Redesign in a World Heritage Site

New Use and Urban Repair in Røros Mining Town

AAR 4551/AAR 4825, Building Conservation and Transformation, autumn 2013
Dep. For Architectural Design, History and Technology
Røros was founded in 1644 after the discovery of copper ore in a remote mountain area. It was located at the waterfalls in river Hyttelva which provided hydropower. Rapidly a small complete urban society was created in a previously almost uninhabited area. In the 1700s, Røros was an important town in Norway with high economical significance.
Compressed farmsteads are organized in an urban pattern and adapted to the location in a barren mountain area with extreme climatic conditions for farming.

The distance from Røros to agricultural areas was long, and all inhabitants – from the workers to the director, had to do farming for their own food supply needs. This symbiosis of mining and farming can still be tracked in the urban pattern.
The urban structure is still to a large degree intact, with shops and houses along the streets, and stables, barns, cowsheds and other outbuildings surrounding the inner courtyards.
Røros was considered an urban cultural heritage site already in the early 1900s.

One reason for the national attention on the urban historic environment may be the colourful depictions of the streets of Røros made by the painter Harald Sohlberg in the early 1900s.
Røros Mining Town was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1980. The status as a World Heritage Site is important for the booming tourist business of Røros, and gives significant grants from the government to the maintenance of the urban fabric.

But Røros is also a living local community with normal needs for housing qualities, business development and service.

Røros winter market, before 1882 (above) – And in 2013 (below)
The challenge:
Redesign/new design in an internationally protected urban heritage area

Røros shares the problem with other urban communities that shops and businesses close down in the center and moves to shopping centres outside the town.

There are restrictions on interventions in the built structures due to the heritage protection, but on the other hand, empty buildings is critical both for Røros as a community and for the buildings themselves.

The course will focus on design of architectural solutions for contemporary use within the limitations of an urban World Heritage framework.

This includes both intervention in existing buildings, and design of new additions in gaps in the urban tissue.

Røros is an excellent arena for studying these critical issues which have transfer value for all design and redesign in urban conservation areas.
«We are very worried about the tendency of replacing the shops in the traditional commerce streets of Røros Mining Town with office businesses. A «officification» of central shopping premises will change a long tradition and in the future it will be hard to restore a trading activity in an area which for a long time has been silent and passive.»

Åpent brev til Røros kommune om framtiden for handelsnæringen i Røros sentrum, Nea Radio 28.02. 2013
The courtyards of Røros: The heart of the urban farming

The House of the Provisions Provider: Listed courtyard complex where both new use of existing buildings, and design on new additions, may be a task.
Learning goal:
Design and redesign in an historic urban context

Methods and techniques for documentation of existing built environments – properties, qualities and possibilities

Assessment of architectural, historical and cultural significance of built environments

Applying the background knowledge as a tool for design for new use of the built environment

Sleggveien, before 1900, and in 2013
Semester structure

Knowledge course AAR 4825 (compulsory): Building documentation and analysis. (group report)
- Measured drawing
- Building archaeology
- Archive studies
- Condition survey
- Biodegradation
- Heritage value assessment
- Discussion of possibilities and principles

Knowledge course AAR 4863 (recommended): Digital modelling and production

Project course AAR 4551 – Building conservation and transformation (individual or groups of max 2)
- Design of a proposal for new use and additions to a protected building complex
Preliminary semester plan – overview

**Week 34: Introduction AAR 4825**
Week 35: Field work Røros
Week 36: Field work Røros
Week 37: Report writing, AAR 4825
Week 38: Report writing, AAR 4825

**Week 39: Submission, report AAR 4825**
Week 40: Start AAR 4551, evaluation AAR 4825
Weeks 41-44: AAR 4551, design work, lectures, seminars
Week 44: Mid semester presentation
Weeks 45-49: AAR 4551, design work, lectures, seminars

**Week 50: AAR 4551: Submission and evaluation**
Practical information

Teachers: Eir Grytli, Dag Nilsen, Jon Nordsteien (AAR 4825 and 4551), Pasi Aalto (AAR 4863)

External partners:
Røros municipality
Trebyen Trondheim
The Cultural Heritage Fund
House owners, Røros
Master students at Cultural Heritage Management, NTNU participate in AAR 4825

Field work: Two weeks field work in Røros.

Costs: External funding of parts of the living costs during field work in Røros, but an own expenditure of about 2000 NOK must be estimated.

Maximum number of participants: 18 (+ 14 studenter fra KULMI

Language: English or Norwegian, depending on the composition of the group

Semester start: Tuesday 21 August