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Her research has been published and presented in several conferences as: 1st International Conference on contemporary architects: Jorn Utzon, Sevilla, Spain; 1st Conference on architectural competition, Nordic Symposium, KTH, Stockholm, Sweden; or Responsibilities and Opportunities in Architectural Conservation, CSAAR, Amman, Jordan.

WELFARE STATE. SOCIOLOGICAL AESTHETICS

Modern architecture and democracy on Nordic countries, Denmark

[My theme] concerns itself with the creation of beauty and with the measure of its reverberations in the democratic society. By the word “democracy” [...] I speak of the form of life which, without political identification, is slowly spreading over the whole world, establishing itself upon the foundation of increasing industrialization, growing communication and information services, and the broad admission of the masses to higher education and the right to vote. What is the relationship of this form of life to art and architecture today?

Walter Gropius¹

In 1954, thirty-five years after founding the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius travelled around the world, revising his ideas about a democratic environment for the twentieth-century man. After World War II, the artistic and social utopia conceived in the twenties was spreading across the whole world but its original ideological dimension was often suppressed in favor of aesthetics.

¹ Walter Gropius: *Apollo in the Democracy. The cultural Obligation of the Architect*, Mc Graw-Hill, 1968, p. 3.

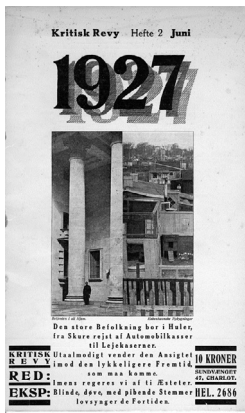


Fig. 1: Cover: Kritisk Revy magazine.

The depoliticization of modern architecture has been traced back to the International Style exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932. In the original catalogue, the curators Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson defined the new movement in terms of a shared formal language emphasizing light as opposed to mass and solidity, asymmetry and regularity as opposed to axial symmetry, and dependence on the intrinsic elegance of materials, technical perfection and fine proportions, as opposed to applied ornament.² Two decades later, however, Hitchcock rewrote the introduction and now argued that “style” was not the right word to define Modern Architecture. Moreover, he also stressed that Gropius’ “novel method of education in design has been widely misunderstood and misinterpreted” and reduced to a rigid stylistic dogma.³

Gropius insisted that the simultaneous creation of modern means and respective forms is only possible through an appropriate education in a democratic society where everyone enjoys equal privileges. This was the goal of the Nordic welfare state, which provided for the development of an aesthetic awareness in the general public and expected the creative architect to find the right equilibrium between art, technology and social demands. This paper will explore the relation between modern architecture and the welfare state in the Nordic countries, particularly Denmark, in search of a democratic architecture and its implicit sociological aesthetics.

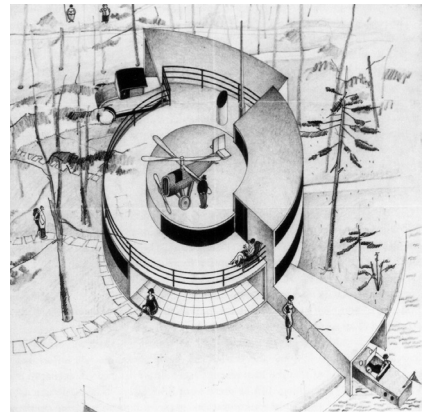
The reception of the Modern Architecture in Nordic countries

As Denmark, Sweden and Norway remained neutral during World War I, they avoided the material and social breakdown that, amongst others, made Germany particularly receptive to the radical agenda of modernism. In the early 1920s, as

² Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson: *The International Style*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1960, p. 13.

³ As a result, Hitchcock claimed that architectural form was perceived as an isolated phenomenon, ignored and rejected by a society untrained to recognize either aesthetic values or social ideals.

Fig. 2: Arne Jacobsen and Flemming Lassen: House of the Future, 1929.



the principles of the welfare state continued to be implemented,⁴ Scandinavian architects were exploring a mannerist form of neo-classicism, often inspired by local building traditions and the *architettura minore* of Italy.

Nevertheless, monumental neo-classicism was criticized for distancing itself from egalitarian democracy. By contrast, modern architecture was an attempt to break free the conflict between classical form and new technology. The modernists found that traditional forms of academic architecture were out-dated and incapable of solving the problems of a technically developed age. In Denmark, some of the most fervent criticism of neoclassicism was launched by the magazine *Kritisk Revy* in 1926–28. Its editor, Poul Henningsen, and correspondents that also included Edvard Heiberg who taught at the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1930–31, extolled the new form language as a vehicle for a social utopia and democratic architecture as a useful and universal art, a more evolutionary than revolutionary renewal (fig. 1).

In 1929, the association of Danish architects, *Akademisk Arkitektforening*, organized the exhibition “House and building” in the Forum, a fair center in Copenhagen. Among the exhibits was the utopian House of the Future, designed by Arne Jacobsen and Flemming Lassen (fig. 2). In the same year, Alvar Aalto and Erik Bryggman organized an exhibition in Turku, introducing the principles of functionalism to Finland.

Accept ! : The Stockholm Exhibition, 1930

Still, it was the Stockholm exhibition in 1930 that marked the advent of a new era in Scandinavian architecture. It was organized by the Swedish Arts and Crafts Association, which had featured model home exhibitions since 1909 as a way to demonstrate the value of good design to a broad audience under the slogan, *Vackare vardagsvara*, or “more beautiful everyday objects”. The 1930 exhibition became an ideal venue for promoting a new way of living and the principal sounding board for the new conception of architecture and modernity (fig. 3).

4 Danish welfare state has been developed since the 1870s.



Fig. 3: Erik Gunnar Asplund: Stockholm exhibition, 1930.

The Association's director, Gregor Paulsson, was both a radical reformer and a forceful advocate of the new architecture and sociological aesthetics. As the general commissioner of the exhibition, he asserted the need for standardization, technical and social rationalism and also the beauty of a constructively clear formal language, which were displayed through the three main sections "housing, transportation and furnishing".

Paulsson appointed Erik Gunnar Asplund as the main architect. Together with his colleagues, Asplund created a disciplined master plan in which the parts were subordinated to the whole in a rational unity with a common and balanced functional style. The exhibition area comprised a multitude of pavilions, halls and artifacts where "industrial arts, arts and crafts and other handicrafts aimed to present Sweden's contribution to contemporary strivings by utilizing artistic resources to endow dwellings and household goods, particularly such as are intended for the public at large, with good quality and an attractive appearance".⁵

Again thematizing the home, the exhibition was a plea to accept the new techniques of standardization and mass production. Soon after the exhibition, together with Asplund and four other modern architects Paulsson co-wrote the manifesto *acceptera* or "accept!". The book begins with the claim that "only by accepting the existing reality have we any hope of controlling it, of prevailing over it in order to modify it and create a culture which is a flexible instrument in our lives." Technology helped to create better conditions for raising the quality of life, so "what we're working on is to organize and improve the world's economy and stabilize individual's living conditions. Yes this is the only means to a richer life. If we're still far from this goal we must work all the harder to perfect the means."⁶ (Fig. 4)

5 Eva Rudberg: *1930, Modernism's Breakthrough in Swedish Architecture*, Stockholmia Förlag, 1999, p. 36.

6 Erik Gunnar Asplund, Wolter Gahn, Sven Markelius, Gregor Paulsson, Eskil Sundahl and Uno Åhrén: *Acceptera* Manifesto, 1931.



Fig. 4: Cover: Acceptera manifesto.

In Scandinavia, modern architecture was known as *funkis* or functionalism, although strictly speaking the term covers only the late twenties and thirties, from about 1929 to 1935. The ideology of functionalism emphasized practicality, appropriateness and expectations of a better world realized with the help of modern technology and rational planning. With collective housing geometry and industrial production held in its core the aesthetic and plastic revolution that reconciled architecture with the establishment of the welfare state. Economy, technology, as well as functional and social needs were stressed over aesthetics or formalism. Nordic architects were seeking a balance between form and use, as well as between construction and function.

Functionalism and Nordic welfare state, 1930s

In Sweden, the Social democratic party held power from 1932 to 1976, while in other Scandinavian countries social democracy was almost as important as a political force. The social democrats often chose functionalist projects as a visible sign for their policies, trying to bring architecture into a sound relationship with life and to free it from antiquated styles and social prejudices in order to provide citizens with a healthy and good environment built according to new architectural ideals. In the words of Gropius, only when “a social or spiritual goal has thus become clearly identified in the mind of the society does it become the inner substance of its works of art and architecture”.⁷

Therefore, public commissions and several open architectural competitions, also as a democratic procedure, were announced to design public buildings and social housing complexes across the Nordic countries. Functionalism was mainly implemented in new buildings such as schools, universities, libraries, sport halls, airports, factories, theaters, concerts halls attending public education, health and transport programs, etc., where new materials like steel, glass and reinforced concrete were used industrially according to the possibilities of standardization

⁷ Walter Gropius, see note 1, p. 67.

and prefabrication in artistic forms. Still, the new architecture was not in every Scandinavian country accepted to the same degree as the symbol of the new society and the development of the social program.

The Swedish welfare state, also known as *Folkhemmet* or 'the people's home' was established in the forties. Following a program later defined as 'functional socialism', *funktionsocialism*, the social democrats wanted to strike a balance between communism and capitalism, not insisting on state ownership but rather controlling businesses through regulations. The government focused on social safety, health care, education and housing needs, enlightening the population about a rational and higher standard in their ways of living. Many of the Swedish architects representatives of the new style in architecture and signatories of the *acceptera* Manifesto, centered their interest on building housing projects for the public at large. Also, cooperative movements such as HSB, *Hysesgästernas sparkasse- och byggnadsförening* (national cooperative association for housing) contributed to create collective dwellings and to spread functionalism throughout Sweden.

Meanwhile, in Norway, architects were designing several buildings for public authorities, reflecting contemporary ideas on public welfare and standards of living through pedagogical exhibitions and courses. Lars Backer, member of the radical group of architects *Socialistiske Arkitekters Gruppe*, asserted the need for a new architecture responding to social requests. Public commissions and private cooperative societies also contributed to the building of a welfare state. OBOS (Oslo Bolig og Sparelag) for instance, became the most important tool in the policy of social housing.

In Finland, the new nation⁸ used modern architecture as a marketing tool abroad, portraying a society where free placing of buildings leads to a dialogue between nature, culture and architecture, which in itself was an artistic value and identity. Functionalism, introduced in the Turku exhibition, was applied in public buildings for new types of institutions, as was, for instance, the Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Paimio built by Alvar Aalto. However, housing projects were carried out by private companies, which meant that social equality was not always provided. Thus, Aalto and Bryggman kept the debate about the housing problem alive, declaring that "the home is one of the main problems of contemporary architecture. Along with new materials and structures, the best of new architecture should strive to create a new culture of dwellings, instead of searching for new forms for their own sake."⁹

8 Finland declared Independence from Russia on 6th December 1917.

9 Erik Bryggman: "To modern Apartment". In *Erik Bryggman 1891-1955*, Architect, Museum

In the interwar period, the Danish welfare state was highly developed by smaller and bigger reforms in the 1920s and especially in 1933, when the “Kanslergadeforliget” or Kanslergade agreement expanded labor rights and arranged social security scheme.¹⁰ Laws were passed by parliament as part of a compromise between the peasants’ liberal party, the centre party named ‘The Radical Left,’ and the Social Democratic party. Despite the social reforms, the parties never tried to close the educational gap between the progressive élite and the working class. First and foremost social housing was not a product of functionalist style and only few public buildings like Kastrup airport, designed by Vilhelm Lauritzen, introduced the new architectural conception and new materials. Modern architecture was only addressed to a minor part of society though private commissions to build business and office buildings, high-level housing complexes or single-family houses.

Edvard Heiberg, Mogens Lassen and Arne Jacobsen were the forerunners of the new formalism in Denmark, that which was characterized by whitewashed brick surfaces, pure forms, flat roofs and steel ribbon windows. The first functionalistic building in Scandinavia was Heiberg’s own house, built in 1924, whose visual composition was influenced by Mucche’s experimental house. Mogens Lassen showed his commitment to the credo of modernism with a set of houses whose geometric impulse and white volumes recall the visual plasticity of Le Corbusier’s villas. Arne Jacobsen introduced the new style in his works gradually starting with the ‘House of the future’, his own house built in 1929 and Max Rothenborg’s house, and later on, with the Thorvald Petersen’s single-family house completed in 1933. Houses and public buildings designed by Jacobsen were characterized by the connection of the interiors to nature and open-air spaces: the gardens and public areas around the buildings were designed to form a unity which embraced an urban planning approach and was clearly exemplified in a suburban area facing the Øresund.

The Bellevue area, north of Copenhagen, was one of the paradigmatic recreation centers close to the beach. Jacobsen’s proposal shows his talent for situating elegant buildings in the landscape, under the guidelines of a new urban planning and the considerations of the committee for the “preservation of rural Denmark”, which carried out the responsibility to maintain the horizontal Danish landscape. The general suburban scheme included the “Bellavista” housing complex (1931-

of Finnish Architecture, 1991, p. 281.

10 Niels Kærgård: *The foundation for the Danish Welfare State: Ethnic, Religious and linguistic harmony*, Proceedings XIV International Economic History Congress, Helsinki, 2006.



Fig. 5: Arne Jacobsen: Bellavista housing complex, Klampenborg, 1931-1934.

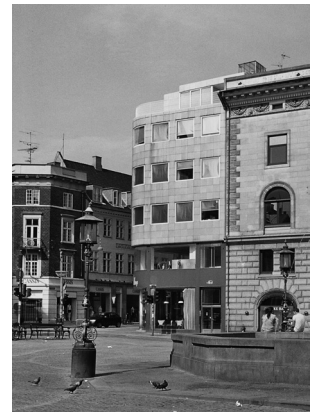
34; fig. 5), further buildings were: as well as a summer theatre (1935–37), a beach bathing establishment (1930–32), a restaurant (1937), a riding school (1934) and a service station (1936). They all show Jacobsen’s ability to create something new in harmony with its time and carefully fitted to the surroundings. Elementary geometry and radiant volumes, functionality and transparency extend the outdoor life to reflect an aesthetic and egalitarian expression of a social utopia and democratization of the leisure.

The new conception of architecture was artistically translated into a white functionalist style without attending entirely to new materials and construction. The architects cultivated the superficial form or appearance without any organic connection to the constructive properties of the buildings. Form and structure had been separated.

In comparison to the traditional, cheap-fired bricks reinforced concrete did not immediately offer economic or practical advantages for domestic architecture to cheap-fired. New technologies were primarily introduced in representative buildings such as offices, sports halls or traffic buildings through curtain-walls, reinforced concrete or steel framed structures. Builders who were less familiar with the new techniques occasionally constructed the new cubist “forms” with traditional brickwork which highlighted the problem of truthful architecture as defined by the functionalist insistence on the form in accordance with material and construction.

At the beginning it was a drawback for the functionalist style that there was no apt material for the coating of the outer walls, so that they would remain white and clean without too much maintenance. For this reason modern architects began to cover the buildings with stone slabs or tiles or metal. Jacobsen’s proposal for the Stelling Hus, built in 1934 (fig. 6) and located in the corner of older buildings, facing the *gammeltorv* (old square), was the first functionalistic building in Denmark furnished with such external facing and built from materials which seemed to be able to remain clean and neat as required by this style. Neverthe-

Fig. 6: Arne Jacobsen:
Stelling Hus, Copenhagen,
1934–1937.



less, the progressive decanting of functionalism in the Scandinavian environment culminates with a modern tradition supported by identity and historic context.

Nordic empiricism. Functional Tradition, 1940's

In the late 1930s, the insistence on truthfulness in architecture led in the first instance to the cultivation of Nordic traditions. Architects established the basis to adapt the principles of modern architecture to the Nordic traditional craftsmanship, materials, habits, ways of living, climate and landscape. Nordic building tradition possessed rational technology, standardization and uniform design; consequently “repetition creates perfection in everyday things, renewal perfection through the ages”.¹¹

Modern Swedish architects tried to preserve the “Swedish grace” or “Swedishness” in architecture, “once-modern but now out-dated decoration, should not be copied but the honesty, alacrity, open-mindedness for new ideas and vitality of the old pioneers and master builders that should survive. Only then, a development that is based on tradition and reverence can occur”.¹² Also, in Finland, Alvar Aalto incorporated his lyrical wood detailing. In Denmark, the alliance between modern architecture and Danish tradition, in form and materials, culminated in a synthesis that Kay Fisker called functional tradition, where the architecture combines the order of neoclassicism, the luminosity and the abstraction of Nordic functionalism and the traditional materials of the P.V. Jensen Klint’ school. “It can be said without exaggeration that Danish architecture is advancing, but along a line not entirely independent of tradition, adapted to the Danish environment and character, quite and modest in expression, influenced by currents from the outer world, but looking first and foremost to its Danish inheritance.”¹³

11 P. V. Jensen Klint, Lecture, 1909. Quoted in Christoffer Harlang: “The Modern Breakthrough”, *Danish Architecture since 1754*, Danish Architectural Press, 2007.

12 Viking Göransson: “Funk-och nationalisk”, in *Stockholms Dagblad*, 1st October 1930. Compiled in AAVV., Sweden, Prestel, 1998.

13 Kay Fisker: “Den Funktionelle tradition”, *Arkitekten Manedshæfte*, 1950, pp. 69–100.



The German occupation of Denmark during World War II isolated the country from the rest of the world and helped to develop national movements, political and cultural. Encouraged by the lack of materials typical of modernity, primarily steel, there was a renewed interest in traditional Danish constructions with local materials, like brick and wood.

Yellow brick, the traditional Danish building material, still held great advantages. Its limited size lent great flexibility to the plan and to the design of façades, and Danish workers were familiar with its various uses. The functional ideal of the relationship between form, construction and contents was expressed in a renewed and contemporary form compatible with pure brickwork construction and the sense of quality in workmanship, in order to democratize architecture through recovering the roots within the Nordic tradition. Thus, Danish architecture reflected the stable economy, quality and tradition in an everyday expression of democracy and welfare.

The paradigmatic public buildings in this period were the Aarhus University designed by Kay Fisker and C.F. Møller (1931–39), and the Nyborg Public Library (1938–40), by Erik Møller and Flemming Lassen. However, the functional tradition was primarily expressed through single-family houses and social housing complexes. Rational planning and standardization of types of flats were developed and architectural effects were simplified with a fine homogeneity of material, practical use, solidity and economy. Dwellings were characterized by their orientation to the sun and views to green areas and parks, as well as houses with enclosed gardens planned by landscape architects.

Social building societies and consortiums, financed and controlled by the state, played an important role in the construction of new dwellings. In Nordic welfare states housing was a political domain, and so that an efficient, well-run, harmonious dwelling came to be considered as a political and social asset; the quality of the domestic environment was of crucial meaning to the political and economic conditions.

Architects, urban planners and professors at the Academy were involved to improve the individual apartments in terms of functionality and standardization

Opposite page, left:
Fig. 7: Arne Jacobsen:
Ibstrupparken I, Gentofte,
1941.

Opposite page, right:
Fig. 8: Arne Jacobsen,
Ellebækvej, Gentofte.

Right: Fig. 9: Arne
Jacobsen: Søholm I,
Klampenborg.



through competitions and methodic research. A new urban planning, so-called 'park development' was characteristic of the Danish residential architecture, where 3–6 storey parallel blocks keep up communal open green spaces in between (fig. 7). *Storgaarden* dwelling designed by Povl Baumann and Knud Hansen in 1935, or *Vertersøhus* (1935–39), planned by Kay Fisker, were results of this period of experimentation.

Simple humanistic architecture, strongly related to English architecture, was also developed in detached houses where the repetition of the unit conforms low-rise housing also through chain and row houses, as for example in Arne Jacobsen's proposals such as the eighteen chain houses in Ellebækvej (1939–43; fig. 8) or *Islevvænge*, the 194 row houses in Rødovre, 1949–52, both government-subsidized. Jacobsen also designed private single-family houses in which, compared with his previous modern period, the white plastered outer walls were superseded by yellow bricks, and the flat roofs by pitched roofs covered with asbestos-cement or roofing tiles. The architect was able to combine tradition and modern aesthetic style to create new forms. *Søholm I*, a group of five chain houses in Klampenborg, summarizes the effort of the 'functional tradition' to adapt materials and construction to Danish conditions through abstract forms and well-balanced compositions (fig. 9).

Nordic Modernity. Synthesis and identity, 1950–60's

After World War II, the necessity of reconstruction in most Nordic countries gave political support to the idea that industrialization would ensure the development of the welfare state. Finland and Norway had been subject to great destruction, so rebuilding and re-housing were the main aims. Sweden had remained neutral, but in Denmark the five years of war were a period of stagnation in housing and public policies. The postwar cultural and political context influenced the perception of architecture. Modern architecture was not only connected to reach the social goals of the welfare state, but also seen as the symbol of a more democratic and better society for everyone.



*Fig. 10: Arne Jacobsen:
Rodovre Town Hall,
1953-1956.*

In Denmark, after the period of isolation, the architects established connections to international architecture, in particular to the United States but also Japan. The main influences were Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Mies had a concept of architecture as something to be found in logical well-analyzed buildings with a static quality, looking for simple solutions and great knowledge in systems of construction, geometrical forms and rules of proportions. Danish architects developed these guidelines in their own work, combined with Danish tradition of craftsmanship that was based on quality, accuracy, rigor, and economy of materials.

Materials, techniques and aesthetics that modern architecture both utilized and promoted were accepted and perceived as beneficial to the large masses of people in Nordic welfare societies. A new universal aesthetics based on simplicity, austerity of form and economy was implemented in urban and landscape planning, public buildings, housing, furniture, etc. promoting a new democratic environment and “total architecture”.

After the war there was a need to control urban growth in Nordic countries and develop a citywide network of railways and arterial roads, or parkways. Most master plans were based on the British ‘garden cities’, a town planning model introduced by Ebenezer Howard in 1898. As a result, new cities were characterized by low-density residential areas and an urban center surrounded by parks, gardens and public spaces.

The new ‘urban centers’ were defined as a new space for the community, organized on the basis of subordinate relationship of public buildings to Nordic landscape. The ‘heart of the city’ contained all the public services required, such as town halls (fig. 10), schools, libraries, cultural centers, residences for the elderly, theatres, post offices and police stations. The architecture helped to highlight the importance of formally expressing the civic and social values of a modern society and welfare-state. Thus, the ‘core’ anticipated post-war social democratic urban planning, in which the principles of modern architecture and new urban environments were to become integral parts of public policies.

*Fig. 11: Arne Jacobsen:
Row houses for A. Jesper-
sen & Son, Ørnegårdsvej,
Gentofte, 1957.*



The demand for social housing and government loans stimulated and facilitated the shift towards new non-traditional building systems. In 1947, the Danish Ministry for Housing and the Building Research Institute were established and proposed industrialized methods in housing construction. Danish architects travelled abroad to study and learn the use of new materials and methods of production. The Danish tradition in craftsmanship and fine details was identified with a new standardization through prefabrication and steel frame construction. The proposals reflected a resurgence of modern language, the best examples of which are performed during the first half of the fifties. The industrialization of residential areas was developed in new dwellings (such as Bellahøj, 1945–56) and row-houses, in a synthesis of industrialization and economy (fig. 11).

In the meantime, an international building exhibition in Berlin, Interbau 1957, recreated the triumph of the 1927 Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart. A district almost completely destroyed during World War II, the Hansaviertel was rebuilt as an experimental neighborhood by 194 invited foreign architects to share their ideas about housing and new construction systems. Once again, Gropius and Le Corbusier, together with Nordic architects such as Kay Fisker and Arne Jacobsen from Denmark, Alvar Aalto from Finland, Fritz Jaenecke and Sten Samuelson from Sweden, took part in it. The Danish contribution consisted of four atrium-houses designed by Arne Jacobsen as well as Kay Fisker's apartment block. Both examples summarized the main guidelines that were carried out in Danish housing.

And yet, it was single-family houses that became the main research field for modern Danish architecture. The system of state subsidies based on low interest rates contributed to the development of the house in close contact with nature and the surrounding landscape. The requirements were established with the model of three-room-houses with up to 110 square meters. Until then, wee houses in allotments, *Kolonihave*, had been the only way to reestablish contact with nature for those residing in cities (fig. 12).



*Fig. 12. Erik Mygnind:
Brøndbyernes Haveby o
Kolonihave, 1964. Urban
and landscape planning.*

This new standard of living created a natural background for the daily life of the family and inspired architects to produce high architectural quality through new materials, improved techniques, landscape sensitivity and Japanese architectural influences. “Toward the end of the 1950s many fine single-family houses were built entirely of wood on a simple principle of construction, where the widened range of architectural possibilities with increased sense of space continuity created greater interest both for interior proportions and textural effects as for the effect of furniture as a whole and the visual space function of individual pieces of furniture.”¹⁴

Single-family houses showed a refined harmony between form and living conditions, climate and available materials, and between materials, construction, building and landscape. The Danish tradition of brick construction converts the smooth white walls of modernity into a vibrant surface characterized by the texture, contrast, color and expression of the natural material. Craftsmanship, functional precision and constructive refinement flow around Danish systems of construction where wooden poles and brickwork established the basis of the master builder. Excerpted from the modern postulates, fluid interior, open plan and the relation to the garden and landscape surroundings reached through the structural reiteration and constructive eloquence, a modernity based on craftsmanship tradition and cultural heritage. Consequently, the rigorous work of the matter lies in the color of the surfaces, the texture of the finish and material honesty of the furniture, lamps and textiles that are incorporated in Danish household interior which matches material rigor with functional precision (fig. 13).

Thus, the post-war reconstruction through industrialization, standardization and material tradition culminated in a utilitarian and democratic modernity characterized by resistance to the homogenization of the international style and the exaltation of the combination of modernity and identity.

¹⁴ Tobias Faber: “Developments 1950–193”, *Danish Architecture*, Det Danske Selskab, 1978.



fig. 13: Arne Jacobsen:
Siesby house, Virum, 1957.

Conclusion. Modern architecture and welfare state: Architecture of the democracy

The Welfare Architecture, *velfærdsstatens arkitektur*, addresses aspects of welfare society, as implemented in the Scandinavian model of a democratic society. This model, engineered and marketed in the 1950s, has steadily adapted and renewed since the 1970s in response to a globalized economy and europeanization. The Nordic welfare state model established a universal model which several democratic societies have adopted.

Danish architecture embraced architectural form, landscape, building tradition, technology and social policies in order to create a democratic environment and a better society. A common aesthetic consciousness or awareness and sense of quality involved citizens to participate and develop their environments with aesthetic judgments.

At that time, in a period characterized by technological optimism and sustainability, usefulness and aesthetic values have also to be considered as a whole, a unity. Modern architectural form is a conception that has gradually evolved from the requirements brought on by the changing material, as well as the social and intellectual structures of our time. The core of this trend can be found in its honest striving to accept the contemporary age and to approach its varied tasks in a serious and humble manner. It is a socially oriented movement with wide aims, which has taken upon itself the task of creating better environments.

Contemporary Danish architecture and urban planning is still attending to current social and cultural demands, building techniques and the continuity of the universal aesthetic values, which characterized modern architecture. Ørestad for instance is the new urban development located on the island of Amager, Copenhagen, conceived as a laboratory of new ideas: “an experimental environment for new lifestyles and urban spaces in a network society.”¹⁵

15 From the program of Ørestad North, Copenhagen.