

Slovakia

Historic Town of Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity¹

Brief Description

Over the centuries, the town of Banská Štiavnica was visited by many outstanding engineers and scientists, many of whom contributed to its fame. The old medieval mining centre grew into a town with Renaissance palaces, 16th-century churches, elegant squares and castles. The urban centre blends into the surrounding landscape, which contains vital relics of the mining and metallurgical activities of the past.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1993

Agency responsible for site management

- Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic,
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (iv), (v)

Justification as provided by the State Party

Banská Štiavnica and technical monuments in its vicinity which are proposed for enrollment to the list of World Cultural Heritage fulfill the criteria of UNESCO in the sense of paragraph 24(A) i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

According to paragraph 29 ii, Banská Štiavnica unequivocally belongs to the category of towns with characteristic development which have retained their original spatial organization and structure that is typical of gradual development phases of their history. Indisputable attributes of Banská Štiavnica are its technical monuments situated directly in the town territory, and also in its larger surroundings, which are connected with a period of the town's prosperity. This prosperity was dependent on the extraordinary concentration of mineral wealth, and the local development of mining techniques of world significance.

The features of the proposed locality fulfil the following criteria of paragraph 24(a):

i) The original scheme of the grand plan and structure of the historical core of Banská Štiavnica demonstrates the presentation of all the historical styles in the development of the town that have led a unique compact urban unit that harmonizes with the landscape. All these facts enable the town to be considered a unique and ingenious masterpiece. Banská Štiavnica was built directly on the place of exploitation of the ore veins, and has retained (specifically the historic town core) its historical flavour and character.

The town's mining wealth supported its rapid development of crafts and fine arts, the result of which we can admire in the magnificence of the entire town and individual architecture even today.

Unique and matchless is the water reservoir system which had its beginnings in the 16th century, with its biggest development in the 18th century. This work of art represents the creative spirit of genius; it was designed for maximum utilization of the hydroenergetic potential of the hilly territory, the results of which were to be used for needs of the mining works and other institutions.

Up to the middle of the 19th century many statistics, not only of the entire system but also of the individual parts (measurements and steep slopes of the dams, the length of mining water galleries, the range of the collecting water-springs, etc.) had not been surmounted anywhere in the world. One value of these works is in their harmonic position with the dramatic character of the landscape. The conserved water system has been a basic factor of the ecological stability of the area until today. It had been the most advanced water economic system created before the end of the 19th century in Europe.

ii) In spite of the complicated geographic conditions, Banská Štiavnica has been a splendid example of advanced urbanism from the 16th century to the present. Archeological surveys of

¹ New name adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 30th session in Vilnius (July 2006).

Trinity Square indicated that the intentional establishment of the large scale development concept respected the features of the terrain. The arrangement of nearby streets and construction of miners' houses is graduated in a way that enables the optimum functioning of the town. The connection between the technically cultivated landscape with the system of water reservoirs managed not only to advance exploitation but also served other needs of the town (drinking water sources, fish breeding, and other supplemental functions.)

From the 15th to the 19th centuries the town with its exploitation and processing of precious metals, and scientific and technical potential, influenced European development and the universal application of progressive mining methods. There was no other mining district with so many important discoveries as occurred here in the past. There are many unique traditions in Banská Štiavnica in the range of science, technology, and education.

iii) The following facts present proof of the unique properties belonging to Banská Štiavnica for the proposal of the town to be enrolled in the list of the World Cultural Heritage (see supplement: "Historical Significance of Banská Štiavnica and the Value of its Cultural, Historical, and Technical Monuments"): the exploitation of gold and silver ores from the 11th century and the exploitation of polymetallic ores, as early as the 16th century; the written documents "terre banensium" from 1156; the efficiency of exploitation during the 13th to the 18th centuries; the creation of the undivided mining water reservoir system; technical discoveries and applications of progressive exploitation and processing methods; establishment of polytechnical education, the first of its type in the world and its attraction of experts concentrated in Banská Štiavnica ore district- all these facts present the proof of unique properties in the proposal of the property to be enrolled in the list of the World Cultural Heritage (see supplement: "Historical Significance of Banská Štiavnica and the Value of its Cultural, Historical, and Technical Monuments.")

iv) Banská Štiavnica and the technical monuments in its vicinity present a unique symbiosis of the technical landscape and the urban environment that was conditional on its rich mineral stores and its prosperity connected with ore exploitation. The position of the town (a hilly mining environment with dramatic geographic conditions) of the town is witness to man's success to adapt, cultivate, and optimally utilize the town and landscape in the period of its economic boom. Banská Štiavnica pioneered significant cultural, scientific, and technical developments in mining and metallurgy. After the exhaustion of the easily achieved mineral

stores, there was a struggle to revive the prosperity on the basis of the former technical advancement that was reached under the influence of progressive education, science, and technology here.

v) Present-day Banská Štiavnica and its vicinity is an example of advanced culture. After conditions changed (exhaustion of mineral resources), the burghers lost interest in the town, and it lost its sovereignty in education when other schools developed elsewhere. The town has become vulnerable in the last century; the historical urban structure (in decline) and the unique historical and technical monuments (such as the water reservoir system) are threatened. The protection and preservation of this setting for future generations should be a goal of revitalization.

vi) In continuity with the above criteria, Banská Štiavnica and the technical monuments in its vicinity are directly connected with the results and discoveries of world importance during its period of prosperity. The first European structured school for educating mining experts was established here in 1605. In 1735 the first mining school of higher education in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy began operation here, thanks to educator and scientist Samuel Mikovíni; in 1762 the Mining Academy was founded, the first of its kind in the world. This school was the workplace of many world-known scientists and experts in mining, mineralogy, chemistry, forestry, and other natural sciences. (See Supplement: "Historical Significance of Banská Štiavnica and the Value of its Cultural, Historical, and Technical Heritage".) On the basis of these facts, Banská Štiavnica is qualified by its cultural-historical heritage to be enrolled in the List of the World Cultural Heritage, especially in the sense of a), c), and d).

A provided in ICOMOS evaluation

At its 16th Meeting in Paris in July 1992 the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee deferred the examination of this property "to allow the competent (...) authorities to provide additional background information concerning the concrete existence of a heritage bearing witness to mining activities". ICOMOS is satisfied that the Slovak authorities have provided that information.

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iv and v:

Criterion iv: The urban and industrial complex of Banská Štiavnica and its surrounding area is an outstanding example of a medieval mining centre of great economic importance that continued into the

modern period and assumed a characteristic and distinctive form.

Criterion v: With the cessation of mining activities at Banská Štiavnica and the removal of the Mining Academy, the town lost much of its *raison d'être*, and in so doing has become vulnerable to the progressive erosion of its character and urban fabric.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1992): The Bureau deferred the examination of this property to allow the competent Czech and Slovak authorities to provide additional background information concerning the concrete existence of an heritage bearing witness to mining activities.

Session (1993): The Committee inscribed the site on the World Heritage List under criteria (iv) and (v).

- 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
- A change of legislation in 2002 and specification of legislative documents resulted in 2005 in the re-consideration of the protective zone and further specification protection aimed at improvement and better precision of legislative protection of the world heritage site as a whole

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Acts: protection and development of territory of Banská Štiavnica and its surroundings (2001); Building Act No. 50 (1976)
- Laws: on protection of monuments and historic sites (2002); on Landscape and Nature Protection (2003)
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed

- Regionally and locally, there is a continual effort to include Protective Measures in planning documents.

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre, rural landscape

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: legally constituted (2005) with a further focus group specifically looking at management planning and business plans
- Site manager: has these responsibilities in addition to another job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional, local
- The current management system is not sufficient

Proposed actions:

- Acknowledge and improve on the need to communicate between stakeholders; finish strategic planning for the town; create a new development planning section to the management plan; act on the protective measures in place that unite administrative bodies

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: March 2003
- Title "Revival of town of Banská Štiavnica in the years 2003-2006"
- Adequate

Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Town of Banská Štiavnica, Región Sitno association

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget: many state sources are mentioned such as the Pro-Slovakia Programme and 'Let's Renew Our House' Programme
- WHF
- Bi-lateral; etc: (2004) The Headley Trust
- Insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 3

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

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

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

- Scientific institutions: Monuments Inspection and the Monuments Council (both Slovak Republic); Technical college of S. Mikonivý; Detached branch of Faculty of Architecture STU in Banská Štiavnica
- Museum conservation facilities, etc: Slovak Mining Museum; Archaeological Council (Slovak Republic)
- Training on site management, etc. : Academia Istropolitana NOVA Sv. Jur.

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: (2004), museum only (60,000), town centre (estimated 300,000)
- Trend: slightly decreasing
- Visitor facilities: visitor centre, museum and museum shop, publications, walking trails
- Visitor needs: adequate

10. Scientific Studies

- Studies relating to the value of the site; risk assessment; monitoring exercises; condition surveys; archaeological surveys; water management projects; landscape and environmental processes
- Studies used for management of site, in the regular decision-making process of the Monuments Board

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem are used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Need for awareness raising in achieved in part through the education strategy
- Events: international seminars and courses, children's events
- Web site available: <http://www.banskastiavnica.sk/>
- Local participation is attained through local representation on the administrative board, specialized seminars and workshops for locals; and local newsletters

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Gradual recovery and rehabilitation of monuments in danger; gradual restoration of water mining works; modernization of supply networks and public areas
- Present state of conservation: 'Patchy'

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressures, number of inhabitants, visitor & tourism pressures, loss of original industrial monuments
- Specific issues: lack of planning and public education regarding tourism activities
- Emergency measures taken: an effort to better use the principles of care for the monuments in planning procedures, in particular through the regional social development plan for 2003-2007

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme exists
- Measures taken: the introduction of "Passport Cards" for each monument to act as baseline data
- Key indicators: (1) description of changes having influence on authenticity and integrity and evaluation of significant interventions into protected locality with respect to increased or decreased threat to said aspects, (2) information on all aspects causing problems or risks, (3) evaluation of conservation of values

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, economic
- Strengths of management: increased interest in territory, its restoration as well as restoration of particular monuments shown by owners and investors at national level; increased services to the area
- Weaknesses of management: need elaboration to the management plan, need better mapping; improved mapping of the site, need continued involvement of the local population

Future actions:

- To work on the areas outlined above as weak points of the management