

Wooden Churches (Slovakia)

No 1273

Official name as proposed

by the State Party: Wooden Churches of the Slovak part of the Carpathian Mountain Area

Location: Hervartov, Trvdosin, Kezmarok, Lestiny, Hronsek, Bodruzal, Ladomirova and Ruska Bystra; Presov, Zilina, Kosice and Banska Bystrica Regions; Slovak Republic

Brief description:

The serial nomination consists of a group of eight religious buildings located in the Carpathian mountain area of the Slovak Republic. The churches are grouped according to their faiths: Roman Catholic (Hervartov and Trvdosin); Protestant (Kezmarok, Lestiny and Hronsek) and Greek Orthodox (Bodruzal, Ladomirova and Ruska Bystra). They were built between the 16th and 18th centuries using wood as the main construction material, according to traditional techniques and architectural forms. In the framework of these common features, the churches bear specific typological layouts related to their specific faiths. In addition to their architectural and technical values, the properties testify to the coexistence of diverse ethnic and cultural communities in a relatively small Central European territory.

Category of property:

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of 8 *monuments*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 12 June 2002

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination: None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 26 September 2006

Background: It is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS consulted its Scientific International Committees on Wood and on Vernacular Architecture.

Literature consulted (selection):

Gojdic I., *Sacred wooden architecture in Slovakia*, Bratislava, 1999.

Ryszkiewicz A., *Le bois dans l'architecture et la sculpture slaves*, Paris, 1981.

Sopoliga M., *Wooden "cerkevs" in East Slovakia*, Bratislava, 1999.

Voloskuk P., *Wooden church typology, its protection and restoration*, Bratislava, 1999.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 4 – 10 September 2007

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 11 December 2007 on the following issues:

- Consider including the churchyards within the nominated area of the churches;
- Consider establishing an agreement between the relevant governmental authorities and the churches to ensure proper management;
- Provide further information on the construction techniques of the churches.

On 27 February 2008, ICOMOS received additional information supplied by the State Party. The document includes revision of the nominated areas, an agreement between the competent authorities and the churches on the management system and additional information on the construction techniques employed. The additional information provided is analysed in the corresponding sections of this report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report:

11 March 2008

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The nominated property consists of a group of eight monuments, each one a wooden church located in the Slovakian part of the Carpathian mountain area. They were selected by the State Party out of some 50 similar buildings existing in the country. The use of wooden construction was traditional in this part of the country (former Upland Hungary). Between 16th and 18th centuries, churches were constructed in small isolated villages, sometimes hardly reachable and inhabited by rather poor communities. The nomination dossier includes a description of each monument, grouped in three categories according to their particular faith: Roman-Catholic, Protestant or Greek Orthodox. Despite common features, the nominated properties bear specific characteristics. The following paragraphs summarise the most significant features of each monument.

a) Roman-Catholic churches (Gothic wooden churches)

- Hervartov, Saint Francis Church

The nominated property consists of the monument itself and the churchyard, with a surface of 0.0802ha. The small village of Hervartov is located in eastern Slovakia, some 9 km south-west of the city of Bardejov, close to the Polish border. The wooden church is located in the centre of the village, on a raised plot lined with a stone defensive wall. The building is composed of a rectangular

nave, a polygonal presbytery and a small sacristy, directly reachable from the outside. The dominant conical tower was built later on, attached to the west western wall of the nave. The Gothic wooden architecture is expressed in slim rectangular windows and the steep saddle roof, covered with wooden shingles and the continuous traverse from nave to presbytery. The nave has a flat beamed ceiling, as did the presbytery originally.

The gallery containing the organ is supported by two columns reminiscent of stone columns with column foot and capping. Its parapet is decorated with blank arcades with marbling. Internal decoration includes carvings with Latin texts as a part of the triumphal arch and painting representing the Calvary scene. The church also contains late Gothic painted decoration with acanthus styled decor in the form of regular stencils. Only some parts of the original altar remain. Late Gothic painting of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Christopher and St. Catherine from the turn of the 15th and 16th century may have formed part of the vanished great altar. Rare monuments from the period of reformation are the polychrome wooden baptistery from the year 1614 or 1674, a simple patronal pew and a panel painting of the Last Supper from the year 1653. The proposed buffer zone encompasses the urban block containing the church and the adjacent plots, with a surface of 5.3587 ha.

- Trvdosin, All Saints Church

The nominated property consists of the church and its churchyard, with a surface area of 0.75ha. The small town of Trvdosin is situated in northern Slovakia at the foot of the Oravska Vrchovina (Orava Highlands) mountain range, in close contact with the Orava River water course, about 10 km from the Slovak-Polish border. In its form, architecture and structural design, All Saints Church represents an exceptional wooden sacral building of Gothic character. Of rustic construction in larch wood with large dimensions of single beams (about 50 cm diameter) it has a simple floor plan. The rectangular nave is linked with the square presbytery, having a small side sacristy in the northern wall. A simple wooden portal, with an outline of the period-style profile, forms the entrance into the sacristy. The impact of Gothic architecture is more expressly manifested in the shape of the western and southern entrance portals. A characteristic feature of the church is its high saddle roof covered with wooden shingles and a small octagonal tower with pavilion roof which was added in the 19th century.

The building was modified in mid 17th century, when the church belonged to Protestants. A new vault arched portal transferred the architectural dominance of the church from the western to the southern side. Original small windows were widened and the altar space was lightened by relatively large twin windows with vaulted arches. A wooden walkway around the building protects the lower part of the rustic work and creates a natural space for churchgoers to gather. The pitched roof on later walled stone columns creates an additional lower level for the roof and gives the church its typical external shape. From mid 17th century, there also comes decorative painting. In the presbytery, the painting consists of an illusory sky with stars extending to figural and floral compositions of the four Evangelists. In the nave, a painting of St. George

is a component of the triumphal arch. Renaissance ornament is however dominant. Statues almost life size create an integral part of the altar. Figures of angels and saints in its upper superstructure, relating to the coronation of Virgin Mary, have almost faded out. A richly carved, ornamented and gilded pulpit with statues of the four Evangelists (only three of them remain) was made by an unknown author in 1654. The church interior decoration includes the tombstone of the Protestant priest Gaspar Koda (1555). The buffer zone includes the entire plot where the church is located and adjacent plots, with a surface area of 1.7091ha.

b) Protestant churches of the Augsburg's confession (Articled Churches)

- Kezmarok

The nominated property consists of the church building and its churchyard, with a surface of 0.5267 ha. The town is located in the northeast region of the Poprad basin with picturesque views of the eastern region of the High Tatras. The location is close to the northern border of Hungary, on the important commercial route from the Balkans to the Baltic, which determined its prominent position in the middle ages. The wooden Articled church in Kezmarok was built outside its historic centre, behind the city walls, as it was ordered by decision of an assembly held in Sopron. Master carpenters used the wide-spread rustic construction, as well as many forms and details used for generations in traditional construction: saddle roof, slab gables ending in a semicircle and plug, sub-gable and shingle roof covering. The rustic building, almost a regular cross in plan, was coated outside with calcareous clay plaster to evoke stone architecture. Later, such plastered façades were partly decorated.

The interior space is cribbed and the ceiling is formed of a slab annular vault. Its stability at the point of the crossing is maintained by four thin wooden twisted columns with acanthus capping. There is seating space for more than 1500 churchgoers on the ground floor and in the galleries, the western one of which is two storied. Original earth and slab floor was replaced by stone. From a visual art point of view, attention is drawn to the unusual slab vault with its illusory painting of the sky, with figures of the twelve Apostles, four Evangelists, and in another part, The Holy Trinity. The richly ornamented pulpit includes sculptures of Christ, the Evangelists and the prophets from The Old Testament. The richness and location of the pulpit demonstrates the importance attributed to the spoken word and sermons in Protestant churches. The proposed buffer zone includes the urban block where the church is located and some neighbouring urban blocks, including a part of the town's historic centre, and encompasses a surface area of 74.1719ha.

- Lestiny

The nominated property is the church and its churchyard, with an area of 0.3152 ha. The small village of Lestiny, with a population of approximately 250 people, is located in northern Slovakia between Choc's mountains and the Orava highlands, in the lower part of the historical region of Orava, about 7 km from the city of Dolný Kubín. From an architectural and structural point of view, the church in

Lestiny best complies with the original models of the Articled churches from the end of 17th century. Unknown master carpenters built the church on a steep slope above the road which runs along the entire village. Master builders used the larch trees existing all around; the heavy gradient of the terrain was altered by means of a high stone base wall, where burial crypts were located. The building has a characteristic longitudinal orientation, facing east-west, and its plan is in the form of an equal-armed cross. A large, dominant hipped roof with shingles characterises the building, which, in form, is closer to secular rather than typically sacral architecture. This impression is strengthened by even the typical wooden entrance portal with vaulted arch. An integral part of the church is a small log annexed charnel house behind the altar area.

The interior is richly decorated. The early nave mural painting from the 17th century depicts a floral ornament of acanthus with a stripe. In the altar area, illusory columns with column foot and capping dominate, with prevailing white and greyish blue colours. Originally, the church had neither the tower nor the bell-house. In 1777, about 100 years after first construction, churchgoers built the tower in close vicinity and the tower was later connected to the church via an open-roofed staircase. Its partly walled and partly log construction shelters two bells. The proposed buffer zone encompasses the plot containing the church and adjacent plots, with a surface area of 1.7757 ha.

- Hronsek

The nominated property consists of the church and its churchyard (0.1883 ha) and the belfry with its immediate surrounding open space (0.0114 ha) that stands apart from the main building. The small village of Hronsek is situated in Middle Slovakia, on the left bank of the Hron River in the Zvolen basin, approximately halfway between Banská Bystrica and Zvolen. However, to carry out this construction, the unknown master carpenters did not use logs but rather portico-framed (so called framed) construction, scarcely used in this territory. Structural elements (columns, struts, collar-beams, horizontal and diagonal beams and door-frame sills) were made of oak hardwood and soft whitewood.

The pitched roof traverses the church at several levels. The building's central plan is in the form of an elongated equal-armed cross. Vaults and galleries are supported by a system of wooden columns, which emphasize the central character of the entire internal space, typical of Protestant churches. In order to facilitate churchgoers in watching and hearing the sermon undisturbed, all pews in the galleries were stepped. Thus, the church had the capacity to seat as many as 1100.

Decoration is focused on small details and, in the spirit of Protestantism, conforms fully to structural functional needs. On the columns of the single galleries, signs of carved caps in imitation of the ionic motif can be found, and the base of the parapet is decorated with knurled cutting in the form of linden-tree leaves. Otherwise, the whole surface of the slab walls, of the flat ceiling and of the annular vaults remain blank, in the natural colour of the wood. The proposed buffer zone includes the plots where church and belfry are located, a portion of the

streets separating the two structures and some adjacent plots, and encompasses a surface area of 1.8224 ha.

c) Greek Orthodox churches, the churches of the Eastern Rite ("Tserkwi")

- Bodruzal, St. Nicholas Church

The nominated property is the church building, the churchyard and adjacent free plots, with an area of 0.3513 ha. The small village of Bodruzal is situated in the northern part of Low Beskydy, in the lateral floodplain of the Ondava river, not far from the Polish border. The log construction was primarily of fir wood; it stands on a small stone base wall and is protected by a vertical slab shielding with moulded overlaid joints. Its plan consists of an orthogonal presbytery close to the east, an almost square nave in the middle and a rectangular "under the tower space" called "*babinec*" ("beldams" standing) to the west. The nave and the "under the tower" make up one timbered building of regular width, although these spaces are clearly distinguished by different ceilings.

Two cross beams in the nave reinforce the entire log construction of the property. The interior is illuminated by twin double windows situated in the south wall of the nave and two smaller simple windows in the south and east walls of the presbytery. When the additional smaller vestibule was built, the former entrance was moved inside the building and its rectangular portal bears an engraved dating, together with a simple plastic decor. The tower on the western side adopted an individual portico-framed construction, partially embedded in the timbered building of the "under the tower" space. Here, the lower part of an external face is decorated in a form of so-called tooth ornament, with a curled carved frieze. The shingle roof ends in typical turrets in the form of a bulb with tapered caret and rich, decoratively shaped forged crosses.

The internal surface of the northern wall in the nave (without window opening) is decorated with a Baroque wall painting with scenes of the Final Judgment and Calvary. The Liturgical equipment of the church is late Baroque, with polychrome on the wood and rich gold plating and silvering in the architectural articulation. The proposed buffer zone includes the plot where the church is located and some adjacent plots and encompasses an area of 2.2720ha.

- Ladomirova, St. Michael Archangel Church

The nominated property is the church building and its churchyard, with an area of 0.0628ha. The village of Ladomirova is situated in the northern area of Low Beskydy Mountain, 4 km northeast from Svidník in the valley of a tributary to the Ondava river, at about 265 m above sea level. With its architecture and internal furnishings, St. Michael Archangel's church in Ladomirova has been one of the most representative wooden sacral places of the Eastern Christian rite in Slovakia. The log building is situated on the eastern periphery of the village, close to the Ladomirka river bank, on relatively flat terrain and stands on a low base wall. The three-part layout of the rooms in the East-West axis line consists of a square nave, an almost square presbytery and an entrance surrounded by the vestibule

on three sides.

The three-spaced form of the church is emphasized by its graded pavilion roofs covered with wooden shingles. All three have typical small Baroque towers with bulbs, tambour and forged decorative crosses in the top. The dynamics of their shape gradually rises from east to west and is definitely dominant at the tower.

The internal fittings are prevailingly Baroque of the mid 18th century. Some icons hang inside the nave of the presbytery. An artistic asset is also the polychrome, gold plated and richly engraved architecture of the iconostasis, altar and "*zsertwenik*" (small side altar). The proposed buffer zone includes the church's plot and some adjacent plots, with a surface area of 1.5873ha.

- Ruska Bystra, St. Nicholas Church

The nominated property is the church building and its churchyard, with an area of 0.2785 ha. Ruska Bystra is situated beside a narrow stream valley in Eastern Slovakia, on the south-eastern side of the Vihorlat Mountains, in the middle of broad-leaved forests. Typologically, the church can be categorized in the group of the so-called Lemkov's type with marked regional alternation, particularly in building material as well as in its roofing. It has a typical tripartite layout with the entrance hall, traditionally reserved for women, the nave and the presbytery. The external form gradually rises from the small gable tower above the presbytery ("*zsanktusnick*") through to the dominant tower above the entrance hall. This typical layout had local modifications and only this church in Ruska Bystra is a precise example. St. Michael's Church was built on a low stone supporting base wall on a slight slope. At first sight, the three-part log construction fades under the consolidated massive hipped roof with shingle covering. On the west side, stands the prismatic tower with bulbous top.

Wooden posts support the roof structure. The interior is dimly illuminated through small square windows with simple trellis in the southern wall of the nave and on three sides of the presbytery. Internal decoration includes a Baroque iconostasis made by an unknown artist. The wooden carving of the iconostasis is polychrome, and has been decorated with posts with plastic motives of the abundant vine. In the middle of the presbytery stands a richly carved polychrome "*prestol*" (altar) with a central motive of the Crucifixion. Apart from this, there is a "*zsertwenik*" (small side altar) with a Pietà icon. The proposed buffer zone encompasses the plot where the church is located and some adjacent and nearby plots, with a surface area of 1.7170 ha.

On request of ICOMOS, the State Party supplied on 27 February 2008 further information on construction techniques, including a detailed explanation on materials and techniques as well as an interesting analysis on typologies and spatial arrangements according to the diverse religious faiths. In brief, depending on the region in which the building was erected different construction techniques were used. In the mountainous regions of Slovakia (the Northern, Eastern and Central parts of the country), in particular horizontal log construction, encountered throughout the Carpathian Mountain Range, was employed. The log construction creates a frame of

horizontal timbers notched at the corners. Individual logs were placed one above the other to make a massive solid structure. The lowest layer of timber could be made of yew and subsequent layers of timber were usually of fir, spruce or larch. The corner joints were used to secure the stability of the building. ICOMOS thanks the State Party for this additional information which satisfactorily enriches the description of the nominated properties.

History and development

The boundaries of the Eastern and Western Carpathians were in direct contact with two essential European religious and political cultures, Western Roman and Byzantine. The set of nominated properties illustrate the coexistence of different religious faiths within a relatively small territory in the mountainous area of the present Slovak Republic. Christianity was adopted in this area in the early Middle Ages. Once the Protestant Reform started to spread along Europe, complicated military, political and religious situations in the Habsburg's monarchy led the emperor Leopold I, in 1681, to admit some non-Catholic Christian churches into the then Upper Hungary. This permission was regulated by "Articles" (originating the common name of Articled churches) that established some restrictions; among them that there could be only two churches in each administrative unit and one in free royal, mining or border cities. Articled churches always had to be erected outside the city centres.

The Central and Eastern parts of the Carpathians mountains had also been reached by the influence of the Byzantine (and later Russian) Empire, what explains the presence of Greek Orthodox communities, related to specific Slavonic ethnicities. These communities built "tserkwas" or churches according to the Greek Orthodox tradition.

The nomination dossier provides information on the history of each building included in the serial nomination. The following paragraphs summarize the main historical information.

- Hervartov, Saint Francis Church

The earliest historical proof of existence of the Hervartov village is from the year 1340. The exact date when the wooden church was built is not known. According to the saved remains of the original Gothic altar, which was probably in place in the second half of the 15th century - the altars of St. Catherine, Virgin Mary and St. Barbara are from the years 1460-1480. This assumption is supported by the fact that the architecture and overall conception of the interior of Hervartov's wooden church, such as its stencilled geometric painting in the presbytery, may be associated to some extent with several churches on the Polish side of the Carpathian Mountains.

- Trvdosin, All Saints Church

Trvdosin (Twrdossin) already had a church and a rectory in 1395; however, the first written evidence of the existence of the independent rectory is two years later. This, however, does not certify the existence of the contemporary wooden church. The church was probably built as late as the second half of the 15th century, either

by alteration of the older church, or as a new sacred building. From this period, there is a fairly well preserved part of the original Gothic altar, probably made for the new church. In 1559, partial subordination to the nearby manor, Orava Castle, is mentioned, as well as the church building serving rites by priests in both practices. The Reformation met favourable conditions in Tvrdosin, and the wooden church passed for a short time to Protestants.

- Kezmarok, the Articled Church

Kezmarok, as many other towns in the vicinity, became the centre of reformation in Upper Hungary from the first half of the 16th century. The people of the city had a special liking for reformation teachings thanks to numerous German relatives having many contacts in their motherland. It was Emericus Thokoly, native of Kezmarok, who headed the anti-Habsburgs uprising, that hastened the convocation of the Soprony's assembly in 1681 and permitted construction of new houses of God for the Protestant Church of the Augsburg confessions and reformed (so-called *Helvetic*) church. The first Articled Church was perhaps just a small house of worship built by protestant churchgoers from Kezmarok in 1687-88. As its space was insufficient for both German and Slovak communities and was obviously built as a temporary building, delegated burghers travelled to the north of Europe and raised money for its reconstruction. Only after Rakoczy's uprising and a partial easement of the anti-reformation tension in April 1717, the existing building was dismantled and a new, much bigger church was built. Works were the responsibility of master carpenter George Muttermann. Shortly, even in the same year, a new wooden rustic church, using high-quality yew and pinewood, was completed. As one of few buildings, the church was plastered on the exterior. The church was adjacent to an older walled inn that was used to serve as a sacristy.

- Lestiny, the Articled Church

It was the Zmeskals family who encouraged the people of Lestiny village to become sympathisers of the Protestantism. At the time, Thurzos, the aristocratic family, were owners of the Orava castle, and almost all Orava belonged to votaries of reformation. The church was built by local carpenters in the years 1688-89 as a simple wooden rustic structure without tower and bells. The church was reconstructed in the 1770s, when the rustic exterior was covered with slab shuttering. In 1775, the churchgoers changed the damaged slabs of the internal shuttering and an unknown artist added a new decorative motif to an earlier ornamental nave painting of the end of 17th century.

- Hronsek, the Articled Church

Reformation in central Slovakia already had many sympathisers and devotees by the middle of 16th century. In particular, the influence of the neighbouring mining towns and the frequent contacts between German traders and craftsmen and local residents, helped them to disseminate and accept new reformation ideas. That is why it is unsurprising that by that time, Hronsek's aristocracy, and consequently their liege people as well, professed the Protestant's religion. Though the Soprony assembly permitted the construction of the new church in

Hronsek in 1681, churchgoers continued to meet for worship at the Renaissance Rothov's manor house for a long time. The foundation stone for a new church was laid on 23 October 1725, at the time when the number of churchgoers had increased and the ecclesiastical community was better off. Worshippers built this church within a year and a day and already, on 31 October 1726, the church was solemnly consecrated. As a fairly exceptional wood-framed building in Slovakia, it shows evidence of foreign architectural influence. Master builders remained anonymous. Probably they were called to Hronsek by eminent aristocrats from the community. It is possible that they came from Germany where the use of wooden framed construction was wide spread.

- Bodruzal, St. Nicholas Church

The wooden St. Nicholas "*tserkwa*" (church) had already been built by worshippers in 1658 and in spite of the fact that in former times it was repaired on several occasions, it is one of the oldest and best-preserved churches of the Eastern rite in Slovakia.

- Ladomirova, St. Michael Archangel Church

St. Michael tserkwa (church) belongs to the so-called Lemkov's group of the eastern Carpathian wooden churches of the eastern rite (Greek Orthodox Church). The horizontal segmentation of the spacious nave reveals the conjunction of different geometric formations of roof level, a substantial height zoning and a Baroque form of a multi-staged roofing over a single room. This confirms the thesis that Lemkov's group did not create an independent form of east-Carpathian wooden churches, but that it is a particular variant of the Boykowsky's church, with considerable influence from western sacral building. Already in the year 1600, the existence was mentioned of a church and rectory in parish Ladomirova.

- Ruska Bystra, St. Nicholas Church

The wooden church in Ruska Bystra was built by worshippers in the first half of 18th century, in approximately 1720-1730. As it is considered to be the result of folk sacral civil engineering, there is no knowledge of an exact date of its origin or the name of the master builder or the master carpenter. During the canonical visit of Bishop Michael Emanuel Olsavsky from Mukacevo on 25th June 1750, the church was mentioned as "in a good condition".

Values of the Wooden Churches of the Slovak part of Carpathian Mountain Area

The properties illustrate the coexistence of diverse ethnicities and confessions in a quite small territory of the Slovak (former Upper Hungary) Carpathians. The use of local materials and traditional construction techniques is a testimony to the vernacular architecture developed by unknown masters that passed on their knowledge from generation to generation. In the framework of their common features, the properties display specific characteristics related to their diverse confessions. Three different types, expressed in architectural layout and form, are related to specific religious functional requirements.

The fact that all churches are located in small villages that underwent little development over centuries adds an additional value to the role of the properties as landmarks in almost rural settings. Interior decoration and movable works of art reflect changing styles between the 16th and 18th centuries, from late Gothic to Baroque. Sculptures, paintings and furniture are essential components of the properties' values.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and Authenticity

Integrity

The nomination dossier includes a paragraph dedicated to both Integrity and Authenticity. During the 19th and 20th centuries, especially after World War I, many wooden churches in the Carpathian area disappeared. Fire and climate conditions were the main causes of destruction. It is in rather isolated villages in mountain areas, inhabited by poor communities, where a few of them still stand. Presently some 50 churches remain, a small part of a whole that reached its peak of expansion during the 16th and 17th centuries. After World War II, these churches were maintained and properly cared for especially by the communities themselves. Their endeavour was supported by the effort of many operatives from special institutions concerned with the protection of these monuments, with funds providing not only archival documentation of individual objects, but also scientific-methodical assistance for knowledge retrieval and essential restoration. The activities of experts and professionals culminated in 1968, when a set of 27 of the most distinguished and valuable wooden churches found in north-eastern Slovakia were declared National Cultural Monuments. Thus, a legislative framework for enhancing the care and protection of this integral part of the national cultural heritage was created.

After 1989, some wooden religious structures were returned to the possession of the Church and thus again began to serve their primary religious purpose and occasionally other cultural-social purposes (classic music concerts, musical organ recites, exposition sites, etc.). Almost all the nominated wooden churches served their earlier purpose fully. The Roman-Catholic All Saints Church in Tvrdosin only partially and occasionally served other cultural purposes. Its owner (the local authority) presented the church as a significant sacred structure in which, upon worshippers request, some sacred activities (Sacrifice of the Mass, marriages, baptizing and funerals) and City cultural activities (concerts) took place. St. Francis's church in Hervartov, where the new walled church was built, served the worshippers in similar ways. All the other buildings regularly satisfied their primary religious function. Moreover, some of them performed a cultural-social function as well. At Protestant Articled Churches in Kezmarok and Lestiny classic music concerts were regularly held. In addition, all of them became much-sought and attractive places of peace and devotion not only for local churchgoers, but also for many foreign tourists.

ICOMOS considers that the selection of the nominated properties out of some 50 remaining in the country has been based on the strict criteria discussed in the nomination dossier. This has resulted in an appropriate sample of the ensemble of wooden churches that once existed in the region. ICOMOS considers that the nominated properties exhibit the necessary elements to express the integrity of the monuments. In order to ensure a better expression of the relationships between monuments and immediate surroundings, ICOMOS suggested to the State Party in a letter sent in December 2007 that the churchyards be included within the nominated areas. The proposed buffer zones guarantee the proper relationships between the properties and their urban or natural settings.

Authenticity

According to the State Party, the eight churches meet basic criteria for the authenticity of architectural cultural monuments, principally through their structural and architectural design, as well as their decorative approach. Interventions for the renewal and restoration of their valuable artistic-historical elements and details were realized on the basis of an elaborate dossier of preparatory and project documentation. This included special restoration documentation for the contemporary preservation of monuments, particularly related to maintenance for the repair of the damaged roof weatherproofing (wooden shingle) and local adaptation of the slab wall facing the outer walls of the rustic construction (Lestiny, Ruska Bystra, Bodruzal). Greater interventions were carried out only occasionally. Limited replacement of the degraded basic logs of the rustic works being attacked mostly by soil moisture and less by insect attack (Tvrdosin, Kezmarok, Hronsek, and Ladomirova) was carried out. Restoration works were realized with analogical methods and technology commonly used in former times. Where necessary, shaped and mass copies of the most damaged wooden bearing members were used. The interior of the given construction remained authentic. Restoration on works of art was carried out with regard to condition and range for each object, in particular affecting painted decorations of internal wooden wall surfaces (Hervartov, Tvrdosin, Bodruzal) and movables, applied to altars, pulpits and iconostases (Kezmarok, Ladomirova, Ruska Bystra and Bodruzal).

ICOMOS notes that wood as a building material is not as sustainable as stone and brick. In Slovakia, shingle roofs were traditionally untreated; they lasted about 20 years. To ensure the authenticity of wooden buildings it is necessary that the crafts of joinery and carpentry stay alive. Replacement of rotten wood by new sound timber of the original species is part of the natural maintenance of wooden construction. Synthetic treatments have been improved; the wood laboratory at the Technical University in Zvolen is going to make a comparative study on the effects of different wood treatments. In the framework of these specificities about the building material, ICOMOS considers that the restoration and conservation works undertaken on the nominated properties reach adequate standards of conservation doctrine.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Comparative analysis

The State Party provides a comparative analysis of the wooden Churches of the Slovak part of Carpathian Mountain Area with other works of wooden architecture in Europe, some of them inscribed on the World Heritage List. The nomination dossier includes tables that establish similarities and differences between the nominated and other properties.

If compared with Norwegian Stave churches (the church of Urnes was the first wooden church inscribed on the World Heritage List, 1979), there are evident differences in period, constructional design and external form. Stave churches were built in the period 1050 – 1350. The construction system is based on a set of timber columns (sometimes more than 12) that determined the central area of the nave. A typical feature of Stave churches is the gabled roof ending with the pagan symbol of dragon head, covered with shingles resembling fish-scales or dragon fur.

Nominated Roman-Catholic churches in Hervartov and Tvrdosin are comparable with the Wooden Churches of Southern Little Poland, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2003. In the western part of the Carpathian Mountains, where distances are relatively small, wooden churches belonging to the so-called Gothic trend are typical. The churches were built between the 14th and 16th centuries, when Christianity was adopted throughout the territory of the Carpathians. These buildings were not randomly built here. Such churches were built in an environment with permanent sufficiency of coniferous trees and/or hardwood species, and wood is the basic building material, in particular in poorer regions that lack suitable stone for building. In the western Carpathian territory, in eastern Slovakia, southern Poland and northern Czech country, wooden churches were built, with similar characteristics of technical solution and artistic concept. The architecture of these churches bears common features with the Gothic structural form, but also many variations in the means of expression of traditional popular building culture, so typical of this region.

The political background to the wooden Protestant churches in the territory of the Habsburg's Monarchy, during 17th century, links with the nominated Articled Churches in Kezmarok, Lestiny and Hronsek and Polish Protestant, known as Churches of Peace in Jawor and Swidnica, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001. However, their architectural and structural designs arise from totally different conditions and developing patterns. Half-timbered (portico-framed) construction used in Polish churches in the town of Jawor and Swidnica were almost unknown in the territory of the Upper Hungary (today's Slovakia) and were only rarely used. Here, log construction was dominant. Their plan layouts also show differences. Besides internal decoration, furniture and works of art in the nominated Slovak Protestant churches there are further creative contexts, which later, but constantly, were influenced by late Renaissance and early Christian artistic expression.

The Greek Orthodox churches in Bodruzal, Ladomirova and Ruska Bystra can be compared, from the architectural point of view, with Boykowsky's wooden sacral buildings of the so-called Lemkov's type. They are

found in a relatively small territory covering the division between the western and central Carpathians, where life itself was impacted by Lemkov's ethnic group. These cult constructions reflect not only sacred, cultural ideas in the traditions of the Eastern European Christianity, but also, in part, the architecture of Western-Latin provenance. They offer unique examples of the influence that left western building culture with strong Baroque features on wooden architecture of the east. This has been most marked in the volumetric form, where the original central and symmetric model of Byzantine churches has partially moved towards the longitudinal layout of Latin churches, with the dominant tower situated over the entrance, oriented to the west.

The comparative analysis concludes by emphasising that the heterogeneity that local residents accepted from Christianity and their hitherto heathen concept of the world affected deeply the forms of their religious architecture. Citizens over a wide geographical region, in particular in inaccessible forested mountainous areas, created specific conditions for their wood processing, using specific building construction and structural methods. At the same time, they adopted specific creative and artistic approaches. As a result, every Carpathian religious building reflects a specific historical period and individual quality of human wisdom, skills, traditions and aesthetic feeling. This occurrence of several values, however, on a common base of Christian faith construction (wood as the basic building material and means of expression, as well as human spiritual culture), defines both the variety and fragility of the rare phenomena over the entire territory of Central Europe, particularly, the wide Carpathian region.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis demonstrates that the nominated properties constitute a valuable addition to the category of wooden churches already inscribed on the World Heritage List. In the framework of wooden architecture developed in Central and Northern Europe, the properties exhibit specific features that complement and contribute to a better understanding of the social and cultural processes developed in the region and of architectural and technical traditions. The properties also illustrate ethnic, religious and cultural coexistence in a rather small region of the Carpathians. ICOMOS considers that the selection of the height churches in the context of the some 50 remaining wooden churches in Slovakia is appropriate for the illustration of this specific type of religious architecture.

The additional information on construction techniques supplied by the State Party on 27 February 2008 at the request of ICOMOS enhances the description of the particular features of the nominated properties.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the inscription on the World Heritage List.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value for the following reasons:

- Wood was in Slovakia (former Upland Hungary) a common building material since the country is covered with deep forests. In these particular wooden churches, inhabitants of the Carpathian area transformed the tree's rigidity into living and spiritual space, where, for centuries, men sought and found peace, quietude, faith and hope.
- In a quite small area, different ethnic groups settled and mixed, mutually influencing each other. The process of evangelism and the adoption of Christianity in Hungary was not easy and did not come from one side. It was determined by contest for power and political struggle as well as rivalry between Western (Roman) and Eastern (Byzantine) spiritual ideologies. The churches of the Carpathian foothill and mountainous areas testify to those encounters and their own long-term and particular existence.
- Architectural and structural solutions, together with decorative concepts, relate to old local traditions. The craftsmanship, skills and wisdom of builders developed gradually through the transmission of experience from generation to generation. In many cases unschooled rustic handwriting and empirical knowledge of the master builders impacted on the "big" period-styles of architecture.
- The ensemble of wooden churches illustrates the contemporary perception of religious life and practice by ordinary people over an extended historical period. Architectural and creative expression are dominated by objective function, simplicity and veracity. These structures represent the intangible spiritual culture of the folk builder, utilizing his natural feeling for his materials and long-term attainments, experience and skills.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated properties constitute an outstanding testimony to the traditional religious architecture of the north-western Carpathians region. These apparently humble structures are full of spiritual and artistic richness and bear witness to the inter-ethnic and inter-cultural character of this relatively small territory where Latin and Byzantine cultures have met and overlapped. The Lutheran churches serve as an exceptional example of religious tolerance in Upper Hungary during the period of bloody anti-Habsburg rebellions and uprising of the 17th century.

ICOMOS considers that the set of nominated properties constitutes an outstanding testimony to a specific cultural tradition and a society characterised by the peaceful

coexistence of different religious faiths in a small Central European territory.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated properties are exceptionally well-preserved and represent one of the best examples of European wooden religious architecture from late Middle Ages to the end of the 18th century. Their characteristic appearance, construction and naïve decoration stem from older local traditions influenced by the professional architectural concept of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles. The western (Latin) and eastern (Orthodox) building concepts are reflected in these wooden structures, creating a specific ecclesiastical architecture of diversified design, technical solution and unique decorative expression.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated properties constitute exceptional examples of small religious buildings constructed with local materials and traditional techniques and incorporating decoration that illustrate the development and local interpretation of major artistic trends from Gothic to Baroque.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv) and that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

Most of the nominated properties are located in back country and barely accessible mountain and foothill regions. The locations are not affected by development pressures or significant change.

Visitors / tourism pressures

The properties do not receive many visitors, thus tourism is not considered a risk factor so far. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the potential increase of visitors could be a threat to the buildings' integrity because of their small dimensions and the characteristics of the wooden construction. Controls on the increase of visitors should be considered in the management plan.

Environmental pressures

At the moment, there are no known environmental pressures that could threaten the nominated properties.

Natural disasters

On account of the prevailing construction material, fire could be a risk for the nominated properties. According to the State Party, every building has a fire safety and

evacuation system. The State Party reports that the buildings are not threatened by floods because they are all located in high places in relation to nearby water courses.

As trees surround the nominated properties, branches could fall onto the roofs. The State Party reports that lightning rods have been mounted on the roofs and that branches are regularly pruned.

Impact of climate change

Although the nomination dossier does not refer to climate change, increased temperatures could cause forest fires. As most of the properties are located close to forests, the control of fire constitutes a primary concern. The location of the properties is not affected by strong storms or floods.

Risk preparedness

The main risk factors are fire and the possibility of branches falling onto roofs. Measures have been taken, including fire security systems and the provision of lightning rods. The State Party has not reported on other risk preparedness measures.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are fire and the possibility of increasing visitor numbers. These issues should be considered in the management plan to be implemented.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The dossier defines boundaries for each nominated property and its buffer zone. Generally, the nominated areas correspond to the surfaces of the buildings themselves; buffer zones include both urban and rural surroundings, according to the specific characteristic of every village.

ICOMOS invited the State Party to consider the inclusion of the churchyards in the nominated areas. In reaction to this request, the boundaries of the nominated areas were revised and the churchyards included. ICOMOS considers that the revised proposal of nominated areas adequately expresses the outstanding universal value of the properties.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zones guarantee the proper protection of the buildings and their settings, in accordance with their respective situations. Some specific considerations on actions carried out in some buffer zones are presented in the section "Conservation".

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated areas and buffer zones are adequate to express the outstanding universal value of the properties and to ensure their proper protection.

Ownership

Most buildings are owned by their respective churches: Roman-Catholic Church (Hervartov); the Lutheran Church (Kezmarok, Lestiny and Hronsek) and the Greek Catholic Church (Bodružal, Ladomirova and Ruska Bystra). The church of Tvrdosin has been owned by the City since 1993.

Protection

Legal Protection

The eight properties enjoy national protection; they have all been registered as National Cultural Monuments on the Central Register of Monuments Fund of the Slovak Republic. Some of the movable goods contained in the buildings are recorded on the National Cultural Monuments Register. Proposed buffer zones enjoy legal protection, at national or local level according to the specific case.

The nominated properties are protected by Law 49/2002 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic for the Protection of Monuments and Historic Sites. Apart from this Law, the protection of monuments and surroundings is assured by urban planning tools for the long-term development of the communities and territories. These tools determine the obligatory *modus operandi* of the territory in question. In the case of national cultural monuments, Act 237/2000, by which Act 50/1976 on Urban Planning and Building Order has been changed and amended, fully respects the need to protect them. This Act is administered directly by the Building Authorities in the individual cities and towns.

As to the appearance of trees or greenery on the premises of the churches, on protected parts of the countryside or territory, the legal instrument is Act 543/2002 on Conservation of Nature and Landscape and the competent body is the Landscape Protected Area Administration.

Traditional Protection

Since most properties are located in small villages where traditional communities have lived for generations in relative isolation, traditional protection is ensured by the attitude of the communities themselves.

Effectiveness of protection measures

The protection measures have proved to be effective since all buildings and their surroundings present an acceptable to good state of conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

Since the properties are registered as national historic monuments, inventories and records have been

undertaken and files kept with the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and Regional Monuments Boards.

Present state of conservation

The present building-technical condition of all nominated churches ranges from very good to good. A very good building-technical condition has been assigned to the All Saints Church in Tvrdosin and to the Articled Churches in Kezmarok and Hronsek. Building-technical conditions of the Church in Hervartov, Articled Church in Lestiny and Churches in Bodružal, Ladomirova and Ruska Bystra have been evaluated as good.

From the building-technical point of view, the most sensitive parts of wooden religious construction are the shingle roof covering, the base of the rustic wall slabs facing, and the lower, or base, beams of the log (load-bearing) structure. Adverse effects of water and dampness may appear as well as complex effects from the climatic condition in the mountains and foothills regions where these buildings prevail. In the nominated wooden churches, the shingle roof cladding is regularly checked and, when needed, continuously locally replaced. The condition of the wood, in particular the threat of wet rot and wood-borer is constantly monitored and repair or replacement of the damaged parts are carried out in well-founded cases.

ICOMOS considers that the properties have been skilfully restored and interior paintings and work of art carefully preserved. Nevertheless, some developments in the vicinity of three churches, inside the proposed buffer zones, constitute inappropriate actions with regard to the proper conservation of the properties' surroundings. These are:

In Hervartov, a new visitors' centre has been constructed opposite the church. Although it fits in with the scale of the village, it has been painted in bright yellow and disturbs the harmonious village scenery. It is recommended that it be repainted using lime or cement and natural earth pigments.

In Tvrdosin some wooden sculptures located in the churchyard disturb the main views. It is recommended that they be relocated to some discreet corner.

In Hronsek the area of the church, including the vicarage and large linden trees is divided by a broad way leading to the vicarage. It is recommended that the connection between church and bell tower be improved.

Active Conservation measures

Taking into account the construction system and materials of the nominated properties, conservation works are constantly being carried out. Main interventions consist of maintenance and eventual replacement of construction components; this is acceptable for wooden construction. One of the most frequent works is replacement of roof shingles. These interventions are always based on traditional techniques and use the same type of wood. Only occasionally modern protection materials have been applied. Since the usual technique is to leave the shingles in their natural appearance, these tasks must be undertaken periodically. Traditional skills and craftsmen are available in the region, allowing for proper maintenance and repairs.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated properties exhibit an acceptable state of conservation. Proper maintenance and repairs are undertaken by using traditional materials and techniques, available in the region thanks to the survival of traditional skills over generations.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The main governmental bodies related to management of the nominated properties are the Ministry of Culture, the Monuments Inspection, the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and Regional Monuments Boards in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica, Košice, Nitra, Prešov, Trenčín, Trnava and Zilina. The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic is the central body of state administration in the field of monuments preservation. The Ministry elaborates the basic philosophy on protection and determines the principal direction and strategies. The government of the Slovak Republic submits proposals and recommendations on issues of protection, restoration, utilization and presentation of monuments fund. The Ministry directs activities of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and manages and inspects performance of the state administration in the entire sector of preservation of the monuments fund. Furthermore, it is the central state surveillance body in the field of monuments protection and considers resolutions issued by the Monuments Board in the course of the administrative procedure. The Ministry of Culture also cooperates with the Ministry of Finance (financing activities), the Ministry of Economy (tourism), the Ministry of Environment (urban planning and construction regulations), the Ministry of Building and Regional Development and the Ministry of Education.

The Monuments Inspection of the Ministry of Culture performs surveillance activities, monitors how owners of the cultural monuments observe laws and how they perform duties, performs supervision of national cultural monuments as well as observance of conditions for their protection and verifies whether imposed measures have been accomplished. It cooperates with the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic, the Regional Monuments Board, municipalities and other inspection bodies. Authorities and legal entities are obliged to provide Monument Inspection with required information and necessary collaboration.

The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic is a budgetary state organisation with its finances linked to the budget of the Ministry of Culture. The Board manages and inspects performance of the state administration in the field of preservation of monuments carried out through Regional Monuments Boards, coordinates special and research projects and elaborates theory and methodology of monuments preservation, assesses the state of monuments and condition of their preservation, ensures development of theory and methodology of restoration, builds places of work for study, development and technological analysis and laboratories, provides for research and restoration works as state assistance for endangered cultural monuments, executes and coordinates documentary, training,

educational, editorial and promotional activity, provides Regional Monuments Boards with professional and technical assistance, cooperates with civil associations and foundations established to preserve the use and presentation of the monuments fund, shares international projects on preservation and restoration of cultural monuments and monument territories and cooperates with international organisations and partner institutions abroad.

Regional Monuments Boards exercise state administration in their territorial district and constitute the first-stage body in the field of preservation of the monuments fund. The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and Regional Monuments Boards exercise state supervision of observance of the provisions of the Monuments Act and binding legal regulations issued to enforce its provisions, carry out surveillance of adherence to lawful decisions and, to the extent of their competence, make decisions to relieve shortages. Regional Monuments Boards are the bodies in charge of monitoring the condition and use of monuments and supervising in the field of protection, elaborating background papers associated with preparation of land use, planning documentation for appropriate state administrative authorities, cooperating with them in the preparation of projects and restoration documentation, directing the activities of legal entities and private persons in the course of preservation, restoration and utilization of the monuments, providing experts and technical assistance, providing municipalities with professional assistance during registration of local monuments, and monitoring monuments law-abidance.

On 11 December 2007 ICOMOS invited the State Party to consider establishing an agreement between the competent authorities and the churches to improve the management structure in place. On 19 February 2008 an agreement was signed between the national, regional and local authorities, representatives of the churches, individual parishes and administrators of the nominated properties. A Management Group was created, headed by the Director General of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic. ICOMOS considers that the agreed management system is satisfactory to ensure the appropriate participation of all concerned stakeholders.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

National plans related to the management of the nominated properties are:

- Urban Development Policy of the Slovak Republic (December 2001); it identifies all national cultural monuments.
- Operational plan for the permanently sustainable development of the Slovak Republic 2005-2010 (16th March 2005); it includes issues related to the revitalization of monuments with emphasis on the processes of preservation, restoration and progressive utilization of properties in underdeveloped regions and settlements.

- National strategy of permanently sustainable development of the Slovak Republic (10th October 2001); it identifies national cultural monuments as one of the irreplaceable components of the living environment to be protected.
- Strategy for the development of tourism in the Slovak Republic to 2013; national cultural monuments are considered significant potential components for the development of tourism in the country.

From these common documents there are related regional schemes and strategies that fully respect preservation by means of Act protected monument territories and national cultural monuments within their immediate vicinity.

Municipal regulations are also in place. Generally, every local government implements territorial plans and, in some cases, town planning schemes (Tvrdosin, Kezmarok, Lestiny and Hronzek).

With regards to a Management Plan, the State Party reports that currently the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and the Regional Monuments Board are carrying out a complete revision of the Central Register of monuments that includes the verification of their building technical conditions and threats to them. Where adverse impacts are found, steps to remedy them will be considered. The Regional Board calls owners and, if appropriate, provides expert assistance. A special team (Control Group) will be established, if the nomination to the World Heritage List is accepted. The nomination dossier includes information on plans for each property. Those plans relate to maintenance and repairs. The State Party reports that the nominated properties have priority over other national monuments.

The buildings are opened occasionally for visitors. Available facilities relate to the respective villages or towns; except for the churches of Kezmarok and Tvrdosin, the monuments are located in isolated villages with very limited visitor services. On-line information is available on several websites. Since 1989, thematic sightseeing bus trips have been organised.

ICOMOS considers that, although the properties are adequately protected and conserved, a specific management plan is needed. This plan should include risk preparedness and predictions on the potential increase of visitors.

Involvement of local communities

Since most properties are located in small villages, local communities are highly involved in their proper maintenance and conservation. Fundamental maintenance and small repairs are usually provided by self-support through administrators of the individual parishes and individuals from particular Christian Communities.

Resources, including staff levels, expertise and training

Projects for interventions in the nominated properties must be drawn up by a specialist (architect or civil engineer) authorised for architectural and design

activities in accordance with a special regulation. Similarly, restoration may be carried out only by a specialist with professional qualification as regulated.

The Schools of Civil Engineering and Architecture of the Slovak Technical University (Bratislava) and Technical University (Zvolen) provide specialised research and suggest the most effective technical and architectural solutions. The Department of Technology of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and the Technical University in Zvolen realize special expertise. In co-operation with colleagues from the Czech Republic, the dendrochronology method has begun to be used and special comparative curves are created, mainly for the spruce-tree of the Slovakia region. Restoration analyses and research are performed by the Studios of Restoration of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic in Bratislava and Levoca and the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava - Department of Restoration, particularly the Studios for Restoration of Wooden Sculpture and for Restoration of Paintings and Panel Painting.

Qualifications for employees of the Regional Monuments Boards and the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic are standard. Further training is ensured within the framework of training for civil servants. Individual places of work are secured by specialized architects, civil engineers, art-historians and archaeologists, who provide, as needed, assistance to custodians of national cultural monuments.

Financing is ensured in the State budget of the Ministry of Culture through four programmes: restoration works for cultural monuments, restoration works for properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, special programme for research and documentation and programme for local monuments.

ICOMOS considers that the management system is adequate. The creation of the Management Group in February 2008 ensures the active participation of all stakeholders concerned. In order to ensure the optimisation of the current management system and the common management of the properties, ICOMOS also considers that the Management Group should define a common management plan that includes risk preparedness measures and provisions with regards to a possible increase in visitor numbers.

6. MONITORING

The nomination dossier includes a plan for a future monitoring system. According to the State Party, monitoring will be a tool of assessment for preserving the values of the properties. Periodical assessment and comparison of changes will prevent degradation and threats and define corrective measures and priorities.

Monitoring will be carried out on individual buildings and their respective buffer zones. Responsibilities for first level monitoring will be entrusted to experts from the Regional Monuments Board in close cooperation with proprietors; a second level evaluation will be carried out by the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic. The evaluation dossier proposes passport cards where information will be registered. Cards will include

information on identification data, present state of conservation, restoration, evaluation, material conditions, use, financial and human resources, promotion and presentation and visitors. The key indicators proposed by the State Party are related to factors of risk. Cards for buffer zones include indicators related to links between buildings and buffer zones, approach roads, greenery, water courses, use of the buffer zone and technical infrastructure. Cards will be accompanied by maps, digital and graphic documentation. The State Party intends to process the information yearly.

Cards will be stored in the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic and their copies in the Regional Monuments Boards and will be an integral part of the Geographical Information System (GIS) of the Monuments Fund of the Slovak Republic. Cards will be accessible on the Internet.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring plan included in the nomination dossier could be adequate to measure and record the state of conservation of properties and buffer zones and to prevent deterioration and risks. The plan should be approved and implemented as soon as possible in order to complete the management system of the nominated properties.

ICOMOS notes that no monitoring system has been implemented so far. The State Party should proceed to implement the proposed monitoring system.

7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS considers that the ensemble of nominated properties constitutes an exceptional testimony to traditional architecture, to the application of vernacular construction techniques and to the coexistence of diverse religious faiths in a relatively small and isolated mountainous region in Central Europe. In this sense, this nomination significantly complements similar properties already inscribed in neighbouring countries. The nominated properties also illustrate the evolution of major architectural trends between the 16th and 18th centuries and their interpretation and adaptation to a specific social and cultural context. In the framework of their specific construction materials and techniques, the nominated properties meet the required conditions of integrity and authenticity, they are adequately protected and, although with the possibility of improvement, the management structures adequately guarantee the preservation of their outstanding universal value.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Wooden Churches of the Slovak part of Carpathian Mountain Area, Slovakia, be **inscribed** on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (iv)**.

Recommended statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The wooden churches of the Slovak part of Carpathian Mountain Area, Slovakia, illustrate the coexistence of different religious faiths within a small territory of central Europe. The series of 8 properties includes Roman

Catholic, Protestant and Greek Orthodox churches that were built between the 16th and 18th centuries, most of them in quite isolated villages, using wood as the main material and traditional construction techniques. Within the framework of their common features, the churches exhibit some typological variations, in accordance with the correspondent faith, expressed in their plans, interior spaces and external appearance. The churches also bear testimony to the development of major architectural and artistic trends during the period of construction and its interpretation and adaptation to a specific geographical and cultural context. Interiors are decorated with wall and ceiling paintings and works of art that enrich the cultural significance of the properties.

Criterion (iii): The wooden churches offer an outstanding testimony to the traditional religious architecture of the north-western Carpathians region and to the inter-ethnic and inter-cultural character of a relatively small territory where Latin and Byzantine cultures have met and overlapped. The Lutheran churches serve as an exceptional example of religious tolerance in Upper Hungary during the period of bloody anti-Habsburgs rebellions and uprising over the 17th century.

Criterion (iv): The wooden churches represent one of the best examples of European wooden religious architecture from the late Middle Ages to the end of 18th century. Their characteristic appearance, construction and at times rather naïve decoration derive from earlier local traditions, partially influenced by professional architectural concepts of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles. Western (Latin) and eastern (Orthodox) building concepts are reflected in these wooden structures, creating specific religious architecture with diversified design, technical solutions and unique decorative expressions.

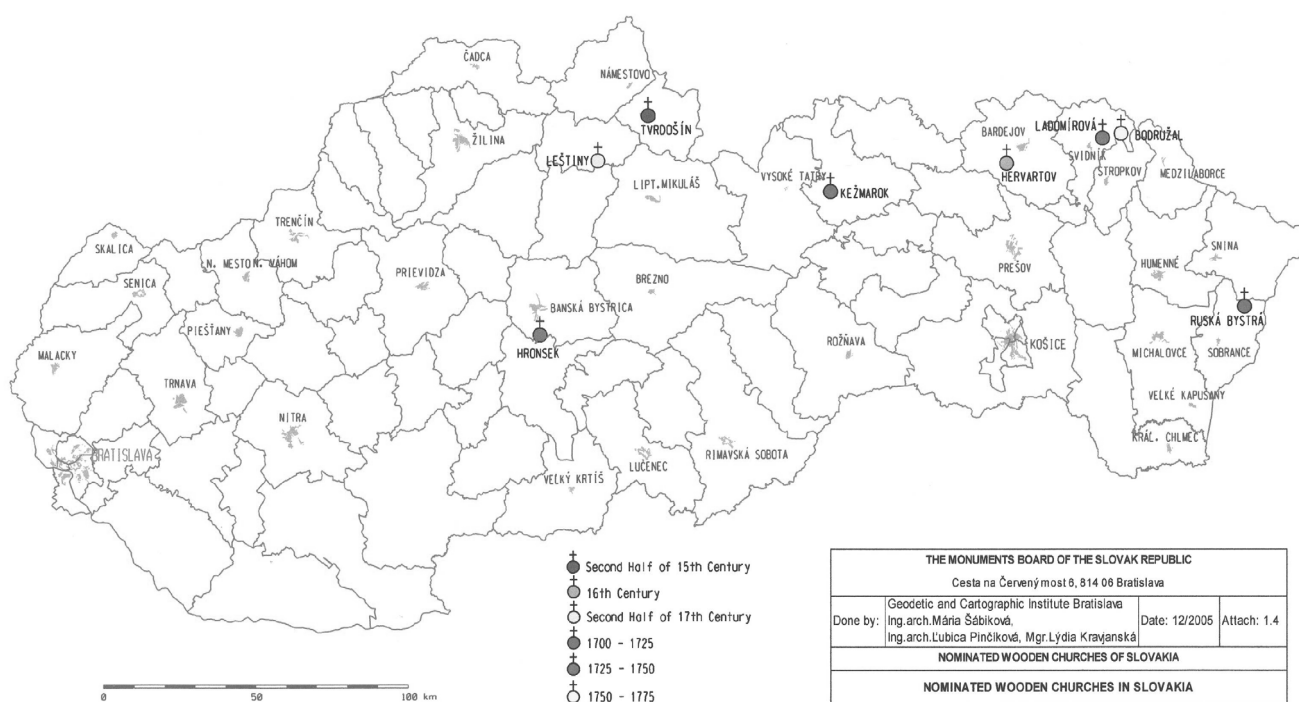
The buildings themselves, in their current settings, present a state of completeness that ensures the condition of integrity. In the framework of the particular characteristics of their construction materials and techniques, the buildings are well preserved and the authenticity of design and form, materials and techniques, uses and functions is ensured.

Legal protection is satisfactory since the properties enjoy maximum national and local levels of protection. The management structure and instruments are adequate, and the creation of a Management Group ensures the participation of all stakeholders.

Furthermore, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- In order to ensure the optimisation of the current management system and the common management of the properties, the Management Group should define and implement a common integrated management plan that includes risk preparedness measures and provisions regarding a potential increase of tourism. The Plan should in particular consider risk preparedness measures against fire, taking into account the increased risk of forest fires due to global climate change.

- Approve and implement the proposed monitoring system.
- Repaint the visitors' centre in Hervartov using lime or cement paint and natural earth pigments.
- Remove or relocate the wooden sculptures located in front of the churchyard in Trvdosin to a discreet corner away from the main view.
- Improve the connection between the church and the bell tower in Hronsek.



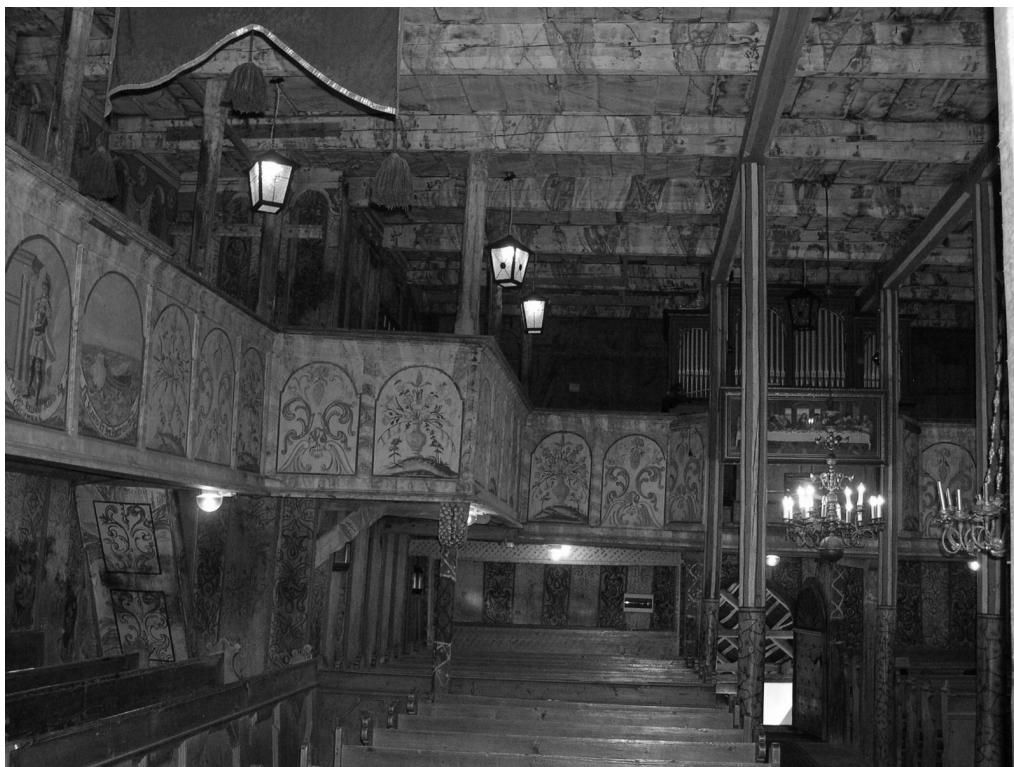
Map showing the location of the nominated Wooden Churches



South east view of St Francis Church in Hervartov



Interior of the wooden Articled Church in Kezmarok



Interior of the church in Lestiny



Interior of the wooden Articled Church in Hronsek



South-east view of St Nicholas Church in Bodruzal



South-West view of St Nicholas Church in Ruska Bystra