

Notes:

1. This was not the first modernist building in Scandinavia, as many believe. Edward Heiberg completed his own house in Denmark in 1924.
2. Lars Backer published the article «Vor holdningsløse arkitektur» [Our spineless architecture] in the Norwegian journal Byggekunst in 1925. One of its key points was, «We want to create an architecture that's in contact with contemporary times, natural for the construction materials we use.» Lars Backer mentioned Tessenow, Poelzig, Garnier and Le Corbusier as his inspirational sources.
3. Christian Norberg-Schulz (1926-2000), Norwegian architectural historian and theoretician of international importance. Among his books: *Intentions in Architecture* (1965), *Meaning in Western Architecture* (1974), *Genus Loci* (1960).
4. Norberg-Schulz, Christian, *The Functionalist Arne Korsmo*, Oslo 1986
5. Dahle, Einar, Bengt Espen Knutsen, Oslo 2009. The book main subject is the son of Knut Knutsen, but a big part of the book deals with the father.
6. Tostrup, Elisabeth, *Norwegian Wood. The Thoughtful Architecture of Wenche Selmer*. New York 2006
7. Grønvold, Ulf, Lund & Slaatto, Oslo 1988
8. Norberg-Schulz, Christian and Postiglione, Gennaro, Sverre Fehn, New York Fjeld, Per Olaf, Sverre Fehn. *The Pattern of Thoughts*. New York 2009
9. Grønvold, Ulf, Arne Henriksen. Oslo 2010
10. Jensen & Skodvin Architects. Oslo 2007
11. Snøhetta (ed), Snøhetta. *Works*, Baden, Switzerland 2009
12. A+U 469
13. A+U 211
14. Frampton, Kenneth and Sand, Bente, Kristin Jarmund, Oslo 2008

Denmark: Tradition and Modernity on the interface between the 19th and 20th century in Danish Architecture

Peter Thule

The Nordic countries are somewhat of a paradox: On one hand they came quite late to industrialization; they are sparsely populated and located on the periphery of Europe. Hence -historically speaking- the Nordic countries can be considered provincial and fairly rural. Nor were they -with the possible exception of Sweden- part of the industrial avant garde with nations like Britain and Germany. On the other hand the Nordic countries are characterized by a series of other conditions normally associated with modernity. According to World Value Studies the Nordic countries score highly on parameters like secularization and self-expression compared with most other countries worldwide.¹

In architecture "the Modern Project" appears to have become manifest through the creation of the welfare state. In this process political establishments allied themselves with the artistic and architectural elite throughout most of the 20th century. Thus a progressive elite culture was diffused through large segments of the population through social housing projects and extensive institutional projects designed by the best architects of the time. During this period the political establishment was open to experiments as long as they were at the disposal of the populace.

Another aspect of this history of the pervasiveness of modern architecture in the Nordic countries lies in the fact that it can be considered the natural development of an already existent building culture rather than a distinct break with the past: The first generation of Nordic functionalists were schooled in the tradition of either Classicism or Arts and Crafts. This meant that many of the properties of these movements were subtly carried over into their formulation of the modern functionalist project. The works of the Nordic Modern movement may have resembled that architecture on which it was modelled, but it was strongly influenced by older traditions and hence perhaps less determined to be avantgarde than for instance the German Neues Bauen movement.

19th century architecture was particularly

significant in formulating the modern project in a Danish context. This was mainly due to the influence of two great Danish personalities: C. F. Hansen (1756-1845) and M.G. Bindesbøll (1800-56). To use a term coined by Danish architect Kay Fisker (1893-1965) the formal principles of 20th century Danish architecture can be almost entirely described through the architecture of Bindesbøll and Hansen. In the following I shall explain how the key principles of 20th century Danish architecture may be traced back to the 19th century.

Bindesbøll's Legacy: The Crystalline Cluster and the Danish House

During the 20th century Danish architecture saw the construction of a range of projects characterized by a combination of pitched roofs and simple architectonic volumes. Frequently built from yellow brick, these buildings have an almost prismatic or crystalline expression where traditional architectural features like gabled roofs and brick walls suddenly appear abstract and unconventional. One of the earliest examples of such a formal principle dates back to the mid-19th century where Michael Gottlieb Bindesbøll, the architect behind the famous Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, designed a mental hospital at Oringe. The hospital buildings are designed with simple yellow-brick walls and gabled red tile roofs. The gabled roofs gradually step up towards the main building whose corners are anchored by grey buttresses. The entire composition is reminiscent of an organic or crystalline form with the same figure repeating within a given pattern.

Projects like Oringe were instrumental in making Bindesbøll a significant source of inspiration for Danish 20th century architects who were generally critical of historicism. Like Kay Fisker they were preoccupied with Bindesbøll's use of simple techniques to create a sober yet artistically valuable architecture.² It was felt by many that Bindesbøll's work foreshadowed functionalism in Denmark.

The general formal principles of Oringe resurfaced in 20th century Danish architecture with P. V. Jensen Klint's (1853-1930) unrealized yet epochal 1907 monument the Crystalline Cluster. Like Oringe 50 years earlier, Klint's monument features a hierarchic composition culminating at the centre and dominated by the figure of the pitched roof. Unlike Oringe however, Klint introduces a dual centre and the gabled roofs are partially

deformed by truncated corners. Klint is more modern than Bindsbøll but his crystal fascination fundamentally stems from the same Romantic origins, now combined with a dash of expressionism. Klint was later given the opportunity to realize what was to be his main work -the Grundtvig Church- from 1913-40. Like Oringe it is executed in yellow brick and features crystalline motifs and buttresses.

Let us now return to Kay Fisker who in his capacity of Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts let his students build a wooden model of Klint's Crystalline Cluster. Fisker also used the crystalline cluster theme when working with his colleagues C. F. Møller (1898-1988) and Poul Stegmann (1888-1944). The unadorned yellow brick walls of their Århus University project from 1931 show clear signs of this inspiration only this time tinged with a functionalist desire for abstraction and featuring a plan inspired by Bauhaus-director Hannes Meyer's (1889-1954) functionalist Bernau school from 1928-30.

Arne Jacobsen's (1902-71) work from the 1940s and 50s also features simple yellow brick walls, abstract detailing and volumetrics determined by the pitch of the roofs such as his Søholm complex from 1950. Correspondingly Jørn Utzon's (1918-2008) work from the 1950s and early '60s was very much characterized by pitched roofs as a recurring element. Utzon's work appears even more crystalline than Jacobsen's and like the Romantic Bindsbøll Utzon was very much inspired by the principles of growth to be found in nature.

Returning once again to the 19th century: Another of Bindsbøll's projects varies the Oringe roof motif further although it presents a less homogenous impression: The 1855 Villa Sollie -highlighted as the first Danish house³- was inspired by traditional Danish farm buildings with their whitewashed walls, thatched roofs and wooden gables. This house reflects an interest in creating an expressive form based on the anonymous and the ordinary, thus producing a heterogeneity that appears almost vernacular. This interest appears to unfold during the 20th century and Viggo Møller Jensen's (1907-2003) 1943 studio houses are a prime example. Here we once again encounter the combination of brickwork, wooden cladding, gabled roofs and variously sized window openings with the cheaply available material eternite constituting the 20th century equivalent of a thatched roof. The studio houses became an important source of inspiration for Danish

architects from the post-war years right up until the 1970s where studios like Vandkunsten (founded 1970) were using affordable materials like wood and eternite to create a composite, "self-built" aesthetic.

Thus the tradition handed down from Bindsbøll indicates a materially homogeneous, compositionally consistent, monumental architecture as well as a more heterogeneous one reminiscent of anonymous, self-built projects. Both feature pitched roofs as a recurring motif which was integrated into Danish modern formal vocabulary right up through the 20th century.

The Legacy of C. F. Hansen: Anonymity and Monumentality

This ability to work with anonymous statements alongside the monumental is also characteristic of C. F. Hansen (1756-1845). Unlike the Beaux-Arts architect Bindsbøll, Hansen consistently subscribed to the classical tradition. Having gone unappreciated for the latter part of the 19th century, he was rediscovered by a number of young architects in the early 20th century. He provided a fine example of an architect who used his methods sparingly and was seen as a way out of the eclectic aesthetics which were dominant at the time. His Church of Our Lady in Copenhagen and its immediate surroundings dating from 1810-26 constitute a unique part of the city where the subtly restrained forms of classicist residential buildings emphasize Hansen's sparse yet effective monumental creations such as the temple front of the church and the nearby City Hall and Courthouse from 1803-16.

Architect and ceramist Carl Petersen (1874-1923) was a significant force behind this rediscovery of C. F. Hansen's work: In 1911 he organized a great exhibition on Hansen. In 1919 he and his colleague Ivar Bentsen (1876-1943) attracted considerable attention with their distinctive competition project for a new residential building by St. Jørgen's Lake in Copenhagen. Although this project was never realized its spartan, classicist detailing owed much to C. F. Hansen's neo-classicism while its enormous size was simultaneously a product of modern industrial culture. All the windows were identical and followed the same rhythm, interrupted only by great barrel-vaulted openings leading into a large octagonal square in the middle of the complex. Here dentil mouldings, balustrades and cassettes in the barrel vaults emphasized the monumentality of the project, contrasting with the more anonymous sections which were

purged of all ornament. This project was an architectonic manifesto reflecting the thinking behind Petersen's 1920 lecture *Contrasts*: "The surfaces and rhythmic subdivisions of a building should calmly lead up to the contrast that is to be found in those decisive places where all is at stake, where ornament or significant reliefs emphasize the essential point in contrast to which the great mass should be the calm before the storm".⁴ This artistic approach was particularly characteristic of C. F. Hansen's Copenhagen works. According to Petersen the effect was optimized by emphasizing the extent of the building; thus a long, horizontal building should not be broken up by such things as conspicuous dormer windows.

Although Petersen only served as professor at the Academy for five years he was to prove enormously significant to the upcoming generation who translated his formal principles into a new functionalist language. One example of the use of these formal principles across different stylistic expressions may be found in Arne Jacobsen's various city hall projects: Thus Søllerød City Hall from 1942 is from a period where Jacobsen was experimenting with fusing modern formal language with monumentality while Rødovre City Hall from 1956 is an expression of his interest in the International Style. Both examples uphold Petersen's principle of emphasizing the extent of the building in order to highlight a limited number of monumental elements even after the disappearance of classicist ornamentation. Thus Danish architecture displays a certain tendency towards long, rhythmically shaped buildings, perhaps this is also because such works fit well into the lightly rolling landscapes and wide open horizons of Denmark.

Distinctively Danish?

Danish Architecture has often been described using concepts like simplicity, functionality and restraint even in the 20th century by writers like Tobias Faber (1915 -), Nils-Ole Lund (1930 -) and Kay Fisker.⁵ These same writers have attributed great significance to climatic, geographical and mental-historical conditions as decisive factors in determining the creation of certain national or regional expressions. However, on examining this discourse in a historical perspective, it soon becomes apparent that it is rooted in 19th century attempts to construct a particular nation identity. In other words it is linked to the particular political and national-romantic proj-

ects which characterized several European countries throughout the 19th century.

We may well ask whether the works mentioned above are in fact restrained, whether they are particularly functional, or merely expressions of particular regional conditions? Certainly Hansen and Bindesbøll were also cosmopolitans and the history of architecture tends to be dominated by a limited number of formal principles, which seem to get stuck for several generations, but which may in fact simply be the random product of influential architectural personae like the two gentlemen mentioned here.

Generally speaking a lot of the projects mentioned -new and old alike- do in fact share certain traits: They are modern yet anchored in tradition. Bindesbøll's psychiatric hospital was an exponent of an entirely new view of mental illness and P. V. Jensen Klint's Crystalline Cluster was innovative even in its references to older building cultures. This also applied to the long residential complex designed by Carl Petersen and Ivar Bentsen, which appears simultaneously retrospectively classicist in its detailing and radically modern in its repetitions. Another trait shared by many of these projects is that they are apparently capable of absorbing the great narrative i.e. of allowing architecture to appear as an extension of nature's own building activity. In this sense the use of repetition and abstraction vis-à-vis a recognizable set of motifs appears to be simply an artistic trick which nevertheless reminds us that in 19th and 20th century architecture the simple can be radical and the avant garde does not necessarily reject tradition.

Notes:

1. World Value Survey by Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, 2000.
2. Knud Millech and Kay Fisker, *Danske arkitekturstrømninger 1850-1950*, Copenhagen 1951, p. 36f.
3. Lisbet Balslev Jørgensen, *Danmarks Arkitektur. Enfamiliehuset*, Copenhagen 1979, p. 42.
4. Carl Petersen, "Modsatninger", in: *Archi-tekten* 1920.
5. Jannie Rosenberg Bendsen, *Enkelhed, mådehold og funktionalitet - en analyse af fremtrædende danske arkitekters udlægninger af dansk arkitektur*, Copenhagen 2009.

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Finland: the south and symbols of enculturation

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To pose the question of the 'south' in relation to Finland raises the often asked question of centre versus periphery or south versus north. There have been those who have attempted to 'essentialize' a division between south and north. One could blame this on von Herder and Goethe at the end of the 18th century; unaware of the French origins of Gothic architecture, they declared it the true German architecture, in opposition to Laugier's French classicism. But even in more recent times Norwegian architecture theorist Christian Norberg Schulz argued that identity has to be understood 'di-critically': the essence of the North is that it is not the South -"the North is a world, scarcely understood, of moods as determined by the light, while the South is the birth of Idea and Form, each entity becoming discrete".

One could also talk of debt and gratitude. This is well illustrated by Alvar Aalto e il Classicismo Nordico (1998) by Paolo Angeletti and Gaia Remiddi. Travelling from Italy to the 'north' in search of the debt, the question arises: "Why is it that it is our northern colleagues and not we who feel united by those communal traits of the classical and Mediterranean traditions?" But their answer comes as gratitude: "If this helps us recuperate an architectonic and urban sensibility so often reflected within our own country, and if this causes us to feel gratitude to Aalto for his efforts in reviving our own heritage, then it should also induce us to search for other equally important meanings of his particular 'classicism'". Here they are suggesting that the classical and the organic are one and the same -what could be termed Vitruvian primitivism.

Classicism as a universal, standard symbol of enculturation is well illustrated by an engraving depicting Finland in Suecia Antiqua et Hodierna, a series of engravings completed in 1661-1703 under the direction of distinguished Swedish soldier-engineer Eric Dahlbergh. The series was instigated by the Swedish crown at a time when Sweden was at the height of its imperialist powers, and depicts the nation's prominent cities and buildings. Only nine of the 353 engravings depict Sweden's largest

'province', Finland. But apart from one medieval castle, no architecture and only one city (Vyborg) were deemed worthy of inclusion. Instead, the emphasis is on coats of arms and views of rural life. Most remarkable is the engraving for "South Finland". It depicts a clearing in a forest for the construction of a typical modest log farmhouse, but in the foreground is a skilled craftsman carving a Corinthian column. The whole series of engravings was viewed through Dahlbergh's architectural ideal of the Roman Baroque, with overlays of motifs of classical mythology and grand distortions, but here the presence of a classical column is used to signify Sweden's colonisation of Finland, bringing enculturation as signified by classical architecture.

In fact, it was not so much architecture as the founding of engineer-designed grid plan towns in Finland -in order to centralise commerce and mark military defence against the threat from neighbouring Russia- that would become the important instrument in the policies of the centralised royal power in a vast and very sparsely inhabited area. Military engineers also had ambitions to build 'ideal cities' based on state-of-the-art French and Dutch fortification treaties. The only one to be carried out in Finland was the radial plan for the new fortress town of Hamina, bordering Russia, by fortification engineer Axel von Löwen in 1723. When the town was ceded to Russia in 1743, similar grand plans were drawn up for new fortress towns in Lovisa and Helsinki but few of the Baroque ideals were realised.

Lacking a professional class of architects, up until the latter part of the 19th century 'building design' in Finland beyond the vernacular tradition was a matter of master builders, foreign pattern books, military engineering or employing foreign architects. The first leading architects in Finland were foreigners, the first being the Italian-born Carlo Bassi, followed by the German Carl-Ludwig Engel. The 'journeyman architect' Engel had arrived a few years after Russia had annexed Finland in 1809, making it a grand duchy within the Russian empire. In 1816 Engel was made state architect with the task of designing the new capital, Helsinki. The result was a St. Petersburg in miniature, designed in the prevailing neoclassical style of the day -in Greek and Roman variations where appropriate.

Dahlbergh's engraving brings to mind a far more famous one, made half a century later by M.A. Laugier, "Allegorical figure of Architecture