

The Extension of the Quay of the German Wharf – 100 Years After.

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Arne Skivenes

Historian and former City Archivist of Bergen

arne.skivenes@gmail.com

The following is the oral presentation with reference to the slides shown simultaneously.

Slide 1. The extension of the quay of the German Wharf. If this story was to be set to music, it would demand a symphony of Gustav Mahler. One hour, complex, dramatic and moving. There is no time for this now. Check out the booklet handed to you, it contains my research. Here and now you will get a taste, more like an Allegro from Antonio Vivaldi. Fast tempo, quickly done. But hopefully giving you an appetite for more.

Slide 2. A few words to introduce myself. No CV, but a few points that might interest you. I am the former city archivist of Bergen and have spent my professional life on documentation. Of the activities that have given me most joy I must mention my affiliation to the Memory of the World program, internationally and nationally. I have made good friends in Paris and elsewhere, and I have had success with writing two Bergen based nominations to the international register, which were accepted.

Slide 3. Why this special topic? Last autumn a friend asked me: Why is no one interested in what is inside the Bryggen quay? Is no one afraid of surprises? Does anyone know what really is down there? I did certainly not know, and decided to find out.

Slide 4. This is some of what I found: (**read slide text in bold**).

Very likely you've been told things like this during your visit here.

Slide 5. Often assumptions like this are illustrated by this drawing or one of many like this. I'm sure you have already been presented with this one or some of the equivalents. As you can see, here is nothing between the old and the new quay front. How do they know this?

Slide 6. My answer is: They don't know this. They assume, and want you to believe. There is no documentation. **READ SLIDE.** There is no professional, scientific response to my work. No answer at all.

Slide 7. No one can claim there has been no indications. This is digging on the quay area in 2007. Anyone can see this is no stone filling. Anyone can see old marine mud at the bottom of the hole. To the right I have given the results of a core drilling from 2008 a few metres away. The results confirm my findings which you will get in a few moments.

Slide 8 I am an archivist and a scientist. I do my digging in the archives. I have 40 years of experience managing the archives of this city. These are the sources I have surrounded myself with since last

year's November. These are the original documents of the responsible builder, the city harbour authorities. I have a lot I want to tell you.

Slide 9. I could have told you how a stone quay was built 100 years ago. (I have a piece in the newspaper about it today). Just notice today that stone fill is the term for a narrow sloping fill to seal the stone wall, the compound behind it is called back-fill in the professional language.

Slide 10. I could have told you the story of the quay of the German Wharf from week to week. To understand quay building the question of timing is imminent. I'm sorry that there is not room for such a documentation today.

Slide 11. So, in a very un-historical way, I will move directly to the final summary the Harbour Engineer made to the City Council in 1927. **READ SLIDE**

Slide 12. Today, I shall briefly touch three central themes. The first is dredging. When building a quay, dredging took place twice: once in the beginning and once towards the end. In this case, the beginning is especially important, because the conditions define the rules for the rest of the work. **READ SLIDE.**

Slide 13. This results in a work situation like this. To the right the new quay wall, like a narrow pier. To the left, the old wharves and freight sheds still owned by the merchants, in the middle open water with small vessels going to and from the wharves.

Slide 14. The first dredging operation starts 13th march 1917 and was mainly finished 4th April. Totally finished 30th April. A dramatic story of the bucket dredger colliding with a bridge we must leave out today. In total a dredging job of 302,6 man-days work, a limited operation. 4 years until the next.

Slide 15. Second theme is foundation and quay wall. Foundation work starts with laying a jete 17.october 1918. Total length shall be 160 m. The description goes like this: **READ TEXT IN ITALICS**

Slide 16. Building the first 50 metres goes well, they are reached 1st March 1919. Then the property owners complain. The access to their properties is difficult, and they are still not compensated. The municipality backs down, and the work is delayed by almost a year. In February 1921 the masonry work is finished.

Slide 17. In 1920 the situation looks like this. The back-fill work has started, but the traffic continues.

Slide 18. One of the great problems of this quay work was the transfers of properties. It took almost 4 years to get the properties transferred to the municipality, making the area available for any construction work.

Slide 19. The other large problem – and our third main theme – was the logistics of the fill. **READ SLIDE**

Slide 20. A finished section of back fill from june 1920

Slide 21. Maybe someone has told you the fill comes from the municipal quarries around Bergen. The do not. The financial records prove this without doubt. The compounds come from the fire site of 1916.

Slide 22. There are indications the compounds were taken from the city centre around Torgalmenningen. When we think of the fire site, we usually see before us ruins like these. They were long gone when our quay was filled in 1920.

Slide 23. In 1920, the relevant parts of fire site looked like this. This is where the shopping centre Exhibition lies today.

Slide 24. There are two groups of questions connected to the compounds: How stable are they, in regard to putting a light rail on? How about archaeology, this is the soil of our old city centre.

Slide 25. Before concluding, we have to return to dredging, the last operation. The ledgers show this took place in spring 1921. Some of the engineers believe there was dredging inside the quay wall. In 1921 there was no water left there to dredge in! The second dredging took place outside the quay wall. Of course, the purpose was to better sailing conditions for larger ships.

Slide 26. Then we have reached the point of summary. I remind you of the 3 sentences from the Harbour Engineer in 1927. They give us 4 important answers. **READ SLIDE**

Slide 27. Earlier, I have shown you the erroneous section drawing. My archival studies have enabled me to make a correct vertical section, based on original records, measurements, facts. I am able to show you what was dredged in 1917 and 1921, the cultural layers from before 1919, probably mediaeval, where the back-fill from 1920-21 went, and where the sterile sea bottom is.

And I can position the pressure zone of the light rail correctly above two unstable cultural layers. Definitely not on a stone filling, which is some metres away.

Slide 28. The decision on a light rail track over Bryggen does not rest on solid rock foundations. But on dredges and dumps.

My presentation for you stopped there. For your information I supply a few additional slides.

In slide 29-35 I supply my original, detailed conclusions from a longer version of the presentation.

In slide 36-37 I present a drawing by the Harbour Engineer from 1st march 1919, from the situation mentioned in slide 16. The vertical section shows the original sea bottom and the dredged area. It also shows that the sea bottom behind the quay was intact two years after the dredging. The accounting proves that no dredging was done to this area after that time.