

A MEETING PLACE FOR ALL ACTORS IN THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

It all started in Stockholm Building Society. From its inception in 1848 this society has been a meeting place for all actors in the construction process. To meet there and exchange ideas under relaxed forms in order to develop the feeling for the art of building construction. In the middle of the 1920's a number of leading people in the society asked themselves if this could also be a collective programme for an activity that would embrace all the Nordic countries. In this way Stockholm, in 1927, became the host for the first Nordic Building Forum, **NBD 1**.

Ragnar Östberg, architect and chairman of the Forum, described two important objectives of the Building Forum: - *The personal meeting between the various collaborating leading protagonists on a construction project in order to exchange experiences and strengthen the feeling of community.*

- *To be able to discuss a problem of great importance for everybody, namely the housing problem.*

Five years later, in 1932, **NBD 2** took place in Helsinki, right in the middle of a severe depression period with high unemployment and labour conflicts. Functionalism had made its entry into the Nordic countries, manifested for example at the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930. Gunnar Asplund, the architect, was the principal speaker on the subject of *»Architecture and the Environment«*. The Nordic Building Forum was now established and a long series of Building Forums followed.

NBD 3 was held in 1938 in Oslo in a spirit of great optimism in spite of international threats. The greatest interest was devoted to technical and economic aspects of housing construction. Alvar Aalto, the architect, spoke on the subject of *»The Influence of Materials and Methods of Construction on Modern Buildings«*.

The war put a temporary end to the Building Forums. By 1946, however, the Danes were prepared to invite all members to **NBD 4** in Copenhagen. The Forum was characterised by the post-war situation. The need for

housing was enormous in the affected countries and there was a shortage of building material and fuel. Innovations with material saving structures and extremely good heat insulation were presented at the Forum.

In 1950 it was the turn of Stockholm again. The theme for **NBD 5** was *»Building Research and practical Results«*. Among other things *»Rationalisation of Construction«* was treated.

NBD 6 was held in 1955 in Helsinki. *»Element Construction«* had then begun to take its mark and was the theme of the Forum. Among other things the risk was emphasised that crane tracks would hamper the adaption of the buildings to terrain and nature.

At **NBD 7** in Oslo in 1958 two subjects were treated: *»Total Planning«* and *»Private House Construction«*. Private houses had previously been built one by one. Now discussions were held concerning mass production in major series.

At **NBD 8** in Copenhagen in 1961 with the theme *»Industrialisation of Construction«* the subjects discussed included advantages and problems with the series production of housing.

At **NBD 9** in Gothenburg in 1965 the theme was *»City Renewal«*. On that occasion was emphasised the importance of taking care of and rehabilitating the older housing instead of demolishing them for new constructions.

In 1968 the Forum was held for the first time in Iceland and Reykjavik, **NBD 10**. The theme *»Forms of Housing«* was treated from the architectonic, the technical and the economical viewpoints. The first ten Building Forums had their emphasis on technology and architecture. During the three following Building Forums technology was toned down.

NBD 11 in Helsinki in 1971 had the theme *»Renewal of the Building Process«* which took up among other things the way in which industrialisation brought in its train new demands on leadership and administration of construction projects.

At **NBD 12** in Bergen in 1974 the theme was *»The Future is being built now«*. The principal speaker

emphasised that we must stop being just spectators of our own history. We shall instead take an active part in creating it.

In **NBD 13** in Copenhagen in 1977 the theme was *»Construction and Economy«*. Both economy in construction itself and the role of construction in civic economy was treated.

NBD 14 was held in Stockholm in 1980 with a technical theme, *»New Technology – better Environment«*. A housing exhibition observed the 50th anniversary of the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930.

In 1983 a return was made to Reykjavik with **NBD 15**. The theme posed a question: *»Saturated Housing Market?«* The answer was *»No!«* With the rider that housing must be better integrated to our urban areas.

NBD 16 was held in 1986 in Helsinki and the Finlandia House. *»The Construction Branch in the Computer Age - Vision and Reality«* was a useful theme, quite contemporary for an uncertain and tentative branch.

»Renewal and Tradition« was the theme at **NBD 17** in 1989 in Bergen. The town itself could illustrate the Forum's theme with many fine examples.

In 1992 Denmark was the only Nordic country in EU, a reason for giving **NBD 18** the theme *»Nordic Construction and the International Competitive Ability«*. Up to now the programmes of the Nordic Building Forums had principally consisted of relevant lectures.

At **NBD 19** in Stockholm in 1996 a somewhat different disposition was tested. The focus of the programme consisted of ten relevant project site visits within the theme *»Stockholm Market Place«*. Furthermore the target group was extended to the other Baltic states. This led moreover to a Building Forum in 1998 in Tallinn, arranged jointly by Estonian and Finnish hosts on the theme *»Rejoining Europe«*.

NBD 20 was held in Reykjavik in 1999 with the theme *»The Nordic Countries – The World – 2000«*. The new way entered upon in Stockholm had shown to be successful and appreciated. It lived again with NBD 2000 in Malmö and the theme *»Öresund Market Place – a Region in Metamorphosis«*, **NBD 21**.

NORDIC BUILDING FORUM 2001 WAS HELD IN HELSINKI

NBD 22 was held in the City of Helsinki and the metropolitan area. Public Toilets and Broken Windows, bus tours and lunches underground, water bus rides, High Tech and Business Parks, wood, steel, the digital tomorrow, Tallinn and St. Petersburg – were parts of the programme.

As usual during the NBD's the programme also included casual evening events, a fun leisure-time programme, golf and interesting tours and trips. The conference itself closed with a traditional Nordic Building Night get-together, this time organised in the Finnish style.

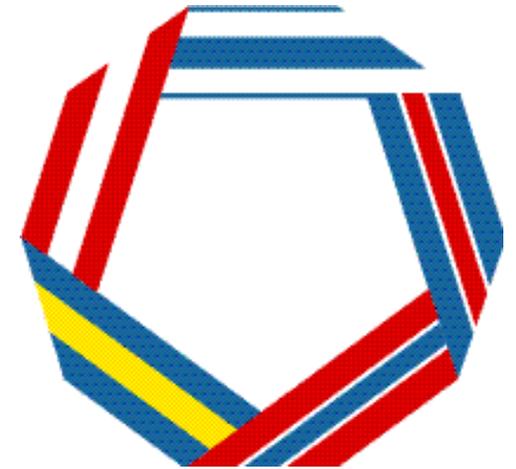
THE FIRST NORDIC BUILDING FORUM WAS ARRANGED IN 1927

The first Nordic Building Forum was arranged in Stockholm 1927. This was the start of a very active institution with the main purpose to bring together, at intervals of 3–4 years, everyone involved in construction and community planning in the Nordic countries. To exchange ideas and experiences and to study present building projects, and in that way to be an incentive to development of the building sector.

Since the turn of the century the forums are held more frequently. Furthermore the geographical field of activities is extended to embrace other countries bordering the Baltic Sea. Colleagues in those countries are now invited to attend the Forums. The objective is that they will find these contacts fruitful and in the future take active part in the work and be connected more firmly to the association.

MEMBERSHIP

For membership, please contact the secretariat in the country of current interest. Information about e-mail, phonenumber etc. is kept updated on the website www.nordicbuilding.org



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