

POLAND

Historic Centre of Warsaw

Brief description

During the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, more than 85% of Warsaw's historic centre was destroyed by Nazi troops. After the war, a five-year reconstruction campaign by its citizens resulted in today's meticulous restoration of the Old Town, with its churches, palaces and market-place. It is an outstanding example of a near-total reconstruction of a span of history covering the 13th to the 20th century.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription 1980

Agencies responsible for site management

- Warsaw City Hall
Plac Bankowy 3/5
00-950 Warszawa
e-mail: sekpres@warszawa.um.gov.pl
Web-site: www.um.warszawa.pl

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (ii) (vi)

- Change to criteria proposed: State Party proposes criteria C(v)

ICOMOS evaluation

Essentially, it corresponds to criterion no. 6, being associated with events of considerable historical significance. Following the insurrection of the inhabitants of Warsaw in August 1944, the Polish capital was annihilated in a reprisal by the Nazi occupation troops. From these ruins, between 1945 and 1966, the will of the nation brought to life again a city of which 85% was destroyed. ...

To support the request for the proposed inclusion, criterion no. 2 may be cited as well, to the extent that the reconstruction of the historic centre of Warsaw has exercised a considerable influence, in the majority of European countries, on the evolution of doctrines of urbanization and the preservation of old city quarters. Given these facts, the criterion of Authenticity may not be applied in its strict sense. The historic centre of Warsaw, tragically destroyed in 1944, is an exceptional example of the global reconstruction of a sequence of history running

from the 13th to the 20th centuries. Its authenticity is associated with this unique realisation of the years 1945 to 1966.

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- Statement of Significance does not adequately define the outstanding universal value of the site
- Need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the statement of significance
- Proposal for revised text has not been made by State Party, but is required
- Brief description of the site is not satisfactory, change required
- Name of the site is not adequate, change required

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: inadequate
Need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the boundaries
- No buffer zone has been defined, but is needed
Need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the buffer zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Decree of the President of the Republic of Poland on the designation of "The historic urban complex together with the Royal Route and the Wilanów Palace" as a Memorial of History in 1994
- Decision on entering the Old Town in the Inventory of Monuments as an urban complex in 1965
- Decisions on entering individual streets and squares into the Inventory of Monuments Acts of local legislation
- A Study on the Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development in the Capital City of Warsaw is being developed. It includes draft provisions for the area inscribed on the UNESCO List. The Study is not an act of local legislation, however, any such act must comply with its provisions
- Protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed

- Study on the Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development in the Capital City of Warsaw
- Local spatial development plans

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, urban centre, religious use
- A symbolic place connected with the struggle for independence and with the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, whose direct consequence was the destruction of the Old Town; a place of national ceremonies

Management/Administrative Body

- No steering group
- No site manager/coordinator, but needed
- Levels of public authority primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional, local and other
- The current management system is not sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- No management plan, but preparation will be completed in 09/2007
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Warsaw Town Hall

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- No integrated budget for the site is maintained. Each of the managers of individual sites within the inscribed area has different sources of funding and income as well as different expenditure needs
- Sources which provide funding for conservation and protection of the site: State Budget; Mazowieckie Voivodeship Local Government Budget; Capital City of Warsaw Budget; Funds of historic monuments owners
- Funding is insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 9

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation
- Average: education

- Bad: management, promotion
- Very bad: interpretation, visitor management

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- There is no special training for those who manage World Heritage sites. There are studies, training courses as well as fairs in the field of conservation that are open to the public. Experts and specialists in different areas of historic monument conservation are available at state level and at the level of non-governmental organizations as well as the academic staff of higher education institutions

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 650,000 in 2004 (Approx. 4.06 million people visited Warsaw, of whom 55% declared tourism as the purpose of their visit; it has been assumed that half of the remaining 45% visited the Old Town; additionally, a statistical inhabitant of Warsaw visits the Old Town at least twice a year)
- Visitor facilities: four historic churches, six museums, a community cultural centre, a cultural education centre with a theatre and a cinema, a library, archives, a hotel, guest rooms, restaurants and cafes, galleries, antique shops, a post office, souvenir shops and grocery stores are located in the inscribed area
- Visitor needs: shortage of tourist information centres, site interpretation and marking, public conveniences, disabled access and car parks not interfering with public space

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, studies related to the value of the site, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, others
- The results of studies are used for the development of renovation and conservation plans and for utilization changes, mainly involving conversions for cultural and educational purposes

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Not enough signs referring to World Heritage site

- World Heritage Convention emblem used on some publications
- Need of awareness raising of World Heritage site amongst visitors, local communities and businesses
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage site amongst local authorities
- Special events concerning World Heritage status: World Heritage Cities Solidarity Days; exhibition devoted to the Old Town facade decorations; celebration of the 25th anniversary of inscription in 2005
- Web site available: www.um.warszawa.pl
- Involvement of local population

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Renovation of the elevations of the Old Town Market Square houses, 1982-1989; Renovation of Kamienne Schodki Street, including neighbouring courtyards, 1995-2002; Conservation and structural reinforcement of the Kubicki Arcades beneath the Royal Castle, 1992-2004; Restoration works of the Castle gardens, 1991-to date; Renovation of the rear elevation of the Balcerowska House, 2003; Renovation works in the St. Anne's Church complex elevations, the bell tower, the Virgin Mary statue, 2001-2004; Renovation of elevation of John's house, 2004; Renovation of the elevation of St. Anne's House 2003; Conservation of the Old Town barbican walls, 1987-1990, 1996 to date; Reconstruction over the revealed remnants of the Gothic bridge and the new layout of Castle Square, 1990-1991; Relocation of the mermaid statue to the Old Town Market Square 1997-2000; Road repairs and replacement of underground utilities, 1994-1999
- Present state of conservation: needs more resources

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, natural disasters, number of inhabitants
- Musealization of the Old Town – subordinating its life to the needs of tourists
- Unregulated ownership status resulting from the 1949 Nationalization Decree

- Construction of new buildings can result in changes of the Old Town embankment development and in the shape of the Old Town panorama as viewed from the Vistula River
- Excessive dampness of the ground in the inscribed area and the Old Town embankment is responsible for the fast degradation of buildings. There is also a risk connected with the instability of the Old Town embankment

Measures taken/proposed

- The management plan for the inscribed area and its buffer zone, which will be ready in 2007, will contain the principles of the site management from the point of view of land management and spatial development conditions; additionally, work will start on the local spatial development plan in 2006. This plan will determine possible ways of land use, taking into account the needs of World Heritage status
- Stabilization of the slope, with particular attention being paid to the Old Town complex, will become one of the tasks for implementation under the Warsaw Development Strategy. The City has adopted a multi-annual investment programme for the adaptation of the existing hydrographic system for collection of rain water

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- A monitoring system will be proposed in the management plan

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, prestige, international recognition for the way the urban structure and the buildings were rebuilt
- Strengths of management: technical improvement of the state of preservation; removal of vehicular traffic from the whole Old Town area; illumination of the most important architectural structures; extending knowledge about the city as a result of archaeological and historical-architectural surveys
- Weaknesses of management: still insufficient funds that can be allocated for maintenance and improvement of the technical condition of the site; lack of a site management plan and thus lack of coordination of activities

Future actions:

- Preparation of projects enabling application for external funding (EU funds and financial structures under public-private partnership arrangements)
- The management plan will be commissioned and completed in 2006; its provisions will be implemented starting 2007