
Ljubljana (Slovenia) No 1643

Official name as proposed by the State Party

The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design

Location

City of Ljubljana
Slovenia

Brief description

The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana are nominated as an example of a human centered urban design that successively changed the identity of the pre-existing city. Following the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ljubljana changed from a provincial city into a symbolic national capital for the Slovenian people. The architect Jože Plečnik contributed to this transformation with his personal, profoundly human vision for the city. The nominated property consists of a series of public spaces (squares, parks, streets, promenades, bridges) and public institutions (national library, churches, markets, funerary complex) that Plečnik designed throughout the city in the period between the two World Wars. The selected works are sensitively integrated into the pre-existing urban, natural and cultural context and contributed to the city's new identity. This highly contextual and human-scale urbanistic approach, as well as Plečnik's distinctive architectural language, is seen to stand apart from the other predominant modernist principles of his time.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of one *sites*, three *monuments* and three *ensembles*.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

29 January 2018

Background

This is a new nomination.

The State Party received input from ICOMOS within an upstream process in October 2017 for a transnational serial nomination project with Czechia with the name: "The timeless, humanistic architecture of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana and Prague".

Consultations and Technical Evaluation Mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 28 September to 2 October 2020.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 5 October 2020 requesting further information about the concept and presentation of the nomination, the selection of component parts, development projects, recent and planned conservation works, and community involvement. An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 17 December 2020 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the scope of the nominated series and number of component parts; the boundaries of the buffer zones; legal protection; landscape design; urban development; and the name of the nomination. Additional information was received from the State Party on 13 November 2020 and 24 February 2021 and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

18 March 2021

2 Description of the property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The nominated property consists of a series of public spaces (squares, parks, streets, promenades, bridges) and public institutions (national library, churches, markets, funerary complex) designed by Jože Plečnik throughout the city of Ljubljana in the period between the two World Wars. Following World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a desire to create independent nation states triggered various state and city building projects in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The national awakening sentiment in Central Europe reaches back to the 19th century, and a destructive earthquake in 1895 constitutes a turning point in the urban development of Ljubljana. From the mid-20th century, after the Slovenian provinces had become part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Plečnik contributed to developing Ljubljana from a provincial city to a symbolic national capital for the Slovenian people according to his personal, profoundly human vision. In 1921, he was appointed professor at Ljubljana's newly-established School of Architecture and returned to his hometown from Vienna, where he had studied, and Prague, where he remained chief architect of Hradcany Castle until 1934. Until his death in 1957, he was

frequently commissioned by the city, the province, the university and several church institutions. His works range from large-scale urban schemes to small-scale architectural interventions in the public spaces and were supported by two influential acquaintances: Matko Prelovšek, the director of the city building department, and France Stele, land conservator in the Ljubljana Monument Office.

Plečnik's highly contextual and human-scale urbanistic approach, as well as his distinctive architectural language, stood apart from the modernist principles that generally prevailed at this time and beyond this geographical region. The serial property constitutes a selection from a greater number of works by Plečnik throughout the city. Despite their variety of scale, function and architectural expression, the components share certain characteristics: a human scale, which focuses on the needs of modern citizens. They embrace various meanings, functions and symbolic references to different cultures and architectural epochs. Against the backdrop of the global financial crisis of the 1930s, they are also testimony to an economic use of resources. Apart from integrating the existing built and natural context, the architecture involves the meaningful up-cycling of materials and historic artefacts, symbolic references as well as the use of local materials and traditional craftsmanship, among other things. Materials employed for structural and decorative elements include natural stone, concrete, brick, wood and metal, among others.

The serial components include 2 parallel land and water axes, which were redesigned and connected with shorter transversal axes by Plečnik, as well as an archaeological park in the city centre. The series also includes two churches of different styles and a funerary complex in both rural and urban suburbs. These works were successively realized in the two decades between 1925 and 1945 as circumstances, political will and funding allowed.

The land axis (component 2), called the "Green Promenade along Vegova Street", consists of the Green Promenade which includes memorials and sculptures along Vegova Street. The component further includes the building of the National and University Library and Congress Square with Zvezda Park. Component 2 also includes urban furniture, a tobacco kiosk and a weather station. Trnovo Bridge (component 1), which functions as a square in front of the Trnovo Church, is located separately to the south.

The water axis (component 4) is called "Promenade along the Embankments and Bridges of the Ljubljanica River". The component includes Trnovo Quay, which consists of a 400-metre-long terraced design of the riverbanks serving both as promenade and washing area. It further includes the Cobblers' Bridge and the Three Bridges, functioning as public squares above the Ljubljanica and Gradaščica rivers, the Theatre Staircase and the Gerber Staircase that link the river promenade to the city, the still-active Plečnik's Market, as well as the Sluice Gate as part of the technical infrastructure for regulating the Ljubljanica River.

Another component in the city centre (component 3) is the Roman Walls in Mirje, around which Plečnik established a public archaeological park and recreational area. The component includes the walls as restored by Plečnik with gates, a stone pyramid, a lapidary and a balustrade made of prefabricated concrete sewage pipes, as well as other landscaping features including vegetation.

The serial components located in the suburbs are the Church of St. Michael (component 5) in the setting of the Ljubljana Marshes, the neoclassical Church of St. Francis of Assisi (component 6), and the funerary complex of Plečnik's Žale – Garden of All Saints (component 7) which includes a propylaea gateway, 14 chapels and other facilities.

Following Slovenian independence in 1991, systematic conservation works started throughout the nominated property. All serial components remain in use and play an important role in Ljubljana's urban life.

Boundaries

The area of the 7 components totals 19.122 ha. The property boundaries are set up adequately on the basis of existing legal stipulations and encompass the nominated interventions designed by Plečnik.

Through additional information requests, the State Party explained that some of Plečnik's works, such as less representative transversal axes in the city centre, were excluded from the series due to concerns about their current state of conservation.

The buffer zones originally totalled 178.613 ha but are in the process of being slightly expanded. The buffer zones were set up on the basis of existing legal protection regimes and encompass the immediate setting of Plečnik's interventions of all the serial components. The buffer zones are subject to a uniform protection regime as stipulated in point 9 of Article 56 of the 2009 Ordinance.

An enlargement of the buffer zones was initiated by the State Party after ICOMOS had raised concerns in four locations: Congress Square with Zvezda Park; the western and eastern extremities of the serial component of the Roman Walls in Mirje; the land across the road south of St. Michael's Church; and the area across the roundabout located south-west of Plečnik's Žale. In addition, the State Party designated a new wider buffer zone for Plečnik's work in the city centre, that is subject to the same Ordinance on the proclamation of national importance, in order to enhance protection of the nominated components. It includes the immediate setting, views, and other areas that are functionally important as support to the property and its protection.

State of conservation

Conservation works in the past entailed structural assessments and repair including a few reconstructions at various scales as well as some modernizations. Conservation works also encompassed the vegetation and landscaping design as well as changes to traffic

schemes. Systematic conservation works, mostly carried out under the supervision of the concerned authorities, occurred following Slovenia's independence in 1991. Major works included the rehabilitation of Plečnik's Žale after 20 years of interrupted service, the pedestrianisation of Vegova Street, the Three Bridges and Cobblers' Bridge, as well as the construction of an underground car park at Congress Square.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is satisfactory. While some elements require attention, such as the subsiding side of the monumental stairs at the Church of St. Michael, or the overgrown beech trees in Vegova Street, most components are generally in a good physical state and remain in use.

ICOMOS also notes that some of the minor interventions, such as repairs, are not differentiable from the original substance and considers that, where appropriate, subtle differentiation is desirable for future conservation works. In addition, there have been attempts in the past to complete some of Plečnik's work with mimetic additions. ICOMOS recommends that such an approach should be avoided in the future. ICOMOS also stresses the need to retain or reinstate original vegetation species of the landscaping designs wherever possible and appropriate.

Factors affecting the property

According to the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, the main factors affecting the property are development and modernisation pressures, urban development, motorised traffic, overgrowth of vegetation, storms, torrential rains, floods and earthquakes.

The continued use of the nominated property's buildings and spaces comes with constant development and modernisation pressures. Necessary modernisations and adaptations throughout the nominated property appear to be controlled by the private and public management entities. The conservation plans for the individual serial components are an important tool in this regard.

Urban development pressure seems generally under control due to urban development regulations and monument protection. ICOMOS nevertheless requested updates concerning several development projects: a new library building in the immediate vicinity of the National and University Library; construction work on the unfinished line of construction along the western border of Congress Square; a visitor centre and exhibition premises at Plečnik's Žale; future replacement of the added auxiliary building next to the Church of St. Michael; reorganization and technical upgrade of Plečnik's Market which is to improve the operation of the market; an underground car park at Plečnik's Market and related archaeological investigations.

The State Party provided detailed information on the archaeological finds and on the technical report assessing the effects of garage construction on buildings at Ljubljana Central Market, on the basis of which the design of the garage construction was modified. The additional information moreover describes how the development projects relate functionally and architecturally to the nominated property and its setting.

In the Interim Report, ICOMOS pointed to the need for a heritage impact assessment to be carried out for the proposed new library building in Emonska Street. In response, the State Party provided a preliminary assessment based on Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) methodology. ICOMOS nevertheless strongly recommends that a full Heritage Impact Assessment is carried out prior to the development of this and any project within the nominated property or its buffer zones.

Traffic calming schemes are in place at several serial components and significantly reduce the impact from motorised traffic. Stationary traffic and lack of parking spaces, however, remains a problem at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi. The State Party is taking action against negative impacts from overgrown vegetation, with rejuvenation schemes for vegetation throughout the nominated property. Response schemes to severe weather events such as floods, storms and torrential rains are in place.

As Slovenia is a country with a medium seismic risk, potentially vulnerable serial components have been seismically retrofitted. Other factors affecting the property to a lesser extent, due to being adequately controlled, include vandalism, pollution, and wear and tear, particularly in relation to public events and tourist visits, as well as fire hazards. With a view to managing visitor numbers, which are rising due to growing international interest in Plečnik's work, the State Party plans to expand its offer of guided tours and suchlike.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The urban design interventions, architectural elements and building types of "Plečnik's Ljubljana" reflect a distinctive architectural expression which represents an important masterpiece of human creative genius. That architectural expression stands apart from the prevailing modernist approaches of the time and is based on an architectural dialogue with the existing older city while serving the needs of the emerging modern 20th century society.
- Jože Plečnik's transformation of Ljubljana from a peripheral city into a national capital in the period between the two World Wars, following the

disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is an exceptional case of creating public spaces, buildings and green areas according to the vision of a single architect within a limited time, limited space of an existing city, and with rather scarce resources.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS raised concerns that the name initially proposed for the nominated property “Ljubljana: The Timeless, Human Capital Designed by Jože Plečnik”, despite its evocative nature referring to the humanist and human-scale transformation of the city, could be considered problematic. The term “Capital” seems historically imprecise as, strictly speaking, Ljubljana only became a national capital in 1991. Additionally, it connotes that the entire city is nominated. Moreover, the adjective “Timeless” seems questionable from a conservation viewpoint for a property that constitutes an urban and architectural testimony of a particular time period. ICOMOS requested the State Party to suggest alternative names, to better reflect the proposed nominated series. The State Party suggested the following name: “The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design”. ICOMOS considers this name to be adequate.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is essentially structured around two elements associated with the justification of the proposed criteria: architectural languages from the end of the 19th to the mid-20th century; and transformation of the city from the end of the 19th to the mid-20th century. The first element relates to the proposed justification for criterion (i) and focuses on the first four out of the five languages in which the architect Anthony Alofsin divided the architectural works of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: the language of history; the language of organicism; the language of rationalism; the language of myth; and the language of hybridity. The second element focuses on post-Austro-Hungarian Empire architectural and urban planning in Central Europe. Finally, a sub-chapter, “Plečnik’s Ljubljana and the transformation of the selected capitals in Europe and around the world” compares Ljubljana with capitals of countries from different continents that are on the World Heritage List or on Tentative Lists. That analysis is complemented with tables identifying relevant properties already inscribed or included in Tentative Lists, on the basis of a set of criteria that relate to the proposed attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

As a serial property, the comparative analysis also includes information on the selection of the component parts. A further table lists all of Plečnik’s works in Ljubljana and assesses each of the 57 sites identified in terms of legal protection, state of conservation, management and potential contribution to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value in terms of: displaying a distinctive architectural expression; revealing the context of the city; creating a city in human scale; diversity of functions and meanings; and economy of the interventions. As per the request of ICOMOS, the State Party provided additional information on the rationale for the serial selection and

particularly on how the components in the suburbs relate to those in the centre.

ICOMOS considers the comparative analysis to be overall comprehensive despite some weaknesses. Namely, it tends to overemphasise the comparison of Plečnik’s work with the Modernist movement and newly-designed cities, while falling short in comparing with works of architects or urban planners who, during the same period, were following more comparable approaches, such as New Delhi designed by Edwin Lutyens.

Despite this shortcoming of the comparative analysis, it demonstrates that the nominated property is an outstanding urban and architectural work of global relevance. In both the narrowest as well as the broader geographical and cultural contexts there seem to be few urban designs that would be comparable to “Plečnik’s Ljubljana”, which stands out as a highly individual, creative interpretation of the city as a work of art, using classical and traditional language in a post-historicist, pluralist manner, creating crafted contextual spaces and urban landscapes that were truly successful in forming, even within a rather small scope, a coherent urban experience.

The comparative analysis highlights the choice of components that complement each other in illustrating the exceptional urban and architectural approach that Plečnik took in Ljubljana.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i) and (iv).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that “Plečnik’s Ljubljana” represents an important masterpiece of human creative genius of the first half of the 20th century in architecture. His architectural expression draws on various, predominantly classical, sources to create entirely new, original and unique forms. It is clearly recognisable, formally rich and semantically multi-layered and differs from modernist architecture of the time. The synthesis of old and new buildings and spaces, including green areas, represents a continuity of the city’s memory and serves to construct its new identity.

ICOMOS agrees that Plečnik’s highly contextual and human-scale urban design approach, as well as his distinctive architectural language, stand apart from the modernist principles that generally prevailed at this time and beyond this geographical region. However, this argument is seen as supportive of criterion (iv). In addition, while there is no doubt about the architectural quality of the nominated property, ICOMOS considers that outstanding architectural mastery is not equally well represented throughout the component parts so as to justify criterion (i).

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the public space of Ljubljana created by Plečnik in the short period between the two World Wars is an example of a renewed urban space, where the city was not built anew but improved with innovative and economic solutions for new architectural ensembles, buildings and urban accents both small- and large-scale. The new urban space is characterized by multiple functions and meanings that continue to draw the users to connect and identify with the city.

ICOMOS considers that the criterion is applicable on the basis of Plečnik's contextual approach in transforming the former provincial town into a symbolic national capital after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This type of approach is rooted in the reformist architectural movements of the early 20th century and is currently underrepresented on the World Heritage List. ICOMOS considers this criterion is justified in relation to the period of nation building after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which can be seen as a significant stage in history.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iv) but that criterion (i) has not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The nominated property's integrity is based on the physical, architectural and functional intactness of all the architectural elements and buildings as well as of the urban design interventions and landscape features in the nominated open spaces. Moreover, it is based on the completeness of the serial composition in terms of comprehensively conveying Plečnik's urban approach and vision.

The main thrust of the nomination is on a selection of public spaces and public institutions designed by Plečnik which gradually changed the identity of Ljubljana from a provincial town to a symbolic capital, endowing it with particular qualities. At the request of ICOMOS, the State Party clarified, in the additional information provided in November 2020, the rationale for nominating portions of Plečnik's work and justified this choice in terms of reflecting his completed projects. It was explained why it was not considered desirable to join up into one component his interventions in component sites 1, 2 and 3, as these were designed individually. ICOMOS agrees with the proposed justification. In addition, ICOMOS requested through its Interim Report additional information from the State Party with regard to the inclusion of transversal axes and on how the individual components relate to each other. Jože Plečnik's approach to (re)shaping the city built on an architectural dialogue with the existing city. He created two

urban axes – the land axis and the water axis – which best illustrated this approach. Transverse links, streets and walkways between the land and water axes had been shaped over previous historical periods and Plečnik only reshaped some of them, giving the city a clearer and more explicit spatial structure. ICOMOS considers that the series includes all necessary elements to comprehensively convey Plečnik's vision for the city and how he gradually changed the urban identity of Ljubljana. Despite being scattered throughout the city and although only some of the components have visual contact with each other, the series forms one entity based on a shared architectural expression respecting the existing fabric and natural elements, at a human scale. ICOMOS nevertheless considers that some of Plečnik's interventions in Ljubljana that were excluded due to their current state of conservation could in the future, if improved to meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity, be included in the series, and further enhance the presentation of the property's proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

On the basis of the information provided in November 2020, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the individual components is satisfactory in terms of current physical state of conservation, function and use. They equally appear adequately protected by proper legislation and management. The integrity of the setting of the serial components is satisfactory in the sense that there have been only moderate changes since the mid-20th century, despite a few rather intrusive urban developments as well as interventions that erred by trying to mime and complete Plečnik's work. Overall, the spatial, architectural and functional relationships of Plečnik's interventions with the setting remain intact.

Authenticity

The nominated property's authenticity is primarily based in its ability to truthfully convey Plečnik's contextual and human-scale urbanistic approach. The nominated property's values need to be credibly expressed by the selected architectural, urban and landscape features in terms of location, form, design, and layout. This also applies to urban greenery. In the case of built features this also encompasses materials and craftsmanship, right up to the details and extent of fittings, furnishings and decorative elements in interior and exterior spaces. Lastly, it is also based on the ability to truthfully illustrate the spatial, architectural, functional and symbolic relationship of Plečnik's interventions with the pre-existing setting.

According to the information provided by the State Party and the technical evaluation mission, the nominated architectural, urban and landscape features largely comply with their original design even in the case of reconstructions, including the weather station on Congress Square, some pavements, technically upgraded fittings, as well as replicas of individual decorative features in the interior and outdoor spaces. Apart from such cases, material authenticity throughout the property appears high. Repairs and reconstructions were generally carried out using the same materials as originally used. ICOMOS

requested and received detailed additional information about the landscaping features throughout the nominated property. Landscaping designs are mostly kept by rejuvenating the vegetation when necessary and ICOMOS strongly recommends to maintain or reinstate the original species used wherever possible and appropriate. A few original features, such as some urban furniture or the earthen pyramids at the Roman Walls in Mirje, are missing. Most additions, such as the underground car park and its entrances at Congress Square, and the new visitor centre and car park at Plečnik's Žale, are described as respectful to the property's architecture, functions and atmosphere. With few exceptions, the original functions and uses of all components and their features are preserved and the outdoor spaces are accessible to the public. Lastly, the level of authenticity of the series' setting is satisfactory in the sense that there have been only moderate changes since the mid-20th century.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions for integrity and authenticity have been met.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

ICOMOS considers that the proposed justification for inscription is appropriate in relation to criterion (iv) but it considers that the nominated property does not meet criterion (i). Despite some weaknesses, ICOMOS also considers that the comparative analysis adequately justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. The serial approach is justified and the selection of component parts is appropriate. ICOMOS further considers that the nominated property satisfies the conditions of integrity and authenticity.

Attributes

Attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are the buildings as well as the architectural interventions and landscape features in the selected open spaces throughout Ljubljana which were designed by Jože Plečnik, including their form, design, layout and materiality, both in the exterior and interior (in the case of buildings) and extending to street pavements and urban furniture. The spatial and functional relationships between Plečnik's interventions are also important attributes, where these have remained intact.

Plečnik's interventions and their characteristics rely on interaction with pre-existing buildings and urban spaces. Therefore, the relationships between his interventions and the pre-existing elements need to be considered, as supportive to the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and need to be subject to protection measures appropriate to the role they play.

ICOMOS considers that the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have been carefully identified, while pre-existing urban buildings and structures that support the attributes need further detailed identification.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Conservation measures

Conservation works are carried out based on conservation plans drawn up for all components and prioritised interventions for maintenance and repair, as well as modernisations as required to ensure continued usage. Available skills and resources appear adequate as per the information provided. Responsibilities and competencies seem clearly assigned to different custodians, which include local communities in the case of the churches, and to ensure specialist advice and supervision by the responsible authorities.

Apart from regular maintenance, planned or ongoing conservation measures throughout the nominated property or within its setting as per the prioritisation in the management plan include: the restoration of the propylaea at Plečnik's Žale; restoration of the stone and concrete structure of Trnovo Bridge and its decorative features as well as of the adjacent river banks, including the access to the Gradaščica River; upgrading of the advertising, street furniture and lighting at the Three Bridges; reconstruction of the landscaping designs at the Churches of St. Francis and St. Michael; provision of visitor lavatories at the Church of St. Michael; upgrading technical infrastructure at Plečnik's Market in order to improve the conditions for its operation, potentially including an underground multi-level car park; replacement of overgrown beech trees with a beech hedge along Vegova Street; the thermal upgrade of windows in the National and University Library. ICOMOS requested and received updates on several of these projects as well as the conservation plans of all serial components.

Monitoring

The property's state of conservation is continuously monitored by the different custodians in close cooperation with the supervising agencies, the Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO), the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (IPCHS) and the City Administration of Ljubljana.

Monitoring of the nominated property is planned to be carried out on two levels. Monitoring of the physical substance of an individual property (as defined in individual management plans), which falls under the responsibility of the IPCHS. Monitoring of buffer zones and of spatial planning is also provided by IPCHS. Monitoring of implementation of so-called soft contents and of accessibility (defined in the joint management plan), falls under the responsibility of the joint manager. In the future a joint manager is to coordinate the monitoring at the different levels.

The nomination dossier provides a comprehensive list of indicators for the entire nominated property and for its individual serial components. The tables link the indicators to the related factors affecting the property to concrete actions and responsible agencies and indicate the periodicity of the monitoring activities. ICOMOS considers the choice of indicators and the periodicity adequate for the protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures and monitoring mechanisms respond to the vulnerability of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

5 Protection and management

Documentation

Plečnik's body of work, including his works included in the nominated property, has been subject to a wealth of early and ongoing scientific research, documented in numerous publications in several languages. The main institution for the documentation of Plečnik's work is Plečnikova hiša (Plečnik House), which is a part of the institution of Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana. Original documents can also be found at the following institutions in Ljubljana: the Museum of Architecture and Design, the Historical Archives of Ljubljana, the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, the IPCHS, and Regional Office Ljubljana. Data on conservation measures and developments within the nominated components and their buffer zones is archived at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia and IPCHS and its regional office, which make accessible paper copies and digital inventories of the nominated property and related heritage assets as well as the conservation plans of the serial components. These include baseline data for monitoring. Publications are available at the National and University Library. Further documentation of spatial planning and urban development throughout Ljubljana is undertaken at the municipal level.

Legal protection

All components are legally protected as national monuments. Some are protected by several laws. The legislative protection of the nominated property is based on the Cultural Heritage Protection Act. Since 2009, the whole of Plečnik's heritage in Ljubljana has been protected under the Ordinance designating the work of the architect Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana as a cultural monument of national importance. Thereby, the Ordinance represents a single comprehensive protection mechanism for the entire immovable and movable heritage of the nominated property. It defines the boundaries of the components and their buffer zones, as well as their protection regimes. An important part of the cultural heritage protection system is spatial planning at the national and local level. Before spatial plans are adopted, the IPCHS must issue guidelines which must be taken into account when drawing up spatial plans. Construction permits and planning permissions throughout the nominated property and its buffer zones require consent from the IPCHS.

Various other local regulations and development plans are applicable to the nominated property or parts of it, particularly in the medieval city centre. These include listings as cultural (including archaeological) and natural heritage. Of particular relevance to the protection of the nominated property are spatial planning instruments such as the municipal spatial plan.

ICOMOS requested and received additional information on how the multi-layered legal protection ensures the protection of the nominated property and its buffer zones. In the course of enlarging the buffer zones, the State Party amended or supplemented existing decrees and thereby moved the responsibility for the new buffer zones parts from the municipal to the State level. The IPCHS informed the owners and the local community, the City of Ljubljana, about the proposed amendments and supplements to the Ordinance. The public consultation process was completed at the end of February 2021 and the adoption of the amended Ordinance is expected in the following months.

ICOMOS considers that the legal system of the protection of monuments is in general strong and effective. Nevertheless, there seems to be a risk that it concedes to real estate pressure in particular cases.

Management system

The management system as it was devised in the course of the nomination process aims at complementing the existing system for the preservation of Plečnik's heritage in Ljubljana from the professional, organisational as well as legal and financial perspectives, and involves owners, managers and public bodies. The different owners of the serial components are, in the case of public owners, the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of Culture, the City of Ljubljana, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, as well as the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering of the University of Ljubljana. Private owners are Ljubljana's Parkings and Markets Public Company, Ltd., and ŽALE, Public company, Ltd. The churches are the property of the Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Ljubljana.

The management of the nominated property operates on two levels. Based on the existing legal protection and the individual conservation plans, individual management plans have been developed for each component in addition to a joint management action plan for the timeframe 2020-2025. They address the management of the physical substance and include an overview of the values that need to be protected, including short-term and long-term objectives and responsibilities that lie with the owners and/or managers. On the second level, the IPCHS monitors the state of conservation of the entire nominated property. The Museum of Architecture and Design, as joint manager, has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the joint management plan by coordinating the concerned individual owners, managers, public institutions and professional bodies. The main members of the Steering Body are the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia and the City of Ljubljana.

Funds for the implementation of individual management plans are principally provided by the owner and/or manager. Funds for the joint manager are provided by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia and the City of Ljubljana. Funds for scientific research, valorisation and presentation, as well as protection and monitoring, are provided under a public service financed by the Ministry of Culture at the state level, and by the City of

Ljubljana for activities at the local level. Another source of finance is European heritage funds. According to the nomination dossier, capacity building programmes will be funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism for the period 2019–2024.

ICOMOS considers that the management system is generally appropriate and effective on both levels and is based on adequate human skills and financial resources. Response schemes to risks such as earthquakes, floods, storms and fire are in place. ICOMOS stresses the importance of carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments for development projects in the nominated property and its buffer zones, and recommends to anchor this in the management plan.

Visitor management

The tasks of research, interpretation and presentation are shared among the different actors with management responsibilities. These include the Museum of Architecture and Design, the IPCHS, Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, the tourist organisation Ljubljana Tourism as well as the University of Ljubljana, the University of Maribor and the University of Primorska. There is extensive academic and popular literature on Plečnik in various languages.

The Plečnik Museum at his former residence in the city centre is the most important visitor facility and is located in the direct vicinity of the nominated property. The well-equipped centre for the interpretation of Plečnik's work contains a permanent exhibition, a lecture room and a library with study rooms. Professional institutions and Tourism Ljubljana work together in providing regular training sessions on Plečnik's heritage for tourist guides, to ensure professionalism and expertise. Many of the components are equipped with informational signage in Slovenian and English. Printed matter on the architect and his work in Ljubljana is available at the Plečnik Museum and at tourist information centres.

Individual management plans lay out visitor regimes that aim to avoid conflicts with the primary users and to protect the authentic functions. Details are published on the websites of the individual custodians. The joint manager plans to establish a website for the property. ICOMOS considers that it would be important to link the components in the suburbs to those in the city centre, to have a joint presentation concept for the entire nominated property.

Community involvement

According to the information provided in November 2020 at the request of ICOMOS, local communities have been involved in the nomination process, with the array of stakeholders taking an active part in the evaluation and awareness-building of Plečnik's work and by formally committing themselves to the nomination and preservation of the property. Public participation in heritage conservation is stipulated by Article 73 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and further

specified by the Cultural Heritage Protection Act as well as for spatial acts. Depending on the nature of the component and its custodians, different communication channels are used. The museum facility at Plečnik's House plays a major role in outreaching to the wider public.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the protection and management of nominated property

ICOMOS considers the protective legal provisions and the management system are appropriate and effective. The human and financial resources, including available expertise and skills, are also considered adequate. ICOMOS encourages the State Party to complete the adoption of the amended Ordinance related to the expanded buffer zones. ICOMOS moreover encourages the development of a joint visitor and interpretation scheme for the whole nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and management system are adequate to preserve the nominated property.

6 Conclusion

The nominated property consists of a series of public spaces and public institutions designed by Jože Plečnik throughout the city of Ljubljana in the period between the two World Wars. Following World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a desire to create independent nation states triggered various state and city building projects in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis provides sufficient evidence in support of the justification for Outstanding Universal Value despite certain shortcomings in focusing on comparison to modernist sites and their fundamental differences, while falling short in comparing with sites that were shaped by more comparable urban design approaches.

Concerns about the serial composition were resolved with the additional information received in February 2021. ICOMOS considers that the serial components complement each other well to comprehensively and truthfully illustrate the exceptional approach that Plečnik took when transforming Ljubljana into a symbolic national capital for the Slovenian people. Despite their variety in type, scale and stylistic features and being scattered throughout the city, and although only some of the components have visual contact with each other, the series forms one entity based on common characteristics. They display Plečnik's contextual urban design approach, share a human scale, focus on the needs of modern citizens, embrace various meanings, functions and symbolic references to various cultures and times, and testify to an economic use of resources. ICOMOS notes that a few works by Plečnik in Ljubljana have been excluded from the series primarily due to concerns about their state of

conservation. This approach is acceptable as Plečnik's approach and vision is well conveyed by the nominated components. However, ICOMOS considers that some of these works, particularly some of the excluded transversal axes, could contribute to enhance the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS therefore encourages consideration of their future inclusion in the property via a minor boundary modification request if their state of conservation is improved to meet the conditions of integrity and authenticity.

The component parts were renumbered 1 to 7 upon the request of ICOMOS.

ICOMOS considers the rationale of the delineation of the boundaries of the property and buffer zones appropriate. It is logical and appropriate to confine the property boundaries to the nominated architectural and urban interventions designed by Plečnik and protect the relevant context which Plečnik upgraded within the buffer zones. Concerns about gaps in the buffer zones and the effectiveness of legal protection were resolved upon the request of ICOMOS. The State Party initiated the enlargement of the buffer zone in the locations concerned.

The State Party nominated the property under criteria (i) and (iv). ICOMOS considers that criterion (i) is not demonstrated. ICOMOS supports the choice of criterion (iv) but points to the need to stress the stage in human history which the nominated property illustrates. ICOMOS considers that the criterion is applicable on the basis of Plečnik's contextual approach in transforming the former provincial town into a national capital after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This type of approach is rooted in the reformist architectural movements of the early 20th century.

There are no fundamental issues with regards to the other requirements of Outstanding Universal Value. The state of conservation of the nominated property appears good and sustainable for the future. The conditions of integrity and authenticity are met. Also the state of conservation of the setting, which plays a crucial role in conveying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, appears overall satisfactory and protected within the extended buffer zones. Adequate statutory protection is in place and enforced. Nevertheless, there seems to be a risk that it concedes to real estate pressure in particular cases. With regards to the general nature of the conservation works and their legibility, ICOMOS encourages subtle differentiation of additions and repairs from the original substance, where appropriate.

The current management system is considered adequate and effective. Interpretation and presentation of the property to the public is satisfactory. Nevertheless, ICOMOS encourages the development of a joint visitor and interpretation scheme that links the serial components in the suburbs to those in the city centre.

Concerns about the nomination's name "Ljubljana: The Timeless, Human Capital Designed by Jože Plečnik" were resolved by the State Party by proposing an alternative name: "The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design".

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design, Slovenia, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion (iv)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The urban design for Ljubljana was conceived by Architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957) in the period between the two World Wars. Following World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a desire to create independent nation states triggered various State and town building projects in Central and South-Eastern Europe. In the changed social contexts, the urban planners and architects introduced new urbanistic and architectural approaches under the influence of the Modernist movement. The transformation of Ljubljana from a peripheral town of the former Empire into a national capital emerged during the introduction of these modernist guidelines, although from entirely different architectural starting points.

The urban design of "Plečnik's Ljubljana" is based on an architectural dialogue between his interventions and the existing older city. Based on the man-made cityscape and its natural features, two urban axes were conceived: the land axis and the water axis. These two axes are connected by transversal axes, which help to form the urbanistic network of the city. The land axis – the Green Promenade starts at the Trnovo Bridge and runs through the Square of the French Revolution, along Vegova Street with the National and University Library, and ends at the Congress Square with Zvezda Park. Running parallel is the water axis – the Promenade along the Embankments and Bridges of the Ljubljanica River – which extends from the Trnovo district to the Sluice Gate. The historical city centre is connected with vital points in both the rural and urban suburbs, and with the broader spatial network of Ljubljana: the Church of St. Michael, the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Plečnik's Žale – Garden of All Saints.

The city centre was interpreted anew and developed into a series of public spaces (squares, parks, streets, promenades, bridges) and public institutions (library, churches, markets, funerary complex).

The property is an outstanding example of urban renewal developed in the context of existing buildings and spaces and tailored to suit the inhabitants. Together, Plečnik's

interventions have created a different type of urban space and architecture, which is not limited to a certain specific use, but instead gives rise to a connecting of the different uses and meanings and creates a new identity for the space. The architectural elements, types and spaces of classical architecture are innovatively summarised, transformed and modernised.

Criterion (iv): The interventions designed by the architect Jože Plečnik throughout the city of Ljubljana in the short period between the two World Wars combine to become an outstanding example of human-centred urban renewal for the purpose of nation building after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They are based on a harmonic relationship with the context of the space and its natural possibilities. The city is not built anew but improved with small- or large-scale interventions – new architectural ensembles, buildings and urban accents. The relationship with the past is established in various ways, from adapting the urban network and incorporating existing structures through architectural reminiscences and by establishing new cityscapes. The new urban space is not limited to a specific use but has various functions and the whole is thus imbued with new meanings.

Integrity

The urban design in Ljubljana, as a result of the intervention by Jože Plečnik, includes the readily identifiable characteristics of a symbolic capital city created between the two World Wars by the architect. Ljubljana's urban landscape comprehensively illustrates an upgrade of the existing space with regards to the topography and based on its continuous use and interpretation of historical layers. The topography of the space is expressed through the urban landscape design of the two axes: the land axis and the water axis. The design of both promenades originates and draws from the continuous use of the space, which defines the positions and use of squares, markets, bridges, parks and other public spaces as well as buildings. A series of public spaces endows the city with public amenities, from spiritual spaces (the Churches of St. Michael and St. Francis of Assisi, Plečnik's Žale – The Garden of All Saints), spaces for relaxation (archaeological park along the Roman Walls, and promenades along the embankments of the Ljubljanica River, Trnovo Quay), to market activities (Plečnik's Market), socialising (Congress Square, the Three Bridges, the Cobblers' Bridge), and intellectual and cultural activities (Vegova Street, National and University Library).

A unified protection regime ensures that the currently unbuilt upon areas remain building-free, that the space preserves its traditional use, and provides comprehensive protection from interventions that could potentially endanger the integrity of the serial property.

Authenticity

The serial property has maintained its original urban design and characteristics, in which the preservation and enhancement of the context of the space are reflected. The serial components have faithfully preserved their original

design in the exterior arrangements, in the interiors as well as on the facades, in the interior furnishings and the masterful attention to detail. The building materials were reinforced in most components in the 1990s, but regardless of the individual repairs or conservation and restoration interventions, which were a consequence of continuous use, material authenticity in general has not been compromised. Larger urbanistic areas have remained unchanged; in some cases, repairs were performed in order to meet the requirements of modern use and ensure the greater safety and structural stability of the property. With few exceptions, the original functions and uses of all components and their features are preserved and the outdoor spaces are accessible to the public. The characteristics of the original urban design have been preserved as well, although partial changes have appeared due to the overgrowth of the original vegetation and in some places the pressure of local traffic, which has been strategically addressed over the course of the previous decade.

Management and protection requirements

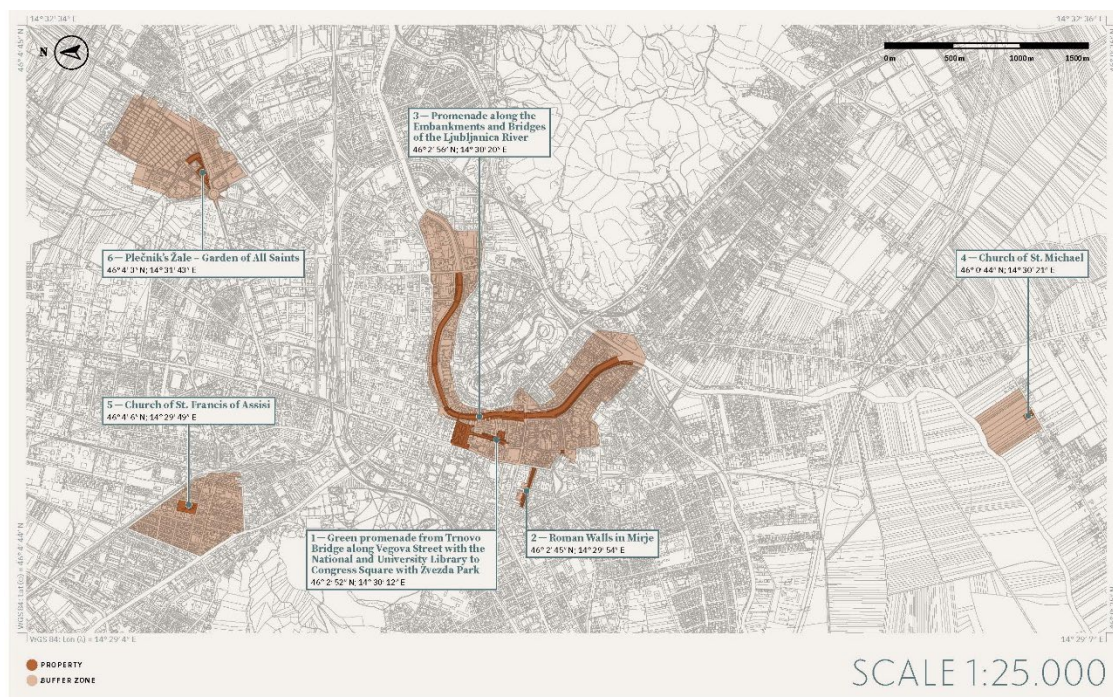
Plečnik's architectural heritage is a monument of national importance and is protected by the Ordinance designating the Ljubljana work of the architect Jože Plečnik as a cultural monument of national importance (Official Gazette RS, Nos. 51/09, 88/14, 19/16, 76/17 and 17/18). The Ordinance represents a single comprehensive protection mechanism for the entire immovable and movable heritage of the serial property.

All of the serial components have conservation plans that form the basis for any interventions on the monuments. Works are coordinated by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (IPCHS) and supervised by the specially-appointed conservator for Plečnik's heritage. The management system complements the existing system for the preservation of architect Jože Plečnik's heritage in Ljubljana from the professional, organisational as well as legal and financial perspectives, and involves owners, managers and public bodies alike. The management of the property operates on two levels. All component parts have their specific management plans and procedures for the implementation and approval of such plans. State of conservation is monitored by the IPCHS, with a special emphasis on the factors likely to affect the property, in particular development pressures and tourism. The coordination of individual owners, managers, public institutions and professional bodies that form the Management Body is ensured by a joint manager that has overall responsibility for the implementation of a joint management plan. The Museum of Architecture and Design of Ljubljana, as an appointed joint manager, cooperates with those institutions at the state and local level that are responsible for protection, monitoring, presentation, education and research, promotion and cultural tourism.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Submitting a minor boundary modification of the extended buffer zones, when formalised, with an updated map showing the property and the buffer zones' boundaries, indicating the total area of the buffer zones in hectares; considering submitting in the future a minor boundary modification with a view to including relevant transversal axes, if their state of conservation could be improved to fully meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity,
- b) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre a complete Heritage Impact Assessment for the planned new library building in Emonska Street for review by the Advisory Bodies, before irreversible decisions are made,
- c) Retaining or reinstating original vegetation species of the landscaping designs wherever possible and appropriate,
- d) Ensuring subtle differentiation of additions and repairs from the original substance, where appropriate, and avoiding mimetic additions that would try to complete Plečnik's original work,
- e) Developing a joint visitor and interpretation scheme that will link the serial components in the suburbs to those in the city centre,
- f) Undertaking further detailed identification of the relationships between Plečnik's interventions and pre-existing buildings and spaces, to allow appropriate protection measures to be put in place for the latter, relative to the role they play in supporting the Outstanding Universal Value,
- g) Carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments for all development proposals within the property or its buffer zones;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated components and their buffer zones