

COMPETITION FACTS

Prize money:

- 1st prize: 12 000 EUR
- 2nd prize: 6 000 EUR

Commision for winners:

- Urban development strategy for downtown Levanger and/or preliminary study for the new library building.
- Commission value 500 000 NOK, with an option of an additional 500 000 NOK.

Site representative:

- Levanger municipality

Actors involved:

- Levanger municipality, The Department of Cultural Heritage, Trøndelag County Council

Team representative:

- Architect, urbanist, landscape architect

Expected skills:

- Multidisciplinary teams with strong skill sets in architecture, heritage, urban design, participatory design and mobility

Communication:

- Online publication and local exhibition

Jury

- 1st evaluation with site representatives

Post competition immediate procedure:

- National workshop with the winners, runners-up and site representatives of Norwegian sites following the award ceremony
- Invited workshop on-site for winners.



Create strategies and interventions to revitalize the historical town centre. Explore designs and programming for a new library.

[Click here for a virtual tour of Levanger](#)



The historic centre of Levanger is on a narrow peninsula surrounded by water on all sides, and supported by a large agricultural region. Map: European Norway.

Levanger municipality wants to use European 16 to explore how its cultural heritage can be a resource for a social, architectural and cultural acceleration into the future. The original town plan from 1846 was founded on ideals of equitable access to common goods such as daylight, air and green spaces. Since then, these qualities have gradually been lost in a car-based shift that has displaced our perception of these timeless qualities.

When the entire town centre of Levanger gained protection as a listed cultural heritage site because of its preserved wooden architecture and city plan, it was not supposed to curb development. Nevertheless, the loss of retailers and activity from the town centre continues, and the main street remains clogged with intense traffic. Can the solution for revitalizing the centre and protecting its heritage be found amongst the ideals of the past?

There is a sense of urgency to find overall strategies to create a climate-friendly, inclusive and vibrant town. The challenge is to find solutions to the town's traffic problems, make interventions that can infuse the centre with new types of activity and to test the tolerance of the protected environment's character while exploring the different possibilities that the new library can offer.

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European 16 - Living Cities

Dear architects, landscape architects and urbanists! The open international idea competition European 16 – Living Cities is being launched at a critical time. We are between the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and seeing the contours of a health crisis that is likely to well outweigh the direct impact of the pandemic. European Norway has won the trust of four Norwegian municipalities that want the emerging generations of practitioners to point out how their communities can prepare for the future. We ask you as a European 16 participant to demonstrate how these towns and places can set an example with designs and strategies to help prevent social and ecological collapse. No other professions are better placed to illustrate that the crisis scenario also represents unique opportunities. The challenge is as follows: show how we collectively can create vital towns and villages based on social and environmental justice.

With the themes Metabolic Vitalities and Inclusive Vitalities, we invite you to take a systemic approach to all streams of life and energy that help shape our society and give vulnerable groups and imperilled ecosystems the consideration they need to build equitable communities. It is a challenging yet exciting time to be practising spatial planning. More than ever, the teams tasked with creating sustainable towns in which we can live and work in the future must embrace cross-disciplinary approaches and innovation. The demand to consider the natural environment and biodiversity is more present than never before — we will not succeed with society's most pressing task without integrating our knowledge of nature, fauna and flora in the planning processes.

The Norwegian towns looking to the international community for exchange and new ideas to develop Living Cities are Haugesund with Risøy, Levanger with The Wooden Town, Nesodden with Fagerstrand and Ringerike with Hjørtelia. Representatives of the local authorities have put a considerable amount of work into preparing for the competition. At European Norway we are proud that they have chosen the open international architecture competition as a tool for their town and urban development processes. The city of Haugesund was in 2020 awarded the BOBY Housing - and City Planning Price for its work on executing the zoning plan in Flotmyr, where European 11 was instrumental in drawing up a framework and holistic vision for the development. We hope that the European 16 candidates will be inspired by the fact

that Haugesund is preparing to make European 16 an equally vital element in its next big urban development project: The island of Risøy

The municipality of Nesodden ranks high in the Sabima ranking of how well local authorities in Norway incorporate nature and biodiversity in their plans. Nesodden has adopted a progressive approach to the issue; The municipality asks participants to identify measures for comprehensive densification of the rural village of Fagerstrand on nature’s terms. Meanwhile, in Ringerike, the local authority wants to build a pilot project for a brand new kind of neighbourhood in Hjørtelia, a productive landscape close to the town centre. In 2013 Sabima introduced a new criterion in their ranking: land degradation neutrality – a concept comparable to climate neutrality but implicating a target of zero net loss of natural land. It is an apt reminder for those wanting to get involved with any of the sites in European 16, reminding us that we are on the threshold of an entirely new paradigm in town - and urban development worldwide. European Norway has selected sites in municipalities that have demonstrated a desire for change, and they want you to show the way.

The case of Levanger represents the ultimate challenge in respect of the Living Cities theme. In 2018, the centre of Levanger was listed as protected cultural heritage for its well-preserved town plan from 1846 and characteristic wooden architecture. The Directorate for Cultural Heritage declared that the listing should not pose an obstacle to development. The meaning of that statement could be subject to inquiry in itself, but the edict added an additional element to a more general problem: the decay of small towns. Here the local authority has spotted an opportunity, and it wishes to use the competition to investigate how the historical qualities can be used to drive development. How can we restructure our cultural and physical heritage and – while being mindful of all kinds of life – create tomorrow’s sustainable and equitable towns in light of what we have learnt from the past?

Dear participants. We are looking forward to discovering how you would solve the challenge and to working with you after the competition!

On behalf of the municipalities of Haugesund, Levanger, Nesodden and Ringerike,

The European Norway secretariat
Bjørnar Skaar Haveland and Tone Berge

Competition premise

Through participating in European 16, Levanger municipality is looking to determine how the town's cultural heritage and unique historical setting can serve as an engine and resource for the *future town* of Levanger. The aim is to find strategic measures to preserve the town centre's historical identity while staking out a path forward to create a sustainable and attractive town centre also in the future.



Map showing the boundary of the Cultural Heritage environment (green line) and protected buildings (blue): Almost the entire downtown is included in the listing. (Map: European Norway).



Levanger is Norway's fourth-largest agriculture-based municipality, with farming accounting for 18% of all employment. The harbour is ice-free. Map: European Norway.

Competition Assignment

The task is to develop a strategy to revitalize the town centre, and to visualize the chosen strategy with architectural and urban space designs for the park axis and adjoining blocks. A wide range of methodologies and processes can be explored; The park axis and adjoining blocks allow the participants to explore infill, transformations and newbuilds as well as urban programming and street design. The local authority has decided to investigate the scope for a new library in Levanger, and wants to use European for ideas on how a new library can sit with the urban development strategy.

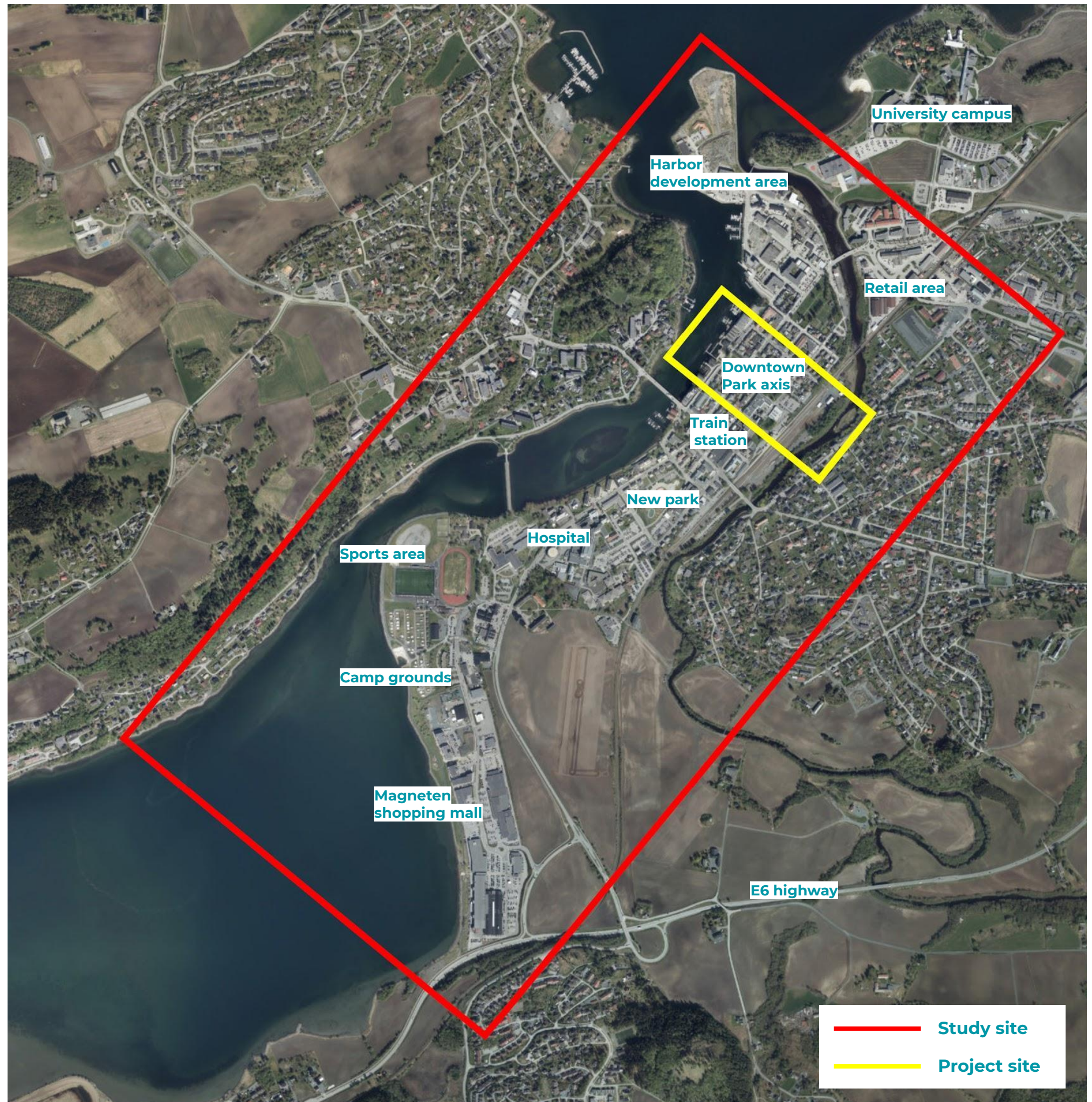
The strategy should be built on forward-looking and feasible ideas and invite citizen participation. How can the strategy create a roadmap to add qualities to Levanger over time through both temporary interventions and major investments? The centre of Levanger should be given both new qualities and attractions, and reinforcements of the existing qualities, in a way that make the residents proud of their town.

In short, the participants should:

Develop a strategy for the *future town* of Levanger, with these four highlighted themes:

1. Conservation and development of a listed cultural heritage site
2. Green and climate-friendly mobility
3. Land use
4. Citizen participation

Visualize and objectify the strategy through urban interventions and experimental architecture in the park axis and central library plots. The solutions must advocate for climate and environmentally friendly infrastructure for 'humans and non-humans'.



Project site definition.



Photo: H. Renbjør 1948. Levanger Fotomuseum

Commission for the winner(s)

Levanger municipality will award the winning team(s) with commissions valued at least NOK 500 000 through one or more of these potential assignments:

- Further study for urban development strategy for the Wooden Town Levanger
- Study project for design and vitalization of the historical park axes
- Study project for design of a new library and cultural house
- Study project for sustainable use and design of the streets

The exact assignment will be decided by the municipality in response to their needs and qualities of the received winning proposal(s).

Levanger municipality retains the option to award further work beyond the initial NOK 500 000 frame.



Competition guidelines for the strategic process

Below you will find a summary of key issues that the participants are urged to consider. The participants should actively engage with these issues but are free to challenge them and adopt the approach they believe is best for their overall strategy.

1. Conservation and development on a listed cultural heritage site

- How can cultural heritage, culture and people be resources for attractive and sustainable town development?
- How can we balance the need for growth and densification against conservation and vitalization of the historical town centre?

2. Green and climate-friendly mobility

- How can we create a town that is more for people than for cars while keeping the town centre accessible to people living outside the town?
- How can we reduce greenhouse emissions, pollution from cars and the need for parking in the town centre?
- How can we use and design the streets to make them safe, attractive and universal spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and urban life?
- How can the railway infrastructure be linked to the historical park axis?
- How can we offer cyclists good parking solutions?

3. Land use

- How can unbuilt land and infill sites be converted for new uses sympathetic to the existing heritage site?
- How can we improve access to the waterfront and develop new blue-green structures to manage surface water?
- How can we encourage shared use by public institutions, voluntary organizations and private enterprise?
- How do we balance housing and commerce to ensure diversity and reduce the need for transport?

4. Citizen participation

- How can we co-create and work with the public to develop an inclusive and climate-friendly town that is diverse and offers a high quality of life?
- How can we mobilize local engagement in the town and surrounding villages?



Competition guidelines for the project site

The participants should visualize how the strategy can be implemented within the yellow boundaries of the project site. Below follows a summary of questions concerning the library site and park axis in relation to the town development strategy. The participants should actively engage with these issues but are free to challenge them and adopt the approach they believe is best for their overall strategy.

1. The historical park axis

- How can the historical park axis be designed to make it a diverse and inclusive meeting place?
- How can the park preserve its historical value while meeting the residents' desire for an outdoor covered stage?
- How can the park be revitalized as a meeting place for play, activity, markets and recreation throughout the year?
- How can the streets crossing the park axis be designed so that they are not perceived as barriers in the continuous green structure?
- How can the outdoor stage in the historical park axis be connected to the smaller cultural venues in the town's backyards?
- How can the park axis be linked to the river Levangerelva?
- How can the park maintain biodiversity?
- Which functions and services can help strengthen the park axis as a vibrant urban space?

2. The new library and cultural centre

- How can a new library and cultural centre be designed to be an attraction and meeting place while respecting the historical town centre and ensuring sustainability?
- How can the library and cultural centre interact with the historical park axis as a cultural meeting place?
- How can the site on the other side of Jernbanegata be incorporated into a concept that combines multiple functions?



Site context

A letter from the mayor

The town's history

Historical market and meeting place

The town's metabolism

The historical town as a blueprint for the compact town

The town as a cultural scene and a meeting place

The town's qualities, challenges and opportunities

Dear architects, landscape architects and urban planners in Europe!

Levanger municipality invites you to help us use the protected cultural heritage in the Wooden Town Levanger as a resource to develop an attractive, inclusive and sustainable future town.

Our ambition is that the Wooden Town Levanger in the future is one of a kind and visible in Europe, where you can still feel the sense of place, the history and the identity. The protection should not be an obstacle to development, and it will be an exciting challenge to study how protection and innovative architecture can be balanced.

We offer exciting challenges. To realize good ideas, we have put several projects on hold waiting for the results from European 16. The preparations for European 16 has rekindled the idea for a new library and cultural centre in Levanger. How can innovative architecture and cultural programming go hand in hand with an overall urban development strategy? We hope your contributions can help revitalize our central urban spaces and give insight into how the new library and culture house can be built, programmed and integrated within the city.

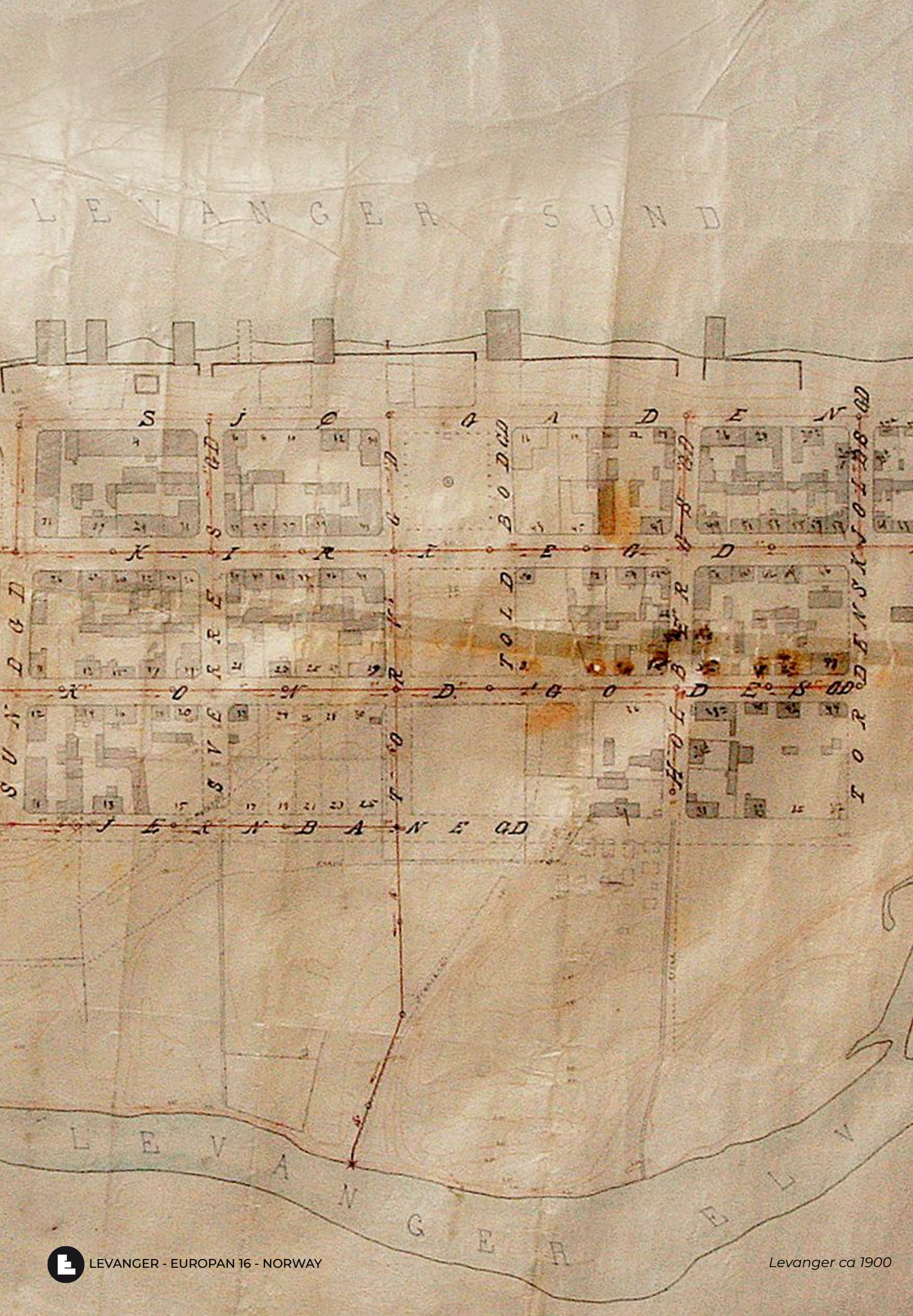
The car age has for decades taken over the town and displaced the people. How can we through innovative solutions create town centre more suited for people and less suited for the 12 000 cars which daily drive through the town center and occupies valuable areas?

How can we build a bridge between the current and the future cultural heritages, and balance the need for growth and development with preservation and activation of the historical urban environment?

European16 offers us the opportunity for innovative thinking that promotes good lives and a safe, inclusive town where the people are most important. How can we develop the new and exciting town through equal dialog, mobilization, bottom-up-processes and co-creation with our inhabitants?

Welcome to Levanger!

Kind regards,
Anita Ravlo Sand
Mayor



The town's history

Levanger has a past to be proud of. Our valuable history includes hundreds of cultural heritages, which tell the story of how Levanger was established on the peninsula between the strait Levangersundet and the river Levangerelva and evolved into the town we know today.

The municipality of Levanger is located by the Trondheimsfjord in the central Trøndelag region, 80 km from the city of Trondheim and 50 km from Trondheim Airport. The municipality is home to 20,185 people. Around half of them live in or close to the historical town Levanger which has national protection as a cultural heritage.

The story begins in the sweeping landscape surrounding the town, where trails and roads have led people to the town ever since the Viking Age. Surrounded by valuable arable land, the town began life as a seaside village around 1820.

Not subject to planning rules, the town arose as a linear structure along the strait Levangersundet with wharves by the water.

After a city fire in 1846, Levanger got its first and only town plan, designed by Major Sejersted. The town plan took its ideals from European townscape in the 1800s with their straight thoroughfares, enclosed blocks and prominent, angled corners.

The perpendicular park axis, the allmenning (the commons) between the wharves and Sjøgata, the roads opening onto the Levangersundet and important landmarks were key elements. After the last great fire in 1897, the town was rebuilt partly with richly ornamented timber houses inspired by different styles. This is where the people of the town lived and worked.

Behind the entranceways, in the more modest private courtyards, people kept livestock and grew vegetables and potatoes. These courtyards have untold stories which have the potential to be put to use.

Communities are created by people. Involving inhabitants will provide force behind the new story about the future town of Levanger.



Historical market and meeting place

As a settlement, Levanger has been in constant flux for more than 1,000 years: from farm to seaside village and finally licensed market town in 1836. The town has been an important meeting place for traders since the Middle Ages – a key factor in the growth and development of the town by the water. Levangermarkedet, one of the oldest and most important markets in Norway, was established at the convergence of the roads from the Swedish villages to the east and the ice-free fjord to the west.

This central hub received a further boost when the first steamboat company in the northern part of Norway was established in 1848 and again when the railway was built in 1902. Car-based development, urban sprawl and centralization have gradually emptied the town of important trade and services, thus weakening the town's original role as a meeting place for trade and culture.

After years of systematic work, the tide is slowly turning, and one sign of the times is that people are returning to neighbourhood living. Surveys and citizen participation in the planning and development processes show that people of all ages want different types of inclusive meeting places.

Residents in both Levanger town and the surrounding settlements state that the historical town Levanger is still important as a meeting place and identity marker for everyone.

Any development plans must therefore seek to create a town that also serves those living outside the town centre in the future. Development must take place in consultation with residents across the municipality.

The town's metabolism

The impact of car use on the town's vitality is noticeable. After 60 years of car-based development, Levanger town centre is dominated by road traffic and bears the marks of the gradual flight of both people and services from the town centre. The low population density and scattered settlement make it difficult to provide comprehensive public transport services.

The town's main street, Kirkegata, is weighed down by traffic, with 12,000 vehicles passing through every day (AADT). In comparison, 14–15,000 vehicles a day use the E6 national highway just outside the town. The project site approaches the Living Cities theme with questions surrounding both sub-themes: metabolism and inclusion. The current situation is causing problems for the local climate and preventing equitable access to services.

High levels of dust, noise and air pollution along with reduced service provision have made it less attractive to live and trade in the historical wooden town Levanger.

Because the city lacks a wide service and has an inflexible and expensive public transport, the residents are forced to shop at the mall and use their car. This restricts access to services for those less well-off and without a car. These social inequalities affect public health and quality of life.

The environmental and social challenges are two sides to the same coin: finding a good solution to the traffic problem and ensuring good access to services in the town centre are key elements in creating a town that is more inclusive, diverse and sustainable.



The historical town as a blueprint for the compact town

The wooden town Levanger was originally designed and scaled for the people who lived and worked there. People worked in or near the town and were largely self-sufficient in terms of food and clothing. Shops and other services were available locally. They moved around either on foot or by horse and cart.

Historical Levanger very much resembles the “ideal of the modern sustainable town”. The old wooden town and the town plan, therefore, represent important ideals and sources of knowledge now that we set out to develop Levanger for the future.

The Norwegian Ministry of Climate and the Environment (2013) describes the “modern sustainable town” as a green and diverse, dense and urban compact town with a vibrant centre. Everyone has access to public transport, shops and local services, kindergartens and schools, meeting places and attractive green spaces within walking distance of their home.

The town centre is the most important meeting place in the “modern sustainable town”, offering a variety of retailers, private and public services and cultural activities. This reduces the need for transport and car-dependency.

Distances in small towns can often be perceived as being longer than they actually are. This perception is impacted by the surroundings, by what happens on the journey and by the speed of the journey. Thanks to its attractive setting and untapped opportunities, Levanger has potential as a pedestrian and cycling town by putting people, not the car, first.

In the summer of 2018, the rental of city bikes was rolled out in strategic locations in Levanger. The reason was that public health had been adopted as a comprehensive strategy for Levanger and in order to give people an alternative to the car.



The town as a cultural scene and a meeting place

The goal for Levanger's culture policy is that “culture should play an important role in society. Every resident should be able to create, practice and experience culture.”

Good cultural venues and a variety of activities are key to making Levanger an attractive student and university town as well as a place to live. Culture is essential both due to its inherent value and as a tool for reinforcing local identity, aiding social inclusion and strengthening networks and solidarity between different stakeholders.

Shared meeting places that invite people to participate in social and cultural activities help foster a sense of belonging, community and inclusion. Good arts provision also has knock-on effects and helps create vibrancy, a sense of community, good public health and business development.

Arenas that promote public health will be good investments in the long term. Levanger has a number of small and large spaces. The past few years have seen numerous new cultural initiatives such as theatre events and concerts in public spaces and courtyards across the town.

The historical atmosphere which helps create unique experiences and the partnerships between numerous organizers have resulted in a common effort to create diverse and inclusive arts venues in the town's outdoor spaces.

Many of the buildings housing municipal cultural activities in the town centre are unsuited for their use. The town has spent years trying to identify a good model for its cultural infrastructure in harmony with its soul and character. We hope European can help us by providing input on how the urban development and cultural infrastructure can be developed in tandem.





Kirkegata. Image: Levanger Fotomuseum



Kirkegata today. Image: TN

The town's qualities, challenges and opportunities

Levanger possesses numerous qualities both in and outside the protected town centre. It is located in scenic settings at the Trøndelag region's heart, between the strait Levangersundet and the River Levangerelva, close to the sea and mountains and surrounded by farmland and countryside.

Levanger is a unique, compact town with its historical town plan, fascinating urban spaces, unique courtyards, splendid architecture and an important transport hub right in the centre of town. Supporters and volunteers from the town and surrounding villages make Levanger more attractive with their knowledge, passion and enthusiasm. The rare national conservation status places Levanger on the international map and gives us a competitive edge. In combination, these factors provide a unique opportunity to develop a living and sustainable town.

Levanger's unique planning history with the well-preserved town plan from 1846 and the timber buildings from the period 1896–1904 have been given national status in the form of heritage protection. When initiating the process of protecting the cultural heritage site in 2008, a "negative myth" arose that the protection would prevent development.

Through our international partners, we have found that most small and medium-sized towns in Europe are facing the same challenges as Levanger even though they have not been protected: cars, exhaust fumes, large car parks, the closure of services and increasing online shopping have resulted in near-empty shops and little activity and few people in the town centres.

The age of the car reinforces this trend in that we no longer live and work in the same place, while car-based planning does not harmonise with the historical town's function, form and scale.

Although the "negative myth" surrounding the protection is not necessarily true, it remains a barrier to development because it is perceived as truth or used as truth by stakeholders with different agendas. The power of such myths has a major impact on urban development in Levanger.

The "positive myth" contends that protecting the town's cultural heritage is a resource and a competitive advantage when developing a more attractive and vibrant town for the future. This perspective plays on the town's identity and involves and engages its historical qualities, characteristics and unique atmosphere in new ways.

However, we cannot grasp these opportunities without also tackling the challenges that Levanger faces. We need solutions to deal with cars and traffic, resolve conflicts of interest, stem the tide of dwindling town centre functions and solve the issue of universal design and space limitations in the old buildings.

We also need good ideas and meeting places to forge partnerships and encourage co-creation between the numerous property owners, businesses and voluntary organisations.

Study area

Doughnut planning

A sprawling town centre

Key typologies

Traffic and mobility

Agriculture, water and biodiversity

Co-operation and co-creation



The town centre's location on a peninsula between the Levangersundet on one side and the River Levangerelva on the other poses challenges in terms of traffic management and mobility. Aerial view of Levanger, looking towards the south.

Doughnut planning

How can we turn this trend and fill in the “hole in the doughnut”?

The idea of developing the town from the inside out has been, and remains, a significant challenge due to urban sprawl and “doughnut planning”. Centralization has caused public services to be closed down or moved out of the town and municipality.

Essential services and town centre facilities have also moved out. These processes have eventually become self-perpetuating. Now they run counter to the intentions behind protecting the centre of Levanger in that it is becoming less and less attractive to establish new activities in the town centre.

The county authorities have often been sceptical of allowing urban sprawl when considering planning applications in Levanger, whereby important town centre facilities are moved to the overspill areas of Moan and Havna

They point out that the cultural heritage protection should instead be seen as a resource that can reinforce Levanger as an attractive town.

It is important that the town’s characteristics in the form of its densely built wooden quarter and a commercial sector based on retail, crafts, administration and culture are maintained. The town will lose out to the competition if it does not invest in attractive commercial buildings and good meeting places.

To prevent urban sprawl, it is important to restrict car-based retail and enable people to walk, cycle or use public transport. To comply with the conservation regulations, the local authority must support development in the historical town rather than encourage further retail leakage out of the town centre.

A sprawling town centre

Levanger is Norway's fourth-largest agriculture-based municipality, with farming accounting for 18% of all employment. Levanger is home to several major manufacturing businesses. Among them are Norway's largest paper factory, Norske Skog Skogn, and the world's largest liquid biogas factory, Biokraft, representing a nascent circular economy cluster in the village of Skogn. The milk powder manufacturer Normilk, based in the centre of Levanger town, is an important and growing enterprise.

To the north of the town centre lies the port of Levanger, an old industrial estate in the process of being transformed into a new mixed-use neighbourhood. New housing is at the heart of the development, and some 1,000 new homes may be built.

Even further to the north is the district of Røstad, home to the Nord University campus and Levanger's largest secondary school. The university, which is one of Levanger's biggest employers and meeting places with around 400 staff and 2,500 students, will be expanded in the coming years with new study programmes, more students and additional buildings.

Next to the university campus is Filmfabrikken, a co-location of photography, film and TV production companies also experiencing growth. Røstad is also an attractive recreational area, and the municipal sports hall and swimming pool are located here. On the southern fringes of the town centre is Levanger Hospital, a local hospital for 100,000 people in central Trøndelag.

It is Levanger's biggest employer, with a workforce of around 1,600. The hospital is very important to the town and its development. The hospital site, which is under ongoing development, has large car parks and heavy road traffic.

Pedestrian access from the hospital site to the town centre is through the Stadionparken. The route provides a good connection between Levanger Hospital, the town centre and the public transport hub at Levanger Station.

1 km further to the south is the district of Moan. It is a busy retail hub with several large shopping centres and around 1,000 jobs. The Magneten centre was established here in the mid-1980s and is a traditional car-based shopping centre. The establishment and development of the retail park in Moan has posed challenges for retailers in central Levanger.

Many retail businesses have moved out of the town centre to the shopping centres. Simultaneously, the retail park has given residents a much wanted modern and efficient retail outlet. Housing and several large office buildings have been built in parts of Moan in recent years. An attractive and well used 2 km promenade along Eidsbotn and the strait Levangersundet also links the area to the town centre.

The centre of Levanger is also surrounded by the expansive residential areas of Nettet, Bruborg and Høgberget/Momarka. Relatively few people currently live in the town centre (around 1,000 people), while some 9,000 live in the surrounding residential areas.

The town centre's location on a peninsula between the Levangersundet on one side and the River Levangerelva on the other poses challenges in terms of traffic management and mobility. Large volumes of traffic are channelled through the town centre via three bridges. It has been difficult to identify new solutions to relieve the town centre of traffic.

The shopping area south of the town centre, with the shopping centre Magneten.



A real hot potato

Car use is a contentious topic in Levanger. Everyone agrees that the traffic polluting the city centre is harmful. However, there has been no consensus on what to do about it—resulting in very little actually having been done. Until now.

The municipality will in 2021 adopt a plan to create an urban development strategy focused on compact development, to make the city safer for pedestrians, to improve the air quality in the centre and to take action on the parking and traffic issues in the downtown.

Europan 16 is central to this plan, and the municipality is eagerly awaiting the results of the competition so it can start the work of solving the town's mobility issues.



Apartments across the fjord from the town of Levanger.



Key typologies



Student lane

A popular pedestrian bridge connects the centre of Levanger to the university campus in the north.



Roads

Wide roads, with buffer zones and bike paths are the norm outside of the town centre.



New developments

A new neighborhood is in the process of springing up in the old port dramatically increasing the urban population of the town.



Secret doors

Secret alleyways to the backyards in The Wooden Town.



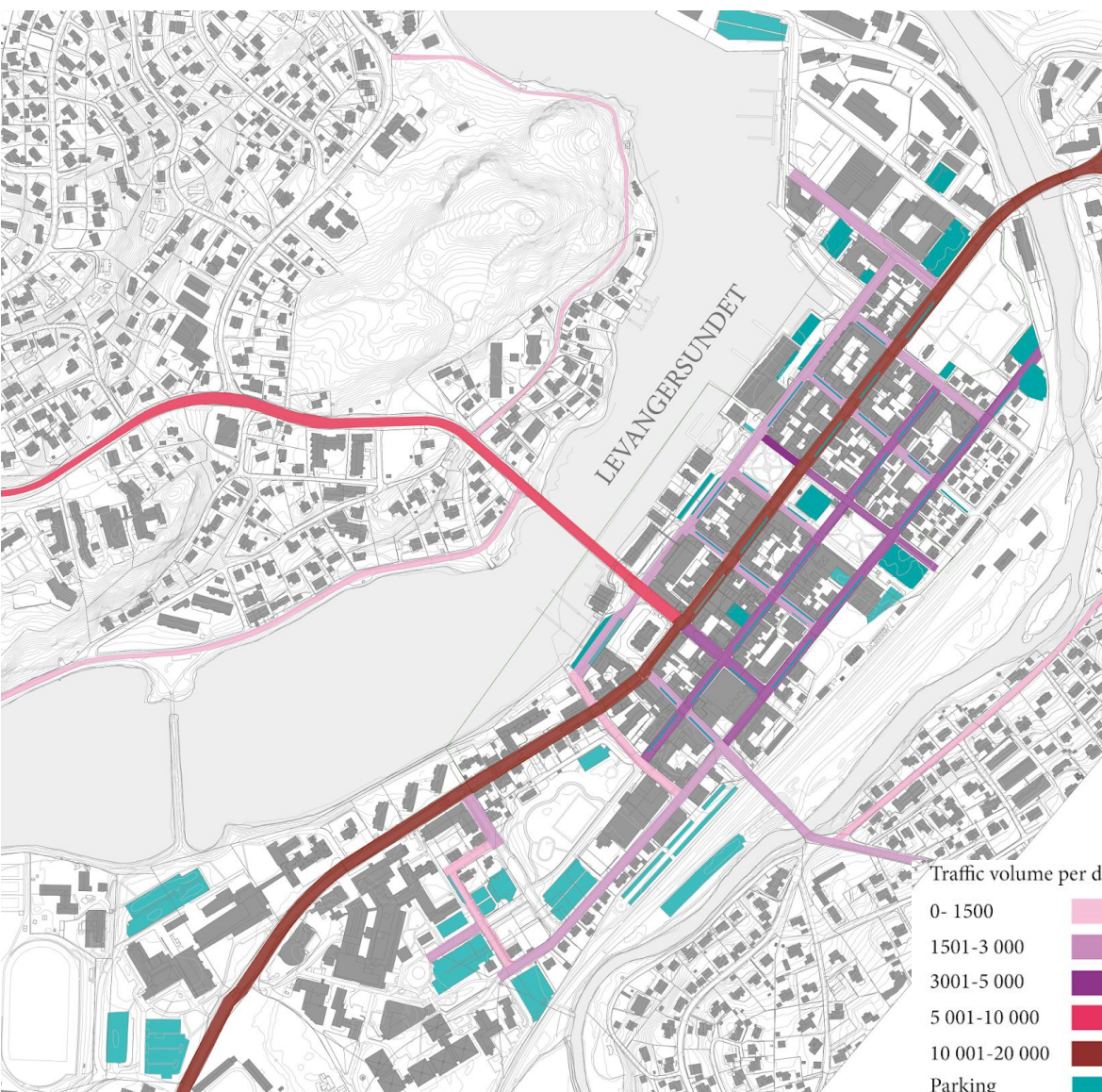
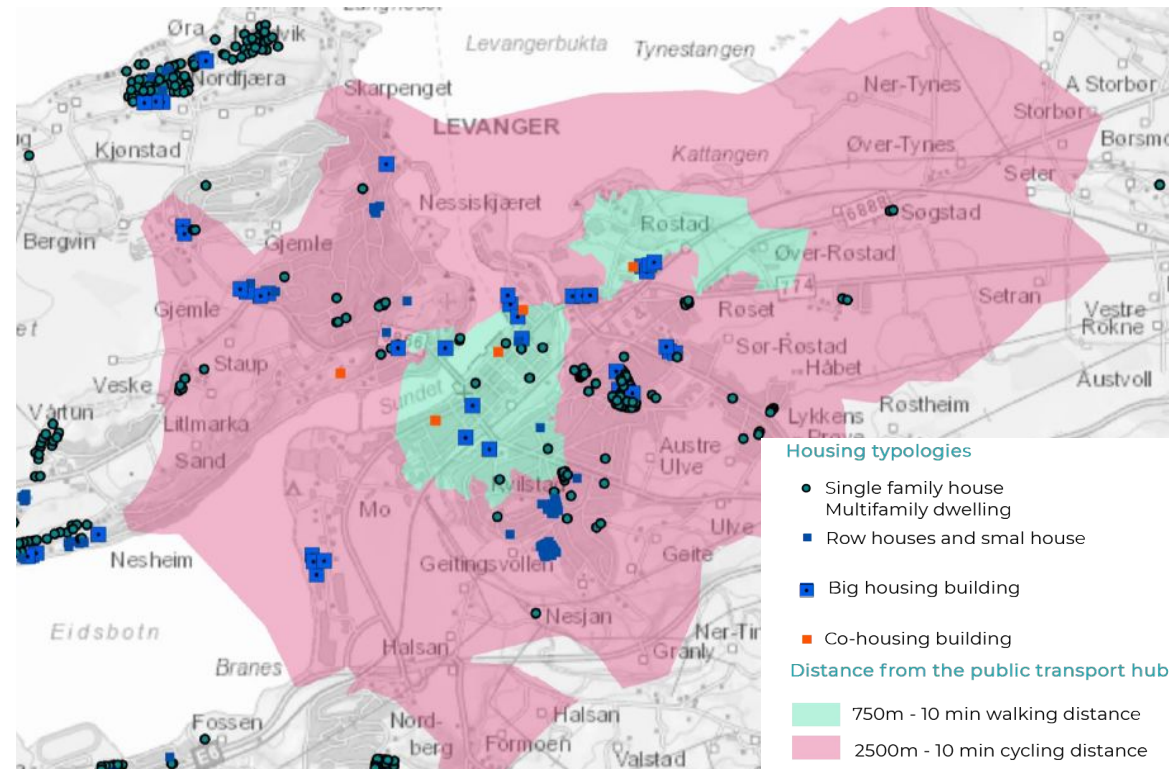
The river and the railroad

The railroad crosses into the Levanger peninsula to make a stop in the middle of town. This creates a barrier between the town and the river that circumscribes the town.



The cut corners

The town plan from 1846 took its ideals from European townscapes in the 1800s with their straight thoroughfares, enclosed blocks and prominent, angled corners.



Map showing the traffic situation outside the town center (Map: Levanger municipality).

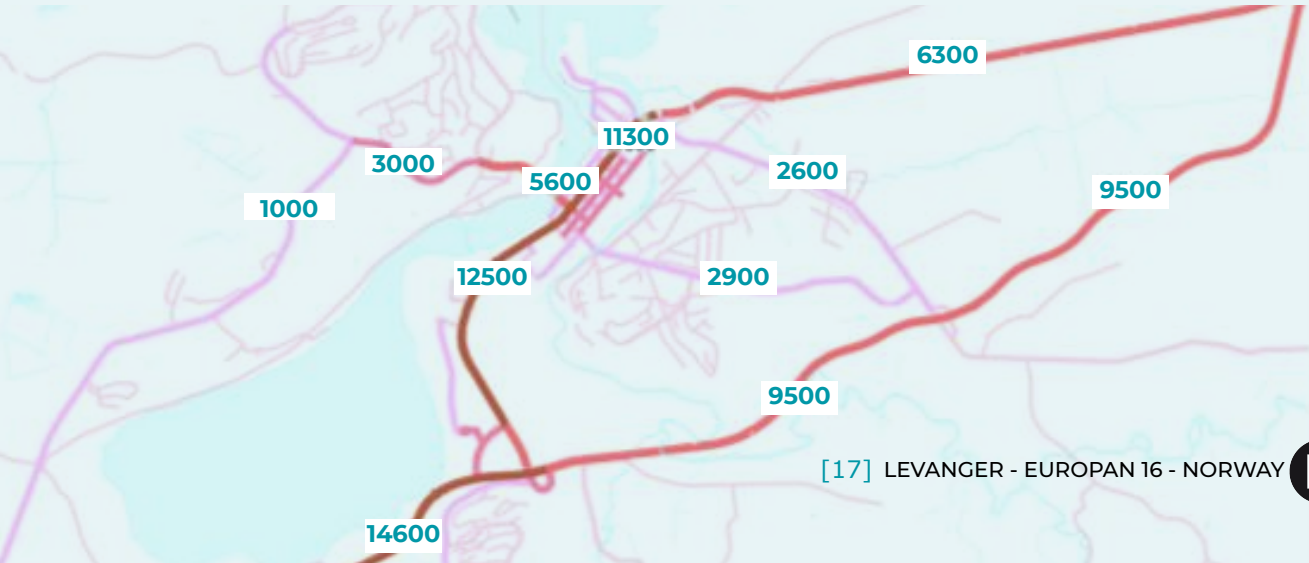
Traffic and mobility

Sustainable urban development is important in order to cut greenhouse gas emissions. To meet the targets set out in the national guidelines on co-ordinated housing, land and transport planning (2014), we need to develop the compact town and village centres, public transport hubs, plans for better utilization of the land and new solutions to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.

Public train and bus services must be strengthened in order to meet the targets. Little has happened by way of development on the Trøndelag Commuter Rail line in recent decades, but the construction of a new E6 highway between Trondheim and Steinkjer offers new opportunities for the railway infrastructure. The new trains due to be introduced in 2021 will double capacity on the line. To exploit this increase in capacity, the provision of commuter parking must also be bolstered.

Access to the town for motorists is via three bridges across the River Levangerelva and the Levangersundet in addition to an approach road from the south. There is also a ferry terminal in the town centre, providing an important link to the island of Ytterøy. There are moves underway to make the ferry service a pilot for autonomous ferry crossings. Pedestrians can also use two footbridges connected to the foot and cycle paths along the strait and the river. The existing cycle network in Levanger is only partially connected, but it is continually improved and expanded.

Map showing the traffic situation outside the town centre (Map: Levanger municipality).



Levanger has northbound and southbound train and coach connections, and Levanger Station is centrally located between the River Levangerelva and the town. However, the railway is also perceived as a barrier to the river.

Good solutions for public transport and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists will help ensure more sustainable urban development. The “Travel Smart” project has sought to change attitudes and make people use public transport, walk and cycle. Long distances and a small population make it difficult to invest in public transport in the traditional sense, however.

Cars as a means of transport are important in order to maintain population figures in the villages and ensure value creation in the agricultural sector – a key industry in the municipality. When developing a more sustainable mobility structure, it will therefore be important to identify solutions to accommodate this group.

The heavy traffic through the town centre shows that there is significant potential for improving public transport and cycling options. Surveys have shown that around 50% of people who live up to 4 km away from their place of work or study travel by car to work or college and that there is ample free parking in the different workplaces.

Many still choose the car regarding of distance. How can we design traffic arteries that invite people to walk and cycle?



Agriculture, water and biodiversity

The centre of Levanger is surrounded by farmland of very high quality. This means that geographical expansion often comes into conflict with land conservation interests. The threshold for using agricultural land for development purposes is very high, and Levanger has therefore adopted a strategy of meeting much of its land requirements through densification.

Continued growth is also putting pressure on recreational areas close to the town centre. These areas are important for the quality of life and biodiversity in the town centre.

Water is an essential quality in Levanger. The fjord, the strait and the River Levangerelva are all bodies of water closely linked to the town centre. They are rich in plants and animals and therefore important for biodiversity. Eidsbotn has been protected due to its local birdlife, and the strait and the River Levangerelva both contain important habitats. The bodies of water also have the potential to be developed into a resource for the people of Levanger.

Co-operation and co-creation

In recent years Levanger Council has embraced co-operation, citizen participation and co-creation in its planning and development processes by mobilizing resources in the local community. The “Levanger by & bygdeLAB” project is working to create new meeting places and models for citizen participation and co-creation in partnership with voluntary organizations in four different locations in the municipality.

Feedback on the planning and development processes has shown that residents in all age groups want measures to improve well-being, community, and safety in the town.

The working group in “Levanger by&bygdeLAB.”



Project site

Levanger cultural heritage site

Heritage protection

Strategy for the management of Norwegian urban cultural heritage

Green structures

Street structure

Levanger station and Jernbaneparken

A library and cultural centre

Citizen participation and collaboration



Levanger cultural heritage site

Large parts of central Levanger have been protected as a cultural heritage site. The protection covers the low-rise wooden quarter dating from the brief period between the Norwegian building act of 1896 and the masonry construction act of 1904. Levanger suffered a great fire in 1897 and was rebuilt in the years leading up to 1904.

The masonry construction act was introduced after the great fire of Ålesund in 1904 and banned the building of timber houses in every town in Norway.

There are few examples of intact agglomerations of preserved wooden houses from the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Central and Northern Norway. Other timber-built districts have been destroyed by fire or were bombed during WWII.

The protected site measures some 175,000 m², and a total of 157 plots and 245–250 buildings are partly or entirely regulated by the protection. The protected buildings include 62 residential properties, 24 commercial properties, 55 mixed-use properties, seven other buildings such as a church and parish hall, as well as nine plots of land.

The protection covers all outdoor spaces and the exteriors of all buildings, fixed structures, services and installations within the map boundary, including all courtyards, entranceways, roads and road surfaces, permanent pavings and coverings, parks and other green structures. The protection does not cover more recent technical installations such as lamp posts, electrical substations etc.

Some buildings on Levanger's cultural heritage site are more important than others. It is important to preserve the oldest buildings (1897–1904), and returning the façades to their historical state is a strategy adopted by the conservation authorities.

The building stock in Levanger is varied. It is typical of the period around 1900 when industrially manufactured buildings were starting to replace the hand-crafted building tradition. Large parts of the building stock from the period 1897–1904 have been preserved. Some of the buildings have been modernised and converted, but the town plan from the mid-19th century and the town's timber style have been well preserved. These buildings are the reason why Levanger is now a protected cultural heritage site, although its history dates back much further.

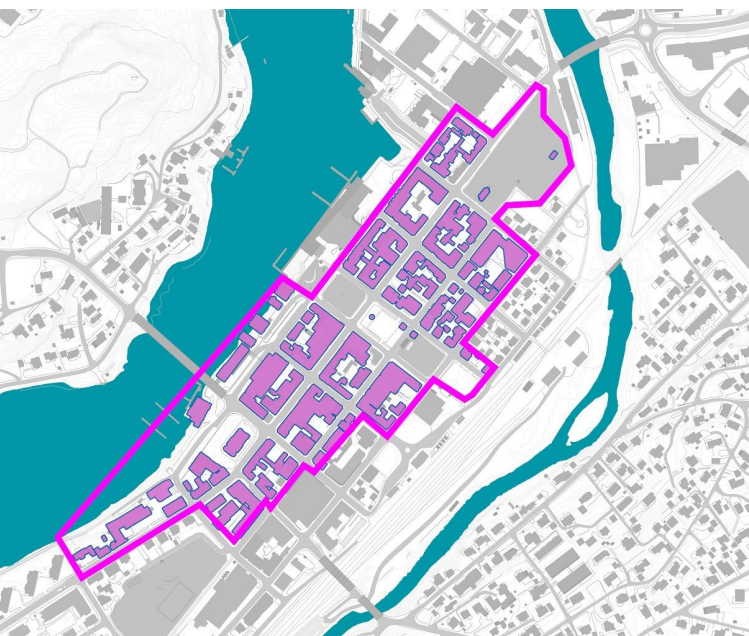
Heritage protection

Heritage protection is the strongest form of preservation. Protection means that all major interventions/changes to the cultural heritage site above and beyond ordinary maintenance require dispensation and must be approved by the county conservation authorities. Dispensation may not be granted to changes that involve material interventions which compromise the objective of the protection.

When a cultural heritage site is protected, it is in order to preserve the context and totality of the site. Heritage sites are areas where cultural relics form part of a greater whole or context.

The purpose of protection the Levanger cultural heritage site is to preserve and conserve a townscape of national value, which serves as a good example of Norwegian town development history with a particular focus on town planning history, cultural history and architecture.

The protection aims to preserve a cultural environment that has been showing tendencies towards urbanization ever since it was a meeting place in the Viking and Middle Ages and when the unregulated town sprang up in the 18th and 19th centuries before being regulated in 1846.



The cultural heritage site must be preserved as a source of research, knowledge, exploration and use for existing and future generations. The cultural heritage protection does not place any restrictions on the use of the existing buildings, and it does not prevent ordinary maintenance of the town's façades. Interior alteration and renovation may be carried out without dispensation provided they do not impact the building's exterior.

The protection should not prevent Levanger from being maintained and developed as a living town with homes, trade and other commercial activity on the same scale as before.

The debate sparked by the heritage protection process, which began in 2008, demonstrates two wildly different approaches to the protection. To some, the protection meant that a "dome" was placed over the town, turning it into a museum that would impede development.

The protection was seen as a provocation and state intervention in local democracy. Others felt that the protection would help ensure positive development in the town. After years of exploring the opportunities that heritage protection offers, most people now realize that it does, in fact, provide a unique chance for Levanger to develop and renew itself.

The cultural heritage of our towns and cities must be managed in a long-term perspective and be put to use as a resource and common good as we seek to create good and attractive communities.

This must be done by strengthening conservation efforts and maintaining the existing qualities of the most important historical urban environments. It is also a goal to reinforce our cultural heritage sites' role and significance in the green shift and enable development and transformation where possible.



Strategy for the management of Norwegian urban cultural heritage

The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage has set out a strategy for the management of Norway's cultural heritage in which it makes recommendations on how to manage densification on cultural heritage sites of national and regional importance. It recommends that urban cultural heritage management should concentrate on increasing adaptation and minimizing contrast when building in historical urban environments.

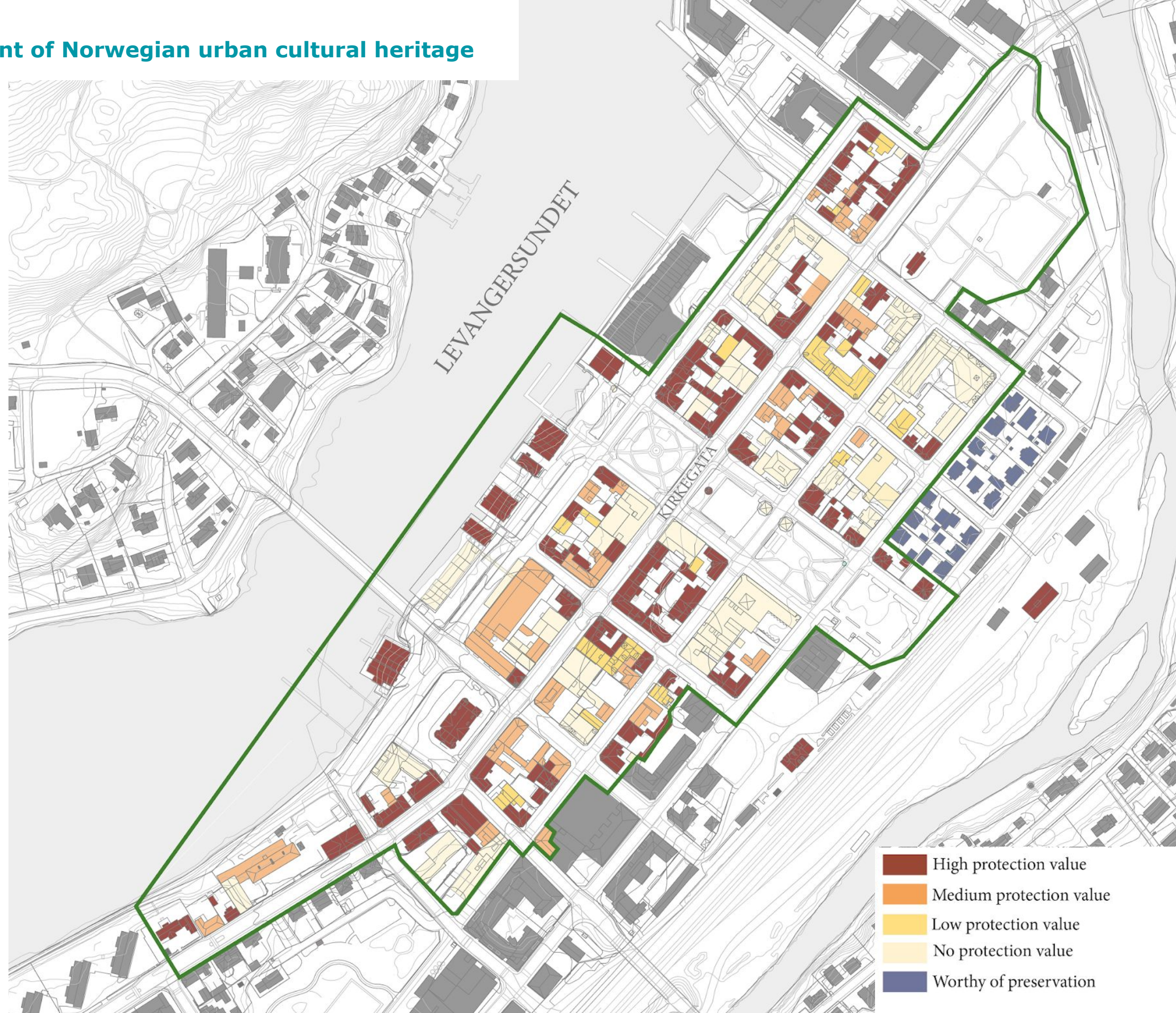
Good architecture, historical buildings and urban environments are described as resources when developing attractive towns and cities, and they help create a local identity and positive urban experiences. Rebuilding, densification, and more intensive use of underused urban areas with impractical buildings can also help ensure more sustainable town development.

Conservation should be sought for valuable buildings with historical façades and structures, original elements such as windows, doors, trims, cladding and roof coverings and buildings which constitute key elements in a wider building and street environment. Building elements should be adapted to reflect the building's original style and materials when renovation has to be carried out.

Settlement patterns and grid layouts, thoroughfares, alleyways, commons and plot boundaries are all important aspects of urban history and should be preserved and maintained.

Heritage sites in urban environments of national and significant regional value should be treated as a whole, and new interventions should conform to the existing buildings. New interventions should uphold the characteristics of the site.

Building height and volume are important in this respect. Good design, materials and colours are also essential in ensuring harmonization between old and new.



Examples of the protected exteriors



Major Sejersted's town plan from 1846

The town was laid out along the ice-free port by the strait Levangersundet. It emerged as a linear and irregular urban structure with piers extending into the strait and homes and outhouses on the other side of the street, formerly known as Krambodgaden.

Levanger has suffered many big fires that have had a major impact on how the town developed and how it looks today. In 1692 most of Levanger was obliterated after a lightning strike hit Levanger Church.

In 1846 it suffered yet another catastrophic fire that turned practically the whole town to ashes with the loss of 110 houses. That same year Major Sejersted designed Levanger's first-ever town plan. The grid plan was designed in line with the new building act of 1845 and prevailing international ideals

The positioning and orientation of the new block structure in which elements in the surrounding landscape were incorporated in the form of axes and backdrops was a typical design feature at the time. It was also common to use colonnades of trees to accentuate axes and add wide park axes to prevent fire from spreading.

The plan gave the town new opportunities for development, with a block structure and wide park axis designed to act as a firebreak. There was not much differentiation in the original street grid, rather it was designed as axes towards the Levangersundet and key elements in the surrounding landscape such as Staupshaugen and Gjeite farm. This town plan has left its mark on Levanger's block structure to this day.

In 1897 a fire broke out by the town's market square. 104 of the town's 133 houses burnt down. Only a few houses in the south of the town were saved. Farmers mobilized to try to save their dairy – and succeeded.

This meant that the neighbouring farms were also spared from the flames. Many of the buildings which survived the 1897 fire are still standing today.

However, it is especially the houses built after the fire but before the masonry construction act came into force in 1904 that have shaped the modern townscape. After the great fire of 1897, the town was resurrected, just as in 1846, but with more differentiated thoroughfares and more emphasis on axes and landscaping.

Fire safety has always been vital in the historical town. This can be seen in the town's current structure. The Commons and the park axis are good examples of fire prevention measures. The park axis is also a good illustration of Norwegian urban parks from the 19th century. The axis with its sightlines, the block structure and the design of the park remain largely unchanged, meaning it is of significant historical importance.

The remaining colonnades of birch trees in the park axis – which played an important role as a firebreak in a dense and vulnerable urban environment – show how the vegetation was used to prevent fires from spreading. The remaining birch trees are therefore of significant historical importance along with older exemplars of other species.

The 1846 town plan, with minor changes made in 1897, is still clearly visible in Levanger. This is particularly true for the road layout and the closed block structure. Some interventions have been made that are in breach of the intentions behind the original town plan, however.

In particular, the reconstruction of the historical common and the sightline towards the Levangersundet at the end of Holbergs Gate have compromised the historical town plan. The character of many of the old courtyards has also changed in that they have been converted from open-air spaces to covered stairwells, verandas and storehouses.



Architecture and building traditions

The development of Levanger town reflects the way in which building legislation and traditions have evolved over time. The cladding style can be seen across the town centre and, as is typical of the period, the buildings represent a wide range of designs.

The urban wooden houses with their entranceways, courtyards and outbuildings are good examples of the freedom that the preferred material offered builders.

Levanger is therefore, an outstanding example of an urban wooden quarter at the threshold of the 20th century, which is when industrially manufactured buildings began replacing crafts-based building traditions.

The architecture in the town centre is varied and predominantly from the period 1897 to around 1945. The prevailing house type is two-storey timber-notched and clad with elements of German Art Nouveau and Swiss chalet style.

Characteristic features include horizontal planed cladding with elaborate mouldings. Most of the windows are two or three-light mullion and transom windows with ornate frames.

The row of wharves facing the strait evokes images of the time when the sea provided the main access route to the town and Sjøgata was the main retail street. The wharves are the oldest and most original built structures in Levanger.

In 1904 a law required all new buildings in the city centre to be built in masonry to prevent fire spread. If there was a good distance between buildings, you could still build in wood.

During this period, the town got several new brick buildings inspired by different styles as Neo-Romantic style, Art Nouveau and New Renaissance.

The period also gave rise to a new type of building structure in the quarters and timber-framed detached villas in a Swiss chalet style with gardens. Some buildings were designed in an early functionalistic style in the years leading up to WWII. After 1960 a number of large commercial buildings were built in the town centre.

These break in part strongly with the wooden buildings in terms of size, scale and design. The modernization of the older buildings has contributed to old façades being stripped for detail and ornamentation. In recent times many buildings/façades have been restored more or less to their original state, often with the help of public/municipal funding.





The courtyards

Levanger also has examples of interesting courtyards. Some of the typical outbuildings have survived.

The courtyards and outbuildings tell a story of how people used to live. The social divide between the "Nerbyen" and "Øverbyen" districts are still clear to see in the architecture.



The park axis and adjacent functions



The historical park axis with surrounding buildings



Existing buildings along the park axis and the street Tollbugata



The historical park axis



Existing buildings along the park axis and the street Torggata

Green structures

Levanger has a long, unbroken and rich history of parks and gardens, probably stretching from the angelica gardens of the Vikings to today's park grounds. This is unique to Levanger compared with other towns and villages in the region. Its blue-green natural qualities are important resources when developing a sustainable town with high biodiversity.

To understand the context and history of Levanger's parks and gardens, we need to be aware of the other green spaces in the catchment area. They include a large English landscape park in Røstad, the gardening school in Staup and the Jernbaneparken.

Allmenningen

The Commons, Allmenningen, was a key feature in the town plan of 1846 and designed as an open space between the wharves and homes. The 30-metre wide belt ran parallel to the Levangersundet and the street Sjøgata and was meant to prevent fires from spreading. It was used for storage, storing boats and small gardens. Some were kitchen gardens with food plants, and some were purely ornamental. Public parks were added later, including Dueparken in 1901 on the initiative of the local tree-planting society.

Sjøparken

Closest to the Levangersundet is Sjøparken, which was revitalized in 2014 in order to highlight the Levangersundet as a key identity marker in the town. The park drops into the strait via a stepped slope, meant to signify the town's close connections to the fjord. It is bounded by older low-rise boathouses on either side with two protected trees among its unique qualities. A protected poplar near Sjøgata is an important element. Sjøparken has a guest marina for visitors arriving by boat.

Nedre Torv

This square is being used as a car park. A row of birch trees has been preserved at the end facing Tollbugata.



Torvet

Next to Kirkegata is a green space with a music pavilion from 1923 as a key historical element. Two rows of horse chestnuts were originally planted on either side of the pavilion, and a wrought iron gate and fence installed at the perimeter. The trees were removed in 2020 due to extensive rot damage, and the plan is for new trees to be planted in their place.

A grassy hill slopes towards the square, which served as a street market and trading place until the 1980s. A temporary pool framed by annuals in different colours was installed for a while in 1949. In 1997 the square was renovated and converted into a car park. The old gravel surface was replaced by grey paving stones. In the past, Torvet was used as a meeting place and street market. Much of the square is now used for ground-level parking.

Sejersteds Park

Sejersteds Park was previously known as Øvre Park. It was originally designed as a square with gravel paths and colonnades of trees near its centre, directly opposite the old town hall. The park, designed as a green square, was built before the great fire of 1877 in line with the prevailing ideals in Norwegian towns in the latter half of the 19th century.

Designed as an English landscape garden, it had a circular fountain pool at its centre. Diagonal and circular gravel paths divided the park into smaller patches of lawn with bushes and trees. A small playground was installed in the park. The playground has since been removed as it did not satisfy health and safety standards.

Nedre Park

The park is dominated by the double rows of large birch trees framing the park. There was originally an open space in the centre with diagonal gravel paths. The park was redesigned in the 1980s, and the gravel paths were replaced by grey paving stones. There are benches between the green and central spaces. In recent years the park has housed a temporary outdoor stage and an amphitheatre used for theatre performances as well as *lavvos* and stalls when historical events are being held.

The historical park axis

The historical park axis was regulated in the 1846 town plan primarily as a firebreak, although it later also came to serve as a market square and green artery. The park extends like an about 45 meters wide continuous axis, across several blocks, from the Levangersundet to the River Levangerelva, between Torggata and Tollbugata.

Double rows of birch were planted along these two streets. The distance from the river to the strait along the park axis is about 400 meters. The Levanger park axis is a well-preserved example of Norwegian urban parks in the 1800s.

Both the axis – with its sightlines and block structure – and the actual park design are of significant historical importance even though their original function has partially changed. The park axis is intersected perpendicularly by streets and comprises five different types of urban spaces with different qualities.



Street structure

Basically, the roads were placed as important axes in the open landscape. The straight roads are an important part of the town's structure with some running parallel to the river and the strait and other, less busy roads running parallel to the park axis.

Rounded corners have replaced the old angled corners. Universal design rules have resulted in several ramps being installed on the pavements. There is mostly street parking on one side of every street.

The thoroughfares themselves and their role as axes are of significant historical value (reflecting the town plan). Their value is impaired by the fact that many original trees have been removed, new trees have been planted in streets where there were previously none, and new species have been used.

The streetscape is heavily dominated by cars through traffic and on-street parking. The streets may have pavements on one or two sides. This makes it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to travel safely, and it contributes to conflicts and dangerous situations involving motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. The traffic and narrow pavements prevent businesses from creating attractive outdoor seating. The traffic also creates major challenges in terms of waste collection.

Partly narrow pavements and level differences between street and shops make it difficult to achieve good universal design and the goal of becoming an age-friendly town. Car pollution affects people's health, and pollution levels have at times been amongst the highest in the country. The pollution also corrodes the historical façades and makes it difficult for property owners to keep them clean and attractive.

The debate about parking in the town centre has been going on for years. Local businesses believe that nearby and easily accessible parking is vital to their survival. This point of view is supported by many people who say they do not shop in the town due to a lack of parking. Others believe that it is the very dominance of the car that prevents the town from becoming more vibrant and attractive.

Kirkegata

After the rebuilding following the great fire in 1897, Kirkegata became the town's main street and was laid out on an axis from the church to the farmhouse at Røstad Nedre farm. The axis was reinforced with the planting of birch trees at either end of Kirkegata and a row of birch trees alongside the church, park axis and cemetery. The main building at Røstad school from 1902 reinforces the axis and can now be seen as a backdrop at the end of Kirkegata. The street is tangent to three parks: the church, the park axis, and the north-east cemetery. The thoroughfares' historical value and the axis they create have been weakened since the original birch trees no longer exist.

As a main road and artery through the town, the street is often dominated by heavy traffic, resulting in noise and dust problems. The last count in 2019 found that 12,000 cars use the street every day. Previous counts have shown that the figure has occasionally been as high as 13,000 a day. This could suggest that projects such as "Travel Smart" and public awareness campaigns have had an effect.

Jernbanegata

The two-way street which runs between the residential area of Jeriko and the hospital. Next to the public transport hub with a taxi rank and bus terminal at the train station.

Sverres Gate

Sverres Gate is part of the axis between Gjeite farm and Staupshaugen. In 1902 the station building was constructed, becoming a fund motive at one end of the thoroughfare.

Håkon den Godes Gate

One-way street linking the historical park axis with the modern skatepark. In the summer months, parts of the street (one block) become a pedestrian precinct. Half of the street serves as an access road to ground-level parking for flat residents.

Sundgata

Sundgata is an extension of the bridge Sundbrua, the main access road from the residential areas on Neset. The traffic light junction between Sundgata and Kirkegata is very busy, especially during rush hour.

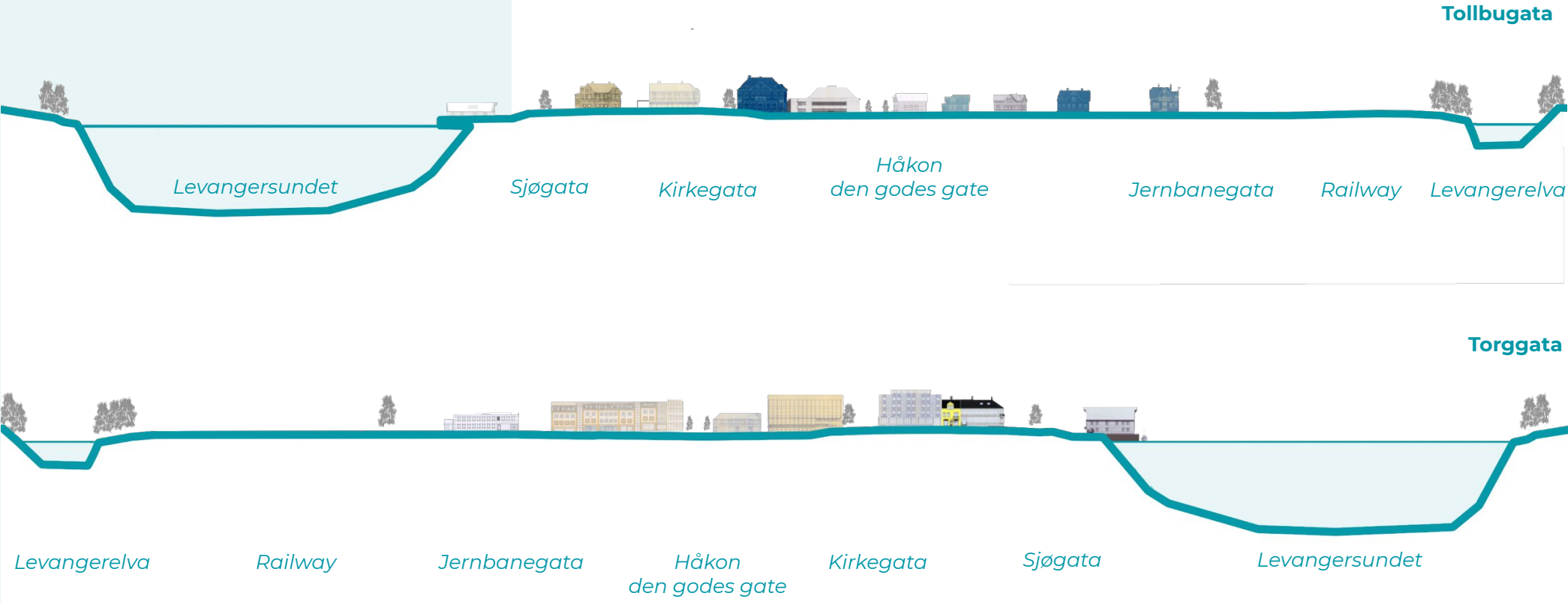
Brugata

The old royal road has been used as an approach road to Levanger town dating back perhaps as far as the 11th century. It has been reinforced as an axis in the new town plan stretching from Brusve farm, across the river to the south-western side of the church, between the two old lime trees next to Levanger Church (the entrance to the mediaeval church).

Brusve farm also served as the local police station, while the customs house was located by the bridge just below the farm.

Sjøgata

The historical Sjøgata is part of the historical commons Almenningen, separating the town's buildings from the lower-lying wharves. Sjøgata is a major access road to the secondary school in Røstad and was upgraded to a shared space in 2014, meaning drivers must pay attention to cyclists on the road.





Jernbanegata with the train station to the left behind the garage row.

Levanger station and Jernbaneparken

Designed by Paul Armin Due, Levanger Station was completed in 1902 and protected as a national heritage in 2002. A flowerbed rotunda was created symmetrical placed in front of the station building, as was common at many stations. The station site is just east of Levanger town centre on filled-in marshland by the River Levangerelva. The purpose of the protection was to preserve a piece of railway history that has significant architectural value.

The protection should safeguard the impact of the station site on the locality by maintaining its character as railway infrastructure with its roads, platforms, landscaping and vegetation. Its central location as a public transport hub by the historical park axis enables a drive towards green mobility.

In the past, there were small kitchen and berry gardens next to Levanger Station. Allotment gardens along the tracks were used to spread knowledge to the public. Along with the park, the area was used for recreation by travellers while waiting for the next train.

Jernbaneskogen, located between the track and the River Levangerelva, provided timber for the railway and a popular play area for children. The park is a good example of Norwegian station parks at the start of the last century. Its historical value is partly compromised, and the woods by the river have become overgrown.

Train station



A library and cultural centre

The role of the library

Levanger Library is an element in the town's sustainable, visionary and cultural infrastructure. The library is free for all to use and plays an important role in terms of integration and inclusion. It is a busy venue and significant meeting place, and a forum for debate. In 2021 Levanger will offer staff less library service to the public outside ordinary opening hours by appointment.

Co-location

Larger and more functional premises are needed if the library is to develop and accommodate additional activities. A new building on the library site is being investigated to establish whether it may be possible to co-locate multiple cultural activities in order to create synergies.

How can the library be co-located with a conservation/education/discovery centre (museum), cinema, school of music and performing arts, youth club, rehearsal rooms (e.g. black box and band room), volunteering centre and a borrowing centre for sports equipment?

The facilities in a modern library must be attractive to volunteers and entrepreneurs in the start-up phase with additional and better meeting and conference rooms, study rooms and temporary offices.

The site

The library site enjoys a unique setting by the train and bus station between Jernbaneparken, the historical park axis and the town hall. The site is until the area that is a protected heritage site and is well exposed on all sides.

The immediate surroundings represent a significant variation in design and height with low wooden houses, the station building, the four-storey town hall and open spaces and parks.

Existing building

Built in 1956, the building was originally home to a factory producing mirrors and mouldings (Levanger Speil- og Guldlistefabrik). When the factory closed down in 1983, the post office moved in and stayed until around 2000. In 2003 the library moved in and remains there to this day.

The library structure comprises one and partly two storeys. The exterior is typical of the 1950s, with repeated iterations of window apertures and concrete surfaces.

An investigation was conducted to ascertain whether the existing building could be transformed to meet the need for development. The investigation concluded that the building has suffered a lack of maintenance and is in dire need of renovation both technically and aesthetically.

The back of the building forms a marked barrier towards the railway tracks, and there is little in its exterior to suggest that it houses one of the town's most important cultural venues.

The upper floor of the library is not well adapted for visitors because of its lack of universal design. An extension would compromise spatial qualities on the ground floor.



Torggata with the library on the right



Additional area- existing parking



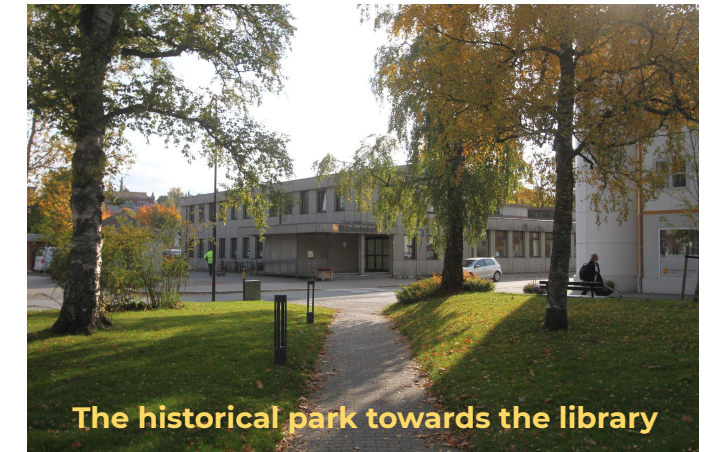
Additional area towards the library



Rolfsjordgården – protected building



Jernbanegata



The historical park towards the library



The library and the town hall



Parking place beside the library



Jernbaneparken

How can a link be forged between the historical park and today's Levanger Station as a modern transport hub?

What is the site's potential and tolerances in relation to the existing historical buildings?

How can the library be reinforced as an attractive meeting place and linked to the historical park axis?

Citizen participation and collaboration

“Levanger by&bygdLAB” project, in order to develop new meeting places and models for citizen participation, collaboration and co-creation in municipal planning and development processes.

Meetings of the “Levanger by&bygdLAB” project have been held in connection with municipal planning processes due to being completed in 2021.

Co-creation is a goal in the municipality’s master plan. The administration is therefore working with four voluntary organizations in Levanger and surrounding villages with the participation processes. Over the course of the meetings, we received 1,700 planning responses.

Just like the feedback we have received through public consultations and surveys, many of them concerned the development of the historical town Levanger.

Every two years, the local authority conducts a resident survey to learn how residents perceive the town and the local authority.

In the past few years, the local authority has also encouraged citizen participation and co-operation in order to develop the town through projects such as “Attractive Nordic Towns”, “Travel Smart”, “The Inherited Town”, “Commerce in Levanger town” and “An age-friendly town and community”.

Feedback received on our planning and development processes shows that people want

- A welcoming and safe town centre. The existing centre is seen as dark and unsafe (feedback from young people)
- More life in the town centre
- The square, Torvet, to be turned into a meeting place, including for students, children and young people
- Increased use of courtyards and empty premises
- More activities
- Green spaces and parks with benches, flowers and opportunities for play
- A new library
- A cinema
- An outdoor stage at the square, Torvet
- Mobility, good public transport
- Physical access and universal design
- Solutions to traffic challenges – fewer cars in the town centre and alternative parking solutions

The feedback, which comes from all age groups, also points to the importance of volunteering. There is passionate local support from property owners, residents, volunteers and businesses who over time have expended a great deal of effort to ensure development in the town and create a positive story about the historical town Levanger.

Surrounding the historical park axis are service industries, homes and public functions that will affect and be affected by changes to the historical park.

The same applies to voluntary organizations that regularly carry out and participate in activities in and around the park axis.

There are also some 80 businesses operating in the centre of Levanger. 30% are retailers, 26% are in hospitality, and 35% are classed as property, manufacturing, health, arts, sports or media etc. All of them are important stakeholders who must be involved in developing the town.



Øystein Rø

*M.Arch. MNAL and Partner
Transborders studio,
former secretary of
European Norway*



Øystein Rø (NO) is architect and founding partner of Transborder Studio. Transborder Studio is an Oslo-based office working on projects in the fields of architecture and urbanism, with a particular focus on cities, green living, reuse and spaces for culture. Transborder works on all scales, from small interventions to large urban projects, often with a unique blend of program, context and history. Øystein Rø was also the co-founder of the art and architecture gallery 0047 in Berlin and Oslo (2004-2014), a work he received the Norsk form prize for young architects for in 2011 and Oslo Architect's Association's prize in 2014. Between 2008 and 2018 Rø was secretary general of European Norway. He has his education from NTNU in Trondheim and TU in Berlin.

Nina Lundvall

*Associate Director
Caruso St John
Architects LLP*



Nina Lundvall (SE) studied architecture at Chalmers and London Metropolitan University, graduating in 2002. Her diploma project 'Caravanserai: Making a Place for Transitional Urban Dwellings' was awarded the RIBA silver medal for best design project. She has worked for Florian Beigel & ARU, Tony Fretton Architects and David Chipperfield Architects before joining Caruso St John Architects in 2011, where she is an Associate Director since 2016. She is also a Director of Archipelago with James Payne, a framework for public and private projects and open collaborations with other designers and disciplines. In parallel with practicing, Nina Lundvall has taught at KTH, Chalmers, London Metropolitan University (the Cass), Central Saint Martins and Nottingham University. She is external examiner for the Diploma Thesis course at AHO, and previously at KTH and Chalmers.

Sabine Müller

*Principal of SMAQ /
Professor at Oslo
School of
Architecture*



Sabine Müller(DE) is Professor of Urbanism at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway. She is an architect and the principal of SMAQ Architecture Urbanism and Research in Berlin. With SMAQ Sabine Müller has won several competitions in Germany and Europe. SMAQ's master plans for Wolfsburg's new residential area, as well as a harbour conversion in Bremen are in development. In 2020 she received the State Prize for Architecture of Lower Saxony. Her research focuses on urban design at the intersection of architecture, urbanism and landscape, acknowledging infrastructure, ecology and processes of inhabitation as drivers of the urban environment. Together with Andreas Quednau she published Charter of Dubai (Jovis, 2012) and Giraffes, Telegraphes and Hero of Alexandria - Urban Design by Narration (Ruby Press, 2017).

Henri Bava

*Founder of Agence
Ter, chairman of the
Landscape
architecture
department at K.I.T.*



Henri Bava (FR) studied plant biology at the University of Paris-Orsay, scenography at Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris and landscape architecture at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paysage, (ENSP) Versailles. He founded Agence Ter in Paris with his partners Michel Hössler and Olivier Philippe. In parallel with his practice of landscape architecture, he taught for 10 years at ENSP Versailles and, since 1998, he has been the chairman of the Landscape architecture Department at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (K.I.T.) in Germany. He has been invited several times as a guest professor at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard. He received together with his two associates the Grand Prix du National du Paysage in 2007 and in 2018 the Grand Prix de l'Urbanisme (the highest urban design distinction in France) for all of Agence Ter's work.

Wenche Dramstad

*Head of Research in
the Landscape
Monitoring
Department at NIBIO*



Wenche Dramstad (NO) is a senior research scientist at the Norwegian Institute for Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO). She has a Master's degree (MSc) in management of natural resources (1990) and a PhD in landscape ecology (1997) from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). During her PhD, she spent a semester at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, where her interest was spurred in strengthening the integration of ecology and design. This was also where the book "Landscape ecology principles in landscape architecture and land-use planning" was developed, which she co-authored. As a landscape ecologist, she has a fascination for the content and composition of the landscape, how the landscape functions as a mosaic, the spatial distribution of different landscape elements, their quality and how they change.

Berit Skarholt

*Deputy Director,
Department for
Planning, Norwegian
Ministry of Local
Government and
Modernisation (KMD)*



Berit Skarholt (NO) graduated from the Faculty of Architecture and Fine Arts at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in 1982. After 9 years in two architect studios, she was 15 years in Statsbygg, the Norwegian government's building commissioner and property manager, in different roles and phases of projects. She has been a jury member in a broad range of architectural competitions. She was Head of the Department for Area Development in the City Planning and Building Agency of Oslo (PBE) and is now in the Department for Planning in KMD. Planning of cities and architectural quality are the main issues, including challenges and possibilities in small and medium-sized towns. She has been a member of the board of the National Association of Norwegian Architects (NAL) and the board of the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU).

Aga Skorupka

*Head of social
science at Rodeo
Architects*



Aga Skorupka (PL) is the head of social science team in Rodeo architects. She holds a PhD from City University of New York in environmental psychology, which is an interdisciplinary study of transactions between people and their physical environments. She likes to think of her work of as evidence-based placemaking, where data informs both public participation, planning and policy making. Aga is originally polish and the combination of her immigrant and academic backgrounds makes her especially apt to work with socio-spatial justice issues in urban planning. Some of her other areas of expertise include spatial analysis, social sustainability and walkability issues. (Photo Anne Valeur)

Linn Runeson - Substitute

*Architect, Urbanist
and
co-founder/Managin
g Director at edit AS.*



Linn Runeson (SE) is an architect, urbanist, managing director and founder of edit — an atelier that is active within the fields of landscape, urbanism, planning and architecture in Oslo, Norway. The studio won European 15 in Borås, Sweden with the proposal "Made in Borås". Linn has worked for Helen & Hard, LALA, A-lab, and for the municipality of Kristianstad, Sweden. She has a masters degree in architecture from Lunds University, and has studied industrial design at Umeå University, she has also had several exhibitions of her painted works. Currently she is working on several transformation projects, and is passionate about creating meaningful, and sustainable environments for all living kinds.

Joakim Skajaa - Substitute

*Architect, founder of
SKAJAA
Arkitektkontor,
curator at the
National Museum,
Oslo.*



Joakim Skajaa (NO) is a registered MNAL architect, graduated from Bergen School of Architecture (BAS) in 2004. He runs the architectural firm SKAJAA Arkitektkontor and is curator of contemporary architecture at the National Museum in Oslo. He is a teacher, former vice-rector and associate professor at BAS and has also taught at the Oslo School of Architecture (AHO). He was the leader of the Oslo Architects' Association (OAF) from 2017-19. Together with Arild Eriksen, Skajaa won European 10 at Haugerud in Groruddalen in 2009.

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c/o Kaleidoscope Nordic AS
Møllendalsveiern 17
5009 BERGEN
NORWAY
post@europan.no
www.euopan.no

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