

Old Rauma (Finland)

No 582

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Finland

Name of property: Old Rauma

Location: Region of Satakunta, Province of Western Finland (formerly Province of Turku-Pori)

Inscription: 1991

Brief Description:

Situated on the Gulf of Botnia, Rauma is one of the oldest harbours in Finland. Built around a Franciscan monastery, where the mid-15th-century Holy Cross Church still stands, it is an outstanding example of an old Nordic city constructed in wood. Although ravaged by fire in the late 17th century, it has preserved its ancient vernacular architectural heritage.

Date of ICOMOS' approval of this report: 10 April 2009

2. ISSUES RAISED

Background

The site was inscribed in 1991 on the basis of criteria (iv) and (v) as an outstanding example of an old Nordic city constructed in wood, typical of the architecture and urbanism of old North-European cities. No buffer zone was included in the nomination although a plan showing a buffer zone was subsequently provided by the State Party in 1991. During the 1st Cycle of Periodic Reporting in 2005, documentation was received from the State Party with an attached plan showing the buffer zone established nationally in 2003. This buffer zone had different boundaries from that shown in the 1991 plan. In the context of the Retrospective Inventory process and the clarification of Boundaries of World Heritage Properties, it was realized that the buffer zone established by the State Party for the World Heritage Site in 2003 had not been submitted for consideration by the World Heritage Committee. In January 2009 the State Party submitted a request for approval of the current national buffer zone as the buffer zone for the World Heritage Site.

Modification

The State Party reports that the proposed buffer zone, which is as established in the Local Master Plan of 2003, is intended to "preserve a large enough urban zone around the World Heritage Site, with special aim to preserve the visual integrity and urban fabric of Old Rauma". The

buffer zone comprises 15 specified areas of which maps and pictures are provided. In brief the State Party reports that the areas to the west and south west include the city's commercial and cultural centre with the town hall, library, theatre and business areas. The building stock is mostly post-war but the area was laid out in the late 19th C. The areas in the north are both residential and commercial including public buildings, blocks of flats and a recently built major shopping centre close to the commercial centre. The visual impact of the shopping centre development was carefully considered in relation to Old Rauma's silhouette and the church tower. Height limits were imposed as well as restrictions on advertisements, and careful attention was paid to the design of car parking and landscaping. The area between the shopping centre and Old Rauma is a homogenous and well-maintained residential area of the 1950s. The buffer zone includes fourteen individually protected monuments and areas, two of which areas are identified as being of historic and cultural significance nationally, and many other protected buildings and smaller areas.

The surface area of the inscribed site is 29 ha.

The surface area of the proposed buffer zone 142 ha.

ICOMOS notes that no mention is made of specific view points within, or from outside the buffer zone - for instance the approach from the harbour.

ICOMOS notes also that there is no mention of archaeological remains of fortifications or waterways around the old town, although there appear to be remnant waterways/canal system in several of the parks (State party report appendix XV – map of parks).

Protection:

Under the regulations of the Local Master Plan all constructions (buildings and roads) and activities within the buffer zone have to be planned "in conformity with the safeguarding of the integrity and historic urban setting of old Rauma". When detail plans for areas within the buffer zone are revised they will have similar regulations, and inventories will be updated in conjunction with the National Board of Antiquities, who will be required to review all plans and projects within the buffer zone.

Management:

The State Party reports that the Local Master Plan is the steering instrument for detail planning processes, which also involves the Ministry of Environment. Building permits within the World Heritage Site are reviewed by a special advisory committee, which includes the National Board of Antiquities. This committee also reviews detail plans in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS notes that there is apparently no Management Plan as such for the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone.

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for Old Rauma, Finland, be *approved*.

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party clarify whether the proposed buffer zone includes all remnants of Old Rauma's original canal system, and to provide information on this (such as a map showing the original canal system) and its relationship to the harbour, to the World Heritage Centre.

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

- The designation of viewpoints within and outside the buffer zone from which view corridors will be protected in the case of development within the buffer zone.
- The development of a comprehensive Management Plan to cover the nominated area, the buffer zone, and view corridors from any designated locations outside the buffer zone, such as the approach to Old Rauma from the harbour.



Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone