

# Report from Site Visit to Ås.

April 26 2013

Magnus Ohren from Ås municipality gave a short introduction of Ås and the competition at the Ås station. Visiting teams were given a tour of Ås centre, the site and the university campus.

The following topics were discussed where information not mentioned in the program was given:

## **Building heights**

Ongoing development in central parts of Ås all have a floor space index of 2.0, and a ground space index of 0.4. However, recent developments have increased this ratio. The recently completed housing unit ("Nylundskvartalet") has 6 floors, and a FSI as high as 3.9, as pressure to maintain agricultural lands was argued.

As of now, there is no defined ratio for development of the European site, and the competition entry may act as a model describing how dense the plot can be developed, or how alternate modes of urbanism may perform in Ås, allowing for increased density. As such, a scheme with a high standard of architectural quality may allow for increased building heights.

That being said, building heights are constantly a topic of heated political debate, and should be considered sensibly.

## **Parking**

Current regulation in central parts of Ås have an established norm of 1.2 cars per apartment. Governmental bodies consider parking norms as a tool for reducing car dependency, and as such norms are under revision. For example, the University of Life Sciences are planning a gradual reduction of parking space from today's 0.45 per employee to 0.3 by 2025, while simultaneously increasing bicycle parking coverage.

In central areas of larger Norwegian cities (Oslo, Trondheim), norms are reduced to 0.5-0.6 cars per housing unit. The Norwegian Ministry of the Environment has released a note discussing future guidelines for municipal parking norms. The note argues for broader coverage of bicycle parking and lanes, and that developments in close proximity to rail and public transportation should reduce their parking coverage.

Current standards for offices in central Ås is 20 parking spaces per 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, which is very generous compared to 2 per 1000 m<sup>2</sup> for Oslo, yet similar to standards in comparable urban entities in the greater Oslo region. For commercial activities Ås municipality has an established norm of 50 parking spaces per 1000 m<sup>2</sup>.

Parking standards for the European site may be discussed in the competition. A lower standard may be argued by proximity to public transport and a greater dependence on improved bicycle infrastructure.

Compared parking standards in the Ministry of the Environment's on-going research project "Future Cities" may be consulted for references.

[http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/subnettsteder/framtidens\\_byer/Bibliotek/Parkeringsnotat.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/subnettsteder/framtidens_byer/Bibliotek/Parkeringsnotat.pdf) (in Norwegian).

## **Use of existing buildings**

Site owner Ørjan Eriksen explained that his initial idea is to transform Ravveien to student housing.