

**REPORT ON THE ICOMOS TECHNICAL ADVISORY MISSION TO
TALLINN, ESTONIA**

FROM 11 TO 15 JANUARY 2010

by Ms. Margaretha Ehrström, M.A. , Finland

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The report is based on documents such as the World Heritage Committee decisions, the periodic reporting reports provided by Estonia in 2004 and 2005 and information for the mission gained from the state party and local authorities in Estonia. The Technical Advisory Mission to Tallinn included on-site visits, meetings and discussions with authorities representing the State party, Estonian National Commission to UNESCO, the local government of Tallinn (the Heritage Department and the City Planning Department) as well as with representatives of ICOMOS Estonia. On-site visits presented the current conservation and restoration work in Tallinn.

The objectives of the Advisory Mission were contained within the Terms of Reference set up by ICOMOS and World Heritage Centre according to the Decision 33COM 7B.99, taken by World Heritage Committee at its 33d session (Seville, 2009). These were as follows:

1. Review the current situation of the site management system;
2. Provide technical guidance to the Estonian local and national authorities for the development of the management plan / system, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, in order to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of the property are sustained;
3. Advise the authorities on how such a plan/system might inform decision-making in all sectors and at all levels, and on how it might be integrated with other existing planning instruments;
4. Advise the authorities on the, establishment of a Site Management Committee, a Site Manager, the identification of resources, capacity building, conservation, public awareness, visitors and traffic management, the improvement of urban regulations, etc, in compliance with the 1972 Convention requirements and its Operational Guidelines;
5. Provide technical guidance to the authorities in order to improve the impact of current legislation on the preservation and protection of the World Heritage property (e.g. the thematic plan "Framework for high-rise buildings", limiting in the height of new constructions which may adversely impact on the site, etc);
6. Submit to the World Heritage Centre a report on the above, including a set of recommendations, an executive summary, and a proposed timetable for implementation by 8 February 2010 at the latest, to be submitted to the relevant Estonian authorities.

There are current problems concerning the administration and management of the World Heritage Site of Tallinn. The main problem is the lack of a Site Management Committee for the overall management of the World Heritage Site of Tallinn. The Committee should include representatives of the State Party, the municipality, NGO's, and other stakeholders.

- **A Management Committee should be set up as soon as possible preferably already in 2010. It should have representatives of the State Party, the regional administration, the municipality of Tallinn, Estonian ICOMOS as well as other relevant stakeholders e.g. the Estonian Architect's Union. Its aim should be to provide a transparent and open forum for discussion and dialogue on the preservation and development of the World Heritage Site of Tallinn. The members should be appointed for a term of specified length. The Committee should consider all aspects of the safeguarding, promoting and enhancing of the Tallinn World Heritage site and its buffer zone. The Committee should meet on a regular basis. The Management Committee should be responsible for enhancing, approving and implementing the Comprehensive Management Plan.**

The lack of a Comprehensive Management Plan for Tallinn and its buffer zone is another major issue. The recently approved "Development Plan of Tallinn Old Town 2008-2013" does not meet the needs of a Comprehensive Management Plan.

- **Work on developing a Comprehensive Management Plan should start at the earliest stage possible. The focus of the Management Plan is the Outstanding Universal Value of Tallinn Old Town for which the site has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the means to preserve it. The Comprehensive Management Plan should address the World Heritage site and its buffer zone.**
- **The Management Plan should be a comprehensive document addressing the legal protection of the site, the administrative bodies responsible for the implementation of the Act on "Heritage Conservation Area of Tallinn Old Town", the identification of financial and human resources, capacity building, conservation, public awareness, visitors and tourism, traffic arrangements. It should also include analyses on threats to the site, weaknesses as well as strengths and possibilities. There shall also be proposals for action on short and long term bases.**

Tallinn City Council has recently approved the thematic plan on "The Location of High Rise Buildings in Tallinn". The thematic plan identifies some ten areas for high rise buildings. The construction of high rise buildings at the border of the Buffer Zone, but fully visible in the cityscape, has been a concern of the World Heritage Committee. Special attention is given to the Maakri Area close to Viru Hotel as the new high rise constructions within this area have a strong negative impact on the visual integrity of Old Tallinn.

- **Tallinn City Planners and City Council should pay special attention to new constructions within Maakri Area. There should be no new detail plans approved or building permissions given to new high rise constructions within this area. Planning projects within this area should be realised focusing on lower and more dense constructions. Analyses on visual integrity of Old Tallinn and its buffer zone should also be part of the Comprehensive Management Plan.**

LEGAL PROTECTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION OF OLD TALLINN AND ITS BUFFER ZONE

Tallinn was inscribed in 1997 on criteria (ii) and (iv); the site is considered to be an outstanding and exceptionally complete and well preserved example of a medieval northern European trading city that retains the salient features of this unique form of economic and social community to a remarkable degree.

The origins of Tallinn date back to the 13th century, when a castle was founded by the crusading knights of the Teutonic Order. It developed as a major centre of the Hanseatic League, and its wealth is demonstrated by the opulence of the public buildings (its churches in particular) and the domestic architecture of the merchants' houses, which have survived to a remarkable degree the ravages of fire and wars in the intervening centuries.

The World Heritage Committee approved the request in 2008 to extend the World Heritage Site of 60 ha to 113 on the basis that the whole area is a national monument, "Tallinn Old Town Conservation Area". The area includes historic fortifications all round the Old Town dating from 17th century and historic city structures mainly from the 19th century including Kaarli and Jaani Churches, Estonia and Drama Theatres, with street views and parks. The area is contained between the streets Mere Avenue, Estonia Avenue, Vabaduse Square, Kaarli Avenue, Toompuiatee, Kopli and Põhja Avenue.

The proposal to increase the buffer zone of Tallinn Old Town from 370 ha to 2253 ha was also approved on the basis that this gave a more complete protection to the Tallinn city centre, protecting the views to and from the Old Town. The buffer zone includes view corridors and view sectors from different directions, altogether 9 points 4 sectors and 5 corridors. The area also extends to the sea to cover the views from Viimsi and Kopli Peninsulas.

Legal protection of Old Tallinn

The development, restoration and conservation of Tallinn Old City are regulated by the Statutes of the Heritage Conservation Area of Tallinn Old Town (Historic Centre). It is based upon the Heritage Conservation Act from 2002 (amended in 2008). The Old Town is considered to be a national monument. The area was designated as a protected zone by regulation Nr 360 of the Council of Ministers of ESSR in 1966. In 1996 the same was declared by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Estonia.

The statutes include the boundaries of the Old Tallinn and its buffer zone, the purpose for preservation and conservation, the restrictions and requirements for new constructions and technical requirements on works conducted within the area.

The Statutes also include arrangements for organisation and administration including cooperation and supervision. There is an agreement between the National Heritage Board and Tallinn City Government on work carried out in the field of restoration, conservation and new constructions within the area. The state supervision is conducted by the National Heritage Board.

Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department is in charge of the implementation of the Statutes of the Heritage Conservation Area of Tallinn Old Town. The department is divided into three

Divisions, Heritage Protection Division (staff of 8 experts), Division of Milieu Areas (5 experts) and Division of Culture (5 experts).

The main duties of the department are:

- to protect Old Town heritage conservation area and all national monuments in Tallinn (historical, archaeological, architectural, artistic);
- to invest in national monuments and give financial support to private owners (yearly budget);
- to approve all conservation and building projects, detail plans, research projects, archaeological excavations, advertisements involving monuments or structures in conservation area;
- to exercise supervision over monuments and heritage conservation areas;
- to monitor whether persons who conduct work involving monuments hold research permits and activity licences;
- to suspend work and other activities which endanger monuments or findings of cultural value;
- to mark monuments with signs, update the national register of cultural monuments
- and to keep an archive on the documentation of historic properties.

There is a good professional team at the Heritage Department in charge of the implementation of the Statutes. During more than ten years of action and activities the Department has had an essential role in guiding, negotiating, advising in the restoration, conservation and research of historic monuments as well as the planning of new constructions in Old Tallinn. According to the Act, there is a system of licences for professionals within the different fields of restoration, conservation and research activity within Old Tallinn. This licence is allocated through a special jury. So far the licence has been compulsory for projects concerning historic buildings within Old Tallinn. The Act is under revision to enlarge the necessity for licensed professionalism for all building projects in Old Tallinn.

In case of research needed in connection to building projects the department has a budget and staff for the work. When buildings are repaired either for continuation of the current use or when there are new functions planned (hotels, restaurants or shops), possibilities for investigations and research, both on the site and in archives, are pursued. Almost all repairs reveal layers of former architectural and functional interiors and details. In recent years a number of medieval wells have been found during restoration, and they are, when possible, displayed as part of the interiors. Thus the new findings and research throw light on the historic fabric of Tallinn.

A problem concerning Old Tallinn is that the medieval town is not considered to be a very attractive residential area among citizens. A number of properties are owned by people, who do not live permanently in Tallinn. This leads to the threat that a number of historic buildings are refurbished for tourism (hotels, restaurants, cafés) business or converted to half public buildings e.g. offices. The restrictions of security and technical installations for public buildings are often much more rigorous than those for residential houses. For the preservation of the historic fabric and the restoration and conservation work of the monuments, the new use can be a threat. The preservation of the historic and architectural values of the monument should always be the target of the interventions. There might be cases when the new planned use has to be revised, when there is a threat to the preservation of historical and architectural values (material and design).

The Statutes of Heritage Conservation Area of Tallinn Old Town are currently under revision enlarging the control of building activities to all constructions within the whole World Heritage Site.

Conclusion: Strategies for keeping up the balance of residential and business properties, private and public areas for inhabitants, shopkeepers and services for local inhabitants and stakeholders bearing in mind the Outstanding Universal Value of Old Tallinn should be the starting point of the Comprehensive Management Plan.

New constructions within World Heritage Site

There are some empty plots of land within Old Tallinn and the surrounding blocks. Some of them are due to the bombardment of Tallinn in the 2nd World War, some due to urban development in 19th and 20th centuries. The most important plots are those situated in Harju street.

The Estonian National Commission to UNESCO, the National Heritage Board, the Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department and ICOMOS Estonia together with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre organised an international conference in Tallinn in May 2002 to address the issues of valuable urban fabric and new urban design. The conference entitled "Alternatives to Historical Reconstruction in UNESCO World Heritage Cities" agreed on a resolution concerning a number of important issues concerning vacant plots in Old Tallinn. These are relevant still today.

In the resolution the participating delegates agree that, for the purpose of restoring the urban fabric and preserving the authenticity of the historic World Heritage City of Tallinn, vacant lots shall be developed, taking into account the following considerations:

- A commitment to respect the World Heritage values recognized by inscription, as expressed in the World Heritage Statement of Significance;
- The need for decisions to be made in the context of a long term strategic plan for the development of Tallinn, which fully integrates concern for heritage;
- A commitment to protection of all heritage resources within Tallinn, including archaeological resources which are often the only remaining authentic but fragile heritage artefacts on sites;
- A commitment to detailed analysis of needs, intrinsic qualities, applicable constraints, and available resources, as a basis for decision making;
- The need to make full use of all applicable planning policies, instruments and mechanisms, including preparation of required detail plans and use of public participation;
- A commitment to architectural design solutions which harmoniously integrate within the historical urban fabric, developed to the degree possible through an open process of public exposure and expression and professional review.

Conclusion: There are important aspects in the resolution concerning the principles to be observed in managing archaeological remains, new constructions and the designing of detail plans within the area. The strategy for addressing these aspects should be part of the Comprehensive Management Plan.

The Development Plan of Tallinn Old Town 2008-2013

The work of the Development plan was carried out as a combination of analysis of literature, interviews, working group meetings, assessment and production of final texts and maps. The development plan concerns the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone. The themes of the plan are the development of the historic urban region, the Old Town as a World Heritage Site, the network of educational institutions, the business environment, presence of cultural institutions, the creative industry environment, tourism, public urban and green space, the natural environment, housing, social welfare and the governing of the city district. These are all essential themes in the development of Old Tallinn.

The main concern, however, in the Development plan for Old Tallinn is that the overall need to respect the Outstanding Universal Value of Old Tallinn according to which the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List is lacking. The OUV (statement of significance + authenticity + integrity) should be the focal point of convergence for a Comprehensive Management Plan, its strategy and its implementation on long and short term bases. Information gathered for the Development plan can be transmitted to a Comprehensive Management Plan from the point of view of preserving the OUV of the site.

Conclusions: A Comprehensive Management Plan should be set up taking as the standpoint the Outstanding Universal Value of Old Tallinn and its buffer zone. The Comprehensive Management Plan should also include analyses on the threats, weaknesses, possibilities and challenges.

THE BUFFER ZONE OF OLD TALLINN

The buffer zone is composed of wide areas around Old Tallinn. The bay and harbour of Tallinn are also included as well as view sectors and view corridors to the old town. There are seven view sectors and three view corridors identified. The enlarged buffer zone was approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2008.

The Thematic Plan of High-Rise Buildings in Tallinn

The Urban Planning Department of Tallinn City Government has worked out a Thematic Plan on the "Location of High-Rises Buildings in Tallinn". The plan has been approved by the Council of Tallinn in 2008. The objectives of the plan are to identify locations of high rise buildings taking into account the height dominance of Old Tallinn and the suburbanization process of the city, by densifying in defined areas of City Centre and sub-centres. All together twelve districts for high-rise buildings have been designated where the absolute height of building in meters varies between 60-130 meters, while Sitsi with 210 meters forms an exception. The housing density varies between 2,5 - 4,2. Here the Maakri area with 6,5 forms an exception. All areas are outside the boundaries of the buffer zone, though the Maakri area is at the very border. The Maakri area has the highest density of 6,5 and the height limit for tall buildings is 130 m. The building activities are realised through detail plans and approval of building projects.

The meeting with the planning authorities revealed that there are detail plans and building projects for two high-rise buildings of 130 m have been approved. Another is in the discussion stages, but so far there is no detail plan approved.

The City Planning Office administrates relevant activity under a different Department in the City Government than that of the Heritage Department. Although there are good contacts between the professionals and experts there are problems with information and engagement of heritage issues. This again raises the urgent need for a common Management Committee for Old Tallinn.

The Thematic Plan has been sent to ICOMOS international for review in 2007. ICOMOS stated in its report that the Thematic Plan should not be adopted until a Management Plan had been formulated, which in this matter should take into consideration the visual integrity of the World Heritage Site.

Conclusions: The strategies and objectives of the Thematic Plan are not in conformity with the preservation of the visual integrity of the World Heritage Site. There is a special concern for the realisation of Maakri area, which is situated at the border of the buffer zone. There are approved detail plans for realisation of high-rise buildings of 130 meters adjacent the Old Town. As the already realised high-rise buildings within the area are a threat to the visual integrity of Old Tallinn, there should be no new constructions with this extreme height. New constructions should be built lower and more densely.

The City Planning Office should also be member of the Management Committee of the World Heritage Site.

Areas of wooden architecture in the buffer zone

Tallinn is surrounded by historical wooden suburbs, built mainly in the 1870s-1940s. The buffer zone covers partly the historical suburbs of Kadriorg, Kassisaba, Kalamaja and Süda-Tatari. "Regulations of Tallinn Central City Milieu Protection Areas, Boundaries, Protection and Usage Conditions". Areas such as Raua and Kadriorg are situated at the line of the buffer zone.

The wooden architecture of Tallinn is exceptional and it forms an integrated part of the historic, urban fabric round Old Tallinn. There are large workers' areas built in wood which are very well preserved. These form an important urban layer in the neighbourhood of the Old Town.

In the years after independence, these areas were threatened due to a lack of appreciation as residential areas. The houses were in poor condition because of a lack of maintenance. In addition there were problems concerning the jurisdiction of ownership of the houses. Many of the houses were neglected because of the uncertain situation of future land-use and planning. Houses have been repaired in recent years. This has not always been carried out in the very best way, e.g. wooden window frames been changed to plastic ones. The trends have changed recently and today the repairs are carried out using traditional building materials and methods. The general opinion and the attitudes of private house owners have also changed. A number of these wooden areas are today considered as areas of environmental (milieu) value and the approved plans have strict regulations concerning the individual historic buildings and the conditions for repair. There are also good examples of new wooden constructions in the old urban fabric.

Conclusions: ICOMOS warmly welcomes the work on the preservation of the urban historic, wooden areas within the buffer-zone and supports the authorities in the implementation of the approved environmental (milieu) plans.

CONCLUSIONS

- A Comprehensive Management Plan should be set up taking as its focal standpoint respect for the Outstanding Universal Value of Old Tallinn and its buffer zone. The Comprehensive Management Plan should also include analyses on the threats, weaknesses, possibilities and challenges.
- The Comprehensive Management Plan shall also include strategies for keeping up the balance of residential and business properties, private and public areas for inhabitants, shopkeepers and services for local people and stakeholders as well as statues for archaeological remains, new constructions and the designing of detail plans within the area. These should all be part of the Comprehensive Management Plan.
- The strategies and objectives of the Thematic Plan are not in conformity with the preservation of the visual integrity of the World Heritage Site. There is a special concern for the realisation of Maakri area, which is situated at the border of buffer zone. There are approved detail plans for realisation of high-rise buildings of 130 meters adjacent the inscribed area. As the already realised high-rise buildings within the area are a threat to the visual integrity of Old Tallinn, there should be no new constructions with this extreme height. New constructions should also be built lower and more densely. The City Planning Office should also be part of the Management Committee of the World Heritage Site.
- ICOMOS warmly welcomes the work on the preservation of the urban historic, wooden areas within the buffer-zone and supports the authorities in the implementation of the approved environmental (milieu) plans.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As expert to the ICOMOS advisory mission I sincerely thank all the authorities of the Republic of Estonia and the City of Tallinn for their support, availability, assistance and hospitality during my mission. I also thank ICOMOS Estonia for hosting a meeting.

Special thanks go to the staff at the Tallinn Heritage Department, Ms. Liina Jänes, Mr. Boris Dubovik and Ms. Riin Alatalu, who accompanied me throughout my mission, provided me with valuable information on the present situation of Tallinn, during on site visits, meetings, discussions and presentations.

List of appendix:

- Program of the mission, Appendix I
- List of persons (institutions), Appendix II
- "Tallinn Milieu Protection Areas", prepared by Riin Alatalu, Appendix III

**Visit of UNESCO expert Margaretha Ehrström
to Tallinn, Estonia
11 - 15 January 2010**

Monday, 11 January 2010

- 11.00** Arrival at Tallinn Port (Eckerö Line ferry) from Helsinki
Met by: Margit Siim, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Departure for Meritan Old Town Hotel (Pikk 29/ Lai 24))
- 13.00-14.30** Lunch hosted by Estonian National Commission for UNESCO (Restaurant Kaerajaan, Raekoja plats 17) with
Marika Valk, Secretary-General, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Kaia Jäppinen, Deputy Mayor of Tallinn, responsible for heritage conservation
Mart Kalm, UNESCO WHC member, Art Academy, professor
Margit Siim, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Liina Jänes, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
- 15.00-17.00** Introductory meeting (Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department, Raekoja plats 12)
Anu Kivilo, Head, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Boris Dubovik, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Riin Alatalu, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Liina Jänes, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Margit Siim, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Anneli Randla, National Heritage Board
Marju Reismaa, Ministry of Culture
Kaarel-Mati Halla, Head, Development Service
Mark Sepp, Development Service
Robert Treufeldt, ICOMOS NC

Tuesday, 12 January 2010

- 09.30-12.45** City tour guided by Boris Dubovik, Head of Heritage Protection Division
Starting from Raekoja plats 12.
- During the city tour** Lunch hosted by Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
(Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, Laboratooriumi st 22)
- 13.00-14.30** Meeting at Tallinn City Government (Vabaduse Square 7, room 626) with Taavi Aas, Deputy Mayor of Tallinn, responsible for city planning
Endrik Mänd, City Architect
Arvo Rikkinen, City Planning Department
Martti Preem, City Planning Department
Kerttu Märtin, coordinator, City Planning Department
- Participants: Boris Dubovik, Liina Jänes

Wednesday, 13 January 2010

- 09.00-11.00** City tour guided by Boris Dubovik.
Starting from Raekoja plats 12.
- 12.00-13.30** Lunch hosted by Ministry of Culture (Restaurant Dominic, Vene st 10) with
Anton Pärn, Undersecretary for Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture
- 15.00-16.00** Meeting at Tallinn City Government (Nunne st 18) with
Aini Härm, Head, Tallinn City Centre Administration

Evelin Tsirk, Head, Tallinn City Tourist Office & Convention Bureau

Participants: Riin Alatalu, Liina Jänes

Thursday, 14 January 2010

Morning Private time

12.00-13.30 Lunch hosted by National Heritage Board (Uus st 18) with
Kalev Uustalu, Director General, National Heritage Board
Anneli Randla, Vice Director General for Research, National Heritage Board

16.00-17.00 Meeting with ICOMOS National Commission (Pikk st 29)

Friday, 15 January 2010

10.00-11.00 Closure meeting (Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department, Raekoja plats 12)
Anu Kivilo, Head, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Boris Dubovik, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Riin Alatalu, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Liina Jänes, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Margit Siim, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Marju Reismaa, Ministry of Culture
Thea Laidvere, National Heritage Board
Kaarel-Mati Halla, Head, Development Service
Mark Sepp, Development Service
Robert Treufeldt, ICOMOS NC

Visit of UNESCO expert Margaretha Ehrström to Tallinn, Estonia 11 - 15 January 2010
List of names and positions

Anton Pärn, Undersecretary for Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture
Marju Reismaa, Advisor, Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture

Kalev Uustalu, Director General, National Heritage Board
Anneli Randla, Vice Director General for Research, National Heritage Board
Thea Laidvere, Chief Inspector on Architectural Monuments National Heritage Board

Marika Valk, Secretary-General, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Margit Siim, Estonian National Commission for UNESCO
Mart Kalm, UNESCO WHC member, Estonian Art Academy, professor

Anu Kivilo, Head of Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Boris Dubovik, Head of Heritage Protection Division, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Riin Alatalu, Head of Division of Milieu Areas, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department
Liina Jänes, Head Specialist, Heritage Protection Division, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department

Kaarel-Mati Halla, Director of Development Service
Mark Sepp, Head of Division of Development Plans, Development Service

Endrik Mänd, City Architect, Tallinn City Planning Department
Marti Preem, Head of Comprehensive Planning Division, Tallinn City Planning Department
Kerttu Märtin, coordinator, City Planning Department

Aini Härm, Head of Tallinn City Centre Administration
Jüri Lump, Deputy Head of Tallinn City Centre Administration
Ivo Parbus, Press Representative, Tallinn City Centre Administration
Indrek Sarapuu, Project Manager (Tallinn Old Town Days), Tallinn City Centre Administration
Kristjan Saar, Head of Culture and Youth Work Division, Tallinn City Centre Administration
Malle Pahapill, Head of City Environment Division, Tallinn City Centre Administration
Rainer Nurme, Head Specialist, Tallinn City Centre Administration

Evelin Tsirk, Head of Tallinn City Tourist Office & Convention Bureau
Leelo Ilbis, Leading Specialist, Tallinn City Tourist Office & Convention Bureau

Meeting with ICOMOS National Committee with:

Robert Treufeldt, Chairman, ICOMOS Estonian National Committee
Riin Alatalu, Vice Chairman, ICOMOS Estonian National Committee
Jaan Tamm, Chairman of Estonian Heritage Society
Andri Ksenofontov, architect
Anneli Randla, Vice Director General for Research, National Heritage Board
Aet Maasik, interior designer
Hain Toss, architect
Helve Ilves, engineer
Mart Keskküla, architect
Kalli Holland, architect
Henry Kuningas, Head Specialist, Heritage Protection Division, Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department

Tallinn Milieu Protection Areas

The medieval Tallinn Old City is surrounded by unique historical suburbs. Mainly wooden suburbs date back to the second half of 19th and beginning of 20th century. To protect these areas Tallinn has since 2001 formed a number of milieu protection areas (see the map).

The restoration and building activities in these areas are regulated by

- Tallinn Comprehensive Plan (2001),
- Thematic plan „Regulation of Tallinn Central City Milieu Protection Areas Boundaries, Protection and Usage Conditions” (2008) and
- Comprehensive plans for Tallinn districts.

All projects on restoration and building in these areas and also detail plans must be approved by Tallinn Cultural Heritage Department Milieu Areas Division.

Milieu areas form a belt around the old town. Some of them are included in Tallinn Old City World Heritage Site's buffer zone (see the map).

Milieu Areas in Central City are regulated by the above mentioned thematic plan.

The principles for restoration, building and planning in Kalamaja are stated in “Building Regulations for Kalamaja” (2004), more detailed regulations will be approved in near future as a part of master plan for Põhja-Tallinn district.

Thematic plan „Regulation of Tallinn Central City Milieu Protection Areas Boundaries, Protection and Usage Conditions.

The thematic plan is based on a detailed inventory. An inventory database includes relevant information for all the buildings in the area (time of building and reconstructions, architect, material etc).

In the milieu areas are also more than 100 listed buildings, these are regulated by Conservation Act. The rest of the buildings are evaluated in five categories:

Very valuable building – outstanding example of area, period, architectural style, architects creativity or type of building



Valuable building – significant example of architecture



Milieu value – typical building in the area, important for the architectural integrity of the area



Less valuable – building has lost its character in reconstructions or is in technically hopeless condition



New buildings – built after 1991



Principles of the thematic plan:

- Maximum height of buildings and living density is regulated on block level.

- Very valuable, valuable and milieu value buildings must be preserved and renovated. All decorative façade details, panel doors, door shelters, ironworks, profiled window frames etc must be preserved or replaced by copies. Historical chimneys and ventilation slots must be preserved.
- The volumes, façade partition and eaves-line must be preserved in very valuable, valuable and milieu value buildings. The attic may be taken into use in existing volume. Raising the ridge is possible only as exceptions, the decision is based on existing roof incline and the architecture of neighbouring buildings. All decisions are unique and based on construction project.
- Planning structure and urban space components (street area, squares, courtyards, fences, pass ways, parks, historical lampposts etc) must be preserved.
- In planning extensions and new buildings the historical urban structure, street plan, diversity in styles and periods, volumes, perspective sights, silhouette, roof landscape and other details of local characteristics have to be followed .
- Local architectural traditions (plot structure, building materials, roofing, facade design, architectural details and elements, street pavements etc) have to be followed in reparation and renovation and new buildings
- Preserve and enable housing.
- When possible preserve and expose architecturally valuable interiors, details, elements and historical constructions
- Preserve landscape elements, nature monuments, trees and green areas.
- Reconstruct demolished buildings in suitable volumes.
- If suitable demolish unsuitable and devaluating buildings
- Imitating materials (PVC boarding, PVC windows, metal doors, profiled roof sheet etc) are not allowed
- Traditional paints (linseed oil based paints etc) must be used for wooden buildings.
- In case of outer thermal isolation, the characteristic overhang of socket, staircase and firewall must be preserved. On wooden buildings the windows must be on same plane with boarding.

Less valuable and buildings in poor technical condition may be replaced by new buildings in suitable volumes. Technical condition is evaluated by a expertise