



Minutes from "The International Restoration Camp in Kuldiga", Latvia, 29th of June - 5th of July 2009

Text: Per-Willy Færgestad og Jarle Hugstmyr. Photos: Per-Willy Færgestad, NHU

Kuldiga hosted a new workshop the 29th of June to the 5th of July 2009 to enhance the competence of the craftsmen in town. This time the topics were doors, windows and window shutters. There were participants from Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Latvia and Norway.



Experts from Norway were Jarle Hugstmyr from The Norwegian Crafts Development - NHU, and Per-Willy Færgestad, project leader in the project "Correct Restoration, Drøbak". Both have previously been used as experts in education projects in Kuldiga. Furthermore two museum craftsmen from Norway participated; Gunnar Kjerland from Hardanger Museum and Knut Johannessen from the Museum centre of Hordaland.

The project leader from Kuldiga was Ilze Zarina. Experts from Kuldiga was the conservator Juris Zviedrans and the restoration painter Edgars Raitums. They were responsible for the practical aspect of the course. All together, there were approximately 25 participants, split in 5 groups. The Mayor of Kuldiga, Inga Berzina, opened the workshop. Thereafter we had a guided tour around in Kuldiga before the work started.



Works in Kalna street.

The craftsmen from Kuldīga had already been working for a week, and windows, frames and shutters from Baznīcas street 28 were nearly done. Our project was the doors and the window above the door in Baznīca street 28, doors, windows and shutters in Kalna street 15, and a window above the door from Jelgavas street 9. Our location for the workshop was the workshop room in Kuldīga Trade School, which was well suited and central in the town.

In Baznīcas street 28, the double frame door had been cut 3 cm, had rotten parts in the bottom, and a few broken middle panels. A relatively large reparation work started, with the jointing of new wooden materials of high quality, to get the door back into a good shape. In addition, the frame, which was left in the house, needed a new threshold.

The window above the door was in good condition. It was washed and rinsed. Later basic treatment as painting was made, and the old glass panes were sealed with putty. A few panes had to be replaced and they were cut from old glass panes. The window above the door in Jelgava street 9 had been removed, and was in a very poor condition, but nearly complete. Several profiled cut glazing bars had to be copied. Originally, the window had 8 small panes. However, at some time in the past, the top of the glazing bars had been removed and one large glass pane had been mounted instead. The decorating flower in the middle was missing, but was copied from an old image, and from an equivalent window on a neighbour's house. It was all rinsed and painted.



Window above the door in Jelgava street 9.



The door in Kalna street 15.

The door in Kalna street 15, a double door from 1780-1800 had been extended downwards 50-60 cm at around 1900, in connection with the restoration of the flight of the street, and the removal of a small staircase. The door was not in use, but was in good technical shape. All details and changes/developments were registered and the door was scraped carefully, washed and given a basic treatment using linseed oil paint. The window above the door was also in good shape. It was demounted, washed and given a basic treatment. The wall, window, door and mouldings are now given back the original colour of the house from earlier periods. The house is included in a project, where the whole street will be given back the original colours. This is the first restored house in the Kalna street, and will be an “exhibition window” for the project.





Restoration of glazing bar.

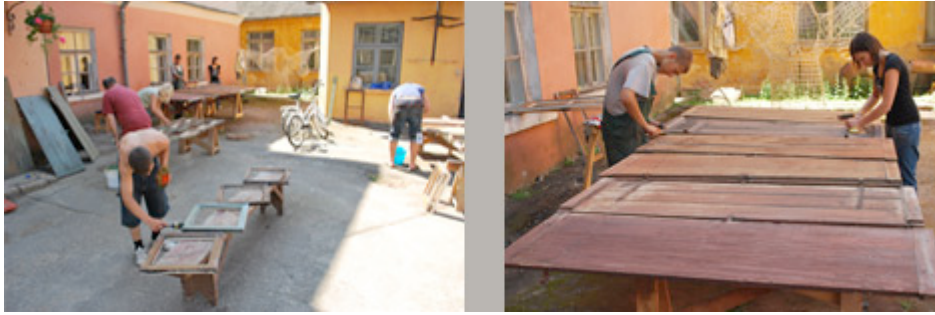
The window frames in Kalna street 15 were mainly in good shape. Some loose tops of the glazing bars were replaced and some corner connections had to be made new, using good techniques for insertion, where as little as possible of the old materials were removed.

The window shutters in Kuldiga have upon the time had different constructions and look.



The window shutter

The oldest window shutter is composed of 2-3 wide standing boards, and had attached a horizontal profiled thin list on the top and bottom. The vertical boards are fitted into a groove, to stabilise the curving, and the bottom and top lists were fastened using an extended tap, locked by wooden plugs. On newer shutters, but still old, the boards width is smaller, but the construction is relatively similar. We saw fresh copies where screws had replaced the wood connection. There are also a few examples where the shutters are made in framework construction. We also found a house with integrated cone horizontal board, in the same position as the hinges.



Window shutters and frames

J. Husgstmyr and PW Færgestad performed a detailed study of 50-60 different shutters and included photo documentation, to get an overview over the condition, building tradition and the variety in construction. Some of these images were shown for the other craftsmen on the workshop, and copies of them all were given to Kuldiga Town museum, where a centre of vernacular architecture is now being established.



Sessions and demonstration of glass cutting and how to use putty, when fastening the glass.

During the workshop, we had sessions where we all met to see how the different groups worked, and choice of solutions were discussed. The demonstrations of glass cutting and the use of putty when fastening the glass panes were given. In Kuldiga we see today, nearly only glass panes fastened with thin triangular wooden lists. In connection to the ongoing restoration work, all window glasses are sealed with putty. This is a technique Gunnar and Knut demonstrated several times.

During the week there were also presentations from the other Nordic cities, telling about their ongoing work. We had lunch and good social environment. The workshop was throughout presented in the local newspaper “Kurzemnieks” and on the local TV station. On the day of the departure we got a guided tour in Riga, where we visited several parts of the town.

Kuldiga December 2009

In December 2009, a half year after the workshop in June/July, Kuldiga was visited to study the results of the restoration work, and for opening of the Restoration Centre at the Museum.



The newly restored door in Kalna street, 15, Kuldiga.

After the International Workshop, summer 2009, doors, windows and window shutters were painted and mounted. Kalna street 15 also got a new staircase to the main entrance. In Kalna street 13 the facade was repaired and painted in the late summer, using a colour found in the old paint layers. The facade of the house in Kalna street 15 and Baznica street 28 is to be painted in the summer of 2010. The houses have been examples for the towns program on restoration of the old wooden town, a town on UNESCOs tentative list.

In December 2009, the new Restoration Centre was opened at the Kuldiga Town Museum. It was opened by the Mayor of Kuldiga, Inga Berzina, and the Ambassador to Norway, Jan Grevstad.

The Restoration Centre is financed with support from Norway, by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Norway Grants.



Kalna gate 13, Restored door, windows, window shutters and wall.



Baznica gate 28, Restored windows, window shutters and doors.

Translated September 2010, PWF.