

Vienna (Austria)

No 1033

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Historic Centre of Vienna
<i>Location</i>	Vienna
<i>State Party</i>	Republic of Austria
<i>Date</i>	27 June 2000

Justification by State Party

The historic centre of Vienna proposed for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List constitutes a uniquely preserved town monument, which is of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, cultural history, and art. Its outstanding historical significance becomes manifest in "Vienna, the capital and residence city," ie the political and spiritual centre of a multi-national state, which was a decisive factor within European history from the Middle Ages to the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Promotion of science and art on a broad basis was concentrated in the imperial city, building on medieval tradition and developing into an instantly recognizable Austrian form of Baroque culture, a Viennese *Gründerzeit* idiom, and a Viennese modernity, all of these styles aspiring to meet the challenges of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, based on an overall design concept. Vienna was important for the history of music (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss, Schönberg), as well as for the history of literature and psychology (Freud, Frankl). The historic centre exhibits a series of significant Baroque ensembles superimposed on the medieval core. The political situation after 1683 (decisive resistance to the Ottoman army) resulted in an urban development that was characterized by the newly accentuated axes leading from the centre to the suburbs and palaces, and contrasted by the *Ringstrasse* in the area of the former fortifications, built in the *Gründerzeit* at the end of the 19th century.

The historic centre of Vienna exhibits an important interchange of human values on developments in architecture, town planning, and landscape design. The spatial organization as well as the density and quality of the historic buildings bear testimony to the socio-economic and cultural development of Vienna. This heritage is the bearer of a cultural tradition of outstanding universal value, designating Vienna as a city of art and culture.

Criterion ii

The historic centre of Vienna is an outstanding example of a city that illustrates significant stages in human history,

including three major developments, medieval, Baroque, and *Gründerzeit*, in its urban pattern and its individual buildings. The historic centre of Vienna has an imperial design in its layout and the individual monuments, and has thus become a symbol of Austrian history. **Criterion iv**

Vienna is directly and tangibly associated with artistic and especially musical works of outstanding universal significance. Based on ecclesiastic liturgical music since medieval times, as well as *minnesang* and ancient dance music, Vienna became a centre of European music as early as the beginning of the 16th century under the Habsburgs. Opera, which emerged in Italy at the end of 16th century, became firmly established at the court of Vienna in the High Baroque. The Viennese Classicists (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert) consolidated Vienna's reputation as the musical capital of Europe, a reputation that has continued and is expressed also in light music (Strauss) and modern music (Neo-Viennese School). **Criterion vi**

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

History and Description

History

First inhabited in the Neolithic period, the history of Vienna has the following main phases:

- Antiquity and early medieval (up to 11th century)

Archaeological evidence has shown that the site of Vienna had a Celtic settlement when the Romans extended their control into the Danube region in the 1st century CE, building the *castellum* of *Vindobona* on the edge of the river and staying here until 488. The meandering Danube formed the *limes* of the Roman Empire, the border to *Germania libera*, influencing later urban development until modern times. The High German name *Wenia* was first mentioned in 881, during the conflicts of Germans and Magyars.

- High and late medieval (12th to 15th centuries)

Vienna started regaining significance in the late 12th and 13th centuries, becoming one of the largest towns of the German Empire, next to Cologne. Several monastic complexes were erected, including the *Minoritenkirche*, as well as starting the construction of the ducal residence, today's *Hofburg*, taken over by the Habsburgs in 1276. In the 14th and 15th centuries the town flourished from trade, and the first German university was founded in 1365. The church of St Stephen became reference for an independent bishopric in 1469 and an archbishopric in 1718. The Jewish community here since the 12th century was destroyed in 1420–21.

- Schism and Turkish siege (16th century to 1683)

In the 16th century Europe was in conflict with the Ottoman Empire, which occupied most of Hungary. Vienna became a frontier fortress, being first besieged in 1529, and trade started to decline. In 1533 Ferdinand I transferred to Vienna, making it the capital of the Holy Roman Empire; this lasted

until 1806, with an interruption from 1583 to 1612. In 1683 Vienna successfully resisted the Ottoman army, a victory which brought Hungary under Habsburg rule.

- Baroque metropolis (1683 to French Revolution)

The change in the political situation after 1683 also brought important changes to the town of Vienna, starting an important development phase. An increase in population led to the construction of suburban areas, which were protected by their own fortifications, the *Linienwall*. Baroque palaces were designed for the centre of the town by the leading architects of the time, including J.B. Fischer von Erlach and L. von Hildebrandt, resulting in the construction of the palaces of Schönbrunn and Belvedere, the extension of the Hofburg, and a large number of ecclesiastical and civic ensembles. Vienna became the European capital of music owing to the genius of Haydn and Mozart. After the defeat of Napoleon it was the venue of the Congress of Vienna (1814–15), which resulted in the political continuation of absolutism (*Vormärz*, ie before March 1848). At the same time, the *petite bourgeoisie* continued an interest in arts, furniture (*Biedermeier*), painting, and especially music (Beethoven, Schubert).

- The Era of Francis Joseph I (1848–1916)

At the end of 1848, the young Emperor Francis Joseph I ascended the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The desire for democratic government remained a dream, although constitutional government was restored in 1860. The city walls were razed to ground in 1857 in order to create the *Ringstrasse*, an outstanding example of 19th century town planning. With the emerging ambitions of the *haute bourgeoisie*, the new *Ringstrasse* became a major construction site for an impressive number of major buildings, including theatres, museums, university, and large private constructions, characterized as the *Gründerzeit*, the constructors' period. There was also an important development in the field of culture, including composers: Bruckner, Brahms, Wolf, Mahler, and Schönberg, architects and painters such as O. Wagner, A. Loos, G. Klimt, and O. Kokoschka, as well as philosophers, including L. Wittgenstein.

- Period since World War I

With the death of the Emperor in 1916 the Empire came to an end and Austria was proclaimed a democratic republic in 1918. Between the two World Wars, Vienna involved leading architects in social housing projects that came to dominate the character of some Viennese neighbourhoods. World War II caused major damage to the city, and the reconstruction phase lasted well into the 1960s. At the same time a new approach to preservation evolved, and the old town was legally protected in 1972. In 1945 Vienna regained its status as a federal province (*Land*) and capital of Austria.

Description

The property nominated to the World Heritage List consists of the medieval core (based on the Roman settlement), the principal Baroque ensembles with their axes, and the *Gründerzeit* constructions from the beginning of the modern period. The property covers an area of 371ha, surrounded by a buffer zone of 462ha.

The city of Vienna is situated on the Danube in the eastern part of Austria. The ancient Roman military camp was

situated on a plain, west of an old branch of the Danube. The site is surrounded by hills, now built on by small villages and vineyards. Traces of the Roman camp are still visible in the medieval urban fabric of the historic town centre of present-day Vienna, north of St Stephen's Cathedral and the *Graben* (450m x 530m). The ancient forum is now a market place, the *Hoher Markt*. The Roman camp became the starting point for the further development of the town. Beginning in the 12th century, the settlement expanded beyond the Roman boundaries, which were demolished, and the new medieval town walls surrounded a much larger area (about six times the area of the Roman camp). The walls were rebuilt during the Ottoman conflicts in the 16th and 17th centuries and provided with bastions. This remained the core city of Vienna until the demolition of the walls in the second part of the 19th century and the development of the *Ringstrasse* area

This inner city contains a number of historic buildings from the medieval period, including the *Schottenkloster*, the oldest monastery in Austria, from the 12th century, which served as a stopover for crusaders and pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. Other medieval buildings include the churches of *Maria am Gestade* (one of the main Gothic structures), *Michaelerkirche*, *Minoritenkirche*, and *Minoritenkloster*, from the 13th century. St Stephen's Cathedral dates from the 14th and 15th centuries (with a major restoration in the 19th century). The period also saw the construction of civic ensembles, such as initial parts of the *Hofburg*. Whilst the monastic complexes were generally built in stone, becoming also part of the defensive system of the medieval city, the residential quarters were built in timber and suffered frequent fires.

After the victory of the Ottoman army in 1683, Vienna developed rapidly as the capital of the Habsburg Empire, becoming an impressive Baroque metropolis with some 100,000 inhabitants in the 17th century. The Baroque character was expressed particularly in the large palace layouts built under Emperor Charles VI (1711–40) and Maria Theresa (1740–80), such as the *Belvedere* palace and garden ensemble (1712–21), extending along an axis to the south from the inner city (but included in the nomination). The first designers and craftsmen came from Italy, but one generation later there was an increasing number of Austrian architects, painters, and artisans, including Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, who designed additions to the *Hofburg Palace* (eg the Riding School, the National Library) and the *Karlskirche*. Many existing medieval buildings, churches, and convents were altered and given Baroque features (eg the *Schottenkirche* and the *Annakirche*), and additions were made to representative administrative buildings (eg the Bohemian Court Chancery, the Hungarian Court Chancery). A growing number of new palaces were built by noble families (eg *Palais Batthyany*, *Palais Lobkowitz*, *Palais Wilczek*, *Palais Esterhazy*). Several historic buildings are now associated with the important Viennese residence of personalities such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and others.

A new phase in the history of Vienna took place when the 34 suburbs were incorporated with the city, and the Emperor gave the order to demolish the fortifications around the inner city, executed from 1858 to 1874. While the demolition of the fortifications may be regretted from the historical point of view, this opportunity was taken in order to create one of the most significant 19th century ensembles in the history of

urban planning, which greatly influenced the rest of Europe in this crucial period of social and economic development.

The new area became the planning ground for large civic complexes in the period of 19th century Historicism. The *Hofburg* complex was extended with the *Neue Hofburg*, an "imperial forum," and joined with large museum complexes into a single ensemble. The *Burgtheater* designed by G. Semper, the Parliament (*Reichsratsgebäude*) by Theophil von Hansen, the Town Hall, and the University formed another ensemble linked with these. To this was added the Opera House as well as a large number of public and private buildings along the *Ringstrasse*. The overall planning concept followed the idea of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, ie planned and executed on the basis of coherent design concepts, as already conceived in the Baroque. The late 19th and early 20th centuries testify to further creative contributions by Viennese designers, artists, and architects in the period of *Jugendstil* (eg the *Postsparkasse* by Otto Wagner, 1904–06), *Secession* (eg buildings by Josef Maria Olbrich), and the early Modern Movement of the 20th century in architecture (eg the *Looshaus* by Adolf Loos, 1909). Here the contribution of Vienna has been fundamental to the formation of modern architecture.

The buffer zone (462ha) surrounds the historic core area on all sides, with a portion of the Danube Canal on the north side. The urban development of the buffer zone includes some of the former suburban areas and a number of historic buildings from the 17th to early 20th centuries.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The nominated historic core area of Vienna as well as the proposed buffer zone are well protected by various legal instruments. These include the Amended Law on Old Town Conservation (No 16/1972), passed in 1972. Within the proposed nomination area, there are about 1500 protected structures. Historic buildings are subject to protection under the Monument Protection Act (No 533/1923), the most recent amendment entering into force on 1 January 2000. Relevant parts of Vienna are subject to the Vienna Nature Conservation Act (from 1998) and other legal regulations. About 75% of the properties are in private ownership, 18% publicly owned, and 7% owned by the church.

Management

The historic area proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List is indicated as a protected zone ("Innere Stadt" and "Ringstrasse") in the Urban Master Plan of Vienna. Protection is also specified particularly to the *Belvedere* Park, the gardens of the *Hofburg* ensemble, the *Rathauspark*, the park of the *Palais Schwarzenberg*, and the *Stadtpark*. The Municipality of Vienna and its departments provide a modern and efficient means of administration and management, including monitoring systems for the areas concerned. These offices are integrated in relevant fields by the *Bundesdenkmalamt* of Austria, the *Landeskonservatorat* for Vienna, and professional advisory bodies.

The Urban Development Plan was revised in 1994, and is since being updated on an on-going basis. This in itself constitutes a perfectly valid management plan for the historic urban area seen in relation to its overall context. It is,

however, integrated with a medium-term (three-year) specific management plan with clearly laid-out objectives. The management processes are well sustained by professional and scientific expertise and facilities. Vienna also has a fully competent infrastructure for visitor management, taking account of its importance for tourism. The historic town is conceived not as a museum but rather as a living and vibrant city. Preservation and conservation are targeted in accordance with international agreements and recommendations.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The historic town of Vienna is an example of a town where the city centre has always remained at the same place. As a result, the city has undergone a continuous process of change, rehabilitation, and adaptation. The town suffered from damage during World War II, but this has since been repaired and restored. The city has been under legal protection as an historic area since 1972. Many of the individual historic buildings have been protected since the 1920s, and the history of modern conservation goes back to 1850.

The municipality of Vienna is giving due consideration to all relevant issues related to the monitoring of change. Particular attention is given to economic trends and pressures, traffic control, tourism, and environmental conditions. There are no serious natural hazards.

Authenticity and integrity

The historic town of Vienna, like an urban cultural landscape, integrates a complex stratigraphy of historic layers from the ancient Celtic and Roman times onwards. Over time the earlier structures have been adjusted in accordance with the needs of later periods, including the *Graben*, which replaced the former Roman walls, and the *Ringstrasse*, which was built over the area of the medieval fortifications. Through this process of gradual change and development, the town has acquired its particular historical integrity and specific character and its outstanding universal value. The development of modern conservation policies goes back to the mid 19th century. Within this context, the historic fabric satisfies the test of authenticity.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Vienna in February 2001. An evaluation of the "outstanding universal value" of the nominated property was provided by the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages (CIVVIH).

Qualities

Vienna has had three major periods in its history: the medieval period (12th to 15th centuries), the Baroque period (late 15th to 18th centuries), and the late 19th to the early 20th centuries. In the course of these periods the city developed its imperial status as well as its cultural character, particularly in relation to the history of music. Vienna has preserved its authenticity and historic integrity to a

considerable degree and has been influential in diffusing the models created to the rest of Europe and the world, including in particular Baroque architecture and the 19th century *Ringstrasse*. Vienna has also been important in contributing to the development of *Jugendstil* and *Secessionstil*, as well as the Modern Movement in architecture. As an ensemble, Vienna is extremely rich in architectural and urban planning terms, including important ensembles of historic buildings and garden layouts.

Vienna is directly associated with artistic and musical developments of outstanding universal significance from the medieval period, becoming a major reference for the history of European music in the High Baroque period, and especially at the time of the Viennese Classicists (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert), continuing these traditions until the modern period (Strauss, the Neo-Viennese School).

Comparative analysis

The nomination document proposes that Vienna should be compared, in terms of size, significance, and state of conservation, with Prague (inscribed 1992: categories ii, iv, vi) and Budapest (inscribed 1987: categories ii, iv]. The nomination of Prague consists of the historic centre of the city and that of Budapest the banks of the Danube and the Old Buda Castle quarter. For Prague reference is made to its role in European developments, its architectural quality, and its role as a cultural centre. For Budapest, the criteria are referred to Roman and Gothic influences in the region and the representative role of the Austro-Hungarian period in 19th century architecture.

It is recognized that Prague, Budapest, and Vienna are three major historic cities in the same region in central Europe, with some similarities in terms of history, art, and architecture. There are also, however, many differences between these three cities. Their urban and architectural developments have differed substantially, resulting in distinct qualities and cultural integrity characterizing each for its own outstanding universal value. Furthermore, Prague and Budapest developed in a decentralized manner while Vienna always evolved at the same place.

In many aspects, Vienna has been a forerunner that has influenced other cities through its example. This was the case in the development of Baroque architecture; other cities have considered it a question of prestige to be regarded as "Little Viennas," such as Varazdin in Croatia. The demolition of the fortifications in the 19th century and the design of the *Ringstrasse* layout also had considerable influence in the history of town planning.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

While taking note of the fact that there are a number of historic buildings of great importance in the proposed buffer zone, such as the *Auersperg* and *Trautson Palaces*, the *Piarist Monastery* and the *Maria Treu Church*, ICOMOS concurs with the proposed boundaries of the nominated area and the buffer zone.

Recognizing the high quality of the historic fabric and appreciating the efforts made at the level of urban planning and management, ICOMOS nevertheless wishes to emphasize the importance of the further development of appropriate instruments for the protection and the control of changes in all structures pertaining to the nominated area.

Brief description

The historic centre of Vienna developed from early Celtic and Roman settlements into a medieval and Baroque city, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It had an essential role as the European capital for music, being associated with major personalities from Viennese Classicism to modern music. Vienna is rich in architectural ensembles, including particularly Baroque castles and gardens, as well as the late 19th century *Ringstrasse* ensemble.

Statement of Significance

The historic centre of Vienna, in its architectural and urban qualities, bears exceptional testimony to an important interchange of values related to the history of architecture, art, music, and literature. In its urban and architectural layout, the historic centre mirrors three major phases of development – medieval, Baroque, and the *Gründerzeit* – which have become a symbol of Austrian and central European history. Vienna has been directly and tangibly associated with the fundamental development of the history of music from the 16th to the 20th centuries, particularly Viennese Classicism and Romanticism, consolidating Vienna's reputation as the "musical capital" of Europe.

ICOMOS Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iv, and vi*:

Criterion ii The urban and architectural qualities of the Historic Centre of Vienna bear outstanding witness to a continuing interchange of values throughout the second millennium.

Criterion iv Three key periods of European cultural and political development – the Middle Ages, the Baroque period, and the *Gründerzeit* – are exceptionally well illustrated by the urban and architectural heritage of the Historic Centre of Vienna.

Criterion vi Since the 16th century Vienna has been universally acknowledged to be the musical capital of Europe.

Bureau Recommendation

That the Historic Centre of Vienna be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iv, and vi*.

ICOMOS, September 2001