

VERONICA THORFVE, SOPHIE PEDERSEN

TRACING FORWARD

- Exploring the interplay of a historical landmark and the new material world



MATTER, SPACE, STRUCTURE

Supervisor: Daniel Norell

Examiner: Daniel Norell

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In times of change driven by contemporary concerns, the question of how to relate to the existing naturally arises. It has long been present in the architectural debate with two distinctive attitudes that dominate, i.e, conservation versus modernization. However, in recent times the focus has increasingly shifted to creating the new from the old where preservation has gained new relevance in architecture. As this thesis argue, the challenge lies in how to interact with a historic landmark and adding new layers that reflect contemporary architecture without neglecting its past.

The use of history in the form of narratives as well as material traces can construct new relationships in architecture. Introducing the notion of palimpsest, referring to something altered with visible traces of its earlier form, into the design process creates an interplay between the existing and architecture added at a later stage. Through superimposing of information, various representation techniques and design studies the thesis approaches the many layers of a historic remnant and explores how architecture can recompose environments with cultural-historical value. Furthermore, it resonates around the ruin as phenomenon and

questions whether to intervene with a buildings "natural state of ruination" as suggested by Stephen Cairns and Jane Jacobs.

The thesis results in a speculative design proposal of an exhibition hall added onto the ruins of Älvsborg's old castle in central Gothenburg. The design incorporates the ruin in its current state, making it a part of the new architecture. The interventions made in the existing structure are minor and what has been subtracted from the ruin is visibly reused elsewhere as pieces of spolia. Combining a pragmatic view on the ruin as reused building material with critical regionalism, where historical characteristics are traced and reinterpreted, creates a multilayered architecture. The design proposal resembles a fictional collage with a tension between purism and symbolism, where tectonics play a major role in the architectural expression. The result embodies a new take on preservation of historical landmarks with focus on superimposing layers of time.

Keywords : Älvsborg's old castle, ruins, palimpsest, cultural heritage, preservation