

THE NORDIC PRINCIPLES

for a sustainable transformation and refurbishment of existing buildings - as well as integrating of new houses into existing building environments.

Manifesto

We, the four Nordic associations working for a qualified preservation and development of the Nordic building culture, hereby present five principles for the careful and sustainable transformation and refurbishment of existing buildings in the Nordic countries - as well as the integration of new houses into existing building environments.

Our concrete experience, as well as proven research, over the last 15-20 years, has shown that the most attractive, technically best, most durable and economically advantageous results can be achieved by consistently using the old and proven classical building materials - rather than modern, newly developed and insufficiently tested materials, methods and structures. These old, well known and genuine materials have been used in the Nordic region for hundreds of years, for the maintenance and refurbishment of older buildings.

The classical building materials represent simplicity, genuineness and historical authenticity that fits well with older buildings, and in addition they are environmentally friendly, sustainable and without toxic or dangerous substances that spread to the environment. Therefore, they are also suitable for use in new buildings fitted into older building environments.

This knowledge and attitudes, methods and experiences are shared and used by the antiquarian authorities in the Nordic countries, by the major state building owners, and they also form an important part of the teaching of architectural schools in the restoration and transformation of existing buildings.

Sustainability means a very long lifetime, at least 200-300 years, based on simple and systematic maintenance with classical materials, reparability and flexibility in form and function - where the buildings are refurbished and reused on the actual site - and not demolished and / or recycled as materials. We call it *real* reuse, recycling and circular economy, rather than secondary recycling and circular economy.

The practices and experiences of the Nordic countries in these areas are in many ways leading in the world, but in spite of this, we can observe that 3 out of 4 restoration, renovation or energy improvement projects or newbuildings carried out in the Nordic countries, are based on the almost opposite principles. This leads to a critical deterioration of the Nordic building culture, historically, technically and architecturally.

The Nordic Principles for a sustainable transformation and refurbishment of existing buildings - as well as integrating of new houses into existing building environments.

1. All interventions, small or large, on or around existing buildings, must be based on a methodical, historical, technical and architectural analysis and assessment, that is the prerequisite for a maximum knowledge of the building - and thus a qualified and respectful project.
2. Keep as much as possible of the original materials, elements and structures by repairing in order to replace - also so wear and patina can be kept. This preserves the identity, soul and atmosphere of the house and represents genuine reuse.
3. New materials and elements in existing buildings, and in new buildings in old environments, must respect and harmonize with existing materials, elements and structures. As well as the local building traditions.
4. Consistently use the classical building materials, structures and crafts techniques that older buildings are constructed with. They have proven their sustainability and represent long-term quality rather than short-term quantity.
5. Create or recreate the architectural whole of the place / building - both together and in detail. Not least through simplicity, authenticity and historical authenticity.

Method: Analysis and assessment

The methodological analysis and assessment, that should always be carried out, because it is a prerequisite for a qualified proposal and subsequent concrete projects - consists of five parts that are consistently carried out in the following order. To be used both on individual buildings and their surroundings but also on cities, human settlements, urban areas and squares, villages and single buildings in the open countryside:

1: General description and identification

An initial, overall identification and general description of the building and its surroundings, or the city, the settlement, the square or the village and its surroundings.

2: Analysis

A historical, technical and architectural analysis of the building, settlement or urban space - according to a defined system and in the order mentioned. For human settlement, squares and urban spaces, the analysis is further extended with the functional and social conditions.

3: Intangible cultural heritage

What is found in the building or settlement of historical, technical or architectural 'traces' - visible (v) or invisible (i) – which is found to be particularly important for the physical expression or later development of the building or city - as a social marker which have a sensory and an atmospheric impact.

4: Assessment

This consists of a concluding assessment of the building's, the settlements or the urban spaces major conservation values and, in particular, the actual site specific properties for the building, settlement or urban space.

The major preservation values can be supplemented by the description of the elements that specifically support the preservation values and their vulnerability to changes. Including special constructions, building or functional conditions.

5: Recommendations

As a conclusion on the assessment, the future project may imply the following strategies:

- a Repair: Unalienable structures and components that should be kept, maintained and repaired
- b Deduction: Disfiguring structures, rooms and components that can be removed
- c Reconstruction: Removed or changed structures, rooms and components that can be reconstructed
- d Transformation: Structures, spaces and components that can be converted and transformed
- e Addition: New structures, spaces and building parts that can be added.

All five strategies for interventions are equally eligible and valuable for the preservation and development of the house.

Denmark: Landsforeningen for Bygnings- og Landskabskultur www.byogland.dk

Norway: Fortidsminneforeningen www.fortidsminneforeningen.no

Sweden: Svenska byggnadsvårdsföreningen www.byggnadsvard.se

Finland: Curatio Byggnadsvårdsförening i Åboland www.curatio.parnet.fi