



MINISTRY OF CULTURE
MINISTRY OF URBAN AND RURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

# A DESIRABLE FUTURE - COMMON GROUND IN A CHANGING WORLD

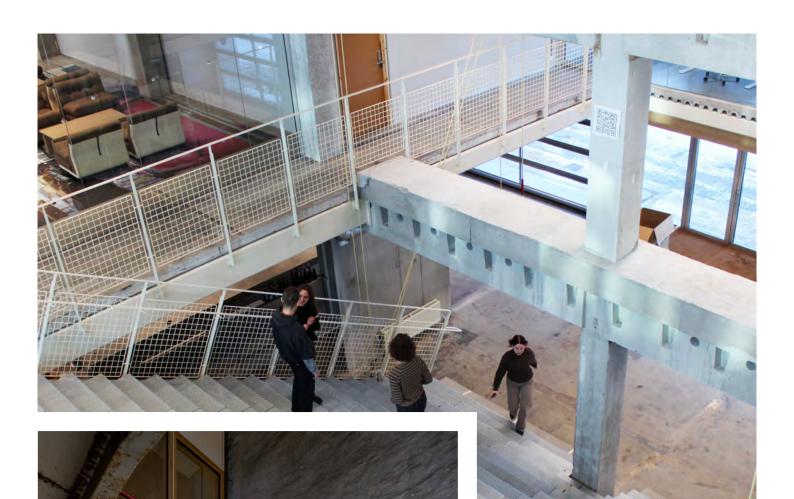
The field of architecture is changing. Building industries throughout most of the world face transitions due to climate change and shifts in the geopolitical environment. Times are uncertain. Supply chains break. Resources are scarce. Nature is under pressure. The needs and demands of the future call for new solutions.

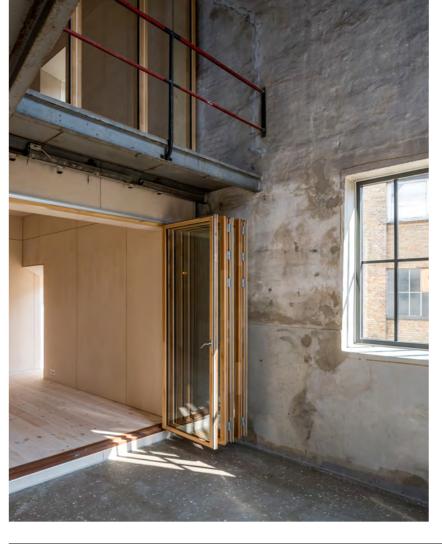
We need to reuse materials, develop new, circular methods, make room for nature, and develop a new aesthetic for our buildings, cities and urban spaces. Architecture cannot be reduced to its function or the sum of bricks and materials. It evokes emotions, cultivates a sense of belonging, and provides common ground. We are reminded of this each time buildings, which we care for and live among, are at risk of disappearing. We see it when war and conflict wreaks destruction and devastation on homes and cities.

Architecture is the opposite of destruction. It is uplifting, it is based on a fundamental belief in the future, a steadfast conviction that it pays to create and imagine a better world. This is why architecture is a public matter, and must be carefully and attentively carried out.

Danish architecture has a distinct quality that is worth holding on to. It combines functionality and aesthetics. This stems from a tradition of design, where projects are developed with sensitivity towards human needs and the human scale. Where the arts – with playfulness and sensitivity –challenge business as usual, and inspire new ways of creating buildings, built environments, and urban environments that are desirable to inhabit and to behold.

Architecture should be a reflection of our values, something worth preserving and cherish in a time of rapid, rampant change. With cooperation and determination we can bring about the desirable future towards which we strive.





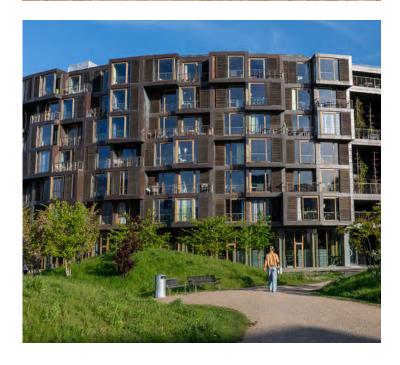


# EIGHT GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESIRABLE AND RESPONSIBLE SETTINGS FOR LIFE

In the spring of 2025, the Expert Group for a Danish National Architecture Policy put forward eight guiding principles for the architecture of the future. The principles intended to trigger a paradigmatic shift in Denmark and chart a new course for Danish architecture. Together, the principles constitute a manifesto for Danish architecture that building contractors, municipalities, industry stakeholders, and companies can be inspired by and use as a guideline and dialogue-promoting tool in the development of private and public architecture projects.









# FIGURE 1 EIGHT GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESIRABLE AND RESPONSIBLE SETTINGS FOR LIFE

#### **#1 PRIORITISE CARE AND BEAUTY**

We must prioritise craftsmanship, universal design, and the creation of quality that lasts, is functional and, as such, beautiful.

#### **#2 REPAIR, RENOVATE, AND TRANSFORM**

We must establish a new starting premise in building: That we repair, renovate and transform instead of tearing down to build from scratch.

#### **#3 BUILD WITH CIRCULARITY**

We must work towards sustainable construction. We must promote circular methods and biogenic materials.

#### **#4 MAKE ROOM FOR URBAN NATURE**

We need nature and biodiversity in our urban environments to strengthen people's connection to nature and provide opportunities for recreation

#### **#5 STRENGTHEN HOLISTIC SPATIAL PLANNING**

Denmark's land area is under pressure, and we need to rethink how we plan and use it. We must compact our cities and create room for nature and biodiversity.

#### **#6 EMBRACE LOCAL VALUES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

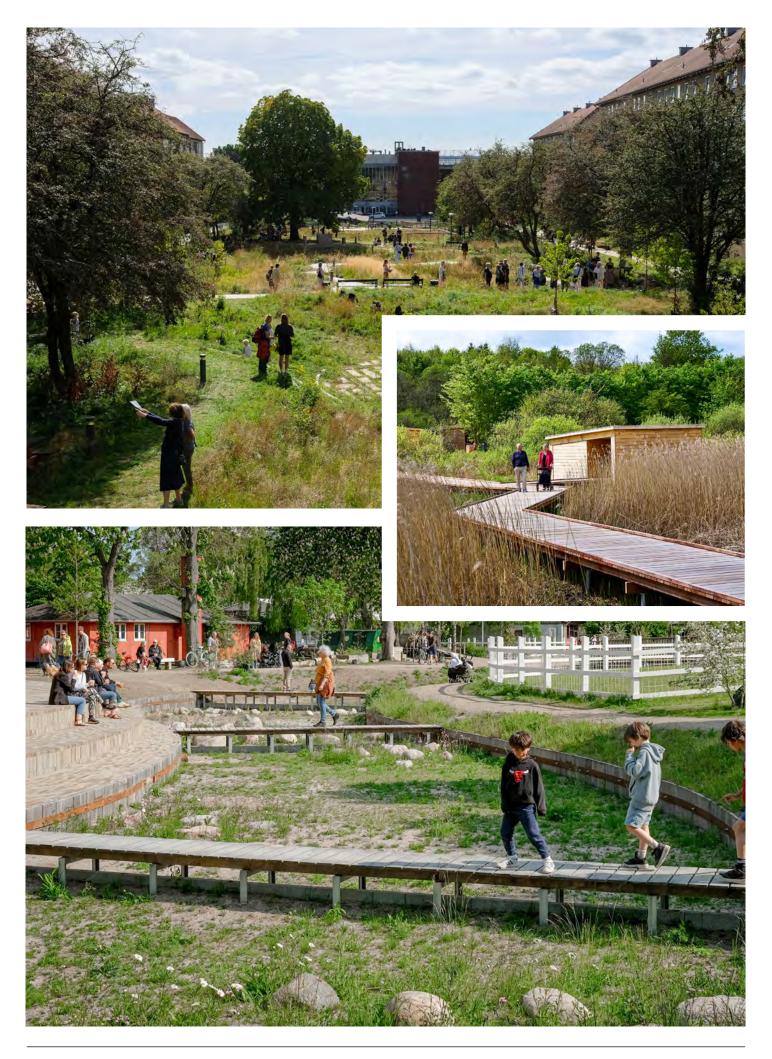
We must develop our cities, villages, and rural areas in line with an understanding of local history and building traditions, and build on the site-specific values already present.

#### **#7 ENABLE DIVERSE HOUSING TYPES**

We need to offer more varied opportunities for desirable living, e.g., inhabiting smaller spaces, having more shared ownership, and living closer to nature.

#### **#8 PRIORITISE NEW, BINDING COORDINATION**

We must prioritise strong and committed collaborations between municipalities, public and private actors, and other relevant parties to facilitate the move towards a fast transition.



#### A ROAD TOWARDS A DESIRABLE FUTURE

The Danish Government will work to support the eight guiding principles and realise their potential to facilitate progress through introducing a variety of concrete initiatives that seek to create the best possible working conditions for Danish architecture, construction, and planning. But the Government cannot make it alone! Our shared success hinges on our ability to unite in a joint effort involving municipalities, regions and industries.

The Government has three focus areas: 1) Transform, repair, and build with circularity, 2) Green cities and revitalization of villages and rural buildings, and 3) Architecture as our common ground and physical values.

#### TRANSFORM, REPAIR, AND BUILD WITH CIRCULARITY

The Government wants architecture and construction to have a smaller impact on the climate and the environment. That is why the Government is working towards an ambitious revision of Danish building regulations to create rules that promote architecture and construction with smaller carbon footprints, as well as new ways of thinking aesthetics sustainably.

#### The Government will:

- Create a new set of rules, making it easier to make use of existing buildings by reconstructing, renovating, and repurposing existing buildings.
- Promote the use of sustainable materials, e.g., recycled and biogenic materials in construction
- Ensure coordination between stakeholders in construction and planning to promote the sustainable development of these areas, initiatives may include creating disincentives to demolishing existing buildings
- Support research and development within sustainable and circular construction and architecture via Innovation Fund Denmark / the Government's research reserve 2026

## GREEN CITIES AND REVITALIZATION OF VILLAGES AND RURAL BUILDINGS

The current Danish government is historically ambitious in terms of putting nature back on the map – in cities and rural areas alike. The Government has amended planning legislation, making it possible for municipalities to plan for – and demand – more urban nature. This includes setting requirements to promote green cities and the establishment of specific natural areas. Further, the Government wants to support the diversification of cities and residential

areas since this provides the most favourable conditions for social cohesion in Denmark. Among other initiatives, the Government wishes to improve conditions for first-time buyers, lift the cap on construction costs for social housing in the big cities, and promote the development of more owner-occupied homes across the country. Furthermore, the Government wishes to create new growth opportunities in rural districts through the development of existing villages and repurposing of existing buildings for residence and other uses, ensuring they are not left unused, empty, and dilapidated.

#### The Government will:

- Work to make it possible to reuse and repurpose buildings in functional decline in rural districts, including for tourism.
- Ensure a diverse real estate market where more people can afford to own their own homes and which has a diverse supply of rental, social, and owner-occupied housing.
- Work with determination to ensure cross-municipal, binding collaboration on the conversion of lowland farmland into natural areas under The Agreement on a Green Denmark, where public and private collaborations drive change.

### ARCHITECTURE AS OUR COMMON GROUND AND PHYSICAL VALUES.

The Danish Government will work to further the knowledge of and interest in Danish architecture. The Government recognises the innovative powers of the architecture and construction industries and will work to find shared solutions and approaches to a sustainable architecture, including spreading awareness about demonstration projects, in order to, among other things, promote sustainable architecture and new construction materials.

Architecture is a matter of public concern, and the Government's effort to further Danish architecture and find desirable solutions of the future is an ongoing process.

#### The Government will:

- Work on a continuous basis to spread awareness about desirable and sustainable architecture in Denmark and abroad
- Continue to protect important cultural environments of national interest
- Support climate proofing of buildings of particular preservation interest with a view to preserve our built cultural heritage
- Collaborate with our European partners to ensure knowledge-sharing and exchange of experience, promoting sustainable architecture

- Support initiatives within the field of architecture, such as organising
  a conference on architecture during the Danish EU-presidency as well as
  providing ongoing support for the educational activities carried out by
  the Danish Architecture Center within the field of architecture and building
  culture, and support the Danish participation in the Biennale Architettura
  2025 in Venice
- Facilitate the dissemination of architectural solutions, which are in increasing demand at home, in Europe, and beyond.

It is crucial that Denmark and Europe join together to take a stand to shape the course of architecture, cultural heritage and physical foundations in a changing world.

Therefore, citizens, industries, municipalities, and regions alike are encouraged to work actively with the guiding principles of the policy on architecture and to participate in the debate about our physical environment and architecture.

#### **IMAGE AND PROJECT CREDITS**

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