**Typical fallacies regarding potentially vacated protected buildings**

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# Abstract

A significant number of institutions in Norway are moving from protected buildings—key architectural works—into new buildings. This affects ten buildings in Oslo alone, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Gallery and the Munch Museum. Several factors lead to the abandonment of such structures; one of them is a prejudice toward older buildings.

This article lists typical examples of such prejudice that were found in Norwegian public documents preparing decisions regarding protected buildings. When an institution has needs that are not being met in the institution’s existing premises, they must choose between rehabilitation for continued use or a new build. For larger building projects, the decision is made by the government, and quality assurance (QA)1-documents provide a basis for the government’s decision.

The examined QA1-documentation demonstrates a lack of appreciation for architectural and historical quality. The findings reveal that consultants fail to include all the necessary information in QA1-documentation when they use fallacies regarding protected buildings as a basis for the government’s choice of concepts.

Regrettably, such fallacies occur frequently throughout society. The findings in this paper should be useful to everyone working in the cultural heritage field that seeks a knowledge-based management of our most important historical buildings, both nationally and internationally.

Key words:

Architectural quality, Cultural heritage, QA, Usability

# Introduction

Norway has seen a series of vacated national monuments in the last decade. Several of the affected buildings are recognised national monuments, and there are no plans for their future use. The reactivation of these buildings is likely to come with a significant price tag. Norwegian authorities have put themselves into this situation through the persistent trend of vacating historical buildings in favour of new builds. Currently, cultural heritage sites are required to undergo economic analysis in public quality assurance. The challenge is a matter of both method and professional knowledge: to be useful, economic analysis must be capable of evaluating the cultural heritage site’s inherent value, and the consultants performing the analysis must understand the qualities and usability of the cultural heritage sites. This paper concerns the latter of the two and discusses fallacies found in the economic analysis of larger public buildings projects affecting protected buildings in the existing situation. This research gets its empirical data from the Norwegian QA-scheme that covers most large public investments on shore. In this context, larger refers to investments costing over 82 million Euro that are typically infrastructure, defence and larger building projects for key public institutions. The QA-scheme that provides a basis for the politicians’ decisions has two main steps: QA1 and QA2. QA1 focuses on the choice of concept and QA2 focuses on the choice of project completion model.[[1]](#endnote-1) Since choice of concept typically determines whether protected buildings should be vacated or kept in continued use, we have studied the QA1-documentation for projects concerning buildings that are protected under the cultural heritage act.[[2]](#endnote-2) The QA1-documentation has two main parts: first, the Concept Evaluation (KVU) report , which is typically made or commissioned in-house, and then the QA1-report, where external consultants quality-assure the KVU-report. We wish to emphasize that although these fallacies are illustrated with examples from existing QA1-documentation, these fallacies are not limited to the QA-scheme.[[3]](#endnote-3) On the contrary, the same or comparable fallacies surface in a number of debates regarding protected buildings. However, since the QA1-documentation is highly formalized, these documents present an opportunity to discuss and improve the practise. Our intention is not necessarily to devalue the conclusions drawn. Fallacies in the initial KVU-report can be addressed in the QA1-report, and recommendations can be adjusted. The noted fallacies do, however, seem to be part of a larger, structural problem that we wish to remedy, and the examples serve to illustrate this. In the following paper, we will show concrete examples of such fallacies and we will explain why we deem them to be incorrect. There are several typical reasons for choosing a new building over renovating the old. There is the belief that a new building will have a lower environmental impact than the existing building. There is also the possibility that the protected building (such as the National Gallery) can be sold to the highest bidder, bringing in revenue and discarding any connections with the public. It has also been proposed that older buildings have dramatically inefficient indoor climates, characterized as a massive, unsolvable problem. Finally, there are claims that historical buildings of significant age have a short expected life span when compared to new buildings. Some of the documentation even blame cultural heritage authorities for blocking continued use of the building, but they lack any documented dialogue with the aforementioned authorities.

The studied QA1-documentation and Norwegian legislation are originally written in Norwegian, and all quotes are translated to English by the authors for the purpose of this paper.

## Method

The method for this research is document analysis. We have collected and examined QA1-documentation for all QA1-projects with protected buildings in the existing situation. The research program Concept is dedicated to research on the Norwegian QA-scheme. The research program´s database, ‘Trailbase’, collects the performed QA-documentation and associated documents and has provided important information for this research.[[4]](#endnote-4) The dataset consists of all KVU/QA1-reports regarding building projects in Trailbase with buildings protected as cultural heritage in the existing situation, listed in the table below.

The collected documentation has been examined for judgement regarding potentially vacated protected buildings qualities, values and potential. The validity of these assessments has been discussed, and those conclusions that could be disputed and categorized as fallacies, are discussed in this paper.

Table 1 Dataset: QA1-reports regarding building projects with buildings protected as cultural heritage in the existing situation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Buildings in the existing situation with juridical protection as cultural heritage** |
| National museum | National Gallery  The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design  The Museum of Contemporary Art  (The central bank of Norway´s second building)  The National Museum – Architecture  (The central bank of Norway´s original building) with  Jens Ulltveit-Moe´s pavilion, by Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate Sverre Fehn |
| Norwegian School of Veterinary Science | 10 buildings at Campus Adamstuen |
| Museum of Cultural History | The Viking Ship Museum  The Historical Museum |
| New Government Quarters | 13 buildings and 1 outdoor area, including two buildings with Picasso murals |
| Future location of Campus NTNU | 9 buildings and 2 outdoor areas |
| National Theatre | The National Theatre  The Torshov Theatre  The outdoor area known as "Studenterlunden" |
| The National Stage | The theatre building with surrounding park,  situated on protected ground from the medieval period |
| 2Tullinløkka Area | The National Gallery  St. Olavsgate 32, former The Norwegian Mapping Authority and Oslo National Academy of the Arts, including outdoor area with obelisk that used to be Norway´s standard datum plane.  The University in Oslo has two buildings in the area: Frederiks gate 2 (the Historical Museum) and Frederiks gate 3. |
| New Courthouse in Bergen | The existing town courthouse, situated on protected ground from the medieval period |

According to the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act, there is a strong connection between juridical protection and architectural quality, as the Cultural Heritage Act juxtaposes historical and architectural qualities as grounds for juridical protection.[[5]](#endnote-5)

# Findings

Searching through the collected QA1-documents, we found a series of unfounded fallacies connected to the economic analysis’ evaluation of protected buildings and their potential for use. The totality of these fallacies does not bode well for the standing of cultural heritage under economic analysis. To shed light on this shortcoming and to avoid further misunderstandings, this article will address a selection of fallacies, with examples. By referring to existing knowledge and research, we will show that these fallacies are either overtly simplified or outright wrong. The statements we address need not be indisputably wrong as the answer to difficult questions can consist of a broad array of nuances. These nuances can go amiss if a field is evaluated by non-specialist and when the different professional groups involved are working without a common, professional language.[[6]](#endnote-6) The complete list of fallacies is quite long and to cover them all here would be impossible. Instead, our intention is to question the validity of relying on these fallacies for making decisions.

. In the following, we will discuss the fallacies tabularized below:

**Table 2: Observed fallacies regarding potentially vacated protected buildings coded into main groups based on concurrent themes**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Main theme** | **Fallacy** |
| **Lacking regard for cultural heritage values** | Cultural heritage protection is not included under normative needs. |
| The core concept of protection of cultural heritage is questioned. |
| Cultural heritage values are put under pressure as especially unquantifiable. |
| Architectural and historical qualities, identity and tradition are ignored. |
| The cultural heritage authorities are treated as caseworkers, not specialist. |
| The critical level of changes that can be made to a protected building is not based on contact with cultural heritage authorities, but rather on consultant’s gut-feeling. |
| **A lack of understanding of historical buildings** | New buildings are perceived to be more environmental-friendly than existing buildings. |
| Older buildings are deemed dramatically ineffective area-wise. |
| Indoor climate in older buildings is characterized as a large and insolvable problem. |
| The monetary value of existing protected buildings is determined to be zero. |
| **A lack of understanding of buildability** | A lack in understanding of how constructions come to exist and function, and how these can be altered in an expedient manner. |
| Building large areas below ground level in connection to protected buildings is difficult, but is still repeatedly recommended. |
| **The assessments are intended for new builds with an expected life span of a few decades. This works badly with buildings that are much older and intended to be preserved for future generations.** | Protected buildings are not granted residual value when compared with the expected life span of a new build. |
| The difference between a building’s life span and the life span of investments made in the building is unclear or confused. |
| The possibility that the value of cultural heritage may increase over the coming decades is typically not considered. |
| **Unintended results of complex, political processes** | The buildings are deemed too small because the institutions are getting bigger in pursuit of efficiency. |
| The connections between established institutions and their traditional buildings are ignored. |
| Political decisions are disregarded based on informal political signals. |
| Political feasibility is overestimated. |
| **Smaller concerns gain greater impact** | Biased weighting of significance. |
| **Problematic and incongruent demarcation of projects costs** | Costs related to vacated, protected buildings are typically not considered. |
| Claims that vacated, protected buildings can be sold. |
| Claims that vacated, protected buildings can be sold for market price. |
| Sales of cultural heritage buildings can diminish the cost of a new building, albeit incorrectly. |
| State owned real estate is mislabelled ‘free’ for public building projects. |
| Maintenance lag is mistakenly included in project costs calculations. |
| **The evaluation can appear to be biased, possibly tailored for a preferred result** | Internal dissension amongst key stakeholders is ignored. |
| Evaluations can appear to be biased. |
| Older buildings weaknesses are emphasized without commenting on the buildings positive qualities, which should be done for a genuine balanced rendering. |

## Lacking regard for cultural heritage values

We repeatedly see that the protection of cultural heritage is not emphasized under normative needs, where QA1-documentation should consider laws relevant to the project at hand.[[7]](#endnote-7) If one is considering changing the conditions for key cultural heritage, a mentioning of the cultural heritage act under normative needs should be expected. This is, however, not always the case, as seen with the Campus for the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) project where the focus was on normative needs regarding the University´s mandate.[[8]](#endnote-8), [[9]](#endnote-9) For some reason, the cultural heritage act seems to be overlooked more easily than other laws, regulations and political guidelines, such as requirements for energy efficiencies in buildings. As the Cultural Heritage Act itself states, this should not be the case:

§ 1 (...)

When, according to another law, decisions are made that affect the cultural heritage resources, emphasis shall be placed on the purpose of this act.[[10]](#endnote-10)

The quote above means that if there are conflicting interests between the Cultural Heritage Act and other laws, the Cultural Heritage Act is to be prioritized: the Cultural Heritage Act can pull rank. Still, the legal protection of cultural heritage is repeatedly challenged or problematized, as can be seen in the KVU-report for the Tullinløkka area project:

All options that are investigated involve extensive protection of historical buildings and outdoor areas. This protection has a very high alternative cost because the uses are limited. For example, a development of the entire site Akademihagen to hotels, residences or commercial buildings with a larger building height could provide significant financial gains for the state and very attractive and environmentally friendly buildings with a large capacity near a public transport hub. The costs associated with protection are only made visible to a limited extent in this investigation..[[11]](#endnote-11)

The QA1-documentation has wisely avoided a similarly problematic attitude towards other value-based legal conditions, such as accessibility and equality. Sadly, cultural heritage is not always shown the same regard.

It is questionable if one can claim alternative costs in this situation, where the alternative costs are connected not to the use of the funds to maintain protected buildings, but to the use of the very site that the protected buildings are dependent upon for their existence. Alternative cost is normally connected to the gain one could get from investing funds in a manner that gives greater economic benefit than the protection of cultural heritage. The difference between best possible investment and conservation can be regarded as a loss, deemed alternative cost, which one theoretically loose by financing preservation. Also, the site is valuable because it is a part of the history of Oslo, with the Royal Castle, the Parliament building, the newly closed National Gallery building, the National Theatre and several other buildings and institutions that were instrumental in Norway’s independence and recognition as a sovereign country. The site Akademihagen with its buildings is part of this historical context, and one of the reasons for the area´s appeal.

Part of the difficulty of discussing the value of cultural heritage is the need for quantifiable measures. The cultural heritage field is built upon a qualitative understanding and argumentation, a multi-faceted understanding of value, and the selection of trusted experts to determine the cultural heritage worthy of legal protection. There are ways to enhance cross-disciplinary dialogue, such as boundary tools, which is objects that can support dialogue and understanding, such as architectural models. However, an actual functioning converter translating multi-faceted qualitative evaluations from the cultural heritage field to quantified value tailored for economic analyses does not exist.[[12]](#endnote-12), [[13]](#endnote-13) The pressure for quantifiable measures of the value of cultural heritage leaves experts dumbfounded and simultaneously demonstrates a lack of regard for the prevailing legal protection that is based on thorough professional evaluations. It is inconsistent and illogical to demand quantifiable measures for cultural heritage values in projects that are of public utility and, roughly speaking, have a quantifiable downside (costs), and a qualitative up-side (the benefit to society, whether it be health, education, research, democratic institutions, museums, art galleries or the imprisonment and rehabilitation of convicts). If society´s need for such institutions is temporarily set aside, these projects still do not make sense from an economic viewpoint. The balance, both strictly economically speaking (as in a budget) and in a wider, socio-economic perspective where more factors are taken into consideration, can literally be thousands of millions of NOK (hundreds or even thousands of millions Euros) in the negative. For example, the quantified prized benefits for the Museum of Cultural History project was merely the income from sales of tickets and the museum shop/cafe, totalling 50 and ≤14 NOK,(5,5 and 1,5 Euros) respectively, per visitor.[[14]](#endnote-14) The value of the museums main tasks and created value, namely preservation, research and teaching, cannot be priced. A lack of recognition of the value of cultural heritage is not necessarily wilful. It could be due to an inability to see and process such values. In the QA1-documentation, we have at times seen the protection of cultural heritage discussed without any adjoining discussion of the actual cultural heritage.[[15]](#endnote-15) The link between juridical protection and the actual cultural heritage at hand is broken, seemingly because the values the law protects are not understood. The legal protection is discussed, but without mentioning of the protected buildings significant historic and architectural qualities. The juridical protection of cultural heritage is thus disconnected from the cultural heritage values, and risk being reduced to mere juridical obstacles. Consequently, complying with the Cultural Heritage Act might be reduced to dreary law-abiding instead of the important task of protecting cultural heritage values as an important public good. This is seen for Bergen District Courthouse, a distinctive stone building nicknamed "Gotham city" due to its neo-gothic details.[[16]](#endnote-16) The KVU-report claims that new buildings are cheaper and optimally shaped for the establishment´s functions—a clear adherence to the style functionalism and its motto ‘form follows function’.[[17]](#endnote-17) The documentation claims that the only factor (if any) that can justify higher costs and ‘worse functional solutions’ is said to be legal protection. The building´s history, architectural qualities and ties to the institution and Bergen are not acknowledged. It is extra challenging for the legal protection to justify both higher costs and a resulting lower building quality. Fortunately, these premises are false. The legal protection must be considered together with the values that are protected. Historical buildings can have qualities that are rarely found in new-builds, such as craftsmanship, traditional materials, historical architectural styles and layers of symbolism. The existing Bergen District Courthouse is an example of such rare qualities.[[18]](#endnote-18) In Table 2, we note that cultural heritage authorities are treated as case workers and not specialists in some of the examined QA1-documentation. In the QA1-documentation for the New National Museum, the Cultural Heritage Directorate´s connection to the project is described as follows:

Positive influence: prompt and constructive processing of zoning- and building plans. Negative influence: can set requirements that complicate a good build solution (Norwegian phrasing: god bygningsløsning).[[19]](#endnote-19)

It is correct that the Cultural Heritage Directorate´s role is that of the adviser, not hired consultant or designer: they are to process applications for alterations to protected buildings and should thus not be creating the proposals for an unbiased judgement. Still, one of the country’s strongest and most valuable source of specialist skills regarding cultural heritage is clearly ignored, and their expected positive contribution to such important projects is reduced to moving paper swiftly from one pile to another. As shown in the quote above, there was a fear in the New National Museum project that the Cultural Heritage Directorate would set unworkable requirements for the protected buildings, and this was not an isolated case. The Cultural Heritage Directorate insists that for the majority of protected buildings in Norway today, use is the best basis for preservation.[[20]](#endnote-20) For the Bergen District Courthouse, the KVU-report stressed that legal protection hindered an "optimal" solution.[[21]](#endnote-21) Still, the consultants performing the QA1-report found no evidence of dialogue with cultural heritage authorities in the KVU-report.[[22]](#endnote-22) Subsequently, through such dialogue, the legal protections´ limits of tolerance for alterations were tested, and alternations purposed, enabling further use of the building as a courthouse.[[23]](#endnote-23)

## A lack of understanding of historical buildings

We have now gone through a few typical fallacies connected to a lacking regard for the value of cultural heritage and the legal and administrative framework that are dedicated to the protection of such values. Next, we will look at fallacies connected to a lack of understanding of the actual historical buildings. A typical challenge for consultants from economic analysis backgrounds working with historical buildings is that they do not have specialist knowledge regarding such buildings and so do not have expertise on the matter they are evaluating. It should come as no surprise that we have found some fallacies connected to the understanding of historical buildings’ qualities. In KVU-documentation for the National Theatre, claims were made that a new build (larger addition) would be much more environmental friendly than a smaller project for continued use of the existing building.[[24]](#endnote-24) This fallacy is a common error: as the consultants performing the QA1-report expressed, building more areas, even if the new build is environmental friendly in its design, will still be less environmentally friendly than managing with the buildings we already have.[[25]](#endnote-25)

It is also often claimed that older buildings are dramatically ineffective area-wise. If this fallacy stands unchallenged, it could nullify the potential of historical buildings in both usability and cost. In the KVU for the Bergen District Courthouse, several thousand square meters (19300 versus 16600) were added to the program for the continued use of the existing courthouse compared to a new building,, representing a major cost driver in the calculations.[[26]](#endnote-26) This was seemingly done without actual calculations of the building plan´s efficiency, even though such calculations can be done quickly based on floor plans.

For several of the studied projects, indoor climate in older buildings has been framed as a large and insolvable problem. This applies both to the National Museum and the Bergen District Courthouse.[[27]](#endnote-27), [[28]](#endnote-28) In 2010, the Bergen District Courthouse underwent a condition of state analysis by the firm of Dr.techn. Kristoffer Apeland AS. The esteemed firm found the building to be in quite good shape. In 2015, OPAK did another analysis of the building and found it to be almost unusable.[[29]](#endnote-29) Continued use for the next five years would require an investment of 6 million NOK (650 000 Euro), but for use beyond five years, an investment of a staggering 975 million NOK (106 million Euro) was deemed necessary.[[30]](#endnote-30)

The monetary value of historical buildings is calculated in a number of ways. If the QA1-documentation recommends selling the historical building, it can typically be assigned a significant monetary value.[[31]](#endnote-31), [[32]](#endnote-32) However, to avoid distorting calculations and due to the notorious maintenance backlog, the monetary value of historical buildings is sometimes set to 0 NOK.[[33]](#endnote-33) The motive to assign nil as the value can be understandable from an economic viewpoint. It is surprising, however, to see well-known, historically important and centrally located real estate of high architectural quality and with outstanding craftsmanship, evaluated to be worthless, as was the case with the Historical Museum, a key example of European art nouveau in Norway:

Item 2, Sites: "Fredriksgate (sic) 2 and 3 are freed. The areas are enclosed with requirements for protection and can be difficult to sell in the market. Substantial rehabilitation investments are also required before the building can be used for new purposes. The value of the Museum of Cultural History´s premises at Tullinløkka is therefore set at NOK 0 million.[[34]](#endnote-34)

## A lack of understanding of buildability

Above, we described how the expertise of the typical consultants employed to create the QA1-documentation was from fields other than the cultural heritage protection and building industry, and how this affected the understanding of historical buildings. We suspect that the same problem has manifested in the considerations of buildability. The reports studied show a lack in the understanding of how constructions come to exist and function, and how these can be altered in an expedient manner. This particularly applies to the alluring concept of building large, invisible, underground areas connected to historical buildings. This was seen in the KVU-report for the National Theatre.[[35]](#endnote-35) It was proposed to build large underground areas directly connected to, and in the immediate neighbourhood of, historical mason buildings on Norway’s parade street. They would be built on clay, by the harbour, in an area with heavy traffic at almost all hours. If seriously considered, this build should be discussed in more detail than simply classifying it as ‘dangerous’ and with ‘risk for high costs’.[[36]](#endnote-36) The Tullinløkka project labelled building underground as the most feasible from a building/technology point of view.[[37]](#endnote-37) This surprising judgement can not be characterized as evident, and should have been backed by convincing argumentation if it were to be accepted.

## Assessments intended for new builds do not work for older buildings

Historical buildings face some extra challenges when it comes to expected life span. The assessments are intended for new builds, with an expected life span of few decades. This short expected lifespan does not go well with buildings that are already much older, and are intended to be kept for future generations. Conveniently, the expenses of a new build will be spread out over a few decades, which fits well with the lifespan of the building and with the expected time period before it is necessary for major investments in maintenance. Historical buildings, however, are often already much older than this expected life span, sometimes by several hundred years. Since they are intended to be kept for future generations, the argument could be made that the cost could be spread out over a longer time period. This is not the conventional approach, however, despite requirements that an economic analysis should contain all relevant elements in the life span of a given action and that the life span should reflect the time period in which that action will be in use or in public service. If this is not possible, the residual value should be calculated.[[38]](#endnote-38) Protected buildings have residual value beyond that of the expected life span of a new build, but this is typically not displayed in economic analysis today. It is often the opposite: that new builds are assigned a higher residual value. For the Bergen District Court, the consultants decided that historical buildings should have lower residual value as they are older.[[39]](#endnote-39) For the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, NVH, residual value was only considered and calculated for new buildings.[[40]](#endnote-40) In the examined QA1-documentation, there is often a sliding transition between a building’s life span and the life span of investments made in the building. This seems to come from reasoning that it costs more or less the same to demolish and build new, as to rehabilitate after a few decades, as the cost of a renovation weighs out the residual value of the building. This makes little sense for protected buildings. Regardless, a building’s life span and the life span of investments made in the building should be kept apart. Even if it is necessary to rehabilitate a historical building all over again after 40 years, this is not the same as the historical building then being worthless. It is actually the opposite, as the value of cultural heritage can increase over time and older buildings can often be more durable than new builds.[[41]](#endnote-41) Unfortunately, this is not always recognized.

## Unintended results of complex, political processes

QA1-documentation is integrated with political processes, and both the documentation itself and related subjects can be affected by political decisions. This is seen when the historical buildings of institutions are becoming too small—not because the established institution is expanding, but because several institutions are being merged, typically to reclaim scale economies. This was the case for the Bergen District Courthouse that, before such a merge,[[42]](#endnote-42) had large empty areas, according to OPAK.[[43]](#endnote-43) When buildings are deemed too small because the institutions are getting bigger in the pursuit of efficiency, the connections between established institutions and their traditional buildings are sometimes ignored. For the theatre in Bergen, Den Nationale Scene, this connection was recognized:

Cultural heritage protection as a whole must include two inseparable parts, namely the building as well as the inherent theatre activity.[[44]](#endnote-44)

Sadly, this is not always the case. Ignoring connections between institutions and their historical buildings can undermine the political feasibility of a measure, as seen with the National Gallery building and the new Government Quarters project.[[45]](#endnote-45), [[46]](#endnote-46) Political feasibility was commented on in the Tullinløkka project, both regarding costs and the public ties to the historical buildings.[[47]](#endnote-47)

For the New National Museum, political decisions were slighted, with unclear reasoning:

In the beginning of 2006, Metier completed the alternative analysis for a development project for the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design. At the time, there were political provisions for the National Museum's main base to be at Tullinløkka. In 2008, however, the municipality of Oslo has sold back the so-called field D on the Vestbanen site to the state. This means that there is enough area for the state to consider gathering the entire National Museum's activities in a new building at Vestbanen. Such a location is therefore investigated in this report in the same manner as the other Tullinlokka options in the KS 1 material for the National Museum's development project from 1 February 2006.[[48]](#endnote-48)

The reasoning above is not logic, and it must be more to this change in scope than a new plot being available in the capital.

## Smaller concerns gain greater impact

Particularly for the institutions involved in producing the preliminary KVU-report, smaller concerns can appear major. This was the case for the National theatre, where the external consultants performing the QA1-report pointed out that the social significance of several effects had been overrated.[[49]](#endnote-49) Unquantifiable effects are typically assessed according to significance and scope, which together constitute an effect, in economic analyses.[[50]](#endnote-50) For an effect to be rated at the extremities of the total scale, there initially needs to be higher scores accorded for both significance and scope. The external consultants mentioned, ‘enhanced knowledge dissemination through educational activities,’ and ‘the theatre as a meeting place for open and public conversation’ as significant activities of the institution. [[51]](#endnote-51)

## Problematic and incongruent demarcation of projects costs

If one is vacating an existing, protected building and moving into a new building, society will have an extra building to take care of. This additional cost should be included in the economic analysis. This is seldom the case, as pointed out both in QA1-documentation and in research.[[52]](#endnote-52), [[53]](#endnote-53) The reason that costs for vacated buildings is not considered, is that the scope is limited to the project meeting the needs of the institution. This makes sense from a project management viewpoint, but not for the state who might end up paying for two buildings instead of one. Coincidentally, as the costs for vacated buildings are omitted, expected income from sales of the same buildings are more often included, as was the case with the Bergen District Courthouse. The QA1-report noted that plans for measures to be made before the courthouse is vacated are missing, and also that the estimated sales price is unrealistic, both with regards to the estimated price and the social value the building´s cultural heritage represent.[[54]](#endnote-54) It has been repeatedly claimed that protected buildings can be managed without restrictions, as in the Museum of Cultural History project, regarding the art nouveau building Historic Museum:

The state is free to use the premises as they see fit if it is vacated, including sales.[[55]](#endnote-55)

This might be the case on paper: in theory, the juridical protection is intended to safeguard the cultural heritage values, also after a sale. Still, the buildings affected in this paper are well known, public buildings, and selling them could be both ill-advised, for a number of reasons, and politically impossible. It could be ill advised because the state would have less control of key cultural heritage, loose the possibility of using a building of outstanding quality and take away the public´s access to important cultural heritage. It could be politically impossible due to resistance from an array of stakeholders.

Possible sales of buildings can generate large sums in an economic analysis, affecting the analysis’ recommendations. For the New Government Quarters, the proposed sale of real estate for 3 billion NOK (329 million Euro) affected the calculations for project costs significantly and played a large part in the alternative analysis.[[56]](#endnote-56) It is problematic to rate sales of attractive real estate as gain, as real estate is popular for placing of money. Having money in attractive real estate is comparable to having money in the bank, and selling real estate is more a matter of financing an investment than actually creating value. For the same reasons, a state-owned site that is required for a new build should not be considered freely available, as was initially claimed for the New National Museum project:

Overview of the total investment costs (nominal values) (...) The state already owns the sites on Tullinløkka and A2 on Vestbanen. The market price for these sites is therefore not included.[[57]](#endnote-57)

Owners of protected buildings are obliged to maintain them. Sadly, this responsibility is often neglected, resulting in a maintenance backlog built up over years. This maintenance backlog should be addressed separately from the project costs, as the maintenance should be done regardless and should have been paid for using earlier budgets. If these different costs are confused, it will make it harder to realize continued use of protected, historical buildings.

## The evaluation can appear to be biased, possibly tailored for a preferred result

In QA1-documentation, institutions tend to appear in unison. However, a closer look can reveal a different situation. Generally, it is unlikely that there will be total agreement within a democratic institution with thousands of employees. For both the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science and the Future Location of Campus NTNU, there were differences in opinion, although this was not obvious in the QA1-documentation.[[58]](#endnote-58), [[59]](#endnote-59) Especially when an institution is considering such serous decisions as vacating its historical buildings, one should ensure that all views are represented.

Historical buildings with documented cultural heritage value are likely to have some flaws, but when describing these, one must be sure to also describe the rather obvious advantages. The National Gallery building was described very differently in the New National Museum project and in the Tullinløkka project, and, in retrospect, it is interesting that the former project chose a new build alternative, thus vacating the National Gallery building, while the latter project aims to find new use for the National Gallery building. This seems to have affected their evaluations of the National Gallery building. According to the QA-schemes purpose of real political control of decisions, a genuine and unbiased analysis should be the objective.

# Concluding discussion

We have listed what we perceive to be typical fallacies regarding the future of protected buildings. We have argued that these assertions are disputable and that presenting them as factual is detrimental.

The objective of this paper is to improve the discussion on the value of cultural heritage in economic analysis and in general, not to attack the QA-scheme. It is important that major government investments undergo quality assurance. It is also necessary to have a system ensuring political control with larger public investments. At the same time, the decisions that are made based on QA1-documentation affect protected buildings that are significant cultural heritage with broad roots in society.

This paper has shown fallacies both from the initial KVU-documentation made by/for the institutions, and the QA1-report performed by external consultants. Still, it is our judgement that the QA1-reports do improve the objectivity and the quality of the information given to politicians, compared to the KVU-reports. However, the totality of poorly-founded assertions uncovered in QA1-documentations regarding protected buildings speaks volumes about the poor assessment of cultural heritage buildings and their potential. Each of the fallacies above has the potential to affect the management of important historical buildings based on insufficient grounds. A clear communication of this lacking basis should be able to improve future management of protected buildings, and not only for the key projects that are included in the QA-scheme.

The QA-scheme is being used for larger public investments, but the methodology trickles down the administrative system and versions of the QA-scheme are now being used for other public investments. Unfortunately, the offspring of the QA-schemes lack one of the QA-schemes key features: the external consultants performing the QA1-report. Our examination of QA-documentation has shown that institutions tend to overrate the significance of some effects and underscore the importance of others. The QA1-reports have done an important job in addressing such bias. Also, smaller projects may not be as visible to the public, and therefore to a larger degree avoid debate.

Also, the described fallacies are not limited to larger, public building projects, and can also presented in the discussion of other protected and historical buildings. The QA1-documentation has been a verifiable source of information regarding these fallacies, but QA1-documentation is not the only place they can be found. Regrettably, such fallacies occurs frequently throughout society. The findings in this paper should be useful to everyone working in the cultural heritage field that seeks a knowledge-based management of our most important historical buildings.

This paper has focused on typical fallacies regarding potentially vacated protected buildings, and have illustrated these fallacies with examples from the examined QA1-documentation. Consequently, all the selected QA1-documentation have been treated alike, which might seem unfair to those which have been more aware of the real challenges vacated, protected buildings face, such as the Tullinløkka project. We have refrained from sharing out gold stars and lumps of coal here, as our object is an improved practice for future projects. Still, we would like to point of that there are some signs of a heightened awareness of protected buildings potential and value in some, more recent reports.

Other measures are also made, such as instructions that the protected buildings should be kept in use. This was done both for The National Theatre and The National Stage in Bergen. However, assuming continued use does not remove the need for a thorough understanding of protected buildings: it is quite the reverse. Genuine understanding of protected buildings´ usability, vulnerability and value is instrumental for continued use in compliance with the buildings’ inherent cultural heritage values.

This paper demonstrates how easily the QA1-documentation can be used against an existing protected building, and, through unfounded assertions, make continued use almost impossible to defend. This vulnerability in the QA-schemes evaluations must be addressed for the sake of treasured pieces of the country´s architectural heritage, and hidden costs connected to ill-advised decisions.

We acknowledge that problematic results can emerge from the best motives. The goal of this paper is to strengthen the understanding of protected buildings, a hitherto overlooked and important subject in QA1-documentation, thus strengthening the decisions governed by these documents. It is understandable that the government wishes an economic analysis of larger public investments, but it is rather surprising that it is not coincidentally demanded an architectural assessment of larger public investments that are de facto building projects. Safeguarding the cultural heritage is part of the normative needs in QA1-documentation regarding protected buildings: Society´s most valuable cultural heritage is protected by law, because the architectural and historic heritage is an important basis for our culture and thus our society. Information given regarding protected buildings should thus be correct and of high quality so that it gives decision makers a genuine basis for decisions.

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