

Links between tangible and intangible heritage in the former Aristavele manor house

The Open Air Museum of Lithuania is implementing a project (funded by EEA and Norwegian financial mechanisms) the purpose of which is the development of practical repair and craft education through the restoration of valuable wooden piece – Aristavélé manor house. Aristavele manor house, which restoration and adaptation works are carrying out during the project, is one of few remaining authentic wooden manor houses of the XVIII century in Lithuania.

The manor has an old interesting history representing the development of wooden architecture of nobility. During three centuries it belonged to a noble family who influenced cultural and political process. The manor house was built in 1700 in Baroque style, later went through several reconstructions until finally was doomed to demolition. Building was carefully investigated and documented. In 1987 it was dismantled, mooved and stored in the museum. The reconstruction of manor house started in 2010. It didn't mean only the recovery of forms and construction; it also contained an attempt to understand and repeat properly the building process, it was a study of history, possibility to examine and learn old materials, technologies, to learn the ideas, needs and work of craftsmen. At the same time it was an object of heritage and a modern



sreation that embodied the conservation concepts, evaluations and skills of people working in this field. We learned much.

The wooden heritage consist not only of tangible form, but also of intangible substance, which is viable in the unwritten building tradition transformed from one generation to another orally, by action or movement. When we restore heritage today it is not enough to get the visual identity it is also necessary to restore the values which could revive history make it actual and modern. The contemporary conservation concept pays attention to the craft skills, which are one of the principal parts of the wooden heritage as the continuation of intangible tradition. Six practical workshops took place at the manor house designed/pointed for different topics: traditional wood building, carving, joinery and woodworks, roof construction and technologies, maintenance and management of wooden architecture. During the workshops we got theoretical knowledge and developed practical skills. On the base of learned experience a wooden heritage research and conservation centre was initiated.

The Open Air Museum is developing the centre by carrying out in situ research of wooden heritage objects and through training and counseling of their owners and managers. The museum has a 40-year experience of maintenance, conservation and repair of old wooden constructions, which could be very useful for other individuals and organizations responsible for maintenance and restoration of wooden built heritage. Moreover, the museum has a collection of more than 140 old wooden buildings, which provides a good base for research and restoration practice. In this context the restored Aristavele manor house will gain the original mission – to spread knowledge and good experience, to educate and train society, to create beauty and harmony, to cherish patrimony...

