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# Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation) No 540bis

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## 1 Basic data

### State Party

Russian Federation

### Name of property

Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments

### Location

St Petersburg Region  
Russian Federation

### Inscription

1990

### Brief description

The 'Venice of the North', with its numerous canals and more than 400 bridges, is the result of a vast urban project begun in 1703 under Peter the Great. Later known as Leningrad (in the former USSR), the city is closely associated with the October Revolution. Its architectural heritage reconciles the very different Baroque and pure neoclassical styles, as can be seen in the Admiralty, the Winter Palace, the Marble Palace and the Hermitage.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

6 March 2013

## 2 Issues raised

### Background

The property was inscribed in 1990 on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi). It is a serial property formed by 136 components, among which only the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg enjoyed defined boundaries since the time of inscription, whilst for all other components, no clear limits were established.

In 2006, following a joint WHC/ICOMOS mission to the property undertaken to examine its state of conservation, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre a precise definition of the boundaries of the inscribed components and of their respective buffer zones, as well as a proposal for the modification of the boundaries of the World Heritage Property (WHC decision 30COM 7B.78).

Between 2007 and 2009, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre cartographic documentation of the inscribed property in which the delimitations of the boundaries of the Historic Centre of St. Petersburg (property component no. 540-001) were significantly

different from those presented at the time of inscription. In 2009 a WHC/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission invited by the State Party confirmed the considerable discrepancy between the boundaries of component 540-001 of the property at the time of inscription and the newly proposed ones.

At its 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Sevilla, 2009), the World Heritage Committee noted this difference and encouraged the State Party to submit a formal request for a significant boundary modification. Equally the Committee noted that the proposed buffer zone did not encompass "*the landscape setting of the property and in particular the panorama along the Neva*" and requested the State Party to formally submit a reconsidered buffer zone to the World Heritage Centre. The World Heritage Committee also invited the State Party to establish an international expert group on the St Petersburg Retrospective Inventory, providing the necessary funds for this activity.

A second joint WHC/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was carried out in March 2010: this recognized that the original nomination dossier contained several inaccuracies and errors but also confirmed the substantial difference between the boundaries defined at inscription and those submitted in 2009.

At its 34<sup>th</sup> session (Brasília, 2010), the World Heritage Committee acknowledged the mission recommendations. It requested the State Party: 1) to compare the situation of the components of the inscribed property as presented in the 1990 nomination dossier with their current real situation; 2) to clarify the boundaries of each component and its elements on a cadastral map. Additionally, the Committee requested the State Party to explore two options for the boundary clarification/modification: a) reduce the boundaries of the 1990 inscription and re-nominate the property; b) retain the boundaries of the 1990 inscription and modify accordingly "the national legal status of the property to allow the serial site to be recognized as a single entity" (WHC decision 34COM 7B.95). The World Heritage Committee, while regretting that the issues of the property boundary clarification/modification and of the buffer zone definition were not addressed by the State Party, also suggested the organization of an international expert forum in Saint Petersburg to evaluate the proposals concerning the property boundaries and its buffer zones.

At its 35<sup>th</sup> session (Paris, 2011), the World Heritage Committee noted the information received on the planned organization of an international expert forum and requested the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre all relevant information on the outcomes of the forum.

In 2012, within the framework of the State of Conservation report, the State Party transmitted the results of the international expert forum and documentation according to which it opted for the retention of the boundaries of the 1990 inscription and proposed a cartography in which the

limits of the inscribed property were similar to the 1990 ones.

The established International Expert Working Group met in 2012 and noted the progress made in the boundary clarification process. To ensure the appropriate framework for the protection and management of the inscribed property within the Russian legal system, particularly for the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and the Historic Part of the Town of Kronstadt, the Group noted that it was urgent to give both properties the juridical status of 'remarkable sites' according to the phrasing of the Russian legislation. This needs to be preceded by the definitive determination of the boundaries of the property components. The present request for minor boundary modification is therefore a preliminary step towards strengthening the protection of the property.

### **Modification**

Following submission of the documentation which was required to clarify the boundaries of the inscribed property in December 2012, the State Party sent on 31 January 2013 a request for a minor boundary modification concerning the major component of this serial nomination - the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg (component 540-001) – whilst no modification has been proposed for the Historical Part of the Town of Kronstadt (component 540-002) nor has a formal proposal for the establishment of a buffer zone for component 540-001 been put forward in coordination with the minor modifications of its limits. However, the annexed maps include the delineation of buffer zones for the property components and the minor boundary modification dossier also mentions the buffer zone for component 540-001.

As inscribed, the area of the property component 540-001 covers 4,034.3ha; the proposed modification, which includes both minor extensions and reductions, reduces the size of the area to 3,934.1ha. However, no information is provided on the size of the areas indicated as buffer zones nor have they been completely included in the submitted maps.

The State Party explains that the rationale for the proposed minor boundary modification is based on a multi-year historical-cultural study carried out by the State Party on the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg, to investigate the OUV of the property and its attributes. The research consisted of analyses of historic sources, of the city structure and spaces, of its landscape and an inventory of the most significant views.

On the basis of this study, protection zones within the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg have been defined and in 2009 the Saint Petersburg Law no. 820-7 regulating the boundaries of these zones and their respective regimes for land use was approved. The zones identified through the aforementioned study better reflect the OUV of the property component, although their boundaries present minor discrepancies with those of the property as submitted for nomination in 1990. However, the 1990 boundaries presented a number of inaccuracies and

inconsistencies (e.g. elements no longer existing were included in the list) which it was necessary to amend, and this has been clarified on various occasions with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS.

The Law establishes several protection zones with differing and decreasing restrictions in land use, according to the specificities of each area. The area with the strictest protection regime is a conservation (CZ) zone, articulated in CZ1 and CZ2, corresponding respectively to areas particularly sensitive due to their richness in heritage buildings, historic urban structure, quality open spaces, panoramas, or their cohesive historic environment, and to areas surrounding heritage buildings. Here new construction is prohibited and commercial activity restricted. Lighter protection zones consist of development and economic-activity (DRZ) zones, articulated in DRZ1 and DRZ2. The first corresponds to areas associated with the historic planned ensembles and characterized by a high degree of conservation, whilst the DRZ2 zone comprises districts distinguished by modern development or the urban form of which is still incomplete. The latter zone constitutes the setting of the inscribed property and the envisaged land use regimes are meant to ensure an unobstructed and coherent visual perspective from the historic Centre.

Taking into account the recommendations of the International Expert Working Group established in 2011, after its meeting in 2012, the State Party has now submitted a request for a minor boundary modification for the inscribed property component 540-001. The proposal envisages the expansion of the boundaries to include within the perimeter of the inscribed property the entirety of both the CZ and DRZ1 zones; heritage properties protected for their federal or regional value and other properties identified for their cultural value; and minor reductions to exclude portions of the DRZ2 zone from the limits of the inscribed property, with a view to use the DRZ2 zone as a basis for the definition of a buffer zone.

According to the State Party, the proposed minor boundary modification would correct inexactitudes and inconsistencies of the property delimitations as determined at the time of inscription and improve the coherence between the Outstanding Universal Value of the property component and its physical consistency, by including all areas directly contributing to the expression of the OUV and excluding non-contributory parts, previously included within the property. Additionally, the proposed modifications would ensure the congruence to its fullest possible degree between the boundaries of the inscribed property and those of the protection zones established in 2009 under the Saint Petersburg Law no. 820-7, thus granting to the property the best protection within the national and regional legal framework.

The State Party informs that, in terms of management, the property component 540-001 is currently managed under the Federal Law no.73-FZ issued in 2002 "On Cultural Heritage Properties (Landmarks of the History and Culture) of the Peoples of the Russian Federation" and

under the Saint Petersburg Law no. 820-7 issued in 2009. The Russian Federation also specifies that protection zone limits established under Law no. 820-7 will be adjusted so as to encompass all parts which have been recommended by the Working Group for inclusion within the limits of the property and which, on the contrary, were not covered by the protection regimes when they were established. According to the State Party, the proposed boundary modification will improve the management of the property, in that it forms the basis for its inclusion in the Unified State Register of the Cultural Heritage Properties of the Peoples of the Russian Federation.

ICOMOS observes that the proposal of minor boundary modification for the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg is the result of a complex process that began in 2006, at the time of the WHC/ICOMOS joint mission, and will continue in future years so as to address the boundary issue of the entire serial property and of its buffer zones.

ICOMOS notes that the proposed minor boundary modification has been based on the historic-cultural studies carried out between 2004 and 2008. In detail, the proposals for both minor extensions and reductions are well motivated.

Boundary expansions will include only regulated areas, the integrity of which is maintained; additionally portions of heritage ensembles that in 1990 were separated with no reason, will be included, thus re-establishing their integrity. Similarly, areas which are integral parts of the setting of monuments and which were originally excluded from the property will be included within the modified limits, so as to reconnect these monuments with their setting. Finally, sections of the opposite bank of the river have been included to ensure the unity of the fluvial urban landscape.

According to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* reduction of the size of inscribed properties should be examined under the minor boundary modification procedure only in exceptional circumstances.

ICOMOS considers that, in this specific case, the proposed boundary reductions appear minor, adequately justified and intended to reinforce the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and therefore examination under the procedure for minor boundary modifications is justified.

ICOMOS notes that parts, included since 1990, that did not present specific cultural value or have been compromised since then by new constructions are proposed for exclusion and shall in the future be included in the buffer zone. In some cases, the modifications are intended to obtain perfect coincidence of boundaries with those of a protected monument/ensemble or with geographic or urban limits.

ICOMOS notes that the proposed boundary modifications concern areas which are already covered by protection regimes, except for very limited portions (see MBM

dossier p. 5), which, however, the State Party assures will be included within the appropriate 2009 protection zone regimes. ICOMOS concurs with the State Party that the proposed minor boundary modification will establish adequate conditions to improve the property protection and management but regrets that no formal proposal for the establishment of a buffer zone for the property component 540-001 has been submitted in coordination with the minor boundary modification request.

To ensure the complete protection of the property component as modified by the present boundary modification proposal, ICOMOS considers that the following steps are necessary and urgent: 1) adjustment of the limits of the protection zones defined in 2009 in all the small portions where they do coincide with the proposed modified property boundaries, (i.e., where modifications were recommended by the International Expert Working Group in 2012); 2) establishment of a buffer zone for Saint Petersburg on the basis of the 2004-2008 historic-cultural study and of the 2009 DR22 zone protection regime.

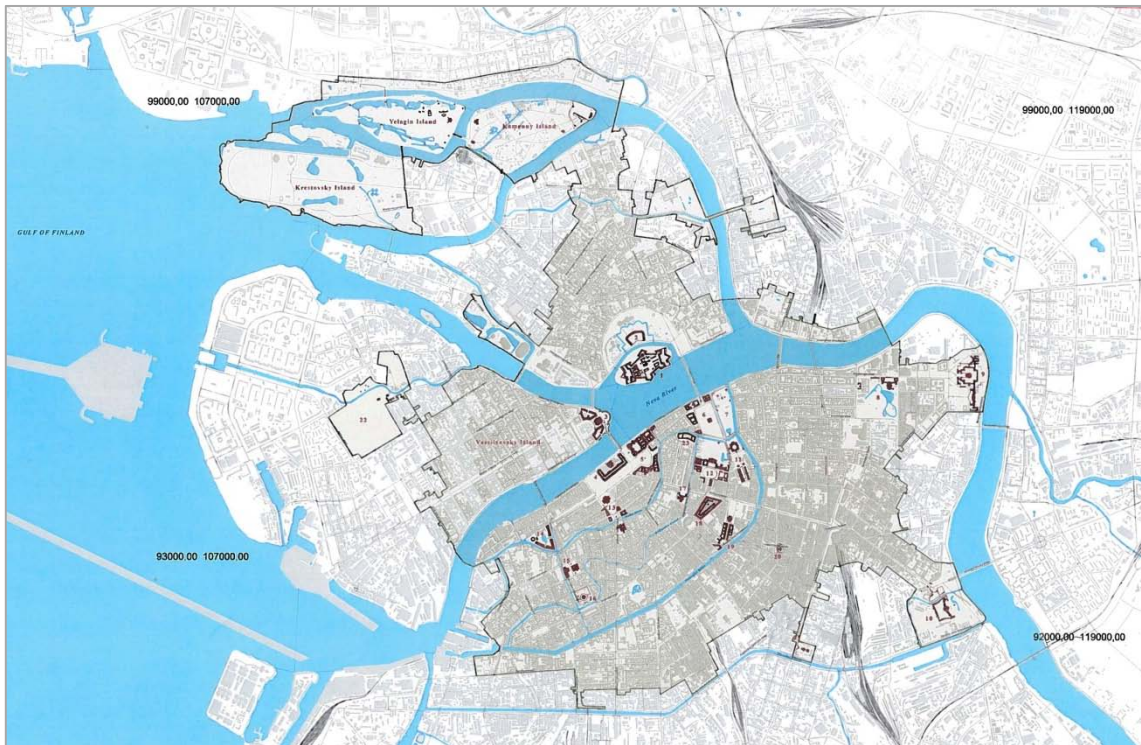
### 3 ICOMOS Recommendations

#### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments, Russian Federation, be **approved**.

ICOMOS further recommends that the State party give consideration to the following:

- Slightly modifying the protection zones established according to the Saint Petersburg Law no. 820-7 where necessary to cover with the appropriate regime (CZ or DRZ1) those small portions of territory that are proposed to be included in the inscribed property and are currently not covered by the appropriate level of protection (CZ or DRZ1) regime;
- Establishing a buffer zone based on the DR22 zone according to an agreed timeframe, considering the reiterated requests made by the World Heritage Committee since its 30<sup>th</sup> Session for boundary clarifications and the need for a robust protection of the cultural historic setting of component 540-001;
- Modifying the juridical status of the property component "Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg" within the Russian legal framework to become a 'remarkable site' and modifying the detailed provisions of the protection zone regimes established in 2009 by the Saint Petersburg Law no. 820-7 in order to better detail and differentiate them;
- Developing a comprehensive management framework for the entire inscribed property, together with a management plan, on the basis of detailed urban and safeguard plans for the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg, to be elaborated as early as possible.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property