

Identification

<u>Nomination</u>	The historic town of Banská Štiavnica and the technical monuments in its vicinity
<u>Location</u>	Central Slovakia
<u>State Party</u>	Slovak Republic
<u>Date</u>	26 September 1991

Justification by State Party

The historical core of Banská Štiavnica is a unique compact unit that harmonizes with the landscape. The town's mining wealth supported its rapid development of crafts and fine arts, the results of which are visible in the town and its architecture. The water management system, begun in the 16th century and most elaborately developed in the 18th century, and designed for the maximum utilization of the hydro-energetic potential of the surrounding hills, remained the most advanced in the world until the 19th century (criterion i).

Banská Štiavnica is an outstanding example of advanced urban design, from the 16th century to the present day. Its exploitation and processing of precious metals had a profound influence on European developments in this field (criterion ii).

The town and the technical monuments in its vicinity represent a unique symbiosis of the technical landscape and the urban environment resulting from its mineral wealth and the consequent prosperity that this engendered (criterion iv).

With the exhaustion of its mineral resources the town has become vulnerable, with its historic urban structure in decay and the unique water handling system threatened (criterion v).

Many of the most important technical and scientific discoveries in the field of mineral processing and metallurgy were made in Banská Štiavnica, and it was also a European centre for mining education for several centuries (criterion vi).

History and DescriptionHistory

Banská Štiavnica is the oldest mining town in Slovakia; its town seal of 1275 is the earliest known bearing a mining emblem. It lies on the steep slopes of the Glanzenberg and Paradajz mountains.

The ore deposits were probably being exploited as early as the Late Bronze Age (10th-8th centuries BC), and again in the Iron Age (3rd-2nd centuries BC). They were certainly being worked in the Great Moravian Period (9th century AD), and this activity continued in the Middle Ages: a document of 1156 refers to it as the "land of miners" (terra banensium), when miners from the Tirol settled in the area. Banská Štiavnica was granted town and mining privileges by Adalbert IV in the first half of the 13th century.

The 15th century saw the beginning of a period of immense prosperity for the area: defences were built round the town, the parish church was rebuilt and fortified, and many new residences were built. These were originally detached structures, but in the 16th century they were either converted into Renaissance "palaces" or combined to form rows or terraces. Trinity Square, at the heart of the town, was a planned development of this period.

However, a slow decline began at the end of the 15th century because of problems of water in the mines and a slump in precious metal prices, exacerbated by political strife. Nonetheless, technological progress continued, and in 1627 Banská Štiavnica saw the first use of gunpowder in mining, an important breakthrough. Paradoxically, this contributed to the economic decline by rapidly exhausting the surface ore deposits. However, much important work in the field of the application of water power in deep mining and ancillary processes was carried out, particularly in the 18th century: this included the invention of a dam-and-weir system for ore dressing that quickly became used throughout the world. During this period, which saw an upturn in mining profitability and Banská Štiavnica becoming the most important centre for precious metal mining in the Habsburg Empire, many leading engineers and metallurgists from all over Europe were working in the town. Banská Štiavnica was also a European centre of mining education from the late 16th century; the Mining Academy founded in 1762-64 was the principal one in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. With the cessation of mining operations at the end of the 19th century, the town retained this pre-eminence in education until the Academy was transferred to Sopron (and later Miskolc) in Hungary after World War I.

Description

The area nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List includes a wide tract around the town, including part of the Štiavnica Vrchy (Hills) Protected Landscape Area. The components of the nominated area are the Town Monument Reserve, the protected zone of the Town Monument Reserve-Glanzenberg Old Town, the Štiavnické Bane-Horná Roven area, and the Sitno castle site. These represent a unique complex of settlements and landscape areas which have developed into an integrated cultural-technical landscape.

The historic centre of the town is a compact unit that has developed in an organic manner. Among the major monuments, dating from the High Gothic to Baroque and later periods, are the Renaissance Old and New Castles, built to resist the Turkish

invaders, the town hall (16th-18th centuries), the churches of St Catherine (late Gothic), the Blessed Virgin Mary (neo-classical), and the Blackfriars, the dome of the Evangelical Church, the buildings of the Mining Academy (1892-1912), and the Baroque calvary complex on the Scharfenberg hill. The town is rich in burgher houses, the earliest dating back to the 15th century.

The whole surrounding area contains important remains of early mining and metallurgical operations. There are no fewer than 30 reservoirs, the oldest of which, Velká Vodárenská, was built before 1510. Three more are also of 16th century date, and there are two from the 17th century; the largest number (18), however, are 18th century, from the period of intensive work in this field. There is an elaborate series of dams, the longest 774.7 m long, and collecting channels.

Remains of mining operations include the Voznická drainage gallery, at 1.65 km the longest in the world when it was completed in 1878. The Bieber drainage gallery, begun in the 14th century, is the oldest known, and the earliest references to the Weiden and Terezia shafts date from 1519 and 1571 respectively. There are also several large opencast ore pits. The shaft building and machine room of the Mayer shaft (begun in 1805) still survive.

The silver-lead smelting plant, originating in the first half of the 17th century and modernized in 1872, is still extant, as is one of the buildings of the first factory in the world for producing machine-made wire cable (1837). The mining museum contains many items of equipment from the area.

Management and Protection

Legal status

Owing to the present situation resulting from the Government's policies on restitution of property, privatization, and attraction of foreign capital investment, the situation regarding property ownership in the Slovak Republic is somewhat fluid. However, at the present time (September 1992), of 296 cultural monuments in Banská Štiavnica, 179 are in state ownership, 56 belong to the church, and 60 are in private hands.

In 1950 the town was designated a Town Monument Reserve by the Czechoslovak Government, and the Slovak Socialist Republic created the Protected Landscape Area of the Štiavnica Hills in 1974. In 1976 a total of 167 archaeological monuments were added to the Central List of Cultural Monuments; of these 11 are in the Old Town of Banská Štiavnica. A management plan for the central historic area of the town was produced in 1977 and approved by the Council of the Central Slovak Regional National Committee, and was updated in 1981. A proposal for the creation of a new protected zone around the Town Monument Reserve made in 1989 and revised in 1992 is currently under consideration.

Management

The Slovak Republic is currently preparing an overall planning management programme. The eventual management plan for Banská Štiavnica will be integrated into this programme. The existing programmes for the town and the district, including the plan for the preservation and restoration of the Town Monument Reserve of 1986, although somewhat outdated, remain in force and are being revised. A number of studies have been carried out by various bodies, including the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the District-Local Office for Banská Štiavnica, and the Municipality.

Overall supervision of work on all protected monuments and areas is the responsibility of the Slovak Institute for the Care of Monuments, through its local office in Banská Štiavnica.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The first large reconstruction project was the renovation of the Old Castle in 1932. A programme of systematic restoration and reconstruction work, based on artistic, historical, architectural, and archaeological studies carried out from 1970 onwards with participation by Polish experts, has been in operation for a number of years. Restoration work on the mining and technical monuments has been in progress since 1963, initially by the state mining company, Rudné Bane, and since 1965 in collaboration with the Slovak Mining Museum.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the town layout and many of the buildings is indisputable. The ensemble is authentic as a whole in that it represents organic growth from the Middle Ages to the present day. The authenticity of the technological remains is also of an acceptable level, although some reconstruction work has been carried out for museum display purposes.

Evaluation

Qualities

The heartland of the development of mining and metallurgy in the Middle Ages was central Europe, in a region stretching from the Harz mountains to Slovakia. The surviving complex of technological remains and the associated settlement at Banská Štiavnica bears eloquent testimony to its importance in this industry. The town is also of great significance because of its role in the field of mining and metallurgical education.

Comparative analysis

ICOMOS is collaborating with TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage) in a detailed comparative study of the world's industrial heritage.

One of the fields to be covered is that of mining industries. However, in advance of the preparation of that specialized list, TICCIH has expressed the opinion that the two most important sites of the medieval and later mining industry in Europe are Rammelsberg/Goslar (inscribed on the List at the 16th Meeting of the World Heritage Committee in December 1992) and Banská Štiavnica.

Additional comments

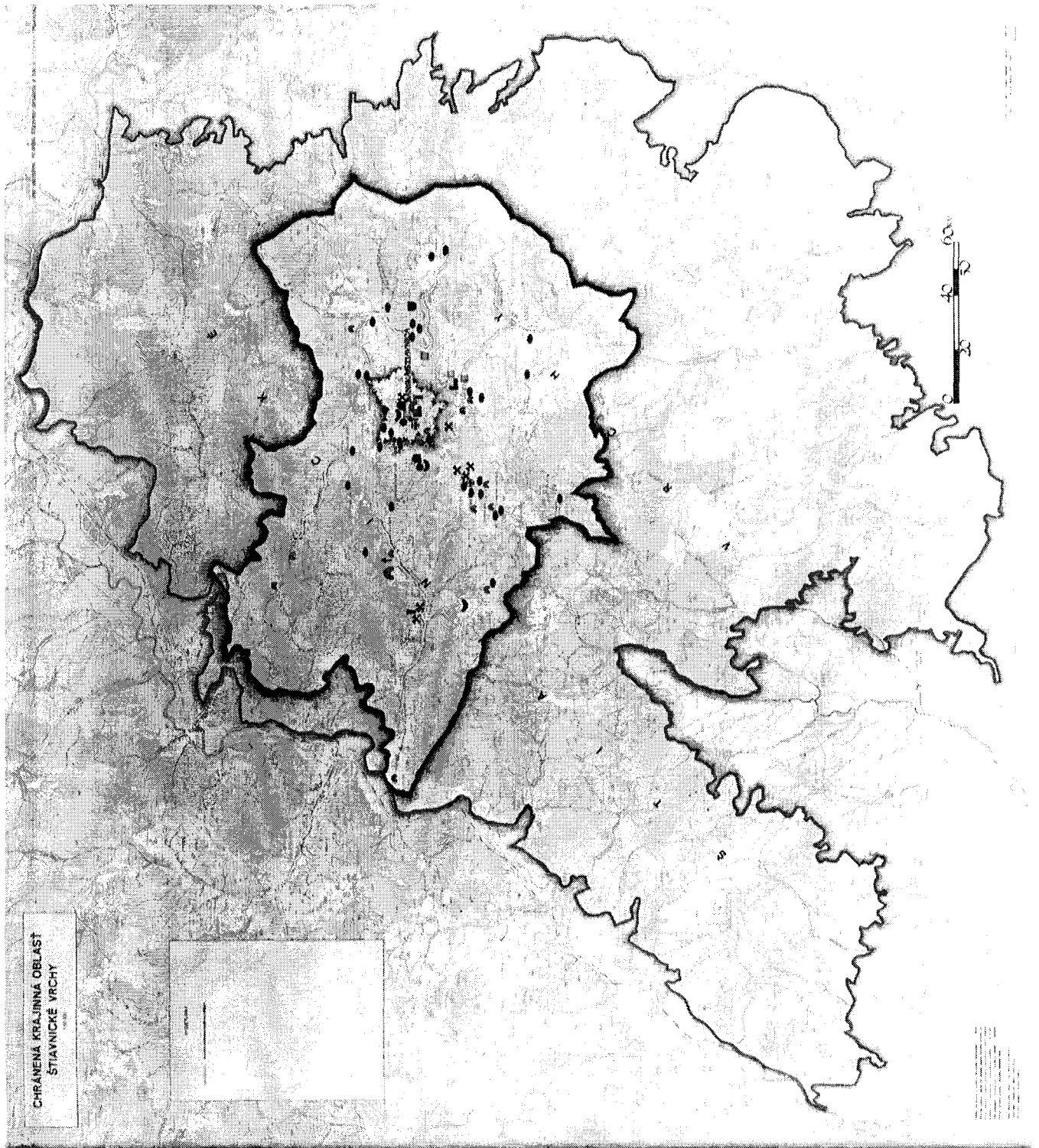
At its 16th Meeting in Paris in July 1992 the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee deferred the examination of this property "to allow the competent (...) authorities to provide additional background information concerning the concrete existence of a heritage bearing witness to mining activities". ICOMOS is satisfied that the Slovak authorities have provided that information.

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iv and v:

- Criterion iv The urban and industrial complex of Banská Štiavnica and its surrounding area is an outstanding example of a medieval mining centre of great economic importance that continued into the modern period and assumed a characteristic and distinctive form.
- Criterion v With the cessation of mining activities at Banská Štiavnica and the removal of the Mining Academy, the town lost much of its raison d'être, and in so doing has become vulnerable to the progressive erosion of its character and urban fabric.

ICOMOS, October 1993



Banska Stiavnica : carte avec délimitation du site /
map with delimitation of the site



Banska Stiavnica : vue aérienne / aerial view