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Riina Haanpää, Laura Puolamäki and Eeva Karhunen
University of Turku, Finland

LOCAL CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE COMMUNITIES OF WORLD HERITAGE SITE OLD RAUMA

Introduction

Situated on the Gulf of Botnia, Rauma is one of the oldest harbours in Finland. Built around a Franciscan monastery, where the mid-15th-century Holy Cross Church still stands, it is an outstanding example of an old Nordic city constructed in wood. Although ravaged by fire in the late 17th century, it has preserved its ancient vernacular architectural heritage. The historic fabric of the city has been built over centuries, forming different historic layers. The historic houses, courtyards, fences and gates, as well as the traditional street pavements, form a homogenous urban entity. (UNESCO World Heritage List, Old Rauma <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/582>).



Figure 1. Typical streetview from Old Rauma. Photo: Kalle Saarinen.

Local community of Old Rauma consists of approximately 700 residents and entrepreneurs of the 150 shops and other commercial services. The 46 blocks of the town are divided into 237 plots. Built heritage includes 250 residential buildings, 100 commercial buildings, 240 outer buildings and 20 public buildings.

Conservation of the area started in 1970's as an initiative of local people. In that time the town was in a poor condition; the town plan was to be renewed and historic houses were to be demolished in order to give way for modern block houses and commercial buildings. House owners were not keen to invest in the area and most of the residents were tenants. Due to this the cheapest houses of Rauma were to be found from Old Rauma. Young families looking for their first home started to move in, and many of them were cultural heritage enthusiasts. These newcomers established Old Rauma Society in 1974 and started a movement for conservation of the area as whole.

Simultaneously a discourse for conservation in general and especially for conservation of Nordic wooden towns was rising. Old Rauma was already brought forward in a Nordic conference and publication "Den nordiska trästaden" in 1972 highlighting Nordic wooden architecture. Soon after this, in 1976, municipality of Rauma and six local associations established Old Rauma Foundation for supporting the house owners in their private conservation activities. This financing structure enhanced the stewardship of the local authorities in daily conservation.

In 1981 the work of local enthusiast led into the fortification of the preservative town plan. In 1991 Old Rauma was inscribed into the World Heritage list together with Suomenlinna fortress among the first two sites from Finland. A decaying town centre had become outstanding example of a Nordic city constructed in wood, which acts as a witness to the history of traditional settlements in northern Europe. (UNESCO <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/582>, accessed 15.5.2016)

By this inscription the conservation of Old Rauma became an international interest, fortified with an intergovernmental World Heritage Convention. In case of Old Rauma World Heritage site monitoring is conducted and reported officially by the authorities working in the area. Periodical reporting of the World Heritage values for UNESCO represents the universal level of monitoring. This reporting and monitoring defines and hopefully secures the universal value of the Old Rauma and each time fortifies its position among the authorized outstanding examples selected to the World Heritage list.

Local authorities of the town planning division monitor the changes in the townscape in general level through legalized town plan, but also in a more detailed level when evaluating building

permissions for individual houses. In many cases these projects are introduced to a Special Control Advisor of Old Rauma consisted of national and local level authorities as well as some lay man representatives from the Town Council. This board was established after the preservative town plan was fortified in 1982 in order to secure the multileveled evaluation of restoration projects. When focusing on physical changes in the townscape, both monitoring systems evaluate the state of tangible cultural heritage.

Conservation of Old Rauma World Heritage site runs on two parallel paths; on one hand, the local community contributes to daily conservation of the still mainly privately owned building and also looks after the objectives of functional diversity and livability. The actual conservation remained in the hands of local house owners and is dependent of their financial resources and will to act for cultural heritage. On the other hand, the national heritage authorities, jointly with ICOMOS Finland, monitor and outline the conservation and development activities in the World Heritage area and its buffer zone, and expect them to be treated secondary to the goals of integrity and authenticity with regard to the historic townscape. (Vahtikari 2013, Dumitrescu 2016)

This paper focuses on residents of Old Rauma, in intangible aspects behind their motivation in living in a World Heritage site and operating in a historic building. The key question is how to introduce an international convention ratified between states parties to local level, where in the most cases the largest unified group for conservation is one family, without excluding the local people from decision making regarding their own environment.

Research

The inhabitant's point of view

During different eras, various principles have prevailed concerning the cultural landscape of Old Rauma. The scenery, the built heritage and the area's history have been mapped actively, especially after Old Rauma was chosen as Unesco's World Cultural Heritage Site. However, as times have changed, so have ideals and also accepted conservation practices (Paasmala 2014). This has influenced the area and its appearance. The last time a wide inventory on build heritage, plots, gardens, streets and squares was made, was during the period from 2010 to the 2012, when preparing the changes in the local master plan and so for in the town master plan. The goal of the inventory was not only to gather information for the town master plan committee, but also to show the main cultural heritage values of Old Rauma as well as the area's authenticity and historical layers. For the first time, attention was paid also on area's outer buildings which, because of the

new ways of living, had been left unused or neglected, but were for their age and their importance in the town view, in need to be placed under conservation. (Niukko 2013; Paasmala 2014; Vanhan Rauman talousrakennusten kuntoarviointi 2005–2007.)

In 2016 the Degree Program of Cultural Production and Landscape Studies of University of Turku continued the research of the buildings of Old Rauma and their history, when a field course of cultural heritage was organized in town. The objective of the field course was especially to view Old Rauma as a living and therefore challenging town environment that is continuously under strain from habitation and time. The starting point of the research was therefore to understand Old Rauma as an area that has been built for people and for living and that has only later been hailed as a World Heritage Site. There is, therefore, cultural history values connected to the site and it was important to interpret its buildings' values and importance. (Paasmala 2014.) The student group interviewed residents of Old Rauma concentrating on their experiences, views and attitudes. The main focus was on the outer buildings and their use. The outer buildings had been noticed in the previous inventory as built heritage, but the field course approached the area from the dwelling point of view; homes and yards as a part of life and activities. This kind of resident-orientated study also aims to improve and increase residents' participation in town plan development. (El Harouny 2008.)

Secondary buildings, like animal sheds, barns, storehouses and small industry or artisan workshops had previously been mostly ignored. Still, these buildings had been under the greatest challenges because of the changed ways of dwelling. (Niukko 2013; Paasmala 2014.) In Old Rauma's outdated, but still valid town plan from 1981, these secondary buildings had even mainly been evaluated as a second class of preservation, which means their preservation was thought to be desirable, but replacing them with new or supplementary building was seen as an acceptable alternative (Paasmala 2014). As the current town plan is so favorable towards new construction, even at cost of outer buildings, the responsibility for their preservation lies heavily on the shoulders of residents of Old Rauma as well as the local communities organizing building conservation.

In comparison with residential buildings, the outer buildings of Old Rauma have undergone many and large structural changes. Many of them have been totally demolished, but they have also been expanded, extended, combined with other outer buildings and modified for a whole new uses. In the 1981 town plan there are altogether 240 outer buildings that have been given some level of preservation status. 110 of these buildings needed restoration, mainly because of wood vermin, mold, decay, vegetation or dampness caused by leaking roof. (Vanhan Rauman hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma 2016; Vanhan Rauman talousrakennusten kuntoarviointi vuosina 2005–2007.)

These numbers clearly show how residents' and owners' own initiative and willingness is needed to conserve outer buildings. Next, we are going to introduce three different heritage communities which were characterized during the analyze of the interviews of Old Rauma residents. These communities are: True Community, Practical Conservation Community and White Paint Community.



*Figure 2. Outer building of Auleen house is painted with traditional, cooked yellow ochre paint.
Photo: Eeva Karhunen.*

The status as Unesco World Heritage Site obliges – universal conservation

Reine Leino and Jyrki Niittyrinta, the owners of the house Auleen, which was built in the beginning of 19th century, put great emphasis on accurate restoration. A part of the outer buildings of their own property had in evaluation based on inventories from 2005–2007 been defined endangered. Since then they have been repaired by the owners themselves. Some of the outer buildings have been rented for small businesses and there are plans to use others for recreational uses, crafts etc. Niittyrinta boasts, how their outer buildings are "The most important buildings in Old Rauma are the church and the town hall and our outer building is the third." Another informant from the True Community group, Juhani Korpinen, points out the importance of preservative and restorative

repairing. "Too many people have to repair according to flyers from hardware stores and that's not preservation". For the True Community built heritage is a part of their everyday lives. The residents are interested in the area's history, built heritage and architecture, and many are in occupations which support this interest. The demands for a World Heritage Site and preservation principles are familiar and accepted and for example the regulations from Finnish National Board of Antiques are respected and strictly followed. More information is searched from Old Rauma information centre Tammela, through self-study and discussion with other residents and professionals. The owner of Iso-Taari property, Mari Aspola, points out the obligations, effects and possibilities of World Heritage status and explains how: "All these international projects began after the World Heritage listing, and that has been important."

For the members of True Community, the value of Old Rauma is not only that "it's old and it looks old." The idea of history and sustainable development, the building materials, the appearance of Old Rauma, the use of the area – all these are important. In Old Rauma "we are in the middle of the town, near everything, we've been living here according to sustainable development for centuries, that's something" (Korpinen 2016).

Violating the town plan or violating the people – residents and authorities

The current town plan concerning Old Rauma allows for large changes in the area – even demolishing or changing preserved buildings. Preservation status does not guarantee preservation of the building without ongoing nurture, understanding and care from the owners and residents. (Vanhan Rauman hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma 2016.) However, Old Rauma's existence as a living and developing town environment is in itself an important value for a World Heritage Site. In some aspects, preserving the living status of the town may need, for example, changes in uses of buildings or repairing and furnishing them differently.

Local authorities object reconstructing attics for living space:

- A.M.: As you know, we are the first family here in Old Rauma which has taken our case to Supreme Court. We would like to make us a home upstairs, but they won't let us. There has been two apartments. At first it was totally denied. Then they would have let us take 97 square meters for living space. But that would leave there 50 square meters useless space, it does not make sense.
- R.H.: Why they would not let you reconstruct the whole attic?

- A.M.: They say that we are violating the town plan, which has been the main issue. But at the same time, our neighbor did get a building permission for a new living space in the attic! There would be no changes in our house's façade or roof structure. The only cultural heritage value lost would be the empty attic filled with pigeon shit. And that empty space in our house for pigeon toilet is more valuable than my need to use my house for my family's home.

(Mäkelä 2016.)



Figure 3. Ari Mäkelä from Knuutla house is willing to restore the outer building, but he needs to secure the living for his family first. Without moving into the Knuutla house and selling their current home it will be economically impossible. Photo: Laura Puolamäki

While True Community concentrates on preserving the authenticity and coherence of Old Rauma and nurturing the values of World Heritage Site, Practical Conservation Community feels its main objective is enabling living and residency – still in accordance of the current town plan. The motives of these two conservation communities are, therefore, slightly different. The first group sees value in old scenery, authenticity, the patina that aging brings and, for example the invisible cultural layers under the town. This community also understands continuity – life and cultural heritage of the area are going to be there a long time after all the current residents have passed away. The buildings are nurtured for the coming generations. The latter community also aims at

respecting the past, but the choices made when restoring is based on enabling residents' comfort and convenience and practical uses for buildings in a World Heritage Site.

Practical conservation community has been confronting the authorities in charge of the World Heritage Site and the Special Control Advisor of Old Rauma. Differing views concerning preservation and different interpretations on the town plan and its allowances create challenges in the way of mutual understanding. When the responsibility of preservation and restoring is put on the hands of individual owners and residents, and the motives for the work rise also from personal needs and views, the opinions and decisions of the residents come forward. For example, the owner of Hauenguano, Tarmo Salvi, sees his property's cultural history value through his own life lived on the property.



Figure 4. Tarmo Salvi explaining the restoration of Salvi outer building. Photo: Laura Puolamäki

His memories of the past happenings, work, childhood games on the yard or falling down with a motorcycle on cobblestone are all meaningful and create respect towards built heritage and life itself in Old Rauma. They also make the area's past observable and real today and guide decision making in the area. Thus, the main motivation for preservation is not the status as a World Heritage Site, but one's own life experiences. "It's...that I have been watching life through this kitchen window for my first 20 years." (Salvi 2016)

New trends and modern ways of life – needs of family life



Figure 5. The kitchen of Tulli house represents modern, Scandinavian blogger lifestyle.

Downloaded from rouvamanner.fi.

”There are some, that modernize, especially the interiors and they aren't very conscious. They may have lack of information. It should be given more.” (Korpinen 2016.) With this sitate, the owner of house Korpinen happens to highlight the main problem concerning built heritage: there is will to preserve the buildings, but it's unclear who should make the decisions on preservations methods. Should the resident or the owner be the one making decisions, should the responsibility lie on local authorities or should the universal regulations guide all preservation and decisions concerning the buildings of Old Rauma? Who is responsible for informing the residents on for example right kind of preservation methods?

The true dangers threatening Old Rauma are over repairing, unsuitable materials and demolishing old structures or whole buildings (Vanhan Rauman hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma 2016). Correct information doesn't always reach the owners, or this information and the owner's interests and will do not meet. ”When we started, we tore down all of interior, all down to the earth. (---) When repairing, of course everything must be modern, naturally in accordance with the old. (---) Ceilings,

paint, electricity, plumbing, division of the rooms, all is going to change. We'll change it all.” (Iso-Simula 2016.) This sitate about restoration plans of the owner of house of Iso-Simula shows clearly the goals of this white paint community: living on a World Heritage Site is a value that is recognized, not committed to. The main guides and motives behind all work on built heritage are owners' and residents' own needs and hopes and trends of modern living, business and hobbies. Living in Old Rauma and the area itself are desirable, but it's not important or interesting to personally invest time or work on nurturing the building heritage or correct preservation and repair work.

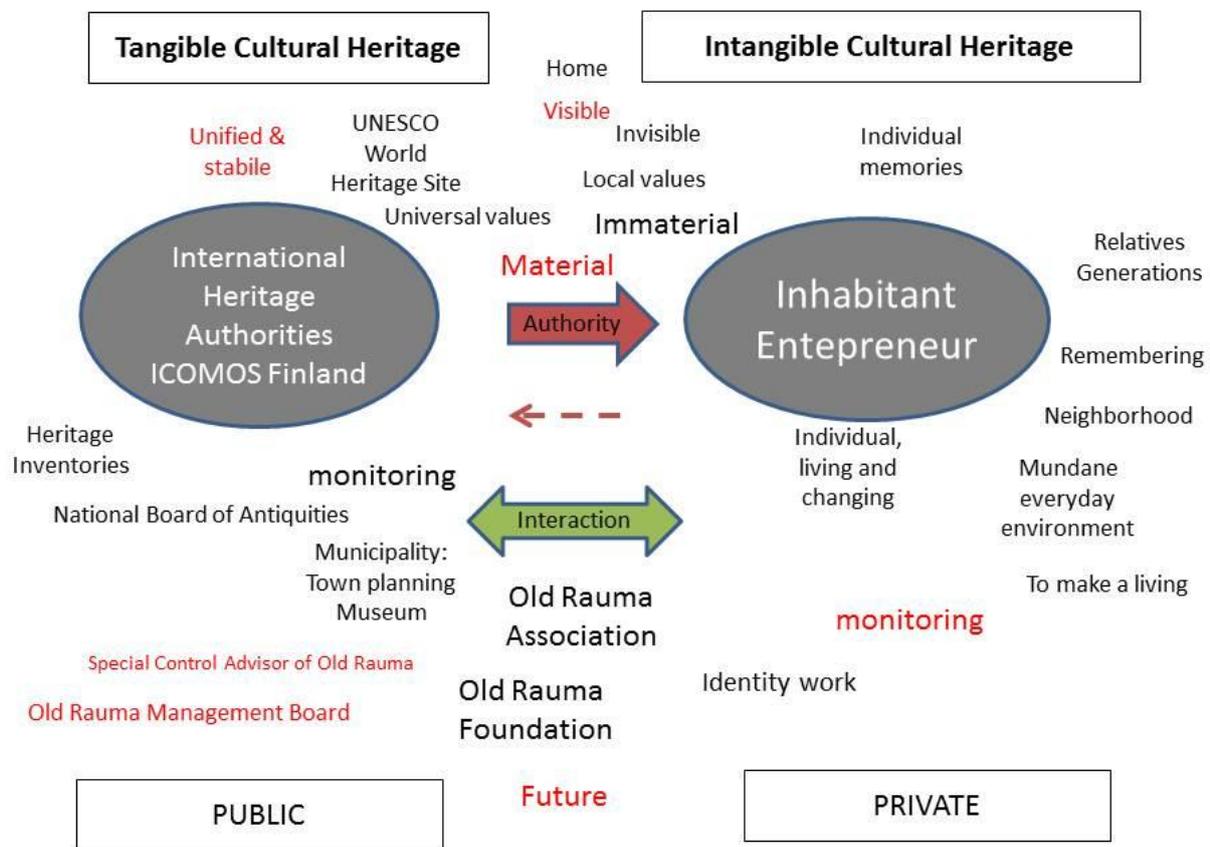


Figure 6. The process of recognizing the values of Old Rauma. Modified from Karhunen 2014.

Conclusions

Most buildings are currently inhabited and owned by private individuals. Old Rauma is not only a World Heritage Site, but also the hometown of its 700 inhabitants. Despite the decorative wooden houses and idyllic street views the inhabitants don't think they live in a picturesque landscape

painting but in a familiar and intimate environment where they are supposed to make a living for themselves, too.

Inhabitants seek to preserve the valuable milieu for future generations. The inhabitants value their neighborhood and its buildings due to intangible heritage. Their values culminate in the concept of "home" and are reflected in individual experiences.

Culturally and socially sustainable conservation stems from local heritage values, fitted into the universal ones in the case of a World Heritage Site. The nature of local values is intangible, but they intertwine with tangible objects. Local values are a key factor in conservation and when included in authorized conservation goals they can empower local people to act for their heritage. When excluded, they can alienate local people from those goals.

Cultural heritage becomes a cultural and social framework for dealing with the present. The cultural heritage process is also powerfully emotive. This emotional power works to reinforce the social and cultural values. Culturally sustainable building protection is based on a mutual dialog between residents and preservation authorities.

Based on the results of this case study we can now ask, if the resident or the owner should be the one making decisions, should the responsibility lie on local authorities or should the universal regulations guide all preservation and decisions concerning the buildings of Old Rauma? Or do we need a new approach for bringing these diverse experts to this dialog?

Stewardship approach as a tool for conservation

“Our landscapes; our privilege; our responsibility. This is, simply put, the concept of landscape stewardship”

defines Elisabeth Conrad at the Cultural Landscapes Blog of the Hercules project 29th March 2015. Landscape stewardship highlights shared responsibility and private-public partnership, while it fosters individual and community responsibility by putting conservation in the hands of the people most affected by it (Brown & Reed 2000).

An essential element of stewardship is monitoring and sensitivity towards change. Perception, experience and representation of landscape are innate skills possessed by all people with different individual levels depending on their environmental sensitivity and knowledge.

While True Community pursues to respect the history and architecture, White Paint Community seeks innovation from hardware store flyers and lifestyle blogs. It does not mean that they would not be keen to learn more, they are just used to explore different sources than the True Community.

The local community living in the World heritage site contributes to daily conservation when living and maintaining their houses and other property in the area. They also use the public spaces and use and produce services of the area as in their mundane, every day environment. To this community the universal and outstanding values are considered as neighborhood heritage (Fairlough 2009), not so much as World Heritage. Their motivation for conservation stems from the intangible aspects; making their historic house a home with all its invisible elements, for some people making their living in the area or in the house they live in and for some families keeping their estate in the chain of previous and future generations of the family.

When the framework of UNESCO for evaluating and monitoring World Heritage values (UNESCO 1972) is harmonized, universal and stable, the framework of local people for evaluating and monitoring neighborhood values is individual, local and ever changing. And yet both of these parallel frameworks are objected to secure and maintain the same World Heritage site, Old Rauma. The key question is how to introduce an international convention ratified between states parties to local level, where in the most cases the largest unified group for conservation is one family, without excluding the local people from decision making regarding their own environment. This question is central also to Strategic Objectives of the World Heritage Convention coined as the “Five C’s”.

The Strategic Objectives were first introduced in Budapest in 2002 including credibility, conservation, capacity-building and communication (Budapest Declaration 2002). They were later completed with the fifth C, community (31COM 13B The “fifth C” for “Communities”; 2007).

In the fifth C the World Heritage Committee “encourages all interested parties to promote and implement this fifth Strategic Objective to enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.”

If diverse experts can be placed around one table with their personal input, monitoring the state of conservation can be raised into a higher and more sustainable level. Also the actions for conservation may find new paths and resources if the management system could be developed more resilient. Perhaps the most important outcome of broad authority is an increase in general knowledge of the site and of its outstanding values with all of its shades including both tangible and intangible aspects.

These joint efforts between different groups come close to Conrad's definition of landscape stewardship. With different mediums diverse groups can find their way to engage with World Heritage and neighborhood heritage, identify with it and share responsibility within their capabilities. With stewardship approach all the Strategic Objectives of World Heritage Convention can also be implemented to family scale conservation.

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