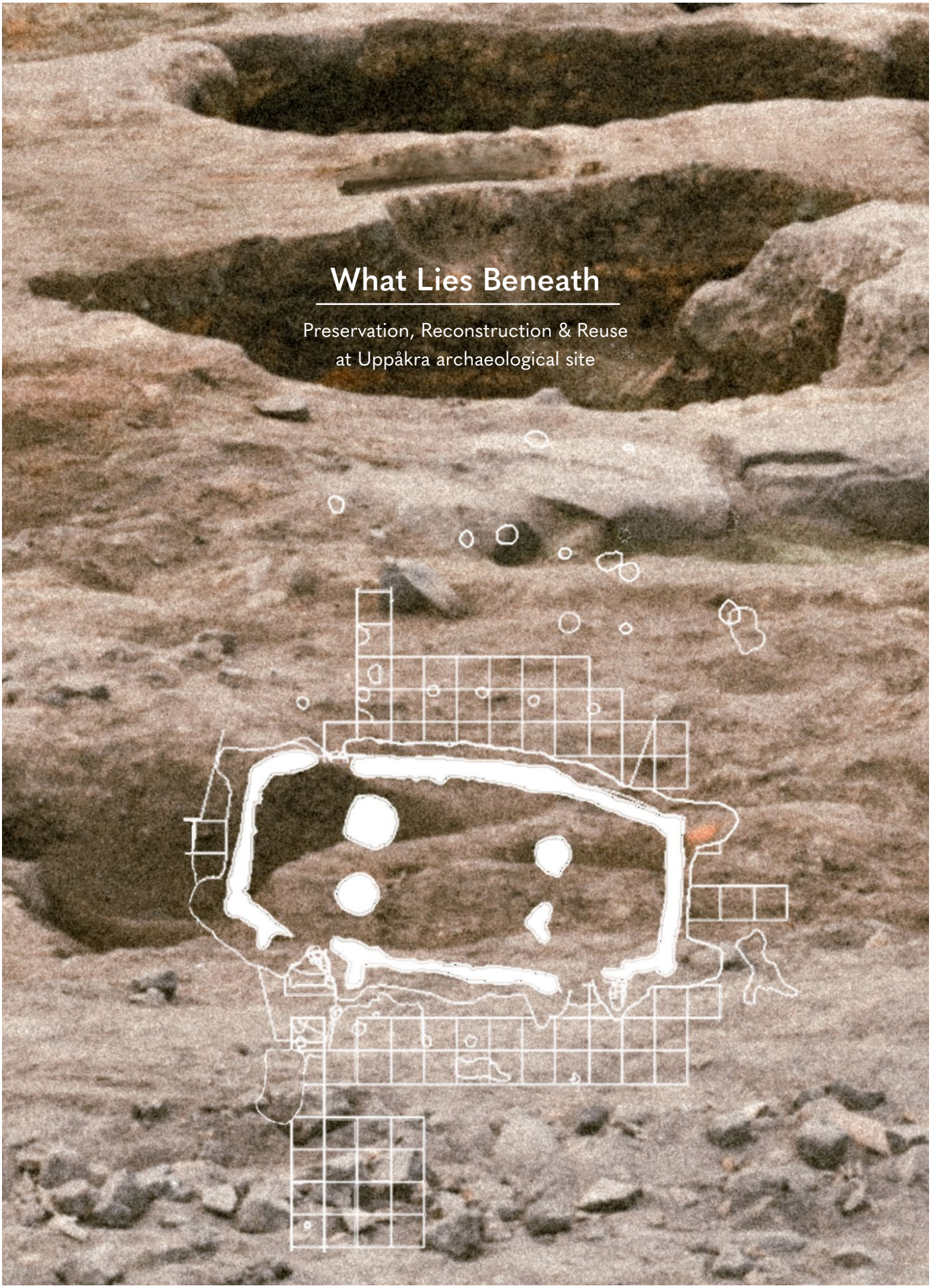
What Lies Beneath

Preservation, Reconstruction & Reuse
at Uppåkra archaeological site



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Husen, dem vi bebo
äro urtidskojor i jämförelse med
den conception av en människoboning
vi bära inom oss.

Edith Södergran 1919

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Abstract

Next to a barn on the Scanian countryside, beneath the wheat-fields around the village of Uppåkra, lies the remains of an ancient Scandinavian power-centre. In the 2000s an impressive temple was unearthed, currently a large hall is being excavated. The rest of the settlement lies untouched, still buried in the soil.

Since the inception of the conservation-field in the mid-1800s, the discipline has battled with a central question: Should we restore objects to its former glory, or preserve heritage in its present state, to display the passage of time? The answer either lands at: restoration, preservation, or somewhere in between.

The thesis explores this spectrum of views on conservation, using the design of an archaeological centre at Uppåkra as a testbed for three approaches: Restoration through the reconstruction of a temple, preservation through protection of excavated remains, and the mix of these through the transformation of an old barn into a museum for found artefacts.

The design departs from collecting, mapping, and representing the local archaeology. Together with research on similar typologies and conservation approaches.

The thesis hinges around the span between abstraction and realism in reconstruction practices, exemplified by the abstraction of Venturi, Scott Brown's "Ghost House" reconstruction of Franklin Court in Philadelphia, USA (1976), and the realism of Jan Gezelius' reconstruction of Eketorps Fornborg on Öland (1984). While Venturi & Scott Brown's project renders the massing as an "abstract" framework to reflect a lack of source material, Gezelius does the opposite, creating a "realistic" interpretation, filling knowledge-gaps with educated guesses.

The thesis illustrates how the history of Uppåkra can be communicated beyond the tools of a conventional museum. By erecting an excavation-shelter that showcases the archaeological process, engaging visitors in conservation work in a transformed barn and enabling them to imagine past structures through an abstract reconstruction.

Unlike previous proposals for the site, the design leaves the area largely undisturbed, enabling future excavations. By reusing existing structures and carefully placing new ones on top of past excavations. It suggests a new direction for the tradition of archaeological centres in Sweden.

Keywords: Archaeology, Preservation, Conservation, Restoration, Adaptive Reuse,

Introduction

The Swedish tradition of Archaeology and Architecture

There is a strong tradition of creating archaeological centres of high architectural value in Sweden, from Jan Gezelius "Eketorps fornborg", Månssson & Dahlbäcks Vasa-museum, to Carl Nyréns Uppsala Museum and Gunnar Mattssons Birka-museum. Even though they weren't designed to be what we today call "sustainable" they have a lot of aspects of a sustainable building. Characterised by timber constructions, low-tech and with no unnecessary climate zones. Most importantly, they all show a deep respect for the surrounding environment and the site, which permeates these designs.

Despite these qualities the projects are however, a product of their time. Most of them were, to some extent, influenced by regional criticism and Gezelius's own "libertarian tradition".

Whilst these theories delve deep into local/global-relation, context and the genius loci, they are mainly focused on the aesthetic and humanistic aspects of architecture, not necessarily its environmental impact.

The projects don't approach architecture with regards to the demands of the climate crisis of today. The thesis investigates how this tradition can be carried forward in a contemporary context, tackling problems that plague the current building industry.

Fig. 1a Gamla Uppsala Museum by Carl Nyrén, Credit: Pudelek. CC BY-SA 4.0

Fig. 1b Birka Museum by Gunnar Mattsson Credit: Krister Berggren (used with permission)

Fig. 1c Vasaship Museum by Månssson & Dahlbäck Credit: Bengt Lundberg CC BY 2.5

Fig. 1d Eketorps Fornborg by Jan Gezelius, Credit:Jan Norrman. CC BY 2.5

Fig. 02 "You are welcome to browse"

A future cultural Wasteland?

Sweden is currently experiencing a crisis of cultural funding. In a time where even the National museum needs to keep closed to save on costs, (Hedström, 2023), the media has started to talk about a "culture-death" (Magnusson, 2023).

Long gone are the days of the "Folkhemmet", when Sweden was heralded as the one of the prime examples of public investments in the cultural sector.

If the financial landscape of the past years is solidified into the new normal, cultural buildings of the next generation will require new approaches to promote culture, and the architecture of what we today call "high culture" might need to draw inspiration from the fringes of the culture industry.

Since the last archaeological museum was built in Sweden, museums all over the world has increasingly "opened up" the workings to the institutions to the visitor: the collections are shown en masse, almost as in storage, and activities such as conservation can be viewed, and engaged with (Hale et al., 2012).

The thesis intends to create a "unstaged" and open museum by showing the whole archaeological process: showcasing an open excavation, letting the visitors play an active role in object care, reconstructing remains in full scale, and lastly to exhibit the curated finds in an informal setting.

Fig. 03 Uppåkra

Uppåkra Archaeological Site

Below the unassuming village of Uppåkra in Skåne lies the ancient remains of a 1000-year-old settlement, once a great power-centre in Northern Europe. Today the area is remarkably unexcavated, as Winge (2023) writes: “only 0.2% of Uppåkra has been excavated so far, generations to come will see the history of Scandinavia being written and rewritten”.

The site sits on a hill near Uppåkra Church, outside of Lund in Southern Sweden. Overlooking the surrounding wheat fields, the area has always been dependent on agriculture. Today however, many of the old barns are underused.

The fertile soil of Uppåkra was the basis for the wealth of the iron-age aristocracy at Uppåkra, who during a 700-year period grew the settlement to a size of 80 football-fields, traded goods from as far away as the middle-east, and built themselves grand temples and halls (Winge, 2023).

Despite past efforts to build a centre for research and exhibitions, Uppåkra currently only contains a small visitor centre and no found objects are on display at the site. The important artefacts are exhibited in Lund and Stockholm.

Aim and Purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to explore, through the design of an archaeological centre, how themes such as reconstruction, preservation and adaptive reuse can influence and guide architecture to communicate the histories of an archaeological-site. Whilst designing a building that is caring, and respectful of the environment, its context, and especially the archaeological remains.

The aim of the thesis is to contribute with a comment on the discourse surrounding archaeological museums and shelters. As well as the Swedish culture industry and conservation-field a large.

With the broader intention of affecting you, the reader, to reflect on how we handle our built environment, and cultural heritage.

Research Questions

How can architecture aid to communicate information and histories about cultural remains, artefacts and the archaeological process?

How can a caring, emphatic and informed architecture at Uppåkra archaeological site be achieved, by basing the design on relevant theories on conservation, and prior projects of the same character?

Delimitations

Even though the thesis touches upon themes such as cultural heritage, sustainability and financial feasibility, the project is intended to be read as a speculative piece of work promoting a new way of thinking about conservation, reuse, and sustainable architecture.

Therefore quantitative methods such as archaeological impact assessments, LCA and cost-calculations are out of the scope of the thesis. Furthermore, the project is strictly focused on the Archaeological site at Uppåkra and does not handle the village and its rural/suburban context.

The feasibility of the project is not investigated, with the argumentation that the proposed design is smaller in size and scope to previous feasibility studies.

Even tough future excavations at the site are likely, the thesis does not propose a design for the sheltering of these future digs. With the argumentation that this would require a modular shelter. A topic which was extensively covered in a prior thesis on Uppåkra by Tobias Wihl (Wihl, 2020). Furthermore, the topic of modularity is opposed to the site- specific and emphatic approach outlined by the research questions.

Dictionary

- Replica
  A reconstruction of an object where no physical remains exists.

- Realistic reconstruction
  A reconstruction striving for full realism. Often based on extrapolation and educated guesses.

- Abstract reconstruction
  A reconstruction avoiding guesses and estimations, showing only what is known from the source material.

- Archaeological centre
  A complex at an archaeological site. Housing museum, research facilities and sometimes exhibition of building remains.

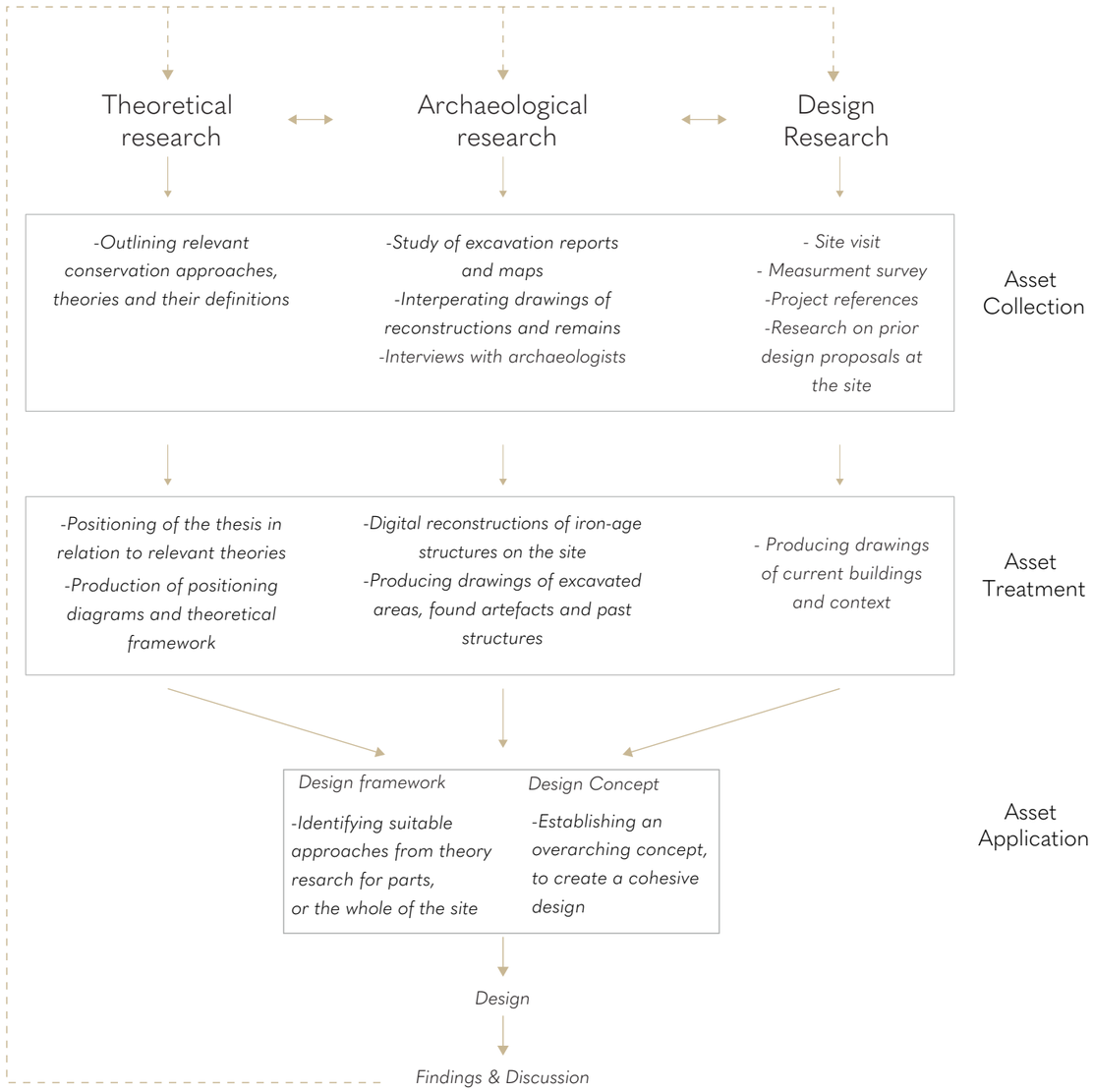
- Fidelity
  Level of detail of a reconstruction.

- Graphical dictionary

  Archaeological remains, artefacts and past structures

  Current buildings and objects on the site

  The designed additions and interventions proposed in the thesis



Method

The thesis methodology was predominantly based on Research by design. The initial research was classified into three main fields: 1) archaeological reports and surveys of the site, 2) Research on conservation theory and 3) research on the current site conditions and architectural projects of similar typologies, such as shelters, reconstructions and museums. Within each of these three areas of research, data was collected, treated, then applied.

Asset Collection

Processing a wide range of information of different types and from different fields, the collection phase narrowed down the scope of the research to the three fields stated above, to allow for a better structure and focus of the thesis. The phase involved both collecting pre-existing information from research-papers and reports, as well as collecting new data from methods such as site-visits and surveys.

Asset Treatment

To provide sufficient context of the site, and the archaeological work undertaken, the collected data was sorted, and the relevant information was illustrated through drawings and diagrams. With the intention to allow the reader to better understand the design decisions, by being provided with information on past and current context. This visualisation of data was not only used to inform the reader of the project but was also to act as a tool to develop knowledge by reflecting on the collected material, since the act of illustrating itself demands selecting and prioritizing.

Asset Application

These knowledge gained from the treatment-phase allowed for connections and conclusions to be drawn between: references, theory and context, and was used to outline a design framework. The theories were applied to relevant parts of the site, where values connected to different theories could be found. The design implications of applying these theories to the site where then pinpointed. Simultaneously a design concept was created, to conceive a cohesive design of the whole centre. With the help of the concept and framework, different design permutations were tested on different scales as a way of finding solutions that align with the research questions, with the main goal of adding to the discourse that the thesis is positioned in.

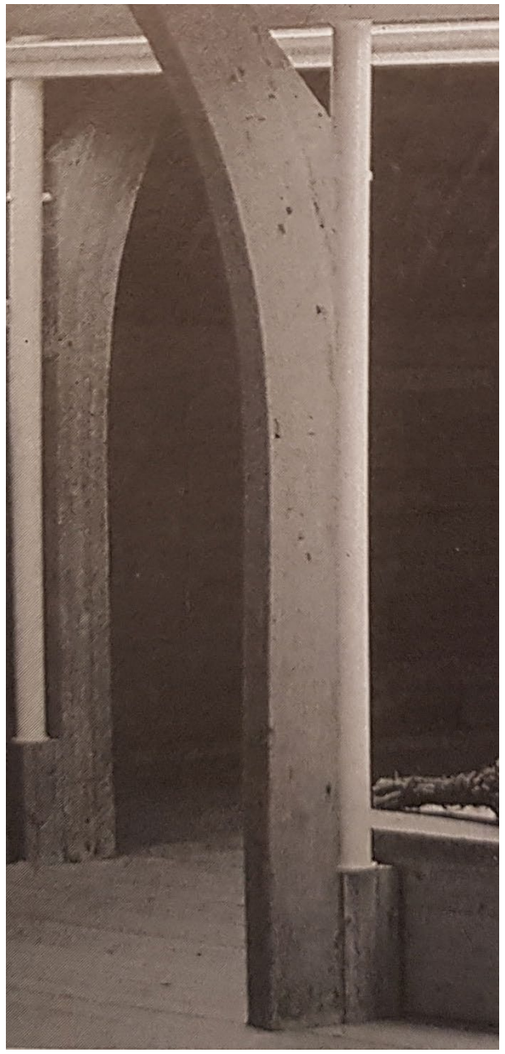


Fig. 04 Eketorps fornborg by Jan Gezelius.
Credit: Ulf Janson (used with permission)

Fig. 05 S. Maria della Place by Donato Bramante
Credit: Ulf Janson (used with permission)

Method Reference: Translating design

References for how to translate past and present structures is prevalent in the design of Eketorps Fornborg (by Jan Gezelius) and Gamla Uppsala museum (Carl Nyrén). Interestingly though, their design is not only influenced by the remnants on the site, but from places and times far removed from the context.

In his thesis "Vägen till verket" Ulf Janson (1998a) describes a conversation with Jan Gezelius on the design process of the columns at Eketorps Fornborg. Gezelius describes how he got the idea of putting the columns on a pedestal from Bramante:

"To see *something* as *something else*, its similarities and differences with the current context is probably the central aspect of the architect's competence".

The designs are, at first glance very different, However studying the columns side by side, a subtle connection can be seen (fig 04-05).

As for the case of Carl Nyrén, Coates (2007) discusses how the curved walls of both Tanum rock-carving museum and Gamla Uppsala museum, might have been derived from Viking boats depicted in the rock and the mounds at Gamla Uppsala.

However, the only clearly stated reference in Nyréns two museums are the windows at Gamla Uppsala, which replicates the window shape of the Melnikov house (Coates, 2007).

What these buildings have in common is how the translations have been executed in a pragmatic manner, with regards to the site, material, available skill and economy.

In the design chapter of this thesis, this method of distinguishing and distilling the qualities of certain elements and translating them to the current context will be used. With the intention to prevent the referential design-aspects being perceived as superficial rather than thoughtful and empathetic, which is the focus of the research questions.

Fig. 06 Ongoing excavation at Uppåkra

Theory

Architecture and Archaeology are both inherently destructive in their nature. Buildings use land, material and displaces soil to make room for the building. Excavations disrupt the soil of earlier cultural layers to reach what we, at the moment deem interesting, often destroying "not-interesting" layers in the process.

The common theme of theories presented in this chapter is that they, in different ways, try to achieve care and respect for the existing, to counteract or minimize destruction or degradation. In short, all the theories are part of the field of conservation.

Before the 19th century, the conservation of built heritage was unexpressed, and driven by economic and pragmatic needs. Conservation theory begins with the English Arts and Crafts-movement and the French Gothic revival. The figureheads of these two movements, John Ruskin and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, were detrimentally opposed.

Viollet-le-Duc proposed a full restoration with plenty of room for interpretation whilst Ruskin propagated preservation in its extreme, fearing interventions that puts the building's historical value at risk (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019).

Their views still define the field of conversation, as Munoz-Vinas (2012) puts it: "they have become icons of a sort, symbolizing two extreme attitudes about conservation, from the most restrictive to the most permissive. Later theorists have oscillated between these extremes, with some added principles thrown in."

How come that the stances of these very first theoreticians are still debated today? Could it be that different pros and cons can be found in their values?

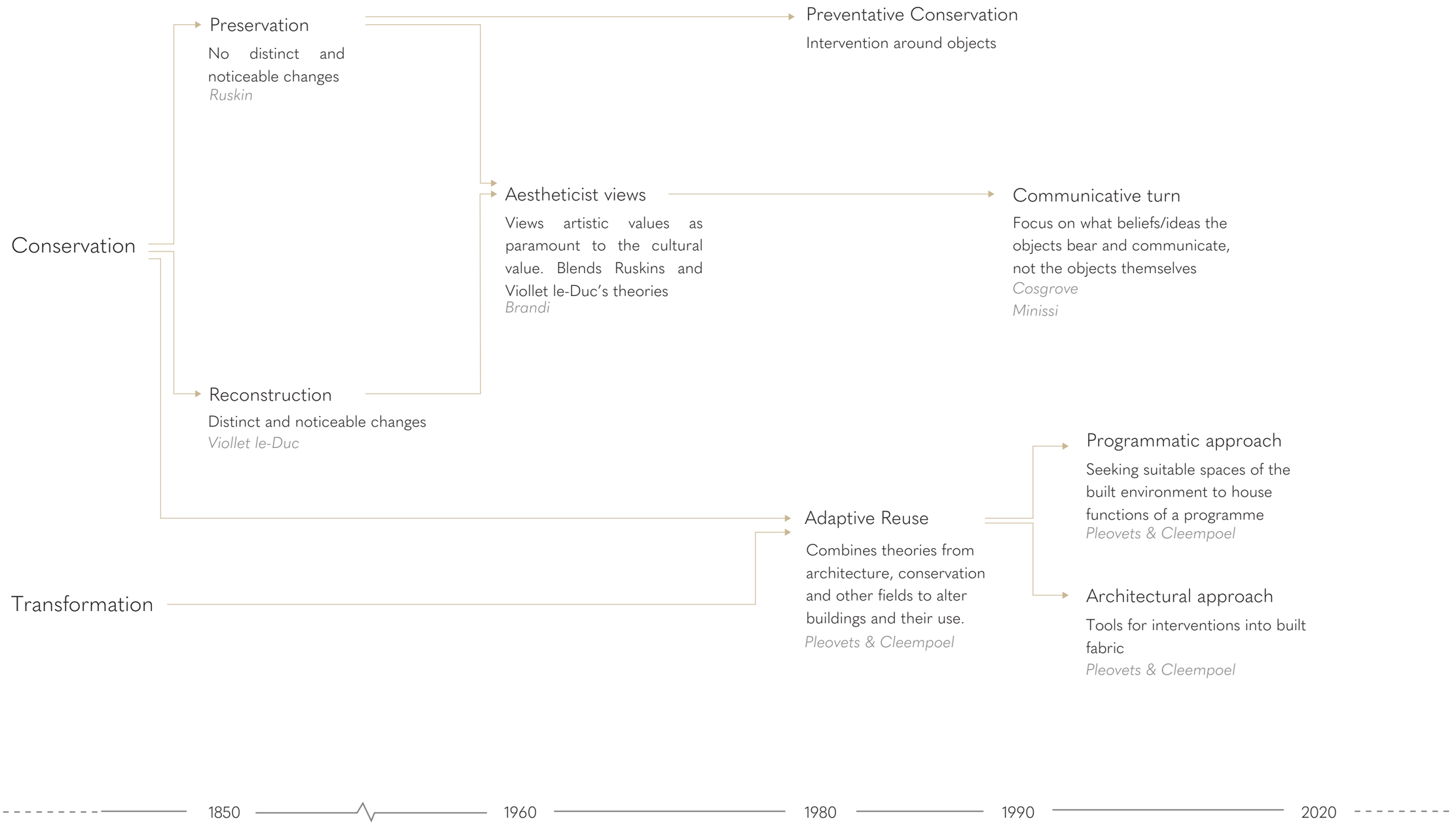

Conservation
Preservation
No distinct and noticeable changes
Ruskin
Reconstruction
Distinct and noticeable changes
Viollet le-Duc
Preventative Conservation
Intervention around objects
Aestheticist views
Views artistic values as paramount to the cultural value. Blends Ruskins and Viollet le-Duc's theories
Brandi
Communicative turn
Focus on what beliefs/ideas the objects bear and communicate, not the objects themselves
Cosgrove
Minissi
Transformation
Adaptive Reuse
Combines theories from architecture, conservation and other fields to alter buildings and their use.
Pleovets & Cleempoel
Programmatic approach
Seeking suitable spaces of the built environment to house functions of a programme
Pleovets & Cleempoel
Architectural approach
Tools for interventions into built fabric
Pleovets & Cleempoel
1850
1960
1980
1990
2020

Fig. 07 Illustration of a shelter over an open excavation at Uppåkra

Preservation

Shelters & Excavations

Preservation is by its very definition opposed to excavation. For the better part of the history of the field, an archaeologist's role has been to find remains and showcase these to the current world, whilst a conservationist prime goal has been to preserve the object for the future.

The theory of preventative conservation seeks to solve this dilemma by preserving objects, through actions *around* the target. When preserving architectural remains this approach often takes the form of reburial, or the construction of shelters (Pedelì et al., 2013).

At first glance, sheltering might seem less destructive than the act of reburial. However, the exposed layers of an excavation are sensitive. Building a shelter can be likened to inserting a new species into an ecosystem. Whilst creating better conditions in one area, a shelter might create unintended consequences that ruins a whole site, for example a roof covering might concentrate the drained water into nearby soil, damaging the foundations of a ruin.
Architect Gionata Rizzi, specialised in design-based conservation, describes these problems in "Protective Shelters for Archaeological sites" (Thompson & Abed, 2013).

"Having thought about and worked with shelters for many years it is very clear to me: shelters are an evil. Sometimes a necessary evil but still an evil. It is hard to name a site that is not better and that would not be made better without a shelter."

Uppåkra, like plenty of similar sites, is placed prominently in the landscape to visually manifest power. When sheltering, the landscape is often isolated from the ruins, thus detaching the experience of the landscape for the present-day visitor. This also applies to the external expression, what does a tin shed built over an ancient marvel communicate? The importance of these aesthetic questions occupied the mind of the leading theorist after Viollet de-Luc and Ruskin, the art historian Cesare Brandi. Who means that the aesthetic values should guide the conservation actions, whether they be reconstructive or preservative (Munoz-Vinas, 2012).
After Brandi, the works of Franci Minissi and Denis Cosgrove takes the aestheticist views one step further, in what Munoz-Vinas (2012) calls the "communicative turn". The theory is characterized by its disregard for convention and focuses on what the subject can communicate rather than the physical object. Even the most outrageous actions are permissible, on the condition that they can be reversed.

Fig. 08 Former shelter at Villa Casale by Minissi, Credit: Jos Dielis. CC BY 2.0

Fig. 09 Current shelter at Villa Casale by Gionata Rizzi, Credit: Rino Porrovecchio. CC BY-SA 2.0

Shelter for Mosaics at Villa Casale (1960-2010)
By Franco Minissi & Gionata Rizzi

A good example of a project containing influences from several theories presented in the thesis is the Villa Casale at Piazza Armerina, Sicily.
The original shelter, covering some of the best-preserved mosaics from ancient Rome, was constructed in the 60's. The project was designed by Minissi and guided by Brandi, influenced by his aesthetic approach. The glass and steel shelter, which would probably upset both Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc deeply , has a volume that follows the form of the original villa.

In the early 2000's, the shelter was replaced by Gionata Rizzi for practical reasons (rust, shadows on the mosaic, unbearable heat). Whilst the new shelter solves these pragmatic issues, the method of the solution shows a heavy influence of the communicative turn in the design. The old dome and roof structure are loosely reconstructed in timber and the fenestration of the lightweight structure matches the original villa (Rizzi, 2008).

Regarding the mosaics, the shelter is an example of preventative restoration. The shelter only inhabits the context of the mosaics and does not physically interfere with them. However, the remains of the villa itself also has great cultural value. Since the shelter sits on top of the old foundation, it is also an example of direct preservation (preservation on an object).

The reference shows how many conservation theories and influences can coexist and coalesce on one singular site.

Fig. 10 Exploration of an abstract reconstruction of the temple at Uppåkra

Reconstruction

The Replica, Authenticity and Truth

The reconstruction carried out during the design phase of this thesis reconstructs a temple, where almost no remains exist.

This most extreme form of reconstruction, a replica of the original, runs the risk of being perceived as a fake, an object devoid of authenticity. After all, authenticity, the quality of being true, is integral to the conservation field. As Munoz-Vinas (2012) puts it: "all of these theorists have retained the basic notion that conservation should always be a truth-based activity."

If all agree that conservation can be true, then why does the divide between restoration and preservation then exists?

Art historian Alois Reigl tries to answer this conundrum by assigning the ideologies of preservation and reconstruction different values that they regard as the basis of truth. Reigl describes how Ruskin and his followers believed that truth lies in a building's age-value and Viollet Le-Ducs restorationist movement valued the combination of newness with a cohesive aesthetic (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019).

Fidelity

For the restorationists, this unity of style and newness mainly took physical form in their reconstructions, building former structures (or parts of buildings) anew. According to art-historian and conservator Georg Mönsch (1989) the main stand one needs to take when reconstructing an object is the level of fidelity (faithfulness to the source object).

Reconstructions of very high-fidelities are classified as true-to original and are only possible with extensive source material. However reconstructions often have a high level of realism, with limited available information. In these highly detailed reconstructions with lacking source material, educated guesses, extrapolations and assumptions are often employed. Sometimes this causes a lack of authenticity, but allows for more immersion. On the opposite end of this spectrum sits the abstract reconstructions, which chooses to only show what can be corroborated from sources.

Engaging in a reconstruction raises many questions on how to keep authenticity and avoid false narratives. What to show? How to show it? What to do with the unknown? The references presented on the next page shows opposites in their approach, one abstract and one realistic.

Fig. 11 Steel skeleton of the Franklin Court, Credit: Ben Franske. CC BY-SA 4.0

Fig. 12 Aerial photo of Eketorps Fornborg. Credit:Jan Norrman. CC BY 2.5

Franklin Court (1976) by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, Inc

When reconstructing the old home of Benjamin Franklin, little was known of the details of the building, Venturi & Scott Brown's solution was a set of steel frames showing only the volume, chimneys and the doorways. The museum itself sits below ground, hidden from view (Bach, 1992).

The Benjamin Franklin house is one of the first major works that reconstructs a building with a very low level of fidelity.

By rendering the building in an abstract manner, Venturi & Scott Brown clearly communicates that this structure is not original, sending clear signals to the visitor that it is not fake, but an interpretation. With the intention to communicate what's new and old in a truthful and honest manner (Matero, 2010).

Eketorps Fornborg (1984) by Jan Gezelius & Nils Arne Rosén

When reconstructing the walls of an iron-age keep at Öland, a museum was erected, built on top of the ruins of houses inside the walls. The exterior of these houses are reconstructed with a high fidelity, except for the entrances, which have modern dimensions, and skylights between the volumes. The inside, however, has an open floor plan and a modern glulam construction. The servant spaces of the museum, (parking, shops restrooms etc.) are located 300 meters from the site. Standing inside the keep, surrounded by pristine nature and the reed-clad houses it's easy to imagine yourself being in the iron age, making it an attractive venue for events and conventions where people dress up in costume. By arriving from a distance, on foot, you approach the keep like one would during the iron age, slowly and allowing yourself time for reflection. Once at the keep the lack of modern functions increases the immersion of the "living museum" (Janson, 1998a). The intentions behind these choices can be seen as in line with the restorationist movement.

Fig. 13 Leftover bricks at Uppåkra Barn

Adaptive reuse

In parallel to the evolution of conservation theory, architects like Bo Bardi, Scarpa, Döllgast and Choay approached built heritage from a design-approach, where future use, function and appearance was valued to be of equal importance as the conservation. These theories, together with conservation theory, morphed into the field of adaptive reuse in the latter half of the 20th century (K. Cleempoel, personal communication, March 31, 2025).

In "Adaptive Reuse of the built heritage" Pleovets & Cleempoel (2019) outlines multiple contemporary approaches to reuse, which in contrast to the more broader terms of restoration and reconstruction, handles approaches to transformation buildings specifically.

As for the case of Uppåkra, the most relevant of the approaches mentioned by Pleovets & Cleempoel is the programmatic approach, where you start with a given programme (museum) and look for existing structures and spaces that can house these (the barn at Uppåkra). However, the programmatic approach does not specify how the architecture is adapted to fit the new programs, for this Pleovets & Cleempoel describes an architectural approach, which lists many classifications of transformation techniques, such as building: within, over, around, alongside and: reusing, adapting and building in the style of.

In a talk from Cleempoel, he also presents the notion of ensemble: where additions to existing structures are inserted with the intention of creating a design that work as a whole. Supplementing or completing a scene that is perceived as unfinished (K. Cleempoel, personal communication, March 31, 2025).

The thesis applies these three approaches of adaptive reuse in the design, with the underlying ideal of the least possible interventions to existing structures.

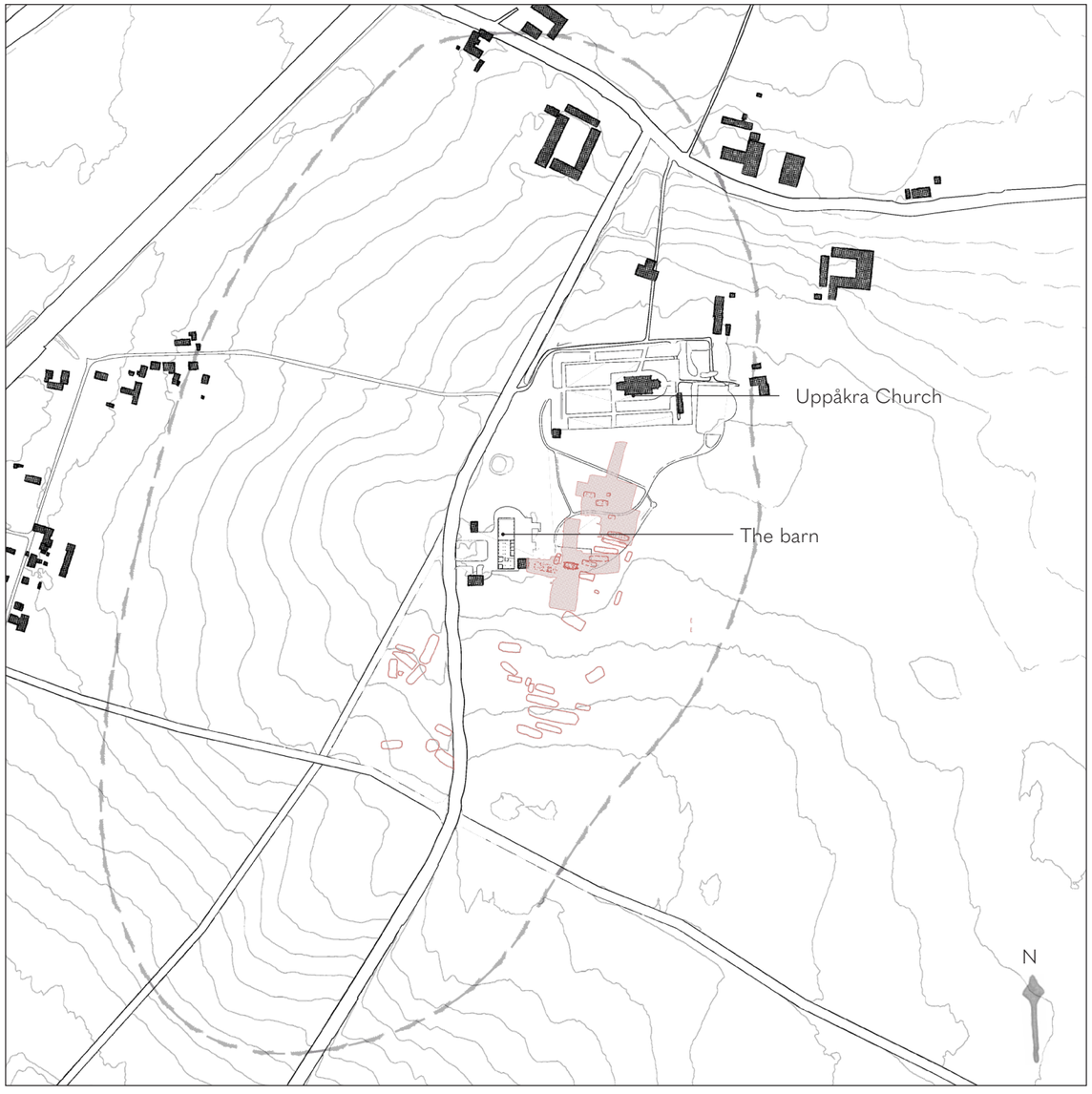


Fig. 14 Site plan of Uppåkra village

Boundary of ancient Uppåkra

Archaeological remains

Excavated areas

Site

Uppåkra since its rediscovery

The remnants of Uppåkra were discovered in 1930 by farmers building a barn. Vifot, an archaeologist at Lund, carried out a few small test-excavations. One of these digs happened to land directly on top of the east end of an ancient hall for feasts.

Vifot however, interpreted the finds as a small house, but made the correct assumption that he had found a larger settlement. Due to time constraints, no other digs where made, and for the better part of the 20th century what was under the soil in Uppåkra developed into an urban legend.

In the 90´s, after a broad sweep with metal detectors produced around 30 000 archaeological objects, over an area of 40 football fields, It quickly became apparent that what Vifot had found was in fact a large settlement and a major power centre of the region (Winge, 2023).

Currently excavations of an old hall are ongoing, right next to where Vifot started digging. Classes from nearby schools visit the site on excursions, where they help archaeologists sort through large amounts of excavated soil in the search for artefacts. This collaboration helps the archaeologists in their work and is an exciting educational activity for the children.

The recency of the excavations, quality of the found objects and the sites great historical value creates a strong argument for an archaeological centre/museum at the site. Besides this, it also has nearby structures suitable for adaptive reuse. These factors create a truly unique opportunity, at least in a Swedish setting.

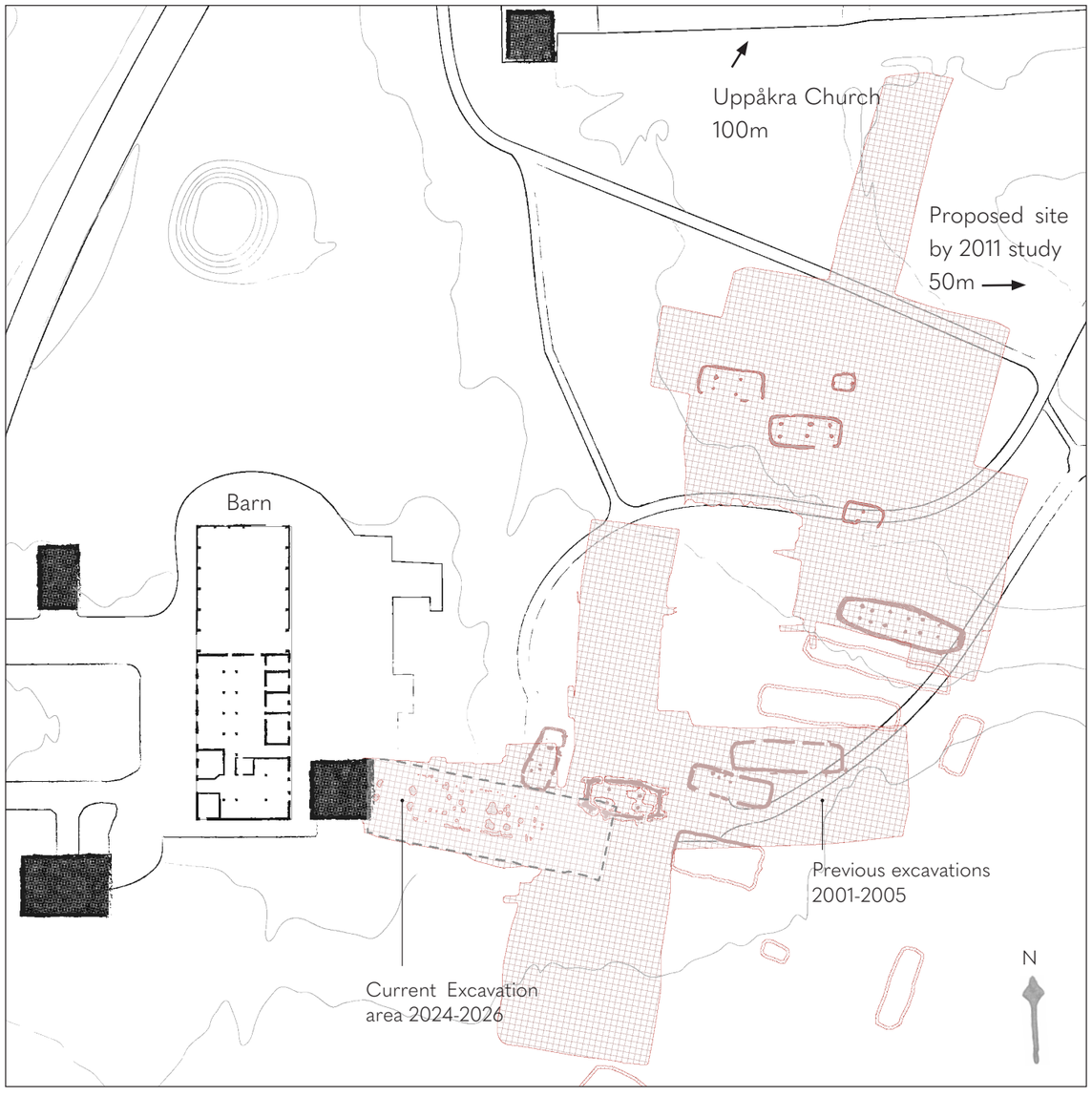


Fig. 15 Site plan of Uppåkra excavation site

Excavated areas

Archaeological remains

Attempts at creating an Archaeological Centre at Uppåkra

Similar sites as Uppåkra (Birka, Gamla Uppsala, Eketorp), all have visitor-centres, see chapter "The Swedish tradition of Archaeology and Architecture". From 2008-2011 local stakeholders investigated building a museum at Uppåkra. A feasibility study concluded in 2011 proposes a very large archaeological centre of 6000 sqm at the cost of 230 msek (Langham & McIntyre, 2011). In comparison, the extension of the Liljevalchs pavilion, was expected to cost 130 msek at around the same time and final costs landed at 580 msek (Bergvall, 2021).

A similar proposal by Sweco (2010) is of a similar scale and budget. The proposed building of concrete glass and steel sits submerged two stories into the ground. Because of the great amounts of excavation needed, the study proposes the museum to be placed away from the important parts of ancient Uppåkra, doing so the proposal also loses the connection to the site.

A major roadblock for development of the site is the ownership of the land. The area belongs to Lund University, local landowners, and the Swedish church. Since it is customary that the Swedish state, owns these types of sites, state-sponsored funding is limited.

Today, Uppåkra is under-exploited in comparison to other, similar, culturally significant sites and no current developments are in progress. There are currently tours open to visitors during the summer-months of the excavations, but no all year-activity at the site.

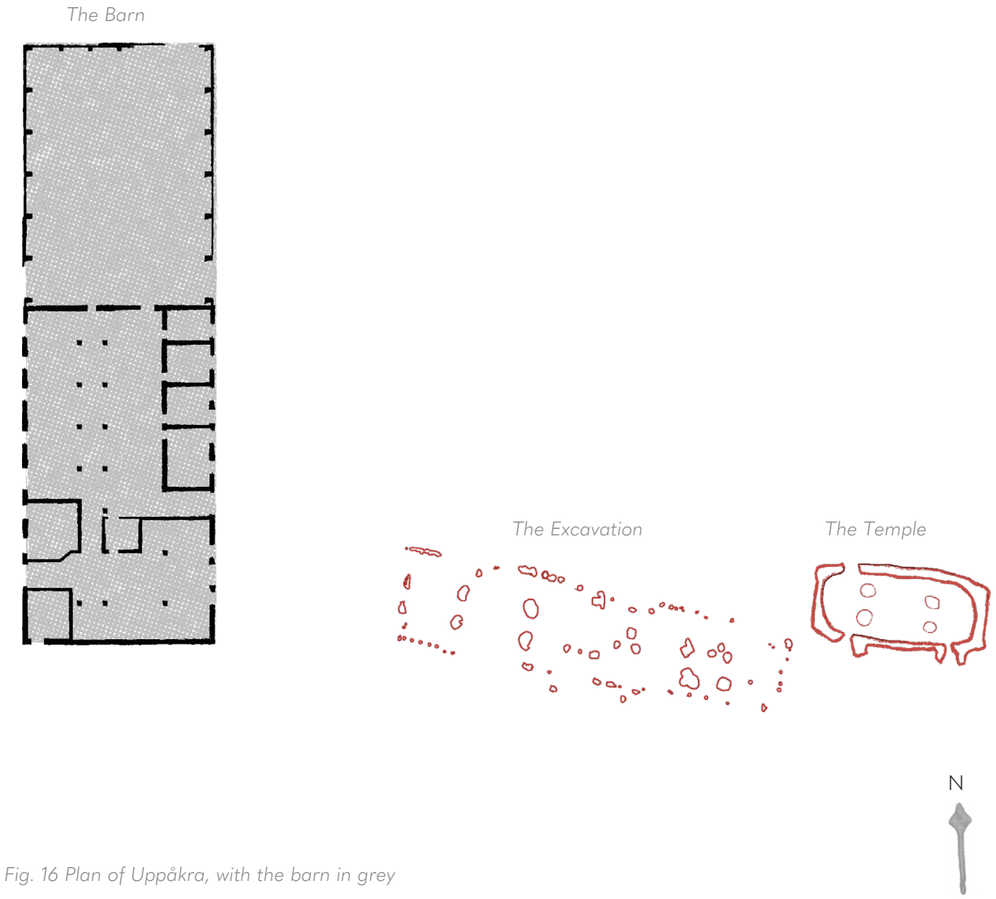


Fig. 16 Plan of Uppåkra, with the barn in grey

The Barn

Three hundred meters from the local church stands the barn that led to the discovery of Uppåkra. Surprisingly, the farm building happens to sit right next to the most prominent buildings of the settlement, the temple and the halls.

The barn itself was originally used to store hay. Wooden trusses carry the roof and a wooden traverse, once used to lift the hay up to a loft. Below the loft a post and beam structure cover half of the barn, once used as a stable.

During a visit to the site, the farmer that owns the barn described a sparse usage of the barn, mostly to keep him occupied in his retirement.

The barn, with its robust timber structure, hipped roof, and elongated shape is not entirely different from the hall being excavated, existing more than a millennium ago right next to it.

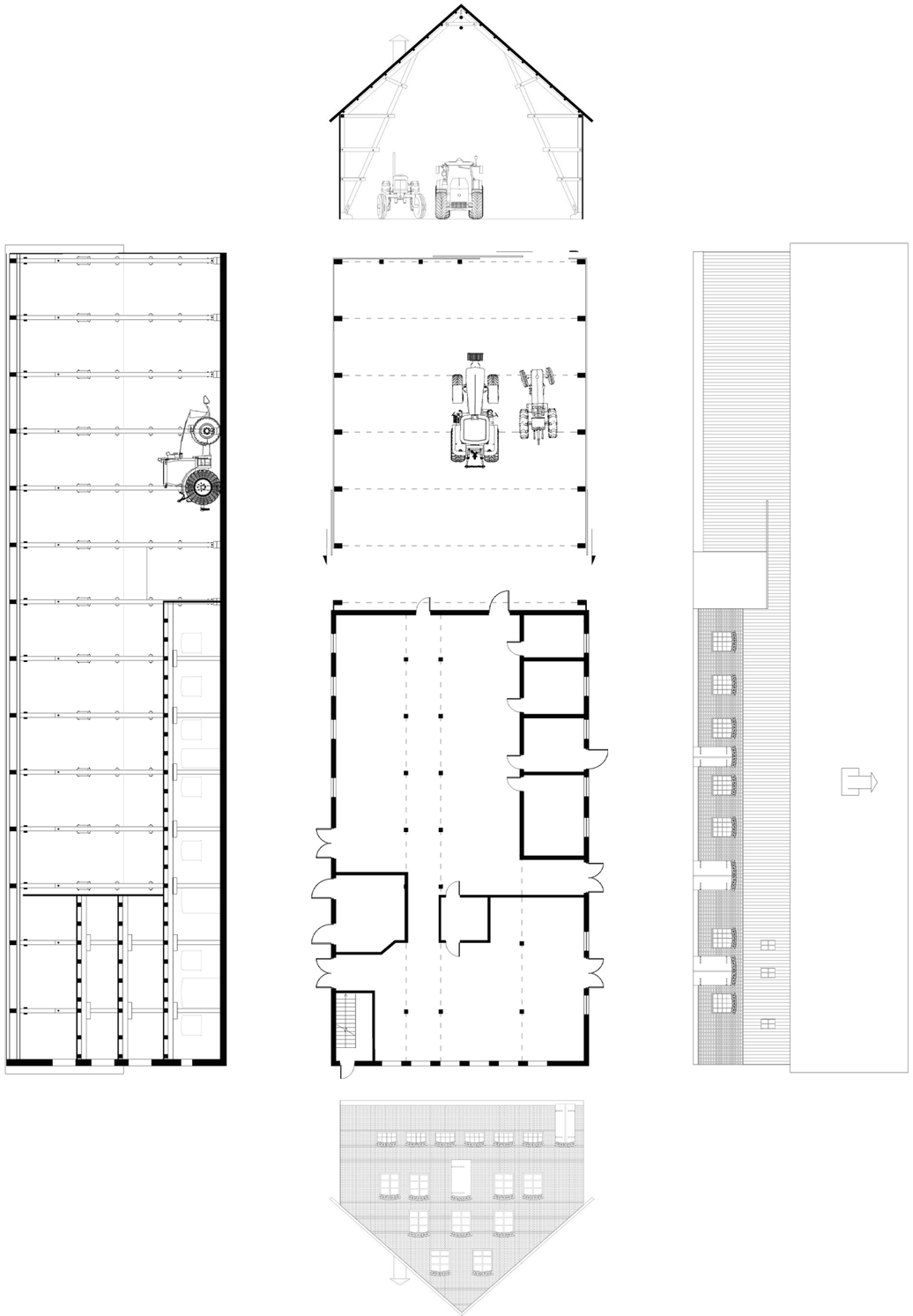


Fig. 17 Drawings of the barn, own work, measurements from survey

Fig. 15 Barn at Uppåkra, exterior

Fig. 15 Barn at Uppåkra, interior

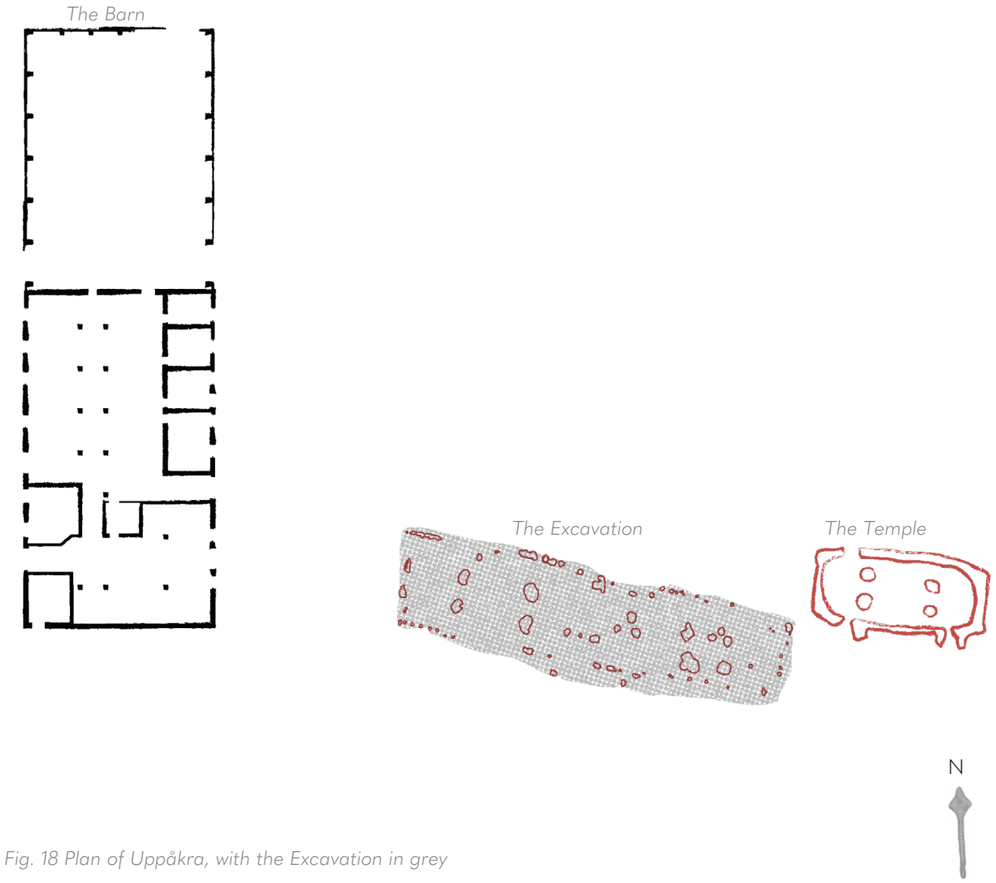


Fig. 18 Plan of Uppåkra, with the Excavation in grey

The excavation

Next to the barn lay what once was the seat of power of ancient Uppåkra. A series of halls or longhouses, built on top of each other during a 500-year period, are currently being excavated. These halls were the seat of Uppåkras ruling elite.

Since the site currently holds no symbolic value, it is only preserved to be used by archaeologists and in their research. The excavation is covered by a temporary tent, protecting it from the elements and halting decay. After the current project is finished, the excavation is planned to be refilled.

Currently tours are held in the tent where you can view the excavation. Visible in the ground are holes that once were dug by a worker 1000 years ago, bones thrown out the door after plenty of feasts protrude from the soil, laying there untouched to this day.

Fig. 19 Holes for posts at Uppåkra excavation

Fig. 20 Bones at Uppåkra excavation

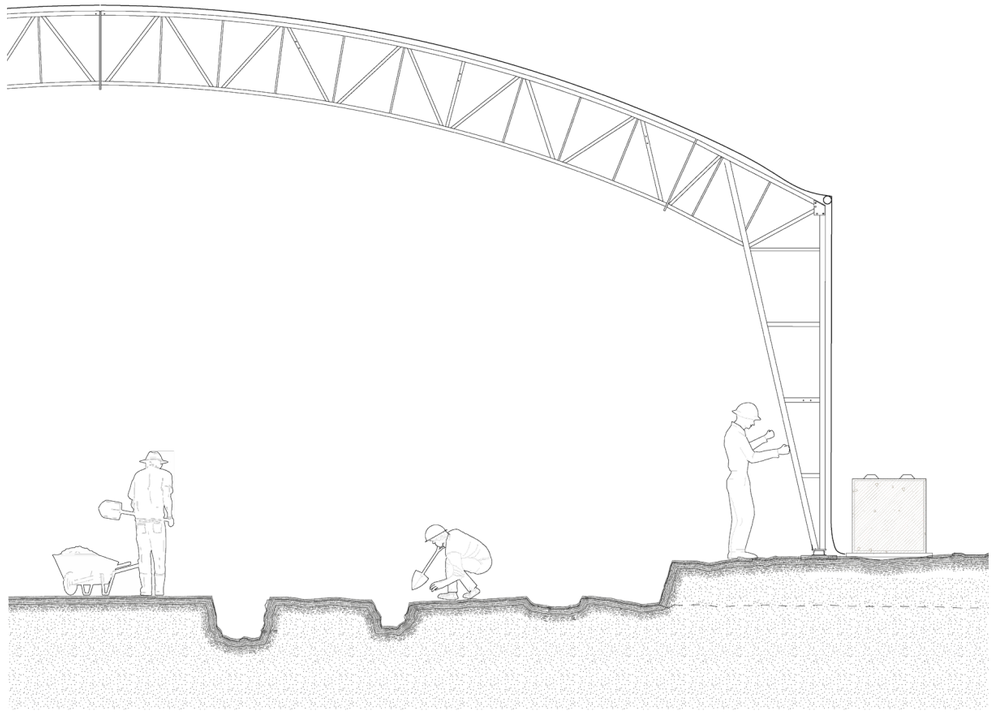
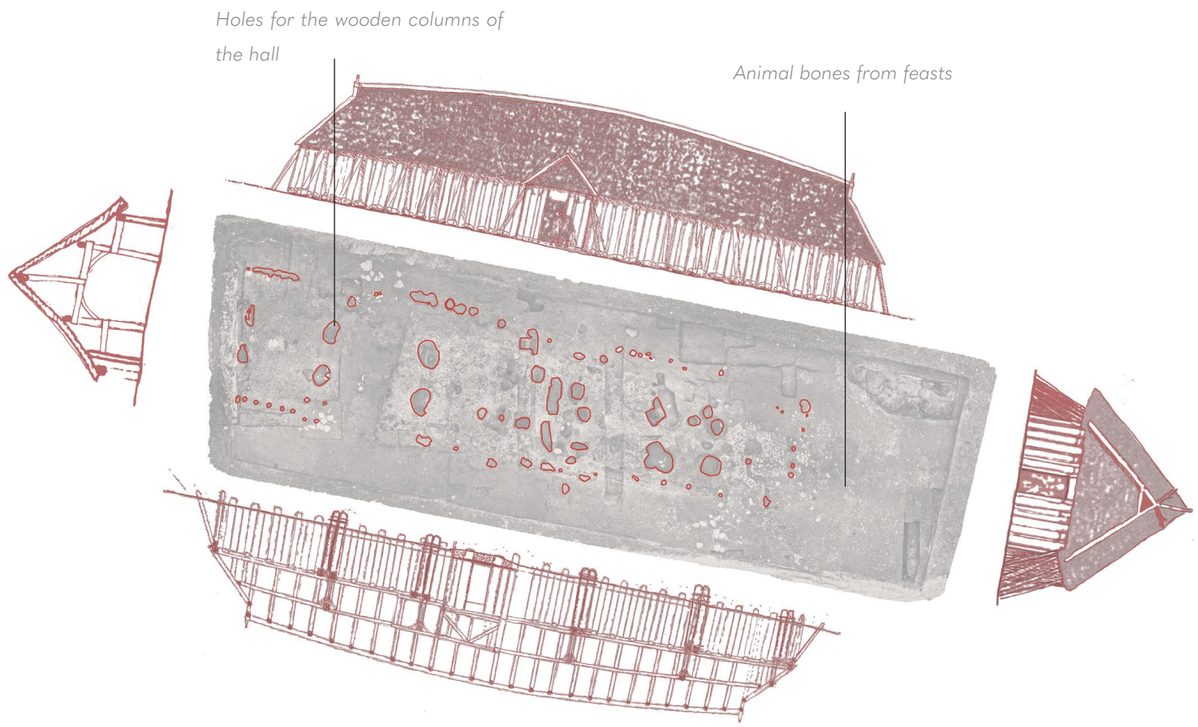


Fig. 21 Section of current excavations of the hall, with a temporary tent sheltering the dig.



reconstructions of similar halls in Denmark.

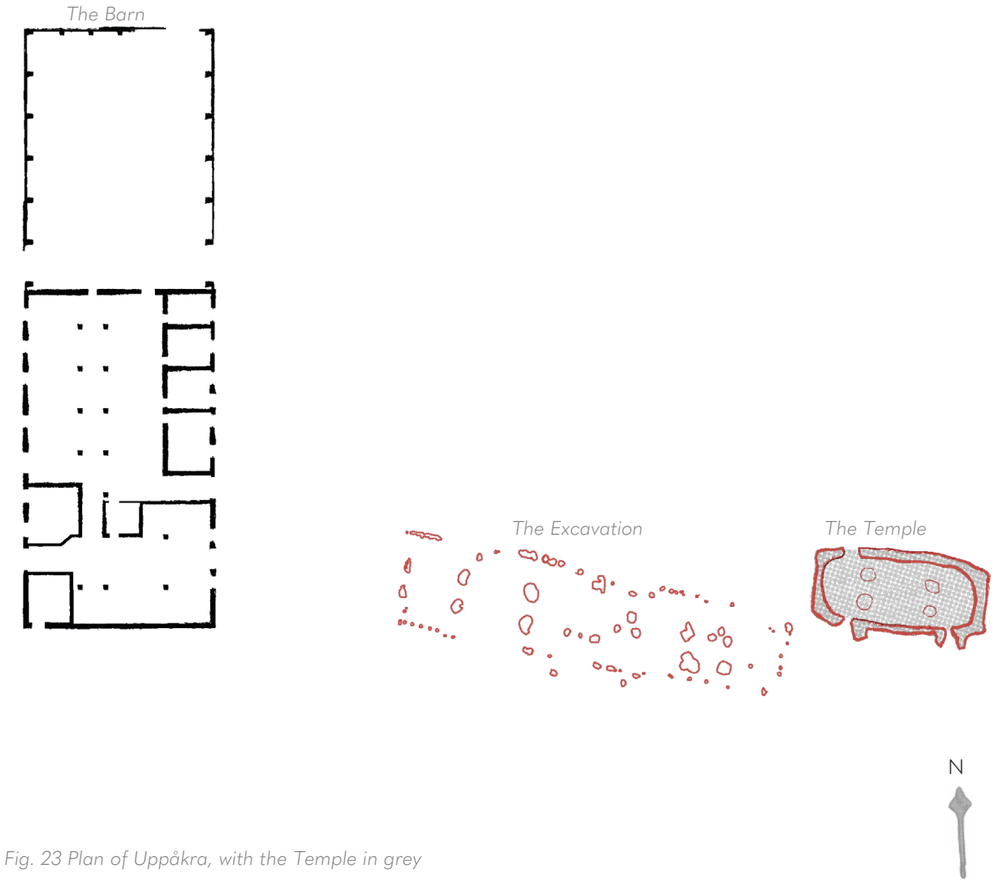


Fig. 23 Plan of Uppåkra, with the Temple in grey

The Temple

Adjacent to the excavation, a temple (or cult-house) was excavated in 2001, possibly erected as an imitation of Roman cult-practises (Larsson, 2001).

The twelve-meter-tall building, made for ceremonies and offerings, towered over the surrounding village. Placed on the highest point of the hill, it was a landmark visible miles away, manifesting the power of the local aristocracy.

This combination of hall and temple, placed centrally in the settlement is a precursor to the medieval city, with its church and keep as the central hub.

Found objects inside the cult-house, such as a glass bowl from the Dead-sea and a golden chalice, speaks of wealth and extensive trade connections.

The temple, and Uppåkra at large, is thought to have been made obsolete by the emergence of Christianity, where local power was moved to the newly founded city of Lund (Winge, 2023).

After the decay of Uppåkra, the ravages of time destroyed and decomposed the wood, which was the primary construction-material during the Iron-age. No physical evidence of the temple's posts, beams and walls remain.

However, since the ground below the columns and the facade was dugout and filled with stones, there remains a sort of negative footprint in the ground. This negative footprint allowed the archaeologists to reconstruct the structure and its extent. After the excavations were conducted the ground was filled up again.

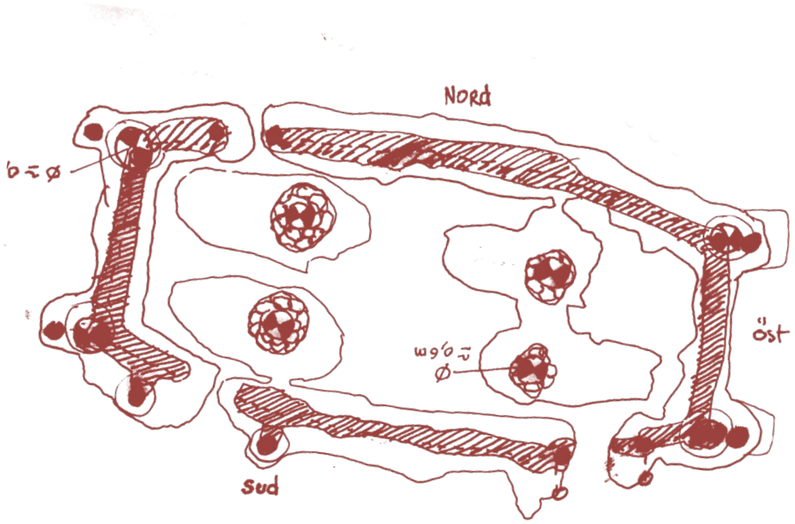


Fig. 24 Archaeological plan of the temple, by Louis Lecareux, Used with permission

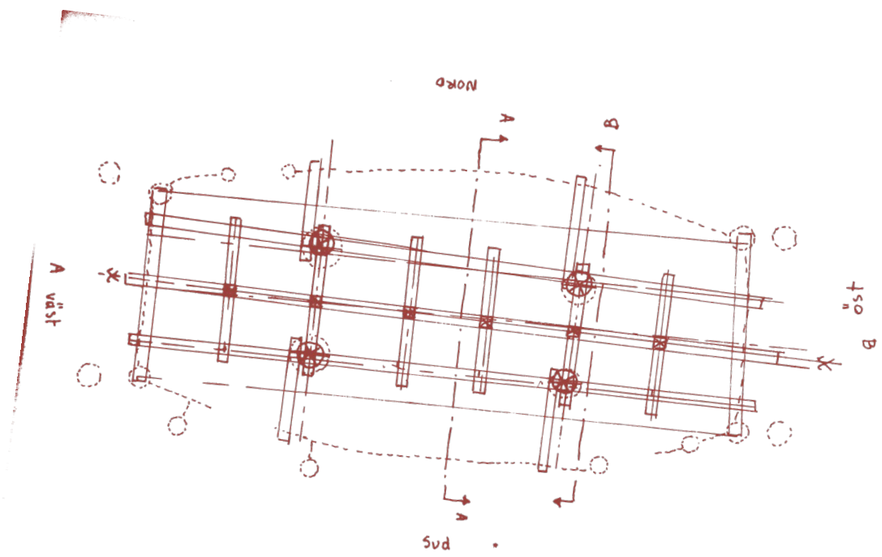


Fig. 25 Architectural ceiling plan of the temple, by Louis Lecareux, Used with permission

Paper-Reconstruction of the Temple

The drawn reconstruction of the temple was made by a collaboration between archaeologists and architects. Certain elements such as the structure and scale of the temple can be deducted from the archaeological record. Whilst the ornamentations and materials of the temple are assumptions extrapolated from other archaeological finds of the same character and period.

Since archaeological excavation can be seen as separating a series of horizontal layers, each corresponding to a historical timespan, the information of the temple mainly comes from the plan (fig. 24).

The excavation clearly showed a rough outline of the building's layout, with openings for doors and posts in the corners and four interior posts (fig. 25). These interior posts suggest that the cult-house has a stave-construction (fig. 27).

The extreme depth and diameter of the post holes (1.5m deep and 0.6m wide) in combination with the buildings small footprint suggests massive posts where needed to support a very tall structure, reaching a height of over twelve meters (Larsson & Lenntorp, 2004).

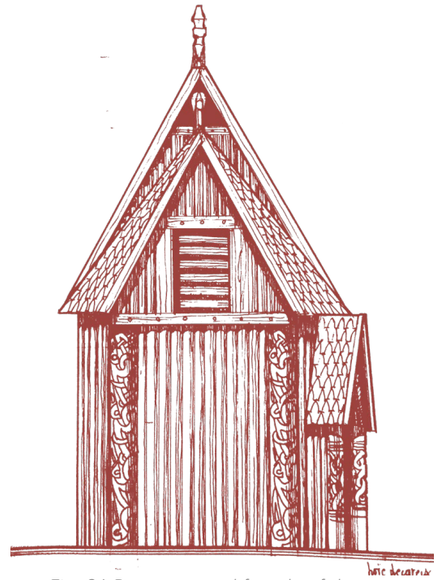


Fig. 26 Reconstructed facade of the temple,showing tentative ornamentations. by Louis Lecareux, Used with permission

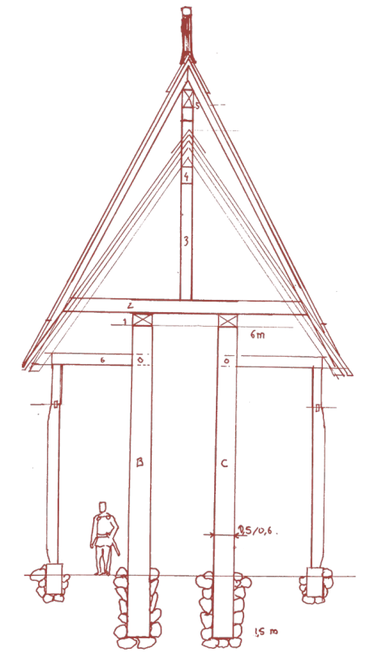


Fig. 27 Reconstructed section of the temple,showing the stave construction. by Louis Lecareux, Used with permission

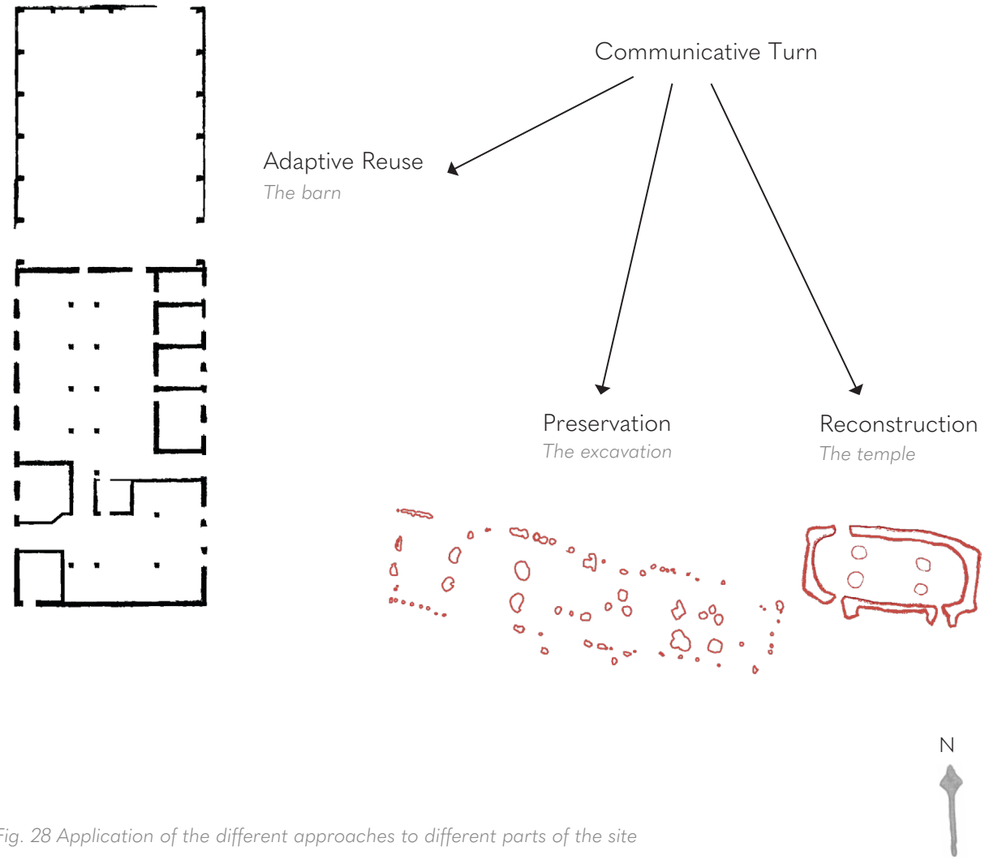


Fig. 28 Application of the different approaches to different parts of the site

Theory to design

Design Framework

The main theories of adaptive reuse, preservation and reconstruction, presented in the Theory chapter, are each applied to a different part of the site. At the barn, excavation and temple, inherent values are found that the corresponding theory favours:

The barn, which is currently the main building on the site, is suitable for adaptive reuse. The structure sports large open spaces, perfect for exhibitions. It is also underused by the owner and in relatively good shape.

The moss, stones, bones and the visible postholes at the excavation all have age-value, making it suitable for preservation.

The temple, which has already been excavated, is suitable to reconstruct since a unity of style is achievable. Because of the extensive documentation of its "paper-reconstruction".

The overarching idea of applying these conservation approaches is to aid in the communication of information to the visitor. For example, if this framework would not be followed and a pure reconstructionist approach of the excavation would take place, it would be filled with false facts, since much is unknown of the hall currently being excavated. Therefore, the underlying theory that guides all of the design is Cosgrove's communicative turn, where the conservation-philosophy is secondary, and what conservation objects can communicate is premièred.

Design Framework

Applied theory	*Design Principles*	*Design Drivers*	*Design implications*
Adaptive Reuse of the Barn	- Age value + newness value + historic value - Mix preservation and reconstruction - Architectural and typological approach	- Modernization and adaptations, to suit the new functions - Preservation of structure and majority of walls - Minimal additions in volume	- Changes in the objects where necessary: - Auditorium bleachers - Openings to let in light - New claddings on roof and façade - Stairs/elevators to accommodate flows
Preservation of the Excavation	- Age value - Stops or halts decay - Changes to the objects environment - No changes on the object	- Protection of the archaeological layers beneath the agricultural soil - Protection and exhibition of exposed excavation	- Excavation left as it is, exposed - Permanent shelter above the excavation - Foundations outside critical areas - Shallow foundations, no slabs - Shelter should enable visitors to get a close view of the excavation
Reconstruction of the Temple	- Newness value + historic value + unity of style - Returns the object to a (perceived) earlier state - Changes the object	- Show scale of original construction - Show building elements verified by archaeological record. - Abstract replica to communicate that it is not original	- Structure reconstructed in full scale - Minimal ornaments reconstructed - Use of new materials such as glulam, plastic and fabric

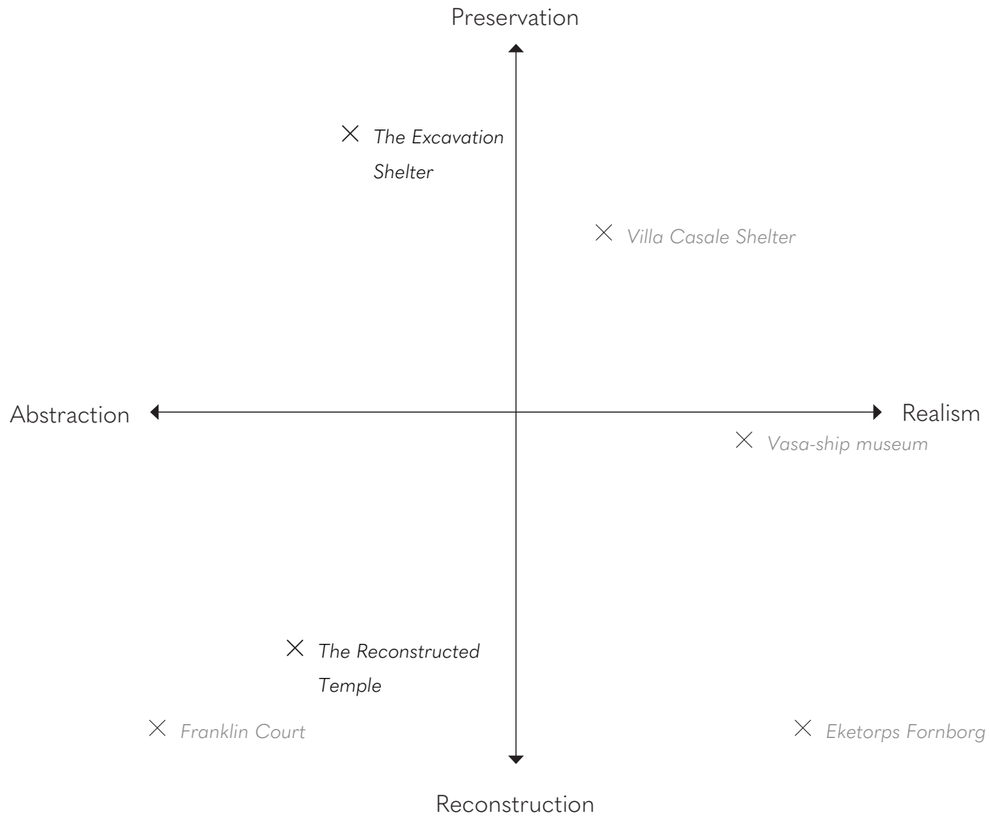


Fig. 29 Positioning of the design, (reconstructed temple and excavation shelter) In relation to Preservation-Reconstruction and Abstraction-Realism

Positioning

Abstraction & Realism

The compass-diagram shown in figure 29, is divided by two axis: Preservation-Reconstruction and Abstraction-Realism. Placed inside this field are references from the text, the Excavation-Shelter and the Reconstructed Temple. Showing the relation between the design and the references.

Because of the limited source material of the temple, the most authentic option is to render it in an abstract manner. However, compared to Venturi Scott Browns Franklin Court, there are known elements from the archaeological work. Since the temple does not serve any major preservative-function it is placed in the bottom-left hand corner of the compass.

The character of the excavation, with its moon-like landscape created by the old postholes, makes the excavation inherently more abstract than, for example the mosaics at Villa Casale or the stone ruins at Eketorps Fornborg. As the shelters main function is protecting the remains it is placed in the top left of the compass.

Formal & Informal Design

In tandem with the design frameworks for the temple, barn and excavation, an overarching design was conceived, to create a coherent character for the whole centre. The philosophy of the previously mentioned architects in the chapter "The Swedish tradition of Archaeology and Architecture" all describe their design approach by two dichotomies. Gunnar Mattsson calls it "ease and precision" (Claes Caldenby et al., 2019). Carl Nyréns grandson describes his production as "the crooked and the straight" (Blume, 2021). Whilst Gezelius classifies his, and the works of his contemporaries, in the coining of the "libertarian tradition", as poetic and factual (Caldenby, 1989). In summary, their approaches can all be described by a combination of **Formal and Informal.**

The intention the design, is to provide solutions that align with the research question: *"How a caring, emphatic and informed architecture at Uppåkra archaeological site can be achieved, by basing the design on relevant theories on conservation, and prior projects of the same character?"* The thesis tries to achieve this by creating a sensible design, both formal and informal in its nature. Tied to disciplinary concerns, as well as fulfilling a communicative role in relation to a wider public audience.

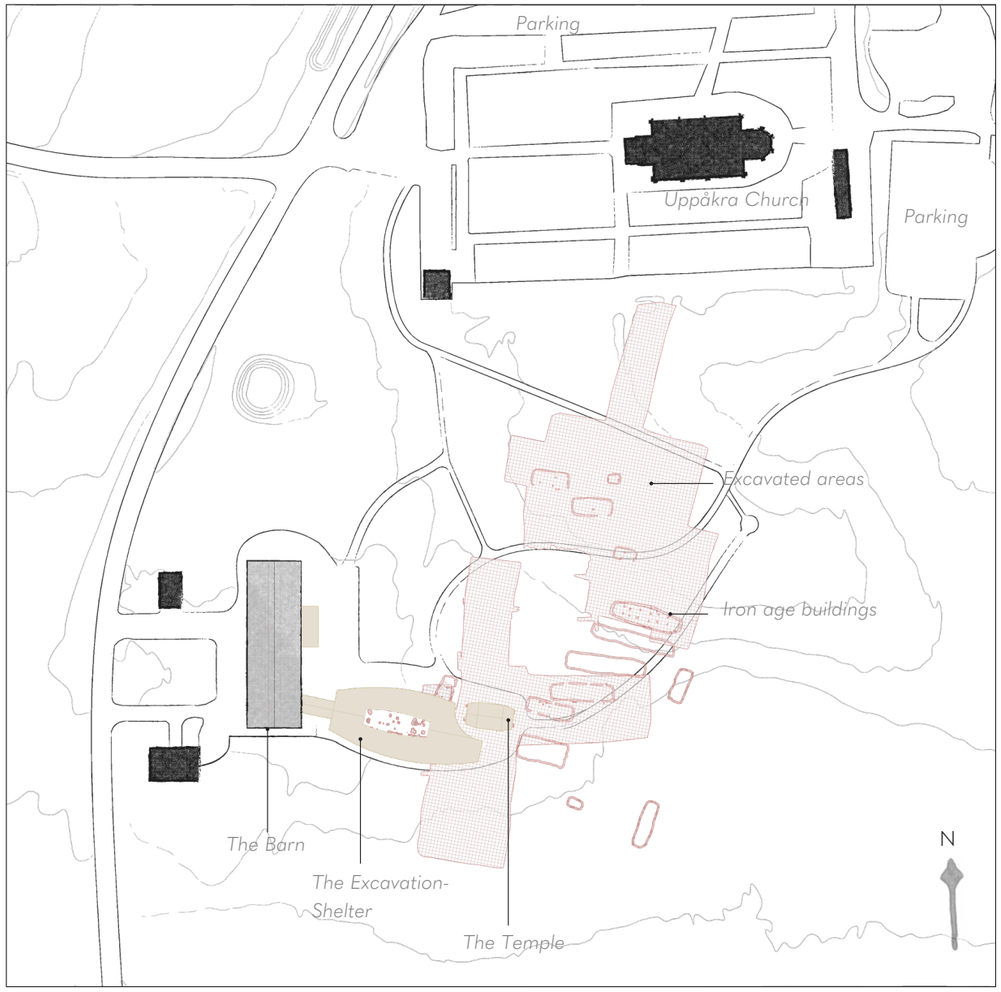


Fig. 30 Site-plan of Uppåkra — Archaeological remains — Additions — Excavated areas

Design

This thesis proposes a centre housed in existing structures, with additions built on top of current and former excavations, leaving the unexcavated archaeological layers intact. The building consists of three main volumes, the transformed barn, a shelter over the excavation and the reconstructed temple.

The silhouette of the centre, with its reconstructed "gable horns", clearly communicate the functions inside.

By utilizing the existing parking at the nearby church, visitors approach the centre on dirt paths along the wheat fields, in a similar manner as Eketorps Fornborg, where Jan Gezelius places the parking away from the museum. As a result, visitors approach the building like one would during the iron age, slowly on foot. This detachment also prepares the visitor mentally for a museum visit, by getting them in the right mood and mindset.

Fig. 31 Plan and elevation of the archaeological centre

An open museum

In the building programs of the previous feasibility studies at Uppåkra the current educational activities, (where schoolchildren help the archaeologists) are included and expanded into a “conservation suite” . The thesis incorporates this program, where visitors can either participate or spectate in archaeology and conservation activities. By showing the whole archaeological process, an “open museum” is created, as described in the chapter “A future cultural Wasteland”.

The thesis embraces this idea of an open museum on several levels. By sheltering and preserving the current excavation, visitors can see an open excavation even in times when no archaeological work is undertaken at Uppåkra. Moreover, the reconstructed temple allows the museumgoers to see how much the archaeologists can deduct from the excavation. The other educational aspects such as exhibitions, participatory conservation and peepholes into conservation-labs are housed in the barn.

The Barn

The Excavation-shelter

The Temple

N

Fig. 32 Plan of the archaeological centre

Fig. 33 Illustration of the temporary exhibition spaces in the barns old hay-loft

Transforming the Barn

Based on the stated needs of the shareholders from the feasibility studies three main educational suites are identified: the conservation suite, as well as a permanent and temporary exhibition suite. By applying a programmatical approach (see chapter "Adaptive Reuse"), these functions are housed in the barn. Where they are paired with suitable spaces:

1) The large open space currently housing tractors and machinery is transformed into a conservation suite where visitors can participate by sorting excavated soil. A box inside the old machine hall houses a lab for conservationists, and a large window allows visitors to view these experts at work.

2) The old stables house the permanent exhibition of the objects, in a more conventional museum-layout, where artefacts are kept in climate-controlled glass encasings. The objects are shown in an informal setting, with the old patinated wooden structure still visible. At the same time, a neoclassical colourway acheives a feeling of formality (fig.33.)

3) The old hay loft is transformed into a gallery for temporary and themed exhibitions.

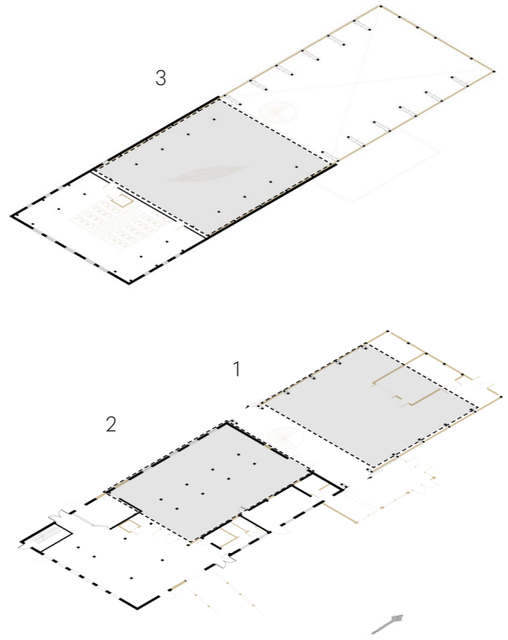


Fig. 34 Axonometric view of the centre

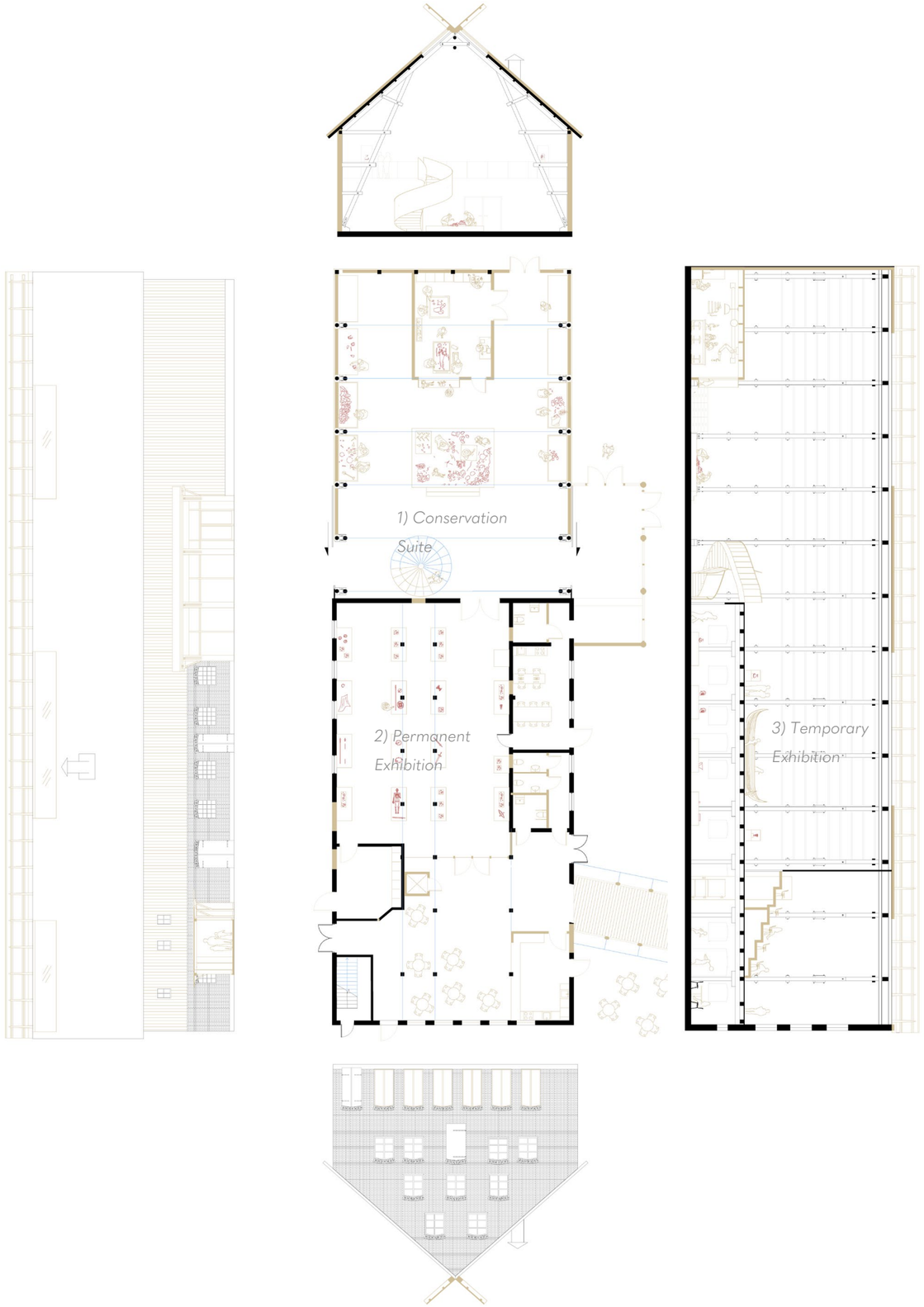


Fig. 35 Plan, elevation and section showing the transformed Barn

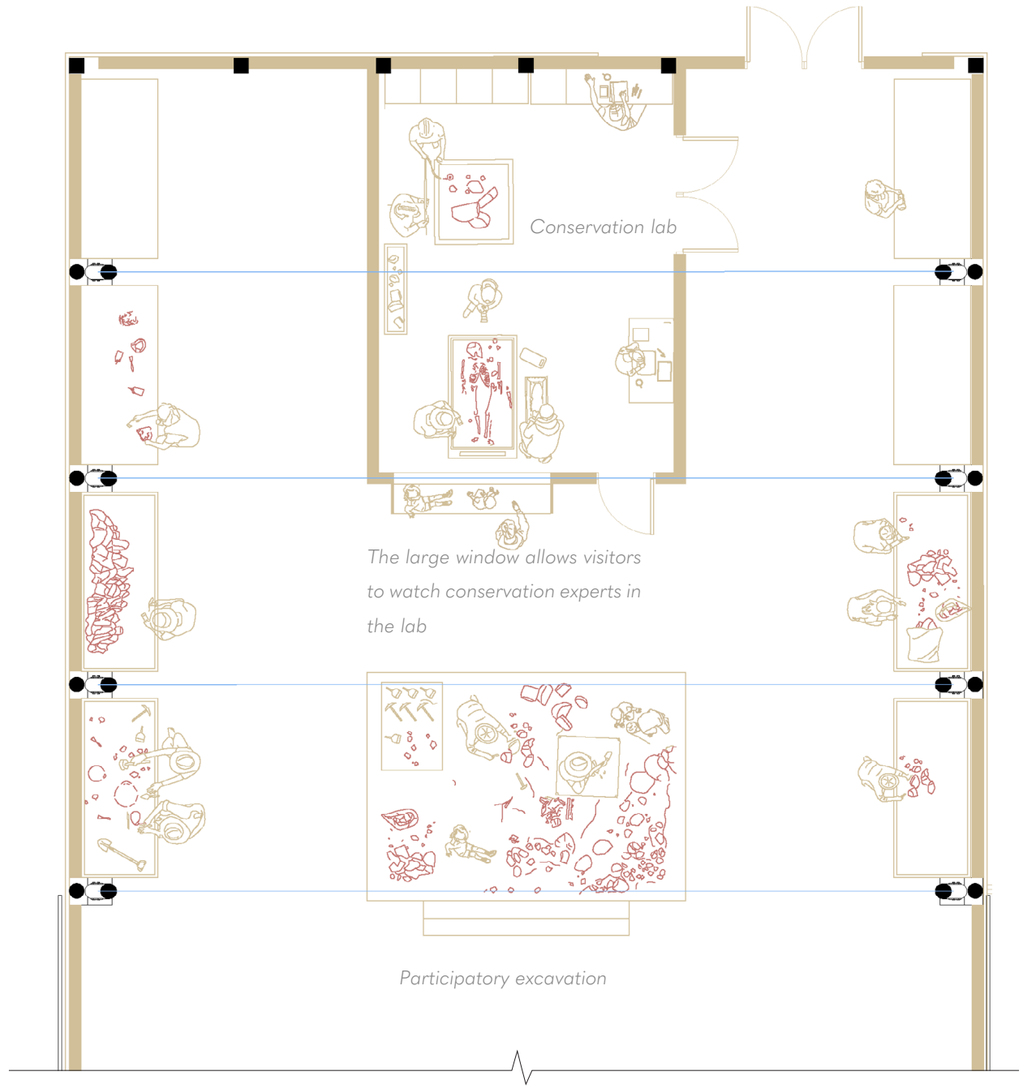
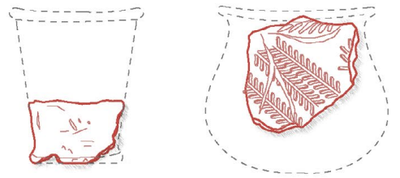


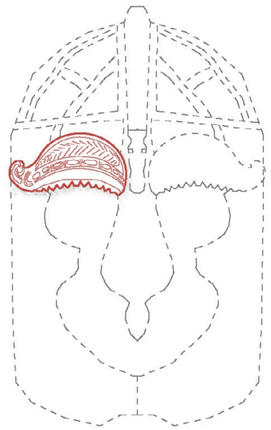
Fig. 36 Conservation suite open to visitors



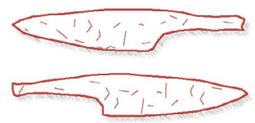
POTTERY SHARDS

MASK PENDANT

COPPER & GOLD
FIGURINE OF VÖLUND



KOPPER & GOLD
EYEBROW FROM HELMET



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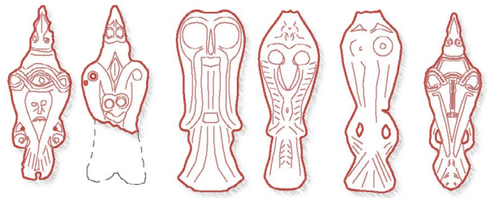
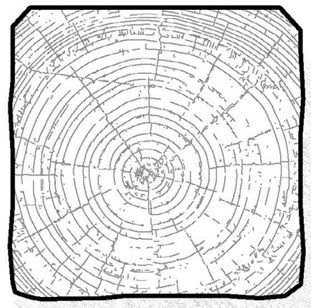
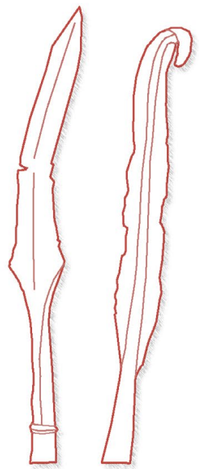


BIRD BROOCHES

GOLD FOIL FIGURES





SPEAR TIPS

BRONZE CLASP
DEPICTING A LION

FIGURINE OF
ORIENTAL MAN

ODIN FIGURINE

GOLD BRACTEATE

Fig. 37 Permanent exhibition with objects found on the site, the scale of some of these is exaggerated for illustration purposes

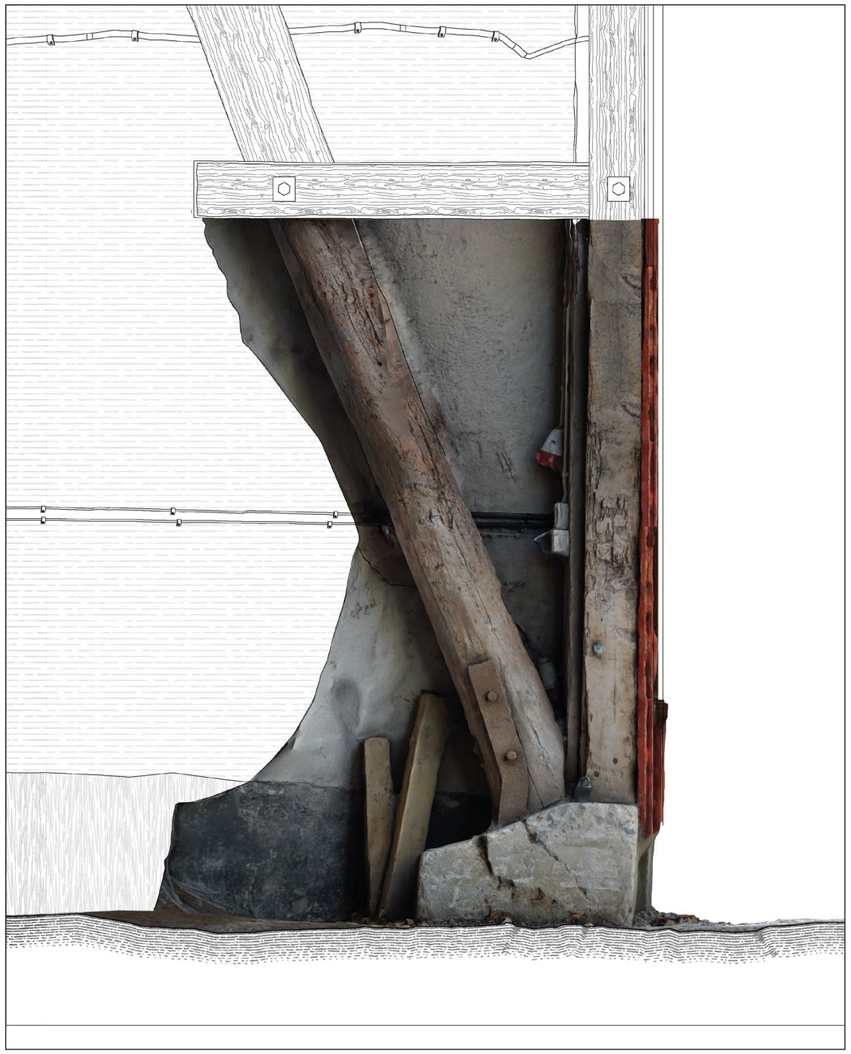


Fig. 38 Detail section of the barn in its current state

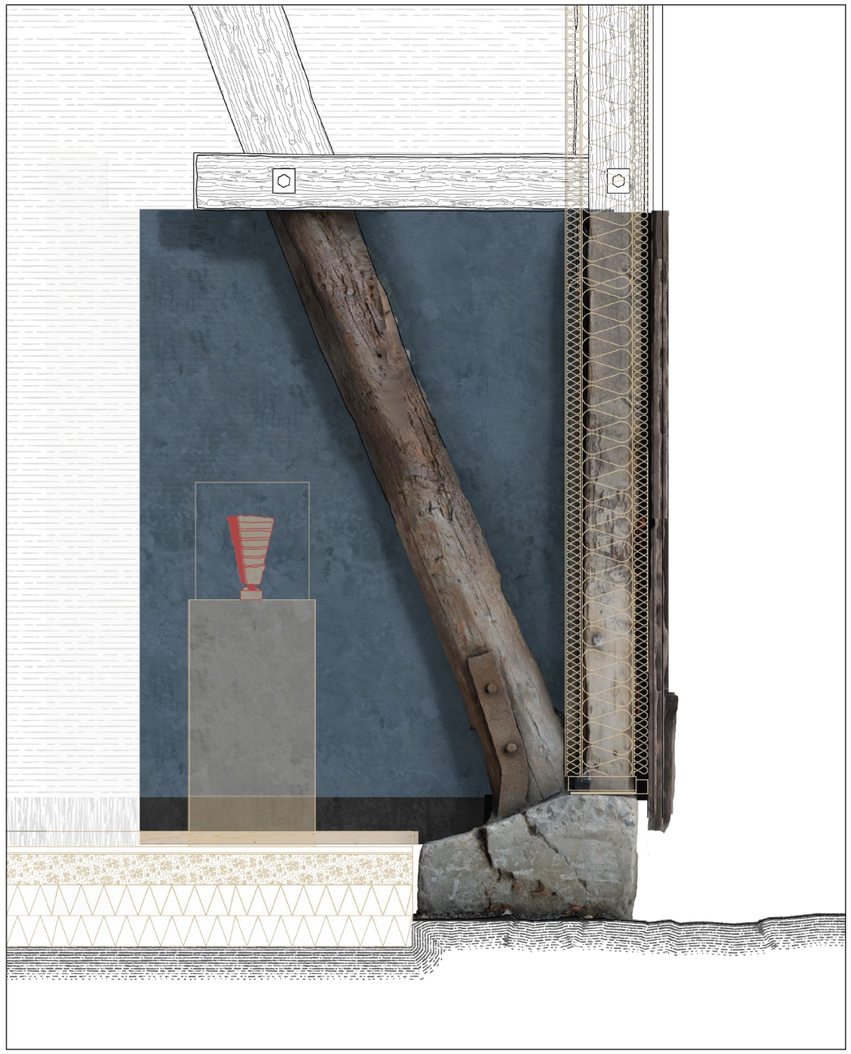


Fig. 39 Detail section of the barn with interventions in gold

Fig. 40 Facade of the barn, current state

Currently the barn is clad with traditional “faluröd” panels- The uninsulated roof consists of worn out, fiber-cement cladding resting on battens.

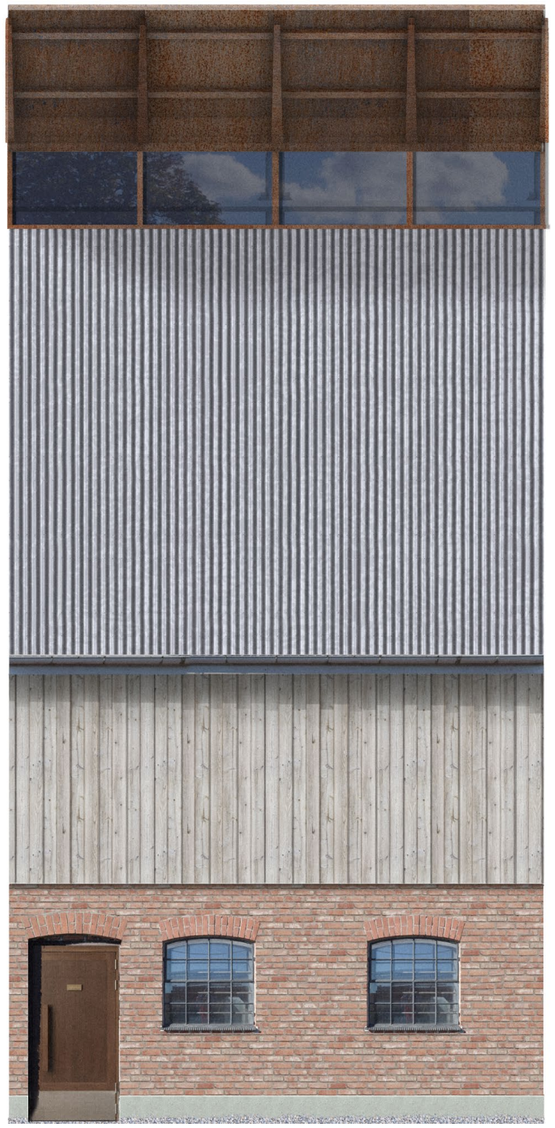


Fig. 41 Facade of the barn, with interventions

The facade is re-clad with an iron-vitriol treated panel, inspired by the Jan Gezelius additions to Eketorps Fornborg. The greyed wood brings connotations of age and patina, whilst simultaneously setting it apart from the other red barns in the village. The old roof is replaced with a similar corrugated cladding, this time however zinc is used.

Fig. 42 Interior illustration of the excavation-shelter. The form of the skylight loosely follows the original layout of the hall, illuminating a rough outline of where the all once stood.

Preserving the excavation

A permanent preservation of the excavation in the form of a shelter might seem preposterous at first glance. After all, such an exhibit of the remains would be more costly and in need of more upkeep, compared to a reburial. In addition to this, the excavation might appear as just weird formations of soil, small rocks and bones, as we are used to looking at building remains of stone structures, such as Eketorps Fornborg, which ruins are more easily read.

However, if an archaeological centre is erected, the excavation is an excellent educational tool that (in tandem with curated exhibitions) has the potential to communicate more to the visitor than just a museum would be able to. By preserving the excavation, it acts as a diorama of previous archaeological work, showing not only where the objects have been found, but also informing of how these findings are done, educating the visitor in archaeology and history at the same time.

The approach to preservation as a protective shelter is inspired by a quote from Morris, one of Ruskins successors:

"... put Protection in the place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care, to prop a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof by such means as are obviously meant for support or covering, and show no pretence of other art, and otherwise to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands..."(Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2019)

Although the preservation of the excavation is the priority and main function of the shed, like Gionata Rizzis "Shelter for Mosaics", the structure incorporates both elements of preservation and reconstruction.

Fig. 43 Facade of the excavation-shelter

The shelter is detached from the ground and rests on a few concrete foundations, minimizing groundwork around the fragile excavation.

The structure cantilevers over the excavation allowing the foundations to largely be placed outside the critical areas. Rocks sourced from quarry blasting acts as counterweights and shallow foundations allows the building to rest in the so called "agricultural layer" above the archaeological layers beneath the ploughed soil.

The use of rocks as counterweights and diagonal struts is a reference to the building practises of halls during the iron age, where diagonal struts were fixed with stones along the facade to strengthen the building from storms.

In the shelter however, the structural order is flipped, with the diagonal struts reaching upwards instead of downwards.

The low silhouette of the shelter, in contrast to the tall temple, mimics the relation between the original buildings. The form of the skylight also loosely follows the original layout of the hall, illuminating a rough outline of where the hall once stood.

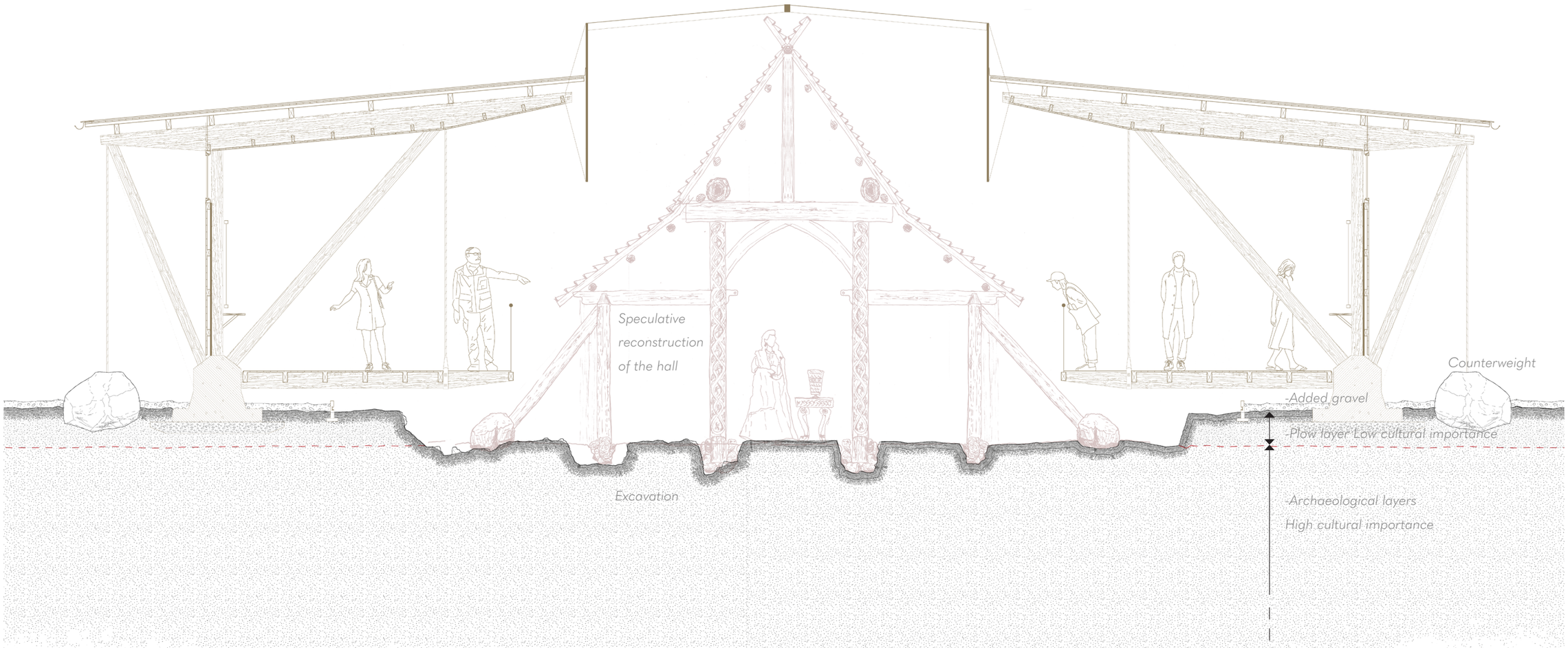


Fig. 44 Detail of the excavation, the protective shelter shown in beige and the excavated hall shown in red.

Fig. 45 Exterior illustration of the archaeological centre, with the temple in the foreground

Replicating the Temple

A small part of temple is currently being re-excavated during the current archaeological digs, although most of it remains buried. Therefore, a preservation of the Temple does not make much sense due to the lack of actual remains.

However, thanks to the results from the previous excavation 25 years ago, there exists sufficient source material to replicating the temple with high fidelity. The illustrations on the next page show a wide span of reconstructions, from abstract to realistic.

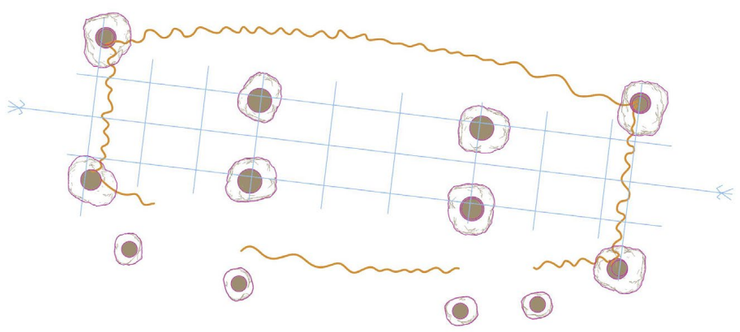
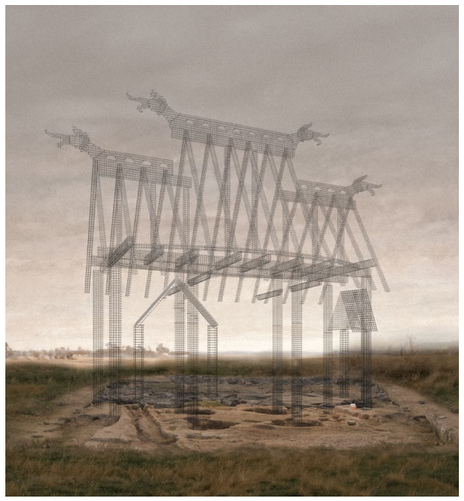
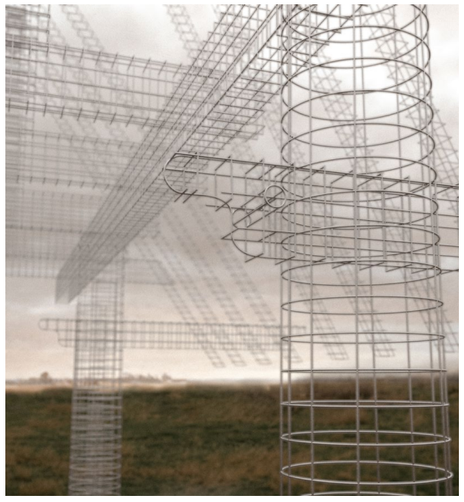


Fig. 46 Plan of the temple








Abstract → Realistic

Fig. 47 Exploration of different levels of fidelity for reconstructions of the temple.

Fig. 48 Section of the reconstructed temple

Abstraction

Although reconstructing the temple in high fidelity (realistic reconstruction) is certainly possible, it could risk being seen as a fake. Disappointing visitors (especially young ones) by implicating authenticity from a distance, only to disappoint up close, revealing a completely new construction.

Therefore, the thesis proposes a design that is mainly abstract, with some exceptions. Similar to the abstract Franklin Court by Venturi & Scott -Brown, elements that can be confirmed by the archaeology, (such as its floor plan, height and structure) are reconstructed, and tentative aspects of the original building such as ornamentation and detailing are largely left out. However, in contrast to Franklin Court, which only shows the outline of the building, the temple at Uppåkra reconstructs the internal structure, due to the translucency of its corrugated plastic roof and fabric walls the columns and beams can be glimpsed from the outside. The glulam construction is reminiscent of the original timber construction, yet clearly modern. The columns rest on large boulders, different from the original post and stone foundation, a technique used in Japanese temples, an external reference of the same spirit as the original construction.

The horns along the ridges of the roof are rendered in Corten steel. Even though no remains of these ornamentations exist, and their actual appearance is therefore unknown, they are reconstructed with the intention of acting as a sign for the centre. Clearly communicating from afar that the buildings' function is associated with the Scandinavian iron-age. These symbolic "signs" are inspired by the reconstructed masts of Vasamuseet by Månssson & Dahlbäck, which mimics the heights of the original masts and at the same time hints what's happening inside.

The transparent manner of the temple, with its diffuse overlight and fabric walls flowing in the wind, is intended to induce feelings of sacrality in a modern visitor. Even though the original temple was, by our standards, a dark space reeking of smoke, the building probably invoked strong emotions of awe in the local inhabitants, who had never before seen a building of this size.

The replica is placed on top of the remains of the original temple. This decision is not only a question of faithfulness to the original but also an act of preservation. Since the footprint of the temple already has been excavated and reburied, the replica does not require any groundwork of unexcavated soil, therefore preserving the surrounding parts for future excavations.

Fig. 49 Elevation of the reconstructed temple

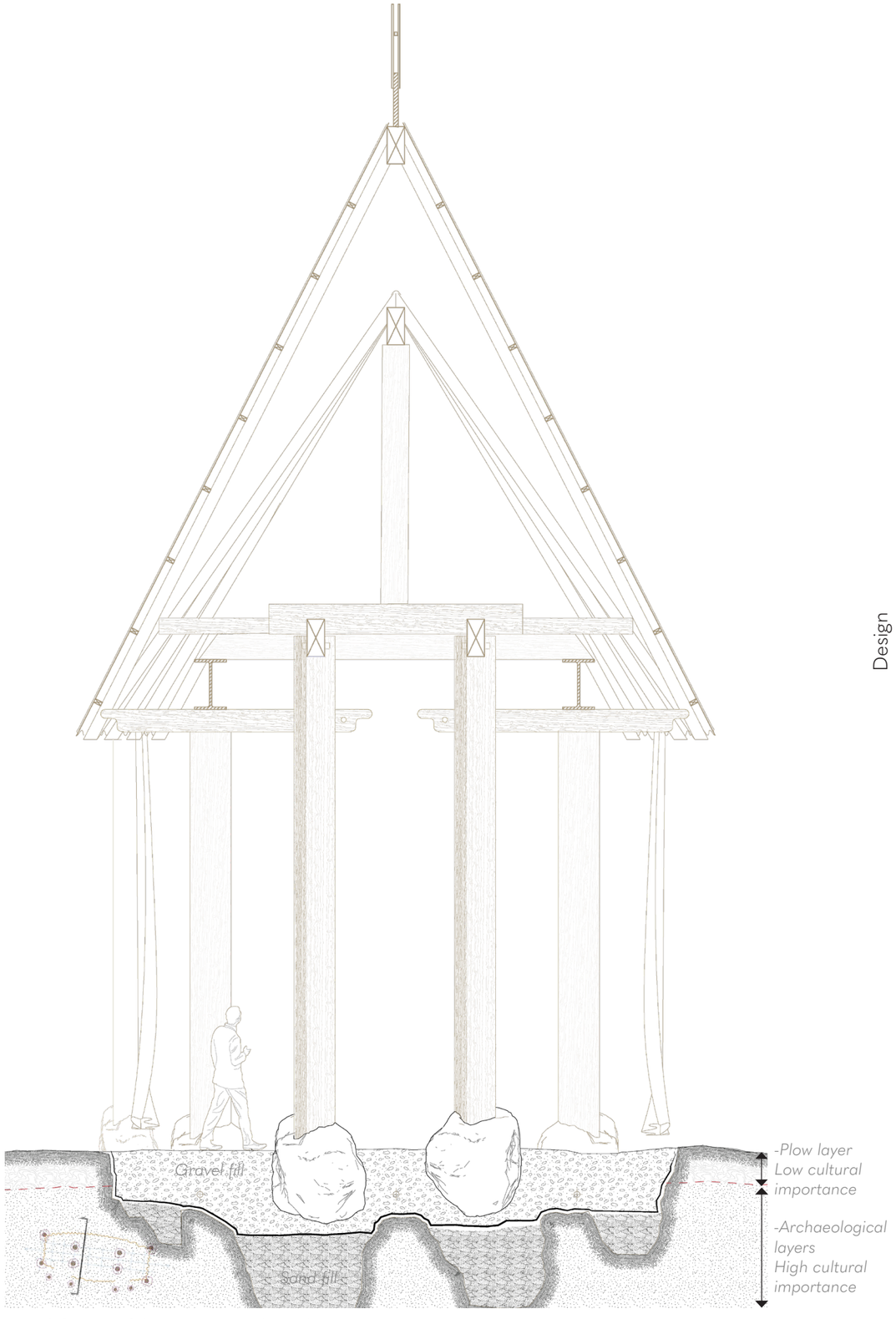


Fig. 50 Section of the reconstructed temple

Concluding Remarks

The main research topics of the thesis are the three conservation approaches:

Reconstruction, restoring a structure (or part of it) to a previous state, or in the same style.

Preservation, actions around on (or around) an object, with the intention of preserving its current state, showing the passage of time.

Adaptive Reuse, the action of transforming structures to other uses. The approach does not solely focus on conservation, but also on the function and future use of the building from a design-perspective.

This thesis bases the design on these approaches, to enable an archaeological centre on top of current and former excavations, designed in a way that tries to leave the unexcavated archaeological layers intact. Which is achieved by: reconstructing an already excavated temple, building a shelter to preserve current excavations and reusing the existing barn into a museum.

Moreover, the thesis addresses museum-culture, and especially the notion of an open museum, where visitors are invited behind the scenes of the conventional museum.
Actively striving towards an open museum has been a way to address the research questions, to create "a caring, emphatic and informed" architecture that "communicates information and histories". The thesis attempts to answer these questions by a design that showcases the whole architectural process. Allowing the visitors to spectate and engage with objects from excavation to conservation, and finally as objects on display. This is achieved first and foremost by the design of the excavation-shelter. Its symmetrical space, with the excavation centrally placed and lit from above by the big skylight, allows the visitor to freely walk around it on the gangways and explore the dig by themselves. Whilst museum-goers might not fully grasp the meaning of the soil formations at first glance, it's primary function is to evoke curiosity and interest in archaeological fieldwork, whereas at sites such as Eketorp, the focus is on the ruin itself. This focus on the process rather than the remains themselves setts the centre at Uppåkra apart from the other archaeological centre's in Sweden. The open conservation suite, housed in the transformed barn, lays further emphasis on the practise of archaeology. The expressed need for these interactive activities, stated in the feasibility-studies at Uppåkra, shows a shift towards museums as activity-based instead of information-based, possibly a reaction to how information is more readily available in the digital age compared to real world activities.

Besides these three conservation approaches, the thesis also highlights how **abstraction and realism** can affect the authenticity and communicative potential of an object. The references from the Swedish tradition of archaeological museums, such as Eketorps Fornborg and Vasamuseet, generally have a high level of realism, with the introduction of the Franklin court reference, a wider range of possible reconstructions are introduced. With design solutions spanning between full realism to a transparent wireframe-construction. The temple design can be placed towards the abstract end of this spectrum, not completely immaterial, but still far away from realistic. By mainly rendering what is known through studies of the archaeological record, the temple at Uppåkra offers an experience where all distractions besides the scale and structure of the temple are shown, allowing the guests themselves to "fill in the gaps" with their imagination. The design favours authenticity over immersion, conveying knowledge about the archaeological work done at the site rather than showing tentative details of the historical construction.

During the thesis process, discussions on the topic of reconstructions revealed an interesting insight. Non-professionals often saw a realistic reconstruction as the obvious choice, whilst the opinion of architects was to caution against realism, citing fears of historicism and pastiche architecture.

In a wider context the thesis engages with this rift between the architectural discipline and parts of the general public, especially prevalent in the current discourse on reconstructions of "classical architecture". The thesis suggests that this divide can be understood as the factions valuing either authenticity or immersion. Similar to how Reigl proposes that reconstruction and preservation are opposed because the value age and newness, the thesis suggests that abstraction and realism are rooted in authenticity and immersion.

Further research, seeking to understand how and why these are valued differently could be a way of understanding the arguments in the current debate-climate on a deeper level. After all, how this conflict will develop is essential for the future relevance of the architectural discipline.

Final Reflection

The choice of an archaeological excavation might seem old-fashioned and antiquated at first glance.

However, in a time when democratic values are eroding at an alarming rate, its opponents armed with disinformation, it is crucial to keep and expand institutions that educate and provide unbiased views, especially on history.

Since the rise of nationalism in the 19th century, history has constantly been a tool in the hands of nationalists striving towards a "nation-state". Using historical events to spurring divisive rhetoric and claim superiority over others.

Norse history in particular was, and still is, extensively used by national socialist forces in their propaganda.

However, history also has the potential to communicate that people who lived over 1000 years ago are not so different from ourselves as we might think. Coming to this realization also invites us to think in a similar manner of our present day neighbours.

Even though this task rests largely on the museum personnel, and curators especially, the architecture of a museum dictate the available tools used to communicate this important lesson.

Working with an archaeological centre and especially this communicative standpoint has been very informative and fun. I hope reading the thesis has brought you a small part of the joy I experienced in producing it.

Thank you!

AI Appendix

The use of AI in the production of this thesis has been conservatively used. When developing the text, AI has been used sparsely to find synonyms to words. The AI-driven features of Photoshop (extending images, removing and/or adding objects) has been used both in images under CC-license and the design material. As for images under creative commons license, AI has only been used to expand the images (sky ground etc.) to so that the aspect ratio of the image fits better into the booklet.

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Figure References

Cover page: Collage of own photograph and illustration from Magnus Rannstorp in: Karl-Magnus Lenntorp. (2008). Arkeologisk Undersökning Stora Uppåkra 8:3, Fornlämning 5, Uppåkra socken, Staffanstorps kommun, Skåne Län. Used with permission from author.

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Appendix - Models

Site-model 1:400

Model of Temple 1:50

Model of Barn 1:50

Model of Excavation-Shelter 1:50

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What Lies Beneath

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