

FINLAND

Fortress of Suomenlinna

Brief description

Built in the second half of the 18th century by Sweden on a group of islands located at the entrance of Helsinki's harbour, this fortress is an especially interesting example of European military architecture of the time.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1991

Agency responsible for site management

- The Governing Body of Suomenlinna
Suomenlinna C 40
00190 Helsinki
e-mail: jaakko.antti-poika@suomenlinna.fi
website: www.suomenlinna.fi

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (iv)

Justification by the State Party

Suomenlinna fulfils the World Heritage Committee criterion IV:

Suomenlinna is a historical, architectural and landscape monument and a living community. It is representative of a significant era in the history of fortification and experimentation in dock construction.

In historical terms, Suomenlinna is an application of the bastion fortress to island conditions and northern climate. It is unique in that it was constructed on a terrain with varied relative altitudes and on separate islands. The islands formed independent fortifications which could operate independently and even against one another, but together formed a systematic fortification. The small size and free forms of the islands forced the planners to conceive an irregular fortification, excluding various outwork.

The fortress also provides concrete examples of the development of fortification throughout centuries; the first phase was a bastion fortress, which was improved in 1774 by high caponiers of a new type. The latter half of the 19th century saw the construction of bank zones required by the science of warfare of the time, and just before the First

World War it was linked to a defence plan covering the whole coastal area.

Special attention was attached to highlighting the ideological significance and monumental nature of the fortress by means of architectural planning. The fortification was to declare the military strength of the nation by its mere existence. On the other hand, the damages inflicted on it by military events reveal the vulnerability of the fortification.

Suomenlinna is in authentic condition in all essential elements. It has got its present form through various historical stages, having formed part of first Swedish, then Russian and finally Finnish defence systems. The point of departure in renovations is to allow and preserve all the manifestations of these historical phases. Reconstruction has been sparse and has been based on extensive document material. More than 10,000 plans and sketches of Suomenlinna have often preserved in Swedish, Russian and Finnish archives. The plans, other archival material and the works of art depicting Suomenlinna form part of the globally valuable cultural heritage.

In accordance with the development plan, the monumental nature and the demands of a residential and working area have been linked into a organic whole.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criterion IV.

- **Criterion IV.** In the history of military architecture, the Fortress of Finland is an outstanding example representative of both the general fortification principles of the period and specific characteristics.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1991): the Bureau recommended the inscription of this site, provided that before its special session in December 1991 the Finnish authorities furnish assurances concerning the existence of a buffer zone to ensure full protection of the site.

Committee (1991): the Committee made no statement

- Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- State Party has not stated if the ICOMOS text is considered to be the official statement of significance

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: not adequate

- Buffer zone: a buffer zone has been defined
- The buffer zone will be defined more accurately

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- No foreseen changes

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- On a decision by the Council of State in 1919 the islands of Susisaari and Kustaanmiekka are protected as historical monuments; in 1975 the Council of State gave a decree on the principles of restoration and future use of Suomenlinna.; the Act of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna (1989); in the 2002 master plan of Helsinki Suomenlinna is defined as an area of significance in the sense of cultural history, architecture and landscape
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Unpaid visitor attraction, community of some 850 inhabitants and part of the city of Helsinki

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group: administration, maintenance and restoration of the area and buildings of Suomenlinna as well as coordination of the works
- Formally constituted
- Management by the State Party; management under protective legislation; management under contractual agreement between the State Party and a third party
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: November 1975
- Very effective
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: the Governing body of Suomenlinna

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Funding from rentals, Ministry of Education and the City of Helsinki (municipality)
- Extra funding has been drawn from World Heritage status
- Private house owners have been able to acquire some contribution through the Board of Antiquities for reparations of their buildings;
- Some assistance through EU (Raphael, Culture 2000)
- Funding available for the adequate management of the site: sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Not provided

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

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

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

- There are members of the staff specially trained in conservation

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: about 600,000 in 2004 - tendency increasing
- Visitor facilities: cafes and restaurants (7-9) museums (7), one hostel / camp school facilities, a visitor centre, info boards, a visitor's harbor, several public toilets
- No tourism/visitor management plan

10. Scientific Studies

- Condition surveys; impact of World Heritage designation; archaeological surveys; visitor management; transportation studies; Suomenlinna is a member in RenDoC, network of historic naval sites in Europe and ACCR, European Network of Cultural Centres-Historic Monuments
- The results have been a tool e.g. to cope with the increased amount of tourists as well as to future planning of restoration. Moreover, the results of various condition surveys have been utilised when defining the use of old buildings

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors; local communities; businesses; local authorities
- Suomenlinna participates the annual Finnish Travel Fair together with other Finnish WH sites
- Web site available
- No local participation

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Further decay on the fortification works, caused by the damaging weather conditions, has been prevented by continuous restoration work
- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Visitor/tourism pressure
- Specific issues if mentioned: an increased number of tourists may cause problems in summertime. It is bound to cause extra pressure to the landscape as well as to the facilities

Actions taken

- More facilities have been built (e.g. public toilets). Special efforts have been made to encourage tourists to visit the site in the winter instead of the high season

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: annual number of visitors and the impact of tourism. The monitoring is being done by interviewing visitors on board the ferries. The residents of Suomenlinna are being regularly interviewed with a questionnaire

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: the public awareness of the historical and architectural value of the site has increased

- Strength: the renovation and re-use of the two wings of the Crownwork Ehrensvärd; the renovation of the coast fortifications of Kustaanmiekka and Iso Mustasaari; the renovation and alteration work of the Tenaille von Fersen as a banqueting hall; refurbishing an old inventory chamber to a visitor centre and a museum; the renovation and re-use of bastion Hårleman and the Jetty Barracs; repairing of apartments; the management and facilities of tourism have developed a lot; the signaling system has been improved
- Weaknesses of management: continuous decay of structures due to the harsh weather and frost in winter

Future actions

- Emphasis is being put on continuous maintenance as well as seeking the most suitable methods of restoration
- Activity does not require funding from World Heritage Fund