

POLAND

Cracow's Historic Centre

Brief description

The historic centre of Cracow, the former capital of Poland, is situated at the foot of the Royal Wawel Castle. The 13th century merchants' town has Europe's largest market square and numerous historical houses, palaces and churches with their magnificent interiors. Further evidence of the town's fascinating history is provided by the remnants of the 14th century fortifications and the medieval site of Kazimierz with its ancient synagogues in the southern part of town, Jagellonian University and the Gothic cathedral where the kings of Poland were buried.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription 1978

Agency responsible for site management

- Cracow City Hall
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (iv)

ICOMOS evaluation

No written statement was prepared.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1978): There was then some discussion as to the desirability of limiting the number of sites that could be nominated by each country onto the World Heritage List to two on this first occasion only, in view of the fact that the total number of nominations was not large and some States had put forward several nominations. The Bureau agreed that on this first occasion in order to have a reasonably balanced List, States should be limited to two nominations each, which could either be all cultural or all natural or a combination of both, and that any sites deferred to 1979 for this reason, which otherwise clearly met the criteria, should be placed on a waiting list.

The only State affected in this way on this occasion was Poland, which had nominated three cultural sites which clearly qualified for inclusion. Auschwitz, Cracow and the Salt Mines. The ICOMOS representative was therefore asked to prioritise the three sites from an expert viewpoint. ICOMOS proposed, and the Bureau accepted, that the Salt Mines was the most important site, followed by Cracow and Auschwitz in that order. It was therefore agreed that the Auschwitz nomination would be deferred.

- Statement of Significance does not adequately define the outstanding universal value of the site
- No need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the statement of significance
- Proposal for revised text has not been made by State Party, but is required
- Brief description of the site is not satisfactory, change required

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- No buffer zone has been defined, but is needed
Need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the buffer zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Act on the Protection and Guardianship of Historical Monuments (2003); Act on the National Fund for the Restoration of Cracow Heritage (1985); Act on the Protection of Nature as amended (1991); Act on Museums (1996); Acts on Central Government Administration in a Voivodeship (1998); Act on Spatial Planning and Development (2003); Act changing the Act - Construction Law and amending some other Acts (2003); Ordinance of the Minister of Culture on Granting an Earmarked Subsidy for Conservation, Restoration and Construction Works on historical sites entered into the Inventory of Monuments (2004); Ordinance of the Minister of Culture on Maintaining the Inventory of Monuments, National, Voivodeship and Gmina Records of Monuments and the National list of historical objects stolen or illegally exported from the country (2004); Ordinance of the Minister of Culture on conducting conservation, restoration and

construction works, conservation and architectural research and other activities performed on a historic monument entered into the Inventory of Monuments as well as conducting archaeological research or search for hidden or abandoned movable monuments (2004)

- The new Law on Spatial Planning and Development dated 27 March 2003, harmonised with the European Union legislation, provides for the preparation of a study of conditions and orientations of spatial development for a town or a gmina as a document preceding the preparation of a general spatial development plan, constituting the basis for the plan preparation. The provisions contained in the Study are binding for gmina authorities working on their local spatial development plans. In 2003 the Study of conditions and orientations of spatial development for the city of Cracow was prepared and adopted by the Cracow City Council. The Study contains a chapter entitled "The Condition of the Cultural Environment" and another, "The Protection and Shaping of Cultural Heritage". Local spatial development plans are gradually being adopted but so far they have covered only a few percent of the Cracow area. The Voivodeship Programme for the Guardianship of Historical Monuments, still under preparation, will provide for activities aimed at the most effective protection and management of the heritage inscribed into the UNESCO List
- Protection arrangements are considered sufficient

Actions taken/proposed

- Strategy for the Promotion of Cracow
- Preparation and adoption of local spatial development plans
- Establishment of a cultural park covering the area of the medieval town of Cracow

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, urban centre, religious use
- Scientific and academic centre; cultural centre of European significance; metropolitan role of the city; using cultural heritage as a widely recognised brand - a symbol of Polish cultural heritage

Management/Administrative Body

- No steering group

- No site manager/coordinator, but is needed
- Levels of public authority primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional and local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed

- Establishment of a cultural park named "The Old Town", covering the area of the Old Town and the surroundings of Wawel Hill

5. Management Plan

- No management plan; preparation will be completed in 01/2008
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Cracow City Council

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Funding is provided by Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland (Civic Committee for the Restoration of Cracow Heritage); Ministry of Culture; Budget of the Monuments Protection Division of the Cracow City Hall; Management Board of Borough I of the City of Cracow; Gmina of Cracow; Office of the Marshal of the Małopolskie Voivodeship; Office of the Małopolski Voivode; Voivodeship Environmental Protection Fund; Church funds; Own resources of the Wawel Royal Castle; Private owners, investors and donators
- As a consequence of the inscription of the site into the UNESCO World heritage List, in 1978, the National Fund for the Restoration of Cracow Heritage was established, together with its authorised fund manager, the Civic Committee for the Restoration of Cracow Heritage (operating to date)
- Financial assistance from bi-lateral cooperation
- Funding is insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 403

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

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

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

- Visegrad Summer School, Villa Decius in Cracow; Academy of Heritage at International Cultural Centre in Cracow; The College for New Europe at the International Cultural Centre in Cracow; Jagiellonian University in Cracow: intramural studies in the history of arts, postgraduate studies in museology and preservation of historic monuments, Culture Management at the Faculty of Management and Marketing; Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow; Cracow University of Technology, Institute of Protection and Conservation of Historical Monuments; Postgraduate Studies for Culture Managers, Warsaw School of Economics

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: no information
- Visitor facilities: Accommodation; Catering; Tourist Information Centres; Tourist guides services; Banks and currency exchange bureaux; Trade; Internet cafes; Transport infrastructure (airport, railway, bus connections, private car, domestic bus and tram network, private minibuses); Theatres, cinemas, galleries, museums, cultural centres, libraries and other cultural institutions; Historic buildings and groups of buildings, including 591 entered into the Inventory of Monuments located in the area inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List; Leisure infrastructure; Tourist trails; Cycling paths; Travel agencies
- Visitor needs: Insufficient number of low cost hotel accommodation; not enough car parks around the city centre; not quite efficient public transport

10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the value of the site, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, visitor management, transportation studies
- Studies prepared recently have identified conservation protection zones for the historic complexes inscribed on the World Heritage List. The zones have limited the introduction of new developments which would reduce the value of an inscribed site. They have also provided conservation guidelines for refurbishment, potential use and utilisation of public space and particular elements of the complex. The Studies

also play a role in the protection of the panorama and the townscape of the city. Moreover, they are regularly used for the preparation of local spatial development plans, which constitute the acts of local legislation

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Not enough signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage site among visitors, local communities, businesses and local authorities
- Special events concerning World Heritage status: annual exhibitions
- Web sites available: www.krakow.pl
www.wawel.krakow.pl
- Involvement of local population: The management of the city is vested in elected self-government authorities

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Since the inscription on the UNESCO List the urban planning arrangement of the Old Town quarters has improved as has the Old Town infrastructure. The condition of the natural environment is better, low emissions and industrial threats have been removed. Urban "interior spaces" have become much more aesthetically pleasing. After 1978 refurbishment-conservation works have been conducted in all historic buildings and complexes within the WH inscribed area
- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disasters, visitor/tourism pressure
- A tendency of buildings proposed to be erected on the few available plots to exceed the size of existing Old Town buildings
- Unfinished transport investment projects and lack of strategically located car parks which would allow to remove all vehicle traffic from the inscribed area
- Sporadic possibility of flooding

- Increased tourist traffic and related excessive development of tourist infrastructure (hotels)
- Transport related natural environment pollution

Measures taken/proposed

- The transportation problem has been solved by construction of underground car parks
- Low emissions (replacing coal fuelled heating with electrical or gas heating systems) and industrial threats (contamination of water and air) were eliminated
- The risk of flooding has been eliminated through increasing the height of levies along the Vistula River and preparation of an anti-flooding system
- A motorway ring road has been constructed together with new bridges, which removed transit vehicle traffic from the city centre
- Replacement of streets and squares surfaces and installation of new lighting systems in urban interiors
- Administrative procedure leading to establishment of a cultural park including the Old Town area, has been initiated
- Regeneration of historic buildings is continued

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- Adaptation of the monitoring methodology following ICOMOS recommendations (2000), including: phases of street formation and a description of their present condition; cards for individual immovable objects containing the address, number of entry in the Inventory of Monuments, function, utilisation status, technical condition of buildings and un-built areas, date of origin, valuation and conservation guidelines
- In addition, the Historical Monuments Protection division of Cracow City Hall has prepared a database of architectural sites located in the area of the medieval town of Cracow and the medieval town of Kazimierz, containing basic information about a site, which is regularly updated with information about its technical condition, ownership changes, utilisation, on the basis of space valuation studies
- State Environmental Monitoring conducted by the Voivodeship Environmental Protection Inspectorate in Cracow. Under the programme the quality of air and flowing waters is controlled by automatic monitoring stations

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, economic, management and tourism development
- Strengths: Since the inscription the funds allocated for refurbishment and conservation of historic monuments have significantly increased as has the funding for improving the arrangement and regeneration of the public space. Municipal and transport infrastructure has been developed. Environmental pollution has been reduced. Tourist traffic has increased, which resulted in the development of accommodation and catering facilities. The city inhabitants have become more aware of the value of the inscribed site. Scientific research extending the knowledge about the site has developed. After the administration reform of 1999 the contribution of local government funding for conservation and pro-conservation activities has increased as has the participation of private capital in financing renovation works in historic buildings
- Weaknesses of management: Lack of local spatial development plans; No institution co-ordinating the management of the site; Unfinished transport investment projects and lack of strategically located car parks which would allow to remove all vehicle traffic from the inscribed area; A tendency of buildings proposed to be erected on the few available plots to exceed the size of existing Old Town buildings; Insufficient co-ordination of works (and their funding) conducted by individuals and corporate entities; Lack of co-ordination of scientific research and studies

Future actions:

- Local spatial development plans
- Cultural park covering the area of the Old Town
- Underground car parks
- Regeneration of historic buildings