CASE STUDIES: Public Enhancements

BONAVISTA HISTORIC TOWNSCAPE FOUNDATION
BONAVISTA, NL

LUNENBURG UNESCO SITE
LUNENBURG, NS

CHEMIN DES CARRIÈRES
ROSHEIM, FRANCE

CASE STUDIES: Adaptive Reuse of Ruins

SANDSFoot CASTLE OAK WALKWAY - LEVITATE ARCHITECTS
DORSET, UK

ROOMS FOR RUINS - LATERAL OFFICE
BANDIRMA, BALKESIR, TURKEY

HAWORTH TOMPKINS ARCHITECTS - THE DOVECOTE STUDIO
SUFFOLK, UK

ALEAOLEA - THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF VILANOVA DE LA BARCA
VILANOVA DE LA BARCA, SPAIN

GOLDIE MILL RUINS
GUELPH ONTARIO
Bonavista’s success comes from many years of proven leadership and a comprehensive, long-term development plan.

Its major components included an ambitious plan for the restoration and adaptive reuse of residential and community heritage structures, the beautification of Church Street (the historic commercial and institutional core) and the harbour front, along with the development of trails and boardwalk. These were seen as laying the groundwork for community economic development and for enhancing the quality of life for residents.

The impetus and driving force for the town’s development efforts was the Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation. This not-for-profit development corporation was able to acquire historic properties, restore them, and then either manage, lease, or sell them. As well, they were able to access millions of dollars in public funding to undertake restoration work, community beautification and infrastructure enhancements. Particularly noteworthy was the restoration and reopening of the historic Garrick Theatre as a community performance and movie venue.

The Foundation’s success has spurred considerable private development from the local business sector, private individuals, and Bonavista Living, a private company that has acquired and restored dozens of historic properties in the town. Some of these operate as vacations rentals, others have been sold as private residents, and many have been leased to business operators. The Foundation’s approach has clearly demonstrated that heritage preservation can form the basis for a community’s economic recovery and that strategic public investments can lay the groundwork for private business development.
In 2014 Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, an historic fishing town with World Heritage Site status, decided to put in place a wayfinding system for its historic downtown core. Fathom Studio of Dartmouth, NS, developed an approach that took a fresh, contemporary approach to wayfinding and sharing stories of the town’s past.

Lunenburg incorporated tidbits of history, easy-to-read maps, and landmarks within the area on their signage. It was simple and respectful of its surroundings - nothing too extravagant, yet still stood out.

Retired architect and long time Lunenburg resident Gerry Rolfson worked with Form:Media on the project. He stated, “Any signage or architecture should reflect the best practices of the time. That creates the charm of a place.”
Found deep within the Alsace Region of Eastern France, Chemin des Carrières (The Quarries Track) was a landscape intervention completed by the Danish firm, Reiulf Ramstad Architects, in 2019. This historic traintrack was left with an abundance of rusted sheet metal and bent tracks that scattered the path. Instead of discarding them, the firm decided to respect these elements from the past and incorporate them into their landscape plan. Along the tracks, the rusted sheet metal was used for seating, pavilions, stairways, and frames that highlighted spectacular views along the way. The architects describe the thought process for the trailway by stating,

Along the 11km path goes a story, which the architectural interventions split into five chapters of different sequences of landscapes, offering varied universes and highlighting remarkable sites. Unusual elements punctuate the way, aiming at awakening the visitor’s senses, and water is encountered repeatedly.

Although much smaller than the winding traintracks, Harbour Grace’s Registered Heritage District could use a similar approach to complementing the natural landscape that surrounds them. By reusing industrial waste, such as steel, iron, and wood, we are able to create incredible designs while simultaneously reducing our carbon footprint. Let’s highlight the rugged beauty of the shoreline and the rich flora in between the historic buildings and invite locals and tourists alike to seek out adventure and exploration.
London studio Levitate have reinstated access to a sixteenth-century English castle by repairing stonework and slotting a continuous oak walkway into the ruined shell. Built on a cliff edge in Dorset, Sandsfoot Castle is under constant attack from coastal erosion and as a result had been unsafe for visitors since the 1930s. Levitate was commissioned to carry out a conservation project so the castle could be reopened to the public. Levitate designed a lightweight walkway that slots into the internal space of the ruin. It traces the ruined walls, touching the fabric of the castle in as few places as possible. It is versatile; providing a backdrop to performances, concerts, re-enactments and a meeting place. The walkway is installed at what used to be ground level, providing a gallery-like space that allows visitors to occupy the castle as it had been historically. The new walkway allows public access to the castle and encourages local ownership of the site. It was designed to be a lightweight element sitting elegantly within the ruined castle at the level of the former floor. It touches the castle fabric in as few places as possible. Peeping out through a doorway on the seaward side it allows a view of Portland Harbour that the castle was built to protect, and its sister castle, Portland.

www.dezeen.com/2014/03/04/oak-walkway-levitate-sandsfoot-castle/
Although only 21 buildings are listed for preservation on the site, we noted several additional structures and elements worthy of recognition that powerfully convey the history, mystery, and drama of the former military site. The curated heritage structures are celebrated by activating them with modest architectural interventions and landscapes. Recognizing that most of the heritage structures have lost their roofs or have partially collapsed walls, our proposal seeks to highlight these absences. Powerful relationships between new and old are established, often by having a new structure emerge out of the ruins of the old. There are two ways that the proposed design seeks to preserve these structures: (1) introduction of new roofs or (2) marking of landscape “rooms” that surround and frame the ruins. The heritage strategy, therefore, employs architectural roofs and landscaped rooms for the historical ruins. The design intentionally formalizes the northwestern part of the site and embraces and maintains the wilder character of the site in southern and eastern portions. Landscape rooms, new paths and lighting become the mediator between new and old.

lateraloffice.com/ROOMS-FOR-RUINS-2017
Nestled within the shell of an abandoned building, the firm responded to the existing conditions with a touch of sensitivity, uniting the old structure with the new aesthetic.

The existing ruins once formed a two-storey brick dovecote, and although decayed, the enigmatic quality of this ruin became well known to concert-goers and visiting musicians. “Its crumbling brickwork and rusting window grilles embodied the site’s romantic dereliction, and the balance between decaying buildings and marsh landscape which first drew Benjamin Britten to Snape.”

The new studio builds upon the original industrial feel on the campus and almost seems to gracefully grow from the old. Clad in Corten weathering steel, the structure is understood as a separate structure, yet compliments the existing shell with its rust-red shade almost matching the red bricks.

www.archdaily.com/89980/dovecote-studio-haworth-tompkins
The Old Church of Vilanova de la Barca (Lleida, Spain) is a 13th-century Gothic building that was partially demolished in 1936 because of the bombings of Spanish Civil War. Since then, the church was in a general state of ruin preserving just its apse, some fragments of the naves and the western façade. The main aim of the project was the restoration of the original appearance of the church and its transformation in a new multi-purpose hall. The most important part of this intervention has focused on the covering elements. The project establishes a new brick façade based on a latticework texture and a new gabled Arab tile roof. The whole system is conceived as a new architectural ceramic shell that is gently supported on the remains of the ancient walls. From outside, the perception of the old church is restored, meanwhile inside the building, the project intensifies the entrance of natural light due to the new windows, the new proposed patio or thanks to the white rendering walls that have been introduced. Thus, the project establishes an architectural dialogue between the old and the new, past and present.

www.archdaily.com/803620/santa-maria-de-vilanova-de-la-barca-aleaolea-architecture-and-landscape
This specific ruin gives us an idea of how a ruin left, somewhat as is, can leave a strong experiential impression to the user. The mill was hit by many fires that left the walls standing. It is currently used for markets, weddings and other experiential activities. With minimal architectural intervention, this mill stands as a flex space.