



BALTIC REGION HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Good practices on built heritage conservation/restoration

S:t Gšrans gymnasium, Stockholm, Sweden.

Title of the heritage building

S:t Gšrans gymnasium (S:t Gšran high school), Stockholm. Completed 1960 and rebuilt 2015-18 to accommodate student housing and a preschool.

Main idea/goal of the intervention.

The conversion from high school to student housing created opportunities for preservation and long-term management. The building was in need of restoration and conservation, including exterior walls and windows and interiors as heating, ventilation and electricity. An initial position and goal was that historically valuable parts of the building and its environment should be preserved.

Location .

The main building and the preschool are located in the centre of Stockholm, at the corner of S:t Gšransgatan and Mariebergsgatan. It is an urban area with housing, offices and institutions, such as hospitals and schools.



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S:t Gårans gymnasium Foto: •ke E:son Lindman , Wikimedia commons, 2014.

Functions.

The building was inaugurated in 1960 as a household- and sewing school for girls and was planned for approximately 1000 students. In the lower floors, there were common areas such as cafŽ, library, music hall and an expedition while the classrooms were situated on the upper floors. The ground floor, towards S:t Gšransgatan, housed different types of shops.

Today, the building is mainly used as a residential building for students. A total of 16,900 sqm has been converted into 245 small student apartments, a preschool and a few other premises.

Owner/manager.

Svenska BostŠderĐa municipal housing company owned by the City of Stockholm.

Heritage category.

The buildingŐs historical value is protected according to the Planning and Building Act, a legislation that is handled at the municipal level. According to the detailed development plan from 2014, the use must be adapted to the historical values of the buildings. There is a demolition prohibition and regulations regarding the exterior, the building's frame and the lay out in order to protect the building's cultural and historical value. The structure of the courtyard and the original character and structure of the green areas have also regulations regarding protection. Further, the regulations state that the building must be maintained and renovated with methods and materials adapted to the building and performed in such a way that the historical value does not decrease. Maintenance work requires a building permit.

Stockholm City Museum has evaluated the historical value of the built environment to the highest degree of classification saying that the environment has a particularly high cultural-historical value. This classification is not a protection but a designation of cultural-historical values.

There is also an ongoing matter of listing the building according to the Cultural Environment Act, which is a state level protection and handled by the County Administrative Board of Stockholm. The case has not yet been decided.

Short historical background.

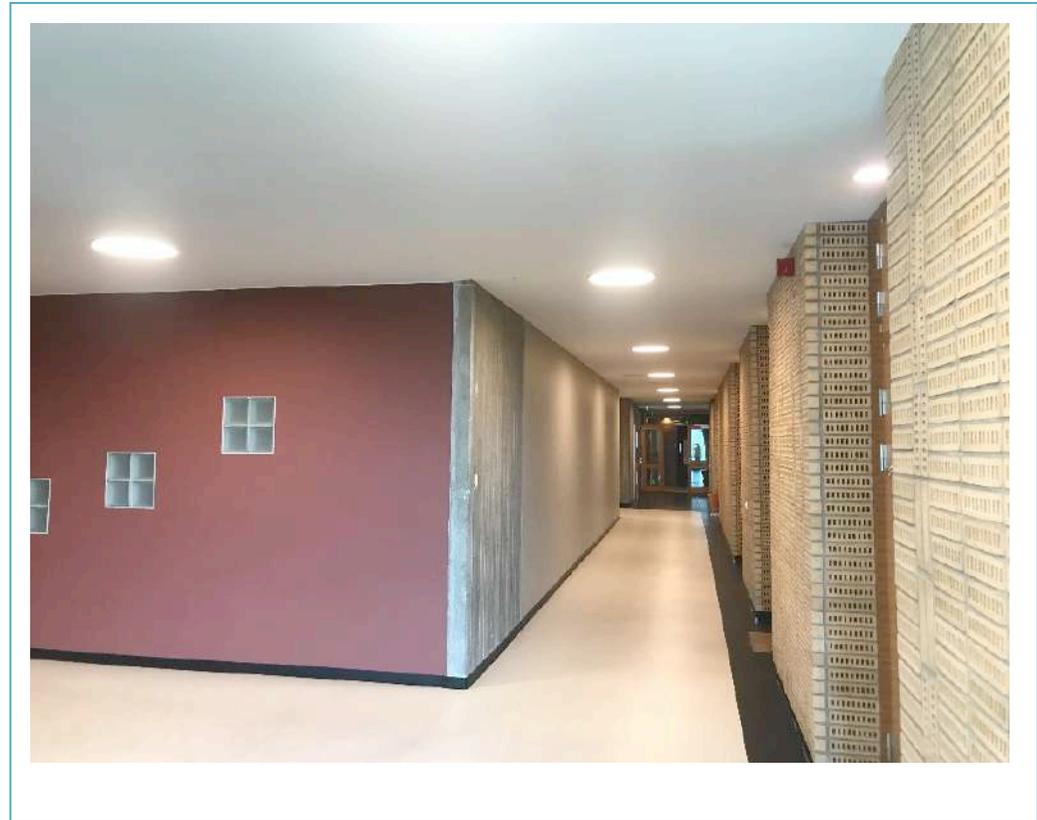
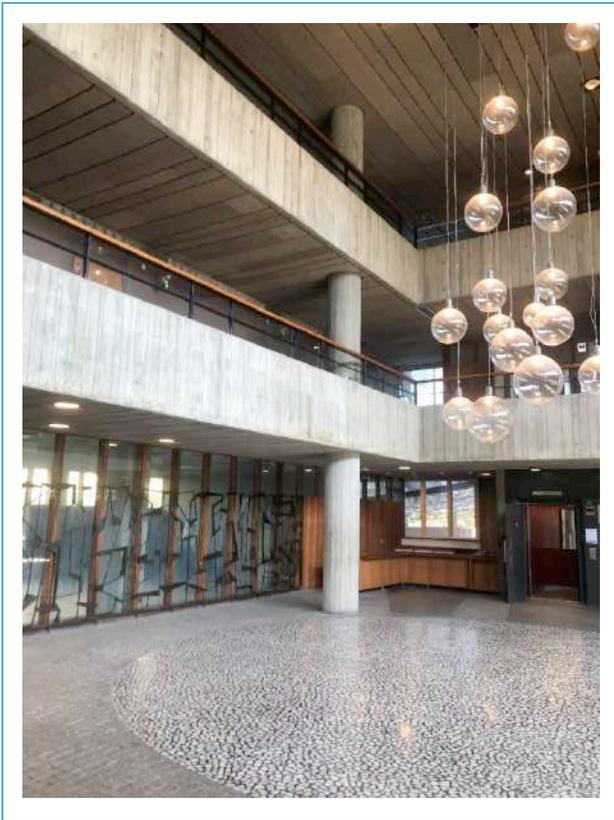
The City of Stockholm commissioned Leoni and Charles-Edouard Geisendorf to design a new household- and sewing school in 1956. To accommodate the requested premises, two building- volumes were designed in the form of one higher and one lower building that were placed on top of each other in an L-formation. In this way, an area could be reserved for the schoolyard. Landscape architect Walter Bauer designed the outdoor environment. A detached building that housed a dormitory and a meeting room were planned but were never realized. S:t Gšran functioned as a practical high school until 2008. After the school operations ceased, the building stood empty, which led to a certain decay.

Leoni Geisendorf was the chief architect of S:t Gšrans gymnasium. She was born in Switzerland, educated at the University of Technology in ZŸrich and practiced at Le Corbusier's architectural office in Paris. In 1938 she moved to Sweden and in the early 1950:s she started an architectural firm in Stockholm together with her husband Charles-Edouard. Her work is generally characterized by great care regarding details in the execution. Several of Geisendorf's works are also characterized by the careful handling of concrete. In S:t Gšrans gymnasium the architect's very consciously designed raw concrete surfaces in the facade elements, the balconies and the pillars have a decisive significance for the building's character and cultural-historical value. The building occupies a special position in Swedish architecture for its consistency, quality and its strong architectural expression and its distinct connection to "the international style".



(Left): The gym on the topfloor of the building. Photo: Cathrine Mellander Backman, RA€, 2021.

(Right): The kitchen in one of the apartments used for practical training, today turned into a museum. The materials and the quality in performance characterize the building. Photo: Cathrine Mellander Backman, RA€, 2021.



(Left): The raw concrete, the decorative ironwork, the luminaire and the floor and ground covering in the three floors high open entrance hall, all contribute to the building's unmistakable character. Photo: Eva Dahlström Rittsžl, RA€, 2021.

(Right): An apartment corridor with new brick walls in yellow hollow brick. Photo: Eva Dahlström Rittsžl, RA€, 2021.

Main issues.

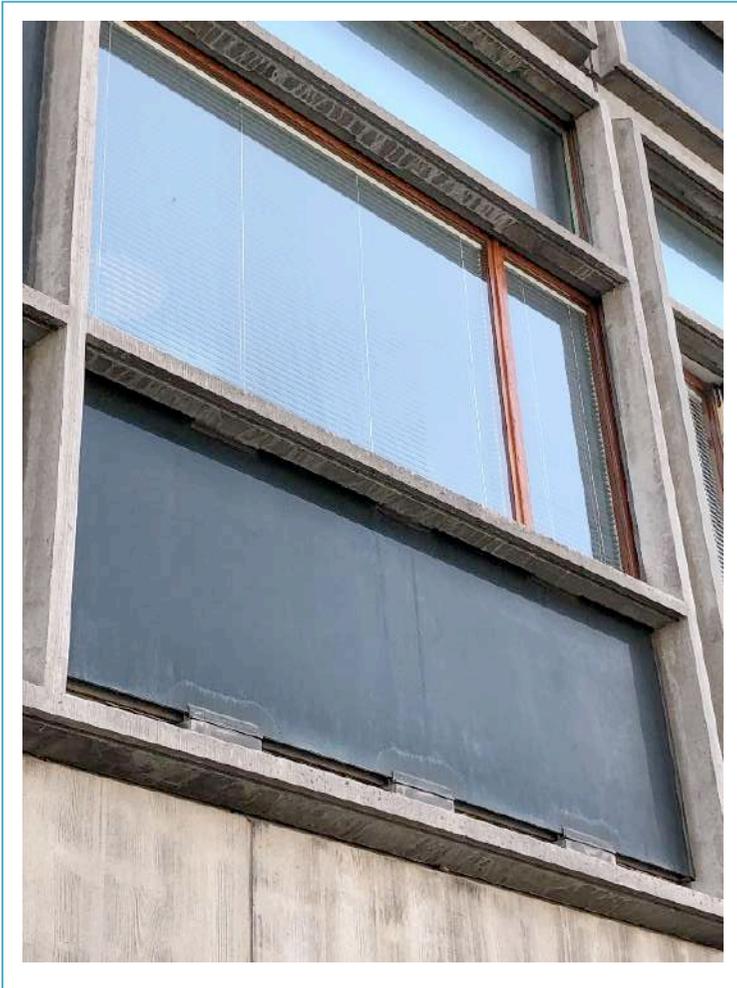
At an early stage of the rebuilding and restoration process, an antiquarian investigation was carried out to describe the history of the environment and account for the cultural-historical values. In addition, an cultural heritage assessment was made for the planned changes. Antiquarian expertise participated throughout the project. The building has a frame system with supporting pillars that allows an open and flexible floor plan and a curtain wall facade. The building has generous public areas on the ground floor with a large and open entrance hall with adjacent to the common yard.

At an early stage the landscaping, facades, pillars, terraces and roofs were identified as the most historically valuable parts of the exterior. In the interior, the entrance hall, the well-preserved apartments and the stairwell were estimated to be of high historical value. In these parts, the only work that has been done is restoration and conservation. In the other parts, such as the former classrooms, major interventions was allowed as these areas have been converted into small apartments. In addition to the works made in the interior mentioned above, colours on walls and ceilings were also restored.

An important goal of the work was to preserve as much of the original materials as possible and, where measures were necessary, to carry out the work with great care and adaptation to the original materials and methods. When the restoration began, the building had been empty for a number of years and the maintenance had been neglected. The damage was inventoried, photo-documented and categorized into three levels. The facades with prefabricated concrete elements with glass had extensive damage as well as the balconies. Other interventions that needed to be carried out was to restore plaster damage and leaking roofs and secure the stairs and the roof terraces. The windows, with low noise- and energy values, had to be adapted to standards of today.



Injuries on the concrete elements and on the balconies in concrete.
Photo: Sven Olof Ahlberg.



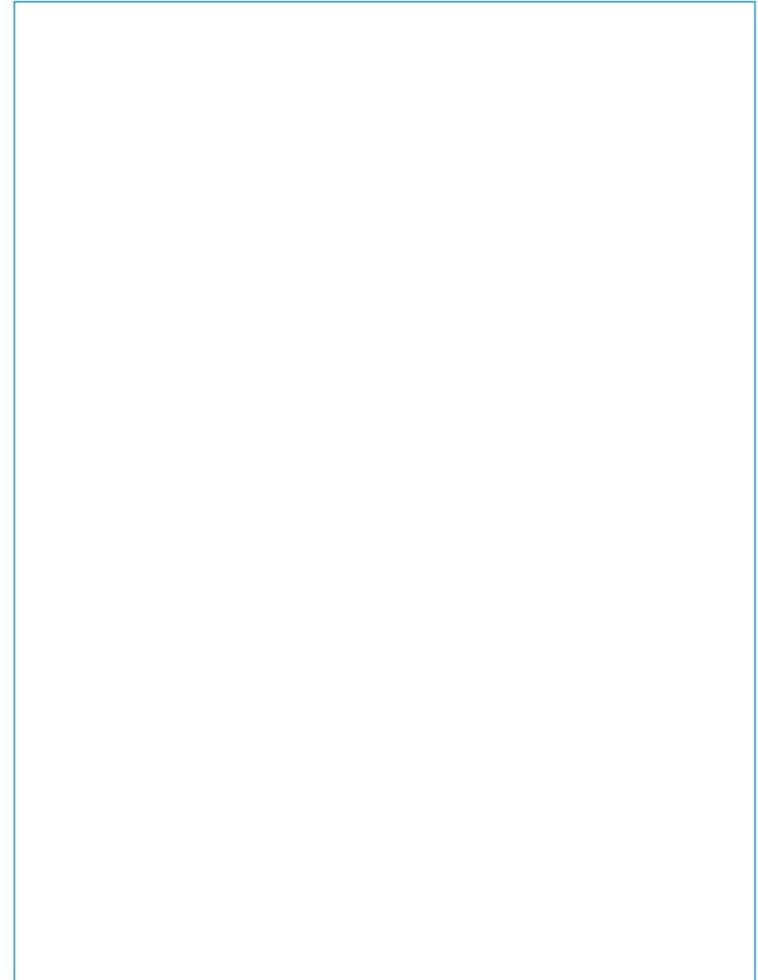
The facade with concrete elements, glass and windows. Photo: Cathrine Mellander Backman, RA€, 2021.

Research.

The investigations carried out before the restoration were a cultural heritage impact assessment (Reichmann Antikvarier AB, 2013), a care- and maintenance plan, a quality programme for refurbishment, an investigation regarding the external environment (City Planning Office, Stockholm, 2013) and various technical investigations, especially regarding the reinforced concrete. The cultural heritage assessment pointed out that the greatest consequence for the cultural heritage values was the changed function, from school to student housing. The new building, proposed to replace the never-executed auditorium, was deemed to contribute to a more cohesive environment as the open square appeared more clearly. The new entrance from Mariebergsgatan was judged to affect both the architectural and the historical value of the building. The internal measures in form of adaptation to housing and new floor plans had a negative impact on the document value. The cultural heritage impact assessment, the care- and maintenance plan and the quality programme became important tools for the work carried out in the redevelopment of the building. The technical examination showed that the reinforced concrete had many injuries, but a goal of the work was nevertheless to preserve as much as possible from the original material.

Conservation/renewal project (author(s), complexity, duration, institutions involved, other agents or circumstances, disagreements and compromises if there were any, decision making regarding conservation/restoration techniques and materials, budget).

In 2012, the Stockholm City Planning Board decided to start the planning work for S:t Gårans gymnasium. The City of Stockholm, the developer Svenska Bostäder and Södergruppen arkitekter developed a joint quality programme with the aim of coordinating and securing architectural qualities in the building and land design. The programme would ensure that both the refurbishment and the new building were given a high architectural quality through careful design. The quality programme is part of the zoning plan proposal and led to the adopted plan. The programme would provide support in coordination, planning, building permits and implementation. Specialist expertise has been used in antiquarian, construction, installation, land- and conservation issues. Other actors involved in the work included Reichmann antikvarier, AIX-arkitekter och antikvarier, Nyréns's arkitektkontor (landscape architect), AB Stenkonsivering Väst and antiquarian and concrete specialist Sven-Olof Ahlberg. The total cost of the project amounted to 360 000 000 (SEK). The costs for the restoration of the apartments for practical training (today museum) was financed through government grants



(Left): The new building with apartments, replacing the never executed auditorium by the inner square. Photo: Cathrine Mellander Backman, RA€, 2021.

(Right): The new entrance from Mariebergsgatan. Photo: Cathrine Mellander Backman, RA€, 2021.