

Title: FJORD CITY FIRE STATION

Abstract

Introduction and background:

Oslo Main Fire Station is today located in the area planned for a new Government Quarter and will be relocated to Bryn. The new main fire station at Bryn is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2023. When the Main Fire Station is moved out of the center of Oslo, the preparedness of the inner part of Oslo will no longer be guaranteed. Therefore, a new central city fire station will be needed. The fire station has been decided to be built on the Fortress Commons in Bjørvika.

Bjørvika

Bjørvika is at the center of Oslos waterfront development known as “Fjord City”. It contains big institutions such as the Oslo Opera House, a new public library and the new Munch museum. The relationship between land and water is a central point for planning Bjørvika and special attention is paid to the design of public spaces. An important urban plan for Bjørvika is the seven commons. The task of the commons is to connect the existing Oslo with the new district and the fjord, and break up the planned 2.8km long harbor promenade with public program.

The Fortress Commons

The fortress Common has a location on the edge of the historic district of Kvadraturen, with Akershus fortress, the harbor warehouse, the ferry terminal and Grev Wedel’s square as the nearest neighbours.

Today the situation is characterized by heavy traffic. Cars are coming up from the Opera tunnel, entering the tunnel and coming out from the ferry terminal. At the end of the alley near the waterfront is the Nomadic Art project called Salt located. Salt is a natural stop along the harbor promenade with a variety of cultural offerings like public saunas, exhibitions, concerts and conferences. Due to today’s car traffic and the ferry terminal, the harbour promenade stops at Salt and does not have a further natural connection to Akershus Fortress or Kvadraturen.

The Fire Station

The main task of the fire station is to ensure that the firefighters can effectively reach out and perform their missions in the shortest possible time. When the firefight goes out on mission, seconds can be the difference between life and death, or if buildings get lost. To be able to carry out effective emergency calls, the fire station is required to be in close proximity to traffic junctions and the firefighters need to carry out their work without obstacles. This has turned the fire station to become more isolated from the city than it has been in the past.

Before the Government Quarter was added to Arne Garborg’s square, the Oslo Main Fire Station had a great location with its six emergency gates out onto a beautiful cobbled park. The emergency conditions were almost perfect. At the end of the cobblestone square was a large fountain with water-spraying jet pipes, which the station used as an exercise pool. Above the fountain was a small park. All summer the kids came from Hammersborg and played by the green lawn and the fountain.

The station was described as crowd-friendly and open. When the government quarter was built, the car gates were put under a traffic lid. Today, the situation of the fire station and its working environment is described as a disaster. The station's front square has been greatly reduced and the fountain has been replaced with an air tower.



Purpose:

When a new fire station is built on the fortress commons, the station will stand on a site that is very visible to the public and will have a big impact on the cityscape in Bjørvika. Therefore, how the building is facing the city is as important as the building's function inward. My main intention with the task has therefore been to investigate how the public can gain from the establishment of a new center station in Bjørvika.

Project description:

Urban situation

The road situation is changed, so the road coming up from the Opera tunnel is turning towards Akershusstranda. This makes the Fortress Commons, a long continuous strip down to the waterfront. Freeing the plot for car traffic makes it easier for pedestrians walking down from the inner city to the Harbour. The building is placed on the back of The Fortress Commons, closing the last open space in a row of buildings towards the street. The car ports and the emergency space for the fire trucks is facing towards the harbour front. Beyond the space serving the fire trucks is a park going the whole way down to Salt and the harbour promenade. The park is a buffer zone between Salt and the Fire emergency. It functions as an extension of Grev Wedels square, establishing a promenade down to the waterfront.

The rows of trees along Grev Wedel's square continues further down to the waterfront, indicating a connection between the inner city and the waterfront. The park in front of the station and the space for the fire trucks is covered with cobbled stone. The grid of the car ports is visible in the stone.

Rows of trees with car protectors frames the emergency space for the fire vehicles, from the park area. The trucks stand exposed in front of the fire station showing its presence to the public in the park. The harbor promenade is continuing in a path going straight through the park. The path makes a natural continuation of the promenade.

The building

The building shape is determined by lines of the surrounding buildings and a grid based on the width of the fire trucks. The angle of the building makes the space in front of the car gates turning away from the road. The construction principle of the building follows the grid of the fire trucks, with loadbearing Concrete walls and pillars. The facade is covered with Charred wood, both because of the relation to fire and to expose the glass in the facade.

The first floor contains apparatus bay, apparatus bay support space, a sports hall, and a small public locker room. The sports hall is placed near the entrance, facing the street. It can be borrowed for public use when the firemen do not use it. The building functions are visible through glass in the facade. For example, the staircase in the entrance, and the car wash space. When walking the path from Grev Wedel's square and down to the waterfront, you can stop by the window and look at the Fire truck standing in the washing hall. The apparatus bay support space has a practical corridor. The corridor also functions as a buffer to the street so the people walking by have a look at the firemen inside, without disturbing. The openness gives the firemen natural light inside the workshops, and practical spaces.

Second floor contains of weight room and the firemen's locker room. On the top floor is the livingarea and the officespace. The logic of the top floor is to expose the livingarea and the officespace to the facade, while turn the bedrooms towards a quite inner courtyard. The courtyard is a space where the firemen can rest and withdraw from the hectic surroundings. The kitchen and the officespace have sight into the courtyard.