



## **The impact of urban planning and governance reform on the historic built environment and intangible cultural heritage**

### **The historic urban landscape**

### **PICH Case study 3 – The urban landscape of Midtbyen, Trondheim**



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## 1. Introduction

This report presents and examines, Midtbyen, the city center of Trondheim in the context of its landscape, as an urban historic landscape. What constitutes Midtbyen as an urban landscape? To what extent is it legible as a historic landscape? How is it perceived and how is it managed?

The project Planning and Governance in Cultural Heritage, PICH, explores the relationship between planning, governance and urban conservation, and how management of cultural heritage influences changes in buildings and urban fabric, and how governance of cultural heritage has influence on various stakeholder's sense of place. The study is conducted through semi-structured interviews of professionals who work within the fields of urban planning and conservation, property development and local politics, field interviews with the general public, a field study of selected building projects from the municipality's building archive, and an analysis of municipal documents and policy on urban planning and management.

This is the last in a series of three case studies. The studies have thematically dealt with Historic Urban Core, Industrial Heritage and, presently, Historic Urban Landscapes.

### The UNESCO definition of the historic urban landscape

According to the UNESCO's Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, the heritage manifests itself on several layers, where the urban landscape is the most general.

The UNESCO's Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape defines this urban heritage by an historic layering of values that have been produced by successive and existing cultures and an accumulation of traditions and experiences, recognized as such in their diversity (UNESCO, 2011).

- Topography and morphology
- Hydrology and natural features
- Built environment (historic and contemporary)
- Open spaces and gardens
- Land use patterns and spatial organisation
- Perceptions and visual relationships - urban structure
- Economical processes
- Intangible dimensions

UNESCO's recommendation states: "Historic urban landscapes undergo dramatic change as a consequence of urban expansion and renewal. Rapid and frequently uncontrolled development has transformed urban areas and their settings, causing fragmentation and deterioration to urban heritage with deep impacts on community values". (Ibid)

UNESCO's definition of the historic urban landscape will provide structure for the case study, modified to adapt to the research questions of the PICH project which thematically deals with cultural heritage in relation to planning, governance and place identity.

## 2. The case study – historic urban landscape of Trondheim city centre

The selected case for the study of historic urban landscapes is the city center of Trondheim. The historic urban landscape is not very strongly recognized as an urban heritage. Originally the urban heritage was connected with important building monuments in the city structure and not the structure in itself, with streets, places, open spaces, parks and natural features.

Emphasis will be placed on the historic urban landscape with its natural features, such as the natural topography, the urban morphology and the river and the fjord. The urban landscape also includes the built environment, both the historic and the contemporary. Trondheim is well known for its wooden built environment with traces back to the Middle Age. In newer time more and more of the traditional wooden houses are replaced by comprehensive architecture in brick, concrete and steel, making a more heterogeneous typology with variations in scale, volume and heights. The historic urban landscape also comprises the urban fabric with its open spaces, gardens and parks and how it is perceived, both the tangible and intangible dimensions.

### Natural features including topography, morphology and hydrology.

The historic urban landscape of the city center including Midtbyen is developed in interplay with the natural landscape. The historic city settled on the peninsula, surrounded by the river Nidelva to the south and east, and the fjord and the canal to the north. To the west a tiny neck of land connects the peninsula to the mainland. The interaction between the natural landscape and the urban landscape is a prerequisite for the development of the city. The first settlements were established here, the river giving a sheltered harbour and a natural fortress. The topography is characterised by the peninsula, situated in a valley surrounded by green hills. To the west the green hills of Byåsen and Bymarka and the lower hills to the east give a distinct expression of the urban settlement in the floor of a green / blue bowl. To the south the valley developed by the river opens the view. The significant natural landscape features for the city are the hills that surround the city, the coastal zone, the river and the river valley.



Figure 1: Aerial view of Midtbyen in the north-eastern direction.





*Figure 2: Natural and cultural features of the city center, Midtbyen. The silhouette of the surrounding hills marked with red, the cathedral as focus point, with green. Veileder for byform og arkitektur (2013)*

### The built environment, historic and contemporary

The urban development of Trondheim started in the medieval time and evolved from the bank by the outlet of the river Nidelva, where the river formed a sheltered harbour that gave good conditions for establishing a trading settlement. Warehouses on the river bank and low, one story high houses for residents, livestock, trade and workshop developed along narrow streets to the fields west of the town. This pattern evolved until a tragic and dramatic fire in 1681, almost demolished the whole city. A new city plan was made by the French general Caspar Cicignon in a baroque style and replaced the urban fabric that had grown organic on the peninsula. Broad and open streets should prevent fires to move from one

block to another. The medieval fabric, however, was still visible as a fine meshed net within the new city plan, called “veiter”, giving access to courtyards and backyard buildings.

The buildings from the period before about 1850 consists of residential and outbuildings as fully or partially enclosing a square courtyard. This is one of the most important characteristics of what we like to call "Historic Trondheim". Together with “veitene” this finely-smeared structure contrasts effectively the Cicignon streets with adjacent grand buildings.

These two urban patterns from different times, gave the urban area a distinct expression in the way it includes a medieval and a baroque urban structure / city plan. The integration of the medieval streets and the monumental parade streets in the baroque city plan is still a distinct characteristic of the urban fabric.



*Figure 3: The Medieval urban structure (left) and the Cicignon's baroque city plan (Wright). (Trondheim municipal archives).*

“Veitene” and the courtyards relate together, with respect to character and use, and form the main elements of a cultural environment. “Veitene” have always been important traffic arteries in the city. Until the regulation in 1681, several of “veitene” were central streets. Following Cicignon’s regulation, these streets were maintained and further developed because they were absolutely necessary as access to the inner parts of the big quarters. The leading classes built their palaces on the main streets according to Cicignon’s city plan, while the inside of the quarters accommodated ordinary residents' substantially smaller homes.

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While “veitene” in the western and southern part, outside the down town area of the city, have retained much of their old character and function, “veitene” in the north-eastern part of the city center, during the 20th century, have been reduced in importance as general traffic arteries and to a large extent also as access to properties. Wooden buildings have many places aroused the space for more spacious buildings, and the old courtyards has thus disappeared. The roads in this part of the city have become an area of supply and for garbage cans, ventilation units and the like. Several of them appear today rather shabby and little welcoming to the public.





Figure 4: Section of city map which shows the mixture of urban fabric, the wide streets of the planned city, intersectioned by the narrow “veiter” (left). To the right an example of a narrow “veit” today.

Low, one story buildings were gradually replaced with two story buildings after fires and development of prosperity and building technologies. But until the beginning of the 19th century the city remained a low town of wooden houses, giving the city a clear expression that later was called “The face of Trondheim”. A poet wrote (Uppdal, 1917):

*“Open, low settlement, dominated by the Cathedral’s mighty silhouette with the great perspectives, the narrow “veitene” in contrast, the river canal with warehouses on both sides ... This is the face of Trondheim”*

The identity of the city was in this text explained by the physical structure of the environment, the historic urban landscape. Two fires in 1841 and 1842 left large parts of the city in ashes and led to the ban of the use of wood as the main building material in the city in 1845. But before this legislation was implemented, the citizens managed to reconstruct the city in wood, even more grand than before.



Figure 5. The image of Trondheim: one of the main streets in the historic centre of Trondheim, Nordre gate, in 1878. Wide, straight streets and low, wooden buildings are essential to the historic character of Trondheim’s historic centre. Photo: Schrøder.



The new legislation introduced a new architectural style based on brick, and later concrete and steel that gradually changed the performance of some parts of the city center into a more diverse and complex urban landscape. The new typology opened up for buildings in several stories, new materials and a brand new architectural style. From being a uniform, wooden town in two stories, Midtbyen evolved in to diversity regarding character and identity.

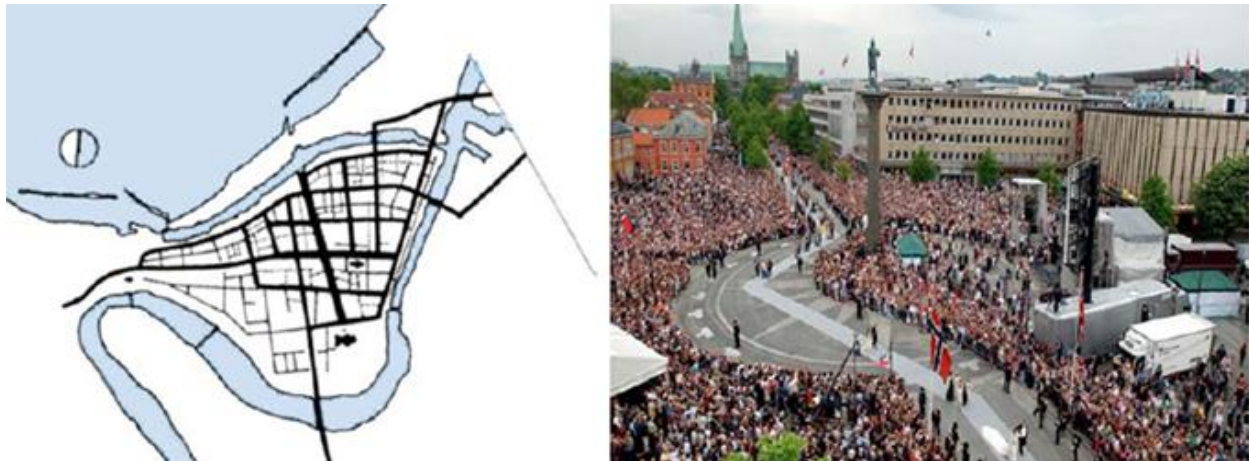
After World War II, the modernisation wave made comprehensive changes in the urban landscape. The two story high wooden buildings were gradually replaced with high rise buildings, first in brick, later in concrete and steel, especially in the north-eastern part of the city center, turning the image of the city from a homogeneous urban character in wood, till a diversity of heights, styles, scales and use of different materials. The homogeneous, wooden town was about to demolish. The historic urban landscape was changing dramatically.

The renewal of Midtbyen according to modernist ideals are seen in single property redevelopments, not in the larger planning scheme (Kirkhusmo, 1997). One challenge of the historic core of Midtbyen is the continued pressure to densify in a largely heterogeneous built fabric, where historic two-story wooden buildings with courtyards are mixed with four and five-story structures. Although there is still a consensus to preserve the historic wooden architecture of the city, the bit by bit demolition of individual historic buildings continues. Not being part of a homogenous built environment makes them weaker candidates for preservation in the face of commercial interests.

The challenges to the historic urban core in Trondheim today are largely concerned with the growing city. More people want to live and work in the town centre, which generates pressure to construct new buildings on limited space. Moreover, historic Trondheim is a low city, so the policy of densifying the city, threatens the city skyline, the character of the streets and urban space. Old two storey properties with courtyards are dwarfed and left in shadow by new tall neighbours. The pressure from commercial actors with space needs which exceed the limits of the historic structures they inhabit, and a general marked-generated demand for housing in the central town area, are threats to the historic fabric of the historic urban core. The city center is considered an attractive location, the historic fabric being part of this attractiveness. The subsequent pressure put on the historic fabric to extend and expand, challenge qualities which constitute an essential part of the attractiveness.

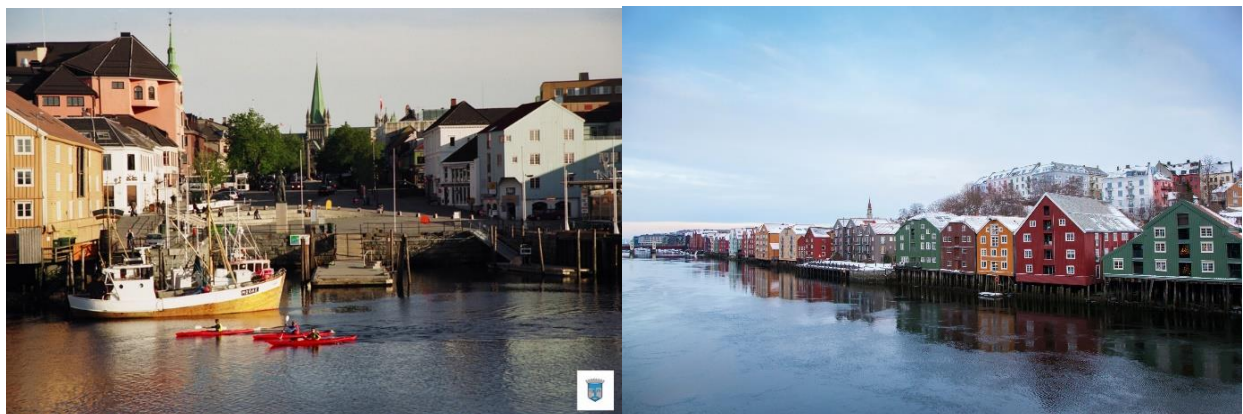
### Urban spaces and spatial organisation

After the fire in 1681 the ancient street of the Middle Ages was replaced by Cicignon's city plan, with wide parade streets in a square structure. Monumental streets and squares replaced the narrow and curvy streets. But within the big quarters, the medieval city continued to live with its narrow courtyards and narrow, curvy streets. The big square, Torvet, is the main urban space and the most important public space for big events.



*Figure 6: Cicignon's city plan with the market square and parade streets (left). Citizens are gathering for a big event on the square, a royal wedding (center).*

Another characteristic feature of the urban landscape is the river Nidelva and the canals surrounding the historic core on the peninsula, establishing attractive urban spaces with its water surface, representing more a visual element than a functional, although there still is some boat traffic on the river.



*Figure 7: The canal outside Ravnkloa with the broad axis of Munkegata which visually connects the cathedral with the island of Munkholmen in the fjord; Nidelva passing the former suburb of Baklandet.*

Another important spatial element connected to the historic urban landscape of the city center, is the green parks, especial Marinen, south of the cathedral Nidarosdomen. This is the most important green space in the city, particular in summer where it also hosts festivals.

The river Nidelva and the canals form important prerequisites for the development of the urban landscape that also encompasses the built environment. The interaction between nature and the urban fabric is evident. The main streets form important connections to the river and the canals. An important feature is "allmenningene," a common place where a main street meets the river. This is important to secure that all the citizens get access to the river, the main traffic artery in earlier days. Today "allmenningene" are important public spaces for stay and pleasure.



*Figure 8: Kongens gate allmenning, common space giving access to the river and a visual connection to the river between the densely placed row of warehouses. Photo: Mette Bye*

### Perceptions and visual relationships - the urban scale

According to the municipal plan of Trondheim, Trondheim should be “...a city where characteristic natural features that surround the city are visible and readable. Important buildings should stand clear and dominate in the cityscape.” (Trondheim kommune, 2013c, Trondheim kommune, 2013a). The city's character, consisting of landscape, landmarks and buildings provide recognisability, identity and orientation. Monumental buildings like the cathedral should dominate in the urban landscape and create the townscape. New buildings should not break important landscape silhouettes or important greenery walls, according to the plan.

The general perception of Trondheim's historic center is a low raised city dominated by monumental buildings like the cathedral. To keep this townscape is a dominant prerequisite for the architectural development of the city center. High raised buildings are not allowed in the historic center. But even though it is a strong pressure on building higher and higher in this area.



*Figure 9: Characteristic features of the cityscape. (Trondheim kommune, 2013c)*

Tall buildings should not dominate the streets, but there are many examples that the upper floors are retracted so that they are not visible from the street level. This made possible to extend the limit of stories in the zoning plan with two or three, establishing a special “Trondheim typology”.





*Figure 10: “The Trondheim type”, with tall buildings filling in the blocks, with preserved two-story historic buildings lining the street, is discussed as an appropriate solution for densifying the city. Photo: DK*

### 3. Planning reform - Evolution of governance and planning for the historic urban landscape

#### The historic urban landscape as a cultural heritage

Seeing the city as a protected object was a new and original thought when the fast urbanization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century threatened the historic structures. Understanding the city as a cultural heritage develops from resistance to the strong urbanization process in the late 1800s, but it was only after the Second World War that the city's modernization project had a clear political agenda, often coupled with social policy goals as the protection of the city's housing resources. The urban environment debate during the post-war era was linked to modernism criticism in architecture and planning and was a reaction to the modernistic urban planning that seems unable to meet basic human needs.

The pre-industrial city with its long traditions had for hundreds of years reconstructed itself. Along with catastrophic fires and war destructions, these cities continued on important elements of the ancient city pattern, created by landscape elements, ancient property structures and the development of the anonymous architecture with its simple townhouses (Choay, 2001). According to John Ruskin these structures primarily represented the historical continuity and personal, local and national identity. The city had to be protected as authentically as possible with all its historical traces of land placement, street art and building patterns down to the authenticity of the individual building, detailing and material use, conveyed by history and as a collective memory (Ruskin, 1880).

The value of the city's morphology was also central to the Austrian architect and town planner Camillo Sitte who sought inspiration in Italian middle age villages to find qualities and attributes that one could bring into modern urban planning (Sitte and Sidenblad, 1982). The Italian architect Aldo Rossi tried to assess the city's space structure, scale, volume and rhythm, and established "the city's grammar" as a prerequisite for the development of the new city (Rossi, 1982).

The importance of the historic cityscape and the urban grammar was in the Norwegian planning debate taken up by Norwegian architects Karl Otto Ellefsen and Dag Tvilde and further developed in the model, Realistic Urban Assessment. This model states that the city's architecture can be understood and established as an objective basis for urban planning and conservation, based on a description of the various elements including historical elements. The model gives a realistic description and interpretation of the city's architecture. *"In this way, we hope that the urban discussion will be characterized by facts and, to a lesser extent, subjective opinions"* (Ellefsen and Tvilde 1991: 3). Several models were developed to describe and assess the historic landscape (Miljøverndepartementet, 1993) (Riksantikvaren, 2005)

## Urban transformations and preservation of the urban landscape: the case of Midtbyen

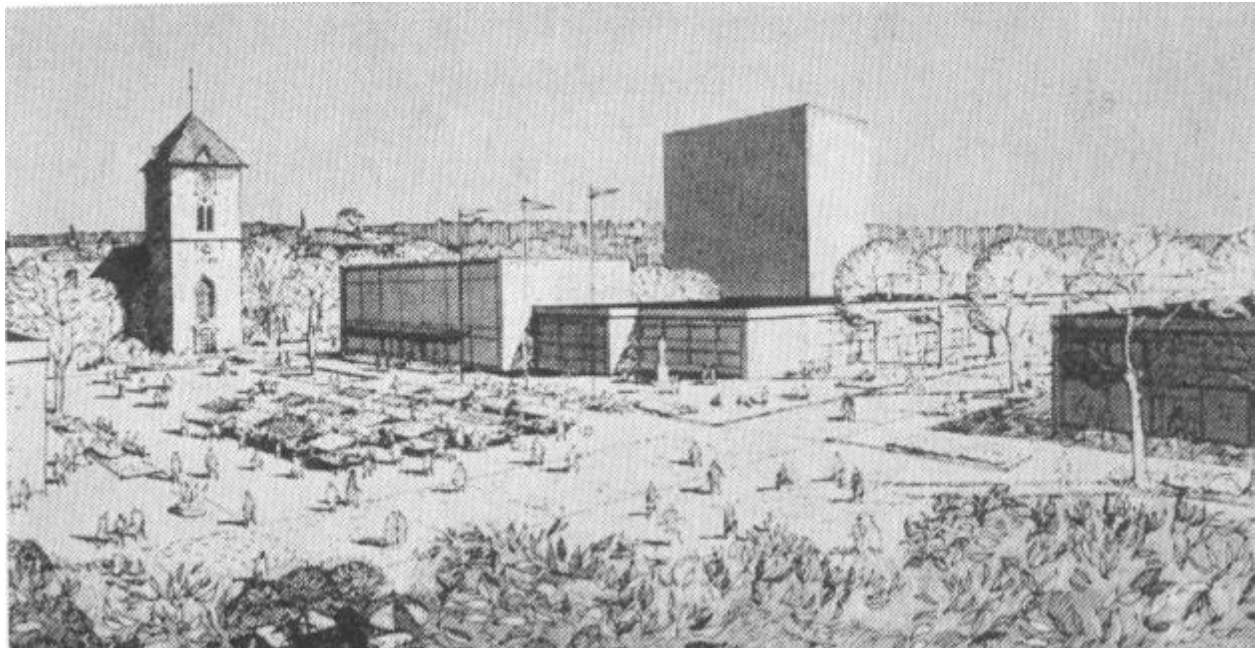
There was widespread consensus during the 1960s that the old wooden quarters of the city needed to be renewed and that the old wooden houses should be replaced by modern buildings that both economically and in terms of functionality were better suited to the demands made by modern society of a city's material structures (Kittang, 2007). As an important measure, Trondheim drew up a municipal masterplan for the city's development and management of land use, presented as a first draft in 1965, which prepared the ground for the demolition of the historical city centre of Trondheim. After over a century of negligent maintenance in combination with widespread renewal brought about by the requirement to build in brick or stone, the old wooden houses were in poor condition, and came under threat from radical urban renewal plans. A large proportion of the old wooden buildings in the city centre was lost during the 1960s. Many impressive wooden mansions from the 1800s were demolished to make room for new office buildings and department stores. In addition, many were destroyed by fire, due to a lack of preventative measures.

The visions of the modern city were based on the conception that the old city would be replaced by a new and modern one which was built according to a new urban structure, where the traditional blocks would be erased and modern transport technology would be introduced. The architectural expression was strict and rational, articulating the city's adaptation to a new economic and technological reality. In the course of the 1960s, the elegant wooden quarters in the commercial city centre were transformed into a fragmented and incoherent urban environment, and the stately wooden mansions with their ground-floor shops were surrounded by modern business premises which stood in stark contrast to the wooden buildings' dimensions, scale and use of building materials.

The dominant mindset in urban planning, that old building structures had to give way to the modern city's need for new urban- and building structures, was met with resistance from several directions. Many people thought it important that the city should not only be a well-functioning centre for trade, but should also cater to cultural and social values. The argument was raised that the city ought to preserve its historical sources, not only because they represented important values in terms of our cultural heritage, but also because they gave the city its distinct identity.

The work on the municipal masterplan and the struggle over the wooden mansions by the central square (*Torvet*) uncovered a need for a new and comprehensive zoning plan for *Midtbyen*, the city centre (Trondheim kommune, 1965). At the start of this planning work, between fifty and sixty different zoning plans for this area were valid, defining building lines and building heights which meant that most of the

existing wooden buildings did not comply with the existing zoning plans, and according to the plans, they were to be replaced.



*Figure 11: An architectural competition in 1960 proposed a dramatic change in the city's urban landscape*

Many of these older plans were characterised by an optimistic belief in development expressed as broad streets, tall buildings, and a complete demolition of historical neighbourhoods. They also created notions of potential development and property value which were not conducive to the preservation of the old wooden settlements. The intentions and the actual realities resulting from this planning work would turn out to be poles apart. The planning work also aimed to preserve the cityscape. The focus moved away from the isolated items of cultural heritage towards the historical wooden neighbourhoods constituting the cityscape. Over a short period of time, conservation approaches to planning had experienced a breakthrough among both the political and the administrative management of the municipality.

### Midtbyplanen – a new zoning plan for the city center.

A new zoning plan for the city centre was initiated (Midtbyplanen), emphasising the city as a social and cultural environment where the historical buildings contributed towards the city's distinctive character (Trondheim kommune, 1979). The intentions of the new plan were articulated as

- Securing a gradual renewal of the buildings,
- Preserving and building on the distinctive character of the city centre, preserving Trondheim's character as a wooden town
- The utilization rate should be kept at the current level
- Increase the housing area in Midtbyen



These aims were to be challenged in a range of cases in Midtbyen's commercial centre. A string of development projects uncovered strong tensions between the wish to preserve the city's distinctive character and the need to renew the city as a modern center for trade and office activities. Midtbyplanen seemed to represent a change in the planning paradigm in the city (Trondheim kommune, 1981).

But even before the plan for the *Midtbyen* city centre was approved, several of its central points were challenged. The buildings made from wood were still to disappear gradually from the commercial city centre in the years to come. A lack of fire safety precautions led to many fires, and the many reconstruction projects were to represent breaks with the city's structure and building pattern. New building projects were based on an international style which was far from the wooden city of Trondheim's paneled architecture, and whose volume and scale went beyond the framework of the existing wooden city.



Figure 12: The Midtbyplan (1981). Trondheim municipal archives.

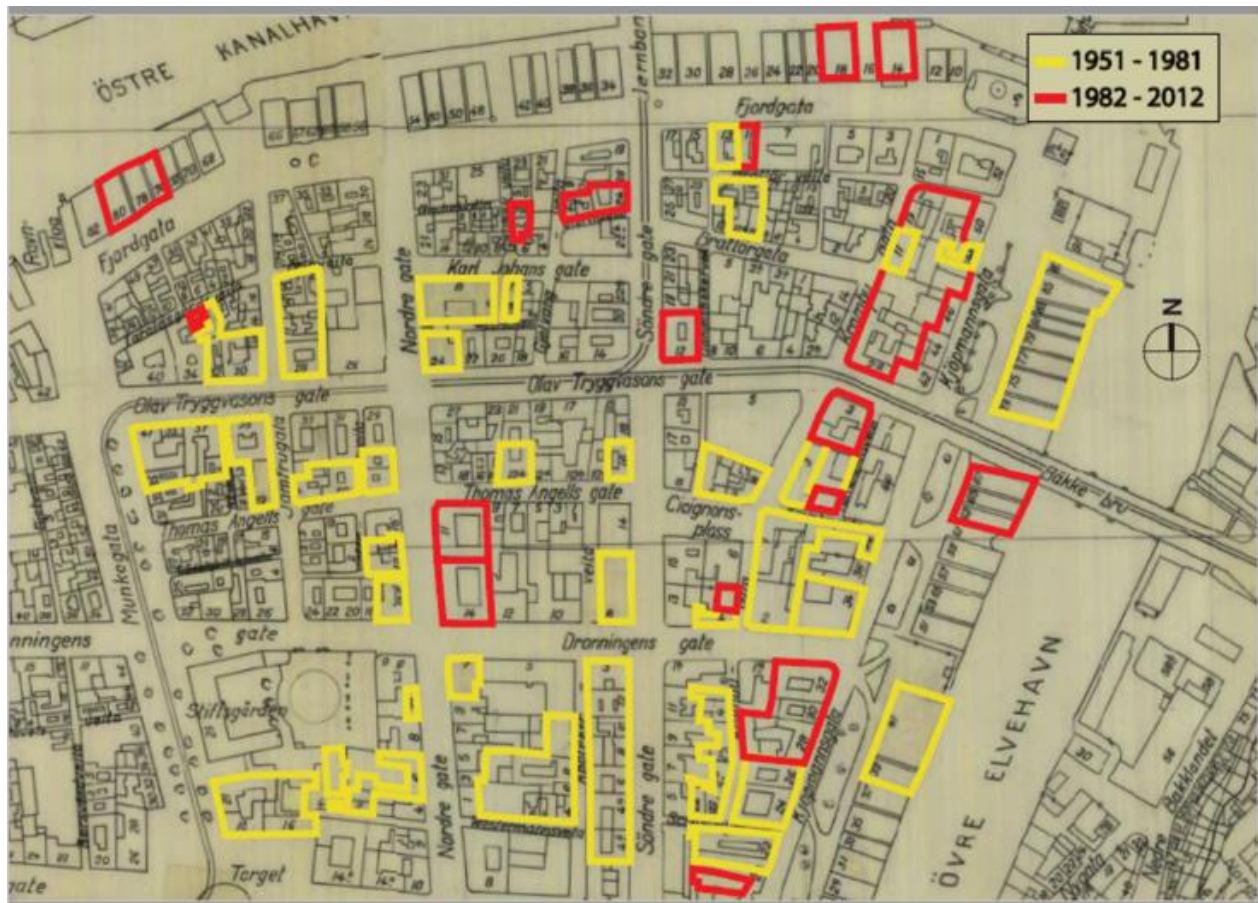


Figure 13: Map showing the loss of buildings through fire and demolition in the northeastern section of Midtbyen. Buildings lost between 1951 and 1981 marked in yellow, and buildings lost between 1982 and 2012 marked with red. With the approval of the Midtbyen plan in 1981, the loss of historic was halved.

## 4. Evolution of policy - planning and governance for the historic urban landscape 1945-2006

### The planning system

The planning system in Norway follows the three governing levels.

1. National legislation, with governmental policy and guidelines.
2. Regional plans and decision making
3. Local plans and local decision making, local guidelines

The designation of listing buildings and environments of considered of national heritage value are made on the national level, and managed on national and regional level. The designation and management of other tangible cultural heritage is the responsibility of the local level, with the regional level as advisory body. Statutory protection other than listing is given according to the planning and building act in local



plans. The highest level of legal protection of built heritage and built environments is listing according to the Cultural Heritage Act (1978), while heritage which is ascribed value on the regional and local levels may be protected with use of the Planning and Buildings Act (1987), §§11 and 12 (previously the Building Act (1965) §§25.6. (Kommunaldepartementet, 1985)

It is interesting to note that already in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in discussions preceding the adoption of the first Norwegian Built Heritage Act, heritage professionals proposed to include landscape in the legislation. The ambition to enable listing of built environments and landscapes, voiced among others by H. Fett, who was to become Norway's first Director for Cultural Heritage, was not included in the Act when it was adopted in 1924. The possibility to list private property on the level of the individual buildings of "historic and artistic value", was what was possible to achieve at the time.

With the Building Act of 1965 it became possible to grant legal protection to buildings and built environments on a local level on the authority of the municipal level. From the 1970s many of the historic built environments in Norway, predominantly in the cities and towns, were designated as conservation areas according to §25.6 of the 1965 act. With the new Planning and Building Act of 2009, the conservation area paragraph was replaced by "consideration area" paragraph, both on zoning plan ("reguleringsplan") and on municipal plan level.

On the national level conservation of landscape is dealt with in several governmental policy documents. Historic urban landscapes would not qualify for protection under legislation to protect nature (the Nature Protection Act of 1965, replaced by the Natural Diversity Act (2009), which is primarily aimed at protecting areas of nature in its undisturbed form, a category which automatically includes scenic natural landscapes. Cultural historic landscapes may fall in under the protective measures of the law where there is a close connection to a natural site, examples include historic agricultural landscapes like areas with mountain summer farms as buffer zones to the parks.

A paragraph on protection of cultural environments was included in a revision of the Cultural Heritage Act (1978) in 2002 (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 1978). So far, a dozen or so such environments have been listed across the country. Urban historic environments are included on the list as are settlements where only the landscape remains, none on the scale which may be defined as a historic urban landscape, which might be said to address the broader sensibilities of a cultural environment. Norway ratified the European Landscape convention in 2001.

## 5. Evolution of policy 2006-2016

In Trondheim, developing projects in Midtbyen have challenged the zoning plan of Midtbyen from 1981 and its original intentions, during the first decade of the millennium increasingly so. Building heights for new projects, and demolition of historic buildings (outside of the designated conservation areas) have been recurring themes. As an attempt to bring the Midtbyen zoning plan up to date and to avoid the elaborate and potentially risky process of making a new zoning plan for Midtbyen, the municipality of Trondheim presented a document with guidelines to the management of the fabric of Midtbyen (Trondheim kommune, 2013c). The aim of the guidelines was to give greater predictability to builders by putting in print principles for densification. The intent was to establish more predictable processes for property development, in the face of the negotiation practice for development plans which had evolved



during the late 1980s and 1990s. One of the stated intentions in the guidelines was to safeguard and develop the character of Trondheim as a wooden town. The document was politically endorsed. It treated relevant themes and established significant principles, but due to its advisory nature (and maybe lack of use or lack of knowledge of its existence) it has not had the desired effect.

In The Municipal area plan 2012-2024 Midtbyen with areas with cultural heritage and cultural landscapes is regulated as zones requiring special considerations (Trondheim kommune, 2013a). A report produced by the planning office in 2015 on selected urban space in the center of the city emphasizes the strong connection between the architectural heritage, the urban space and the interplay between these to constitute the image of the city as an intangible cultural heritage and the important of collaboration in making good and livable urban spaces (Trondheim kommune, 2015).

In 2017 the Building Council requested a revision of the plan to facilitate a more efficient land use, and the normative building height of four stories to be assessed (Trondheim kommune, 2017b) *"The purpose of the plan for city centre development is to provide a new strategic framework for the development of Trondheim's city centre in the long term. The purpose of the zoning plan for the north-eastern section of Midtbyen is to reconsider parts of the legal planning framework which is the basis of the city center's development, for example area use, functions, heights and conservation."* Whether this means that the cultural heritage protection policy will be weakened, is too early to say.

Tabell 1: Development of cultural heritage policy related to the historic urban landscape in Trondheim

	<b>1945-2006</b>	<b>2007-2016</b>
Pivotal events that influenced change	1945-Modern transport technology (automobilism, bus), Modernist architecture ideals, Modernist building technology and materials. 1970s-Movement for urban conservation. Preservation of the wooden city. Preservation of the cityscape (city plan and layout, building heights)	Re-introduction of wood as a major building material
Policy themes National & regional (non-local) Local (municipality, Local authority)	Transport Modernist urban renewal Post-modern urban renewal Conservation	Densification
Regulation: national, local	1965 Master plan for Trondheim 1945-1981: series of local zoning plans to renew blocks in the city centre Midtbyen (< 50 plans) 1981 Area plan for the city centre Midtbyplanen	2014 Municipal area plan
Incentives (including financial)	1997 City jubilee	

## 6. Legal and policy framework 2016 and beyond

### Policy themes and general goals

On the national level, the Directorate for cultural heritage presented an *Urban Strategy* in 2017, a document with principles and recommendations for the management of urban historic environments. The document emphasises the socio-economic benefits of cultural heritage, use as a significant tool for preservation, and goes far in suggesting that on the broader scale, visual management is the way to go to maintain the consensus to preserve which has been dominant the past 30 years (Riksantikvaren, 2017). The strategy is designed to accommodate or counter the following trends:

- City growth
- Densification
- Transformation
- New infrastructure – roads, railway
- Trade- and commerce leaks (suburban establishments, online shopping)
- De-gentrification
- Gentrification

As prerequisites for its approach to preservation, strategy refers to the following documents: the European year for architectural preservation (1975) and the Amsterdam Declaration with its emphasis on dealing with urban *environments* and focus on heritage, use and development, the Granada Convention (1985) and Washington Charter which put forward cultural heritage as an asset, and the European Landscape Convention (2004) and UNESCO's Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes (2011) for the perspective on the city as constituting an environment and landscape, i.e. more than a series of individual buildings of heritage interest. The stated objectives of the strategy document as pinpointed by the Directorate for cultural heritage are:

- Treating historic cities as a whole, not as objects which are assessed individually and unrelated to its context
- Strengthen conservation and preserve existing qualities in significant historical environments
- Strengthen value for society and the consideration for preservation
- Heritage for use
- Strengthen the role and significance of cultural heritage in “the green change”

The strategy presents itself as holding a new approach to managing urban heritage, representing a shift from object to context, from preservation to use, and from considering heritage as holding intrinsic value to emphasising its value for society as a whole as an asset for use, ecology, quality of urban space, driver for tourism and attractivity etc. In reality, the document describes the de facto practice of heritage management since the 1980's, negotiating solutions, managing change, deliberating use; however, with the new pressure on especially historic urban cores and heritage in cities, this approach needs to be affirmed and incorporated in governance, and anchored with all stakeholders.

## Regulation - plans and strategies

On the regional and local level, zoning plans, guidelines and strategies comprise the tools for managing Midtbyen in its landscape context today. *Midtbyen zoning plan* (1981) with guidelines (2013), the *Municipal area plan* (2012-14), the city's strategy documents for *High-rise buildings* (2007, 2013), Trondheim's *Policy for architecture and urban form* (2013) define the hegemonic acknowledged characteristics and values of the Midtbyen landscape. Although frequently challenged, and not necessarily specifically referred to (as documents), these are the plans and policies relevant to the current debate on the urban development, and represent the values which all new zoning plans and building projects are measured up against, and discussed in relation to.

Midtbyen is on the Directorate for cultural heritage list of Urban Heritage of National Interest. Relevant to this case study is the special mention of the baroque town plan, and the wharf buildings. The description is presently being altered to include the low historic buildings and courtyard structure of the blocks in Midtbyen mixed in with taller turn of the century brick and mortar structures, the combination described as part of Midtbyen's defining characteristics (Riksantikvaren, 2015).

The municipal area plan of Trondheim (2012-14) has designated the Midtbyen peninsula a "consideration zone" for cultural heritage (Trondheim kommune, 2013a). This does not add but rather acknowledges the Midtbyen's intentions to preserve the overall historic character and buildings of Midtbyen in general. It provides rules for process, and recommendations for treatment.

*Guidelines for planning and building in Midtbyen* (2013) were presented by the municipal planning office as a tool to bring the 1981 plan up to date (Trondheim kommune, 2013d). The guidelines do not specify heights or form, but rather set down a set of principles on how to manage an existing historic environment, with special attention on how to fit new buildings regarding. Rather than specifying or setting a fixed general limit to building heights, the guidelines state that:

"The max height of new buildings should not exceed today's silhouette. (...) New buildings inside the courtyards should not be significantly taller than the buildings lining the street."

The guidelines lay down that that in the north-eastern section of Midtbyen slightly taller buildings can be considered than in the rest of Midtbyen (which has larger areas dominated by two-storey buildings), however: "...within the scale that the lower buildings represent." The following main features of Trondheim cityscape and special qualities and features are put forward as significant to consider and preserve:

- The silhouette of the cityscape of Midtbyen, and the cathedral Nidarosdomen as the dominant feature in the landscape.
- The urban pattern with special mention of Cicignon's 1681 city plan and its street grid, urban spaces and vistas, and the medieval street pattern of "veier"
- Building environments and urban spaces of historic significance, which demonstrate the evolution of the city over the centuries.
- Trondheim's historic wooden built heritage
- The image of the street with the impact of new structures

Trondheim's *Policy for architecture and urban form* is an additional management tool for Trondheim's urban form and landscape (Trondheim kommune, 2013c). The municipality has written two strategy-



documents for high-rise buildings, *Highrises in Trondheim* (2007) (Trondheim kommune, 2007) and *Highrises in Lerkendal, Tempe and Sluppen* (Trondheim kommune, 2017a). The first deals with high-rise buildings in the city in general, the second is a supplement to the area zoning plans for an area south of Trondheim's city centre, with guidelines on how to develop the area for high-rise buildings with consideration for urban form and architectural quality. The zoning plan in question has not been ratified. (Trondheim kommune, 2013c, Trondheim kommune, 2013b):

Trondheim should be a city where the fjord and the river should be experienced from important urban spaces and streets. The view towards the fjord, the river and the contact with the great landscape space is a part of the city's character. Visibility to landmarks or landscapes should help to understand where you are in the city. View from public rooms is therefore a quality that everyone is enjoying and should be established where it is possible. Existing, important viewpoints towards the fjord and the river must be taken care of. This is particularly important from the streets of Cicignon city plan. and will affect the height of new building on Brattøra, which should be placed so that they do not form a contiguous wall against the fjord.

The city council has stated that Trondheim must be a city for activities along the water, with good visual contact, access and possibilities to stay by the water for experiences and recreation. Public spaces along the water must be attractive, of good aesthetic and architectural quality. Trondheim shall be an open city which is not characterized by high-rise buildings. It should not be placed high rise in the landscape-room around the center of the city. The city should have a smooth silhouette, mostly consisting of low housing. High-rise buildings will challenge and change the place identity. The cathedral should be the dominant building and not be challenged by high rises.

## Direct intervention

The municipality has in recent years initiated projects to promote the improved management and use of the city center with attention to heritage and landscape qualities. The project "En Blå tråd" ("A Blue Thread"), administered by the municipal planning office, focuses on the qualities of the river and water in relation to the city, advancing awareness through temporary measures and activities in urban space. The project "Veiter og gårdsrom" ("Alleys and courtyards"), administered by the municipal conservation office, works to advance and activate the medieval street grid and courtyards, raising awareness and encouraging maintenance and activity in the urban space. The municipality also has a small budget and working group to promote, enhance and activate urban space in the city center through temporary measures, administered by the planning office.

## Communication and civic engagement

The regional branch of the Society for the protection of ancient monuments (Fortidsminneforeningen) is a voice in the public debate and the organization which represents heritage interests.

Urban development, including the heritage aspect of the urban fabric and urban landscape, is a recurring theme in public debate, in the regional newspaper *Adresseavisen* and, more recently, on social media.

The municipality have launched a web-magazine *Trondheim 2030* which presents news on urban development, presenting many articles on Midtbyen and the city centre.

## Knowledge – research and studies

Since 2015 the municipality have published the Midtbyen Accounts as a separate illustrated publication, counting inhabitants, work places and trace, as well as listing activities and trends.

## Institutional innovation

In 2014 a new position was established, in a joint venture funded by the municipal planning office and the Society for Trade and Commerce, to coordinate activity and improve communication between commercial actors and the municipality, especially in the field of planning.

## Future trajectory of policy

As a measure to prevent urban sprawl, the municipal area plan (2012-14) put forward a goal for densification in built up areas in general and along transportation hubs in particular (Trondheim kommune, 2013b). Land area in the immediate vicinity of Midtbyen, like the harbour, has been considered to hold a significant potential for densification of urban fabric in the city centre. The Midtbyen peninsula is already rather densely built, and as a large segment of its buildings is of heritage interest the potential for densification here has hitherto been considered limited. There is however a pressure to densify also here, which so far has been primarily market driven. Recent planning initiatives, in response to a fresh analysis of the road system and city transport analysis and the expected growth of the city's population, acknowledge the drive to densify in the city centre, including the Midtbyen peninsula. Both a call for densification on the Midtbyen peninsula and on its surroundings like the harbour, has the potential to challenge the city silhouette and historic urban landscape.

Environmental and city growth challenges have presented themselves with new force in recent years. Meeting the expected growth in the city's population, and curbing carbon emissions are major issues in urban development, and are presently being implemented in municipal planning strategies. For Trondheim, new plans which are currently under way which will likely challenge standing principles and policies. City transport and densification are key factors within this new policy regime, and a change in practice on these issues have with a potential to significantly affect the city's area use, town silhouette and skyline. These issues which are much debated and will be more so in coming years.

## 7. Change in the cultural heritage of the area

The Midtbyen plan of 1981 was a turning point for the development of the city center, where modernist ideas of urban renewal were abandoned in favour of a more adaptive and sensitive approach where the goal was to preserve the historic wooden city, and maintain the city silhouette with the cathedral and church spires as dominant features, and secure visual contact with water and the surrounding landscape.

This chapter will explore change to the historic city centre of Trondheim in its landscape setting after 1981 with an emphasis on the past two decades, with examples which demonstrate different approaches to renewal the existing urban fabric which may be defined as a characteristic Trondheim grammar of urban morphology.

Standing policies and plans define the Midtbyen peninsula as a consideration zone for cultural heritage and define and map its various features such as the baroque street plan, the medieval street grid, specific conservation areas, singular historic buildings, as well as its silhouette and landscape setting (Trondheim kommune, 2013b). In mapping changes to cultural heritage all these features must be taken into consideration. However, since development and renewal and maintaining a functional and vibrant city are also standing policies and aims of both the Midtbyen plan and later policies, changes are also desired and allowed for.

The Midtbyen plan and standing policies are tools of managing change within a historic context. The examples demonstrate various solutions to the intersection of conservation and renewal in a regime of negotiation planning and governance.

The Directorate for cultural heritage defines Trondheim's city center Midtbyen as an area of national interest, highlighting the following characteristics (NB-registeret) (Riksantikvaren, 2015):

Trondheim was a predominantly wooden city for 850 years, from its founding until the building act of 1850 which required more fire-proof materials such as brick and tile or slate thatching. Characteristic of Trondheim's wooden built heritage are two-storey houses lining both major streets and secondary streets within the medieval grid, many intact with utilities buildings surrounding courtyards.

The morphological change of Midtbyen can be broadly defined according to types of building and structures which reflect major development phases in the city's history, types represented in the city fabric today.

Turn of the century buildings in the Jugend Style, which were both commercial and residential, marked a significant break with the urban morphology as it had developed within the baroque town plan of 1681 up until then. As well as occupying larger plots, they created a new skyline, some of these buildings were up to seven stories. Characteristically, an early 20th century jugend-style seven-story building "Munken" on the main square, demolished after a fire and a lower building erected on the plot, in adaptation to and more respectful of the neighbouring 18th century wooden palace Stiftsgården. The turn of the century jugend style buildings can be said to represent the beginning of modernism in Trondheim, abruptly changing the hitherto slowly evolving urban landscape with regards to both scale and morphology.

The ideals of post war functionalist modernism challenged the urban morphology to a larger extent – in theory, proposing a new town plan and complete renewal of both structures and skyline, however in practice the renewal happened on a plot by plot basis, the major or more intervening modernist plans were never implemented, some combatted with conservation considerations. The city has a selection of modernist buildings, the tallest up to eight stories most adhering to the block structure of the 1681 plan and several built with aesthetic requirements in outspoken consideration for the image of the city.

The city peninsula's relation to the fjord and waterline in the north was intercepted by the gradual planned landfill of the new harbour from the 1870, with the new railway line and its bridges establishing a continuous structure dividing off the city from the fjord. New built structures in the harbour like the railway station and packing house were originally not of significant height (2 tall stories), supplementary later structures in the service of the harbour have been modest. Over the past two decades this area has



been developed with new functions, and is today seen as holding great potential for urban renewal and densification.

For Brattøra building heights and formats are marked themes in the discussion on the area's development and future transformation, the arguments ranging from a propositions to allow 20 stories blocks to advice restrain development. The plan for the station is currently under start-up and has spurred discussions on heights, for the sight specifically but also for the urban landscape of Trondheim as a whole.

## Physical change

Changes to the urban landscape of the Trondheim city centre for the purpose of this study relate to the morphological and the visual. Changes to morphology concerns urban pattern, street and property patterns and the layout of buildings, and buildings' footprint, height, form and material. Changes in the visual of the urban landscape relate to changing skyline, vistas and other boundaries.

Aerial views and maps show densification on the Midtbyen peninsula over the past two decades, with a tendency towards a strong development to the north on Brattøra with partly monumental buildings with large footprints, on the peninsula on a more miniscule and less detectable scale.

For the harbour area north of the city centre, where the railway runs along the entire stretch of filled land, connected to the main land west and east with bridges, the past two decades has seen a new urban development comprising office blocks, institutional buildings and hotels. New buildings in Brattøra include Pirsenteret, the central swimming facility Pirbadet, the Clarion Hotel, Rockheim, Miljødirektoratet, PWC, Powerhouse (under construction), Stasjonsbygget (under planning), P-hotels. The area holds some buildings of heritage interest, but is largely defined as a transformation area. New buildings here have large footprints and scale.

Brattøra is defined as a transformation area for urban development, with the proposed relocation of the harbour functions in a long term perspective. The transformation and densification of Brattøra is ongoing.

## Changes in function

The peninsula of Midtbyen has maintained its use as city centre with shopping and commercial activities, cultural institutions and activities, administration, education and residency.

The harbour area of Brattøra has seen a transformation of use, although the railway and harbour functions, industry and workshops are maintained the area is supplemented with office buildings, museum, hotels and public bath. The standing zoning plan does not allow for residential use due to the noise from the railway and goods terminal. In 2003 a new car road connecting the city's western and eastern parts opened, to relieve the city centre of thoroughfare traffic. The completion and opening of the shoreline promenade, planned since the early 1990s and opened in 2015, transformed the shoreline from an inaccessible area for the railway, into a new hub for recreational use (walks, biking, swimming).

## 8. Experiencing the historic urban landscape of Midtbyen – Trondheim’s city centre.

### Citizens sense of place

This chapter looks at citizens of Trondheim’s sense of place of the historic urban landscape. A series of spontaneous focused interviews (Henriksen and Tøndel, 2017) were conducted in and around the area of the crossing main streets Olav Tryggvason’s gate and Søndre gate in Midtbyen, the city centre. The interviews lasted about 10 to 20 minutes and were with men and women aged 18 to 80 years old. Due to practical reasons, affected by the cold Norwegian weather in November and December the majority of interviews were carried out in the cafés of Dromedar in Olav Tryggvassons gate and Café le Frère in Søndre gate, except for a handful in the crossing and in nearby shops. As a result, our participants are mostly white and middle class. We interviewed 31 people in a total of 28 interviews, some in groups of two or more. The interview guide was structured in themes as followed:

- How would the participant describe Trondheim to someone who has never been there and what areas or buildings would they show this person.
- What is the participant’s connection to the area and how did they end up there. At this point participants would draw on a map of their chosen route.
- What are the participant’s perceptions of this area and how would they describe it.
- How does the participant experience the landscape of Trondheim?
- Using illustrations, the participant would reflect on changes in the area and their experience of the cityscape.
- How does the participant imagine the future of Trondheim’s urban landscape, what should be kept, redeveloped, what are the participant’s worries for the future and how would the landscape of Trondheim look ten years from now.

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, then coded using a stepwise-deductive-inductive approach (Tjora, 2007) related to Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The empirical data was analysed thematically looking at tendencies and discourse. As an additional method, we used a map and two architectural drawings of new developments in the city centre to add elements of visibility and to provoke thoughts and feelings about the cityscape and the city’s structural changes. The two architectural drawings were Powerhouse<sup>1</sup> and Midtbykvartalet<sup>2</sup>, Powerhouse being a self-sustainable eco-friendly office building in development, built between the city centre and the fjord, while Midtbykvartalet, a six-floor building planned to be in the backyard of one of the city centre’s wooden quarters, upper floors being retracted from sight of street level. Both drawings address the view of the natural landscape by either closing the view of the fjord from the city centre or constructing buildings higher than the two floor wooden buildings. This method of photo elicitation, using architectural drawings, can be used to break the frame, make use of a phenomenological perception of the space in question and also “evoke deeper elements of human consciousness” (Harper, 2002). It was important to address that architectural drawings would show a static viewpoint, which excludes the possibility of testing and experiencing the built reality, and also draws an idyllic representation of a building that may be experienced differently in

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.powerhouse.no/en/prosjekter/brattorkaia/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.arcarkitekter.no/prosjekter/midtbykvartalet-20cali11/>

real life (Cormack, 2004). Themes reoccurring in the analysis were citizen's perceptions of the natural landscape surrounding the city, the feeling of open landscape and closed landscape, experiences of different architectural styles and the identity of Trondheim.

### Observing Nature from the City

A general idea in the interviews was citizen's access to see the natural landscape surrounding Trondheim. One of the participants expressed that she "feels that wherever you're in the city you're able to see Våttåkammen" (participant 10), a mountain peak at the end of the mountain chain in the west towards the open fjord. Trondheim has mountains surrounding the city from several angles, also at the seaside in the north where the mountains from the other side of the fjord peaks. Addressing these mountains tops on the other side, one of the participants mentioned regarding building Powerhouse that

"[it] takes away some of what makes these kind of places good to be in, such as when we can see the snow [on the mountain tops]. (...) [W]hen you're living in a city, these kind of remarks remind you its winter, right? I like that. I like to see mountains" (participant 8).

Another participant stated also about Powerhouse that when it's built "we won't be able to see the fjord" or "the land on the other side" (participant 16). There also seems to be a coherent argument amongst the citizens that you can see nature wherever you are in the city centre. One participant said that they could "[see] Bymarka just about anywhere from the city central" while also mentioning always seeing the fjord. Arguing that seeing nature surrounding the city makes Trondheim feel less like a big city and more like a "cosy city" with "not too many tall or alienating buildings". She argued this created a "feeling of safety" (participant 23).

Both the natural and built landscape of Trondheim can be used as orientation points when navigating the city, as both buildings and nature often is looked at from a lower angle in the city centre. One participant told the story of one time when she was walking in the city centre with her ten-year-old niece who claimed she would never find her way in this city, being highly impressed by her aunt who knew her way around. The aunt explained that all she needed to do was look up towards the mountains; the churches towers and know that the fjord was at one side of the city and the mountains on the other. She argued:

"To have certain natural phenomenon to point at is important for me. It's probably not for people who grow up in bigger cities, they most likely have other orientation points, like the tallest building" (participant 12).

Another participant expressed the importance of having access to and seeing an "escape route" from the busy city centre towards a natural environment, to "literally see where the city ends" (participant 18). Similar, one pointed how concentrated the urban city core felt: "Some areas I experience as very urban, like this one. But you don't have to walk long one way or the other before you feel like you're on the countryside" (participant 20). Being able to see the surrounding nature from the city seemed important for the participants. When asked about why, one explained that seeing nature had a "calming effect" and suggested it might "provide a different way of thinking for human beings" (participant 5).

Using nature recreationally also seemed important, especially to this participant who had been on a walk along the river the same morning as the interview:



“It was really cold and such lovely colours. People are out walking, some are super stressed, others travelling, buses are driving, and I’m just looking at the sky and the fjord and... I think it’s very lovely” (participant 27).

The river Nidelva was addressed by several participants, one noted that she thought the landscape was beautiful and water was accessible:

“Nidelva, which runs through the city. There are so many beautiful trees and when you walk along the river towards Gamle Bybro<sup>3</sup> and Nidarosdomen<sup>4</sup>, there are some green lungs between the houses and the city roads” (participant 24).

The river Nidelva generally seemed like something that is easy to access as a recreational space because of its closeness to the city centre.

### Openness and View

Being close to and being able to see the fjord, having direct sight lines from the city was something that occurred often in the interviews. But this easy access to recreational spaces in Trondheim seemed to be threatened due to new constructions in the area. One participant expressed concern about how the city had already been “cut off from the fjord because of the train line and several buildings”, and hence could not be called a seaside town anymore. He argued that “The fjord is fantastic to look upon and be close to and use, but we’re losing that opportunity” (participant 30). Several seemed especially worried about being able to see the fjord from Søndre gate towards what will soon be Powerhouse, built in the sight line of the fjord. One participant explained that she felt as though Trondheim had been “closed off the fjord, and the mountains on the other side near Fosen<sup>5</sup>. But also suggested that it was positive that the developments meant that they had “connected the city central to the Pier (...) they’ve tied it together and that’s all right” (participant 20). Similar to another participant who expressed positive feelings towards changing the sight line if the building was done in a certain way:

It depends on the how the building will end up looking. If it’s a massive brick building it’s better that we’re able to see the fjord instead. But if it were a beautiful building that could also be a symbol of Trondheim, then it would be a positive thing. Something Trondheim could be famous for (participant 11).

One participant stressed that the buildings already built in the sight line from the city to the fjord were “ugly and massive and divides the city from the fjord” (participant 30). For some it also seemed more like a feeling of space rather than view, one participant mentioned that building Powerhouse looked “very new and modern, but also closes off the airy experience which exists today” (participant 28). Also important was the experience of feeling close to nature, such as this participant stressing that:

“There’s something about the taken for granted view of the mountains around us, that you’re able to see nature, which creates a spacious feeling, a feeling of outlook. There’s something about the experience of being close to the coast that I believe is important to preserve” (participant 12).

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<sup>3</sup> Gamle Bybro [Old Town Bridge] is a bridge connecting the city centre to the famous old wooden house neighbourhood of Baklandet.

<sup>4</sup> Nidarosdomen is a cathedral in Trondheim, famous for being the northernmost medieval cathedral in the world.

<sup>5</sup> Fosen is a district located outside of Trondheim on the other side of the fjord.

## Buildings: high and low, urban density and this and that

Using the architect drawings and asking citizens about the built landscape, we wanted to look into citizens' perceptions of tall and low building areas due to Trondheim's famous and picturesque two floor wooden buildings. Participants addressed these kinds of questions often without us asking specifically, making this an issue a lot of citizens cared about. Two participants in discussion talked about the issue, one especially unsure about rising taller buildings behind low wooden buildings: "We often see the sky and the sun from here, if they start building in the backyard we won't be able to see it anymore." The other participant responded by stating that "the city is growing, we can't really stop that from happening" (participants 25 and 26). Another tendency was participant's personal closeness to the redevelopments, an idea that these developments wouldn't necessarily be a problem for *them* but would most definitely be a problem for the people living in the area. One participant argued:

"[Midtbykvartalet] isn't something I'm going to see when I walk past it. I'm thinking more of those who live close by, who will see it every day, if it's blocking their view, then it's personal (...). I've heard the backyard is beautiful as it is, but it's not something I'll have to worry about personally" (participant 1).

Using the drawing of Midtbykvartalet participants would talk about whether or not the plot in question would benefit from being rebuilt, one participant argued that "[t]he backyard might look a bit empty, so perhaps it would be a good plot to just fill out" (participant 21). There was an idea that urban density could in theory benefit Trondheim by inviting more people to the city centre, but redeveloping the historic backyards of the wooden buildings was usually not welcomed unless we were discussing the *less beautiful* backyards. The general consensus was that the backyards should be left, as they are, several pointing out the importance of *seeing* the roofs of the wooden houses. Like this participant arguing that "the people walking the stairs need a view too, [the urban developers] can't fill out all the beautiful backyards, we need to be able to see the roofs" (participant 25). But *using* the space was also an important issue, and leaving the backyards as they are, often meant useless space. One participant argued that "the space [in the backyard] isn't being used. Only REMA 1000 [the grocery shop] and a couple of student housings are being used. Maybe a big building makes the area more user-friendly?" (participant 2).

When discussing the urban landscape of Trondheim, several participants mentioned the mix of different architectural styles. One participant stressed that the architecture and the buildings in the city was like "Lobster and Canary"<sup>6</sup> (participant 19), which can be translated to 'this and that' or a combination of disparaging elements. He continued to explain that Trondheim has "no consequent style" and that there were various styles used in the architecture, no restrictions on facades, and stressed that "compared to Lillehammer<sup>7</sup> and Røros<sup>8</sup>, it doesn't look good" (ibid).

## Mapping the City

Talking about landscape and participants' sense of place provoked some discussions on how the participants felt walking around and navigating the city. These feelings of finding the right path, making decisions of where to walk or getting lost in the narrow streets were often elements the participants found

<sup>6</sup> Norwegian idiom originating from WWI when unruliness in the stock market created a group of newly rich people without etiquette who, at least the saying was, would order lobster with dessert wine from the Canary Islands, the most expensive items on the menu although a known bad combination in culinary experience.

<sup>7</sup> Lillehammer is a town in Norway that has managed to preserve its 19th-century wooden houses in the city centre.

<sup>8</sup> Røros is an old mining town with 17th and 18th century buildings and is on the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

fascinating. Participants would describe feelings of walking in the streets of Trondheim as an interaction between themselves and the city, such as one participant describing how walking in Nordre gate would feel like: “If you look forward, it will just open up in front of you, it will start looking bigger and bigger” (participant 21).

Creating a mental map by finding orientation points from above was another way to map the city: “Olav Tryggvason<sup>9</sup>, you have the main square in the middle, then four streets outwards from the statue, which shapes most of the city central” (participant 29). One participant pointed out that you have to intentionally choose to walk to some of the narrow streets: “It’s a bit like you have to want to get [to Brattørgata<sup>10</sup>] to end up there. It’s not like; at least I wouldn’t, end up there by chance. I would easily end up in the main square and Nordre gate wherever I’m going” (participant 29). Choosing to walk in the narrow alleyways could be seen as a way of mindfully walking and being aware of the walk. “Usually when I walk in the city I walk in the narrow alleyways, because there’s something intriguing by walking where others don’t. (...) I’ve always liked, it sounds a bit lonely, but I’ve always liked being alone and walk where no one else walks. It feels more open. There’s something special about it, it’s pleasant” (participant 21).

The area we investigated is currently under development to become a car free pedestrian’s zone. Participants often addressed the busy streets we were either standing in or looking at. Several were looking forward to Olav Tryggvasons gate becoming a pedestrian’s zone only. Some of the participants who worked in the nearby shops expressed concern about how a car free main road would impact their business. Others felt traffic was an issue in the city central in general and wanted traffic to be moved further away from the city core. Sound and emotions related to noise was also often addressed as Olav Tryggvasons gate especially was experienced as a loud, stressful street to be in, hence the wish for many to make a pedestrian zone. Although the street was experienced as stressful most participants usually walked this street to get to where they were going because it was seen as the shortest way and the simplest to walk in.

In general, there was also a positive attitude, similar to the political climate of Trondheim today, on cycling rather than driving. Participants wanted less traffic, more green lungs and better cycle roads. There were many suggestions and ideas for what to expect when Olav Tryggvasons gate turns into a pedestrian zone, some saw Olav Tryggvasons gate to become more similar to Nedre Elvehavn, a neighbourhood with bars, restaurants and serving points in the streets. One participant in favour of the car free pedestrian zone thought the new development would mean a more *positive* space, with people in the streets sitting at tables and enjoying themselves. She argued that it would be “easier to get from a to z if you enter a landscape of wellbeing” (participant 22).

On a different note some participants complained about the lack of parking in the city central, and how inconvenient it was to drive. But also how ideally they too would stop using their cars. One participant stressed that they usually cycle all year, but sometimes wishes to use their car when shopping or running errands. Although having a wish to be able to use their car, the same participant argued that perhaps citizens just needed to be “forced to do something you don’t want to (...) just like the smoking ban<sup>11</sup>, we

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<sup>9</sup> Olav Tryggvassons statue is a 58-foot statue located in the centre of the city square.

<sup>10</sup> Brattørgata is a street in Trondheim between Olav Tryggvasons gate and Fjordgata (the street along the fjord).

<sup>11</sup> The smoking ban makes it illegal to smoke indoors in public buildings, aircraft and other forms of public transport in Norway.



just need to be forced to do so”, referring to a general Norwegian consensus that it’s better for everyone regarding health and safety.

### Identity of Trondheim

Several participants argued how Trondheim is a small town in a big city, addressing Trondheim as a familiar, safe and cosy town with lots of cultural events and happenings. Often compared to Oslo as an equal in offers but without the stressful environment. A handful of participants said they had lived in Oslo, but felt it was too big and messy. The question of whether or not Trondheim could be more of a metropolis such as Oslo was often addressed.

When asked about what to preserve in the city, most participants responded the wooden houses. One participant argued:

“Trondheim is very famous for the areas with the wooden buildings. If you see a picture [of the wharves] you, like, know it’s in Trondheim” (participant 9).

In a conversation with three participants, one responded, after the other mentioned preserving the old wooden buildings that it is important to “preserve the cosy city feeling” a feeling characterised by sitting at a café in a quiet street relaxing, even though being in a city. She also expressed hope that we would be able “keep some of the cosy areas in the city” (participant 9). Another participant argued that “old things are often much more beautiful to look at” (participant 20). When participants talked about *the city feeling* they were usually referring to things particularly special about Trondheim rather than a feeling of urbanism. This *feeling* could be sitting in a café or walking the streets with a take-away coffee.

These picturesque descriptions of Trondheim seemed to be threatened. Such as with this participant who worried about “Møllenberg<sup>12</sup> decaying because of students ruining the area and no one taking responsibility of fixing up or renovating [the houses]” (participant 30). Or another who worried about the cafés disappearing, mentioning that Trondheim used to be a city of cafés but had become more of a city of restaurants (participant 12). When addressing new buildings, there was a tendency to still prefer wood as material and Trondheim as something other than a city of steel and glass. One participant argued that with steel blocks everywhere “Trondheim’s special traits [would] disappear” (participant 26).

In addition to gentrification and new developments, Trondheim’s old wooden buildings have had another on-going treat, namely fire. If some of them were to meet such a dreadful end, redevelopment of the empty lots would be a hot topic echoing through the city. Some participants wanted the new buildings to look just like the old ones, but not all change was unwelcomed:

“There was massive scepticism when Reitan<sup>13</sup> did the rebuilding after the fire in Nordre [gate]. Many feared it was going to turn out to be a horrible building, but my impression is that most people think it pretty much fits the place” (participant 28).

He argued that change was welcomed, but only “[a]s long as no one [took] the old, dignified buildings and [started] modernising the wharfs too much” (ibid).

Another tendency was participants’ descriptions of the materiality used when building. One participant said the old wooden buildings “seem[ed] to really sympathise with you when you walk[ed] next to them”

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<sup>12</sup> Møllenberg is a neighbourhood east of the river Nidelva with 19th-century wooden houses.

<sup>13</sup> Odd Reitan is a Norwegian businessman and founder of the grocery shop REMA 1000.

(participant 29). Another stressed that wood gave specific characteristics such as “light wood (...) which perhaps helps [the buildings] avoid that heavy feeling” (participant 12). Several participants used descriptive words more related to feelings of space rather than observation. Feeling protected was often repeated, one mentioned that the size of the old two-floor wooden buildings gave her access to look beyond the buildings but also made her feel protected. The same participant also said the tall and dark buildings provoked feelings of an “emotional cold” (ibid). She argued that modern buildings could often become “a bit robotic and steel like”, further explaining that she “is very concerned with things being human, that it’s warm. For me wood is such a human thing, which kind of mirrors humankind in the buildings” (participant 4).

One participant talked about his relationship to the city centre as a force that would draw him into the city. He argued that he lately had felt “an automatic pull” towards the city central, and would plan his visit once he was there instead of planning in advance. Comparing it to when a group of friends go out for drinks without specifically planning where to go. He argued that the feeling was “almost rhythmically”, because he knew there would always be stuff to do there (participant 18).

### Professionals sense of place

We conducted 14 comprehensive interviews with public officials from the town planning office (4) and the city conservation office (2), politicians from different political parties (4), people from real estate industry / property owners (2), a representative for the local Trade and Commerce Association (1), and a master student in planning. (1).

All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. The empirical data have been inductively coded, and analysed by applying a stepwise-deductive-inductive approach (Tjora, 2007)(Tjora 2017), related to Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

### Collective sense of belonging

The professionals all describe Midtbyen as very important for the identity of Trondheim. Midtbyen is referred to both as “the soul of Trondheim” (Developer 1) and “the heart of the whole region of Trøndelag” (Politician 1). “It is Midtbyen one think of when one think of Trondheim” (Politician 2). The urban core can be understood as the (mental) image of the whole city of Trondheim, both to the people who live in the city/region and to people outside.

One of the interviewees, a student who have lived in the city of Trondheim for four years, experience that the citizens of Trondheim has a *sense of belonging to Midtbyen* in common, no matter in which part of Trondheim they live. Himself states that he has “almost a stronger sense of belonging to Trondheim” compared to the place he grew up - a municipality just outside the capital of Oslo, which can be characterized as suburban Oslo. Without the urban core of Midtbyen, Trondheim “would just be a place where people live”, as the place he grew up, “and it would be hard to feel like a *trondhjemmer* at all”. Also one of the politicians states that “Midtbyen is what makes the city of Trondheim into a *city*” (Politician 2).

The professionals point out that Midtbyen is important for the feeling of *community* in the city. In general, a very important value that is mentioned throughout the interviews, is Midtbyen as a place to meet other people. It is a place “where things happen” (Planning office 1), “a meeting point” (Planning office 2, Politician 1), a “gathering place” (Politician 3 and 4, Trade and commerce ass., Student) and the like.

From the interviews, the functions of Midtbyen can be summed up as social, commercial and historic (with the order of importance depending of the role of the professional). These functions are interlinked. Many emphasize that Midtbyen as commercial centre is one of the reasons that the city is experienced as a social meeting place, as one official from the city conservation office puts it: “If you don’t have any businesses/activities which makes people swarm around, then there will be no meeting place” (Conservation office 1). The historic traces in Midtbyen is one of the important values of the urban core, and makes it stand out as something different. One of the politicians says that “If you do all your shopping on the Internet, then you don’t go to City Lade [shopping mall outside the city center] just to have a nice time. In Midtbyen you can go to a café, you can meet people, you have other experiences there” (Politician 1). Shopping centres are what Marc Augé call *non places*, they are anonymous and similar where ever you go (Augé, 1996). The urban core in Trondheim is perceived as something opposite, as one from the planning office says: “Off course, commerce is always threatened, but I think we have an advantage [compared to shopping centres] because we are very centralised around historic buildings with a very clear identity. It is a strength for Midtbyen” (Planning office 1).

### The big little city – defining and describing the city through topography and morphology

Many of the professionals, as the citizens, describe the city as small but big. The urban core is in general described as very compact, which contributes to the “feeling that there are a lot of people there” (Developer 1). One of the politicians (Politician 2) points out that the surrounding river Nidelva emphasizes the image of a small city. One of the officials at the town planning office says that the city almost appears as a village even though it is a city, because you always meet people you know. He relates this to the topography, where the city centre is located as in a “pot” which makes the city centre compact with many crossing movement lines (Planning office 2). The potential for encounters is therefore significant (Tjora 2016).

Both the landscape elements of the river Nidelva and the Cicignon’s city plan is especially used by the professionals when defining and delineating what is regarded as the urban core and/or the city centre. One of the representatives from the city conservation office states that the urban core in Trondheim is “actually the area east of Munkegata<sup>14</sup> and not the whole of the Midtbyen-peninsula” (Conservation office 2). The representative for Mid-Norway Trade and Commerce Association says that Midtbyen is “actually a very limited area, if we think of the part inside the river”. She points out that they also include other parts of nearby areas on the other side of the river/canal, as Bakklundet, Solsiden and Brattøra in their definitions of the *urban parts* of Trondheim.

In addition to the river, also the Cicignon’s city plan is used to describe further what is experienced as the city center. As the student points out: “The street network in Midtbyen is very characteristic and differs very from the ones at Solsiden and Bakklundet, it gives a completely different feeling”.

While the river Nidelva contributes to capsule Midtbyen, some of the informants also talk about the connection between Midtbyen and the surrounding areas on the other side of the river. One official at the town planning office (Planning office 2), points out that he does not think of the river as a barrier, but rather as a space which *connects* both sides of the river. The many bridges make it possible to experience this particular space, and also makes it possible to experience the variation in the surrounding landscape, from the more urban space at the bridge by Bakklundet – where the buildings face the river, to the greener

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<sup>14</sup> Munkegata is one of the parade street. It has view line to the cathedral in the south and the Monk’s islet in the north.



and more open area around the park area by Nidarø in the south. He further mentions that he paddles kayak at the river Nidelva, so he also experiences the city from the river point of view.

### A mix of brick and wood and the “Trondheim typology”

One of the politicians says that “the small wooden houses are an important part of the soul of Midtbyen” (Politician 1), something that also became evident in the citizens sense of place. At the city conservation office, one official describes Trondheim as a colourful wooden city, and points out that the central districts of Møllenberg, Bakklandet and Sanden/Løkken, which is dominated by wooden houses, contributes to the *impression* that also the urban core (Trondheim kommune et al.) is a wooden city, “even though it might be as many brick houses there as wooden ones” (Conservation office 1). At the town planning office, one says that the three main points in the zoning plan is the “the low city, [Cicignon’s] city plan, and the wooden city and the understanding of the wooden city” (Planning office 3). Despite the often mentioned image of Trondheim as a wooden city, the professionals at the town planning office and the city conservation office describe Trondheim and the urban core in fact as a city with diverse and mixed buildings, high and low. She further states that “Trondheim is not a city of low wooden houses; it is a mix”. Another at the town planning office describes the buildings in Midtbyen as “helter-skelter” (hulter til bulter), and believes that this mix could be seen as a good quality we should develop further (Planning office 2).

Two of the professionals explicitly talk about the variety of buildings as joyful. One at the city conservation office describes the diverse variety of buildings, the contrasts and the mix within a strict city plan, as a “source of happiness” (Conservation office 2). Also the planning student speaks of the variety as something that makes him happy: “I think it’s a bit funny with so many weird buildings. For example, there is this very ugly building in Olav Tryggvasons gate (...). When I walk past it, I always start smiling because it fits so terrible bad. But it’s so funny anyway, and it puts me in a good mood”.

One of the politicians says that the contrast between houses from the 1840s next by buildings from around 1890 is beautiful, but he thinks less of the contrast when these old buildings are placed next by buildings from the 1960s, and states that it is this less beautiful mix that to a greater extent characterize Midtbyen (Politician 2). Another politician underlines that it is important that many old buildings have been kept, and that the combination of these together with new buildings gives “the kind of strange image of Trondheim” with old and new, high and low buildings side by side (Politician 1).

Several of the professionals talk about buildings which have been built in the backyards in the city. One at the planning office says that “Monumental backyard buildings are almost a specific Trondheim-typology that we actually should be proud of” (Planning office 3). She states that this is how we have managed to fit big programs, like the concert hall, Olavshallen, in to the city centre. Also the big shopping center next by the main city square is mentioned as a typical backyard building, where the old wooden houses in front is kept, and the newer buildings “pop” up behind. Fire is perceived as an always present threat to the city, and some of the professionals (Planning office 1 and 4) express concern over what will happen to the town/street scape if the low rise front buildings burn down and the higher buildings behind is the only left.

## 9. The management of change

### The process of managing change

Trondheim's city centre is managed as urban structure in form and content, through plans and policies on the local, regional and national level (see chapter 3), within the realm of public debate. On the governance level the municipal administration and private developers represent the major actors. Final decision-making on planning lies with the city council, with the regional government as formal hearing partner in planning. On the organisational level the Mid-Norway Trade and commerce association (Trondheim kommune et al.) is a stakeholder and active influencer in governance of the city and city centre, representing its members who are commercial actors in Midtbyen. Since 2014 the association for commerce and the municipal planning office have shared the position of a coordinator for Midtbyen, for improved collaboration, dialogue and development of Midtbyen. The use of public space in the city for festivals, markets etc. is managed by the office Midtbyen Management, also a collaborative partner in governance of the city centre.

During the past decade, planning, use and development of Midtbyen has been subject to much public debate. The regional newspaper has published numerous articles on topics like parking, traffic and the status of trade and commerce. Specific development plans for new built structures in the existing urban fabric is also frequently presented and debated in the press. The plans for Midtbykvartalet ("the Midtbyen quarter) and Powerhouse exemplify two major themes of discussion, the first concerning building heights within Midtbyen, challenge to the skyline and the urban pattern of the blocks, proposing to fill in historic courtyards. The second concerning building heights of structures in the vicinity of Midtbyen, which influence visual contact with the fjord and surrounding landscape.

### The Midtbyen quarter

The process for planning the Midtbyen quarter exemplifies negotiation planning within a heritage context. With the approval of a first plan a renewal and conservation were balanced in what was considered an agreeable compromise within the framework of the 1981 zoning plan (Midtbyplanen). The plan was never realised. Instead the developer revised the plan proposing a denser and taller development which challenged the zoning plan in terms of height. This is the type of project which pushes for a revision of the 1981 zoning plan.

A development plan for the Midtbyen quarter was approved by the city council after a negotiation process between the developers, a consort of two firms who held or had acquired ownership of properties on the block, and the municipality through the planning office.

Where the initial proposal was to build eight stories behind the street houses which to the north is dominated by typical wooden two-storey wooden town houses, a compromise of five storeys within the block was reached, after signals from the regional governmental administration to raise an intervention on the grounds that taller buildings would interfere with cultural heritage. The compromise involved demolition of courtyard buildings marked as heritage interest and involved infill of courtyards, preserving one courtyard building and courtyard. One historic two-storey building was to be demolished but replaced with a pastiche in the same height and shape of roof.

The approved plan was not implemented. Ten years later negotiations started for the same block, on the same principle, preserving the two-storey street buildings but with up until nine stories in the courtyard

area and replacing the one historic street building which had previously been accepted replaced with a similar form with a taller building with a different shape. Arguments for increased plot use and heights was that the approved plan did not provide sufficient economic viability. The municipal area plans general goals for densification were also referred to, and a statement that "...good quality residential space is difficult to achieve below the fifth storey level", hence the program of commercial space on street level, office space above this, topped by apartments.

The first plan was negotiated within the framework of the Midtbyen plan of 1981, which is a flexible overall plan where the values and intent are the significant and standing features, as a senior officer of the municipal planning office says: "So I believe that it is really the intention of the plan and the conservation part of it which is significant" (Planning office 4).

Where development plans within the plan are required these do not, as is frequently inferred, render the 1981 plan obsolete as the 1981 plan is general and rather flexible. The argument that the 1981 has been continuously challenged and therefore is ripe for replacement, is repeated by developers and politicians. The planning office however has a different understanding of the plan, stating it is flexible enough to allow for desired development. The Midtbyen guidelines was launched by the planning office as a tool to clarify and exemplify interpretations of the 1981 plan (Trondheim kommune, 2013c). One of the informants from the planning office says "...we do not know if it is used much" (Planning office 3). A new plan has been promoted also on the political level, "...likely as a result of lobbying from developers ... they (politicians) want a new plan, but they do not know what they are asking for" (Planning office 3).

In response to a request for a new plan for Midtbyen from the city council, (a political initiative which came up with the approval of the Strategy for urban space), the municipality in 2017 proposed a new area plan for part of Midtbyen, as one of several plans and strategies for the city and city centre (Trondheim kommune, 2017b). The planning area is defined as the north-eastern section of Midtbyen, which is the commercial centre of Midtbyen, which is the most diverse in urban fabric, as well as being the area of the earliest settlement of Trondheim. The area is not defined as a conservation area in the Midtbyen plan although it comprises a high density of buildings of heritage interest which are intended preserved, as well as being defined as a general area of heritage interest through the municipal area plan (Trondheim kommune, 2013b).

### The reasoning for managing change

Both stated objectives in standing policies and the interview, material conveys that there is a consensus that Midtbyen must be preserved for its historic significance, and as the significant identity marker of the city. The urban fabric should be managed to accommodate commercial, cultural and social functions. As one of the interviewed politicians points out: "It is important to keep the historic identity you experience when you walk around in the city, but at the same time it is important to open up for modern use of the buildings. These are challenging discussions" (Politician 1).

In the analysis of the interview material, the viewpoints on how these objectives are best achieved and balanced are grouped according to the following themes: character of urban fabric, building heights and skyline, courtyard structures and layout, urban space, vistas and landscape setting.

### Urban fabric

Describing the character of the built urban fabric of Midtbyen, one politician states: "Midtbyen is so complex and "put together", it is difficult to keep to a firm course, like Røros" (Politician 2). Commenting

on the Trondheim “grammar” of building new monumental structures in the courtyards while preserving the older, lower buildings on the street level, the planning head officer questions the consequences of this in the long perspective. “... what happens if for example the two-storey buildings facing the street burn down (...) because what happens behind them in the courtyards, will in a sense be defining for what happens in front. So there is the situation where one freezes a particular type of urban development, which in many ways is unusual” (Planning office 4) (i.e. low buildings facing the street, taller buildings within the block).

On the structure of user space, a developer notes: “...one must allow the development of premises in the city centre which not only belong to the past” (Developer 1), and continues to comment in reference to the heterogeneous urban fabric “The variation is so great that inserting a new building does not represent much of a change”.

The reasoning for a new Midtbyen area plan as grounded in the plan not being followed as intended, seems to be widespread, as one politician notes: “Talking about revising it, it is because many mean that it is not being followed as intended. Dispensations from height regulations and area use are repeatedly given. A new plan is needed to preserve and maybe to develop what can be developed (...) To my experience, that is at least the intention. A new plan can provide improved conservation for what we want to preserve, and maybe make it is easier to build differently where this is acceptable (...) So what I personally mean is that I desire a very strong conservation, especially in the areas which have a homogenous character today. And then I think it is far more difficult to assess the areas which have a very heterogeneous character with different types of buildings put together.” (Politician 2)

On the contrasts between tall and low buildings the politician comments “Trondheim ... is characterized by contrasts from the 1890s and onwards ... There is a big contrast [between low wooden buildings and tall style turn-of the century masonry buildings] which I think is quite nice, but at the same time, if we should preserve this, then it will be as if one catches development in flight so to speak. One tries to freeze a particular moment and there is a little bit contradictory about that.” (Politician 2)

On reconstructions in historic styles, the conservation officer comments: “....we should not historicize for the sake of historicizing only – there must be a potential in the buildings, it must have had a different façade previously” (Conservation office 1).

Regarding buildings of heritage interest which are lost, a developer states: “For those of us who have never seen Hjorten (large wooden house with a much used dancing restaurant, now demolished) have no relation to this building – it is sad when something is demolished, but also sad to turn off the switch and do not build nothing new” (Developer 1).

## Heights and skyline

While the general reflections on the value and significance of the historic city fabric and urban landscape are similar among the different stakeholders in governance, the considerations on how to manage change, both regarding policy and physical change, varies and can be said to reflect the stakeholders’ interests. Within the different groups of stakeholders however, the views are not consistent.

One developer holds the view that one should guide by objectives rather than rules, seeking to not disturb the image or visibility of dominant elements in the urban landscape, instead of imposing a set of rules which regulate heights at a rigid limit. The importance lies in “not disturbing the soul of Trondheim”



(Developer 1). Another developer wants specific rules for heights, “clear rules for heights is a smart thing, they should be non-negotiable”, and clear regulations for the protection of historic buildings “one has to decide that this is how it should be – that these buildings are important for the identity of the city – if they burn they will not be replaced to taller structures” (Developer 2).

The leader of the regional association for commerce expresses some weariness concerning the practice of negotiation planning “it should be possible to define that in these blocks we will preserve the wooden buildings, end of discussion (...) commercial actors want a new zoning plan for Midtbyen which is more predictable, which is clearer on what is and what is not possible (...) one should block by block assess where it is possible to densify, preserving the identity, but allowing for more space for business and employment and for residences to create a pulsating city”.

At the prospect of a revised plan for Midtbyen, a politician states: “A new Midtbyen plan must be strict regarding for example regarding heights – not only on that the Cathedral must be visible from a distance, but maintain the character of a city” (Politician 1). Reflecting on the prospect of tall buildings, the town planning head officer reflects “...A skyscraper (...) changes the character of the city – maybe transformation should rather focus on about altering functions within the existing urban fabric, reprogramming existing buildings” (Planning office 4). A colleague in the same office says: “It is a bit strange that we today must say that the scale of two storeys in the building that burnt down is to be the guiding factor for what to rebuild on the plot – higher exploitation of the plot can be tolerated” (Planning office 1).

The conservation officer reflects on the function of the 1981 Midtbyen plan, noting that “it has worked according to its overall goal – and exerted a not insignificant control in ensuring that replacing two-storey historic buildings has not been too easy” (Conservation office 2).

### Courtyard structures and layout

The preservation of the courtyards as a significant part of the historic urban structure is a central subject for debate. The conservation office states “it may not be possible to preserve all of them, but many are still intact and there is still opportunity to strengthen this part of the city’s identity (...) promote some good projects [i.e. new structures within the blocks] where old structures are preserved and courtyards are preserved for good use (...) define some special and significant courtyards for preservation” (Conservation office 1).

In the interviews with professionals and politicians many arguments are presented both for and against densifying the city by building in the courtyards, often are exemplified through the following statements: “99.9% have never seen the courtyards and never will, and then there is no great loss – we can build there” a developer says (Developer 1).

“Too many courtyards are used for parking and garbage – there is a discussion on how much we can densify and what heights to allow” a politician states (Politician 4). “There was a fire in our courtyard buildings. We managed to save the street building, and then extended the shop into the courtyard which burned. This was an advantage for the shop which has better facilities now” says a politician whose family manages a Midtbyen shop (Politician 1). “What you see when you walk along the streets is only a couple of storeys. Nobody walks around looking upwards” a developer comments on developing the courtyards with taller buildings and continues “The north-eastern section of Midtbyen is the “trading chamber” of

the city – we can do quite a lot with this area without losing the city’s soul, build taller, densification is good environmental practice” (Developer 1).

“It is not the courtyards which represent the historical Trondheim. They are used as parking lots and are closed off” a young politician comments on the historical (in-) significance of the courtyards and backyard buildings (Politician 3). “It is not significant whether we build six or seven storey buildings in a courtyard, what you see from the street is what counts, this is important” a developer notes, and continues “I have never demolished a (historical) building, but I believe one must sacrifice a courtyard to achieve enough space... not that I hope for a city fire... ” (Developer 2). “The contrasting architecture from the 1980s – I have to admit it often turned out quite nice – for example Trondheim Torg and Olavskvartalet – where low old buildings are kept towards the street, with taller contrasting buildings behind them” a politician comments (Politician 2). “I mean we can develop the courtyards and connect it to existing buildings – preserve the soul – one must allow some deviations” a developer says (Developer 1).

A town planning officer indicates that the Midtbyplan is not predictable for the developers “The Midtbyplan from 1981 allows development of the plots and at the same time points at the value of the structures in the courtyards – we (the planning office) receive questions to be more specific” (Planning office 1). Regarding Olavskvartalet, the concert hall: “what else can one do if we want to do it in Midtbyen – it is a sad building”. A planning student comments on the grey tall square structure of Olavskvartalet which comprises the city’s concert hall.<sup>15</sup> “If one wants to build something new (in Midtbyen)” one must try to increase the volume without diminishing the value of experiencing the city – building five storeys inside the courtyard” says the conservation office (Conservation office 1).

Arguments against densifying and building in the courtyards are exemplified in following statements: “The courtyards in Midtbykvartalet are important historical markers – but on the other hand building here may provide good facilities for business for a living city, but also challenge heights” says a politician (Politician 1). “Two-storey buildings dominate in Midtbykvartalet – it is rational to build here, but we lose history on the way. It is nonsense to destroy the historic structure before exploiting the potential outside (the peninsula of Midtbyen” says the conservation office (Conservation office 1).

“It is a common notion that new constructions have to relate to values connected to historical buildings. Constructions in the courtyards, are they adaptation or exploitation? These are difficult questions” says a representative of the city planning office (Planning office 1), and continues on the use of the open courtyard space within the blocks: “It is preferable that people walk in Nordre gate (the main pedestrian shopping street) rather than through passages inside the blocks. The courtyard space inside the block can be used for other functions like outdoor cafes”. The planning student says: “The blocks with courtyards have an important function, with potential for use by children. Courtyards are one of the nicest places in a city, like jazz cafe in Oslo”, and continues: “I don’t think people are very conscious about what they actually appreciate. When they go on holidays they seek out such places, courtyards and peculiar architecture”.

“The regulations of the Midtbyen plan are a product of their time, they aim to preserve the image of the city, the street image, but the legislation does not provide legal protection for the innards of the blocks, the courtyards and backyard buildings” the conservation officer says (Conservation office 2). The planning

student is concerned that relatively few reside in Midtbyen “the city needs more engaged people who care to keep the city going”.

“I don’t think it would be much more difficult to run the store (a computer retailer) if the historic wooden house had three rooms instead of the present one room (with original dividing walls knocked down” the conservation office comments on the need for large space, “we have to make compromises with the businesses” (Conservation office 1).

On the negotiation between developers and planners on development schemes within Midtbyen, the chief town planning officer comments:

“But it is clear that the biggest pressure for change has been in the north-eastern section (of Midtbyen). And this is what we are met with, these are the arguments: If Midtbyen is to be a living city centre, then the centre must adapt and adjust to the needs of being attractive. And there are for sure many ways to look at this. So we have been working a lot with this, finding compromises. ... So there will always be a need for balance, finding new ways to deal with this, that are acceptable. What is possible to preserve, while at the same time achieving this adaptation which makes the city attractive and useful. But we are fully aware that we do not want Midtbyen to compete on the same terms as a shopping mall. That has not been a goal. And I believe the businesses agree with this. They agree with this now, and I think they believe in it more now than they did ten years ago. And I think this is a good thing, that the understanding of what the city centre and what Midtbyen is has changed somewhat as well” (Planning office 4).

### Urban fabric and landscape

Informants from the town planning office are more concerned about the structure of the streets (morphology) than about the height of the buildings and have the impression that there is attention paid to urban space, the space between buildings, and its significance for the vibrant city (Planning office 2 and 4). Some do not believe a new zoning plan for Midtbyen is the correct approach to future management of the urban fabric and landscape of Midtbyen: “We cannot preserve all vistas but have to select some (...) We have to work out a strategy for managing the city centre as a whole, not revise the existing zoning plan for Midtbyen” (Planning office 3).

“I think it should be possible to build tall buildings some places – not in Midtbyen – we cannot be so afraid that this affects some views and axis” is the expressed view of the leader of the regional society of commerce.

The heterogeneous character of the north-eastern section of Midtbyen is more difficult to appreciate aesthetically, and therefore more challenging to preserve for some. Some informants see the contrast between the wooden two-storey buildings and the taller turn of the century buildings as a quality, whereas the contrast between pre-modernist and modernist buildings is less appreciated.

## 10. Conclusions – managing the historic urban landscape

### Professionals and citizens' points of view

Population growth, environmental demands for densification of urban fabric, and requirements from commerce and trade, puts Trondheim's historic urban landscape - urban landscape in this context understood as the morphology of the city center's built fabric, open spaces, vistas, skyline and silhouette - under pressure. Change and pressure to the historic city is of course not new for Trondheim nor for most historic cities. Especially the emergences of the industrial city in the 19th century, and the urban development post-WW2, with automobiles and modernist architecture as drivers and denominators, have previously induced large morphological changes to the urban fabric and image of Trondheim.

The views on to what to preserve, i.e. which elements and qualities are significant, largely mirror the role of the stakeholder. Representatives of commercial interests and property development argue for an intensified use of space, insisting especially for allowing taller buildings both in the historic urban core of the Midtbyen peninsula, and in its immediate surroundings. The informants from the city planning office and conservation office argue for caution especially regarding heights, and express concern for the courtyard structures and open spaces within the blocks and quarters. For developers, these spaces represent attractive plots for new and taller structures.

For citizens there was a significant consciousness that the city centre stands in close relation to the surrounding landscape. The interviews show how the citizens consider the value of vistas, the views on the fjord and visual contact with the river as something which is typical, significant and positive for Trondheim. Many expressed concern that the building activity on the outskirts of the historic centre, both built and planned, is destroying some of these qualities.

The ideas on how the historic urban landscape should be managed also vary, the interviewed professionals were asked to elaborate on this, especially on the Midtbyen plan from 1981. For both the city planning office and the conservation office, the intentions for conservation and development formulated in the Midtbyen zoning plan from 1981, with its guideline update from 2013, represents the advised framework for future development. The plan puts forward the historic city as prerequisite for development, providing sufficient flexibility for developers without challenging the silhouette of the historic city centre in its landscape setting. The developers interviewed held opposing views on this question. Some argue for clarification on goals and objectives rather than strict rules, others for specific rules which are non-negotiable.

### Answering the research questions

Trondheim is a city with a clear geographically defined historic city centre. The Midtbyen peninsula forms a natural demarcation, fortification and harbor and from the middle ages, the city developed here. The city centre has kept a legible and characteristic landscape setting featuring the meandering river, the vista on the fjord and surrounding green hills. Growth and development has occurred both on the Midtbyen peninsula, and, since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, vastly beyond it. Within the boundaries of the historic city, the low wooden city has been transformed plot by plot. Despite the introduction of taller buildings the historic



centre over the past century, the city centre retains a low character where wooden two-storey buildings are still very present in the urban fabric and townscape.

- i) How is the governance and planning of Trondheim's historic urban landscape changing and why?

With the Midtbyen zoning plan of 1981 a new phase in the urban development of Trondheim's historic centre was introduced, placing conservation as a premise for future development of the historic city centre. With this plan, the loss of historic buildings on the Midtbyen peninsula, through demolition, fires etc., was reduced by 50%, and new buildings were regulated at a limit of four stories, with options to adapt to neighboring buildings both by building lower and taller than this. The height limits have been respected in many building projects since 1981, but they have also been challenged, and since the turn of the millennium increasingly so. A set of guidelines presented by the municipality in 2013 aimed to update and interpret the 1981 plan, to clarify policy on heights and management of historic buildings, and create more predictability for developers and property owners in Midtbyen. A tool for planners and developers with the status of an advisory document, planners in retrospect show concern that the guidelines are not much used, and that they may not have had the desired effect.

Since the ratification of the latest municipal area plan in 2014, a plan which is the key regulatory document for area use in the municipality, a number of development plans which challenge existing regulations regarding buildings heights have been presented, both within and immediately surrounding the historic city centre. Presently a set of plans for urban development in Trondheim are under preparation to meet the challenges of city growth. Among these plans, which are all in the startup phase, the a) strategy for development of the city centre and b) zoning plan for the north-eastern section of the Midtbyen are set on re-evaluating the existing policy for urban development regarding building heights, area use, and conservation, and therefore go straight to the core of our case study topic: the preservation and management of the historic urban landscape of Trondheim.

- ii) How are the relationships between the physical built environment and intangible heritage considered in the governance of urban heritage / historic urban landscape?

Guidelines for urban form and architecture, published by the town planning office in 2013 and ratified by the building council, stress the importance of maintaining the visibility of characteristic landscape features, and the city's silhouette in relation to this. Implementing the principles of the guidelines, which are presented and illustrated in a very clear, descriptive and advisory manner, seem however to be challenging. When presented with a specific planned project, the concepts of views and vistas, skyline and silhouette, "character", "structures" and "landscape features" seem to be difficult to convey, and considerations for these objectives are quickly up for negotiation. However, within the Midtbyen plan, projects over the recent decade which challenge conservation and city form have been rejected.

In the city centre outside Midtbyen, projects which have been in conflict with preserving vistas and which have been architecturally challenging with respect to size, shape and consideration to skyline, have been approved. In the aftermath debates have emerged, with decision-makers expressing regret for their concessions to the plans despite being otherwise advised.

The concept of “landscape” is vague, guidelines and principles challenging to convey, interpret and implement. Consequences for landscape considerations seem to be easier to grasp post-construction, when the building is standing there.

iii) What is citizen’s sense of place?

The sources which have formed the basis of our study convey that there is a strong consensus that the historic city, its image and setting, is crucial to the identity of the city, and that it must be preserved and cared for as the city grows. This view is expressed and shared both by the interviewees among the general citizens, and the interviewed professionals in commerce, planning and property development.

In describing the characteristics of the historic city centre, “water”, “greenery”, “wooden buildings”, “sky”, and “openness” were recurring used as positive qualities. The fact that there is still visual contact with the fjord and the surrounding green hills from many viewpoints in the city centre was commented with appreciation. “Dense”, “low” and “mix of old and new” were recurring in also mentioned frequently in describing Midtbyen. The notion of Midtbyen as “a smaller town with a big-city feel to it”, and “a condensed urban centre with many fine old buildings” was a characteristic shared by many. Many expressed views on densification and heights, and the historic courtyards, and were concerned about consequences for future developments to create a “messy and disharmonic street image”, and a denser, darker and more inhumane city centre.

iv) How best can policy makers take account of sense of place / place identity in the management and planning of the historic urban landscape?

The interview material for the case studies show that citizens generally show more concern for the development of the city centre, and fear lack of consideration for the city’s landscape qualities and historic identity. Taking these views into account in planning seems crucial, as developers (or those who chose to do so) have a strong voice when plans are up for vote.

Managing landscape is complex, and in a growing city cannot be steered by a conservation plan alone. Sensitivity for historic identity, place identity and landscape requires tools which work in a dynamic setting. In the interview material for this case study, the advice from developers on planning tools is ambiguous. Some argue that objectives, as in defining a desired effect, is preferred to strict regulation, others take a different stand: “clear rules for heights is a smart thing, they should be un-negotiable (...) one has to decide how it should be – that these buildings are important for the identity of the city – if the burn they will not be replaced by taller structures.” Some developers and commercial actors express weariness of negotiation in planning processes, others welcome it and put it to use.

There is a strong call for more clarity in planning, and many developers and commercial actors in Midtbyen have been advocates of a new zoning plan for Midtbyen. However, while inquiring for more predictable rules, these are the same parties which have challenged provisions and guidelines of the Midtbyen plan (1981) and guidelines (2013), which according to planning officials are very clear. Projects which have been planned within the framework of the Midtbyen plan, adhering to its regulations and the advice of the principles of the 2013 guidelines, have been realized. Projects which have been struggling in the negotiation process are the ones which have not adhered to existing plans or guidelines.

Flexibility in plans and tools, clarification of values and objectives regarding open space, vistas and landscape issues, non-negotiable regulations on heritage buildings and structures, and actors who respect

agreements, seem to be critical factors for a sustainable urban development which respects the historic city and the historic urban landscape.

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