

Wooden Heritage of Vilnius. Understanding and protecting Cultural Values of
Wooden Architecture of Žvėrynas Historical Suburb



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Introduction

It is unique and specific that modern-day Vilnius is still rich with wooden architecture. Not only Vilnius but also other big Lithuanian towns maintained wooden areas in their old parts. The layers of centuries here are more picturesque and more expressive than in many Western European towns – wooden buildings and of no value low-rise stone houses vanished there because of rapidly growing industry in 18th-19th century. This specificity of Lithuania towns is one of urban values, broadening the information field of the town.

Wooden Vilnius is much younger, more chamberish and democratic city marginalia, compared to the centre or the old town. It fell into margins both in geographic and heritage preservation sense. It also fell into margins literally as it was pushed out into the suburbs and also figuratively as it took lower rank of cultural values in the hierarchy of heritage¹.

Wooden architecture heritage of central part of Vilnius constitute of approximately 2000 houses, mainly living ones (97 %), built in the middle of 19th and beginning of 20th century. It presents the traditional forms of vernacular wooden architecture or repeats the forms of professional architecture. There are four large territories in the town where wooden architecture dominates (more than 75 %): *Žvėrynas*, *Šnipiškės*, *Markučiai*, *Naujininkai*. (fig.1, fig.2, fig.3) Besides there are twelve smaller territorial units and some single buildings².

The object of the work

Wooden architecture of Žvėrynas historical suburb which is also an undivided urban unit per se - is the object of this work. It is essential to emphasize the integrity of wooden architecture and its environment whereas there is a threat to tend to protect a single object and to ignore its surrounding. While wooden Žvėrynas is a peculiar composition and example of the unity of architecture (not only wooden) and green places – the loss of symbiosis between the “woodies” and the green environment means also the losses of cultural values of this heritage

Wooden houses in this area are mainly from the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century. In contrast to the others historical suburbs, this one (together with Markučiai area) maintained almost untouched by the industrialization processes in the 6th decade of 20th century and kept its wooden face in concord with ambient natural places.

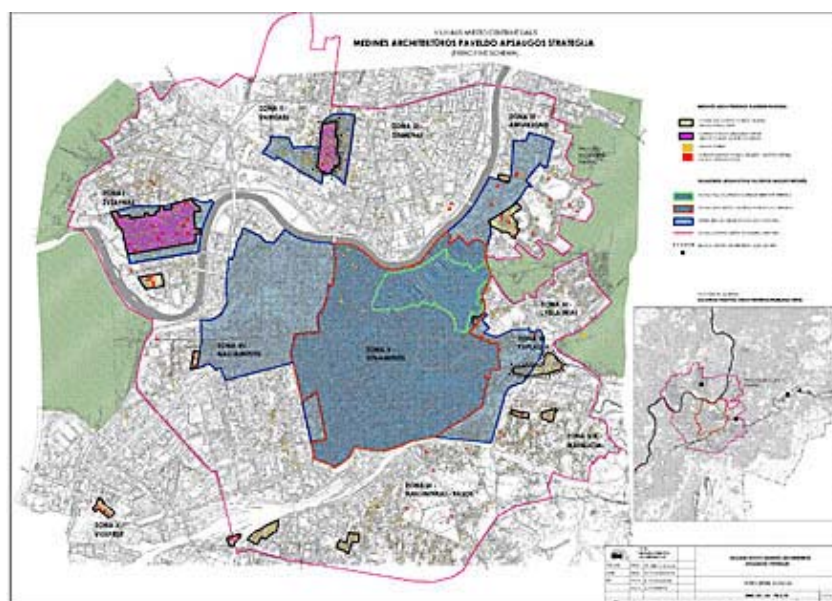
¹ Laučkaitė Laima, *The Forgotten Wooden Vilnius* // Surgailis Andrius. *Medinis Vilnius. Wooden Vilnius*. Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2006, p. 10

² *Medinės architektūros paveldo apsaugos strategijos įgyvendinimo programa*. Vilniaus miesto savivaldybės tarybos sprendimas Nr. 1-1117. Vilnius, 2006, balandžio 26, 3 art., 4.

It is necessary to mention that Žvėrynas urban site, namely the territory with the complex of wooden architecture³, is a listed object which is of local urban significance. (fig.1, fig.2, fig. 3)



1 fig. Vilnius map and its main historical areas. Žvėrynas suburb is on the left side of the map, surrounded by the river bend from the south.



2 fig. Implementation of Conservation Strategy Programme Regarding Wooden Architecture of Vilnius. The main zones of wooden architecture are marked here. The zones of Žvėrynas (on the left side) and Šnipiškės (on the north side) historical suburbs contain more than 75 % of wooden buildings. Pink colour of these zones in the map indicates the frameworks of urban protected areas.

³ The territory including the streets of Latviju, Birutės, Traidenio, Maloniosios, Upės. Fig. 2 and fig. 3

Problems of the work

There are plenty of valuable wooden buildings in Žvėrynas suburb – 108 of 439 wooden houses are listed (there are 708 stone buildings). It should be noted that registering of objects is still ongoing process. According to Vilnius Technical University and Institute of Monuments Restoration executed research results (1990) more than 80% of protected wooden buildings are in a critical condition and demands major repairs. Present day condition of wooden architecture is not better in many cases. In spite of some decisional documents and strategic programmes concerning wooden architecture of Vilnius and issued by Vilnius Municipality and National Commission of Cultural Heritage (the latter is an advisory body in heritage issues) as well as of the fact of listing of single houses and the urban area, wooden face of Žvėrynas is vanishing rapidly. Thus the following questions arise: *why this heritage is doomed to disappear? What are the threats which determine the disappearance of this heritage? What are the main reasons of this indifference and disregard in respect of this heritage? What should be done for preservation of wooden heritage of this suburb?*

Aims of the work

The main goal of the work is regeneration and identification of values related to cultural significance of wooden heritage of Žvėrynas. Understanding values is necessary process to start a sustainable preservation programme of it, to solve the existing problems and to give possible proposals in preservation of this heritage. Therefore the answers to these questions are significant:

- *What should it be protected and why should it be protected?*
- *Why is this object important and significant? What are the cultural values of the object?*

We argue that it is important to present some theoretical ideas about values of heritage. This will serve as a theoretical tool for the analysis of cultural values of Žvėrynas wooden architecture.

Getty Conservation Institute's researches⁴ on the subject of values and benefits of cultural heritage conservation as well as on values-based management will be instrumental and contributory for this work, mainly for the framework and directions in the concrete values-based research on wooden architecture of the historical suburb of Vilnius town.

Historical records and other investigative literature related to wooden architecture of the place will serve for the identification of cultural significance and values of the object. Besides, some official documents will be analyzed in the light of perception of cultural values.

⁴ Values and Heritage Conservation. Research report. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2000 // <http://www.getty.edu/gci> and Port Arthur Historic Site. Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. A Case Study. Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2003 // www.getty.edu/conservation

Definitions

It is important to define some principle definitions which are basic for this work. These are the definitions of *cultural value* and *cultural significance*.

Cultural significance of the object of cultural heritage contains multiple values. From the writings of Austrian art critic Alois Riegl to the policies of the Burra charter⁵, cultural values have been ordered in categories, such as aesthetic, religious, political, economic, social, historic, etc.⁶ These values are significant for the past, present or future generations⁷.

In this work *value* is used to mean the characteristics attributed to heritage object, wooden architecture of Žvėrynas historical suburb, by legislation, heritage authorities, and/or other stakeholders. These characteristics are what make this site significant. *Significance* is used to mean the overall importance, determined through an analysis of the entirety of the values.

Specifically for this work it is important to take a look at the main law for protecting immovable cultural heritage in Lithuania. Here we find the definition of *valuable feature* (synonym of cultural value) that is the feature of cultural object or place, or some their parts and elements, significant ethnically, historically, aesthetically or scientifically⁸. This definition is close to the one of Burra charter where cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for the past, present or future generations⁹.

⁵ This charter is particularly focused on cultural heritage values and cultural significance of cultural heritage. It can be an adaptable model for site management in other parts of the world because the planning process it advocates requires the integration of local cultural values. – The Australia ICOMOS charter (The Burra charter) for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (1999). [Looked 2007 10 30]. On the Internet: <<http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>>

⁶ Values and Heritage Conservation. Research Report. The Getty Conservation Institute. Los Angeles, 2000, p. 8

⁷ The Australia ICOMOS charter (1999)..., article 1, 1.2

⁸ Lietuvos Respublikos Nekilnojamųjų kultūros vertybių įstatymas. 2004, Nr. IX-2452, Vilnius, article 2, 40

⁹ The Australia ICOMOS charter (1999)..., article 1, 1.2

1. Historic and geographic survey of Žvėrynas historical suburb

Historical reflection

Žvėrynas as a Vilnius suburb had been developing under special conditions. This area, isolated by the natural fence of the river Neris, remained for a long time an untouched site of nature. The suburb was formed in short time-period - in the late 19th and early 20th century. Until present days it preserved a humane scale of the area as well as an atmosphere of a place historically intended for recreation¹⁰.

The oldest information about Žvėrynas reaches the 16th century. It is mentioned in the documents of Radvilos, the noble family of Lithuania. Žvėrynas was the belonging of Radvilos noble family. This area was used as a fenced hunting territory with animals, kept in the forest precisely for that purpose. There were already some water ponds and water mill.

In the 17th century a part of Žvėrynas was shaped into a landscape park with rare species of trees, flower beds and animals.

This area belonged to various owners during the 19th century who continued hunting and organizing receptions of nobility. The springy slopes of the river Neris were cleared and planted with trees – the old oaks are growing also today. The Orthodox church of St. Catherine, the oldest sanctuary of the suburb, was build during this age. One more Orthodox church together with the Catholic church and Kenesa of Karaites (Caraims) were built in the beginning of 20th century.

The constructions in Žvėrynas took a rather chaotic character, disregarding any special rules. Just after the sale of the area, in 1891, the south and the west part of it were regularly divided into squares. The plots in the forest area also used to be sold. We can see also now, that the streets in the eastern and northern part are curvy, shaped by the forms of nature¹¹.

Three periods of constructions in Žvėrynas can be singled. During the first period, until 1902, all built houses were wooden. This territory was advertised as a resort and recreation zone. It is important to mention that the suburb was connected with Vilnius town in 1902. Vilnius inhabitants loved this suburb and flew to live there as well as to rest and relax or entertain even before its incorporation into the town.

During the second period of building, from 1903 till 1914, the most salient and specific examples of wooden architecture were built. That was a period when a style of historicism corresponded to the fashion and taste of the time.

The rationalism features are found in the houses built during the interwar period. That was a period when the stone architecture appeared in the neighbourhood of woodies. This period was distinguished for its manor style houses and Zakopane style which was characteristic to Poland, Vilnius and Vilnius region¹².

¹⁰ Ptašek Marija. Medinė architektūra Vilniaus Žvėryno rajone // Medinė architektūra Lietuvoje, Vilnius, 2002

¹¹ <http://www.zverynas.lt> – an official internet site of the community of Žvėrynas suburb. [looked 2007 10 25]

¹² Ptašek Marija. Medinė architektūra ..., p.

Geographical situation and other specificities of the suburb

The position of this suburb is rather specific – this is the area which locates between intensively built-up centre of the town and slopes of natural conservation area of *Karoliniškės*. It is as if moves from intensively urban environment to natural one. Wooden architecture of this area lives in concord with natural green places and thus creates a beautiful environment.



3 fig. Žvėrynas historical suburb. The territory including streets of Latvių, Birutės, Traidienio, Maloniosios, Upės is the urban protected monument. This territory is the most dense wooden built area.

Three zones are singled in this area: “riverside zone”, “forest zone” and “north zone”. In the green parts these places and objects are protected: slopes, springs, water ponds, relict pines. The specificities of the zones must be taken into account when preparing the development plan of the suburb. However the unique environment is becoming more and more harmed because of new investments and new constructions.

2. Cultural values and cultural significance of heritage: a theoretical reflection

Values of cultural heritage are an important subject in contemporary society. Values are able to transform some objects and places into heritage. In the field of conservation of cultural heritage, values are basic to deciding *what to conserve*, *why to conserve* and *how to conserve*. The ultimate aim of conservation is not to conserve material for its own sake but, rather, to maintain the values embodied by the heritage. It must be admitted that objects and places are not, in and of themselves, what is important about cultural heritage. They are important because of meanings and uses that people attaches to these material goods and the values they represent. Good, sustainable preservation of heritage examines *why* and *how* is heritage valued and by *whom* it is valued. The investigation of values and the answers to these questions will help to achieve that the heritage is meaningful to those whom it is intended to benefit¹³.

There are some important challenges which face us in the field of conservation:

- Physical condition of the cultural object or place and their maintenance;
- Management context of cultural heritage: funds, trained personnel, legislative and political issues;
- Cultural significance and values¹⁴.

We will argue here that the identification of cultural values of the object and place and emphasis of their significance is one of the most important issues that impact the physical condition of heritage objects and places as well as the management affairs. The process of valuing and categorizing values of the monument can serve as a vehicle to inform decisions about how best to preserve these values in the physical conservation of the object or place¹⁵.

It is noticeable that in 20th century, the conservation community and the heritage field have undergone an extraordinary expansion. There still are specialists – who are certainly needed – but new groups have become involved in the creation and care of heritage. The social factor in heritage conservation is specially emphasised in the Getty Institute's research on values: instead of focusing on objects of conservation their research centres on subjects and involves an investigation of the different actors and institutions and their motivations, habits and other mediating factors. The group of citizens arrive with their own criteria and opinions on how to establish significance, on what merits conservation, and on how it should happen. The new definition of conservation, relevant for the research, can be raised here – it should be understood as a social process, one that includes the work of many individuals and groups, not just conservation specialists¹⁶. Here, the importance of social and economic values is acknowledged along with traditional notions of conservation value – such as age, aesthetics, and historical significance.

¹³ Values and Heritage Conservation. Research report... , p. 7

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 4

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 7

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 68

Heritage can be valued in a variety of ways, driven by different motivations (economic, political, spiritual, aesthetic, etc.), each of which has correspondingly varied ideals and ethics. These different ways of valuing in turn lead to different approaches to preserving heritage. Here we must notice also the complexity of the contemporary society as well as the diversity of potential stakeholders of the heritage. Motivations for valorization (or devalorization)¹⁷ of heritage may vary between different stakeholders and thus can create dissonances between existing values or added values. Cultural significance for the purposes of cultural heritage yet can be an issue of negotiation among professionals, academics and community members who value the objects or place¹⁸.

The behaviour in regard of cultural heritage, interpretation of it can be seen as a changeable, not a stable process. Values, given to heritage by individuals or communities may shift from time to time. Thus the values are not simply “preserved” but are, rather, modified. In the outcome, the meaning of the object or place is redefined, and new values can be sometimes created.

One more landmark in the analysis of values can be taken into consideration. This is the significance of geographic scale. How to conserve the cultural heritage – at a local scale, national or global scale?

The new term of values-based management appears in the heritage valuing process. Heritage management, which focuses on values’ identification with the primary purpose of protecting the significance of the place, is called values-based management. It must be said that values-based management has been most thoroughly formalized in Australia, where the Burra charter guides practitioners. While the principles of this management and the ideas of Burra charter can be adaptable also in the other parts of the world and serve as guidelines because the planning process it advocates requires the integrations of local cultural values. Values-based approaches starts by analyzing the values and significance attributed to cultural resources. This management is based on following issues:

- Ability to accommodate many heritage types;
- Ability to serve the diversity of interest groups;
- Ability to address the range of threats to which heritage may be exposed;
- Ability to propose a long-term view of management¹⁹.

Some of these trends are especially important in preservation of the wooden architecture of the chosen Vilnius suburb.

For establishing values of the object or site it is important to take into consideration:

- Historical records;

¹⁷ There is a subtle distinction between valuing - appreciating existing value, and valorizing - giving added value. - Values and Heritage Conservation. Research report... , p. 8

¹⁸ Values and Heritage Conservation. Research report... , p. 9

¹⁹Port Arthur Historic Site. Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority. A Case Study. The Getty Conservation Institute. Los Angeles, 2003, p. 1-2

- Consultations of stakeholders – individuals and groups who have an interest in a site and who can provide valuable information about the contemporary values attributed to the place.

3. Understanding and protecting cultural values of wooden architecture of Žvėrynas historical suburb

Wooden architecture of Žvėrynas historical suburb is not evaluated adequately. The same may be said about all wooden architecture of Vilnius suburbs. This is one of the main reasons that determines the rapid decay or in some cases – even intentional destruction²⁰ – of this part of heritage. We will look at cultural significance of wooden architecture from several viewpoints:

- How cultural significance of this heritage is defined in official documents? (These documents talk mainly generally about wooden architecture of Lithuania and Vilnius wooden architecture)
- How this architecture is valued by Vilnius inhabitants and by Žvėrynas inhabitants?
- Cultural values of Žvėrynas wooden architecture with reference to historical records and other investigative works

3.1. Articulation of cultural significance of wooden heritage in decision-type documents of official institutions

Let's take a look to, so called, "official" evaluations – these are the actions of the institutions, responsible for the heritage or town planning. These actions result in legislation of documents or other releases as well as in their effective implementation. It is noticeable, that there is no detailed values-based research in regard of wooden Vilnius architecture. Moreover, there is no special legislation intended namely to wooden architecture as well as to Vilnius wooden areas.

However, it is necessary to notice some other also important releases intended to wooden architecture. There are two *Decisions Concerning Preservation of Wooden Lithuanian Heritage* issued by *National Commission of Cultural Heritage* in 2002 and 2006. It is relevant to emphasise that the decisions of the Commission are of advisory and consultative nature²¹, and do not possess any legal capacity.

The Commission emphasizes the importance of Lithuanian wooden heritage and declares necessity of understanding and perceiving cultural values of it and states *that institutions, responsible for the conservation of cultural heritage do not reveal the real significance of wooden architecture*²². Consequently this document obligates *The Department of Cultural Heritage Conservation* and other responsible institutions *to prepare the criterion for identification of values of wooden heritage, in*

²⁰ For example, abandoned and not used houses are used to be set on fire in order to get a free, expensive land site.

²¹ National Commission of Cultural Heritage is an advisory body to Parliament, Government, Ministry of Culture and The Department of Cultural Heritage in regard of heritage issues. It presents proposals, analysis. – Lietuvos Respublikos Nekilnojamųjų kultūros vertybių įstatymas. 2004, Nr. IX-2452, Vilnius

²² Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybinės paminklosaugos sprendimas Nr. 88 „Dėl medinio kultūros paveldo išsaugojimo“. Vilnius, 2002

consideration of their significance and importance for continuity of the ethnic culture as well as learning about it. The Commission obliges those institutions to admit special regulations ensuring the preservation and maintenance of wooden heritage.

Unfortunately, the second decision (2006) of the Commission states *that the conditions of wooden heritage constantly worsen, and no means are undertaken to solve the existing problems*²³. Basically, this document is repeating the recommendations of the document of 2002.

On the one hand, the remarks regarding inadequate evaluation of wooden heritage and the proposal for valuing criterion preparation is a significant step. But on the other hand these remarks and proposals are worthless if only left on paper. The real situation demonstrates the insufficiency of only recommendations.

We will analyze also one more decision, released by *Vilnius Municipality Council* and intended namely to Vilnius wooden architecture: *Implementation of Conservation Strategy Programme Regarding Wooden Architecture of Vilnius* (2006). (fig. 2) The Programme states, that *heritage of Vilnius wooden architecture is a valuable and integrate part of the town as well as the part of Lithuanian architectural heritage and it is significant on a European scale*²⁴. It is an integrate part of Vilnius Strategic plan. The purposes of the Programme as a part of this plan are:

- Increasing the international competitiveness of Vilnius;
- To improve the urban architectural image of the city;
- To reveal and make wider use of the cultural and natural distinctiveness of Vilnius;

However the elaboration of these aims in the strategic plan is negotiable and not concrete suitably.

The other aims of the Programme per se are connected with wooden architecture of the town. One of the purposes highlights the significance and value of wooden Vilnius architecture.

This decision of Vilnius Municipality Council embraces the whole town's wooden architecture. While in the process of understanding and identifying values of this heritage, is significant to notice the individuality and specificity of each Vilnius suburb as well as the individuality and specificity of their wooden architecture. Therefore it is important to prepare special plans for each suburb, regarding cultural values of the heritage.

The Programme addresses attention towards the diversity and originality of wooden heritage of Vilnius²⁵. These features were influenced by some factors:

- Character of the town (Vilnius is a metropolitan city in proportion to the other Lithuanian towns);
- Location in the region (it is the centre of East Lithuania);
- Influence of ethnic cultures (it is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural town);
- Historic development of architecture (the profound traditions of professional architecture and carpentry);
- Picturesque natural environment (relief, waters, cultural landscape).

²³ Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros paveldo komisijos sprendimas Nr. S-2- (118) Dėl medinio Lietuvos kultūros paveldo išsaugojimo, Vilnius, 2006

²⁴ Medinės architektūros paveldo apsaugos strategijos įgyvendinimo programa... 1 part, 2

²⁵ Ibid, 3 part, 5

This is the only one statement in this Programme, considering the value and significance of Vilnius wooden architecture.

However it is significant to remark that the Programme presents the range of threats to which wooden heritage may be exposed and introduces proposals for sustainable preservation of wooden heritage and its environment. These are the important abilities of values-based management which has already been discussed above.

3.2. The position of locals in respect of wooden architecture of Žvėrynas historical suburb

Unfortunately, wooden heritage of Žvėrynas wooden architecture as well as of other suburbs is not evaluated adequately also by the local inhabitants and especially by the owners of this property. The negative attitude dominates towards wooden building, finding it not prestigious enough, infirm and short-lived.

One of the most important reasons of depreciation of this heritage is the specificity of inhabitants of the houses and their indifference towards this heritage. Unfortunately, the most of the houses lost their original owners after World War II. A specific poorest social group inherited the woodies' area in the second half of 20th century: houses are heated with coal, there are no accommodations and water is only taken from hydrants in the street. These conditions formed an image of uncomfortable, outworn and undesirable area. The colourful multi-national public of Vilnius inhabited these areas: „Tuteishy“ (“locals” in local slang) – a mixture of Poles, Byelorussians, Russians and Lithuanians - reside here; prostrated people and society outcasts live here²⁶.

3.3. Cultural values of Žvėrynas wooden architecture with reference to historical records and other investigative works

The following questions will be answered with the identification of wooden architecture values of the chosen suburb in Vilnius: why wooden architectures of Žvėrynas must be preserved? To whom this heritage is important? What are the values of the object?

In the light of the historical records and some researches intended to wooden architecture of Žvėrynas the following values can be distinguished: historical, aesthetic and art (or architectural), social and scientific. The detailed elaborations of these values are presented below. The principle of categorization of values is taken from the Burra charter and the main law for protecting immovable heritage of Lithuania. However, the proposed valuing is not a singular one.

²⁶ Surgailis Andrius. *Medinis Vilnius...*, p. 13

Historical values:

- Žvėrynas suburb with its wooden villas, taverns, curhouses was an important resort area in the end of 19th century - the first part of 20th century.

- Wooden architecture of Žvėrynas historical suburb composes a unique architectural and natural ensemble; Žvėrynas suburb still maintained its landscape and townscape beauty, created in the end of 19th century - the first part of 20th century. The formation of townscape in this and other suburbs is related with the idea of “garden-city” that was strengthened in the 2nd half of 19th century in urbanized Europe where the need to return to nature created this new vision and new type of the city. Copying the major European cities, similar ideas spread in Vilnius²⁷.

- Wooden architecture tells us about the urban culture traditions that are not comprehended yet. Wooden architecture is often considered from one angle – like a phenomenon of countryside culture, a relic of village housing traditions. But this is just one-side and not comprehensive attitude. It is able to tell stories about distinctive life style of townsmen, the slow rhythm of the days that passed and harmonic relation between the people and architecture and nature.



4 fig. Living house built ~ 1920 according manor-style house the main entrance is highlighted with the help of pediment and columns. Pušų 26. Listed, reg. Nr. – G 274 K

- Wooden architecture was a characteristic feature of Vilnius town as well as of all Lithuania until the mid. of 20th cent. It preserved an almost perished and assimilated spring of the old Vilnius.

²⁷ Surgailis Andrius. *Medinis Vilnius...*, p. 10

Aesthetic and art (architectural) values:

We are noticing here that the architectural value of listed *Žvėrynas*' wooden houses is emphasized in the register of protected monuments²⁸. However, it is not elaborated.

- *Žvėrynas* was considered the most beautiful wooden villas suburb by Vilnius townsmen. It still possesses the charm of passed days.

- Wooden architecture together with the natural places is a part of beautiful and picturesque townscape; a symbiosis of architecture and nature is also characteristic to other parts of Vilnius.

- Wooden houses represented different styles of architecture: many Lithuanian village cottages with folk carved ornamentations also were influenced by Russian folk style widespread in the late 19th century. Wooden architecture also has fashionable art nouveau features and Zakopane style elements popular in Poland. The so-called Swiss style grew popular in Vilnius like in all Europe of the late 19th century: house walls of such houses were constructed of a log carcass covered with planks instead of notched logs. Such construction provided not only a new and inexpensive way of building, but also new aesthetics: light, open spaces with beautiful terraces, lodgings and balconies. Azure décor, numerous trimmed and crosscut ornaments are specific to Swiss style houses.



5 fig. Vytauto 49. Listed building, reg Nr. S-591. This house possesses a characteristic to Russian style form of gables. A slanting composition of consoles as well as a multangular veranda is projected according Swiss style.

²⁸ The Register of the objects and places of cultural heritage – [looked 2007 11 12] . On the Internet <http://www.heritage.lt/registras>



6 fig. Vytauto 27. Listed building, reg. Nr. S-619. Former summer-cottage. Built in ~ 1901-11. Swiss resort terraces and windows rims of Russian style are recognized here.



7 fig. More rare and unusual manifestations of historicism style remained in the suburb of Žvėrynas. This living house possesses the oriental, so called Mauritanian, motives: small arcs of horseshoe in the strips of décor, azure crosscut ornamentation of the fencing of veranda. Poškos 61. Listed, reg. Nr.S-574. Built in 1901.

It is obvious that professional Vilnius wooden buildings, possessing traditional Baltic ethnic elements, intertwined with traditional Russian style, art nouveau trend features, and popular Polish Zakopane style, are perfect examples of the time, created by architects of diverse nations and schools.



8 fig. This manor-style and Zakopane style house was built in ~ 1916-1920. Utilitarian décor dominated in the houses built during the interwar period. Vilnius and its region was occupied by Poland therefore a fair amount of living houses according Zakopane and manor-houses style, characteristic to Polish architecture of the day, were erected in Žvėrynas suburb. The symmetrical and strict composition is characteristic to facades of the houses. The main entrance usually was highlighted with the help of pediment and columns. Birutės 40 Listed, reg. Nr. S-619.



9 fig. Traditional folk elements in the ornamentations of the detail are recognized here. Vytauto 34/Treniotos 1. Listed, reg. Nr. S-589. Built in 1901. Vytauto 61. Listed, reg. Nr. S-590. Built in 1910.



10 fig. Modern elements are recognized in windows of the houses – decorations of colourful small glasses and hooked forms small windows. Houses were built in 1910. Pušų 43/15. Listed, reg. Nr. S-622. Built in 1910. Vytauto 61. Listed, reg. Nr. S-590. Vytauto 63/2. Listed, reg. Nr. S-570.

Social values:

- Wooden face of Žvėrynas suburb is a very specific feature in the context of Vilnius as well as Lithuania thus it becomes important for the identity of its community. Some woodies still have their original owners as they managed to stay after the World War II and to preserve them from generation to generation. The original owners as well as some part of newcomers are the ones especially concerned about the fate of the wooden and green face of the suburb. The community of Žvėrynas is one of the most active one, which takes care also about cultural heritage of the site, considering its importance for their identification with this place.

Scientific value:

- Wooden buildings which are considered the works of art can be an important scientific research resource.

4. Protection of wooden architecture of Žvėrynas historical suburb: range of threats and problems

The strongest risk factor for wooden architecture is a shift of way of life and building technologies. Three groups of risk factors are subdivided in the *Conservation Strategy Programme Regarding Wooden Architecture of Vilnius* preservation strategy:

- Ideological;
- Legal;
- Social, economic²⁹.

We are proposing the interpretation and elaboration of these factors below.

Ideological factors of risk:

- Wooden building is considered as not stable and durable enough. Many owners of wooden houses in Žvėrynas area possess such opinion;
- Unconsciousness towards significance and values of wooden heritage;
- The quality of daily and prestigious life is associated with modern stone architecture. The quality of life depends on progressive technologies and their orientation to global industry. The utilization of modern technologies in wooden architecture is often expensive and inappropriate for specificity of wooden building.

The ideological factors destined the destruction of wooden houses during the reconstruction works: they were rebuilt, covered with brick, plastic planks and plastic windows. Very few houses were reconstructed properly, preserving their old plan, structure, materials and details.



11 fig. Inappropriate restoration of windows. Vytauto 37/Pušų 9. Listed house.

²⁹ Medinės architektūros paveldo apsaugos strategijos įgyvendinimo programa. Vilniaus miesto savivaldybės tarybos sprendimas Nr. 1-1117. Vilnius, 2006, balandžio 26, 3 part, 6.



12 fig. A partly „restored“ house – a „beauty“ of plastic windows and plastic planks. Vytauto 37/Pušų 9. Listed house.

Legal factors:

- The imperfection of laws of conservation of cultural heritage;
- The absence of legal laws for wooden heritage;
- Financial responsibility of stakeholders is not validated by laws.

Social, economic factors:

- Urban development of the town. The town is expanding at the expense of historical suburbs, built-up with wooden architecture.

- Extremely high price of the land. The prices of land in the town are increasing rapidly and become attractive just for large investments. Large investments always determine the high-rising thus profitable buildings.

- Differentiation processes of society. Social differences are sharp in Vilnius. Activities of the rich distinctively influence the environment as well as the changes in the architecture. Lower social groups which own wooden houses often and usually are indifferent in regard of this heritage, condition the wane of wooden architecture.

- The politics of heritage conservation is late in respect of urban development. There are no precise conservation regulations for the control of the development of the town.

- The rise of living standards of townsmen. The demand of labour force raises the living standards and determines large investments.

- High price of restoration and repair of wooden building. The low professional standard dominates in the field of wood conservation. There is a lack of specialists of wood restoration, joiners and carpenters. It is especially difficult to restore or reconstruct lost decoration details of the houses which are so frequent and specific for the architecture of Žvėrynas suburb.

- Shared ownership of the buildings. Historically the houses in Žvėrynas were intended to be summerhouses or villas or just simple living houses which the owner rented for several families. Therefore the houses used to be large and spacious. At present it is frequent that there are several owners of the house. This factor determines a diverse treatment in the repair of the building and it becomes very difficult to restore the oneness of it. There are plenty of examples when one house is painted in different colours, has different windows – old and shabby ones and new, modern plastic ones and, certainly, easier to clean – or even walls’ are repaired or “embellished” in different way, covered with plastic planks and left the old wooden ones.



13 fig. Collective ownership “creates” a jazzy and patchy house face. Vytauto 34/Treniotos 1. Listed house. Reg. Nr. S-589. Built in 1901. Pušų 43/15. Listed, reg. Nr. S-622. Built in 1910.

A fair amount of wooden houses, both in Žvėrynas and in other Vilnius suburbs are abandoned, with shut up windows and doors. Of course, they are occupying precious and expensive plots of Vilnius land and do not bring any benefit. Therefore it is not surprising, but pathetic and sad, when recent messages of media rather often notify

about burnt-out woodies in different Vilnius areas. Not only economical interests are playing role here, but also the unconsciousness towards the values of this heritage as well as the lack of legal sanctions.



14 fig. Abandoned house. Sėlių 2/31. Listed house. Reg. Nr S-589. Built in 1910.

5. Proposals for the preservation of wooden architecture in Žvėrynas

One of the most important aims in preservation of wooden architecture is the identification of valuable objects thus understanding their values, and listing procedure. Therefore a detailed historical and architectural investigation of appropriate objects is an essential requisite of a sustainable preservation and development policy.

Considering the risk factors of wooden architecture the preservation means can be singled into three groups – legal, economic and financial, and educative.

Legal means

It is necessary to initiate the legislation of law acts and other legal instruments beneficial to the preservation of wooden architecture.

Legal means should also initiate the development and legalization of method of revitalization, repair (restoration, liquidation of emergency conditions) and use.

Economic and financial means

The mechanism of financing of revitalization and restoration of wooden architecture should be created by the government. These means should also focus on the search of other financial sources needful for restoration and maintenance of wooden architecture.

Educative means

The establishment of further development of training programmes on the protection, preservation and conservation of wooden architecture should be encouraged. The programmes should address all relevant professions involved in such work, in particular, architects, conservators, engineers, craftsmen persons and site managers.

It is necessary to take into account the lack of professional craftsmen, necessary in the repair and restoration of wooden architecture and to encourage the establishment of workshop centre and training programmes.

Educative means should also replace the negative attitude towards wooden architecture of the society and help to understand and perceive its significance. The inhabitants of Žvėrynas suburb should be involved in possible educative activities.

Educative means should influence the ideological risk factors.

Conclusions

The strongest risk factor for wooden architecture is a shift of way of life and building technologies. Three groups of risk factors to wooden architecture can be subdivided: ideological, legal, social and economic.

Considering the risk factors of wooden architecture the preservation means can be singled also into three groups – legal, economic and financial, and educative.

Wooden architecture of Vilnius is a unique and specific feature which still radiates the atmosphere of long gone Vilnius. Žvėrynas historical suburb is one of the most specific areas of wooden architecture, which possesses historical, aesthetic and art, social and scientific values. It was argued here that identification and understanding of values and significance of wooden heritage of Žvėrynas is necessary process to start a sustainable preservation programme of it, to solve the existing problems and to give possible proposals in preservation of this heritage.

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Illustrations

Fig. in front page – Vytauto 49/2. Listed house. Reg. Nr. - S-591. Built in 1901-11 // <http://www.agape.lt>

1 fig., 3 fig. – <http://www.maps.takas.lt>

2 fig. – <http://www.vilnius.lt>

4 fig., 5 fig., 6 fig. - <http://www.agape.lt>

7 fig. - The register or protected monuments of Lithuania: <http://www.heritage.lt/registras>

8 fig., 9 fig., 10 fig. – from the personal album of Justina Pakalnytė.

11 fig., 12 fig. - <http://www.agape.lt>

13 fig., 14 fig. - from the personal album of Justina Pakalnytė.