

NORWAY

Cultural heritage places, monuments and sites of national importance in Norway can be protected under national legislation (The Cultural Heritage Act). Cultural heritage of regional and local importance is given protection under The Building and Planning Act.

The Directorate for Cultural Heritage is a body under the Ministry of the Environment. The Directorate is responsible for the management of all archaeological and architectural monuments and sites and cultural environments. The following agencies are responsible for the day-to-day management:

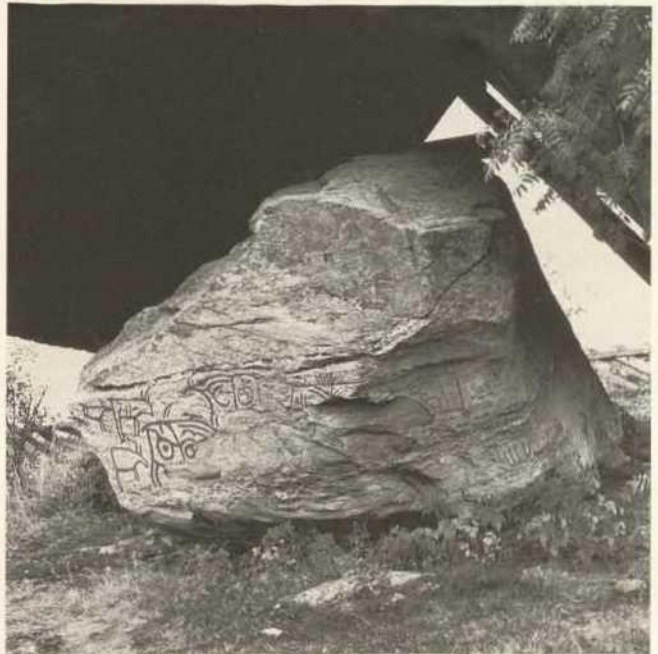
- County level Cultural Heritage Management exists in all 18 counties. This service advises the county administration on questions of conservation and protection of cultural heritage and environment in the planning process at county and municipal level.
- Local Council Cultural Heritage Management exists in some towns and under the management of some local councils. This service advises the municipal council on questions of conservation and protection of cultural heritage and environment in the planning process.
- The Archaeological Museums in Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø administer excavation and investigation of archaeological monuments and sites.
- The Maritime Museums in Oslo, Stavanger and Bergen, the Museum of Natural History, Archaeology and Social History in Trondheim, and Tromsø Museum are responsible for the underwater archaeological sites on the sea bed.
- The Sámediggi administration has a Department of Environment and Cultural Heritage, with the same tasks as the county cultural heritage management.
- Cultural heritage conservation of Svalbard is administered by the Governor, in accordance with the cultural heritage regulations for Svalbard.

The Cultural Heritage

Archaeological sites have been protected since 1905, and today 300,000 automatically protected objects on 70,400 sites have been recorded. Archaeological sites have been inventoried for the Economic Map since the early 1960s, but some municipalities have still not completed this work. In addition, large forest and mountainous areas have not yet been investigated. The average loss of archaeological sites is estimated to be about 0.7% each year, mostly resulting from agricultural work.

Rock art in Norway dates back more than 7000 years, numbering at least 1100 sites with more than 32,000 motifs. Observations and research during the past 25 years show that 94% of the sites are more or less damaged. The sites are endangered for a number of reasons, most often in different combinations: climatic influence, wet and dry depositions, macro- and microbiological growth, and human impact. The results are weathering, mineral loss, development of cracks, crevices and exfoliation, and general mechanical, chemical and biological deterioration. In 1996, a national 10-year multi- and cross-scientific project for the management, conservation and protection of rock art was initiated by the Directorate for Cultural Heritage.

We do not have an exact number of the underwater archaeological sites, but we have estimated it to be about 3500 locations with thousands of objects. Priority is given to 400 sites. The pressure of



Stone-age rock carvings damaged by frost erosion in Moelv, County of Hedmark

Fire is one of the greatest threats to wooden buildings. Arson destroyed the 19th-century church at Saner near Oslo.





The sad remains of the mediaeval stave church of Fantoft near Bergen, burnt down by a man with Satanist motives.

development of the coastline, harbours, offshore activities, and shell sand-digging is threatening the underwater sites.

Norway still has some one hundred unique mediaeval houses in wood. Of these, 255 have been restored during the last 8 years. Out of 2000 mediaeval wood churches, 28 stave churches are left, and some are in a poor condition. Stave churches are particularly threatened by the dangers of fire, as well as by human wear and tear. This year (2001) plans are being created for a major project for the protection and safeguarding of these wooden churches. There are still 160 mediaeval stone churches left in Norway and more than 70 mediaeval ruins of churches, monasteries and castles. The ruins are generally in a bad condition and are seriously endangered. The reasons why they are threatened include previous conservation using inappropriate techniques and materials, lack of proper maintenance and monitoring routines, plant growth, damage from frost, mechanical wear and tear, and wanton destruction.

There are eight mediaeval towns in Norway, and their still-intact cultural layers are important, though seriously endangered sources of information. The sites are under strong pressure from modern urban development. Efforts are made to gain more knowledge about which conditions favour protection and which lead to deterioration. Through the systematisation of previous inventories, combined with ongoing studies, we are in the process of defining possible variable solutions, contingent upon the context and the local conditions: for example – uncompromised preservation, archaeological excavations, protection *in situ* combined with building on the cultural layers.

There are 1230 enlisted and protected building groups incorporating 2950 buildings in Norway. Of these buildings, 85% are in rural areas and connected to agriculture.

17th and 18th century wooden churches

There are 185 wooden churches dated from the 17th or 18th century, typical in style for the northern European region. There are still 130 churches from the period 1800–1850, and approximately 900 that were built after 1850; 50% of these are of historical interest. The damage to these churches is mainly the result of overheating and cracking of the wooden and painted decorations. We must also mention that the introduction of new material, especially plastic wall paintings, since the 1970s has caused great damage.

Industrial and technical heritage

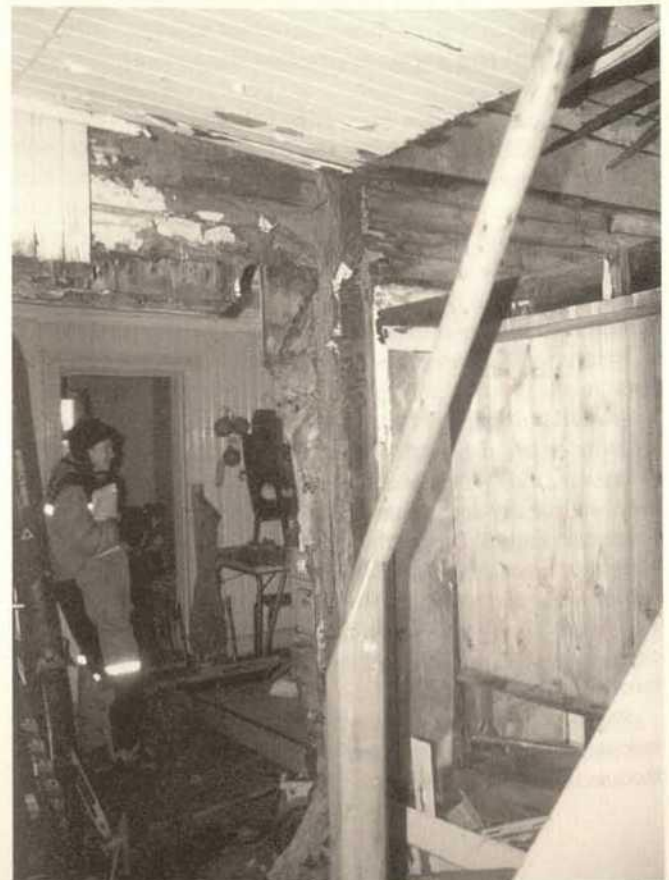
The protection of 31 technical monuments receives priority in Norway. In addition there are many others that are not protected and which are of great historical value. The complexity of these monuments, their size and lack of knowledge of the correct maintenance procedures increase the danger of losing this industrial heritage.

Buildings owned by the State

Historic buildings owned by the State are recorded, but not protected by law. During the last several years, the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and the different ministries have worked out conservation plans for:

- Coastal administration: Historic lighthouses;
- Railroad company (NSB): Stations, bridges, water towers, etc.;
- Military defence: including fortifications, airports and barracks (1300 objects are proposed for protection).

Wooden buildings are vulnerable to invasion by various types of fungi. In spite of this serious damage, this house in Bietilae, County of Finnmark, is now restored.



Sami cultural monuments and sites over 100 years old are automatically protected by the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act. Even so, the still incomplete register and mapping of Sami cultural monuments leaves them vulnerable to destruction by the effects of modern civilisation. However, this traditional Sami turf house, a *goahhti*, in Gratangen, County of Troms, has been restored and will survive.



Ship Preservation

The major task concerning ship preservation is to preserve a representative selection of vessels of great historical value. The term 'ship preservation' has been used in Norway as synonymous with preserving vessels longer than 30–35 feet in a floating condition. In addition to this fleet there are many objects preserved inside museum-buildings, but these are mainly small open boats.

Ship preservation in Norway has always been based on voluntary efforts. This activity started in the 1960s, and the Norwegian Council of Cultural Affairs started to support some of these projects financially. Today the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, which is under the Ministry of the Environment, has the public responsibility for ship preservation. To date, 172 vessels have received economic support or been declared 'worth preserving ship'. According to the Cultural Heritage Act §14a, it is now also possible to protect boats that are of particular historical value.

In 1996 three national ship preservation centres were established. These centres have collected valuable knowledge concerning old shipbuilding skills and they are able to restore and maintain old vessels in accordance with relevant traditions. The restoration work done at the three centres is based on historical and technical documentation.

Recorded and not protected buildings

Across Norway, 540,000 buildings built before 1900 have been recorded during the years 1973–1998. These buildings have no

legal protection and most of them are part of farm complexes. The structures are of great historical value as they represent an enormous source of knowledge of former craftsmanship, use of materials and ways of life.

Research in some communities has given the depressing result that 15% of the buildings have disappeared within 20–25 years, while 20% have been hardly damaged. Without a large-scale repair and maintenance program, 35% of the buildings will be lost within 10 years. If these buildings are not taken care of, there will be virtually none left in 80 years time.

Museum buildings

In all, 329 Norwegian museums own 4700 historic buildings, mainly as part of open-air museum facilities. A long period without maintenance has led to a considerable exchange of authentic building materials.

Historic Sami Sites

Many cultural Sami sites have been recorded during the last years in connection with different projects. The very important Sami cultural environment, Skoltebyen in South Varanger (Finmark), has been listed; this site is the traditional summer camp (settlement) of the Eastern Sami People. A 4000 year-old rock painting in Finmark has also been discovered. However, many Sami sites are still threatened by the building of hydroelectric power stations with dams and military training fields.

Groups of Monuments and Sites

Historic wooden towns

Norway has 54 wooden towns and villages with 13,000 buildings. The greatest risk to these structures is fire.

Agricultural landscapes and farmsteads

Priority is given to the protection of 104 cultural landscapes. Reports for these areas have been prepared, but we do not have any surveys for the condition of these landscapes. Every year, 5000 acres of land go under urban development. Most of this area is within the suburban rural landscape.

The Arctic area

Half of the archipelagos of Svalbard has been recorded, and sites have been found from walling to hunting dating to the 16th century and mining industry from the 20th century. The tough climate, erosion and increasing tourism are today the greatest threats to the cultural heritage of the islands.

General Threats

Agricultural development

Norway has 180,000 agricultural properties; in connection with these, farm buildings represent the largest numbers of cultural heritage items. Every year for the past 15 years, 2% of the total number of farms has been closed down and partly abandoned. Out-houses are losing function and are no longer maintained. Deep ploughing destroys archaeological sites and cultural layers.

Forestry

Building of roads, heavy forestry machinery and gravel pits are threatening the unknown archaeological sites in the outer areas. Training courses in cultural heritage in the forest have been organised for more than 12,000 forest owners and workers. Forest certification will help to diminish the loss of this cultural heritage.

Communication

The development of road and railway networks, harbours and airports are claiming huge areas in Norway, posing great threats to all cultural landscapes and archaeological sites. One percent of all loss can be traced back to communication and infrastructure projects.

Military

The military forces are in a process of reorganisation and rationalisation. Many old camps and some training fields have been abandoned, but also new training fields are being planned. The largest interference in nature, an area of 226 square kilometres that includes a large number of archaeological sites, is now under planning in eastern Norway, under the name of regional training fields for eastern Norway. Forty-six percent of the area has been recorded this year (2001). Last year nearly 500 legally protected sites were found dating to Stone Age, Iron Age and mediaeval times.

Hydro electric power

Still more new hydro dams are being planned. The lakes will cover enormous areas and inundate many historical sites.