

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT : A CHALLENGING DIALOGUE

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Abstract. A dialogue with those who intend to develop a site is always challenging. As heritage curators, we must often give advice that developers may not want to hear because it might interfere with the realization of a project. In our work as environmental planners at WSP, we have experienced that it is difficult but of utmost importance to create an open dialogue with those involved in the development of sensitive cultural heritage areas at a regional level. However, we have realized that theory and practice do not always go hand in hand.

In this paper, we will take a closer look at two recent projects in which we carried out a cultural and historical assessment and, also, an environmental impact assessment (cultural and historical as well as environmental impact assessments). In both, the team aimed to maintain a dynamic and functional relationship between the existing heritage and the planned future development of the areas. We will see how the outcome of both projects call for a re-examination of the importance of our preliminary assessments. We also believe

Insight: how cultural heritage is managed in Sweden

In order to understand how regional planning works we must first take a look at the organization of heritage protection in Sweden. At a national level it is the Swedish National Heritage Board (Riksantikvarieämbetet), governed by the Ministry of Culture, that is responsible for World Heritage Sites in Sweden and other national heritage monuments and historical environments. The goals of the agency are to encourage the preservation and protection of historic environments and to promote the respect for and knowledge of historic environments. The Swedish National Heritage Board has nowadays foremost a counselling role. At a regional level, the County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen) is the Swedish government's extended arm when it comes to cultural heritage issues. The main responsibility of the County Administrative Board is to coordinate the development of the county in line with goals set in national politics.

The County Administrative Board is responsible for the development of the county so that established national goals may be accomplished. In Stockholm County, the Administrative Board consists of approximately 450 employees, of which circa 100 work for the cultural heritage unit (kulturmiljöenheten). This unit deals with planning issues, legal deductions and growth issues.

Thus, the national government deals with issues at an

overall level, the County Administrative Board supervises the issues, and the municipalities deal with the issues at a local level.

At a local level heritage protection is dealt with by the existing antiquarian expertise that can be found within each municipality. However, most municipalities do not have antiquarian expertise; only about 40 of 290 employ antiquarians. Thus, other local institutions, such as municipal museums, interest organizations, and private actors. A common explanation is the lack of municipal economic resources and the result is a lack of knowledge of city planning.

Case 1: New residential areas around Åbyholm Farm in Vallentuna, Greater Stockholm

In the spring of 2009, in connection with the creation of a new zoning plan, Vallentuna Municipality planned a new urban expansion to be located on the East side of the railroad tracks which pass through the conurbation. Cultural heritage analysis was conducted in Åbyholm as a basis for a park proposal, specifically Åbyholm Farm which has a significant cultural heritage value.



Bronze/Iron Age burial mound near Åbyholm Farm in Vallentuna. One of the many significant cultural heritage areas to be taken into consideration in local and regional planning of Greater Stockholm.

The Municipality has decided that a major housing development will be built during the next five years. A process to develop a number of zoning plans has started, two of which deal with Åbyholm Farm. The Culture Committee at Vallentuna Municipality requested a cultural and historical analysis of the area surrounding Åbyholm Road. The County Museum soon realized that the development plans should include regulations for the shape and colour to be used for the new buildings and amenities in the area, in order for these to be adapted to the environment of Åbyholm Farm. The area was carefully surveyed and assessed. A review of older historical maps was carried out and archive documents were studied. The results showed that Åbyholm Farm has, since 1790, had a significant impact throughout the history of Vallentuna. Our cultural and historical assessment was taken into consideration by the landscape architects who developed a proposal for the Åbyholm area. This led to the inclusion of some of the most important historical features of the area in the new

project. One example is that the course of the old medieval road, which ran through the area, is once again a main road. In addition, Åbyholm Farm abandoned water spring has been turned into ponds and is part of the landscape design of the area. A third example is the recovery of the bond between the sacred and the profane administrative functions in the area. Vallentuna Municipality was satisfied with our assessment and our development guidelines but they moved on to other higher priority projects in neighbouring and adjacent areas. The original development plan from 2005 remains untouched but the deadline to begin building residential areas in 2011 has not been changed. It is our hope that when this area will be developed the cultural heritage assessment be included in the guidelines.

Laws and rules that protect Cultural Heritage in Sweden

As we have seen, it is the County Administrative Board that represents cultural heritage interests in community planning and ensures that the laws and rules for protection of cultural heritage are followed. In Sweden there is a Planning and Building Law (Plan- och bygglagen) which regulates the zoning of land, water and built environments. This law is implemented at a local municipal level. The municipalities are responsible for the greater part of what shall be preserved. However, the lack of antiquarian expertise often causes difficulties. In addition, there is also a Cultural Heritage Law (Kulturminneslagen) which is implemented by the County Administrative Board at a regional level.

When the municipality presents a new plan it has to consult with the County Administrative Board at every stage of the zoning process (program stage, detail plan stage, public exhibition stage and the acceptance stage). The County Administrative Board makes a professional assessment at each stage and strives towards achieving that the ancient monuments remain untouched from exploitation.

In sum, it is the County Administrative Board who always has the last word. It monitors the national interests at a regional level. These interests are national interests for cultural heritage care (kulturmiljövård), cultural reserve sites (kulturresevat),

listed buildings (byggnadsminnen), churches (kyrkor) and ancient monuments (fornlämningar). Within Stockholm County there are 131 cultural areas of national interest, these do not have a fixed protection and can often clash with other interests.

Case 2: Insertion of an amusement park at Hågelby Park in Botkyrka, Stockholm County

Hågelby Farm (also known as Hågelby Castle) is located in Botkyrka, at Lake Aspen, approximately 20 kilometers South-West of Stockholm, Sweden. The area has been inhabited since the Bronze Age and is surrounded by valleys and forests. The Baroque main building ("Castle") was built between 1916 and 1918 by telephone factory owner Lars Magnus Ericsson. Nowadays, Hågelby is owned by Botkyrka Municipality and functions as a public park and comprises a conference center, restaurant, youth hostel, 4H-farm, crafts shops and general goods store. In 2002, the Municipality began planning a large amusement park within the area.

Recently, Botkyrka Municipality put forth a use-based zoning scheme for the area in question. The purpose is to present the plans for the development of Hågelby Farm into a popular attraction for Sweden.



Area next to Hågelby Park to be developed. The landscape will be entirely replaced by an amusement park. Bronze and Iron Age burial sites can be found in the woods behind the meadow.

The existing buildings and park will be renovated, expanded, and completed with new recreational amenities and services with shops, camping facilities, bungalows, and a hotel.

WSP was commissioned to carry out an environmental impact assessment which was used by Botkyrka Municipality as a base for a planning program for the area, made public in October 2010. In January 2011, it was briefly announced that a partial zoning plan would be exhibited throughout the Municipality for a period of three weeks in order for the citizens to be able to give their opinions. The County Administrative Board had insisted that a zoning plan for the entire area should be presented together as a whole but the Municipality ignored the recommendation.

Currently, the Municipality and the project developers are making great efforts to force the project through the entire building permit process in order to start building as soon as possible.

From the Cultural Heritage point of view, we are able to see that the proposed project comes into conflict with some of the Bronze Age burial mounds and other archaeological remains in the area. However, if we consider a buffer zone (immediate surrounding environment) as suggested in the ICOMOS Xi'an declaration on the conservation of the setting of heritage structures, sites and areas and, also, the recommendations made by the Swedish National Heritage

Board, almost two-thirds of the proposed first phase of the amusement park comes into conflict with delicate areas.

Observations: What have we learned from our work?

On one hand, our work with the insertion of residential areas and an amusement park into the cultural landscapes of Åbyholm Farm in Vallentuna and Hågelby Park in Botkyrka has permitted us to have a better understanding of why theory and practice, even though they take different directions, should go hand in hand in order to preserve and develop. On the other hand, we must make a greater effort to better understand the procedures of the developers and interested parties in order to be more precise in how we present the cultural and historical facts in our environmental impact assessments. It is crucial to succeed in giving the involved parties a clear picture of the cultural heritage aspects at an early stage in the project. Some environments together with their immediate surrounding settings are unique. If lost they are irreplaceable and, thus, sometimes it might be better to help the developers find alternative sites for their projects.