

# NORWAY

## Bryggen in Bergen

### Brief description

Bryggen, the old wharf of Bergen, is a reminder of the town's importance as part of the Hanseatic League's trading empire from the 14th to the mid-16th century. Many fires, the last in 1955, have ravaged the beautiful wooden houses of Bryggen but its main structure has been preserved. Many of the remaining 58 buildings are now used as artists' studios. [Bryggen in Bergen, being the greatest assembly of wooden ware houses of great antiquity, is thus unique (cf. 5a iii)] [bracketed sentence added as part of supplementary information provided 26/02/1979]

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1979

#### Agency responsible for site management

- Municipality of Bergen, Cultural Heritage Management Office  
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5020 Bergen  
e-mail: [siri.myrvoll@bergen.kommune.no](mailto:siri.myrvoll@bergen.kommune.no)  
website:  
[www.bergen.kommune.no/byantikvaren](http://www.bergen.kommune.no/byantikvaren)

### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (iii)

#### Justification provided by the State Party

The inclusion of Bryggen in the World Heritage List is justified by the following:

-It is the only remaining part of a hanseatic overseas office.

-It is the nucleus of urban development in a marginal part of Europe.

-and it is a relic of the ancient North European type of Wooden urban structures.

[Bryggen in Bergen, being the greatest assembly of wooden warehouses of great antiquity, is thus unique. (cf. 5a iii)] [bracketed sentence added as part of supplementary information provided 26/02/1979]

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

In its present form, following the 1702 fire, Bryggen, a harmonious ancient quarter, illustrates the use of space in a quarter of Hanseatic merchants. It is a type of northern "fondaco" unequalled by even Lubeck and Novgorod. Bryggen can be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion III.

#### Committee Decision

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
- UNESCO official description of site should be improved. State Party has provided suggestion

#### Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: a buffer zone has been defined

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

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

### 3. Protection

#### Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The Plan and buildings Act; The Cultural Heritage Act §§ 4 (subsurface) and 15 (buildings)
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

### 4. Management

#### Use of site/property

- Urban centre

#### Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group: Mutual information between stakeholders and bodies involved, coordination of initiatives and interests. A forum for discussions on matters that affect the World Heritage
- Formally constituted
- Management under protective legislation
- 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: March 2005
- Adequate
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: the Directorate for Cultural Heritage

### 6. Financial Resources

#### Financial situation

- State budget, regional, local
- Extra funding has been drawn from World Heritage status
- Resources from the State Party provide an annual budget for the purpose of caretaking of Norwegian World Heritage sites. The city and the county also provide monetary support for maintenance and restoration. It is difficult to tell how much out of this is owed to the WH status
- Funding available for the adequate management of the site: sufficient

### 7. Staffing Level

- Number of staff: 3

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

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

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

- There is a Museum at the site (Bryggens Museum)
- There are courses for carpenters and other craftsmen in traditional methods and skills

### 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: more than 500,000 - tendency slowly increasing
- Visitor facilities: a temporary 'Visitors' Center' established in 2004
- No Tourism/visitor management plan

### 10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys
- To reestablish drainage systems for the surface water. To provide the right quality of new timber materials for the foundations, and to reestablish skills in the handling of the materials. Also to investigate how to construct new foundations in accordance with the claim of authenticity - which will mean authenticity in the way of doing, 'processual authenticity'

### 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate 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
- No special events and exhibitions concerning the site's World Heritage status
- No official web site available
- Local participation

### 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

#### Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 18<sup>th</sup> (1994)

#### Conservation interventions

- 23 of the total of 63 buildings at the site have been restored for new use during the period 1962-1999, and thus being preserved. Asbestos materials (roofing etc) have been removed. An extensive restoration project is established (2001) for 38 of the remaining buildings (those not being repaired earlier), paying the highest attention to authenticity in materials and methods. Successively they will be adapted for new, sustainable use. Also an environmental monitoring project is in progress
- Present state of conservation: patchy

#### Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressure, visitor/tourism pressure
- Specific issues if mentioned: Traffic pressure. Wear and tear (through visitors/tourism), fluctuation tidal levels and changes in the ground water level. Extreme humidity gives living conditions to deteriorating organisms

**Actions taken**

- Monitoring projects on environment and traffic pressure

**13. Monitoring**

- Formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: Monitoring projects on environment and traffic pressure. Monitoring of structure damages. Most of the buildings of Bryggen are built upon layers of organic materials which over the centuries have been filled into the sea. Hence the foundations will not be stable. The ways and rapidness in which the changes will occur are hardly predictable, but traffic loads, fluctuating ground water level, and currents caused by ship movements on Vågen are supposed to be of importance

**14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic, management
- Strengths: end to some serious demolition threats, and preservation of the Bryggen district for future generations. Knowledge on how to reconstruct foundations and other vital parts by 'procedural authentic' methods. The road in front of Bryggen, with heavy traffic, has been moved towards the quay front
- Weaknesses of management: the seriously bad state of conservation at the time of inscription

**Future actions:**

- An extensive conservation project for the whole area
- Timeframe: approx 30 years
- Activity does not require funding from World Heritage Fund