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Antwort bitte unter Anführung der GZ an die Abteilungsmail

**UNESCO-World Heritage; Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn (Austria) (C 786) and
Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) (C 1033): State of Conservation Report**

Ref.: Decision 37 COM 7 B.71

Sir,

The World Heritage Committee decided 2013 at its 37th session, decision no. 37 COM 7 B.71, with regard to the both above-mentioned World Heritage properties, inter alia:

6. Further requests the State Party to integrate standard requirements for comprehensive visual impact assessments in relation to the Outstanding Universal Value of the properties in its urban planning policies (including regulations for night-time impacts caused by illuminated advertisements);

7. Requests furthermore the State Party to inform, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the World Heritage Centre of any additional major urban development projects as well as amendments to current projects that may have a negative impact on the World Heritage properties, before any planning permissions are granted;

*8. Finally requests the State Party to provide a report to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2014**, on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above.*


In compliance with this stipulation, the City of Vienna prepared the attached information, which I wish to convey for your assessment and further action.

For further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

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

19. January 2015
For the Federal Minister for the Arts, Culture
Constitution and Media
MALDONER

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*Mr Kishore Rao
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Subject:

**UNESCO World Heritage properties Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn and
Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria)**

**Updated report on the state of conservation for the run-up to
the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee
in Bonn, Germany, 28 June - 8 July 2015**

Vienna, 9 January 2015

Dear Sir,

by way of the present letter, the City of Vienna would like to submit an updated report on the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties of Vienna. This information is meant to serve as a run-up to the upcoming 39th session of the World Heritage Committee to be held in Bonn, Germany, 8 June – 8 July 2015.

Project “Vienna Ice-Skating Club / InterContinental Hotel / Konzerthaus”

The following section of this paper reports on the status quo of discussions regarding the project “Vienna Ice-Skating Club / InterContinental Hotel / Konzerthaus”.

A block of buildings of an extension of approx. 21,000 square metres is situated in the area of transition directly linking the core and buffer zones of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”. This block creates a barrier in the urban fabric, since it is currently impossible to cross between the municipal districts of Innere Stadt and Landstrasse on foot. This block houses the InterContinental Hotel inaugurated in 1964. From street level, the height of the volume is approx. 45 metres. The roof accommodates additional superstructures that in their turn are several metres high.

The Vienna Ice-Skating Club (Wiener Eislaufverein) with an extension of about 6,000 square metres is located adjacent to the hotel. This part of the block must be classified as highly negative both from an urbanistic and an architectural viewpoint. The ice rink itself is encircled by plain additions dating from

the past decades. The entire existing structures of the Vienna Ice-Skating Club largely do not correspond to modern requirements regarding both technology and operation and hence urgently need refurbishment. The entire area covered by the hotel and ice-rink is around 15,000 square metres.

These two sites are located at the periphery of the World Heritage core zone but are the only area that is not classified as a protection zone under Art. 7 of the Building Code for Vienna (ensemble protection) and also do not feature any built structures under monument protection.

In addition to the InterContinental Hotel and the Vienna Ice-Skating Club, the Vienna Konzerthaus inaugurated in 1913 is the third unit to occupy part of this block.

In recent years, it has unfortunately proved impossible to bring about a quality improvement of the urbanistic status quo of this site, which is of great traditional significance for Vienna. This was primarily due to the fact that the site was the property of several land owners with differing interests. Since both privately-owned properties – InterContinental Hotel and Vienna Ice-Skating Club – are now owned by one single corporation, Vienna enjoys the unique opportunity of developing the entire area urbanistically in a manner that will generate added value, not only for the three individual users (hotel, ice rink, concert hall) and the owner, but also – and above all – for Vienna’s population.

Figures 1a and 1b show the area to be developed in its relations to the core and buffer zones of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”.

Figure 1a

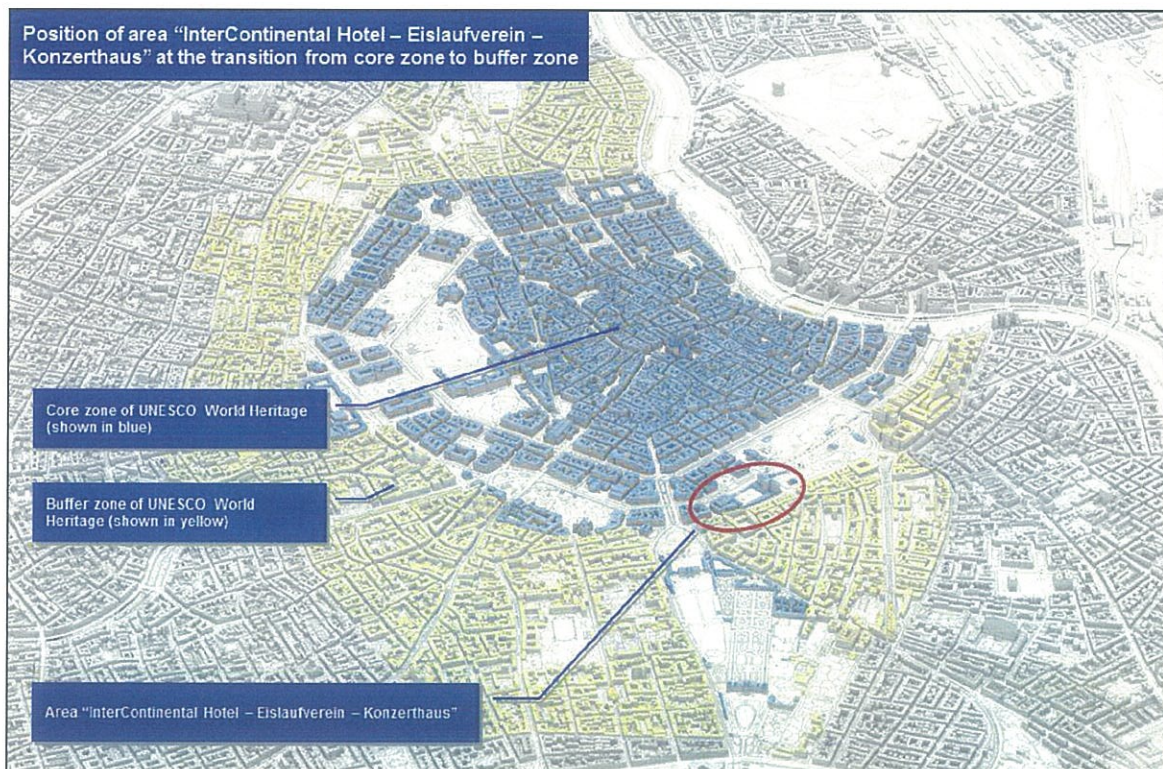


Figure 1b



By means of a co-operative dialogue process, over 50 stakeholders and experts from a great variety of scientific disciplines were invited to discuss the potential frame conditions for the development of a future project with experts of the City of Vienna as well as of the future users and the land owner. Concretely, this meant that, for example, representatives of the Austrian Federal Monuments Office and of ICOMOS Austria as well as foreign experts well versed in World Heritage matters (inter alia including Professor Kunibert Wachten and Mr Michael Kloos of RWTH Aachen University) were able to participate in this moderated, multi-tiered process and as a result weighed in with their viewpoints.

It was the purpose of the dialogue process to create consolidated urbanistic frame conditions that would result in clear-cut specifications for subsequent competition procedures and are also in accordance with the World Heritage status.

The expert discussions showed that the further project development should avoid placing the focus solely on the height issue. According to the experts' opinion, it would seem to be much more useful to pay attention to qualities of urbanism and urban space. Put in simple terms, a higher and more slender volume might possibly influence the authenticity of the World Heritage property "Historic Centre of Vienna" less than a lower volume of significantly more massive dimensions.

After more than two years of intensive expert discussions, the final jury meeting for the redesign of the area occupied by the Vienna Ice-Skating Club, InterContinental Hotel and Vienna Konzerthaus took place on 26 February 2014. A jury composed of top-level international specialists selected the project submitted by the renowned Brazilian architect Isay Weinfeld as the victorious entry of the architectural and open space design competition.

Figure 2a shows the very unsatisfactory status quo, while Figure 2b is a first design sketch of the winning project submitted by architect Isay Weinfeld.

Figure 2a



Figure 2b

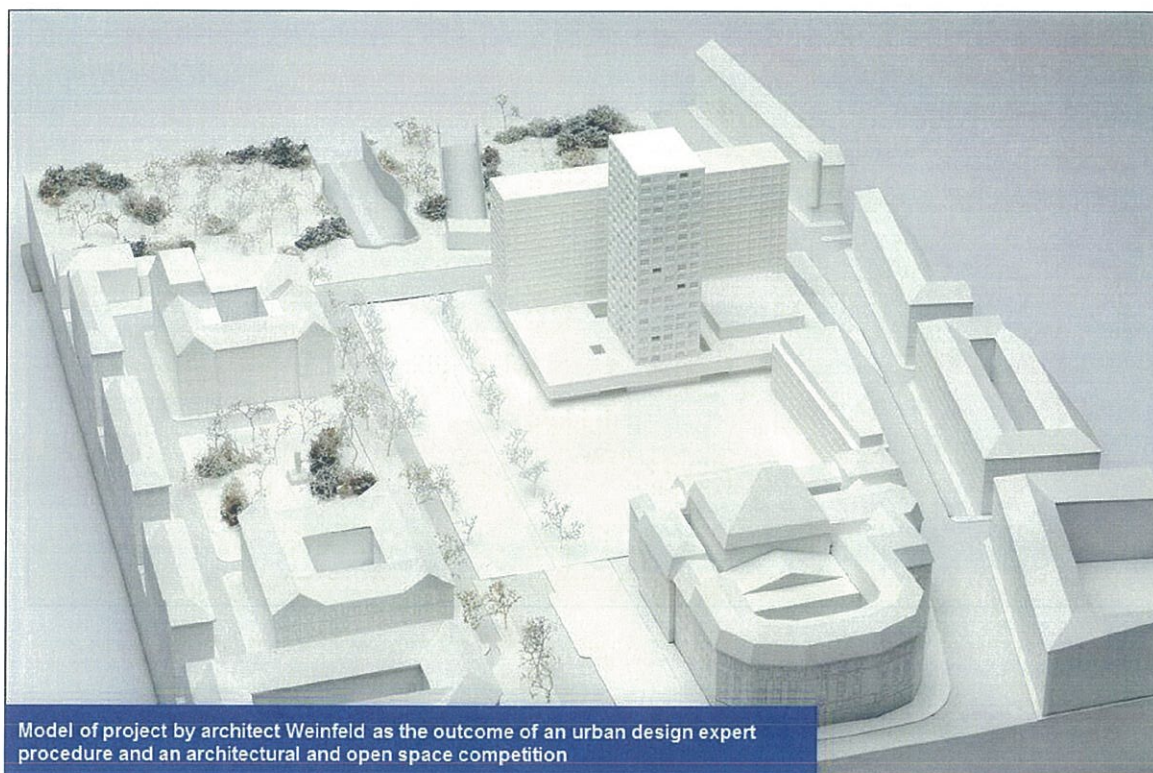


The jury's work included a very thorough discussion about building height and compatibility with the UNESCO World Heritage status. Ultimately, the jury excluded all projects with a proposed height in excess of 80 metres. In selecting the project by architect Isay Weinfeld, which proposes a maximum

height of slightly under 73 metres, the jury ultimately also reflected the height suggestion of approx. 70 metres that was formerly discussed with the UNESCO and ICOMOS bodies with regard to this section of the Glacis area.

Figure 3 shows a model including the project draft submitted by architect Isay Weinfeld.

Figure 3



Model of project by architect Weinfeld as the outcome of an urban design expert procedure and an architectural and open space competition

Already during the discussion about the “Wien-Mitte” project in the Erdberg area in the early 2000s, an intensive fine-tuning with the UNESCO and ICOMOS bodies was carried out. As a result of this fine-tuning process, a height dimension of approx. 70 metres was defined as conceivable for the former Glacis area in the transition zone between core city and former suburb. This guideline height was approved by the international bodies.

Moreover, in the early 2010s, consultation and fine-tuning with the UNESCO and ICOMOS bodies led to the approval of high-rises not exceeding approx. 70 metres to be constructed in the Danube Canal area on the Leopoldstadt side – which is characterised by 1960s reconstruction architecture –, as this dimension was considered adequate for the location. The UNESCO Committee session of June 2011 duly acknowledged this guideline height.

Like the “Wien-Mitte” project, the Vienna Ice-Skating Club – InterContinental Hotel – Vienna Konzerthaus area is located close to Stadtpark in the former Glacis zone. Precisely like Danube Canal, the urban fabric along Wien River was strongly impacted by war action and is now mainly characterised by projects dating from the 2nd half of the 20th century.

An important aspect motivating the decision of the jury lay in the fact that the high-rise projected by architect Weinfeld will take the shape of a point (high-rise) block, and not of a slab, in order to comply with the demands of UNESCO, i.e. to avoid a negative impact on the cityscape.

Figures 4a and 4b show the development of high-rise volumes along Danube Canal and Wien River.

Figure 4a

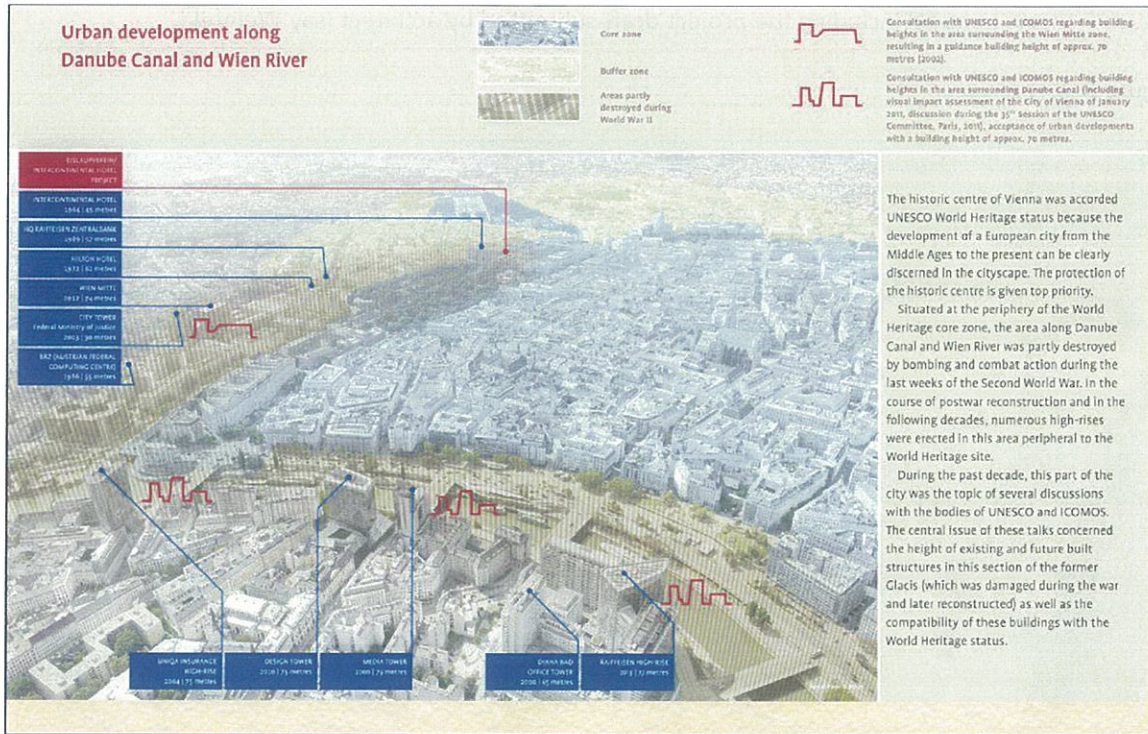


Figure 4b



In the course of the dialogue process, it became evident that it is necessary to address the tension between the dynamics of development and the requirements of preserving the historic heritage with regard to the Glacis (i.e. the zone that until the second half of the 19th century encircled the historic

core city – the “Innere Stadt” – as undeveloped terrain). The Glacis Master Plan was developed for this very reason. The last section of the present report describes this document in greater detail.

At the moment, the political decision-makers have not yet ruled definitively whether the project based on the design by architect Isay Weinfeld will be implemented.

If implemented, the project would have numerous technical and urbanistic effects on the surrounding area of the city. For this reason, it is planned as a next step to clarify, within the scope of the City of Vienna and its bodies, whether the project is compatible with the currently applicable building laws of Vienna. Concretely, Municipal Department 21 – District Planning and Land Use is evaluating the preconditions created by the plans submitted for the Vienna Ice-Skating Club – InterContinental Hotel area with regard to the revision of the currently valid land use and development plan. Before the commencement of the procedure, which is regulated under the Vienna Building Code, a preliminary draft – called “Gründruck”, i.e. official draft – is to be compiled and evaluated by the City of Vienna.

Only then will it be possible to initiate proceedings to modify the legally applicable land use and development plan for this part of Vienna. This modified land use and development plan would create the legal basis for constructing a new project on the area occupied by the Vienna Ice-Skating Club and InterContinental Hotel. Based on past experience, it is likely that this land use planning procedure will take up about one year. The final decision must be taken at the end of the land use approval procedure by a majority of Vienna’s legislative assembly, the Vienna City Council.

Naturally, the City of Vienna is willing to conduct expert talks with the international UNESCO and ICOMOS bodies in the course of the further process so as to ensure that the project submitted by architect Isay Weinfeld will not conflict with the UNESCO World Heritage status of the site.

Vienna Main Station

With regard to Vienna Main Station, the new railway station situated outside both the core and buffer zones of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”, the City of Vienna right from the beginning placed its focus firmly on the compatibility of the project with the UNESCO World Heritage status. In particular, this concerned the preservation of the historic Baroque sightlines between the Lower and Upper Belvedere.

In January 2010, a comprehensive visual impact assessment for the two World Heritage properties of Vienna was submitted to the World Heritage Centre. Professor Kunibert Wachten and Mr Michael Kloos (RWTH Aachen University, Germany) monitored the compilation of the assessment as independent experts. In their summary evaluation, these two experts identified no negative effects on the outstanding universal value (OUV), authenticity and integrity of the two World Heritage properties. In January 2011, further information was supplied upon a request voiced by the World Heritage Committee (WHC-10/34.COM/7B.Add). On the basis of the decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the Vienna Main Station project was already preliminarily modified (inter alia, the height was reduced in 2008 from 100 metres to 88 metres for Lot A 01, cf. 33COM7B.89).

From 17 to 20 September 2012, a joint World Heritage Centre/ ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the city on an invitation extended by the City of Vienna (Decision 35 COM7B.84) in order to obtain an on-site overview in connection with the two studies submitted. In the context of a comprehensive programme, information about the ongoing and projected urban development activities in the surroundings of the two World Heritage properties was provided. Inter alia, thematic meetings and talks with experts, relevant decision-makers and representatives of citizens’ initiatives took place. Moreover, on-site visits were conducted, thereby enabling the visitors to obtain a detailed understanding of the individual projects.

The recommendations of the joint mission and of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee were followed inasmuch as it will not be possible, by law, to put up large-sized illuminated advertising hoardings or billboards on any of the Vienna Main Station buildings currently under construction that are situated directly in front of Belvedere Palace. The intention lies in safeguarding, through the authorities responsible for construction with supporting expertise provided by Municipal Department 19 – Architecture and Urban Design, that there will be no negative visual effect on the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”, especially during night hours.

Vienna Main Station took up full operation on 14 December 2014.

Figure 5: View of Vienna Main Station as completed in December 2014, looking towards the UNESCO World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”

Figure 5



Project “Rathausstrasse 1”

The following section provides information about the project “Rathausstrasse 1”.

The property “Rathausstrasse 1” occupies a significant location in the 1st municipal district of Vienna in the area of the former Glacis between Ringstrasse and Landesgerichtsstrasse. The property is situated at the western periphery of the core zone of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna” as well as inside a protection zone (under ensemble protection according to the Building Code for Vienna).

The office building currently occupying this site (1010 Wien, Rathausstrasse 1) was erected in 1980 based on plans by architect Harry Glück and until the end of 2013 housed the EDP department of the City of Vienna. In the meantime, this department has been relocated to a more suitable position in north-eastern Vienna.

Various studies have shown that the existing building is no longer able to meet the modern requirements of state-of-the-art office buildings. Moreover, it has become apparent that a comprehensive rehabilitation of the existing building would be both technically and economically extremely difficult and perhaps impossible. For this reason, it is planned to demolish the current building and to replace it with a new one.

In the run-up to a competition organised by the City of Vienna, Vienna University of Technology compiled a comprehensive urbanistic analysis of the zone directly surrounding Vienna City Hall (called "Rathauscarree"). In their study, the experts of Vienna University of Technology define the geometric urbanistic block structure and homogeneous height dimensions as typical elements of the area of the surrounding Rathauscarree zone in which the project is located.

In the meantime, a competition was held in order to develop planning proposals for a new office building. This project was to ensure compatibility with the World Heritage status. The project identified as the victorious entry during the final jury meeting (November 2013) provides for a volume with a height of 31 metres. This means that the height of the future building in Rathausstrasse 1 – at the periphery of the core zone of the World Heritage property – will blend in with the surrounding Gründerzeit edifices and will in fact be markedly lower than the existing volume. The original structure of the Rathauscarree zone is made recourse to; the project by the architectural studio Schubert & Schubert as approved by the jury reflected the alignment of the covered market that was originally situated at the corner of Stadiongasse and Landesgerichtsstrasse and in due course replaced by the office building designed by architect Harry Glück (1976-1980).

Although the victorious project would have reflected the historic building alignments, there was some controversy and discussion about the possibility that the planned new building might block the view along Josefstädter Strasse towards St. Stephen's Cathedral. In due course, the project was revised on an initiative of the City of Vienna, which now ensures that the sightline from Josefstädter Strasse to St. Stephen's Cathedral will not be obstructed by the new building in Rathausstrasse 1.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the project location within the city of Vienna, highlights the current building as well as the future edifice and illustrates the visual axis – kept unobstructed – between Josefstädter Strasse and St. Stephen's Cathedral.



Vienna High-rise Concept 2014

The High-rise Concept 2002 was approved by the Vienna City Council in April 2002 as a basic planning document. This High-rise Concept of spring 2002 does not reference the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”, since the historic centre of Vienna had only been classified as a World Heritage property shortly before (in December 2001).

As this High-rise Concept dating from 2002 no longer corresponded to current requirements – i.e. allowing for urban development while protecting the historic building stock –, a new High-rise Concept was developed under the aegis of Vienna University of Technology and involving a wide circle of experts. This new concept was adopted politically by the Vienna City Council on 19 December 2014.

The current High-rise Concept adopts a methodology entirely different from its precursor formulated in 2002. The concept of 2002 takes no account of Vienna’s morphology (i.e. the city’s terrain structure) and in evaluating potential sites for high-rise buildings primarily looks at their location vis-à-vis priority public transport lines and Vienna’s numerous “exclusion zones”, in the process making reference to green and open spaces, bodies of water, protection zones, etc., but not to the World Heritage core zone “Historic Centre of Vienna”.

The entirely novel aspect of the new methodology applied lies in the fact that exclusion zones are no longer brought into play. Rather, every potential high-rise project must be analysed in detail with regard to its impact; moreover, the municipal territory of Vienna is now structured into different “Gebietskulissen” (regional scenarios). The key and essential element lies in the requirement that any potential developer must specifically demonstrate the added value a high-rise would have for the immediate surroundings.

With regard to the UNESCO World Heritage property, the current High-rise Concept 2014 embodies much more comprehensive provisions than its precursor of 2002. For example, the chapter on “Compatibility with the cityscape, visual axes and sightlines” makes direct reference to the World Heritage status as follows:

“Compatibility with nature reserves, protected landscapes, safety zones of Vienna International Airport, protection zones according to Art. 7 of the Building Code for Vienna, the UNESCO World Heritage properties and visual axes must be demonstrated. The position taken, and the effects caused, by the high-rise within the areas covered by all these zones must be clearly visualised. All technical and thematic clarifications must be exclusively co-ordinated by Municipal Department 21 and the Steering Group.

Special attention is to be paid to the visual axes and sightlines that determine the urban space. Concretely, potential developers must show, by way of a written and visual set of arguments (in combination with visual impact assessments and visualisations), what impact a planned high-rise project would have on the future cityscape as well as on the two UNESCO World Heritage properties.

With a view to the city as a whole, the following sightlines are of special importance:

- Visual axes from and to identification points of historic and identity-creating significance (e.g. St. Stephen’s Cathedral, Church of St. Charles Borromeo, Schönbrunn Palace/Gloriette, Belvedere, Danube Tower, Giant Ferris Wheel).*
- Visual axes to be understood as part of urban vedutas and panoramas of importance for Vienna. What is of significance here are not only the single sightlines per se but the way in which the cityscape as a whole is perceived visually from these points (relevance for the silhouette of the city, cityscape as a whole).*

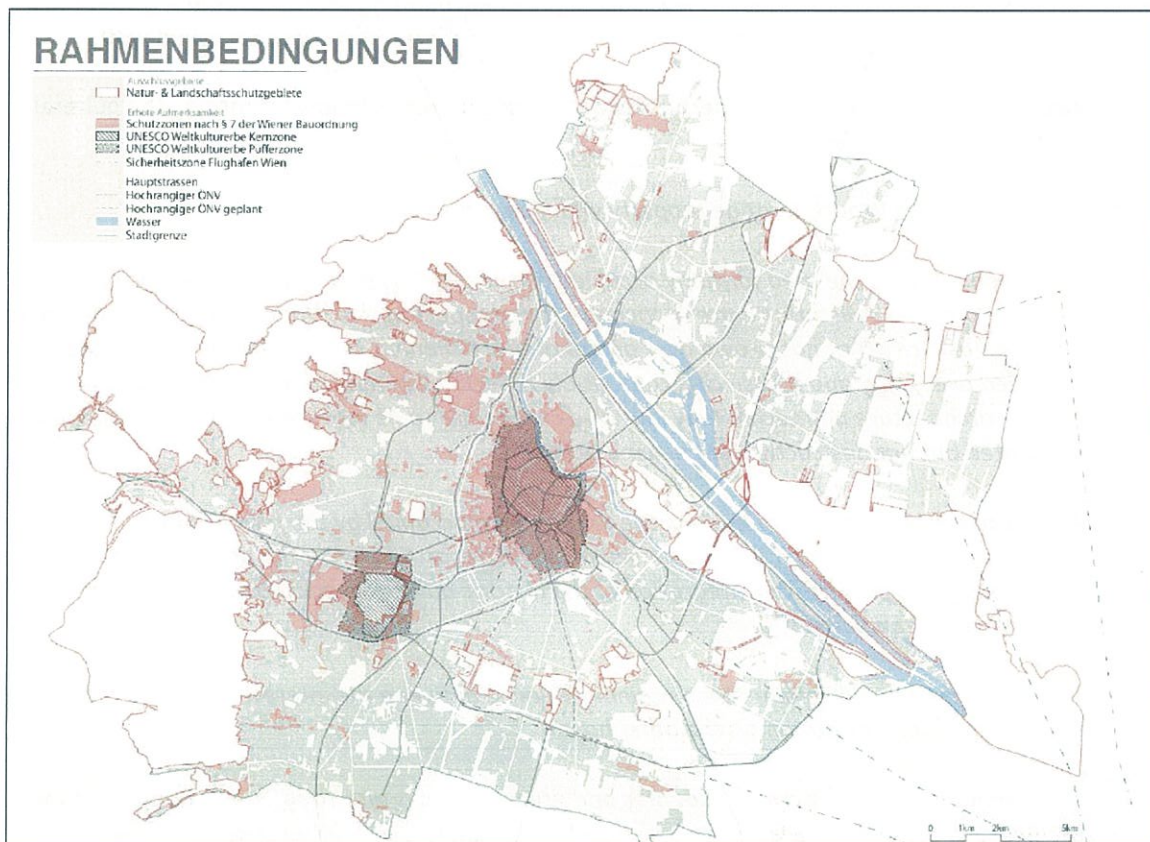
By way of example, the following urban vedutas and panoramas as perceived from the following viewing points are of special significance (non-exhaustive listing): Kahlenberg Hill, Leopoldsberg Hill, Wilhelminenberg Hill, Upper Belvedere, Gloriette/Schönbrunn Palace, Danube Tower, Giant Ferris Wheel.

These visual impact analyses and visualisations to be submitted by the potential developer/developers (based on the 3D city model of the City of Vienna) must be implemented in close technical co-operation with Municipal Department 41 – Surveyors.

In connection with planning considerations for high-rise buildings, the abovementioned reasons principally require that any potential project developers establish agreement with Municipal Department 19 – Architecture and Urban Design and, in connection with matters touching on the World Heritage properties, with the Chief Executive Office of the City of Vienna, Executive Group for Construction and Technology, Directorate General for Urban Planning, Development and Construction (co-ordination of UNESCO World Heritage matters) at the earliest possible moment, in order to ensure that a potential high-rise building will have no negative impact on Vienna’s cityscape.”

Figure 7 sketches the frame conditions for the High-rise Concept 2014 and stipulates that the two World Heritage properties “Schönbrunn” and “Historic Centre of Vienna” are areas to be given special attention.

Figure 7



Glacis Master Plan

As already outlined in connection with the report on the project “Vienna Ice-Skating Club / InterContinental Hotel / Vienna Konzerthaus”, a Glacis Master Plan was developed last year on an initiative of the City of Vienna as one of the results of the dialogue process.

The intention lay in addressing the diverse fields of tension between the dynamics of development on the one hand and the requirements of preserving the historic heritage on the other hand.

Until around the mid-19th century, the area occupied by what today is the periphery of the core zone of the World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna” was taken up by the Glacis. This area encircled the then city walls of Vienna (roughly mirroring today’s Ringstrasse boulevard) and was left undeveloped for military-strategic reasons. When the city walls were torn down and in the wake of the massive urban enlargement of Vienna in the 2nd half of the 19th century, the Glacis was largely built up.

This comprehensive study provides information about the possible urbanistic potentials and restrictions for this area situated at the edge of the historic core city. At a strategic level, this is to constitute a response, on the one hand, to the fact that the area still contains isolated inner-city lots suitable for possible urban development (new buildings or restructuring projects); on the other hand, this is to ensure that the obligations arising out of the World Heritage status are complied with.

With respect to the World Heritage property, this documents states as follows regarding the general urbanistic objectives for the Glacis zone:

“Continuing to infuse the World Heritage property with contemporary life:

- *The urban fabric of the area formerly occupied by the Glacis is part of the UNESCO World Heritage property “Historic Centre of Vienna”. A key aspect of this World Heritage site lies in its evolution as a city that has grown over an era of two millennia, whose parts were repeatedly reshaped over time, and whose cityscape visibly reflects all phases of urban development. 21st-century architecture and technology, but also culture are to be inscribed in this book of history: integrated but not destructive, yet never imitative.*
- *As part of the historic core of Vienna, the urban space occupied by the former Glacis is to be evolved as a lively centre; it is not a museum. While the protection of the precious cultural heritage is given priority, the integration of the historic building stock into a living urban organism is of equal importance.*
- *All measures to be taken aim at maintaining balance between the interests of conservation on the one hand and utilisation on the other hand.*
- *The urban fabric with its streets, squares and green spaces is also to offer sufficient room for the needs of art and culture.”*

Regarding the protection of the authenticity of the World Heritage property and the issue of sightlines and visual axes, the Glacis Master Plan contains the same – word-for-word – provisions as the High-rise Concept 2014, which is to emphasise that sound judgment will be employed to ensure that all measures of urban development will be in line with the obligations resulting from the World Heritage status of the historic centre of Vienna.

For the sake of clarity, these provisions are once more quoted in the following passage:

"Compatibility with nature reserves, protected landscapes, safety zones of Vienna International Airport, protection zones according to Art. 7 of the Building Code for Vienna, the UNESCO World Heritage properties and visual axes must be demonstrated. The position taken, and the effects caused, by the high-rise within the areas covered by all these zones must be clearly visualised. All technical and thematic clarifications must be exclusively co-ordinated by Municipal Department 21 and the Steering Group.

Special attention is to be paid to the visual axes and sightlines that determine the urban space. Concretely, potential developers must show, by way of a written and visual set of arguments (in combination with visual impact assessments and visualisations), what impact a planned high-rise project would have on the future cityscape as well as on the two UNESCO World Heritage properties.

With a view to the city as a whole, the following sightlines are of special importance:

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In connection with planning considerations for high-rise buildings, the abovementioned reasons principally require that any potential project developers establish agreement with Municipal Department 19 – Architecture and Urban Design and, in connection with matters touching on the World Heritage properties, with the Chief Executive Office of the City of Vienna, Executive Group for Construction and Technology, Directorate General for Urban Planning, Development and Construction (co-ordination of UNESCO World Heritage matters) at the earliest possible moment, in order to ensure that a potential high-rise building will have no negative impact on Vienna's cityscape."

At the moment, the High-rise Concept 2014 and the Glacis Master Plan are being translated into English. As soon as the English translation has been completed, the texts will be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for information purposes.

If any additional information going beyond the present report is requested by you, we are of course happy to submit this at any time. By way of conclusion, I would like to express thanks on behalf of the City of Vienna for the extremely positive and constructive co-operation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Rudolf Zunke

Chief Executive Office of the City of Vienna, Executive Group for Construction and Technology,
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ordinator of the UNESCO World Heritage properties

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