

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



SEPTEMBER 10-15, 2025
KULDIGA, LATVIA



CIVVIH
ICOMOS

comité international des villes et villages historiques
international committee on historic cities, towns and villages

Background

wood - plentiful resource
common technology



Shifting status – 20th C

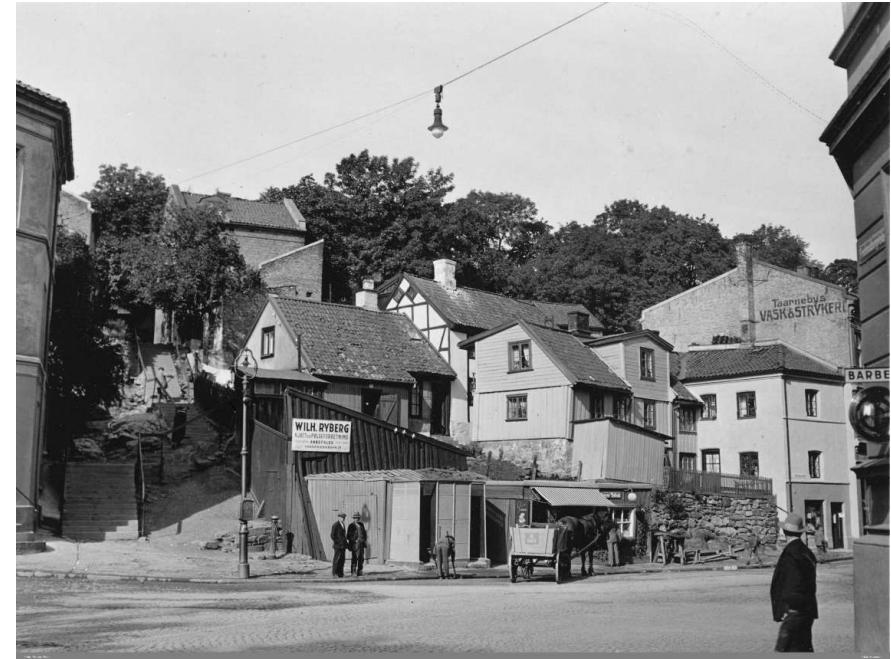
Early 1900s – unfit for dense city due to

- 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



Urnæs 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



A photograph of a snowy street at night. In the foreground, a large, red-painted wooden building with a dark, gabled roof stands on a hill. The building has several windows with white frames. In front of the building, a small, bare tree is covered in snow. A black wrought-iron fence runs along the base of the building. To the right, a yellow-painted wooden building is visible, with its windows glowing from within. The street is covered in snow, and a street lamp is visible on the right side. The sky is dark, and the overall atmosphere is quiet and cold.

Thank you!