Welcome to Den Gamle By

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My presentation is about the underground Aarhus Story Experience.

How it fits into the concept of Den Gamle By.

About our principles and guidelines.
15 years ago Den Gamle By was a single period Open Air Museum
A National open-air museum with focus on the pre-industrial period
Now Den Gamle By is a 
*Time Travel* Open Air Museum
Of course we still have the pre-industrial part
We have added the Modern Times as in 1927
With people’s homes
The Car Dealer
The Telephone Exchange
And a museum
And a new town district with focus on the welfare society as in 1974
The Gynaecologist
The conventional family with two children, a boy and a girl
The commune of young left wing students
The storytelling is focused on real people and real stories
On screens you will meet the people who lived there in 1974
The same people 39 years later
The Mini supermarket
The second hand shop with magazines
The exhibitions inspire nostalgia and they stimulate discussions.

For instance about the pornography exhibited in The second hand shop.
In the Jazzbar it is allowed to smoke.

This certainly also stimulate discussions.
Back yards
The house with the small homes
The retired couple
Turkish immigrant workers
- also a theme for discussions
Student from Greenland - a story about Danish colonialism
The kindergarten
Basically this part forms the basis for discussions about Danish identity.
Recently we have also made galleries for Den Gamle By’s special collections
The Silver Gallery
But basically Den Gamle By is an open-air museum conceptualized as a time travel.
In 2010/11 a new task was given to Den Gamle By: The history of Aarhus
A little background:

Den Gamle By is “born” in Aarhus in 1914 and in the first decades large parts of the museum’s houses and collections related to Aarhus.
From the 1920s Den Gamle By was in reality both a local museum for Aarhus and the national open-air museum of urban history and culture.
In 1993 the City Council decided to establish a special museum dedicated to Aarhus’ history.

As a consequence Den Gamle By now focused on being a national museum.
In 2011 The City Council decided to close down the Aarhus museum and asked Den Gamle By to take over.

Luckily we also got the staff and the budget for the running costs.
We recognized that Aarhus has had museums for more than 150 years. But never an exhibition telling the history of the city.

So we knew what to do.

And we had to find out how to do it and how to combine the local and the national angles.
We know that the visitor’s experience at Den Gamle By is a good day out in combination with content and substance.

We wanted the same for the new Aarhus Story exhibition.
We also know that many people are fond of Den Gamle By’s combination of intelligible exhibitions and the possibility of digging deeper into the matter.

We wanted the same for the new Aarhus Story exhibition
We also know that Den Gamle By always has been a national museum with a lot of stories from Aarhus.

We decided to make a virtue out of that and integrate the local and the national perspective into the upcoming exhibition about Aarhus.
Den Gamle By is a time travel from pre-industrial times until to-day.

We wanted the Aarhus Story exhibition to be a chronological survey of Aarhus’ history from the city’s founding in the Viking period until to-day.
We developed the concept, we made it fit with the museum’s other development projects, and we were lucky with the fundraising.
In 2014 we excavated the area
In 2015 we hoisted down the centre piece
In 2016 the underground spaces were about to be finished
The Entrance building was built
11. April 2017 Queen Margrethe opened the Aarhus Story
You start with an elevator tour from the present to the past
First you enter the Viking’s town
In the well a movie tells about the founding of the city
Then the Bishop’s town
Townspeople
Growth 1850 - 1950
The Occupation 1940-45
Big City?
At the end of the storyline you can take your picture and you will become a part of the Aarhus Story.
Until now the Aarhus Story Experience has been visited by more than 150,000 visitors.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

And we have learned a lot.

I will sum up the main principles.
Capsule 1
The Aarhus Story is meant to be a *chronological* time travel in Aarhus’ history from the founding of the city until to-day.
Capsule 2
As it is the case with Den Gamle By the Aarhus Story is meant to be a fruitful combination of a good day out and some substance and content.
Capsule 3

As with Den Gamle By the Aarhus Story is a combination of local and national history. So you can consider Aarhus Story as the history of a typical Danish Town - and the example is Aarhus. And of course also the other way round.
Capsule 4
The Aarhus Story is meant to be a combination of easy understandable exhibitions and the possibility of digging deeper into the matter.
Capsule 5
The Aarhus Story is designed as a combination of *immersive experiences* and areas with more *detailed information*.
Capsule 6

In Aarhus Story we focus on people and their stories more than on things and objects.
Capsule 7
As with Den Gamle By in general the Aarhus Story create *shared experiences* and try to avoid introvert and individualized storytelling.
Capsule 8
In Aarhus Story we try to produce *backgrounds for discussions* between our visitors.
The Aarhus Story is a permanent exhibition and experience.

The contemporary part will be continuously updated in order to keep its relevance.
At Den Gamle By we believe that museums are important.

It is therefore our aim to reach out to as many people as possible. Even to people who believe that museums are boring and elitist.
To us the starting point shall always be the visitors. Of course, we recognize that museums also are about research, collections and preservation, but the focus must be on the visitors.
How do we hook them, how do we catch their fascination, how do we trigger their imagination, how do we touch their hearts – so that they will be open to the insight and experience that is the basic purpose of our museums.
This is basically what this conference is about.
Thank you for your attention and welcome to the conference.