

Mrs.
Dr. Mechtild Rössler
Director
UNESCO World Heritage Centre
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 PARIS 07 SP
FRANCE

Antwort bitte unter Anführung der GZ an die Abteilungsmail

**UNESCO-World Heritage property: Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) C1033)
SOC Report 2017**

Madam,

With reference to Decision 40 COM 7B.49 adopted in Istanbul 2016, we wish to submit a report on the current situation concerning the state of conservation of the Historic Centre of Vienna.


Furthermore allow us to thank the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for accepting the invitation to a meeting concerning the revision of the Vienna Ice-Skating-Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus project which shall take place through Skype.

Please accept, Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Attachment

31. January 2017
Für den Bundesminister für
Kunst und Kultur, Verfassung und Medien:
BAZIL

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Republic of Austria

STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT

Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) (C 1033)

Executive Summary of the Report

Pursuing Decision 40.COM/7B.49 the project Vienna Ice-Skating Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus underwent a revision process. The height was reduced in accordance with the request of the World Heritage Committee. The number of storeys of the projected residential high-rise was decreased.

Reacting to the concern, that the projected high-rise might negatively impact the visual integrity - especially when taking into account the visual axis from the Upper Belvedere Palace - and hence the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property, the area occupied by the high-rise was reduced vis-à-vis the original project idea with the aim to integrate the high-rise more harmoniously into the surrounding cityscape. In combination with the now narrower high-rise, the height-reduction diminishes the impact on the visual integrity of the Historic City Centre of Vienna.

Furthermore the City of Vienna intends to analyze the existing urban planning instruments in order to clarify, whether they take sufficient account of the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property and to modify their focus if required. This applies mainly to the instruments "High-Rise Concept" and "Masterplan Glacis".

Concerning the Karlsplatz-area the City of Vienna informed the Federal Chancellery about the projected reshaping of two buildings (Wien Museum and Zurich Cosmos Insurance/Winterthur Building) dating back to the second half of the 20th century and situated in the Eastern area of the square in direct vicinity of the baroque style "Karlskirche". According to the City of Vienna the planning process takes deliberate consideration of the space defining dominance of the "Karlskirche" which shall remain untouched. The reshaped buildings shall not cause negative impact on the appearance of the historic ensemble. No up-stations are intended and the future building height shall be in alignment with the surrounding Gründerzeit-style buildings. The maximum height will not exceed the deck-edge of the "Karlskirche".

Referring to the concerns expressed by the 2012 mission regarding the historic roofscape of the World Heritage Property the Federal Chancellery commissioned a study on historic roof constructions in the Historic Centre of Vienna focusing mainly on baroque roof constructions and with the aim to provide comprehensive information on the current condition of historic roof constructions and subsequently to develop instruments for an enhanced safeguarding of the historic roofscape. The study is carried out by the Federal Monuments Authority in collaboration with the City of Vienna.

Response to:

Decision 40.COM/7B.49

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B.Add,

2. Recalling Decision **39 COM 7B.94**, adopted at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015),

3. Also recalling the concerns expressed by the 2012 mission regarding the critical level of urban development reached since inscription and its cumulative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and the need for new tools to orient the development process towards sustainable development that protects the attributes of the OUV,

4. Noting the information provided by the State Party about the stage of implementation of the proposed Vienna Ice-Skating Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus project,

5. Expresses its concern that the High-Rise Concept abolishes exclusion zones for high-rises in the Vienna urban areas, without having applied appropriate instruments of control for height, volume and urban density, which respect the OUV of the property; and that the Glacis Master Plan permits the construction of buildings of a scale that would have an adverse impact on the urban form and character of the Glacis area;

6. Notes the recommendations of the 2015 mission to the property and requests the State Party to implement its recommendations and in particular aligning the use of the existing tools with the protection of the property's OUV, including authenticity and integrity, as laid out in the Management Plan and associated legal instruments such as local Decrees on protected urban areas (ensembles, buffer zone etc.) and guidelines on urban development;

7. Also requests the State Party to facilitate the preparation of revised planning rules and guidelines which:

- Establish parameters for the urban density as well as specific standards for building height and volume for the property and buffer zone,
- Safeguard the urban morphology that is an essential attribute of the property,
- Encourage sustainable development in the property and its buffer zone in harmony with its OUV,
- Require that all high-rise projects are evaluated through a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared in accordance with the ICOMOS 2011 Guidance on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage properties, including reference to 3D visual simulations, so that the effects of the proposed development on the OUV of the property can be properly considered;

8. Urges the State Party to halt any further approvals for high-rise projects, pending the preparation of the revised planning rules, and submit the proposed designs and related HIAs for any future high-rise projects to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*;

9. While noting the State Party's decision not to pursue the land use planning procedures for the proposed Vienna Ice-Skating Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus project, nevertheless expresses its concern that the proposed project remains inconsistent with the

recommendations of the 2012 mission and would adversely affect the OUV of the property, if implemented in its current form, and also urges the State Party to facilitate a major revision of this project design to:

- Reduce the height of the proposed building to comply with the recommendations of the 2012 mission report,
- Take into account scale and massing in relation to the characteristics of the location and the OUV of the property,
- Harmonize the project design with the attributes of the specific location, which is an integral part of the property,
- Reduce the visual impact of the proposed building on both the close urban context and views of the Historic Centre of Vienna;

10. Further requests the State Party to submit the revised design to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any decisions are made regarding its implementation, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*;

11. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2017**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017, **with a view to considering, in the case of confirmation of the ascertained or potential danger to Outstanding Universal Value, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

Responses:

ad 3:

Recalling the 2012 mission, one concern addressed was the change of the historic roofscape within the World Heritage property; a concern reiterated by the mission 2015. Therefore by the beginning of 2016 the Federal Chancellery of Austria commissioned a study on historic roof constructions in the Historic Centre of Vienna focusing on baroque roof constructions and with the aim to provide comprehensive information on the current condition of historic roof constructions and subsequently to develop instruments for an enhanced safeguarding of the historic roofscape. The study is being carried out by the Federal Monuments Authority in collaboration with the City of Vienna and is executed in three steps. Step one encompasses the surveying works and the data collection related to it, step two the analyses of the collected material and step three is proposed to lead to a strategy for a future approach concerning an enhanced safeguarding and a proper dealing with the historic roofscape in the Historic Centre of Vienna. Step one was completed by the end of October 2016. More than 180 historic objects in total were surveyed and recorded in a catalogue. Subsequent to the analyses of the catalogued items 90 amongst them were selected as objects of special interest and value. Each one of the latter was surveyed in detail and documented by a comprehensive dossier. This step was completed by the end of January 2017. At present the research data are being completed and the final report is under preparation. It is also intended to release a publication of the study. This step is envisaged for 2018.

ad 5., 6., 7., 8.

In keeping with paragraph 5 and 6 of Decision 40 COM 7B.49 the at present existing planning instruments shall be analyzed with a view to get clarification whether they take sufficient account of the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value, with the intention of

modifying their focus if required. This applies primarily to the "High Rise Concept" ("Hochhauskonzept") and the "Masterplan Glacis". For example, it is to be analyzed which visual axes and visual links have particular significance for the cityscape and hence are worthy of protection.

Concerning the project "Vienna Ice-Skating Club – Intercontinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus" at present no final political decision has been taken to implement the project as currently revised and reported to the World Heritage Center by 13th December 2016. For this the Vienna City Council as the competent political body has to come to a decision concerning an amendment of the current land use and development plan. The latter would lay the legal basis for implementing the project and therefore requires a majority of votes of the City Council Members. As of today a motion concerning this matter could be submitted to the Vienna City Council for decision in spring 2017. In case the Vienna City Council should decide to create the mentioned legal basis for the project, the earliest point in time to begin with construction works would be 2019.

In the context of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), 3D visualizations of the revised project will be developed and submitted.

ad 9. and 10.

The decision of revising the project as originally envisaged was taken on the basis of the professional assessment submitted by the Advisory Board for City Planning and Urban Design (an advisory body composed of politically independent experts including Dr. Kunibert Wachten and Dr. Michael Kloos, UNESCO chair for Cultural and Urban Landscapes in World Heritage at the RWTH Aachen,). It was a concern of the City of Vienna to react to the criticism voiced by ICOMOS and the World Heritage Committee, most specifically with regard to the height of the projected building. The revision process was concluded by December 2016 and the results were presented to the general public on 13 December 2016. The results are as follows:

- The recommendation to reduce the height of the project was taken on board. The number of storeys of the residential high-rise was decreased. Instead of the originally planned 75 metres, the building will now not higher than 66.3 metres.
In its current, revised form, the building planned for the Vienna Ice-Skating Club/Intercontinental Hotel site, in keeping with the suggestions of the Advisory Board, reflects the heights of the already existing high points in the immediate surroundings.
As a result, the building will now be significantly lower than the Wien-Mitte project with its height of 75 metres, which is situated in the direct vicinity of the Vienna Ice-Skating Club property. The Wien-Mitte project was discussed intensively with ICOMOS as well as with representatives of the World Heritage Centre and World Heritage Committee and acknowledged by them as is, i.e. with a height of 75 metres (see Committee Decision 28 COM 15B.83).
- A major concern raised by UNESCO and ICOMOS was that the planned high-rise might negatively impact the visual integrity and hence the Outstanding Universal Value of the Historic Centre of Vienna. Above all the visibility of the planned structure from the Upper Belvedere Palace was mentioned as a prime reservation in this context. Taking this criticism into account, the area occupied by the residential high-rise was reduced vis-à-vis the original project idea. As a result, the high-rise will now integrate more harmoniously with the surrounding cityscape. In combination with the

now narrower high-rise, this reduction in height diminishes the impact on the visual integrity of the Historic Centre of Vienna.

- The slab-type block of the Intercontinental Hotel (inaugurated in 1964) is to be pulled down for functional reasons and replaced by a new building. The roof of the current slab-type block features numerous very massive superstructures (including ventilation and air-conditioning systems, technical add-ons, and lift wells). This roofscape characterised by superstructures is perceived as blight on the cityscape, above all when viewed from high points of Vienna (e.g. Belvedere Palace). To improve this situation, the superstructures will be largely integrated into the building. As a consequence, the top surface of the building is higher than that of the current hotel structure but visually less busy, which should be considered a positive development. Taking account of the existing urban silhouette, the effect on the visual integrity is relatively minor.

Moreover, it is planned to incorporate parts of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna into the projected architectural complex for the Ice-Skating- Club property and thus to create a "Cluster for Music and Performing Arts" in cooperation with the adjacent Concert Hall ("Konzerthaus"). This would further enhance the relevance of Vienna as "the capital of music in Europe" (criteria VI for the inscription of the property in the World Heritage list: "Since the 16th century Vienna has been universally acknowledged to be the musical capital of Europe.").


Public access to the state of conservation report

Yes, the State Party agrees that the whole report may be uploaded for public access on the WHC's Conservation Information System.

Signature of the Authority/Date of issue

Vienna, 31 January 2017

Dr. Christoph Bazil m.p.

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