

## WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Malbork (Poland)

No 847

### Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork
<i>Location</i>	Elblag Voivodate
<i>State Party</i>	Republic of Poland
<i>Date</i>	19 July 1996

### Justification by State Party

Malbork Castle is a coherent architectural composition, which in its entirety possesses enormous artistic and historical-scientific value. Individual building groups within the complex are also very important architectural monuments in their own right.

The High Castle, in its 13th century form, is a key link in the process of development of the regular four-winged Teutonic castle, combining the functions of a monastic foundation with that of a defensive structure. Developed to a high degree during the construction of Malbork Castle, this model gave rise to a series of Teutonic castles in Prussia at the end of the 13th and during the 14th century. This type of castle had no analogies in contemporary European defensive architecture.

An equally ambitious enterprise, but drawing on the best traditions of European court chapels (eg La Sainte-Chapelle in Paris), was the addition of the two-storey chapel to the High Castle at Malbork in the first half of the 14th century. This presbytery, at the east end of the building, projected beyond the original limits of the castle. The joining of these two parts, as well as the architectural division of the eastern part of the chapel, required great sophistication and is proof of a high degree of architectural artistry.

The Palace of the Grand Masters, situated in the Middle Castle, is worthy of special attention. The structural system of the Residential Tower, the excellent functional planning, the shape of the interior spaces, the manner of vaulting, and the illumination from the many enormous windows have no parallels in the residential architecture of

medieval Europe. The Great Refectory of the Middle Castle is another structure of exceptional value, even on a global scale. This is due to the superb systems of proportions and the innovatory artistic form of the vaulting, supported on slender columns. It is one of the most magnificent and elegant secular interiors that European Gothic architecture produced.

The architectural and aesthetic qualities of Malbork Castle are heightened by its exceptionally picturesque location on the banks of the river Nogat.

### Criteria i, ii, and iv

Malbork Castle is generally accepted as an architectural work of unique character. Many of the methods used by its builders in handling technical and artistic problems (among them the design and construction of the vaulting and portals and the use of architectural sculpture) greatly influenced not only subsequent castles of the Teutonic Order but also other Gothic buildings in a wide region of north-eastern Europe. Thus the Castle is incontestably one of the most important examples of Gothic brick architecture in all Europe.

### Criterion ii

Malbork Castle was built in such a way as to make use of the rich repertoire of medieval defensive architecture on an exceptionally large scale. At the same time it was an architecturally perfectly planned economic, military, and administrative centre not only of the extensive Teutonic Order with branches all over Europe but also of the mighty state that it founded here. It was also the official residence of the Master of the Order, who was also head of state. Taking all these functions into account, the Castle must be recognized as a unique creation, with no equivalent in European Gothic architecture.

### Criteria iii and iv

As the main seat of power of the Teutonic Order, chief executant of the concept of Crusades in eastern Europe, the forced baptism of the Baltic peoples, and the colonization of their tribal territories, Malbork is the major material manifestation of these acts, which played such a vital role in the history of Europe. The Castle was witness to many of the most important and influential social, economic, and political events of medieval Europe.

Over a span of two hundred years, since the 18th century, Malbork Castle has remained one of the major objects of the European fascination with medieval history and its material remains. It has also been the subject of scientific and conservation activity which has contributed in an exceptional way to the development of research and conservation approaches to European medieval architecture, such as the interdisciplinary approach to conservation, development of sampling methods for building materials, and the use of archaeological, photographic, and graphic techniques of recording. Many forgotten art and craft techniques have been rediscovered as a result. In this sense Malbork Castle

is also an historic monument to conservation itself, both in its social aspect and as a scientific and artistic discipline through the work of distinguished practitioners such as, among others, F Gilly, K-F Schinkel, F von Quast, C Steinbrecht, and B Schmid.

The rise of Malbork Castle is connected with the conversion to Christianity of Europe's last pagans through the medium of a Crusade. It has also become an outstanding example of the relationship between the most recent generations and the past. In this context, the Castle became a reflection of the tendency to treat history and its monuments as instruments in the service of political ideologies, such as the civic society ideas of von Schon, Wilhelm II's imperial concepts, and the chauvinism of the Third Reich. It has thus also become an historical monument that is uniquely associated with ideas, beliefs, and events of enormous scale and general historical significance.

#### Criterion vi

#### Category of property

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

#### History and Description

##### *History*

Malbork (German Marienburg) is located in the south-west of a territory inhabited since prehistoric times by the Prussians (Pruzzi), a tribe of Baltic origin who were pagans until the 13th century. To the south lay the Polish state, which had accepted Christianity in the 10th century. The missions organized by Polish rulers to bring Christianity to the Prussians had little success, and led to the martyrdom of St Adalbert (997) and St Bruno (1009). An intensification of Polish missionary activities in the early 12th century led to devastating Prussian raids on Polish territory. In 1215 Pope Innocent III created a missionary bishopric to the Prussians, and two years later his successor Honorius III decreed that a Crusade to their lands would be equal to those to the Holy Land.

The Polish Prince Conrad called upon the Teutonic Order for assistance, granting them lands on the frontier of his territory. The Order established itself there in 1230, but the fierce resistance of the Prussians lasted for half a century. Taking advantage of his good relations with the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, and his influence in the Papal court, the Grand Master of the Order, Hermann von Salza, secured the grant of the entire conquered territory and independence from Polish ecclesiastical control.

The Teutonic Knights built many castles on the captured territories, with a dual political and religious function. The castle at Malbork, work on which began some time after 1270, was among the most important of these. Its importance increased greatly after 1309, when the seat of the Grand Master

of the Order was moved there from Venice. The original Fore Castle was adapted as his residence and administrative headquarters, the impressive palace of the Grand Masters being built in its south-west corner. The Great Refectory was built to the north of the palace, the north side of the Middle Castle was closed with a wing housing the hospital and the residence of the commander of the Castle, whilst the chapel in the High Castle was enlarged, with a mortuary chapel of the Grand Masters dedicated to St Anne beneath the new presbytery.

When the Treaty of Torun brought the wars between Poland and the Teutonic Order to an end in 1457, Malbork Castle passed to the Polish Crown, and remained in use, virtually unmodified from its medieval form, for three centuries, serving at different times as an administrative headquarters, a central arsenal, and a temporary royal residence. It suffered some damage during the successive Thirty Years' War (1618-48), Polish-Swedish War (1655-60), and Nordic War (1700-21), but its robust basic structure remained intact.

After the first partition of Poland between Austria, Prussia, and Russia in 1772, Malbork Castle became part of the Kingdom of Prussia and was promptly modified to serve as a barracks; a number of unsympathetic demolitions and additions took place in the period 1799-1803. However, a number of artists and intellectuals had begun to take an interest in the Castle, and as a result of their pressure it was designated as an historic monument in 1804. Conservation work began after 1815 and continued until 1939.

The Castle was partly destroyed at the end of World War II, after which it passed once again within the boundaries of the new Poland. Since 1947 there have been continuous campaigns for the reconstruction and restoration of the monument.

##### *Description*

Malbork Castle is situated on a peninsula on the right bank of the Nogat river. The whole complex of buildings and fortifications covers 21ha.

The Castle consists of three elements, known as the High Castle, the Middle Castle, and the Fore Castle respectively. All the buildings are constructed in well fired red brick, the predominant building material of a wide region stretching from the Low Countries into Russia, where stone is scarce. Stone is used sparingly at Malbork, principally for decorative purposes.

The *High Castle* was the convent of the Teutonic Order in the final phase. The first component of the complex to be constructed, it is square in plan, with a central courtyard. It contained living accommodation for the Knights, with dormitories, refectories, and kitchens, and extensive storage facilities. Attached to it is the Conventual Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, originally on the first floor of the eastern wing and extended outside the perimeter of the High Castle with a new presbytery. Its imposing main portal, the Golden Gate, still retains much of its original polychrome decoration.

The *Middle Castle* was the original Fore Castle. It and the High Castle were surrounded by fortifications of walls, ramparts, and moats. When Malbork became the seat of the Grand Master of the Order, what had been essentially an exercise ground was elaborately restyled, a new three-sided enclosure being created, communicating with the High Castle by a drawbridge. The entrance gate to the High Castle is surmounted by a bas-relief of a mounted Knight of the Order

The Palace of the Grand Masters projects outwards to the river on the western side. This building, and the adjoining Great Refectory, are outstanding examples of High Gothic, with elegant slender vaulting and large windows providing an atmosphere of soaring space and light. This section of the complex also houses the infirmary, the quarters of the Grand Komtur (military commander of the Castle), and a guest wing, used by visiting dignitaries of the Order and secular Knights. A chapel, dedicated to St Bartholemew, was at the service of visitors and guests

When the 14th century enlargement took place, a new *Fore Castle* was created, to the north of the existing complex, and the fortifications were extended to defend the entire Castle. A monumental gateway with a massive gate tower in the north wing of the Middle Castle gives access to the central open space of the Fore Castle. The buildings in this section were quarters for the servants of the Order, workshops, armouries, cannon foundries, and other services, and a stable and wagon house complex (the Karwan). A chapel dedicated to St Lawrence was provided for the use of the inhabitants of the Fore Castle.

The whole complex is surrounded by an intricate system of defensive works, including massive walls and bastions, wet and dry moats and ditches, earthen ramparts, and ponds (which also served to supply the Castle with water).

## Management and Protection

### *Legal status*

The Castle has been a protected historic monument since 1804 by *Kabinettsordre* of the King of Prussia (see "History" above). In the 20th century the post-war Polish Government classified it as an historical monument by means of national and regional legislation in 1949 (castle alone) and 1959 (castle and town). It is currently designated a national historic monument under the provisions of a Presidential Decree of 8 September 1994. Any form of intervention requires the authorization of the competent national and regional monuments agencies. Since 1949 the complex has been surrounded by a buffer zone in which there is strict control over any form of construction.

### *Management*

The Castle is owned by the Polish State. It is managed by the Castle Museum, an official body created in 1960 by the Ministry of Culture and Art,

to which it reports directly. The work of this body is supervised by the Inspector of Historic Monuments of Elblag Voivodate, and the overall responsibility is vested in the Chief Inspector of Monuments of the Republic of Poland.

All conservation work is funded from the Central Budget of the Polish State.

There is no direct management plan for the Castle itself. However, the Castle and its surrounding area come within the purview of the Regional City Plan for the City of Malbork adopted in 1989 and the 1996 Resolution of the City Council on "The Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Planning for the City of Malbork."

It is essentially the High and Middle Castles that are strictly protected and used as a museum. The Fore Castle is given over to visitor facilities (hotel, restaurant, shops, etc); there are, however, strict controls over the appearance and nature of these facilities.

## Conservation and Authenticity

### *Conservation history*

The cultural significance of the Castle had been first identified by two distinguished architects, Friedrich Gilly and Karl-Friedrich Schinkel. It was at their urging that the Castle was designated in 1804 as an historical monument. The large-scale conservation work that began in 1815, encouraged by the Prime Minister of Prussia, Theodore von Schon, was entrusted to a group of scholars and architects, led by Schinkel, J K Costoble, and J Voigt. Their major project was the restoration of the Palace of the Grand Masters. Marienburg (as it was known at the time) was the principal European testing ground for conservation techniques and approaches. It was also noteworthy for the constructive teamwork of historians and architects.

In 1843 Schinkel's pupil Ferdinand von Quast became the first Conservator of Historic Monuments in Prussia and devoted a great deal of time and thought to Marienburg Castle. It was under the guidance of Carl Steinbrecht, who was appointed Chief Conservator of the Castle in 1882, that the most important period of restoration took place. The detailed preparatory investigations that he carried out before initiating restoration work have survived and, together with those of his successor, B Schmid, constitute an invaluable source of information both on the Castle and on conservation principles and practice of that period.

The Castle was partly destroyed by artillery bombardment in 1945, at the end of World War II. For political reasons, as well as the lack of funds, the decision to restore and reconstruct the Castle was not taken until the late 1950s. Work began with the creation of the Castle Museum in 1960 and has continued without interruption since that time. Work is still in progress on the restoration of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the High Castle.

A deliberate policy of respecting the work of the 19th and early 20th century conservators has been followed, in view of their importance in the evolution of modern conservation practices.

#### *Authenticity*

Following the destruction during World War II, a certain amount of rebuilding took place using modern brick and tile. However, because of the extensive and detailed archival material available, both in the form of early drawings, paintings, and photographs, and in particular the records of the investigations and work carried out under the guidance of Steinbrecht and Schmid as Chief Conservators (see "Conservation history" above), the overall authenticity of the complex in its present form is very high.

The policy since 1960 of respecting the restoration work of the 19th and early 20th century conservators in the present reconstruction also confers an authenticity relating to the evolution of the precepts and practice of restoration and conservation.

The relationship of the Castle to its setting, the historic town of Malbork/Marienburg, which was almost totally destroyed in World War II, has also conserved its authenticity, thanks to the sympathetic and conscientious reconstruction of the historic buildings in the town.

#### **Evaluation**

##### *Action by ICOMOS*

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Malbork in February 1997.

##### *Qualities*

Malbork is the most complete and elaborate example of a medieval brick castle in the characteristic style of the Teutonic Order, which evolved independently from the contemporary castles of western Europe and the Near East.

Although substantially reconstructed following severe damage during World War II, that reconstruction has been scrupulous in its use of the abundant and meticulous records of those responsible for restoration and conservation works in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It has, moreover, reproduced their work in the present reconstruction, thereby providing a remarkable overview of the evolution of modern approaches and methods.

##### *Comparative analysis*

A comparative study of the castles of the Teutonic Order is being carried out at the present time at the request of ICOMOS and will be completed in time for the meeting of the World Heritage Committee in December 1997. However, given the importance of Malbork as the seat of the Grand Master of the Order from the early 14th century onwards and its monumental scale, there can be little doubt that Malbork is pre-eminent in this group.

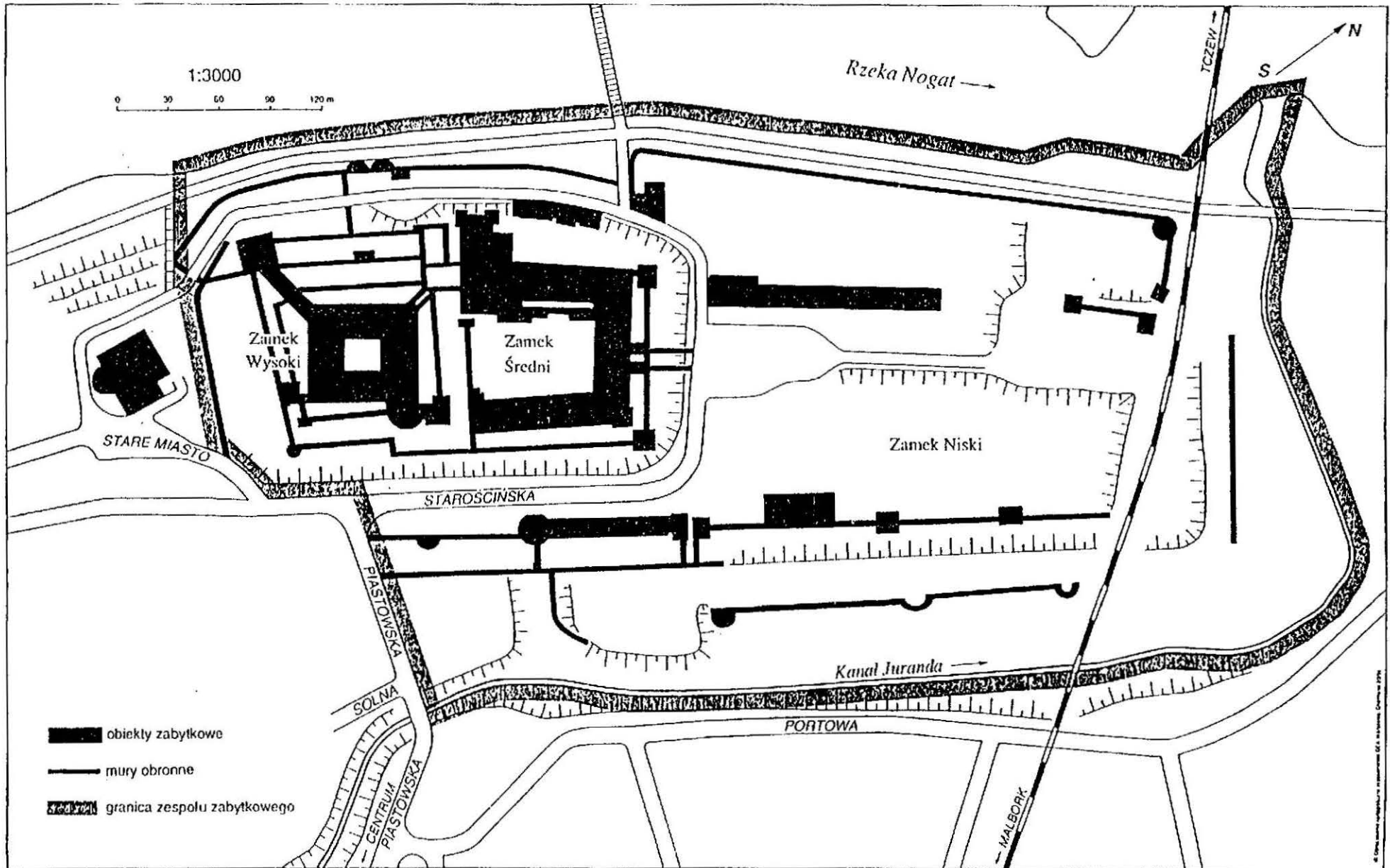
#### **Recommendation**

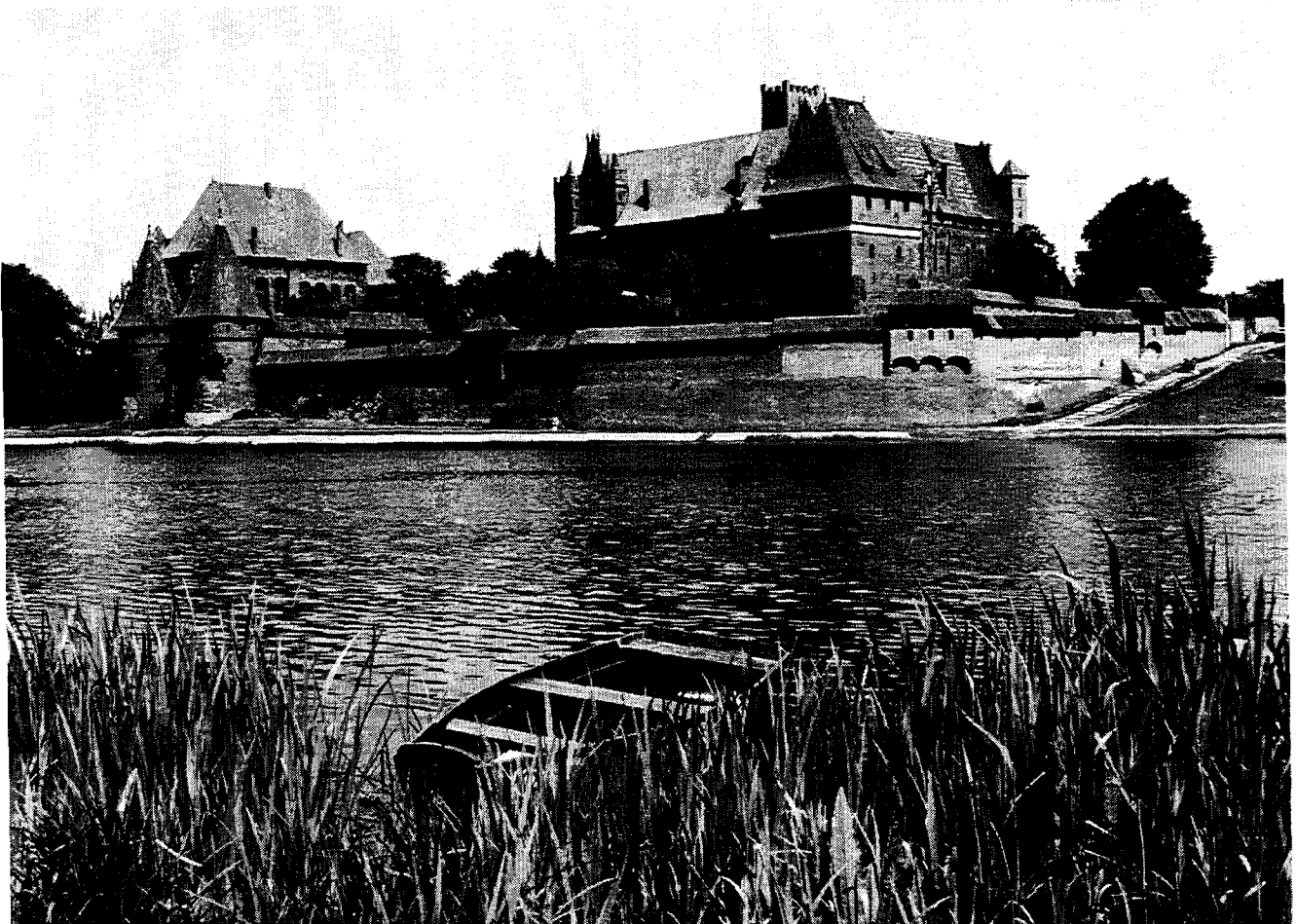
That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iii, and iv*:

Malbork Castle is the supreme example of the medieval brick castle that characterizes the unique architecture of the Crusading Teutonic Order in eastern Europe. It is also of considerable historical significance for the evidence that it provides of the evolution of the modern philosophy and practice of restoration and conservation.

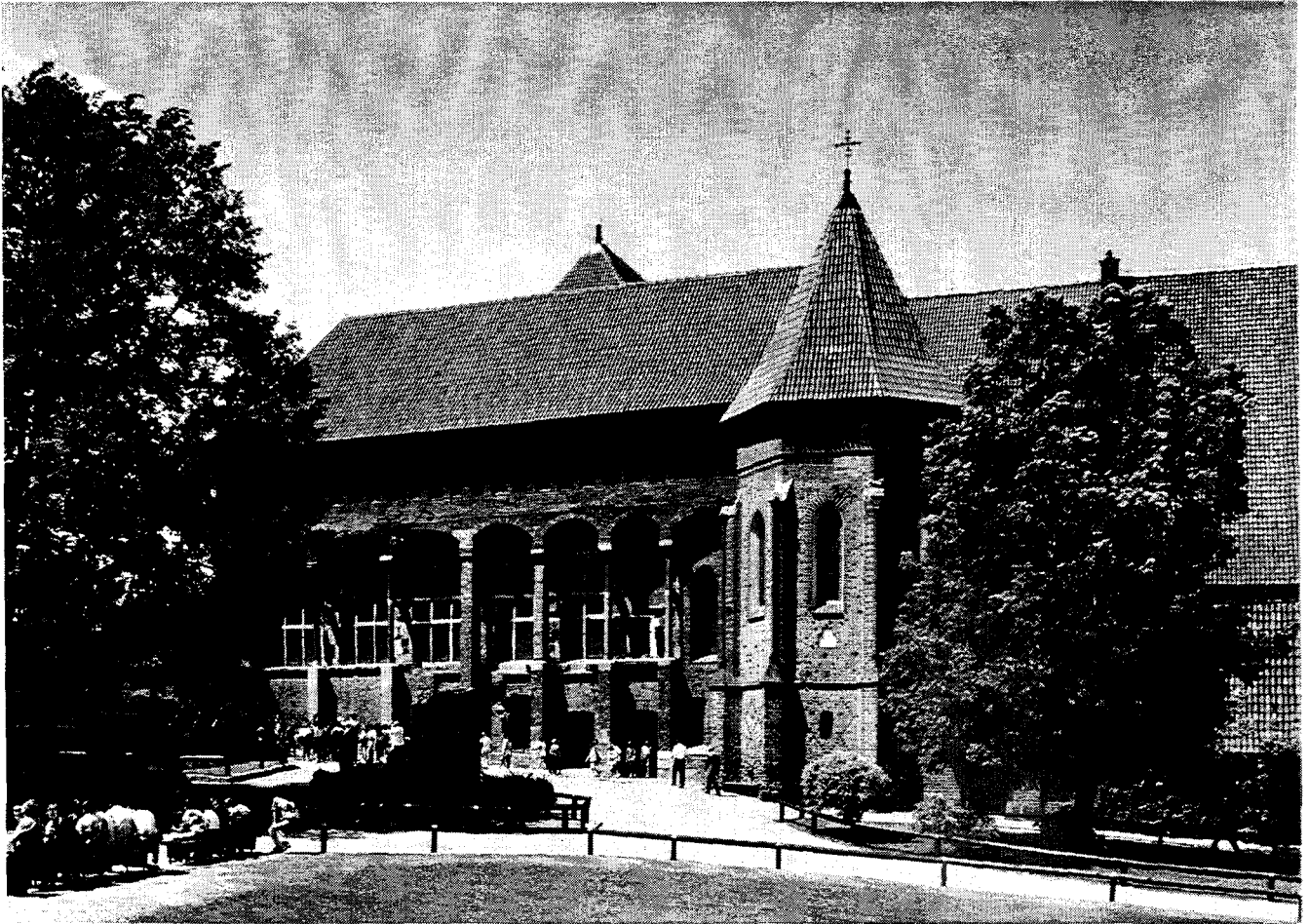
ICOMOS, September 1997

**Malbork :**  
**Plan du château /**  
**Plan of the Castle**





**Malbork :**  
**Le Château Haut, la Porte du Pont et le Palais des Grands Maîtres**  
**vus de la rive opposée du Nogat /**  
**The High Castle, Bridge Gate and Palace of the Grand Masters,**  
**seen from the opposite side of the Nogat**



**Malbork :**  
**Façade est du Palais des Grands Maîtres,**  
**vu du côté de la cour du château moyen /**  
**The east facade of the Palace of the Grand Masters,**  
**seen from the courtyard of the Middle Castle**