
Historic Centre of Warsaw (Poland) No 30 Bis

1 Basic data

State Party

Poland

Name of property

Historic Centre of Warsaw

Location

City and County of Warsaw, Masovian Voivodship

Inscription

1980

Brief description

During the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, more than 85% of Warsaw's historic centre was destroyed by Nazi troops. After the war, a five-year reconstruction campaign by its citizens resulted in today's meticulous restoration of the Old Town, with its churches, palaces and market-place. It is an outstanding example of a near-total reconstruction of a span of history covering the 13th to the 20th century.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

6 March 2014

2 Issues raised

Background

The property area of the Historic Centre of Warsaw is 26ha, representing the medieval Old Town enclosed within its fortification wall. The surrounding city is subject to development pressure including high rise investments that are increasingly shaping the urban panorama. A proposal for a buffer zone of 667ha surrounding the property was submitted to the World Heritage Committee as a minor boundary modification in February 2013. This was referred back to the State Party because the proposed buffer zone was not protected or regulated as a whole in accordance with paragraph 104 of the *Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and was considered inadequate in this respect.

The World Heritage Committee adopted the following decision (37 COM, Phnom Penh, 2013):

Decision: 37 COM 8B.52

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-13/37.COM/8B.Add and WHC-13/37.COM/INF.8B1.Add,

2. Refers the examination of the proposed buffer zone for the Historic Centre of Warsaw, Poland, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

a) Provide detailed information regarding the protection afforded by the buffer zone as a Monument of History and under the Act on the Protection of Monuments and the Guardianship of Monuments;

b) Consider legal protection and regulation of the buffer zone as a whole by inclusion in the National Heritage Register.

In October 2013, the approval of construction of a development abutting the boundary of the World Heritage property within the proposed buffer zone without reference to the World Heritage Centre was the subject of concern in relation to its impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

Further information on the protection of the buffer zone has now been provided by the State Party. This states that the most appropriate and effective form of protection of the buffer zone under today's legal conditions is to combine the existing area listings in the Register of monuments with the establishment of protection under local area development plans.

Modification

The proposed buffer zone of 667ha surrounding the property is intended to preserve the spatial relationships between the Historic Centre and later historic complexes, as well as to protect the urban landscape and the panorama of the city in accordance with spatial studies.

The proposed buffer zone is clearly delineated on the map provided by the State Party. It covers the New Town area immediately north of the inscribed property and extends to the 17th and 18th century line of the city's embankments; further extends to take in Saska Park and its western axis; crossing the Vistula River at Gdański Bridge in the north and Świętokrzystki Bridge in the south to also cover the right (east) bank area as far as Jagiellońska Street which forms its eastern boundary. The buffer zone thus encompasses the area of the Residential City of King Sigismund, situated within the 17th century Sigismund Embankments and enlarged to include the residential quarters along the Royal Route on the southern side, the foreground of the Citadel on the northern side, and the area of three private towns on the right bank of the river. Most of the right bank is now a Zoological Garden.

The Monument of History comprising the 'Historic urban complex with the Royal Route and Wilanów' is protected by Presidential Decree as a Monument of History (8 September 1994) and covers about 50% of the buffer zone. Some individual urban layouts, building complexes, structures and archaeological sites are included on the National Heritage Register and protected under the Act on the Protection of Monuments and the Guardianship of Monuments (23 July 2003). Local area development plans in the form of spatial development plans cover other parts

of the buffer zone but about one third of the area remains without this form of protection. The State Party states that in that case, where a building permit is required, it is necessary to also obtain a planning permit, which affords protection at the local level. ICOMOS notes that this form of permission was gained for the development currently of concern.

ICOMOS considers that the whole area of the proposed buffer zone should be covered by spatial development plans aimed at ensuring no adverse impact of new development on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

To this end, ICOMOS considers that the following requirements should be incorporated in all development plans covering the proposed buffer zone:

- i. The height of new buildings (or additional volumes at or on existing buildings) should be limited. Scale, materials, techniques and colours should be defined.
- ii. For existing buildings that are to be renovated, permitted materials, techniques and colours should be defined.
- iii. For existing and new buildings, possible measures for energy-saving and energy-production on the building should be defined, and respectively limited.
- iv. For new and renovated buildings the type of use should be defined.
- v. Views to and from the World Heritage property should be carefully studied and left open.
- vi. The fact that the area of a development plan is part of the buffer zone should be mentioned in the prescriptions of each plan, and its delimitation shown in the plan.
- vii. Within the planning permission decision for building interventions of any type, the influence of the historic preservation officer should be strengthened and be more than just a 'consultation'.
- viii. Already existing development plans should be modified to fulfil the above-mentioned requirements.

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- v. Views to and from the World Heritage property should be carefully studied and left open.
- vi. The fact that the area of a development plan is part of the buffer zone should be mentioned in the prescriptions of each plan, and its delimitation shown in the plan.
- vii. Within the planning permission decision for building interventions of any type, the influence of the historic preservation officer should be strengthened and be more than just a 'consultation'.
- viii. Already existing development plans should be modified to fulfil the above-mentioned requirements.

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party submit a report to the World Heritage Centre outlining progress made in the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations.

3 ICOMOS Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Historic Centre of Warsaw, Poland, be **approved**.

ICOMOS recommends that as a matter of urgency the whole area of the proposed buffer zone should be covered with spatial development plans aimed at ensuring no adverse impact of new development on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

To this end, ICOMOS recommends that the following requirements should be incorporated in all development plans covering the proposed buffer zone:



Plan indiquant les délimitations de la zone tampon proposée