

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

White Monuments of Vladimir and Suzdal

Brief description

These two artistic centres in central Russia hold an important place in the country's architectural history. There are a number of magnificent 12th- and 13th-century public and religious buildings, above all the masterpieces of the Collegiate Church of St Demetrios and the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1992

Agency responsible for site management

- Committee for Culture of the Administration of the Vladimir Region, State Centre of Registration, Use and Restoration of Monuments of History and Culture, Department of Monuments Protection
3, Museynaya St.
600000 Vladimir Region, Russian Federation
Website: www.culture.avo.ru

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (i), (ii), (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

[Vladimir: The outstanding value of the monuments of Vladimir and Bogolyubovo white-stone architecture derives from the following:]

1. They are unique artistic phenomenon in Russian and world architecture. They are in the harmonious unity with the surrounding landscape and are marked with unusual harmony and perfection of the architectural forms.

They are the elements of the universal medieval town - Building system, as it was realized by Andrei Bogolyubsky who put into it the idea of "town-symbol", "God's town". The monuments got the deep poetical and philosophical composition that found its expression in the idea of the special protection of Our Lady to the land of Vladimir.

These monuments, forming a unique architectural school, represent an important stage of the

development and perfection of architectural forms and methods in white stone construction.

Each monument is unique in its medieval decision with no analogies and repetitions in Russian and world architecture. They are brilliant examples of medieval architectural thought. They are perfect examples of technical and building craftsmanship without analogies in world's practice.

They preserve in great degree the authenticity of building materials and architectural form.

2. They influenced greatly the development of Russia's national architecture and monumental art. The Moscow architecture of XIV-XV centuries was based on the traditions of the white-stone architecture of Vladimir. At the end of the XV century these traditions were also widely used in the construction of the Assumption Cathedral - the principal cathedral of Moscow - by the Italian architect Aristotle Fioravanti.

Old frescoes in the white-stone churches of Vladimir inspired Andrei Rublev, the greatest Russian icon-painter.

3. They are closely connected with the important historical events and the main ideas of this period. The monuments are the best structures of Vladimir. The Assumption Cathedral of Vladimir was the most important church of Vladimir-Suzdal Russia and the religious centre of the whole Russia for a long time.

In 1299 the religious centre was transferred from Kiev to Vladimir. Till 1480 there was the icon of the Virgin of Vladimir in the Assumption Cathedral. It is the brilliant example of Byzantine painting of the XII century. The Cathedral was the burial place of Vladimir princes. The builders of the cathedral (Andrei Bogolyubsky and Vsevolod III) were buried there. The new religious feast of the Intercession was initiated by Andrei Bogolyubsky. This feast was to confirm the idea of special protection of Our Lady to the land of Vladimir and Vladimir Prince. The churches built during Andrei Bogolyubsky's lifetime were dedicated to Our Lady.

The spiritual ideas of that period were combined with the real life. The Church of the Intercession was built to commemorate the victory of the Volga Bulgars. The Golden Gate is not only a defensive structure But it is was also the triumphant Arch which was built to show the importance of a new capital.

Secular ideas were represented in the palace of Bogolyubovo and in the Cathedral of St. Demetrius in Vladimir.

[Suzdal:] The outstanding universal value of Suzdal derives from the following:

1. Unique, without analogues, Old Russian town ensemble with typically national traditions in architecture, Suzdal is a masterpiece of creative genius of architects of many centuries (12-19 centuries).
2. The only town which preserved and developed Old Russian artistic traditions up to the 19th century and influenced the development of architecture and building art in the 16-19th centuries Central Russia. The only urban settlement to preserve pre- regular planning, its Old Russian Appearance and its old size within the limits of the 18th century.
3. The town of Suzdal was for a long time (from the second part of the 12th century) not only artistic and cultural centre, but also a religious spiritual capital of North- Eastern Russia. From 1333 it is a centre of independent bishopric and then archbishopric.

The church of Sts Boris and Gleb:

1. It's a unique artistic creation, masterpiece of creative genius.
2. The first white stone church of North-Eastern Russia in the principality of Vladimir and Suzdal, which outlined the development of architectural forms and methods in white stone construction, which laid the foundations of unique architectural school, which became an outstanding phenomenon in Russian and world's culture. Supreme example of technical craftsmanship, harmonious blend of architecture and surrounding landscape, brilliant embodiment of medieval world outlook.
3. Being the first local royal residence the monument is associated with the most important period of the local history, that is the formation of the principality of Vladimir and Suzdal. It played not only a representative part, but also helped the prince to control all political and trading contact of the principality.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Quality: The quality and importance of the white limestone ecclesiastical buildings of the Vladimir tradition in Vladimir and its surroundings are indisputable. This influential tradition saw its origins and achieved its highest expression at Kideksha, Vladimir and Suzdal. The later churches and monasteries in Suzdal are also important historical documents relating to the history of Russian architecture.

Additional Comments: The ICOMOS Bureau as seen the letter dated 13 March 1992 from the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation proposing that there should be two separate nominations. It cannot accede to this proposal, since it considers that the significance of this group lies principally in the individual monuments and not in the urban ensemble at Suzdal. They should therefore be redefined as "historical monuments of Vladimir and Suzdal". The essential components should be the five monuments in the existing Vladimir nomination (Cathedral of the Assumption, Golden Gate, Princely Castle at Bogolyubovo, Church of the Intercession, and Cathedral of St Demetrius; the Kremlin, the Cathedral of the Nativity, and the Monastery of Our Savior and St Euthymius at Suzdal; and the Church of Sts Boris and Gleb at Kideksha. The Bureau would be sympathetic to the inclusion of other historic buildings in Suzdal in the nomination. It may be, however, felt that this would extend the inscription too widely, beyond the indisputably important early group. [...]

ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION [October 1992]: That inclusion of this cultural property on the World Heritage List be deferred, the competent authorities being requested to reformulate the nomination.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1992): The Bureau recommended the inscription of these properties on the condition that a new proposal be submitted, bringing together the universal architectural values of the monuments of the ensemble of Vladimir and Suzdal.

- Statement of Significance did not adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required by State Party

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Status of buffer zone: not provided

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have not been maintained. There have not been significant changes to the authenticity/integrity of the site since inscription

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The Decree of the Head of Administration "On the Programme on protection and Development

of culture of the Vladimir Region in 2002-2006";
The Decree of the Head of Administration "On Measures for Protection and Development of Culture of Vladimir Region for 1999-2002"

- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre, national park, religious use, rural landscape

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group has been legally constituted
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: regional, local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: January 2002
- Management plan is considered to be effective
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: the Committee for Culture of the administration of the Vladimir Region and its State Centre for Registration, Use and Restoration of Monuments of History and Culture of the Administration of Vladimir Region

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget: in 2004 budget has been assigned for the reconstruction of the Vladimir Historic Centre from Regional Budget
- Funding is insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: not provided

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

- Good: management, interpretation, visitor management
- Average: conservation, promotion, education

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

- UNESCO Chair in Urban and Architectural Conservation
- No training available for site managers and stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- No visitor statistics
- Visitor facilities: hotels, excursion bureaus, guides, souvenir shops

10. Scientific Studies

- State Party reported (though, not specified) that the researches have been conducted in the following areas: risk assessment, value of the site, monitoring, condition, archaeology, transportation

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- A number of signs referring to World Heritage site is not sufficient
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Web site: www.museum.vladimir.ru
- No steps have been taken to involve local people in the management of the site

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Conservation/restoration works: not provided
- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disasters, visitor/tourism pressure
- Emergency measures: not provided

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme exists
- Local specialists are controlling the overall state of conservation in *ad hoc* format

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, management
- Strengths of management: the restoration/maintenance activities have been gradually intensified
- Weaknesses of management: need of training and capacity-building of institutions and specialists involved in the conservation and management; need of training opportunities for stakeholders and local communities; inexistence of the regular monitoring exercise