

# RUSSIAN FEDERATION

## Historic Monuments of Novgorod and Surroundings

### Brief description

Situated on the ancient trade route between Central Asia and northern Europe, Novgorod was Russia's first capital in the 9th century. Surrounded by churches and monasteries, it was a centre for Orthodox spirituality as well as Russian architecture. Its medieval monuments and the 14th-century frescoes of Theophanes the Greek (Andrei Rublev's teacher) illustrate the development of its remarkable architecture and cultural creativity.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1992

#### Agency responsible for site management

- The Novgorod Regional Committee for Culture, Cinema and Tourism  
Department of State Control, Protection and Use of Monuments of History and Culture  
1, Sophiyskaya Square  
173001 Velikiy Novgorod  
Novgorod Region, Russia  
E-mail: [op@culture.natm.ru](mailto:op@culture.natm.ru)  
Website: [www.adm.nov.ru](http://www.adm.nov.ru)

### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (ii), (iv), (vi)

#### Justification provided by the State Party

The cultural layer of Novgorod of the 10th-17th centuries is a unique archaeological monument.

It occupies considerable area (about 347 hectares) and at certain areas is up to 7-8 meters thick.

Preservation of ancient relics in Novgorod is a unique phenomenon that is due to a combination of several favourable factors. First, Novgorod was built on a thick clay soil that excludes natural drainage of precipitation. In the course of its formation the cultural layer was saturated with moisture.

The fact excluded and prevented forming life conditions of bacteria that cause decay.

Secondly, excessive humidity precluded any work to be done in the layer, and the ancient citizen of Novgorod shunned making deep foundation, digging wells and cellars. Thus cultural deposits experienced little disturbance.

Thirdly, in the 18th century the city got a new planning conception by the principles of regular construction. As a result of this replanning new streets were made aside from the medieval streets. That is why the stone construction on a large scale at the end of the 18th century and up to the 20th century with deep foundations did not destroy the principal ancient clusters of buildings.

Fabric of Novgorodian cultural layer gives us opportunities not only to obtain in it numerous ancient objects, that do not survive in other locations of Russian medieval cities, but also to evolve the system of their interconnection and to discover during excavations local-chronological and local-territorial ensembles.

Ideal preservation of remains of wooden buildings makes it possible to use arbor-chronological analysis on a large scale and establish dating of these entities within a decade. The above mentioned possibility allows posing such scientific aims that were unthinkable earlier for archaeology of a medieval town.

From here follows that the Novgorod cultural layer is a historic source of a national and world importance that needs most careful preservation.

Among old cities that form a treasure of culture and arts Novgorod undoubtedly stands foremost. No city in Russia can boast of such numerous beautiful monuments of architecture and fresco painting of the a unique comprehensive historical, architectural and arts ensemble of the 11th-17th centuries.

The fact that in the 8th-19th centuries Novgorod turned into a backwater provincial town accounts for preservation of its ancient planning structure, many of its original streets and squares.

In Novgorod survives nearly intact the system of medieval fortifications, consisting of the Kremlin (walls and towers date back to the 15th-17th centuries), of Inner city earthen rampart (the second belt of fortification) and the outer city rampart with a wall of the 14th, 16th centuries.

The Novgorod Kremlin is a comprehensive monument of 15th-17th centuries. Its principal constructions, though greatly influenced by Moscow architectural traditions still preserve some local trends that confirm stability of ancient Novgorodian architectural patterns. Novgorodian Detinets like

most of other old Russian fortresses, shuns regular geometrical forms, characteristic of west-European castles of the time. Its layout is interwoven with the landscape relief and that principal was not violated during the whole period of its construction and reconstruction from the 11th to the 17th century. The walls of the fortress are following the terrain natural outlines and that forms a unique impression of an ancient town.

Unlike any other Russian city, Novgorod has preserved up till now the earth ramparts and moat of outer belt of city fortifications of the 14th, 16th centuries. The rampart and moat both on the St Sophia and Market side of the city form a unique by its length and rare by its preservation monument of old Russian military defensive architecture and archaeology.

On the territory of the Novgorod historical core is situated the most ancient of surviving churches of Russia, St Sophia cathedral of 1045-1050. The oldest monument of stone architecture in the northern part of Russia, the Novgorod St Sophia is only by several years junior to St Sophia Cathedral in Kiev. Despite its affinity to the Kievan cathedral of St. Sophia, the Novgorodian one differs from it not only in design features but also in its artistic pattern. It is simpler, more laconic and austere.

The Novgorod St Sophia cathedral is an outstanding monument of the Russian art of the 11th-17th centuries. The cathedral interior with fragments of fresco painting of the 11th, 12th centuries, large multitiered iconstand of the 16th century, iconstand of the Nativity chapel of the 16th century made by Novgorodian masters, woodcarved thrones for praying of the 15th, 16th centuries, large bronze chandelier of the 16th century and other authentic objects of cathedral decoration present an invaluable art treasure.

Novgorod is the only Russian city that managed to preserve a great many unique monuments of architecture of pre-Mongolian period (11th-12th centuries), St Sophia Cathedral of 1045-1050, St George Cathedral in Yuriev monastery of 1119, the Nativity cathedral in St Anthony monastery of 1117, St Nicholas cathedral in Yaroslav's court of 1113, the Transfiguration of our Saviour Church at Nereditsa of 1198, the church of Annunciation at Miachino of 1179, St Peter and Paul church at Silnishche of 1192, St Parasceve the Friday church at Yaroslav's court of 1207, the Nativity of Our Lady church at Peryn of the 13th century and others.

Many a monument of architecture and wall-painting (fresco) art has survived in Novgorod dating back to the 13th-15th centuries, that as the period of

flourishing of Novgorodian culture, epoch of formation of original art and architecture school (church of St Nicolas at Lipno of 1294 with fresco painting of the 13th century, Church of St Theodore Stratilates on the Brook of 1360 with fresco painting of the 14th century, church of the Transfiguration of Our Saviour in the Ilyina Street of 1374 with the fresco of the 14th century by Theophanes the Greek, church of St John the Divine on the Vitka of 1383-1384, church of the Nativity of Our Lady of 1379 at the Mikhaillitsky monastery in Molotkova Street, church of the Nativity of Christ in the Field of 1381-1382 with fresco of the 14th century, church of SS Peter and Paul in Kozhevniky of 1406 and others.

The historical core of Novgorod contains a great many unique monuments of ecclesiastical architecture of the 14th century built in typical Novgorodian forms. Among them are the church of the Myrrh Bearing Women of 1510 and the church of St Procopius of 1529 in the Yaroslav's court, church of St Clement of 1520 and others.

An authentic masterpiece of monumental painting of world significance is the fresco painting in the church of the Transfiguration of Our Saviour in Ilyina Street, made in 1378 by the renown Byzantine artist Theophanes the Greek.

Among the masterpieces of old Russian art one should mention the worldwide known paintings of the 12th-17th centuries in the architectural monuments of Novgorod, the church of the Transfiguration of Our Saviour at Nereditsa of the 12th century, church of the Annunciation at Miachino of the 12th century, the Nativity of Our Lady cathedral at St Anthony monastery of the 12th century, St George cathedral at Yuriev monastery at the 12th century, church of St Theodore Stratilates on the Brook of the 14th century, the Nativity of Christ in the Field of the 14th century, church of St Simeon the God Receiver of the 15th century, Our lady of the Sign of the 17th century and others.

The numerous surviving monuments of architecture in Novgorod with monumental simplicity of forms and peculiar construction methods and fresco painting in the churches, that strikes by its spiritual and dramatic expression, present typical examples of the Novgorodian school of Old Russian art.

Historical core of Novgorod with outstanding monuments of Old Russian architecture of the 11th-17th centuries, surviving masterpieces of frescos of the 12th-17th centuries and rich cultural layers present a unique comprehensive, historical,

architectural and arts ensemble of the 11th-17th centuries.

No other Russian city enjoys such a picturesque natural conditions as Novgorod. Numerous rivers and lakes, vast meadows enhance visual impression of the city monuments.

#### **As provided in ICOMOS evaluation**

#### **COMMENTS**

In 1991 the World Heritage Bureau followed the ICOMOS Bureau in recommending inscription of this property, but requested a reformulation of the title of the nomination. It was felt that "Historic Monuments of Novgorod" would be preferable to "Historic Centre of Novgorod". A topographical plan with a clear indication of protection perimeters (and of the respective buffer zones) was also requested.

By letter of 11 October, 1991, the Ministry of Culture indicated a change in the title of the nomination to "The Historic Monuments of Novgorod and its environs". Appropriate maps were also provided subsequently. This change of title has implications in relation to the protection criteria, since it applies to individual monuments and not a zone. All the monuments lie within the historical, architectural, and archaeological preserve established by the Novgorod Regional Council of People's Deputies by Resolution No 366 of 25 September 1985. The cultural deposits are protected by Decree of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR No 624 of 4 December 1974. The effects of these two ordinances is that (i) there is planning control over all constructions in the designated zone and (ii) all construction work must be preceded by archaeological excavation.

#### **ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION**

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria ii, iv, and vi.

- Criterion ii: As an outstanding cultural centre, birthplace of the national style of stone architecture, and one of the oldest national schools of painting, the town of Novgorod influenced the development of Russian art as a whole throughout the Middle Ages.

- Criterion iv: With the broad range of monuments conserved in Novgorod, the town is a veritable "conservatory" of Russian architecture of the Middle Ages and later periods (11th-19th centuries). These monuments alone suffice to illustrate the development of Russian architecture.

- Criterion vi: Novgorod was one of the major centres of Russian culture and spirituality: its

monuments and the treasures they house bear living witness to this.

#### **Committee Decision**

Bureau (1991): The Bureau recommended the inscription of this property, but requested the Soviet authorities to submit a plan clearly showing the boundaries of the property nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, and also to consider the possibility of naming it "Historic Monuments of Novgorod". In the light of the information received, the nomination could be re-examined by the Bureau at its special session in December 1991.

Session (1991): The proposals for inscribing the Historical Centre of Boukhara and Historical Monuments of Novgorod and its region were not considered by the Committee because the Bureau decided to defer their examination.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required by State Party

#### **Boundaries and Buffer Zone**

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

#### **Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have not been maintained. No significant changes to the authenticity/integrity of the site

### **3. Protection**

#### **Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- The Cadastre of the Historical and Cultural Heritage of Novgorod approved by the City Administration in 1997
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

### **4. Management**

#### **Use of site/property**

- Urban centre, religious use

#### **Management /Administrative Body**

- Steering group has been legally set up in 1992
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: regional, local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

## 5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: January 1992
- The current management plan (revised in 2005) is considered to be adequate
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: The Administration and City Duma of Velikiy Novgorod

## 6. Financial Resources

### Financial situation

- State budget
- WHF: International Training Workshop for decision-makers on the World Heritage from Eastern and Central Europe (2001)
- Bi-lateral
- Funding is insufficient

## 7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 505

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

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

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

- Scientific institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Archaeology, Centre for Archaeological Studies
- Wooden conservation laboratory
- Workshops and training courses organised by the UNESCO Chair in Urban and Architectural Conservation

## 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: not provided
- Visitor facilities: excursion bureaus, guides, souvenir shops, promotional materials, parking lots, transport facilities, hotels, restaurants, cafés

## 10. Scientific Studies

- Archaeological surveys have been regularly carried out since 1932
- Historic-Ethnographic expeditions

## 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Small 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
- Web site available: [www.novgorodmuseum.ru/museums/arch](http://www.novgorodmuseum.ru/museums/arch) The Novgorod Museum-Reserve
- No steps have been taken to involve local people in the management of the site

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

### Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

### Conservation interventions

- Conservation; restoration works: not provided
- Present state of conservation: patchy

### Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, tourism pressure
- Emergency measures taken: not provided

## 13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme has been established
- Measures taken/planned: not provided

## 14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, economic, management
- Strength: adequate management plan
- Weaknesses: lack of funding, need of training for the staff involved in the conservation activities, no community participation in the site management

### Future actions:

- Administration of the Velikiy Novgorod and the Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation to increase funding for conservation/restoration, educational and awareness-raising activities, as well as for the training of the staff