

NORWAY

Røros Mining Town¹

Brief description

The history of Røros, which stands in a mountainous setting, is linked to the copper mines: they were developed in the 17th century and exploited for 333 years until 1977. Completely rebuilt after its destruction by Swedish troops in 1679, the city has some 80 wooden houses, most of them standing around courtyards. Many retain their dark pitch-log facades, giving the town an medieval appearance.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1980

Agency responsible for site management

- The Municipality of Røros
Postuttak B
7361 Røros
e-mail: torbjorn.eggen@roros.kommune.no
website: www.roros.kommune.no

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (iii), (iv), (v)

Justification provided by the State Party

Røros is a unique mining environment with exclusively wooden architecture. For 333 years the town has combined impulses from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Trondheim and neighbouring districts. This has resulted in a wood-constructed environment containing much of the finest of the Norwegian tradition, which has at the same time become something very special in our land on the industrial, social and cultural planes as well as on the architectural.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Røros is an extensive mining settlement dating from 1644, when the development of the copperworks began. Its physical history has continued without interruption since the town was burned in 1679. Thus the numerous surviving buildings represent the Norwegian tradition of wooden construction that flourished in the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The buildings reflect the dual occupations of the inhabitants, mining and farming, the domestic groups being arranged as compact farmyards. These groups are disposed on a regular urban pattern adapted to the mountain terrain, reflecting the particular kind of industrial planning introduced by the Danish kings of Norway in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Røros is a characteristic example of this type of technological and industrial development, as well as being an outstanding survivor of a traditional kind of human settlement built in traditional methods of construction. Also, it has become vulnerable under the impact of economic change since the recent cessation of copper mining after 333 years of continuous activity. Lastly, Røros embodies a strong degree of rarity because of its location. It was built as an industrial community in the mountains (650 meters above sea level) at a very northern latitude (62° 35' N) subject to extremely long winters and low temperatures (-50°).

For these reasons Røros qualifies under criteria iii, iv, v, and is therefore recommended for inscription on the World Heritage List.

Committee Decision

1979: Deferred together with a number of other Norwegian proposals.

1980: The Committee made no statement

- Statement of significance by ICOMOS does adequately define and reflect the outstanding universal value of the site
- State Party has not stated if the ICOMOS text is considered to be the official statement of significance
- UNESCO official description of site should be improved. State Party has provided suggestion

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: not adequate
- Buffer zone: a buffer zone has been defined
- Change to buffer zone proposed by State Party

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- Røros is still a living city, where a constant pressure for alterations and development has to be met. The small shops on the 2 main streets are gradually being displaced by supermarkets outside the town, while souvenir shops will dominate these streets or the streets will be emptied with their vitality. Former shops and even dwelling houses may also be converted for vacation use

¹ Name change adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 30th session (2006).

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The Plan and Building Act; the Cultural Heritage Act
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group: mutual information between bodies involved, coordination of initiatives and interests. A forum for discussions of matters that affect the World Heritage
- Formally constituted
- Management under protective legislation
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional, local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- No management plan
- New management plan will be completed and adopted: 2007
- Adequate

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State budget, local
- Extra funding has been drawn from World Heritage status
- Resources from the State party provide an annual budget for taking care of Norwegian World Heritage Sites. It is difficult to tell how much of the state funding is particularly owed to the WH status, because significant state funding would be the case for Røros anyway
- Funding available for the adequate management of the site: sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 2

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, management; interpretation, education

- Average: promotion, visitor management

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- The Røros Museum is pretty well equipped with expertise and facilities. A National Built Heritage Center is in progress at the Museum. Special trained carpenters and craftsmen (15). Training in craft skills is integrated in the ongoing restoration project for the outhouses (former smallholders' barns etc.). Local farmers specialized on cultural landscape

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 52,258 in 2004 - tendency slightly decreasing
- Visitor facilities: A tourist information office, offering town walks a.o. The Røros Museum located within the rebuilt furnace building, with exhibitions, large 1:20 scale models a.o. In the historic town center there are several small museums, shops, hotels, restaurants, cafes. No specific WH information center
- No tourism/visitor management plan

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, studies related to the value of the site, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, visitor management
- A fire prevention plan is developed and actions put into practice. Knowledge is adapted to the long-time restoration programme 'the Outbuilding Project' and to municipal management in general. Results from monitoring activities provides basis for management priorities

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Not enough signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: local communities; local authorities
- Need for awareness raising
- The International cultural heritage day; The annual Winter Market
- Web site available
- Local participation

Education, information and awareness building activities

- A joint project - the Røros Museum and the Røros High School have the initiative. Classes will adopt specific buildings

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)**Reactive monitoring reports**

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 18th (1994)

Conservation interventions

- National employment programs started in 1985 and continued until 1995 in the field of built heritage. In 1995 a long-time program for repair and restoration of outbuildings inside the WH site was established, many of the buildings were deserted because farming activities have ended. The Røros church (Bergstadens Ziir), repair of walls, roof, tower etc is going on. Large repair program on the waterway constructions after the mining company. The Hydro-power station Kuråsfossen from 1896 has been restored
- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, agricultural/forestry regimes
- Specific issues if mentioned: Deposits from the processing of copper ore are a source of poisonous leakage, especially to water. The cultural landscape is dramatically changing as the vegetation is spreading (farming is abandoned).

Actions taken

- Create a management plan
- Municipal land-use planning

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: Carried out by NIKU (the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Studies), attention Birgitte Skard

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic, management
- Strengths: Røros has been given the possibility to maintain and care for the built heritage. Røros has got a large and well staffed museum to develop within the mining

company's former furnace building. The awareness has risen among property owners. A number of skilled craftsmen is now at hand. Heritage management on the local level is supported by a keen Regional authority and also an active state party (national level)

- Weaknesses of management: The sporadic lack of quality control on rehabilitation and major repair work on town houses by the local building authority. Sometimes destructive interventions happens almost without noticing (more and better trained staff is needed). The lack of a management plan is an obvious drawback. The boundaries defining the city center conservation area are weak where the town has extended along roads leading into the historic center

Future actions

- Create a management plan
- Timeframe: 2007
- Activity does not require funding from World Heritage Fund