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Hallstatt-Dachstein Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape

Brief description

Human activity in the magnificent natural landscape of the Salzkammergut began in prehistoric times, with the salt deposits being exploited as early as the 2nd millennium B.C. This resource formed the basis of the area's prosperity up to the middle of the 20th century, a prosperity that is reflected in the fine architecture of the town of Hallstatt.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1997

Agency responsible for site management

- Amt der Oberösterreichischen Landesregierung
Abteilung Raumordnung
UNESCO-Koordinierungsstelle
Bahnhofsplatz 1
A - Linz 4021

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (iii), (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

The Hallstatt-Dachstein cultural landscape is part of the Salzkammergut and thus of the Eastern Alps. Owing to its varied mountain ranges, numerous lakes, beautiful features and art historic treasures, as well as the economic outline conditions in both the past and the present, it forms a generic cultural geographic unit. The Dachstein is characterised by its massif shape, extensive and highly karsted plateaus, high and often wall-like precipices, and finally the exceptionally wide glaciation. The landscape is coined by the U-shaped valley of the Traun river and the fjord-like Hallstättersee with the market town Hallstatt wedged between mountain and south-western lake shore. Favoured by its natural location, the core of the town is a unique example of a Gothic miners' settlement with its still discernible basic structures and Late Baroque additions made after the great fire of 1750. Due to its high density of historic monuments and expressive material evidence Hallstatt represents a town monument of the first order. The magnificent

scenery grants but little space to the architectural evolution of human settlement. The attempted optimum space use can be clearly seen within the basically Gothic settlement core and its Baroque additions whose salient silhouette and almost complete original ensemble have been preserved to date. The realisation that this was a unique landscape in its traditional context led to any interventions (e.g. construction of a lakeshore road) being rejected as early as in the 1960s and appropriate alternatives (tunnels) being encouraged to preserve the historic material.

The cultural landscape of the Hallstatt-Dachstein region boasts a continuing organic evolution covering 2,500 years. Its history from the very beginning is primarily linked with the economic history of salt extraction. Salt mining has always determined all aspects of life as well as the architectural and artistic material evidence. Salt production on a major scale can be traced back in Hallstatt to a middle period of the bronze age.

The greatly differing and rich flora and fauna of the Hallstatt-Dachstein region draws its support from a changing mountain landscape that reaches up to the nival belt, thereby offering numerous small and large ecological niches. It is remarkable for such a mountain region to have so many rare and endangered plant species of the "red lists". The fact that many large stretches of wood in inaccessible locations are almost untouched by man deserves special mention. Due to the low degree of development and enclosed character of the region the said conservation zones are also of major importance to those animal species that are very sensitive to human interference.

In karst and cave terms, the significance of the almost three thousand meter high glaciated Dachstein mountains lies in the great density of caves and in the presence of three important showplaces designed to impart knowledge on cave formation and origin to the general public, with each of the three showing caves representing a different speleological type.

However, Hallstatt is of global significance not only because of its natural beauty and features but also and in particular because of its archaeological heritage from the time of the prehistoric Hallstatt culture which shaped Central Europe 2,500 years ago. Two places in particular have yielded major finds: the cemetery that gave the Hallstatt culture its name and the salt mine. Both are located high above the present market town of Hallstatt in the inaccessible Salzberg valley. They are linked by a causal relationship that is salt mining provided the economic base for the affluence and refinement of objects found in the graves. More than a thousand

graves have been excavated so far, the provisionally last ones in the past two years. At no time in earliest history was man so much influenced by metals in terms of manufacturing skills, craftsmanship and artistic design as in the Hallstatt period. Among the sensational finds, considered to be some of the most important archaeological discoveries, are magnificent jewellery, richly decorated weapons, bronze and clay vessels. Ivory, amber and glass refer to extensive trading relations. The Salzberg valley near Hallstatt still has much in store for archaeological research, scientists expect further spectacular finds.

An essential factor of the continuing historic value are the pictorial qualities of the region, a combination of natural and architectural form and component features. Their discovery and artistic development was the pioneering work of important painters (inter alia, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, Jakob and Rudolf von Alt, Wilhelm and Franz Steinfeld, Friedrich Gauermann, Reinhold and Thomas Ender) and writers (Adalbert Stifter, Franz Grillparzer, Nikolaus Lenau, etc.) of the Biedermeier era and early Realism in Austria. Adalbert Stifter, who was also the first pioneer of official monument preservation in Austria, wrote “a book on monument conservation” with his internationally famed novel *Nachsommer* (Indian Summer) set in the Hallstatt-Dachstein literary landscape. The main character of the novel conducts important monument preservation operations, as did Stifter, and develops visionary ideas on the future of monument preservation.

Apart from the scenic variety and the bio-climatic conditions, the balneological spin-offs of salt mining have been essential prerequisites for the gradual evolution of an internationally renowned tourist location welcoming politicians, scientists and artists to its spas. With the development of the transport system in the 19th century, the Salzkammergut enjoyed a flourishing villegiature culture, the special kind of summer vacation in and around Hallstatt. Since the second half of the 20th century Hallstatt has been known internationally as one of the most famous tourist places.

The cultural landscape of the Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut region is a unique documentation of an epoch of human history and also reflects the inseparable unity of nature and culture in both the landscape and the man-made monuments and sites.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iii and iv: The Hallstatt-Dachstein-Salzkammergut alpine region is

an outstanding example of a natural landscape of great beauty and scientific interest which also contains evidence of a fundamental human economic activity, the whole integrated in a harmonious and mutually beneficial manner.

Committee Decision

The Committee decided to inscribe this site on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv), considering that the Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut alpine region is an outstanding example of a natural landscape of great beauty and scientific interest which also contains evidence of a fundamental human economic activity, the whole integrated in a harmonious and mutually beneficial manner.

- Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate
- The buffer zone protects sufficiently the landscape which is surrounding the core zone. The buffer zone includes the majority of the edges of the main block of the Dachstein massif and larger connected settled areas around the core zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Laws and existing administrative arrangements:
 - “Denkmalschutzgesetz” (Austrian Monuments Protection Act)
 - “Forstgesetz” (Forestry Act)
 - “Bundesforstgesetz” (Federally Owned Forests Act)
 - “Wasserrechtsgesetz” (Water Management Act)
 - “Oberösterreichisches Naturschutzgesetz” (Upper Austrian Nature Protection Act)
- Regulations:
 - “Naturschutzgebiet Dachstein 2001” (Nature Protection Area Großes Lößermoos Nature Protection Area Dachstein, nominated for European Protection Area)
 - “Naturschutzgebiet Großes Lößermoos 1998” (Nature Protection Area Großes Lößermoos)
 - “Naturschutzgebiet Kleines Lößermoos 1998” (Nature Protection Area Kleines Lößermoos)
 - 23 “Naturdenkmale” (23 Monuments of Nature), etc.

- 60% of the core zone of the World Heritage Cultural Landscape are nominated for "Natura 2000"
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction; urban centre; religious use; rural landscape

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group: the "Round Table" is both an advisory and steering body for the main issues of UNESCO-World Heritage
- Formally constituted
- Management under traditional protective measures or customary law, consensual management
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional, local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- No management plan
- "Round Table" has decided in January 2004 to elaborate guidelines for a future management plan

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- No operational budget
- Personnel costs covered by Province of Upper Austria
- Alpine pasture promotion for protection and sustained development, "Cultural Landscape Campaign" planned arrangement between the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Province of Upper Austria for joint financial support for conservation works within the World Heritage area. Round Table has guaranteed subsidies for different regional projects in the first half of 2004. Project orientated application of EU-programmes, especially "LEADER" +activities;
- Extra funding has been drawn through the World Heritage status
- Funding is sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- 57 staff

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion; interpretation; education; visitor management
- High level of regular volunteer's involvement especially through different associations for PR-work, awareness-rising, presentations, organisation and support of events

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Sufficient expertise and training possibility available; universities and regional and national organisations; restoration workshops for building conservation; courses on conservation and restoration matters

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: Daily visitors in Hallstatt 550,000, 140,056 arrivals, 592,660 overnights, tendency slightly increasing
- Visitor facilities: tourist information offices; tourist information boards at prominent tourist places; car-park guiding system including a shuttle system into village centres and to the Gosau lakes; large scale visitor guidance along main traffic routes; cable car connections; network of bicycle and hiking routes
- World Heritage Museum Hallstatt, archaeological excavations of the Viennese Museum for Natural History in the "Hochtal" and the "Salzberg", archaeological excavation, open-air museums in Bad Goisern, cave-museums "Schönbergalm", thematic Trails on: local history, karst ("Karstlehrpfad"), glacier ("Gletscherlehrpfad"), "Soleweg" (Salt Production Trail), "Botanikweg" (Botany Trails), "Arboretum" Bad Goisern, "Zeitwanderweg" (trail presenting geological areas (log rafting barrages)
- Tourism/visitor management plan: www.inneres-salzkammergut.at installed by "Tourismusverband Inneres Salzkammergut" in connection with regional and local information systems visitor needs

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; impact of World Heritage designation; archaeological surveys; visitor Management
- Studies were not elaborated for the World Heritage Cultural Landscape as such. However,

they are connected either with the application for World Heritage status on the one hand, or used for the management of the cultural landscape on the other

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Emblem used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Numerous educational activities connected with the World Heritage Site; World Heritage Study Centre "BASIS" in Bad Goisern; "Welterbehauptsschule" (World Heritage College) in Bad Goisern with educational priority on World Heritage (e.g. UNESCO-seminar for communication, information and presentation), teacher training seminar for Heritage Education /Heritage Learning),
Project: "Lerne dein Welterbe kennen" (Learn about your World Heritage Site), guided tours in the World Heritage Area, "Almerlebnistage" (Alpine Pasture Events)
- Special events: annual World Heritage Celebration, annual Celebration for Children in Hallstatt "No Heritage without Children"
- Web-pages: numerous, belonging to local or national agencies and offices
- Local participation: many activities were designated for the creation of jobs for local inhabitants

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Preservation of a maximum of connected and interlinked green space for the protection of the cultural landscape; public grant aid for preservation of historic structures; revitalization of typical agricultural objects including the preservation of authentic traditional alpine pasture objects within the framework of a campaign for shingled roofs; nature preservation: reforestation project for higher regions of the Dachstein plateau to stop karst development and guarantee sufficient drinking water supply for the future.

Archaeology: installation of an archaeological centre as basis of scientific works of the Museum of Natural History Vienna

- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressure; Natural disasters; Visitor/tourism pressure; Agricultural/forestry regimes
- Specific issues mentioned: since the region is a high alpine region there is a danger of avalanches; due to decrease in number of inhabitants there is a danger of historic buildings without maintenance and use; visitor pressure - shortcomings of car parking areas sometimes causes extensive use of certain nature areas near glaciers and around cable-car stations; Alpine Pastures - declining cattle farming in the valleys may endanger the continuation of alpine pasture farming in future
- Emergency measures taken: avalanche protection project: protection of both the roads to Hallstatt and the town itself against avalanches by reforestation protection forests. In addition reforestation of the higher regions of the Dachstein plateau

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- The monitoring of the World Heritage Cultural Landscape is effectuated according to the indicated legal instruments by the respective authorities; protection of Nature: in the nominated "Europa 2000 Protected Area" a special monitoring is provided; regular control of the land use plans and local development plans; surveillance of new construction permits through townscape and landscape protection (respecting protection of nature and of monuments); continued control of forest development plans and plans for endangered zones; game-monitoring for the limitation of hunting capacities; water management (quality monitoring according to the respective ordinance)
- Future management plan will provide a monitoring system with relevant key indicators as basis for standardized controls and observations

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, economic, management

- Strengths: there have been no significant changes since the Cultural Landscape was inscribed in the World Heritage List 1997. The values of the site have not changed. The protective legislation can be judged as sufficient. There were no changes in legislation. In addition more than 60% of the core zone were nominated as "Natura 2000 Europe Protection Area" and the 4 local communities have adopted restrictive development plans based upon the Upper Austrian Regional Planning Act. The management forum "Round Table - World Heritage Hallstatt-Dachstein-Salzkammergut" proved to be an efficient managerial instrument for sustainable development and financing. The cooperation between the World Heritage Cultural Landscape and the Province of Upper Austria is supporting strategies and measures for the necessary protection, maintenance and care of the World Heritage
- No need for international support