

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES (CIVVIH) – ICOMOS
3RD CONFERENCE OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

**LIVING IN WOODEN HERITAGE: REVIVING
CRAFTSMANSHIP**

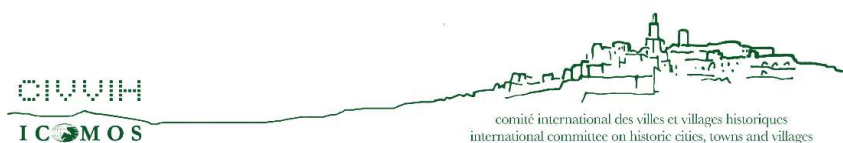
THRIVING WOODEN TOWNS OF NORWAY

Hogne Langset

**STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING HISTORIC
CITIES' RESILIENCE TO DISASTERS**

SEPTEMBER 10-15, 2025

KULDIGA, LATVIA



Background

wood - plentiful resource
common technology



Shifting status – 20th C

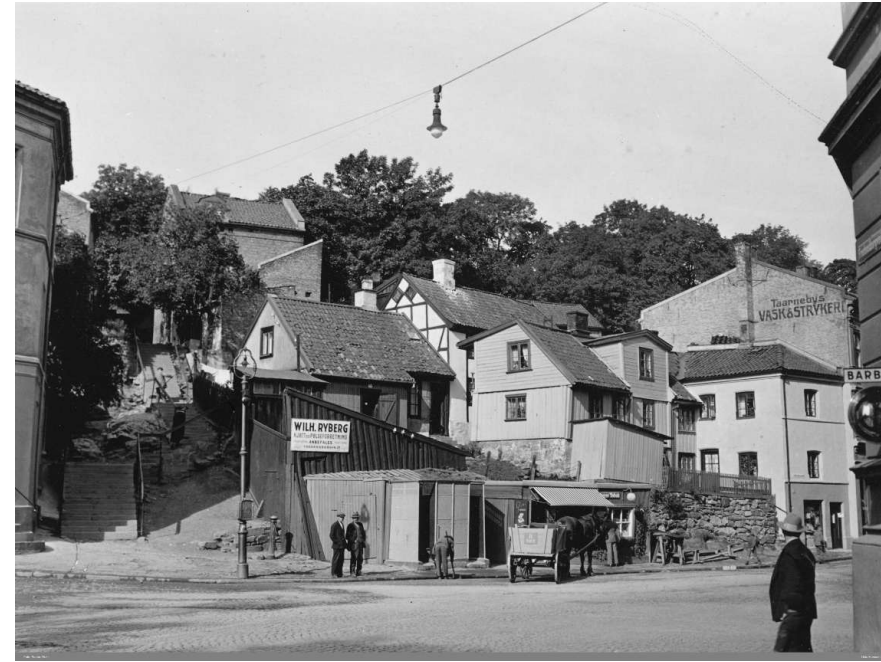
Early 1900s – unfit for dense city due to

- Fire hazard – restrictions in the national building act
- Quality of Constructions and lack of amenities

Turnaround early 1970s

- Public protest - squatters
- Nordic project: «Wooden towns in the Nordic countries» - defined wooden towns and vernacular architecture as:
 - Cultural heritage of national importance
 - A Nordic responsibility to safeguard within an international perspective

(The project inspired a modern network “The Nordic wooden town” that since 2016 has arranged conferences on wooden towns and vernacular architecture)



Wooden World Heritage



Urnes stave church - WHS 1978



Bryggen, Bergen - WHS 1978



Røros, mining town – WHS 1980

Target issues in later years

- Fire protection
- Traditional crafts & materials in maintenance
- Upgrades including
 - Climate adaption
 - Energy efficiency
- Adaptive reuse
- New adaptive architecture and city development
- Legal protection
- Funding



Fire protection

Norway: More than 200 tight wooden clusters of high cultural heritage value

A national program since ca. 2010 is aimed to help owners and municipalities secure all clusters with

- Plans for fire prevention and fire response
- Installed common fire detection and alarm systems
- Installed common sprinkler system or similar enhanced system



Traditional crafts & materials – strengthen competence

The International Course on Wood Conservation Technology - ICCROM, RA and NTNU

Regional building conservation centers

Initiated as a cooperation between conservation agencies, museums, crafts institutions and NGOs

- Advice and information material to owners on maintenance, repairs, energy efficiency upgrades and climate adaption
- Training courses for owners on simple maintenance and repairs
- Training courses for professionals on traditional crafts and materials

Regional and local cultural heritage management offices

- Advice and information material on maintenance, repairs and upgrades

Universities and research institutes

- Tests on performance of traditional constructions and materials compared to modern standards



Upgrades and adaptive reuse

- Light and flexible constructions
- Low heights and other deviations from current regulations are challenging when converted to new functions



New adaptive architecture

With respect for

- Local character
- Local setting

Can strengthen social or economic sustainability



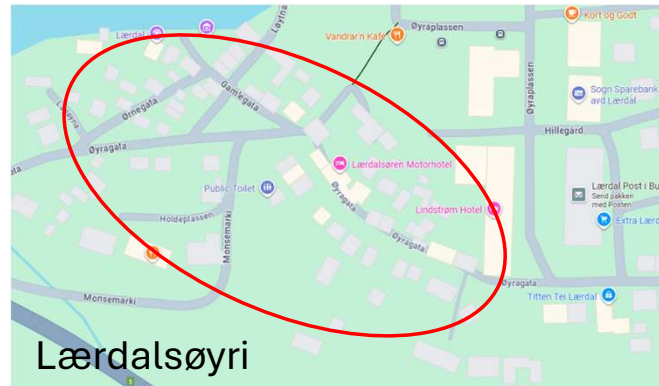
Economic sustainability and city development

Distance to

- Public transportation hub
 - Centers for commerce, culture, service, education, health or other
- is important for the vitality of multipurpose clusters

In bigger cities the low, dense historic built fabric is under pressure for further densification

Self ownership is a positive factor for social sustainability and community resilience.



Legal protection

- Cultural heritage act
- Planning and building act

Mainly a municipal task

A big backlog

Local awareness, pride and sense of community are more important factors for preservation and resilience.



Funding

National grants

- Restoration of National monuments
- Fire protection of wooden clusters

The national cultural heritage fund

- Grants for private owners – restorations, upgrading, utilizing heritage

Regional and municipal grants





Thank you!