

Future North

Vardø



**Future
North**

Vardø

FUTURE NORTH — VARDØ

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ON THE PAMPHLET SERIES

Future North — Kola
Future North — Svalbard
Future North — Vardø

This is one of three pamphlets that are outcomes of the *Future North* project at AHO. They are designed to complement more formal research outputs as well as present material from the territories and terrains the project team and adjunct members travelled and from where we were based. The pamphlets offer a mix of materialities and media, showing experimental writing, student projects and reflections on research.

On NODE Berlin Oslo:
NODE is a Berlin- and Oslo-based design studio founded in 2003 by Anders Hofgaard and Serge Rompza. The studio works collaboratively across various media for a diverse range of clients from individuals to institutions, focusing on print, identity, exhibition and interactive work. Besides studio projects, NODE gives lectures and holds workshops at art and design academies.

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SEA FEVER



On Future North

The Future North research project studies the relationship between social development and landscape change in the Arctic. The main regions for the research are the Kola Peninsula, The Norwegian Arctic town of Vardø, and Svalbard. The project is funded under Research Council Norway's SAMKUL programme, one that is particularly concerned with the prospective social impact of academic research.

Central to Future North is to study places that are transforming as the Arctic region is under pressure from several transformation forces, including climate change with subsequent intensified interest from the extraction and transportation industry as significant drivers. As the polar ice cap is melting, and the summer sea ice recedes, areas for oil exploration and new sea routes are being planned.



1. Into the Future

Andrew Morrison

Vardø lies just off the far northern coast of Norway. As a low lying island it has had a long history of habitation, fishing and trade. It's strategic position has always been a key part of its identity and daily life. The entries in this pamphlet tell more about its past, present and futures. They do so from the perspectives of a research project called Future North, located at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design and funded by the SAMKUL Programme of the Research Council of Norway. Headed by Associate Professor Janike Kampevold Larsen of the Institute of Urbanism and Landscape, the project investigated the complex changing conditions and climate of cultural landscapes of the Arctic in the age of the Anthropocene. As Kampevold Larsen and her co-author Peter Hemmersam write in their Introduction to the project's major book publication:

In the Future North project, we have studied territories that are imbued with a promise of future potential. Traditionally they have been regarded as resting beyond the well-known world, and have been particularly mythologized due to their remoteness. To us, the circumpolar Arctic is a laboratory for investigating landscapes in the making — their materiality and appearance as well as their cultural layers.' (Kampevold Larsen & Hemmersam, 2018).

Vardø is one of the three landscapes, along with the Kola Peninsula and Svalbard, facing the Barents sea that were selected for study of relations between people and the changing conditions of climate and context. While the past and the present matter enormously in such an investigation, the project also looked toward the future. Uncertain yet filled with projections. Uncharted yet only navigable from given insights and tools. Always just beyond reach, tantalising in its promise, always potentially utopian and dystopian. Yet, for a university of architecture, urbanism, landscape and design, such as ours, the fields of Futures Studies and Anticipation Studies are in need of inputs, that is practical and theoretical, for design to operate as a genera-

tor and critic of practices and inquiry into futures knowledge (Celi & Morrison 2017). The chapters that follow are offerings towards understanding the far north, the Arctic, and just one part of it, the island town and community of Vardø. Once a vibrant fishing town, over the past three decades in particular Vardø has lost most of its catch, as it were, due to fishing restrictions and changing practices and facilities. Vardø is tethered to the land by a road tunnel, served by two island harbours and one onshore. It boasts a local airport linking the town to a national and international network of global travel, tourists flying in to watch birds and live king crabs crawling their way in daily shipments flown to Japan. Much happens in this one small Arctic location; it is a venue for many activities and perhaps for both theoretical and applied research into changing landscapes and landscapes of change. It's a space of possibility, of exploring potential but within a setting that has had to find ways to survive the loss of the main livelihood of fishing and to keep asserting its long and proud history.

To speak of the future as an outsider in such a space is to seem trite, short-sighted almost, unaware of how difficult it must have been to survive winter seas and to find ways to reconfigure a 20th century municipality. Yet the future is already sown in the present. The present spawns possible, potential and putative activities and events, programmes and plans because it has to be imagined. Futures Studies as a transdisciplinary field is undergoing changes of its own as the future under the duress of our own making through dependence on fossil fuels and models of 'development' that are systemically unsustainable. Suddenly Vardø seems like an island set out almost into the future, in the Barents Sea, a speck on the global map of change, yet situated right at the heart of changing Arctic landscapes and seas, an island still yet metonymically all of ours as we begin to more actively engage in facing the wicked problems and the wicked practices of extractive economics and unbridled consumption.

While as Arun Appadurai reminds us, the future is a cultural fact (Appadurai, 2013), it is now being played out ahead of us today as our insatiable human drive for progress and a lack of care for the environment and resources have led us into the slipperiness of the Anthropocene Age. This is a still very fuzzily yet fearfully framed aeon characterised by the complex and dynamic changeable nature of climate change, (indisputably acknowledged by science in a time of not only fake news but facile politics of consumption and denial). It positions us within our own self destructive experiential narratives today, and tomorrow and the days and decades that follow. We live within systems that we have influenced, but that play out beyond our control and are likely to continue to do so as accumulations of past action permeate future effects.

In this context, human scale is hard to fathom, just as are the rapidly changing commercial and cultural conditions as oil and gas fields are not developed, including those off Vardø, and plans and earlier strategic foresight methods bob about in the bay, unmoored from the once seemingly fast anchors for future planning. That the future has always been unforeseeable, an unknown known, is now more complex and on a global scale. This is intensified in terms of local changes and especially in the circumpolar region under rapid transformation as ice melts, glaciers shrink and sea levels rise. The future is dynamic, a dynamic now, a dynamic in motion.

I type Vardø and spell check this document, and the software changes the name to Verdi. I laugh out loud at my lack of precision: I should not have clicked on the replace button. Verdi. Not just the sound of Italianate opera but the Norwegian work for meaning. To have meaning, or to have value. To be valuable. How is this project to make meaning, when it is an heuristic in its own right, an expedition itself to find out what may need to be found out

In the face of the universal challenges of changing climates, the local community project Vardø Restored has worked tirelessly to regenerate many of the town's wooden buildings. This has been part of drive to revitalise the built and cultural environments so as to regain a sense of civic pride, engagement and momentum toward emerging 21st century Arctic futures. Members of Vardø Restored have welcomed the diverse teams of Future North educators, researchers, and students, as well as related architects, designers and artists to Vardø. As interlopers, we have been introduced to local needs and conditions, but importantly, to dreams and clear goals and to the very

substantial if often slow and deliberative processes of restoration, repurposing and reinvigorating the character and the future of the town.

Svein Harald Holmen has been central to this resilience with revival. Its hard to think that the local hardware store or the North Pole Bar would not have existed without the sheer determination and organisational skills, expertise and collaboration that across the town have marked out the actions and achievements of Vardø Restored. In our view this has been possible because of the will of local inhabitants to take care of their own lived environment. The island and its waters matter intensely to them and to their own identities. It's into this setting that we have entered as a different and exploratory project configuration of disciplines, experience, interests and motivations.

The island has long been teeming with life. Vardø has been a site for human settlement, from the Iron Ages, as well a nexus for commerce and travel. It's strategic position and ice-free waters have meant that in recorded history it's been an outpost for Danish administration and rule, seen today in the Vardøhus Festning (an octagonal fortress and museum), but it has also been a venue for overzealous witch hunts and executions, and a haven for flourishing regional trade and especially fishing in the abundant local waters into the 20th century. Vardø overcame Nazi occupation though more of its wooden buildings survived than in most of regional Finnmark as retreating forces scorched all in their path. Then, for entirely different reasons, the town lost roughly half its population since the mid 1990s as the fishing industry all but collapsed.

Over time Vardø has been marked by an entrepreneurial spirit, fearless forays into stormy seas and a strong measure of resilience. On a clear day one could nearly see over to the Murmansk fjord in the Soviet Union; the gap in the line of hills is still visible for contemporary Russia as the protected waters have become the new location for the Russian military fleet. The looming presence of the Globus domes on Vardø, allegedly for tracking space debris, reminds one that this is a site of intensive data gathering and processing, a beacon of NATO and that while the facility is ever present it is always closed to public access.

The Varanger Museum, in its wooden harbour side building, contrasts markedly with the Steilneset Monument's invocation of fish drying racks in the commemoration of the trails and execution of over one hundred persons in the 17th century for witchcraft. Designed by the internationally renowned

artist Louise Bourgeois and the architect Peter Zumthor, this monument also has a disturbing series of mirrors that reflect an eternal flame back to one, searing the present with the agonies of the past. Hugely expensive, for some residents the installation however is a symbol of a lack of consultation about its processes of selection and placement in the very community in which it stands. For visitors it is a truly disturbing reminder of judgement past, grounded in a fundamentalism of time and place.

'The Damned, The Possessed and the Beloved' was the title Bourgeois gave her installation. Vardø is clearly the dedicated home of the towns people and the members of Vardø Restored are devoted to its survival and do not operate as if damned to a dreary future. The project has been a massively encouraging entry point for the Future North team and visiting students and researchers. It provides a perspective on place and a platform for continued engagement, albeit fighting for funding — and achieving massive success right into 2017. 'Darkness shall give way to sun' is written in the town's coat of arms. The future might always be brighter here, we laugh, as we are encouraged by the constant will and physical energy on the part of Vardø Restored to revive the cultural character of the town. As part of the growth of Landscape Architecture and Landscape Studies at AHO, including the joint programme in Tromsø with UiT, the Arctic University of Norway, the project has worked closely with Vardø Restored to build experience, experience and reflections on Vardø as specific place, an arctic city, a cultural landscape and a site for prospecting the future.

Investigating past, present and future has been central to our work. This collection therefore gathers together a diverse set of activities and outcomes from Future North. The project has deliberately set about engaging with Vardø from different perspectives. In part this reflects our various interdisciplinary origins and practices but it is also a sum that is greater than those parts. We have taken up and needed to locate a mix of methods from the humanities and social science at the same time as engaging with local wishes and emerging needs, including our own. And our work has been conducted through design and with people from the town, informed by their choices and experience, at times pressured by their interests. So too have we been challenged to make better sense by working critically with what we bring and what we learn. This is a collaborative and interpersonal venture; a venturing together to make some sense for a future that is aware. One in which knowledge is not driven for its impact but ideally

for engagement. For people in place and for places that have people who are connected to community and who are engaged in work and leisure that are buffeted by the weather and shift within and between the expansive annual swings of dark and light.

Here you will find a photographic essay by Janike Kampevoold Larsen that addresses matters of *solastalgia* she summarises as concerning 'physical and mental stress that arises from seeing your home environment deteriorate due to climate change' while summarising many of the activities of the two overlapping key projects. One of the core partners in Future North Peter Hemmersam, from urbanism at AHO, reflects on our uptake of the transect walk with a tool to use to understand the town more fully, adapted from an earlier NFR project *YOUrban* in which he and I participated as part of our shared strategy as directors of two of the four research centres at AHO. One of our international partners Bill Fox, a renowned writer on polar zones, reflects on being in the landscape of Vardø. Interdisciplinary methods — contextual, sensory, experimental — and practices, and from Futures Studies, are what Henry Mainsah takes up in his chapter.

Vardø Transformed — Cultural Heritage and Place-Based Development was the title of a studio run by Thomas Juel Clemmensen and his contribution outlines the intentions and practices of its landscape pedagogy, ones that are taken forward into his new appointment to the UiT staff. These reflections are materialised in the next chapter that includes the work of two master's graduates Brona Keen and Miles Hamaker in landscape studies that reveal the multi-literacies and, indeed, futures literacies that are key to the joint programme between AHO and UiT. Next there follows a jointly written account of negotiating change in the potential and actual transformation of the former Grand Hotel to a community oriented social and cultural hub for innovation and shared events. This points more generally to the inclusion of a number of summer schools and studios that have been a part of our shared activities in Vardø, with landscape master's students from AHO, UiT, and once with guests from The University of Montréal. This too has been extended into new projects such as that underway into bakeries and their histories and potential as future. These initiatives have been about place: Vardø as a specific Arctic town, with its own needs and challenges, but also infused with resources and capacities. As Janike Kampevoold Larsen writes, Vardø is a site that shows the paradox of built futures that do not match their proposed use while the local community is increasingly engaged in a process of self-determination.

One of the doctoral students in the project, Morgan Ip, a Canadian architect studying cultural landscapes in Future North, presents experience of his deployment of the locative media tool *MyVardø* tailored to the town. He closes his chapter observing that the imagined cultural city is rooted in history and in the contemporary that are ‘... conditions of what constitutes the cultural landscape of Vardø today, as well as in the creative potential of its citizenry.’ Our students, as Henry Mainsah notes, have been part of sketching alternative options for buildings and services, the overall research project connected with the educational programmes — masters and doctoral — provide a mesh of potential envisioning that has in some cases already influenced their transformation, such as the building tagged with COD IS GREAT.

Our final chapter called ‘Water Words’ takes the form of screen grabs from Narratta. She is a device, a fictive persona, we have developed and co-authored to allow us to reflect on the human and non-human and ‘design’ and research practices as well as themes and topics of the changing landscapes of Arctic. Narratta blogs about the other two contexts of our inquiries and we have written about her in our joint project book.

This pamphlet contains some additional material from courses and seminars and the most recent and closing event at which the volume was launched. A joint venture with *Vardø Restored*, Future North drew together its Vardø team for a shared seminar session on reflection and projection. The seminar was part of a shared almost week long programme into the continued investigation and communication of landscape of change, that included walking tours and discussion, and where such ‘walkshops’ led into meals and festivities in a *lavvo*, and then on the final day into an open space for futuring in the ongoing discussion. Following on from earlier collaboration, this workshop opened out to more town members and to representatives from similar initiatives on the Norwegian coast. Our prospective aim has been to shape a future that is characterised by cultural reflection and energies. This shaping futures is made of cultural entrepreneurship in co-designing spaces for shared exploration and events, diverse yet flexible, informed yet playfully available for future design and performative expression, offering a site for commercial and cultural exchange and for active engagement with making climates of change.

so far and into the future, as in connecting related research in the project and more widely. This pamphlet is just one part of that change process. The Future North project thanks colleagues and friends in Vardø, and it hopes that members and their networks may become part of new, different and alternate collaborations and aspirations that build on this experience and its social innovations, cultural enactments and situated knowledge building.

Oslo
November 2017

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Photo: Janike Kampevoid Larsen



Photo: Janike Kampevoid Larsen



Photo: Janike Kampevoid Larsen



Photo: Janike Kampevoid Larsen



Photo: Janike Kampevoid Larsen



Photo: Janike Kampevoid Larsen





2. Ruins in Reverse

Janike Kampevoid Larsen • Photos: Janike Kampevoid Larsen

SPACE AND TIME IN PLACE

When I visited the airport in Kirkenes in 2011, a large banner covered the end wall in the arrival/departure area: The oil has arrived! (Oljen har kommet!). Only, the oil had not 'arrived'. It still has not. And it may never arrive from those sub-bathymetric recesses of petroleum off the Barents Coast that has not quite been located. Still, the prospect of a black or liquid gold presence in Kirkenes and nearby settlements has had extensive material and economic consequences.

One of the places where the petroleum imaginary has already made an impact is Vardø, a small Arctic town located on an island off the northeastern Norwegian coast. Here, however, another force has materialized; a small group of idealists have established a platform for city development called Vardø Restored. The Future North research project have been lucky to be welcomed to work closely with them since 2013.

The relationship between humans and their landscapes have been changing quickly and profoundly over the last decades. The Anthropocene has been introduced as the age of 'man' in a deep geological perspective, as the era in which we, as species, contribute to change the face of the earth as much if not more than any natural processes. This again has contributed to raise awareness of 'place' as much more than a spatial phenomenon. 'Place' in the Anthropocene includes all of the material specter, comprising air, soil, water, pollution, as well as the management of all these — but it also comprises human practices and the forces that affect any given place, that is industrial, economic, political, cultural. While we have gained an acute sensitivity of the degree to which local actions affect the entire globe, we have also gained an awareness of the degree to which each place is connected to other places. For the cultural geographer Doreen Massey (Massey, 2005: 130) this is elemental: places are part of a network of global and local relations. She





also stresses that she considers places “not as points or areas on maps, but as integrations of space and time; as spatio-temporal events”.

Places in Arctic areas unfold in time with a particular acuteness — very quickly. Many of them have been part of global networks for centuries, while still having a deep historical identity as autonomous local places. The time of industrial production has been attuned to the natural cycle of resource production, fish spawning patterns and seasonal migration. Now, space is becoming compressed, and with that time. An insatiable demand for carboniferous fuels propels the rapid search and development of new petroleum fields, while new technologies propels the exploration for minerals and rare earths, all of which seems abundant in the Arctic.

Since the turn of the millennium, the Scandinavian Arctic has been governed by a petroleum imaginary that is mostly due to a speculative hype from the Norwegian Government. Small towns and settlements have tried to mobilize and position themselves in the face of the oil industry promising a new and better future. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been promising new workspaces and increased revenue for municipalities, and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, often referred to Finnmark as ‘Europe’s New Oil Province’ some ten years ago. In Hammerfest, Statoil has operated their LNG processing facility since 1996, leaving the city with a large annual income from real estate taxes. But will this happen in other places?

VARDØ

When I started this text, I had again just landed in Kirkenes on my way to Vardø where I would spend a few days. It was February 2016 and six and a half years since my first contact with the small group of urban activists and actors in Vardø Restored. Over the years, we have built a deep relationship to this small Arctic town. Deep enough to understand why people grab onto life there and work intensely to create new workplaces, first and foremost by trying to save the remnants of this oldest town in Northern Norway. Vardø was the capitol of Finnmark for centuries and among its significant traits is the large number of pre-war wooden buildings, many of which form parts of the prolific fishing infrastructure, the first harbour in Norway financed with government money, as early as 1897, and a rich tradition for story-telling.

‘We’ are a research project called Future North, and since 2013 we have been travelling, documenting and analyzing the Kola Peninsula, the Barents Coast, and Svalbard. Our purpose has been to study the relationship between social development and land-

scape development, landscape referring to a material resource that is shared by people in settlement, cities and territories. Landscape hence has little to do with classical beautiful scenes, those pastoral landscapes that are generally restricted to an intimate human scale, and that have very much determined how westerners look at landscape. Our work has been about understanding and documenting what is the most important forces at play in the different areas, and how populations relate to the, often rapid, changes unfolding around them. We are architects, designers, literary scholars, and media scholars and we are experts in urbanism, participatory action, reading, and political history. Significantly, two members of our team grew up in the global south and two others have Canadian and East Asian roots.

Frequently we have worked with groups of students from Tromsø Academy of Landscape and Territorial Studies in the new landscape architecture education started by the Oslo School of Architecture and Design and UiT, the Arctic University of Norway. Some of these students have visited for weeklong workshops, some for a few days, and a few stayed for a month in order to conclude our mapping of cultural heritage in Vardø. Their work represented the final phase of registering cultural value in the city, work that will form a significant foundation for a new city plan. Some of it is included in this pamphlet.

Vardø is a contemporary ruin — in a quite literal sense. Many of the old fish processing facilities at the harbour are about to fall apart. The quays are covered by moss and grass, the wooden decks are rotten and partly collapsed in places. A city that used to total 4000 people, with thousands of visiting fishermen, hundreds of smaller fishing boats and trading ships during the winter season, now counts 13 active fishing boats, and only two of the fish processing facilities are in operation. Over the last 30 years the number of inhabitant has dwindled to around 2000.

As a consequence, the population may be said to be prone to *solastalgia*. This is a concept that was developed by the philosopher Glenn Albrecht in 2003 to describe physical and mental stress that arises from seeing your home environment deteriorate due to climate change. Generally, *solastalgia* describes a tangible feeling of loss and annihilation that may arise from people perceiving that their home place changed for the worse, such as by oil leaks from fracking that ruins valuable farm land, or for example by seeing a growing number of empty shop windows glaring at you on the main street, or the house next door falling apart. The old fisherman Arthur Andreassen describes it like this: “I would walk out my door in the morning, see that demolished house across the street, and be depressed for the rest of



the day.” One could say that this condition is a kind of homesickness that resemble nostalgia for a place lost, except that those who experience it have not left their homes.

Solastalgia speaks to the relationship between people and place. This is a relationship that, in the time of climate change and the Anthropocene, is undergoing fundamental changes. For many places in the north this also has to do with a strong dependency on certain natural resources — like fish — a relationship that becomes unhinged when new industries, like the petroleum and mining industries infiltrate in the wake of an ‘ice edge’ that retreats north and is bound to eventually disappear. Researchers Berit Kristoffersen and Philip Steinberg argue that the notion of an ice edge is a political construct. In reality, the so-called ice-edge is a fluctuating zone, varying seasonally and over the years. (Steinberg & Kristoffersen 2017).

NETWORKS OF SPACES

Vardø is a place also in the literal sense of the word (Latin: *platea*, open space). It is a delimited geographical area, an island in an ocean of fish (and presumably oil). Particularly in the winter time, but also when the island is engulfed in thick summer sea fog, one has the feeling of being alone with the Arctic Ocean — the Ice Sea as they call it here. Now, in February, that large space of ocean and air surrounding the city is black most of the day. The city, however, is illuminated, not the least due to Globus II, NATO’s surveillance radar sitting on top of the island, and the Coast Guard’s rescue service facilities next to the old fortress. The darkness at the margins always have a material quality — it seems tangible, thick, with layers and layers of greys and blacks. Snow is whirling, running, packing. The buildings are plastered with it, even more so than other places due to the high salinity in the air — it glues the snow, inch-thick, onto the walls.



Wrapped up in materialities and light in the midst of such a vast darkness one could be tempted to think that Vardø is an autonomous little community, isolated from the rest of the world by latitude and character. But it is not so: the city’s cyclical economy has been intimately linked to a global market for centuries. Its three major recessions in the 20th century were intimately linked to the stock market crisis in New York in 1929, WWII, and the 1967–70 civil war in Nigeria which was then a major importer of stock fish from Vardø. This was after a decade of receding fish populations, which had contributed to a decline in the industry.

The city has not been a globally connected place only due to the many visiting fishermen, the Russian Pomor trade and immigration of Finns, but rather more so due to its prolific network of trading nations on a global fish market. Even today, there is growing export of King crab on to a large global market. Arctic Catch, located in the new industrial harbour in Vardø delivers live king crab to a large Asian market, as well as frozen king crab and white fish to Europe and Saudi Arabia. Such openness also relates to Massey’s network notion of space, as crisscrossed by interests and agents.

IM/MATERIAL RELATIONS

Future North’s work in Vardø has so far not left any hard marked material traces in the city. Over a long period, and most often in collaboration with our students, we have contributed to discussions about what is considered cultural value — be it material or immaterial. Results are not easy to measure, but that makes the work all-the-more engaging: it seems to have had an empowering effect on parts of the community and this provides further motivation for all. Some property holders have been inspired by seeing and talking to a small group of researchers and larger groups of students visiting again and again. We see this as contributing to an increased confidence that the city does indeed have a future as an attraction for tourists, artists, and even maybe as a future hub for cultural engagement and learning.

Landscape students have proposed projects for land use strategies, including refurbishment of harbor areas. Diploma students Brona Keenan and Miles Hamaker have proposed a sustainable food network for the city enabling locals to come together in community kitchens and exchange food preservation methods and form small businesses based on the rich resources in the city. We have photo-registered old wooden buildings, empty buildings (20 % of the building in Vardø are empty, and the percentage is higher for industrial buildings), as well as preserved ones. We have engaged in



workshops with business owners to learn about their material dilemmas and worries about infrastructure, as well as of their future prospects.

The most intriguing part of the work has been interviewing business owners (fishermen, entrepreneurs, and human ‘archives’ — elderly people with exceptional memory of Vardø history). Arthur Andreassen, a seasoned fisherman and community “archive”, vividly remembers Jack Jacobsen who owned 4–5 of the ten cod liver oil production facilities in town. Arthur also recounts the story of Gismondi, the Italian fish buyer who would step off the Coastal Steam Liner every summer in his straw hat and yellow linen suit and proceed to inspect all the fish on stock. In a good year he would buy it all, which meant all levels of fish processing workers would be saved for the season, from rowers of livers to fishery owners. Arthur remembers where bombs fell during the war, and how he was forced to sail a 90

feet steel boat carrying 70 dug-up German soldiers’ bodies to Vadsø where they loaded 80 more before going to Kirkenes. The small concrete building where the German Nazis temporarily stored corpses had been both ice storage and salt storage before it was turned into a mortuary.

Over years of work in Vardø we now know that part of its cultural history is exactly the extreme versatility of its buildings that have been adapted to new uses depending on the fluctuation in industry. We find an old Model T Ford on the third floor of an old building used for stock fish storage. Another ice storage has been used as a gym and a car shop since 1980. Over about 40 years, the city has customized its supply of architectural structures to the degree possible. Yet, much of it is falling apart.

It is evident that a building heritage that has linked the Vardø shoreline to a global network of fish trade, and which has formed the core of the Pomor commerce, is now partly left as ruins. On its four-decade journey to ruination, the masses of built structure have been repurposed again and again; they have been adapted to an array of different uses in this dynamic community, until much of the built environment has reached a state of being beyond repair unless new funding is to be allocated for restoration.

The city appears a landscape of production, one in which all buildings and infrastructure have been intimately connected to fisheries. Harbour front buildings are all old fish processing facilities, blubber cookeries, and



stock fish storage sites. Many of them have been through multiple stages of use, but over the last two years some of them have been refurbished, most significantly the two massive buildings on each side of the molo, Østre and Vestre Molokrok. There we see streets planned perpendicular to the main street so that once fish could be transported by horse and wagon straight from the dock to the outfields to be hung on racks to dry.

PLACES ARE FOR PEOPLE

Vardø Restored is a development strategy and platform for urban renewal that has been developed over the last 10 years. Its main operative model is to secure funding for property — and business owners for basic restoration of building. These encompass funding for roof, window and building envelope restoration, and for business start-ups. Results include the new (and only) equipment/clothing/hard — and software store, the Nordpol pub which forms a seminal social hotspot, and The Grand Hotel restored externally to its former glory as the largest building in Finnmark as well as a



cherished accommodation for wealthy Russian traders and tourists. Then it featured a roof promenade and sun platform overlooking the city: it is now in the process of being experimentally transformed into a cultural hub for the town. For Svein Harald Holmen, the key motor and founder of Vardø Restored, it is all about inspiration:

None of the work we do, he says, is of any value unless it inspires people, creates enthusiasm and an understanding of the landscape that makes them want to take part in the future development of the city. They need to regard the city as a resource, and not as a shameful ruin. It comes down to empowerment, and social participation — both for Vardø Restored and for Future North.

Echoing art critic and curator Lucy Lippard’s statement in her latest book *Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics, and Art in the Changing West*, our work is basically about understanding place as place for people (Lippard, 1999). It is about raising awareness of the inherent qualities of a material place as a reservoir for sustenance where its materialities are shared among users, and developed in a sustainable way. The work hence has a strong existential dimension. And it is laborious and slow. The slow time of restoration has been reconciled with the time it takes people to negotiate futures, private economy and labour.

Places are for people, states Lippard, and any art or practice that wants to relate to a place, needs to relate to the fact that every place is cut through by a network of agents and interest — and people. In *Undermining* she critically looks at large areas in

the 'The New West' where for decades sedentary peoples have been marginalised by industries that are tapping into land and soil resources, like gravel, water, minerals and space, for biological and nuclear testing. What we may call 'The New North' is facing similar dilemmas, although on a smaller scale, so far. The possibility of large scale mining, in Finnmark and on Greenland, is imminent, as is sub-sea mining for rare earths in the Barents Sea. The question is whether one might learn from large scale extraction and exploitation like the one the American west has been subjected to, if it is at all possible for small places to be global while remaining local. Can one avoid that other municipalities than Vardø spend enormous amounts on mobilising for a development that may never happen, and then cannot afford to upgrade a fishing harbour that might have drawn resilient fishermen and their families to move to Vardø?

BUILDING IN THE ARCTIC

Recent municipal strategies have worked towards other, less manifest goals. The lure of petroleum-related revenue led to a large-scale harbour development for Vardø. Between 2008–2012 the city and county municipalities, with the aid of private investors, spent one billion NOK on a large industrial harbor at Svartnes, the mainland part of Vardø. According to plan it would serve as a supply harbour for petroleum operations at

the Stokhman gas field in the Barents Sea that were to be operated by Russian Gasprom, French Total, and Norwegian Statoil. Statoil pulled out of the project in the summer of 2012, which led to the discontinuation of the project a month later. The industrial harbour in Vardø town now lies largely idle, save of Arctic Catch's king crab facility. The new harbour is, in full measure, a *ruin in reverse* — a fairly new facility sits gleaming in its own brilliant uselessness, while the city's old ruin, the fishing harbor remains part of the town's cultural heritage. A fraction of the cost of the new industrial harbour in Vardø would have saved the old one, and contributed to rebuilding a place for people.

The artist Robert Smithson developed the notion of 'ruins in reverse' during a walk around Passaic County in New Jersey in 1967. His is a somewhat blurry term, but it is one much referred to by artists that deal with land use, ruins and rural development. The term signifies something that is not yet built, or has just been built, and is raised into ruin before it has even been used. In Passaic County, Smithson photographed contemporary monuments like excavators, run-off tubes, fractions of infrastructure, and other 'dinosaurs'. He describes the new industrial landscape as if it was pre-historic. He collapses time scales by comparing excavators to dinosaurs and by talking about the not-yet-built as future ruins. In this concept lies a reflection over necessity: places and regions are being consumed. They are being



developed quickly and for a revenue that may happen now, in a current and possible economy — while in fact, they may just as quickly become superfluous. Infrastructure and departments building, harbour and shopping malls, may quickly be abandoned if they are not built upon a careful consideration about the long term, for a slow time of societal development. Ruins in reverse refers then to infrastructure that does not have a history with a place it occupies. It builds a 'no-man's land', both in Passaic County and at Svartnes, Vardø.

Smithson's idea of ruins in reverse describes a landscape that has at the same time not yet happened, and already happened. In a way then, he also pre-figures the

Anthropocene — a future where whatever we build now will become traces and ruins in a possible future. The fantastic thing about the concept is that it activates our imagination about a time that will come after us — a future. It asks us to re-think the perspective we are building in and for. And this question seems particularly pertinent in Vardø — a place that is, or at least has been, in a squeeze between local forces and external (partly internal) investment forces. Many places in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic find themselves in a similar squeeze.

Territories in the north may be considered ruins in reverse. They are exposed to development forces that wish to make them operative in present day trade and transportation networks. There are still plans to build an oil trans-shipment hub at Veidneset close to Honningsvåg meant to serve the rich Johan Castberg-field in the Barents Sea. There are viable theories that the Arctic may see new sea routes, not only in the Northeast passage, but also in the Northwest passage and trans-polar sea routes. It seems quite pertinent to expect that port cities in the Arctic may continue to position themselves by building container harbours and supply hubs to meet new transportation lines and petroleum development. There is building, but not for people. Vardø's industrial harbor is a splendid example. By making a leap in time, anticipating and speculating on possible petroleum development off the eastern Barents Sea Coast, it was building for possible revenue, and in the face of a global space and time.

SLOW, REAL TIME LIVING

People in Vardø, and Vardø Restored, are building in a slow time, a real time. In this current slow time, Jonas Gahr Støre recently visited the community, invited by Kystopprøret (The Coastal Riot). The venue was the Grand Hotel, now partly refurbished by owners, the Bertheussen family. Maria Bertheussen Skrydstrup offered its east wall for Kystopprørets symbol — and is an active participant in the organization's claim for a more sensible fisheries policy. It is not only the dilapidated harbour that keeps Vardø from once again flourishing as a fishing community. The national policy on fisheries allows trawlers to own quotas at the expense of land-based fisherman, and for fish to be processed onboard rather than in local factories. The current policy on fisheries is not a coastal policy. It does not include social economic perspectives that allow local smaller scale fisheries to continue being the basis for sustenance in this farthestmost part of the country where the oceans are the only field of harvest.

Based on centuries and decades of capital exploitation of the fisheries in the North, communities now challenge politicians on what they will do create and to secure activity along the long Coast of Norway, in those old communities, like Vardø, that are partially demolished. There is no long-lasting national initiative to secure places where people have been depending on the fisheries for centuries. This leaves strong individuals like Maria in a predicament: it is very difficult to endeavour to shape an economic strategy to complete The Grand Hotel when she cannot know that there will be a bustling town to appreciate and use it. Slow time is one of insecurity. However, in this slow time *The Grand Hotel* offers a place and time for activism and for activity.

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3. Transect Walk

Peter Hemmersam • Photos: Peter Hemmersam

¹
Future North, Project application, 2012.

²
Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Massachusetts Inst. of Technology, 1972).

³
Martino Stierli, *Las Vegas in the Rearview Mirror: The City in Theory, Photography, and Film* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2013), p. 318.

⁴
Jilly Traganou, *Travel, Space, Architecture, Design and the Built Environment Series* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 22.

⁵
e.g. Chuihua Judy Chung, Rem Koolhaas, and Tae-Wook Cha, *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (Köln: Taschen, 2001); Rem Koolhaas, 'Harvard Project on the City, "Lagos"', in *Mutations*, ed. Stefano Boeri, Francine Fort, and Rem Koolhaas (Barcelona: Actar, 2000): 652, 719.

⁶
T. Ingold and J.L. Vergunst, *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008); Sarah, Pink, *Doing visual ethnography: Images, media and representation in research* (London: Sage, 2007); Guy Debord, 'Theory of the Dérive', *Internationale Situationniste 2* (1958): 50-54; Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A history of walking* (London: Penguin, 2001); Smithson, Robert, 'The monuments of Passaic', *Artforum*, 49 (1967): 19.

⁷
Ingold and Vergunst, *Ways of Walking*.

Walking across the island reveals traces of history, everyday life and ongoing change. Following the same line in summer and winter, we — researchers from the Future North project — applied our disciplinary perspectives on the town and landscape. The random discoveries and encounters of the walks, spurred conversations about change, and about how the current landscape, the town, its people and the external influences and forces that work on it, shape the future of the community and the place.

In the Future North project, travelling through and within landscapes and communities has been an important mode of doing research. Our aim has been to study emerging landscapes and to document and describe change in ways that facilitate public awareness of possible futures of settlements and territories. The study of landscapes carried out in the project is "founded in a conception of landscape as a shared material human experience," which echoes various forms of mapping in architecture and art that moves beyond dominant cartographic mapping practices, for instance by focusing on perception and individual and group based mental images of space.¹

The seminal 1972 book on experimental architectural mapping, *Learning from Las Vegas* by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, was based on a travel to this emerging metropolis devoid of traditional architectural qualities.² The ambition of the book was to reveal the actual architecture of modernization by venturing into an urban environment entirely dependent on cars and air-conditioning, and mapping it from the car and on foot. The authors abandoned normative theories of how cities ought to be in favour of a logic in which, as Martino Stierli puts it, "the built evidence of the existing city, which had come into existence almost "unconsciously," was to be furnished with a theory after the fact".³ Their work inspired a tradition of doing mapping and urban research as a kind of architectural production, and of architects traveling "temporarily to various types of otherness".⁴ This is perhaps best illus-

trated by Rem Koolhaas' investigations of alternate states of modernization in non-US/European cities with the aim of uncovering the structuring forces of globalization as the predominant driver of change.⁵

Learning from Las Vegas represents one alternative way of reading the urban landscape based on eye-level perception. Adding to this visual approach, theorists like Tim Ingold, Jo Lee Vergunst and Sarah Pink, but also artists and authors like Guy Debord, Rebecca Solnit and Robert Smithson, have emphasized walking as mapping practice and a way of accessing the city and its lived space.⁶ Walking is even, according to for instance Ingold and Vergunst, not a neutral act but one in which the individual interacts with the environment (both ways) and place making occurs.⁷



(Top) *Learning from Las Vegas* is based on a notion that visiting this city is as instructive today as a visit to Rome (on the map) was to the educated minds of the 18th century. (Bottom) Illustration on Vardø city map by Vardø based architectural office Biotope.

THE TRANSECT WALK

Learning from Las Vegas was the result of a visit to city, and in a similar way, we have used mapping as a way to collectively introduce ourselves to the various places of our research. Specifically, we have used the transect walk as a way of mapping and addressing materialities, perceptions and futures in these communities. The urban transect walk deliberately cuts across urban landscapes and is a tool that has been used by organisations like UN Habitat and the World Bank for rapidly appraising local economies in cities in the Global South.⁸

Our version of the tool, which we have developed over several iterations in five locations, implies following an imaginary line across an urban setting and enabling sensory and embodied engagement with the urban landscape through walking. In the transect walk, the line is a tool of selection

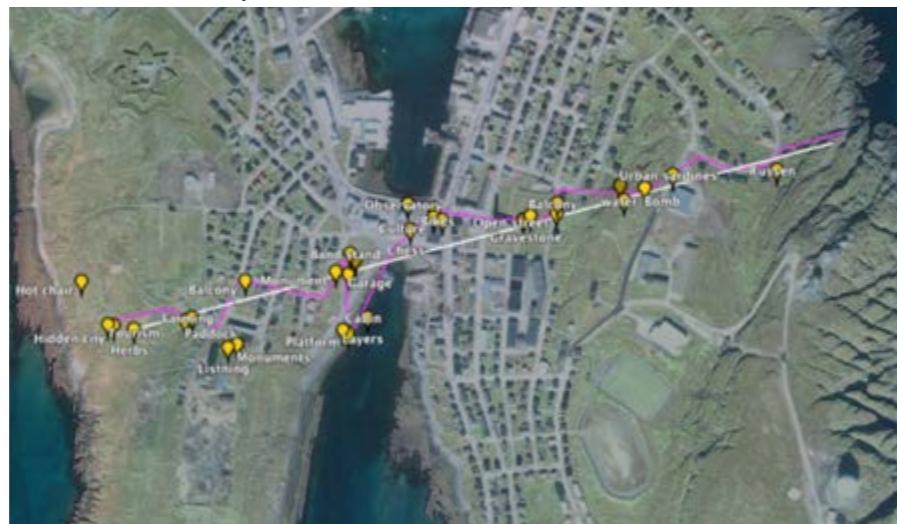
which functions by looking for difference and diversity of phenomena and observations, rather than averages.⁹ This qualitative method has proved effective as a way of introducing us to issues of change and future directions of communities and landscapes.

To document the transect walks, we have used the iPhone app MAPPa which enables groups to map interactively and collaboratively while being on the move through the urban landscape. It enables annotation in the form of POIs (Points Of Interest) that include photos, texts and thematic hashtags. The app also provides 'live' access to Instagram during mapping, revealing entirely different perspectives to be included. After the transect walks, the POIs can be downloaded as digital maps that can be viewed and edited in geobrowsers such as Google Earth.



Map data: Google, CNES/Astrium.

Transect 1: 70.372059, 31.124275—70.368291, 31.094207
Date: 26 January, 2014.
Participants: Aileen Aseron Espiritu, Bill Fox, Janike Kampevold Larsen, Morgan Ip, Peter Hemmersam, Andrew Morrison



Map data: Google, CNES/Astrium.

Transect 2: 70.368291, 31.094207—70.372059, 31.124275
Date: 11.06.2014
Participants: Janike Kampevold Larsen, Peter Hemmersam

⁸ Jules N Pretty, *A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning and Action* (London: Sustainable Agriculture Programme, International Institute for Environment and Development, 1995).

⁹ Henk de Zeeuw and Joanna Wilbers, 'PRA Tools for Studying Urban Agriculture and Gender' (Resource Center on Urban Agriculture and Forestry, 2004), <http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/33988/1/121475.pdf>.

TWO WALKS

In Vardø, MAPPa was used for a transect walk in January, 2014 (with Bill Fox, an invited guest researcher from the Center for Art and Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art), and reflecting the seasonal changes in the Arctic, we followed the same trajectory (in the reverse direction) in June the same year.

The observations and conversations that took place during and after the transect walks initiated links and connections across our individual professional and personal backgrounds, across sites and seasons, but also to theoretical perspectives that relate our experienced to wider aspects of thinking about the future. The POIs with images, text and hashtags have been combined to indicate themes that form the basis for further discussion about the current and future conditions of Vardø:



Morgan Alexander Ip → The Barents Sea #FutureNorth → Peter Hemmersam → and in summer...



Aileen A Espiritu → Radar stations

STARTING

Starting at the eastern rocky shore of the island, we turned away from the icy Barents Sea and Russia. We walked from coast to coast, through the broadest variety of urban structures, from the rugged coastline, through the city centre and the town hall, to the slightly more benign western coast of the island. This was also the end point of our summer transect.

SURVEILLANCE

The mappings uncovered the role that observation and surveillance has played and still plays in this town on the eastern tip of the country. A 14th century fortress monitored and defended against the Novgorodians and Russians and in 1769 a celestial observatory was constructed here to observe Venus transit across the sun. Today the US Space Command tracks the skies from its enigmatic 'mushrooms' on the highest point of the island, while the Norwegian Coastal Administrations tracks ship traffic in the Barent Sea from its Vardø base.



Observatory → Observatory — looking at the #sky



Peter Hemmersam → curved street



Peter Hemmersam → easternmost house → Instagram → (June 11, 2014) #vglistatilvardø #vglista #russn2014

EASTERNMOST HOUSE

The curved street with large new houses stands out in contrasts with the pragmatic rectilinear streets of the town centre. Standing in the shadow of the Space Command radar domes, it is hard not to associate it with the sprawling North American style suburban housing areas that accompanied US military installations around the world during the Cold War. At the same time, “the handful of houses planted along [the street], which are afforded spectacular views of the waves and rocks, are generic family dwellings that could be sitting in any northern European city, a banal suburb fronting the sublime.”¹ An expectation of a particular contextual Arctic architecture seems to part of our professional baggage, while the dreams and aspirations of the inhabitants appear to be indistinguishable from those in climatically milder regions of Scandinavia.

¹ Bill Fox, ‘Walking the High Wire’, Future North blog. http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=3590.



Peter Hemmersam → Hard to make out in the photo, but the kicksled is painted in the same color as the house.

KICKSLED TERRITORY

The kicksleds are evidence of wintertime mobility in Vardø, where kicksleds replace bikes. This form of transport relies on stable winter weather as streets have to be snow packed over extended periods, something that climate change might put an end to.



Peter Hemmersam → Kicksled with baby seat



Peter Hemmersam → New houses

SUBURBIA

New attractive urban districts are built on the hill above the town, while older buildings in the town are empty and in disrepair. A new supermarket here has successfully eliminated a city centre rival. Even as the town is shrinking it is growing — older buildings are abandoned rather than refurbished, and entirely new structures are built, leaving the buildings that formerly housed these functions empty. Thus, the dilapidated state of many houses in the city are not just a result of out-migration.



Morgan Alexander Ip → Everything you could ever need



Peter Hemmersam → curved street



Peter Hemmersam → G(r)owing up in Vardø

SEASONAL LANDSCAPES

The town has distinct seasonal landscapes. Wintertime, wind and snow shapes the movement of local inhabitants, but the reverse condition of the snow itself being shaped to direct flows was also evident in one observation of a snow pile that was used to block a road to prevent traffic from passing the ski and sliding slope for children in the centre of the town.



Aileen A Espiritu → Fearless sliders on a quiet Sunday.



Peter Hemmersam → Transformed Street. Nordre Berggate is blocked to make way for the kids' ski slope.



Peter Hemmersam → Pointing up

UPWARDS RATHER THAN OUTWARDS

The most extensive conversation on our first wintertime transect walk occurred when we observed that the steepness of the church tower was reflected in other vertical features of the island, such as the antennas of the Vessel Traffic Services and even the radar domes on top of the hill.^{II} This vertical infrastructure seemed to reflect a break from the horizontal logic of the town's traditional industry: fishing, which is closely related to its location as an island in the expanse of the Barents Sea. These vertical infrastructures connect the town to places and global locations beyond the horizon.

II
See Bill Fox' text 'Walking the high Wire' elsewhere in this booklet (http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=3590).



Aileen A Espiritu → Grand holiness



Culture → New culture — 210 collapsible seats



Peter Hemmersam → Nye Vardøhus?

NEW VARDØHUS

The large new culture house looks rather alien among the low houses of the city centre. The scale and facade materials of new structure attached to the old town hall in the town centre is a contrast to the surroundings. It is the new dominant feature of the town.

The urban chess board provides an image of urbanity on the new south facing square, and the furniture indicate the use of the space which is facing away from the other important public space surrounding the harbour. This new space is designed to be the square the town does not currently have, but it is not in the place where most people are found.



Cabin → #urban cabin



Chess → #urban chess



Peter Hemmersam → XX's new dog from Germany ran out into the street in front of us with XX in pursuit.

DOG AT THE RIGHT TIME

By being in the right place at the right time we witnessed a family episode with a new pet. When we told our local contact Svein Harald Holmen about the episode, he was immediately able to identify the family, and tell the story about the dog's recent arrival in town. Thus, this otherwise accidental observation provided us with extended knowledge of place, people and everyday life.

Peter Hemmersam



Garage → Garages on the outskirts of town, like the ones in Murmansk.

HOUSING STANDARD

Unlike their counterparts that we have observed on the nearby Kola Peninsula, where chimneys reveal additional uses, these garages appear to serve one purpose only: as garages. While the inhabitants of Kola live in Soviet era apartment blocks with little extra space for storage and other activities, the residents of Vardø primarily live in warm, comfortable large wooden detached houses with plenty of space.



Tourism → Tourism site — with oil harbour in the background

TWO FUTURES

Two possible futures of Vardø face each other across the water: The Stilneset memorial to the history of witch burning is part of developing Vardø as a tourist destination and the new industrial Svartnes harbour is constructed to support a future petrochemical industry. These two seemingly irreconcilable futures are equally pursued by local and national actors.



Herbs → Edible herbs? Tor-Emil Sivertsen / Varangerkokken knows.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPE

We had learned that the summer seasonal landscape was one of edible plants identified by locals with a particular interest in developing a regional cuisine. But when we encountered the fish scattered over the high point above the town, we were reminded that real abundance is found in the sea, which is reflected in the rich bird life of the area. According to Tormod Amundsen of the local architectural practice Biotope which specializes in architecture for bird watching, fishing — as it is carried out in Vardø — and birds go very well together: fishing harbours are in fact fantastic and biologically diverse.^{III} In this way, the city is also a landscape.



Urban sardines → #urban sardines



Paddock → Paddock with a view

RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPES

This horse riding facility is a reminder of the proximity to the town's recreational landscapes. This will continue to be a feature of the town in the future.



Farming → Urban farming?

III
Conversation with Tormod Amundsen in Vardø on January 24, 2014.



Balcony → Added balcony to enjoy #globalwarming

GLOBAL WARMING

The acute question of how Arctic communities experience and respond to climate change is partially answered by the visible presence of new terraces and balconies being added to the older buildings of the town, that previously had no such outdoor extensions to the home.



Balcony → Add-on balcony



Paths → Crossing paths. Entry to the white house?

TOURIST TRAILS

Beside a pleasant view over the sea, the logic of the location and orientation of the outlook platform is not self-evident. The tourist trail for visitors on their brief stopover on the Hurtigruten coastal steamer hardly overlaps with the movement of the everyday city of the inhabitants of Vardø. This reminds us that while the daily arrival of the boat brings tourists to the town, their direct economic impact is limited.



Platform → A platform facing nothing. The "millennium place"



Layers → Deep layers of culture

LAYERS

Our transect walks revealed numerous monuments and visual traces of the layered history of the town, including remnants from the Middle Ages, witch trials and WW2. We even spotted a seemingly discarded monument and what seemed like remnants of historical buildings in the municipal storage yard. This seemed, in an odd way, to echo JB Jackson's argument that when monuments are detached from their hortatory role and no longer celebrate grand historical narratives, they become reminders of a 'vernacular past' in which historic events and individual heroism is no longer important — an 'age where there are no dates or names'.^{IV}



Monument → Was the #monument here?

^{IV} John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins, and Other Topics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980): 94.



Hot chair → Synes synd i den personen som skal sitte i denne stolen...



Bunker → #WW2 bunker?



Monuments → Lost monuments



Traces of People → Where people are



Bikes → Where bikes go to die

SAFE CITY

On a Wednesday afternoon, the streets mostly are empty, but traces of children are found around the swimming pool in the new culture house. The casually dumped bikes evidence the free and safe movement of children in the town. Here, they can go anywhere

WHAT WE WERE NOT LOOKING FOR...

While we mapped, the landscape and the act of walking often overwhelmed the formality of the transect walks and the notational protocol. The actual walk deviated from the straight line; obstacles were encountered during the walk, and the gaze (and the observer) was drawn by events and objects on both sides of the line. The observations we made during our transect walks may seem like just chance, and while that might be the case, we argue with Gary Fine and James Deegan that it does not mean that that there is not “anything interesting ... to be learned. It is through our intellectual readiness, coupled with exposure to a wide range of experience, that we create a sense of lived experience — ours and others. Each researcher must be ready to seize the clues on the road to discovery.”¹⁰ In fact, serendipity (finding something we were not looking for) occurs in different ways during our transect walks.¹¹ Remembering Fine and Deegan, we find that accidentally being at the right place at the right time may trigger deeper insight into processes that are immediately visible or graspable. Serendipity may also involve accidentally meeting and building networks with people telling us about their experiences and aspirations for the future. Insights may also emerge when what we encounter triggers links to stories we have heard or read before or theory that reflects our varied academic fields. All these forms of serendipity were active in our Vardø transects.

The act of walking brings forces into play, and the emerging mapping is as much a product of the activity as of the landscape. The transect also functions by foregrounding our professional and disciplinary ‘luggage’ of pre-configured notions that we bring on our travels.¹² Rather than denying these notions, the conversations along the transect walk helps bringing them out in the open, leading to degrees of reflexivity for the researchers involved. This is an important first step in familiarising ourselves as a group with a new place.

Walking and mapping starts unpacking the complex interconnectedness of landscapes and people. While the mapping may be perceived as random, it points to the fact that various perspectives exist in any given location, and as Canadian Sociologist Alice Mah reminds us in her book on cities of industrial ruination “there is no single imaginary of change that will produce prosperous, liveable, and equitable communities. Rather, imaginaries are diverse and contradictory, situated in particular times and places, and linked to different social actors and interests.”¹³ Our transect walk mapping sessions in several places in the Arctic suggest that imagining change clearly happens in different ways in different locations, and that any location, including Vardø, provides multiple ways of understanding what is there as a precondition for thinking about the future

¹⁰ Gary Fine and James Deegan, ‘Three principles of serendipity: insight, chance, and discovery in qualitative research.’ *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 9(4) (1996): 11.

¹¹ Peter Hemmersam, Jonny Aspen and Andrew Morrison, ‘Serendipity and The Urban Transect Walk: Reflections on design and cultural mapping in Arctic cities.’ Paper presented at the Cumulus Conference, Hong Kong Design Institute, 21–24.11.2016.

¹² Jilly Traganou, *Travel, Space, Architecture*.

¹³ Alice Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community And Place: Landscapes And Legacies Of Urban Decline* (University of Toronto Press, 2012): 194.

4. Walking the High Wire

William L. Fox

The wind where the street ends and the sea begins is gusting over five metres per second, enough to stagger us while we're standing above the massive green combers pushed out of the Barents Sea. Spindrift blows sideways through the rocks. It's -5°C , and we're wearing multiple layers of fleece, wool, and windproof nylon against the wind chill. Taking notes is done with bare hands facing away from the wind in 15-second bursts.



The uppermost street atop Vardø sweeps in an arc with its apex the easternmost man-made civilian feature on the island. The handful of houses planted along it, which are afforded spectacular views of the waves and rocks, are generic family dwellings that could be sitting in any northern European city, a banal suburb fronting the sublime. The only structures sitting higher and more easterly than the tidy dwellings are four radar domes. It's not coincidental that on a clear day you can see the mountains of Russia from here.

The transect of Vardø that Peter Hemmersam has plotted for us starts here above the eastern shore, cuts through downtown and across the historical harbor. It then traverses the left lobe of the butterfly-shaped island to end on the western shore not far from the spindly radio masts of the Vessel Traffic Service. In between stands the improbably tall isosceles spire of the town's central church. What the transect walks is a line stretching above town that connects its three highest points, all of which are navigational devices for military, commercial, and more ethereal movements.

The four domes atop the geological climax of the island serve several masters: the Norwegian Intelligence Service, which administers them, the Raytheon Corporation which built and maintains the largest one, and the United States Air Force Space Command, which ostensibly deploys that latter device, the 27-meter radar dish of Globus II, to track space debris. And you can see Russia from the doorstep of its three-story building supporting the huge white dome, which is by far the dominant visual

vertical on the island. A good guess is that the multiple devices track everything that's flying above the ground flying north from Iran to Murmansk, as well as the 10,000 pieces of trash in slowly decaying geosynchronous orbits.

As we trundle down the snow-covered street the twin crosses capping the church spire are visible most of the way. The first church in the centre of Vardø was built in 1307. A more recent version constructed in 1869 was torched by the Germans in 1944 as they retreated from northern Norway. The current Church of Norway structure, its interior a slightly chilly and austere mid-century Lutheran chapel, doesn't see much traffic on Sundays, but remains an important civic center for rites and passages, as well as the occasional concert.

But the dominant height of the spire, while it metaphorically connects Heaven and Earth, is a reminder that church spires were often the most or only visible landmarks along an otherwise foggy, highly fractal, and isotropic coastline. Ship's logs contained a catalogue of them all along the shorelines of this part of Europe, distinctive features standing above each town that the pilots used to keep place in the grayed-out world of water and sky that is the Barents Sea.

The several radio masts and real-time tracking screen of the Vessel Traffic Services is part of a cooperative monitoring system run in cooperation with Russia. The "VTS" tracks every boat and ship on the sea surface around the region, paying particular attention to the shipping routes from Lofoten archipelago north around the



Transecting Vardø — the line and the walk

Varanger and Kola peninsulas to Murmansk. Liquid natural gas and oil tankers, ships carrying nuclear waste, and the commercial and passenger traffic through the increasingly ice-free Northeast Passage keep the operators alert. The system uses satellites, coastal radios, some of the radar gear atop the island, and maritime seniors to plot the constantly evolving relative positions of every vessel. Everyone prays it works, no doubt.

All three verticals are linked visually from almost any vantage point on the island, and they exist to plot, surveil, assist and sanction human movement in a profoundly

hostile environment. The geo-political and historical circumstances that require facilities of global strategic importance be situated in Vardø, an otherwise modest if handsome fishing town, illuminate why this has been a fortified stronghold in the Arctic since the late thirteenth century. As always, the most highly prioritized functions of a town are expressed in its verticals, which require the expenditure of more resources to erect than the horizontal and more earth-bound buildings of commerce and domicile. Peter's transect followed a natural fall line from the most global of the instruments to the more regional coastal service.

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5. Methods for Probing Futures: Vardø

Henry Mainsah

Studying future landscapes poses a methodological challenge for researchers and communities facing the effects of climate change and industrial development. Changes brought about by these converging forces pose significant challenges for communities such as Vardø. This calls for new ways of understanding, envisioning and attuning to futures. How does one go about studying the visible and not-so visible aspects of changes in the environment and socio-cultural landscapes? What historical and cultural resources can communities draw upon to envision alternative futures? How does one convey the emergent character of climate change related transformations as manifested locally?

All these questions point us to a future that is slippery, ill defined, constantly moving and intangible. Social researchers (Coleman, 2017; Lyon & Carabelli, 2016) tell us that the future is not an empty space lying in wait for us to project our visions into from the present. Neither is it a predefined destination that we can foresee and arrive at in due time. Futures scholars, in particular, urge us not to consider the future as a separate space or time but as a multiplicity of ideas, critiques and potentialities that are reflected in the narratives and objects of our everyday lives (Yelavich and Adams, 2014). The challenge is how to tease out these ideas and potentialities and how do we project these towards alternative futures.

These are quite complex questions that no single research project could pretend to fully and completely address. What is clear, though, is that in order to address such issues, we need methods that enable us to distance ourselves from the current, the ordinary, the mundane and the 'real', in order to be able to question the taken for granted and to see possible alternatives. In this regard, I have paid particular attention on how tools and techniques from the design disciplines can be particularly fruitful in helping us understand, frame, convey, and intervene in matters pertaining to futures. My interest here is motivated by the idea that research methods lay the foundation of

almost every empirical endeavour and constitute an essential component of what and how we know. Thus, knowledge about central contemporary issues related to global futures, from climate change and the environment, to sustainability and resource dilemmas, go hand in hand with the implementation of appropriate methods. Although methods are often thought of simply as a necessity, they can also be stimulating, inspiring, and provocative. Methods do not only serve to answer pre-known questions. They can also stimulate latent realities and help generate new questions.

The renowned cultural theorist and media designer Anne Balsamo (2010) lists a series of actions that frame the methods and techniques of design. These actions include imagining, creating, representing, negotiating, prototyping, fabricating, building, evaluating, and iterating. These actions represent techniques that can serve as research devices that could help us navigate between the world of 'what is' and 'what could be'. This could take the form of visions and ideas that local communities craft in collaboration with design teams. It could also involve scenario writing, narratives, future workshops and prototyping. These can enable new forms of experience, dialogue and awareness to emerge (Halse & Boffi, 2016). They also have the quality of being able to materialize and make tangible ideas, concerns, and speculations, while paying close attention to the people being affected by them. Design provides us with a repertoire of techniques for creating artifacts that allow communities to revitalize their past, reflect upon the present and extrapolate into possible futures.

The Future North project has invited a wide variety of students and researchers with backgrounds in landscape architecture, urbanism, design, as well as from a variety of humanistic and social science disciplines to participate in research and planning activities in Vardø. The project has ensured that the visiting research teams make time and space to explore, to see, and otherwise sense the environment in their own way. We

have seen what it means to bring a design sensibility to looking, noticing and learning about the landscape, the local community, its history and culture. One could see this when a group of landscape architecture students went out to explore the town on foot. When they came across an empty building at the pier with graffiti painting on it, they would pay attention to small details such as the north facing elevation, the concrete floors, layout, and internal fittings. They could make quick sketches and prototypes to convey alternative scenarios of how the building could be transformed in the future.

We have observed a wide repertoire of techniques from co-design being employed to facilitate collaboration between the Future North research team and local community actors. One of the project's researchers Morgan Ip has experimented with the use of the locative mapping tool, mybarents.com to engage local communities with their local urban environment. Using the tool, he invited people to share ideas for the future on a map, discuss them, and link into select neighbouring areas. Through this, he tries to demonstrate that landscapes are not fixed and static but can be shaped and redefined by the people and the cultures that inhabit it. During our workshops, we have seen how artifacts such as hand-drawn sketches, satellite photographs, and computer-generated models have contributed to engaging our collective imagination. When students present sketches and collage photos of alternative scenarios for what the abandoned wooden fishing house building could be to community members, we can collectively better perceive hidden material and potential of the urban landscape lying just underneath the surface.

Dealing with past present and future contexts that are multiply situated, mutating and messy, sometimes requires the use of more speculative methods. Researchers in the project have experimented with collaboratively developing design fiction personas to communicate issues related to climate change. In the Future North project, Andrew Morrison has invited us to co-design the persona called *Narrata*, a nuclear powered narwhal, and a blog based online character. *Narrata* has rested underneath the boardwalks in Versterågen, recalling the facilities at the harbour front that were blown up during WWII. She has commented on the rising temperatures and envisioned future urban arctic transformations. Design fiction is envisioned here as a way of playfully engaging with challenging and complex topics. For those speaking through the person, as well as for the audience, the persona offers a means to facilitate self-reflection. The idea is to make the audience and partici-

pants immerse in and empathise with the narratives, in spite of their gravity and complexity. What is of interest here is the potential of design techniques and methods to help us make sense of things that are vague, ephemeral, unspecific, and constantly changing. These methods give material form to abstract phenomena, so that that we can engage with these experientially.

I see methods as devices that are always shaped by the context in which we deploy them. They cannot be detached from users and communities and cannot simply be transferred from one project to another. In addition to having diverse disciplinary backgrounds, the members of the research team comprised of people of different nationalities (Norwegian, Canadian, Dutch, Ethiopian, Zimbabwean, Taiwanese, Greek, among others). In Vardø, they were positioned as outsiders, looking in through a variety of lenses.

What I suggest, here, is that we need to view the making of methods as a process of design (Mainsah, 2017). I understand methods of research inquiry as a process of *making* that involves an artful combination of skills, craft, and technologies. This is akin to the work of the *bricoleur*. Research techniques, in this case are understood as forms of situated practical action that are productive, constitutive, and lead to the emergence of novelty.

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6. DIPLOMA PROJECT: Savour the Past, Taste the Future — Community Regeneration Through Food Heritage in Vardø

Brona Ann Keenan and Miles Franklin Hamaker

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Varangerhalvøya is a 2,080 square kilometer peninsula at the very northern tip of continental Norway, just above the Arctic Circle. Resting in the Barents Sea and only 50 kilometers to Russia's border, Varanger is Norway and Finnmark's most northeastern land mass. Varanger is not a politically defined area, but a geographical region comprised of 4 complete municipalities, Vardø, Vadsø, Berlevåg, Båtsfjord, and 2 partial, Deatnu Tana and Unjarga Nesseby. The region and towns have seen many shifts in population throughout the last 65 years. Halfway through the century in 1950 there were around 11,025 people in the Varanger region. 15 years later the population peaked around 18,500 at the height of the Barents sea fishing boom. Today about 15,500 people call Varanger peninsula home with almost half of them living in Vadsø on the Varangerfjordbotn coast.

Varanger peninsula is Norway's only Arctic peninsula complete with all the diverse ecological properties of these northern biotopes. Situated in the heart of the marine bounty of the Barents sea, including world renowned king crab and, undeveloped aquaculture infrastructure, as well as a home to the grazing grounds for award winning reindeer, lam, and unique local traditions of food preservation, preparation, and presentation — Varanger is at the delicious epicenter of Norway's arctic sustenance resources.

VARANGER & FOOD CULTURE

... the Unjarga-Nesseby "meahcci" (outfields) is where resources are found and where harvesting take place. What is important locally, is the ability to maintain varied (and from time to time changing) harvesting in the outfields, because it enables a flexible way of life, through matauk and the ability to birget (cope), and because it contributes to social interaction through food gifts and the sharing of meals, based on locally harvested resources. Both the harvesting activities and their following social significance, made possible through mutually constitutive relations between animals, plants and landscape, appear highly important to peoples' local identity management and sense of belonging.

This excerpt from social anthropologist Stine Rybråtyn's PHD thesis revolving around a year long study of the small Varangerfjorden coastal community of Unjarga-Nesseby is an excellent encapsulation that reveals the deep importance of local food resources not only the to economy and health of the region, but to the societies way of life and identity. This description of the seasonality of experiencing, and dependence of people on the landscape linked directly through food production can be used for every community along the arctic peninsula, Varanger.

WARDØ CONTEXT

Historically industry in Vardø was based on trade links with Russia and strategic position in the Barents sea. The Pomor Trade (1740–1917) along the North coast of Norway traded wood and flour from Russia for Fish from Norway, Vardø was a major hub in this trade. Trading also occurred with Finns and Sami. The main industries in Vardø were related to fishing activity, food processing and ship maintenance.

A slump in fish prices in the 1980s caused economic depression, resulting in unemployment, abandoned of multiple buildings (domestic and industrial), migration, population reduction by 50% between 1980–2010 and a breakdown in community.

Recently this pattern has begun to change through a variety of projects and initiatives aimed at building community spirit and pride in Vardø. Vardø Restored, an initiative by Varanger Museum aims to develop a city strategy, reflecting the cultural heritage and business initiatives. Vardø has the highest concentration of historic buildings in North Norway. Vardøhus fortress was established in 1306. Komafest, an art project, was initiated to address the depopulation and abandoned building in the town. Vardø has a proud history, dramatic scenery and nature and is increasing in popularity as tourist destination.

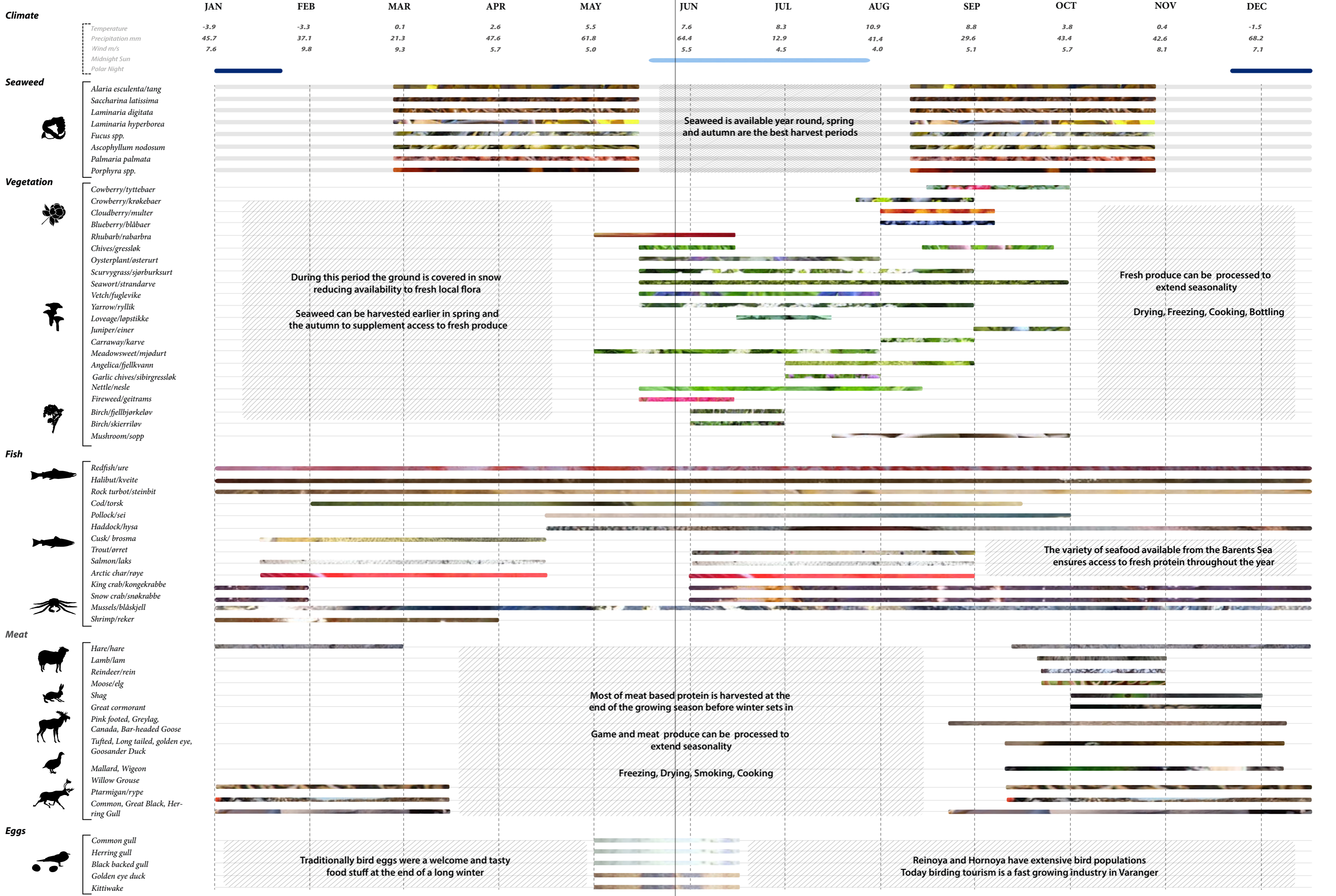
PROJECT STATEMENT

In our diploma we explore how local food resources may be reassessed to contribute to regenerating people's sense of place and community development in Vardø, Norway.

Drawing on an anthropologic assessment of the Varanger region and Vardø specifically, we have come to understand that a community's connection to the landscape is directly influenced through food resource harvesting activities and the subsequent social significances. This importance is not only economic, but plays an important role in an individual's identity and sense of place. In reaction to the 1980's cod crises and the negative consequences on the city, people, and economy of Vardø, we propose a series of food related educational and processing spaces intended to reveal the now invisible food infrastructures of the city. These spaces will take on the idea of "allmenning," being open to public use and community direction. To take on this project we have explored cultural food heritage of the Varanger region, seasonality of existing food resources, interviewed a wide variety of stakeholders, mapped existing flows of projection, and gained and understanding of how food infrastructure is a fluctuating part of Vardø's urban fabric.

When to Pick

seasonality of Vardø region's food resources



Seaweed is available year round, spring and autumn are the best harvest periods

During this period the ground is covered in snow reducing availability to fresh local flora

Seaweed can be harvested earlier in spring and the autumn to supplement access to fresh produce

Fresh produce can be processed to extend seasonality

Drying, Freezing, Cooking, Bottling

The variety of seafood available from the Barents Sea ensures access to fresh protein throughout the year

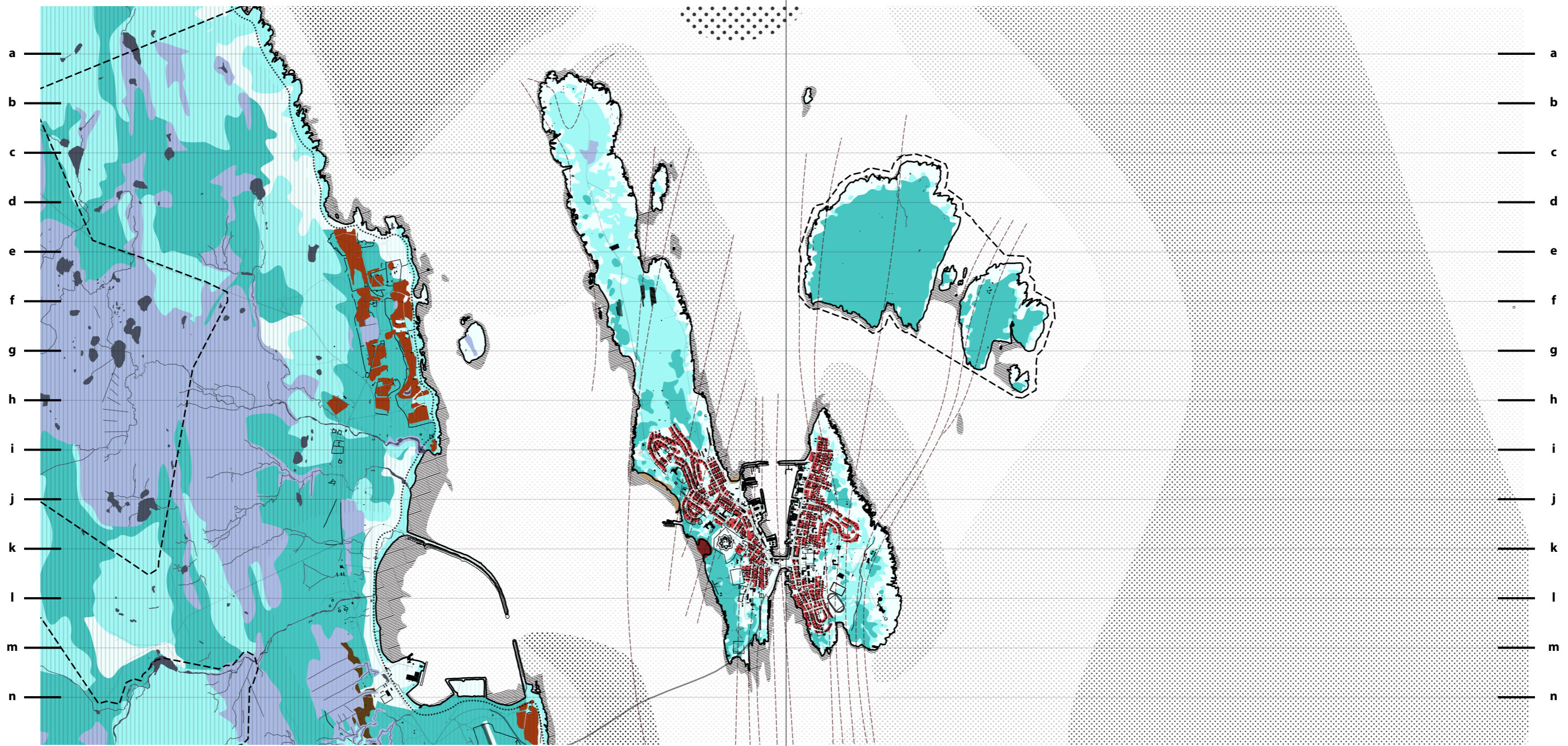
Most of meat based protein is harvested at the end of the growing season before winter sets in


Game and meat produce can be processed to extend seasonality

Freezing, Drying, Smoking, Cooking

Traditionally bird eggs were a welcome and tasty food stuff at the end of a long winter


Reinoya and Hornoya have extensive bird populations Today birding tourism is a fast growing industry in Varanger




plaiice & tobis - mørketida || 

scallop field - mørketida || 

tidal zone - mørketida : 

freshwater habitat- mørketida : 

thin to no soil - mørketida : 

cultivated soil - mørketida : 

plaiice & tobis - mørketida : 

scallop field - mørketida ' : 

tidal zone - mørketida || 

freshwater habitat- mørketida ■ 


thin to no soil - mørketida ■ 

cultivated soil - mørketida ■ 

meadow - mørketida ■ 

bogs - mørketida ■ 

private gardens- mørketida ■ 

birch forest - mørketida ■ 

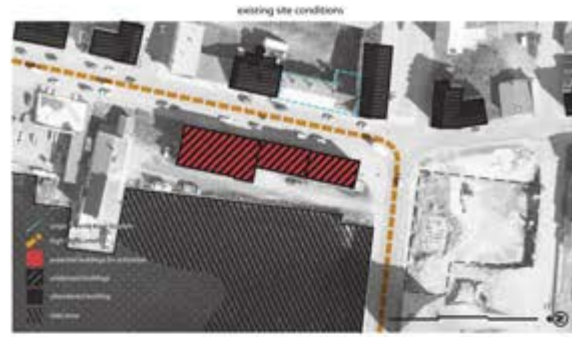
beach - mørketida ■ 

cultivated soil - mørketida ■ 

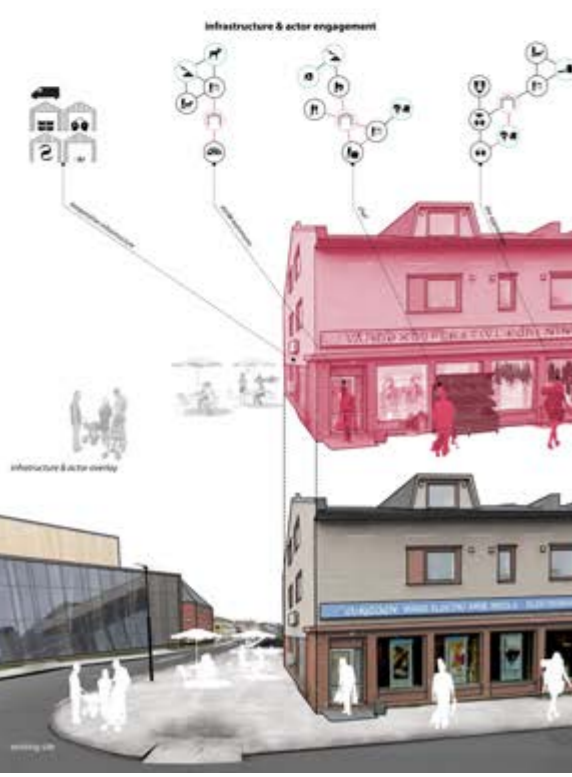
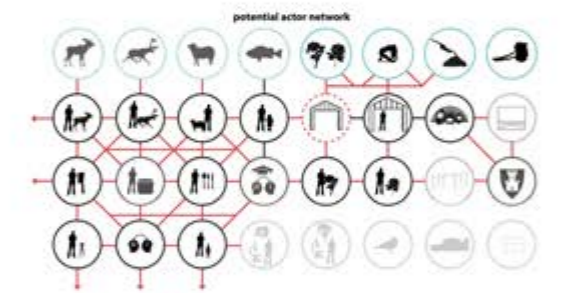
Vardø Food Landscape
mapping of landscape types and species general location

Vardo Kooperativ Forening 2.0

The Vardo community cooperative is a food hub for the collection, distribution and exchange of goods and facilitates resource exchange through formal and informal economies. An existing structure is reused and proposed across the street from the original, and culturally successful Vardo cooperative. Small scale production, local employment, and apprentices share and exchange resources while locals and tourists have easy access to a taste of Vardo and Finnmark's fresh and preserved local produce while in season.

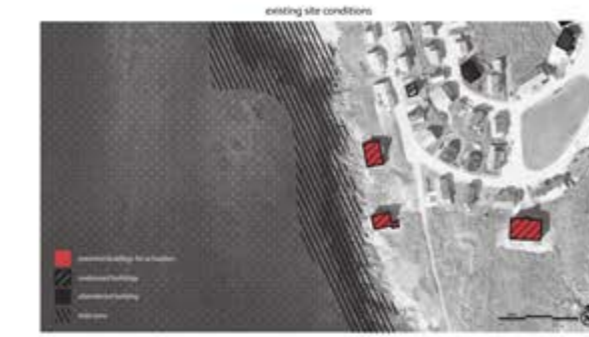


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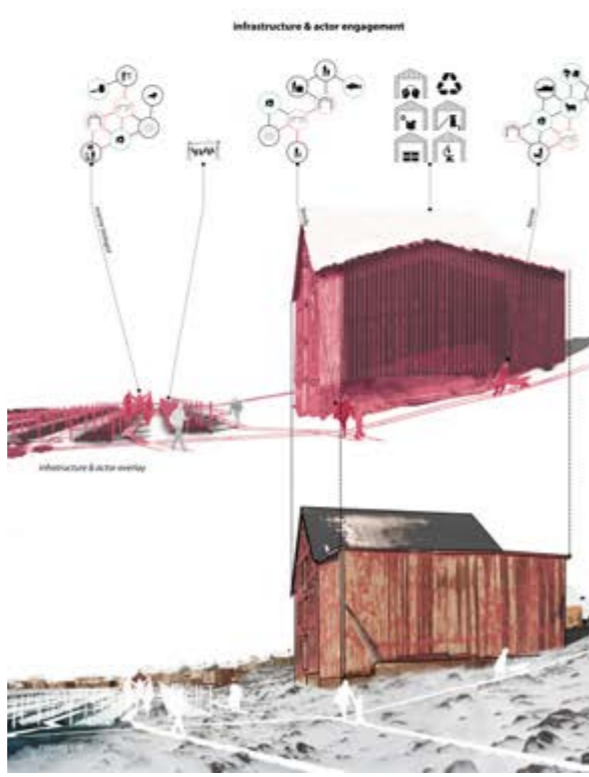
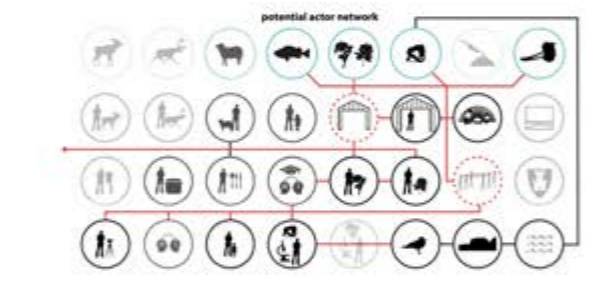


Vardo Community Compost Center

Community waste composting and seaweed harvesting closes the food network loop, offering facilities for the recycling of food by products. Engaging actors involved in vegetative food production, water is shared from landfill, and used to improve soil structure, health and fertility. The harvested seaweed is also applied as food fertilizer and is recycled into the network to be incorporated into gardens or farms. The cycle stabilizes the urban metabolism. The infrastructure also facilitates research and public education function.

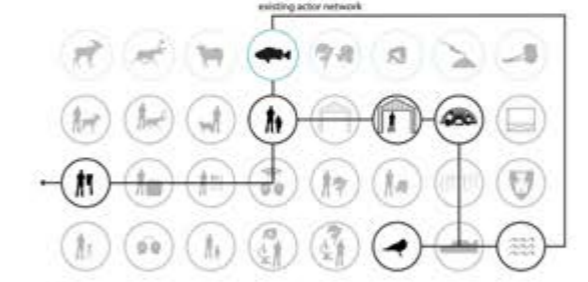
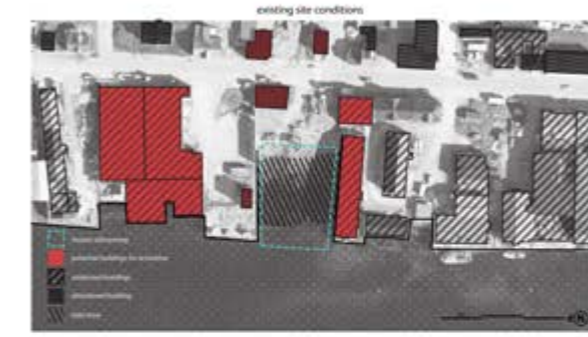


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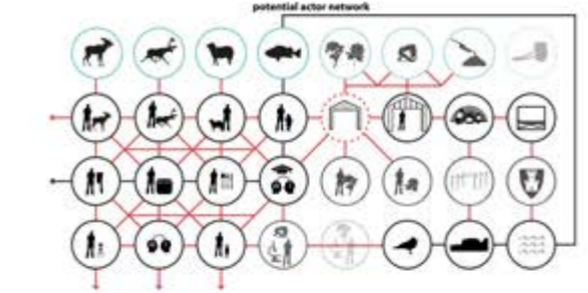


Vestervagenvaen Fauna Allmenning

Public facilities programmed with workshops, machines, and other necessary tools for processing local fish and game resources. These spaces are utilized by small scale producers, enthusiasts, and the curious local or tourist. Secondary processing is arranged in various abandoned industrial buildings to help reveal some of these visually visible processes and networks to pedestrians. Combining these food resources also provides opportunities for sharing of facilities, education, and networking.

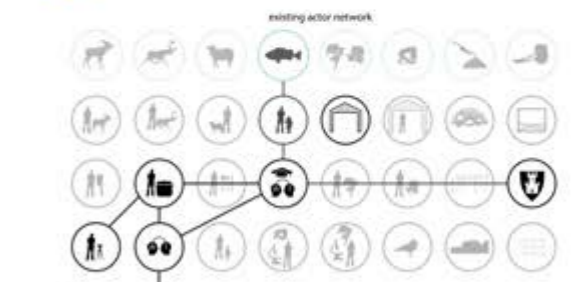


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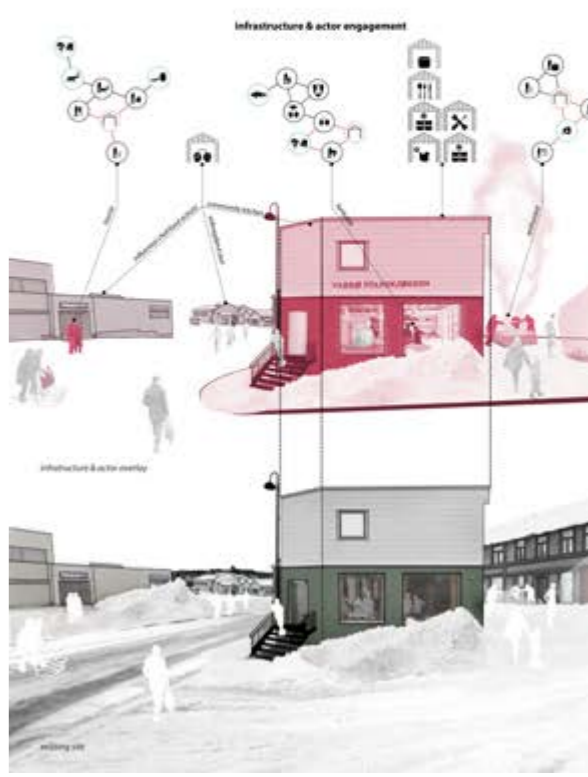
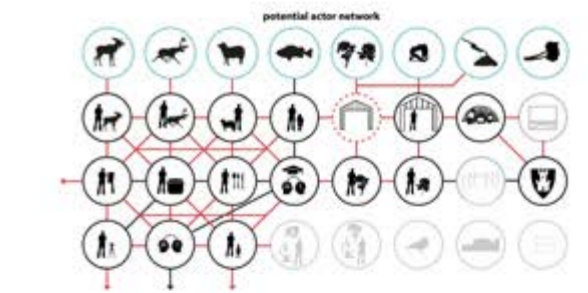


Vardo Community Kitchen

Community cooking and processing facilities. The relocation of a food economy requires a processing infrastructure related to the community. It suggests the reuse of existing infrastructure and combines food preparation, cooking, preserving, sorting and packing. Here small producers and local enthusiasts exchange knowledge, experience, ideas and resources. The strategic location is adjacent to the Seafood Centre at Vardo Videregående Skole, Vardo Hotel and Harstuguene docking. Engaging students, educators, professionals and tourists.



existing
proposed



SAVOUR THE PAST, TASTE THE FUTURE

community regeneration through food heritage in Vardø

Brona Keenan & Miles Hamaker

Regional Context

Vardø is a 2,000 square kilometre peninsula at the very northern tip of continental Norway, just above the Arctic Circle. Nestled in the Barents Sea and only 50 kilometres to Russia, Vardø is Norway and Finnmark's most northerly land mass. Vardø is not a politically defined area, but a geographical region comprised of 4 complete municipalities: Vardø, Vadsø, Berlevåg, Skånland, and 2 partial: Østre-Fosen and Ungva-Nesbyen. The region and towns have seen many shifts in population throughout the last 60 years. Halfway through the century in 1960 there were around 11,000 people in the Vardø region. 13 years later the population peaked around 18,000 at the height of the Barents sea fishing boom. Today about 15,000 people call Vardø peninsula home with almost half of them living in Vadsø on the Vardøfjordbotn coast.

Vardø peninsula is Norway's only Arctic peninsula complete with all the diverse ecological properties of these northern biotopes. Situated in the heart of the marine biotopes of the Barents sea, including world renowned king crab and, undeveloped aquaculture infrastructure, as well as a home to the grazing grounds for local reindeer herds, sea and unique local traditions of food preservation, preparation, and presentation. Vardø is at the delicious epicentre of Norway's Arctic sustenance resources.

Vardø & Food Culture

"...the Ungva-Nesbyen 'biotopes' (outfields) is where resources are found and where harvesting takes place. What is important is not the ability to maintain control (and thus time to time change) harvesting in the outfields, because it enables a flexible way of life, through mobility and the ability to adapt to changes. It contributes to social interaction through food gifts and the sharing of meals, based on locally harvested resources. Both the harvesting activities and their following social significance, made possible through mutually constitutive relations between animals, plants and landscape, appear highly important to people's local identity management and sense of belonging."

This excerpt from social anthropologist Tone Halvorsen's PhD thesis resulting around a year long study of the small Vardøfjord coastal community of Ungva-Nesbyen is an excellent encapsulation that reveals the deep importance of local food resources not only to the economy and health of the region, but to the societal way of life and identity. This description of the seasonality of experiencing, and dependence of people on the landscape linked directly through food production can be used for every community along the Arctic peninsula, Vardø.

Vardø Context

Historically industry in Vardø was based on trade links with Russia and strategic position in the Barents sea. The Pomor Trade (1740-1917) along the North coast of Norway traded wood and flour from Russia for fish from Norway. Vardø was a major hub in this trade. Trading also occurred with Fennoscandia and Sami. The main industries in Vardø were related to fishing activity, food processing and ship maintenance.

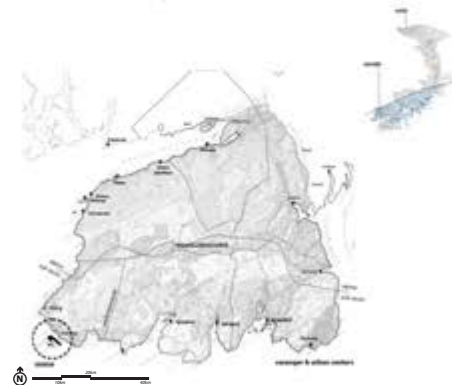
A slump in fish prices in the 1980s caused economic depression, resulting in unemployment, abandonment of multiple buildings (domestic and industrial), migration, population reduction by 50% between 1980-2010 and a breakdown in community.

Recently this pattern has begun to change through a variety of projects and initiatives aimed at building community spirit and pride in Vardø. Vardø Restored, an initiative by Vardø Museum aims to develop a city strategy reflecting the cultural heritage and business initiatives. Vardø has the highest concentration of historic buildings in North Norway. Vardøhus Fortunes was established in 2006. Furthermore, an art project, was initiated to address the depopulation and abandoned buildings in the town. Vardø has a proud history, dramatic scenery and nature and is increasing in popularity as tourist destination.

Project Statement

In our designs we explore how local food resources may be reassessed to contribute to regenerating people's sense of place and community development in Vardø, Norway.

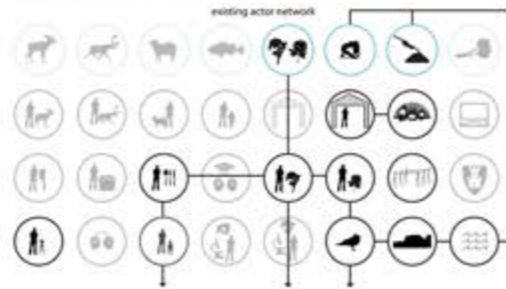
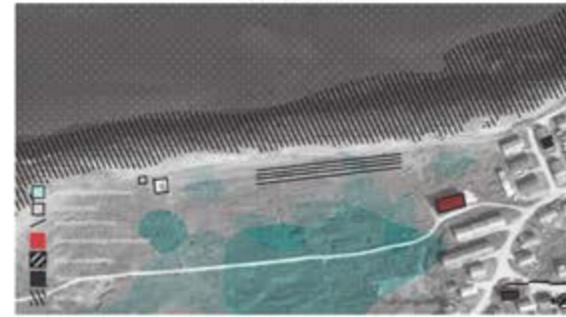
Drawing on an anthropological assessment of the Vardø region and Vardø specifically, we have come to understand that a community's connection to the landscape is directly influenced through food resource harvesting activities and the subsequent social significances. This importance is not only economic, but plays an important role in an individual's identity and sense of place. In reaction to the 1980s food crisis and the negative consequences on the city people, and economy of Vardø, we propose a series of food related educational and processing spaces intended to reveal the now invisible food infrastructures of the city. These spaces will take on the idea of 'allmenning', being open to public use and community direction. To take on this project we have explored cultural food heritage of the Vardø region, seasonality of existing food resources, assessed a wide variety of stakeholders, mapped existing flows of production, and gained and understanding of how food infrastructure is a fluctuating part of Vardø's urban fabric.



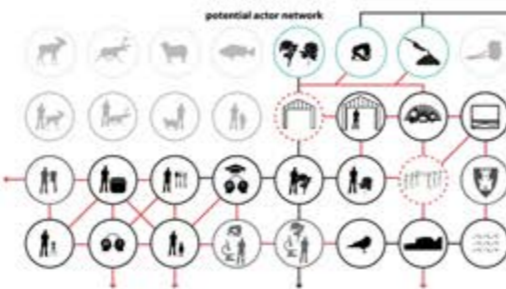
Skagen Flora Allmenning

Community flora and seasonal harvesting centre. Harvesting opportunities and biotopes are revealed through visible connection with landscape and infrastructure. Tidal cycles are connected with the harvesting of seaweed and are accessed by tidal paths. Existing infrastructure, redundant fish racks are repurposed for drying seaweed and herbs while revealing the potential of sea vegetables and Vardø's unused vegetation. A fish house is activated as an outdoor berry, mushroom and herb collection by locals who recreate on the island's food developed landscape. The infrastructure also facilitates ecological research and a public education function.

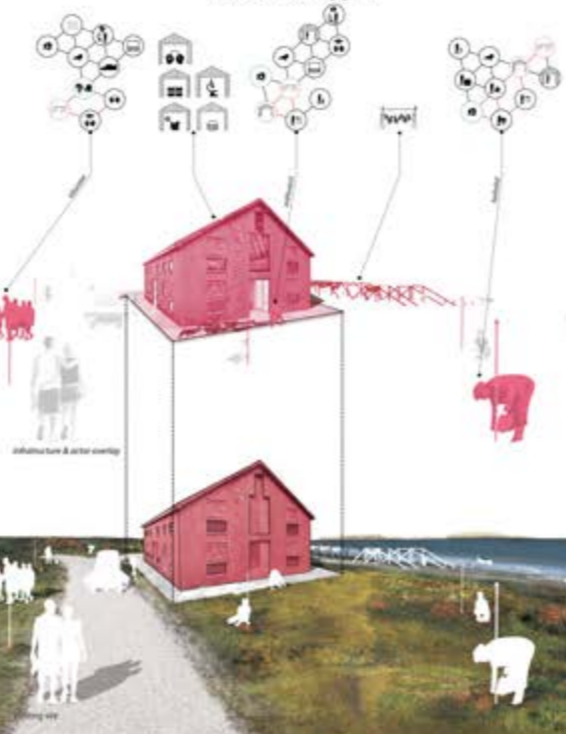
existing site conditions



existing
proposed



infrastructure & actor engagement



Vardø's Present
photographic study of fraying urban fabric



Vardø Mat Allmenning Design

public food gathering, processing, and education spaces

allmenninger as design

Food is seen as part of cultural heritage can be used as building blocks for community development and in place making. We suggest developing a food network based on the current and potential relationships between people, infrastructure and resources. Using the concept of Allmenninger the project seeks the right to be able not only to access and harvest food, but also knowledge, ability and facilities to process these resources. The food allmenning can be seen as a utility in the community, like a library, a place for education and growing. Actor Network Theory (ANT) is utilized as a tool to visualize possibilities and attempts to translate these future interactions between people, resources and infrastructure. It explores tangible and changeable networks, between human and non-human actors to reveal dynamic potential.

Phase 1: Education

Phase 2: Inspiration / Facilitating

Phase 3: Growth & Enterprise



actor network theory as design

ANT explores the activation of existing resources, qualities and potential for strategic development. It provides an operational framework using creative site analysis as a transitional process. It is a tool for understanding complex and dynamic connections between human and non-human actors that mutually effect one another. The effects of these interactions between the actors are translated into future possible interactions. The aim of this design approach is not primarily good physical form but to trigger off a given situation in a desired direction.

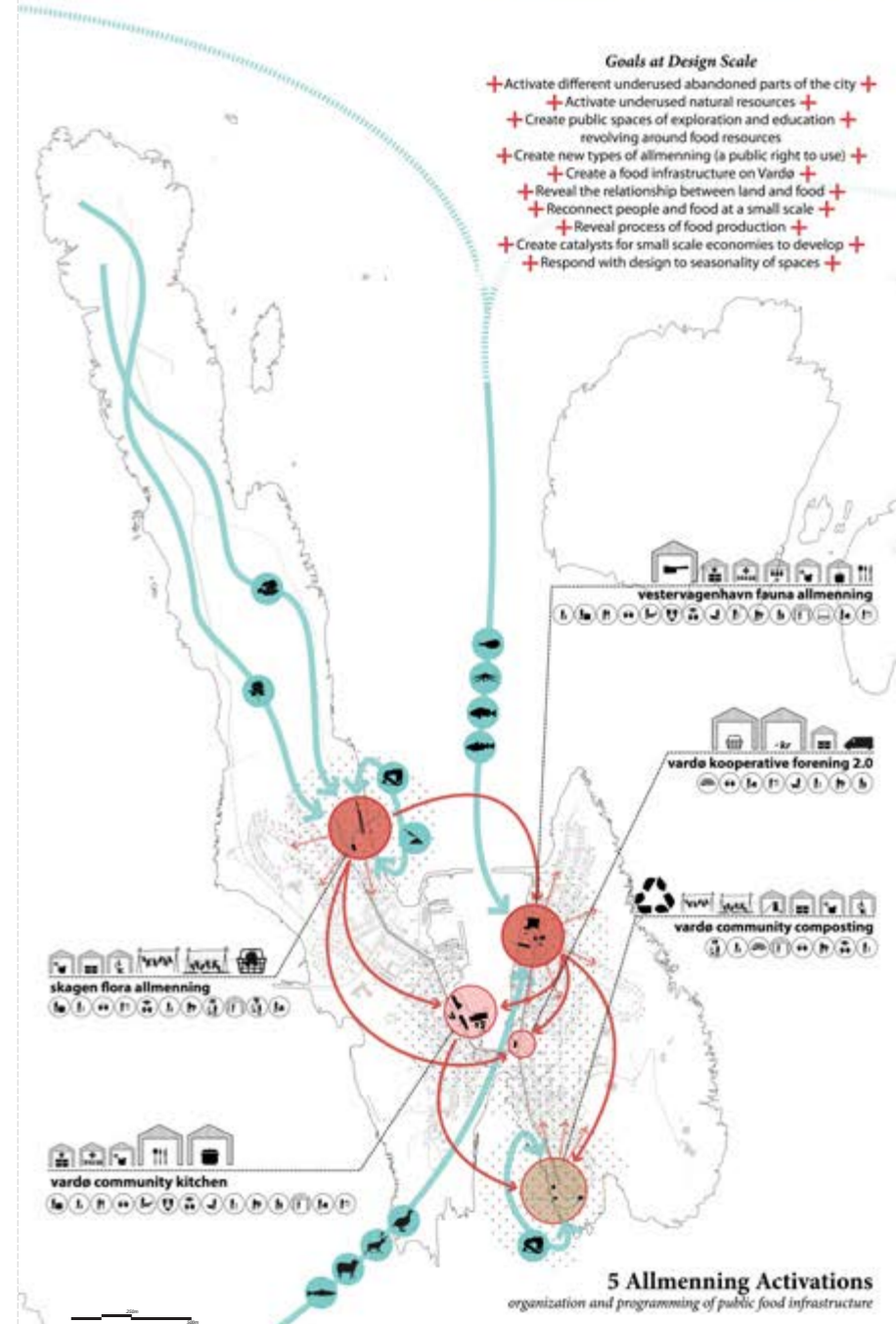
The site analysis is about form, dynamic factors and interactions of processes, physical, ecological and man made that shaped the site over time. This is then translated into descriptive maps and diagrams which become prescriptive and suggest possible future interactions. The relationships between actors are articulated, new actors are introduced by the design intervention and innovative actor networks are activated.

The design role is the articulation of a design proposal that effects a wide spread, dynamic web of socio-technological relationships. The design proposal become an actor and the Allmenning to gain a new role, become a network node and productive exchange of resources and knowledge.



Goals at Design Scale

- + Activate different underused abandoned parts of the city +
- + Activate underused natural resources +
- + Create public spaces of exploration and education revolving around food resources +
- + Create new types of allmenning (a public right to use) +
- + Create a food infrastructure on Vardø +
- + Reveal the relationship between land and food +
- + Reconnect people and food at a small scale +
- + Reveal process of food production +
- + Create catalysts for small scale economies to develop +
- + Respond with design to seasonality of spaces +



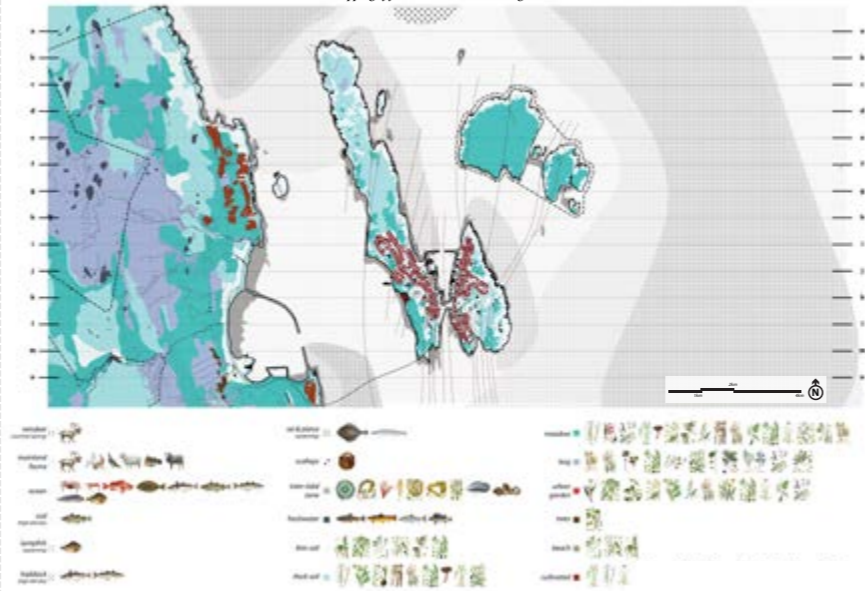
5 Allmenning Activations

organization and programming of public food infrastructure

Vardo's Past
photographic study of people & food

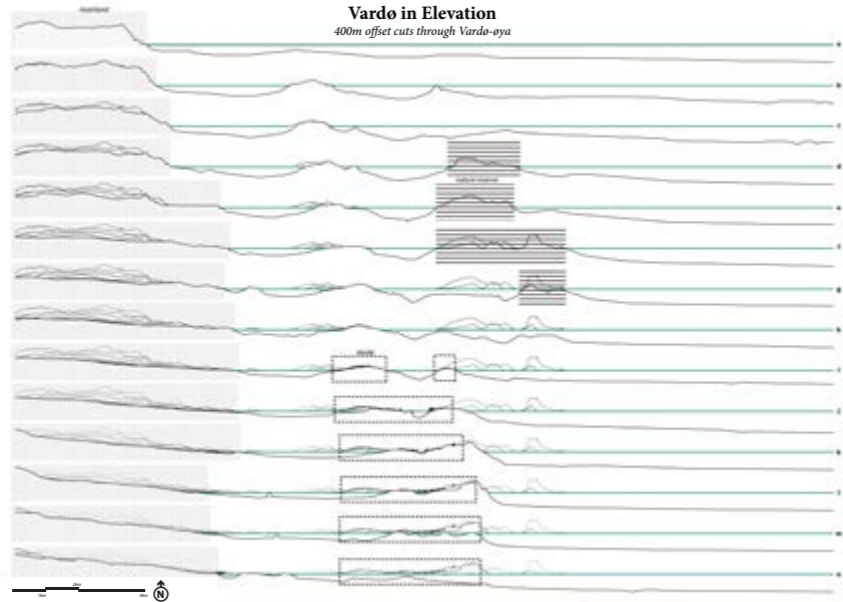


Vardo's Productive Landscape
mapping of food resources surrounding Vardo



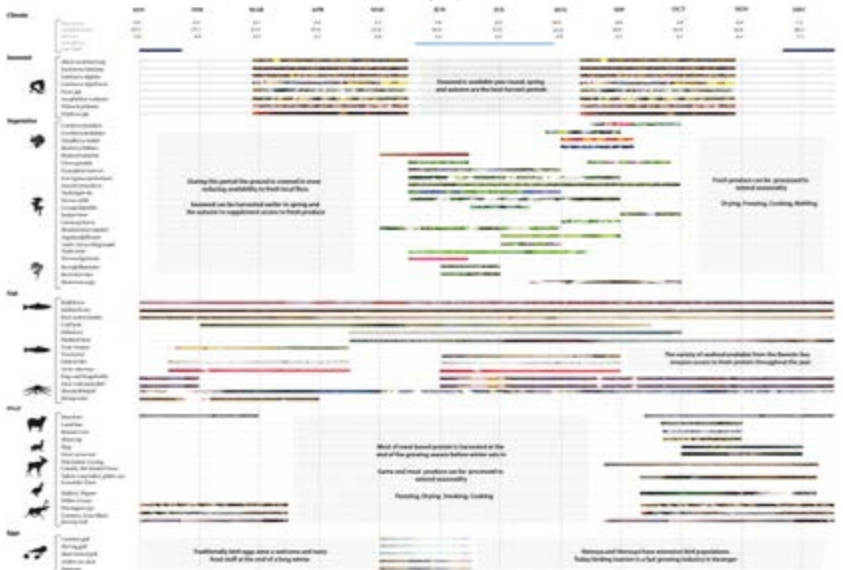
Vardo in Elevation

400m offset cuts through Vardo-aya



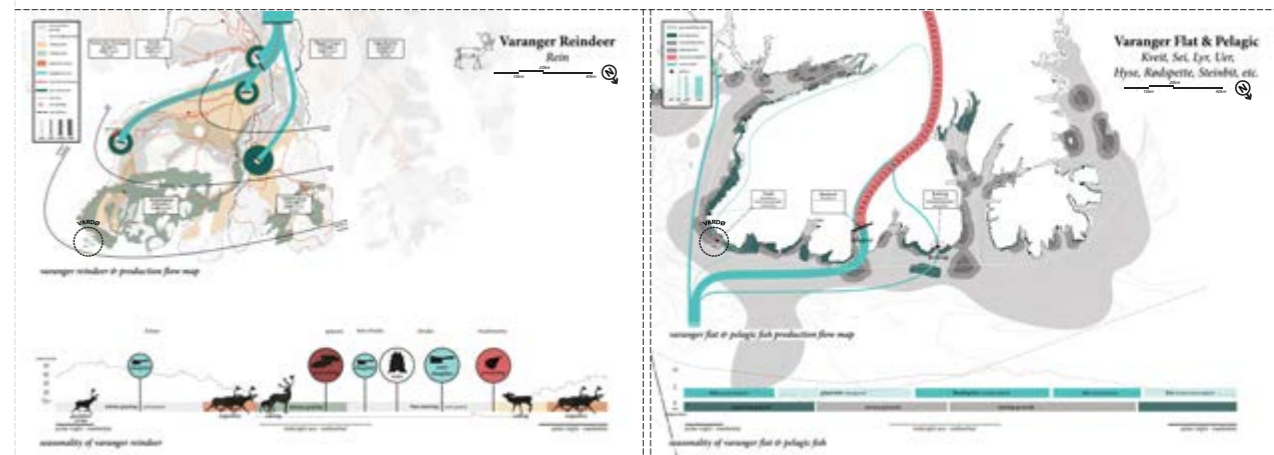
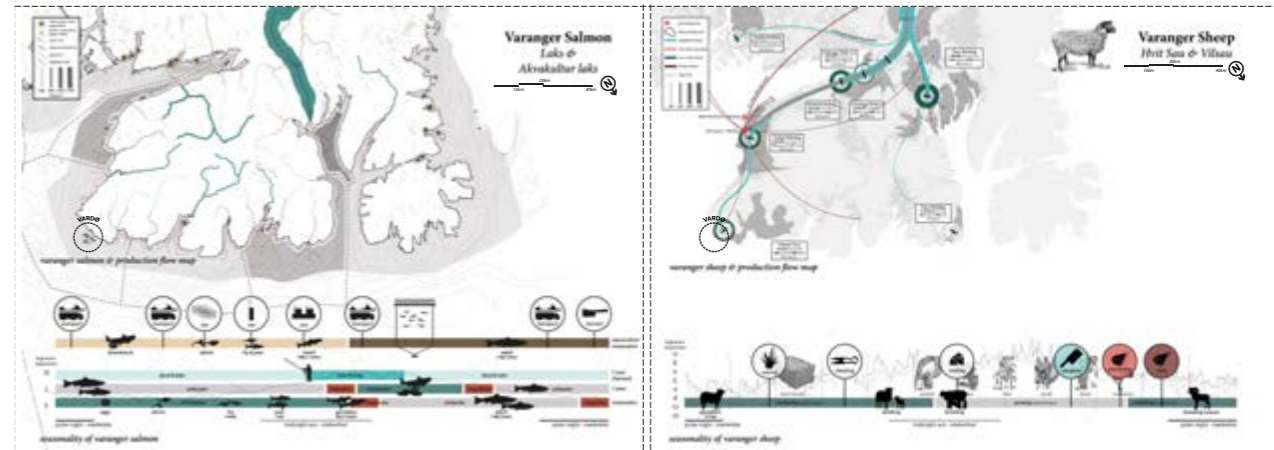
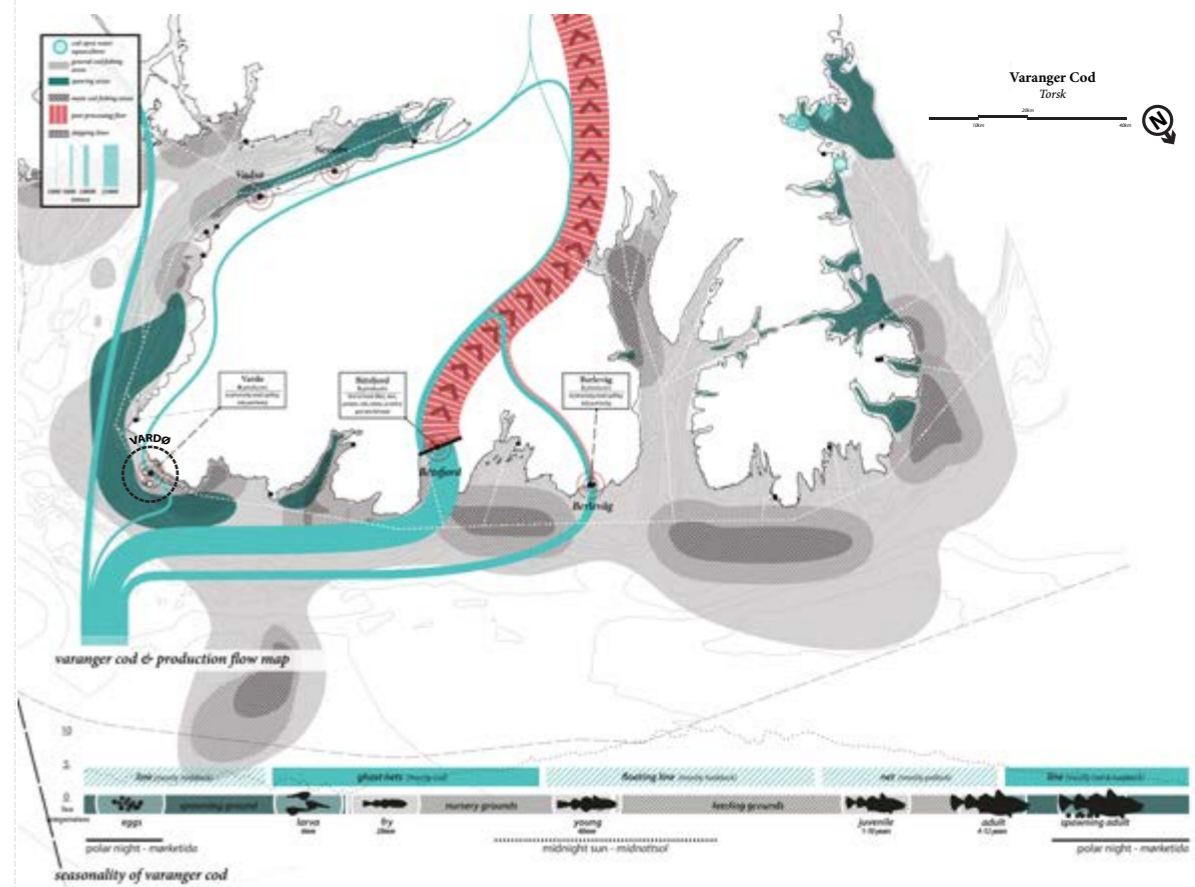
When to Pick

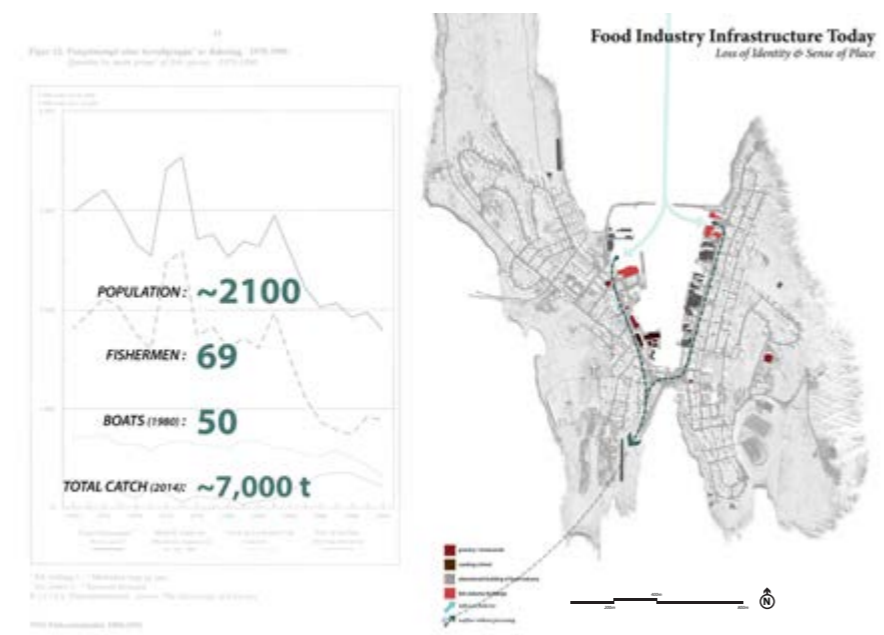
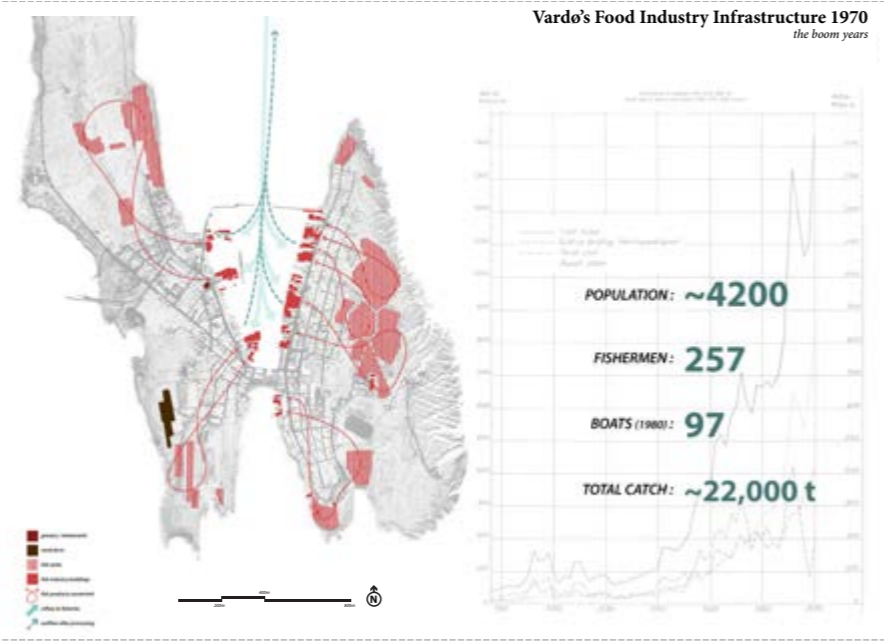
seasonality of Vardo region's food resources



Varanger Food Resource Economy

regional study of production flows & seasonality





If we hunt, if we farm, even if we botanize, we are benefiting from and sharing in the accumulated experience of others...it implies we recognize other people as inhabitants of the earth as well as members of a social ode. No group sets out to create landscape... what it sets out to do is create community, and the landscape as its visible manifestation is simply the by-product of people working together, sometimes staying apart, but always recognizing their interdependence

J.B. Jackson ("Discovering the Vernacular Landscape" 1986)

The Unjarga-Nesseby "meahcci" (outfields) is where resources are found and where harvesting takes place. What is important locally, is the ability to maintain varied (and from time to time changing) harvesting in the outfields, because it enables a flexible way of life, through matauk and the ability to birget (cope), and because it contributes to social interaction through food gifts and the sharing of meals, based on locally harvested resources. Both the harvesting activities and their following social significance, made possible through mutually constitutive relations between animals, plants, and landscape, appear highly important to peoples' local identity management and sense of belonging.

Stine Rybraaten ("This is not a wilderness. This is where we live." Enacting nature in Unjarga-Nesseby, Northern Norway" 2013)

It is important to realize the value of what we produce care about end product, making it as good as it can be, and take pride about what we do and produce.

Jan Ivar Smuk (personal interview, 2015)

Varanger has the best produce in Norway, based on its unique geographic location.

Niel Lupton (personal interview, 2015)

"The future is in teaching about food and start at the beginning."

Leif Haugasan (personal interview, 2016)

In 2002 the big factory premises developed in Svartnes...closed all the small places, and went bankrupt after 8 months, that really destroyed the town, 350 work places were lost.

Glenn McMaster (personal interview, 2016)

"There is a lack of knowledge on how to process a product so people don't dare to try."

Ørjan Gundersen (personal interview, 2015)

"We have some of the best food in Norway, we have all the fresh fish, reindeer, wild sheep, lamb and all of the local herbs, and rhubarb. We have to make more of it and not just send it away."

Tor Emil Silvertsen (personal interview, 2016)

"Food production is part of the cultural heritage of Vardo, cultural heritage can be used as a tool for community development."

Svein Harald Holmen (personal interview, 2015)

"There are too few people in Finnmark for us not to work together."

Tor Emil Silvertsen (personal interview, 2016)

"To do food you have to have the belief inside, we need people to get curious about food."

Tor Emil Silvertsen (personal interview, 2016)

"Food is an important part of peoples identity, it builds on knowing your backyard and traditions."

Svein Harald Holmen (personal interview, 2015)

We have never seen food's true potential, because it is too big to see. But viewed laterally it emerges as something with phenomenal power to transform not just landscapes, but political structures, public spaces, social relationships, and cities.

Carolyn Steel ("Hungry City: How Food Shapes Our Lives" 2013)



7. Vardø Transformed — Cultural Heritage and Place-Based Development

Thomas Juel Clemmensen • Photos: Martin Danais

This studio course was building on the strong solidarity between the concepts of heritage and that of landscape. Both are unifying concepts; they bring together previously separated aspects of the world into a stronger whole; both sit at the interface between people's perception of the world and the world itself.¹

The overall objective was to study urban transformation across Finnmark with Vardø as the main case. A central task was to explore how diverse heritage resources can be assembled into stronger wholes, which can guide not only future preservation and restoration but more importantly, future transformation in Vardø. This emphasis on transformation stresses the importance of using existing material and human resources to create a 'living heritage' that allows the community to evolve continuously.

Studio work was done in close collaboration with Vardø Restored, a local non-profit initiative guided by Varanger Museum. Working closely together with local stakeholders led to a unique studio experience with six weeks of fieldwork, which not only

helped the students gain an in-depth understanding of the place but also provided them with a rewarding experience of working together with people needing and benefiting directly from their work.

In addition to the fieldwork, the studio course also collaborated with Vardø Restored in organizing a mini-seminar on 'conservation through transformation' in Vardø with presentations from researchers from Norway and Denmark. The seminar also featured a small exhibition of the fieldwork done by the students and was open to the public.

All students produced work of high quality, but some were more thought-provoking than others including the project 'Unexpected Trajectories' by Annie Breton. In her project, Annie explored how abandoned buildings and their material could be used in different architectural recycle strategies that support a flexible, sensitive and reactive transformation of Vardø. The project demonstrates how landscape architects through an understanding of material processes can engage in urban design and heritage planning in a very profound way.

¹
See "New Heritage Frontiers" (2009) by Graham Fairclough



8. Student Works: Vardø Transformed — Cultural Heritage and Place-Based Development

Revitalization of Allmenning

Akie Kono

This project is about re-opening of the place where had been functioning as a public space in Vardø in the past. 'Allmenning' is a name of places meaning 'common area' or 'the place for all'. In Vardø, there were many Allmennings in the harbor, and had been used as a boat landing space, especially for small boats, by local people. However, as industrialization, individual fishing with small boat has been declined, then, Allmenning has been less used and finally abandoned. It was the place where could make people having the relationships with the nature, the sea, in the past, whereas that relationships has been weakened as Allmenning has been abandoned.

To improve the quality of the life in Vardø, it is important to open spaces for everyone, in order to re-build connection between people and the sea. Especially in the North harbor, because there are a lot of abandoned buildings which has negative influences on the closed residential area. Furthermore, it is also a crucial point to consider about visitors since locals can be stim-

ulated the identity, proud for this town, by communication with foreigners. As mobility has been improved, the number of visitors has increased, therefore, it should be taken advantage for the town improvement.

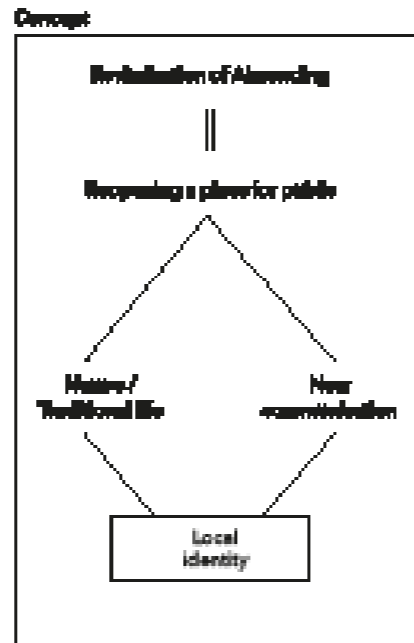
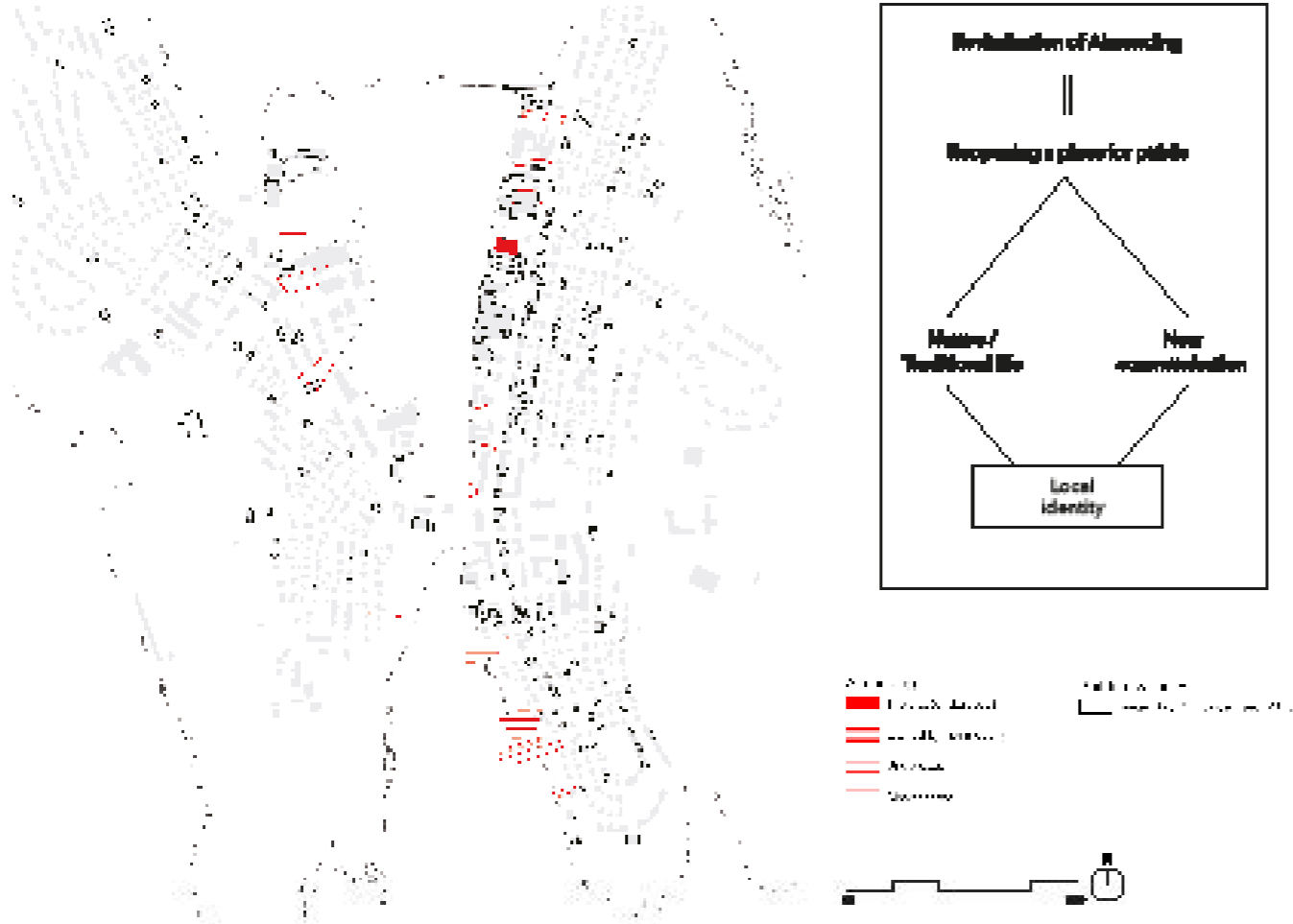
The site in this project is the Allmenning remaining the natural elements, sandy slope and some rocks, in the North-East harbor, where is adjusting to old wooden buildings constructed before WWII. The buildings can be used as a common dining and kitchen on the first floor and an accommodation for visitors on upper floors. On outside space, there are basins and rocks, an old stone foundation and a concrete slope for pleasure boat landing. These elements can promote water activities, but also can enhanced the connection between people and the sea perceptually.

Thus, revitalization of Allmenning can contribute to gain the value of the life that people can connect to the nature as well as the past, in the terms of a modern way and will have positive effects for transformation of other areas in the town.

The site (taken in April 2016)



Mapping of Abandoning and current situation of Vardø



Unexpected Trajectories / Vardø's Transient Heritage

Annie Breton

The development of a new heritage plan for Vardø is an opportunity to investigate the different material resources found around the island and the unexpected role they might play in the future transformation of the city.

Vardø's population has drastically declined following the downfall of the fishing industry. Although now stable, the number of inhabitants resides far below the actual capacity of the city. This depopulation resulted in the abandonment of buildings and structures of all kinds. They are still present, embedded in the landscape and urban fabric. They are the physical remnants of consecutive building traditions and historic practices of the landscape. They also carry the memories of the people that used them over time and the stories of big and small events that took place within them. They are the physical manifestation of a heritage that reaches far beyond the realm of the tangible.

As static as they may seem, these abandoned structures are in a constant state of movement, transformed by human intervention or weathered out by natural elements. Parts of these structures have already travelled around the city to take on new lives: windows of abandoned houses are collected to fill the openings of an old fish factory, wooden pole that once supported tons of fish are now planted in the seabed to support docks and platforms, wooden planks of a collapsing house are gathered in piles, waiting to find a new use. This informal circulation hints towards the potential of these resources to play a role in the transformation of the city.

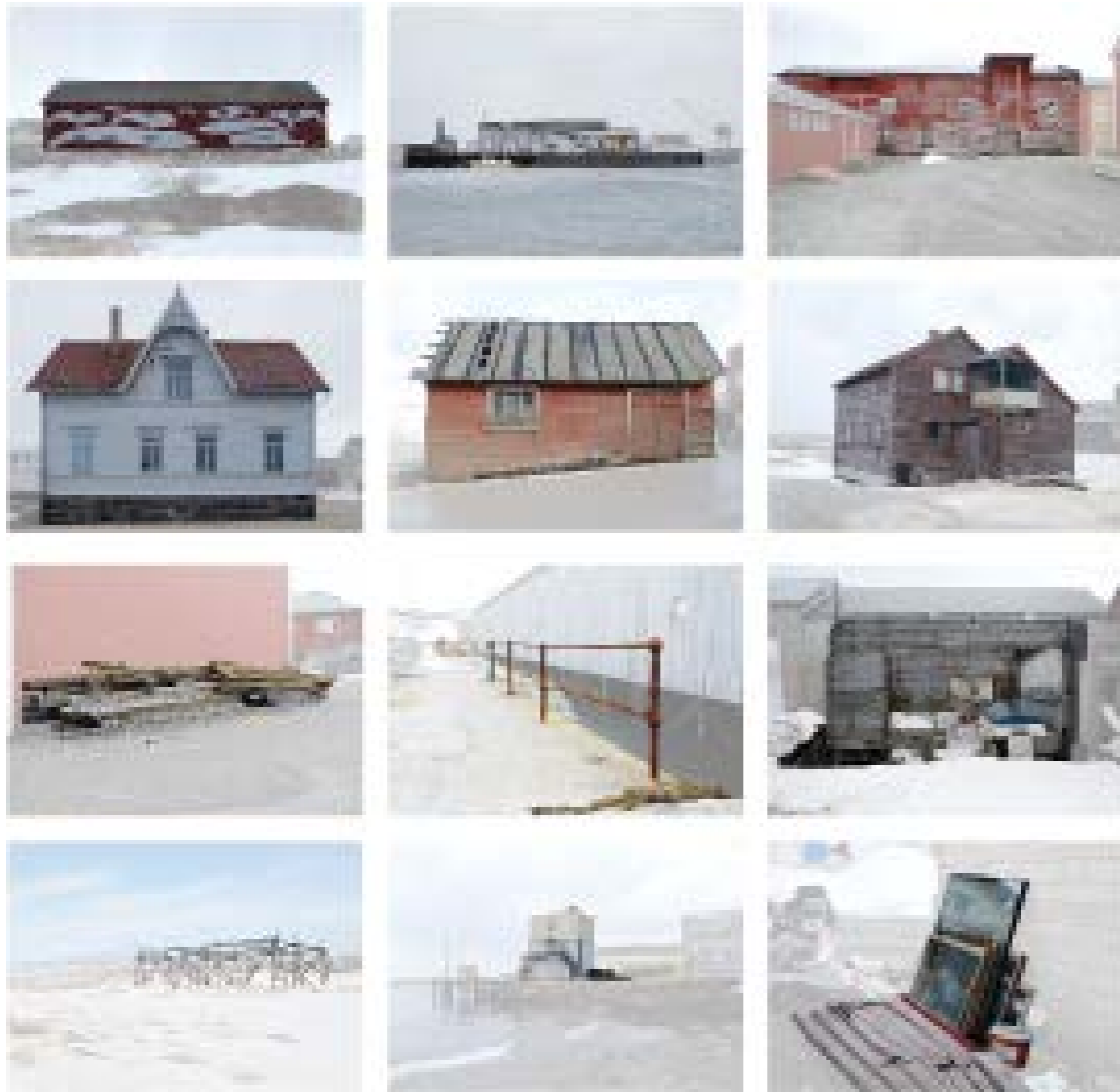
If left unattended because of a lack of interest or financial resources, abandoned buildings slowly decay to become ruins and, eventually, waste. The ruining of Vardø's unique heritage might seem unavoidable, has there are far more buildings than what is needed, or what can be cared for. This project suggests setting these structures in motion before they reach the point of decay where potential is lost. By acting willingly, pieces of the buildings can be saved, and the heritage

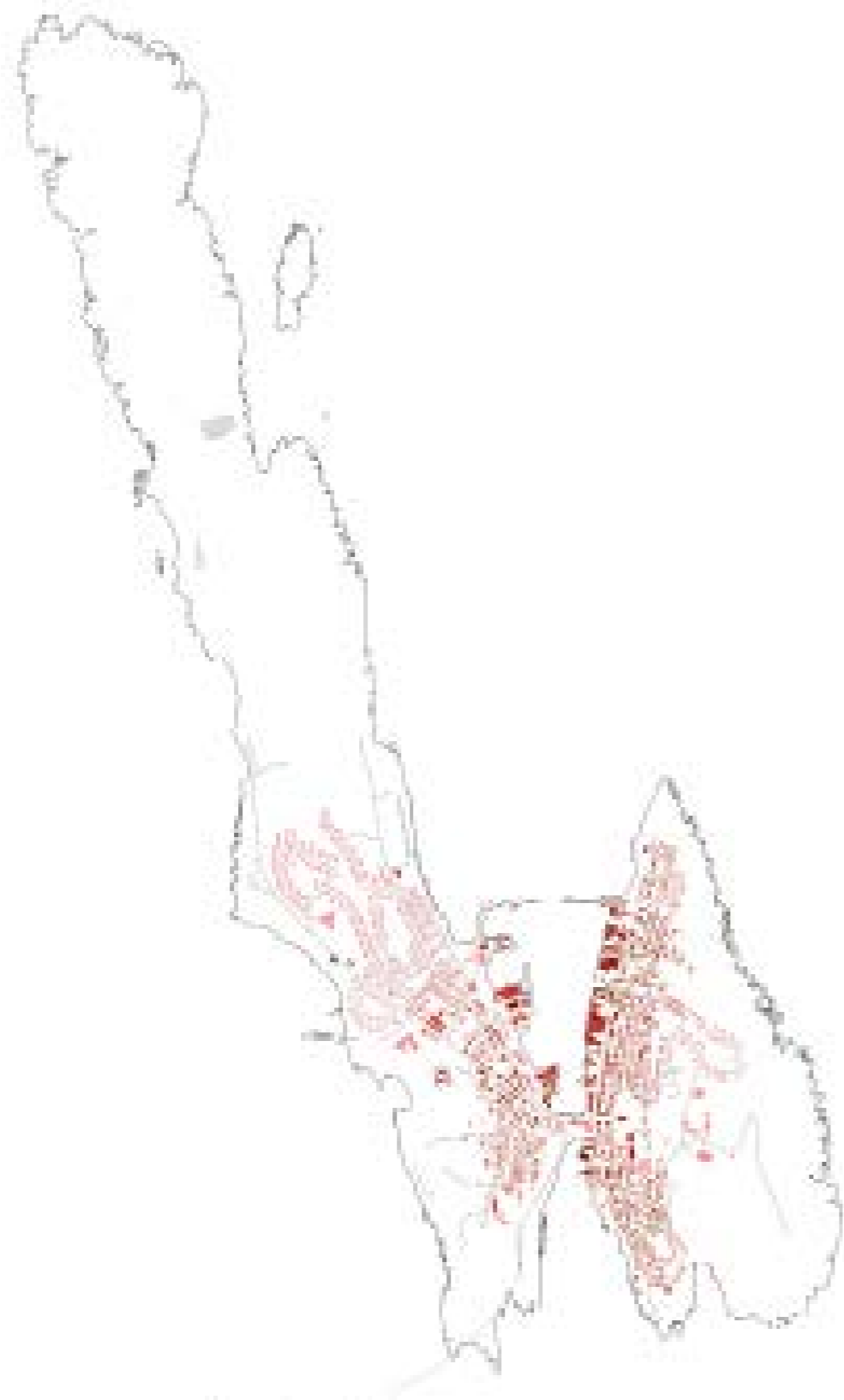
they carry can live on through reuse of the materials.

By moving, storing or carefully dismantling abandoned buildings, new resources are made available and can be used within the remaining built environment. These materials and building parts are collected, identified, sorted and taken care of in recirculation centers housed in old fishing factories. In these centers, heritage becomes an accessible, visible and collective practice.

Materials and building elements can afterwards be used as spare parts for other aging structures and accessible materials for projects of renovation, adaptation or invention of new places. Should the city grow in the future, these materials could also be integrated in new constructions.

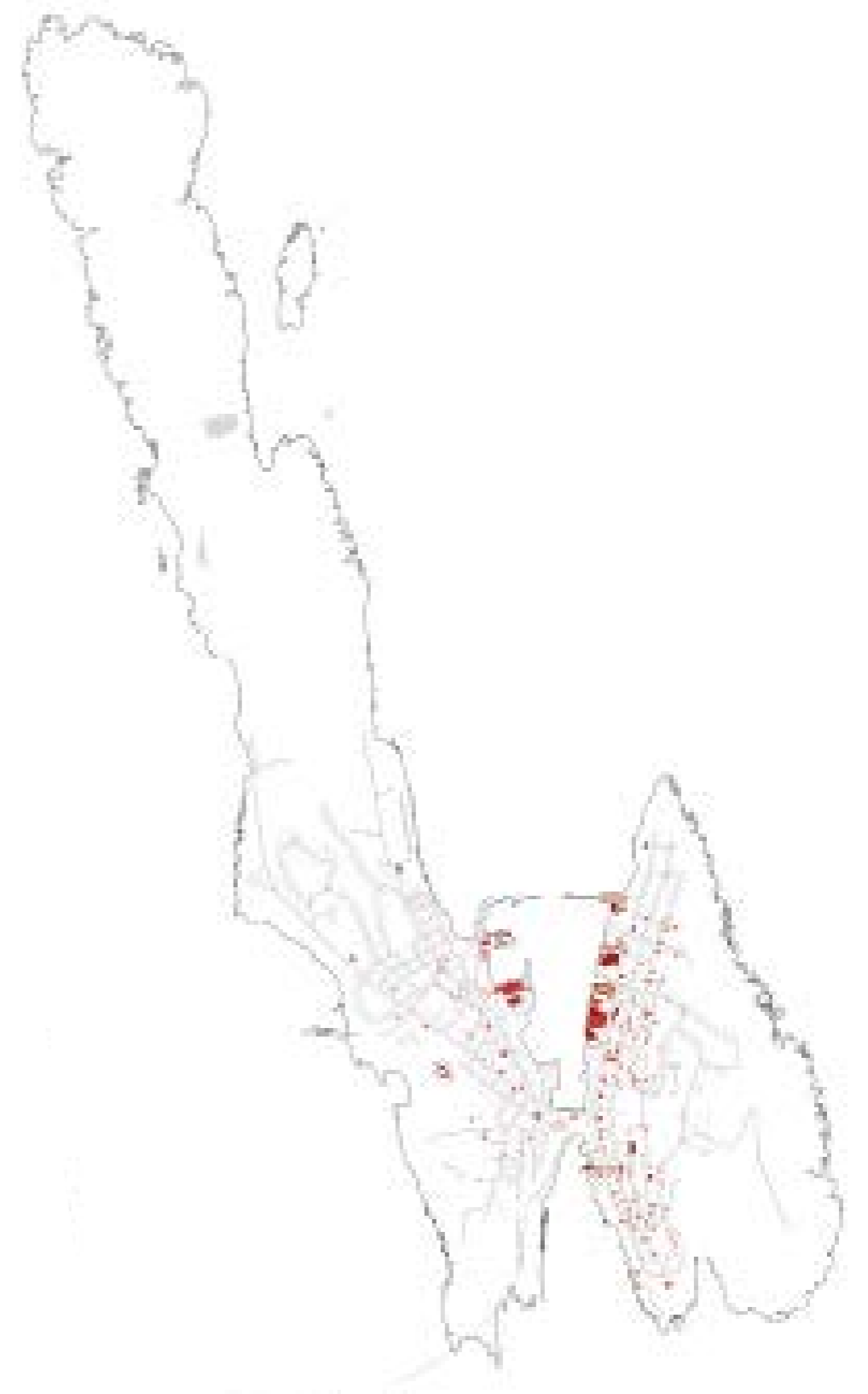
Each intervention that saves or enhances a building or a place is valuable on its own. But when many interventions take place all over the city, their combination might well bring about changes or adaptations in the urban fabric: potential increased mixity and density, as well as a strengthening of a certain historic character, for example. While the recirculation of materials can benefit individual constructions, it can also allow for a flexible, sensitive and reactive transformation of Vardø to unfold.





construction periods

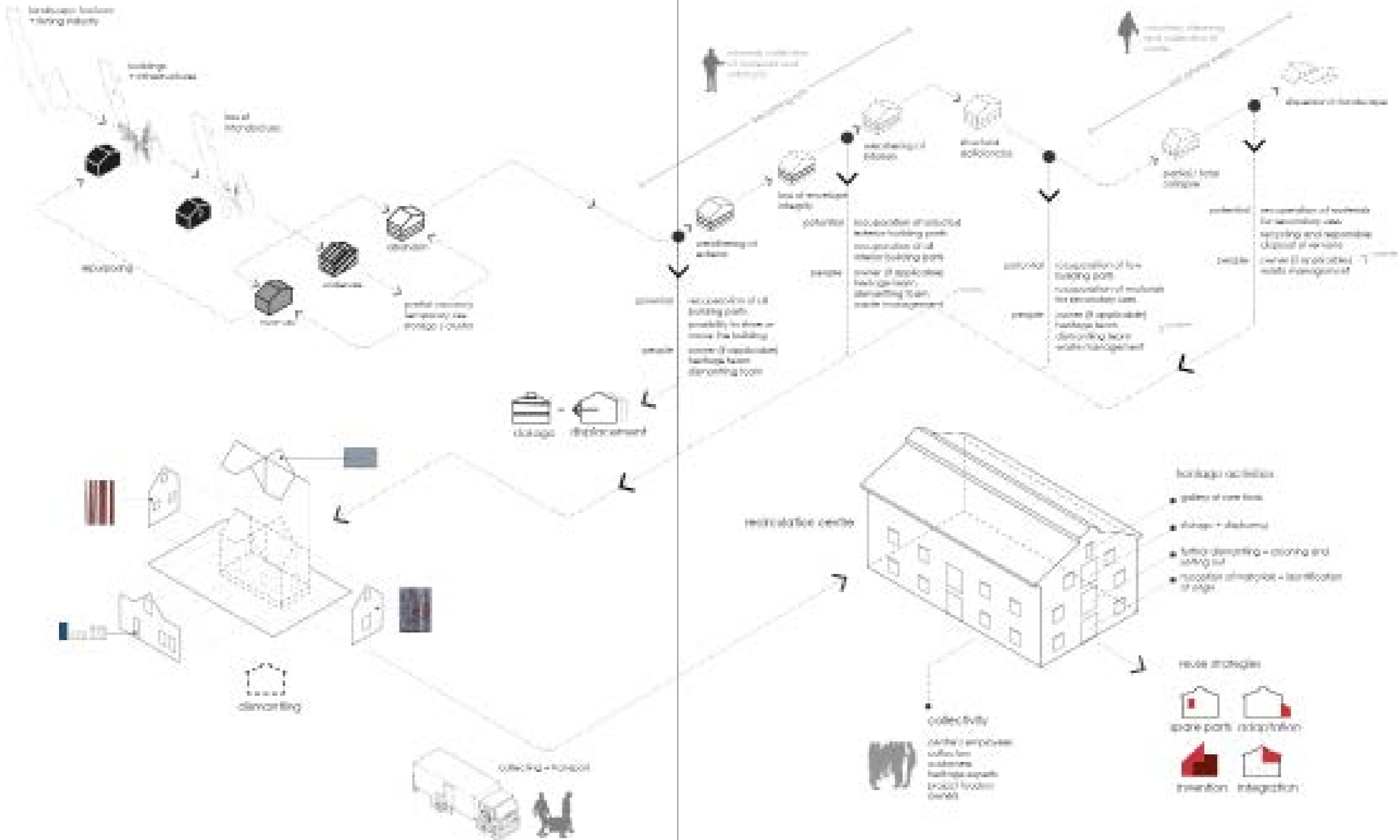
- post-reconstruction
- reconstruction
- pre-war

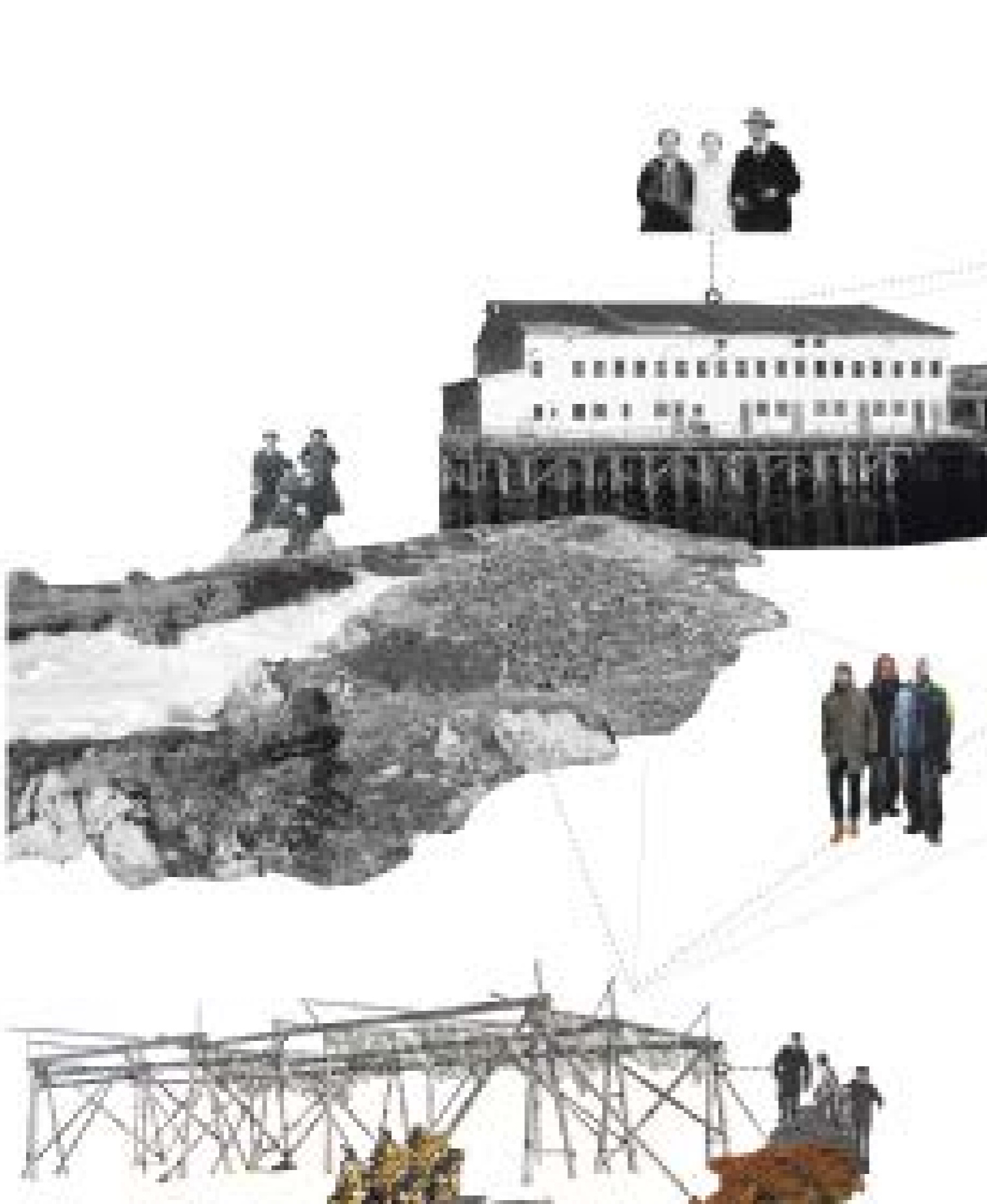


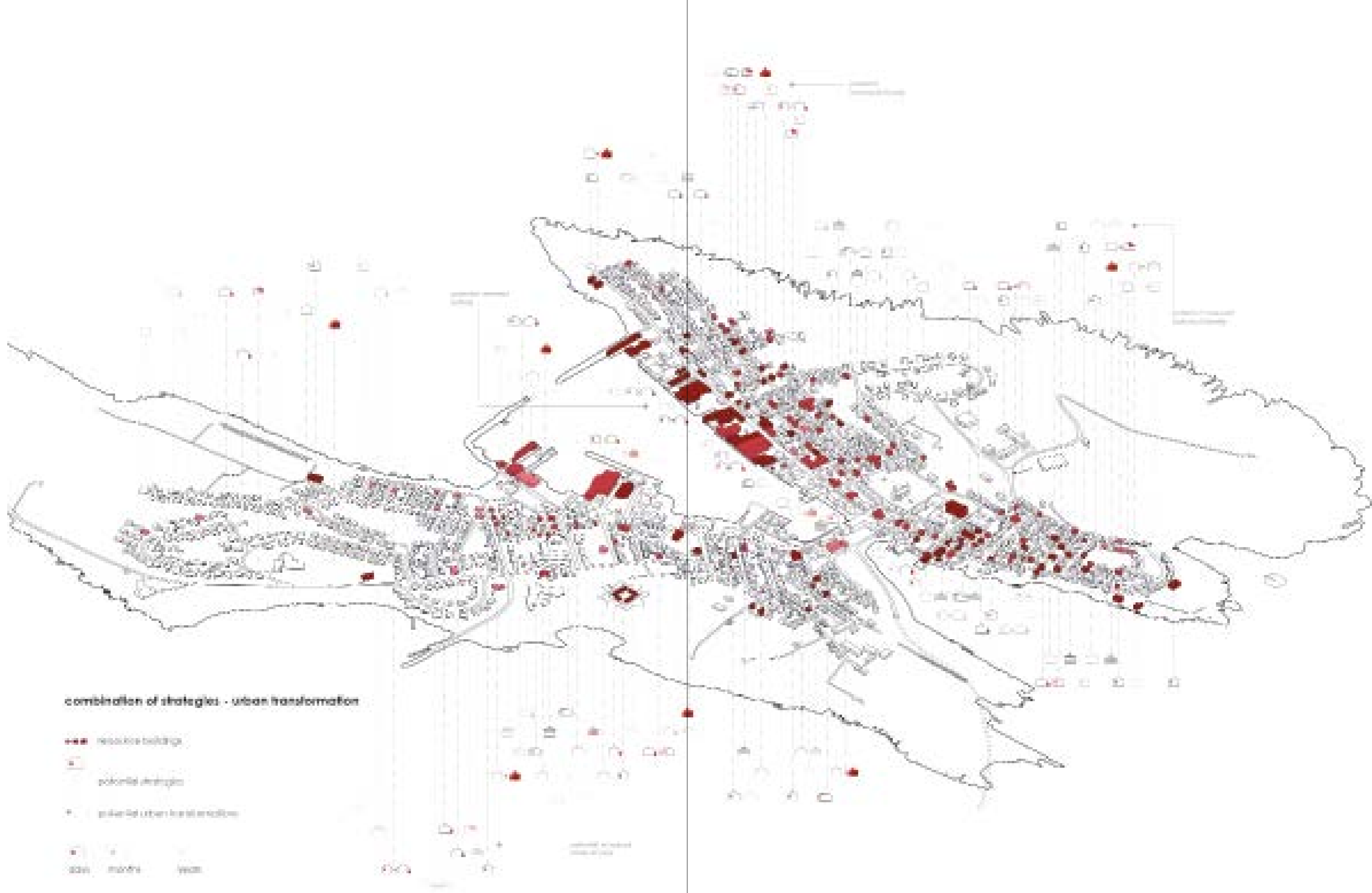
vacant and underused

- vacant
- underused
- post-reconstruction
- reconstruction
- pre-war





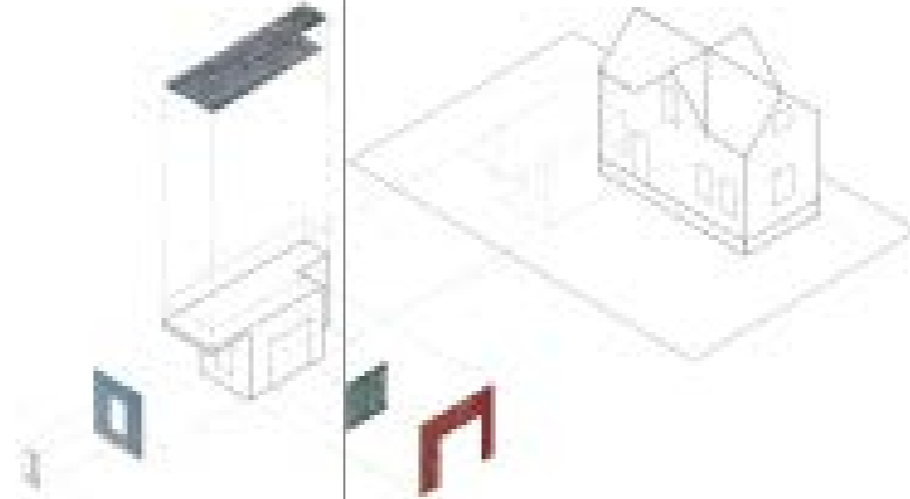




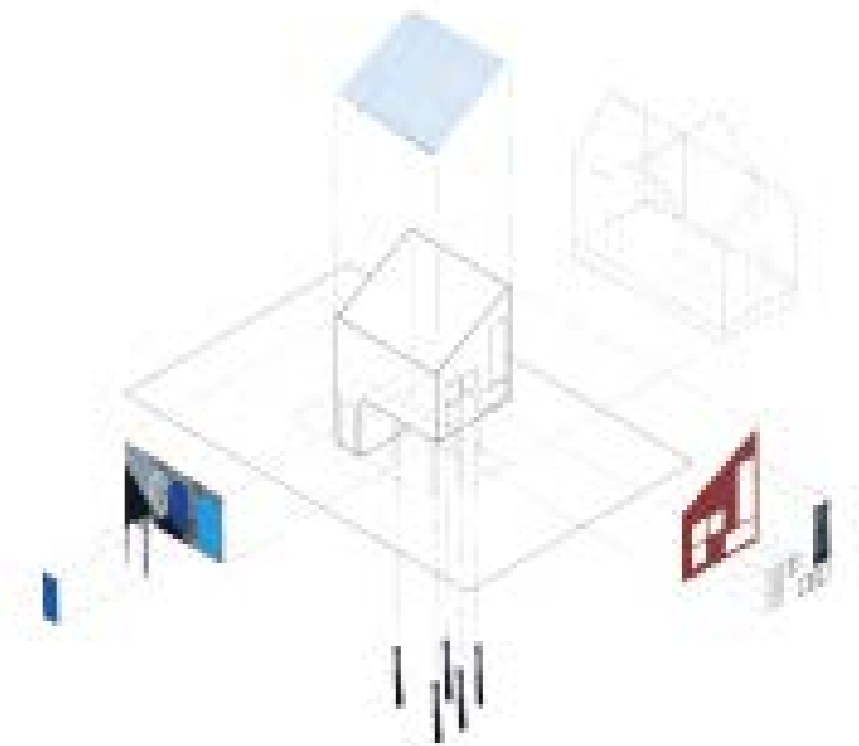
spare parts



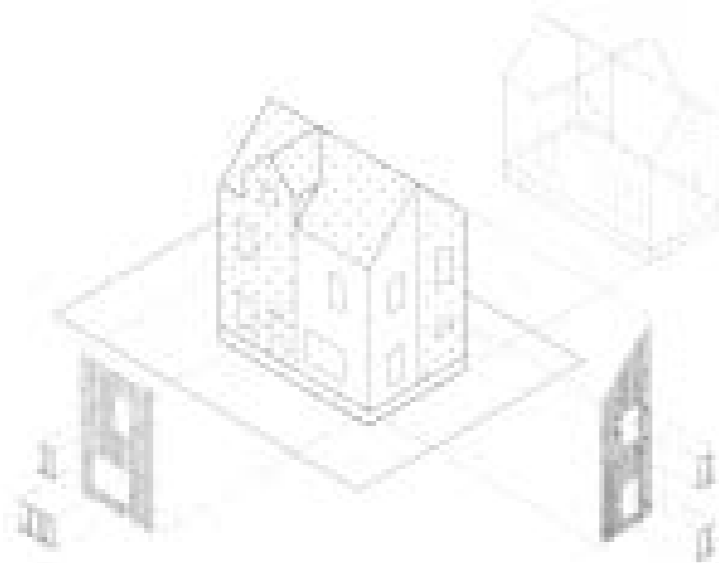
adaptation



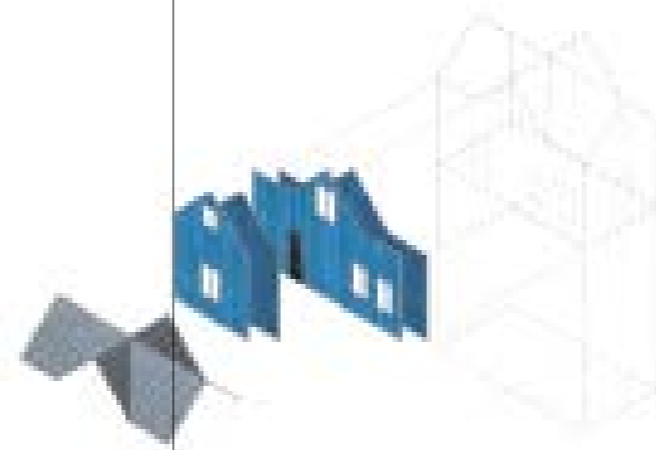
invention



integration



storage



displacement



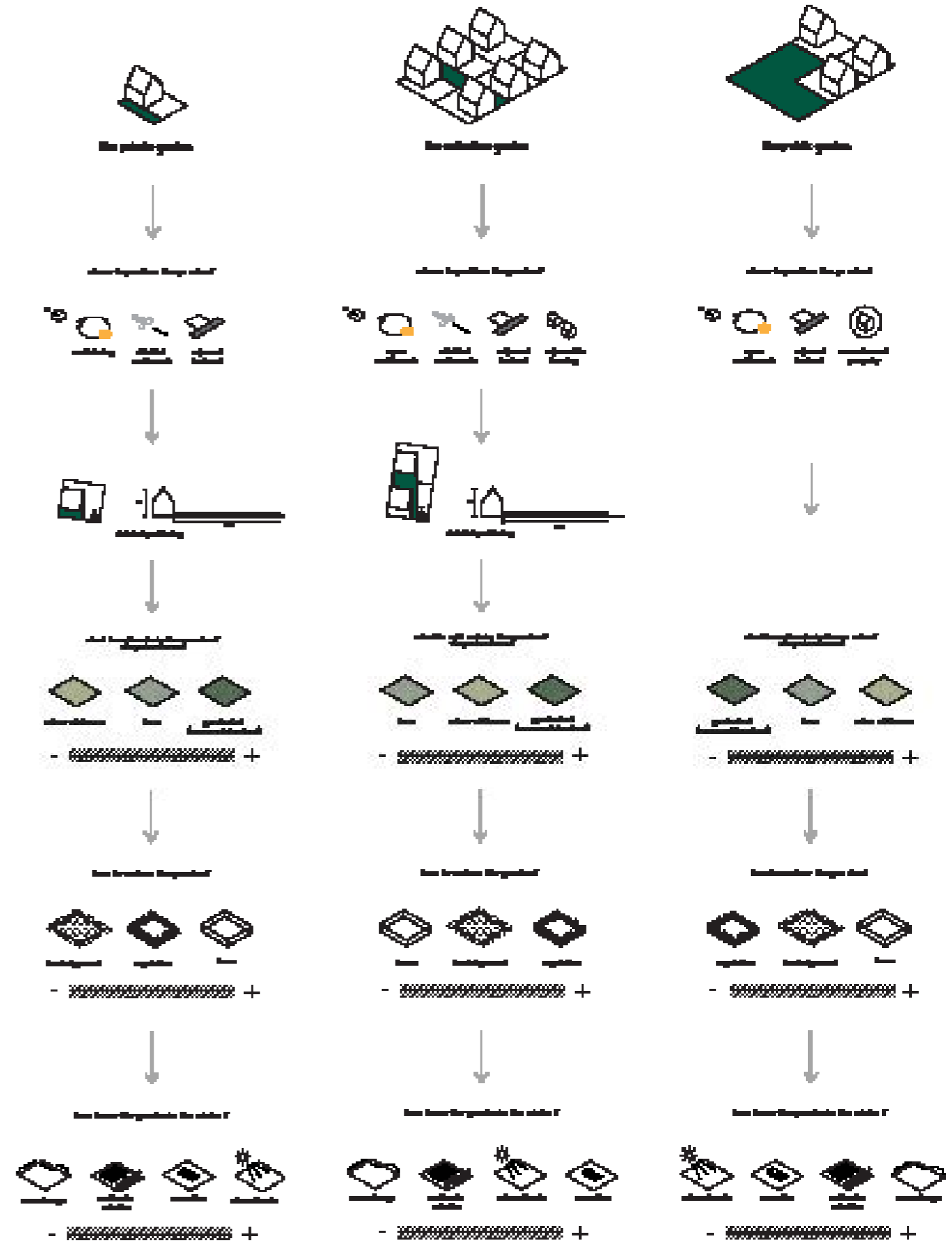
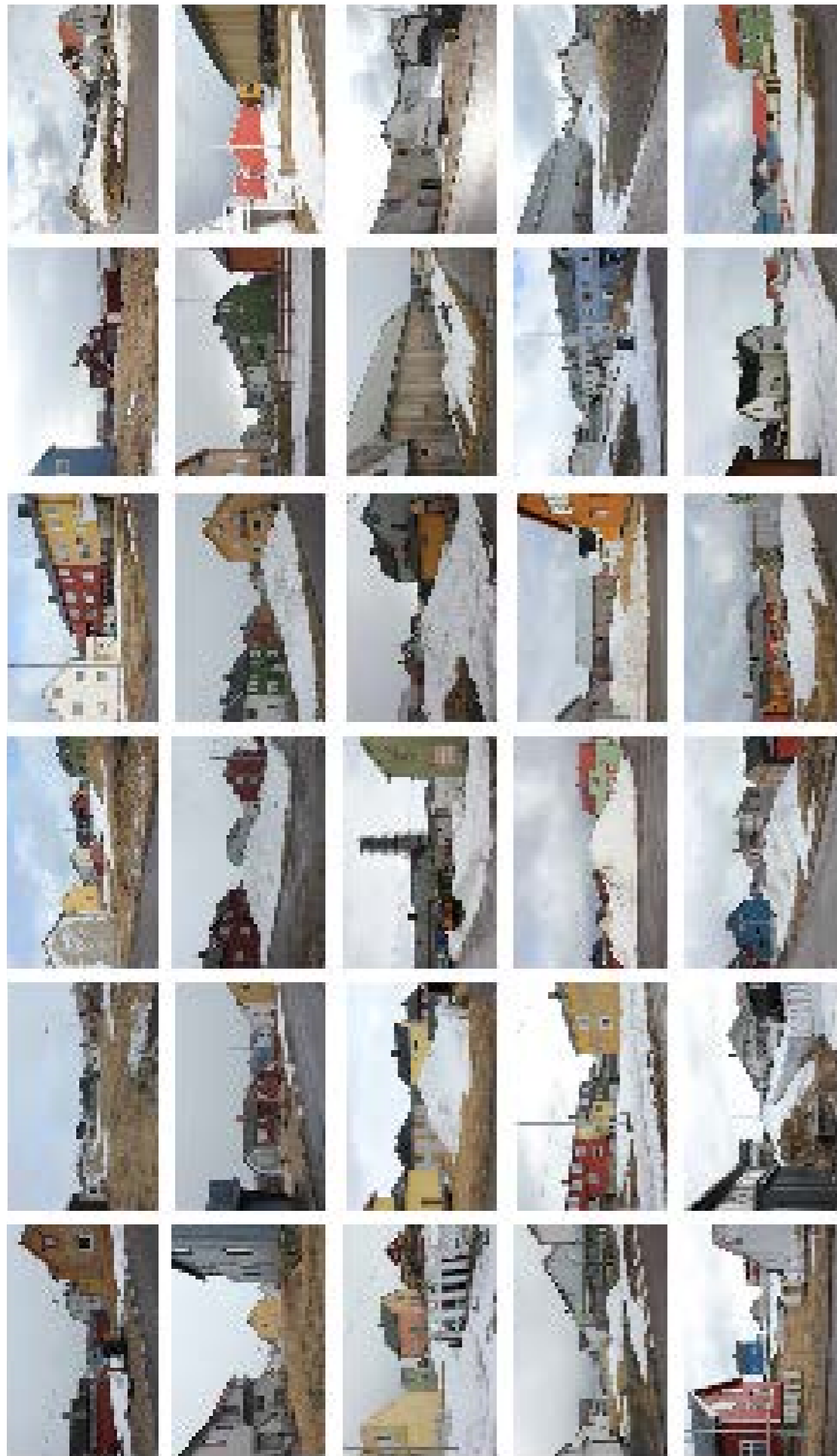
Tending the Landscape

Élisabeth Baril

The project explores the various ways the landscape can contribute to the prevailing issues of shrinking towns and heritage in the north, more specifically in the small fishing town of Vardø. More specifically, the project examines the landscape of the garden, in the context of northern Norway.

The project began with a series of on-site field studies, interviews and research on the landscape of Vardø and its heritage — namely, on the former uses and spatial qualities of the land, as well as the role of the garden in the lives of Vardø's inhabitants. Photographs and maps also revealed an interesting potential in the landscape — in its interstices. As a result of these studies, a conceptual framework for the preservation, restoration and transformation of the landscape was imagined — a how-to guide for the continued development of the interstices as gardens.

The step-by-step, pick-and-choose framework provides guidelines for the implementation of gardens in Vardø for the town's various actors. The framework allows these actors to select the garden configuration and components they wish to have, while also guiding them in the feasibility of each option. By providing a variety of options, the framework is adaptable to the different constraints, needs, and transformations of Vardø over time, while benefiting the town socially, environmentally, and even esthetically.





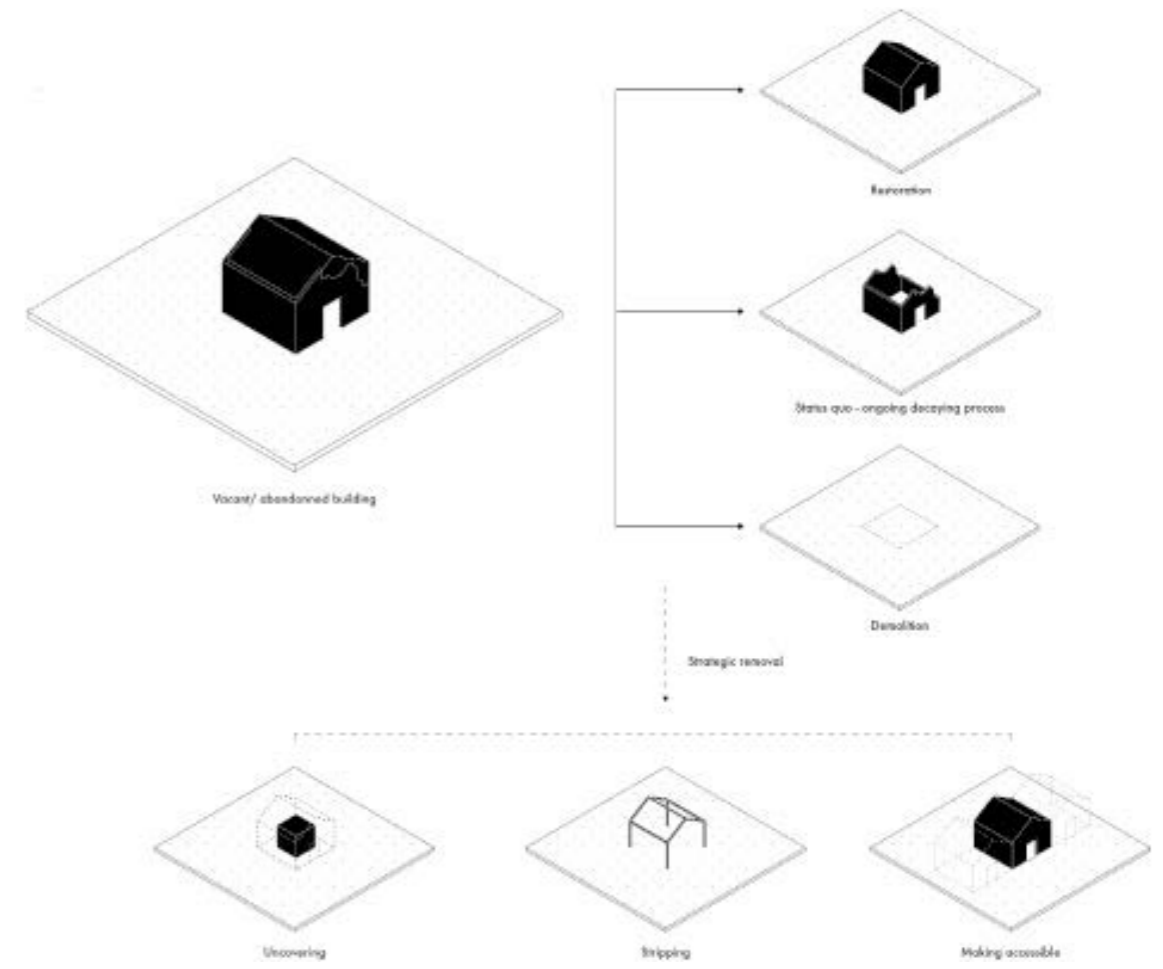
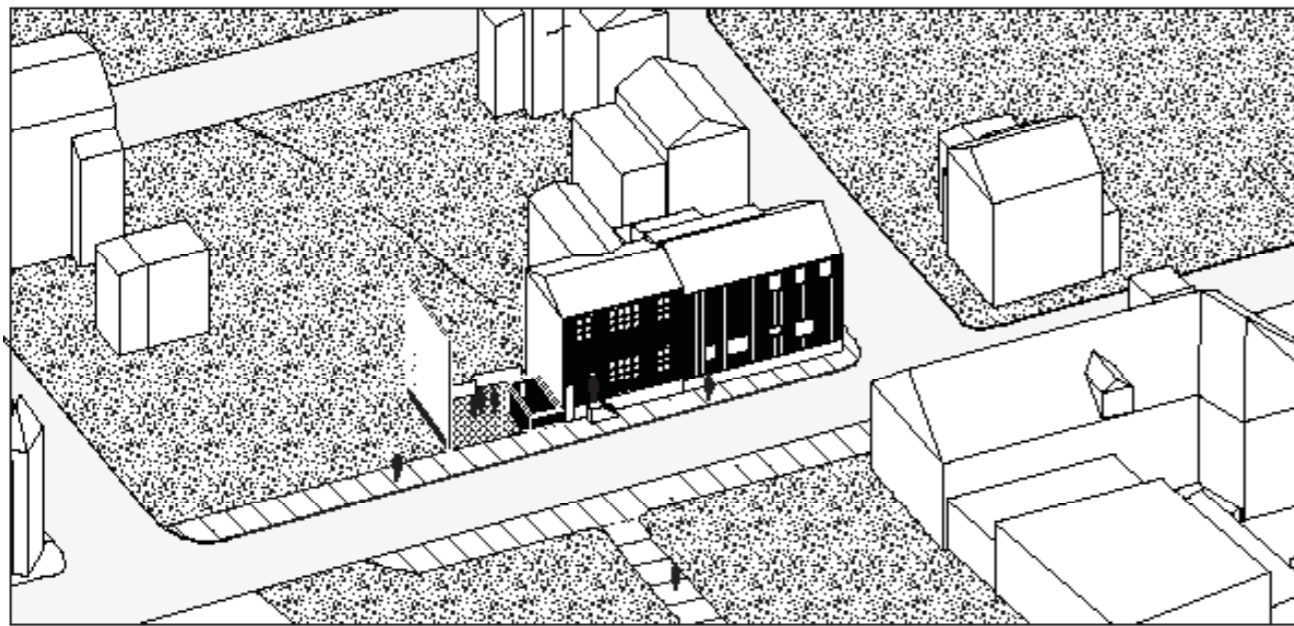
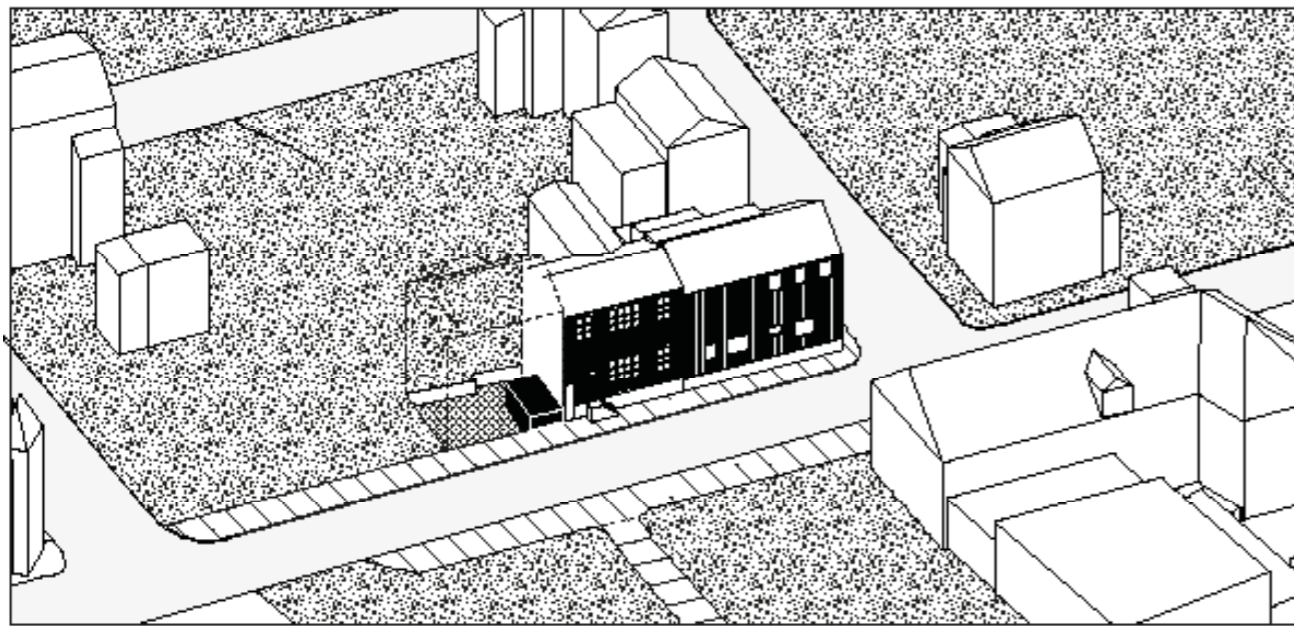
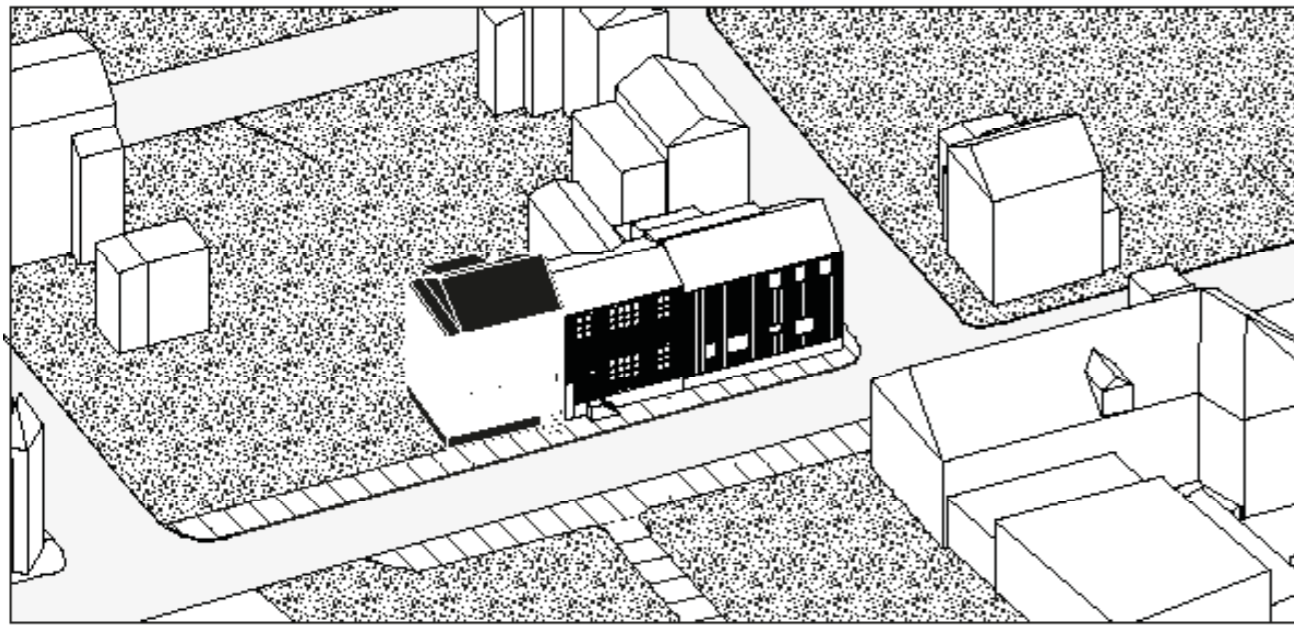
Uncovering and Discovering Rethinking cultural heritage management in Vardø

Jérôme Codère

Vardø is going through a phase of renewal, many restoration projects are being developed and people are open to innovative ideas to put forward and reclaim their city. The main problem now with all the vacant constructions is that the city doesn't have the means to restore and maintain all of them, nor should they. With the slow regeneration of the community and no big demographic growth in sight, it is vital that the buildings be carefully chosen based on their cultural heritage value, but also based on their uses once restored. This is basically what is being done by the municipality and organisations such as Vardø Restored.

Following this idea, the first question trying to be answered by this project is: What to do with the empty buildings left standing? As it is now, the options regarding abandoned decaying buildings are the following: they are restored, left to decay or demolished. In Vardø, however, very few infrastructures are removed, considering the cultural value. However, in many ways, leaving them to weathering is the equivalent of a slow removal of the building, they will at some point collapse and have to be removed.





Harbour(ing) History

Heidi Marja Komonen

The project is looking at how the revitalisation of line fishing in Vardø can help to take care of the cultural heritage and how it can create different positive outcomes, both for the tourist industry and creating jobs. This is done through looking at the history of fishing, especially line fishing in Vardø and how Vardø is one of the best places in Norway to use line because of its very rich fishing grounds situated close to the town. This makes it possible to focus on the quality more than quantity, which in this case will reflect positively back on the fishermen because they are able to ask more money for the fish they catch.

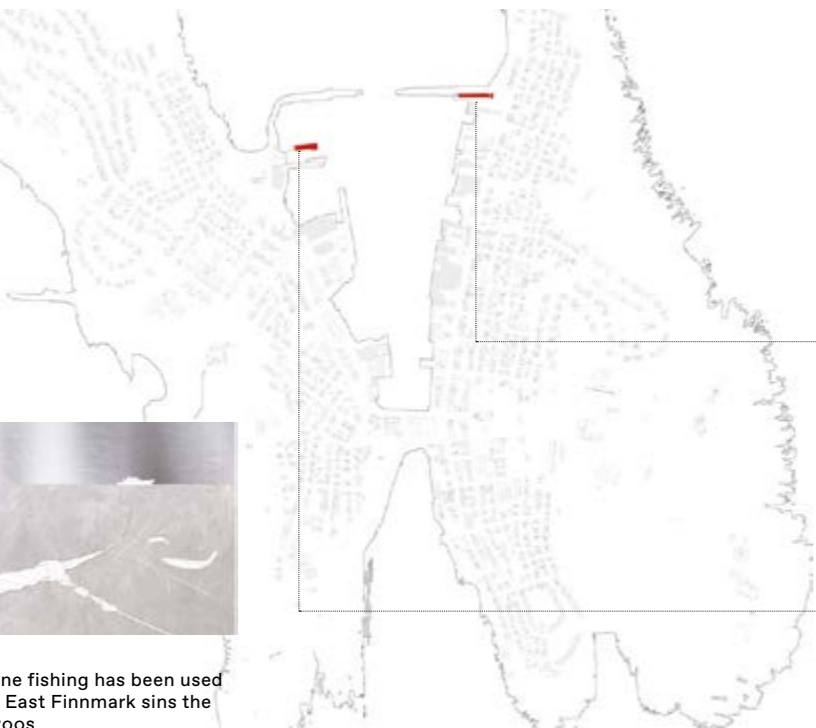
The project aims to reactivate the use of the hand lining. Vardø has many facilities that has the opportunity to become places where people can work with preparing lines.

These places have a lot of history and are valuable for keeping the cultural heritage in Vardø. The large amount of fish outside Vardø makes it possible to keep up these traditions, while it will also benefit the fishermen economically.

The tourism in Vardø is growing, and more and more people see the value of coming to the most eastern city of Norway. The project looks at connecting the tourism industry on to the fishing industry, especially the line fishing. This will give the tourists an opportunity to experience a historical way of how the fishing was done and it will also reactivate some of the old buildings that today are falling apart. It will create an extraordinary ordinary experience for the tourists.



VARDØ HARBOUR



Line fishing has been used in East Finnmark since the 1700s

TWO SITES;

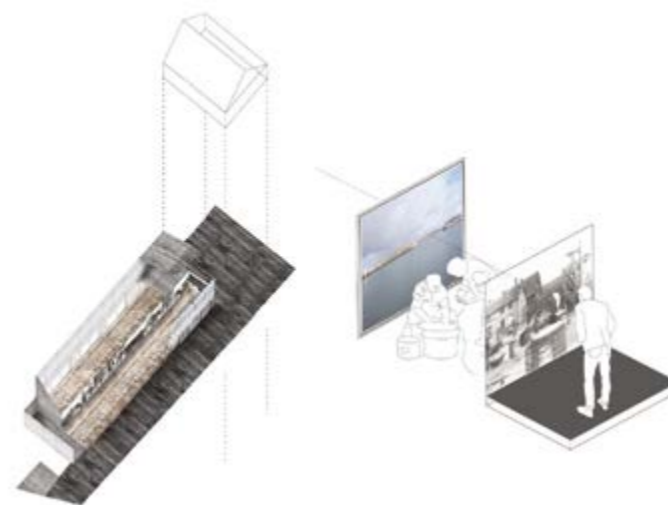


Eastern breakwater



The whale building

Design approach; Site one and two

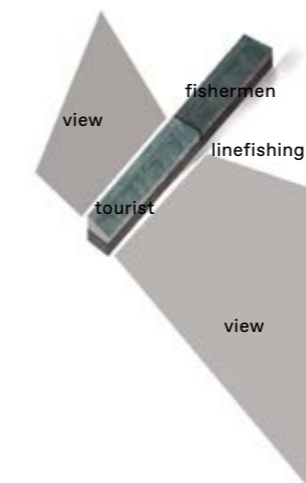


Site one; building and approach

Diagram showing view



Section and illustration looking through the space; what the tourist experiences



Organising space; connecting inside and outside



Observation and view point



Section; connecting tourism and fishing activities

9. Co-creating a Culture of Care through the Vardø HUB

Andrew Morrison, Maria Bertheussen Skrydstrup,
Janike Kampevold Larsen & Angeliki Dimaki-Adolfson
• Photos: Andrew Morrison

This essay, enunciated through ethnographic and expository writings and contextual images, presents aspects of an unfolding process of dialogue between Future North and Vardø Restored projects. It focuses on the co-creation of the development over a period of four years of the former Vardø Grand Hotel into an emerging 'cultural hub'. Named the Vardø HUB in 2017, this site is projected as a venue for motivating and supporting sustainable local Arctic futures. It's the outcome of a slow, delicate and, at times laborious, processes of shaping a wider co-design of cultural care suited to the context and its potential futures.

*

How might a community-driven exploratory initiative on cultural innovation for sustainable future arctic living be put together and developed? In what ways might partnering of local citizens' expertise and that of external design contributors be used to support local cultural expression and its ongoing life?

What kind of space might be designed for a diversity of uses and events, for local discussion, community engagement, a variety of events, a mix of spaces for workshops, seminars and courses, and short and long term residencies and visitors? How might a cultural hub be built from the bottom-up and meet interests and needs?

Where might base funding be secured and how might this be achieved against the background of more business oriented 'social entrepreneurship' and innovation programmes? Might there be an emergent practice and experience that can offer a transformation model for other communities and coastal towns in northern Norway?

*

These are the key questions we have discussed in the development of what has come to be the Vardø HUB project. The pro-

ject has taken several years to shape in an ongoing dialogue between a diversity of participants as we show in the text below. It has been important to take time to understand quite what the HUB might be as its aims and activities and long term survival depends on it being suited to local conditions and to it being fuelled by real interests and needs. For us this was about developing a wider 'culture of care'. That is shaping a place for cultural engagement and exchange in which participants — local permanent inhabitants of Vardø and short and longer term visitors.

Since the start of the Future North research project, its members have been welcomed into community initiated and enacted activities by the Vardø Restored project (<http://vardorestored.com/en>). Vardø Restored has gone about reviving while also reinventing the uses of numerous buildings across the town as part of a move to reinvigorate the cultural character of the town that since the 1980s has struggled to survive the loss of its core economic production when northern fishing was formally restricted to secure future stocks. One of these buildings is the former Vardø Hotel owned by Bjørn and Britt Bertheussen. They have been painstakingly working on its revival as can be heard in an online video from the project site in which Bjørn Bertheussen talks about the renovation process. (<http://vardorestored.com/en/project/grand-hotel/>)

*

Our approach has been arrived at through negotiation and design-led scenarios that have sought to connect the needs and expertise of local owners and citizens with the perspectives and inputs of designer-researchers. On one hand is a community driven revitalisation initiative based in the materialities of yesterday and today. On the other hand, there's a transdisciplinary research project concerned with potentiality and projection of possible futures. However,



local participants are long term residents, while the researchers have been itinerant visitors. Building connections and trust took time to gradually and carefully land on the notion of a hub as suited to the hotel, to find this term and to locate in social and cultural framework for a community centred future and one we could place within the existing approaches to business oriented 'social innovation'. In summary, our shared and growing interest has to be to find ways to develop an actual place and a model for providing means to cultural expression and community exchange, whether that be a local food making interest group on 'found foods' or a series of visitors to the proposed rooms and meeting services.

So we spend time looking into related frameworks, views, concepts and practices. There is a need to explore and draw from a mix of perspectives: from cultural mapping informed from landscape (e.g. Cosgrove, 2008; Corner & Bick Hirsch, 2014; Doherty & Waldheim, 2016) and the digital (e.g. Panofsky & Kellett, 2015), from space specific arctic urbanism (Hemmersam & Harbø, 2016) and perspectives on 'many mappings' of the far

north (Sheppard et al., 2017), citizen and civic engagement, but also in a futures view (Davies et al., 2012; Appadurai, 2013). And a mix of methods are needed too, such as collaborative ethnography (e.g. Lassiter 2005) and acts of doing sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009) in a wider co-design and participatory design frame (Simonsen & Robertson, 2015).

But these would need to be seen as operating in a concert of care, drawing on other inquiries into 'enacting care through communities of makers (Toombs 2015) and notions of makers of care in a DIY citizenship view (Hargreaves & Hartley 2016; Ratto et al., 2014) and 'matters of care' (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) that are to do with the assemblies of people and neglected things (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011; Denis & Pointille, 2015) and enacting care in practice (Mol et al., 2010). These would take place in the wider context of engaging with emerging discourses and practices of 'designing for social innovation' (e.g. Manzini, 2015).

As a venue for dialogue and for shared making, the HUB would have a DIY, active citizen centred logic (Gauntlett, 2011; Goldsmith et al., 2010), where activities of making futures

(e.g. Ehn et al. 2014) drive change and not policies alone and where a mix of events and outcomes will serve to motivate and drive processes of ongoing transformation in 'rethinking repair' (Jackson, 2014) for arctic architectures (Hemmersam 2016) that are connected to culture and communication. These though need considerable planning and support, just as much as deep motivation and agile responses to emerging needs and demands. They would need to engage with and perhaps critique some of the approaches to social innovation and entrepreneurship (e.g. Bornstein, 2007; Brassett, 2016). And they would need to look into the emergence of dynamic, cultural approaches to the burgeoning field of Service Design (Meroni & Sangiorini, 2011; Matthews, 2014; Matthews, 2017), mindful of connecting, not separating, communities, culture and participatory tools and methods (e.g. Light & Akama, 2012). Important too would be approaches to selecting and mixing design tools and research techniques in the context of social innovation (e.g. Hillgren et al. 2011).

*

Autumn 2013. Members of the Future North project visit Vardø and connect with key partners in Vardø Restored. We learn of their lively processes of cultural and infrastructural revival in which processes of collaboration and mapping were used in a workshop at the hotel to chart ways forward for cultural regeneration of the town. Svein Harald Holmen, leader of the project, and Maria Bertheussen, one member of the owner family of *The Grand Hotel*, take us on a tour of the town and the project's sites of transformation, many completed. We are led to the front steps of *The Grand* and are taken on a tour of its four floors.

Roughly half of the ground floor has been completed, two rooms with new concrete floors and walling, a large and immovable safe from earlier use as a bank is highly present. We move up the front staircase, and later exit from the rear one, to the first floor that has potential to be a seminar space or offices, according to Maria. The Vardø Restored project earlier used the second floor of *The Grand* to run a workshop on its processes and relations to the town and wider community. We see the sketches, prototypes processes and outcomes of the workshop on boards still standing in the large space, its only inhabitants, precursors of a possible future. There has been interest shown in discussion with some local businesses.



We climb the internal staircase up into the large unfinished third floor and marvel at the views of the town's two harbours. Maria mentions that the family have thought about converting this into apartments, or hotel rooms. Later we discuss this as a space for 14 self-service *Airbnb*-like bedrooms with shared bathrooms and a central kitchen. Then we climb a ladder and rickety staircase to the top floor with its eight attic windows, each with a magnificent view. Apartments, studios, a home for the family, says Maria wistfully, laughing and looking at us all. But we don't really know what to do.

*

January 2014. A shared concern has been how to make and to go about making decisions about the future of more than merely the edifice of the hotel. Whose arctic futures are at stake in this small town has always been at the forefront of our discussions. We have been interested to develop what we see as a culture of care suited to a specific small arctic island town setting and to its social-material and imaginative cultural resources. But we have wanted from early in our discussions to reach beyond obvious choices that are simply a matter of income generation with the building being distanced from the community.

*

What has been special about questions as to how to transform *The Grand* — whether into a hotel or another commercial venue or into a wholly different entity — has been that it is firmly in the hands of its family owners, the Bertheussens, since the 1970s. The video material on the *Vardø Restored* site give a strong sense of pride.

Maria grew up in Vardø, and knows the city as well as anyone, or more, having an interest for history, and a father who is a storyteller. Her husband Rasmus, have been one of the most important members of Vardø Restored. His skills a restoration carpenter have been seminal to the work that has been done on several properties in town. Having a family that is itself needing to work out its own internal decisions and long term goals for the grand. These are matters that have taken time and energy and all the while during the process of restoring the buildings exterior, then gradually its interior. Maria's father has worked tirelessly to see the project through, having also restored his own family home, proudly a predecessor to the entire Vardø Restored project. But the hotel is also being revived for a potentially different future, and the family manage to hold it open, the future that is! Occasionally they use the venue for workshops such as the one held by the Vardø Restored project for its early mapping of the city and the project and processes for the regenerations. The size of the hotel is daunting for a family and a small town to tackle.

*

Field work needs humility by researchers towards their hosts. Yet it needs all to see in a collaborative ethnographically positioned inquiry that local interests may also need unpacking and questioning to venture into performative and dynamic futures. This is so that they may reach beyond local horizons. They may not yet be visible and translatable form within local contexts. Materials and means prompted from elsewhere may be needed that would need to be repurposed or positioned to context and situated local practices. These are delicate and difficult processes and need negotiation and delegation, they require connecting different view points and they demand a shared interest to look forwards to a larger picture that may not yet be possible to demarcate clearly, again and again, but that over time becomes clearer through processes of sketching and proposing, all a type of projection that is abductive and associative not necessarily driven by deductive or inductive logics and certainties as models of destinations.

How then does a community with a diversity of stakeholders come to be understood and how do the owners of one large venue come to see their possession as a shared resource and site for generating interest with income, activity with accountability? How to may designer-researchers engage in such processes without respecting local knowledge and needs, yet offer alternative to 'business as usual'. And how might a variety of visitors

contribute — master's students from Norway and Canada, students, designers, architects, story tellers, ethnographers, landscape theorists and teachers to mention a few.

Having Vardø Restored as an ongoing and ambitious and aspirational framework, based on local organising and expertise, provided Future North as a project as whole with a robust platform and a strong point of entry to the town. While this was an invitation, it was done so with criticality and with expectations that the project would also indirectly and directly bring new expertise and experience to Vardø and not only itself follow a model of extraction of cultural knowledge and insight for researchers and students.

Field work therefore became a primary means of engagement. The new programme in Landscape Architecture between AHO and the University of Tromsø brought a spread of students and activities to the town. There workshops and classes were connected to Vardø Restored and to the defined and emergent needs of the town as changing policies concerning development ensued, principally no oil and gas field extraction and no successful use of the gigantic new harbour on the mainland opposite the island.

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Vardø is a town with a long, vibrant culture and successful economy. In its heyday at the start of the 20th century Vardø was a rich mercantile centre for fishing and regional trade. It has a longer political and cultural history: there is evidence of iron age Sami settlements, the first church was built in 1307 and a stone and earth walled fortress from the 14th century — part of the Norwegian kingdom, later visited by King Christian IV of Denmark-Norway in 1599 to claim to the area in the face of Russian expansion — has been successively rebuilt and today is a museum. The island has become a venue for tourism and indeed for education and research residencies and projects such as ours.



As expressed by numerous participants in the Vardø Restored website, one of the main challenges for the town has been to reassert its cultural core and to restore a sense of pride and engagement for the local community. This is very much to do with working with the materialities of the context and setting, where cultural heritage, daily work and social practices and projections of future developments are entangled. Yet this increasingly needs to be seen in relation to the town's growing identity as a tourist venue and related services and Service Design potential, alongside its part in strategic roles in military surveillance and maritime navigation, such that the digital is ever-present too. Over the past two decades this small island community has increasingly been 'connected': to the mainland by a road tunnel, supported by a small airport linked to the national network, and visited daily by the coastal supply and cruise ship the *Hurtigruten*.

There is a diversity of interests in the town that centre on the hotel as a social and cultural venue. Andrew is reminded of his old colleague and friend Jay Lemke who has been motivated to see how mediated meaning making is realised through many actors. Lemke (1998: 286) suggests that 'Instead of theorising causal relations from one autono-

mous domain to another ... if we unite all these domains as participants in the myriad subnetworks of an ecosocial system, we can give detailed accounts of their interdependencies and the self-organising dynamics of this complex system.'

But how are we to translate this into a process over time that will lead to reasoned and seasoned choices that are economically and communicatively sustainable for the Bertheussen family and for the potential reconfiguration of the hotel to a Hub for a variety of activities and self organising future dynamics. Design offers many such means but its own dynamics and elaborations would need explaining, demonstrating, offering and come consolidation.... The speculative and also systems-service aspects of Design too would need to be asserted as both analytical and developmental resources, part of a wider reflexive knowledge building practice that funders seemed not to ... anticipate.

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Over several years between the projects and their members we have built up close working relationships and developed friendships. We've arrived at what we hope will continue to be the practice of 'a design centred culture of care' that will help realise

the ongoing transformation of a former hotel to a 'cultural hub' and not merely one of entrepreneurial innovation. This design view on cultures of care acknowledges that we are involved in shaping shared futures and that select choices need to be arrived at after the processes of posing and pitching and proecting various options — formal, open neded, playful even — that is typical to design based development and inquiry. This too needs to be about design based futures, where the acts of desinging are themselves a means to negotiating options and contexts — but to also extend these into unexpected, unforeseen and plausible paths to follow.

For the owners of such a hotel this has naturally seemed too indistinct, too intangible and far to undefined. Then, as we have continud a process of their suggesting their own options, influenced by local conditions and expressions of interest from within the town, these two processes have gradually become inter-twined. A different set of possible directions and choices have emerged in what has become a design rich space for workshops, exchanges of other similar settings and a spread of types of engagement and activity.



Matters of care, that care matters. We have written up an academic book chapter on this concerning the Vardø HUB (Morrison et al, in press 2018). But what are we to make of this notion of care? For Puig de la Bellacasa (2011: 100):

The notion of 'matters of care' is a proposition to think with. Rather than indicating a method to unveil what matters of fact are, it suggests we make of them what is needed to generate more caring relationships. It is not so much a motion that explains the construction of things than a suggestion on how those who study things can participate in their possible becomings.

As a team of authors representing the owners and community and diverse academic

and design fields, we presented some of the contexts and dynamics of this negotiation by way of exchanges and interactions between the owners of a large building and a related local urban regeneration project and design orientations of a research project into cultural landscapes of the future arctic.

*

Through collaboration and access to diverse expertise and experience such an approach to urban regeneration will hopefully culturally enrich and enchant a community in the face of undeniable rapid change in the Arctic (Arbo et al., 2013). Importantly, as we experienced in the past five years, this change that spans altered polar 'development' policies, shifting oil prices and changes in exploration strategies and investment and not least the physical and related economic effects of climate change. In the context of such change, culture is often not a core topic of care and has to fight for its place alongside the ideologies of geo-politics and the profit driven forces of resource extraction.

*



February 2015. Maria stands in the hotel. She has woken up early and taken a walk over from her current home to think about what to do with the building. She stands looking out over the sea, facing the north pole. The town has changed a great deal in her own lifetime. She feels a responsibility to her family and to the community, the hotel standing empty for all to see. She has been discussing its future with her father. Should it be a hotel again with an investor that will drive a process perhaps in a very commercial direction? Perhaps a series of apartments would be the fastest way to occupy the building and turn a profit but where's that money to come from? And now there is interest that these be taken up by the staff of the Globus II radar military intelligence monitoring station that looms over the island. Maria looks out over the ocean

that never freezes and thinks of discussions of possible other options with the Future North team but remains confused.

*

Pragmatically, these consequences are embedded in process of change and cautious choices and moves into what is emergent and prospective, not only given and known, characterised by engaging flexibly and adaptively with unscripted and unpredicted developments that have been part of learning to together design not just a 'Make-b&b' or a 'maker-tel' (as we began to call it instead of a hotel), but to find a form and future that is not merely care-ful but full of care. By this we mean that the design for cultural futures, located in the past and enacted in the present, might be generated through and around a building for and the building of a culture of care. This is a culture that is driven by interests, activities, events, participants and processes of cultural making and exchange that are dynamic and responsive, prospective and dynamic.

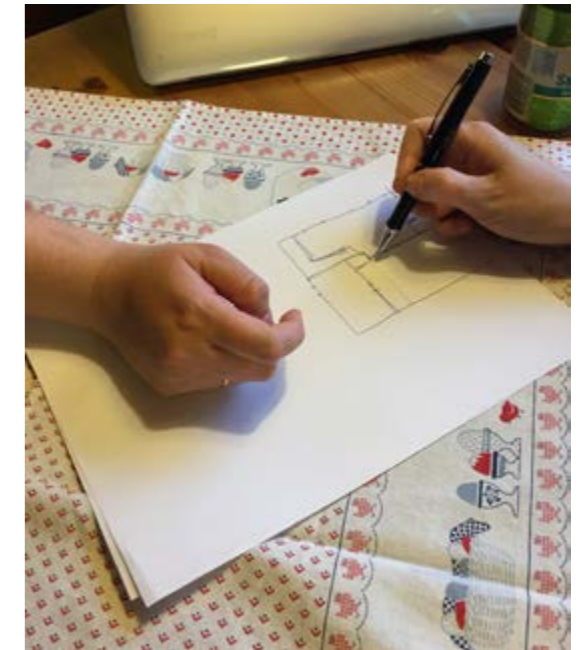
*

March 2016, the exterior of the property has been wholly restored. By now Future North has visited on numerous occasions with teams of students and researchers and on each occasion we have visited and discussed *The Grand*. The family has worked tirelessly to complete the external work. Inside the interiors are also being transformed. Step by step. Room by room. The ground floor has been changed: a concrete floor has been completed and a wooden archway installed, the space seems quieter and larger. Maria has held several events in the space.

*

Mid April 2016. Andrew and Janike of Future North make another visit to Vardø and to specifically move into exploring design centred scenarios and options for repurposing the hotel into what we loosely pitch as a kind of maker space. This is a critical visit as we have brought with us three adjunct participants — Angeliki Dimaki-Adolfson, Jonas Adolfson and Heather Moore from *The Shape of Things* in Berlin (<http://theshapeofthings.de/team-2/>) — who have volunteered their interest and expertise. The notion of the hotel being a maker space, one enlivened by shared interests and a logic of unpaid contributions is very much as the centre of working frugally, carefully and yet drawing on strong skills and wide experience. On this visit, familiarisation with the town and its tourist sites and services is a key element as tourism is one of the main

possible futures for the hotel and other local services to support and develop.



Later in Oslo, Andrew discusses the potential of a service design connection to the hotel and tourism with his AHO colleague Berit Lindqvister. It turns out Berit has already run a studio with master's students in service design into the *Hurtigruten* coastal ferry service that moves volumes of tourists and goods up and down the coast between Bergen and Kirkenes, stopping daily in Vardø at 1600 for an hour. On a subsequent visit to Vardø, Andrew and fellow travellers meet the manager of the hotel on the *Hurtigruten* one sunny afternoon as he stands resplendent in his uniform beside the large vessel. We discuss *The Grand*, his new position for the first time managing a hotel off shore, and the possibility of connecting the two. Hanging about on the quayside and showing our new visitor Heather Moore about the town has turned out well. Following through on connections is a task that will take well into 2017 we anticipate.

We find examples of other Norwegian initiatives not only international ones. It is important to offer evidence of how others have framed and marketed their initiatives as hubs. However, as we already anticipate, looking into a designing for futures that are care-ful, we see that many of these are arranged around notions of social entrepreneurship.

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Late April 2016. In Oslo, we open photographs and look at the drawings of the building Jonas has taken back with him to work up new ones showing potential uses

and scenarios. In Vardø, Maria and her family and members of Vardø Restored frequently visit the hotel and rethink its possible uses. The shell of the building is part of the difficulty of shaping its future generative uses: it is so large and its transformation will be costly. It is essential that a staged and careful process of development, mindful of constraints and the very pressing demands on a few key actors who are already entangled in other projects, travel and day jobs be core to this.



Angeliki and Andrew spend hours trawling the Web looking for cultural hubs that provide us — and most importantly the team in Vardø — with elements from different examples of what we have been suggesting. Its become increasingly important for Maria and her husband Rasmus to build their own clearer concept of what we have been showing and gently suggesting. We have moved into a different phase in conceptualising the hotel as a hub. We use our internal Facebook group to exchange ideas both ways. Andrew and Maria talk on the phone, and Janike is also in the loop, talking with Maria and offering suggestions and importantly questions about feasibility that back channel Maria's already expressed concerns about already holding down a full-time job at the museum and being a partner to Rasmus travelling up and down from his formal job as master restoration carpenter for Trondheim cathedral, and mother to their two girls in Vardø.

It's increasingly clear to us that the Vardø HUB is a mixed cultural concept built around expression and articulation, with a blend of uses connected to the creative sector and industries. For us, at its heart it's a

venue for diverse activities and not driven by developing training or support for businesses. Maria and Andrew discuss this on the phone. There's a long pause at one point. Then Maria says she does not want to 'run a hotel'. We laugh and admit that we have finally landed on not just an innovation space for commerce, though it has to have its place, but a *cultural* innovation hub that needs to be fuelled and nurtured by impulses: artistic, creative, community, collective, exploratory and cultural.

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Andrew suggests he follow up possibilities with *Innovation Norway*, spurred on by a phone call with Maria, who knows how they work in the region and has been in touch with them on several occasions. They discuss the recent maker space facilities supported by Innovation Norway in the *Tivoli* in the larger town of Kirkenes near the border with Russia. We discuss the maker ethics and aesthetics of our own Hub quite sure its not a centre for training or for 3D printing in a fab lab tradition. Andrew's been collaborating at AHO with Additive Manufacturing research so he is familiar with its DIY and regenerative modes of design and knowing (Morrison, 2017). Using making as a practice and thinking through being able to make an alternate space in the town are recurring themes in our conversations. Yet we are making a space for cultural engagement. Often we have recalled the community centres, art collectives and cultural centres that have been a part of wider social democratic initiatives in many countries, notably Britain and Scandinavia.

In the early autumn of 2016 Andrew visits colleagues in the Future North project in Tromsø and has a meeting with Merete Susan Andersen and Ingrid Mathisen at *Innovation Norway (Arctic)*. He and Maria have followed up leads from Finnmark and Maria's contacts in Vadsø, Vardø's nearest neighbouring town, and Andrew discussed interaction and service design, tourism and innovation business strategies with Berit Lindqvister. The meeting with *Innovation Norway* goes well; it is supportive and open, and the two colleagues there are open to ideas for the future on discussing cultural views, but it is clear that seed funding and its possible extension into a larger project is dedicated to social entrepreneurship and a specific development of business.

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Social entrepreneurship has matured in the past two decades, drawing on earlier notions of patronage, social good, benevolent capitalists and change agents who are

active proponents of change to motivating and realising social change through entrepreneurship and innovation (e.g. Bornstein, 2007), According to Martin and Osberg (2015: 5–23), with extensive experience in business, services and systems, we may usefully see three types of social engagement. They argue that social service providers work directly for change yet leave an existing system in place while social activists who may work more indirectly to transform given settings and practices, often through legal means. Social entrepreneurship, in contrast, works directly for change and seeks to alter an existing system into a preferred one that makes for effective change, often with a fair measure of advocacy work. For these authors, the stages of transformation may be summarised as: understand, envision, build, and scale.

Martin and Osberg offer a framework for understanding how successful social entrepreneurs actually go about producing transformative change. There are four key stages: understanding the world; envisioning a new future; building a model for change; and scaling the solution. In summary, social entrepreneurship characterises acts of leadership that generate public benefit (Marin & Roseberg, 2015: 1).

For us it's a matter of co-designing a venue for multiple activities that will suit the given and emerging needs of a variety of stakeholders, commercial, community, civic, tourists and researchers, students and artists who are themselves active civic entrepreneurs who may 'ignite community networks for good' (Goldsmith et al. 2010)

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March 2016. We decide its Impulse not Impact that is our alternate term. An impulse for cultural expression, production and articulation in many forms. Maria's laughter rings out, 'Is that what we are up to?' 'There's a pulse', quips Andrew. Influenced by other hubs and needing to differentiate ours we land on a name change from Vardø Hotel to Impulse Hub. It's not long until we simply change hotel to hub and drop the word impulse and let the activity- and event-oriented character of our design work their way into action. Well, we hope this is possible and we spend long *Whatsapp* calls discussing how to use the sparse funds at hand, to secure others and to commence a process that will not only bootstrap the hub into a self-generating space but engage others to do so.

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May 2016. Angeliki and Andrew meet up twice in the trendy *Tøyen Torget* (<http://ostkantliv.no/category/toyen/toyen-torg/>), a recently revitalised 1960s inner city square in the east of central Oslo. We have chosen to meet here to place ourselves in a sensory ethnographic mode of inquiry (Pink, 2009) concerning the aesthetics, interior and event design apparent in two new cafés that provide venues for a variety of services and events. *Postkontoret* (<http://pkontoret.no>) is a large bar and restaurant café independently owned that changes its functions across the day and night, also like the hotel in Vardø it has an old safe that serves as a cosy lounge. *Nord og natt* (<http://www.nordoslo.no/restaurantogcocktailbar/>) is part of a chain of concerns that offer a mix of food and spaces across the country, and in this instance with ecological and 'traditional' food types and on site production part of its culturally framed Norwegian identity.

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Later in June, Andrew takes Dagny Stuedahl, a design professor at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, and Laurene Vaughan, co-editor of the book on design and care there for lunch to discuss designing for care. Both venues in *Tøyen-torget* deliberately mark out their identity through interior design that appears to make use of second hand furniture, roughly crafted and seemingly DIY maker-generated counters and components. Angeliki and Andrew discuss these elements on site too and what we might convey of this trend to our colleagues — and now friends — in Vardø.

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November 2016. It's a cold weekday morning and Jonas, Angeliki, and Andrew meet with Ole Jørn Myklebust at *Sentralen* in downtown Oslo. Jonas and Ole Jørn are old

friends and we are able to talk openly about this large scale commercially supported initiative into a social innovation hub in the heart of the city.

Promoted on its website as 'From savings bank to cultural think tank', *Sentralen* offers (<http://www.sentralen.no/en/thehouse/byggets-historie>). *Sentralen* opened its doors in the current location in February 2016. Supported by Sparebank, *Sentralen* is based on collaborative experience, surveys and design that indicated a need in Oslo for an open space for meeting and cultural practices as well as a providing 'a centre for innovators working on finding new solutions for dealing with social challenges.' As can be seen online, the centre's website offers a variety of activities and event centred participation, with offices and workspaces for hire. The seven storey building is reflected the extent of offerings and reporting on the website so that connections between physical spaces, innovation, community and especially youth centred participation are co-present, alongside a café and more formal restaurant.

Sentralen provided us with a fully functioning social innovation venue to visit and to think with and through in considering a rather differently located and constituted culturally framed possible space in the far north of the country. This is a very different space, away from the vibrant cultural diversity and extensive capital city based expertise and volume of participants. What might a designing a culture of care mean when scaled to the locality of Vardø and to a property owned by its inhabitants not a leading bank intent on supporting a form of core urban social capital investment? What sort of values of care might we need to ensure and enact, inspired by *Sentralen* and its many participative and public activities and open platforms for engagement?

The mixed venue setting of *Sentralen* in many respects mirrored on a much larger and city central scale, what we had already conceptualised in Vardø. It encouraged us to think further into our already sketched event and activity based conceptualisation of how to care for cultural processes and interaction through events being framed and carried through by a diversity of participants, such a seminar by the regional museum, a visual exhibition by a research project, a community based planning process and an evening sharing knowledge of found and foraged food production.

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December 2016. Andrew and Angeliki need to meet to discuss the content and process of the project and the joint book chapter on design and care. We choose yet another venue that is a mixed use space in central Oslo. *Kulturhuset* (<http://www.kulturhuset-oslo.no/about-us/>) aims to provide an inclusive cultural space for new collaborations and forms of engaging expression respectful of tradition between artists, cultural workers and the wider public. It's another part of the hybrid design we are sketching. But the physical building is to be demolished soon for a city centre high-rise development.

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January 2017. Andrew visits Vardø again to discuss the future of the HUB with Maria, Rasmus and Svein Harald. They show him the completed kitchen, the office of the small events company that the municipality suggested move in and have funded some changes. There are many different partners involved it turns out and according to Maria, the town's mayor has begun to see the ramifications of this slow transformation.

It's important to bear this in mind as the town has relatively recently opened a 200 seat stage/auditorium with collapsible seats and a 25 m indoor heated swimming pool as part of its community building and public services. The HUB is then well placed to access these facilities and to complement them. When we visited them on a prior travel, a meeting of the Norwegian Labour party is in progress in the auditorium; we are given an extensive tour of the pool, technical workings, and gym/yoga/exercise studio.

Again, it seems to Angeliki and Andrew that connecting people is what Vardø Restored and the Vardø HUB might be doing best. But in the future we will also need to build an online presence, a reliable booking system and news facilities as part of the project's website. A mesh of Service, Systems and Interaction Design.

*

It is a demanding semester for everyone, Janike visits Vardø in February if only to keep communication moving. Then its April already. She tries again in May, and as calendar tightens she is invited to Maria's daughters confirmation, as in the end this seems to be the only available weekend. Much has been going on locally around arranging *Kystopprøret* that's launched in Vardø in April 2017. Maria is an active member. There's a lively Facebook site and postings form a team of ten or so. It's a non-party political programme is motivated to develop dialogue with national politicians about how

communities such as Vardø experience the future.

And its fish that are the key to this future, argues the group, across the coasts and seas of Norway. Already the mesh of meaning making is apparent, past, present and futures intertwined. The fish — the people — the politicians. Moves to privatisation by the current government. What is the fishing industry to Norway? Its older than oil and gas. The fish is a replenishable resource, and is key to upholding communities along the coast, communities that have been built on the fishing industry.

*

September is election time. *Kystopprøret* gains momentum and protests. On 7 September an 8x8 m big banner is set up by the SALT project near the Norwegian Opera. It includes a highly visible symbol of opposition adopted by *Kystopprøret* 2017 that has already been painted onto the most central wall of the Grand Hotel building. The use of the symbol starts to be taken up along the coast.

The protest begins to gather interest from many political parties and leads to action: the Fisheries Minister Sandberg withdraws the government's message about the duty system for trawlers from coverage in the Parliament.

In early October, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, now leader of the Labour Party, visits Vardø and the organisation holds a two hour meeting with him in the Vardø Hub, in the refurbished kitchen and meeting room. Surely the HUB is alive and kicking, and ideas are not just slapping about like fish out of water?

According to the Facebook site, 'The message is clear: the fish belong to the community. We will live by what the sea gives. We love our coastal community. We have will and brio. We're not giving up!'

Yet another activity has come to be centred on the HUB whose name has not yet formally been labelled on the exterior of the building...

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This summer the latest fad in real time streaming continues in Norway. From the Hurtigruten to trains to knitting. Now its bird life. NRK have set up their cameras on Hornøya (<https://www.nrk.no/fuglefjellet-1.12984757?loc=en>). The stream shows the vibrant life of the island, but doesn't mention it is just off Vardø, close by the main harbour. Teeming with birds, Vardø is fre-

quented by thousands of birders and supported by the excellent architectural office biotope (<http://www.biotope.no/p/birding-varanger.html>) specialising in bird watching and birding. Its leader Tormod Amundsen has been instrumental in bringing new hides and shelters to bird watchers but new architecture of wonderful character and quality.

There are more than enough birders visiting Vardø to support the HUB. There are rooms for meetings and photo sharing evenings. And then there is the Hurtigruten that visits daily, edging into the harbour and its passengers wander about the town for an hour and disappear into the Arctic Ocean, camera and tablet and long lenses all untapped as visitors for layovers on the island ready to catch the next boats out the next day with the museum, monument and fort unvisited otherwise. The birders have hatched a plan...

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Early September 2017. Janike has begun her sabbatical and is bent upon writing. Angeliki is busy with her doctoral studies in her programme in Goteborg. Maria is back at work and her children in school again in Vardø. Andrew is preparing for the Anticipation 2017 conference in London and a paper on culture, design and future Arctics. October 8-12 Janike visits Vardø, does the initial shaping of the upcoming joint seminar with Vardø Restored in November, and spends several afternoons with Maria where they plan how the HUB may be featured in the event. Maria wants to use the opportunity to launch the Vardø HUB for the town and to make connections to the place and its history as well as to the future and its possible and projected potentials. The one is known and valued, the other is emergent and uncertain. She wants the decision-making process regarding the future of the hotel to be transparent, for inhabitant to be able to influence her choices.

Again, they go over and discuss possible solutions for the four storey building. Now, the leader of Biotope, Tormod, has been clear about needing apartments for the many young architects who come to Vardø to work for him for a few months, a year, several years. Tormod needs accommodation now, and urges Maria to think about this as she ponders the future of the hotel. She also want to engage the local youth in a discussion whether they would like to contribute converting the hotel basement into a club. She used it herself when she was young, to arrange pop-up parties.

Monday night, 13 November. Following up on Maria and Janike's talks, Maria and Andrew walk around their homes talking on

their mobiles, discussing the final event on Saturday 25 November. Its to be a Workshop to present the concept of the Vardø HUB to one another, and to the town, to provide an open venue for discussion, for finding out more about people's interests and needs, their ideas and dreams. Before then we need to follow up a possible application to Ferd. no a social entrepreneurship programme, mindful of the making character of our venture, cultural capital suddenly seeming very real, the event a tangibel result of years of exploration and devotion making in context. They once again discuss the potential of the HUB to be a place of multiplicity. Then Maria says that its a place for facing and sharing change. And we become quiet, wondering what will happen.

But it's important not to put all our eggs in one basket, we say laughing, so that the events and the venue of the Vardø HUB may be responsive and prospective, emergent and connected, tentative but selective, inclusive yet specific, singular yet connected. There's so much that inspired me in Copenhagen this summer, says Maria, perhaps it's time I also get to Oslo before you make another visit here to us in Vardø.

And we discuss how we need to marshal a team of makers and volunteers, experts and participants, to fulfill this slowly defined culture of care-ful design and transform it into tangible, place-based activities for public engagement and shared expression, that may unfold on site and beyond.

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Later in September we visit the website Træna in Helgeland (<http://www.tenktraena.no>). It seems like we have found a fellow space and mindset that melds into the thinking around the Hub. Maria is already familiar with their work and has met some of its active member. It's a small archipelago community of 500 persons and many of the similar interests and needs: 'There are shops, a schools, café, bar, overnight accommodation and eatery, a swimming pool, gym, museum and two fishing facilities' says the site, well documented and presented. We must remember to invite a representative to our closing seminar. We have now invited Moa to the seminar and workshop.

*

October races by and we are busy planning the series of events in Vardø. Two days and evening programmes hosted by Vardø Restored and Future North. This will be the first time of making public to their town their many years of dedicated work. We meet Svein Harald Holmen and Brona

Keenan in the AHO canteen after they have been teaching on a master's course. A working lunch becomes the next phase in the programme development for a string of events (22-25 November), weary as they are from making proposals for future projects. So it is that Future North is to hold a research event to reflect on its Vardø work and to anticipate possible future collaborations, events and projects.

We hope to use the occasion to launch an internal project between researchers and teachers in landscape and design at AHO on learning landscapes. We call it *LAND LEARN*. The seminar will also be the launch of this booklet, a medley of making and reflections that cross into and threads outwards from our more formal research presentations and publications. During Future North we have also pulled together an emerging project called *Cape to Cape* and a visit to Vardø always activates thinking of our collaborators on other projects in Cape Town.

But this time we will be travelling to Vardø with a new artistic research project that Andrew is a part of, already activating the shaping our own futures logics of the Hub. Called *Amphibious Trilogies* (<http://amphibious.khio.no/index.php/home/>) it explores the notion of an extended choreography, led by Professor Amanda Steggell from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO) and with a dancer, choreographer and cartoonist Brynjar Åbel Bandlien. We'll hold a small workshop on Vardø: the project encompasses the trilogy of ponds, pasages and ... islands. Brynjar will perform one of his new works that are part of his artistic PhD. And they will see the harbour where Narratta our fictive speaking nuclear powered narwhal lingers and listens.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our deepest thanks to the Bertheussen family and to Rasmus Skrydstrup. Their generous welcome to *Future North* and openness to a process of ongoing change and possibility is inspirational and courageous. Svein Harald Holmen and Brona Keenan has been central to making connections for us all in visiting Vardø and for motivating this collaboration that led to the Vardø Hub. In addition, thanks to Mats Kemppe, Ted Matthews, Heather Moore, and Sandra Kemp for their inputs, and to Jonas Adolfsen for his architectural inputs and photographic documentation of the building, and the town of Vardø.

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10. Future Vardø — Imaginary City

Morgan Ip

All cities were once imaginary. When you look at any urban skyline, you are looking at the thoughts, the dreams and the decisions of individuals. What we see as the essence of a city's identity is very often an invention and could so easily have been different. — Darran Anderson¹



¹ Anderson, Darran. "Imaginary Cities — Radical Ideas." *Journal of International Psycho-geography*, September 10, 2015. <https://medium.com/journal-of-international-psycho-geography/imaginary-cities-radical-ideas-b51f9fe5666c>.

Future potential of Vardø as envisioned by local citizens both online and offline. Image by author.



People place notes on the map during Pomor Festival, Vardø, 2015. Photo by author.

The future city of Vardø already exists in a multitude of configurations: it resides in the minds of the people inhabiting it. What shape does this imaginary city take? How does the actual future of Vardø emerge from these civic desires, or how does the imaginary Vardø emerge from the existing one?

COLLABORATIVE MAPPING

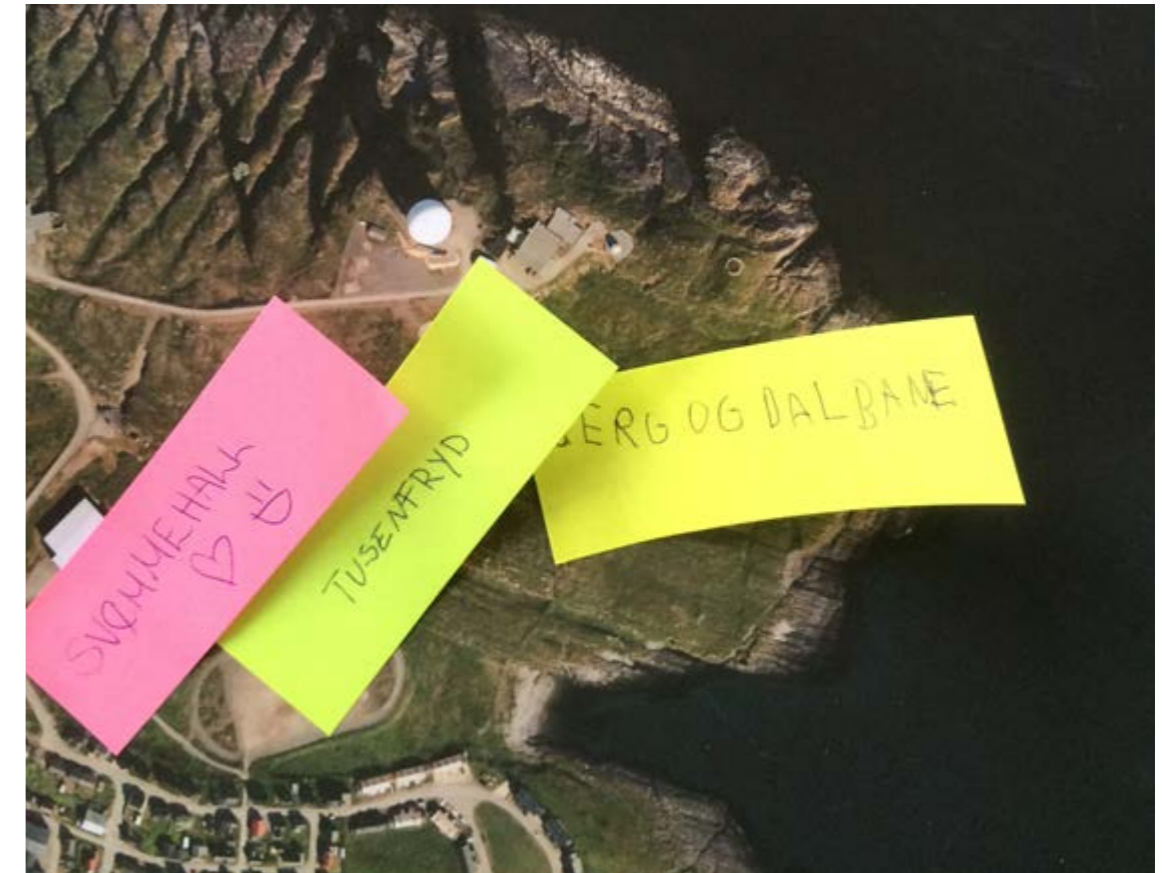
As part of my PhD research within Future North, I aimed to excavate this imaginary city. People are implicit in the design of the built environment, and it is thus important to elicit the voices of the people to assure locally and contextually relevant design. Including the public in the planning process strengthens a community by building social capital, expands awareness and understanding of local issues, and ultimately increases support for decisions made affecting policy and development.² By revealing this city hidden in the imaginations of the citizens we are thus able to guide plans and actions in the constant ongoing creation of the real world.

Murmansk digital content producers Stepa Mitaki and Denis Kreminsky developed one way to do this with a digital collaborative mapping tool called MyCity.io. Together we created a version called MyBarents.com, which was focused on the Russian-Norwegian borderland encompassing

Kirkenes and Vardø in Norway, Nickel in Russia, and Näätämö in Finland. Here people could plot ideas directly on a map that could be shared, discussed and voted upon with an aim to increase engagement with the public in conversations of civic improvement.

To complement the online tool, public mapping events were held, and in Vardø this was during Pomorfestivalen in the entry space of the Sør-Varanger Museum in July, 2015. We placed a large satellite image map of Vardø on the wall next to the museum's sepia photographs of historical Vardø. A smaller map, but at a bigger scale, was placed on a nearby table. Both were accompanied with sticky notes and pens for people to attach their ideas. A computer station had the online map ready, although this remained mostly unused as passers-by spent most time examining the physical maps, pointing out and discussing Vardø and some placing their own notes. These in turn were put on the MyBarents.com website in an act of virtually archiving the event as well as allowing people to further engage with the ideas.

The results of these mapping exercises revealed elements of the imagined Vardø. The ideas ranged from smaller interventions to bigger dreams for the future, from how people get to Vardø, and what they do once they are there.



Some of the tags were quite visionary. Photo by author.

DREAM SCALES

Some ideas that visitors placed on the map were fairly modest in scale. These range from social program initiatives such as a sewing room, youth club and band rehearsal places, to the greater maintenance of existing attractions. For example, one post was to make clear signage with directions to the Steilneset Memorial site and the maintenance of the grassy area around it. People also posted calls for new local parks, grilling places, and weather warning signs.

Others dreamt bigger, calling for infrastructure that might not be feasible in the foreseeable future, such as extra indoor swimming halls (even though there is a newly built one already located in the city centre), an indoor ice rink, or a fish restaurant on the breakwater to the harbour. Possibly the most fanciful ideas placed on the map, and mentioned twice even, were posts for an amusement park or rollercoasters on the island. The idea to move the airport to the island to avoid existing fog conditions was also quite a bold move.

VARDØ ON THE MOVE

Several of the ideas were aimed at improving and expanding transportation options within Vardø and to beyond. These ranged in

scale from smaller infrastructural developments supporting non-motorised transport (i.e. making the tunnel bicycle friendly, clearly marked trails to monuments and Domen, the witches mountain) to the creation of a new harbour, a new location for an airport that would experience less fog, and introduced seaplane services.

“Here one should arrange for parking, as well as mark up a hiking trail to the witch’s cave at Domen. This can be expanded with a hiking trail all the way to Kiberg, with sightseeing points at the Kiberg Cape and the whole surrounding area.” — E³

“New Airport: Make a new airport (without fog)” — Participant at Pomor Festival⁴

“Seaplane: A good trip for tourists and only an airplane without an airport.” — Participant at Pomor Festival⁵

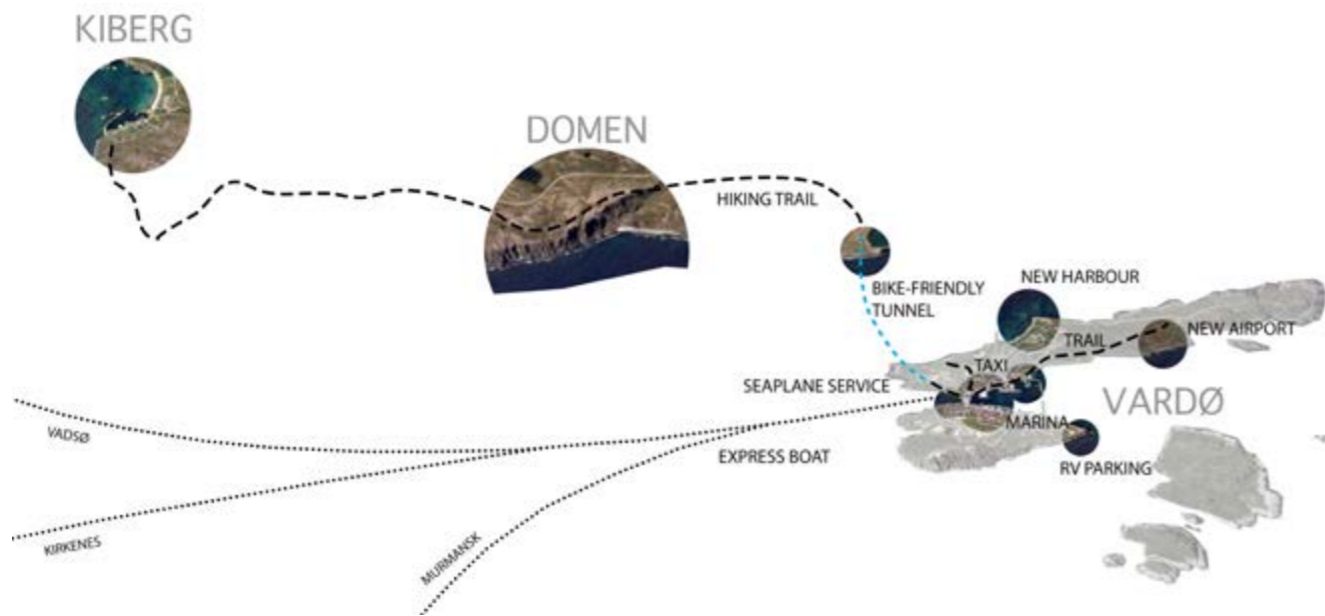
This suggests that part of an improved city future includes better ways of moving through Vardø, as well as increasing connections with the world beyond. This seemed to be a two-way street, forgive the pun, with transportation considerations given to inhabitants as well as visitors. Parking places for camping vehicles, extended time

² Evans-Cowley, Jennifer, and Justin Hollander. “The New Generation of Public Participation: Internet-Based Participation Tools.” *Planning Practice & Research* 25, no. 3 (June 1, 2010): 397–408. doi:10.1080/02697459.2010.503432.

³ E. Tursti til Heksehula: Her bør4(sic) man tilrettelegge for parkering, samt merke opp tursti til heksehula ved domen. Kan utvides med tursti helt til kiberg(sic), med sightseeingspunkter(sic) ved kibergsneset og hele området rundt. MyBarents.com. April 12, 2015.

⁴ Pomorfestivalen. Ny flyplass: Lag ny flyplass (uten tåke). MyBarents.com. July 27, 2015.

⁵ Pomorfestivalen turisti. Sjø-fly: en fin tur for turister og bare et fly ingen flyplass. MyBarents.com. July 23, 2015.



Ideas for improved transportation connections in the Vardø area. Image by author.

slots for ferry passengers, and signage and historical markers for tourists along local trails are all requests to entice and beckon visitors. Vardø also happens to be at the end of the series of national tourist routes across Norway, extending just further to Hamningberg between May and October.⁶ A series of spots for motor homes and service facilities plotted on the maps suggests that people in this end-of-the-road city want to take advantage of its existing situation as a tourist destination. The expansion or refinement of transportation infrastructure in the town dovetails with nurturing and enshrining local assets.

BUILDING ON THE REAL VARDØ

These assets are resources that contribute to the mental image of the city. People plotted many ideas that, sometimes literally, highlight special aspects of the city's storied past and exceptional natural endowments.

"Illuminate the Eagle's Nest: The Eagles Nest should be cleaned, labeled and illuminated (inside) so that history comes forth ... great tourist site if a little bit of work is done here" — E⁷

**"Light up Globus"
— Participant at Pomor Festival⁸**

These are some of the ideas that pick up on the historical connection, such as with the atrocious witch trials of the 17th century, with an idea for improved access to the Steilneset monument by Peter Zumthor and Louise Bourgeois that stands in memorial to the victims. The aforementioned trail to Domen and a witch's museum in the old fort also refer to this layer of history. From another dark passage of time, the Eagle's Nest is a remnant of the many WWII fortifications that dot the landscape. Globus refers to the radar domes that loom large over the city. This locally specific aggregation of built heritage informs the existing identity of Vardø, and indeed all are striking landmarks. Where history informs the imaginary city, so too does the natural landscape with diving, camping, boating and hiking infrastructures all making their marks on the maps. The existing economic hardships of Vardø are also highlighted, with several people requesting areas of the city to be cleaned up and rejuvenated. The historical and present conditions of the city combine to inform the mental image of the future.

⁶ <http://www.nasjonale-turistveger.no/en/routes/varanger>

⁷ E. Opplys Ørneredet: Ørneredet bør ryddes, merkes og opplyses (innvedig(sic)) slik at historien kommer frem.. florr(sic) turist-plaster dersom man gjør bittelitt arbeid her! MyBarents.com. April 12, 2015

⁸ Pomorfestival. Lyssetting av globus. July 24, 2015.

THE FUTURE CITY

Could there be a Tivoli North in Vardø, with rollercoasters and other amusements available to the delight of locals and visitors? What other grand ideas do citizens have? There will certainly be contention between competing and opposing ideals of what should become reality, particularly given the specific context and feasibility of any one idea. Perhaps it is unlikely for some imaginings, such as having three indoor pools in Vardø, to leave the realm of the creative mind in the foreseeable future. It is more likely for less whimsical ideas, such as the development of tourist trails, or the installation of a barbeque area in a park, to come to realisation. Some of the lower hanging fruit, such as creating a youth club or sewing room, could begin with bottom-up community efforts. Importantly these ideas have become one step closer to materialisation in the act of plucking them from the mental landscape and archiving them not only on paper but also in the virtual realm to be accessed and engaged with by anyone with an Internet connection.

The current array of ideas is but a snapshot of an imagined future Vardø. If every new idea or rumination on future place-making in Vardø could be captured on MyBarents.com one would not be able to see a single pixel of the town underneath the array of overlapping ideas. Likewise, paper maps would be laden with layers of bright pink, orange and yellow notes inscribed with ideas ranging from the mundane to the fantastic.

In this imaginary Vardø, a new promenade has been established, the city is cleaner and brighter, and monuments shine brilliantly in the long winter nights. Young people have opened up shops and cafés along a revitalised Strandgata, an artists' and architects' studio perches atop a restored fishing wharf, and a beachside sauna provides warmth and a chance to take a dip in the cool Arctic waters.

The city cuts across a vast swath of the human imagination and is rooted in the historical and present conditions of what constitutes the cultural landscape of Vardø today, as well as in the creative potential of its citizenry. Each city informs and forms the other. While often wildly speculative, the imagined city speaks to the potential inherent in the existing Vardø, with all its challenges and opportunities as it heads into the future.

Acknowledgements

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11. Water Words

Narratta

http://www.oculs.no/projects/future-north/news/?post_id=3983



Dreaming about the Butterfly Island

Narratta, January 13, 2015

One night I dreamt about Vardø as if it were Teriberka—the Russian Barents Coast town where dreams of a new gas era never came true.

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- The Wall and the Flower
- Fabulous forms and design fictions
- Svalbard, The Arctic, May 23–June 1, 2015
- The urbanity of Longyearbyen and the fluid territory of Svalbard

I swam around the butterfly island; the rocks were rust coloured, and I had trouble entering what was once the harbour. There used to be a town there – now the boats were rotting on the shore. The wharfs had all but collapsed, and the sea wall was crumbling.

Very few people lived there now. It used to be a noisy place, boats coming and going. Seals and seagulls used to fight over fish offal that was dumped from the fishermen's wharfs. But the boats disappeared. First they were sunk to the bottom outside the island, but later they simply went off to somewhere else. Probably those big trawlers took over. The ferry that used to shuttle back and forth between the town and the mainland went quiet even longer ago when the under-water tunnel was built.

They tried to save the town and create new jobs by building a new harbour on the mainland for bigger ships and supply boats for the new oil and gas fields. It was to be an ice-free port. It was never deep enough to be a proper oil base, but still they planned oil spill facilities, areas for storing and preparing pipes, with crew quarters and a Heliport – all located right next to the airport. Drilling on the Russian side never started; American shale gas and the challenges of Arctic drilling meant that no money was to be earned. Few boats ever came to Svartnes Harbour, but the birds loved the artificial cove, which was slowly sanding up.

In my dream, life had passed briefly over the butterfly island. Birds still visited and stayed for a while. Their wings reminded me of the butterfly shape of the island. Butterflies (along with skulls, rotten fruit, flowers, watches, bubbles, smoke, hourglasses and musical instruments) symbolized the brevity and the ephemeral nature of life in Dutch 16th and 17th century "Vanitas" paintings. Many coastal communities in my Arctic habitat have had a short life, and even though Vardø has been around longer than most – 700 years, I believe—it is still only really a blink of an eye in Earth time. Vanishing towns do tend to look the same; time takes its toll, and in the end they look just like natural landscapes.

Life is indeed fleeting, even my own radioisotope thermoelectric one, which sees it's Strontium-90 fuel slowly degrade. It, like anything else, succumbs to entropy which seeks to even the distribution of energy—tapping energy—erasing difference and ending in thermodynamic equilibrium where everything looks the same. In the town it was hard to see what was man made and what was natural – the two had blended into each other as time had passed. The beach, rocks and the piles of rotting and crumbling man-made structures no longer distinguishable. Even the massive concrete bunkers from the hot and cold wars—displaying the utmost effort to defeat entropy—were slowly crumbling and returning to the sand they were originally made from.

The once brave new pier of the Svartnes Harbour was almost covered by the rising sea level. It reminded me of something I saw in a gravel pit in Holland – a broken circle and a spiral hill created by the American artist Robert Smithson. Only this is so dull and straight. Smithson once reminded us that entropy is what gives time a direction, creating a past and a future. If you ask a child in a sand box, in which the sand is white in one end and black in the other, to run around in one direction, the sand will eventually become gray. No amount of running in the opposite direction will ever bring things back to the original condition.

The people who lived in Vardø had still fewer jobs and many had left for elsewhere. The only places that seemed well kept and freshly painted were the graveyard and the cultural centre that was donated to the town to keep it alive. In the end, the most important business left in the town was restoring the old houses that people had left behind when they moved elsewhere—a fascinating effort to keep entropy at bay. I remember thinking that while people in Northern communities like Vardø dream of the new, paradoxically, looking after the old seemed to be the future of the town.





Vardø Futures

Narratta, June 15, 2014

It's a rather mild June afternoon in Vardø. This once Arctic city is at the northeast of Norway. I am resting right underneath the boardwalks in Vestervågen, among poles that were for a large part put down after WWII. You'll recall that the German Nazis blew up most of the facilities on this side of the harbourfront. It looked quite different back in even 2014.

The restaurant above has an outdoor dining area now – over the past ten years people have been able to sit outside more often, most restaurants now have them. This one is buzzing with voices, kitchen sounds and plates. Mostly tourists. The usual blend of German bikers, American and Canadian artists, Norwegians finally exploring their north. And students – the city has become a case study for city development in the Arctic. The food is excellent I hear them saying – local fish, vegetables from the many smaller farms in the area, game meats. I dive down quickly, careful not to make a splash, as I don't want to hear if we are on the menu!

Exotic we've become in a different way as the temperatures have risen and we have spread eastwards, no longer hard to see, that being our old exotic character. We are still not that easy to catch. But easy to eat?

So here is urban arctic transformation in this small island that is not oil-driven. Tourists and specialist foods, and even a Residency for artists, writers and researchers. A refuge. A site for presentations and debates on the future of the far north, over the past decade, now in 2025 climate change has moved from the future to the immediate present. I lie here underwater. Oxygen is spread about my body, not being just mostly based in the lungs like the talking tourists. And I wait. Time is poised in the centre of the harbour floor while climate time rolls forwards in the clocks of the Anthropocene.

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Narratta
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