

Wieliczka Salt Mine (Poland)

No 32

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Poland

Name of property: Wieliczka Salt Mine

Location: City and County of Wieliczka, Lesser Poland (Malopolska) Voivodship

Inscription: 1978

Brief Description:

This deposit of rock salt in Wieliczka-Bochnia has been mined since the 13th century. Spread over nine levels, it has 300 km of galleries with works of art, altars, and statues sculpted in the salt, making a fascinating pilgrimage into the past of a major industrial undertaking.

2. ISSUES RAISED

Background

At the time of inscription, although a map was submitted this did not contain any coordinates, nor was the area of the inscribed property given in hectares.

In March 2005 as part of the Retrospective inventory, the State Party was asked to provide an adequate map, the area in hectares and details of any buffer zone which might exist.

In November 2005 the Periodic Reporting questionnaire from the State Party indicated that a buffer zone had been established in 1994. This buffer zone was said to extend from levels VI to IX and to protect the most valuable part of the mine – presumably levels I to V.

The total area of the site was given as 318,372 ha and the protected area 259,844 ha.

The State Party were encouraged to submit this buffer zone as a minor modification.

In March 2006 a further map was submitted which did not reflect the boundary at the time of inscription. Nor did it have coordinates, areas, or legend in English or French.

The State Party was asked to submit an adequate map to show the inscribed area, and if they wished, a proposal for a minor boundary modification for a buffer zone.

Modification

On 17th December 2007 the State Party submitted a minor modification. This includes a map showing the

buffer zone and inscribed area. This stated that there were 240km of chambers and galleries and that the buffer zone extended to 244 ha. Furthermore it was stated that the inscribed area was the underground passages and chambers, not the land on the surface. The State Party submitted a map showing the projections of the mine levels onto the ground and suggested that this area should be considered as the buffer zone. The area delineated as the buffer zone corresponds with the boundary defined at the time of inscription, although the map suggests that the area on the ground corresponding to the projections of the underground levels is slightly smaller than the buffer zone.

A further proposal was submitted on 1st March 2008. The text stated that the inscribed area was 968.6 ha and the buffer zone 244 ha.

The maps supplied showed the seven levels of the mine which were inscribed and it is stated that the State Party proposes to include the shafts that connect the various levels in the inscribed property. The State Party says that it does not have a 3D model to show the inscribed area.

ICOMOS in its evaluation said that the site extended 5km to the east and west and 1km to the north and south and extends to 327 metres. There is no suggestion either in the evaluation or in the map provided that the site at ground level and everything underneath was not put forward for inscription.

However the State Party are now suggesting that only some of the underground levels were put forward for inscription, without the connecting shafts. At the time of inscription 9 levels were mentioned; in November 2005 5 levels are mentioned and in December 2007 7 levels are said to be part of the core zone.

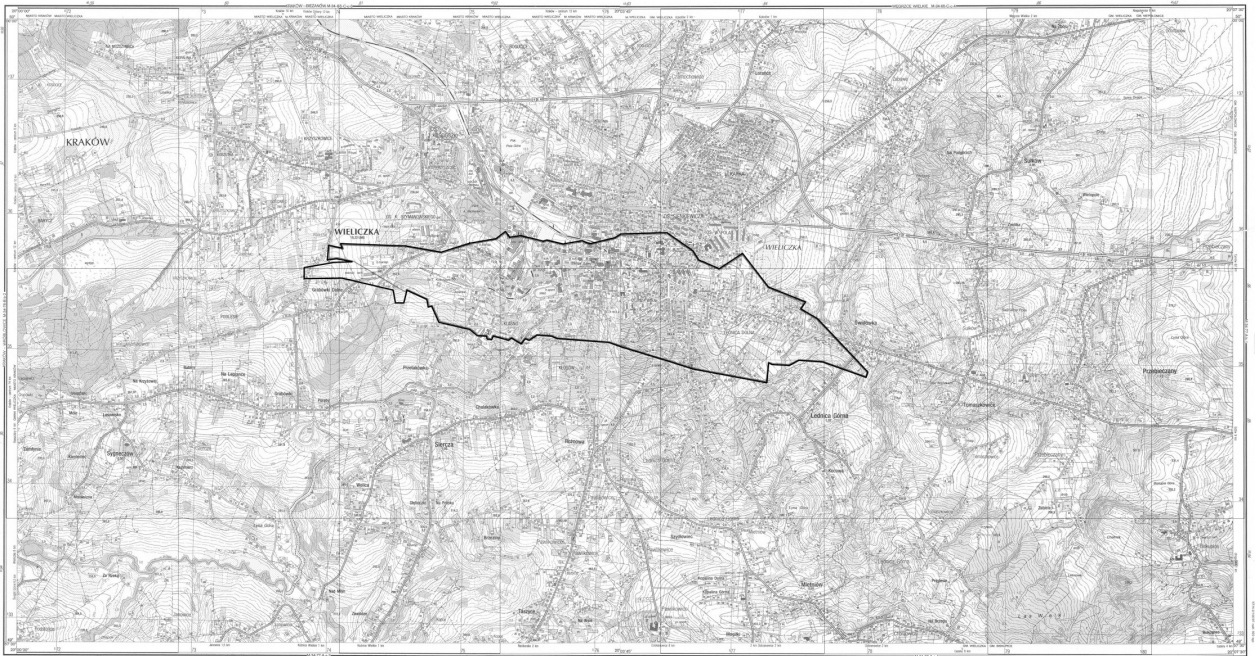
ICOMOS considers that there is a precedent for inscribing only underground levels (the Roman Limes in Germany where modern buildings above ground became a sort of vertical buffer zone to protect the underground Roman remains. However it becomes excessively complex where the buffer zone is suggested both for the ground and for the lower levels of the mine.

ICOMOS suggests that all the underground working with their connecting passages should be part of the core zone and that the buffer zone should coincide with the area at ground level reflecting a projection of the mine workings.



3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS considers that clarification is needed of the extent of the underground working – whether 7 or 9 levels and that all of the levels and their connecting shafts should be part of the core zone. There was no indication to the contrary at the time of inscription. An adequate map needs to be provided showing the extent and area of the underground levels.

ICOMOS suggests that the minor modification to the buffer zone of Wieliczka Salt Mine, Poland, which extends to cover the area of the projection of the mine workings, should be *approved*.



Wieliczka Salt Mine, Poland

-  - boundary of the buffer zone of the World Heritage property located on the ground level
-  - projection on the ground level of the total range of the World Heritage property located on the 7 mine levels

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Map showing the boundaries of the property