their authority."

Extract from the BAS syllabus

Sustainability

The concept of 'Holdbar' was introduced as a complementary approach for all teaching in the 2009 Strategic Plan. The goal being for issues relating to sustainability to become a natural part of all academic discussions, research and development, and for them to help shape the attitudes that underpin all student projects. For BAS it is also important to revisit the concept of sustainability as it relates to needs, historical contexts, the natural environment, resources, energy and climate, while also promoting and supporting a notion that is more strongly rooted in the needs of society. Within this framework the school also aims to widen people's understanding of innovation, so that the knowledge of pioneering projects perhaps relating to reuse, user participation and regional building traditions amongst others can be used to challenge the current focus on green growth.

Landscapes, regional building traditions, innovation and materials

Landscapes, regional building traditions, innovation and materials The school's teaching draws on Western Norwegian building traditions that have developed within the context of a particular climate and landscape. During their studies, students experience and have to engage with the different landscape spaces and patterns of settlement inland and along the coast, through a mixture of analysis and practical work such as repairing boathouses and old houses. Interdisciplinary collaboration with fields such as meteorology, landscape ecology and construction history are important elements of the course. The school's teaching emphasises the importance of using field work, societal and situational analysis to set the parameters for design work. By teaching them about place-specific, traditional and innovative uses of materials, we seek to enable students to challenge standard practice in the construction industry and to develop new design.

Collaboration and participation

The school encourages approaches to community development and architecture that create a framework for actively inclusive processes in relation to the place, users and action. In recent years, courses have looked at topics like democracy in terms of transparency and security and user participation in major urban transformation processes that can affect people's sense of belonging. The school shall continue to put the spotlight on the fundamental values of collaboration and participation.

Students should contribute to the development of the school and provide input on facilities for students, in keeping with our belief that users should help to shape their own surroundings. When the school bought the silo on the quay at Sandviken, one of its main hopes was that the building would become a venue for spatially exploring real-life situations and different interactions between the school, the neighbourhood, the wider landscape and the general public. Since the move, students have continuously been involved in building the school through projects of all sizes, both on their own initiative and in the course of various modules. It has become a place of learning where students are challenged, and one that can be developed through new exploratory ventures.

Course structure

Courses at BAS are studio-based and are built up around design modules. The Architecture, Planning and Design (APP) course includes design projects at the building, town and landscape scales that provide a framework for the course. The other courses, which are The Other World (DAV), Techniques, Technology and Administration (TTA) and Complementary Theoretical Subjects (KTF), are integrated with APP, and supplement it, providing a variety of perspectives and technical insights during the design work, but also through complementary, parallel modules. The relative weight of the various courses is set out in the syllabus, but is regularly adjusted on the basis of student feedback. During the first years of the course, there are many short design projects of increasing complexity, while in part two of the course, modules last a semester. Teaching at BAS emphasises the importance of activities that give practical experience, such as full-scale design, visual structural exercises, extensive surveys, analyses and interventions on site; repairs and new-builds. Design exercises are used to explore new interpretations of the situation, while opportunities for participation, diversity and ambiguity are debated and elucidated through discussion.

4

Aims and Actions

The school's aims and strategic actions shall reflect its academic position and take into account the role in society that BAS has today and the one that it wants to have in the future. Aims and actions must reflect what is possible and any constraints. Aims and the associated actions have been set out for the following four sub-topics:

A

Education

B

**Development/Research/Communication /
Publication**

C

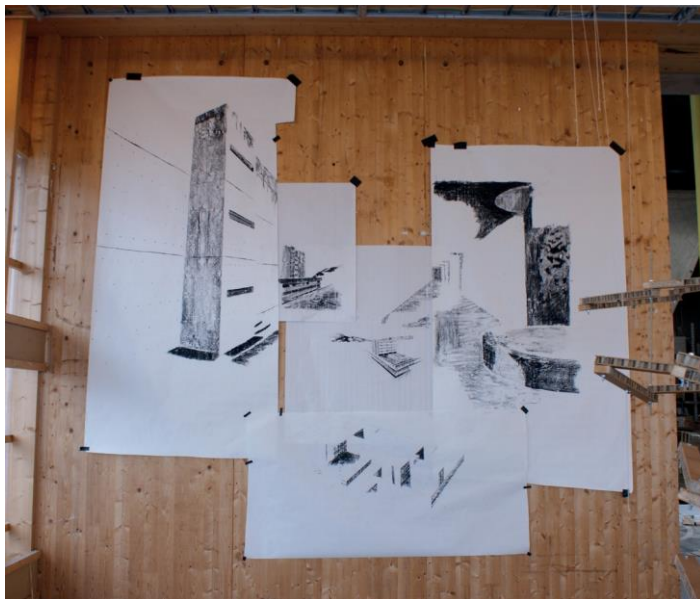
Collaboration

D

A Place to Learn and Work

"[...] the room of propositions, dedicated to students' experimental works, where they could propose their own concepts to enhance the faculty curriculum [...] to guarantee an effective connection between the academic curriculum and the surroundings, making students sensitive to the needs of the contemporary society in which they would work after graduation."

– Quote from the book; Oscar Hansen,
Opening Modernism. On
Open Form architecture,
art and didactics.



A EDUCATION

BAS prioritises practice and personal experience, general cultural awareness, the ability to see connections and understanding ahead of the acquisition of knowledge in isolation.

Extract from the BAS syllabus

Architecture is transcendental and universal, but also tied to a particular place and local. The school's ambition is to give students the tools they need to practise as architects; to engage them with contemporary culture and society. The course should be contemporary and relevant to society, and prepare students for a professional life in which their expertise will be an important prerequisite for their ability to make independent and thoughtful contributions that add technical integrity to the development of society. How we live, how and in what contexts we develop venues for social interaction and how we relate to the landscape and nature are all important questions that students must grapple with. Courses at BAS are module-based and have a strong practical focus. Students must deal with real-life situations and work within natural, historic and social constraints.

Relevant complementary theoretical subjects give students strong interdisciplinary foundations. Within the framework of real-life situations, students must develop the ability to build bridges between theoretical and experience-based knowledge, through analytical and qualitative project work.

AIMS

BAS shall encourage the active exploration of alternative ways of organising society and offer input to debates about the challenges of our time.

BAS shall challenge and bring up to date the concepts of Open Form and Sustainable in its teaching, as part of a broad academic discourse.

BAS shall train architects whose understanding of local building traditions and physiography enables them to produce place-specific architecture and support community development.

BAS shall be a laboratory for experimental work that brings together innovation, tradition and responsibility to society.

BAS's teaching shall have a balanced gender perspective and help to ensure that a variety of cultural perspectives are represented.

ACTIONS

Strengthen discussions about Open Form in courses and challenge perspectives through practical application.

When teaching about Sustainability, increase the diversity and challenge attitudes and practice by relating projects and modules more clearly to a concept of sustainability that incorporates both social and physical considerations.

Convey and challenge the different roles in a project and the handling of project processes in order to prepare students for negotiating with clients in their professional lives in the face of complex real-life situations. Give students practical experience of design and full-scale construction through modules that allow them to draw and build their own buildings. Improve the learning outcomes of projects carried out during courses by focusing more strongly on exploring, contextualising and contemplating relevant topics in greater depth.

Make courses more relevant and increase the all-round, interdisciplinary experience that students take with them into the workplace by focusing on subjects that give architects professional integrity and authority. This includes putting greater emphasis on the complementary theoretical subjects, TTA and universal design, to more effectively complement and support design and process choices.

Develop The Other World's free, exploratory and investigative role in training architects and encourage interaction and interdisciplinary collaboration within artistic fields.

Ensure that each year group of students comes from diverse backgrounds and develop our practice in consultation with professionals working in the field.

Maintain our alternative and experimental approach by remaining a small, independent, manageable and flexible school.

B

DEVELOPMENT/RESEARCH/ COMMUNICATION/PUBLICATION

Student projects at BAS must be relevant to society. Exploration and analysis are key criteria when choosing how to position course modules and set project frameworks. Student projects carried out at BAS have in recent years contributed data, visualisations and analyses that have been used in research results and publications. We have collaborated with various partners such as the Western Norway Research Institute, Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, the Norwegian Police Security Service, the National Security Authority and the Housing Bank. In a wide range of studies we have investigated everything from problems relating to surface runoff to Open Form and democratic expression in public spaces. The various construction modules explore material properties and construction techniques, but also spatial perception and sustainable approaches, through specific design solutions.

Processes and results are documented as an integrated part of the development process. Students and teachers should be conscious of the individual and institutional significance of presenting and publishing results through different channels.

BAS disseminates the architectural, theoretical and artistic work produced by its students and lecturers by participating in seminars and conferences, in publications and at exhibitions, in actual structures and through urban interventions. This includes students' and employees' individual academic, architectural and artistic work, material produced during modules, as well as the results of interdisciplinary and collective projects.

The school's many exhibition rooms, its website and its use of social media all play important roles in disseminating the school's work and activities.

AIMS

BAS shall facilitate the integration of research and development activities into modules and student projects.

Raise BAS's profile in the public debate.

BAS shall engage proactively with the new UNESCO chair for "Sustainable Heritage and Environmental Management. Nature and Culture" based at the University of Bergen.

BAS shall be a venue for cultural debate, where architecture and spatial design can be discussed in an academic framework. The silo cellar shall be developed into a leading venue for producing and putting on exhibitions and performance art with a spatial focus.

Continue to develop the school's various workshop facilities, for our own students, for collaborations with other schools and as a "common workshop" for the city.

The role of the BAS library as an academic and public resource for the school's students and for the academic community in Western Norway shall be reinforced.

BAS shall improve the documentation, archiving and accessibility of past student projects.

Carry out regular alumni surveys to find out about past students' job opportunities, architectural activities and work experience.
Encourage the production of more internal publications.

ACTIONS

BAS shall carry out the academic and administrative processes needed to create a 20% post at BAS for an adjunct professor in conjunction with the UNESCO chair.

BAS shall improve teaching on a range of analytical and design tools, as well as on presenting material clearly and precisely, in order to improve students' analytical and presentation skills.

BAS shall curate and improve the distribution of its own publications.

The school's buildings shall be used to the full for teaching, exhibiting, discussing and disseminating information. We shall upgrade the accessibility and functionality of the silo cellar for producing and exhibiting fine art/installations, performance art and music. Third parties are to be invited to put on events.

The school wants to make students' work and presentations increasingly accessible through digital platforms and Open Access publishing.



The school's library in use.



Second year students build with timber at Kvamsøy in 2015.

C

COLLABORATION

Collaborative projects allow us to participate in projects and discussions that involve relevant research and that provide lots of opportunity for interdisciplinary knowledge-sharing. The school benefits from forming part of a larger network with an academic community that can draw on our partners' specialisms and professional backgrounds.

We shall engage with society and focus on architecture as a profession. Projects that we take on shall benefit the community as a whole, and include exploratory elements that distinguish them from standard commercial projects. This is to ensure good learning outcomes and to emphasise that we are not taking work away from qualified architects. BAS is currently involved in a number of collaborative projects with public and private partners. We participate in architectural networks, both in Norway and overseas. In our collaborative projects we aim to increase the focus on sustainability as an opportunity for promoting physically and socially sustainable development. We want to use Open Form as a springboard for a discourse based around concepts such as shared decision-making, diversity and democratic values.

AIMS

BAS shall facilitate collaborative projects with local, regional, national and international partners involving development activities related to architecture and planning, with a particular emphasis on environmental and climate adaptation, material selection, typology studies, user involvement and planning programmes.

Establish and develop international relationships.

Enable the school building and its outdoor areas to be used for interaction with the local community, for academic debate and for art projects.

Challenge ideas about the role of the architect in relation to construction processes and a changing society.

ACTIONS

Strengthen ties to other academic institutions, businesses, public institutions, the professions and the general public.

Take part in student exchanges, joint courses with international partners and international discussion forums so as to gain an international outlook that gives a global perspective to our teaching. Exchanges, mobility and good collaborative relationships with other institutions are important for our students, teachers and courses.

Work to promote collaborative projects in the field of material selection/craftsmanship and at the interface between tradition, technology/digital tools and innovation.

Continue to develop collaborative projects that allow students to interact with clients in real-life situations.

Exploit the potential of the school's buildings, programmes and outdoor areas through collaborative projects that create academic synergies and enhance the school's position as a venue for interdisciplinary exchange. The workshops, library and the school's many unique rooms are possible facilitative resources to this end.

D

A PLACE TO LEARN AND WORK

BAS currently owns a large, old converted feed mill by the sea at Sandviken in Bergen, where it also holds its courses. This site creates certain challenges, but it also possesses many unique qualities and interesting indoor and outdoor spaces for exploratory spatial activities. As an independent, private university college, decisions quickly become actions. As a small school we have a manageable, efficient administrative structure, we have committed, permanent lecturers, complemented by many people who want to teach modules and a good, inclusive student community. We are a flexible organisation, which makes it easy for us to change and develop how we teach and operate. This strategic plan is not designed to compromise the framework for our activities, which we have learned to treat as something positive and constructive.

AIMS

As an organisation we shall strive for responsible management, clearly defined roles and mutual respect.

Good and effective communication and dialogue within the organisation.

BAS shall involve its staff and students in organisational processes, and promote a sense of initiative and creativity.

BAS shall have a staff policy that safeguards the interests of all groups of employees, enables professional and academic development and ensures that staff receive suitable training.

BAS shall have a recruitment policy that enables it to attract people with academic expertise of a high international level and highly-qualified staff for administrative support functions. It shall also have the right blend of architectural, artistic and scientific expertise and a good mix of male and female staff and students.

BAS shall seek to increase its financial room for manoeuvre by operating efficiently, increase public financing and external revenues.

Bergen School of Architecture shall seek to operate sustainably and raise awareness of the ethical implications of doing so.

ACTIONS

Responsibilities and mandates in the organisation shall be clearly described. BAS shall give its staff and students the opportunity to voice their opinions and make themselves heard.

The contribution of staff and students to the university college's operations and development shall be recognised.

Be conscious of which forms of communication are appropriate for which purposes (publication online, blog, e-mail, notice board, meetings, etc.) and actively facilitate dialogue through regular meetings, social events, etc.

The Rector shall invite staff and students to participate in discussions about all major organisational processes through their respective channels.

BAS shall recruit teaching staff who are practising artists and architects, as well as other experts with strong backgrounds in their respective academic fields.

The HR policy shall give staff opportunities to receive training and for professional and academic development.

Clear guidelines shall ensure that all people and groups receive fair and equal treatment. BAS shall encourage, and where possible support, meritorious activities. As part of its aim of fulfilling the NOKUTS requirements relating to the competence of academic staff, BAS shall when necessary assess whether staff meet the competence requirements for an associate professorship. Administrative staff shall be given the opportunity to keep their skills up-to-date in their areas of responsibility.

The recruitment and selection process for permanent academic staff follows the relevant regulations. All permanent positions are advertised publicly. We shall be conscious of the importance of gender equality and avoiding discrimination in recruitment and admissions processes, and we shall actively seek to attract people from diverse social backgrounds.

BAS benefits from being a small school that is streamlined and able to adapt quickly. Historically a high proportion of students have completed their courses, and the school aims to maintain this situation.

Staff are encouraged to apply for external funding that can be used to fund both regular teaching and for research and development activities.

The school wants to develop environmentally sustainable practices for transport, heating and energy consumption, cleaning and maintenance, storage and sorting and reuse of materials, as well as have clear policies on the choice of materials and purchasing.

