

# WORLD HERITAGE LIST

## Holasovice (Czech Republic)

No 861

### Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Holasovice historical village reservation
<i>Location</i>	South Czech Region
<i>State Party</i>	Czech Republic
<i>Date</i>	30 June 1997

### Justification by State Party

Holasovice belongs to the folk architecture of southern Bohemia, more specifically to that of Hlubocká Blatská. There was a large increase in building activity in the region at the end of the 19th century. The traditional local technology reacted to the building and craft expression in the new manorial and town architecture, which was copied by the village people at a time when material conditions were improving.

This was not the only formal resemblance. Village craftsmen were more often in contact with the manorial building techniques and those in the dense network of towns in both Bohemia and Austria, which have had long-lasting trade and employment contacts. The result was the gradual adoption of construction techniques and modes of expression by master bricklayers, who created the magic of the folk architecture of the region, using a logic of structure and form of which they had little understanding to produce buildings for their customers in the villages.

#### Criterion ii

The cultural tradition and its survival within the village area and the entire region can be documented on several levels. Detailed analysis of buildings demonstrates an inertia in the use of decorative forms and the change from older to new technologies. In so far as the volumes and details of the new buildings are concerned, there was a consistent respect for tradition.

#### Criterion iii

In comparison with other villages in the region, Holasovice is a remarkable example of mature local building practice (South Bohemian "Folk Baroque") in terms of the state of conservation of individual buildings and their layouts, dating back to the 13th century.

#### Criterion iv

The fish-ponds of South Bohemia are good examples of man-made late medieval and Renaissance landscapes.

Most of the settlements in the area were founded after a vast area of wetland had been drained. The result is a picturesque countryside of fields, meadows, and ponds around the villages. This is a highly organized cultivated landscape centred on picturesque villages and their architecture. The whole district has in recent years become a favoured tourist area.

#### Criterion v

### Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*. In terms of paragraph 39 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* it may also be considered to be a *continuing cultural landscape*.

### History and Description

#### History

Archaeological investigation has shown that this area was settled by humankind as early as the 2nd millennium BC, in the Neolithic period. It was settled by Slavonic peoples in the 9th and 10th centuries AD. It came under Premyslid rule at the end of the 10th century, but Holasovice was not founded until the period of large-scale colonization of the border regions of Bohemia in the first half of the 13th century. The first written record is in a 1292 document of Wenceslas II, who gave the village, along with several others, to the Cistercian monastery at Vyssí Brod, which retained possession until 1848.

Until the beginning of the 16th century the area was settled by Czechs, but the plague that ravaged Bohemia in 1521 left only two inhabitants alive. The Cistercians brought in settlers from other possessions of the Order in Bavaria and Austria: all the family names listed in a monastic record of 1524-30 were German. There followed a period of prosperity that came to an end with the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), but the village quickly recovered.

The numbers of farmsteads remained steady at seventeen from the early 16th century onwards, and the village did not begin to grow until the 20th century. The ethnic makeup remained predominantly German up to the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918: in 1895 there were 157 inhabitants of German origin and only 19 of Czech origin. By the time the ethnic Germans were expelled at the end of World War II Czechs remained in a minority.

The Definitive Cadaster of 1827 reveals that all the farmsteads (with the exception of the barns) in "Holschowitz" were built of masonry, not timber-framed, as was the case in most of the villages of Bohemia at that time. This tradition of masonry building for domestic structures is a characteristic of South Bohemia, no doubt brought in from Austria and Germany.

Between 1840 and 1880 there was considerable rebuilding in the villages of North Bohemia. This process

was later in South Bohemia, and the style adopted, known as “Folk Baroque,” is characteristic of this region.

#### *Description*

Holasovice is situated in the heart of South Bohemia, 15km west of České Budejovice and 18km north of Český Krumlov (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1992).

The village consists at the present time of 120 buildings arranged round an elongated village square, with a small chapel and cross on it, and some more recent buildings on the outskirts. The historical reservation that forms the subject of this nomination consists of the original village as surveyed in the Definitive Cadaster, which includes 23 farmsteads that are protected architectural monuments, along with their attached farm buildings (barns, stables etc) and gardens or tofts.

The farmsteads are all built with their gable-ends facing the square. Only some typical examples will be described in this evaluation. Farmstead No 3, a three-sided group, has a classic South Bohemian double-gabled front elevation with a large entrance gate and a smaller gate in the wall. On entering the main gate the visitor finds a two-storey granary on the left, with an attic larder. Beyond the granary is a block with stables and a vaulted cellar. The farmhouse, consisting of two rooms, is to the right. The entrance hall is partitioned by a staircase which gives access to the attic space; the block contains the large main living room and a traditional “black kitchen.”

Both the main gables are finished with Baroque voluted curves and with stucco pilaster strips. The configuration of the main buildings has hardly changed since they were recorded in the early 19th century, although artistic changes were made on the gables, dated to 1857 and 1863 by inscriptions on the granary and farmhouse gables respectively.

Farmstead No 8 is the largest in the village. The main farmhouse, to the left on entering, is a modest chamber-type structure with two rooms, and this adjoins a long cow-house, divided into two vaulted rooms; this wing is dated on the facade to 1861. To the right of the entrance is a massive three-storey granary, the present form of which probably dates from the mid 19th century. The courtyard is closed at the rear by a spacious stone barn, built towards the end of the 19th century to replace an earlier timber structure.

Another large farmstead, this time on the eastern side of the square, is No 15, again on three sides of a central courtyard. Seen from the square it is a classic double-gabled structure with an arched entrance gate. It has undergone a number of alterations over the past two centuries, which have led to the replacement of the Baroque gables by less ornate triangular ones. Historically the most important component of the ensemble is the granary, situated to the left on entering. It preserves its original form and decoration (which was relatively simple) more faithfully than most of the other buildings in the village.

In a number of cases, elements of farmsteads (granaries and barns) were converted in the years preceding and following World War II into retirement dwellings; this

process involved substantial reconstruction. In addition to the farmsteads there are several farm labourers’ cottages that are much smaller and simpler in design.

The village smithy and the smith’s house are located in the middle of the village square. A facility of this kind is known to have existed in Holasovice since the beginning of the 18th century. It was originally located on the west side of the square, but was moved to its present position in 1885 (the date “1841” on the smithy itself probably relates to that of the building that was relocated). Both buildings are single-storey structures with saddle roofs, and the smithy has a characteristic arched opening on the square (now closed, since it has been converted for residential use).

The other architectural feature in the village square is the small Chapel of St John of Nepomuk. This is a slender structure with a tall bell-shaped front. The rectangular interior is vaulted, with two lunettes closing it. The chapel has a saddle roof hipped at one end and with a four-pillar lantern spire containing a bell in its centre. It appears to date from the mid 18th century.

### **Management and Protection**

#### *Legal status*

Under the provisions of Law No 20/87 on State Care of Historical Monuments, implemented by Decree No 66 of the Ministry of Culture of 26 April 1988, 23 buildings around the village square of Holasovice are designated as protected monuments. The whole village was designated by State Decree No 127/1995 as an historic preservation site, in accordance with Article 5 of the 1987 Law. All interventions must be authorized by the relevant authority.

The District Committee in České Budejovice declared the area round the village a conservation zone in September 1996. This means that all proposals for building, reconstruction, or other forms of intervention must be submitted to the District authorities for approval.

#### *Management*

Most of the buildings in the area proposed for inscription are owned by private individuals (six of them are in use as holiday homes). The Jankov Village Municipality owns two of the buildings, and the chapel and other religious objects (cross, shrines) belong collectively to Holasovice village.

Management and administration of the nominated property is shared among several bodies at different levels of government:

- Jankov Village Municipality: responsible for overall care of its territory and coordination of regeneration plans;
- The District Administration in České Budejovice: the executive body for implementing state historic protection legislation through its regional development and cultural departments;
- The Ministry of Culture: responsible for designation and inspection of protected monuments and sites.

The Institute for the Care of Historical Monuments in České Budejovice and the State Institute for the Care of Historical Monuments in Prague provide professional services in support of the bodies listed above.

The 1996 decision of the České Budejovice District Committee (see above) creates an effective buffer zone around the protected site. It makes provision for strict control over such aspects as change of use, roofing materials, street lighting and furniture, etc, so as to preserve the environment of the historic ensemble. This is reinforced and expanded by the territorial plan for the village of Holasovice of April 1997.

## Conservation and Authenticity

### *Conservation history*

There was no policy for the conservation of Holasovice until the individual buildings were first designated in 1960 under the provisions of Law No 22/1958 on Protection of the Cultural Heritage (now superseded by the 1987 Law).

Financial help has been made available to owners of individual buildings to assist them in meeting their statutory obligations to maintain and conserve their properties to the standards laid down by the State Institute for the Care of Historical Monuments. The sums disbursed increased more than fourfold between 1995 and 1996, as did the grants made to the village under the Land Use Plan.

### *Authenticity*

The authenticity of the layout of the village is very high, as shown by the early maps produced by cadastral surveys. A number of the individual farmsteads have conserved a substantial measure of authenticity in their internal layouts and external features. However, others have undergone radical changes, especially to their interiors, which have severely reduced their overall authenticity; this is especially applicable to the buildings rehabilitated for use as retirement homes.

## Evaluation

### *Action by ICOMOS*

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Holasovice in January 1998. Comments were also received from the ICOMOS International Committee on Vernacular Architecture.

### *Qualities*

The historic centre of Holasovice has preserved its overall layout and general appearance to a considerable extent, making it an excellent illustration of traditional village architecture in central Europe.

### *Comparative analysis*

The State Party has provided a scholarly comparative study by a Czech expert on "The position and interactions of folk architecture of Holasovice within the framework of Bohemia and contiguous areas." This makes a strong case for attributing unique qualities to the "Folk Baroque" architecture of this region, best

represented by Holasovice, and sets it within the broader framework of vernacular architecture in a large region of central Europe.

Holasovice does not figure on the short list of vernacular settlements recommended for consideration for inclusion on the World Heritage List in the comparative study of traditional villages in the Carpathian basin and its immediate surroundings prepared by its International Committee on Historic Towns and Villages in 1993.

### *ICOMOS comments*

ICOMOS recommended at the meeting of the Bureau in June 1998 that this property should not be inscribed on the World Heritage List, on the grounds that it did not possess the qualities of "outstanding universal value" and authenticity prescribed in the *Operational Guidelines*. However, the Bureau decided to refer the nomination back to the State Party to supply additional information relating to the authenticity and current usage of the village and its buildings.

Having studied the supplementary submissions from the State Party and carried out extensive consultations within its own membership, ICOMOS has revised its evaluation.

## Brief description

Holasovice is an exceptionally complete and well preserved example of a traditional central European village, containing a number of high-quality vernacular buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries.

## Recommendation

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

*Criterion ii*: Holasovice is of special significance in that it represents the fusion of two vernacular building traditions to create an exceptional and enduring style, known as South Bohemian Folk Baroque.

*Criterion iv*: The exceptional completeness and excellent preservation of Holasovice and its buildings make it an outstanding example of traditional rural settlement in central Europe.

ICOMOS, October 1998

BUFFER ZONE

HISTORICAL RESERVATION



HOLAŠOVICE

HISTORICAL RESERVATION

Reserve du village historique d'Holasovice / Holasovice historical village reservation :  
Plan indiquant la zone proposée pour inscription et la zone tampon / Map showing nominated property and buffer zone



**Réserve du village historique d'Holasovice / Holasovice historical village reservation :**  
**Vue aérienne d'Holasovice / Aerial view of Holasovice**



Réserve du village historique d'Holasovice / Holasovice historical village reservation :  
Façade de la ferme n° 3 / Facade of farmstead n° 3