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Seeing,

Building

Looking at the Existing, Making Tectonic Translations
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INTRODUCTION

To build is to add to the existing. Three existing wooden buildings in Visby, made in three different local techniques (a post and plank, a timber frame and a log construction) have been the starting point for what to build upon. After studying these techniques, new buildings have been added in line with the principals of the existing.

As architects, we should look at the reality and recreate and build upon what is already there. Imagining a new world through looking at the existing. In the making of the new addition (or perhaps subtraction), one will always balance between the act of harmonising with history or turn against it. This balancing act have been a constant struggle throughout this project.

"The central question is whether to have the new contrast with the old, or look for more harmonious union of the two. Generally speaking, the decline of craftsmanship at all levels, from building industry to architectural design skills, forces us to choose the contrast model. Abstract form language is being opposed to the historical building. What is important, in many cases, is to get in touch with the intensity of an old building, to learn to understand it and work with it. Ultimately, this can result in buildings that have new authenticity of their own."¹

We live in a global world, and architecture is more commonly made without any relation or true understanding for the place or cultural context in which it is built. The intention is to highlight the importance of craftsmanship and place; the idea of building on to a history rather than working against it without being lost in nostalgia or kitsch.

The method is the focus of the thesis. It is a two-step process, where the first is to analysing how the existing was built, through a measured survey and by making straight forward replicas of the existing. The second, is to make an addition to the existing by using the gained knowledge from step one.

The project focuses on the Swedish building tradition looking at three existing houses situated in Visby on the island Gotland. Visby is largely a wooden city, covered in plaster. The selected buildings represent three building traditions apparent in Visby: a post and plank building, a timber-frame building and a log building. The buildings are situated on two sites, two courtyards, and have generated three additions in total.

SITE 1 / THE EXISTING

The Post and Plank Building
Measuring of the existing post and plank building
Construction drawing of part of the existing post and plank building.
Construction model of part of the existing post and plank building

Scale 1:20
SITE I / ADDING TO THE EXISTING

A Kiosk & An Apartment Building

Additions of an apartment building and a kiosk in a courtyard with a post and plank building. The municipality plans to develop the courtyard Atterdag by adding apartments and by making it more accessible to the public. This is an answer to their quest.
Existing situation

1. Post and plank building
2. The house with the paintings
1. Kiosk
2. Apartment building

Proposal
Existing situation
Model of Site I, Atterdags

Scale 1:100
THE KIOSK

The kiosk serves as an entrance to the courtyard and act as a skeleton of the neighboring post and plank building. The addition is made with a traditional post and plank construction which is exposed to the outside and with insulation on the inside.
THE APARTMENT BUILDING

The apartment building is built in a contemporary lightweight timber frame construction with a facade that refers to the post and plank construction.
Street views
SITE II / THE EXISTING

A Timber Frame & A Log Building
The Timber Frame Building
Measuring of the existing timber frame building acquired from Fyrusalen, Gotlands museum
Construction drawing of the existing timber frame building
The Log Building
Measuring of the existing log building acquired from Fornsalen, Gotlandi museum
Construction drawing of part of the existing log building
SITE II / ADDING TO THE EXISTING

A Visitors Centre

The municipality plans to make the existing red log building, Burmeisterska huset, more accessible to the public. However, the building is too fragile to open it daily as a museum. In this proposal a visitors centre is added to the courtyard with a cafe and an exhibition space with exhibitions about Burmeisterska huset, in an attempt to make the log building more accessible.
Burmeister courtyard, Visby
1. Timber frame building
2. Bar, Barmerister nightclub (open summertime)
3. Courtyard, Barmerister nightclub (open summertime)
4. Supper restaurant (open summertime)
5. Outdoor seating of Supper restaurant (open summertime)
6. Log building, Barmerister huset

Existing situation
Visitors Center
Model of site II, Burnmøster

Scale: 1:100
Existing situation, facades facing the street Strandgatan
Proposal, facades facing the street Standgatan
Existing situation, facades facing the courtyard

Scale 1:200
(Original scale 1:100)
Proposal, facades facing the courtyard
THE VISITORS CENTRE

The visitors centre is made with a glulam construction on the ground floor, which transfers into a log construction on the first floor. The glulam construction refers to the neighbouring timber frame building while the log construction is represented in the exhibition space.
Longitudinal Section

Ground Floor

Scale 1:200
(Original scale 1:50)
Construction model of part of the addition

Scale 1:20
PANELS

presented at the diploma days
1. Post and plank building
2. The house with the paintings

Proposal

1. Kiosk
2. Apartment building
1. Timber frame building
2. Bar, Burmeister nightclub
3. Courtyard, Burmeister nightclub
4. Log building, Burmeisterhuset
5. Supper restaurant
6. Outdoor seating of Supper restaurant

Proposal:
1. Visitors center
MODELS

presented at the diploma days