The work of protecting the cultural heritage has come a long way since the enthusiasm of the artist J. C. Dahl in the early nineteenth century and the founding of the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments in 1844.

Where there once was a pragmatic makeshift arrangement, there are now proper lines of communication among those institutions which are responsible by law for the care and protection of the cultural heritage, and also among voluntary organisations.

In addition to the Cultural Heritage Act of 1978, there are a number of other acts which deal with monuments, buildings and other relics of the past, and with the use of the area around them (cf. Henrik Lund, this vol.). We also know that both financial and administration considerations affect the way conservation problems are tackled and solved.

An important principle was established in 1912 when it was acknowledged that the protection of the cultural heritage was an official matter and an Ancient Monuments Officer was appointed by the State. Central government thus took over the work which for a long time had been done by the private Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments on a consultative basis. The newly appointed Ancient Monuments Officer (Riksantikvar) became the permanent adviser to the government on all matters concerning historical buildings and monuments, and within a short time his office developed into a sizeable institution. The period of greatest growth has been in the 70s and 80s. Today the Central Office of Historic Monuments has a staff of c. 85 and is the nation’s senior authority on matters concerning the protection of the cultural heritage. The future development and organisation of the institution is currently under discussion and will probably be decided during 1987.


Les expédients dictés par le pragmatisme de la situation ont fait place à tout un système d’interactions entre les institutions responsables de l’application des lois qui protègent les monuments, et les associations bénévoles.

En plus de la loi sur la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel, d’autres lois régissent la protection des monuments, bâtiments ou tout autre vestige du passé, y compris leur environnement (voir Lund, ce vol.). Nous savons aussi qu’il faut tenir compte – et résoudre – les problèmes d’économie et de gestion.

Un important principe fut établi en 1912 quand il fut reconnu que la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel était du ressort de l’État, et que le premier poste d’« antiquaire du Royaume » (Riksantikva- ren) fut créé. Ainsi, le travail jusque là accompli bénévolement par l’Association était-il pris en charge officiellement. Le Gouvernement avait maintenant un conseiller permanent pour toutes les matières concernant les monuments. En peu de temps cette nouvelle institution prit une certaine ampleur. Surtout les années 70 et 80 ont vu un accroissement considérable des effectifs. Aujourd’hui, la Direction générale des Monuments Historiques compte 85 employés. C’est la plus ancienne institution à laquelle est confié le patrimoine immobilier. Une réorganisation des Services est en cours et sera probablement décidée en 1987.

D’autres institutions, spécialisées dans la sauvegarde des vestiges et des sites préhistoriques, existaient cependant bien avant. Ce sont les Musées archéologiques qui remontent à la première moitié du siècle dernier (voir Hagen, ce vol.). Il y
The Military Hospital, one of Oslo's finest Regency buildings from 1807, was dismantled after a hard but unsuccessful campaign from 1949 to 1962 to preserve it. It was re-erected on a new site in 1982-84 and was listed in 1987.

In addition to the Central Office of Historic Monuments, there had already existed for some time a number of institutions with a special interest in the care and protection of prehistoric sites and monuments. These are the archaeologi- cal museums, most of which were founded before the mid-nineteenth century (see Hagen, this vol). Today there are five major museums responsible for the administration and care of the archaeologi- cal heritage in their respective district. It is expected that these will also be affected when the Central Office of Historic Monuments is re-organised.

Another important public institution concern- ed with historic buildings, monuments and sites is the Norwegian Council for Culture (Norsk Kultur- råd) which was established in 1964 and which has a special sub-committee for matters concerning the cultural heritage. The Council has been mainly involved in the funding of conservation projects of a more extensive nature and in making grants to pilot schemes and trial projects. It has also taken a mininary 500,000 kroner for cultural heritage projects.

In 1972 a separate Ministry of the Environment was established with the protection of the cultural heritage among its duties. Conservation is now represented with its own government council: in 197. The National Council for Cultural Heritage (Statens kulturminneråd) was set up, a clear indication of the increased interest and significance which the conservation of the cultural heritage now holds in our society. There had been so many last-minute repairs necessary to threatened buildings or monuments were saved at the eleventh hour, that it was time to take a more offensive approach. After this advisory body had been constituted, there was a desire to stress that the protection of our historical monuments and buildings was accepted on the same lines as other political matters. The Central Office for Cultural Heritage has proposed various improvements and urgent operations to the Ministry of the Environment. The council also has a special responsibility for the cultural heritage of the different ethnic groups in our society.

Conservation of the cultural heritage often finds itself in a weak position when compared with other political matters at local government level. There are a number of hitherto unsolved problems which the Council for Cultural Heritage has on its agenda, one of the most important being the preservation of old crafts. It should also be mentioned that the Council is working towards an improvement in the supervision and management of our monuments, and the care and protection of the cultural landscape is no less important. The preservation of boats is another area in which the Council is engaged. It makes recommendations to the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Fund which is intended to act as an 'emergency fund' and which stands at about 2 million kroner per year.
At county (fylke) level, conservation of the cultural heritage comes under the County Conservation Officer (fylkeskonservator) in each fylke, an appointment which has existed since 1962 and which was first intended to provide specialist help and advice to local museums which did not have any permanent staff. At that time there were few museums in the country with specially trained staff, but this situation has improved during the late seventies, as better resources have been made available. Gradually the need has arisen for more active conservation work, particularly with regard to old buildings, and the County Conservation Officer has become increasingly involved in the conservation of buildings and in local government planning work. In the 60s and 70s we experienced some lively discussions concerning buildings which were considered worthy of conservation.

More and more families are willing to live in old houses which are of architectural or historical interest. These buildings are usually in need of repair and often require improvements, and it is the County Conservation Officer who will be approached as the nearest authority where expert help and advice can be obtained. The state Loan Fund (Den Norske Stats Husbank), which was set up in 1946 to provide favourable mortgages and building loans for private individuals building their own houses, also has an arrangement for providing favourable loans for improving old property of architectural or historical value. The improvement plans must fulfil certain conditions and in most cases it is the County Conservation Officer who approves the plans for rehabilitation.

In the past couple of years the government’s employment policy has included the funding of short-term employment schemes for those temporarily out of work. Where grants have been made available for conservation projects, these have in many cases been administered by the County Conservation Officer who has also functioned as leader and adviser. Heritage protection work in many parts of the country has derived a great deal of benefit from the extra resources which have been made available. In 1984 the total sum given to these projects was 30 million kroner.

A postage-stamp issued in World Architectural Heritage Year 1975 shows the old part of Stavanger with its wooden houses. The area is under the care of the City Conservation Officer and the Old Stavanger Preservation Society.

"Statens Husbank" avait été instituée afin de financer la construction à un taux d'intérêt favorable. Des prêts semblables peuvent être obtenus pour remettre en état d'anciens bâtiments. Les plans de restauration doivent alors remplir certaines conditions et être approuvés par le conservateur régional.

Ces dernières années, le Gouvernement a mis sur pied un programme d’actions diverses pour procurer de l’emploi aux chômeurs. Ce programme a inclus certains projets de réhabilitation qui ont été gérés et administrés par le conservateur régional. Plusieurs régions ont ainsi bénéficié de ces ressources. En 1984, la somme totale consacrée aux projets de réhabilitation était de 30 millions de couronnes. En 1985, on y a ajouté 10 millions.

Les musées locaux dont la vocation est d’illu- strer l’histoire de la région, sont dispersés un peu partout dans le pays, et sont pour la plupart des musées de plein air rassemblant de vieilles maisons et des collections d’objets anciens. Ils représentent une énorme ressource pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel. Les membres du Comité de gestion sont en général en possession de connaissances solides des traditions archi- tecionales et techniques, et de l’histoire locale. Même si ces institutions n’ont pas toujours un personnel permanent, ou même pas de personnel, elles représentent une ressource dont le patri- moine culturel bénéficiera sur le plan local.

Un des domaines auquel ces musées peuvent contribuer est justement de fournir des informations sur l’architecture et l’histoire de la région. Leurs ressources limitées ne leur permettent pas d’autres activités d’information, mais c’est d’eux, entre autre, que la conservation de notre patrimoine dépend et leur champ d’action devrait pouvoir s’élargir dans le futur.

Ces musées locaux s’occupent de la conserva- tion et la protection de leur propre collections de maisons et d’objets. Au sein de nouvelles structures ils pourraient sans aucun doute assumer la supervi- sion de travaux entrepris dans l’entourage immé- diat, ou dans le voisinage. Ils peuvent aussi contri- buer à former des artisans ou des ouvriers spécialisés dans les travaux de restauration.

Les municipalités participent également au tra- vail de conservation. Les décisions prises pour l’utilisation des sols là même où se trouvent les monuments et les sites à conserver sont finalement la responsabilité de l’administration locale. Ceci est vrai à la campagne comme à la ville, y compris les grandes cités.
Many of the buildings on the deserted cotter's building at Kjellvik, Stavfjord, Nordland, had collapsed completely. It was restored in 1964-65 under the government’s scheme to provide short-term employment for those temporarily out of work.

where the monuments lie. This applies to both rural and urban districts, the large cities included. In Oslo and Stavanger, and more recently also in Trondheim, the city authorities have appointed their own City Conservation Officer to advise in matters concerning areas and buildings of cultural, historic or architectural interest and the conservation of the urban environment. In Bergen, there is a conservation advisory officer attached to the city’s department for culture who fulfills a similar role. From a political point of view, these large city authorities have shown their willingness to deal with the care and protection of the cultural heritage. In spite of the great pressure on building sites in the historic town centres, they have chosen to appoint their own trained conservation expertise as a counterweight to the powerful commercial interests which threaten old buildings and urban environments. There can be no doubt that the work of the City Conservation Officers, particularly in Oslo and Stavanger where they have been in function for several years, has been of the greatest significance in protecting the cultural, architectural and historical values in the city.

Also outside the larger towns and cities, most local municipalities have now established some kind of politically chosen organisation, in the form of a cultural committee or board (kulturstyret), with responsibility for cultural matters. Moreover, in over half of the country’s 454 local municipalities, there is now an administrative staff handling the preparatory work for this committee. However, the particular interests and competence of those who work in the cultural sector are more often associated with general cultural and leisure activities, and only exceptionally connected with the cultural heritage and matters of conservation.

In most municipal authorities, it is the cultural administration which forms the contact with SEFRAK, a nationwide project for recording all cultural relics which are not automatically protected by law (see Erik Aas, this vol.). It administers the local recording work in the field and is usually responsible for the financial administration. The significance of this recording work lies not only in the total survey which is being obtained of buildings and other cultural monuments worthy of conservation; it has also been observed that in the process of making the survey, interest has been both stimulated and strengthened at local level for older buildings and the valuable resource which these represent for society.

The local authority’s cultural committees have only been able to offer financial support to conservation projects on a very modest basis. Nevertheless, many municipal authorities have been able to make some kind of contribution when the cultural committee and the local municipal administration have made a combined effort to solve some major conservation problem. Perhaps the greatest contribution which these politically appointed committees can make is when they succeed in getting local politicians to understand and appreciate the work of conservation. As a rule the cultural committee reports on matters which affect conservation, and in many cases special conservation proposals have been incorporated in the local authority’s cultural planning.

Many people have some personal connection with an old building, or a monument or site, and it is generally also private individuals who are responsible for taking the initiative in conservation, as a result of their enthusiasm to protect personally experienced values.

Apart from those institutions which have been delegated with special legislative powers under the Cultural Heritage Act, the conservation of the cultural heritage in Norway is characterised by the initiative and effort of many private individuals and of many small institutions and organisations.

Those actions and projects which have been successful have usually had many participants. Cultural heritage work will always require the effort of many in order to succeed. We will need the help of resources at all levels and we will still require the many hard workers and the many willing hands who carry on the work of conservation with the enthusiasm of the amateur and the insight of the connoisseur.

culturelles en général jusqu’à l’occupation des loisirs. Ils ont exceptionnellement la sauvegarde du patrimoine comme objectif principal.

Dans la plupart des municipalités ce sont ces instances administratives qui sont en contact avec l’inventaire des biens immobiliers (SEFRAK, voir Aas, ce vol.). L’administration du travail de terrain ainsi que la gestion financière du projet sur le plan local leur sont confiés. La signification de cet inventaire ne se limite pas au résultat final, c’est à dire celui d’obtenir un inventaire total des biens immobiliers à conserver. On a remarqué que le processus en lui-même, le fait d’inventorier, a été un stimulant sur le plan local et a éveillé l’intérêt pour les bâtiments anciens et la ressource qu’ils représentent.

Ces autorités locales n’ont pu consacrer que de modestes ressources à la conservation. Néanmoins plusieurs municipalités ont contribué à résoudre certains problèmes de sauvegarde. Mais leur meilleure contribution est peut être d’un autre ordre : faire comprendre aux politiciens l’importance de la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel. Ainsi dans de nombreux cas, les projets de conservation ont-ils été incorporés dans la planification locale.

Nombreux sont ceux qui, pour une raison ou pour une autre, ont des liens affectifs avec un bâtiment ou un site. Ce sont en général des particuliers qui prennent l’initiative d’un projet de sauvegarde, par enthousiasme ou par satisfaction des désirs personnels. En dépit des institutions officielles chargées du patrimoine, la conservation de ce patrimoine en Norvège est en fait aux mains de nombreux particuliers, institutions et organisations.

Pour réaliser certains projets, il faut de nombreux participants. La sauvegarde du patrimoine demande les efforts de tous. Nous avons donc besoin de l’aide et des ressources de chacun à tous les niveaux, y compris le travail acharné fourni par les nombreux bénévoles, combinant l’enthousiasme de l’amateur aux connaissances du spécialiste.