

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 540

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Historic Centre of Leningrad and surroundings

Location : Region of Leningrad

State Party : U.S.S.R.

Date : 17 October, 1989

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I, II, IV and VI.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The inclusion of Leningrad on the World Heritage List is so obvious that any detailed justification seems superfluous. The taking of the Swedish fortress of Noteborg at the beginning of the War of the North and the establishment in 1703 of the fortresses of Peter-and-Paul and Kronsclot ushered in the greatest urban creation of the 18th century: the construction of the capital of Peter the Great, the symbol of a Russia that became the master of the Baltic after the victory of Poltava (1709) and was free to open to the West. At the cost of the colossal forced labor of Russian soldiers, Swedish and Ottoman prisoners of war, and Finnish and Estonian workers and laborers, the metamorphosis of an inhospitable coastal area into a superb city where palaces, churches and convents, and also two-storey stone houses fit in to the urban designs of the Frenchman Alexandre Leblond, was completed in less than 20 years. In 1724 St. Petersburg, which then outstripped Moscow, counted 75,000 inhabitants.

A network of canals, streets and quais was built gradually, beginning in the reign of Peter the Great (+ 1725). The Nevski perspective did not become the city's major east-west axis until 1738. Similarly, under the empresses Anna Ivanovna (1730-1740), Elisabeth Petrovna (1741-1762) and Catherine II the Great (1762-1796), the urban landscape of St. Petersburg took on the monumental splendor that assured the world renown of the "Venice of the North". An array of foreign architects-Rastrelli, Rinaldi, Quarenghi, Cameron, Vallin de la Mothe-rivalled one another with audaciousness and splendor with the capital's huge palaces and convents and in imperial and princely suburban residences-Petrodvorets, Lomonosov, Tsarskoie Selo (Pushkin), Pavlovsk, Gatchina, etc.

Again under Paul I (who ordered the construction of Michailovska Palace) and especially under Alexander I (1801-1825), the impetus given by the city's founder continued with astonishing monumental works: palaces and theaters by Carlo Rossi; the remarkable Arts Square, by the same architect; the collegiate church of Notre Dame of Kazan by Voronikhine (1801-1811); St. Isaac Cathedral (1819-1858) by Auguste de Montferrand, assisted by Vassili Stassov, Abram Melnikov, and Alexandre and Andrei Michailov, are some of the great masterpieces of the period.

In the history of urbanism Leningrad is no doubt the only example of a vast project that retained all its logic despite the rapid succession of styles reputed to be irreconcilable: everything opposed the unrestricted baroque style of the collegial church of the Resurrection begun by Bartolomeo Rastrelli in 1748 and completed by Vassili Stassov in 1835 and the refined neoclassicism of Tauride Palace; at Palace Square the exuberant architecture of the Winter Palace, where Rastrelli gave free reign to his imagination, provides the background to the irreproachable Alexander Column, built from 1830 to 1834 by Auguste de Montferrand. From the disparity of styles, an impression of timeless grandeur comes to life in this distended historic centre where the greatness of the monuments is on a scale with a landscape free of any background, open to the sea, perpetually swept by sea breezes and criss-crossed by canals running beneath, it is said, more than 400 bridges. The multicolored, sparkling capital of the Baltic, Leningrad reconciles- with the lively colors of plaster and stucco, the reflection of marble, granite and porphyry, the brilliance of gilt decorations, the green of the parks, and the unreal blue of the waters of the Neva- the opposing principles of the architects who succeeded one another at the site from 1703 to the modern era.

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of this cultural property on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I, II, IV and VI.

- **Criteria I.** In the field of urban design, Leningrad represents a unique artistic achievement in the ambition of the program, the coherency of the plan and the speed of execution. From 1703 to 1725, Peter the Great lifted from a landscape of marshes, peat bogs and rocks, architectural styles in stone and marble for a capital, St. Petersburg, which he wished to be the most beautiful city in all of Europe.

- **Criteria II.** The ensembles designed in St. Petersburg and the surrounding area by Rastrelli, Vallin de la Mothe, Cameron, Rinaldi, Zakharov, Voronikhine, Rossi, Montferrand, and others, exerted great influence in the 18th and 19th centuries on the development of architecture and monumental arts in Russia and Finland. The normative value of the capital was increased from the beginning by the establishment of the Academy of Sciences, followed by that of the Academy of Fine Arts. The urban model of St. Petersburg, made explicit by future work completed under Catherine II, Alexander I and Nicholas I, was used during the reconstruction of Moscow following the fire of 1812, and as new cities, such as Odessa or Sebastopol, spread in the southern

part of the Empire.

- **Criteria IV.** The nominated cultural property links outstanding examples of baroque imperial residences with the architectural ensemble of St. Petersburg - the baroque and neoclassical capital par excellence. The palaces of Petrodvorets and Tsarskoe Selo (Pushkin), which were restored following destruction during the Second World War, are some of the most significant constructions.

- **Criteria VI.** Leningrad was twice directly and tangibly associated with events of universal significance. From 1703 to 1725, the construction of St. Petersburg (recalled by the equestrian statue of Peter the Great by Falconet, located in Gorki Square) symbolizes the opening of Russia to the western world and the emergence of the empire of the czars on the international scene. The Bolshevik Revolution triumphed in Petrograd in 1917 (the city had been renamed in 1914). The Aurora cruiser and the town house of Mathilde Kchesinskaia, later the museum of the Great Socialist Revolution of October, are, in the heart of Leningrad, symbols of the formation of the U.S.S.R.

ICOMOS observations

ICOMOS, mindful of the considerable amount of restoration work undertaken at Leningrad, Petrodvorets, Pushkin, Pavlovsk and Gatchina following the Second World War and the 900 days of bombing (September 1941- January 1944) suffered by the capital of Peter the Great, commends the Soviet authorities for the conservation effort carried out at this exceptional site.

However, ICOMOS also notes that Leningrad is now a city of nearly 5 million inhabitants and that it covers 200 square kilometers. The existence of a major industrial complex- the largest in the U.S.S.R.- with its steel, petrochemical and chemical factories, poses the difficult problem of the harmonization of development and safeguarding policies. The delimitation of the historic areas annexed to the nomination takes major elements of the architectural heritage into account, but not the environment.

In view of the fact that a general development plan for the city and the region was adopted in 1987, it would be good to recommend stronger control over the development of polluting industries in order to avoid an evolution similar to that experienced, for example, by Venice and its lagoon (included on the World Heritage List in 1987).

ICOMOS, April 1990

