

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Church of the Ascension, Kolomenskoye

Brief description

The Church of the Ascension was built in 1532 on the imperial estate of Kolomenskoye, near Moscow, to celebrate the birth of the prince who was to become Tsar Ivan IV ('the Terrible'). One of the earliest examples of a traditional wooden tent-roofed church on a stone and brick substructure, it had a great influence on the development of Russian ecclesiastical architecture.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1994

Agency responsible for site management

- The State Art and Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve Kolomenskoye
39, Y. Andropov Ave., 115487 Moscow
E-mail: m304@mail.museum.ru
Website: www.museum.ru/Kolomen

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (ii)

Justification provided by the State Party

The Church of the Ascension is of a great town-planning importance. It dominates over the surrounding architectural and natural structures and unites all the elements of the estate. The Church of the Ascension is a unique architectural and art monument, being one of the first stone tent-roofed churches in Russia, built in the 16th century, the etalon for the architecture of the further time.

A tent has been known in Russian architecture since the old times.

The Church of Risopolozhenie on the Gold Gate in Vladimir was covered with a tent.

The completion with a tent was often used at the building of defences of the beginning of the 16th century. The builders of the Church in Kolomenskoye for sure were the Russian masters, who perfectly knew of the best constructions of the previous time. So the most of the details of the order Renaissance architecture, used in the decoration of the Church in Bolomenskoye, are

known in the Arkchangel'sky Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin, which was built a quarter of a century before the Church of Ascension.

The architectural details of the Church have the imprint of the national features of Russian architecture. There is a valuable in Russia highness of the construction and free using of classic order forms.

In the outward view of the monument, as in its inner space we can brightly see the unity of constructive and decorative intention, so typical for Russian architecture.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Qualities: The Church of the Ascension at Kolomenskoye occupies a key role in the development of Russian ecclesiastical architecture. It represents the first use of the traditional wooden tent roof design for a stone structure, and as such was influential in church design of much of Russia in the following centuries.

Recommendation: That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion ii:

Criterion ii The Church of the Ascension at Kolomenskoye represents an imaginative and innovative advance in Russian Orthodox church design which exerted a profound influence on developments in ecclesiastical architecture over a wide area of eastern Europe.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1992): The Bureau deferred the examination of this nomination to allow the competent Russian authorities to reformulate the proposal so as to include only the Ascension Church. Furthermore, the Bureau requested that the new nomination comprises detailed documentation concerning the authenticity of the property.

- Statement of Significance 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
- Buffer zone: adequate
- No change to buffer zone has been proposed by State Party

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have not been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Federal Law n°119 (1999); The Moscow Law n°26 (1998) "On Regulation of Urban Activity on Territories of Moscow Natural Complex"; The Moscow Law n°18 (2003) "On Long-Term Programme of the Conservation of Historical and Cultural Heritage and Development of the Museum-Reserve Kolomenskoye for 2003-07"
- The Moscow Government Decree n°38 (1999) "On Project Proposals about Geographical Demarcation of the Natural Complex with the Description of its Limits and Fixing them by Acts of Red Lines"; The Moscow Government Decree n°863 (2002) "On Integrated Programme of Development of the Museum-Reserve Kolomenskoye for 2003-07"; Law of Moscow n°26 (2000); Authoritative Order of the Moscow Government's Dept of Property n°316-p (2003)
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- National park, religious use

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group has been legally set up in 2003
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: regional
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: August 2001
- The current management plan considered to be very effective
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: The Committee for Cultural Heritage of Moscow of the Moscow Government

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Federal/Municipal Budgets
- WHF: N/A
- Bi-lateral: N/A
- State Party considers funding is adequate

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 398

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

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

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

- Scientific institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences
- Training: workshops and seminars organised by the UNESCO Chair in Urban and Architectural Conservation

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 106,192 visitors (in 2003)
- Visitor facilities: visitor centre, playgrounds for children, souvenir shops, cafes, parking lot

10. Scientific Studies

- Regular risk assessment exercise; monitoring of the temperature and humidity; engineering researches; several major archaeological surveys including the opening of 16th century level, the determination of the general stratigraphy and of the limits and chronology of Kolomenskoye graveyard
- Visitor statistic records and analysis. The Moscow Master Plan Institute developed the traffic flow chart at the neighbouring territory and optimal routs and parking for tourist buses
- Historical-archival and bibliographical studies

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Web site: www.museum.ru/Kolomen
- State Party reported (though, not specified) that certain measures have been taken in order to involve the local communities in the site management

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Conservation/restoration works: Preventive conservation works in 2001-02, walls hydro-isolation works
- Present state of conservation: patchy

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disasters, tourism pressure
- Deformation of the architectural structure, cracks, damage of masonry and décor because of erosion and biochemical corrosion
- Emergency measures taken: arrangement of drainage system providing water outflow from walls beyond basement platform; engineering studies; the Programme of Development of the Museum-Reserve Kolomenskoye includes the comprehensive measures aimed to address the main conservation issues

13. Monitoring

- The *ad hoc* monitoring activities have been taken in 2001-03
- Measures taken: survey of the condition of architectural structures, including monitoring of cracks in bearing walls, western basement and stoops; estimation of the radioactive contamination of the territory with identification of high γ -radiation areas; monitoring of vertical displacements of the bearing walls; temperature/humidity monitoring; exploration of physical-mechanical properties of grounds; examination of the basement and foundations for the identification of mechanical strength characteristics
- Key indicators: overall condition of the architectural structures; cracks in bearing walls and stoops in basement; vertical deformations of the bearing walls

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, management
- Strengths of management: establishment of the appropriate management plan; legislative provisions adopted by Moscow Duma and Government

- Weaknesses of management: lack of heritage legislation expertise; lack of managerial staff; lack of international expertise in monitoring