



Nordic Journal of Architectural Research 1-2021, Editors' notes

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EDITORS' NOTES

**MARIUS FISKEVOLD, MADELEINE GRANVIK AND
MAGNUS RÖNN**

This mixed issue of the journal is made up of four scientific articles as well as two reviews, viz. a review of a dissertation and a book review.

Why subscribe to and read the journal? One important reason is that architecture as a profession is closely connected to the *writing* on architecture – not only drawings, photos, illustrations, scale models, and buildings. Architecture is both a discipline for practicing architects and a subject for academic education and research. A profession needs a language and means of communication in dialogues with colleagues, clients, and citizens. The journal was established to operate in this context. According to our renewed guidelines, the journal publishes scientific articles and essays. It is, of course, important to be able to publish research in your native language – not only in English for a global target group. The use of native language is of special value in architecture when a nuanced language that expresses cultural conditions may be part of understanding research findings. Language does not only describe, but constitutes architecture.

The planned, designed, and built environment is embedded with architecture stories and social traditions. In this issue, we have collected four manuscripts. Three articles present findings in the Danish and Norwegian languages. The fourth article is in the English language. The guidelines request that articles written in Nordic languages must have a summary in English. We have chosen to publish and comment on these summaries in Danish and Norwegian as an extended editor's note.

We start the presentation with an article by Vibeke Andersson Møller called “Hoff, Widinge og det kollektive tema i dansk boligbyggeri ca. 1945–1970” (Hoff, Widinge and the collective theme in Danish housing approx. 1945–1970). After the end of the Second World War in 1945, a general consensus on the collective requirements for Danish housing began to emerge. Furthermore, during the next 25 years, the concept of necessary requirements and services of collective housing evolved under the influence of both the Welfare State and contemporary architectural ideologies. The work of the architects Povl Ernst Hoff (1903–1992) and Bennet Windinge (1905–1986) elucidates these changing interpretations. Housing projects from one architecture office is used to express the contemporary design ideas of collective support, in order to improve living conditions. This represents a methodological approach used in research within the humanities.

Hoff and Windinge started to co-operate in 1942, and soon they were engaged in projects for the housing association Dansk Almennyttigt Boligselskab. As a driving force, Andersson Møller points out that during this period an increasing number of women, married as well as unmarried, became employed outside the home. In the block of service flats, known as Høje Søborg (1949–1951), the collective concept emanated from a desire to reduce the amount of the daily housekeeping undertaken by these women. The aim was to rationalize domestic work by introducing collective facilities and services, e.g. a dining room with served meals, cleaning service and nursery. In the 120 apartments, the tenants could benefit socially from the small community in the building. However, social engagement was not the main purpose of the collective arrangements.

The low-rise housing scheme Søndergård Park (1949–1950) was equally planned to ease the adversities of daily housework. Central heating, machine laundries, a nursery and a small shopping centre were among the collective amenities that the housing association proudly mentioned in advertisements for their 250 dwellings, which also included common, accommodated leisure time, as well as social interaction, within the small community.

The housing estate of Høje Gladsaxe (1963–1968) consisted of almost 1.900 apartments. In this large-scale housing estate, commercial services, recreational facilities and schools were collected on the edge of the estate in order to create a diversified urban centre. Adjacent to the buildings was a huge green area, designed for sport and leisure. Even though the large scale and the seemingly anonymous buildings have been criticized for their inhumane environment, the overall arrangement was designed to improve social engagement.

The housing area Værebros Park (1966–1968) with around 1,300 apartments, amalgamated features from blocks of service flats, as may be found in Høje Søborg, and in large scale housing estates, such as Høje Gladsaxe. Collective services and commercial facilities were of paramount importance; all were assembled and designed as an indoor shopping street in the middle of the housing area. Meticulous care was taken to establish collective, cultural activities and flourishing social connections within the community.

Along with the youth revolt, the young generation of architects in the 1960s denounced such large estates as inhumane, and introduced a new ideal in Danish housing: the low-rise, high-density housing movement. Nevertheless, this novel dwelling standard prospered from the collective initiatives of the previous decades. This is a general conclusion at the end of the article by Vibeke Andersson Møller.

The second contribution by Martin Odgaard is entitled “Da byen flyttede på landet – det danske plansystem, arkitekternes utopier af byens morfologi” (When the city moved to the countryside – the Danish planning system, the architects’ utopias of the city’s morphology). This article explores the issue of urban planning of Danish cities. The investigation has a historical, architectural and legislative approach. The Danish urban planning system was to a large degree born in the 1970s through a series of legislative reforms. The main purpose of these reforms was to set the framework for the planning of urban development. A significant outcome can be found in the urban morphology of Danish cities; they are to be held together. According to Odgaard, the Danish urban planning discourse seems to be part of an experimental tradition, and partly avant-garde with regards to urban form in the mid-late 1960s and early 1970s. He uses three architectural competitions on housing as informative cases to illustrate the urban planning discourse: the competition in 1965 at Gullestrup in Herning, the competition in 1967 organized by Statens Kunstfond and the competition in 1971 by SBI on “low-dense” housing.

In the article, Odgaard focuses on an important shift in Danish planning discourse, expressed in housing architecture, urban design and landscape planning. In the background is the accelerated construction activity in Denmark after World War II, culminating in 1965–75 (Gaardmand, 1993). The first part of the story is well known – how the evolution within element construction in buildings led to new and large urban areas designed with functionalist ideas, often at the edge of the city or in rehabilitated urban areas. The large construction activity helped the population and the politicians to realize that an area regulation was necessary. A discussion started to grow from the need of keeping the city together. The second part of the planning discourse is the liberation of new urban and housing typologies from the historical city. Odgaard sheds light on

this part of the story in architecture, urban design and landscape planning. The regulations started to operate for a densification of the urban form, while the search for new settlement became more hidden in the planning system as urbanization in the open landscape was prevented.

The border between city and landscape had gradually become more fluid and fragmented – especially where growth has been fast. This change could be experienced in the built environment. The Danish planning system was designed in the 1970s to counter this fragmentation and preserve the unity of the city. Several decades later, in 2017, the government in Denmark carried out a significant liberalization of the Planning Act, in order to make it easier to develop rural areas and expand villages. However, this liberalization did not shake the fundamental principle from the 1970s of keeping cities cohesive, according to Odgaard. This becomes a design problem in contemporary architecture and urban planning. He finds that the fundamental principles in the planning discourse act as a mechanism that seems to limit the imagination of architects and urban planners.

Even if the relationship between urban and rural zones on one hand, and on the other hand the degree of experimenting in housing architecture and urban design can be difficult to prove, there is an interesting, temporal correlation demonstrated in the article. Odgaard notes that some of the architectural motifs, known from the “dense – low rise building movement” have become a part of the Danish housing tradition. The article looks back at a turning point in Danish planning history, when the reform of the planning system in the 1970s was intended to support the design idea of cohesive cities. However, the experimental tradition in architecture and urban design did not benefit from the reform, according to Odgaard. He would like to see a development of urban forms, renewed through experimental approaches in competitions. This may be a professional statement at the end of the article. The question is how to carry out experiments within the urban morphology, in order to achieve architectural qualities in urban areas.

The third contribution by Thomas Haraldseid is entitled “Kunstneriske og kreative prosesser i stedsutvikling: eksempler fra kystsamfunn i nord” (Artistic and creative processes in site development: examples from coastal communities in the North). Arctic landscapes change fast, becoming increasingly important on the global arena, due to dramatic climate change and new industrial development forces (Larsen & Hemmersam, 2018). Following increased tourism in declining rural areas, it is a global tendency to invest in creative projects for tourism purposes (Richards, 2011).

In Norway, the national tourist route project serves as an example of art and architecture used to enhance place attractiveness (Nasjonale turistveger, 2018). However, art placed in a commercial and promotional context faces the challenge of reducing its capacity to critically engage with places and landscapes (Lippard, 2014). By being relevant for communities existing on hold, awaiting future resolutions to present problems, place specific art – along with other types of local practices – has a critical capacity to trigger energies (Larsen & Hemmersam, 2017). The purpose of writing this article is to explore how place-specific art can contribute to place-making for both local communities and visitors. The author uses empirical data from an in-depth case study of development processes in Vardø, in addition to fieldwork in Teriberka. The empirical analysis is based on multiple sources of evidence, with interviews and participatory observation as the main methods. Different traditions have inspired the theoretical framework involving place-specific art, creativity, place-making and literature about landscape.

The research question in the article is: How can art contribute to place making in small coastal towns with value for both inhabitants and visitors? The analytical lens is grounded in a future-orientated, place-making perspective based on the concepts of experimentation (Ingold, 2013) and hope (Waterman, 2019). Experimentation relates to initiating, nascent and real-time processes, opening up for creativity to emerge within the context of place. Optimistic hopes relate to utopian thinking regarding the way art can contribute with new aspirations, responding to local communities' current situation and challenges.

The discussion in the article highlights three different examples of artistic interventions through a memorial (Steilneset), artistically driven local mobilization and a critically addressed geopolitical stunt. In conclusion, Thomas Haraldseid suggests that art can play a very important role in place-making for declining areas by contributing to future-oriented aspirations for the people living there. Art can have a liberating effect on people's thoughts and feelings by promoting curiosity and renewed interest in place. Art can spark ideas and trigger actions, emerging into new enterprises in relation to other local initiatives. Cultural heritage can play an important role for a sense of community, through artistic processes grounded in current situations and challenges for the involved local communities.

The fourth contribution by Ulrika Wärnström Lindh and Monica Billger is called "Light Topography and Spaciousness in Urban Environment." They present a full-scale study conducted in a park next to a church in a small-scale, historical, wooden town called Alingsås in Sweden. The research project took place in the autumn of 2010 during a light festival. A temporary installation with 90 luminaires was made in collaboration with Lights in Alingsås 2010, an event of the Professional Lighting Designers

Association. In the article, the two authors investigate how light distribution affects the perception of public spaces. The study focuses on light direction, the distance between illuminated areas and light topography, and their effects on perceived depth and size of spaces.

Finally, we have two reviews in this issue. The first one is a review of a PhD-dissertation, by Agatino Rizzo, professor of architecture at Lulea University of Technology in Sweden. He reviews a PhD research conducted by Tiina Merikoski, Aalto University in Finland. The PhD dissertation is entitled "Planning competitions as tools towards sustainable community development: a critical case study". The dissertation consists of an overall essay (kappa) and three attached articles. This kind of paper-based dissertation in architecture has increased markedly during the last decades.

The second review covers a book entitled "Rethinking Modernity: between the local and international", published by RIBA. The author is Antigoni Katsakou, a London-based architect with a PhD in History and Theory of Architecture from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne. The book includes several examples of architecture from Norway, such as Villa Stousand II from 1935 by Ove Bang, Villa Stenersen from 1937 by Arne Korsmo, a summer cottage from 1949 by Knut Knutsen and a summer house from 1965 by Wenchi Selmer. The review has been conducted by Nina Berre, professor at the Institute of Form, Theory and History, AHO.

We end this editorial note with a personal reflection by Madeleine Granvik, who resigned as editor-in-chief after holding this position since the rebirth of the journal as an on-line publication. She will now return as a Senior Lecturer / Associate Professor to the Baltic University programme at Uppsala University. The Nordic Association of Architectural Research hereby thanks Madeleine for her contribution in transforming the journal into a highly ranked scientific journal.

Madeleine Granvik, editor-in-chief 2011–2020

Ten years have passed since I started as one of the editor-in-chiefs for *The Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*. The year 2011 was full of changes, such as the status from being a printed publication to becoming a web-based journal. A new team of editor-in-chiefs was established, which together represented both Denmark, Sweden, Finland as well as Norway through the publisher SINTEF Academic Press. During this time of transition, the team of editors worked with organization and administration issues related to the review process: We developed a new form for reviewers to use, an author's guideline and a policy directed at clarifying the role of guest editors. Some work was also needed for the structure and design of the website. We had discussions about whether this new form, a web-based journal, would affect the interest of the journal. Quite soon, we realized that there actually was a growing interest, and that there was an increase in the number of submitted articles, as well as in the interest to publish special theme-issues by inviting guest editors. This gave us hope for a bright future of the journal.

During the same time period, academia experienced an increased competition for resources, which forced many of the Nordic architectural schools and institutions to face economic cutbacks, decrease the number of students and to reconsider their research policies. In the media, we read about flawed publications and the dubious workings of some open access journals, favouring quantity over quality. The developments in general did put an increased pressure, on both scientific journals and researchers, to publish. These issues are still topical currently.

In 2017/2018, we experienced an even further increase in interest among Nordic colleagues, which led to a peak in submission of articles, forcing us to make the decision to temporarily set a stop for submissions; at that time the editorial team was receiving significantly more articles than we were able to manage. Within this period, there was also a change as a new editorial group was established. Discussions started whether to reintroduce the *Forum* as a separate section in the journal, for contributions such as reviews of PhD Theses, debates and reports, and to have the chance to deepen the discussions on architectural research. In issue number 2 of 2019, we re-introduced this form that had been coming and going during different time periods since 1991. During that year, the question on open access was raised again, and the editor team expressed possible threats and drawbacks for

journals devoted to architectural research. The change to an open access publishing system is positive in the ways of reaching out with research findings; however, in the hands of market-driven actors this can become a threat to the journal's independence, as well as to the individual researcher's possibilities to publish peer-reviewed articles without fees. In the case of the *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, it will survive as long as we have subscribers, editors and peer-reviewers who are able to work in these roles from their positions at their universities.

I hope to see a future where we keep up and stand for our values – stressing the importance of a liberal diversity of the Nordic architectural research climate, and to promote academic freedom and scientific independence.

For now, the hard work with the articles is over: the communication with the authors, reviewers and guest editors, the editing of the manuscripts, the co-operation in the editorial team and with SINTEF. It has been an interesting experience working for the journal, and I wish the current editorial team good luck with coming issues.

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