

**MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN URBAN MANAGEMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**Revitalization of historic wooden
housing using local entrepreneurs'
capacity (cases of towns of Gorodets,
Russia and Eksjö, Sweden)**

Andrey Ivanov
Russia

Supervisor:
Rachelle N Åstrand

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Preface

This thesis examines the problems on the revitalization of historic wooden houses in the old towns of Russia. It also looks at the case of Sweden, drawing learning experiences which can be applied in the context of Russia. To determine the roles of local entrepreneurs in the revitalization of historic wooden houses, two historic towns, namely, Gorodets (Russia) and Eksjö (Sweden) were analyzed.

Wooden architecture, mostly dwelling houses from 19th – beginning of 20th cc., is one of the core part of Russian urban heritage. It is in danger now because of natural deterioration processes, social misunderstanding of their values, and unwillingness of inhabitants' majority to live in without normal conveniences. Strong investors' pressure on territories still occupied by this kind of development in order to demolish it and build totally new housing according to consumer demand is newly emerging threatening factor.

The paper describes examples of local entrepreneur's activity towards renovation of old wooden houses in small Russian town with lively traditions of entrepreneurship and timber construction, which are against of this negative trend. It focuses narrowly in grass-roots approach to urban revitalization. The main idea is that horizontal ties between local businessmen and built environment, the wish of some of those people to live in the traditional cozy atmosphere that is associated with vernacular wooden housing, may serve as a motor of revitalization of old wooden areas in the case of enabling policy of local administrations. The paper suggests that the local entrepreneur's activity might have a stronger socio-economic effect in the case of win-win approach adoption by the local government.

The successful experience of Swedish wooden towns' revitalization, where there were much long-term efforts to combine national and local governmental activity, and, especially in last time, private financing from owners and entrepreneurs sources, may inspire the creation of effective urban policy in pilot wooden towns in Russia as well as at a national scale. The inter-countries comparison, looking at experiences from abroad into our domestic problems, can lead to some instructive outcomes and open new questions for further research.

The results of Russian case study, particularly from the primary information gained from the local entrepreneurs during informal interviews, showed the existence of a positive alternative to the dominating notions of the inevitable loss of historic urban wooden development in Russian cities and the only one saving policy of preservation through museums.

It is possible to save this valuable part of Russian urban heritage on its initial places and even to live there in normal modern conveniences. The social prerequisites to achieve this aim really exist; it is necessary just to supplement their agents with proper managerial practice.

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Summary

The thesis includes six chapters that are organized in the following order.

Chapter 1 gives a short explanation of the background and the problem statement of the research. It explicate the historical wooden housing (HWH) as attribute of Russian town and sizable part of the whole housing stock, and in the same time as most vulnerable part of Russian urban heritage. The real influence of important urban actors onto HWH saving is briefly described; and the potential of local entrepreneurs (LE) is stressed. Then research questions, objectives, case areas, hypothesis, methods of the research, and as well as the limitative and innovative factors are defined.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical framework of the research. The notion of urban heritage is examined, theoretical model of urban revitalization and main existed approaches to it are studied focusing on the grass-roots revitalization, informed conservation and entrepreneurial activity. Specific of HWH as a subject of revitalization and a part of urban heritage and living environment is examined. Actual situation with HWH in Russia is evaluated in the framework of the SWOT analysis; and the research object – the part of HWH restored by LE – is selected. Swedish wooden town revitalization's experience is summarized with a deducing of some instructive managerial principles of Swedish practice of wooden architecture preservation and revitalisation. Finally, the problem of principal applicability of foreign experience of urban revitalization in Russia was stressed and some basic preconditions of possible success were named.

Chapter 3 is concerned with some ‘changes in optic’ chosen for given research in order to focus on main differences between conventional and proposed approaches to HWH revitalization in Russia. Brief program of field observation and principles of questionnaires’ elaboration for Russian and Swedish case studies are given in this chapter as well. Finally, the methodological framework of the research is shown in graphical form.

Chapter 4 depicts the results of case study of HWH revitalization in Russia. The professional view on important issues of wooden development revitalization is gained from questionnaires filled in by experienced experts from Moscow. Investigation’s outcomes in the case town of Gorodets are divided to blocks devoted to the town background and historical roots of its uniqueness; field observation of built environment pointed on local HWH peculiarities; local experts’ attitude to HWH revitalization obtained during their formal and informal interviewing; and detailed description of four households in historic area of wooden development and revitalized by local entrepreneurs. Quotations from face-to-face interviews of owners are sufficient part of this chapter. In conclusion the lessons learned from field research, and especially from “touching” these rather rare in Russia examples of well-maintained old private wooden houses are concluded and summarized.

Chapter 5 handles the data and personal author’s impressions received during the Swedish part of case study. Experts’ opinions on Swedish experience of wooden towns’ revitalization, and particular results gained in the town of Eksjö proved the possibility of win-win-win approach urban revitalization on practice.

Cross-case findings of the research, including the theoretical model of comprehensive revitalization’s circle, recommendations for Russian experts, authorities and citizens, and some issues for further investigations given in **Chapter 6** are finalized the thesis.

In the **Annexes** some detailed and qualifying information is given.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 General problem and research topic

Russian historic cities and towns have valuable cultural heritage, in some cases worldwide recognized; but their monuments and urban environment as a whole are usually in very bad condition. Especially in not-central settlements one could observe many deteriorated buildings, lack of infrastructure, poor public services, crisis of economical structures inherited from soviet time.

Historic heritage destruction continues in the whole Russian scale. The situation now is rather comparable with what it was in Western Europe some decades ago. “Swedish urban renewal – our historical self-destruction. During the post-war years Swedish towns were modernized rapidly based on the assumption that historical town centers no longer satisfied present and future demands. In the 1960s, almost 50% of all buildings from before 1900 were pulled down. If the demolitions from the following decade are also included, we can claim that more than half of the older cultural heritage disappeared. Along with the houses, numerous small businesses in the town centre were lost and the previous inhabitants were re-housed in new suburbs, whilst the centre tended to be reserved for offices and department and chain stores <...> and the few isolated historical buildings remaining are preserved for tourists” (Caring for Cultural Heritage 2004, p.15).

Conventional governmental policy to tackle those problems, based on top-down control and money distribution, is not efficient. Practical affords from the grass roots are rare and restricted by many legal and economic obstacles (lack of financial resources, institutional skills, legal frameworks and support for local businessmen). Those problems became more acute with coming of active private (or public-private) developers who are eager reconstruct totally old shabby housing irrespective of their cultural values. While such situation continues, we progressively lose our cultural identity, but also lose in competition on the world cultural tourism’s market. The gap between our ‘shrinking’ historic towns and more innovative and attractive cities of West and East became more and more broad.

The aim of this thesis is to observe if it is possible to oppose to those trends by using emerging market mechanisms on local level, taking as an example rather peculiar kind of Russian urban development – historical wooden housing (HWH).

HWH is one from attributes of Russian town and sizable part of the whole housing stock till now, constituting up to 90-95% of it in many small and middle-size settlements (ed. Krogius 2000).

In the same time HWH is most vulnerable part of our heritage. Problem of HWH conservation is among the most difficult in Russian city management and restoration practice (Ivanov 1997, 1999).

In the “National Report on the Conditions of Natural Environment in Russian Federation in 2003” is stressed that continuation of losing of historical and cultural monuments is index of real diminishing of cultural potential of nation; as examples are given the wooden development of historic areas of the city of Tomsk, wooden monuments of settlements on historic Moscow-Siberian road, and many other wooden building and areas in the whole Russia (Gosudarstvenny doklad... 2005, p.95).

It happens not only because of neglect to everyday heritage usual for Russia but also owing to common opinion on HWH: “Wooden houses are considered to be of bad quality, a fire hazard, and lack toilets and baths. They are associated with poverty and only suitable for dacha life. The prevalent opinion is that in the city, it is better to get rid of them as soon as possible. <...> Thus these parts of the city are built up with high-rise apartment blocks clad in the ‘traditional’ style” (Goldhoorn 2004).

According to some Russian specialists, the situation with urban wooden heritage is catastrophic as a result of a predominantly mercenary approach to property: **investors** are convinced that it is more profitable to knock down old wooden buildings in potentially attractive areas and to build anew on the site rather invest in rehabilitation of decaying urban areas (Derevyanny Tomsk pod ugrozoy polnogo unichtozheniya 2004).

The real influence of other important urban actors onto HWH saving is either weak or destructive. **City authorities** and majority of **planners** are recognizing the old wooden development as an “inner-city slum” and elaborating special programs for fighting with “tumbledown” buildings. **Architects** being engaged by customers (regardless either public or private) are happy to build new “masterpieces” in historic areas. Average **citizens** (dwellers of such a housing) are usually almost out of the process having not legally approved conditions to participate in urban management practice and means to do something themselves (maintenance, modernization, installation of needed modern conveniences). Many of them are wanted to move into new residential areas with worse location but better living conditions. Some **conservationists** were making attempts to design comprehensive projects and programs for wooden development rehabilitation using “right” theories and progressive foreign experience. But those works are still unrealized being elaborated without stressing on the implementation’s issues (e.g. use of townspeople’ capacity and support).

Only positive tendency of last years is the emerging renovation of separate old wooden houses in provincial historic towns by some local **entrepreneurs** (LE). Those people reach enough to domestic measure start feel commercial advantages of such a type of urban development, which is based on its location, ecological merits, tourist attractiveness, and cultural/symbolical significance. They restore their wooden property by own strength and use it as small cafes, hotels, or dwelling for themselves. From the other side, such almost uncontrolled activity leads in many cases to damages for heritage and the whole town appearance.

In the meantime, a successful program of so-called “wooden towns” conservation is realized from early 1970’s in Nordic countries, and particularly in Sweden, as a reaction of professionals and society on sufficient destructions of historic environment in post-war period (1950’s – 1960’s). Old urban wooden development is recognized there as an essential component of national cultural heritage and the starting-point for a sustainable society building (Ahlberg s.a.); historic wooden housing is saved, equipped with all needed modern conveniences and returned to actual use during broad participatory activity (Per-Göran 2003). An approach, mechanisms, and some practical elements of that Swedish activity probably may serve as an instructive example in conditions of Russian towns and cities where problem of HWH revitalization became realizable by urban society.

1.2 Research questions

Six research questions are raised in the thesis:

1. What is the existing practice on the revitalization of HWH in Russia?
2. What are the main problems from the point of view of different actors?
3. What is the role and capacity of local entrepreneurs in the process?
4. How the HWH revitalization is organized and perceived in Sweden?
5. What can be learned from the Swedish experience to be applied in Russian context?
6. Which measures should be implemented in Russia in order to utilize the LE’ capacity in the process of HWH revitalization?

1.3 Objectives

The aim of research is to explore real social need in HWH revitalization in Russia and to find realistic way to enhance this process.

According to this aim and research questions following objectives of work are selected:

1. To describe current general situation with HWH in Russia.
2. To analyze the concrete cases of rehabilitation of HWH done by local entrepreneurs in the Russian town of Gorodets.
3. To identify learning experience, to determine the capacity of LE in the existing system of urban social relationships.
4. To observe the process of HWH revitalization in Sweden in perception of key specialists; to check outcomes on example of the city of Eksjö.
5. To gain lessons learned from Swedish experience might be applicable in Russian conditions.
6. To formulate realistic instrumental proposals for Russian local governments and specialists.

1.4 Research areas

According to the task of comparative case study two country were chosen with deep focus on two special places be served as case examples:

- 1) Russian historic town with big percentage of wooden housing in central zone and emerged practice of wooden development renovation by LE – the town of Gorodets (Nizhegorodskaya oblast', Volga region)¹;
- 2) Experience of Swedish wooden towns conservation in 1970-s – 2000-s (general results and 1 case example – the town of Eksjö, Småland province).

Figure 1.1 Location of the case towns



¹ To choose a place for Russian case study there were many sources in media analyzed in order to find a town with a positive experience of historic wooden development preservation. Finally the town of Gorodets was chosen where situation is relatively better than in majority of other places according to opinions of many Russian experts.

1.5 Hypothesis

There is sufficient group of people in small Russian historic towns who has demand for HWH as a place to live and, sometimes, to develop their enterprises. The entrepreneurial approach – using of local businessmen capacity and activity in the processes of inner cities development – may be used an efficient tool for HWH revitalization. Management skills and conservation techniques used in processes of Swedish wooden towns' revitalization are applicable in similar Russian situation in the case of efficient institutional and economical tools finding (win-win-win strategy for entrepreneurs/developers, owners, and city authorities), use and strengthening of existing positive trends, and target awareness rising campaign (clear explanations of HWH values and possible benefits to all actors).

1.6 Methods of research

Methodology in general:

multiple-case study (proposed research tends to explain real-life contemporary phenomenon and will be conducted in two places in two countries).

Literature research:

- contemporary urban heritage and inner-cities revitalization concepts, with stressing on the informed (grass-roots) conservation and entrepreneurial approaches;
- issues of historic wooden urban environment reconstruction, urban heritage and historic and cultural monuments preservation in Russia;
- Sweden wooden town conservation's/revitalization's experience;
- problem of applicability of foreigner experiences in Russian urban management practice.

Case study in Russia:

Interviewing of people involved in the HWH preservation and modernization. Russian interviewees are divided to three target groups:

- 1) experts (researchers, planners, urban managers, conservationists) both from national capital (Moscow) and regional center (Nizhniy Novgorod) were problem of local wooden heritage is extremely acute;
- 2) local specialist from the town of Gorodets;
- 3) local entrepreneurs from the town of Gorodets – owners of old wooden houses.

Field observation in selected town (statistic data and local urban planning documents obtaining, photographing of key places and objects).

Case study in Sweden:

Interviewing of experts involved in the wooden towns conservation: specialist both from 'central' (national) institutions and selected case place – the town of Eksjö (researchers, planners, conservationists, etc.).

Field observation in selected town. Similar framework as in Russia is used.

Results interpretation:

cross-case comparative analysis, analytic generalization, outcomes and recommendations gaining.

1.7 Research limitation and innovation

Main *limitative factors* of given research are:

- Case places are small towns with specific urban management situation; not all outcomes and conclusion are applicable to big cities of Russia where situation with HWH saving is more crucial;

- Rather narrow circle of people is interviewed. From all the set of actor involved in Gorodets urban development only following main groups were selected: local entrepreneurs owned now old wooden houses in historic area of the town and local specialists in town-planning;
- Only questions of renovation of existed historic wooden houses and possible revitalization of wooden area are examined inside of the broad scope of urban-policy issues of this town;
- There is also no precise economic calculation: the work contains just qualitative appraisal and assumptions;
- The research not pretends to be a comprehensive analysis of broad and long-term experience of wooden towns' revitalization in Sweden; only brief description of general Swedish approach with some illustration of Eksjö example was possible to make during short study time;
- The scope of experts interviewed in Sweden was also limited by real possibility to find and convince to answer proper people during summer vacation period;
- Only few Swedish literature sources on the wooden towns' topic translated to English language are accessible;
- Important questions of restoration and construction techniques relevant to HWH renovation/revitalization are almost out of examination.

In fact, it is just pilot, testing research of one special part of huge managerial problem how to switch to efficient inner-city revitalization in Russia in the conditions of emerged market economy and multi-actors activity.

Anyway the research has some *innovative aspects*.

Nobody until now had asked LE who are almost only real positive actors in the processes of Russian provincial historic towns' revitalization about their aims, preferences, and interests in urban environment field. Primary information obtained during such informal interviews seems to be important for new understanding of real processes of grass-roots revitalization, which are going in small Russian town rather often without any governmental support and in defiance of many juridical and managerial obstacles.

Analyzing of concrete cases of contemporary households based on historical wooden dwelling houses in the town of Gorodets owned, renovated and developed by LE as examples of such grass-roots revitalization is resulted in understanding of necessity of combination of routine Russian top-down urban-forming mechanisms with common people activity running "from below".

Managerial proposals proved by some outcomes from successful Swedish HWH revitalization's practice are stressing on obligation of enabling preservation policy aimed to win-win results for all actors of urban development in wooden areas of Russian historic towns.

The ideas mentioned above may serve as a *subject of defense* of the given study.

Chapter 2 Theoretical background

2.1 Urban revitalization as a system of development and preservation

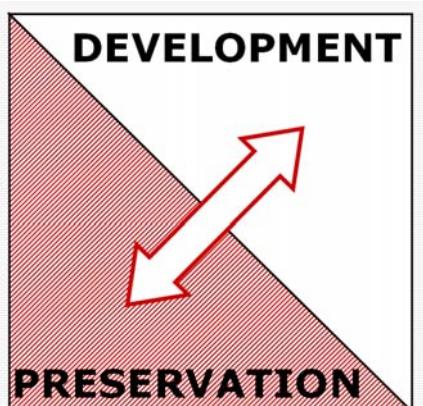
As a theoretical model for this thesis a notion on the inner-city revitalization as a comprehensive system of different activities is chosen. Urban revitalization is a result of dual processes of:

inner-city upgrading and development (rise of economic activity, material structure transformation, enhance of housing and environmental conditions. etc.)

and

urban heritage preservation (protection both townscapes and separate monuments for existed inhabitants and future generation, etc.)

Figure 2.1 Principal model of urban revitalization



According to such holistic understanding the revitalization is aimed both to protect heritage and to enhance the quality of life of inhabitants.

But what is the *heritage*? As will readily be observed in recent publication there is distinctive trend to more broad and operational understanding of this notion corresponding to a complicated reality: “In the information society, the approach to the heritage is a decisive factor, and is sometimes even more important than the heritage itself. The heritage is a medium for the collective memory, which is expressed through a series of mediators ...it is the place of transition from «knowledge» to «know-how»” (Therond 2000).

Heritage potentials directly connects with economic issues: “In a Europe where unemployment, marginalization and criminality reach worrying proportions, cultural heritage offers a high and relatively neglected potential for job creation, as well as an important and insufficiently used instrument of good citizenship” (Europa Nostra: Philosophy 2005).

Formally such interpretation of heritage coordinated with an approach to historic towns officially adopted in Russia. But, as determined in the Federal Target Program “The Preservation and Revival of the Architecture of Historic Towns” (Sub-program “The Revival, Construction, Reconstruction and Restoration of Small and Middle-Sized Historic Towns of Russia in Conditions of Reform”) adopted by Federal Government on November, 2001, the term ‘*revival*’ is chosen as a key notion. “It denotes determination, restoration and maximum utilization of the city’s historic heritage in a most broad sense, including historic and cultural monuments, all historic development, the character of the town environment, traditional trades and handicrafts, peoples’ traditions, sensibility, spiritual life and the city’s spirit, intensity and variability of public contacts, self-government forms, self-sufficiency of the city’s own forces and resources regarding the economic life, i.e. everything that was in many

ways lost during the preceding decades and that is almost forgotten in Russian province” (Federal’naya tselevaya programma... 2001).

Unfortunately such a broad definition of principal kind of activity is hardly realizing in practice and cannot solve a conflict between modern development’s aims (purposed by officials and developers) and preservation tasks (that current by conservationist, art historians etc.). The defeat of the urban heritage is usual result of such uncertain policy.

Russian experts are trying to solve this contradiction at least on theoretical level proposing to join both kinds of town-forming potentials of historic cities: a potential of urban heritage (potential of object) and a potential of developing activity (potential of subjects) that may lead to better quality of historic urban environment: “The heritage has a capacity to influence into town-planning development of urban territories, e.g. it has a town-forming potential. ...So we have not just maintain and properly use monuments, but also protect and use this town-forming potential of heritage” (Regame 2004, p.9).

Accordingly the notion of *urban heritage* appears and is under elaboration till now. “The switch towards preservation of the urban-planning heritage as a special class of cultural and historic heritage is needed. Urban-planning heritage includes the systems of historic settlements, sites and connecting communications, separate historic settlements and adjacent natural landscapes, parks and gardens, historic lay-outs, areas of historic development, architectural ensembles and separate monuments with sufficient territorial constituents. The main features of the urban-planning heritage are its multilateral nature, diachronic formation, principal changeableness, functional heterogeneity, complicated property’s structure, existence of objects as a property complex (land & buildings)” (Krogius & Ivanov 1995).

In other words, urban heritage includes almost everything what we meet in the historic areas of city. For example the scope of responsibility of the famous New York City Landmark Preservation Commission is like this: “in open public hearings, the commission regulates such varied application as the replacement of a window in the front elevation of a brownstone in Greenwich Village, the design of a shop front in a former factory building in SoHo, the proposal to the Whitney Museum in the Upper East Side Historic District, and the plans for a sixty-story office building on Fifth Avenue” (Tung 2001, p. 6).

The understanding of needs in connection of conservation (preservation) and development appeared: “...prevention of transforming the old town into a museum town is strongly connected to the newest definition of urban heritage as well” (Vahtikari 2002); “Conservation-based development aims not only to improve and protect the existing living environment, but also to create and maintain a better quality of living environment to enhance the positive aspects of life. The concept of preserving the entire urban environment which surrounds historic areas is one method of controlling development, as opposed to the idea of leaving old things in their original state” (Yoshida 1995).

It relates to attempts of some researcher in Asia where the cultural heritage is also under the threat of too quick urban development: “Research, Preservation, Revitalization. These three factors should always be considered as an ensemble, unlike the present situation where they are treated as separate issues. It is important ...always confirm [heritage] where it stands by way of ‘research’, inherit the positive elements of the past by ‘preservation,’ and build a bridge between present and past through ‘revitalization’” (Muramatsu 2000).

So, even between conservationists themselves the notion became stronger that the success of preservation of monuments does not depend on blind restoration of old monuments but rely on putting practical needs by balancing the needs of development and demands to carry on the living heritage.

From the other point, there is also a tension to use revitalization as a base for a preservation strategy: “...the National Trust [for Historic Preservation, USA] now views revitalization as

part of the changing role of preservation, which includes fighting urban sprawl, reviving entire downtown areas, as well as saving historic buildings and sites” (When Does Historic Demolition Serve Preservation? 2005).

And, finally, an experience of many historic cities in the world proved that this idea may come to reality: “Downtown revitalization is one of the most complex, challenging undertakings anyone can embark on. There are many skeptics and even those who support the process may have unrealistic expectations and frustrations. Yet, seeing a dead downtown come to life is a great reward for any community – and worth investing time, energy, and emotion” (Leinberger 2005).

2.2 Management of urban revitalization: main approaches

There are many concepts inside of the broad notion of urban revitalization how to deal with real inner-city environment on practice. The author will stress on three of them, which are most important for construction of the theoretical framework of the given thesis.

2.2.1 Top-down vs. bottom-up approaches

For topic chosen is important to divide those two vectors of urban-forming influences, e.g. in the sense of “preservation from ‘above’ and ‘below’” (Vahtikari 2002)².

Top-down reconstruction (not revitalization in the sense mentioned above) is traditional direction of town-planning activity in Russia having deep historical roots of the government lead construction, planning and re-planning of cities going from the interest of the state first of all. According to domestic town-planning tradition the term “reconstruction” means not just demolishing and rebuilding like in the West (at least in Anglo-Saxon tradition of use of the word) but “putting in order” old urban areas using combination of different kinds of activity effected from outside.

But such a domination of top actors is still usual for Europe also in spite of all declaration on “participation’s” importance.

For instance, let us take as an example the model of activity proposed in the Europa Nostra Declaration on urban wooden architecture (The Riga Declaration 2001). The majority of stakeholders mentioned here are related to the ‘top’ levels of activity (all relevant authorities and international and national organizations; the Institutions of the European Union; Member States of the Council of Europe; policy and decision-making bodies; local authorities; international sources of financing and technical competence) and much fewer actors are from ‘below’ (the public; the inhabitants; the citizens of Europe; the local communities; conservation and heritage societies; craftsmen – you see that many categories here are repeating each other).

Actions needed are looking here like following consequence: to improve of policy by authorities on each level (from EU to local) → to enhance work of specialists → to educate citizens. Money should come either from governments, or from international sources.

It good for solving special questions in established democratic societies of developed countries with socially oriented economical policy (e.g. Nordic countries); but when country like actual Russia (characterized of strong top-down flows of state money, rise of central

² We can refer here also to the division in bureaucratic and physical preservation presented by Henrik Lilius in the late 1970's. By official or bureaucratic preservation is meant preservation by urban planning and legislation. “With physical preservation Lilius means the measures that realize the aims of preservation taken to buildings. Physical or practical preservation is practiced by private persons living in wooden towns more or less instructed by local planners and other professionals. The inhabitants' objectives in the preservation differ from those of the urban planners. The urban planner regards the totality whereas the inhabitant wants to fill his or her personal needs, that give the form to the act of building” (Seppälä 2000).

administrative power, etc.) tried to apply similar approach, it became just lip service – fictive urban conservation policy, in many cases imitating real attention of governmental structures to heritage aimed to gain more profit through demolishing of historic development in commercially valuable areas.

Who is out of this model? Grass-roots economical actors who are rather independent on government and behave on the market following their own living, financial and cultural interests but some top-down policies or programs.

From the other side and in the same time the processes of so called *bottom-up (or grass-roots) revitalization* are rising everywhere, and – paradoxically – in Nordic countries again, where there is good skill to blend together those two opposite directions into efficient process of urban regeneration: “Preservation ‘from above’ can encourage preservation ‘from below’ but the ‘above’ process only succeeds if there are already forces in action ‘below’. In the case of Rauma, there were several important independent dimensions of ‘above’ and ‘below’ processes that eventually reinforced each other” (Vahtikari 2002).

Experts stressed that in “the preservation of wooden towns in Finland <...> there was a shift in preservation initiative from ‘above’ to ‘below’, from the national to the local, during both phases of development” (Vahtikari 2002); that “working with a regeneration project, you must face the society around when dealing with physical planning, economy, social problems and ecological adaptations. You must work in the opposite direction to the generals not from top to the bottom, but upwards from the bottom. You must deal with all good powers like landowners, engaged citizens, enthusiasts, officials, organisations, etc.” (Brattberg 2000); that “in Sweden, rather few of all valuable buildings are protected by strong legislation. Preservation depends a lot upon the general interest in society and the interest among the owners. Only little more than 2000 buildings are listed and have a strong legal protection. The central principle is that it is not a long-term solution to try to force people to preserve their buildings. The basic assumption is that buildings are best preserved by interested and caring owners. Information and training are instead the means used” and even “Conservation has become in fashion” (Larsson 2002).

Switch to community and local people-led urban activity is supported by such well-known advocate of participatory approach as Jane Jacobs: “Let’s think first about revitalization successes; they are great and good teachers. They don’t result from gigantic plans and show-off projects <...>. They build up gradually and authentically from diverse human communities; successful city revitalization builds itself on these community foundations...” “What the intelligently worked out plan devised by the community itself does not do is worth noticing. It does not destroy hundreds of manufacturing jobs, desperately needed by New York citizens and by the city’s stagnating and stunted manufacturing economy. The community’s plan does not cheat the future by neglecting to provide provisions for schools, daycare, recreational outdoor sports, and pleasant facilities for those things. The community’s plan does not promote new housing at the expense of both existing housing and imaginative and economical new shelter that residents can afford” (Jacobs 2005).

Going closer to HWH issues we can call such approach *grass-roots revitalization*, which is based on wish, knowledge and capacity of owners to maintain old houses according to their nature and values.

And results are positive: “The last five-ten years, the interest among people in general and house owners in particular, has grown fast. More and more people are getting interested in preserving their historical building. More house owners are also prepared to conserve their building with traditional materials and techniques. Some years ago, a listing of a building was regarded as a problem, but today it is an additional value that gives a building a higher price” (Larsson 2002).

Swedish concept of “Cautious renewal” or cautious approach is quite related to this notion of grass-roots revitalization: “Caring for the existing buildings and environment is one way to economize with and re-use the resources available. Traditional habitats have as a rule been developed in harmony with the climate, local materials and living conditions, knowledge of which should not be underestimated. Therefore wise heritage management should principally be based on traditional handicraft methods and local materials. Acting in this way will help to create jobs for impoverished groups, although it may prove necessary in certain cases to revive knowledge of traditional artisan techniques. When renewal and maintenance are done with local materials and by the local workforce and local contractors, the resources of the local community can be mobilised, activated and re-invested” (Caring for Cultural Heritage 2004, p.13).

2.2.2 Informed conservation

But tricky thing in this people-centered process is that people should understand themselves the values of inherited property – both their own houses and public assets – urban heritage “owned” by community. How to start? Broad international experience of inner cities revitalization, and in particular Swedish experience of wooden town preservation showed that to be efficient in management of grass-rout activity you need firstly to create proper attitude to heritage, reliable understanding of historic values of environment.

For instance, Nordic experts, basing on local traditions of urban governance, proposed for historic cities within the Baltic and the Nordic region the model of activity that “dealing with three main issues: Values (what values are regarded as essential within a given urban setting?); Development (what are the basic tendencies of development that influence the urban fabric?) and; Management (how are the city governed according to city values and on going development?)” (The Nordic World Heritage Office 1997).

Starting from “Values” towards Development and Management is fundamentally important in Russian context, where progressive advance of historic urban development had been interrupted more than once, that resulted in people cultural and historical disorientation. “In a course of elaboration of number of program and planning works for small and average Russian historic towns and cities in the Institute on Reconstruction of Historic Towns (INRECON, Moscow) we constantly meet a great deficiency of information about a heritage (especially a town-planning heritage) and, accordingly, a lack of understanding of its values (both among the “simple” townspeople and among heads of towns and even among professionals. But in such a situation of mass misunderstanding of a nature of local town-planning heritage and its “superficial” perception distorted by propagation of the Soviet years, the realization of any environmental initiatives is very problematic” (Ivanov 2001).

However even those countries, where active participations of locals in heritage conservation already became an everyday and legal norm, have also gone through similar period of social apathy and heritage misunderstanding. A radical turn has taken place during of civil society’s development and purposeful work of the experts assisting to local communities. It is indicative, that the job on heritage education and “environmental” informing of citizens goes continuously and becomes more and more active in developed world (Ivanov 2003).

“What are the best ways of understanding and recording the historic environment and how can that information best be disseminated to the widest possible audience?” (Clark 2000) – questions like this are today one of key points for conservationists. The answer is given in different ways: awareness-rising companies, eye-opener publications, public oriented guidelines edition, sites in the Internet, etc.

Plain value-led concept of revitalization consequence is proposed by MEDAN organization creating a framework for understanding modern heritage in Asia with special interest to

traditional wooden housing³: “The first step is «Understanding Heritage». This refers to a comprehensive survey of modern heritage to be conducted in each city. The purpose is to establish a quantitative and inclusive grasp of the city's built heritages... The second step is «Inspiring Heritage». This step prepares for a possible future revitalization of the heritage. Publishing a book on traditional and local technique of wooden architecture can be one example. If such a book would be published, it would help create the techniques that are suitable to the region and useful for the affordable restoration of old wooden houses. It could be also a chance to inform the inhabitants of their own heritage. (Such heritage does not only include the houses themselves, but also intangible heritage such as their methods of construction.) We have to deal with many obstacles – political, economic, historical, and technological – in order to revitalize a building and a city as a whole. But this step is necessary in order for us to move from the «Understanding Heritage» step to the «Revitalizing Heritage» step. The third step is «Revitalizing Heritage». It is not until this step that we should plan actual conservation or renovation” (MEDAN Understanding Heritage).

Figure 2.2 Value-led concept of revitalization consequence



So we should consider this mediatory step to raise awareness of the heritage values as obligatory bridge for “transition from «knowledge» to «know-how»” (Therond 2000).

2.2.3 Entrepreneurial approach as a key factor of success in contemporary historic cities

Urban regeneration policy and entrepreneurship have traditionally been treated as separate fields. But now urban developers must focus explicitly on the links between the two, examining how policy can help regenerate inner cities and other areas of urban distress by stimulating entrepreneurship (Entrepreneurship... 2004).

The role of local entrepreneurs (LE) as an agent of urban development of not less importance than top-down (governmental) actors is stressed now by many experts: “...Helping small businesses is certainly compatible with what the World Bank is pushing in its urban productivity strategy: “City governments should pay particular attention to the regulations and infrastructure deficiencies that impede the growth of productivity of urban entrepreneurs – particularly in the informal sector – and should provide greater incentives and improved services that will enable entrepreneurs to take advantage of opportunities within the urban economy” (Gilbert 2001).

It is especially visible in the small towns with horizontal economic and personal ties’ prevalence: “...The roots of small-town success intertwined with the roots of individual success” (Schultz 2004, p. XI).

In small towns, the people who are energized by challenges and thrive on problem solving can influence the whole community; they can pull others along with them” (Schultz 2004, p. 30).

³ MEDAN means by “modern” development created in Asia from middle 19th c. under western influence – a time frames comparable with an age of most part of still existed urban wooden development in Russian cities.

In many cases entrepreneurs are more active and behave in more creative way than governmental officers. Usually they became local leader, having a “Can-Do” attitude and exhibiting a willingness to take a risk (Schultz 2004, p. XIII).

Acceptance of positive LE activity by local government’s leaders may open possibilities to a win-win situation (instead of usual win-lose situation) and directly affects economic health and the prosperity of the town (Schultz 2004, p. 4).

Unfortunately those theories became rather questionable coming closer to Russian reality. In the cases where so called “horizontal social contract” is built between businessmen and local community there are more possibilities for sustainable development. In opposite, usual for Russia “vertical contract …is unsustainable, it is asymmetric because of initiative is in the hands of only one side – the powerful, administrative side” (Auson 2004).

There are two different points of view on Russian national capacity for entrepreneurship. It was hard negative attitude to entrepreneurs during the whole Soviet period when bureaucrats recognized them as a “class enemy”. Even now after 15 years of reforms many officials see them as unwished competitors who may be self-sufficient and to some extend independent from central power.

From the other point, there was long-term tradition of effective entrepreneurship existing before October revolution (especially in such merchant areas like Volga region selected for the case research for given thesis).

“…Russia initially has arisen on trade ways as the trade state. More over, this state has extended up to Pacific Ocean due to entrepreneurs, whose energy was strengthened by cheapness of furs best in the world. And it remained to be the trade state during the most part of their history until 1917, that did not prevent it to be simultaneously the military, aristocratic, and bureaucratic state” (Goryanin 2004). The same author describes as example the unique meaning of the trade in Nizhniy Novgorod – the capital of Volga region: “The Nizhniy Novgorod fair was largest in the world, it collected a quarter of one million(!) businessmen per year and represented the whole city with hundreds pavilions, branches of banks; it imitated round the whole Russia. The trade in the brought goods wasn’t main aim of the fair; the bargaining on the basis of the submitted samples prevailed here” (Goryanin 2004).

Entrepreneur initiative worked as the main town-forming engine of Russian cities and towns from the middle 19 c. (Brumfield, Anan’ich & Petrov 2001, p.11).

And even today after 70 years of anti-entrepreneurial repressions of soviet time (characterized by command centralized economy), big part of population is ready to free entrepreneurial activity.

According to leading Russian sociologist that is because “… an externally rigid standardization of normative patterns was in deed never all-embracing and all-powerful: under covers – or even under covering – of patterns of behavior and consciousnesses given «by the centre» others everyday samples and orientations worked in all time, to a great extent they were implanted in ordinary people behavior” (Levada 2000, p. 86).

An outcome of one recent survey on the self-identification of Russian people in the early 21 c. by The All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center was formulated like this: “In modern Russia reformatory potential of a society considerably exceeds reformatory potential of elites… The modernization is blocked not by mentality of the population, but by Russian elite not ready and not capable to operate with the free people. Aspiring to compensate this inability, it will reanimate old myths about Russian people [as not capable to the economic freedom]” (Kutkovets & Klyamkin 2002).

The principal dilemma is to which from two traditions historically existing in Russian economic and social ways of life: the authoritarian paternalistic tradition (with ancient roots

in the Byzantine Empire and the Tatar-Mongolian yoke); or the democratic European tradition of limitation of governmental power and free entrepreneurship activity that also existed and still alive (see: Yanov 2005) should (and want) we follow in our urban-management practice?

This is of cause open question for our professional society; but in the frame of given research the aithor want stress that in the case of overcoming of too strong government regulation and anti-business attitude we may hope that LE activity may be really helpful for our inner-city revitalisation processes.

Other important and at the same time dangerous perspective – a privatization of listed historic and cultural monuments. To save monuments today is possible, only given them in private hands, the experts consider. There is a need in some mechanisms insuring against the “uncivilized” proprietors or tenants who sometimes tend to destruction of monuments instead of their proper restoration.

Anyway we should agree that “yet entrepreneurship strategies targeting distressed urban areas need to be strengthened. ...Targeted strategies and ad-hoc tools are therefore needed in order to foster entrepreneurship and support entrepreneurs in deprived areas.” Of cause this approach like any other must be place bounded to be effective. It “have to be designed with reference to the special situation of the “milieu” of inner cities ...in which businesses are to be set up” (Entrepreneurship... 2004, p. 9).

2.3 Historic wooden housing as a subject of revitalization

Going more close to the concrete subject and concrete places of research we should especially examine a historic wooden housing’s meaning as a part of living environment and actual issues of its revitalization in countries chosen for case study – Sweden and Russia.

2.3.1 Specific of historic wooden housing as a part of urban heritage and living environment

Improvement of housing conditions in central parts of historic cities is crucial for revitalization success. “It is important to realize that housing is two-thirds of the built environment, so it is always a critical part of the [revitalization] strategy” (Leinberger 2005). It proves an experience from cities where revitalization policy was successful, like Denver: “Key downtown interests – business owners, government, residents – should all agree on housing as a priority” (Moulton 1999).

Historic specific and natural conditions of Northern part of Europe resulted in prevalence of housing made from timber in old areas of some cities till present time.

“...The wooden architecture and wooden towns are one of the most important contributions of Northern Europe to the World Cultural Heritage ...Wooden architecture provides a living quality and a sense of history and belonging for civil society, which is an interest to all Europe, showing common ideals in architecture and town planning and adding to the understanding of the built environment wherever we live. <...> Recognizing the need to modernize these towns and dwellings, the importance of protecting this very attractive and characteristic architecture was stressed. Wooden architecture is natural and sustainable and vital to all identity in an increasingly standardized world” (The Riga Declaration 2001).

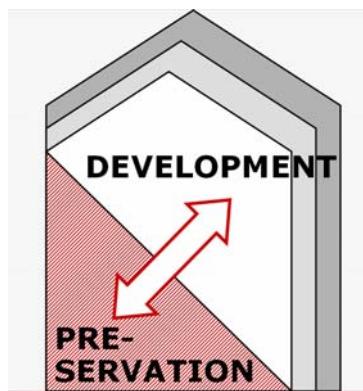
Especially in Sweden the meaning of timbered housing is high: “More than fifty percent of all buildings in the countryside are log-houses. In that area these buildings are part of everyday life – a natural feature of local and regional identity. At the same time those buildings are among the most distinctive in the built cultural heritage of Scandinavia. Using, preserving and re-using those characteristic houses, are important in the work on cultural heritage of northern Sweden” (Timmerdraget).

In many places of the world exempt of Scandinavia we can also find positive examples of HWH revitalization. For instance, in “New Orleans, [which] like many historic Russian cities, is primarily a wooden-framed city, but due to a buoyant real estate market for historic properties, in contrast to the situation in Russia, wooden buildings are able to find sponsors and investors ready to undertake major restoration and maintenance work even on buildings off the tourist trail” (New Orleans a new example for Russia? 2005); or in Kyoto that comprehensive preservation of wooden development is described by Tung (2001, pp.368-385).

It’s very important that wooden building is such a kind of living organism – it must be updated many times during their life period because of natural deterioration of construction and changes in needs and tests of inhabitants. Big preference of wooden construction is flexibility – you may change some parts of it without demolishing of the whole. “Monuments like churches and other public buildings present permanency making the past concrete to us where as the background or dwelling areas are constantly changing. These changes make our environment rich with historic layers and connect us to the past. Neglecting the changes would mean breaking up this connection” (Seppälä 2000, p. 189).

According to this notion of permanent “natural” development of wooden fabric in historic town we can return to our scheme of urban revitalization on the house level:

Figure 2.3 Historic house (household) as an object of revitalization



Saving the most valuable “core” of each house we may renovate and develop it in the way permitted by local building codes and heritage protection regulations. That is the compromise way of activity with HWH allowing owners to live in historic milieu with modern conveniences and (theoretically) revitalize the whole wooden areas still remained in historic cities.

2.3.2 Situation with HWH in Russia: SWOT analysis for revitalization’s possibilities

As for Russia, HWH remains a realizable issue only in small and medium-sized historic towns of the Central and Northern parts of European Russia, and in Siberia. Main condition is the existence of private owned individual wooden houses. Usually the share of such buildings in small or average towns and cities differs from about 60% (blocks in historic urban cores) to 90-95% (development of former suburbs where semi-village way of life still exists) (ed. Krogius 2000).

Wooden housing, especially in small towns without grandiose reconstruction projects’ implementation, is familiar and traditional for many people. While HWH it is well maintained it promotes a sense of habitability, the feeling of authenticity of the established,

traditional, elaborated, hand-made urban environment; they are oasis of privacy, “place of freedom and individual creativity” (Architecture after communism 2002, p. 52) (in opposite to flat in concrete multi-storey building that are still most typical kind of Russian housing).

Types of HWH are differ from most common single-families houses, to more rare multi families houses (usually transformed in soviet time from big nobles or merchants houses); and even to wooden 2-storey barracks of 1920’s – 1950’s, which should be recognized now like rather special but sufficient part of our urban heritage.

Unfortunately in big cities where individual property for housing was almost totally forbidden in central areas in soviet time, old wooden merchant houses formerly owned by one family became multi-flat dwelling (often with communal flats where in one flat from 2 to 7-10 families lived); so the sense of property was lost. Areas of wooden development become uncomfortable and threatening, modern engineering infrastructure was not implemented, houses step by step became shabby, inhabitants are living copped in very bad conditions. They really want to leave such houses moving in any other places in the city.

From the point of view of city officials such areas are looking as a “slum” – they don’t spent municipal money for upgrading or infrastructure waiting for possibility of demolishing (e.g. during preparation to the celebration of 1000-years of Kasan’ in August 2005, when this city received special money from federal budget, big part of historic center with dominantly wooden development was razed to the ground).

Box 2.1 The town of Rostov the Great: HWH appreciation by inhabitants (source: Ivanov 1999)

Some results of socio-town-planning research carried out by author in Rostov the Great, Russia in 1998 within the elaboration of the Federal Target Program of Town’s Revival are given below (*Sample: about 200 respondents, representatives of various social groups*).

Only 2% of the respondents have named wooden architecture among major sights of Rostov. About 5% of respondents have mentioned in this context “all old houses in the town” and 4% - the buildings along the main historic streets, where wooden buildings are also included. Thus, on the average, only each tenth Rostover by one way or another recognises in this or that sense an architectural or cultural significance of wooden historic buildings.

Answering the question “Which monuments, on your opinion, need to be restored in the first place?” only 2% of respondents have mentioned wooden historic buildings.

As a whole about 90% of respondents would like to change their living condition. Two thirds of the respondents live today in 5- or 9-storey houses, and 95% from them would like to live different. The new individual house (“cottage”) prevails among preferred types of housing. 57% of the respondents among those, who would like to stay in Rostov, would wish to live in such a house. But nobody has especially pointed that the “cottage” should be wooden.

Outcome: the social status of wooden buildings is very low. Such houses were not included neither into a number of town’s symbols nor into prestigious kinds of housing. The majority of the respondents evaluated the decayed wooden buildings in general as an “old stuff”, or as “cesspit”, which is necessary to remove from the town as soon as possible.

So, positive cases of renovation of HWH in big or average Russian cities are very rare. Let us look onto Russian historic city of Vologda not long ago famous with wooden architecture through the eyes of W. Brumfield: “Fortunately, a concerted effort by local residents has saved and renovated in the area surrounding the church a number of the nearby nineteenth-century wooden houses, similar to those that have been leveled in other parts of the city.” But then this well-known researcher of Russian architecture must add: “Unfortunately, the advances of decay and neglect are often evident, and there are few resources for renovation. The dilapidated appearance of these solidly built and crafted structures supports the arguments of those for whom such buildings are a useless encumbrance” (Brumfield S.a.).

Selective approach to heritage is also reason to neglecting and demolishing: vernacular heritage, common historic development is often excluded from the official field of attention:

old wooden houses every time are in the shadow of stone monuments more important from official point of view for the external appearance of the city.

Now new dangers for HWH districts that located usually on central cities territories with high land prices: big investment firms working in coordination with local governments are eager to demolish the total areas of wooden development in order to built new multi-flat residential houses very profitable for them (Derevyanny Tomsk pod ugrozoy polnogo unichtozheniya 2004).

Situation in small towns is different. Many of old wooden houses remained to be in private property of owners during whole soviet period (even if adjacent plot of land was public owned); usually such dwellings are multigenerational households with kitchen gardens, additional utility buildings, storage rooms, garage in the courtyards, etc. Neighbors create some kind of community knowing and helping each other. Surviving of such kind of housing is crucial for sustainability of small towns in Russian province.

In these places the same problems (bad condition, lack of conveniences, lack of infrastructure, declining population, etc.) are also crucial, but owners are trying to solve it by their own power; good location and general shortage of housing inherited from soviet time create social demand for this houses; more rich people may buy them at market rate from old owners who for money gained may purchase flats or new housing on the town periphery.

Then owners (independently new or old) early or late are becoming to choice between two principal options: either to demolish old wooden house and build totally new or reuse and renovated old property introducing needed conveniences and adding new living rooms.

Real decision depends on the ad-hoc combinations a quantity of factors; unfortunately many people are for the first variant recognizing it as practically easier or less expensive. Such cultural influences like, for example, a pressure of community wanted to protect their identity incarnate in HWH, are absent now.

As for new individual private owned housing construction that is almost only direction in housing development after stop of construction of multi-storey multi-flats houses almost everywhere in 1990s, there is obvious loss of craftsmanship's tradition and lack of skills to built something in accordance with historic environment: "in conditions of absence of compulsion in construction and arrangement of personal habitation (the business very important personally and socially determining the reputation of family on generations from now on), one not observe any coordination, visual coherence, style unity, or even simple consistency of the colors of two houses next door" (Kagansky 2005).

The dilemma may be expressed in the following way: shall traditional vernacular Russian wooden building culture be lost inevitably and replaced by chaotic modern semi-wild urban landscape which we see already in many places?

In the Table 2.1 actual situation is presented in the form of SWOT analysis.

Table 2.1 SWOT analysis of possibilities of HWH revitalization in small historic towns of Russia

Strengths:	HWH is related to habits and tradition of sufficient part of small towns' inhabitants (multifamily households, kitchen gardens on adjacent plot, Russian wooden bath's possibility, etc.)
	Renovation and maintenance of private wooden house may be done by hands of owners using relatively cheap local recourses (timber building materials, extra labor)
	Inherited traditional entrepreneurial spirit in some places is supportive for HWH
	Income of owners (if they are LE) from small or average local enterprises is sufficient for historic parts of houses restoration and household development according to family needs
Weaknesses:	HWH areas have suffered from neglect over the years being without communal engineering infrastructure and sufficient public services
	Difficulties to meet needs of inhabitants in modern conveniences with aim of saving of

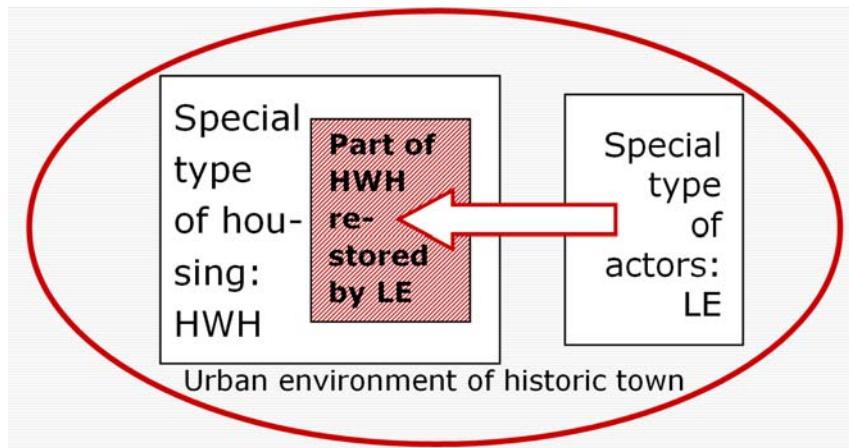
	historic values of wooden environment
	Too heavy load for many relatively poor owners (maintenance and reparation, installation of needed conveniences)
Opportunities:	
	Private individually owned property in the town center is reliable target of money investment
	Wooden house is ecologically sound; ecological purity of wood as a construction material will make it more and more attractive for consumers in nearest future
	Wooden house gives to owner a possibility to express his/her individuality (in the frame of heritage protection regulations)
	HWH is home for family by nature, and its revitalization will serve for returning of full value life in the urban historic centers
	Participatory processes of HWH revitalization will create a sense of belonging to and identification with the neighborhood and the town
	This clear and understandable for majority of citizens activity may help to form collective vision of the future of certain town (as one of the keys to successful development)
	HWH rehabilitation may give possibilities to combine national tradition of everyday habitat organization and contemporary management tools (and be supported by some politicians looking for “own Russian way of development”)
	Potential benefits from location and branding (e.g. small town with well restored HWH may became tourist attractors as a unique “wooden town” near big regional capitals or on the established tourist routs)
	Rising of symbolical capital of owners and the town as a whole in the case of success
Treats:	
	Discontinuity of building and habitual traditions and vagueness of preservation law and building regulations
	Speculative real estate development (especially on places profitable for big external investors’ companies) may lead to introducing of large-scale reconstruction projects and then to the loss of architectural character of areas
	No proper public attention, no citizens voices for saving in the case of demolishing “from above”. New actors (informal citizens groups, NGOs) wanted to protect urban heritage are appeared now but in big cities with high intellectual potential only – where HWH is already lost
<i>‘Dreamy treat’</i>	In the case of ‘full’, comprehensive HWH revitalization the elitist well-being areas of well-preserved historic villas owned by relatively rich people may be created that may be reason for social exclusion and interclass tensions in certain cities; but according to actual trends it is so to say ‘dreamy threat’ the chances of that are poor

But alternative to the revitalization looks like this: intensive HWH redevelopment (or so called comprehensive reconstruction with rather sufficient changing of historic building stock to the new one) leads to demolishing of authentic buildings and losses of city spirit, to the leveling of historic environment; but also to losses of financial profits (money uncollected from tourist use of historic environment, not full-grown capital, etc). Finally going this way cities will lose values instead of adds them.

From other side, HWH revitalization by LE activity fully rely to the notion of efficient urban policy by Garau, Sclar & Carolyn (2005, p. 119): “Given the enormous scale of the problem, the task force had to define and identify the most economical, effective, and affordable models to reach the target. In the case of regularization and upgrading, the best solution involves four steps: taking care of the largest possible number of people with the least amount of disruption and dislocation, relying heavily on local building materials and methods, providing a secure form of tenure, and involving residents to as great an extent as possible in planning and implementing the process”.

In the case of emerging process of Russian HWH revitalization by local entrepreneurial activity we have an interaction between special type of housing (HWH) and special actors (LE). As a result we have some part of HWH already restored and used by LE and their clients, which start to have positive influence on the surrounded urban environment.

Figure 2.4 Specification of research object



Taking into account ideas of Russian conservative (!) philosopher A. Panarin (1994, pp. 28-30) – “Attributes of wide movement for restoration and rehabilitation of naturalistic forms of life are observed everywhere in the world; and small towns have chance to become the centers and arenas of such movement. It is possible, firstly, because more elements of natural, cultural and historical environment were kept in them, and, secondly, polarization, characteristic for an industrial way of life of large cities, is less expressed in these settlements”; “The direct horizontal connections uniting the producer with the consumer and local communities, activity of small informal groups that correlate any “large projects” with daily inquiries of common people are doubtless advantages of small town as a center of contemporary «civilizations of the small forms»” – we may recognize small historic towns as a very perspective environment for efficient “self-organized” HWH revitalization.

2.3.3 Swedish wooden town revitalization's experience

The actual situation with HWH in Sweden is quite different as compared with Russian one. The careful attitude to historic wooden architecture and to wooden urban heritage in particular is a part of national self-consciousness; the tradition for wooden buildings and wooden towns is recognised as one of main contributions of Sweden to European culture and the world cultural heritage.

The wooden towns in Sweden (as well as in Finland and Norway) were facing serious threat in the late 1960s.

That time a study was carried out in the Nordic countries, called “The Nordic Wooden Town”. Several surveys, case studies and specialized studies on different aspects of the wooden towns were published, and a final conference was arranged in Norway 1972. The project was very important in creating a public awareness of the cultural values and an interest in the conservation of the wooden towns. At the time there was little appreciation for them and many were threatened by total redevelopment.

By taking common actions in the countries concerned and with international seminars and conferences a number of towns could be preserved through urban conservation plans.

An important part of the national and local heritage was protected. The knowledge and experience in individual historic towns carried out by town-planners and researchers can be transferred for the development of models for sustainable urban conservation policy.

On the representative international conference “Sustainable Urban Habitat in Wood” in Trondheim, Norway in 1997 the results of 25-years activity in Nordic countries were summed up.

Basing on the article by Larsson (2002) it is possible to deduce some instructive managerial principles of Swedish practice of wooden architecture preservation and revitalisation:

- Preservation of valuable buildings depends a lot not on strong legislation but upon the general interest in society and the interest among the owners. The central principle is that it is not a long-term solution to try to force people to preserve their buildings. The basic assumption is that buildings are best preserved by interested and caring owners. Information and training are instead the means used;
- There are almost 2000 so called Areas of National Interest in Sweden. It can be a village, a district in a town, a rural area, etc. These areas are not legally protected, but the values in these areas are supposed to be considered when the local building committees are deciding upon building permits, etc;
- During the government supports some 25 million euros are granted to conservation of privately owned buildings each year. The funds are distributed by the county conservators offices;
- Approximately 500-1000 buildings have been restored each year in a way worthy of imitation, giving an example to people of how things should be done. Together with other activities, this has been of fundamental significance for the general interest in society for conservation and preservation of historical buildings.

Many institution and in particularly in Sweden (and other Nordic countries) are working also especially with collecting and recording traditional knowledge of log-housing construction and old forestry methods (see: Timmerdraget), with issues of restoration and construction techniques relevant to subject of HWH (see e.g.: Sanz 2002).

And results are very positive: "House owners are anxious to preserve their buildings – which was not the case 15-20 years ago. In some areas, a listed building is regarded very attractive and people are prepared to pay a premium price. People in general have become distinctly more interested in building conservation the last 10 years. They visit local conservation sites and historical buildings, read articles, participate in short courses or university education programmes etc. Many interior magazines have in almost every issue some articles about families and their conserved buildings. The annual, huge antique fair in Stockholm has developed a special building conservation department that is very popular has some 35.000 visitors during a weekend. Conservation has become in fashion" (Larsson 2002).

An attempt to include Russia (together with Baltic states) into Nordic Wooden Town project was undertaken in the late 90's aimed to get a wider perspective of project and learn from each other during broad comparative study.

A special committee was formed; there were a number of mutual visits of experts and a series of meetings and seminars were held in Stockholm, Helsinki, Riga, and Tallinn, also with Russian representatives.

In Russia this activity was resulted in the edition (both in Russian and English) of report especially devoted to Russian wooden towns' history and actual problem (ed. Krogius 2000). But, unfortunately, then activity was stopped by many of subjective and objective reasons. Ideas on educational and practical training activities, professional interchange and scientific cooperation, and even on informational exchange were not realised.

Now in Russia we have not any comprehensive sources on Swedish experience of wooden town revitalization; in the only book edited in Russian about Swedish town-planning in last decades, there are not a word on this topic also (Ptichnikova 1999).

Unfortunately, some attempts to built mutual Swedish-Russian professional contacts in this field had come to nothing more than short meetings or seminars⁴; and in the only resumptive

⁴ The seminar "Wooden Houses – Russian-Swedish cultural heritage" under the aegis of the Swedish Institute and the Swedish Central Board of National Antiquities held in Stockholm in November 1997 was one of the last and

article specially devoted to the topic (Krogius 2000) there are just common information on Swedish wooden towns and some proposals to enhance co-operation between Russian and Nordic experts.

After all the special issue of the leading Russian professional magazine devoted to wooden architecture talking on foreigner experience in “countries with a tradition of building in wood” addressed readers to Canada, the USA, Switzerland, and Finland, but to Sweden (Goldhoorn 2004).

2.4 Issue of applicability of foreign revitalization’s experience in Russia

This case study should be comparative, taking into account lessons both from comprehensive revitalization of wooden towns in Sweden and grass-roots revitalization of HWH in small Russian town. According to Tung (2001, p. 2), “the most useful information for informing the civic debate on architectural conservation was derived from lessons learned in other places. Too often we were reinventing the wheel, when other cities had already come to grips with the same problems.”

But not answering question on principal applicability in Russia the foreign experience of urban revitalization such comparative study would worthless. This question would be even more concrete: may Russian historic towns with own deep traditions and distinctive identity like Gorodets found the vibrant success and vitality of Swedish wooden cities like Eksjö to learn useful and helpful lessons for them?

Numerous facts show that there are some obstacles to do it easy, both in objective and subjective spheres. From the one side, principal difference in living standard of common people reflecting the stages of capitalistic development should be mentioned. On the other hand, there are obvious also some contrasts in historical roots, national mentalities, social models, and the civil society’ ripeness to use real democratic principles needed for efficient urban development today. The rise of negative attitude of common people to the West partly inspired by conservative politicians who are talking on so called “own way” of Russia is also happened in the last years.

Of cause it is truth that any idea or experience to use should be adequate to historical conditions and cultural traditions of Russia. But not all those traditions are really good. Looking briefly to Russian urban and cultural history, we can see again two lines of adaptation of European ideas and practices. There are – again – lines “from above”⁵ (St. Petersburg is most bright realization of this vector – but now even the majority of citizens of this most European city of Russia don’t recognize themselves like Europeans – see Sikevich & Savchenkova 2005) and “from below”. Paradoxically but no conservative ideas could stop entrepreneurs from old believers’ circles to adopt best from Europe in pre-revolutionary time (as a results we may see now best of the world collection of European painting of the late 19th – early 20th cc. in Russian museums descended from old believers families).

It is possible to hope that evolutionary development of local economies, strengthening of horizontal ties between local people in small communities, and LE activity in particular, may serve as a fertile field for successful adaptation of lessons from foreigner (Swedish in

most representative events collected about 6 Russian specialists and approximately 30 participants from Sweden; but according to my knowledge the consequences for Russia were limited in the frames of personal activities of some experts (V. Krogius, M. Milchik) and restoration practice inside of museums of wooden architecture (the Kizhi museum, the Kenozersky National Park). It seems that co-operation was stopped that time on the first step.

⁵ “The most ineradicable cultural and historical feature of Russia is guilty of all our failures connected to application of western experience. It is the authoritarianism of imperious thinking that stops undertakings, even obviously useful to the people, if they create threat for autocracy and secret distribution of the budget between bureaucrats” (Ermolin 2005).

particular) urban management and revitalization practice. Many of our differences have not so much principal as phase character and should be overcome.

2.5 Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter main theoretical notions and terms relevant to given research were considered consequently: urban revitalization as a system of development and preservation; system of urban heritage; principal approaches to the urban revitalization's management – traditional for Russia top-down direction of urban reconstruction, emerged participatory bottom-up movement of “grass-rout” preservation; informed conservation's concept; and entrepreneurial approach as a key factor of revitalization's success in contemporary historic cities.

Then a notion of historic wooden housing as a subject of revitalization was examined: specific features of historic wooden development as a part of urban heritage and living environment; an actual situation with HWH in Russia with SWOT analysis of its revitalization's possibilities; and Swedish wooden town revitalization experience was also briefly reviewed.

In the end the problem of principal applicability of foreign experience of urban revitalization in Russia was stressed and some basic preconditions of possible success were mentioned.

Chapter 3 Justification of methods

3.1 Chose of principal methods to be relevant to research aims and nature

Both a theoretical study and a dissatisfaction with Russian practice of urban conservation in general and with former author's activity in particular leads him to look for the new approach to the subject. Those 'changes in optic' selected for given research and practical proposals are summarized in the following matrix:

Table 3.1 Main differences between conventional and proposed approaches to HWH revitalization in Russia

Field of research/proposals	Approaches	
	conventional	selected for the present research
Main method of understanding of unknown phenomena	Secondary data gained from project papers, statistic analysis, etc.	Face-to-face interview, walks-thought, other forms of first-hand "touching" the reality
Type of relationship between researcher/designer and research subject (research position)	Vertical (top-down), monologue-like	Horizontal, dialogical
Main unit of analysis and recommendation	City, historic zone, area, block as a minimal unit; separate building only in unique case when it is listed monument	Single household (parcel)
Quantity (share) of heritage to preserve	"The whole", "as many as possible", all listed monuments and everything inside of zones of protection → total losses instead of real conservation	Households selected not only because of their core buildings' historic value but mostly on basis of economic capacity/ambitions of owners or LE interested in their renovation
Whose problem? Who must preserve HWH?	Monument protection authorities of the state, region and municipality (for monuments of different "levels of value"); local and regional monument protection bodies (for "zones of monument protection"); city planning and architectural authorities	Concrete person (owner, tenant, user) - with a help of LG and NGO's (legal, tax, consultation, etc.) - and under control of monument protection bodies and city planning and architectural authorities
Principal attitude to HWH by specialists	Leveled, not-personal; from artistic point of view as "masterpieces of folk architecture"; in the common cases of dilapidation an appraisal as an "urban slum"	Attention to concrete people who already done something to conserve and modernize their property or have real capacity and wish to do it
Principal type of urban-forming activity	Reconstruction	Revitalization
Core factors determining a type of developed housing	Enormous deficit of housing → bare economic calculation (the same fore central-ruled housing policy in Soviet era and developers-ruled construction process in last decade) → almost everything will be consumed	Cultural roots of personally (socially) accepted types of housing; individual demand; long-term economic expectation (investing in social and symbolic capitals' raising)

Of course not all of those proposed approaches' changeovers were realized fully during given study; but they created the research discourse proper for its topic and were helpful in finding

some new knowledge on real processes in everyday built environment in “wooden” historic areas.

Interest to real processes of urban life realized in the everyday activity of common people (owners of wooden houses in given case) is main reason and driving force /engine of given research. Their reasons, intension to do something, and even big part of real activity are usually hidden for urban experts (planners, architects). Moreover we in the frame of conventional top-down approach are looking onto those people as on some impersonal mass of recipients of our “charitable” intervention in their life. But now when governmental money aimed to urban development is diminishing in big extend, the real urban processes are conducted by private resources; and surprisingly for external experts in many cases they became even more efficient.

Accordingly the qualitative research interviewing (face-to-face interviews) is chosen as a core tool of the study. Only during the building of informal personal relationships with the actors of urban life allowed by that method we can draw near to the sense of what is happened and how it is possible to influence on.

Citing the French sociologists D. Bertaux (one of the author of the life story approach), his Russian followers are stressing the value of this technique important for me too: “Recognizing some weaknesses of narrative interviews as a method of obtaining of the sociological information (mistakes of memory, retrospective attitude, subjective interpretation, etc.), we consider their as valuable sources, as they contain the stories about practices that highlight a social context, in which given practices took place, actively promoting both their reproduction and transformation” (Gerasimova & Chuykina 2000).

Formal questionnaires for experts in different fields of activity are also used in order to supplement outcomes with more well-ordered information and to see the problem from the point of view of different groups of actors.

The subject is approached by expert questionnaires that reflect the actual situation with HWH at Russian and Swedish national levels, and also local condition of HWH development at the level of Russian case town of Gorodets.

There was no formal interviewing in the Swedish case of wooden town of Eksjo because of quite limited time of research and difficulties with access to local specialist during Summer vacation period. Anyway one informal interview was provided in Eksjo with one of the key leader of revitalization process.

Understanding of topic was deepened with information gained from broad literature review (including an analysis of accessible statistic information) and Internet surfing inside of items related to the broad discourse of the given research.

Visual field observation served as an important factor of information and inspiration obtaining and was also used as a vehicle for understanding the subject.

3.2 Field observation

Field observation in selected towns includes collection of the principal statistic data (especially concerned wooden urban development and management), local maps and (in the case of Russian study) urban planning documents obtaining, photographing of key objects and areas.

For the scheduling of photographing the technique of “photo-safari” developed by author from of the method of “Photo Safari for Children” (Holmgren & Svensson 2001, pp. 10-11) was used.

It is mean walk-through passages into urban area interested, observation and picturing of elements urban environment; then pictures’ evaluation and sorting

This method is helpful during brief field research to focus on features of environment important for research subject, to determine established types of housing in the area, to evaluate a prevalent attitude of inhabitants to their houses and surrounding reflected in the visible features of milieu (clean and well-kept places vs. neglected and deteriorated, etc.)

During such this observation provided both in Eksjo and Gorodets, pictures were made also on environmental and building details (household entrances – e.g. doors and gates, wooden carving house decorations, ornaments, colouring, etc.)

Collection of local statistics included basic data like quantity of inhabitants, size of territory etc.; and some specific information on the town functioning (quantity of tourists visit in the town per year, average salaries/incomes of inhabitants, etc.) was conducted also.

Visits to local administration offices (departments of town-planning and architecture, economic, social and cultural issues, etc.), real-estate agencies, tourist bureau, and city information offices were also planned but they were realized mostly in the town of Gorodets.

Map analysis (more deep in the case of Gorodets) allow to select specific area for case study most characterized by HWH presence and its relatively undamaged state for today.

3.3 Questionnaires elaboration: Russia

Three sorts of questionnaires were elaborated for Russian case research according to three target groups of respondents selected:

1) experts (researchers, planners, urban managers, conservationists) from central institutions in Moscow and regional organizations in Nizhniy Novgorod related to activity in urban development of historic areas and local wooden heritage preservation (**Annex 1**);

2) local specialist from the town of Gorodets (**Annex 2**);

Core questions were: In which conditions the conservation of Russian historic wooden housing could be successful? Which part of Sweden experience might be most instructive and applicable in domestic conditions now? How lessons learned might be implemented in Russian reality?

3) local entrepreneurs from the town of Gorodets – owners of old wooden houses (**Annex 2**).

For both Gorodets' groups one principal lay-out was used; but in the form for LE one special section was added devoted to their personal attitude to the process and results of their own houses purchasing/modernization/maiteinance.

Main additional questions were: Why you decide to keep and maintain your house instead to demolish it and build a stone one? Which obstacles have you met during the whole process of restoration? Are you satisfied with results of your actions (living conditions, business outcomes, etc.)? Do you need any help (methods, techniques, etc.) for your future restoration activity (if any)? What a role should HWH play in your town?

Informal audio interviews (recorded by the voice recorder) were also used as a sufficient additional source of information.

3.4 Questionnaire elaboration: Sweden

Only one universal form of questionnaires (**Annex 3**) was made for Swedish case research. It targeted to the *interviewing of experts* involved in the wooden towns' conservation: specialists both from 'central' (national) institutions or with a national-wide scope of experience and selected case place – the town of Eksjö (researchers, planners, urban managers, conservationists, etc.).

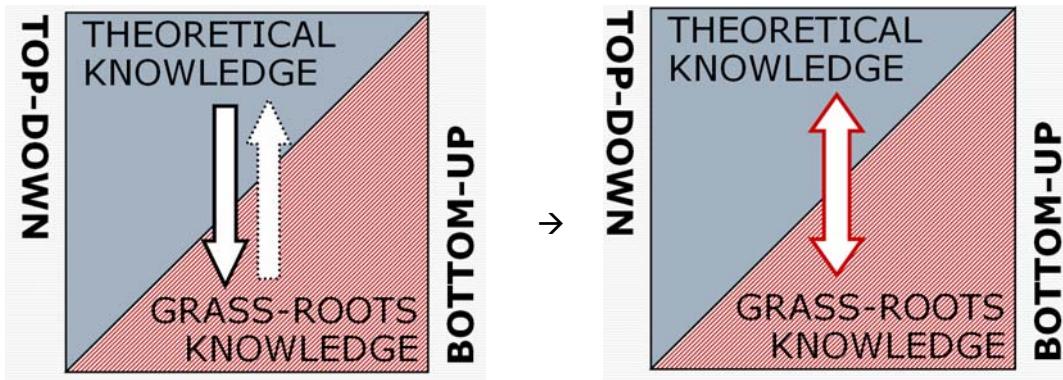
As a prototype for Swedish expert's questionnaire the form from the ongoing European APPEAR project by European Commission, which "focuses on the conservation, integration, enhancement and exploitation of urban subsoil archeological sites in a sustainable way so as to make them available to the population", was used (see: APPEAR 2005).

Core questions were: What were main managerial factors of success? What of economic and participatory mechanisms are used? Are there some special legal/planning procedure and tools elaborated? Which part of Sweden experience seems to be most instructive to similar problem's solving in actual Russian condition?

3.5 Conclusion of the chapter

Methodological framework of the research may be shown on the following scheme:

Figure 3.1 Model of interaction of knowledge obtained during research (conventional and ideal states)



Research strategy chosen combines two principal directions of knowledge' obtaining: an analysis of the views "from above" (experts' of national scale opinions written in formal questionnaires, most of literature sources, dominating governmental policies reflected in special programs, etc.);

and investigations on the grass-roots level (informal dialogues with local people⁶; walks through everyday urban environment, detailed photographing, etc.).

The peculiarity of research given is an attempt to overcome a conventional for "armchair scientist" domination of theoretical top-down approach "diving" into cases of real urban life that are closely connected to research topic (like samples of HWH owned by LG in the case town of Gorodets)⁷.

Ideally according to author's opinion no one epistemological direction must predominate prescribing thereby the findings and outcomes; but some open system of mutual penetration of top-down and grass-roots knowledge may give more deep understandings of real life phenomenon.

⁶ The same person may provide researcher with both kinds of information. E.g. local expert filling in questionnaire being in office use predominantly top-down view on the town and his/her related activity; but occurring in informal atmosphere of stroll of café this specialist became common town dweller and his/her view is gained more bottom-up direction.

⁷ For more detailed authors' reflection on application of those two methodological approaches to historic towns' identity' issue see (Ivanov 2000).

Chapter 4 Case Study: Revitalization of HWH in Russia

4.1 Professionals' attitude on revitalization of HWH in Russia

Answers of experts reflect professional views on issues of wooden development revitalization in Russia.

Table 4.1 List of Russian experts of national level, filling in the questionnaire (all of them are from Moscow)

Ex-experts' code No	Experts' institution, position (experts listed by way of questionnaires' delivering)	Scope of experience in HWH revitalization according to the answers
1	Consultant of the Federal Office on the Cultural Heritage Protection, doctor of technical sciences	Russian experience as a whole
2	Professor of the Moscow Architectural Institute, doctor of architecture, private architect	Cities and towns: Kargopol', Vologda
3	Head of Department on Cultural Heritage Protection of the "Our Heritage" magazine	Russian experience as a whole
4	Senior staff scientist of the Central Scientific and Design Institute on Urban Planning	Russian experience as a whole; in particularly cities and towns: Tomsk, Kungur, Elabuga, Kargopol', Rybinsk, Pereslavl' Zalessky, Gorokhovets, Tutaev, Myshkin, Galitch, Soligalitch, Nerekhta, Vologda, Kaluga
5	Research fellow of the Central Scientific and Design Institute on Urban Planning, private architect	Cities and towns: Vologda
6	Head of Department of the Settlements' Cultural Environment of the Institute of Cultural Researches, President of Russian ECOVAST, doctor of architecture	Russian experience as a whole; in particularly cities and towns: Zvenigorod, Kolomna, Mariinsky Posad, Arkhangelsk', Elabuga, Suzdal', Belosersk
7	Deputy director of the Institute on Reconstruction of Historic Towns, doctor of architecture	Russian experience as a whole; in particularly cities and towns: Kargopol', Yalutorovsk, Kozmodemiansk, Kyakhta
8	Vice-President of the Russian Architects Union, academician-secretary of the Urban-Planning Department of the Russian Academy of Architecture and Building Sciences	Cities and towns: Yaroslavl', Tutaev, Tobol'sk', Minusinsk, Tumen', Irkutsk, Nizhniy Novgorod, Zvenigorod, Perm'

Experts represent different branches of professional society (governmental offices, scientific institutions, NGOs, mass-media, etc.); all of them are people highly recognizable in our urban-planning corporation. Most of them are having a great experience of work with Russian wooden towns; both in the whole Russia scale and on concrete city level. There were mentioned cities from all Russian regions that still are rich in 18th- and 19th-century wooden homes (European North – Arkhangelsk', Vologda, Kargopol', etc.; Central Russia – Yaroslavl', Pereslavl' Zalessky, Kolomna, etc.; Volga region – Nizhniy Novgorod, Kozmodemiansk, etc.; and Siberia – Tomsk, Irkutsk, Kyakhta, etc.).

In between of settlements mentioned are representatives of two principal types of urban environments with different kinds of managerial problems: both big cities – regional centers like Kaluga, Perm', Tumen', etc.; and small towns like Suzdal', Myshkin, Zvenigorod, Belosersk.

Not of the less importance that all of experts are people really interested in problems of Russian HWH saving and revitalization, dedicated to it big part of their professional life. That is why they were agreeing to fill in questionnaire in spite of pressure of work (and, from the other side, summer vacation time).

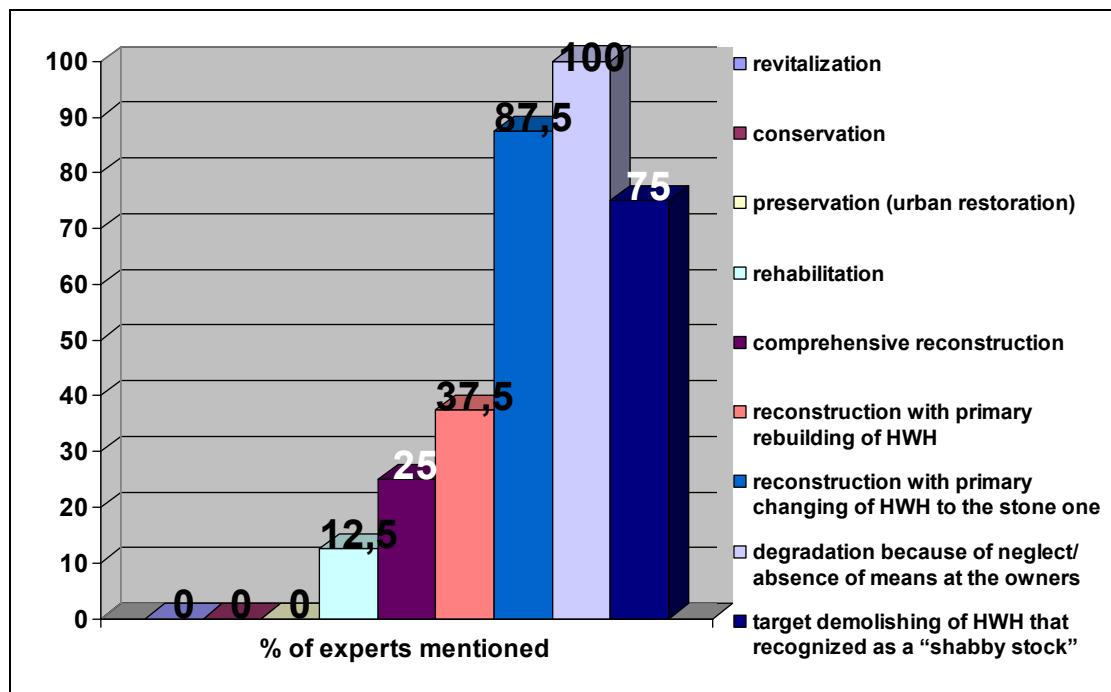
Answers to the question “Which kind of urban activity seems to you most appropriate for defining the processes which has taken place in Russian wooden towns or in urban historic areas with sufficient share of wooden development?” show a following picture:

Table 4.2 Experts opinion on dominating kinds of urban transformational activity related to HWH in Russian cities and towns

No	Dominating kinds of urban transformational activity related to HWH in Russian cities and towns	Quantity of experts named	%
1	revitalization	-	0
2	conservation	-	0
3	preservation (urban restoration)	-	0
4	rehabilitation	1	12,5
5	comprehensive reconstruction	2	25,0
6	reconstruction with primary rebuilding of historic development stock	3	37,5
7	reconstruction with primary changing of historic development stock to the new one (the stone one)	7	87,5
8	degradation and gradual destruction because of neglect or absence of means at the owners/users	8	100,0
9	target demolishing of HWH that recognized as a “shabby stock” or slum	6	75,0

According to experts’ opinion, destructive processes are dominated; both “natural” because of a weakness of owners, and “target” (top-down demolishing during some projects implementation). Nobody named revitalization (and conservation and preservation as well) as a sufficient kind of urban transformational activity relating to HWH.

Figure 4.1 Experts opinion on dominating kinds of urban transformational activity related to HWH in Russian cities and towns



Experts were asked also to assess the role of different actors in processes going with historic wooden development (HWD) in Russian cities and towns, using the scale of marks from “-5”

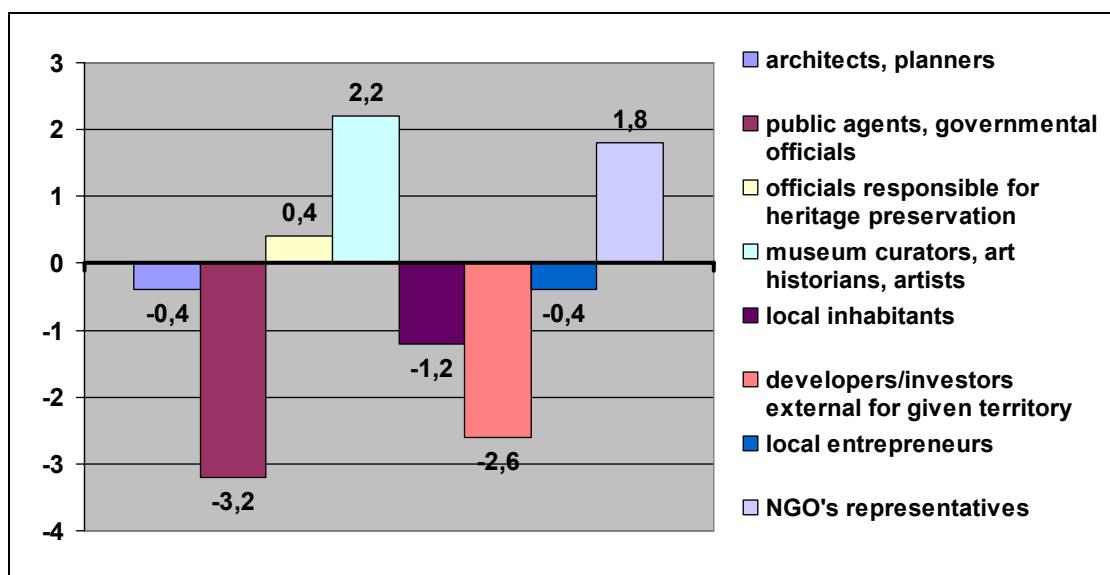
(most negative, destructive influence) up to “+5” (most positive, constructive influence). The results are:

Table 4.3 Experts opinion on the role of different actors in urban transformational activity related to HWH in Russian cities and towns in balls from “-5” (very negative) to “+5” (very positive)

No	Groups of actors	Different experts' estimation								Average estimation of actors' role
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	Experts' code No									
1	architects, planners	+1	0	-4	-2	-1	0	-	+3	-0,4
2	public agents, officials of the municipal/regional governments	-5	-5	-4	-5	-1,5	+2	-2	-5	-3,2
3	officials responsible for preservation of historical and cultural heritage	+2	0	-	+0,5	-1	+2	+2	-3	+0,4
4	museum curators, art historians, artists, lowers of antiquity	+4	0	+3	+0,5	+1	+3	+3	+3	+2,2
5	local inhabitants	-4	-3	+2	-	-4	-	-	+2	-1,2
6	developers, investors, businessmen, external for given territory	0	-5	-5	-5	0	-2	+0,5	-4	-2,6
7	local entrepreneurs (owners of small enterprises, shops, etc.)	0	-5	+2	-	-5	+3	+0,5	+2	-0,4
8	representatives of NGO's	+1	0	+1	+3	-	+3	-	+3	+1,8

Remark: the mark “0” means neutral influence of certain actors' group; the sign “-“ means “no answer at all. The first one type of mark was taking into account during the average value's calculation; while the second one wasn't.

Figure 4.2 Average experts estimation of the role of different actors in urban transformational activity related to HWH in Russian cities and towns in balls from “-5” (very negative) to “+5” (very positive)



Many expert stressed that role of certain actors may be quite different in different cities according to their attitude to heritage, strictness of position and bulk of other subjective and objective local factors. (E.g., in some questionnaires one can see answer like “from -5 up to +3” for architects according to their professional position and cultural level”, etc.). The role of local architects and town-planners is especially controversial differing from “-5” to “+5”

(in very rare personal cases); but only one expert working in professional trade union looks on them unambiguously positively.

Anyway, the average estimation is very revealing: 7 from 8 experts agree on negative role of authorities (average estimation is “-3,2”); the second destructive group is external investors wanting to develop certain HWH areas; as positive actors were mentioned only cultural workers relatively independent from governments, and NGO’s representatives. The average role of other actors is close to neutral. It is indicative that 3 experts don’t give any marks for local inhabitant, not seeing any their role in the processes directly concerning them.

And other important outcome may be gained: there is rather significant difference in appreciation of the roles of two groups of entrepreneurs, which were separated deliberately: “external” and “internal” businessmen. The last ones are “better” more than for 2 balls; but both groups were considered as having negative influence on the HVH surviving.

Asked to indicate a value of obstacles most impedimental for the process of preservation of HWH in diapason from “1” (minor obstacle) to “5” (major obstacle) expert selected budgetary factor (absence of means in the budgets of the appropriate levels, or in the personal budget of the owners of wooden buildings, on their maintenance, modernization, restoration) as a most crucial problem, clearly divided it from an economic one (competition for land or property in urban wooden areas by stakeholders with diverging interests), which may be is still ton so crucial in small and average Russian settlements.

Table 4.4 Experts evaluation of importance of different types of obstacles in urban transformational activity related to HWH in balls from “1” (minor obstacle) to “5” (major obstacle)

No	Types of obstacles ⁸	Different experts' estimation								Average estimation of obstacles' importance
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	economic	2	1	5	5	2	2	-	3	2,6
2	budgetary	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	5	4,6
3	technical	4	3	2	3,5	2	3	2	5	3,1
4	organizational	2	-	1	3	2	5	3	4	2,5
5	social	5	1	2	5	3	3	5	3	3,8
6	cultural	5	5	2	4	5	4	-	5	3,8
7	political	5	3	3	5	5	4	4	4	4,1
8	judicial	-	2	3	4,5	5	2	-	3	2,4

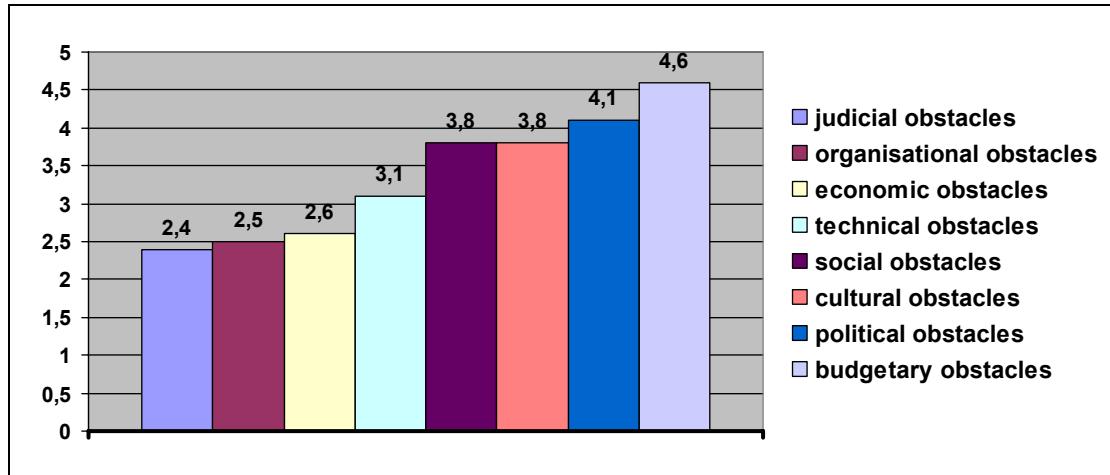
Remarks: the sign “-” means here “no estimation”; one might suppose that experts didn't see this certain factor as a valuable; so such estimations were also taking into account during the average value's calculation

Political, social and cultural factors were recognized as much more important obstacles for HWH preservation than organizational and judicial: personal attitude to problem (both from

⁸ The following definitions of obstacles' nature were included into questionnaire: *economic* (competition for land/property in urban wooden areas by stakeholders with diverging interests); *budgetary* (absence of means in the budgets of the appropriate levels, or in the personal budget of the owners of wooden buildings, on their maintenance, modernization, restoration); *technical* (absence of necessary methods or skills for maintenance, preservation, modernization of HWD); *organizational* (absence of institutional structures responsible for preservation of wooden buildings or interested in it); *social* (low prestige of HWD areas for residence or business-keeping); *cultural* (loss of skills to maintain wooden houses, lack of understanding of their historical values); *political* (absence of interest to preservation of wooden building on the part of local authorities, presence of official policy of the struggle with shabby housing stock, etc.); *judicial* (too strict rules of heritage protection interfering modernization of buildings, absence of legal opportunities of monuments' privatization or legal difficulty of this process, etc.)

politicians and private owner positions) is more crucial now than more rigid institutional structures or law papers.

Figure 4.3 The hierarchy of most important obstacles for the HWH preservation according to Russian experts' opinions ("1" is minor obstacle; "5" is major obstacle)



The qualifying question on specific problems that the preservation of historic urban wooden areas may create for the whole towns' functioning was also set to experts. 5 of them agreed that such problems are important. In particular, experts have mentioned

- economic unreasonableness to invest in engineering infrastructure because of low density of land use usually permitted in such areas;
- difficulties in maintenance of HWH for municipal departments that simply don't know how to do it (it is "terra incognita" for urban services);
- fire risk;
- envy of the neighbors, if the well-preserved households (manors) will have the better more comfortable living conditions.

Next section of questionnaire was devoted to real **techniques** of work with HWH: what is possible to do for normalization of actual crucial situation in experts' opinion?⁹

In between of **managerial and organizational mechanisms** the following measures were mentioned:

- elaboration of special instruction on urban planning and design in historic cities; and, in particular, articles (chapters) concerning of HWH in principal urban planning documents in the "wooden towns";
- establishment of strict system of punishments for infringements, distortion, and demolishing not only listed monuments but also ordinary historic buildings; and, most important, to carry out it strictly; and toughening of the requirements to the investors and proprietors of HWH;
- detail assessment of HWH on its values and physical conditions (deterioration);
- researches with the purpose of revealing the potential consumers of HWH;
- creation of special workshops on restoration and reconstruction of wooden houses;
- organization of PR-campaigns on propagation of the importance, values, and potential economic benefits of HWH;
- carrying out master-classes, pilot projects on formation of a positive image of wooden dwelling;

⁹ Most significant answers only from the researcher's point of view are quoted in following part of chapter.

- support of public organizations such as a “Society for protection of monuments”, which are very weak today.

Some experts are hoped for effectiveness of the large international project’s organization with elaboration of the program of development in two-three case cities and realization of a part of proposals, including preliminary preparation of population and stakeholders partnership’s building; or at least on indicative preservation and adaptations to modern conditions of sample houses with the subsequent propagation of this experience (better with some support of the foreign colleagues having successes).

As efficient **economic/financial mechanisms** expert were named, in particular:

- budget financing of creation and maintenance of an engineering infrastructure in HWH areas;
- creation of special foundation on the HWH revival;
- and different ways of target support and stimulation of HWH owners (lax credits on complete overhaul and modernization of HWH; partial payment of repair work from the municipal budget; reduction of the taxes on the real estate or rent payment; privileges and target budget grants to the owners on the buildings’ maintenance).

As an exceptional measure a creation of living open-air museums (museum-preserves) with special economic status (incomes from all activities on their territory must be accumulated on special bank account for their development) was mentioned in the given context.

Mechanisms of citizens’ **participation, including awareness rising measures**, are also essential from the experts’ point of view. They stressed on the need of the education of specialists-intermediaries on the communication with inhabitants (otherwise “every meeting turns into a squabble”); escalation of local history education in primary schools; attraction of children to the HWH studying. But establishment of real local self-management and joining up of the townspeople living in HWH neighborhoods (in the form of “territorial partnership” may be) seems to some experts even most important.

Finally most of experts are agreed that some special **legal and/or planning** procedure and tools should be elaborated aimed to HWH preservation on local level, but most of them not mentioned any concrete forms.

Last block of questions was on the positive experience in HWD preservation/revitalization – both in Russia and in Sweden. Four experts having broad scope of knowledge can not name any positive examples in Russia; by other four experts just few number of small towns with some good cases were mentioned (Gorodets, Myshkin, Ostashkov, Rostov the Great); and in the big cities according to them only rather controversial experience exists in Vologda (construction of brick copies of historic wooden houses with wood facing imitating the old one), Ulyanovsk (the State museum-preserve “Homeland of V.I.Lenin” where on the area about 170 ha many initial wooden houses are preserved thanks to being close to the former house by Lenin’s family), Kasan’ and Tumen’ (just few separate houses).

As for acquaintance of Russian experts with Swedish (Nordic) experience of HWH revitalization, one expert know about Nordic successes but sure that this experience is inapplicable to Russia because of quite low level of well-being and culture of the towners’ majority; two people vice versa don’t know any details about foreign urban wood preservation but are convinced in possibility to learn some lessons from it; one just heard about and can not formulate constructive ideas; and other are familiar with it enough to conclude what it is instructive for Russia:

- governmental support of HWH in both local and national levels as a components of cultural identity of the state;

- attraction of various groups of the population and youth to participation in the programs of urban development; techniques of co-operation of citizens and authorities, people education on historic values of built environment;
- support of traditional craftsmanship;
- experience of Swedish open-air museums of wooden architecture;
- technologies of preservation and strengthening of wooden constructions; means of the engineering equipment and fire protection;
- and, of cause, financing instruments (but without detailed explanation which in particularly).

It is worth also to quote some particular experts' ideas (both from texts and informal talks) important for the actual situation' understanding:

- "We have not a social base for keeping of a massive of HWH as housing; about 60% of Russians are living "from salary to salary" according to surveys";
- "There is a boom of wooden hotels near federal motorways in the Central Russia; but all of them are new – to avoid troubles with old constructions, modern sanitary equipment' installation, etc."; "room in such a hotel may costs about € 200 per night...";
- "a visible trend is the creation of quite new museums of wooden architecture, like museum of Russian wooden churches near St. Petersburg where old churches that were burn down on their initial places are reconstructed in authentic technique; it is build mostly in private donation"¹⁰;
- "I have not seen in our cities during my numerous traveling any wooden house in such a good condition as in Eksjo, which would be open to the town – either there is a common neglect of urban municipal wooden development, or there is perfect private estate but behind of high fence" (reacting to the researcher's show of picture from Swedish town of Eksjo);
- "The skills of work with a wood are lost even in traditional "northern" regions. In the 1930's every man in the Vologda region could put a log house. Now there are quite few such foremen";
- "It is very difficult today to educate people: they do not want to live in wooden houses without convenience and are setting fire to them industriously";
- "It is necessary to release the normal man from the pressure of poverty which giving him indifference to cultural problems";
- "It is necessary to show, what benefit heritage preservation can bring both for cities, and for the separate investors and owners of buildings. This measure can become a deciding factor. For now an understanding of economic value of a heritage is not present in our country".

It is important that experts' answers not showed any elements of especial exalted attitude to wooden buildings as to works of folk art used to be very characteristically for our architectural discourse some years ago and strongly pronounced for instance in the following sentence: "We refer to this chapter of our national culture as the 'Timbered Jerusalem of Russia' for Russian wooden architecture has no analogue anywhere in the world. The resurrection of its images, undistorted by the reconstruction and deformations of the Russian conscience, seems to be one of the basic factors presaging a worthy condition for our national culture" (Opolovnikova 2004).

That popular admiring 'artistic' (but in fact 'anti-managerial') approach was important for attraction of primary attention not only to the masterpieces but to 'common' HWH in 1970's (Derevyannaya architectura Tomska 1975; Derevyannoje kruzhevo Kostromy 1975) but than – after decades – in the researcher's opinion paradoxically resulted in their mass destruction.

¹⁰ As a comment for this sentence one might add that to build new wooden Orthodox church in the old style became a fashion in between of so called "New Russians" (rich newly appeared businessmen) – it is a kind of atonement of sins in their understanding.

It seems that experts closely involved into real urban-planning activity feel that cause-and-effect relation.

Some typical proposals on what is possible to do in actual situation quite crucial for HWH is possible to find in speeches and articles by experts not included in my sample but known as a fighters for urban wooden development's saving.

Main proposed directions are:

- *Special programs' elaboration in complex with enlightenment of investors and citizens*: "The decision of a problem lays, substantially, on ways not only architectural decisions ...but also on social ways. It means, a program should be developed in the city, not cheap, but absolutely necessary program, in which the measures for rise of investment appeal, on the one hand, on and on change of prestigiousness' criteria, on the other hand, would be stipulated. In order to make clear, that this flea-pit can turn in cozy, pleasant, comfortable and extremely favorable habitation that could be a subject of proud. It is very important that future investor or owner will understand that is necessary to keep original habitation as far as it is possible, instead of to build its free copy, which turns it into theatrical scenery..." (Mil'chik 2002); "The main task of the people, who take care today for preservation of these values saved by our ancestors within centuries [HWH], is the education of authorities and citizens owning significant money resources, in order to convince them invest in constructive and preserving but in the destructive projects" (Romanova s.a.);
- *Toughening of the law-enforcement policy, proper budget financing and comprehensive assessment of wooden monuments*: "It is enough of normative base for preservation of cultural objects n our region; however the law-enforcement practice is not sufficient. It is possible to cite as an examples mass of wooden buildings having status of cultural objects that were pulled down in Nizhniy Novgorod without any juridical consequences for destroyers. Other real problem: no real financing is allocated for monuments' restoration <...> Besides there is no complete register of wooden buildings being objects of cultural importance. Not all these buildings have passport [for protection. - A.I.], but even those objects, which have it, can expect that they have guarantees against demolition" (Petrov 2005).

But to sum there are no special attention to the already existed LEs' capacity and intention. Whether it is a real underappreciated resource for HWH revitalization? Let us see on the concrete example of the case town of Gorodets.

4.2 Case study: the town of Gorodets

The town of Gorodets formally is one of the most ancient towns of Russia (official time of founding is 1152, so it is just five years younger then Moscow). But the age of the settlement was not the reason to choose it as place for case study (especially as it lost the town status long ago during troubles of his story and returned it in 1922 only)¹¹.

4.2.1 Historic routs of the town's uniqueness

There were two main factors to select this place: the existence of plenty wooden houses within of its urban fabric; and rather positive assignments of the actual situation with HWH by leading Russian experts that are in sharp contrast with common descriptions of problems in other towns and cities with big share of wooden development.

For instance, one of leading Russian art historian and preservationist A. Komech told: "One may see waders nearby Nizhniy Novgorod. There is such a small town there on the Volga River called Gorodets. They have made a toy from the town, but without any attributes of

¹¹ See Annex 4 for the town's more detailed description.

falseness. The entire center was putted in the order, houses were having corrected, painted, treated, both wooden, and stone. All electrical wires were removed from streets, the underground communications were built, and street lamps a-la 19th century were installed. It is fantastic" (Kucherskaya 2001). Furthermore, from the literature it became known that because of presents of many relatively good museums and really working folk handicraft Gorodets received a positive image of the "museum capital" of the middle Volga region and became place of many festivals and other cultural events of the regional meaning.

Answering question how those 'wanders' were possible in usual small town was one of the reasons to go to Gorodets for the case research.

It appeared that along with all typical features of usual small Russian historic town Gorodets has some very important peculiarities that differs it from the mass of "normal" provincial settlements.

Firstly, there were never radical re-planning of the settlement's lay-out during Catherine the Second urban reform because of not-urban status of Gorodets; so it avoided deep changes in self-identity experienced by common cities during reconstruction of medieval "organic" planning structures into rectangular classicistical ones. (It is necessary to mention that that planning revolution accommodated with total demolishing of the whole wooden urban development during new plans' long-term realization in the late 18th and 19th cc.)

One may draw a parallel between this former village's and many Scandinavian wooden towns where ancient urban plans are remaining by different reasons, and it was very important for wooden structures preservation: "...protection of personal property rather than a philosophy of preservation had prompted local house-owners in Rauma to prevent implementation of grid plans" (Vahtikari 2002).

The second principal characteristic property is especially important for our topic: Gorodets was the Old Believers'¹² capital in the middle Volga region during long period of 18th – early 20th cc. The active role of the Old Believers' merchants in the Russian economy was stressed by many scholars (e.g. see: ed. Brumfield, Anan'ich & Petrov 2001). "In the 19th century, Old Believer entrepreneurs played a major role in the development of Russian capitalism; by some estimates, they once controlled up to 80 percent of Russia's privately owned economy" (Zolotov 2005).

So, in the *village* of Gorodets the owners or the head-offices of 19 steamboat companies were located in 1905; there were also 25 big factories (15 tanneries, 2 mechanical plants, 2 mechanical mill houses, 2 fitting shops, oil mill, soap works and 2 saw-mills), 40 small enterprises, and 75 artisan undertakings located in dwelling rooms in 1912 (Eremin 1995, p. 246-247).

Not going too deep into details, the author can suppose that pre-revolutionary period of Gorodets' history was characterized by some elements of autonomy from the state and valid self-development; an entrepreneurship worked here as driving force of urban-forming (instead of dominance of strong top-down administrative will). Development of the settlement was to a lesser degree mediated here from the outside than in many other places in Russia where during the short capitalistic period the social basis for self-development had no time to grow.

As a result a certain "niche" of rather unique spirit of human freedom existed here before October revolution; and some remains of it are probably inherited by actual inhabitants, especially in families of native dwellers of Gorodets. It is a mere supposition, which is

¹² "The Old Believers had split off from the Russian Orthodox Church in the mid-17th century, when the Moscow patriarch had instituted a set of controversial reforms to church rituals..." (Zolotov 2005; for more details see Annex 4).

impossible to prove inside of given short research. Anyway some evidences of it are visible both in physical environment and in interviewers' answers (see part 4.4).

4.2.2 Structure of built environment and case area's selection

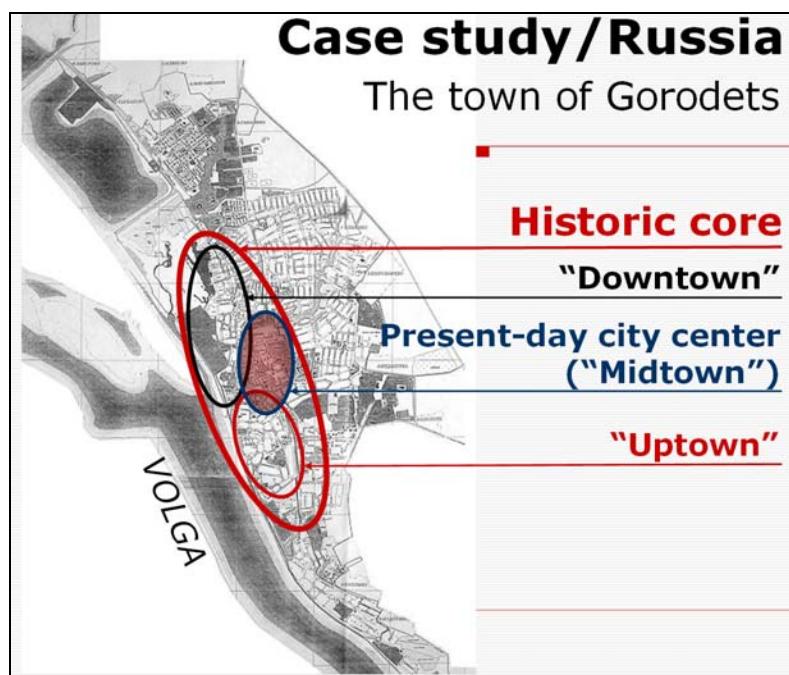
Other consequences of historic rout of the town are realized an actual functional structure and nonhomogeneous use of space of its historic core.

We can see here three different types of contemporary urban milieu:

- distressed area in the low part of historic core near the Volga River bank (this part of town was prosperous in the time of pre-revolution merchants boom having huge market area and great number of wharfs, enterprises, and storehouses; but now the river not play economic role anymore; and all activity removed from here to the upper parts of the town);
- busy multifunctional area around contemporary administrative and trade center (bus station, market, governmental and private offices are concentrated here together with multistory dwellings of soviet time ant some remains of HWH);
- and more quiet predominantly dwelling area to the south from the center adjoining to the high steep of the Volga river; it is a place of relatively surviving historic development without any dissonant including of soviet time architecture; all Gorodets' museums are also located here¹³.

The terms "Downtown", "Midtown" and "Uptown" were chosen consequently for naming of those three distinctive areas; then our attention will be focused on the Uptown as a place in the best way proper for the case study (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.4 Actual differentiation of historic core of Gorodets; "Uptown" is area selected for the case study



¹³ "Since 1860's the area near the Troitsky-Nikolsky churchyard [the St. Trinity Cathedral used to be an architectural and symbolical dominant of Gorodets was demolished by Bolsheviks in 1930's. – A.I.] and upwards from it on a mountain became a place of «prestigious» development. At that time the overwhelming majority of wooden and stone two-storied private residences belonging to the well-being citizens were built up there, as well as manors belonging to the first-rate merchants and the industrialists Deryugin and Oblaev" (Eremin 1995, p. 252).

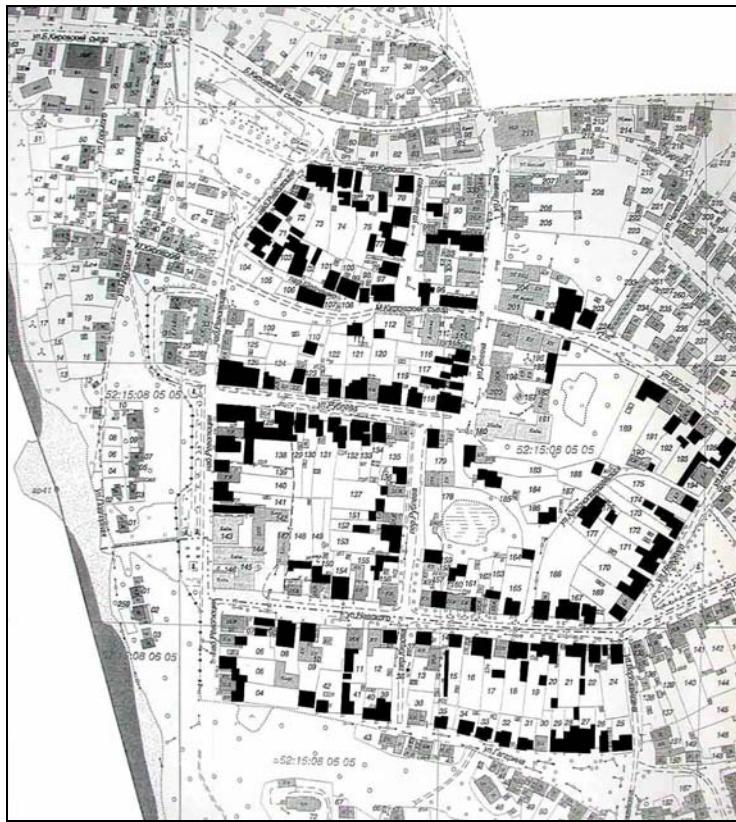
After an ad-hoc and map analysis of the Uptown area the distinctive sub-area of HWH prevalence was selected. It is the most central and representative parts of Uptown – the territory in the borders of the streets Lenina, MOPRa, A. Nevskogo, Vorozheykina, Gagarina, Revolutsii Embankment, and Kirova Lane – 9 blocks at all with about 142 households (Figure 4.6). The size of territory is about 13 ha that is approximately 1/5 of the whole Uptown in the border of medieval ramparts. It is mean good pedestrian accessibility inside of area and possibility of rather high density of public services and institution along main area streets (Lenina, A. Riubleva and Revolutsii Embankment). In the same time the area is walk distance from the main town center (about 600-800 m).

All this area is included in the borders of the Historian and Architectural Reserved Territory of the Town of Gorodets, which is definition for the major protected zone of the town according to the regional law (The Resolution by the Legislative Assembly of the Nizhniy Novgorod region No 42 from 21 June 1994).

Recent cadastre map analysis showed that approximately 69% of the main buildings of households on this territory are wooden (small part of this share is semi-wooden building with walls of 2nd storey from timber and 1st storey from stone). The percentage of wooden buildings inside of concrete urban blocks is differing here from 36% to 91%.

This share of wooden buildings is comparable with their percentage in the whole stock of the historic part of the town of Gorodets and other historic town of similar size in Russia.

Figure 4.5 Selection of wooden building (black) in the case HWH part of Uptown area of Gorodets



As for listed monuments of history and culture, the share of wooden buildings among them is here a bit higher than an average in Russia: 32 items from 99 monuments the wall material of

which is specified by the author¹⁴ – or about the one third. (For example in the town of Rostov the Great only about 40 from 323 listed monuments, or just 12%, are wooden and mixed – see Ivanov 1999).

It is important that 11 of those listed wooden monuments are concentrated on the relatively small territory of HWH chosen for analyses; and both of two wooden monuments of the federal meaning are located here (from the rest 5 monuments have regional meaning and 5 belong to so called “newly identified” monuments).

4.2.3 Field observation

Figure 4.6 Examples of historic wooden built environment in Gorodets



¹⁴ There is no information on the wall material in the official monument list; as a whole Gorodets has 117 listed monuments; 112 of them are buildings.

The author's impressions obtained during the walks through Gorodets' HWH areas are mostly positive. Old wooden houses are partly belong to some institutions (like local newspaper's editorial office), but mostly to citizens, who tend to combine dwelling use with growing the vegetables, berries and fruits on the kitchen-gardens located on rear parts of parcels. The external appearance of buildings obviously depends on the owner's well-being, but in the most cases it is in the frames of traditional norms of Russian small towns' urban culture (colored walls, elaborated building details, flowers in small front gardens, etc.).

As for historic wooden buildings on this territory, which are distinctive by their perfect carved architectural decoration (and some times by rather worn out walls and roofs), they can be seen as examples of rather valuable urban vernacular architecture based on local building traditions. Wooden houses of Gorodets are extremely important for the sense of place keeping bounded today reality to the past and creating some kind of living history (habitual work on the kitchen gardens is not irreconcilable with existing at home of all kind of modern electronics, and continuation of tradition of wooden carving – with second-hand foreign cars using).

As a whole, HWH in rather normal (civilized) condition creates here a critical mass enough for good look of the area and possibility for step-by-step improvement of the urban environment.

But the observation of urban services showed the existence of big differences between aims of their owners: one group are LE rooted in domestic soil oriented for service for local rather poor people; while second group consists from businessmen obviously externally targeted towards rich people's demand¹⁵. The contrast between horizontal economic ties inside of local community developed by first part of entrepreneurs and vertical vectors provided by representatives of second part is visible here.

4.2.4 Local experts views on HWH revitalization

In the town of Gorodets and in the regional capital Nizhniy Novgorod 18 people were interviewed as experts for given research. Most of them were participated in informal oral interview; and 6 experts provided questionnaires filled in also.

Table 4.5 List of experts from Gorodets and Nizhniy Novgorod

No	Experts' institution, position	type of interview	
		formal (questionnaire filled in)	informal (dialog recorded)
1	Expert of Department of architecture and town-planning of the Gorodets' District administration, member of Union of Artist of Russian Federation	+	+
2	Expert of Department of architecture and town-planning of the Gorodets' District administration, official representative of the Ministry of Culture of Russian Federation on control for maintenance and use of monuments of history and culture	+	+
3	Deputy chief of the Social and Cultural Department of the Gorodets' District administration		+
4	Director of the Gorodets' Museum of local history		+
5	Senior staff scientist of the Gorodets' Museum of local history	+	
6	Research fellow of the Gorodets' Museum of local history	+	
7	Director of the Gorodets' Center of Folk Arts, Crafts and Tourism		+
8	Tour guide of the Gorodets' Center of Folk Arts, Crafts and Tourism		+

¹⁵ One can compare prices in the café "Uslada" owned by the hero of the case 1 (see sub-chapter 4.2.5) with tasty dinner in Russian style for about € 5 and in the hotel "Yar" with just 4 big rooms for € 50 each; talks of authors with "common" locals showed that such prices (often equal their monthly salary) are just unbelievable for them.

9	Director of the Gorodets' Center of Art Crafts	+	
10	Official of the Gorodets' Real Estate Agency "Privately Owned Enterprise by Abramov N.V."		+
11	Journalist of Nizhniy Novgorod TV, owner of the wooden house in Nikolo-Pogost village in the Gorodets' District		+
12	Local entrepreneur, owner of the house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 1, Gorodets (Case 1)	+	+
13	Local entrepreneur, owner of the house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 6, Gorodets (Case 2)		+
14	Local entrepreneur, brother of owner of the house in the Revolutsii Embankment, 8, Gorodets (Cases 3 and 3')		+
15	Local entrepreneurs, owners of the house in the Alexander Nevskiy Street, 20, Gorodets (Case 4)		+
16	Head of Department on Historical and Cultural Monuments Protection of Nizhniy Novgorod Regional Government		+
17	Head of Department on Historical and Cultural Research of the Scientific Enterprise "Etnos", Nizhniy Novgorod		+
18	Chief architect of the Nizhniy Novgorod State Historical and Cultural Museum-Preserve		+
In total		6	15

Summarising the answers it is possible to create rather multi-dimensional picture of situation with HWH in Gorodets. Experts represent different social group involved in the revitalization processes: municipal and regional officials, historians and museum workers, local entrepreneurs –owners of old wooden houses.

A basic idea was stressed by one Nizhniy Novgorod's experts: "In Gorodets, as against Nizhniy Novgorod (where wooden houses were turned into communal flats), a separation of a monument from the owner or proprietor has not taken place. 3-4 generations live consistently in their houses, and consequently perceive them as a value, maintain, etc."

On the whole answers in formal questionnaires are not differing so much from Moscow experts. It should be considered rather pessimistic attitude to the situation in Gorodets: all experts have mentioned an existence here the degradation and gradual destruction of HWH because of neglect or absence of means at the owners/users; 4 from 6 experts – the existence of reconstruction with primary changing of historic development stock to the new stone constructions; and 3 from 6 – the target demolishing of HWH that recognized as a "shabby stock" or slum. In the same time only in the sole LE questionnaire some positive processes were registered.

"There is an active change of appearance of old merchant's development of 19th c. The shabby court yards, houses are breaking down. The new garages are under construction. The facades of houses vary. For the sake of justice it is necessary to tell, that the owners and authorities try to stylize new buildings «of the same kind of olden time». But it is done either not always, or in the dilettante way", – this estimation made by one of respondents seems to close to common opinion of the majority of Gorodets' citizens interested in local history preservation. Obviously the whole town situation that is known to internal expert very well is not so good like in the area selected for the case study; there is also some kind of so to say self-criticism in the answers.

From measures proposed by experts two following are dominate: elaboration of special papers that will be directly (target program) or indirectly (rules of the town development) devoted to the HWH preservation; and the target (interest-free) crediting of the HWH inhabitants for improvement of their housing conditions (realization of water-pipes, gas, houses' repair). Financial difficulties are recognized as the most important for this process.

But from verbal interviews valuable information that sometimes contrasted to written sentences was taken out:

- big demand for the wooden houses in upper part of the town exists now (“the houses here even without conveniences are more expensive than flats, because the air is cleaner, and people are preferring to live separately today”), then buyers install water-pipes by themselves and use gas provided by municipality, making bathrooms etc.; private houses in the town center are not in sell – all are occupied; only in rare cases of elderly owners it is possible to hope for purchasing;
- they became so smart to stop old development’s destruction in Gorodets after almost total demolishing of local churches (only 4 from more than 20 clostral and parish churches and chapels are surviving here after soviet time);
- only wooden houses with middle 19th-century decoration in a form of deep-relief carving are traditionally recognized here by local specialists as having real cultural and artistic values, so, according to one expert, “wooden Gorodets remains more likely a legend today – there are literally 3-4 interesting wooden houses here; the majority of interesting merchants houses were made here from brick”; but anyway “what is important here – the perfect proportion of common wooden house; and remaining of wooden streets, e.g. Revolutsii Embankment”;
- many wooden-carving-hunters (“black collectors”) are looking here and especially in the countryside nearby for last remains of valuable carving and buying (or even stealing) it from owners who are usually rather poor elderly people;
- only about 8-10 thousands of tourist are coming to Gorodets yearly (mostly by river way), and there are no trends for rising this quantity; so incomes from tourism hardly will help to heritage preservation in coming time; just few of them are foreigners – it is very hard to explain them the local beauty (in comparison with masterpieces of Moscow or St. Petersburg);
- if there is normal owner, the wooden house will stay and nothing happens with them; in the rather rare case of bad/poor owners this house will naturally go to collapse;
- new carving in the old fashion is very expensive – only rare private people may order such a work from local engravers; and the town or the State never done it (except of one copy of old carved gate in the complex of local museum);
- the town is developed now without actual general plan (the old one from 1970’s is under correction long ago in Nizhniy Novgorod); there are two rather recent urban-planning documents in Gorodets directly related to urban heritage protection¹⁶, but they are not in real use by the specialists of local Department of architecture and town-planning, partly because of absence of instructive regimes and rules of urban development in them¹⁷;
- new housing development in Gorodets in last years is mostly private and executed mostly from brick.
- too small plots in the center are creating difficulties to investors – nobody wants to invest now into plots of 600 square m;
- there are too many restrictions from the point of view of monuments protection system; new fire codex recently adopted in 2002 as well makes strong obstacles for HWH renovation: such strong requirements like limitation of the gap between two wooden buildings in at least 15 m; or permission to build new house in historic areas in the dimensions of previous one

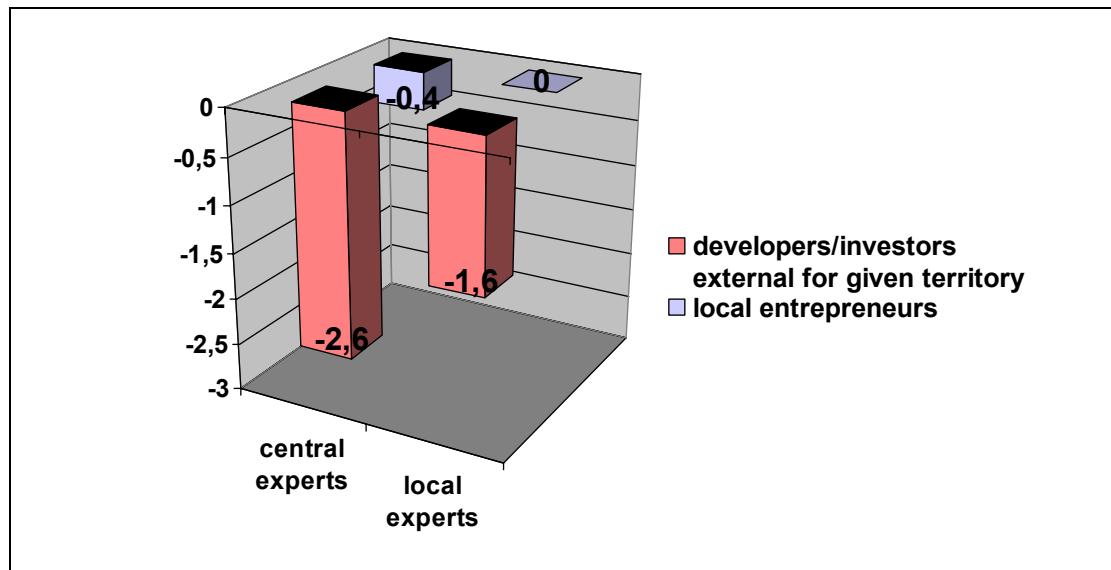
¹⁶ “The Historic and Architectural Basic Plan and Project of the Zones of Protection of the Town of Gorodets”, by the State Design Institute “Nizhegorodgrazhdanproject” and the Scientific Enterprise “Etnos”, Nizhniy Novgorod, 1993; “Program-Concept of regeneration of the Historic Zone of the Town of Gorodets”, by Pashkin, E. et al., Moscow, s.a.

¹⁷ The preservation plan did not contain any detailed instructions for new buildings – every decision for new construction in the zone of protection must be taken personally by town architect and approved by representative of monument protection authorities in the regional center (Nizhniy Novgorod).

only (both horizontal and vertical) are promote of moving of all potential private builders/developers towards so called “Fields of Miracles” on the town outskirts where land is cheaper in many time and it is possible to build almost everything;

- “developers” are still not coming here; last years there were not target demolitions of wooden houses (except of some fire cases);
 - the richest builders from Nizhniy Novgorod who lease big plots on the Volga banks in the forest are use preferably timber materials together with contemporary system of fire protection (e.g. sprinklers) but normal citizens cannot afford such a practice;
- Comparing the answer of local and central experts considering main research topic in general, one can not see some differences in average appreciation of very dangerous situation with HWH as a whole.

Figure 4.7 Average estimation of the role of “external” and “internal” entrepreneurs in processes of HWH transformation by experts from Moscow and Gorodets in balls from “-5” (very negative) to “+5” (very positive)



Anyway, as for perception of entrepreneurial activity in the HWH transformation, and the difference in between two main groups of them, local experts see picture in a little bit positive way then Moscovites: the average role of “external” entrepreneurs were assessed here like “-1,6” (at the scale from “-5” to “+5”) while of “internal” businessmen like “0” or neutral (with significant dispersion of answers from “-5” to “+1” in the first case and from “-5” to “+3” in the second case).

Unfortunately, no one local expert has some acquaintance with Swedish (and foreign at all) experience of HWH revitalization.

4.2.5 Samples of HWH owned by LE: descriptions and analysis

The general aim of face-to-face contacts with LE who are core actors of revitalization according to research hypothesis is to explore real need of this social group in HWH conservation/modernization and to find realistic way to enhance this process. The important questions that the researcher wanted to answer were:

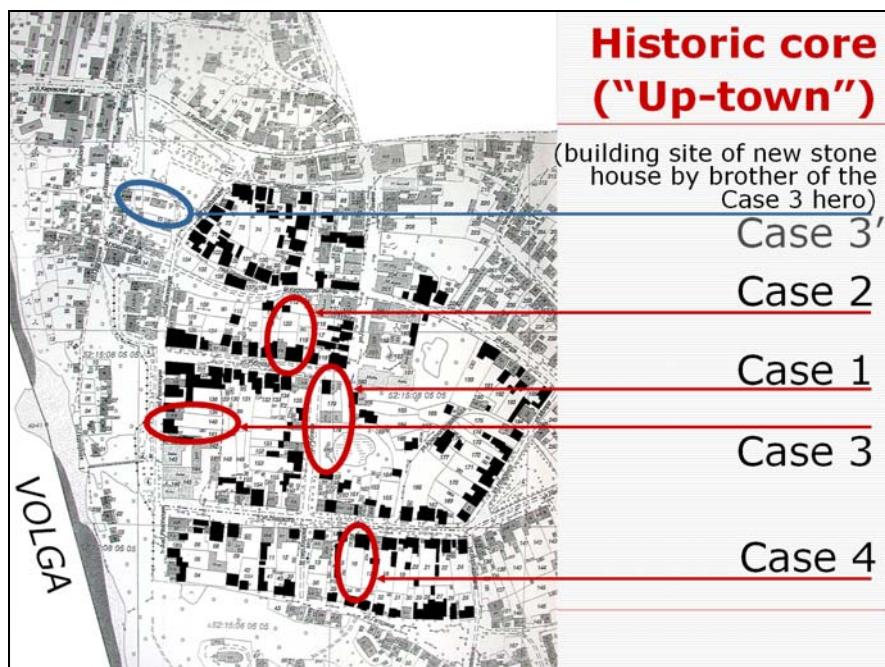
- why LE are doing it (e.g. from commercial reasons; or to rise their symbolical capital; or because something else)?
- whether their activity is really helpful for HWH preservation?

- what measures will be proper to support/enhance this process (methods, techniques, institutional changes, etc.)?

- whether a positive Swedish experience may help to Russian LE?

Four households owned by LE were selected as the main cases for study.

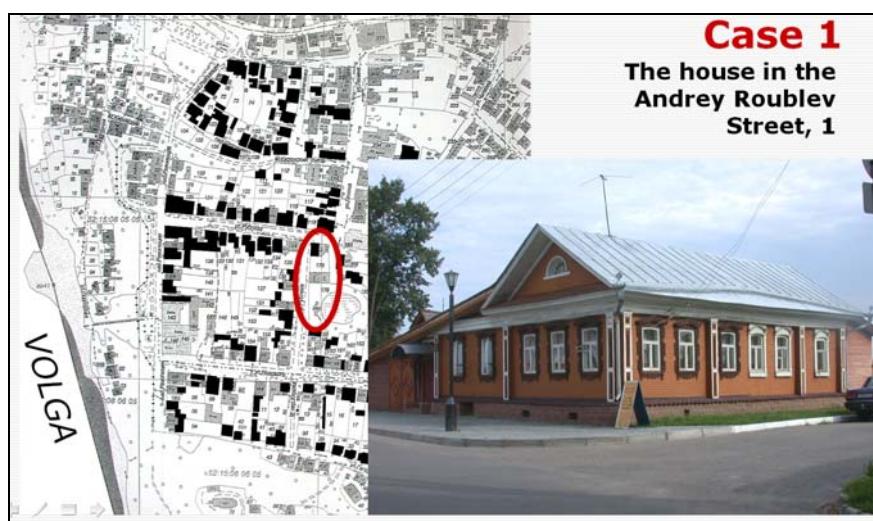
Figure 4.8 Localization of case households owned by LE



Case 1. The house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 1

The house not being included in the monuments' list is anyway a perfect and quite typical example of common historic wooden development of Gorodets. Internal structure of house is visible on the facades, differences in the windows decorations reflecting former multi-ownership of the house. The house being located in the beginning of one of the major streets is rather important for the whole town appearance.

Figure 4.9 Case 1



Box 4.1 An extract from the interview with Mr. Krupinov Alexey Konstantinovitch, the owner of the house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 1. Gorodets, July 24, 2005¹⁸

“Our house is 150 years old. I opened [the casing of the walls] when I repaired the house and discovered that no details have been changed since then. And even the lowest rows of logs have never been replaced... When we bought this house, we made a toilet and a shower. The house still looked terrible, though we had already equipped it with all modern utilities. Now it is difficult to surprise anybody with that, but then it was 1983, and people came to our place and were surprised greatly. Now we already have all conveniences in the new part of the house, but then everything was in the old part. And you see, some time ago there was neither heating, nor water pipe. ... My new shop and café are made of brick, and there wasn't even an idea to build them of wood. It is because now timber is so bad, that you have to replace it in 30-40 years. ... Only in Russia it can be like this: we could not open the café for 3 years, though the building was ready to work. It is because there are too many bureaucrats in our country. When the town needed us, because we gave money for all the town events, it was good. But when the town authorities understood we can develop our own business independently, they started to grudge giving us the land. ... If we give up looking after the pond [adjacent to café building], it will be polluted. When we began fencing it in, they made a complaint against us, calling us invaders. But we removed 20 lorries of garbage out of here... ... It is not so necessary for us to spend so much money, but it is a pity if there is a rubbish heap near the cafe. And we want to leave something good after us. So that people could remember us kindly”.

The owner of this house was only LE who managed to fill in the questionnaire. Of cause his answers are not representative for the whole LE circle of Gorodets; anyway even in those rather particular and short sentences one can feel some typical spirit of entrepreneurial attitude to the HWH (*Here and then researcher's remarks are in italic*):

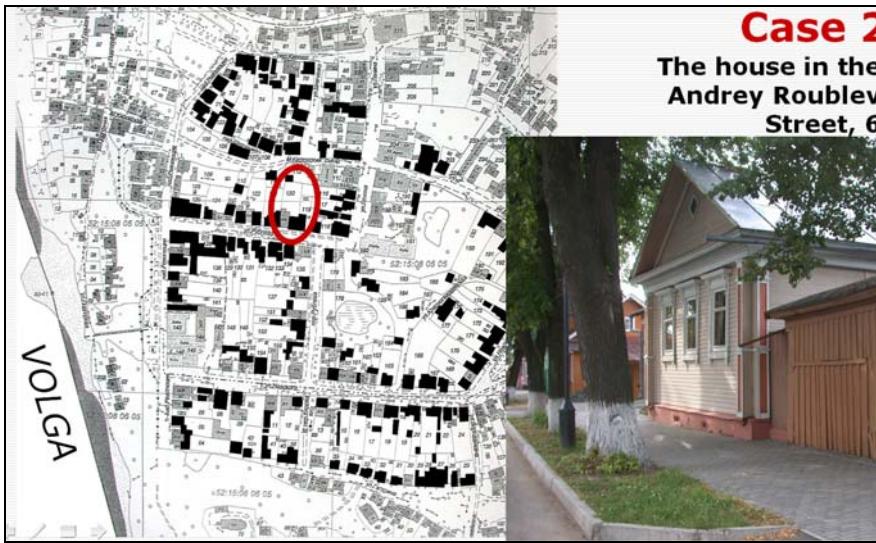
- “What basic reasons induced you to pay attention to old wooden houses of Gorodets?”
– “The beauty and grace”;
“Why do you have decided to keep and repair the wooden house, instead of demolish it and replace with the stone one?”
– “In order to keep his appearance and historic value, and also because it is good for health”;
“What difficulties have you met during the restoration (modernization) of a house?”
– “Great difficulties in changing of shabby parts of wooden constructions”;
“Whether you are satisfied with results of your activity (improvement of housing conditions, growth of income of the enterprise installed, etc.)?”
– “Yes”;
“Do you feel yourselves protected enough, living in the wooden house?”
– “My home is my stronghold”;
“Do you need any help from the State or local authorities to maintain your house or to continue your activity on the restoration (modernization) of other historic wooden buildings of Gorodets?”
– “No”.

Case 2. The house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 6

This house also not having monument status is perfectly incorporated in the row of historic development along A. Roublev Street on the main pedestrian way from the town center to the parade panoramic embankment. You can never guess that behind this rather modest façade the big household with many additional new buildings is hidden.

¹⁸ The full verbatim of this and following interviews see in the Annex 5.

Figure 4.10 Case 2



Case 2
The house in the
Andrey Roublev
Street, 6

Box 4.2 An extract from the interview with Mr. Valeriy Petrovich Men'kov, the former 1st secretary of the Gorodets' Committee of the CPSU, the owner of the house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 6. Gorodets, July 27, 2005

"What were your motives to buy the house?"

I was the first in the region to change the flat in the stone house in Zavolzh'ye for the wooden house. ...Our flat was four-room, it is normal according to the views of Soviet people. But I'm fond of working with my own hands; it would be nice to have a workshop, a dog, a cat, so that it disturbed nobody and gave pleasure to all of us. And we began to look for an exchange. The condition of [this] house was not very good. It was built in 1923... I have re-planned everything in my own way at once and made an annex.

The conveniences are in the stone part, not in the wooden one, there is always dampness [there]... I have made a boiler, and gas was laid last year. And the most important thing is that the workshop was built, as I am also an artisan. I have made all this myself, have bricked this fireplace. There is another fireplace in the house, I have made it out of the furnace...

And to sleep in the wooden house [is wonderful]!... my grandchildren come to my place, when they are asleep – you can't wake them up. Here it may be hot, and in the same time there is ventilation here – as the house breathes. ***So, you are pleased, aren't you?***

Well, not that word. ...There is the one bath-house here, and there I have made another one for using in summer. Sometimes it is nice to change the conditions, and you may leave from house and go to another wooden house. Certainly, it isn't easy to keep the house, even when you have more or less enough: money and your hands. Here I paneled the front part of the house with [plastic] siding, now I am to brick the socle.

But why have you decided to decorate the house with siding, not with wooden planking?

I'm tired of painting, as in sunlight paint keeps for 3 years at the most...

But in Sweden you wouldn't be allowed to decorate the house with siding...

Ha-ha, now we are still masters here, not Swedes. When the Swedes invade the country, and they may invade it once, then... will see...

...This part [of the town] – it is reserved, you know, but, certainly, they keep all this in the Russian way. And it is necessary to tell, that Russian people were used to building houses in a very thrifty way: small accurate windows, etc.... And I wouldn't say guys, who have much money, move to the ancient part, they build their houses on the outskirts that where hardly anybody can see them, and those houses are ugly; the owners DO NOT LIVE IN THEM!

Well, here [in the historical part] they really must have some restrictions, probably, they do have them: they can not build a big house, should not have an opportunity to do that...

And there are restrictions, indeed, but everyone here evades the restrictions, builds something on... And you should understand that not everyone will agree to live in the house he has got – in the hundred-year-old house.

Here you must think somehow, it is impossible to approach it so hard...

...It is my self-made automobile. I have made it also as a part of the house, have a look – here there is carving, the emblem of Gorodets, here is Bereginya [a water-nymph served like the amulet saving from evil] protecting it...

...And from the outside house looks small. There are only three windows and that's all. And you say, we should keep everything. How can we keep anything here, when we want to have everything: both that, and the other, and the third one".

Case 3. The house in the Revolutsii Embankment, 8

This is one of the most valuable wooden houses of the whole middle Volga region decorated with initial relief wood carving.

According to official "List of the objects of cultural heritage (historical and cultural monuments) of the town of Gorodets" the house is the listed monument of Federal meaning. The notation looks like this: "No 73. The house by Demetn'eva. 1864".

Figure 4.11 Case 3



The owner of this house is Mr. Sergey A. Volkov, LE from Gorodets, director of the Joint-Stock Company "Baikal-Volga" founded in Gorodets 1991. The basic kinds of company's activity are construction of yachts and yacht docks, and modernization of river fleet: re-equipment out-of-date landing-stage into hotels, restaurants, recreation bases (Gorodets' District 2005, p. 37). Unfortunately it was impossible to interview him during case visit (he

was out of town). Anyway some information gained from informal talks with citizens, interview with his brother, and from the web-site of his company may substitute partly the face-to-face contact.

According his brother's explanation the house was purchased by Sergey especially in order to have the great view from the front windows towards the great Volga panorama. Then he restored the old house and added big new stone house behind¹⁹; it was not easy to receive an official permission from the regional monument protection body but he got it.

The original carved wooden gate visible on the picture from the book of early 70's (Zvantsev 1972) was destroyed before the house's obtaining by actual owner: they are not included in the list of monuments from 1994 (in contrast to the gate from the Case 4 – see below). Anyway, on the place of initial gate the new one from red brick with forged garage doors one can see now.

It is known from the web-site of the "Baikal-Volga" company (<http://www.baikal-volga.ru/>; in Russian) that it plays big role in the town accomplishment: e.g. the ladder on an abrupt coast of Volga in "Severny" microdistrict, the ladder to the view point in the central public garden, and the fence of a district communication center were built up in 1994; the ladder with forge iron fence of the central town embankment is established in 2000, etc.

But it is interesting that brother of Sergey, who is also director of big private company in Gorodets (<http://www.monolit.nn.ru/>; in Russian) builds now new dwelling house nearby in more or less the same location with view to Volga from brick but from wood (see Figure 4.8, Case 3').

Box 4.3 An extract from the interview with Mr. Vladimir Andreevich Volkov, brother of the owners of the house in the Revolutsii Embakment Street, 8. Gorodets, July 27, 2005

"...But I am building a stone house, anyway it will also be in the style of Gorodets – that is with all these rustication, other small details, with all these things... I am putting it directly on the place of the old previous house..."

But didn't you want to buy an old house like your brother?

I have bought the wooden house too... But it was so strange – there had been a provincial hospital there earlier, the log house, and it was built in 1950's, i.e. it was of no historical value, and joisting were rotten... And I decided to build a new house...

...You see, my brother's house is *rather* wooden too... His house is logged, and the bottom rows are not rotten yet, they nearly ring, that is because the wood isn't bled. ...And the extension he has made of stone however. There was the old wooden carved gate there, but the previous owners broke it and built an ordinary garage of white brick, my brother broke it and made it of red brick, put this forged gate...

Also what is there in the wooden part?

But all the wooden part is only 20 square meters and that's all. There is only the dining-room, and the ceiling is so low ...

But we were told he has bought it for the sake of the view of Volga...

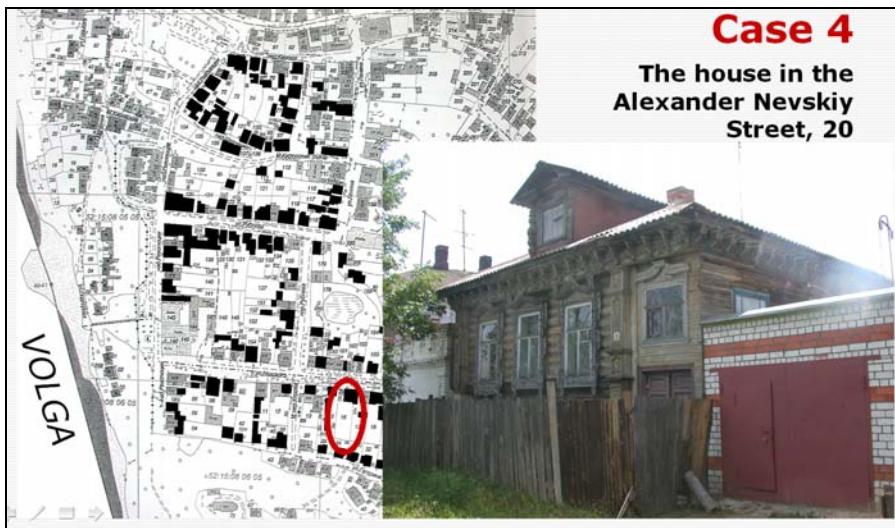
Well it's true, he has really bought the house because of it, but the better view of Volga is now from the library, in the new part..."

Case 4. The house in Alexander Nevskiy Street, 20

According to official "List of the objects of cultural heritage (historical and cultural monuments) of the town of Gorodets" the house is the listed monument of regional meaning, lost wooden gates is also included in the list. The notation looks like this: "No 8. The estate by Lukjanychev: 1. Wooden house with carving; 2. Gate. 1909".

¹⁹ It is worth to comment that according to the recent national law for monuments' protection from 2002 (Federal law "On the objects of cultural heritage (monuments of history and culture) of the folks of Russian Federation") such actions are forbidden for every monuments of history and culture of federal meaning; only restoration or reconstruction of lost parts of monument are permitted on the monument's territory (a parcel in this case).

Figure 4.12 Case 4



Box 4.4 An extract from the interview with anonymous, the owners of the house in the Alexander Nevsky Street, 20. Gorodets, July 24, 2005

“...And is the house old?

The house is old. ...It will be 100 in 2006.

Have you bought it?

We haven't, it's ours own, and we've inherited it from our great-grandmothers... You see, the furniture is centenarian and the mirrors are centenarian too. You see, how open, trimmed and clean the wood is, they only rubbed it, only washed [never painted]. Now a carpenter is working at our place, he says the wood is 100 years old already, but it has kept so well! ...And how wonderful the furnace is! They [the first owners] were rich, were engaged in tea production. ...But the furnace cannot be restored, it does not work – we will strip it down in the course of time...

Well, you really live in a museum, don't you?

Yes, we do, we have trunks, fur coats and sheepskin coats, they wrapped themselves in it then... and there are chairs remained, the ancient Viennese chairs ... And here is a spiral stairs over there – there the servants lived so as not to bring dust in the house ...

How will you use the house, when you finish the repair? Will you live in it?

We'll move here once. Our son will marry, we'll leave the flat for him – and we will move.

And you have even a kitchen garden, don't you?

Oh, our kitchen garden is very large... Everything is large here at our place... The bath-house over there is very large; the hothouse is large...

...And here we are restoring, there was a wood carving here, and we are restoring ... Look: a vase with flowers...

The owner shows several variants of the ornamental pattern – the new items are being carved exactly per sample of the old ones.

We are not worse than the Swedes are [laughing]

Is there a special carver in Gorodets?

But there are plenty of them in Gorodets...

And is the carving expensive as it turns out?

Yes, it is expensive, because it is linden!..

And don't you know whether your house is an architectural monument or not?

We do not know, it is interesting for us too, but if there would be some paper...

The carved gate was here... (*Gate is not kept, on its place there is a garage made of white silicate brick with blind metal doors*).

Well, you will be forced at once (if it is a monument): to restore that gate.

Well, yes, they won't help us, but they will force us..." [sarcastically]

The activity of LE towards their historic wooden property is careful and solicitous. It is clear that owners love their houses and spent many money for their maintenance.

Those properties are visible for everybody forming a locus of well-conditioned prosperities based on local traditions development. Moreover, the social activity of LE is going beyond borders of their households and business, being in accordance with historical regional tradition: "...For the entrepreneurs-philanthropist the personal participation in a charity had two major motives – a comprehension of the responsibility before a community, and aspiration to raise their social status. The example of Nizhniy Novgorod shows that from 1880's not only in capitals, but also in entrepreneurial environment of a province the participation in charities became a necessary stereotype of behavior and means of business elite's socialization" (Ulianova 2002, p. 135).

But there are many contradictions in LE approach to preserving and upgrading of their houses. For instance, to give few examples only:

- new buildings from brick (the shop, café) near well-preserved wooden house on the same plot (case 1);
- facing of historic elevations with plastic siding just imitating the old wood (case 2);
- brick additions directly adjoining to the wooden building from 1864 that is a listed monument of federal meaning; the garage from red brick with metal doors (although decorated with forget ornamentation) instead of historic gate (case 3);
- restoration of rather expensive decorative wooden carving and an intention of owners to demolish historic and artistic-looked furnace in interior as well as existence of the ugly garage nearby (case 4).

But it seems that "clean variants" are impossible here. LE intuitively use flexible approach; there are tried to combine the wish to protect most important historic values of their property and the need in normal modern conveniences, and, in some cases, something extra according to their own testes and customs.

Actually it is grass-roots revitalization realized without strong official control with all good and bad (for the heritage) consequences.

4.3 Conclusion of the chapter

The whole Russia's situation with HWH is sad, which was proved by the experts' answers both from Moscow and Nizhniy Novgorod region. But in the town of Gorodets we have met quite different and rare situation: far from all Gorodets' inhabitants are LE; far from all LE are lowers or (already) owners of HWH; from the other hand, far from all of rather narrow circle of HWH owners (or lowers) may managed to became LE to have means enough for reparation/restoration/modernization of their historic property. Anyway some cases where all those factors are coinciding were obtained during rather short visit to the case town, which was not so easy but not so hard. Whether it means that researcher was on the proper research way? Hopefully, yes. Anyway, in the town of Gorodets the oasis of comfortable historical urban environment is created, where it is pleasant to be. The luck is that this fragment consists of mainly wooden houses. In many respects it was created by forces of the local businessmen who sponsored the town's preparation to its anniversary of 2002; but many LE are simultaneously inhabitants of this area, and it is more important for research outcomes. All this can be regarded as a basis (a psychological basis as well) for the further positive processes of revitalization of HWH in Gorodets.

It is possible to learn some lessons from touching of everyday real processes of grass-roots entrepreneurs' activity:

- The situation with HWH in small towns is not so catastrophic as in the regional centers;
- Wooden houses are part of 'organic' living environment of small historic town; so, no separate wooden house but household must be a subject of attention;

- LE are ready to participate in the wooden development's revitalization using win-win-win approach; authorities don't realize yet such a potential of urban development;
- Too many restrictions and obstacles exist for both enterprises' development and HWH renovation;
- There is hard psychological resistance against of use of timber in new construction;
- The creation of positive can-do attitude should be the first step; branding the appropriate towns as a "Russian Wooden Towns" may be an efficient tool for attraction of investments and tourists;
- There is an absolute lack of knowledge on Swedish (Nordic) experience in wooden towns' revitalization.

Some manifestations of inertia in the minds of LE when they concern housing may serve as a basis for sustainability of living environment important for keeping of local identity (in contrast to hundreds of towns that lost their identity during too quick soviet or post-soviet reconstruction). This inertia may be even recognized as a condition for development (Fesenko 2004).

Entrepreneurs asked already have the right stimulus to renovate restore their houses – what they need it a proper LG policy, more broad knowledge what happened in the world in this topic and some help in techniques

The sense of life in old wooden house full of historic flavor, freedom to do what you like and fresh air acts as a magnet for other people and attract new investments to HWH. People will do it even in actual situation of the bulk of obstacles. But in the case of enabling LG policy to do it will be more easy and efficient.

Moreover, LE are eager to spend some part on incomes for social development of their town. They are doing it not only being philanthropists but because of long-term effect of such social activity to their own business. Their project initiatives (like a public pond's accomplishment by the case 1 hero) are profitable for the whole community and would be also more successful on the assumption of proper top-down attitude.

Such traditional features of the Russian entrepreneur (especially characteristic for Old Believers entrepreneur environment), which are disappeared in big business of megapolices and capitals as

- settled home-building basis connected to productive economy;
- methodical thrift and saving of assets;
- aspiration to the public consent at social concessions to the more poor majority;
- reliable and gradual development of business (see: Panarin 2003) –

are still alive in the horizontally bounded entrepreneurship milieu of small traditional town like Gorodets and usable in the processes of old wooden houses (and adjoined households) revitalization.

Chapter 5 Case Study: Revitalization of HWH in Sweden

5.1 Experts' opinions on Swedish experience of HWH revitalization

The aim of Swedish case study was to gain the aggregate picture of situation with HWH in of Sweden, check it on example of particular “wooden town” of Eksjö, and provide some ideas instructive for Russian practice.

Because of summer period of Swedish case study's conducting not so many experts were available for interviewing; and answers may give just selective but comprehensive information. The field trip to Eksjö was also relatively short. That are the reasons to stress in the given chapter on qualitative analyze of interviews and field observations, paying especial attention to what can be learned from the Swedish experience to be applied in conditions of Russia.

Table 5.1 List of Swedish experts, filling in the questionnaire

No	Experts' institution, position	Scope of experience in urban revitalization according to the answers	type of interview	
			formal (questionnaire filled in)	informal (dialog not recorded)
1	Dr of architecture, professor at Lund University; Head of private architect's office; Lund	south of Sweden, in particular Skåne (Simrishamn, Lund)	+	
2	DrSc, professor at Lund University; expert of Nordic Centre for Spatial Development (NordRegio, Stockholm); Helsinki/Lund	All Nordic and Baltic countries, most of Europe	+	
3	Architect and Project Manager; chairman of the working group of the Swedish National Board of Antiquities; member of ICOMOS International Committee on Wood; Stockholm	Sweden as a whole; in particular Alingsas and Eksjö	+	
4	PhD, head of private teaching and research company; teacher at the program of building antiquarians at Göteborg University; member of the Swedish National Board of Antiquities; previous Director of Qvarnarp Preservation Center; Eksjö	Sweden as a whole	+	
5	Senior adviser of the National Board of Housing Building and Planning (Boverket); Karlskrona	Sweden as a whole; in particular Kalmar, Karlskrona, Västervik	+	
6	Head of private research and design office, international expert in many heritage preservation's projects in the Central and East Europe; Råå	Sweden as a whole, former socialistic countries of Central and East Europe		+
7	Head of private architect's office; Eksjö former town architect, Eksjö	Eksjö		+

The background of answers of Swedish experts is former neglect of HWH²⁰, a subsequent turn to the conservation of remains, and actual relatively good situation with separate dangers and subjective mistakes: “Unfortunately many wooden towns and wooden houses were taken down during the 1950th – 1970th when Sweden built a lot of modern houses. The “Year of architectural preservation 1975” meant a step forward to conservation. We still have many wooden houses neglected in the northern part of Sweden, in small villages and in the countryside” (*I*)²¹.

²⁰ “In comparison with the damage caused by the Second World War in the historical towns on the European continent, in Sweden we managed to do it ourselves” (Caring for Cultural Heritage 2004, p.15).

²¹ Here and then the italic number in brackets means the No of expert cited according the Table 5.1.

Answer to question “Which **kind of urban activity** seems to you most appropriate for defining the processes which has taken place in the Swedish wooden towns or historic areas of wooden development?” give following distribution: revitalization (5 mentioning); conservation (4); rehabilitation (4); and preservation (3 mentioning). In addition some others kinds of urban-forming processes were mentioned once: destruction of cultural heritage; re-use of old building (as a most common process) and moving wooden houses from city-center to “reservation”. This evaluation is in big contrast with the same made by Russian experts, but more broad sample of Swedish experts is need to make this comparison correct.

And even inside of such a narrow circle of specialists two contrast definitions of the research key term were obtained: the positive one “Conservation combined with rehabilitation gives revitalization” (3) and the negative one: ““Revitalisation” <...> is a rhetoric slogan (not an analytic concept) used for promoting investment interests. It is in most cases the promotion of private interests and the deliberate destruction of public goods (cultural heritage, natural heritage, collective economic interests, etc.). Protection of historical towns would gain these towns as a whole, because of their attractiveness both for inhabitants, tourists and advanced business. “Revitalisation” indicates for me the slogan of private interests, which completely disregard public interests. It is also a concept much used by architects, who think new design and building would bring additional qualities to a place. In reality is most of the time the opposite. Architects’ endeavours destroy what is there without bringing in something new of any quality. Please do not “revitalise”, try to establish decent living conditions by respecting historical continuity. Quality of life is not an exponent of grand ideas but of the small things of every day life. (This comment is valid for Russia in particular!)” (2).

The threat of a such speculative use of “good” notions really exist in Russia, but our authorities and investors (fortunately for author) usually are doing the same with a slogan “reconstruction”; anyway the idea of the “small deals” importance seems to be very relevant to our domestic situation.

As for **different actors’ influence** (the question “In your experience, who are the stakeholders most responsible for the realization of activities/projects for Swedish wooden towns/areas? Who is the main engine of the process?”), local policy makers appeared on the first position (5 mentioning); then follow developers/investors/businessmen (4); architects/planners (3); local people (3); and conservationists (2 mentioning).

For Russia a need of inter-actors dialogue is crucial: “It is a matter of co-operation. Progress would not be possible without the support from local people, developers and policy makers – and they need the expertise of the conservationists and the architects” (3).

Answers to question on **major obstacles of the process of HWH preservation** give 3 groups of factors: economic, cultural and political obstacles were recognized as most important received in average 3,2 points on the scale from 1 (minor obstacle) to 5 (major obstacle); while organizational and institutional obstacles 0,4 balls only; other factors (judicial, technical, budgetary and social) are somewhere in between with marks from 2,2 to 1,2.

It correlates with results of previous question and means an importance of subjective factors (like personal interests of politicians and investors or capacity of owners and builders to follow of historic tradition) under the solving of objective (e.g. organizational) problems in Sweden: “If the political support is there, everything may be obtained. This support could be gained by showing that built heritage is an asset – also economically – and that the technical knowledge and experience are there to rehabilitate for modern use (without destroying the cultural values and without “gentrification” as a side-effect)” (3).

As examples of certain obstacles the following answers worth to be quoted:

- *political*: “politicians sometimes think that it is necessary to let big supermarket chains get established at the cost of old buildings, national policy for many years strongly favored large scale development with new houses” (4);
- *budgetary*: “Owners preferred less expensive plastic or metal window frames to original” (4);
- *economic and judicial*: “too high land values owing to modern details plans with rights to high-rise buildings and useful for commercial purposes” (5).

Four experts from five are agreeing that the conservation of historic urban wooden areas present **specific problems in terms of the function of the towns**. Major issues here looks like this:

- “The wooden houses are often very small and nowadays the wish is often to make the towns more dense, to build higher and bigger houses is more economical to the builders” (1);
- “It is hard to find an appropriate (modern) use for the buildings and the town structure, with (perhaps) narrow streets and small units” (3);
- “Too long periods of no periodical care. Too low density (only two story houses allowed in wood). The fire risk” (5).

In between mentioned **managerial factors** significant for the revitalization’s success more instructive are, in author’s opinion:

- “Co-operation, understanding of cultural values, confidence in traditional techniques and materials, support for good examples, openness to local solutions” (3);
- “Process planning. <...> A continuous dialogue between owner, antiquarian and builder. <...> Planning for a wise maintenance after renovation. Flexibility” (4);
- “Political understanding. Real enthusiasts. Good planning” (5).

The very important for Russia question on **economic/financial mechanisms** being used was answered like this:

- “There is special governmental money for safeguarding the built heritage that is for extra costs due to the cultural values when conserving an historic building. The regulations on different levels gives a background to financing. EU-projects can be carried out on wooden towns (is done)” (1);
- “State loans for conservation and rehabilitation” (3);
- “In Sweden during the 60’s-80’s financing by state loans actually was a big impediment. The regional authorities can support a small number of projects with special funding covering extra costs if the owner make a careful renovation rather than using modern building methods in a careless way” (4).

Experts’ perceptions of **participatory mechanisms** in use seems most controversial reflecting traditional top-down approach to citizens participation in urban processes:

- “In Sweden all planning work has to be official, exhibited and people can write to the authorities to complain/ask” (1);
- “This is a joke! The representative democratic system is a “participatory mechanism”, but it is not used for that purpose. The stakeholder-approach is winning terrain, and this indicates the pursuit of neo-liberal ideas, which has nothing to do with enlarged democracy, but with investment interests” (2);
- “The “cultural identity” of the town stressed so that every citizen (including businessmen) are proud and aware of the potentials and values” (3);

“In some situations municipal housing companies tried to involve the tenants in the planning. This is very important” (4);

- “Open debate, exhibition, planning consultation” (5).

Anyway at least to begin to use this “upper part” of participation is obligatory in Russian historic towns where such a practice is often very weak.

Answers to next points of questionnaire didn't give significantly new information but were helpful in the Swedish case town selection: the town of Eksjö was most frequently mentioned by experts in between successful samples of Swedish wooden towns' revitalization:

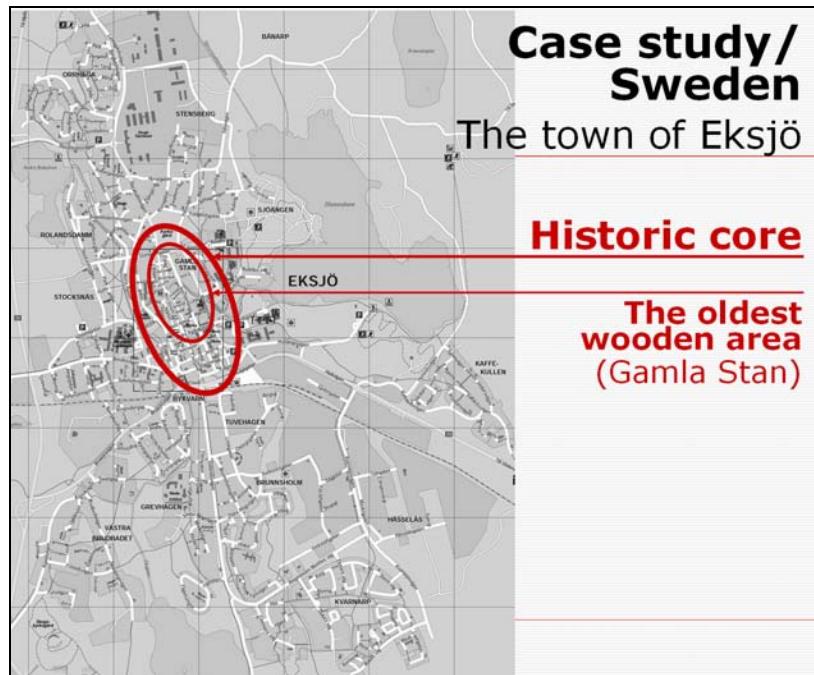
- "Eksjö, a small wooden town where the local authority architect has put lots of effort on saving the wooden areas – it is important to have skilled people as "town architects". This town is now visited by tourists due to its wooden architectural heritage and it is very well kept by the locals" (1);
- "Eksjö, Vimnnerby, Kalmar, Västervik, Karlshamn, Hudiksvall, Håmesånd – buildings conserved at the original building site" (5);
- "I think that regions in need of general and economic local or regional revitalization are most relevant. That is regions with very limited access to capital where the built environment needs be a resource to economic development rather than just another cost. An example is Eksjö and Småland" (4).

5.2 Wooden town of Eksjö: win-win approach to HWH revitalization on practice

The town of Eksjö selected for Swedish case study is the central settlement of the municipality of Eksjö in Småland province in the south Swedish highlands (administratively belongs to Jönköping county).

Describing the local situation peculiarities that make this town comparable with Russian case town of Gorodets, and also features that are important as possible lessons for Russia HWH revitalization will be stressed.

Figure 5.1 Localization of the historic core of Eksjö and the oldest area of wooden development (Gamla Stan) in the town structure

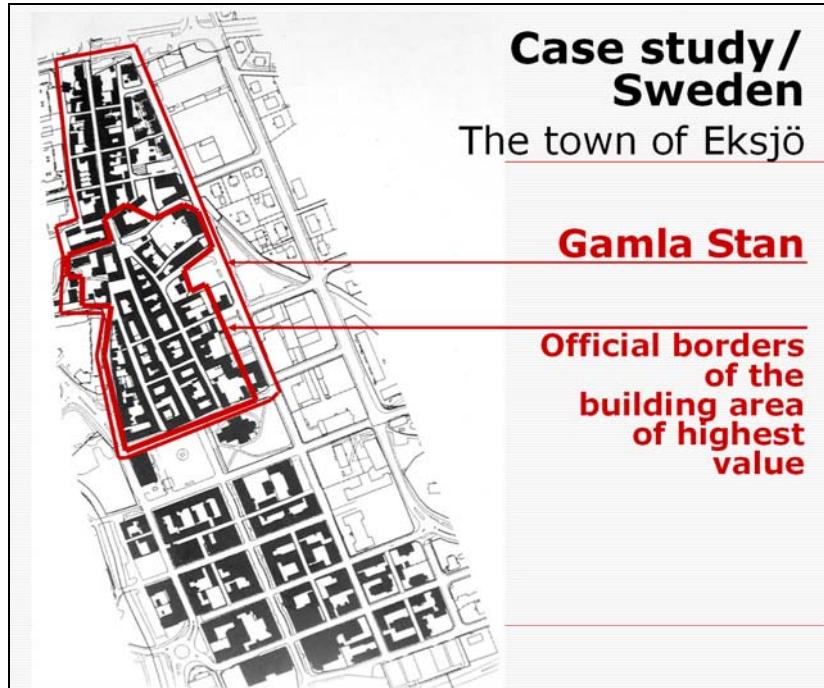


The oldest part of Eksjö (so called Old Town or Gamla stan) is unique for Swedish towns consisting of old wooden houses: this northern section of the historic town core has never

suffered any devastating fires after its foundation in 1568²². As a result, there is continuity in the structure of the buildings, from the time of their construction to the present-day. The original town plan and property structures are intact as well.

According to the map in (Agertz & Grandelius 2003, pp. 20-21) in about 80% of the houses inside of “building area of highest value”, that is officially selected inside of Gamla stan as having strong protective status, are listed monuments, and about 8% are “buildings of cultural historic value”²³, almost all buildings here are wooden (2- and 1-storey).

Figure 5.2 Building structure of the historic core of Eksjö



Looking both on the map and onto real material structures the rather high *density* of wooden built environment is visible, which very rare happened in Russian historic towns of resembling size²⁴.

But similarities with Russian case town are also sufficient. Like Gorodets, Eksjö is located in the large wood region; it was and is trading, craftsmen and merchant town. The proud sentence from popular brochure “The enterprising spirit you see in the Eksjö of today, dates back a long time, we can almost say it is in our blood!” (Pictures of Eksjö 2002, p. 8) is proved by visual observation: the inner city is full of small restaurants, cafes, gift shops, tiny hotels – all installed into old well-preserved wooden building privately owned. However the major use of this area is housing, in spite of the fact that it play in the same time the role of town center for inhabitants and tourists. So, other major part of field impressions was the sense of *living* historic town.

²² See Annex 6 for the town’s more detailed description.

²³ “The Swedish National Board of Antiquities decided in 1993 to declare an additional 32 buildings in Gamla stan as historical landmarks. The justification was that the town district constituted a very remarkable area of buildings. This was the first town district in Sweden to receive such a strong antiquarian protection. Today, there are a total of 56 historical landmarks in Gamla stan” (Eksjö Municipality 2003).

²⁴ Typical picture of Russian small town’s urban density one may see on the Figure 4.6 on example of Gorodets.

Personal observation of the old wooden part of Eksjö gives to author a unique feeling of comprehensive almost entirely *wooden* urban environment. To be in the middle of it is strange and very astonishing for normal urbanite who used to growth in usual stone urban milieu. It is funny just because all houses are made from wood; they are not sharply rectangular, they keep marking of hand work and worm of human hands – not machines. It is possible to presume that this factor forms biggest part of tourist attractiveness of wooden Eksjö. According to data by Eksjö Tourist information gained by author during informal interview with staff of bureau the total quantity of tourists per year is here about 200 000, approximately one third of them are foreigners. The slogan “Wooden town” is real brand name of Eksjö: the road signs and information desks with such description are everywhere.

Figure 5.3 Examples of rehabilitated wooden houses in Eksjö



There is also a special atmosphere that could be called “*conservation in fashion*” (Larsson 2002) here. Good technical conditions of every building, hand-made variety, thoroughly colored facades, simple but elaborated perfectly restored architectural details, clean cobbled streets are evidences of not just centralized conservation activity but participation of majority of population in the buildings’ and entire town’s maintenance.

This is the case that already in first decades of the 20th c. there was a considerable popular interest in the preservations issues in Eksjö. Then, “starting in the 1950’s, the Municipality of Eksjö has planned for avoiding parking and traffic problems, as well as the adaptation of the older buildings to the demands modern housing, business and offices. The teamwork between the town’s governing body and the property owners on the issues of preservation is very important. Information and guidance to the property owner has provided knowledge about the buildings’ specific nature and how to best maintain them in order to retain cultural and historical values for the future” (Eksjö Municipality 2003).

From the side of LG there are planning with attention to the urban heritage issues to an increasing extent²⁵ and enabling policy for stakeholders²⁶; from the side of residents driven by awareness and pride of their town there is deliberate maintenance of their property in most cases according to their historic value and legal ordinances. This combination of top-down and grass-roots revitalizing vectors led to the quality of public and private environment of Gamla stan: “Life in the town forms, together with the town’s typical features, the identity of the town. It is therefore important that the identity of the town, its soul, is clarified so that it is not harmed when wishes for change are to be met”. (Eksjö Municipality 2003).

Figure 5.4 Qvarnarp – the center for conservation of old buildings in Eksjö



An instructive example of such a preparation to win-win approach’s realization is opening in 1995 by the LG a building preservation centre, Byggnadsvård Qvarnarp, “aims at ensuring Eksjö’s historical heritage for the future” (Historic background and the preservation of Eksjö s.a.). Qvarnarp combines a museum for local building culture, a unique shop (Qvarnarps Building Preservation Store) with all supplies and materials needed for practical renovation

²⁵ “In 1995 Eksjö municipality adopted a town centre supplement to its comprehensive plan. This supplement is intended to guide future town planning taking conservation interests into account. At present work is under way on a detailed development plan for the town centre, with the purpose of regulating the management of buildings and street areas taking cultural heritage values into account. The intention is that it should be possible to retain these values at the same time as the town accommodates housing and other activities of the 21st century” (Eksjö Municipality 2003).

²⁶ “During the last decades, The Municipality of Eksjö has resolutely worked, together with the affected property owners, to enable the preservation of the culturally and historically valuable and unique town of Eksjö” (Historic background and the preservation of Eksjö s.a.).

older houses by individuals, and training courses for conservation of old wooden architecture (in cooperation with the Chalmers University of Technology, in Gothenburg). Exhibitions, open lectures and weekend courses relating to the arts and crafts of the preservation of buildings are also arranged.

Only one informal **interview** was taken in Eksjö during short field trip; but the respondent (*No 7 in the Table 5.1*) was one of real key person of the town revitalization – former town chief architect being on that position almost 2 decades and very interested in the old wooden architecture preservation in the form of living wooden town. Joint walk through the Gamla town with his comment and attention to every small details of wooden environment was very useful for more close touch to Swedish urban reality. According to respondent, the majority of houses are privately owned unexpectedly of use; the majority of owners here are from upper-middle class partly replacing more poor people who can not spend extra money for maintenance of valuable historic buildings (mostly listed monuments).

For example, the special comprehensive program of fire protection is introduced from the late 1990's in Gamla stan where high density of wooden development creates permanent risk of fire. It includes sprinklers installation, special refractory windowpane using (usual glasses are changed step by step during regular home repairs), quick fire notification system (sensors), and other needed measures that are sort out according to individual conditions of each households. Important that main source of foundation of this program are private money of owners of HWH. According to interviewer who was main champion of this program in the Eksjö municipality, the task of LG in this case is to convince (and some times even force inhabitance) to install fire protecting equipment but to pay for it.

This opinion on private money importance was proved during the second informal interview with experts of broader diapason on knowledge (*No 6 in the Table 5.1*). According to him, if some decades ago the monuments' maintenance in Sweden was mostly based on governmental (budget) money (in different forms of direct donation, owners' subsidies, interests' reduction, etc.), now this line slackens, and LG should look for support from entrepreneurs attracting them and enabling their activity. To attract of well-educated and reach people to become owners of historic properties is another important aim of LG today. In this case a spiral process of mutual success and common benefits rising may be launched.

5.3 Conclusion of the chapter

There are some proper ideas and tools were gained from experts' questionnaires and interviews analyses, which worth to use in the top-down part of the HWH revitalization in Russia (federal, regional, municipal program elaboration, local strategies and ordinances working out, etc.).

Table 5.2 Comparison of some economic indexes of Swedish and Russian case areas²⁷

No	Indexes	Jönköping county, Sweden	Gorodets district of Nizhegorodskaya oblast', Russia	Difference (times)
1	Average monthly salary (Euro, 2004)	2 250	170	13,2
2	Average income per capita (2004)	18 000 (2002) ²⁸	1 220 (2004)	14,8
3	GDP per capita	28 000	3 090 ²⁹	9,1

²⁷ Numbers in lines 1 – 3 are calculated by author basing on information from Statistics Sweden (Statistiska centralbureau <http://www.scb.se>); The social atlas of Russian regions (<http://www.socpol.ru/atlas/index.shtml>); OECD statistics (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/41/18630168.pdf>); and (Gorodetsky rayon 2005. pp. 26, 27).

²⁸ Average taxable earned income, income year 2002.

²⁹ Data for the Nizhegorodskaya oblast' as a whole.

4	Average quantity of tourists per year in the town of Eksjö and Gorodets (approximately)	200 000	10 000	20
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The practice of wooden town revitalization had been seen by researcher in Eksjö is also very instructive. But it may hardly serve as a blueprint for Russian cases mostly because of the differences in the social and economical situation in our countries. Available economic data show the gaps in mayor indexes as big as at least in 10 – 15 times, that directly affects the capacity of inhabitance to participate in grass-roots HWH revitalization's processes.

But it can be an inspirational example for Russian towns like Gorodets where some prerequisites of the improvement of the HWH environment are already gained mostly because of grass-roots entrepreneurial activity.

It is obvious that an activity of Swedish experts and institutions in propagation of national experience may be extremely helpful in order to build real contacts with Russian colleagues to share knowledge and to create a better co-operation in future.

Target inter-exchange of experience between the experts in the frame of twin-towns partnership (e.g. Eksjö and Gorodets) – mutual visits, practical seminars, participation on scientific conferences, etc. – would be supportive also.

Taking into account quite low level of acquaintance of Russian experts not only in province but in the central cities with unique Swedish experience of wooden town and HWH revitalization, the organization of movable exhibition on this topic would be very efficient. It may raise the knowledge of different stakeholders (LG, LE, urban experts, common people) and to give them many useful practical tools and creative ideas.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

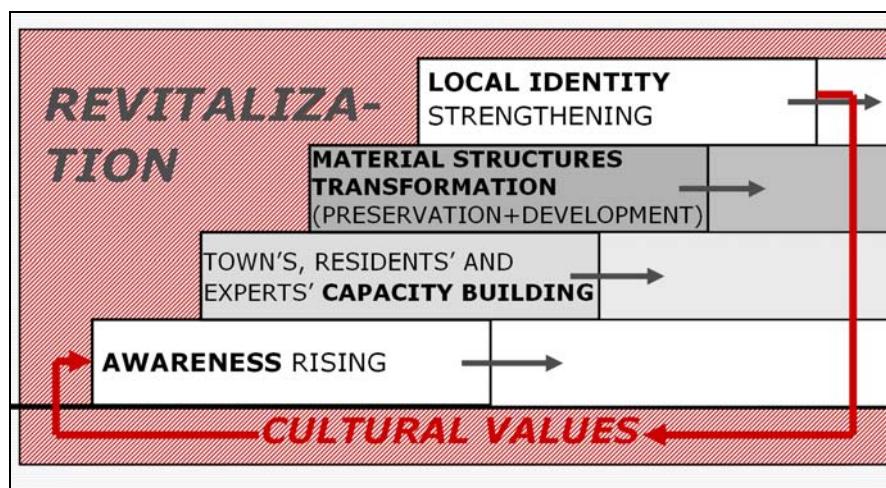
6.1 Cross-case findings

- An examination both of theoretical sources and urban-forming practice in historic wooden areas of Russia and Sweden leads to a concept on successive steps desirable for efficient process of HWH revitalization:

- from a formation of a positive attitude (including awareness building) and stimuli to revitalize HWH that serves as a basis or “covering” of needed activities
- during practical preparation to revitalization (capacity and institutional building, juridical and economical preconditions, special training for officials and other stakeholders)
- towards physical effect onto real material structures
- permanently returning on the “basic” level of people consciousness, supporting the town self-identity strengthening, citizens’ spirit transformation, and emerging of new lifestyle adequate to needs of “natural” grass-roots preservation and development.

All these processes are summarized in comprehensive integrative model of urban revitalization that is different from usual top-down approach presuming that just material effect would be enough to improve urban environment³⁰.

Figure 6.1 “Formula” of comprehensive revitalization’s circle



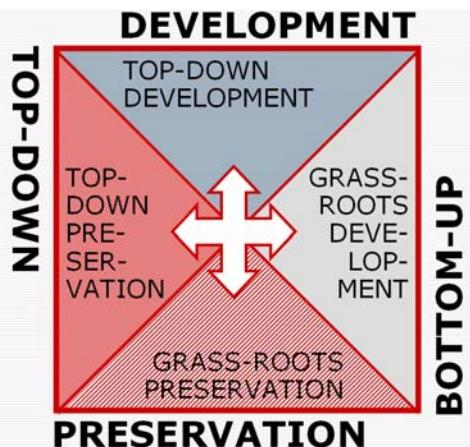
- New development may supplement HWH without its substitution; it is feasible to integrate cultures both from the past and the present in the vibrant living urban environment of wooden areas of small historic town. Both Eksjö and Gorodets (each in one’s own way) are convincing alternatives to transfer the last remains of ancient wooden architecture into museums-reservations where authentic cultural phenomenon lose their identity being taken out from everyday urban context. In contrast, the towns studied show that traditional culture (built culture, craftsmanship culture, entrepreneur culture) can be maintained and even recreated in conditions of modern society.
- Private owners of old wooden houses/households, and LE especially, are principal actors in the HWH revitalization process; other actors (governments of all levels, experts, NGOs) should play an enabling, contributive role in condition of limited budgets and decentralization of power. The catastrophic process of disappearing of urban wooden heritage

³⁰ The scheme on Figure 6.1 based on and develops the drawing on Figure 2.2.

in Russia may be stopped by using such policy at least in small towns where self-sustaining grass-roots revitalization is achievable.

- The revitalization works really in HWH areas where dwelling is a major kind of land use only when top-down and grass-roots vectors of preservation and development are complementing each other. The authors notion of workable revitalization's mechanism is shown in the theoretical model following³¹.

Figure 6.2 Comprehensive integrative model of urban revitalization



6.2 Recommendations for the town of Gorodets

These recommendations are addressed to LG officers responsible to urban-planning and monument protection issues, top managers including the mayor of the town, all locals interested in proper urban development of Gorodets³².

According to study results main direction of local activity towards HWH revitalization and historic town's identity strengthening might be as following:

- to include the aim of HWH revitalization in the *vision* of the town future as factor of its prosperity: wooden heritage is not the burden but hidden strength of the town that may to capitalize on this unique peculiarity organizing comfortable, cozy, attractive wooden town;
- to elaborate new efficient *strategy* for old town revitalization based on actors already existing and who are active by purposefully involving them into common aims achievement; such a strategy may be called an “innovative progressive community-benefiting ownership strategy” (Alperovitz 2005);
- to use the *LE capacity* and creative energy as much as possible building on local level the enabling condition for their revitalization activity; to support an entrepreneurial attitude to revitalization, to recognize LE-HWH owners as leaders by examples, and to advocate /popularize their experience, enhancing the participation of other citizens in the grass-roots revitalization of HWH and historic environment as a whole;
- to work out (using tender mechanism to select proper specialists) the local land use and development *ordinance* for historic wooden area, oriented for the sense of place's preservation, residential use's stimulating, protection of traditions of “Gorodets-style” wooden environment; and in the same time allowing development needed for owners inside of legal framework;

³¹ The scheme on Figure 6.1 develops the author's principal model of urban revitalization (see Figure 2.1).

³² Author intends to publish this recommendation together with part of thesis devoted to Gorodets in local newspaper and on the next conference “Gorodetskie chteniya” in the Museum of local history.

- to set up technical advisory and *information units* easily accessible to individuals, responsible for propagation of progressive experience, restoration know-how training, juridical help for HWH owners;
- to *brand* the town as the only successful wooden town in central Russia after achieving the critical mass of properly restored old wooden houses, that may open a set of opportunities for the future development attracting new businesses, tourists, artists, any creative people and to creating new branches of the town economy like, for instance, the whole-Russian Center of carpenter education.

6.3 Recommendations for Russian experts

It would be too brave from the author's position to recommend our experts really wanted³³ to save Russian urban heritage and very experienced in this issue something except the only easy idea, which based on one of the main outcomes of this thesis:

- to re-think the attitude to HWH toward notion of principal *possibility* of revitalization of old wooden development in Russia.

Next steps on the “central” level of expertise would be possible only in the case of consensus of interested part of professional society on this possibility’s recognition. The viability of the offers followings is limited by imaginary (virtual) situation of this needed consensus’s gaining:

- So-called *policy of small deals* (easy system of measures to be really feasible, clear and understandable to all actors/stakeholders) may be more efficient than “comprehensive” but hardly realizable programs aimed often just to show off some attention to urban citizens and heritage;
- Three directions are very essential in given moment: *legalization* (property rights regulation, local land-use and heritage protection ordinances), *information* (awareness rising companies, mentoring, technical assistance) and *pilot project realization*;
- In the HWH areas the *pilot projects realization* (e.g. concrete historic wooden houses modernization) should be provided in short time as a real visible measure to demonstrate feasibility of proposed mechanism stressed on concrete people’s capacity;
- “Central-level” experts must be capable to explain to all actors of urban-forming activity (central, regional and local governments, planning/architectural authorities, monument protection bodies, tourist companies, NGO’s) which *benefits* would they obtain in the step-by-step process of the *entrepreneur-led HWH revitalization*;
- Especially to LG how policy proposed can help regenerate HWH areas of urban distress by *stimulating local entrepreneurship* and making HWH areas attractive for high-income people using their money and capacity for so to say unpremeditated (“natural” or self-organizing) preservation;
- Principle of “*the subjects of protection*” is quite rational for HWH revitalization’s enabling: sharp legal definition of features must be preserved in the environment or a building and permission of inner-households development in the frame of legal regulations.

6.4 Relevance of the study results to Russian urban management practice

The recommendations and outcomes gained as a given research’s results wouldn’t solve all problems of HWH in old Russian cities. But their implementation may became a modest

³³ One should consider the existence of very broad circle of specialists who participate in the everyday practice of urban development and also in tackling the problems of HWH in our cities who are engaged by governments, customers, high-level investors and developers seeking first of all for profit from their activity. Consequently they do not want any advices how to save urban heritage if they would spoiled business-plans of their customers.

input into innovative approach to inner city housing revitalization – in parallel with continuing of conventional work of LG. It is obligatory just to start to prove and support the already existing progressive practice (like LE experiments with HWH modernization). Thus, some positive experience will be gained and legal, ‘mental’ base will be also created, time to develop new practice will come – to replicate first examples (as a model of inner-city housing renaissance) in the way towards mass processes on the next more complex stage of policy-program-project continuum elaboration and implementation, when much more actors and sectors would be included.

HWH revitalization in historic cores of old Russian towns may became one of the important direction in the course of new emerging enabling housing policy of LG in transition period from universal all-leveling approach to address, diversified suit of policies aiming to consider market reality and focused on concrete people. It should help both LG to solve part of ‘global’ housing problem in their cities, and citizens who want to live in traditional urban environment with modern conveniences. At the same time, it may help to preserve sufficient sector of urban heritage which still defines identity of many Russian historic cities.

6.5 Issues for further research

The results of given research lead to notion on several perspective directions for future examinations. Emerged research challenges are divided into two categories: questions directly connected to the given research topic that must be obligatory answered in order to make results more instructive and practical;

and “facultative” (or “side”) lines emergent from given research being probably out of urban management discipline but interesting and not deeply studied before.

Lines of investigation directly connected to given research topic:

- comprehensive studying of world experience of HWH and wooden towns revitalizations (Norway, Finland, Baltic Countries, Canada, Japan, etc.);
- investigation of building codes, land use ordinances, and rules of protection of urban areas of high cultural and historical value that are currently in force in Swedish wooden towns;
- close retrospective inspection of issue of financing of revitalization processes in Sweden;
- specification of the role of NGOs and citizens participation in Swedish wooden town’s revitalization practice;
- comparative analysis of experience of HWH areas’ revitalization in big cities (e.g. Stockholm and Nizhniy Novgorod).

Intriguing “facultative” issues:

- comparison of planning lay-outs and architectural features of urban wooden vernacular in Sweden and Russia;
- degree of viability of historic building tradition in Russian province (e.g. on example of HWH: who are “owners” of tradition, how is it inherited and translated, to what degree is it changeable);
- phenomena of ancient Russian settlements not re-planned during Catherine’s the Great reforms, and peculiarities of HWH in such settlements;
- particularity of urban management in the Russian Old Believers settlements;
- comparative analyses of the influence of urban rules/codes (especially fire codes) on evolution of wooden development in Swedish and Russian settlements in 19th – 20th cc.;

- practice of timber constructions' use in contemporary urban development in Russia and possibility to re-construct doomed to demolishing HWH areas in big cities by means of modern architecture preserving local identity and building culture;
- special study of LE role in urban development of post-soviet Russia.

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Abbreviations

HWH – historic wooden housing

LE – local entrepreneur(s)

LG – local government

Annexes

Annex 1. Questionnaire for Russian experts (translation from Russian)

QUESTIONNAIRE

PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC WOODEN DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN OF GORODETS: PROBLEMS, MECHANISMS, ACTORS

Dear expert,

We ask you to fill in this questionnaire which has been addressed to you because of your expertise in the field of urban, architectural and cultural heritage of the town of Gorodets, and, in particular, its historic wooden development.

The questionnaire is part of a research project on “Revitalization of historic wooden housing using local entrepreneurs’ capacity (cases of Sweden and Russia)” conducted by Andrey Vladimirovich Ivanov, a Russian architect and urban developer, fellow at the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, in the frame of his Master thesis’ elaboration in the Institute on Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and Lund University, Department of Housing Development & Management.

The aim of the project is to analyze the Swedish experience on wooden towns’ conservation in the 1970s to the 2000s, and also the real situation in the wooden towns of Russia, in order to find the appropriate possibilities of its improvement basing on the capacity of the local entrepreneurs and all other actors involved.

We consider this project as well as an opportunity of attraction of the international attention to a problem of preservation of a wooden architectural and town-planning heritage of Russia.

Therefore, we would like to ask you to answer the questionnaire below to the very best of your ability and send it back by e-mail to the address andreyivanovarch@yahoo.com as soon as possible or return it directly to Andrey Ivanov.

We would like to thank you for your invaluable co-operation.

Your sincerely,

Andrey Ivanov,
Architect, student of Master courses in Urban Development and Management, IHS Rotterdam – HDM, Lund University

Noted by:

Johnny Astrand,
Director of Housing Development & Management – HDM, Lund University

1. The following questions may be answered basing on your knowledge of general situation in the country or specific situation in certain cities/towns. Please specify the scope of your answers:

Russian experience as a whole
experience of concrete places
which places in particular? (*please listed*)

2. Which kind of urban activity seems to you most appropriate for defining the processes which has taken place in Russian wooden towns or in urban historic areas with sufficient share of wooden development?

Delete the statements with which you do not agree. Please note that multiple answers are allowed.

revitalization
conservation
preservation (urban restoration)
rehabilitation

comprehensive reconstruction
reconstruction with primary rebuilding of historic development stock
reconstruction with primary changing of historic development stock to the new one (the stone one)
degradation and gradual destruction because of neglect or absence of means at the owners/users
target demolishing of HWD that recognized as a “shabby stock” or slum
others? Which?

Additional comments:

3. According to your experience, estimate an influence of different actors on process going with historic wooden development (then – HWD) in Russian cities/towns in marks in a range from “-5” (most negative, destructive influence) up to “+5” (most positive, constructive influence):

architects, planners ... (mark)
public agents, officials of the town/municipal (regional) governments ... (mark)
officials responsible for preservation of historical and cultural heritage ... (mark)
museum curators, art historians, artists, lowers of antiquity ... (mark)
local inhabitants ... (mark)
developers, investors, businessmen, external for given territory ... (mark)
local entrepreneurs (owners of small enterprises, shops, hotels, etc.) ... (mark)
representatives of NGO's ... (mark)
representatives of the church ... (mark)
others? Which?

Additional comments:

4. What types of obstacles are most impedimental for the process of preservation of HWD? Please indicate a value from “1” (minor obstacle) to “5” (major obstacle) for each type selected.

Delete the statements with which you do not agree. Please note that multiple answers are allowed.

economic (competition for land/property in urban wooden areas by stakeholders with diverging interests): ... (mark)
budgetary (absence of means in the budgets of the appropriate levels, or in the personal budget of the owners of wooden buildings, on their maintenance, modernization, restoration) ... (mark)
technical (absence of necessary methods or skills for maintenance, preservation, modernization of HWD): ... (mark)
organizational (absence of institutional structures responsible for preservation of wooden buildings or interested in it): ... (mark)
social (low prestige of HWD areas for residence or business-keeping): ... (mark)
cultural (loss of skills to maintain wooden houses, lack of understanding of their historical values): ... (mark)
political (absence of interest to preservation of wooden building on the part of local authorities, presence of official policy of the struggle with shabby housing stock, etc.): ... (mark)
judicial (too strict rules of heritage protection interfering modernization of buildings, absence of legal opportunities of monuments' privatization or legal difficulty of this process, etc.): ... (mark)
others? Which?

Additional comments:

5. Does the conservation of historic urban wooden areas present specific problems in terms of the function of the towns?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

yes
no

6. If yes, what are the problems?

Taking into account the Russian specificity, following 4 questions (No. 7-10) concern, more likely, to the forecast' area. On your sight,

7. Which managerial or organizational actions or decisions might be most significant for the preservation of HWD?

8. What economic/financial mechanisms might be most efficient?

9. What participatory mechanisms might be useful in the Russian conditions?

10. Whether should be some special legal and/or planning procedure and tools elaborated on local level aimed to HWD preservation?

11. According to you, which Russian towns have positive experience in HWD preservation/revitalization? May you specify some particular aspects of success gained on mentioned place and their reasons?

12. Are you familiar with an experience of preservation/revitalization of HWD in towns of Sweden or other Nordic countries or at least heard something about?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

yes
no

13. If yes, is it possible in principle to use any components of this experience in actual Russian condition?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

yes
no

14. If no, why?

15. If yes, which components seam to you instructive during similar activity in Russia?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND CO-OPERATION!

Identification questions (the following information will remain confidential):

Training/qualifications:

Job Title:

Age: Your sex: male female

Annex 2. Questionnaire for Russian local experts and entrepreneurs in the town of Gorodets (translation from Russian)

QUESTIONNAIRE

PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC WOODEN DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN OF GORODETS: PROBLEMS, MECHANISMS, ACTORS

Dear expert,

We ask you to fill in this questionnaire which has been addressed to you because of your expertise in the field of urban, architectural and cultural heritage of the town of Gorodets, and, in particular, its historic wooden development.

The questionnaire is part of a research project on “Revitalization of historic wooden housing using local entrepreneurs’ capacity (cases of Sweden and Russia)” conducted by Andrey Vladimirovich Ivanov, a Russian architect and urban developer, fellow at the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, in the frame of his Master thesis’ elaboration in the Institute on Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and Lund University, Department of Housing Development & Management.

The aim of the project is to analyze the Swedish experience on wooden towns’ conservation in the 1970s to the 2000s, and also the real situation in the wooden towns of Russia, in order to find the appropriate possibilities of its improvement basing on the capacity of the local entrepreneurs and all other actors involved.

We consider this project as well as an opportunity of attraction of the international attention to a problem of preservation of a wooden architectural and town-planning heritage of Russia.

Therefore, we would like to ask you to answer the questionnaire below to the very best of your ability and send it back by e-mail to the address andreyivanovarch@yahoo.com as soon as possible or return it directly to Andrey Ivanov.

We would like to thank you for your invaluable co-operation.

Your sincerely,

Andrey Ivanov,
Architect, student of Master courses in Urban Development and Management, IHS Rotterdam – HDM, Lund University

Noted by:

Johnny Astrand,
Director of Housing Development & Management – HDM, Lund University

1. Please, answer how long is you living in Gorodets:

- all your life
- less than 20 years
- less than 5 years

2. Which kind of urban activity seems to you most appropriate for defining the processes which has taken place in Gorodets with historic wooden development (then – HWD)?

Delete the statements with which you do not agree. Please note that multiple answers are allowed.

- revitalization
- conservation
- preservation (urban restoration)
- rehabilitation
- comprehensive reconstruction
- reconstruction with primary rebuilding of historic development stock
- reconstruction with primary changing of historic development stock to the new one (the stone one)

degradation and gradual destruction because of neglect or absence of means at the owners/users target demolishing of HWD that recognized as a “shabby stock” or slum others? Which?

Additional comments (*Probably, you can describe, what changes have taken place in the attitude to the HWD in Gorodets last years*):

3. According to your experience, estimate an influence of different actors on process of preservation of the HWD in Gorodets in marks in a range from “-5” (most negative, destructive influence) up to “+5” (most positive, constructive influence):

- architects, planners ... (mark)
- public agents, officials of the town/municipal (regional) governments ... (mark)
- officials responsible for preservation of historical and cultural heritage ... (mark)
- museum curators, art historians, artists, lowers of antiquity ... (mark)
- local inhabitants ... (mark)
- developers, investors, businessmen, coming to Gorodets from outside ... (mark)
- local entrepreneurs (owners of small enterprises, shops, hotels, etc.) ... (mark)
- representatives of NGO's ... (mark)
- representatives of the church ... (mark)
- others? Which?

Additional comments:

4. What types of obstacles were most impedimental for the process of preservation of the HWD in Gorodets? Please indicate a value from “1” (minor obstacle) to “5” (major obstacle) for each type selected. Delete the statements with which you do not agree. Please note that multiple answers are allowed.

- economic (competition for land/property in urban wooden areas by stakeholders with diverging interests): ... (mark)
- budgetary (absence of means in the budgets of the appropriate levels, or in the personal budget of the owners of wooden buildings, on their maintenance, modernization, restoration) ... (mark)
- technical (absence of necessary methods or skills for maintenance, preservation, modernization of HWD): ... (mark)
- organizational (absence of institutional structures responsible for preservation of wooden buildings or interested in it): ... (mark)
- social (low prestige of HWD areas for residence or business-keeping): ... (mark)
- cultural (loss of skills to maintain wooden houses, lack of understanding of their historical values): ... (mark)
- political (absence of interest to preservation of wooden building on the part of local authorities, presence of official policy of the struggle with shabby housing stock, etc.): ... (mark)
- judicial (too strict rules of heritage protection interfering modernization of buildings, absence of legal opportunities of monuments' privatization or legal difficulty of this process, etc.): ... (mark)
- others? Which?

Additional comments:

5. Does the conservation of historic urban wooden areas present specific problems in terms of the function of the towns?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

- yes
- no

6. If yes, what are the problems?

7. Which managerial or organizational actions or decisions are (or might be) significant for the success of HWD preservation in Gorodets?

8. What economic/financial mechanisms are (or might be) most efficient?

9. What participatory mechanisms might be useful in local conditions?

10. Are there some special legal and/or planning procedure and tools elaborated on local level aimed to HWD preservation elaborated (or must be elaborated)?

11. According to you, which other Russian towns have positive experience in HWD preservation/revitalization? May you specify some particular aspects of success gained on mentioned place and their reasons?

12. Are you familiar with an experience of preservation/revitalization of HWD in towns of Sweden or other Nordic countries or at least heard something about?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

yes

no

13. If yes, is it possible in principle to use any components of this experience in actual Russian condition?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

yes

no

14. If no, why?

15. If yes, which components precisely seem to you instructive during similar activity in Russia?

*Following group of questions (No. 16-24) we ask to answer **only ENTREPRENEURS** already investing or going to invest certain powers or means in restoration or modernization of historical wooden buildings in Gorodets. Other survey participants can ignore the given part of the questionnaire.*

16. What basic reasons induced you to pay attention to old wooden houses of Gorodets?

17. Why do you have decided to keep and repair (restore, modernize) the wooden house, instead of demolish it and replace with the stone one?

18. What difficulties have you met during the restoration (modernization) of a house?

19. How the house has been used before modernization and how it is used now? (Please name basic uses – residence, shop, café, etc.)

before:.....

after:.....

20. Are you

- an owner of the house and plot of land
- a tenant of the house and plot of land
- a tenant of the part of the house
- others? Which?

21. Is your house listed as a monument of architecture (culture, history)? If yes, have you met any connected difficulties?

22. Whether you are satisfied with results of your activity (improvement of housing conditions, growth of income of the enterprise installed, etc.)? If not, what were the basic reasons of incomplete success?

23. Do you feel yourselves protected enough, living (working, having this or that business) in the wooden house? If not, why? On your sight, how is it possible to correct this situation?

24. Do you need any help from the State or local authorities to maintain your house or to continue your activity on the restoration (modernization) of other historic wooden buildings of Gorodets?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND CO-OPERATION!

Identification questions (the following information will remain confidential):

Training/qualifications:

Job Title:

Age: Your sex: male female

Annex 3. Questionnaire for Swedish experts

QUESTIONNAIRE

SWEDISH WOODEN TOWNS' REVITALISATION: ACTORS, MECHANISMS, TECHNICS

Dear Sir, Madam,

Attached herewith is a questionnaire which has been sent to you because of your expertise in the field of urban heritage protection in Sweden, particularly in the revitalization of Swedish wooden towns.

The questionnaire is part of a research project on “Revitalization of historic wooden housing using local entrepreneurs’ capacity (cases of Sweden and Russia)” conducted by Andrey Ivanov, a Russian architect and urban developer, fellow at the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program, in the frame of his Master thesis’ elaboration in the Institute on Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Rotterdam and Lund University, Department of Housing Development & Management.

The aim of the project is to analyze the Swedish experience on wooden towns’ conservation in the 1970s to the 2000s in order to find the appropriate proper bottom-up mechanisms for the preservation of Russian historic wooden housing based on the capacity of the local entrepreneurs and all other actors involved.

Therefore, we would like to ask you to answer the questionnaire below to the very best of your ability and send it back by e-mail to the address andreyivanovarch@yahoo.com as soon as possible.

We would like to thank you for your invaluable co-operation.

Your sincerely,

Andrey Ivanov,
Architect, student of Master courses in Urban Development and Management, IHS Rotterdam – HDM, Lund University

Noted by:

Johnny Astrand,
Director of Housing Development & Management – HDM, Lund University

1. The following questions may be answered basing on your knowledge of general situation in the country or specific situation in certain cities/towns. Please specify the scope of your answers:

Swedish experience as a whole
experience of concrete places
which places in particular?

2. Which kind of urban activity seems to you most appropriate for defining the processes which has taken place in the Swedish wooden towns or historic areas of wooden development?

Delete the statements with which you do not agree. Please note that multiple answers are allowed.

revitalization
conservation
preservation
rehabilitation
others? Which?

Additional comments:

3. In your experience, who are the stakeholders who are most responsible for the realization of activities/projects for Swedish wooden towns/areas? Who is the main engine of the process?

Delete the statements with which you do not agree. Please note that multiple answers are allowed.

architects, planners

conservationists
local policy makers
local people
developers, investors, businessmen
others? Who?

Additional comments:

4. What types of obstacles were most impedimental for the process? Please indicate a value from “1” (minor obstacle) to “5” (major obstacle) for each type selected.

Delete the statements with which you do not agree. Please note that multiple answers are allowed.

economic (competition for land/property in urban wooden areas by stakeholders with diverging interests): ...
budgetary: ... (mark)
technical: ... (mark)
organizational: ... (mark)
social: ... (mark)
cultural (loss of skills to maintain wooden houses, lack of understanding of their historical values): ... (mark)
institutional: ... (mark)
political: ... (mark)
judicial: ... (mark)
others? Which?

Additional comments:

5. Does the conservation of historic urban wooden areas present specific problems in terms of the function of the towns?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

yes
no

6. If yes, what are the problems?

7. Which managerial factors are significant for the success?

8. What economic/financial mechanisms are used?

9. What participatory mechanisms are used?

10. Are there some special legal and/or planning procedure and tools elaborated on local level?

11. According to you, an experience of which Swedish towns in the historic wooden development's revitalization is most positive? May you specify some particular aspects of success gained on mentioned place?

12. Are you familiar with issues of reconstruction of historic wooden development in Russia or at least heard something about?

Delete as appropriate. Only one answer is allowed.

yes
no

13. If yes, which part of Swedish (and broader Nordic and Baltic countries) experience seems to be most instructive to help solve similar problems in actual Russian condition?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND CO-OPERATION!

Identification questions (the following information will remain confidential):

Training/qualifications:

Job Title:

City:

Annex 4. The town of Gorodets. Brief description and historical review³⁴

The town of Gorodets stands on the high left coast of the Volga in 70 km to the northwest of the regional centre of Nizhniy Novgorod and in 14 km to the west of the railway station of Zavolzh'ye. Gorodets is connected with Nizhny Novgorod by the river way on the Volga and by 2 motorways (through Zavolzh'ye, on a dam of hydroelectric power station, and through the village of Zinyaki). It is the district centre of the Nizhniy Novgorod region. Its population is 32 400 people (2003; it was 6 300 inhabitants in 1897, 11 200 in 1926, 35 200 in 1979).

Gorodets is the most ancient city of Nizhniy Novgorod region. It is accepted to consider 1152 the date of the town's foundation. For the first time Gorodets is mentioned in the annals in 1172 as an already existent fortress-town. Gorodets protected east borders of the Vladimir principality from the invasions of the Volga Bulgarians (Volga Bulgaria is an ancient state, situated in the territory of modern Chuvash and Tatar Republics). Before the foundation of Nizhniy Novgorod (1221) it was the main base station of Russian princes on the middle Volga region.

In February, 1238 Gorodets was ruined by the armies of the Mongolian khan Batiy.

Famous Russian prince Alexander the Nevsky has died here in 1263 in the St. Theodore Monastery, coming back to Vladimir from the Golden Horde.

In the end of the 13th c. Gorodets became the centre of the appanage principality, which was owned by Andrey Alexandrovitch, one of the sons of Alexander the Nevsky. During the years of his ruling Gorodets became an outstanding political centre, as important as Tver and Moscow. Then the town became the part of Great Nizhniy Novgorod principality.

In December, 1408 Gorodets was burnt by the army of Mongolian and Tatar khan Edighey. His invasion has struck the town terribly, and it could never recover from that. Gorodets lost the city status and disappeared from the political map of Russia.

In the 16th c. Gorodets was already known as a village of the Balakhna district of the Nizhniy Novgorod province.

In the 18th and the first half of the 19th cc. Gorodets was a rich commercial and industrial village known not only in the province, but also in the whole Volga region. The local inhabitants were going in for trade, shipbuilding, tanning manufacture, baking spice-cakes.

One of the main features of the economic life of Gorodets and its surrounding was the wide development of crafts. It was caused, on the one hand, by the poorness of the local sandy soil, on the other hand – by the riches of forest and the proximity to the Volga. The wood processing (manufacture of wooden dishes, spinning-wheels, sledges, etc.), ceramics, making of valenki (special warm shoes for winter period) were distributed most of all.

Together with those lines of business the folk arts and crafts developed. Relief wood carving and bright painting decorated not only Volga ships, but also dwelling houses and many goods of country life.

In the middle of the 19th c. because of the beginning of steamship era on the Volga and the abolition of serfdom, Gorodets entered a new period of the development. The village grew rich quickly owing to navigation and shipbuilding, and also bread market.

By the end of the 19th c. Gorodets was considered a village and was part of the Balakhna district. It was a crowded settlement – 6 330 inhabitants lived there according to the census of 1897.

The prosperity of merchant Gorodets was broken by the October revolution. Though in 1922 Gorodets received the status of the district city, nationalization of fleet and liquidation of

³⁴ Author's compilation based on materials of local museum (Erantsev 2005) and different sources from popular historical literature

private trade diminished its role in the economic life of the region greatly. However, despite of all the severities of the 20th c., the city could save its face. Gorodets is interesting with its architecture. As it was considered a village till the beginning of the 20th c., the centre of it doesn't look like other cities of old Russia. There is no usual town square with public offices and with streets fanning from it here. The layout of Gorodets is naturally attached to the landscape – to the lines of medieval ramparts still clearly visible, numerous descents and ravines, but first of all to the bank of the Volga. Gorodets faced the river – to the “main street of Russia”, as the Volga was called then. In its bottom part, at the coast, there was the market and the shipyard; and in the upland part of the village – in the area of the present Lenin Street, the Revolution Embankment and the Andrey Rublev Street – there had formed rich residential areas.

One of the important features of Gorodets is that the large role in its economic and cultural life in 19th – beginning of 20th cc. was played by the Old Believers. The Old Belief is one of the most complex and inconsistent phenomena in the Russian history. The occurrence of the Old Belief became a result of split in Russian Orthodox Church in middle 17th c. Gradually the Old Belief has turned to wide religious and public movement, opposing to the official church closely cooperated with the state.

A meaning of the Old Belief oversteps the limits of the church history as such. The active role of the Old Believers' merchants in development of Russian capitalism is well-known. The very important fact also is that they managed to protect norms and customs of old Russian life in spite of any persecutions and repressions from the government. Old Believers differed by deep conservatism: they were very thrifty and economical, observed strict norms of family life of the time before Peter the Great, order a church service in ancient manner, saved ancient icons and books. In the same time they were open to any new ideas in economic life and were rather efficient entrepreneurs. Old Believers were a numerous, rich and influential part of the Gorodets' population in pre-revolutionary time.

In the end of the 19th c. Gorodets acquired the features of the real merchant city. In its streets one can see many beautiful wooden and stone houses built in the second half of the 19th – in the first half of the 20th cc.

In the houses of the rich local peasants and merchants the features of urban and country architecture got mixed up. They are decorated with carved windows' framing, smoke bonnets and drainpipes made of dinking iron, wooden of forged gates, railing and porches.

One of the bright phenomena of local architecture is houses decorated with relief wood carving. It is typical for country buildings of the whole Volga region. 1850-70 are the period of its highest prosperity. In the end of the 19th c. the laborious relief carving is replaced by the cheaper through carving.

The distribution of relief carving in Gorodets and its outskirts was not casual. The technique of deep relief carving was widely applied at the decoration of the Volga ships. As the historians consider, when the construction of wooden ships was stopped (in middle of 19th c. they were replaced by steamships and barges), the carpenters switched over to the decoration of houses.

The relief carving is beautiful not only because of its deep relief, but also because of the unusual, fantastic plots. Fairytale birds of paradise called Sirin, fantastic fish with female heads (Pharaonka, or in other way, Bereguinya), and also smiling lions with magnificent manes one could see on frontal boards, windows framing, and on the top of gates. On pediment (frontal) boards the dates of construction, and sometimes surnames or initials of masters were cut out too.

Annex 5. Verbatim of the interviews with LE – owners of historic wooden houses in the town of Gorodets. July 2005³⁵

The interview with Mr. Krupinov Alexey Konstantinovitch, the owner of the house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 1. Gorodets, July 24, 2005 (Case 1)

“How old are houses there, in Sweden?

Our house is 150 years old. I opened [the casing of the walls] when I repaired the house and discovered that no details have been changed since then. And even the lowest rows of logs have never been replaced...

The matter is that now the atmosphere has a bad influence on trees, plants, animals, i.e. the timber is “blue” and unripe. And here I lowered the floor a bit, and here I had to hew the logs, so the axe sounded sonorous, it rebounded, and the timber was so red. There is no store nail, all are forged.

Now there are a lot of chemical goods all around, and the bad influence is great.

The thing is that trees breathe too, as well as people do, and now timber is different from what it was like some time ago.

When we bought this house, we made a toilet and a shower. The house still looked terrible, though we had already equipped it with all modern utilities. Now it is difficult to surprise anybody with that, but then it was 1983, and people came to our place and were surprised greatly.

Now we already have all conveniences in the new part of the house, but then everything was in the old part. And you see, some time ago there was neither heating, nor water pipe.

And the new shop and cafe are made of brick, and there wasn’t even an idea to build them of wood. It is because now timber is so bad, that you have to replace it in 30-40 years. Earlier there was lack of brick, and to let the house look made of stone, people face the wooden house with brick, there is a lot of examples here. People wanted their house to look expensive, and had to make the house warmer because of strong winds and severe winters.

Now we have a lot of work to do, our business is very large: the shop, the cafe ...

There were a lot of problems with the pond too – only in Russia it can be so: we could not open the café for 3 years, though the building was ready to work. It is because there are too many bureaucrats in our country. When the town needed us, because we gave money for all the town events, it was good. But when the town authorities understood we can develop our own business independently, they started to grudge giving us the land. If we give up looking after the pond, it will be polluted. When we began fencing it in, they made a complaint against us, calling us invaders. But we removed 20 lorries of garbage out of here...

...Many years ago different ceremonies were held there, boatings, it was the town skating rink, and it was called Tseremonovo boloto (the ceremonial pond). There was also the brass band and there was a public garden near it. It is not so necessary for us to spend so much money, but it is a pity if there is a rubbish heap near the cafe. And we want to leave something good after us. So that people could remember us kindly”.

The interview with Mr. Valeriy Petrovich Men’kov, the former 1st secretary of the Gorodets’ Committee of the CPSU, the owner of the house in the Andrey Roublev Street, 6. Gorodets, July 27, 2005 (Case 2)

“What were your motives to buy the house?”

I was the first in the region to change the flat in the stone house in Zavolzh’ye for the wooden house. In 1990 there appeared a decision permitting doing that.

[In wooden houses like this] there were only old people to stay in, who could not maintain their houses, and all that grew poor and ruinous.

And my wife and I both grew up in wooden houses. I grew up in the industrial settlement, in the wooden house I love very much, and every year I come there to make a bow. And my wife’s father burnt down in the wooden house in Zlatoust, there was the inheritance left. I told my wife: let’s swear that we shall move to a wooden house, let’s return to our hearth and home, why shall we live in the khrushcheby [*tenement houses built in the period of N.Khrushchev’s ruling?*]

Our flat was four-room, it is normal according to the views of Soviet people. But I’m fond of working with my own hands; it would be nice to have a workshop, a dog, a cat, so that it disturbed nobody and gave pleasure to all of us.

³⁵ Translation from Russian by V. Ivanova. The researcher’s remarks are in *italic*.

And we began to look for an exchange. Here there lived an old woman-pensioner and her son, who wasn't used to doing any work about the house. I suggested our changing the houses and they agreed at once to move to the centre of Zavolzh'ye, where the hospital and the dental surgery are near the house.

The condition of the house was not very good. It was built in 1923 by the countess Panina's forester, as they say, but it was already after the dethronement of the Soviet regime. No. of cause, I mean Tsar's regime. We are already confused, where, when and who was been dethroned, as in our Russia they often dethrone somebody.

My wife is a teacher, in summer she has a rest here, works in the garden and kitchen garden.

Well, I have re-planned everything in my own way at once and made an annex.

The conveniences are in the stone part, not in the wooden one, there is always dampness, you may spill something and that's not a good idea [to have the toilet and bathroom in wooden part].

I have made a boiler, and gas was laid last year. And the most important thing is that the workshop was built, as I am also an artisan. I have made all this myself, have bricked this fireplace. There is another fireplace in the house, I have made it out of the furnace, not absolutely successfully, and we use it sometimes, but rarely.

I have made as for myself, so to speak, I have preserved the furnace, because I have grown on the Russian furnace, have fallen from it many times my head first.

And to sleep in the wooden house [is wonderful]!... my grandchildren come to my place, when they are asleep – you can't wake them up. And try to sleep in the stone house – there it is impossible. Here it may be hot, and in the same time there is ventilation here – as the house breathes.

So, you are pleased, aren't you?

Well, not that word. My mother was angry with me, because we lived there as neighbors before, my father had died, the mum remained alone, and when we moved here, she told me I had abandoned her... Then she came here, I washed her in the bath, and she was happy... There is the one bath-house here, and there I have made another one for using in summer. Sometimes it is nice to change the conditions, and you may leave from house and go to another wooden house.

Certainly, it isn't easy to keep the house, even when you have more or less enough: money and your hands.

Here I paneled the front part of the house with [plastic] siding, now I am to brick the socle.

But why have you decided to decorate the house with siding, not with wooden planking?

I'm tired of painting, as in sunlight paint keeps for 3 years at the most. If it is of high quality, then for 4-5 years at the most. Well, here it is already peeling off.

But in Sweden you wouldn't be allowed to decorate the house with siding...

Ha ha, now we are still masters here, not Swedes. When the Swedes invade the country, and they may invade it once, then... will see...

...Once I was the head of the Gorodets district, and when we felt that the Soviet regime is coming to the end, and we had felt that long before, that we are going the wrong way, are doing wrong things, in 1984 we organized the first holiday – the Day of the Ancient Town.

And in two years Genadiy Zyuganov came here... then he was in the propaganda department, worked under Yakovlev's command and was a deputy head of the sector of the ideology department of the Central Committee of the CPSU. He walked together with me about the town the whole day, saw that all inhabitants, about 30 thousand people, went out to meet the prince – founder of our town, the streets were tidied up, stained, the wells were smartened.... And ... the next year there appeared the similar Day of the city of Moscow. Well, so it was. Then Zyuganov in Moscow – they felt too, that there will be a failure [of the Soviet regime] - now they had to do something with the people, to convert them to the history, to the antiquity, because they couldn't convert people to the communist belief any longer... And they have managed to convert, but ... it was already too late.

... This part [of the town] – it is reserved, you know, but, certainly, they keep all this in the Russian way. And it is necessary to tell, that Russian people were used to building houses in a very thrifty way: small accurate windows, accurate, so to speak. And what is there now? Especially Russians have a habit ...

... And I wouldn't say guys, who have much money, move to the ancient part, they build their houses on the outskirts that where hardly anybody can see them, and those houses are ugly; the owners DO NOT LIVE IN THEM! Here Drugaev has built the house and does not live in it, and I do not even know, how many millions he has put up in it. But he has bought the wooden house in the Zagorodnaya street, there is a kitchen garden there, potatoes and everything, there he lives and enjoy it, but in that stone house he does not live.

So, when he got much money for the first time, it seemed to him he was very rich but then he came back; but – all people are different... to someone it is pleasant to walk up and down in 300 square meters.

Well, here [in the historical part] they really must have some restrictions, probably, they do have them: they can not build a big house, should not have an opportunity to do that...

And there are restrictions, indeed, but everyone here evades the restrictions, builds something on... And you should understand that not everyone will agree to live in the house he has got – in the hundred-year-old house. Here you must think somehow, it is impossible to approach it so hard. The Swedes, they are such a sort of people, and they build in such a way...

...By the way, my homeland, I am from ... [*indecipherably*] district, there is such a place there- Panzelka. It is forestry. There the windows in our house are twice as large as these ones.

In the old house?

Yes. But why? PAN-zelka. Pan. A Pole got there once. And he made everybody there build everything- offices, houses, everything with large windows. So the houses are... If a Pole or Swede comes, he does everything in his own way, and a Russian, he always makes windows... in the dimension of a bull bladder. ... Yes, so it is warmer, is completely right".

Excursion round the plot: according to author's estimation the size is about 1200 m² – the owner has confirmed it; we have seen the unfinished pool...; the second wooden house in a back part of the site, with wooden bathroom; the second garage with entrance from parallel streets. Then we continued in the main house: the large drawing room in an old part of a house decorated with wood carving made according the owner's drawings, with a fireplace; inhabited loft with billiards, bath-room in the 1st floor, large cellar. In the brick garage adjoining to the old house – the automobile by the size of the microbus, with an emblem of competition of self-made automobiles in Nizhniy Novgorod in 2003 – "It was me who this competition organized, it was my project".

"It is my self-made automobile. I have made it also as a part of the house, have a look – here there is carving, the emblem of Gorodets, here is Bereginya [a water-nymph who is considered the amulet saving from evil] protecting it..."

...Would you like some tea?

And from the outside house looks small. There are only three windows and that's all. And you say, we should keep everything. How can we keep anything here, when we want to have everything: both that, and the other, and the third one".

The interview with Mr. Vladimir Andreevich Volkov, brother of the owners of the house in the Revolutsii Embakment Street, 8. Gorodets, July 27, 2005 (Case 3)

"...But I am building a stone house, anyway it will also be in the style of Gorodets – that is with all these rustication, other small details, with all these things..."

I have its appearance's approval from Nizhny Novgorod's; the house will be two-storied...

I am putting it directly on the place of the old previous house...

But didn't you want to buy an old house like your brother?

I have bought the wooden house too... But it was so strange – there had been a provincial hospital there earlier, the log house, and it was built in 1950's, i.e. it was of no historical value, and joisting were rotten... And I decided to build a new house...

...My brother has just left for Sweden for holiday... but these Swedes certainly build in their own way there... You see, my brother's house is *rather* wooden too, what year it was built in...

Oh yes, that unintelligible inscription there [on the facade of the house the carved designation of the year of construction – 1864 – is kept where by tradition of Old Believers figures are designated by letters]

But why, it is intelligible [tries to remember, deciphers from memory]: "one" is an "A", "four" is a "snake"... [But nevertheless fails to decipher it up to the end]

His house is logged, and the bottom rows are not rotten yet, they nearly ring, that is because the wood isn't bled. And the extension he has made of stone however. There was the old wooden carved gate there, but the previous owners broke it and built an ordinary garage of white brick, my brother broke it and made it of red brick, put this forged gate...

He also submitted it to Mr. Petrov's in Nizhniy approval...

Also what is there in the wooden part?

But all the wooden part is only 20 square meters and that's all. There is only the dining-room, and the ceiling is so low ...

But we were told he has bought it for the sake of the view of Volga...

Well it's true, he has really bought the house because of it, but the better view of Volga is now from the library, in the new part...

And I hoped however there would be a wooden house here [saying goodbye]

Unfortunately, there won't..."

The interview with anonymous, the owners of the house in the Alexander Nevsky Street, 20. Gorodets, July 24, 2005 (Case 4)

It was informal interview in the mode of free talk during excursion round the house. Nina Nikolaevna, our guide from the town administration, participated also.

There is a repair in the house; there are building materials, paint all around and inside, a mess and special repair atmosphere... According to the traces, there was recently small fire in a lateral part of a house (verandah).

The owner of the house and his wife (mistress) together:

“...And is the house old?

The house is old.

Have you bought it?

We haven't, it's ours own, and we've inherited it from our great-grandmothers...

And how old is it?

It will be 100 in 2006.

And you want to repair it by its centenary, don't you?

Yes, we do.

Walking about the house – only the mistress:

So, nobody lives in the house now, does he?

Yes.

Do you have another place to live in?

Certainly, we do. And this house we have got after our great-grandmothers. You see, the furniture is centenarian and the mirrors are centenarian too. We constantly find coins here, silver coins.

You see, how open, trimmed and clean the wood is, they only rubbed it, only washed [never painted].

Now a carpenter is working at our place, he says the wood is 100 years old already, but it has kept so well! White, clean – very good.

Look, what the mirrors are! And there is a buffet here!

And how wonderful the furnace is! They [the first owners] were rich, were engaged in tea production.

But the furnace cannot be restored, it does not work – we will strip it down in the course of time...

There are even tiles here – they made ornamental pattern like groove... it is a very expensive variant, it is visible a very skilful stove-setter made it...

Well, you really live in a museum, don't you?

Yes, we do, we have trunks, fur coats and sheepskin coats, they wrapped themselves in it then... and there are chairs remained, the ancient Viennese chairs ... how old they are, but they are still in use... you see, we climb on them...

And here is a spiral stairs over there – there the servants lived so as not to bring dust in the house ...

And are the ceilings high enough?

They are high, yes, they are high...

Well, low ceilings were in poor houses, whose owners had decided to buy fewer logs.

How will you use the house, when you finish the repair? Will you live in it?

We'll move here once. Our son will marry, we'll leave the flat for him – and we will move.

And you have even a kitchen garden, don't you?

Oh, our kitchen garden is very large... Everything is large here at our place... The bath-house over there is very large; the hothouse is large (*points out in the direction of the farthest side of the garden*).

And what is it, is it gas?

Yes, it is gas.

But why the pipes are above the ground?

But it is cheaper. In the ground it is very expensive... So as not to dig... First, everybody has a kitchen garden, and it is so as not to break them. Well, and to dig it is very expensive...

The mistress shows ancient coins, found in the house.

We look at the basement rooms, where servants lived... and the spiral stairs.

Will you use it?

We won't, we no longer need it...

But where the servants will live (a joke)?

The servant [now] is the wife [*laughing*].

And here we are restoring, there was a wood carving here, and we are restoring ... Look: a vase with flowers...

The owner Sergey: Shows several variants of the ornamental pattern – the new items are being carved exactly per sample of the old ones.

We are not worse than the Swedes are [*laughing*]

Is there a special carver in Gorodets?

But there are plenty of them in Gorodets...

And is the carving expensive as it turns out?

Yes, it is expensive, because it is linden!

Do you will remove all carving?

But why should we remove all – only where it is absent...

And how did they do earlier, did they impregnate it with something?

With oil. They did not paint carving... Well, one day we will understand, will find it out.

And will you leave the roofing slate?

We won't, probably it will be iron... We will see...

And don't you know whether your house is an architectural monument or not?

We do not know, it is interesting for us too, but if there would be some paper...

The carved gate was here... (*Gate is not kept, on its place there is a garage made of white silicate brick with blind metal doors*).

Well, you will be told at once (if it is a monument): to restore that gate.

Nina Nikolaevna: But why, they won't, they will be only forced to restore what has really remained... *[calming]*

Sergey: Well, yes, they won't help us, but they will force us... *[sarcastically]*

Nina Nikolaevna, answering my question what Sergey is occupied with: "I do not know, but when there is some event, he walks with his camera, shoots films of everybody..."

Annex 6. The town of Eksjö. Brief description and historical review³⁶

The town of Eksjö with a population about 9 700 is situated on the highlands of province of Småland, in the south part of Sweden in between of Stockholm and Malmö (308 and 311 km correspondingly). It is main settlement of the municipality of Eksjö with approximately 16 600 inhabitants (data on the 31 December 2004).

The city emerged as a centre for the oxen trades but never really prospered and remained a small town until a heath outside the town became the point of assembly for the Smalandia Regiment (Smålands Regemente). Eksjö's economy was based not only on trade with the surrounding rural areas, but also included an extensive beef trade with the mining regions west and northwest of Stockholm, and, consequently, a continuous transit trade of iron, tobacco and other imported goods.

Up until the 1600's, Småland was a border area between Sweden and Denmark. Military units were based in Eksjö already in the late Middle Ages, and its presence is clearly evident in the town character and traditions up until today. The city continued to be in the centre of military establishments, with the coming of the engineering battalion and the Hussars of Smalandia, hence the lack of large industrial establishments.

But most of all the town is known due to its unique wooden buildings. Eksjö and the wooden part of the town called the Old Town (Gamla stan) were awarded the Europa Nostra Diploma for 1997. This prestigious honor is a reward for good architectural and cultural preservation.

The town of Eksjö most likely appeared sometime in the Middle Ages when it was the centre for the thing, a regional council. The town was first mentioned in written records in 1406, and most probable it received its town charter a few years earlier during the reign of Erik of Pommern. In Eksjö the road between the important cathedral cities of Linköping, in the north, and Växjö and Kalmar, in the south, merged with the road from Västergötland, the western county bordering to Norway, to the Baltic Sea coast, in the east. The town became a natural meeting place for trade and legal proceedings. At this time, the town was located 500 m southwest of the present-day church site. There is not know very much about the medieval Eksjö since neither written nor archaeological sources provide any clear information.

In the 16th c. it was one of the six Swedish cities in the historical province of Småland, together with Jönköping, Kalmar, Vimmerby, Västervik, and the seat of the diocese: Växjö. After the crowning of King Gustav Vasa in the 1520's, the Smalandian revolutionary Nils Dacke led riots and revolts in the area for a few years, supported by locals of the province, including in Eksjö. After having killed Dacke, Eksjö was one of the locations the King let put up body parts of Dacke, to quench any notions of new uprising. Perhaps this was the reason why Gustav Vasa eventually revoked the charter of Eksjö in 1544.

During the Nordic Seven Years' War, in February 1568, the Danish army was retreating through Småland. In order to make it difficult for the Danes to find food, the people of Eksjö set their town on fire. In the spring of 1568, king Erik XIV gave order that the town should be rebuilt, but on its present-day location around the old parish church. The royal Flemish palace builder, Arendt de Roy, was instructed to draw up a new town plan for Eksjö.

The asymmetrical town plan which today is characteristic of Gamla stan, the town district north of Stora Torget (The Big Town Square), is almost entirely based on this original plan. An additional district was added to the north of this in the 1600's. After that, the size of the town remained, for the most part, unchanged until the end of the 1800's. Of special interest is the fact that the northern section of the town has never suffered any devastating fires. As a

³⁶ Author's compilation based on materials from Internet ([; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eksj%C3%B6_Municipality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eksj%C3%B6_Municipality)) and popular tourist brochures available in English.

result, there is a continuity in the structure of the buildings, from the time of their construction to the present-day. The original town plan and property structures are intact as well. This is a unique situation for a Swedish town consisting of old wooden houses.

The buildings in the old town are today one of Sweden's best examples of a well-preserved wooden town and are a unique cultural treasure.

The Old Town contains a total of 56 listed buildings. Today 400 years of architectural history can be studied in the original late medieval town plan. Many of the houses and courtyards there stem from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Here there are good examples of trade and merchant dwellings from the 17th – 19th centuries e.g. Aschanska gården (Aschan House) and Krusagården as well as craftsmen's dwellings such as Fornminnesgården (Local History Museum) and Johan Biörnsgård. They are well preserved both inside and out.

Like many other Swedish towns it was struck by fire in the 19th c., with the southern half of the town burned down in 1856. In 1857 a new town plan for the southern district of Eksjö was agreed upon. The change was extensive, and the district was, in accordance with the ideals of the time, given a strict right-angled square plan that allowed an abundance of light and air into the broad streets.

The southern end of town is a well preserved example of town structure of the second half of the 19th c.

In the town's beautiful Main Square the Old Town with its late medieval town plan meets the neo-classical town plan of the 1800's. To the west can be seen the former Town Hall, now the town hotel. To the east is Eksjö Church with its tower from the 18th century.

The tragedy of devastating fire of 1856 would later be of great importance for the preservation of the remaining, northern part of Eksjö. A visitor to Eksjö, in the 1870's, praised the new southern district for its wide and roomy sidewalks, while the old northern district (Gamla stan) was negatively described as having crooked narrow streets and dark alleys. Those governing at this time shared this opinion, which was expressed in a new town plan for the north in 1877. The plan proposed, without any regards to existing buildings, that the southern town districts right-angled square plan should continue to the northern district. Fortunately, the plan was modified so that instead of paving the way for changes, it preserved Gamla stan. One of the most important factors in the preservation of Eksjö was that the rebuilding of the southern town district required all the available financial resources in Eksjö up until 1890.

In the spirit of the time, the congregation in Eksjö allowed the gloomy medieval parish church to be torn down in 1887. A new, light, and airy church was built to take its place. But soon the people of Eksjö began to miss the old church with its rich interior decorations from the baroque period. Gradually the interior details were gathered and put into the new church. The tearing down of the old church prompted an interest, among Eksjö's more influential citizens, in the values of the town's traditions, structure and buildings. In 1896 the work was started on a new town plan, which was first accepted in 1924. The existing buildings in the northern district were taken into account in the extensive expansion of the planned area.

In 1911, when one of Eksjö's most valuable buildings, Vaxblekargården (the Wax Bleachers House), was to be renovated, the concerned townspeople formed a community association. The association would have significant importance for the preservation of Eksjö's buildings and cultural history. Around 1930, Nordiska Museet (the Nordic Museum) in Stockholm studied Eksjö, taking photographs and measurements of many houses. It can be said, with good reason, that as early as the first decades of the 1900's, there was a considerable popular interest in the preservation issues in Eksjö.

In 1945 there were extensive plans to tear down an old tradesman's house (Krusagården) that dated back to the 1600's, in order to build modern business premises. Due to a strong popular opinion and the intervening of one of the town's builders the house was instead renovated. In 1963 the town architect prevented the demolition of an entire block in Gamla stan. The intention was to build a department store on the site.

Today, Eksjö's northern town district, Gamla stan, is entirely and reverently renovated, as a result of individual property owners' awareness of that the cultural heritage must be managed. Gamla stan in Eksjö is a unique and coherent town of well preserved wooden buildings.

It is not by chance that Eksjö's unique town plan and architecture is in the European spotlight. The Europa Nostra award was the first stepping stone towards the town's 600th anniversary in 2003. It is likely that there will be a great deal of interest shown in this unique wooden town in the intervening years. Tourists and other visitors see Eksjö as an exciting place to visit which has now come even more into focus as a result of international interest.

Although Eksjö is best known for the wooden houses in the old town and as a military town, it also has a vigorous economy. The local economy mostly consists of small businesses like wood processing, production of timber-frame houses, manufacture of metal goods, newspaper distribution and paint and dye manufacture. The municipality also has several large sawmills. Recently a new resource centre has been started in Eksjö, whose activities include university level courses in building conservation.