

WG Chair Cathrine Mellander-Backmann, Swedish National Heritage Board
2014-04-04

BSR WG of the 20th Century Built Heritage

Report from the constitutional meeting on the 26th of March in Stockholm addressed to the MG-meeting in Schleswig on the 8th of April 2014

The new WG on the 20th Century Built Heritage has been constituted after a fruitful meeting in Stockholm on the 26th of March. Representatives from eight countries are now appointed, but as yet no representatives are appointed neither from Germany nor Russia. The purpose of the meeting, alongside of forming the new WG, was to gain an understanding of how cultural heritage management and research in each country so far has worked with the 20th century built heritage. Another important aim with this first meeting was to decide how our future cooperation should be formed and how this platform, in the WG, can provide grants to the VI Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum in Kiel 2016.

The meeting followed a defined program and was divided into two parts. The first part of the meeting consisted of the participants various lectures. They all gave an interesting insight into how the 20th century built heritage has been manifested in our respective countries, but these presentations also gave an understanding of what research is currently being done in this field and what type of work is presently being processed in the cultural heritage sector concerning the development of "the modern built heritage".

The representative of the National Board of Antiquities Finland, Hilka Högström, described how they are currently running a project concerning the expansion of the welfare state from 1945, and onwards, and its built environment. By documenting different sectors linked to this era, including sports and recreational venues, university-environments, health care facilities, Finland aims at achieving greater understanding of this period and its various cultural environments. As a contribution into the WG, Finland wants to discuss their practices and exchange ideas and experiences. As example:

- **How to generate general knowledge of the welfare state-era, provide context?**
- **How to identify main aspects and importance of environments as well as main threats?**
- **How to communicate knowledge and experience, and how to find relevant networks and guidelines to promote better understanding and management of change / sustainable development?**
- **How to designate and protect objects from this era?**

The representative of the National Heritage Board of Estonia, Triin Talk, described how they, during 2007-2012, have worked with the project "Mapping and Analysis of Estonian 20th Century Valuable Architecture". In this project, the Heritage Board has mapped and documented over 3000 buildings. A number of 2000 buildings are registered in an "online registry" and are accordingly to this accessible. Based on this material no less than 114 objects have been promoted as Listed buildings. As a

contribution to our work in the WG Estonia would like **to discuss and find ways of how to deal with buildings that no longer have a function, and link this to matters relating to maintenance and long term preservation.**

The representative appointed by the State Inspection of Heritage Protection of Latvia, Ilze Martinsone from Latvian Museum of Architecture, told us that one of their more important issues now and something Latvia wants to contribute with in the work of the WG is the postwar architecture, also called "the Soviet modernism". This era has gradually gained a higher cultural value, as this era has been reassessed in recent years. An ongoing project that illustrates this is an analysis of the historical center of Riga, called "Riga 2002-2020" where several examples of Soviet modernism have been recognized as having high cultural values. Based on this theme Latvia wish to discuss and find ways and solutions for the following issues:

- **The society has a somewhat cool interest concerning postwar architecture because of mass-production - how to handle this?**
- **Materials and construction during the postwar era has sometimes poor quality - how to deal with issues relating to maintenance and long-term preservation?**
- **Many of the era's most important buildings have been either destroyed or converted / reconstructed - how to handle this type of reconstructions?**

*The representative appointed by the Department of Heritage Protection under the Ministry of Culture of Lithuania, Dr. Vaidas Petrulis from Kaunas University of Technology, explained in his lecture that “in order to understand and exhibit the role of modern legacy it is crucially important to find aspects which highlights not only the unique physical manifestations of modernism, but also embodies the **meanings of intangible nature** (activities, symbolic and historic functions, cultural practices etc)”. Petrulis has carried out a case study of Kaunas, which became capital 1919-30 during the time Lithuania was independent. His thesis is that these political changes evoked great spatial, social and cultural changes to the city – there is a rich layer of interwar architecture. **In our effort to inherit and understand the legacy of 20th century cultural heritage we have to understand the close links between cultural, political and symbolic circumstances. This sort of theoretical discussion will be of great importance as input in the work of the WG.***

*Poland was represented by Pawel Filipowicz from the National Heritage Board of Poland and by Piotr Majewski from the Museum of World War II in Gdansk, which is under construction. Filipowicz depicted the historical architectural development in a rewarding way, and clarified the conditions that have affected the architectural development in Poland during the 20th century. An ongoing discussion in Poland and something Poland wants to contribute to in the work of the WG is, likewise to Estonia and Latvia, to discuss and develop methods for assessing built environments from the postwar era. Piotr Majewski's contribution to our work in the WG will, among other things, be **different perspectives regarding the muzealisation of the World War II**. Majewski stressed the importance of preserving war relics and monuments as they play a major role in our collective memory. The purpose of the World War II museum is not only to mirror the war from a Polish perspective but also picture it from a critical European perspective.*

Sweden is represented by Karin Arvastson (MG), Hugo Larsson and Cathrine Mellander-Backmann, who all represent the Swedish National Heritage Board. The Board has since several years been working with the modern society's cultural heritage. This has resulted in a number of different

projects. These include "The Architecture and cultural heritage in the larger cities of Sweden" (1999-2001), "The Swedish industrial heritage" (2002-2004) and "The Cultural Heritage of Modern Society", 2004-2007.

For the specific purpose to develop our ongoing work concerning the modern heritage and also as a contribution to the Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum, the Swedish National Heritage Board will develop **a project concerning architecture and built environment that relates to the period between 1970-2000 – a project that we call "The Recent Modern"**. There is currently a lack of surveying inventories and deep analysis, based on a cultural heritage aspect, with respect to this period. The purpose of the project, however, is to deepen the knowledge concerning "the recent modern" and highlight this era so that it may be relevant within the work of the WG and, in extension, the conference in Kiel in 2016.

This project has many similarities to those aims Finland has in their ongoing survey of the welfare-state. **Key-questions and aims are:**

- **How to understand the social context / zeitgeist that set the agenda 1970-2000 (neoliberalism, globalization, etc.)?**
- **How is this era reflected in the architecture?**
- **What can cultural heritage bring in terms of relevant perspectives concerning the era 1970-2000?**
- **Where do we stand in terms of ideological issues associated with preservation and how do we manage change?**
- **How can we apply perspectives concerning sustainability?**
- **How'd conventions on cultural heritage have significance in this context (the Faro-convention)?**

Denmark is represented by Michael Lauenborg from the National Heritage Board of Denmark.

Norway is represented by Liv Ramskjaer from the National Board of museums in Norway.

Unfortunately they were both indisposed to come to this first WG-meeting.

II The future cooperation in the WG

After the formal constitution of the WG the official name of the **"WG of the 20th Century Built Heritage"** was adopted.

Another item on the program was the joint platform and what themes we want to continue working with in the WG – a work that ultimately will constitute our contribution and content for the VI Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum in Kiel 2016. It is in this respect important to see the overall theme – the 20th Century Cultural Heritage - as an umbrella where our different subthemes can be developed into various "tracks"/themes on the conference. These subthemes should be held wide and open, **as it is important to avoid "one country, one theme"**. The representatives' various lectures have all pointed to directions that could be summarized in these suggested subthemes:

- **The Modern movement, the Cold war heritage, the Welfare-state, the Recent modern**
- **The role of the modern (20th century) legacy (cultural, political, social values, identity, symbolic values)**

- **Assessment and designation (what values, what context, how communicate knowledge and experience)**
- **Preservation and protection (what methods, what ideology)**
- **Sustainable development and managing change (what role does the built cultural heritage have in terms of sustainable development – social and economic values)**

At our next meeting, this autumn, the WG has to specify more clearly what exact subthemes it wants to elaborate. These subthemes also have to be established and communicated with the representatives of the MG. For this reason, these issues or subthemes may be changed while working. The WG also has to start thinking about appropriate lecturers and keynote speakers for these subthemes, who can describe and problematize our questions from different perspectives.

During the meeting it was decided that the WG shall meet twice a year. Hosting of these meetings will also circulate and several representatives have already offered to hold the honors ahead. Who is going to host the WG-meeting this autumn though, is still not decided yet.

The actual work in the WG can, as a suggestion, be divided in two parts: One more practical part directly related to the conference, where we discuss subthemes of the conference and proposals concerning relevant lecturers. And one more theoretical part where we, in form of a small seminar/workshop, can discuss certain subthemes in more detail from different perspectives. This will give us, in the WG, an opportunity to exchange ideas and methods related to the 20th Century Cultural Heritage.

After each meeting, meeting-notes shall be sent out and be approved by all the representatives in the WG. It was also discussed, at the meeting, the need of having some kind of document that is constantly updated, where we may have discussions in a more flexible way as a purpose to be able to exchange ideas, methods, processes and practices. This kind of document is also important what concerns our contact, so that it may be vibrant and valid, also between our two annual meetings.

The Chair of the WG is very much looking forward to very soon also sit down with representatives from Germany and discuss the forms of this close co-operation and elaborate a sound and well functioning collaboration concerning the Forum in Kiel 2016.

Members of the BSR WG of the 20th Century Built Heritage:

Finland:	Hilkka Högström, the National Board of Antiquities in Finland
Estonia:	Triin Talk, the National Heritage Board of Estonia
Latvia:	Ilze Martinsone, the State Inspection of Heritage Protection, Latvian Museum of Architecture
Lithuania:	Vaidas Petrusis, Kaunas University of Technology
Poland:	Pawel Filipowicz, the National Heritage Board of Poland, Piotr Majewski, the Museum of Second World War
Denmark:	Michael Lauenborg, the National Heritage Board of Denmark
Norway:	Liv Ramskjaer, the National Board of museums in Norway
Sweden:	Hugo Larsson and Cathrine Mellander Backman, the Swedish National Heritage Board

Representatives from **Germany** and **Russia** are not yet appointed.