

A FORMER MINING VILLAGE, RIMETEA

Lucian Fulger SANDULESCU,

Architect –Head of Heritage Department - The National Office for Historical Monuments,
Str. Ienachita Vacarescu nr.16, Bucharest - sector IV, ROMANIA

Abstract

Major problems of (the former or present) industrialised countries, areas, regions and cities consist in the impact of old or recent productive activities in territorial contexts, in a moment when many countries are involved in the process of recognising, inventorying, evaluating, preserving, and reusing the industrial heritage to active participate to society's life and becoming "autonomus" in day-by-day life.

As a normal reaction, the close relationship between industry and environment has emerged from various path of development according to specific local conditions, from case to case.

This has characterised and modified – more or less - the landscape according to different models, stages and levels of industrialisation, and the specific types of technological processes developed in respective area.

The case of Rimetea presents an example of nondestructive intervention of industry on environment and landscape and the preservation of natural particularities of site after restauration works.

Rimetea was one of the most important mining and iron making centres in Ardeal county, and now is one of the most beautiful settlements in Transylvania, 38 km far from Cluj-Napoca.

Here you can visit the old mine, admire utensils, painted furniture, traditional costume, and local specific embroideries in the Museum or at your hosts.

The effect of early exploitation of minerals, mostly iron ore, and the early "non pollutive" industry in the village is obvious, and is related to the fact that mine working and iron processing started in the 14th century and continued until the 19th century, with a period of maximum glory in the second half of the 18th century, when is remarkable – besides the iron ore exploitations, the developement of handcrafted iron objects.

This paper proposes some solutions to improve the acessibility, the understanding and the approach to industrial heritage architecture preservation in close relation to vernacular architecture preservation and rehabilitation, both conducting to the local development by means of cultural tourism, to keep - unaltered - the site particularities and "history".

The analised elements are presented that depict the characteristics and the performace of restauration works.

The results are evident on site and sustained by the constantly increasing number of visitors interested and present in Rimetea and in the surrounding area.

The Rimetea Heritage Conservation Programme was awarded at Venice with "Europa Nostra" Medal in 1999, and in 2001 it obtained the "Grigore Ionescu" Prize of the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs.

The attitude of the community towards their own historic buildings has changed and most of the inhabitants consider it necessary to maintain and preserve the old buildings.

The reuse of old mines, and the surrounding area, actually abandoned, by transforming it in a exhibition – as integrated part and an "open air" extention of the existing museum, and the transformation of the village or main/central part of it in a "living museum" where artisans manufacture local product in workshops "live", in front of the visitors, will be in the benefit of the community.

This will increase the "attention" degree of locality, and will contribute to the growth of community living standards, which, actually, are far from "urban life" circuit and involvement and would be prived – in actual context- to survive owing to lack of industrial-economic means.