

Klaksvík with the site of the ongoing development of the Klaksvík City Center project visible centrally, to the right of the Christianskirkjan (Church of Christian).



GÍSÁTGJÓN – NENSJÓEJENEN

become real to people immediately; it needs time to work its way into hearts and minds. In hindsight, I think most people would agree that the Harpa became a symbol of Iceland's defiance in the face of hardship, of recovery, and of national pride. It's a vivid illustration of the cultural impact of architecture."

'AN EXCELLENT MOVE'

What about architecture in the Faroe Islands? For any observer, the country—regardless its tiny population—appears to be spending considerable resources on relatively large construction projects, more so than ever.

Jacobsen: "We may or may not have more trained architects and engineers now compared to what we had, say, 20 years ago; but overall when it comes to construction, I think the Faroes has grown both commercially and professionally. That is certainly true judging from the scope and scale of buildings and construction works."

While J. P. 'Palli' Gregoriussen remains a towering figure in Faroese architecture and a pioneer in the business by all accounts and

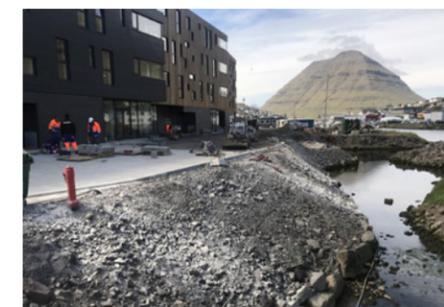
the first one to open a modern architectural firm in the islands, how much has really happened since his heyday, despite all the investments of late in public works, road infrastructure, commercial buildings—aside from the Nordic House, which came in 1983?

"That's a good question. The Nordic House is a marvellous piece of architecture, designed by Norwegian architect Ola Steen and Icelandic architect Kollbrún Ragnarsdóttir; it's a great source of inspiration still today.

"I would say the Faroe Islands is an exciting place inasmuch as it's architecturally young, which in itself presents an opportunity to contribute to the definition of Faroese architecture."

One such opportunity for Jacobsen was the new seat of the Municipal Council of Eysturkommuna in Norðragøta—representing the communities of Gøta and neighboring Leirvík.

Completed in late 2017, the building has a remarkable look and feel to it while at the same time appearing unassuming as it blends into its natural environment. What's the idea behind it?



HENNING LARSEN ARCHITECTS

Partial views of the Klaksvík City Center development.

think we're seeing it more now than earlier. Perhaps it has something to do with finding our own space as it were and being confident there—much as we've seen great progress lately here in the music scene as well as in culinary arts."

Jacobsen won the international competition 'Klaksvík City Center' project in 2012, which is still ongoing with parts completed.

"We need more boldness at times, yet with proper consideration of the local environment, rather than monumental imposture. Call it an holistic approach if you like, and I think Klaksvík has made an excellent move in that direction."

Elsewhere, in quite a few places, it would appear that car traffic and parking lots are sometimes sole determinants of the development of cities.

"That's a challenge, yes, and I've pointed it out many times over the years. Often that space should not be sacrificed because it's essential for creating an atmosphere that is pleasant and sustainable.

"Traffic and parking is essential in a modern urban society, therefore we need to address these challenges; but at the same time I would urge local decision makers to balance these challenges and support and seek alternative solutions that may seem like big investments right now, but which in the long run can support the progressive and ambitious development of our cities.

"In the Faroe Islands centrally placed underground parking could be one of the solutions."

"It's very much about the local environment, both in the physical sense and the historical sense. Part of it is paying tribute to the natural surroundings, including the Oyran field that used to be there before it was developed for infrastructure and industry. We wanted to make a gentle reminder of that natural environment."

That is indeed a striking element of the building—the sloping side of its roof doubles as a pedestrian ramp with a platform on the top that is at the same time a viewing post of sorts.

The building also forms a bridge across a river while the interior features a large, transparent glass circle on the floor of the main meeting hall from where people can enjoy the sight of the river running freely underneath them.

"It's about authenticity, which involves respecting, taking into account, somehow reflecting the surrounding environment and local history. I think that as a principle is gaining traction in many places around the world; I'm also of the opinion that we need more of that approach in most places, including the Faroe Islands. But again, I