

# Made in Oslo

*Production School in Brenneriveien*

*Historic Timeline*

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## AKERSELVA

Akerselva is a river which flows through the center of Oslo and marks the separation between the west and east part of the city. It starts at Maridalsvannet in Osломarka and follows the urban areas such as Sagene, Grünerløkka and Grønland. It finally ends in Bjørvika. The entire river is about 8.2 kilometers long.<sup>1</sup> As pointed out in the map Brennenriveien is located in the area between Grunerløkka and St. hans haugen, in the west side of the river.

Today Akerselva is rapidly evolving into one of the most significant clusters of institutions for higher education in Norway: Along its riverbeds, you'll find over 14000 students located in culturally and economically substantial schools such as AHO, KHIO, BI, and Westerdals. Each one molding and reshaping the landscape into a large scale urban campus. The riverbed is today characterized by schools and colleges that populate the old warehouses lining the shore.

The areas surrounding the river have also turned into cultural hotspot sin Oslo. Along its trails, you'll find places such as *Det Andre teateret*, *Vulkan Arena*, *DOGA*, and *Hausmania*, to mention a few. Akerselva was named one of New York Times' favourite streets, in a list containing 12 streets from around the world.

However, we keep wanting to tell the story about the factories that used to line the river shores, but it is not the only story to tell. Akerselva's evolving and rich history represents and reflects the history of Norway in more than one way. It is the story of a landscape rising from fjord to mountains followed by the journey from the rural to the urban. Lastly, and maybe most significantly, it is a story about the evolution from agriculture to industry, and again to technology

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akerselva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akerselva)

## MEDIEVAL TIMES

Along Akerselva Northeast of Brenneriveien between *Møllerveien* and *Nordre Gate* you find *Grunerbroen* that is known to be the very first bridge and possible crossing point over the river. In medieval times this bridge was part of the few main roads in Oslo. The crossing point was also central for the *Pilegrimsleden* that followed west to the church of Gamle Aker. Since these times, the bridge has been the setting of many historical events like fires and sieges in connection with battles and attacks, especially from the Swedes and Danes during the Nordic Seven Year War between 1563-1570. Through history, the bridge has had several names: *Frysja bridge*, *Aggers bro*, *Møllerbora* and *Fossbroa*. (Norsk Teknisk museum, Lützow-Holm)

The following Map of Oslo illustrates the landscape of Oslo during the Medieval times. Brenneriveien, along Akerselva is marked out.



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## THE WATER-SOURCE FOR OSLO

Akerselven has since its origin and throughout medieval times been known as *Den smukke Nympe Azur-blaa*, which refers to its abundant water flow. The water running from *Maridalsvannet* was the very first water source for the general population of Oslo and a prerequisite for the establishment of the farming along the river. In these times, the water was clean and drinkable. This was the case until the massive industrialization along the river where factories and added infrastructures started to pollute the water.

The following map is illustrated by M, Kønne right before 1800. It illustrates a precise mapping of the water sources in Oslo in the 1600s. The area around Brenneriveien is marked out. (Norsk Teknisk museum, Andreassen)



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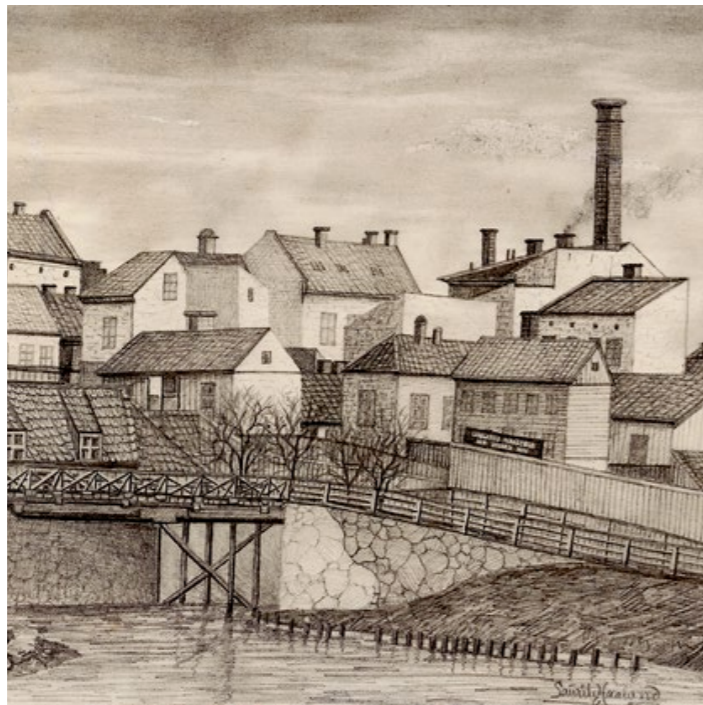
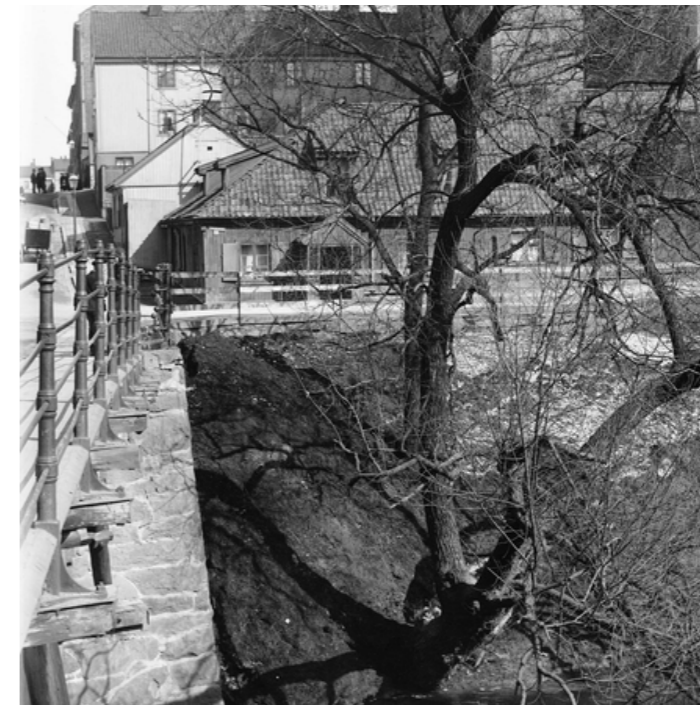


Illustration of Grunbrua seen from the North during the mid 1800s



Picture of the Grunbrua looking towards Grunerløkka from 1917

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## FARMING ALONG AKERSELVA

In the 1700s-1800s farming and agriculture was the most common industry in most parts of Oslo. This was also the situation along Akerselva, and several small farms were established along the river. *Nedre Foss Gård*, north of Brenneriveien, was one of these farms, and it was owned by the family Gruner. Because of the areas close relation to the farm, most areas Brenneriveien functioned as fields for the *Nedre Foss Gård* at this time.

Salmon fishing in Akerselva was another important food source for the population in Oslo. The areas from Brenneriveien down to Bjørvika were known to be exceptional fishing areas. During the industrialization, the fish disappeared because of the massive pollution. Today the water quality is improving, and the fishing tradition has once again resumed. Many have started to fish along the river with a recreational purpose.

(Norsk Teknisk museum, Andreassen)

The following map this time shows important buildings in Oslo at this time, such as *Nedre foss Gård* and the surrounding fields



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Photo taken year 1860. Shows the fields related to the Nedre Foss gård.

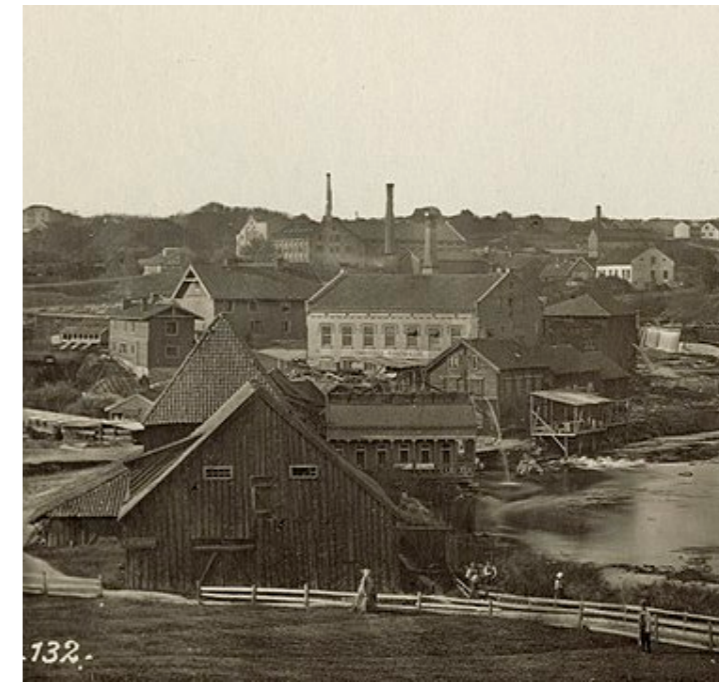


Photo taken year 1860. Shows the fields related to the Nedre Foss gård.

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## INDUSTRIALISATION

With influence from Europe, a industrialization started in Norway around the year 1840. Oslo and the areas around Akerselva, including Brenneriveien, were central and part of the very first breakthrough. Along the river grew a rich variety of different industries and productions, for instance, *Christiania Seildugsfabrikk* in 1856, *Vulkan Jernstøberi og mekaniske verksted* in 1873, *Myrens Mekaniske verksted* in 1890. In total, around 500 new industries were established along the river in the period 1840-1900.

(Store Norske Leksikon, Dørum)

The following map shows the industrial landscape along Akerselva from 1840-1900. The area around of Brenneriveien is marked out.

(Norsk industrimuseum)



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Many moved into the cities and started to work in the newly established industries. This picture is from 1930 and shows industrial workers from "Christiania Seildugsfabrikk"



Pictue taken in 1930 during the construction of the new production facilities for "Vulkan", north of Brenneriveien

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## FIRST BUILDING IN BRENNERIVEIEN

The architectural landscape of Brenneriveien was also part of the massive Industrialization and development along Akerselva. At the beginning of the 1900s, the street included a variety of productions such as a food factory: *Nora*, a lamp factory: *Philips lampefabrikk*, a brewery: *Christiana Bryggeri*, and the workshops: *H.L.N mechanical workshop*, and *Norbit*. (Norsk industrimuseum)

The very first building in our projects site in Brenneriveien 11 was built in the 1890s. The building was a multi-wing brick building positioned towards the south side of the site. It was originally constructed to function as a storage hall and an extension to the *Vulkan Jernstøberi og mekaniske verksted*. The specific location for the rest of their production facilities was north of Brenneriveien in the area today known as *Vulkan*. (Oslo Byleksikon)

In the following map from 1880, the industrial landscape in Brenneriveien is marked out.



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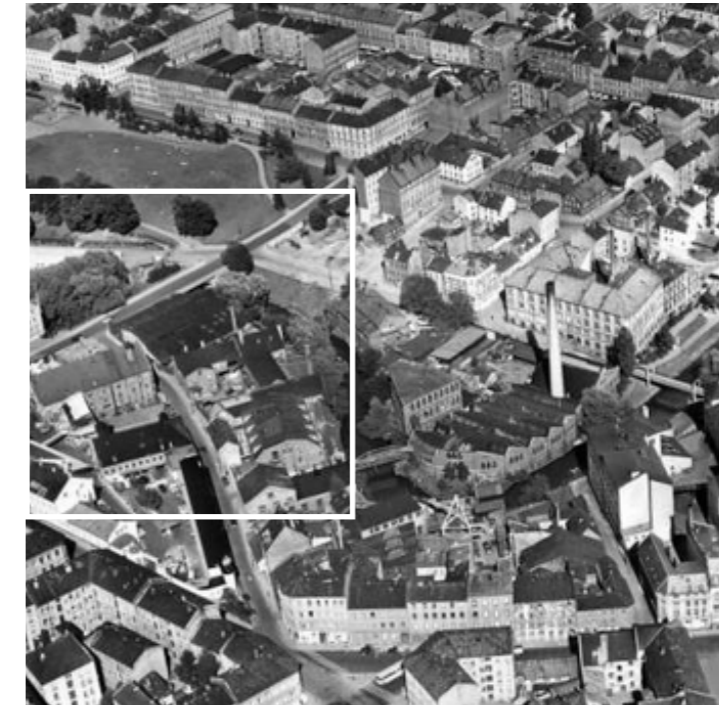
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The industrial landscape in Brenneriveien, year 1935 from start to end.

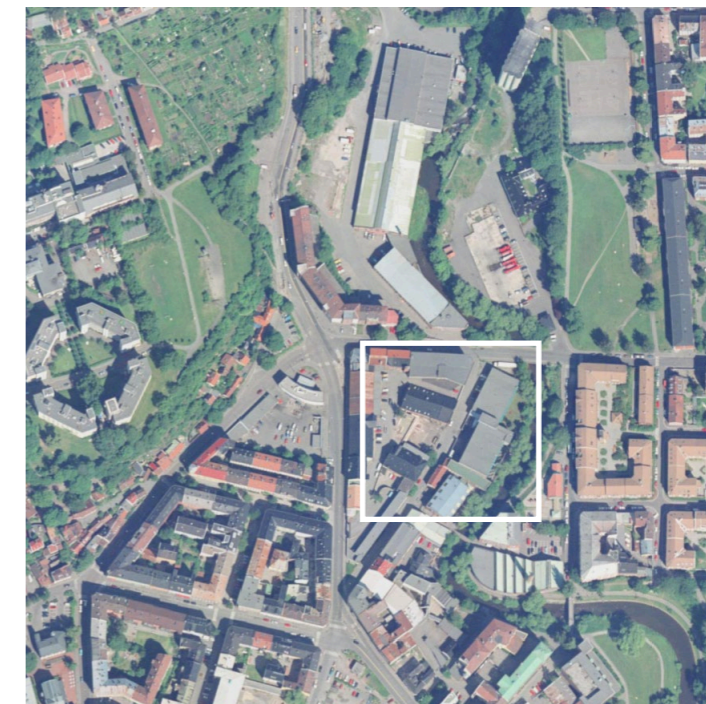


Pictures of the area around Brenneriveien from 1910. The first buildings in the site have been marked out

### A NEW BUILDING IN BRENNERIVEIEN 11

In 1967 *Vulkan jernstøperi og mekaniske verksted* tore down all existing building mass on the site and built a new and storage building drawn by the Norwegian architect Harald Hille. The architecture of the building was simple and pragmatic industrial building influenced by both brutalism and structuralism. The year after the construction was finished *Vulkans* industry decentralized and moved from the city center to a new industrial landscape in Furuset. The remaining and empty building in Brenneriveien 11 was then rented out to a wide range of different and small scale productions and various workshops, such an umbrella factory: *Norena A/S*, a chemical factory: *Glidol* and a icecream factory: *Norsk Iskremkakefabrikk*. (Norsk industrimuseum)

At this time several Norwegian productions and industries were replaced with the petroleum industries outside of the cities. The remaining production buildings were either demolished or reused for housing, offices, cultural programs or leisure activities. This was also the case for the building in Brenneriveien 11, and from this period until today the flexible building structure has housed a range of different businesses that all require different amount of space, from small music-productions and design companies to wholesalers from different industries



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Axonometric drawing of Oslo anno . The current building in Brenneriveien is marked out.



Picture of the current industrial building by Harald Hille in Brenneriveien 11.

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## FROM INDUSTRY TO CULTURE IN BRENNERIVEIEN

At the end of the 1990s new programs once again started to establish in the street of Brenneriveien. As a result of a slowly evolving gentrification in the areas around Akerselva and Grunerløkka, many old production buildings were transformed and reused. Artists and young people from cultural industries started to value these buildings' unique architectonic qualities and rustic look. The club and cafe *Blå* were the first to establish in the street in late 1998. In the following years, the road slowly but surely evolved into a cultural street and hot-spot with many cultural offers and institutions such as the private art school: *Strykehjernet*, The cultural scene *Ingensteds* and the art shop: *KEM* and *Hausmania*. After some years, *Blå* established a Sunday market that reached great attention and visitors. Gradually the street became more known for its cultural offers, and today it is well known and reach attention. It is especially known for its graffiti art that today colours the whole street. The following picture is from Brenneriveien is from Instagram, taken year 2014



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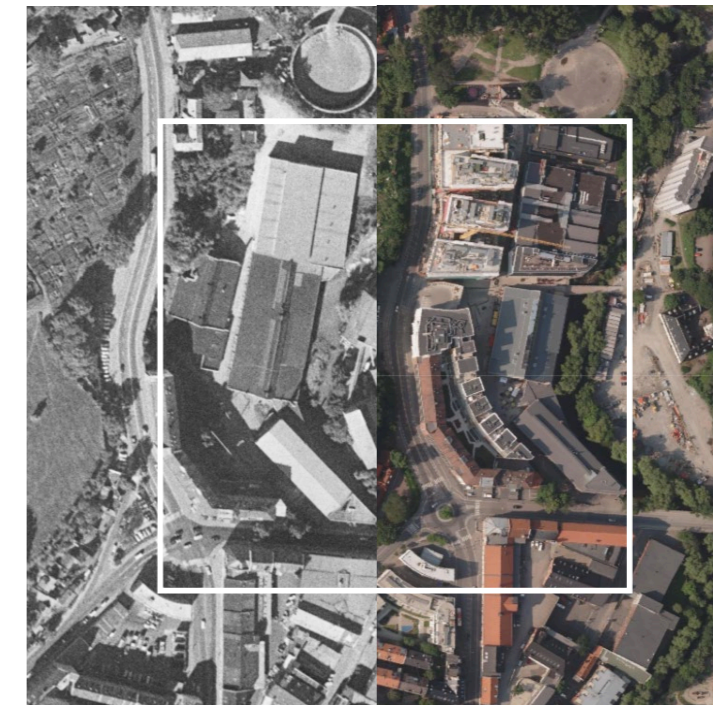
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## TRANSFORMATION OF VULKAN

The street of Brenneriveien has, from the beginning of the 2000s until today, also evolved into an essential circulation ax that takes you from the city center up north to the popular and urban areas around Akerselva or Grunerløkka. There are especially many that use the street when they want to visit Vulkan. This area lies next to the site in the north direction, and here you find the famous and only Food Court in Oslo. Since 2004 - 2014, the property owners Anton B Nilsen and Aspelin Ramn have together with the architects of LPO transformed the previous Vulkan mechanical workshops with an extension of new building mass. Today the area is an essential cultural arena in Oslo with a mix of restaurants, clubs, shops, schools, sports activities, offices, hotels, and housing. As for Brenneriveien, it lays in the area where the west and east parts of Oslo meet along the river.

(Vulkan, LPO architects)

The two following maps show the development of the area in Vulkan from an industrial area in 1970 to a cultural arena in 2014.



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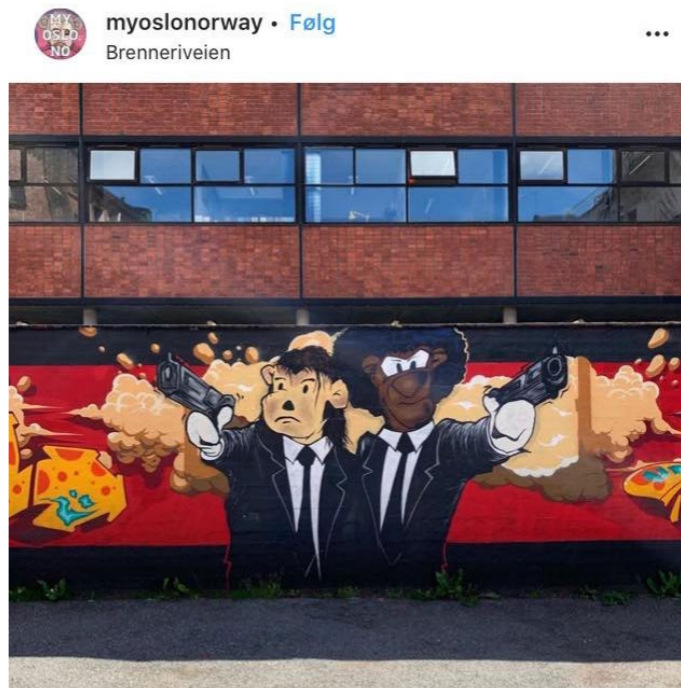
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## THE CURRENT IDENTITY OF BRENNERIVEIEN

Today many people go through Brenneriveien from the city to areas like Vulkan and Grunerløkka. At the same time, it is a destination for visitors that wants to visit one of the cultural offers or cafés in the area. Many visit the street to take pictures of the graffiti art that has evolved into an important identity mark for Brenneriveien. It reaches great attention and has become almost an icon and phenomenon in social media. Many use the urban and rustic graffiti look of the street as a setting for their pictures that they post online. The building in Brenneriveien 11 is part of this identity and has also become a setting for graffiti especially in the front wall and the area in relation to the street. Most of it is added illegally from time to time since 2000. Despite this most of the this graffiti is well executed with an artistic and professional look. After looking for pictures of the site in social media, we have discovered that in most cases, it is the graffiti that is included in the photos, and the building by Harlad Hille is in the background. It strikes us that the graffiti is, in fact, what most people notice and appreciate. We question ourselves whether the colourful graffiti take the attention from the rest of the building? Or do they find the building as un-attractive?



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## FUTURE PLANS FOR BRENNERIVEIEN

Brenneriveien has gradually evolved into a popular area. This bottom up development and gentrification have naturally taken place over the past 20 years, entirely without any master-plan or visions from property owners like the area of *Vulkan*. But what are the future plans for the road? *Aspeling Ramn* and *Anthon B Nilsen*, the same property owners as for *Vulkan*, has since 2012 stated a vision of transforming the thoroughfare of Brenneriveien and develop and inspire the establishment of a “creative axis for business development education and culture along the Akerselva.” They vision a pedestrian street for lively markets and cultural events, galleries, but mostly housing. We question ourselves What is the main goal and intentions of these plans, economic or social? Can a development like this potentially, including the student housing at the site, potentially lead to

(Aftenposten, Aldridge)



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## FUTURE PLANS IN BRENNERIVEIEN 11

Today the student accommodation in Oslo: *SHIO studentskipnaden* is the owner of the site. They bought it in 2014 with plans to tear down all existing building mass to build a 10 story high brick building containing 250 new student apartments.

<https://www.sio.no/5741/brenneriveien-11>

The proposal has received massive criticism from neighbours as well as *Oslo Elveforum* and *Akerselvens venner*. They consider the building to be massive and too tall with an architectonic expression that don't suit the historical and current landscape in the area. The criticism has pointed out a lack of outdoor spaces and programs open for the public, especially in the areas close to the Akerselva and the already existing vegetation in the site.

(Akerselvas Venner)

The following photo shows the current (2020) situation in Brenneriveien



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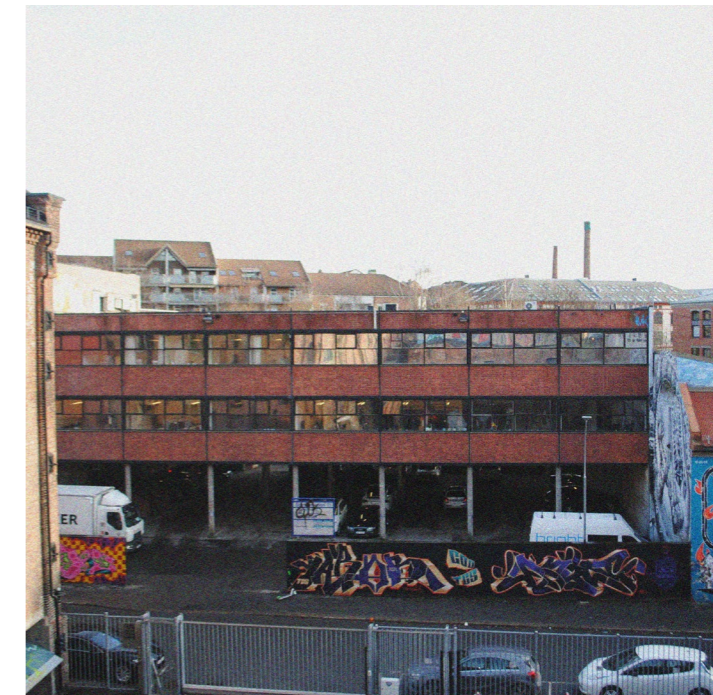
1967

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Illustration of height for the planned student housing in Brenneriveien 11



Picture of the current building mass and its condition anno 2020.

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## Sources

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