



Reinterpreting: Folketeateret

Five-scale model and reinterpretation

Binder I

Diploma

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Cathrine Tønseth Sundém

The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

Reinterpreting is 'the act of changing what you think the meaning of something is'.

In arts, adding a new perspective to the subject of examination, expressed through our own ideas.

'Reinterpretation' Cambridge Dictionary

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Binder II*:

- Building presentation and history
- Archive

* Sources can be referred to Binder II: labelled "Building presentation and history" or "Archive".

Abstract

Relevance

It is estimated that by 2050, approximately 80% of Europe's current buildings will still be in use.¹ This statistic highlights architects' expanding roles and responsibilities, as most projects will involve alterations, transformations, and preservation efforts. Furthermore, as our society continues to evolve, buildings must continuously adapt to meet the contemporary demands encompassing functionality, social dynamics, environmental sustainability, and preservation of cultural heritage.

Working with existing buildings introduces additional layers of historical complexity to architectural projects. These buildings already possess authors with intentions, solutions and premises that responded to previous demands and desires for what the building was and were to be. The existence of these layers becomes apparent when examining archival documentation and the physical building – acting as an archive.

Method

Reinterpreting: Folketeateret explores how a comprehensive building analysis can expand stakeholders' definition of a building's significance. By highlighting different examination entries, the aim is to exemplify how alternative narratives can point to the complexity of a building's history. The project tests a perspective of dismantling the physical building into five (theoretical) scales, where building components are isolated in advancing complexity from the fragment (the building material) to the environment (the physical context the building is placed within) – revealing how the point of view contextualises the building in different ways. The project uses Folketeateret, a building complex in Oslo, as the case study.

In the essay, "Reinterpretation: A Comment to the Folketeateret Listing Document", I elaborate on what the heritage authorities imply when a building is preserved for its *architectural historical value*; I take a critical stand on the word 'tilbakeføring' (to revert); and discuss what happens when architectural quality is summed up in a building's response to defined architectural styles.

The hypothesis is that by surveying the variety of contexts and narratives, stakeholders can be more precise about which aspects of the building's history have significance and are of interest to preserve. Whether listed or not, buildings in use are continuously adapted through design alterations to accommodate a contemporary function. These design alterations add layers of narratives to the building's history. Which role can these narratives have in the discussion about significance? Moreover, how can these narratives be activated?

¹ World Green Building Council (2019) *Bringing embodied carbon upfront. Coordinated action for the building and construction sector to tackle embodied carbon.*
Lending, *Provenance: Projected*, 1. Introductory statement in the project description



Short introduction to Folketeateret

Folketeateret was constructed as a combined office and theatre complex. When the building was inaugurated in 1935, it was considered the tallest one in Oslo and was commonly referred to as "The Skyscraper".¹ Folketeateret was designed by Morgenstjerne & Eide, two renowned architects in Oslo from the first half of 20th century.

The complex consists of three volumes, two office buildings facing a street and a square, and a theatre situated in the middle. A central passage cuts through the structure over two floors.

Since its inauguration, Folketeateret has served as a cultural gathering place. Due to its strong ties to the Labour Party and the labour movement in the early 20th century, the building has been a focal point for numerous political events.² The plans and realization of Folketeateret were driven by the labour movement, with the key figures from the Labour Party as initiators.

Folketeateret was considered an ambitious project of technological advancement and size.³ The building covers an area of 4000 sqm and its tallest section consists of 12 storeys.⁴ The construction involves using deep foundation piles reaching 32 meters to realise the building on unstable ground. The office building facing Youngstorget was erected with an iron skeleton and reinforced concrete infills, while the two other volumes are primarily constructed using reinforced concrete. The theatre salon, situated above the passage, is supported by iron beams measuring about 1 meter.

Arno Berg, architect and Oslo's first city antiquarian, described Folketeateret among the monumental structures of Oslo, manifesting a new era in Oslo's architectural language – pointing to a turning point in Oslo's cityscape – transforming the capital from "a small town" to a city of international significance.⁵

The monumental facade facing Youngstorget is adorned with brick veneer laid in a running bond and chevron pattern.⁶ The lower floors are covered with marble plates. On the top was the former restaurant Stratos, now functioning as an office and weekend bar. Folketeateret is considered a representative of the architectural style *art deco*.

¹ Riksantikvaren, "Folketeaterbygningen"

² Helle, *En høyborg for kultur og politikk*

³ Riksantikvaren, "Folketeaterbygningen"

⁴ Berg, "Monumentalbygninger", 193-216

⁵ Eide and Morgenstjerne, "Folketeateret", 63-67

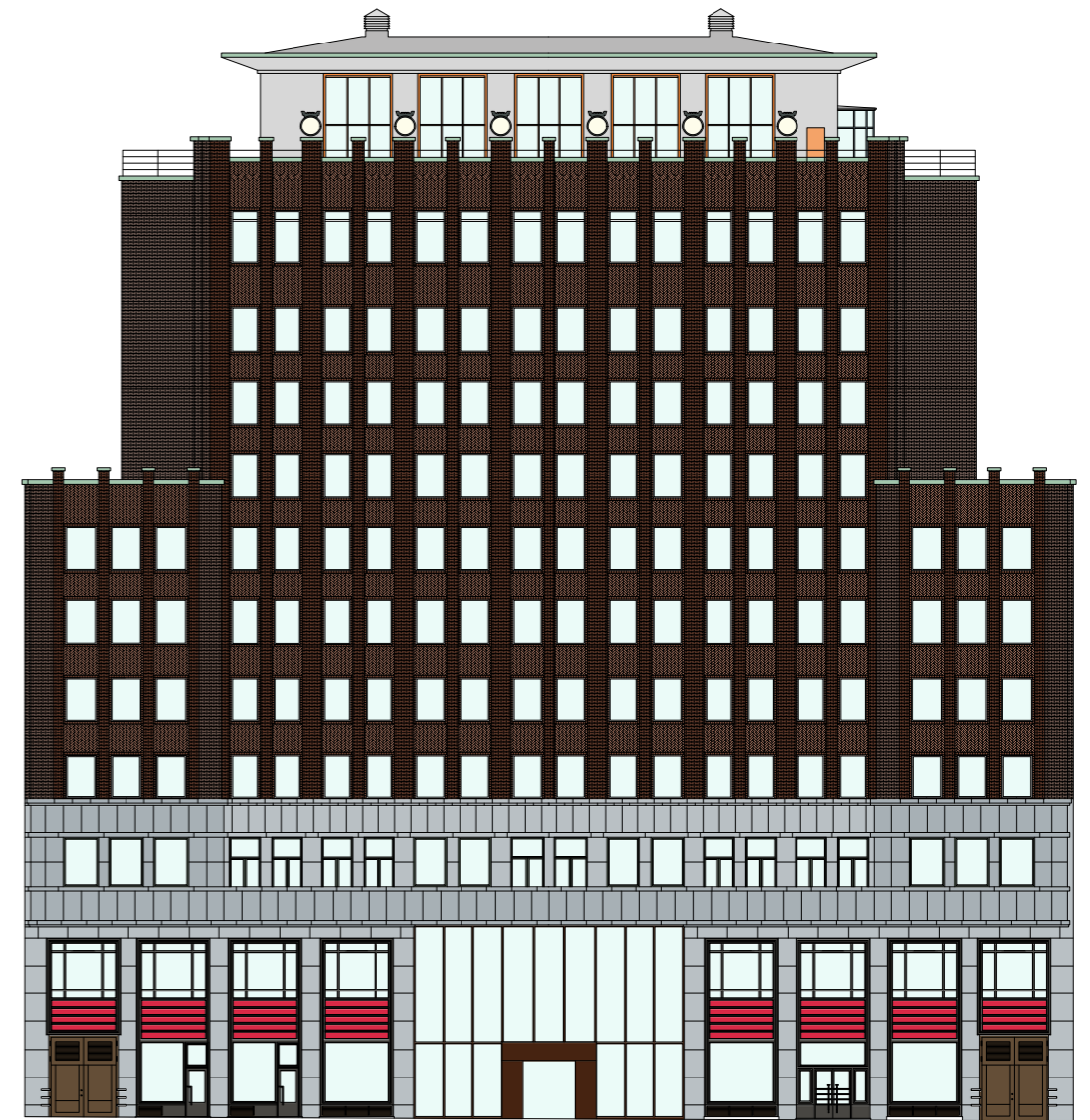
⁶ Riksantikvaren, "Folketeaterbygningen"



Components have changed since the building's inauguration...



Facade, Youngstorget
 Historical, after original drawings by Morgenstjerne & Eide, 1935
 1:400/A3



- 1957 – Fire on the top floor. Rebuilt after original drawings
- 1976 – New windows 3rd to 11th floor Window-bars removed
- 1984 – New windows 2nd floor and the central passage closed off
- 1980-1990s – Red panels in between 1st and 2nd floor
- 1990-2000s – Closing side entrances with iron doors
- 2006 – New glass portal and rondel in the central passage
- 2023 – New windows on the 3rd floor

Facade, Youngstorget
 Existing situation, 2023
 1:400/A3

Building presentation and history: History, Alterations

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Abstract

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Riksantikvaren. "Folketeaterbygningen." 2009. Accessed 25th January, 2023,
<https://www.kulturminnesok.no/kart/?q=folketeateret&am-county=&loke nk=location&am-lok=&am-lokdating=&am-lokconservation=&am-enk=& am-enkdating=&amenkconservation=&bm-county=&cp=1&bounds=59.9 154320474788,10.748421549797058,59.913049452040795,10.752069354057 312&zoom=18&id=2937976c-54df-11eb-818d-005056bf3d73>

Helle, Egil. *En høyborg for kultur og politikk: Folketeaterbygningen 60 år*. Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1994

Images:

Front page: Brick facade, Folketeateret

Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.97 – B

Abstract: Folketeateret, 1964

Archive: Photography, Historical, p.70 – A

Short introduction to Folketeateret: Folketeateret today

Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.80

*Reinterpretation:
A Comment to the
Folketeateret Listing Document*



“Everything that has been and is no longer we call *historical*, in accordance with the modern notion that what has been can never be again, and that everything that has been constitutes an irreplaceable and irremovable link in a chain of development”, wrote the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl in the first report, where heritage is systematically analysed and a theory for restoration emerges: *The Modern Cult of Monuments* of 1903.¹ Therefore can “every human activity and every human event of which we have knowledge or testimony (...) claim historical value; in principle, every historical event is irreplaceable”.²

At the end of *Kulturminneåret* (the year of cultural heritage) in 2009, Riksantikvaren (The Directorate for Cultural Heritage) announced Folketeateret (Youngstorget, Oslo) as a bonus listing in a year where twelve cultural heritage objects had been listed as “Dagliglivets kulturminner” (the cultural heritage of everyday life).³ The listing highlights the central role of Folketeateret as a monument for cultural and political events in the 20th century, and its unique architectonic qualities. (Fig. 1) The building has strong symbolic ties to the labour movement, having been built as a public theatre with the aim of bringing culture to the people. Folketeateret has since 1935 housed a cinema, functioned as public theatre, and been the national opera house. Since its inauguration, the twelve-story building facing the grand politically important square Youngstorget has served as the headquarters for Arbeiderpartiet (The Labour Party) and other left-sided organizations and newspapers. The building’s rare national example of *art deco* design is repeatedly emphasized as one of the building’s key architectural qualities.

Studying the Folketeateret listing document several questions arise. The building is listed for its “historical, architectural-historical and cultural-historical values”, but how to understand the heritage authority’s definition of these values? There is an expressed desire for “tilbakeføring” – reverting Folketeateret to a historical architectural layout – which poses the question as to how a historical layout of the building can revive? What does it mean that the emphasize on architectural quality are based upon allusions to architectural styles? This essay wants to elaborate on these questions critically, in light of influential works by architectural historians and theorists against the statements in the Folketeateret listing document. Additionally, I will comment on a recent example of “tilbakeføring” in Folketeateret, from 2023.

¹ Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments”, 21

² Ibid, 21-22

³ Riksantikvaren, *Kulturminneåret 2009*, 4

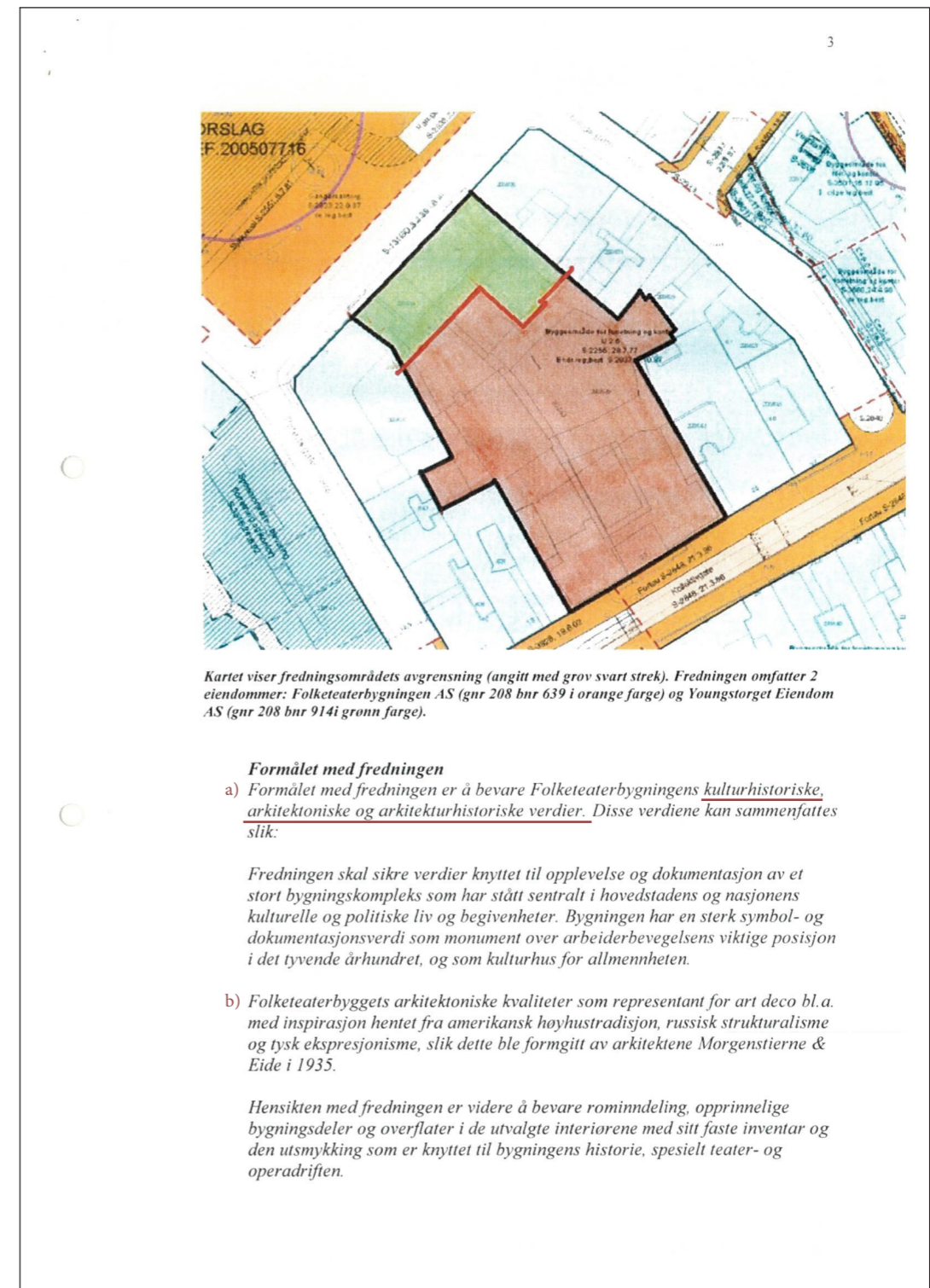


Figure 1

The Folketeater listing document from Riksantikvaren.

Interpreting architectural historical value

The listing document states that Folketeateret has *architectural historical value*. What does that imply? (Fig. 1a)

According to the Swedish antiquarian Axel Unnerbäck from *Riksantikvarieämbetet* (The Swedish National Heritage Board), *architectural value* is evaluated by seeing the building's qualities in its entirety.⁴ The value is first and foremost tied to the "building's exterior and proportions". The evaluation is based on the surrounding buildings' context, which determines the building's architectural composition after how well it fits in with the site's conditions and surroundings. According to Unnerbäck, architectural value encompasses both a building's aesthetical qualities and the architect's design to the given conditions.

In Riegl's report *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, a monument's *historical value* is defined as something that "arises from the particular, individual stage it represents in the development of human activity in a certain field".⁵ Historical value is distinguished as one of three commemorative values: age value, historical value and international historical value.⁶ Riegl distinguished *age value* from *historical value*, two intertwined yet contradictory concepts that evaluate significance in different ways. *Age value* is ascribed monuments with evident traces of natural decay which "betrays itself at once in the monument's dated appearance".⁷ Historical value considers the monument's "original status as an artifact", where "the more faithfully a monument's original state is preserved, the greater the historical value".⁸ According to Riegl:

The objective of historical value is not to conserve the traces of age which have been produced by nature since its creation, but rather to maintain as genuine as possible a document for future art-historical research. Any speculation and restoration remain subject to human error; therefore the original document provides the only reliable basis and must be left untouched in order to serve better and more coherent hypothetical reconstructions.⁹

⁴ Unnerbäck, *Kulturhistorisk värdering av bebyggelse*, 72. Dag Myklebust, a senior advisor at Riksantikvaren (The Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Norway) and author of the influential work on Norwegian heritage evaluation called "Verditenkning – en arbeidsmåte i bygningsvern" (1981), highlights the impact of Unnerbäck's work on the selection and evaluation of cultural heritage objects in Norwegian education. Myklebust, "Verditenkning i et retroperspektiv", 40-41

⁵ Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments", 34

⁶ Ibid, 31-38

⁷ Ibid, 31

⁸ Ibid, 34

⁹ Ibid, 34

In combination Unnerbäck and Riegl's definitions of *architectural historical value* can be interpreted as a building's aesthetical qualities as they were expressed by an architect's design at a specific point in history and preserved for its testimony as a historical architectural style in the development of architectural expressions. To preserve the original architectural design is of interest from the perspective of the historical value, as the survival of authentic components will close in on the gap of interpretations between the subjects of research (the original components) and a future art-historical analysis.

Historical value is given a broad definition in the report *Assessing the values of Cultural Heritage* from The Getty Conservation Institute. In Randall Mason's value assessment *historical value* is given "from the heritage material's age, from its association with people and events, from its rarity and/or uniqueness, from its technological qualities, or from its archival/documentary potential".¹⁰ Mason divides *historical value* into two subtypes: educational/academic value and artistic value. The first points to the potential a cultural heritage object have for the future gaining knowledge about the past; and the latter concerns the cultural heritage object's uniqueness, first-rate status, the best representative, work by a particular individual, etc.

Further, Mason states that a building's *aesthetical value* refers mainly to "visual qualities of heritage".¹¹ Historically this value has been considered the most important criterion in heritage evaluation and regards the interpretation of the object's beauty. Mason points to the "design and evolution [development] of a building, object or site as another source of aesthetical value". The aesthetical value is not only being ascribed the original work, also later changes to the building can benefit and characterize the aesthetic composition. Mason places the aesthetical value under socio-cultural values because the evaluation relies on qualitative methods which are based upon narrative and analysis.

Reading the Folketeateret listing document with these definitions in mind, it makes sense that the focus and perspective presented emphasizes how the building first and foremost represents a historical period (as a symbolic building in political, social and cultural narratives) with an architectural layout designed by renowned architects of the early 20th century.

¹⁰ Mason, "Assessing Values in Conservation Planning", 11

¹¹ Ibid, 12

From this context I will in the following section question the wish for “tilbakeføring”, reverting Folketeateret to a previous condition. The discussion I want to raise is not a critique pointing to the desire for having new interventions departing from the building’s historical architectural layout – which, in my opinion, would be the most meaningful way to develop existing buildings. Nor is it meant to criticize the removal of later additions or alterations done to an original architectural layout, although I do believe that their removal should be evaluated from additional factors beyond an idea of an historical aesthetic. Rather, the discussion I want to raise is centred around the word “tilbakeføring” which implies the notion that a contemporary intervention can revert a building to a previous condition. As a word describing a design alteration, it overlooks that a ‘revived’ historical condition is a contemporary perception about the past brought about from layers of reinterpretations when examining evidence or when lacking evidence. Additionally, it ignores the deviations accepted from the interpreted *historical* to the reverted *new* for the design alteration to be realized. The following section will elaborate on this.

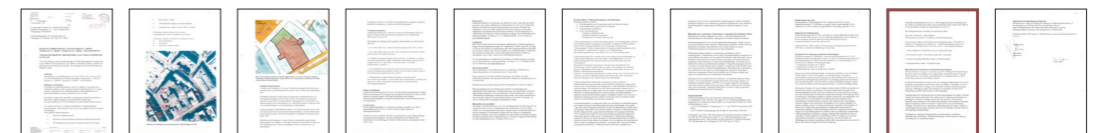
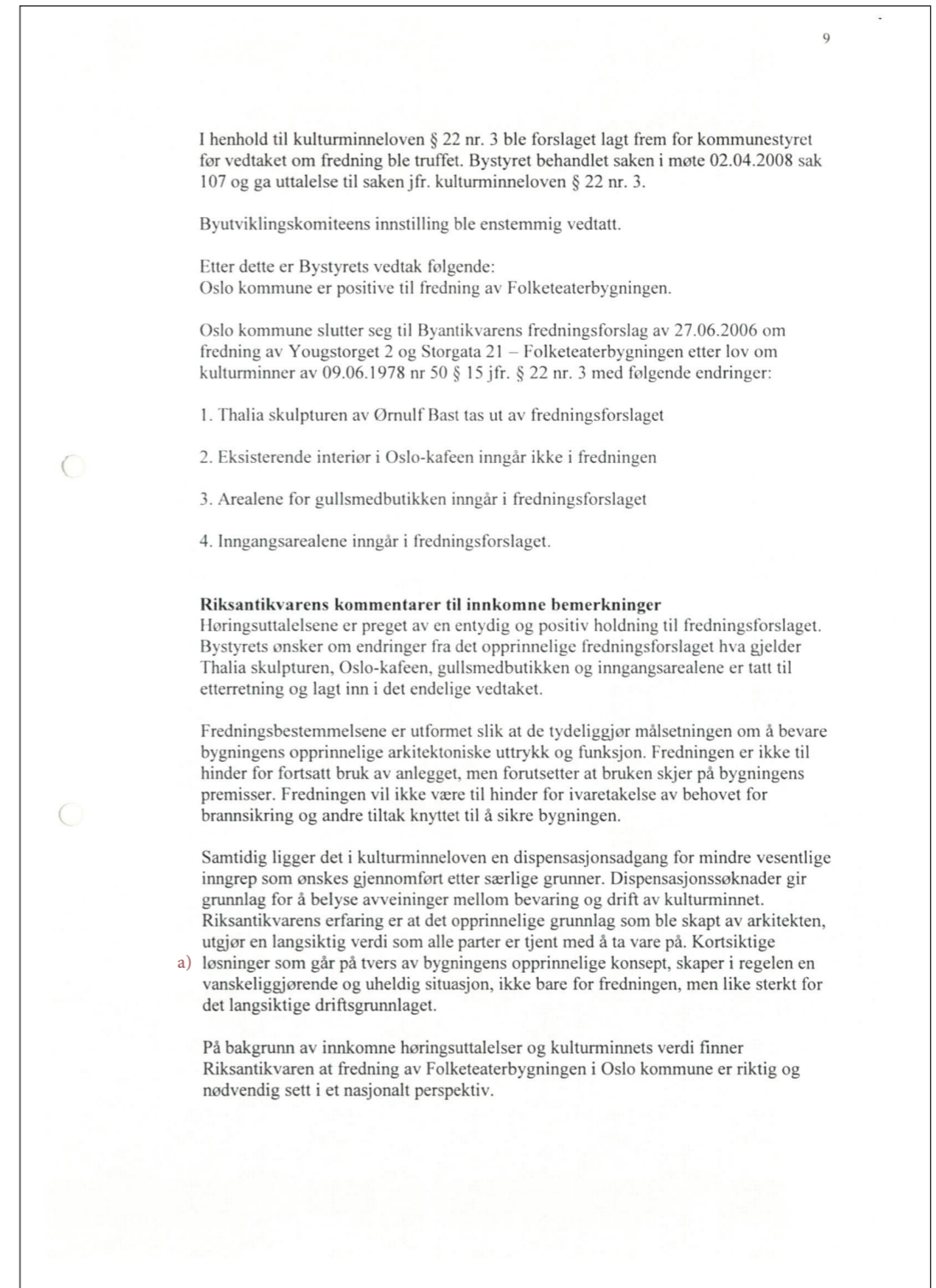


Figure 2

The Folketeater listing document from Riksantikvaren.

”Å tilbakeføre” – to revert

The listing document states that later alterations done to Folketeateret, which don't follow the original concept, are weak adaptations to the original situation; ”[de] skaper i regelen en vanskeligjørende og uheldig situasjon”. (Fig.2a) The building's aesthetical value is, according to the document, first and foremost tied to the building's layout and architectural composition from its inauguration in 1935, to what Riegl termed its *newness value*.¹² Riegl defined newness value as a counterpart to age value – where the latter points to the process of destruction which sets in as soon as the “individual entity has taken shape (whether at the hands of man or nature) (...) and the mechanical and chemical force, dissolves the entity again and returns it to amorphous nature”. Since man-made objects gradually will change and dissolve, maintenance or replacement of parts one wants to preserve in the architectural composition are unavoidable.

Components in existing buildings will change, wear down or vanish in time. That is the nature of things. Making architectural components timeless demands the act of removing them from their context, the building, and placing the components in an archive – stored away, maintained, and protected from the wear and tear of time. This act will remove components or even the whole building itself from its intended context and can be seen as problematic colliding with the building's utility value, and its cultural significance which is normally characterized by site-specificity. Cataloguing the physical components in a traditional archive is from this perspective an extreme solution. Thus, due to the nature of decay, components need maintenance and replacement *in-situ*, or can be removed to prevent transmitting damage to other components. Additionally, components can be removed if they are considered disturbing, as misfits or unnecessary parts in an altered composition. Evaluating which components can remain, be removed, replaced, or come in as new additions, is an ongoing discussion among the stakeholders (owners and architects). However, the stakeholder's liberty to intervene no longer applies when the building is listed or protected, when the building becomes subjected to restrictions for change by law, regulated by heritage authorities. The listing will prohibit the building to move further away from the original architectural layout. In this lays the notion that design, as default, is oriented towards the future, where alterations will add a new layers of interpretation, changing the original. Listing is therefore required

to make sure that the stakeholders use the building's past as the starting point for the inevitable alterations that need to be done to its components. In the listing document to Folketeateret, it is stated that preserving as much of the original building components is desirable and that maintenance should follow the original components in execution, technic and material use as far as possible. (Fig.3a) Beyond maintaining the original, it is an explicit interest in returning or *reverting* the building to its architectural layout and detailing:

Both the main structure in the architectonic expression and the detailing must be maintained or reverted Reverting to the original window type on all facades, as well as opening up the theater passage so that the passage once again has its original function as part of the urban space, will be of particular value for the building's architectural expression. (Fig.3b)

The years of interest are 1935, the inauguration year; and 1952, the opening of the theatre. These years represent the two moments in time which has significance for the building's initial function – a public theatre that was built upon ideas that rose from the labour movement. But can components be *reverted* when they have been lost? If one chose to remove deteriorated components – and not protect them from time in storage –these components will at some point disappear in the course of time.

‘Revert’ to something means to go back to a previous condition.¹⁴ In the physical world that is an impossible endeavour. As Fred Scott put it in *On Altering Architecture*: “It should be remembered that the original condition of the building is inaccessible, as with all things past, even for a building that is only a few years old”.¹⁵ What is happening when buildings are ‘reverted’ is that stakeholders are observing and making reinterpretations about the building's past, its history, from the perspective of the present. Scott calls this ”stripping back” when the designer (architect) is “making an acquaintance with the building, in order for it to support the notion of *model*, abstract, ideal and complete, as the thing to which all conditions of the buildings past, present and future, in some way bear allegiance”.¹⁶ According to Scott, the *model* is the perception of an *ideal form*. Reading the listing

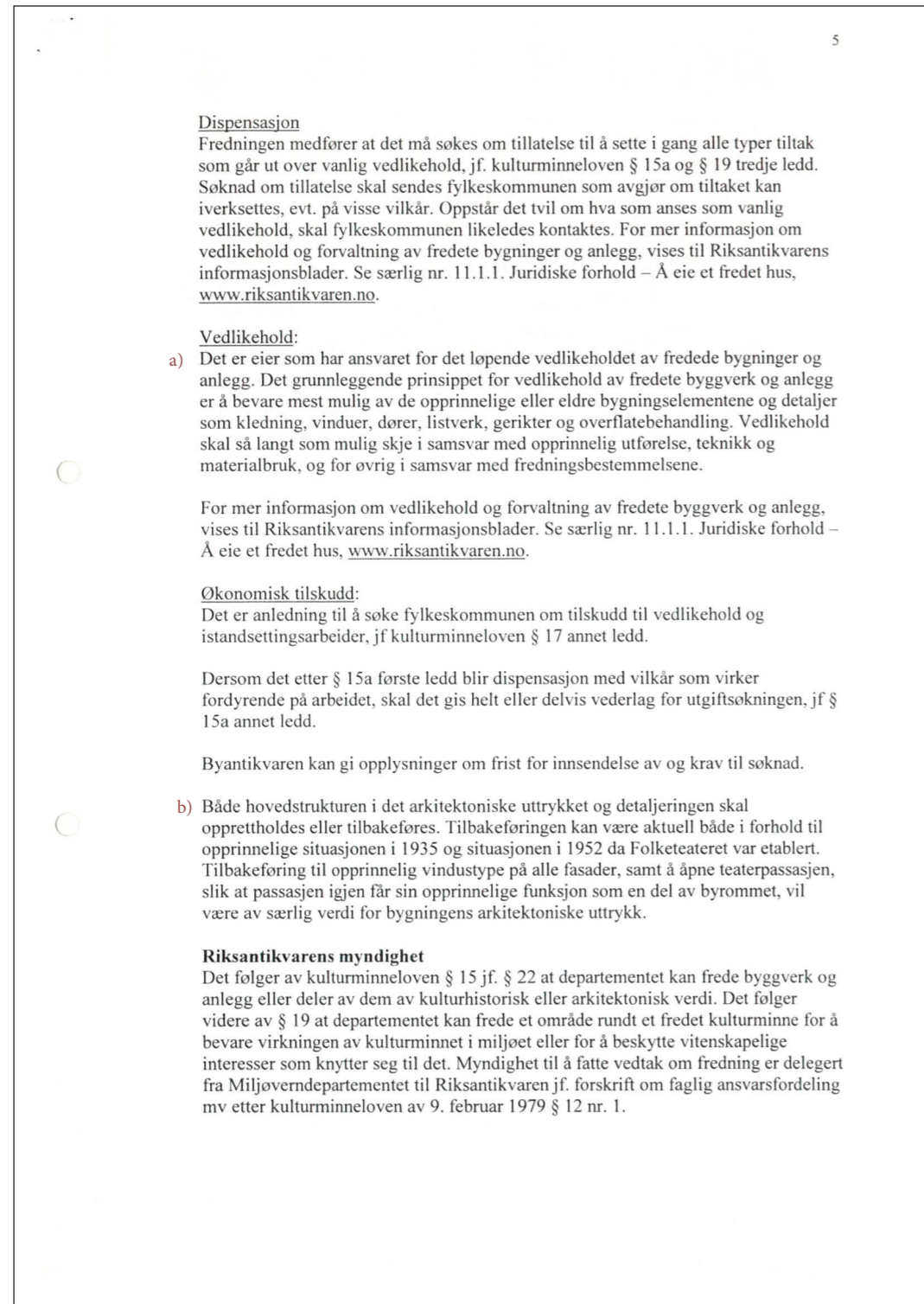
¹² Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments”, 42

¹³ Ibid, 32, 42-47

¹⁴ ‘Revert to something’, Cambridge Dictionary

¹⁵ Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, 108

¹⁶ Ibid, 112-113



document with this definition, Folketeateret’s *ideal form* is defined as the original design. The point of “stripping back” “is to establish a means by which the designer can begin a negotiation between the ideal and the actual [building], and also to begin the process of intervention by which other disparate parts must be made to cohabit.”¹⁷ Formulating what is observed of the existing (the actual) is to construct a narrative about the past, and the narrative is as much about the author in the present as it is about the subject in the past. As architectural historian Dana Arnold puts it in *Reading Architectural History*:

History is about the past. Yet it only exists in the present – the moment of its creation as history provides us with a narrative constructed after the events with which it is concerned. The narrative must then relate to the moment of its creation as much as its historical subject. History presents an historian with the task of producing a dialogue between the past and the present. But as the temporal co-ordinates cannot be fixed, history becomes a continuous interaction between the historian and the past.¹⁸

‘Reverting’ a building to a former state is thus an action bound to the present, using the reinterpretation of the past as departure – and can be seen as taking the building towards an idea of what the building was. Moving forward, adding a new layer to the building’s history where many layers of reinterpretations already exist – as physical alterations and historical and analytical descriptions of the building’s aesthetical expression. The question up for further discussion is if there are other words that can be used to describe the desire for making a contemporary understanding of the building as the starting point for a new, added layer.

The closest one can get to *revert* a specific component, is if there exists an original component that can be used as a template. If so, the original component can be examined and replicated in materiality, craftsmanship and design, and a close to identical copy can be made. But not even copies can escape the contemporary realm of reinterpretation. The relationship between the copy and the original (*model*) can be characterized by using three terms: *translatio* (translation), *imitatio*



Figure 3 The Folketeater listing document from Riksantikvaren.

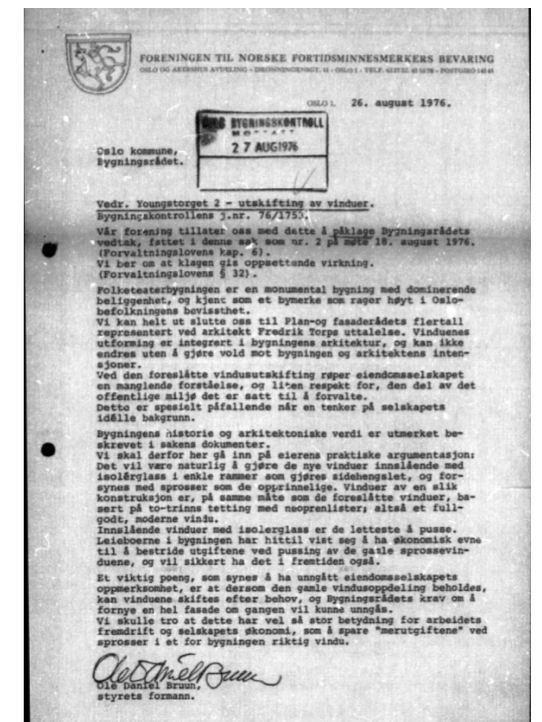
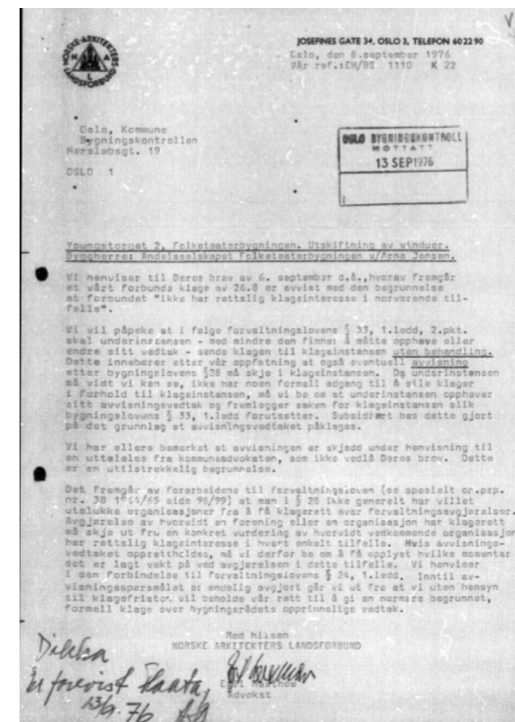
¹⁷ Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, 112

¹⁸ Arnold, *Reading Architectural History*, 1

(imitation), and *aemulatio* (emulation).¹⁹ According to George Pigman, these terms are arranged in an escalating liberation the copy has established from the model.²⁰ The first term, *translatio*, emphasizes closely following the model and striving for similarity. The second term, *imitatio*, emphasizes equality rather than mere similarity. Finally, the third term, *aemulatio*, aims to enhance and surpass the model itself.²¹ How the copy is made will in any degree be a result of how the architect, craftsmen and other contributors have reinterpreted the model while in the process of “stripping back”.

An example of a contemporary reinterpretation, that got physical repercussions in Folketeateret, is the latest insertion of new windows on the third floor facing Youngstorget.

In the 1970s, the owners Andelsselskapet Folketeaterbygningen needed to upgrade the technical standard of the building, to keep down energy costs.²² The oil crisis in 1973-74 had quadruplicated the prices for raw oil in the following years. The oil burner, heating Folketeateret, had become too expensive. In 1976, Andelsselskapet Folketeaterbygningen applied for new windows of the type Nor-Dan, two-way swing windows in pressure-impregnated wooden frames with two to three layers of glass, to replace the worn-down windows in the façade towards Youngstorget. The design was without window bars. Architects – representatives in Plan- og fasaderådet (Council for plan and facades), Norske Arkitekters Landsforbund (National Association of Norwegian Architects), and Fortidsminneforeningen (National Trust of Norway) opposed the change because the design of the new windows would alter the building’s architectural expression. (Fig.4) The account given by Egil Helle in *En høyborg for kultur og politikk* explains that Norske Arkitekters Landsforbund referred to Åndsverksloven §48, and Fortidsminneforeningen termed Folketeateret *kulturminne* (a cultural heritage object), removing the bars was an act of performing “violence” to the building.²³ The appeal body, Oslo Municipality and Fylkesmannen (the county governor) disagreed upon the term *cultural heritage object* being used on a building of this age. Fortidsminneforeningen sent the complaint to Kommunaldepartementet (the Ministry of Local Government), which in 1977 stated that Fortidsminneforeningen had the legal right to oppose the alteration by claiming that Folketeateret had cultural significance, because according to the Ministry “kulturminne” was a term



Top: “Brottsverk mot Folketeaterbygningen”, Fredrik A. S. Torp, unknown date and newspaper.
 Left: Letter from NAL to Bygningskontrollen Oslo Municipality, 13th September 1976.
 Right: Letter from Fortidsminneforeningen to Bygningsrådet, 26th August 1976

Figure 4

¹⁹ Plevoets and Cleempoel, “Intervention Strategies”, 32
²⁰ Pigman III, “Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance”
²¹ Plevoets and Cleempoel, “Intervention Strategies”, 32
²² Helle, *En høyborg for kultur og politikk*, 176-179
²³ Ibid, 176-179

in development.²⁴ But it was a lost case, the windows had already been changed. Nevertheless, Fortidsminneforeningen’s complaint changed the public conception of Folketeateret, which from now on were publicly considered amongst the nation’s cultural heritage objects. Yet, the official status, the listing, came in only 2009.

Now, 47 years later, windows and doors are again being replaced on the third floor towards Youngstorget. (Fig.5) The listing document reveals that this operation has been anticipated by Riksantikvaren since 2009. (Fig.3b) The design for the windows and doors is based upon an extended research done by the architects at Rebuilding AS in 2021, who have worked out guidelines for reverting (“tilbakeføre”) the windows to the original design, based upon archival material (documents, photos, drawings), literature; while thoroughly cataloguing all the existing windows in the building, taking measurements, and searching for the original colour schemes.

What is most important for Riksantikvaren and Byantikvaren (The City Antiquary) is to revert the aesthetical or architectonic expression of the building. (Fig.6 and 7) To fulfil this ideal some deviations had to be taken from the evidence based on the original windows: the original windows and doors on the third floor were made of steel, and this would have been a “technically and economically challenging” endeavour today, so the new windows are instead framed by wood. Second, the windows over the doors, which originally were top-hinged and tilted inwards, are in the new editions fastened – even though they are designed so that it looks as if they can be opened. Third, the three windows on each corner are side-hinged rather than pivot windows. If one were to make pivot windows according to contemporary standard, the window would have needed wider frames. So, likeness in design triumphed function and authenticity. Lastly, a qualified guess has been done in regards of the colour – although this is not mentioned in the document from Byantikvaren or in the dispensation application. The original colour of the windows on the third floor is uncertain. The present green colour is taken from another steel window the architects at Rebuilding discovered facing a small courtyard or light shaft in Folketeateret. In a book produced by Fortidsminneforeningen Rebuilding found the same colour code as the one they discovered – S3010-G70Y, under typical window colours in the style “Functionalism”, from the time-period Folketeateret was built.²⁵ However, in the end, the architects preferred a green shade with more yellow (S3010-G90Y). (Fig.5) Why? It looked nicer.²⁶

²⁴ Helle, *En høyborg for kultur og politikk*, 178-179

²⁵ Fortidsminneforeningen, *Gode råd om farger og stil*, 37

²⁶ Ruiz, Juan (architect, Rebuilding AS) in discussion with the author. January 2023.



Figure 5

Site-visit to Folketeateret, Youngstorget 2.
New doors and windows on the 3rd floor.

According to the applicants Youngstorget Eiendom AS (with Rebuilding AS) and Byantikvaren, the replacement of windows will revert the building to its previous condition prior to the removal and loss of the original windows in the 1970s: “tilsvarende utseende, farge og funksjon som i 1935”. (Fig.6a)

Observation of how the stakeholders (the owners, architects and Byantikvaren) have reinterpreted the evidence (archive material, and discoveries done in the present building) and taken “liberties” or done qualified guessing, as one lacks evidence or contemporary conditions demand other answers, reveal the complexity behind the window alteration. The windows are not copies of the authentic originals, but that was probably never the intension either. As Scott states: “Restoring a building nearly always involves modernization of servicing, so it might be noted in passing that as a general rule, everyday restoration does not completely aim at authenticity, even from the outset”.²⁷ Byantikvaren terms the new windows “better copies”, implying improvement (modernization). (Fig.7b) From the definitions of a copy’s relationships with the original building, I interpret from the documents that the new windows are *translations*. The new windows strive for similarity in architectural expression, since achieving an exact copy in every aspect is technically and economically difficult. The deviations between the original and the new in materiality and function was by Byantikvaren evaluated as “mindre vesentlig” (less essential). (Fig.7a) The new windows are said to surpass the “copies” from the 1970s, but it does not explicitly say that they surpassed or improved the original windows. Improvements of the original is seen as a restoration taboo, as it poses a threat to authenticity.²⁸ But as stated by Scott, complete authenticity is not the aim. What we see on the third floor are new windows, whose design have departed from a contemporary understanding of historical evidence, where the process of “stripping back” led to a reinterpreted imitation of the original. Moving Folketeateret ahead, towards a contemporary idea of what the building once looked. So, what word can best imply the desired point of view where evidence is abstracted from the building when change occurs? “Tilbakeføring” (reverting) is a word that seems to simplify the complex action of changing the building’s components to have similarities with how one has reinterpreted the significance and appearance of the original components. Components will change, wear down or vanish in time. To have a clear language for the process of alteration will be beneficial for the stakeholders of today as of the future, who again will reinterpret the alteration of the past – as layers of the building’s history.

²⁷ Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, 92

²⁸ Ibid, 122

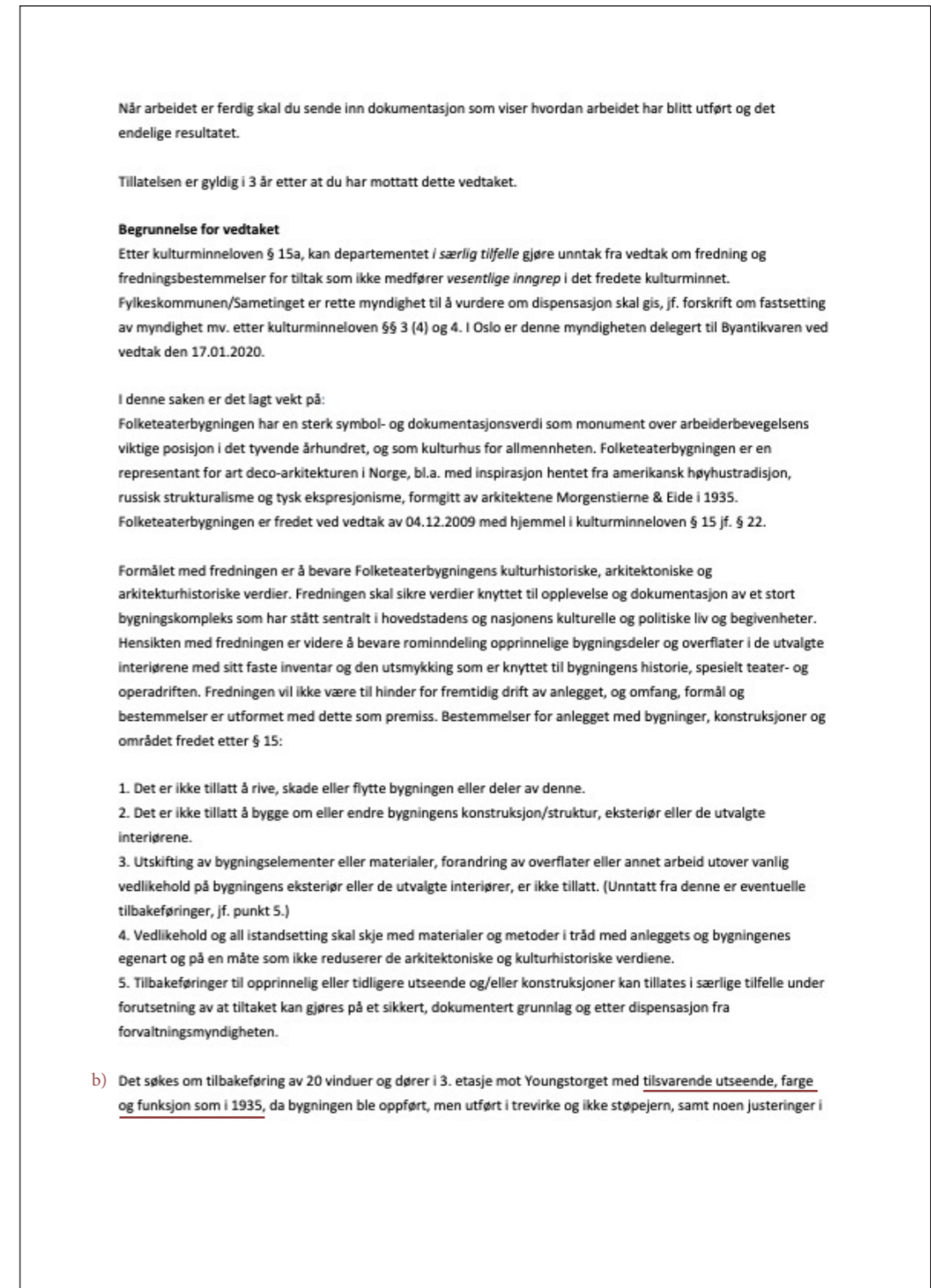


Figure 6

Accepted dispensation from Byantikvaren.

slagretning. Dagens vinduer er andregenerasjons og i dårlig stand. De har ingen verdi sett i lys av fredningens bestemmelser og formål. Det har, i forkant av søknaden, blitt nedlagt et omfattende arbeid for å undersøke opprinnelige tegningsunderlag, fotodokumentasjon av bygningen og fargeprøver av originalvinduer, som er utført både i tre og støpejern. Dette har resultert i en veileder for tilbakeføring av vinduer i hele Folketeaterkomplekset. Veilederen ble oversendt Byantikvaren 07.06.2022 og ligger til grunn for foreliggende søknad. Vinduene som ønskes tilbakeført, avviker på noen områder fra de opprinnelige. I prosessen med veilederen ble avvikene som søkes om nå drøftet med Byantikvaren. Avvikene fra de originale vinduene gjør seg gjeldene på tre områder:

1) Material- og profillikhet: Prosjekterte dører og vinduer i 3. etasje hadde utførelse i støpejern, på samme måte som vinduene i hovedtrappene. Dørene og vinduene i det aktuelle området ønskes tilbakeført, men med treprofiler. Dette gir en slankere utførelse enn f.eks. aluminiumprofiler, samt at de vil være funksjonelle med tanke på både bruk og isolasjon. Et helt identisk uttrykk og materialbruk er i dag vanskelig å få til siden tekniske krav og økonomisk gjennomførbarhet ikke er forenelig med eksakte vinduskopier i støpejern. Disse avvikene er, etter Byantikvarens syn, mindre justeringer av både teknisk og materialmessig kvalitet, som har blitt belyst og vurdert som akseptable i utarbeidelsen av veilederen for vindusutskiftning. Byantikvaren anser avviket som *mindre vesentlig* i lys av fredningens bestemmelser.

2) Fastfeltvindu i stedet for topphengslende og innadslående vinduer over dørfelt: Avviket skyldes at aktuelle leverandører har påpekt at dette er en dårlig teknisk løsning som kan gi vannskader i forbindelse med slagregn/vanninntrenging. Åpningsbare vinduer over dør er heller ikke nødvendig for å ivareta f.eks. naturlig ventilasjon, da dette ivaretas med dørene. Dette avviket er, etter Byantikvarens syn, en mindre teknisk justeringer, som har blitt belyst og vurdert som akseptable i utarbeidelsen av veilederen for vindusutskiftning.

a) Byantikvaren anser det som *mindre vesentlig* i lys av fredningens bestemmelser.

3) Sidehengslende kontra pivohengslende vinduer: Totalt 10 vinduer i 3. etasje mot Youngstorget, eller tre stk. på hver flanke i tillegg til fire vinduer på balkongen, hadde opprinnelig pivohengslende vinduer. En slik åpningsmetode er vurdert, men fører til kraftigere profiler, samt at sidehengslende vinduer gir bedre formlikhet. Disse avvikene er, etter Byantikvarens syn, mindre justeringer av både teknisk og materialmessig kvalitet, som har blitt belyst og vurdert som akseptable i utarbeidelsen av veilederen for vindusutskiftning. Byantikvaren anser det som *mindre vesentlig* i lys av fredningens bestemmelser.

b) Behovet for nye, oppgraderte vinduer gjør at det foreligger et særlig tilfelle. Tiltaket er *ikke vesentlig* siden det er nyere vinduskopier av lav kvalitet og utførelse som skiftes ut med langt *bedre kopier*, og at endringene er å anse som tilbakeføring på dokumentert grunnlag og således i overensstemmelse med fredningsbestemmelse 5 om tilbakeføring. Ut i fra en samlet vurdering finner vi derfor at vilkårene for dispensasjon er tilstede.

Forholdet til annet lovverk
Hvis tiltaket krever tillatelse etter annet lovverk, må søker sørge for dette, før tiltaket kan gjennomføres. Dette kan for eksempel være aktuelt for tiltak som er søknadspiktig etter plan- og bygningsloven § 20-1.

Du kan klage på vedtaket



Figure 7

Accepted dispensation from Byantikvaren.

Discussing architectural quality

Folketeateret is protected to prohibit that the need it has for development will move the building further away from the original architectural composition; defined in the listing document as preserving the building’s “historical, architectural-historical and cultural-historical values”. (Fig.1a) The mentality is that the listing status is necessary, or else will alterations, additions, and removal of components, eventually lead to the loss of the original design or worse demolition of the whole building. Under ”Fredningsbestemmelser” (listing provisions) it is stated that any changes are forbidden, except from regular maintenance. Reverting the building to an original or previous design can be allowed if the proposed action is based on documentation, and the proposal has been granted dispensation from the regulation of the listing. Phrased in §5 as:

Reversions to original or previous appearance and/or constructions may be permitted in special cases under the condition of that the measure can be carried out on a secure, documented basis and after dispensation from the administrative authority [Byantikvaren].(Fig.8a)

The original design is seen as representative of the period in which the building was constructed; a historical stage in the development of design, construction, and craftsmanship, but also in the political, social and cultural development that defined the conditions for the building’s construction. These stages are from an art historical perspective categorized with architectural styles labels– constructed as a linear development. In the listing document, under arguments for protection, it is stated that:

Folketeaterbygningen [is protected for its] architectonic qualities, as a representative for art deco including inspiration from the American high-rise-tradition, Russian structuralism and German expressionism, as designed by the architects Morgenstjerne & Eide in 1935. (Fig.1b)

²⁹ Arnold, *Reading Architectural History*, 6-7

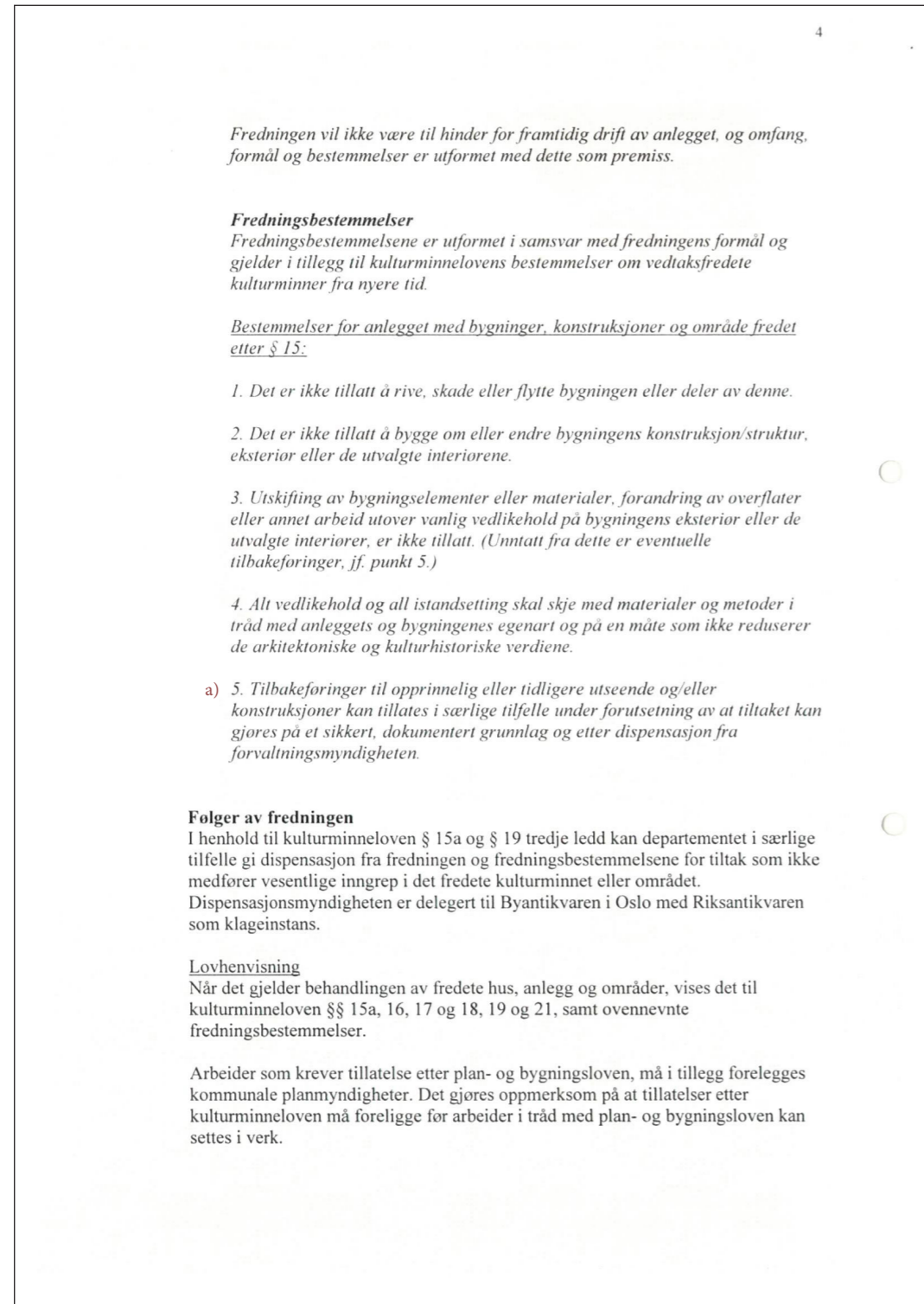


Figure 8 The Folketeater listing document from Riksantikvaren.

What happens when architectural quality is set as an equivalent to architectural styles? According to architectural historian Dana Arnold, buildings which are evaluated as architecture will be reduced to certain aesthetics – “a cosmetic transformation or intervention of which the cultural and historical meaning remains in the realms of the visual” when described solely for their representation of a refined architectural style.²⁹ This emphasising of visual and aesthetic aspects, may downplay that architecture also is the product and expression of buildings based on functional considerations and structural and technical innovations, situated in a physical and non-physical contexts that shapes the architectural layout.

What these labels of architectural style associations on the other hand can do is to construct narratives about the building. Placing it in a broader international context of tendencies and possible influences can make the history of the building more comprehensible and tangible. But can a specific building’s architectonic qualities be summed up with references to how they respond or stand in relation to a variety of styles or traditions? Does the physical building have aesthetic value solely in a comparison with or as a representative of what were time-typical architectural paradigms when the building was constructed, as seen in hindsight? Architectural quality regards preferences in aesthetics, but it also considers the spatial experience and use which together forms an essence in architectonic composition.

Arnold points to the distinction between works of art and architecture.³⁰ Where art will remain unchanged in “subject-matter, form and matter” wherever it’s displayed, architecture in its physicality will change over time; with additions and alterations as the function of the building alter with the occupants’ needs. Also changes to the physical context can alter the meaning and reading of architecture. Architecture is therefore something more than aesthetics, defined by its style. Although a structure’s façade visually remains virtually the same, the significance of the building will change in time, because time changes context. Therefore, architecture cannot be seen as “a limited body which reflects certain social values” anchored in a specific period; rather it is “an essential instrument of the development and dissemination of (...) ideas [that] continues throughout the life of the building.”³¹

²⁹ Arnold, *Reading Architectural History*, 7

³⁰ *Ibid*, 7

³¹ *Ibid*, 7

From this one can argue in regards of historical architecture, the structure cannot only be valued for its composition of design (its architectural style) and as a representative for specific a moment in time. The building's lifespan, including its alteration, all events, must be taken into consideration when interpreting its significance. Further, to encapsulate a building's significance in a specific state in the design development is to limit the nature of the building itself – as a building is destined to change even though it's not expanding or being reduced in volume. Buildings need maintenance, replacement, or removal of worn-down components. But the mindset can be that the building itself is used as an archive for new clues when changes occur. Then alterations to the architectural composition can emerge from a reinterpretation of what is observed about the building, instead of adding unfamiliar components. This ethos comes across as the heritage authority's intentions and was what happened in the latest window alteration. Still, one can ask if evaluating Folketeateret's architectural quality from how the components fit a fixed architectural style, considers the architecture in its complexity. The building's materiality, detailing, and composition of fragments and elements –which creates the architectural spaces the beholder observes and encounters – is as interesting to describe in a building-specific context as it is expressed in comparison with its defined architectural style. By expanding the definition of what the evidence of interest is, additional narratives orbiting around the building can help uncover the complexity of the building's history. For example, how did the materials find their way to Folketeateret? And can an investigation into the building components themselves enhance the significance of components beyond aesthetic qualities in an architectural composition? This is elaborated on in the part *The 5-scale model* of the diploma project.

Folketeateret was listed in 2009, which means that the listing document was written 14 years ago. In some sense can the document therefore be considered outdated. Nevertheless, it is the legal document that protects Folketeateret from future alterations “harming” the architectural layout by moving it further away from the model – the original building as it was conceived by the architects Morgenstjerne & Eide in 1935. What “has been can never be again” stated Alois Riegl. By preserving the existing we can bring forward what has been left to us, adding a new layer to the layers of reinterpretation.



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Front

Folketeateret before new windows in the 70s.

Archive: Photography, Historical, p.75 – D

Ørnelund, Leif, photographer, "Folketeaterbygningen", 22nd November, 1976. Oslo Museum, <http://oslobilder.no/OMU/OB.Ø76/4552>

Figure 1, 2, 3, and 8

The Folketeater listing document

Archive: Documents, Listing Document, p.104-113

Riksantikvaren,"Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §

15 jm. § 22", 4th December, 2009. Accessed from the archive of ReBuilding Arkitekter, who received the document from Youngstorget Eiendom A/S.

Figure 4

Top: "Brotsverk mot Folketeaterbygningen", Fredrik A. S. Torp, unknown date and newspaper.

Archive: Documents, Building Applications, p.176

Left: Letter from NAL to Bygningsskontrollen Oslo Municipality, 13th September, 1976.

Archive: Documents, Building Applications, p.175

Right: Letter from Fortidsminneforeningen to Bygningssrådet, 26th August, 1976

Archive: Documents, Building Applications, p.174

Plan- og bygningsetaten i Oslo, "Storgata 21-23, Utskiftninger av vinduer". Accessed January, 2023. <https://innsyn.pbe.oslo.kommune.no/saksinnsyn/casedet.asp?mode=&caseno=197600639>

Figure 5

Site visit to Folketeateret. Replacing doors and windows on the 3rd floor. 4th April, 2023.

Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.88 – B, p.89 – C, D, p.91

Figure 6 and 7

Accepted dispensation from Byantikvaren.

"208/914 - Youngstorget 2 - Innvilget søknad om dispensasjon for utskifting av vinduer og dører i 3.etasje".

Archive: Documents, Building Applications, p.234-237

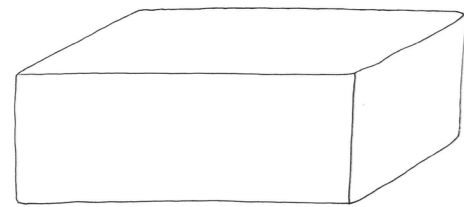
Plan- og bygningsetaten i Oslo, "Youngstorget 2 - Tilbakeføring av dører og vinduer".

Accessed January, 2023. <https://innsyn.pbe.oslo.kommune.no/saksinnsyn/casedet.asp?mode=&caseno=202213334>

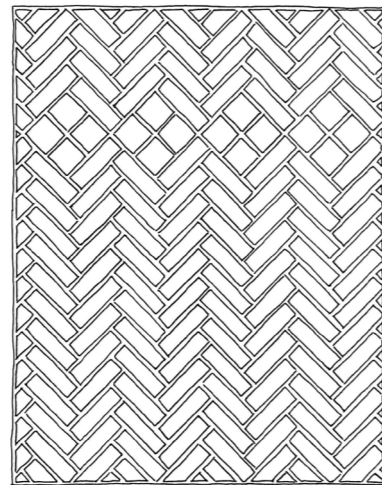
End

Site-visit to Folketeateret. New windows on the third-floor. 16th April, 2023.

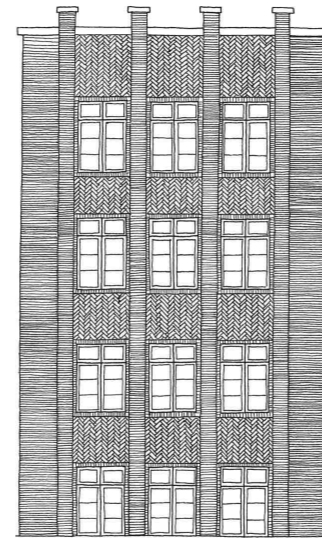
Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.93 – A



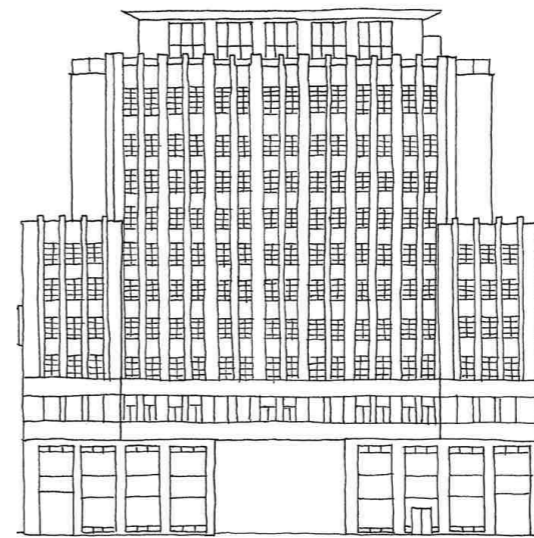
Fragment



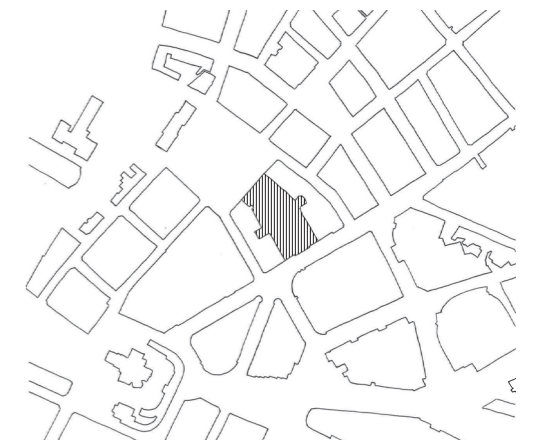
Element



Fabric



Structure



Environment

Five-scale model

The *five-scale model* divides a building's components into advancing levels of composition, highlighting multiple perspectives for analysing different aspects of a building and its components. The model aims to explore the various narratives associated with an existing building by highlighting alternative entries of building analysis. It sees a building not only as a whole structure but also through its components and how they are composed. The five-scale model is limited to five scales – visually present on-site and in the environment of the building – named fragment, element, fabric, structure, and environment, but the scale could have continued in both directions, zoomed down to matter, molecules, and atoms, and upwards to the regional-, national-, and international context. The five scales evolve as; several fragments can make an element, numerous elements go into fabric, the collection of fabrics makes the structure, and the structure's relation to other buildings is what creates the environment.

The model aims to expand and highlight different entries of building analysis and open for a broader discussion about significance and which components or composition of components “hold” the values we attribute buildings. Using the model, the stakeholders (architects, heritage authorities, owners, producer, or other interested) can clearly define which part or aspect of the building has significance and need to be preserved. For example, when a building is subject to change, stakeholders enter the process of interpretation or reinterpretation – exploring and defining narratives about a building's history and identity – to state which components can be altered, removed, or added.¹ The model can then be a tool for exploring several perspectives or entries for examination when defining significance.

The *five-scale model* is created as a response to the experience of the discussion around a building's significance, especially how it comes across in listing documents – which is the document that shapes the guidelines and points to the

¹ «Stipping back», the stakeholders engaging in a negotiation with the building's past. Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, 112-113

regulations tied to cultural heritage objects and -environments. The narratives about Folketeateret's significance seem in the listing document to be discussed on the higher levels of the scale, on structure, environment-, regional-, national- and international context. Exemplified in the essay, “Reinterpretation: A Comment to the Folketeateret Listing Document”, I asked if narratives about architectural styles are to steer the discussion about a building's value, pointing to Folketeateret being listed for the building's architectonic qualities as it is a representative for the architectural style *art deco*:

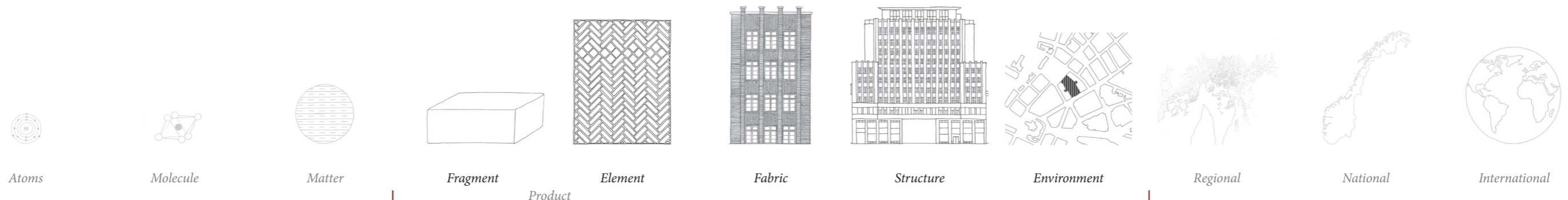
Folketeaterbyggets arkitektoniske kvaliteter som representant for art deco bl.a. med inspirasjon hentet fra amerikansk høyhustradisjon, russisk strukturalisme og tysk ekspresjonisme, slik dette ble formgitt av arkitektene Morgenstjerne & Eide i 1935.

Riksantikvaren, ”Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §15 jm. §22”, 3
Archive: Documents, Listing Document, p.106

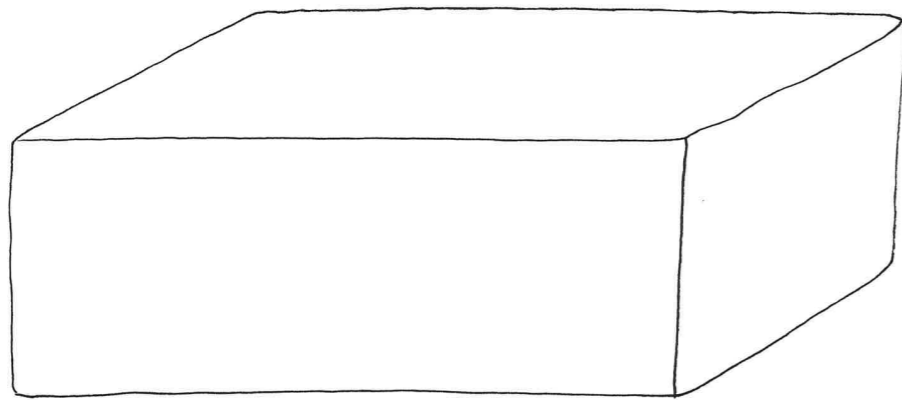
Folketeaterbygningen [is protected for its] architectonic qualities, as a representative for art deco including inspiration from the American high-rise-tradition, Russian structuralism and German expressionism, as designed by the architects Morgenstjerne & Eide in 1935.

In the document, little emphasis is put on the scales fragments and elements. Even though they are briefly mentioned, their significance is not elaborated on.² After the definitions of the five-scale model, *fragments* and *elements* are the scales that concern the physical components of buildings. When composed on-site, they become the building's visual- and materialized identity, from where the discussion about architectonic qualities emerges. Exploring the significance and narratives orbiting fragments and elements is essential because they are what will be physically modified when alterations occur – which further will have an impact on how the building is spatially perceived and described in the analysis of the later scales, fabric, structure, environment, and futher, the regional-, national-, and international context.

² The chapters «Karakteristikk av Folketeaterbygningen som kulturminne» and «Riksantikvarens vurdering av kulturminnet – begrunnelse for fredningsvedtak». Riksantikvaren, “Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §15 jm. §22”, 6-7



Fragment

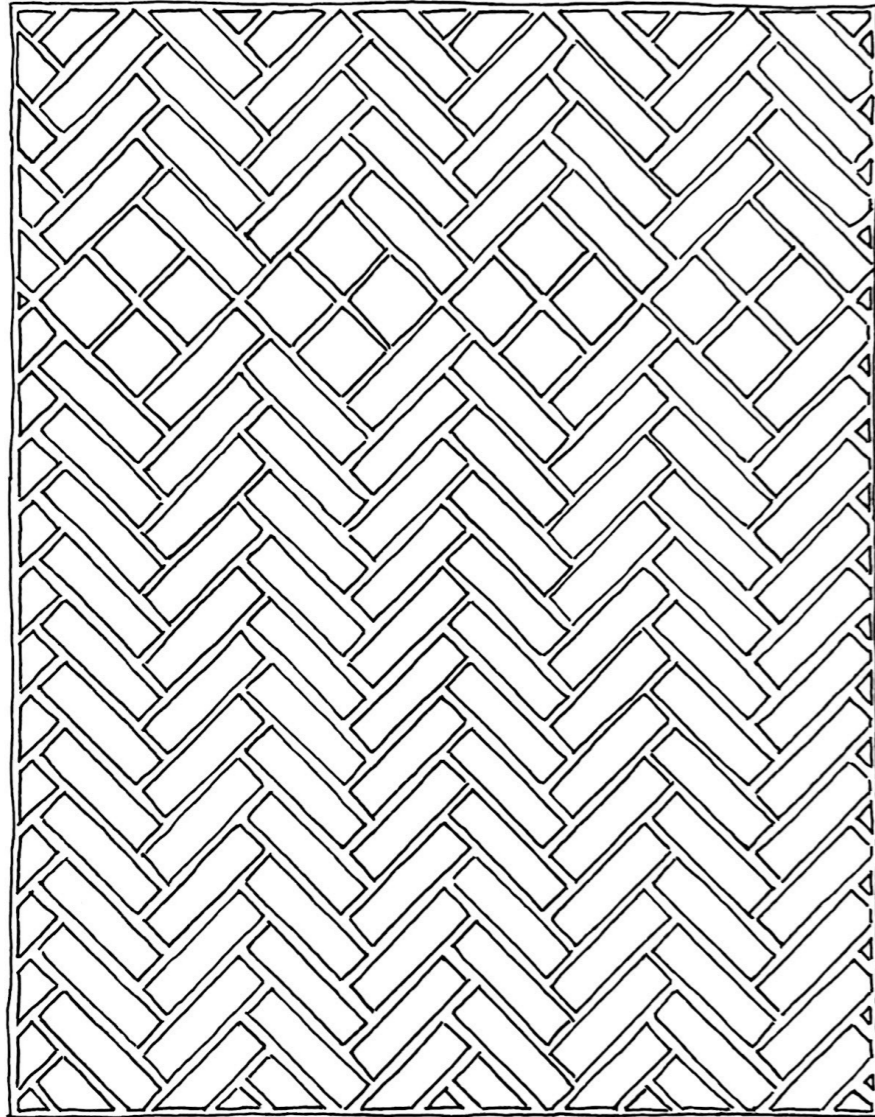


A **fragment** refers to the various building materials used to construct a building, including those that are made by a producer and those arranged on site. This scale examines the fragment's material, material quality (durability, tactility, malleability, etc.), craftsmanship and/or dimensions. Furthermore, the scale includes the contextual history of the fragment, both related to the building and its physical context.

"A small piece or a part"

'Fragment', Cambridge Dictionary

Element



An **element** is a combination of fragments that together form building components such as segments of a wall, the roof, a column, the floor slab, a window, a staircase and more. Elements can be composed of multiple materials. The outline of an element is defined in the meeting with other elements. The transition from one element to the next is observed in the change of material and/or a shift from one volume to another. For example, a façade can consist of several geometrical volumes arranged in such a way that creates a shift from the baseline of the façade. The shift can therefore distinguish two elements from each other, even if they are made of the same fragments. Architects and producers alike can design elements, which can be assembled on-site, or in a factory or workshop setting. Furthermore, the scale includes the contextual history of the element, both related to the building and its physical context.

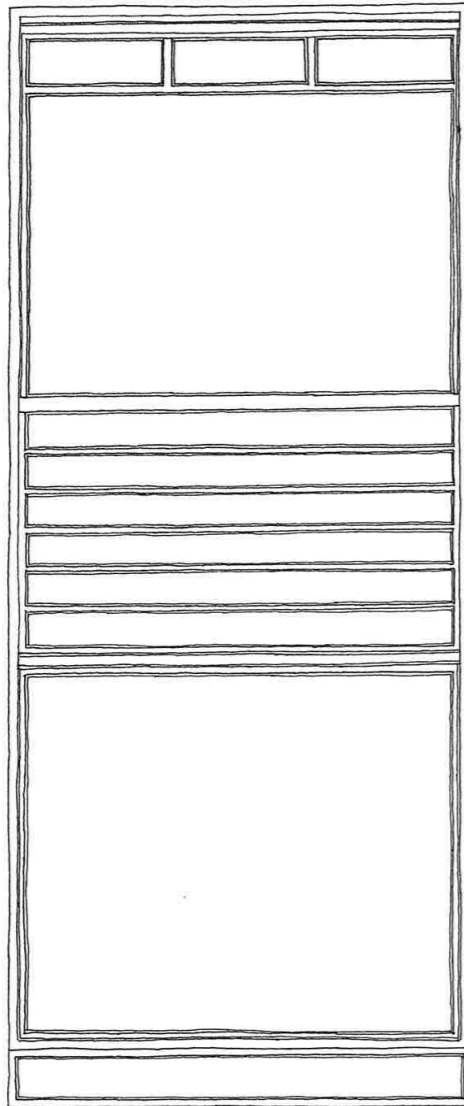
”A part of something”

’Element’, Cambridge Dictionary

”Architectural elements are the unique details and component parts that, together, form the architectural style of houses, buildings and structures”

’Architectural elements’, Wikipedia

Product



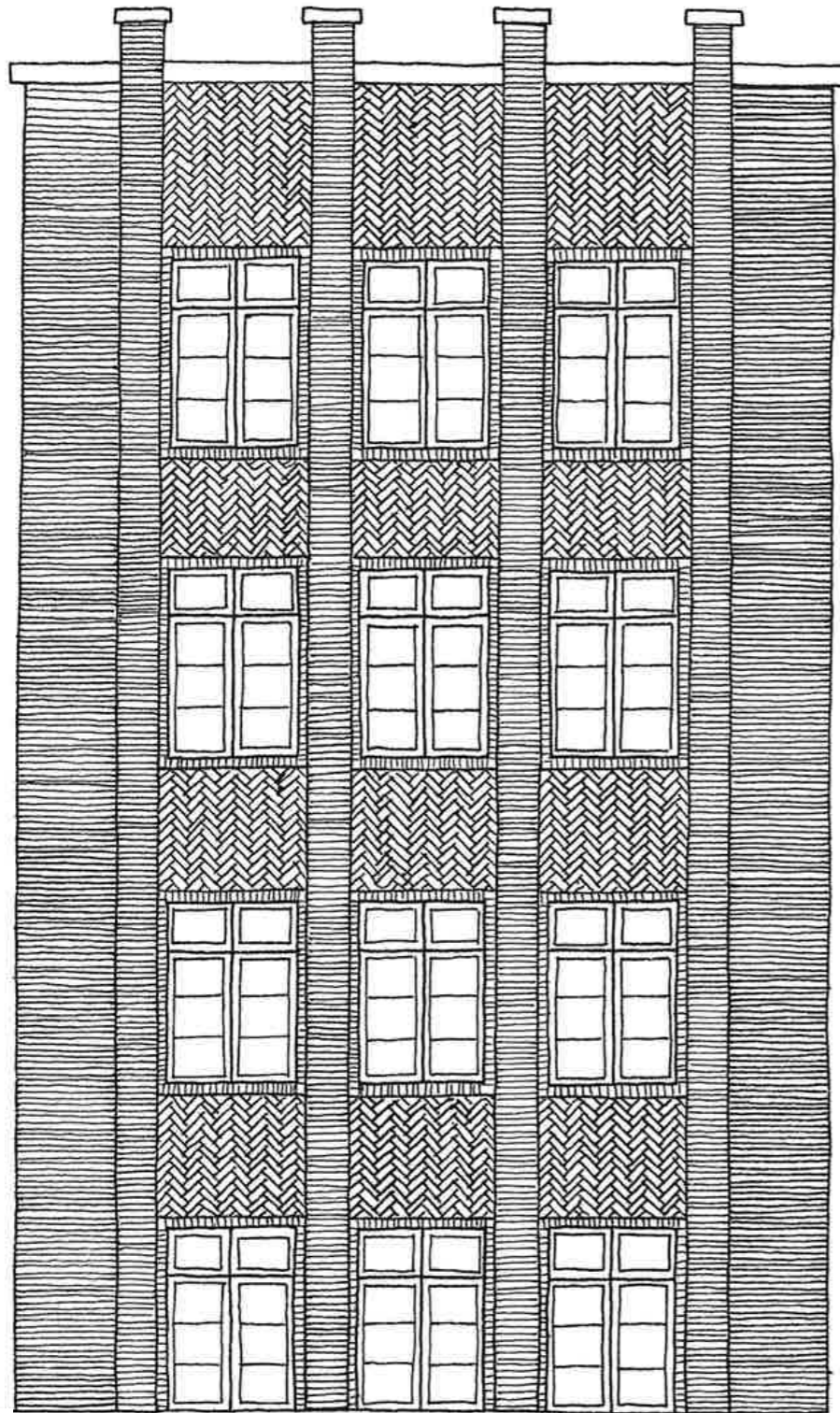
Fragments and *elements* can both be or include **products**, which are designed and produced by other actors than the architect(s). These products are fragments and elements which count as mass-produced and/or fabricated, likely chosen by the builder and architect from a selection of solutions.

Examples from Folketeateret: the espagnolettes to windows and doors produced by Trio Fabrikker A/S in Oslo bought from Coward & Thowsen A/S in Kirkegata, reinforced iron from Christiania Spigerverk in Nydalen, construction beams from Vulkan Mekaniske Verksted along Akerselven or stone blocks of lightweight concrete from Gullaugsten, produced in Gullaug/Engersand (Lier) near Drammen.

”Something that is made to be sold, usually something that is produced by an industrial process”

’Product’, Cambridge Dictionary

Fabric

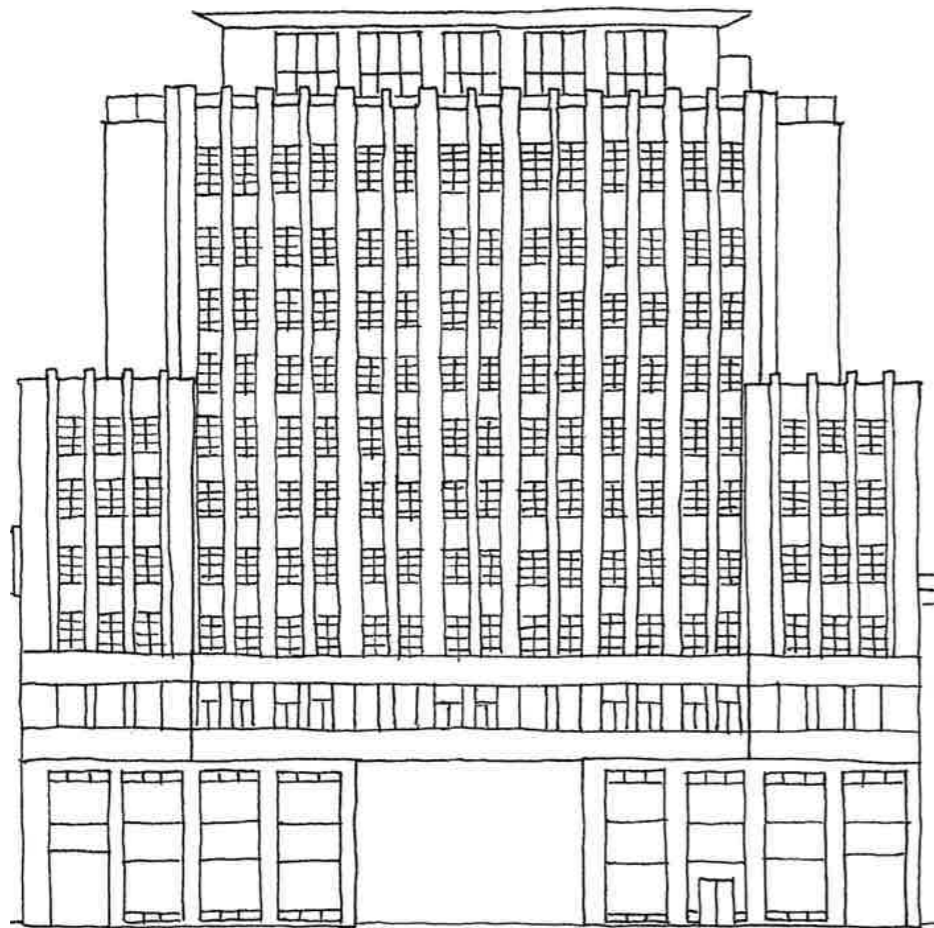


Fabric is the spatial composition of fragments and elements where the architect's act of assembling the different components materializes towards a functional building with an artistic expression or intension. Fabric is the scale where the building's characteristics start to take shape: where configurations of fragments and elements are given directions and rhythm in a geometric composition. The elements become functional: walls, floors, and roofs become structural; windows let in light and give visual contact between inside and outside; stairs connect floors, etc. Fabrics are distinguished from each other by their geometric composition, where different shapes and sizes of elements create a distinct visual arrangement that separates them. Example from Folketeateret: recessed- or protruding volumes.

” The fabric of a building comprises the elements that characterise the structure as a building, such as walls, roofs, internal surfaces, floors, stairs and landings and all doors and windows. The fabric of the building also includes plumbing and central heating systems, and mains wiring and lighting systems”

’Architectural fabric’, UK Government

Structure

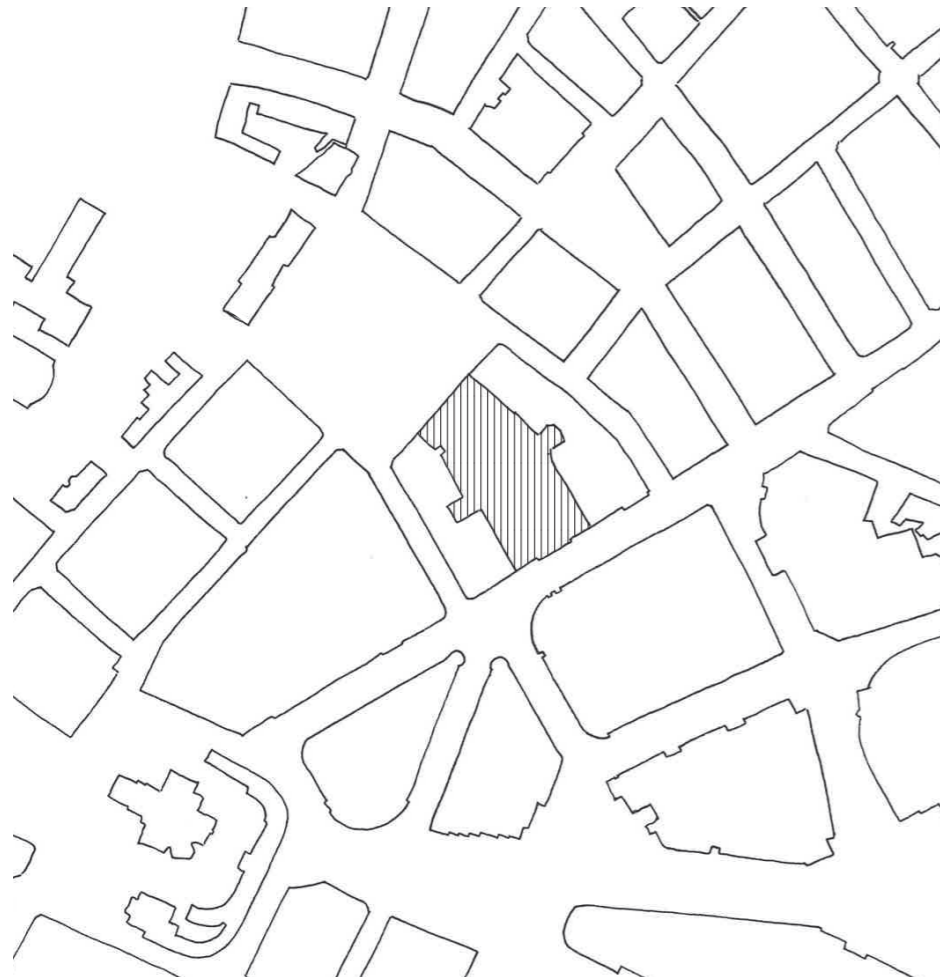


Structure refers to the complete building and encompasses both its form and function. Fabrics are the entities that in structures are constituents in the formulation of the building's features and characteristics, which can be defined in a typology. Structure points to the overall appearance of the exterior and to the three-dimensional layout of the building. The scale includes the re-interpretation of the architect's holistic vision for the building as a cohesive entirety.

"Something that has been made or built from parts, especially a large building"

'Structure', Cambridge Dictionary

Environment



Environment refers to the immediate context in which the building is situated, experienced, and perceived. This includes its relationship with neighbouring structures, streets, squares. The scale considers the location, orientation, and scale, and how they interact with the surrounding district. Additionally, the scale may also examine how the building's inhabited functions and activities relate to the surrounding area.

”The parts of the places in which we live that have been built by people, for example buildings and streets, rather than the parts that exist in nature”

’Built environment’, Cambridge Dictionary

What narratives can emerge when exploring the history of a singular fragment or element, or when emphasize is set on one of the spatial characteristics of the building? In the following sections I will elaborate on two fragments, brick and stone, and their connection to Folketeateret. Followed by one of the spatial characteristics in the scale *fabric*: "the theatre passage". The narratives derive from examination and interpretation of archival material, asking where a building's significance can be defined additionally to how we conventionally describe a building's architectural historical value. Conventional is here understood as the narratives describing a building's relation to the architectural expression it has been defined as having or taken inspiration from in hindsight; descriptions where the building as a historical structure is analysed in comparison with other buildings of the same era and with similar architectural language. When examining a building from alternative perspectives, other questions of significance emerge. Riegl defined a monuments historical value, after how much a monument original state is preserved.³ But are components historically significant solely for being original parts in a building, or can the components be described as historically significant in themselves? Pointing to fragments and elements becoming part of what defines a building's historical value, not only being the visual appearance in descriptions of a building's architectural expression. Fragments and elements can be altered, added or removed, which may impact the building's spatial compositions and -qualities. Spatial compositions are often altered to respond to the current stakeholder's desire for use, function, or need. The heritage authorities sees some alterations as weak adaptations, because the design was not according to the *ideal form*.

Riksantikvarens erfaring er at det opprinnelige grunnlag som ble skapt av arkitekten, utgjør en langsiktig verdi som alle parter er tjent med å ta vare på. Kortsiktige løsninger som går på tvers av bygningens opprinnelige konsept, skaper i regelen en vanskeligjørende og uheldig situasjon, ikke bare for fredningen, men like sterkt for det langsiktige driftsgrunnlaget.

Riksantikvaren, "Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §15 jm. §22", 9
 Archive: Documents, Listing Document, p.112

Riksantikvaren's experience is that the original foundation created by the architect constitutes a long-term value that all parties benefit from taking care of. Short-term solutions that go against the building's original concepts usually create a challenging and unfortunate situation for conservation and the long-term operating basis.

However, should alterations be considered "weak" in every aspect?

³ Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments", 34

Examining two fragments

One of the significant fragments in the architectural expression of Folketeateret is brick. The brick is made of clay. It has an uneven surface of a rectangular shape, measuring 228 mm x 108mm x 62 mm (Norwegian standard). It was made at Hovind Teglverk, produced by being manually hand-stamped in moulds of steel or wood, and when shaped burned in a Hoffmann kiln. The fragment is used as the outer shell of Folketeateret.⁴ (Fig.1)

The listing document emphasises that Hovid Teglverk produced the brick veneer. "The main facade addressing Youngstorget is of brick. This facade is richly articulated and is characterized in the style art deco both in its main shape and details, as the brick in chevron-pattern from Hovind teglverk"

Hovedfasaden mot Youngstorget er kledd i teglstein. Denne fasaden er rikt artikulert og som helhet preget av stilretningen art deco både i hovedform og med detaljer som chevron-mønster i teglstein fra Hovind teglverk.

Riksantikvaren, "Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §15 jm. §22", 6
 Archive: Documents, Listing Document, p.109

Reinterpreting why this is mentioned as significant, one can ask: Why were this producer and brick especially important for Folketeateret?⁴

Hovind Teglverk was one of the brick producers in the former municipality Aker.⁵ The production was located on today's Teglverket skole and Hovid park plot (Hasle, Oslo). Hovind Teglverk exploited clay and produced and stored the bricks on the grounds of Søndre Hovind Gård. Oslo municipality bought the company in 1916 and ran its production from 1923 to 1967 when it closed. Hovind Teglverk produced machine- and manually stamped bricks, but they were primarily known for their hand-stamped brick veneer. Their brick was used on several monumental buildings in Oslo, such as Oslo City Hall and adjacent buildings, which were the former location of Oslo Trygdekasse.⁶ Another example is "Tomba Emanuelle", the mausoleum to the painter Emanuel Vigeland, on Slemdal – to speak in a *regional* context from the scale model.

Hovind Teglverk had, since the beginning of the late 19th century, burned their bricks in a ring oven – Hoffmann kiln, a German innovation by Friedrich Hoffman, patented in 1858.⁷ (Fig.1) The bricks move through a series of chambers for

⁴ The description of the brick follows the explanations of things from Aristoteles's theory of four causes (Aris. *Physics II* 3 and *Metaphysics V* 2), which he used to describe movements and changes in nature. Aristoteles came to four explanations for the question "Why?" things are as they are; material cause (material), what the object is made of; formal cause (shape), how the object is arranged; efficient cause (creator): what or who made the object; final cause (use), what the object's purpose is.

⁵ Zakariassen, *Teglindustriens historie*, 139

⁶ Hovind Teglverk, Oslo Byleksikon

⁷ Algaard, "Forblændings- og terracotta-arbeider", 31-32

heating, burning, and cooling, efficiently utilising the movement of hot gas from a central fire. In 1923, the production doubled with a new ring oven.⁸

Hovind Teglverk was in the 1930s the workplace for a central figure in the worker's movement and the union representing bricklayers in the Oslo region, Fritjof Thorbjørnsen.⁹ Thorbjørnsen was the first chairman of what would become Norsk Bygningsarbeiderforbund (Norwegian Construction Workers Union) and was, in the late 1930s, the operation manager of Hovind Teglverk.

When the building committee decided which brick to use for Folketeateret, there was no mutual agreement about Hovind Teglverk producing the most suitable brick. Bredo Berntsen, the consulting architect, saw that the machine-produced brick from Aker Teglverk would be even more beautiful and of better quality than the hand-stamped one from Hovind. "First, the machine-made stone gives a smoother point and is relatively smoother in format. Second, the machine-made stone has fresher, cleaner and more beautiful colors."

For det første gir maskinsten jevnere fuger og er relativt jevnere i formatet.
For det annet har maskinstenen friskere, renere og vakrere farver.

Letter from Bredo Berntsen, 06.09.1933
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.251

In 1929, Aker Teglverk decided to modernise their production with new machines and drying processes to make bricks more sufficient and of better colour quality.¹⁰ Some stages of the production were automatised, such as the cutter and the wagons transporting the brick to the oven.

Architect Berntsen did not persuade the building committee, as shown in the report of 7th September 1933.

Referertes skrivelse fra arkitekt Bredo Berntsen av 6/9.1933 hvori han henstiller til byggekomiteen å besiktige bygg med maskinsten fra Akers teglverk før der tas bestemmelse om valg av mursten.
Byggekomiteen besluttet å anvende Hovind teglverks bankesten.

Building committee meeting report, 07.09.1933
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.249

Reference is made to a letter from architect Bredo Berntsen of 6/9/1933 in which he recommends that the building committee inspects buildings with machine-made bricks from Akers' brickworks before deciding on the choice of bricks. The building committee decided to use Hovind Teglverks' hand-stamped stone.

It is not stated why, but some reasons can be suggested. First, an apparent reason could have been the price difference, but this can hardly be in favour of the hand-stamped brick, which was produced with a more time-consuming procedure than the automatised production at Aker. What about ownership? The municipality owned Hovind Teglverk, and Aker Teglverk was a private company. One can suggest that the building committee got a good arrangement with Hovind Teglverk, since Folketeateret was realised with financial help from the municipality – but this is only a speculation. Another possible answer is found in the letter from Hovind Teglverk after the building committee visited the production area. Here it is listed that Morgenstjerne & Eide had recently used bricks from Hovind Teglverk in the new building for Akers Sparebank in Grensen 3.

Akers Sparebanks nybygg, Grensen 3, Oslo.
Arkitekt: Morgenstjerne og Eide, Oslo.

Letter from Hovind Teglverk, 30.08.1933
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.247

Could an already established contact between the architect and the company be why Hovind Teglverk was the preferred choice? Or was Hovind chosen because the committee liked the rough hand-stamped surface better than the even machine-stamped one? Or can contacts from within the labour movement have been decisive for the election?

Concluding with any of these proposals would only be speculative. Still, a dive into the archive, tracing the possible significance of the fragment's relation with the building, is valuable for elaborating on how the fragment found its way into the project, which further can enhance the fragment's significance in the building beyond aesthetical qualities.

⁸ Zakariassen, *Teglindustriens historie*, 139

⁹ Ibid, 113-114

¹⁰ Ibid, 140

Interestingly, this was not the only incident of a fragment first appearing in Grensen 3 to later be considered for Folketeateret. Initially, the building committee had chosen to use the same façade stone in the theatre passage and third floor towards Youngstorget: “Nr.30, Norsk Gran Hadeland” from John F. Køltzow. ”The committee decided to use the marble on the facade and in the passage – John F.A.Køltzow nr. 30 (as used in Akers Sparebanks bank offices)”

Komiteen besluttet å anvende til fasade og passagen marmor – John F.A.Køltzow nr. 30 n. (som benyttet i Akers_Sparebanks banklokaler)

Building committee meeting report, 22.11.1933
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.270

Nevertheless, in the end, it was a granite stone from Porsgrunn, “Gråstripet norsk Labrador”, delivered by A/S Norsk Labrador & Granitindustri, that ended up in Folketeateret. (Fig.1) In between, the committee decided upon a stone from Den Ankerske Marmorforretning, “Småmønstret Breche”, but because of a cost difference, architect Eide’s preference was voted down in the committee meeting on 4th January 1934:

Arkitekt Eide optok forslag om å anvende Den ankerske marmorindustri's marmor "Småmønstret Breche"

Med 3 mot 2 stemmer besluttet komiteen å anvende denne sten – Småmønstret Breche – mens to stemte for å anvende "Norsk Labrador nr. 2".
Dermed anses ophevet komiteens beslutning av 22/11. om anvendelse av Norsk Gran Hadeland, Køltzow-marmor.

Building committee meeting report, 21.12.1933
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.272

Architect Eide raised the proposal of using ”Småmønstret Breche” from Den ankerske marmorindustri. (...) Three against two, the committee decided to use – Småmønstret Breche – while two voted for using ”Norsk Labrador nr.2”. (...) Therefore, is the committee’s decision from 22/11, Norsk Gran Hadeland ”Køltzow-marmor”, annulled.

Komiteen besluttet på grunnlag av de opstilte priser å opheve tidligere beslutning vedr. valg av marmor og å anvende Gråstripet norsk Labrador

Building committee meeting report, 04.01.1934
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.275

The committee decided, on the basis of the prices, to annul the previous decision on the choice of marble, and use ”Gråstripet norsk Labrador”.

Five days later, the building committee received a complaint from Oslo Steinindustriarbeiderforening, demanding that the façade stone be prepared in Oslo. From the report of 2nd February 1934, we can read that the contract with A/S Norsk Labrador & Granitindustri depended on the stone block being acceptably treated in Oslo:

Drøftedes spørsmålet om i hvilken utstrekning arbeidet med marmoret kunde utføres i Oslo. Formannen underrettet sterkt at arbeidet i den utstrekning det var mulig og økonomisk forsvarlig skulde utføres i Oslo. Denne side av spørsmålet krevet formannen belyst før marmorkontrakten blev undertegnet.

Building committee meeting report, 02.02.1934
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.281

The question of to what extent the work with the marble could be carried out in Oslo was discussed. The chairman [Sverre Iversen] strongly emphasized that the work to the extent that it was possible and economically justifiable should be carried out in Oslo. This side of the question required the chairman to clarify before the marble contract was signed.

Architect Morgenstjerne was responsible for settling the question with A/S Norsk Labrador & Granitindustri before signing the contract.

By exploring the history of fragments (and elements), we can gain a deeper understanding of their importance beyond their function as parts of a building's structure. This context allows us to place them within a larger architectural-historical framework. For example, brick, as a façade material, described in the context of representing typical façade expressions from the time a building was constructed. A typical phrasing might be: "several monuments in Oslo from the beginning of the 20th century are built with exposed brick, University Campus on Blindern, Oslo City Hall in Pipervika, Vinmonopolet Head Office on Hasle." In these narratives of architectural history, the brick's origin is irrelevant or even uninteresting.

However, when directing specific attention to the fragments (and elements), alternative narratives pointing to their provenance and their unique connection with the building can extend the significance of the components- and even the building. For example, the brick in Folketeateret originates from one of the leading brick producers in the region. It encompasses an industrial account pointing to the brick's position in Norwegian and local industrial history from the 19th and 20th centuries. When the brick and building are linked, this history becomes a part of the narrative for the construction of the building. In the "propaganda film" of 1936, the key figures, chairman of the building committee Sverre Iversen and architect Arne Eide, present the building's history from idea to realisation.¹¹ (Fig.2) Here the construction is portrayed around the labours as the main characters of the labour movement. Examining the brick emphasises the close relationship between the chosen facade material and the cultural and social profile the builders wanted to portray from the construction. The archive reveals that the building committee discussed different producers, where material quality and expression were measured against price, production methods, and the location of the industry. Suddenly, when narratives like these emerge, a brick is not just a brick; that specific brick has significance for the narrative about Folketeateret, which, when highlighted, becomes part of the building's history – the building's identity. The possible findings emerging when isolating a focus on fragments (and elements) can make them valuable in themselves and not only as part of a composition. They become culturally significant and essential to preserve – whether as components in Folketeateret (or any other building) or being located elsewhere. Alternatively,

¹¹ The film called "Folketeaterets historie 1919-1936" was initially named "the propaganda film" by Johannes Jensen (the film producer) in letters to the building committee. The film premiered on the inauguration ceremony 2nd April 1935, in the restaurant Stratos on top of Folketeateret. Helle, *En høyborg for kultur og politikk*, 80

because they are components in Folketeateret, the fragments and elements enhance the structure's significance.

In the Folketeateret listing document, fragments and elements are protected as original building components of the original structure. They may be evaluated as having the highest significance for the building's visual expression because of their authenticity. In addition, they have age value – as Alois Riegl labelled authentic historical materials (monuments) bearing visible witness of a foregone time.¹² However, is it only the authentic and original that can be said to have historical significance in a building? Let us take a look at another example from Folketeateret – but first a thought experiment.

¹² Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments", 42-47

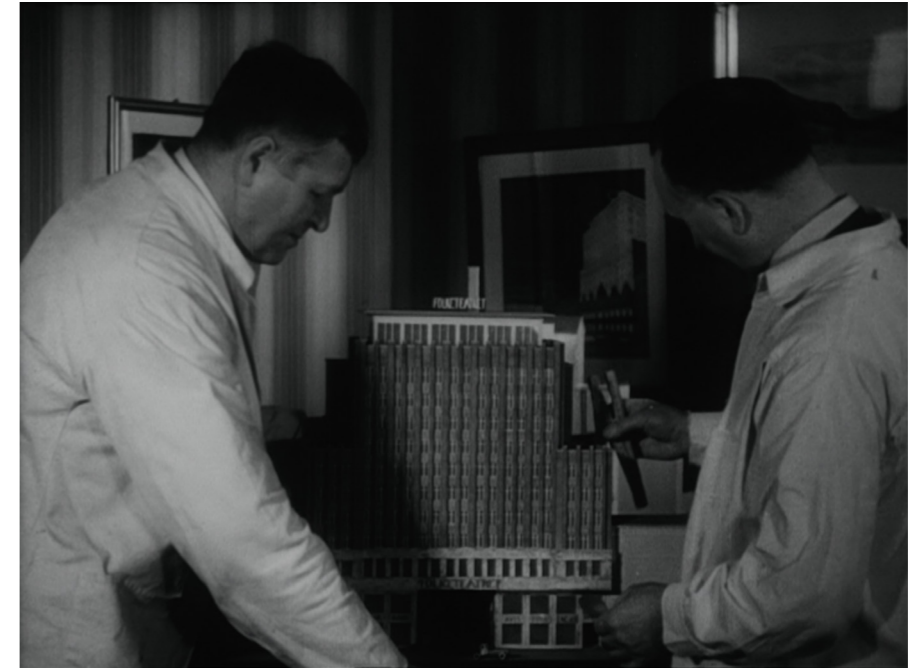
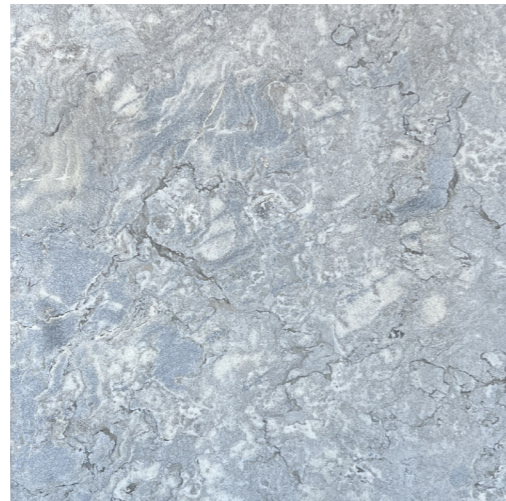


Figure 1

- Top left: Worker at Hovind Teglverk posing for Arbeiderbladet, 1957
- Top right: Brick veneer, Folketeateret
- Bottom left: Labours piling unburned brick in the ring oven, 1953
- Bottom right: Marble tile, Folketeateret

Figure 2

- Top: Architects Morgenstjerne and Eide in the office looking at the model of Folketeateret
- Right: Bricklayer, facade Youngstorget

Snapshots from the film.

Thought experiment

Let us think of a scenario where Folketeateret is subject to restoration. As discussed in the essay “Reinterpretation: A Comment to the Folketeateret Protection Document”, buildings will need maintenance, and components might be removed from the building, or other events can lead to the building being torn down or the parts being dismantled from the structure. So, let us say that the brick and the stone must be removed from the façade. We are now in the future, and the building’s appearance has continuously evolved to an idea of the original design. Some elements are new, such as the windows – now with window bars again – others, such as the window layout on the second floor, have remained. Wear and tear have damaged the facade fragments, so the stakeholders (owners, architects and heritage authorities) are discussing what to do.

Norway is no longer producing brick, and it is too expensive to start new production locally, so the best economical choice is to import them from Germany. In Germany, the clay has a different shade, so replicating the bricks’ colour is impossible, but the architects found a similar shade. In addition, the manufacturer could modify brick sizes so the measurements could be replicated. The owners were also in an excellent economic position, so there was money to have the bricks traditionally hand stamped into moulds. Additionally, a Hoffmann kiln was still operating, so the brick could be burned similarly.

The quarry in Porsgrunn is no longer operating, so the authentic stone, “Gråstripet norsk Labrador”, from the same quarry was impossible to obtain. However, a look at the archive reveals several stone types were discussed, the committee had first decided to use “Nr.30, Norsk Gran Hadeland” from John F. Køltzow. That stone was still being quarried. Even though the stone did not have a similar visual appearance, documentation proved that the building committee and architects had considered it once. The stakeholders could therefore argue for its connection to the building. The heritage authorities approved the application.

In this scenario, the building is protected from the perspective of the structure. Here the specific brick or marble slab is irrelevant. However, it is relevant that the façade is of exposed brick, and the façade stone is natural stone – as it fits into a narrative about architectural styles and the conception of original

visual expression. The premise is that documentation points to the components’ shape, colour, or craftsmanship and that its function can be verified to have once “belonged” to the building. Since the aim was to have a unified visual expression, patching with the original authentic brick and marble was not desirable.

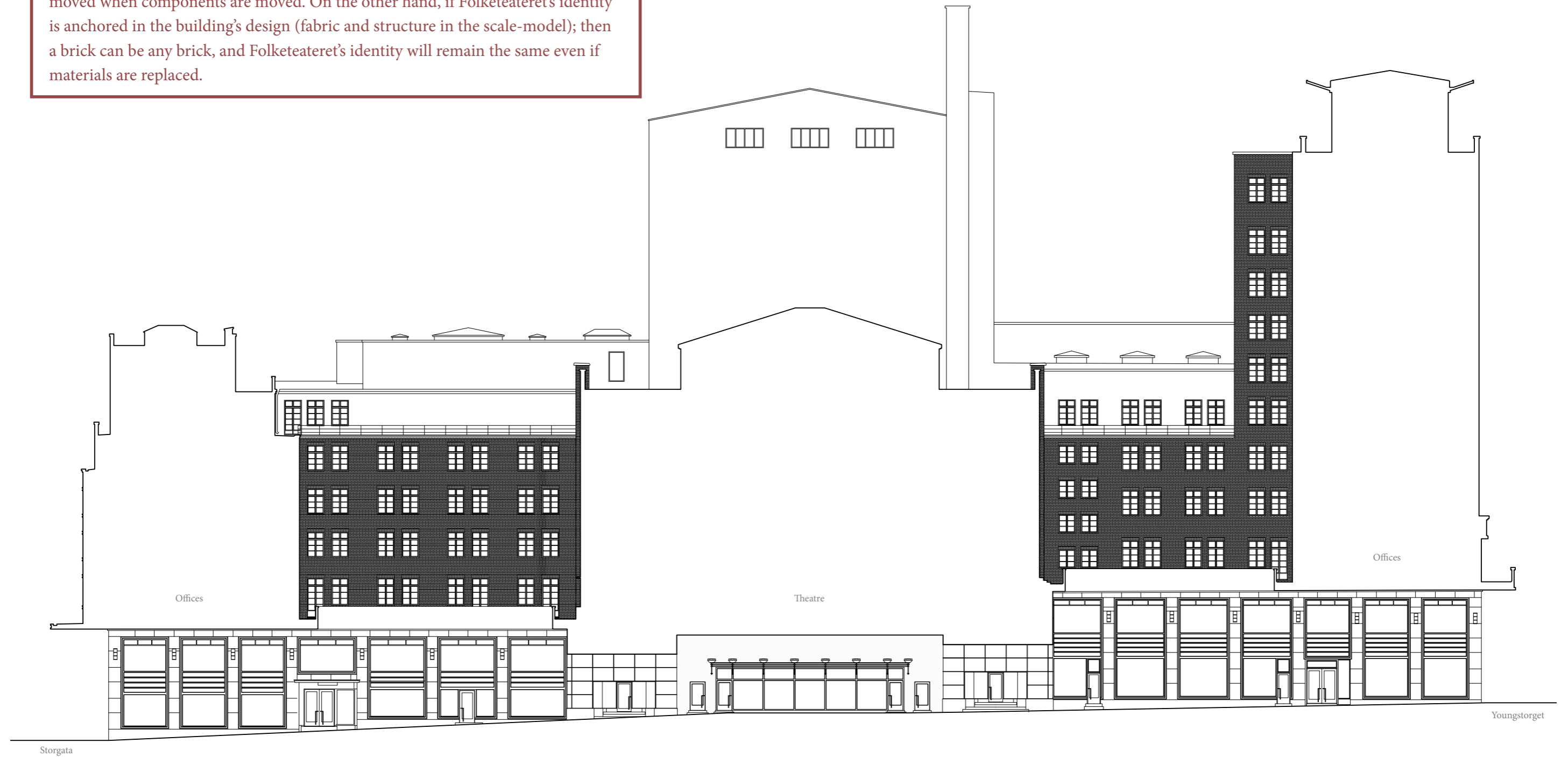
Some pieces could be reused when picking down the worn-down original brick and marble fragments from the façade. The fragments were sold on open-marked as “authentic materials from Folketeateret”. The fragments suddenly became artefacts – their significance was identified from their previous location. (Provenance)

Identifying objects from their origin or last owner is not something unfamiliar. We do it to artefacts, but also in everyday situations pointing to objects with sentimental or status/identity value for the owner. “This vase belonged to my grandmother; she meant a lot to me”, or “The countertop is marble from Carrara”.

There were several interested in the materials from Folketeateret; some ended up in a fireplace and others on a rustic interior wall in a restaurant. A museum also caught interest in the ad and bought one brick. They found it interesting because the brick represented something more than just being a brick. This specific brick was made at one of the largest brick producers in Aker. Therefore, a narrative about industrial history from the 19th to 20th century could be told by exhibiting the brick. Furthermore, as the brick came from Folketeateret, could the stone be a catalysator for the story about the building itself – as one of the monumental buildings in Oslo with cultural, social and political significance. Further elaboration leads to the question of whether a building’s cultural, social, or political significance in historical hindsight is dependent on the presence of authentic fragments and elements from its original construction.

Remains a object fundamentally the same if all components are replaced? The question of authenticity, tied to identity, is from classical literature known as the thought experiment *The Ship of Theseus*. (Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* 23.1) Theseus had travelled around the world on his ship, and along the way, he had gradually changed worn-down materials. When returning from the trip, all materials had been replaced. Is the ship that left the same as the one that returned? As a thought experiment, there is no universally correct answer; it boils down to the beholder’s point of view. Are the materials what make the ship authentic? Then the ship is not

the same. Is the authentic understood as what Theseus continuously sailed on – the ships form? Then the ship remains fundamentally the same even though materials have been replaced. Translating this to Folketeateret, if the fragments and elements are what hold the building's identity, then, in theory, can Folketeateret's identity be moved when components are moved. On the other hand, if Folketeateret's identity is anchored in the building's design (fabric and structure in the scale-model); then a brick can be any brick, and Folketeateret's identity will remain the same even if materials are replaced.



Long-section, facade passage

Historical, after original drawings by Morgenstjerne & Eide, 1935

1:150/A2

Examining one fabric

One of the characteristic fabrics in Folketeateret is “the theatre passage”. The two-storey high space pierced through the central axis of the building complex was, according to the architects Morgenstjerne & Eide, what marked the entrance to the building’s primary function – the theatre.¹³

Led by light fittings between windows, visitors were brought towards the portals marking the transition to the central piazza and the theatre’s entrance. (Fig.3) The extensive use of electric light was considered an artistic building fragment under the term “Lysarkitektur” (Light architecture), “celebrating the electric light and the urban nightlife”.¹⁴

“Light” resonated in the rhetoric from the labour movement. The famous banner from the demonstration in Rjukan in 1919 states, “The revolution enlightening the world”, and the banner was later reused in other labour movement demonstrations.¹⁵ Furthermore, “light” was also a metaphor for the insight and knowledge the labours would get from visiting Folketeateret when speaking of the theatre’s significance to the society:

De skjønner at det er intet som revolusjonerer verden, som river ned all gammel og dum tankegang som den riktige opplysning. Og som et viktig ledd i denne inngår Folketeatret. Det skal være en vekker, en lysspreder. Det skal søke å sette alvorlige og brennende problemer under debatt. Det skal få folk til å tenke.

Article in Arbeiderbladet by Olaf Kullmann, “Folketeateret”, 13.04.1931
Archive: Documents, News, p.305

You know it’s nothing that revolutionizes the world, that tear down all old and stupid way of thinking, as the right education (*enlightenment*). Folketeateret is in this matter important. It will be an awakener, *spreading light*. [The theatre] will search to put serious and burning problems up to debate. *It will make people think*.

¹³ Eide and Morgenstjerne, “Folketeateret”, 66

¹⁴ Simonsen, *Høydepunkter: Arkitektur*

¹⁵ Today the banner is protected by UNESCO, as part of Norway’s documentary heritage.

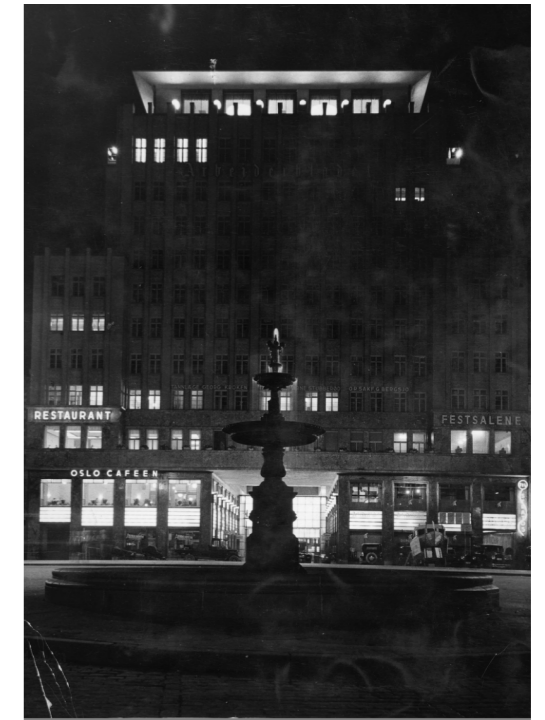


Figure 3

Top left: Banner, Rjukan 1919

Top right: Light fittings leading to the theatre entrance. Photography from Youngstorget.

Bottom: Lithography by Christian von Munthe af Morgenstjerne, ca.1930

The passage measures about 11,5 meters in width and is about 100 meters long, and the height varies from 4,5–8,5 meters. Riksantikvaren describes the passage as a unique urban space, pointing to a new understanding of the street being more than a traffic artery.

Teaterpassasjen som en gate i bygningskomplekset representerer en ny forståelse av det urbane rom, hvor gaten (eller passasjen) ikke bare skulle være en ferdselsåre for å komme fra et sted til et annet, men gaten og byrommet forsterker bygningens urbane betydning. En delvis innvendig handlegate var noe helt nytt, og befestet det moderne og framtidsrettede uttrykket.

The theater passage, as a street in the building complex, represents a new understanding of urban space, where the street (or passage) not only [functioned as] a thoroughfare to get from one place to another, but the street and urban space reinforce the building's urban significance. A partly internal shopping street for something completely new, and reinforced the modern and forward-looking expression.

Riksantikvaren, "Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §15 jm. §22", 7
Archive: Documents, Listing Document, p.110

The passage was a shared street between cars and pedestrians. (Fig.4)

The spatial character of the passage has changed throughout the building's history. It was built as an exterior space functioning as a public street owned by the municipality. Two atriums opened between the office buildings and the theatre, bringing in daylight.

In the 80s, the perception of what the passage was and could be had changed. On each side, the architects Dyrø-Endersen-Grevskott Larsen A/S added two concrete portals with glass façades, and the passage was furnished for pedestrians with flower boxes and benches and repaved with clinker tiles. Vans, delivering goods to the shops could enter and park, but the street was no longer a thoroughfare for cars. The passage was initially still an unacclimatised space with open atriums, but soon after, two steel and glass roofs closed off the atriums. The passage's character and spatial composition were adjusted for different use. Why the stakeholders saw the need to close off the passage is not stated; potentially, it

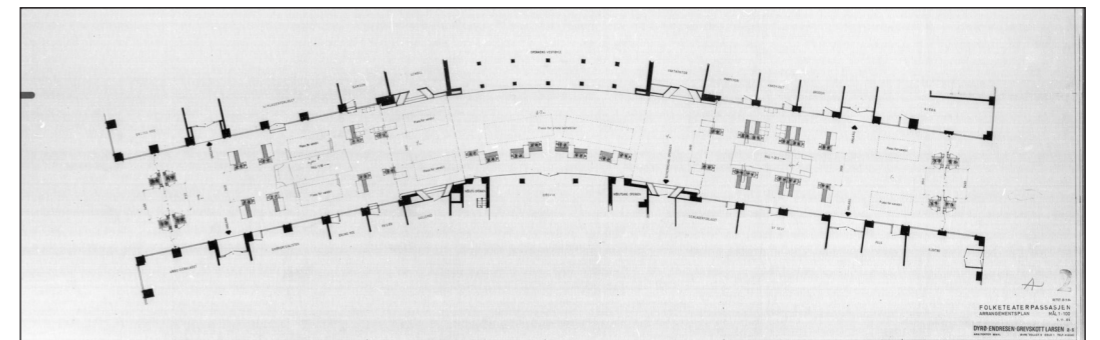


Figure 4

- Top left: Cars and pedestrians sharing the passage.
- Top right: The open atrium.
- Middle: Plan of the closed passage.
- Bottom left: The central square of the passage.
- Bottom right: Roof in the atrium, towards Storgata

could have been the wind, or the cold climate present many months in Norway. Alternatively, shared streets with a free flow of cars and pedestrians were now considered dangerous, changing the perception of how pedestrian streets were designed. Speculative reinterpretations aside, the alteration can be read as the passage's *fabric* (spatial composition of fragments and elements) did not correspond with what the stakeholders wanted the space to be. Therefore change (here addition) was the answer.

In 2005 the sliding doors in the portals were replaced by revolving doors. "The background is unpleasant wind and drafts in the passage, as well as the fact that today's sliding doors work poorly in terms of functionality"

Bakgrunnen er ubehagelig vind og trekk i passasjen samt at dagens skyveporter fungerer dårlig rent funksjonsmessig.

Enerhaugen Arkitektkontor AS, letter to Plan- og bygningsetaten, 04.02.2005
Archive: Documents, Building Applications, p.208

Moreover, the year after, the owners applied again for altering the portals, and this time also the roofs in the atriums. There was discontent in the passage no longer having an open character, and it was, therefore, a desire for lighter constructions:

Siktemålet med ombyggingene er å gi passasjen en mer åpen karakter, og å åpne lysgårdene visuelt slik at de indre fasadene eksponeres igjen. Tiltakene er bergrunnet i misnøye med den lukkede karakteren inngangsveggene i dag gir passasjen, og den visuelle lukkingen av lysgårdene dagens løsning innebærer.

DARK Arkitekter AS, letter to Plan- og bygningsetaten, 20.12.2006
Archive: Documents, Building Applications, p.215

The aim of the renovations is to give the passage a more open character, and to visually open the atriums so that the inner facades are exposed again. The measures are based on dissatisfaction with the enclosing character the entrance walls currently give the passage, and the visual closure of the light yards that the current solution entails.

The new glass portals were to be tilted – to prevent the reflection from appearing as an impenetrable wall. The dense roof construction was to appear lighter with fewer beams, re-establishing visual contact with the atrium facades. The portals were replaced, but the roofs remained the same. The perception of the passage as

a spatial composition had again changed, and the stakeholders wanted through design-alterations to highlight the spatial qualities that were hidden with the alterations in the 80s.

Nevertheless, the portals and roofs were not proposed to be removed. This signifies the desire to maintain the passage as a climatized space and points to its spatial composition as it responds to the present use value – where the passage serves as an indoor public space with the interior of an exterior space. Providing "outdoor" servings all year round in the central string of seating areas belonging to the passage's restaurants and cafés, and a climatized waiting area in the square in front of the theatre entrance or for those using the passage as a short-cut between Storgata and Youngstorget.

In the listing document, there is a desire from the heritage authorities to have the theatre passage reopened:

Tilbakeføring til opprinnelig vindustype på alle fasader, samt å åpne teaterpassasjen, slik at passasjen igjen får sin opprinnelige funksjon som en del av byrommet, vil være av særlig verdi for bygningens arkitektoniske uttrykk.

Riksantikvaren, "Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §15 jm. §22", 5
Archive: Documents, Listing Document, p.108

Reverting to the original window type on all facades, as well as opening up the theater passage so that the passage once again has its original function as part of the urban space, will be of particular value for the building's architectural expression.

Aiming to bring the building towards an idea of what the building once was – its *ideal form* as the building was designed by the architects Morgenstjerne & Eide.¹⁶ The statement disregards a reflection for why the passage was closed in the first place. In the essay, "Reinterpretation: A Comment to the Listing Document", a quote from Dana Arnold's points to architecture being more than mere aesthetics: "an essential instrument of the development and dissemination of (...) ideas [that] continuous throughout the life of the building"¹⁷ Architecture is in its physicality subject for change. Thus, interpreting the reasons behind alterations is as important as considering a reinterpretation of the original design expression. However, that

¹⁶ 'ideal form', Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, 112-113

¹⁷ Arnold, *Reading Architectural History*, 7

does not mean that design should not respond to the stakeholders' aesthetic goals, for example, the desire to have visual contact with the facades in the atriums or letting in sunlight to the passage, inspired by how one has interpreted the original spatial qualities. Regardless, the short statement of 'reverting' a previous condition without considering why the space was altered in the first place can be questioned. The critique is not to say that heritage authorities only concern with the aesthetic qualities of heritage objects; the various reports on value assessments confirms that.¹⁸ Riksantikvaren has also made an evaluation report, where values are categorised under *knowledge value, experience value, economic value* ("Kunnskapsverdier, opplevelsesverdier, økonomiske verdier").¹⁹ However, an intriguing question arises: Can a building's multifaceted significance, encompassing its complete historical narrative, be encapsulated in a reinterpretation of its original design? In other words, can a building's historical importance, encompassing cultural, social, and symbolic dimensions etc., be effectively represented by 'reverting' to its original appearance? When examining the Folketeateret listing document, it is through this lens that one can comprehend the desire to 'revert' the building to its original aesthetic, considering the description of the building's profound symbolism and its cultural position continuously since inauguration.

Fredningen skal sikre verdier knyttet til opplevelse og dokumentasjon av et stort bygningskompleks som har stått sentralt i hovedstadens og nasjonens kulturelle og politiske liv og begivenheter. Bygningen har en sterk symbol- og dokumentasjonsverdi som monument over arbeiderbevegelsens viktige posisjon i det tyvende århundret, og som kulturhus for allmennheten.

Riksantikvaren, "Vedtak om fredning med hjemmel i lov om kulturminner §15 jfm. §22", 3
Archive: Documents, Listing Document, p.106

The preservation will secure values related to the experience and documentation of a large building complex that has been central to the capital and the nation's cultural and political life and events. The building has a strong symbolic and documentation function as a monument to the important position of the labor movement in the twentieth century, and as a cultural center for the general public.

¹⁸ Myklebust, "Verditenkning i et retrospektiv: En øvelse i forenklingens kunst". States the most influential as Riegl, «The Modern Cult of Monuments» (1903). Important for the Norwegian context: Myklebust, "Verditenkning – en arbeidsmåte i bygningsvern" (1981); Myklebust, "Domkjærka no igjen!" (1984); Bull, *Verneverdi og utvelgelseskriterier*, 1987; Riksantikvaren, *Alle tiders kulturminne*, 2001; Unnerbäck, *Kulturhistorisk vurdering av bebyggelse*, 2002.

¹⁹ Riksantikvaren, *Verdisetting og verdivektning av kulturminner*

The passage's closing was a historical design alteration where the spatial composition was altered in response to the stakeholders' needs, which gave the building new spatial qualities. Spatial qualities embrace more than aesthetics, such as how the space is used or other aspects of experience that respond to senses. Considering later alterations, the motivations behind them and what the alterations wanted to achieve would be essential to discuss in every specific case of change. Not generally dismiss them as weak adaptations.

An interesting anecdote is that the architects proposed inserting glass roofs in the atriums. Meeting reports reveal that architect Morgenstjerne talked to the fire consultant about roofs. Unfortunately, the building committee would not take a stand to the request in the meeting of 1st June 1934. However, the balconies railings were covered in the "simplest" form to accommodate a possible roof construction:

Arkitekt Morgenstjerne meddelte at der var truffet avt med brandchefen om tillatelse til å legge glastak over passagens to luftgårder. Komiteen ønsket ikke på dette tidspunkt å ta standpunkt til spørsmålet om glastak, men imøteså forslag og pris fra arkitektens side. Av hensyn til muligheten for at der blev lagt tak over besluttedes anvendt den enkleste form for dekkning av balkongens rekkverk. Priser forutsattes forelagt neste møte.

Building committee meeting report, 01.06.1934
Archive: Documents, Building Committee Meetings, p.286

Architect Morgenstjerne announced that an agreement had been reached with the fire chief regarding permission to lay a glass roof over the passage's two atriums. At this time, the committee did not want to take a position on the issue of glass ceilings, but accepted the proposal and price from the architect's side. In view of the possibility of a roof being put over, it was decided to use the simplest form of covering for the balcony railings. Prices are expected to be presented at the next meeting.

Sadly, the report from the next committee meeting with updates is missing from the archive, but we know that, in the end, the glass roofs were left out of the

design. Nevertheless, this points to the complexity of architectural projects, where the architects' will to create a design in response to a commission are met with premises, preferences, and coincidences depending on other factors. The narrative about how the architect envisioned a spatial composition, discussed as architectural quality, is, therefore, more complex than an artist's (architect's) vision of an aesthetical composition.

Alternative ways of examining a building can raise other questions about its historical significance. The five-scale model does not point to a universal framework of perspectives, but it can engage in an interest of activating alternative narratives when stakeholders define a building's historical significance and acts on the reinterpretation through alteration.

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Figure 1:

Top left: Worker at Hovind Teglverk posing for Arbeiderbladet, 1957

Archive: Various, *Fragment*, p.272 – C

Arbeiderbladet, photographer, "Helge Jansen. Hovin

Teglverk. Mars 1957", March, 1957. Arbeidernes arkiv og bibliotek,

<http://oslobilder.no/ARB/AAB-120982>

Top right: Brick veneer, Folketeateret

Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.97 – B

Bottom left: Labours piling unburned brick in the ring oven, 1953

Unknown photographer, "Teglverket på Hovin", January, 1953

Arbeidernes arkiv og bibliotek, <http://oslobilder.no/ARB/0023003>

Archive: Various, *Fragment*, p.272 – A

Bottom right: Marble tile, Folketeateret

Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.99 – A

Figure 2:

Jensen, Johannes, director. *Folketeateret historie 1919-1936*. Kommunens filmcentral, 1936. 31:13. The National Library. (Closed access)

Figure 3:

Top left: Banner, Rjukan 1919

Archive: Various, *fabric*, p.328

Løvaas, Oscar, artist, "Revolusjonsfanen fra Rjukan", 1918-1919.

Norwegian Industrial Workers Museum,

https://no.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:Revolusjonsfanen_fra_Rjukan.jpg

Top right: Light fittings leading to the theatre entrance. Photography from Youngstorget.

Archive: Photography, Historical, p.59 – D

Eidem, Olav Lorck, photographer, "Untitled", 1935. Oslo Museum,

<http://oslobilder.no/OMU/OB.F23062>

Bottom: Lithography by Christian von Munthe af Morgenstjerne, ca.1930

Archive: Other mediums, p.318

Morgenstjerne, Christian von Munthe af, artist,

"Folketeaterbygningen", 1930. Lithography. The National Museum,

<https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/samlingen/objekt/NAMT.00149>

Figure 4:

Top left: Cars and pedestrians sharing the passage.

Archive: Photography, Historical, p.73 – A

Unknown photographer, "Biltrafikk i Folketeaterpassasjen",

December, 1962. Arbeidernes arkiv og bibliotek,

<http://oslobilder.no/ARB/0033228>

Top right: The open atrium.

Archive: Photography, Historical, p.73 – D

Middle: Plan of the closed passage.

Archive: Documents, Building Applications, p.194

Bottom left: The central square of the passage.

Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.101 – C

Bottom right: Roof in the atrium, towards Storgata

Archive: Photography, Site visit, p.83 – B

Reflections and acknowledgements

From the outline of the pre-diploma, I started the diploma semester with the aim of exploring or designing an analytical method or perspective to discover, evaluate and understand the broader context of a building's history (through a survey of components) by using Folketeateret on Youngstorget in Oslo as a case study.

I have been interested in analysing the specific history of a building, focusing on narratives emerging when examining historical archives, discoveries during site visits, reading history about historical events and art-historical analysis about the building's visual expression – the written history about Folketeateret's architecture is lacking many examples.

Due to the building being listed, I have studied the preservation field and its theory, observing and trying to formulate an opinion of the practice from the outside perspective. The listing played a central role in the project since the status greatly influences how Folketeateret is analysed and further, dictates future alterations. Due to the short time of the diploma, there are many aspects and voices from the preservation field left out of the project.

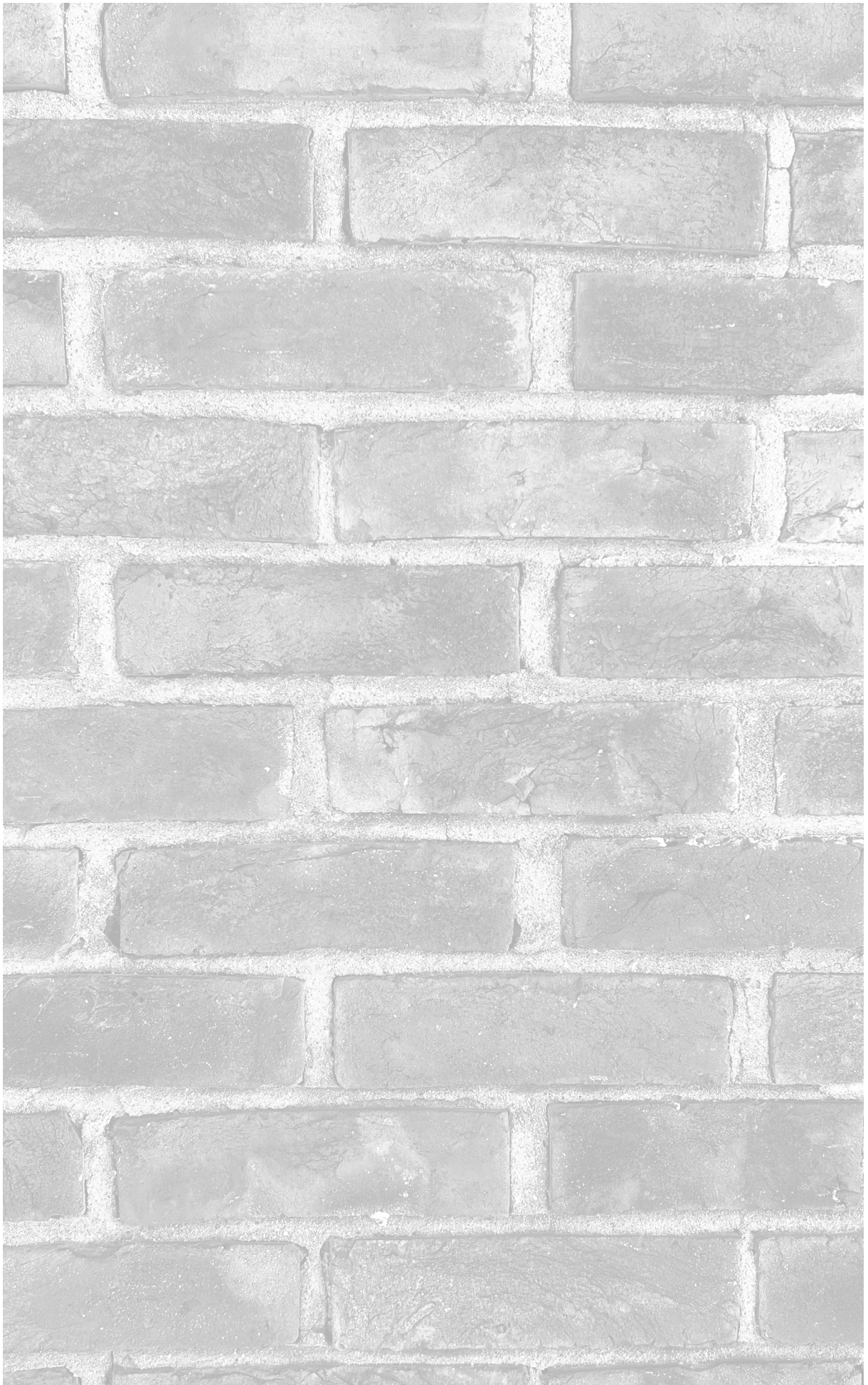
Constructing and surveying an archive has been an essential part of the semester, where the archive and the interpretation of the evidence I have found have led to the outcome of the project, where I wanted to explore and challenge my relation to the field of architecture, by trying to put words to what happens behind the actions or stands taken when designing alterations or formulating an opinion about significance.

In my project, I have not aimed to criticise all aspects of the heritage authorities- and architects' practice in the preservation field. I have wanted to question the focus and phrasing of listing documents. I am not opposed to reintroducing a building's historical appearance – where reinterpretations of historical evidence lead to design solutions. Alterations, whether it concerns cultural heritage buildings or not, should derive from in-depth building analysis, in my opinion. However, I am sceptical when these alterations are labelled with a rhetoric of the alterations being unquestionably reviving a previous condition, when further descriptions are evident in all the deviations that must be taken for the commission to be accomplished.

Looking into alternative perspectives of building examination, a broader discussion about a building's historical significance can elevate components' contribution to a building's value beyond being originals in an aesthetic appearance. Further, a discussion around later alterations will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how a building has responded to different needs and desires. As mentioned, I am not opposed to reintroducing spatial qualities translated from the building's past. However, buildings are more than aesthetics, so discussions around the broad spectre of spatial qualities and aesthetic preference should be present in the listing documents defining a framework or outset for building alterations. Comprehending the entire building's history, not only pointing to the reinterpreted original. Whether or not a building is listed, it cannot be valued as a mere artefact – if intended to be continuously used.

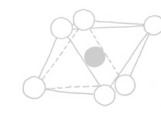
I have reached out to one of the authors of the Folketeateret Listing Document, but unfortunately, I never got a reply. I have further been in contact with Tove Kristiansen, author of the master thesis in art history about Folketeaterbygningen, but she was unfortunately not able to contribute.

I want to thank Mari Lending for her text comments on the essay "Reinterpreting: A Comment to the Listing Document", and further thanks to my supervisors Erik Langdalen, Alena Rieger and Nicholas Coates for their conversations and inputs. Mari and Erik's ongoing project *Provenance Projected* has been an essential inspiration for studying archives and searching for architectural history from new perspectives. Juan Anton Ruiz, thank you for showing me around in Folketeateret, and for sharing valuable source material. Vignir Helgason, thank you for our conversation about Riksantikvaren. Marius, thank you for your text revisions and support. I thank my fellow diploma students for their inspirational conversations and feedback. Finally, I am incredibly grateful to Anne Sofie, Alexandra and Oda – you have been a tremendous support!

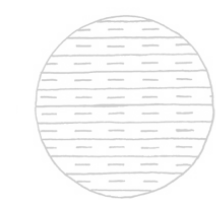




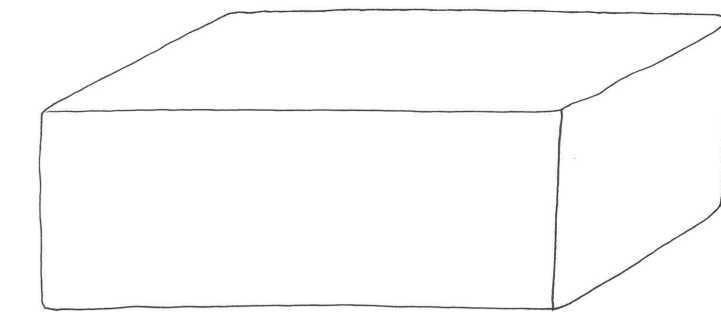
Atoms



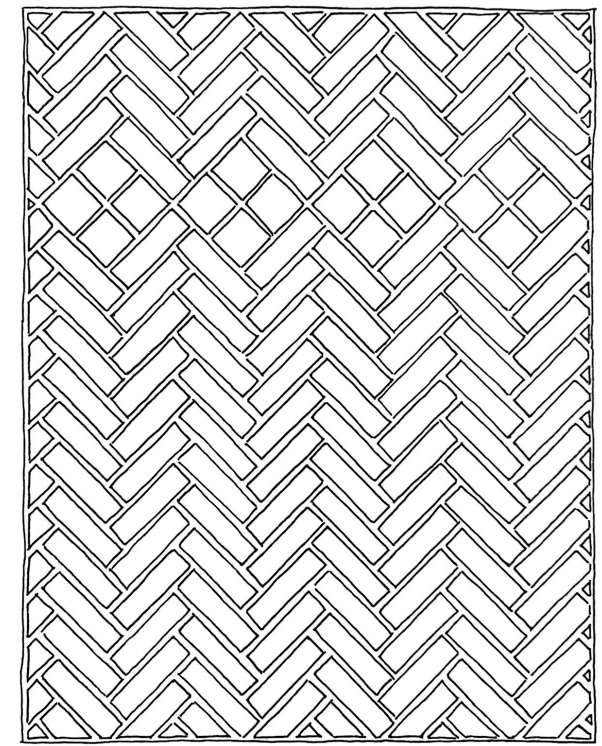
Molecule



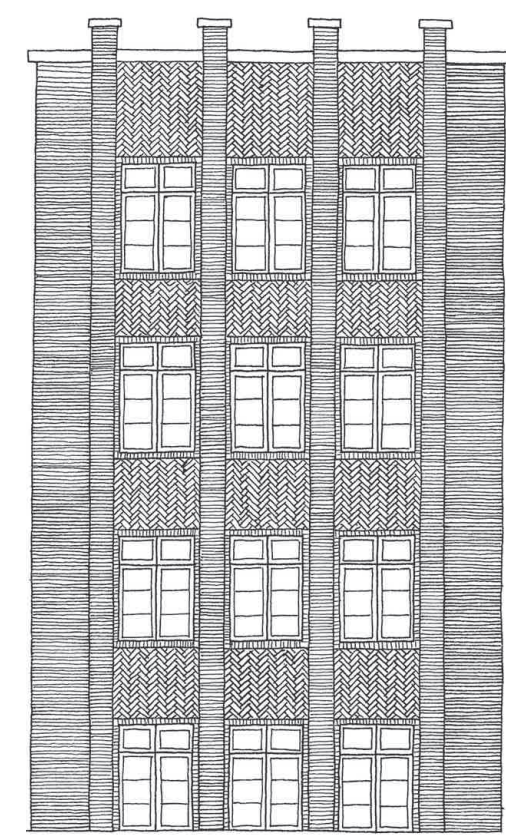
Matter



Fragment



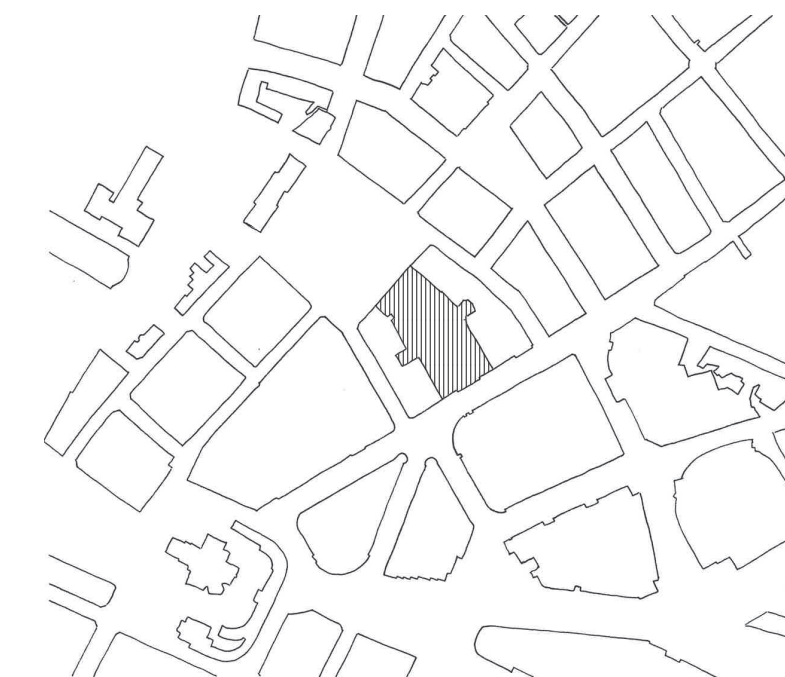
Element



Fabric



Structure



Environment



Regional



National



International

The *five-scale model* divides a building's components into advancing levels of composition, highlighting multiple perspectives for analysing different aspects of a building and its components. The model aims to explore the various narratives associated with an existing building by highlighting alternative entries of building analysis. It sees a building not only as a whole structure but also through its components and how they are composed. The five-scale model is limited to five scales – visually present on-site and in the environment of the building – named fragment, element, fabric, structure, and environment, but the scale could have continued in both directions, zoomed down to matter, molecules, and atoms, and upwards to the regional-, national-, and international context. The five scales evolve as; several fragments can make an element, numerous elements go into fabric, the collection of fabrics makes the structure, and the structure's relation to other buildings is what creates the environment.

A **fragment** refers to the various building materials used to construct a building, including those that are made by a producer and those arranged on site. This scale examines the fragment's material, material quality (durability, tactility, malleability, etc.), craftsmanship and/or dimensions. Furthermore, the scale includes the contextual history of the fragment, both related to the building and its physical context.

An **element** is a combination of fragments that together form building components such as segments of a wall, the roof, a column, the floor slab, a window, a staircase and more. Elements can be composed of multiple materials. The outline of an element is defined in the meeting with other elements. The transition from one element to the next is observed in the change of material and/or a shift from one volume to another. For example, a façade can consist of several geometrical volumes arranged in such a way that creates a shift from the baseline of the façade. The shift can therefore distinguish two elements from each other, even if they are made of the same fragments. Architects and producers alike can design elements, which can be assembled on-site, or in a factory or workshop setting. Furthermore, the scale includes the contextual history of the element, both related to the building and its physical context.

Fabric is the spatial composition of fragments and elements where the architect's act of assembling the different components materializes towards a functional building with an artistic expression or intension. Fabric is the scale where the building's characteristics start to take shape: where configurations of fragments and elements are given directions and rhythm in a geometric composition. The elements become functional: walls, floors, and roofs become structural; windows let in light and give visual contact between inside and outside; stairs connect floors, etc. Fabrics are distinguished from each other by their geometric composition, where different shapes and sizes of elements create a distinct visual arrangement that separates them. Example from Folketeateret: recessed- or protruding volumes.

Structure refers to the complete building and encompasses both its form and function. Fabrics are the entities that in structures are constituents in the formulation of the building's features and characteristics, which can be defined in a typology. Structure points to the overall appearance of the exterior and to the three-dimensional layout of the building. The scale includes the re-interpretation of the architect's holistic vision for the building as a cohesive entirety.

Environment refers to the immediate context in which the building is situated, experienced, and perceived. This includes its relationship with neighbouring structures, streets, squares. The scale considers the location, orientation, and scale, and how they interact with the surrounding district. Additionally, the scale may also examine how the building's inhabited functions and activities relate to the surrounding area.

Five-scale model

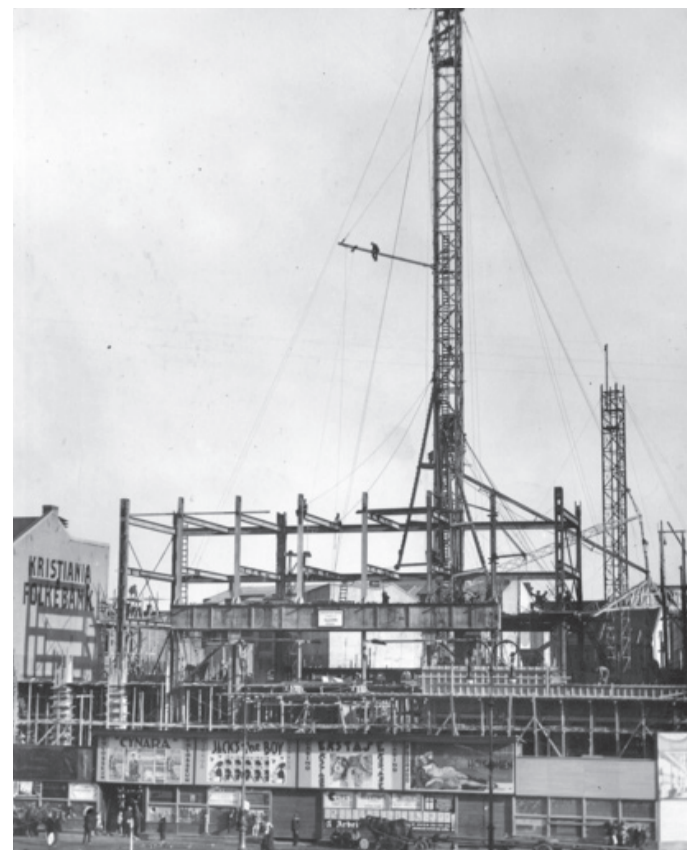


Bazarhallen and Auktionshuset
1890-1900

Youngstorget 2



Bazarhallen and Auktionshuset demolished
1933



Construction of the steel skeleton (Youngstorget 2)
1933



Framework to Youngstorget 2 finished, and construction the theatre's framework
1934



Inauguration 2nd April
1935



Liberation Day WWII
1945



Einar Gerhardsen orates to the crowd on Youngstorget
1957



Right before new windows (3rd-11th floor)
1976



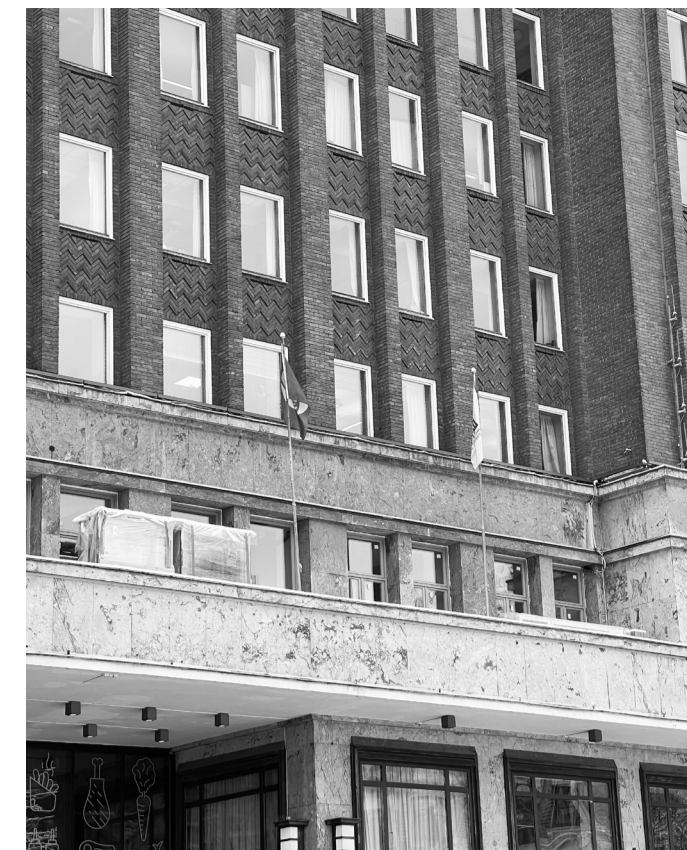
Right before closing of the passage and new windows (2nd floor)
1985



Replaced light-panels in the passage
1991



The facade's commercial profile
2003



New windows third floor
2023

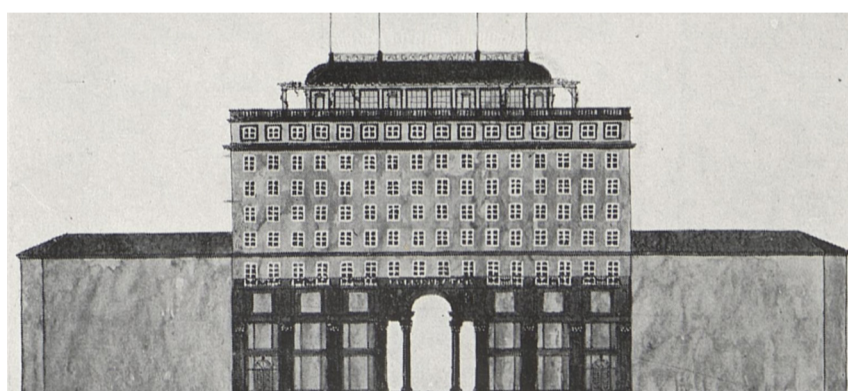
Folketeateret

1919–1926: Finding a site

Folketeateret was established on 9th October 1919. The company aimed to construct a public theatre based on the values of the labourers' movement, which was established on 9th October 1919. Initially, the plan was to locate the new theatre on Ankerstorget, adjacent to Jacob Kirke and Ankerselva, on the plot where Gassverket was situated. This site was an ideal location for the theatre's intended audience - the working class residing on the opposite side of the river.

However, in 1922, the plans were scrapped due to Gassverket's decision to continue their production on the plot. Consequently, a new proposal for Folketeateret was documented in the meeting protocol on 9th May 1923, with the new location set to Hammersborg. Unfortunately, the plans for Hammersborg faced challenges due to the initial regulations designating it as Oslo's central fire station, and ultimately, the case was lost in the autumn of 1925.

On 2nd October 1925, Folketeateret approached the owners of Bazarhallen, who agreed to sell the plot to Folketeateret on 26th March 1926. The public and press were optimistic and thrilled that the plans were finally progressing towards realization.



Storgata 21-23



Auktionshuset
1931



Apotek Løven (Storgata 21)
1930



Demolishing Apotek Løven (Storgata 21)
1933



Exterior, Storgata
1934



Inauguration 2nd April
1935



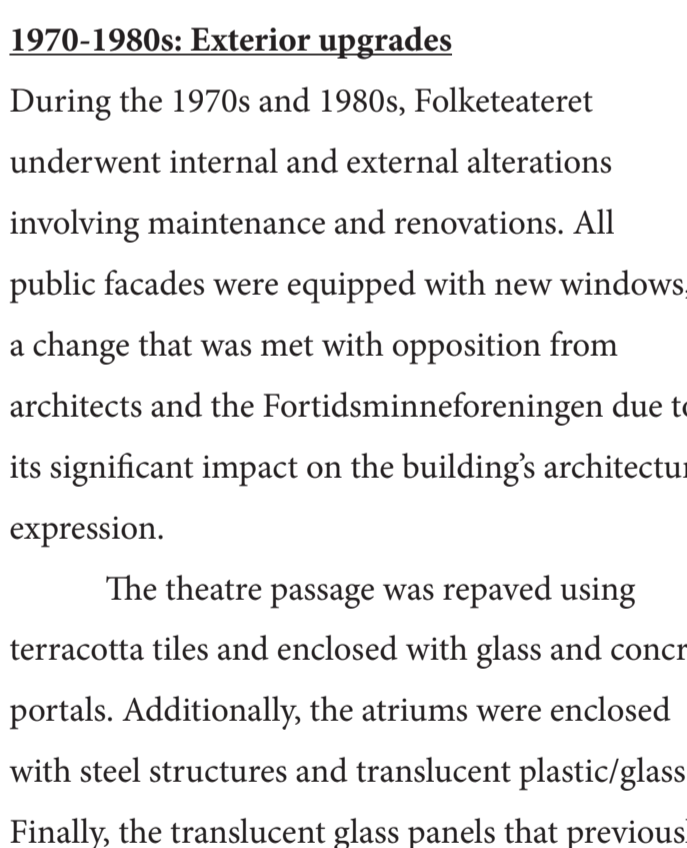
Liberation Day WWII
1945



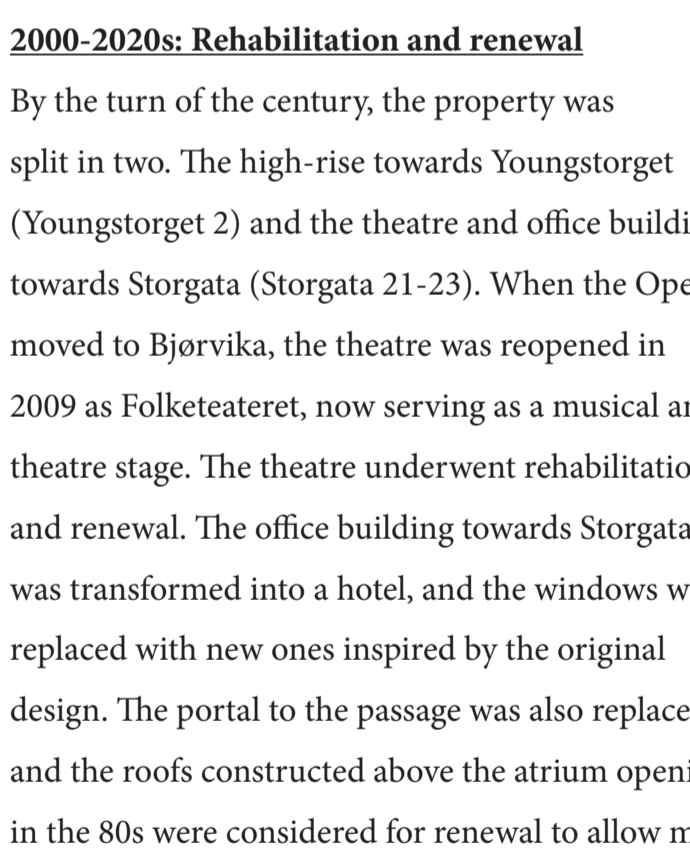
Storgata, one of the main avenues in Oslo
1950



Folketeateret as a commercial centre
1966



Window maintenance
1975



Red panels between windows, portal and single-framed windows
Unknown year (possibly the 90s)



Renewed entrance
Unknown year (after 2006)



Theatre passage with restaurants and art installations
2017

1932–1935: Construction and facade materials

The first step in the construction process was the removal of existing structures. Starting in October 1932, the structures were demolished from Youngstorget towards Storgata. Folketeateret comprises three volumes: an office facing Youngstorget, the central theatre, and another office facing Storgata. The site measures 5000 sqm, with the construction covering ca.4000 sqm: 1100 sqm (Youngstorget), 1600 sqm (theatre), and 1200 sqm (Storgata).

The construction was reinforced with iron poles ranging from 20 to 32 meters long to accommodate the varying size and height of the volumes - balancing the weight. These poles were inserted into pipes, which later were filled with concrete to anchor the structure to the bedrock. The office building facing Youngstorget was erected using an iron skeleton with infills of reinforced concrete. The other two volumes are primarily constructed using reinforced concrete, except for the theatre salon, which is situated above the passage and supported by iron beams measuring about 1 meter height.

The building features seven publicly visible facade materials: hand-stamped brick, Gråstripet Labrador marble, grey mineral plaster, light-coloured plaster, bronze, golden mosaics, and peach-painted concrete. Facing Youngstorget, the first three floors are covered in marble plates, while bricks in running bond and chevron patterns are used from the 3rd to 11th floor. The 12th-floor wall is covered with mineral plaster. The theatre section has bricks in running bond and chevron patterns from the 3rd to 7th floor, with the theatre's 'flies' made of concrete, covered in paint. Facing Storgata, the first two floors are covered with marble plates, while bricks in running bonds are used from the 3rd to 7th floor. The central midsection incorporates bronze from the 3rd to the 5th floor, with plaster applied to parts of the 7th floor. The theatre passage includes marble plates over two floors, with the central section covered in gilded mosaics and the atrium balconies covered in plaster. The window- and door frames on the first two floors were made of bronze, the windows on the 3rd-floor facing Youngstorget, the midsection facing Storgata and the light shafts of iron. The rest was primarily in wood. The passage featured light fittings between the windows and, still today, two light portals of iron and translucent glass define a square in front of the theatre entrance.



Light-fittings on the ground-floor
Unknown year



The theatre passage by night
1938



People in queue for the buying their ration at Erling Moe
1943



Labour Day procession through the theatre passage
1957



Window exhibitions adorned the theatre passage
1957



The theatre passage as public shopping street
1970



Cars driving in the theatre passage
1966



Christmas market arranged by Folketeaterpassagens Vei
1971



Portal to the theatre passage
1985



Current entrance to theatre passage
2017



Theatre passage with restaurants and art installations
2017

1926–1929: Plans moving forward

In the summer of 1926, the board of Folketeateret organized a design competition for the new building. Among 45 proposals, "Teaterpassagen" by Morgenstjerne & Eide and "Prolog" by Petter Daniel Hofflund were awarded the first prize. However, in the following years, Oslo's numerous theatres faced struggles, and there was growing opposition from the political right against building new theatres. Collaboration and sharing the stage with other theatre institutions were dismissed, but the theatres still sought ways to support each other.

To reignite interest in theatre, Oslo Folketeaterforening was established. The foundation purchased tickets for performances at other theatres and sold them at discounted prices to its members. Despite the political opposition, the plans for the theatre persisted, and on 7th June 1929, Morgenstjerne & Eide were appointed to commission the construction of the new public theatre.

1930s: Political turmoil

In the early 1930s, the Norwegian economy was severely impacted by the waves of the Wall Street Crash in 1929. This led to a more potent political opposition between the left and right as they debated ways to overcome the crisis. Arbeiderpartiet (The Norwegian Labour Party) had emerged as the largest party in parliament since the beginning of the century, with significant influence from the labour movement. They aimed to stimulate the economy and keep it running smoothly. On the other end of the political spectrum, there was a rise in opposition from Fedrelandslaget and Quisling, who opposed the labour movement. Hoyre (The Conservative Party) took a more aggressive stance, successfully mobilizing voters in the 1930 election. At this point, there was a strong desire to abandon the plans for Folketeateret, a complex project heavily funded by the municipality, supported by right-wing values, and perceived as the future bastion for the right side, with Arbeiderpartiet renting the office building facing Youngstorget. News reports indicated that expenses had exceeded expectations, prompting the left side to consider shelving the plans due to the economic crisis strongly. In August 1931, the budget for Oslo municipality was approved by the government, which had previously approved the plans and construction of Folketeateret. Furthermore, the conservatives now sought to rescue the shop owners in Bazarhallen, some of them being opposed to leaving. In the 1920s, the conservatives viewed Bazarhallen as a slum that must be cleared out.

1933–1934: Labours

The construction of Folketeateret aimed to support and facilitate industrial labour in Oslo. Both craftsmanship and production were desired to come from the capital. Folketeateret and Oslo Arbeiderkontor reached an arrangement to provide labourers through the latter. However, when it came to the production of building elements, a separate agreement was made with entrepreneur Selmer A/S to have the elements manufactured elsewhere. For instance, window frames in both steel and wood were produced in Larvik and Hokksund. A leap into the archive reveals that these contracts with external businesses sparked anger among labour unions, as carpenters in Oslo faced difficulties finding work in 1933/1934 - when the production of windows took place. Nevertheless, the construction contributed to 150 000 day's work from autumn 1932 to autumn 1934.

1935: Folketeateret

The twelve-storey building, nicknamed "The Skyscraper," was a monumental structure located in the heart of the city. When inaugurated in 1935, the theater couldn't be realized due to financial constraints. As a result, Folketeateret entered into an agreement with Oslo Kinomatografer to rent out the space as a cinema called Verdensteateret. Nevertheless, Folketeateret remained a vibrant and multifunctional building, housing various amenities such as shops, restaurants, an assembly hall, offices, newspapers, a printing office, a cinema, and serving as the government's political headquarters. The building buzzed with constant activity from morning till night.

1935–today: The left-side bastion

The Labour Party moved to a 12-storey building near Youngstorget in 1934 and has occupied several floors since then, except during WWII. It played a crucial role in developing Norwegian politics and was the largest left-wing party in the 20th century. During the "Golden Age" from 1945-1965, they rebuild Norway after the war. Sverre Iversen, a central Labour Party politician, was instrumental in realizing Folketeateret, as chairman of the board and building committee. Due to the building's strong ties to politics, was its completion a political goal and target

Environment and city context

Folketeateret occupies a central axis of a quarter, addressing a street and a square. Storgata serves as a vital public transportation route. It is one of the old thoroughfares, while Youngstorget was first defined in 1846. From being a market square, it has become a central political square associated with the Labour Party and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). The complex includes a passage that cuts through the building's axis, leading to the theatre's entrance in the centre, connecting Storgata and Youngstorget. Once a public street, this passage represents an early example of Oslo's semi-indoor shopping streets, serving both cars and pedestrians.

1950 – 1970s: Folketeateret to Den Norske Opera

On 24th November 1952, the long-awaited Folketeateret, the labour's theatre, finally opened its doors. The architects Christian Morgenstjerne and Arne Eide, who had eagerly anticipated the inauguration of the central heart of the project, remained in charge of the commission. Just days before the curtain dropped, Hilde Ruud reported in Arbeiderbladet that Architect Eide sat quietly in the gallery, "satisfied with his masterpiece, akin to Our Lord on the seventh day." (Arbeiderbladet. "Nå er det like for...: En siste runde i Folketeateret - for dørene åpner sine porter for publikum", 22nd November, 1952, 13)

However, the theatre faced economic difficulties, struggling to attract members to the Folketeateret union. Other theatres also experienced a decline in attendance during that unsatisfactory decade. In 1958, the parliament decided to establish the Norwegian Opera, which subsequently reached an agreement with Folketeateret to utilize their stage permanently. Under the leadership of Kirsten Flagstad, the Opera inaugurated the stage on 16th February 1959. Folketeateret continued with performances within their own theatre and elsewhere, now in collaboration with Det Nye Teater under the name Oslo Nye Teater.

In the 1970s, plans were considered to vertically expand the building by adding extensions to the theatre roof. However, despite the Opera gradually occupying more space over the years, their existing space became too cramped. The theatre's construction could have accommodated an extension, albeit at a considerable cost. The owners of the building, Andelselskapet Folketeaterbygningen, required funding and reassurance regarding the Opera's continued lease. Simultaneously, the Opera's board entertained establishing their new opera house in the Filpstad area and later in Bjørvika. As a result, the proposed extension was never realized. The Opera moved to Bjørvika in 2008.

1970-1980s: Exterior upgrades

During the 1970s and 1980s, Folketeateret underwent internal and external alterations involving maintenance and renovations. All public facades were equipped with new windows, a change that was met with opposition from architects and the Fortidsminneforening due to its significant impact on the building's architectural expression.

The theatre passage was repaved using terracotta tiles and enclosed with glass and concrete portals. Additionally, the atriums were enclosed with steel structures and translucent plastic/glass. Finally, the translucent glass panels that previously adorned the light fittings between the windows on the 1st and 2nd floors were replaced with red panels.

2000-2020s: Rehabilitation and renewal

By the turn of the century, the property was split in two. The high-rise towards Youngstorget (Youngstorget 2) and the theatre and office building towards Storgata (Storgata 21-23). When the Opera moved to Bjørvika, the theatre was reopened in 2009 as Folketeateret, now serving as a musical and theatre stage. The theatre underwent rehabilitation and renewal. The office building towards Storgata was transformed into a hotel, and the windows were replaced with new ones inspired by the original design. The portal to the passage was also replaced, and the roofs constructed above the atrium openings in the 80s were considered for renewal to allow more light, but the alteration was never carried out. In 2023, Byens Tak opened on top of Youngstorget 2 after undergoing rehabilitation.

Sources and references:

- Arbeiderpartiet. "Starten på Arbeiderpartiet". Accessed 21th April, 2023. [Byggekunst nr.17 \(1935\): 63-70 Helle, Egil. *En høyborg for kultur og politikk: Folketeaterbygningen 60 år*. Oslo: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1994](https://www.arbeiderpartiet.no/om/historien-om-arbeiderpartiet/starten-pa-arbeiderpartiet/Eide, Arne. Morgenstjerne, Christian.)

References to archive material and images are found in the booklet *Archive*. Some images are edited to black and white for graphical reasons - they will appear in the original colours in the booklet *Archive*.