

Press release from the Expert Committee on risk assessment of possible relocation of the Viking Ships from Bygdøy

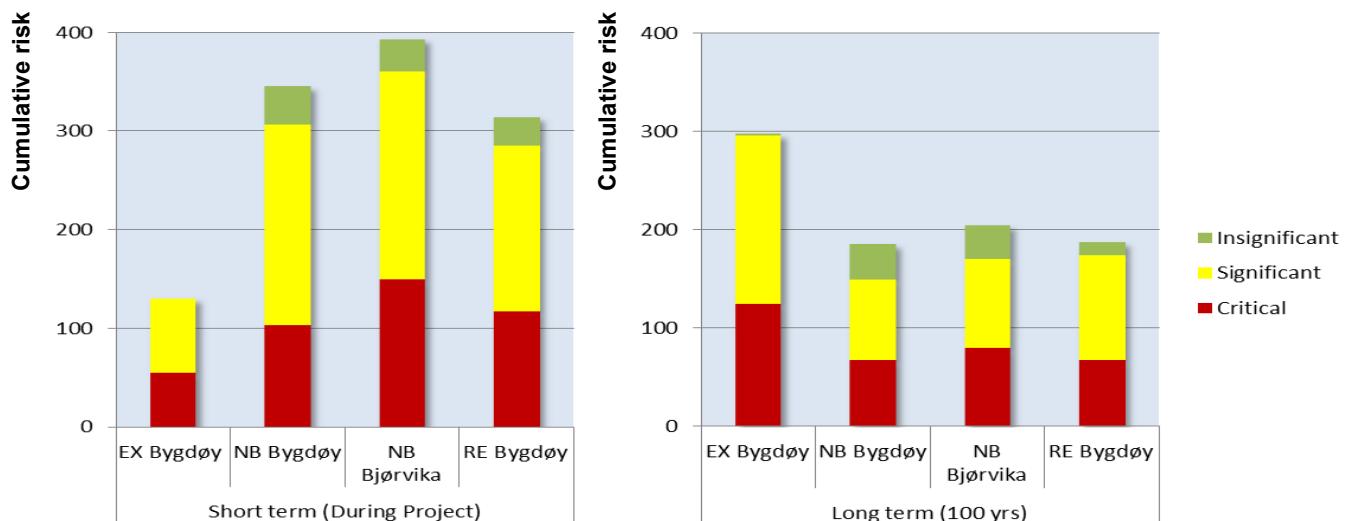
There are risks for damage to the Viking Ships and assemblage present at the Viking Ship Museum at Bygdøy regardless of which future scenario is considered.

From a long-term perspective the risk for damage is lowest in a new museum complex followed by a refurbishment of the existing museum building at Bygdøy.

Based on the mandate the following scenarios have been evaluated by the Expert Committee:

Scenario	Description
EX Bygdøy	Remain in existing building at Bygdøy, no additional actions are taken
NB Bygdøy	New Building at Bygdøy followed by refurbishment of the existing building
RE Bygdøy	Refurbish and remain in existing building at Bygdøy
NB Bjørvika	Relocation to new building in Bjørvika

The illustration below summarizes the results of the risk assessment process in the short term (now and during any immediate project) and from a long-term perspective (100 years).



Every scenario has risks that are considered to be critical (red column). Both from a short- and long-term perspective there are no 'short cut' solutions for the preservation, dissemination and presentation of the collection

In the short term the most critical risks relate to moving the collection to a new building at Bjørvika. In the long term the most critical risks relate to staying in the existing building at Bygdøy. If nothing is done now to improve the conditions, critical risks are introduced in the long term.

The Expert Committee finds that staying at Bygdøy minimizes uncertainties related to external factors compared to moving to Bjørvika. Unknown external factors related to the relocation to Bjørvika, including transportation, building construction and rail activity implies significant uncertainty for the Viking Ship assemblage both short and long term.

The Expert Committee concludes that:

- ✓ The Viking Ships and assemblage are recognized as unique and valued both in a Norwegian and international context. The potential for unrepairable damage is not acceptable but may be unavoidable when handling the objects. However, some form of handling of the objects will be necessary in all scenarios in the short or long term except existing building at Bygdøy.
 - Therefore careful documentation of all objects, using state of the art analytical and measurement tools and following best practice in the field, should be initiated. Careful documentation will allow for repair and reconstruction. This will also increase the research potential of the collection.
- ✓ Of the nine identified highest risks, direct physical forces causing structural deformation and/or loss of material from the Viking Ships and alum-conserved objects are the major short-term hazard
 - Therefore, in order to minimize uncertainties, a key element before any action on moving, relocating or securing and protecting the Viking Ships and the assemblage is to design carefully, rehearse and execute each step in the project, taking into account the identified risks
- ✓ In the long term the lowest risk scenario is the development of a new museum complex at Bygdøy. However, by delaying the decision, and therefore any action, the conservation and presentation benefits that would accrue at a later stage will be diminished as the assemblage will have suffered further decay and change.
 - Therefore the Committee recommends that a new museum to display the Viking Ships and the assemblage should be built at Bygdøy in the vicinity of the existing building, followed by refurbishment of the existing building as part of the development of a new museum complex.
- ✓ Possible restoration works and long-term costs for maintenance and care of the collection should be considered.
 - After project completion, adequate resources must be made available to repair (any) damage that has occurred to the ships and objects, including the necessary time for carrying out restoration and preparations for display before opening to the public. The long-term resources and costs for maintenance, monitoring, preventive conservation initiatives and carrying out restoration work on the Viking Ships and assemblage must also be estimated.

The Expert Committee:

Jesper Stub-Johnsen <i>Dr and Director of Conservation National Museum of Denmark, Chairman of the Expert Committee</i>
May Cassar <i>Professor and Director of the Centre for Historic Buildings, Collections and Sites at University College of London</i>
Ronal Bockius <i>Dr and Head of Research at Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Museum für Antike Schifffahrt, Mainz, Germany</i>
David Saunders <i>Dr and Keeper, Department of Conservation and Scientific Research, The British Museum, London</i>

For more information contact: Jesper Stub Johnsen, Mobile + 45 50 76 05 00,

email: jesper.stub.johnsen@natmus.dk