

Claessons Trätjärä and the Ringön urban transformation site

2014-03-28 Application for seed money

Claessons Trätjärä in Gothenburg clearly stands out in the Ringön industrial site both as a place to visit and as a repository of skills. Throughout the Nordic countries it is considered a fine market for products and know-how necessary for skilled renovation work and the transformation of urban built environments into heritage ones. While being part of a wide network of heritage actors, and constantly widening its sortiment of products, Claessons can be understood as an offspring from what Nigel Thrift has described as the 'urban glue' in which the general population is involved in 'activities of repair and maintenance' (Bohlin, 2013:6). But besides having established a secure position in the heritage market, the Claessons Trätjärä shop in Ringön stands out in a different sense too – deviant as it is from a neighbourhood of haphazard small firms, rundown industrial sheds and battered harbour docks from the 1930s.

This proposal aims toward a pilot study of Claessons Trätjärä, firstly as a heritage business and network in the market of restoration know-how and products; secondly "place-wise", as an attraction point and deviating establishment in a centrally located industrial site in the Gothenburg harbour. Is Claessons perhaps a lackmus that reveals ongoing gentrification processes, or is it rather a unique example of an ermine that has come to thrive among cats?

Methods and theory

More precisely, I aim to spend a couple of weeks looking into the empirical case in parallell with a limited number of theoretical concepts, with the objective of identifying and formulating creative research questions. The outcome will be presented in the form of an abstract for a research project and/or paper to the NSBB 2014 conference in Tallin (<http://www.ttu.ee/projects/nsbb14/>), in addition to a seminar in the Urban Heritage Cluster (by August 2014).

Methodologically I will approach the case inductively, whilst at the same time trying to disclose my own existing preconceptions. Thus, on-site investigations of the urban area and the Claessons Trätjärä physical shop in parallell with existing municipal and academic documents about Ringön as a site for urban transformations, will be used as starting point for the survey. This while theoretical concepts such as 'urban glue' from Thrift and Foucault's elusive concept heterotopia will be studied, tried and utilized quite freely with the ambition to help demarcate and theoretically contextualize the empirical yields of the case.

Referenser

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