

CZECH REPUBLIC

Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora

Brief description

This pilgrimage church, built in honour of St John of Nepomuk, stands at Zelená Hora, not far from Zdar nad Sázavou in Moravia. Constructed at the beginning of the 18th century on a star-shaped plan, it is the most unusual work by the great architect Jan Blazej Santini, whose highly original style falls between neo-Gothic and Baroque.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription 1994

Agency responsible for site management

- The National Institute for the Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Sites
Valdštejnské náměstí 3
11801 Praha1, Czech Republic
Website: www.npu.cz

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

The comprehensiveness of the symbolic meaning of the area, in its direct and profound interlinkage with the architectural and landscape and urban project makes [the Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora] one of the most significant artistic presentations of Baroque art on a European scale. This is underpinned by the uniqueness and inventive virtuosity of the entire concept of the structure and its decor which in its artistic and symbolic individuality has no comparison. The entire project grows from the purely Baroque understanding of the world, untouched by modern rationalism, from total and dedicated faith in the validity of the truth of the artistic phenomenon and metaphoric image. That is why the Zelená hora pilgrimage area is a sterling Baroque structure in the most genuine sense of the word, as a reality created deliberately, whose intention exceeds the mere sphere of art, substantially develops form and extra-artistic reality, and by convincing articulation manifests its visual

and content order and meaning which claims international impact and the validity of its mission.

[...] The St. John pilgrimage area at Zelená hora near Žďár nad Sázavou is the most magnificent and most original artistic manifestation of one leading idea in the life of Bohemia and Moravia in the 17th and 18th centuries, namely respect for St. John of Nepomuk. The profound experience of the entire ideological complex inspired an exceptional architect (in cooperation with a musically sensitive theologian) to devise the extraordinarily courageous aesthetic and symbolic concept of a work which has no comparison in period Baroque art. The exclusiveness of this pilgrimage area in the religious life of its time was held in high esteem by contemporaries. In its first decades Zelená hora belonged among the most important pilgrimage centres in the entire Kingdom. This is well documented by period homiletics and other literature. The said documents also indicate that the uniqueness of architectural design and its symbolic potential had powerful impact on contemporaries and inspired period literature.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

(October 1994): That this nomination be referred back to the State Party, with a request for further information of the impact of the new Czech legislation on the protection of ecclesiastical monuments and on the restoration programme currently in progress. In the event of this information being supplied, ICOMOS recommends that the property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria i and iv:

Criterion i: The Pilgrimage Church of St John Nepomuk at Zelená Hora, Žďár nad Sázavou, is a masterpiece of Baroque Gothic architecture.

Criterion iv: The Church of St John Nepomuk is an outstanding example of an architectural style that spanned the transition between the Gothic and Baroque traditions.

Committee Decision

Bureau (July 1994): The Bureau took note of the ICOMOS evaluation and referred this nomination to the State Party concerned for additional information concerning the effect of the new legislation on the protection of ecclesiastical monuments and on the on-going restoration project. This information should be communicated before 1 October 1994 to allow ICOMOS to complete its evaluation which will be submitted to the next session of the Bureau in December 1994.

Bureau (December 1994): ICOMOS informed the Bureau that the State Party, as requested by the Bureau at its eighteenth session, had provided additional information concerning the effect of the new legislation on the protection of ecclesiastical monuments and on the on-going restoration project. This information was positively evaluated and ICOMOS recommended, therefore, the inscription of this property under criteria (i) and (iv).

The Bureau recommended that the World Heritage Committee inscribe the property under criteria (i) and (iv).

Committee (1994): The Committee made no statement.

- Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate - no buffer zone has been defined
- change to buffer zone proposed by State Party

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Law No.20/1987 Coll., on the state monuments care that codifies the care for cultural monuments and protected conservation territories
- The estate was declared a national cultural monument by decree of the government of the Czech Republic in 1995. At present its protection is ensured by decree of the government No. 336/2002 Coll., on the declaration and cancellation of some cultural monuments national cultural monuments
- The buffer zone of the estate was declared by the District Authority in Žďár nad Sázavou ref. No. Kult/577/93/Odv of June 27, 1993
- The layout plan of the settlement unit of Žďár nad Sázavou was approved by the authorities of the town in 2003
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction; religious use (cemetery); concert venue

Management /Administrative Body

- A steering group will be established at the end of 2005
- Site manager: responsibilities have been added to an existing job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional, local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- The steering group will be established and the management plan will be elaborated according to the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention of 2005 (by the end of the year 2006)

5. Management Plan

- No management plan is being implemented, but one is projected for 12/2006
- Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: The National Institute for the Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Sites

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Budget sources: State funding for operational costs is allocated from the Ministry of Culture; road and grounds maintenance is covered within the municipal budget; site revenues include sales of guide services, souvenir sales and publicity
- Sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- number of staff: 2

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Very good: conservation, promotion, interpretation
- Good: education, management
- Average: visitor management

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Museum conservation facilities: there is some study of special professional competence in monuments care and extramural courses at the National Institute for the Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Sites, the central place of work in Prague. By request, professional assistance is provided also by the National Committee ICOMOS and the Scientific Council of the National Institute for the Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Sites
- Training on-site management: there is regular training for both guides and managers, as well as methodological materials of the National Institute for the Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Sites that set as their aim the unification of preparation and assessment of repair and restoration of the cultural monuments

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 26,297 (entrance tickets), 2004
- Trend: growing
- Visitor facilities: guide services, local souvenir and refreshment shops, parking, various museums, walking and bicycle paths with interpretive panels
- Visitor needs: Further guide training; better parking facilities for seniors and handicapped visitors

10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the value of the site; Monitoring exercises; condition surveys; archaeological surveys; a “project of the overall arrangement of the surroundings of the estate”
- Studies used for: results are used in the programme of conservation and restoration works
- The individual projects were directly influenced by the fact that the locality was included into the World Heritage List, with the protection of monuments playing a dominant role. Laying stress on the unique values of the estate and preservation of the authenticity of the monument are priorities

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Large number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Events: both temporary and permanent exhibitions, conferences
- Web site available: www.zdarns.cz, www.zamekzdar.cz
- Local participation: the inhabitants express their support of the local municipal administration which is a major promoter and important stakeholder of the estate. The inhabitants are engaged in the work of professional commissions of the town in which questions are discussed relating to the estate and its immediate surroundings. The public organizes or co-participates in the organization of different cultural and social events connected with the monument

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Conservation: After 1994 the first phase was performed, which consisted of the overall repair of the cloisters by conservation method with partial revitalization interventions. This also included repairs to outer facades of the cloisters and plasters of the interiors and restoration of the painting decoration of the so-called German chapel. Partial reconstructions of the stucco decoration were undertaken. Before the beginning of these works, some graves were relocated that were adjacent to the cloisters, such that overall de-watering could be performed. Connected with the repair of the cloisters was also the re-laying and completion of the brick paving. Restored further were 4 entrance gates to the gateways, the windows of 5 chapels of the cloister and sculptural decoration. In the second phase, still in progress, is the complex repair of the church itself, accomplished by conservation method to prevent the necessity of closing the visitors' operation

Repair of the paving in the interior of the church was also completed, and the entrance door to the church was restored. In 2002, the gradual repair was started of the plasters and stucco decoration of the interior of the church. Access roads to the monument were repaired

- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- No specific threats or risks are mentioned

13. Monitoring

- A formal monitoring programme exists
- Measures taken: Since 1998 regular monitoring has been performed according to the methodology approved for the whole state. Elaborated are annual reports that are oriented, at the problems of monument conservation of the estate and its surroundings. The conclusions of those reports are discussed at professional meetings
- Key indicators: monitoring, assessment and documentation of performed repairs with stress laid on the preservation of the authenticity of the monument; monitoring of terrain adjustments and condition of the verdure in the surroundings of the monument; assessment of the standard of visitors' operation

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social factors, economic factors, cultural factors
- Strengths of management: extensive restoration works have been completed, always with the authenticity of the site in mind; the buffer zone and view planes are well protected; some graves have been successfully relocated; the conditions of protection have been outlined in the town planning documents; higher social awareness
- Weaknesses of management: background training for guides needs improvement; the emergency hygienic facility for the visitors and guides and close to the area need improvement; the management plan has not been elaborated yet according to the operational guidelines for the World Heritage Convention of 2005

Future actions:

- Building of the background for the estate management and for its visitors.

- The management plan, according to the operational guidelines for the World Heritage Convention of 2005, will have been elaborated by the end of 2006.