

As part of the ICOMOS Advisory Committee Symposium held 26-31 October 2010, some of the International Scientific Committees held individual events throughout Tuesday 26 October. The International Committee on Vernacular Architecture (CIAV) partnered with the RIAI and a presentation was made by Mr Marc de Caraffe, from Canada, President of the CIAV, accompanied by Norwegian architect, Gisle Jakhelln, who spoke on the architect's role in CIAV.

Why become a member of ICOMOS?

Presentation for the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland - RIAI

October 26, 2010

Dublin, Ireland

Summary

Gisle Jakhelln, former President of ICOMOS Norway – Architects' Role in CIAV

The presentation included illustrations of examples of his work and the vernacular architecture in Northern Norway, and highlighted the importance of involvement in ICOMOS and CIAV, the International Committee on Vernacular Architecture, in particular.

Background

I live and work in Northern Norway, in Bodø, a coastal town of c. 50,000 inhabitants, north of the arctic circle, not far from the Lofoten Islands. I am partner in the architectural office BOARCH arkitekter a.s, which I started in 1971 together with two more architects. We are now 13 persons in the office of which seven are architects. We do all kinds of jobs from single family houses to large apartment units, cultural buildings, industry, commercial buildings, terminal buildings, hospital and health care buildings as well as planning.

I have taken a special interest in historic buildings all these years.

Learning from history

For me it started with the small scale traditional houses in Northern Norway, the *nordlandshus*. A modest building, 1 ½ or 2 stories, 5 m wide. A timber building of log structure and post structures together. The grouping of the buildings was important, and varied in the different parts of the countryside.

From the history of vernacular architecture the architect of to-day can learn important elements to his daily job:

- Energy conservation.
- Understanding of climate, working with the climate, to benefit for the microclimate around the house.
- Prevailing winds – cooling effects.
- Lay-out of settlement.
- Lay-out of the building i.e. location of the different types of rooms according to whether the rooms needed heating or not.

Rehabilitation works on these buildings must be based on the understanding of the structure and the scale of the building. New and additional elements have to follow the grammar of the old building. This applies to the small living houses as well as to the larger buildings, as for the fishing industry. In the small coastal villages in the Lofoten Islands the scale of the settlements has to be kept. This is advanced architectural work and has to be done with utmost care and knowledge.

Having studied the old timber post constructions in Northern Norway, as well as these constructions in the countries bordering the North Sea, I designed the reconstruction of the largest building from the Viking Age ever found, 82 m long and nine m wide, in the Lofoten Islands. The final design was developed in discussions with scholars in other fields such as archaeologists, geologists, chemists, building engineers and timber men, as well as architects.

Coming to a conclusion or recommendation for a work is very difficult if fighting with the problems alone. It gives so much more understanding to analyze the problems with another or more persons. These persons must have the necessary qualification on the theme for discussion, to be able to appreciate the conclusion.

Forum

We need a forum of persons with knowledge in our fields of work – and not only limited to architects!

In Norway we have the oldest freestanding organization in Europe (1844) for saving our heritage: *Fortidsminneforeningen*, The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments. This is a society where everybody can be a member, not only professionals. I am a member and vice president of the Nordland County branch. However, the professional discussion here is limited.

So – when I found ICOMOS I found professionals with whom I could discuss my daily challenges/problems, and particularly the scientific committee CIAV, the vernacular group. When meeting we do site visits, have presentation of challenges, strong discussions – and develop the understanding of the tasks.

It is worth while being a member of ICOMOS and the scientific committee CIAV!

Bodö, Norway
Gisle Jakhelln



Bodö harbour.



Hamnøy in the Lofoten Islands. Buildings for the fishing industry. Rehabilitation and new building in the traditional way of designing. Architect: BOARCH arkitekter a.s/Gisle Jakhelln



Espolin Gallery, Kabelvaag, Lofoten Islands. Museum/gallery for the artist Kaare Espolin Johnson, architect BOARCH arkitekter a.s./Gisle Jakhelln



Traditional *nordlandshus* 18th century and 20th century, Fleinvaer near Bodö.



Saure farm, Steigen. Refurbishing a traditional farm building. Architect BOARCH arkitekter a.s./Gisle Jakhelln



Post construction, *saltenstavlina*, with a *nordlandsbåt*. Rognan.



The chieftain longhouse at Borg, Lofoten Islands. Architect BOARCH arkitekter a.s./Gisle Jakhelln



CIAV seminar 2010 excursion, Finnskogen, Kongsvinger, Norway.