

BADEPARKEN FOLKEBIBLIOTEK

# ABSTRACT

## Badeparken folkebibliotek

### Program

In November 2019, Larvik library sustained heavy damage in a fire. My task investigates the potential of a new library on the existing site.

It is important to distinguish Larvik as a town and not a city. Suburban, urban and natural elements are weaved together. The town can be read as a hybrid typology that mixes these qualities rather than committing to one. In Larvik specifically, three elements characterise the town: *the house, the terrain* and *the vegetation*. The project investigates how these elements can be incorporated into a library that emphasizes the character of Larvik.

*The diploma investigates how the library can incorporate contextual qualities*

### Badeparken

The site of the project is located by Badeparken, a public park on the north side of the town center of Larvik.

Larvik is widely known for its mineral water source, and in the early 20th century there was a bathing house in Badeparken, hence the name “Badeparken” or “The bathing park”. The retreat was used by the upper class and had treatment rooms, a dining hall, rooms for exercise and more. Eventually the bathing house ceased operating and was torn down in 1972. Badeparken is no longer an aristocratic facility, but a more typical park. It consists of large lawns, a mix of large trees and places to sit down, unwind and partake in nature close to the urban qualities of town.

### The library and the garden

The theme of the library and the garden appears in different ways throughout history. The main task of the classical library was to provide good spaces for reading. The garden provided a meditative quality to help a reader concentrate.

The contemporary library has additional tasks it needs to fulfill. Changes in society have made the library into a social meeting space. Badeparken represents an opportunity in this discussion. The library can act as a catalyst, providing infrastructure for activities that take place in the park. Friends who want to barbeque in the park can book the cafe. Free sunbeds can be rented out to sunbathers in the park. Events outdoors can move indoors and vice versa.

## Larvik

Larvik is a town on the south-east coast of Norway. The municipality has three departments: Svarstad, Stavern and Larvik. The town of Larvik has approximately 25 000 inhabitants. The town center is situated to the north, a steep walk from the harbor. My site is located at the northern tip of the town center.

It is important to distinguish Larvik as a town and not a city. Suburban, urban and natural qualities are weaved together. The town represents a hybrid typology that mixes these qualities rather than committing to one. Through studying Larvik, I discovered three underlying elements that define Larvik as a place:

*The terrain:* Although Larvik is located close to the sea, the town center and most of its built mass is located on top of a plateau. From the city centre the terrain slopes up towards a forest on one side and down towards the sea on the other. These two views are almost always present from any location in the centre.

*The houses:* To be able to deal with the terrain, building volumes in Larvik are broken up into smaller parts. This creates a “small” and cosy character to the place which emphasizes Larvik as a town rather than a city.

*The vegetation:* In Larvik vegetation is always present, except in the town center. Bøkeskogen, or “the beech forest”, is a large forest situated next to the town center. It is considered the treasure of Larvik, and the people of the town use it for recreation. The forest fades into Badeparken, making Badeparken a mediating space between the natural and the urban. The trees in Badeparken are old and measure up to 35 meters in height. The presence of the trees creates an atmosphere that borders between forest and park.

## Extending Badeparken

The site of the library is located in the southern part of the Badeparken. The existing library was placed in an axis with the street rather than the terrain of the park, with the entrance facing Badeparken. This has resulted in uneven jumps in the terrain. The architects imagined that people would drive to the library, resulting in large amounts of parking on the site. Both the ruins of the old library and the parking spaces act as barriers between the street to the south of Badeparken, *Nansetgata*, and Badeparken itself. I want to eliminate these barriers, and create a connection, so that Badeparken can become part of the town center.

*Nansetgata* acts as the central street in the town center, it starts with Torget, the town square. By opening up the site, Badeparken can become a public space that is connected to the town centre, and together the two can create a defined start and ending to the town centre of Larvik.

The three elements found in Larvik have been used to achieve the new connection.

*The terrain:*

The barriers of the site are removed. The jumps around the old library are evened out to create a more seamless transition between the street and the park.

*The vegetation:*

The existing vegetation is conserved and some new vegetation is added towards the street to extend the park.

*The houses:*

Finally the library is placed in an axis as a portal and passageway into Badeparken from the town centre. A new path through the library connects the two. Small pavilions are placed around the path.

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The new library is placed in the same axis as the historic facility from the 1920s. Re-introducing the idea of a building that connects to both the street and the park. The trees around the building create a filter to the street. A visitor will pass through trees and gardens before entering. This enables visitors to unwind before taking part in an activity within the library.

The idea of a contextual library can be traced back to the first public libraries in Norway called “Folkebibliotek”, directly translating into the library of the people or the peoples library.

Grunerløkka library is an example of this. The building connects to its context in different ways. The area is organized in a grid with courtyard blocks. Sometimes the grid becomes a park. The library is placed as a pavilion in one of these parks. Its proportions, scale and facade connects it to the neighbours around. These two qualities make it so that the library achieves a middle ground between expressing that it is a public building and yet feeling like it belongs to the atmosphere of the place and its people.

The architecture of the new library in Badeparken emphasizes the three contextual elements from the analysis.

*The Terrain:* A terrain in concrete that follows the contour lines outside, highlighting the passage into the park. Concrete is chosen because it can be used both inside and outside. This creates an impression that the path between the street and park is continuous.

*The Vegetation:* A roof in timber with numerous openings let down rays of sun, giving the impression that you are standing in a forest. Columns in the middle of the space act as tree trunks while a beam construction acts as the crown. The placement of columns mimic the free order of trees in the park.

*The House:* Pavilions are introduced to create enclosed spaces with a specific focus. The choice of timber links it to the materiality and modesty of the houses in Larvik. The beams always point towards the outside.

The west side of the site has a wall of beautiful trees which is left untouched. On the east side of the building there are today two large parking lots with rows of smaller trees. One of the parking lots has been removed and replaced with a playground and a garden. The row of trees frame the space, adding a small space in contrast with the largeness of the park. Each of the pavilions relate to different situations in the park. Two tall pavilions rise up to the large trees west of the building, while two low pavilions zoom in on the garden and the playground.

The plan divides between the pavilions and the climatized park space in between. The pavilions are rational and each carries a specific program. In contrast, the park space is open and free. It acts as a continuation of the park outside. The space is furnished with sunbeds, plants, park benches and a large hammock emphasizes that you are still in the park. Books are placed in this space. After picking up a book you can choose if you want to go outside, into a pavilion or stay where you are. The library has a variety of places to sit so that every visit is different. The main space of the library becomes a passageway rather than one reading room, emphasizing its connection to its surroundings.

The roof in the climatized park is horizontal so that you get a hierarchy of spaces. The entrance space towards the town has a ceiling height of 7,5 meters. The exit at the other end has a ceiling height of 3 meters. This signifies the main entrance as the most public and active part of the library. Towards the park, the ceiling height closes down to create a more intimate atmosphere.

The more active and public functions placed towards the street. Reading rooms that should be quiet and relaxed are placed towards the park. The cafe faces the sun and the street. The auditorium slopes down towards the street so that people who pass by can see when something is happening at the library. A pavilion with children's library on the first floor and media library on the second is placed towards the playground. The children's library can be opened so that the space extends outside. The library facility has makerspace, games and music equipment. Here you can make noise without bothering the rest of the library. Staff is placed to the east, near the entrance, so that they are close to the facilities that need most attention. There are two pavilions for studying. One with openings high up towards the tree crowns and one with windows low down towards the garden. Finally there is a pavilion for storing equipment with a shop window towards the park. Here you will be able to rent parasols, sunbeds, hammocks, table tennis, yoga matts to bring out into the park and enjoy.