

REPORT

of the Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission
to the World Heritage property “Auschwitz Birkenau, German
Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)”
(Poland)

12-14 October 2021



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The mission team would like to convey its special thanks to the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport, and in particular Katarzyna Pałubska, Deputy Director of the Monuments Protection Department, and Jakub Wiśniewski, Counsellor to the Minister, as well as to the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, and in particular Bartosz Skaldawski, its Director, Anna Marconi-Betka, Head of Heritage Monitoring Unit, and Barbara Furmanik, Chief Specialist, for their efforts in ensuring the success of the mission.

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Executive Summary and List of Recommendations

The main purpose of the mission was to assess the progress made in the establishment of a dialogue between the authorities and other key stakeholders as regards the immediate setting of the property and in view of the development of the management plan, as well as to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and factors that could potentially impact its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The executive summary accompanied by specific recommendations follows the Terms of Reference of the mission.

Review progress with the establishment of a dialogue between the authorities, other key stakeholders (including Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, local governments, local communities, National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Regional Monuments Inspector, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport and the Polish National Commission for UNESCO) as well as local communities in relation to the historical and other associative values of the immediate setting of the property, through using, where appropriate, a mediation approach.

There has been an enormous change in the development of a dialogue among all concerned stakeholders in managing the World Heritage property. This is also reflected in the financial commitment of the State Party at all levels in its support of the State Museum and other relevant institutions. This may also assist in promoting social cohesion within the communities.

Recommendations:

1. Building on the positive dynamics initiated by the State Party in the dialogue among the various stakeholders, continue and further reinforce this dialogue in order to achieve an inclusive approach to the safeguarding and management of the property.
2. While recognising that each institution involved has its own structure and objectives, a coordinated effort should be made in mapping their interests and in support of visitor experiences. This is essential in adopting an approach that gives the “cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes”.¹

Coinciding with an expert group meeting, advise on the development of an educational and social awareness-raising programme on the historical structures and associations of the protection zone, and on any further measures that might be taken to strengthen social cohesion.

The State Party is progressively enriching and supporting educational and social awareness-raising activities linked to the historical structures within the site and in the protection zone. A good example is the reuse of the former *Lagerhaus*, which, after its restoration, will soon open as the Land of Oświęcim Residents Memory Museum.

Recommendations:

3. For new museums and memorials, there needs to be a better definition of existing and potential audiences to develop focused and harmonised educative and social awareness-raising material for local, national and global public. This should be

¹ Article 5 (a) of the World Heritage Convention.

accompanied, where relevant, with connections to the historical structures in the protection zone.

4. Consideration should be given to the fact that finding a potential reuse of the various historical structures in the protection zone might not be feasible in the short run. However, it is imperative to ensure the conservation of these structures in order to allow sufficient time for reflection and dialogue on their future use.

Review progress with the development of the Management Plan and its adoption by all the stakeholders, and also review the effectiveness of the management structures in reinforcing and extending the governance mechanism to all stakeholders.

Advise on how appropriate uses might be established for the immediate surroundings of the property, through a process of dialogue and discussion with local stakeholders, and how this could lead to the establishment of a buffer zone for the property to offer greater protection to its setting.

Little progress has been made so far with the development of the Management Plan. Past difficulties in creating a dialogue among the stakeholders have slowed down the process. As noted in the previous reports, the Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau should serve as a basis for the future Management Plan. A welcoming development in this regard is the recent creation by the Polish Government of a special team for monitoring the preparation of management plans for all World Heritage sites in Poland, chaired by Katarzyna Pałubska, Deputy Director of the Monuments Protection Department at the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport.

As regards the establishment of a buffer zone for the property to offer greater protection to its immediate setting, the unique silence zone in place at the time of inscription in 1979 should be maintained. One of the main issues will remain the acceptance of the principle of a buffer zone by the local authorities.

Recommendations:

5. In developing the Management Plan, the State Party is invited to reflect on the issues and challenges at Auschwitz-Birkenau in managing a property involving multiple local authorities and the legalities of building protection measures, including mechanisms for the prevention of blight and deterioration.
6. Innovative proposals in bringing public-private partnerships should be investigated as part of the Management Plan.
7. The State Party is recommended to establish a buffer zone, which encompasses both a silence zone and a wider protection zone or relevant spatial planning policies in order to offer greater protection to the property's immediate setting and context.
8. Taking into account the importance of the surroundings in understanding the setting and context of the property, appropriate uses might be established in the management plan for the immediate surroundings of the property, through a process of dialogue and discussion with local stakeholders.

Review the implementation of the conservation guidelines of the *Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau* and its immediate setting.

The Conservation Strategy offers an inventory of the structures and buildings associated with the property and of the historical landscape beyond, with conservation guidelines for each object. All the historical structures visited during the mission testify to the implementation of the conservation guidelines of the Strategy.

Recommendation:

9. The conservation guidelines of the Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau should be revisited in order to prioritise and hierarchise all the attributes within the property according to their contribution to OUV and specify precisely how elements of the setting support OUV in terms of their historical importance and context.

Assess the overall state of conservation of the property and evaluate factors, projects and conservation issues that could potentially impact its Outstanding Universal Value.

The state of conservation of the property is overall satisfactory.

The ring road does not impact directly on the property, but the southern part of the road cuts into the protected zone to the south of the property, which could reduce the effectiveness of the protected zone. The details of the road have been developed in the context of an approval in principle given by the Expert Group in 2013, their list of recommendations, the Conservation Strategy and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA).

The mission considers that within the constraints of this ring road project and in the absence of a Management Plan, which could have clearly articulated the sensitivities of different areas of the property, the current proposals can be seen as the best that can be achieved.

The project does though highlight the need for a formal buffer zone or formal protection of the immediate setting to support the OUV of the property.

On the other hand, major conservation issues remain for several significant historical structures, which support the OUV of the property and which are located outside of its boundaries, as identified in the Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property (2015). While the Covid-19 pandemic had a great impact on the number of visitors to the site, over-tourism remains a long-term challenge.

Recommendations:

10. Any future proposals for the new development in the vicinity of the property should be assessed for their potential impact on OUV, through undertaking Heritage Impact Assessments at the earliest possible stage.
11. It is recommended that a comprehensive tourism management and interpretation plan for the whole property and its setting are established as part of the Management Plan – to handle promotion, suggest projects and actions, review new initiatives and provide coordination between the authorities and stakeholders.

The Property

The World Heritage property of “Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)” was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979. The remains of the two camps of Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau were inscribed under criterion (vi), recognizing that:

the fortified walls, barbed wire, platforms, barracks, gallows, gas chambers and cremation ovens show the conditions within which the Nazi genocide took place in the former concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest in the Third Reich. According to historical investigations, 1.5 million people, among them a great number of Jews were systematically starved, tortured and murdered in this camp, the symbol of humanity's cruelty to its fellow human beings in the 20th century.

At the time of inscription, the World Heritage Committee stated that it had decided “... to enter Auschwitz concentration camp on the List as a unique site and to restrict the inscription of other sites of a similar nature” (CC-79/CONF.003/13, Report of the 3rd session of the Committee, 1979).

At its 31st session, the World Heritage Committee adopted a Statement of Significance for the property (31 COM 8B.8, Christchurch, 2007) and the change of the name of the site to “Auschwitz Birkenau: German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)”.

At its 40th session, the World Heritage Committee adopted the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property (40 COM 8.E, Istanbul/Paris, 2016) (see Annex VIII). It states that the 191.97-ha serial property, which consists of three component parts – the former Auschwitz I camp, the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp and a mass grave of inmates – and its landscape have high levels of authenticity and integrity since the original evidence has been carefully conserved without any unnecessary restoration. It also states that potential threats to the integrity of the property include the difficulty in preserving the memory of the events and their significance to humanity. In the physical sphere, significant potential threats include natural decay of the former camps’ fabric; environmental factors, including the risk of flooding and rising groundwater level; changes in the surroundings of the former camps; and intensive visitor traffic.

The last mission to the property took place in 2013, when the international Expert Group visited the site and issued a mission report including recommendations. This group of international experts has been assisting the State Party since the 1990s with guidance and advice on the preservation and conservation of the property.

One of the main factors affecting the property has been the lack of an agreed management plan acceptable to all key stakeholders. A management plan has been requested by the World Heritage Committee regularly since 2001 (Decision CONF 205 V.268-278) and most recently in 2021 (Decision 44 COM 7B.52). A draft management plan was circulated in 2007, which however, was not finalised due to a lack of consensus among various stakeholders.

The dialogue between the national heritage authorities, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, the local authorities and local communities was slow and difficult in the past. In this regard, the World Heritage Committee since 2008 (Decision 32 COM 7B.102), has consistently encouraged the State Party to intensify efforts to ensure involvement of local communities. The Committee reiterated its request in the recent Decision 44 COM 7B.52.

In parallel, the international Expert Group in its 2013 report urged the Polish authorities at all levels to continue to develop cooperation and to agree and document an effective management system involving all stakeholders.

The insufficient dialogue has also hampered the establishment of a buffer zone for the property to offer greater protection to its setting. The Expert Group recommended the State Party to give legal status to the 'silence zone' and 'broader protection zone' as notified to UNESCO in 1978, to be modified as appropriate in line with current conditions and taking into account the surrounding landscape, perhaps as a buffer zone or through relevant spatial planning policies.

The Expert Group was furthermore concerned by the continued dilapidation and risk to major significant structures (e.g. the SS Kitchen, the cabbage and potato warehouses) located in the broader protection zone of the World Heritage property.

The construction of the S1 expressway and the southern link road to Oświęcim has been discussed for several years; the route of the proposed ring road will run through the protection zone of Birkenau. The World Heritage Committee has examined the issue of the construction of the S1 expressway and the southern link road to Oświęcim since 2009. During the 2013 mission, the Expert Group discussed the project with various stakeholders in great detail. The World Heritage Committee requested the State Party in its recent Decision 44 COM 7B.52 to provide full Heritage Impact Assessment documentation for review by the Advisory Bodies ahead of an on-site mission and to await the review results before taking any decisions or entering into any contractual agreements for the construction of the road that cannot be reversed.

By its most recent Decision 44 COM 7B.52, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2022, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the Committee at its 46th session.

Summary of the National Management System for Preservation and Management

The World Heritage property of “Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)” is protected by Polish law under the provisions of heritage protection and spatial planning laws, together with the provisions of local law.

The site, buildings and relics of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp are situated on the premises of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which operates under a number of legal Acts concerning the operation of museums and protection of the Former Nazi Extermination Camps, which provide that the protection of these sites is a public objective, and its fulfilment is the responsibility of the State administration. The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is a State cultural institution supervised directly by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, who ensures the necessary financing for its functioning and the fulfilment of its mission, including educational activities to understand the tragedy of the Holocaust and the need to prevent similar threats today and in future.

The Museum has undertaken a long-term programme of conservation measures under its Global Conservation Plan. It is financed largely through funds from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, which is supported by countries from around the world, as well as by organisations, businesses and private individuals. The Foundation has also obtained a State subsidy to supplement the Perpetual Fund (*Act of 18 August 2011 on a Subsidy for the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation Intended to Supplement the Perpetual Fund*).

The existing legal system provides appropriate tools for the effective protection and management of the property. The Museum Council, whose members are appointed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, supervises the performance of the Museum’s duties regarding its collections, in particular the execution of its statutory tasks. In addition, the International Auschwitz Council acts as a consultative and advisory body to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland on the protection and management of the site of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp and other places of extermination and former concentration camps situated within the present territory of Poland.

Several protective zones surround components of the World Heritage property and function *de facto* as buffer zones. They are covered by local spatial development plans, which are consulted by the Regional Monuments Inspector. The management of the property’s setting is the responsibility of the local government of the Town and Commune of Oświęcim. For better management and protection of the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, especially for the proper protection of its setting, a relevant management system must be put into force bringing together all the responsible authorities.

As noted in the comprehensive inventory included in the Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau, many of the important attributes of the property’s OUV, including buildings, transport infrastructure and work areas of the German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp, lie outside the component parts of the inscribed property. At the time of inscription in 1979 this was recognised by the notification by the State Party of two protective zones – a larger 1km protection zone and a smaller “silence zone” within it – which function *de facto* as buffer zones. However, legally, there is only a 100m protected zone around the boundaries of the property as determined under the legal acts of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

The Mission

The World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to invite a joint WHC/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property in 2016 (Decision 40 COM 7B.55). This was reiterated by the Committee in 2018 (Decision 42 COM 7B.27) and in 2021 (Decision 44 COM 7B.52) (see Annex III). The World Heritage Centre has been discussing the organisation of this mission with the State Party since 2017. The mission was scheduled for March 2020 but had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Due to the ongoing pandemic in 2021, an online meeting in view of the mission took place on 19 May 2021, with the participation of relevant national and local authorities, the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS International, and members of the International Expert Group (the full list of participants and the programme can be found in Annex VII).

The programme of the day-long online meeting was structured around the agreed Terms of Reference for the Advisory mission. The following points were presented by the State Party and discussed:

- the progress made in the dialogue between different stakeholders;
- the educational programmes of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum;
- the different conservation projects and in the setting of the property;
- construction of the S1 expressway and the southern link road to Oświęcim.

The on-site mission then took place on 12-14 October 2021 and included two thematic meetings with a number of stakeholders – one on the Oświęcim ring road investment and another one on the development of a management plan for the property – as well as a day-long site visits, mostly of the historical structures situated in the protective zone (full programme in Annex IV).

The mission team consisted of Irena Caquet, World Heritage Centre, and Max Polonovski, ICOMOS International.

By its Decisions 42 COM 7B.27 and 44 COM 7B.52 (see Annex III), the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to also organise an expert group meeting coinciding with the Advisory mission. A group of international experts (including Max Polonovski) has been assisting the State Party since the 1990s with consultations and advice in the preservation and conservation of the World Heritage property. However, the State Party has not extended an invitation to this group to meet in conjunction with the Advisory mission in 2021.

The mission followed the Terms of Reference agreed with the State Party (see Annex I).

Key Issues Informing the Terms of Reference

Issue 1: Dialogue between the authorities, other key stakeholders and local communities in relation to the historical and other associative values of the immediate setting of the property

The mission noted the positive atmosphere and the constructive dialogue which prevails between the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport and the other key stakeholders, including the Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, the mayor of Oświęcim, the governor of the commune of Oświęcim, the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, the Regional Monuments inspector, and the Polish National Commission for UNESCO.

The mission was pleased to note a very profound change in the relations between the various stakeholders, local communities, and the authorities. A climate of mutual understanding and respect has been established, with each stakeholder accepting the development of the diverse narratives.

The passage of time and the gradual disappearance of direct witnesses reinforce the historical and symbolic value of the site. The reflective and historical aspects of the former camps constitute essential characteristics, which can have several levels of reading and perception. The Outstanding Universal Value and the complexity of the site include components that allow for reflection of diverse narratives. What might appear to be conflicting points of view today are in fact bringing together different actors on the same line, that of memory. The competition of narratives, which prevailed during several decades, between different claims of the victims of the period is giving way to a more balanced approach, allowing each stakeholder and institution to address its own audience.

The numerous elements of the complex structure built over five years in Auschwitz-Birkenau and its surroundings are components of interconnected narratives related to the multi-agendas of the Nazi occupation, including the extermination of Jews, concentration, slavery, and forced labour of opponents.

The history of the site cannot be limited to a narrative developed by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, even if it is the main actor. The frustration of the local population accumulated over several decades during the Communist time, when the genocide of the European Jews was not differentiated from the persecution of the Polish resistance, is fading away for the benefit of a clearer consciousness of the history of World War II and the following period in Poland. This is evident in the growing awareness by the stakeholders of the importance of the remaining structures belonging to the Nazi system outside of the camps and the attempts to find an appropriate use for them, to give them a sustainable future by restoration and reuse.

Issue 2: Development of an educational and social awareness-raising programme on the historical structures and associations of the protection zone

The mission expressed their regret that the core group of experts who attended the online meeting in May 2021 was not convened to the meetings on site. The State Party could have benefited from their advice and opinion on the further development of educational and social awareness-raising programmes on the historical structures and associations of the protection zone.

During the on-site visits, the mission team witnessed a raising consciousness of the added value of history to the site experience through the development of educational and social programmes or activities.

This was evident in the adaptation of historical structures within the site for educational purposes: the Old Theatre has been adapted to the activities of the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust to expand the educational function of the State Museum by offering additional facilities. It offers a 200-seat auditorium, conference rooms, offices, reading rooms, and other facilities.

In the protection zone, the restoration of the building of a former *Lagerhaus* and its adaptation to host the Land of Oświęcim Residents Memory Museum, is an excellent example of expanding educational and social awareness-raising offer in the vicinity of the site. The museum, planned to open in spring 2022, will be dedicated to the history of the inhabitants of the land of Oświęcim, with emphasis on the period of World War II, and focusing on the help the local population provided to the prisoners of Auschwitz. Presents made by prisoners for those who helped them will be displayed, among other historical objects and documents. The exhibition will also shed light on the persecution of some of the local war heroes during the communist period after the war. Furthermore, the museum will present the history of the Oświęcim area prior to the war. By bringing these different aspects together, the museum will contribute to embedding the history of the camps in the history of the land of Oświęcim.

The Mayor of Oświęcim emphasises the necessity not to exclude the local community from the scope of the memories of World War II, since it is also their own history that must be viewed with a long-term approach. The city of Oświęcim, as Messenger of Peace – member of the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities – is promoting educational activities aimed at reconciliation, dialogue and tolerance. The lack of green spaces inside the city led the municipality to create the Zasole Park in 2017. It met success with the city's inhabitants and led to the creation of a second part of the park – the alley of Memorial Trees – dedicated to other cities that suffered tragic history. Works are ongoing to complete this new space. 17 cities from around the world will be represented by a tree coming from each of them. Guernica, Dachau and Hiroshima are among the cities participating in this project. It sends a message of peace and hope for the future, while providing the local population with additional green area.

Social awareness-raising and educational aspect of the property and its surroundings is further strengthened through the organisation of several commemorative spaces in memory of the Polish war hero Witold Pilecki. He allowed himself to be captured voluntarily by the occupying Nazis in order to infiltrate the Auschwitz concentration camp and organise a resistance movement within it. There is a statue of Witold Pilecki outside of the College of Applied Sciences of the State University of Małopolska, named after him and adapted from a former State Tobacco Monopoly building. Archaeological traces of the presence and work of the camps' inmates are presented in a showcase in the lobby of the College, and a permanent exhibition on the Polish resistance is on display in the ground floor corridor. They aim at promoting awareness among the students about the past of the place. A commemorative stone to honour Witold Pilecki will also be erected in the above-mentioned alley of Memorial Trees in Oświęcim.

The management plan should address the multiplicity of sites, exhibitions and museums and how they may be better integrated in the wider regional policies.

Issue 3: Management Plan

The State Party took the opportunity of the mission and the presence of the local authorities and stakeholders to announce the creation of a team, which will be monitoring the preparation of management plans for the World Heritage sites in Poland. It will be chaired by Katarzyna Pałubska, Deputy Director of the Monuments Protection Department at the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport. It has an allocated budget for this task, earmarked until 2023.

The State Party expects the team will set up a draft management plan for the property in the year ahead and will present it for discussion to the group of international experts before submitting it to the World Heritage Centre for review.

As the Conservation Strategy underlines, the interests of the local communities must be represented in the course of the decision-making processes for the management plan. As part of these processes, it will be necessary to define the priorities and the responsibilities of each stakeholder and to find compromise and understanding of the respective roles and views of each of them.

The Director of the State Museum estimates that 1200 objects were destroyed by their owners fearing that the necessity of their protection would create a binding and legal obligation, which would inconvenience their owners. The desirability of protecting such objects as a crucial part of the documentation of the property needs to be stressed in the management plan, which will take into account the inventory of all the objects related to the history of the site. Although movable heritage is not part of the attributes of OUV, its conservation should be seen by their owners as being a desirable way to sustain the historical memory of the property.

Achieving such an understanding should be one of the tasks of the newly created team in charge of the preparation of the management plan with the cooperation of the local authorities and involvement of local communities.

Issue 4: The establishment of a buffer zone

There is a need to redefine the limits of the protective zone, leading to the establishment of a buffer zone that includes both the silence zone and a wider area, to reflect the results of the analysis performed by the Rawecki's Draft Management Plan (2007) and the Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property (2015).

One of the main challenges will remain the acceptance of the principle of a buffer zone by the local authorities. The establishment of a protective or buffer zone must be based on comprehensive explanation of its incidences and on consensus about how it may support the OUV of the property, in order to avoid tensions and misunderstandings among the local population.

Issue 5: Conservation Strategy for the property and its immediate setting

The Conservation Strategy was prepared between 2008 and 2015 by the National Heritage Board of Poland, under the direction of Andrzej Siwek, using and further developing the draft Management Plan issued by M. and J. Rawecki in 2007. The Conservation Strategy offers an inventory of the structures and buildings within and associated with the property and of the historical landscape setting, with conservation guidelines for each object.

The mission visited several buildings mentioned in the Conservatory Strategy, which used to be in a bad state of conservation and have been restored, as an example of the application of the recommendations included in the Conservation Strategy.

The State Museum ensures the protection and conservation according to accepted principles, which are required in the field of museum conservation.

The mission had an opportunity to visit several historical structures in the immediate setting of the property. One of them was the registered historical State Tobacco Monopoly building, a former *Lagerhaus* (a warehouse for cereal products), which was adapted to host the College of Applied Sciences of the State University of Małopolska, named after Witold Pilecki. The restoration of another building belonging to the Tobacco Monopoly complex to enlarge the capacity of the State University is about to be completed. Some remnants of the war period were found during the work and will be kept and exposed in the same spirit of safeguarding the memory of the site as in the other buildings of the campus.

The railway sections still remaining in the vicinity of the Tobacco Monopoly are the residual traces of the first convoy of prisoners to the Auschwitz camp in 1940. These railway sections have been restored and contribute to the students' awareness of the history of the camps.

Another *Lagerhaus*, part of the Tobacco Monopoly, registered, will open soon as the Land of Oświęcim Residents Memory Museum, which is a cultural institution created in 2017 by the Oświęcim District Council. The restoration of the building is completed, and the interior design of the exhibits is nearly ready for the museum to be opened in spring 2022. The architects created an elegant renovation, with a contemporary treatment of the entrance, which preserves and highlights the section of the railway which used to bring the food to the former warehouse. This museum will complement the Auschwitz Jewish Centre, which already exists in the City of Oświęcim and commemorates and educates about the history of Jews in Oświęcim.

The former *SS-Küche* is a wooden building in a bad condition for many years. It has been taken over by the Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau, a foundation established in 2013 in order to save objects and artefacts related to the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau and its subcamps that remain mostly in private hands. The conservation work of the building is in progress and follows the scientific principles of the building archaeology. All the boards and pieces of wood are numbered before being disassembled. It is yet to be determined what new use to give to this building after its restoration. The Foundation suggests that it could potentially be used to organise large exhibitions, or to host concerts by young musicians.

All these restorations of the historical structures of the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex are a sign of the social awareness of the local communities of their common obligation to use history to strengthen the social links between the inhabitants.

Another important group of buildings, which are entrusted to the care of the same Foundation by the Commune of Oświęcim, are the warehouses – the so-called cabbage cellar and a range of potato cellars (see photos in Annex IX). They are located in the immediate vicinity of the former *Judenrampe*. This huge alignment of warehouses was built in 1943-1944 and should be an essential element of the visit circuit as it marks the unloading place of all the deported Jews between 1942 and April 1944, before a new ramp was built inside the camp of Birkenau. For many years, the warehouses have been decaying, losing their roofs and are today in the state of ruins. A project of conservation and restoration has been elaborated by the Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau, which is looking for funds. Since the funding for such a large surface of ruins – to consolidate or to conserve them, if not to restore – is not yet secured, some urgent measures should be taken to stop the degradation and cover the ruins with a temporary roofing cover.

Issue 6: Overall state of conservation of the property and factors, projects and conservation issues that could potentially impact its Outstanding Universal Value

Time constraints did not allow the mission team to visit the property and its surroundings in their entirety. The mission was impressed by the quality of the recent restoration works within the property. The State Museum answers to the conservation needs of the World Heritage property continuously, and the conservation works carried out are of the highest standards.

Thus, the mission was presented with the results of the conservation work in Barrack 123 in the women camp at Auschwitz II-Birkenau. The complete preservation is achieved with visible but necessary technical additions to ensure the stability and sustainability of the original structure, in line with the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter, 1964). All restoration works are achieved under the highest standards.

The mission visited another historical structure within the property – the Old Theatre at Auschwitz I – restored and adapted for the activities of the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. The project was funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The State Museum also undertook the restoration of a non-registered building on Więźniów Oświęcimia Street, just outside of Auschwitz I, to create a visitor centre, where groups could gather before visit, and documentation and facilities could be offered. The restoration works are at nearing their final stage. A subterranean passage will cross the street connecting the parking lot and the centre. During the work, an unknown before shelter for Nazi officers was discovered and will be conserved.

However, many of the important attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, including buildings, transport infrastructure and work areas, lie outside of the inscribed property, while the area around the camps still forms a cultural landscape reflecting the exploitation of humanity. On the basis of the visits made during the mission to the historical structures in the setting of the property, concerns remain about the state of conservation of such significant structures as the *SS-Küche* and the former cabbage and potato warehouses by the *Judenrampe*. The lack of progress on conservation is closely linked to the lack of funding, but also to the difficulty to find new uses for these redundant buildings. It is urgent to secure the conservation of these structures while allowing for future answers to the question of their potential reuse to mature.

Issue 7: The ring road

Since the ring road project was the key issue discussed during the Expert Group mission to the property in 2013 and the focus of one of the two main meetings during this mission, the examination of its potential impact on the OUV of the property is developed in greater detail below.

The project of the ring road, which will connect the S1 expressway to the city of Oświęcim, was presented in its last version during the online meeting in view of the mission in May 2021. The project includes the construction of national road no. 44, 9 km long, with the crossing of the railway and the construction of two bridges on rivers Vistula and Soła, with the necessary engineering infrastructure, civil structures and facilities.

Some unsolved questions on the potential negative impact of the road on the silence zone and the protection zone, which had been raised during the online meeting, in particular on the

historical landscape as defined in the M. and J. Rawecki's study, and in the HIA, were discussed again during the mission.

The Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland described the measures which will be taken to prevent any negative impact on the OUV of the property, going into great details in its presentation. The level of depth of analysis of possible impacts of the project on the property and its protective zone is unprecedented in Poland.

In investigating different aspects of the planned investment, the government agency examined a number of Museum's documents, archives and territorial studies. A study of the presence of human ashes was undertaken through 100 drillings conducted under archaeological supervision. As a conclusion, the possibility of the new road colliding with human remains was ruled out.

Earth walls, greenery, plant screens are planned to avoid any visual impact and to reduce noise. The potential visual impact of the new development on the property was examined from 22 spatial points of analysis. Techniques used included drone aerial photography. Traffic and direction signs will not be visible from the property. Even the lights necessary for the security of the road will be at the lowest acceptable level, which is not specially required by the Museum being closed after sunset.

The five intersections of the ring road with the existing local roads and in particular, the road of the Death March, are designed to be roundabouts. At km 5,390, the road will run under the railway line through a pipe roofing structure created by thrust boring.

The question whether the bridge on the Soła River would be seen from Auschwitz I or would overlook the former camp received a negative answer. The height of the bridge has been calculated at its lowest possibility (6 m) and will not allow any view on the camp and *vice versa*.

As shown in the map presented during the meeting dedicated to the discussion on the project (see Annex IX), the route of the proposed road will cut into the protection zone but will not cut through the smaller silence zone. The mission was informed that the closest distance between the road and the property will be 800m, south of Birkenau.

During the mission, different stakeholders – from the national and local authorities to the Director of the State Museum – stressed the urgent need to have the ring road to improve the increasingly difficult traffic situation in and around Oświęcim.

It appeared to the mission that the ring road would bring economic and social benefits for the State Museum and the city of Oświęcim, as the road will dramatically reduce the heavy traffic, which has become a threat for the property, in particular with the continuous pounding of trucks, buses and cars along the walls of Auschwitz I in the Legionów Street. The heavy traffic will be rerouted to the new road, which will move it away from the street and the property.

The ring road does not impact directly on the property, but the southern part of the road cuts into the protected zone to the south of the property, which could reduce the effectiveness of the protected zone. As the purpose of the protected zone is to support the OUV of the property, then this support is to a degree diminished by the incursion which also puts into question the purpose of the Protection Zone.

The mission acknowledges the long gestation of this ring road project, the very detailed documentation that has been provided, including an HIA, and the recommendations of the Expert Group, and all these aspects were carefully considered by the mission. The details of

the road have been developed in the context of an approval in principle given by the Expert Group in 2013, their list of recommendations, the Conservation Strategy and the HIA.

In line with the relevant decision of the World Heritage Committee at its session in 2021, the mission considered how the design of the southern ring road has responded to the recommendations of the 2013 Expert Group and the conclusions of the HIA.

A summary analysis has been prepared of the main stages in the development of the project and the assessments that have been undertaken, and this is set out as Annex II to this report.

In conclusion, the mission considers that within the constraints of this ring road project, and in the absence of a Management Plan which could have clearly articulated the sensitivities of different areas of the property, the current proposals can be seen as the best that can be achieved.

The project does though highlight the need for a formal buffer zone or formal protection of the immediate setting to support the OUV of the property.

A new road has been already built to reroute the continuous traffic of cars along the entrance and the eastern wall of Birkenau, which is a positive development. The residual space created between this new road and the old one belongs to the Commune of Oświęcim and to different private owners. However, it has become a wilderness and puts at risk the view of the entrance of Birkenau. It is highly desirable that, to avoid a degradation of the immediate surroundings of one of the most famous views of the site – the Death Gate, this land becomes part of the State Museum. It would allow an appropriate maintenance, which is particularly required here for visual impacts and to develop a security system further away from the entrance of the former camp.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Significant progress is evident in the dialogue between the authorities, other key stakeholders, and local communities.

The state of conservation of the property 'Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)' is overall satisfactory. The State Party and in particular, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, invest significant efforts and resources in the preservation of the historical structures within the property, which are fragile since they were not built to last.

On the other hand, the safeguarding of important historical structures situated outside of the World Heritage property, in the large landscape setting of the property, is less systematic. While some of the historical structures in the protection zone visited during the mission have benefited from extensive conservation activities, others, such as the former SS Kitchen and the former cabbage and potato warehouses are in poor state of conservation.

The ring road is desired by most stakeholders in order to alleviate the traffic in the Oświęcim city centre and also to divert some of the heavy traffic going through smaller roads in the immediate vicinity of the site's component parts.

The ring road does not impact directly on the property, but the southern part of the road cuts into the protected zone to the south of the property, which could reduce the effectiveness of the protected zone. The details of the road have been developed in the context of an approval in

principle given by the Expert Group in 2013, their list of recommendations, the Conservation Strategy and the HIA.

The mission considers that within the constraints of this ring road project, and in the absence of a Management Plan which could have clearly articulated the sensitivities of different areas of the property, the current proposals can be seen as the best that can be achieved. The project does though highlight the need for a formal buffer zone or formal protection of the immediate setting to support the OUV of the property.

The main challenge remains the lack of an agreed management plan for the property. Some progress has been made towards this end, notably the preparation of the Conservation Strategy, achieved in 2015 and focusing on the protection of attributes of OUV within the cultural landscape surrounding the property. The Conservation Strategy will be of use when establishing a management plan. A positive development in this respect is the recent creation by the Polish government of a special team for monitoring the preparation of management plans for World Heritage sites in Poland, chaired by Katarzyna Pałubska, Deputy Director of the Monuments Protection Department at the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport.

The positive dynamic in the dialogue between the national authorities, other key stakeholders, and local communities should facilitate the upcoming discussion on the management plan and the establishment of a buffer zone.

List of all recommendations:

1. Building on the positive dynamics initiated by the State Party in the dialogue among the various stakeholders, continue and further reinforce this dialogue in order to achieve an inclusive approach to the safeguarding and management of the property.
2. While recognising that each institution involved has its own structure and objectives, a coordinated effort should be made in mapping their interests and in support of visitor experiences. This is essential in adopting an approach that gives the “cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes”.²
3. For new museums and memorials, there needs to be a better definition of existing and potential audiences to develop focused and harmonised educative and social awareness-raising material for local, national and global public. This should be accompanied, where relevant, with connections to the historical structures in the protection zone.
4. Consideration should be given to the fact that finding a potential reuse of the various historical structures in the protection zone might not be feasible in the short run. However, it is imperative to ensure the conservation of these structures in order to allow sufficient time for reflection and dialogue on their future use.
5. In developing the Management Plan, the State Party is invited to reflect on the issues and challenges at Auschwitz-Birkenau in managing a site involving multiple local authorities and the legalities of building protection measures, including mechanisms for the prevention of blight and deterioration.

² Article 5 (a) of the World Heritage Convention.

6. Innovative proposals in bringing public-private partnerships should be investigated as part of the Management Plan.
7. The State Party is recommended to establish a buffer zone, which encompasses both a silence zone and a wider protection zone or relevant spatial planning policies in order to offer greater protection to the property's immediate setting and context.
8. Taking into account the importance of the surroundings in understanding the setting and context of the property, appropriate uses might be established in the management plan for the immediate surroundings of the property, through a process of dialogue and discussion with local stakeholders.
9. The conservation guidelines of the Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau should be revisited in order to prioritise and hierarchise all the attributes within the property according to their contribution to OUV and specify precisely how elements of the setting support OUV in terms of their historical importance and context.
10. Any future proposals for the new development in the vicinity of the property should be assessed for their potential impact on OUV, through undertaking Heritage Impact Assessments at the earliest possible stage.
11. It is recommended that a comprehensive tourism management and interpretation plan for the whole property and its setting are established as part of the Management Plan – to handle promotion, suggest projects and actions, review new initiatives and provide coordination between the authorities and stakeholders.

Annexes

Annex I: Terms of Reference of the mission and the World Heritage Committee's decisions requesting the mission to be carried out

Terms of Reference

Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the World Heritage property “Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940- 1945)” (Poland), 12-14 October 2021

The World Heritage property of “Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)” was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 under criterion (vi).

In response to the World Heritage Committee decisions 40 COM 7B.55 and 42 COM 7B.27 the State Party has invited a joint WHC/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property.

The mission should address the following key issues:

1. Review progress with the establishment of a dialogue between the authorities, other key stakeholders (including Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, local governments, local communities, National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Regional Monuments Inspector, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport and the Polish National Commission for UNESCO) as well as local communities in relation to the historical and other associative values of the immediate setting of the property, through using, where appropriate, a mediation approach;
2. Coinciding with an expert group meeting, advise on the development of an educational and social awareness-raising programme on the historical structures and associations of the protection zone, and on any further measures that might be taken to strengthen social cohesion;
3. Review progress with the development of the Management Plan and its adoption by all the stakeholders, and also review the effectiveness of the management structures in reinforcing and extending the governance mechanism to all stakeholders;
4. Advise on how appropriate uses might be established for the immediate surroundings of the property, through a process of dialogue and discussion with local stakeholders, and how this could lead to the establishment of a buffer zone for the property to offer greater protection to its setting;
5. Review the implementation of the conservation guidelines of the *Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau* and its immediate setting;
6. Assess the overall state of conservation of the property and evaluate factors, projects and conservation issues that could potentially impact its Outstanding Universal Value.

The mission will take place in Oświęcim and Brzezinka, Poland.

Annex II: Main stages in the development of the ring road project and the relevant assessments

The designed section of the S-1 expressway intends to complement the European Corridor VI connecting the Baltic countries with the countries of Southern Europe. The concept of building the S-1 expressway, along with the ring road of Oświęcim and the bridge on the Soła River, is aimed at comprehensively solving the problem of inefficient transport system in the eastern part of the Śląskie Voivodeship and Western Małopolska. The Oświęcim ring road is designed to allow to move significant traffic from the current national road No. 44, not adapted to the existing traffic pressures, on the section from Bieruń to Oświęcim and from the city area.

In 2008, following the report of the Expert Group on 'Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)', the General Directorate for National Roads and Highways (GDDKiA) prepared variant VI of the S-1 expressway route, which was approved by the Małopolskie Voivodeship Monuments Protection Inspector. In 2009, the World Heritage Committee welcomed the new variant of the expressway S-1 which takes into account the values, integrity and authenticity of the property and does not adversely impact on its OUV (Decision 33 COM 7B.115).

In the following year works on the design of S-1 road started, studying different variants while taking into account the UNESCO World Heritage property, Natura 2000 sites, social conditions in the area and the location of coal mines, drinking water intakes, main underground water reservoirs, transport service of the region, and ecological utility areas.

The matter of selecting the variant of the expressway route and the Oświęcim ring road was repeatedly consulted by the State Party with the Małopolskie Voivodeship Monuments Protection Inspector, the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, the Polish National Commission for UNESCO and, as part of public consultations, with residents of the municipalities through which the various variants of the expressway and ring road are to run. All the above-mentioned institutions gave a positive opinion on variant A of the S-1 expressway.

Following an on-site mission in 2013, the Expert Group issued a report, which included a number of recommendations for continuing the evaluation of variant A.

In 2014, the ICOMOS Technical Evaluation recommended, amongst others, narrowing the ring road, preparing a comprehensive transport plan for the city of Oświęcim, and abandoning plans to build a bridge over the Soła River near the former Auschwitz I Camp. In response, the General Directorate for National Roads and Highways expressed an opinion that it was impossible to lower the category of the Oświęcim ring road and to abandon the construction of a bridge on the Soła River on the basis of traffic intensity surveys for the whole region and traffic forecasts for the period 2018-2038. Narrowing the Oświęcim ring road to two lanes and interrupting its continuity by not building the bridge over the Soła River was considered to put additional strain on the existing heavy traffic in the city, including the immediate vicinity of the former Auschwitz I Camp.

In 2016, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the overall project (Decision 40 COM 7B.55).

In 2017, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Construction of Poland adopted an Investment Programme for the construction of the S-1 express road, which included further design and research work.

In 2018, the World Heritage Committee congratulated the State Party for the decision taken regarding the environmental conditions limiting the visual, acoustic disturbance and archaeological impacts of the expressway S-1 and the south ring road of Oświęcim and the quality of the measures proposed, in particular concerning the possible human remains, and the general project planning integrating the HIA as requested by the Committee (Decision 42 COM 7B.27).

The same year, as part of the development of the Programme Concept for the construction of the expressway, including the Oświęcim ring road, a HIA was undertaken by the State Party with regard to the World Heritage property.

In 2020, GDDKiA signed a contract with Budimex S.A. for the design and construction of the southern ring road of Oświęcim.

In July 2021, the Małopolskie Voivodeship Monuments Protection Inspector requested the National Institute of Cultural Heritage to express its opinion on the construction design in question.

The World Heritage Committee, during its 44th session in July 2021, requested the State Party to submit full details of the Oświęcim southern ring road project, including how it responds to the recommendations of the 2013 Expert Group and to the conclusions of the HIA, to allow a review of the project by the Advisory Bodies ahead of an on-site mission (Decision 44 COM 7B.52).

On 17 September 2021, the National Institute of Cultural Heritage of Poland issued an opinion on the ring road project. The study concluded that “the absence of direct conflicts with the physical form of the property and the solutions introduced in the project to minimize indirect impacts on the substance ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property will not be endangered”.

On 24 September 2021, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre full details of the Oświęcim southern ring road project, including a detailed technical description, a map, an analysis of the project’s links with other public roads, longitudinal profiles, anti-glare noise barriers, lighting design, greenery, and bridge engineering.

On 12 October 2021, the State Party organized a meeting on the Oświęcim southern ring road project for the experts of the Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property, with participation of various stakeholders. During the meeting, the mission team was given a detailed presentation of the project and provided with further clarifications on a number of points.

Annex III: Decisions of the World Heritage Committee requesting the mission to be carried out

Decision 40 COM 7B.55

Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) (Poland) (C 31)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/16/40.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision **33 COM 7B.115**, adopted at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009),
3. Acknowledges the details provided by the State Party on the ongoing projects including progress made in the management of visitors including with advanced booking systems, the express route and the start of a restoration initiative of the barracks in Auschwitz;
4. Welcomes the development of the detailed Conservation Strategy and urges the State Party to ensure that its Guidelines are followed;
5. Whilst understanding that the proposed expressway and south ring road of Oświęcim have been approved in principle, subject to environmental decisions, reiterates its request to the State Party to undertake as soon as possible a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the overall project, and to submit this, together with details as to how this project relates to other proposed road schemes in Brzezinka and elsewhere, to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, before irreversible commitments are made;
6. Also welcomes the start of the restoration project of the two brick prisoner barracks and requests the State Party to submit further details on the restoration principles at use with documentation in order that good practice be established for further application in other parts of the property;
7. In light of the various transformations that are taking place to accommodate the nearly two million visitors arriving at the property each year, also requests the State Party to provide more information on how the various projects and necessary infrastructure will be provided in symbiosis with the surroundings of the property, in line with the Conservation Guidelines, while respecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
8. Also reiterates its request that HIAs are undertaken for all projects before any decisions are taken, in order to define clearly potential impacts on the attributes of OUV;
9. Notes with satisfaction that the Retrospective Statement of OUV of the property has been finalized and submitted to the World Heritage Committee for adoption (Document WHC/16/40.COM/8E);
10. Considers that there is a need for a governance system that brings together all the stakeholders at the property and for a clearer multi-disciplinary management approach that is based on OUV, and further welcomes the suggestion of a programme to facilitate more positive relationships with the local community;
11. In order to undertake a dialogue with the State Party on how best these issues might be addressed, further requests the State Party to invite an ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property;
12. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2017**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session in 2018.

Decision 42 COM 7B.27

Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) (Poland) (C 31)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/18/42.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decisions **33 COM 7B.115** and **40 COM 7B.55**, adopted respectively during its 33rd (Seville, 2009) and 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) sessions,
3. Congratulates the State Party for the provision of the Conservation Strategy and implementation following the international standards and regulations for urgent conservation projects as requested by the Committee (Decision **40 COM 7B.55**);
4. Also congratulates the State Party for the decision taken regarding the environmental conditions limiting the visual, acoustic disturbance and archaeological impacts of the expressway S-1 and the south ring road of Oświęcim and the quality of the measures proposed, in particular concerning the possible human remains, and the general project planning integrating the HIA as requested by the Committee;
5. Recommends the State Party to continue the dialogue initiated with the authorities and the local communities to explain the historical value of the cultural context surrounding the inscribed property, notably through mediation methods and appropriate educative material to enable the establishment of a buffer zone for the property, guaranteeing the appropriate use of the property and its surroundings;
6. Requests the State Party to continue its efforts to complete the management plan and its adoption by all the stakeholders and also recommends in this respect to evoke the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value recently adopted, and to reinforce and extend the governance mechanism to all the stakeholders, notably the authorities and local communities;
7. Reiterates its request to the State Party to invite a World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property and further recommends the State Party to coincide the mission with an expert group meeting, notably to enable the development of an educative and social awareness-raising, explanatory and reconversion programme, on the historical structures of the protection zone;
8. Recommends furthermore the State Party to continue the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 expert group;
9. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2019**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020.

Decision 44 COM 7B.52

Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945)” (Poland) (C 31)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions **33 COM 7B.115**, **40 COM 7B.55** and **42 COM 7B.27**, adopted respectively during its 33rd (Seville, 2009), 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and 42nd (Manama, 2018) sessions,
3. Congratulates the State Party for its efforts to conserve numerous remains of the wider setting of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp complex through the Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau and the recently created The Remembrance Museum of Land of Oświęcim Residents;
4. Notes the information provided by the State Party on progress with the planning and design of the south ring road of Oświęcim, including the requested Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) Report, but regrets that the HIA was not accompanied by full design details and alignment of the proposed ring road, or by background visual and acoustic assessments, with the result that it currently remains unclear how the project respects the recommendations of the 2013 Expert Group, therefore invites the State Party to provide full HIA documentation for review by experts ahead of an on-site mission;
5. Requests the State Party to:
 - a) Submit full details of the Oświęcim southern ring road project, including how it responds to the recommendations of the 2013 Expert Group and to the conclusions of the HIA, to allow a review of the project by the Advisory Bodies ahead of an on-site mission,
 - b) Await the reviews by the Advisory Bodies of the proposed south ring road project before taking any decisions or entering into any contractual agreements for the construction of the road that cannot be reversed;
6. Reiterates its request to the State Party to continue its efforts to complete the management plan and its adoption by all the stakeholders;
7. Welcomes that an online meeting on the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission took place in May 2021 and also requests the State Party to organize the planned on-site World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission and expert meeting as soon as the global health situation allows it;
8. Urges the State Party to continue implementing the recommendations of the 2013 expert group;
9. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2022**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.

Annex IV: Programme of the mission as implemented

Programme of the Advisory mission

12 October 2021

- 17:00 Arrival in Oświęcim, check-in at the hotel Hampton by Hilton, and meeting the site managers, representatives of the local government authorities, Małopolska Regional Monuments Inspector, Government Agency responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport, National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Polish National Commission for UNESCO, ICOMOS and other stakeholders
- 18:00-20:00 Meeting on the Oświęcim ring road investment project – presentation by Government Agency responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland followed by Q&A

13 October 2021

On-site meetings with managers

- 9:00-13:30 Site visit to the World Heritage property (components in Oświęcim) and surrounding zones:
- Auschwitz I – Old Theatre and new visitor centre (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
 - Zasole Park with the alley of Memorial Trees (Mayor of Oświęcim)
 - former Lagerhaus (Remembrance Museum of Land of Oświęcim Residents)
 - former SS Kitchen (Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau)
 - former building of Tobacco Monopoly (Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki State University of Małopolska in Oświęcim)
- 15:00-18:00 Site visit to the World Heritage property (component in Brzezinka) and surrounding zones:
- Auschwitz II-Birkenau – barrack 123 (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
 - relief road and access road to Judenrampe (Head of Oświęcim Commune)
 - former potato warehouses (Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau)
- 20:00 Working time for experts

14 October 2021

- 9:00-11:30 Advisory meeting with stakeholders on the Management Plan with the site managers, representatives of the local government authorities, Małopolska Regional Monuments Inspector, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport, National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Polish National Commission for UNESCO, ICOMOS Poland and other stakeholders:
- Presentation by the Ministry of culture
 - Open discussion, followed by Q&A
- 11:30 Departure from Oświęcim

Annex V: Composition of the mission team

Irena Caquet, World Heritage Centre
Max Polonovski, ICOMOS International

Annex VI: List of people met

1. Katarzyna Pałubska (Deputy Director, Monuments Protection Department, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
2. Jakub Wiśniewski (Counsellor to the Minister, Monuments Protection Department, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
3. Katarzyna Sikora-Święch (Chief Deputy, Monuments Protection Department, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
4. Alicja Jagielska-Burduk (Secretary General, Polish National Commission for UNESCO)
5. Bogusław Szmygin (President, Polish National Committee ICOMOS)
6. Monika Bogdanowska (expert)
7. Bartosz Skaldawski (Director, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
8. Anna Marconi-Betka (Head of the Heritage Monitoring Unit, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
9. Barbara Furmanik (Chief Specialist, Heritage Monitoring Unit, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
10. Andrzej Siwek (Head of the Regional Office in Kraków, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
11. Dominika Długosz (acting Małopolska Regional Monuments Inspector)
12. Magdalena Trafas-Wołoszyn (Head of the Department for Inspection of Archaeological Monuments, Regional Office for the Monuments Protection in Kraków)
13. Piotr Cywiński (Director, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
14. Rafał Pióro (Deputy Director, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
15. Tomasz Michaldo (Department of Education, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
16. Dorota Mleczek (Director, Remembrance Museum of Land of Oświęcim Residents)
17. Aleksandra Bibrzycka (Remembrance Museum of Land of Oświęcim Residents)
18. Janusz Chwierut (Mayor of Oświęcim)
19. Andrzej Bojarski (Vice Mayor of Oświęcim)
20. Marek Tarnowski (Head of the Department of Promotion, Municipality of Oświęcim)
21. Małgorzata Potaczek (Head of the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Municipality of Oświęcim)
22. Mirosław Smolarek (Head of Oświęcim Commune)
23. Halina Musiał (Deputy Head of the Oświęcim Commune)
24. Robert Dziuba (Secretary of the Oświęcim Commune)
25. Agnieszka Molenda-Kopijasz (Head of the Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau)
26. Dagmar Kopijasz (Founder, Member of the Foundation Council, Foundation of Memory Sites Near Auschwitz-Birkenau)
27. Sonia Grychtoł (Rector, Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki State University of Małopolska in Oświęcim)
28. Radosław Folga (Vice-Rector for Student Affairs and Promotion, Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki State University of Małopolska in Oświęcim)
29. Justyna Kuglin (Economic and Financial Director, Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki State University of Małopolska in Oświęcim)
30. Tomasz Kałwa (Head of the Documentation Department, Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Katowice)
31. Tomasz Sitarz (Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Katowice)
32. Robert Jakubiak (Deputy Director on Investments, Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Kraków)
33. Bogusław Pietrusza (Project Manager, Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Kraków)

34. Anna Ronowska (Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Kraków)
35. Dagmara Woźnica (contract managing engineer, Lafrentz Polska Sp. z o.o.)
36. Małgorzata Bednarska (author of HIA, Multiconsult)
37. Joanna Borzuchowska (author of the landscape and conservation study for the investment project and greenery development concept, Multiconsult)
38. Krzysztof Markowicz (ARCADIS)
39. Paweł Zawila (Budimex S.A.)
40. Jacek Wojtowicz (Budimex S.A.)
41. Wojciech Dryś (Budimex S.A.)
42. Sebastian Komasa (Budimex S.A.)

Annex VII: Online meeting in view of the WHC/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property (19 May 2021)

Programme of the online meeting

- 9:30-10:15 Welcome, presentation of Terms of Reference and update
- 10:15-11:30 Review progress with the establishment of a dialogue between the authorities, other key stakeholders (including Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, local governments, local communities, National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Regional Monuments Inspector, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport and the Polish National Commission for UNESCO) as well as local communities in relation to the historical and other associative values of the immediate setting of the property, through using, where appropriate, a mediation approach
- 11:45-13:00 Coinciding with an expert group meeting, advise on the development of an educational and social awareness-raising programme on the historical structures and associations of the protection zone, and on any further measures that might be taken to strengthen social cohesion
- 13:35-15:00 Review progress with the development of the Management Plan and its adoption by all the stakeholders, and also review the effectiveness of the management structures in reinforcing and extending the governance mechanism to all stakeholders
- 15:15-16:30 Advise on how appropriate uses might be established for the immediate surroundings of the property, through a process of dialogue and discussion with local stakeholders, and how this could lead to the establishment of a buffer zone for the property to offer greater protection to its setting
- Review the implementation of the conservation guidelines of *the Conservation Strategy for the World Heritage property Auschwitz Birkenau* and its immediate setting
- 16:45-17:30 Comments, interim recommendations and preparation for site visit

List of participants

International experts:

1. Mechtild Rössler (international expert, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre)
2. Michael Turner (international expert, Israel)
3. Eleonora Bergman (international expert, member of the Council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, Poland)
4. Giora Solar (international expert, Israel)
5. Christopher Young (international expert, UK)

Participants from ICOMOS:

6. Max Polonovski (ICOMOS expert)

Participants from the State Party:

7. Magdalena Gawin (Undersecretary of State, General Inspector of Monuments, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
8. Katarzyna Zalasieńska (Director, Monuments Protection Department, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
9. Katarzyna Pałubska (Deputy Director, Monuments Protection Department, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
10. Jakub Wiśniewski (Counsellor to the Minister, Monuments Protection Department, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
11. Bartosz Skaldawski (Director of National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
12. Anna Marconi-Betka (Head of the Heritage Monitoring Unit, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
13. Barbara Furmanik (Chief Specialist, Heritage Monitoring Unit, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
14. Arkadiusz Łukawski (Senior Specialist, Heritage Monitoring Unit, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
15. Andrzej Siwek (Head of the Regional Office in Kraków, National Institute of Cultural Heritage)
16. Urszula Ślęzak (Director, Department of International Relations, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
17. Szymon Jałkowski (Senior Specialist, Bilateral and International Organization Section, Department of International Relations, Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport)
18. Krystyna Żurek (Titular Ambassador, Department of the United Nations and Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
19. Alicja Jagielska-Burduk (Secretary General, Polish National Commission for UNESCO)
20. Aleksandra Waclawczyk (Deputy Secretary General, Polish National Commission for UNESCO)
21. Bogusław Szmygin (President of the Polish National Committee ICOMOS)
22. Monika Bogdanowska (Małopolska Regional Monuments Inspector)
23. Jacek Chrzyszczewski (Chief Specialist, Regional Office for the Monuments Protection in Kraków)
24. Piotr Cywiński (Director, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
25. Rafał Pióro (Deputy Director, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
26. Andrzej Kacorzyk (Deputy Director, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
27. Agnieszka Tanistra-Różanowska (Project Manager of the Global Conservation Plan, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
28. Jolanta Banaś-Maciaszczyk (Head of the Conservation Department, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)
29. Marek Zajęc (Chairman of the Council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation)
30. Janusz Chwierut (Mayor of Oświęcim)
31. Małgorzata Potaczek (Head of the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Municipality of Oświęcim)
32. Magdalena Stapurewicz-Cierkosz (Head of the City Development Office, Municipality of Oświęcim)
33. Marek Tarnowski (Head of the Department of Promotion, Municipality of Oświęcim)
34. Monika Świętek-Smrek (Vice Head of the Department of Promotion, Municipality of Oświęcim, specialist in peace initiatives)
35. Halina Musiał (Vice Head of the Oświęcim Commune)
36. Representatives of the Oświęcim Commune
37. Agnieszka Molenda-Kopijasz (Head of the Foundation "Auschwitz Birkenau Nearby Memorial Sites")
38. Dorota Mleczko (Director, Remembrance Museum of Land of Oświęcim Residents)
39. Aleksandra Bibrzycka (Remembrance Museum of Land of Oświęcim Residents)

40. Sonia Grychtoł (Rector, Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki State University of Małopolska in Oświęcim)
41. Radosław Folga (Vice-Rector for Student Affairs and Promotion, Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki State University of Małopolska in Oświęcim)
42. Justyna Kuglin (Economic and Financial Director, Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki State University of Małopolska in Oświęcim)
43. Marek Niełacny (Acting Director, Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Katowice)
44. Tomasz Kałwa (Head of the Documentation Department, Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Katowice)
45. Tomasz Pałasiński (Director, Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Kraków)
46. Robert Jakubiak (Deputy Director on Investments, Government Agency Responsible for Roads and Motorways in Poland, Regional Office in Kraków)
47. Representatives of the Oświęcim District
48. Ryszard Pagacz (2nd Deputy Voivode of the Małopolska Region)
49. Tomasz Kosecki (Deputy Director of the Culture and Heritage Department, Marshal's Office of Małopolska Region)
50. Agnieszka Szpala (Chief Specialist, Development of Cultural Spaces and National Heritage Unit, Department of Culture, Marshal's Office of Małopolska Region)
51. Maciej Majerski (Head of Rajska village)
52. Adam Zieliński (Head of Harmężę village)
53. Krzysztof Harmata (Head of Pławy village)
54. Mother Superior of the Monastery of the Carmelite Sisters in Oświęcim
55. Father Krzysztof Janas (Rector of St. Maximilian Kolbe Centre in Harmężę)
56. Dorota Wiewióra (Head of Jewish Community, Bielsko-Biała)
57. Michael Schudrich (Chief Rabbi of Poland)

Annex VIII: Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property

Brief synthesis

Auschwitz Birkenau was the principal and most notorious of the six concentration and extermination camps established by Nazi Germany to implement its Final Solution policy which had as its aim the mass murder of the Jewish people in Europe. Built in Poland under Nazi German occupation initially as a concentration camp for Poles and later for Soviet prisoners of war, it soon became a prison for a number of other nationalities. Between the years 1942-1944 it became the main mass extermination camp where Jews were tortured and killed for their so-called racial origins. In addition to the mass murder of well over a million Jewish men, women and children, and tens of thousands of Polish victims, Auschwitz also served as a camp for the racial murder of thousands of Roma and Sinti and prisoners of several European nationalities.

The Nazi policy of spoliation, degradation and extermination of the Jews was rooted in a racist and anti-Semitic ideology propagated by the Third Reich.

Auschwitz Birkenau was the largest of the concentration camp complexes created by the Nazi German regime and was the one which combined extermination with forced labour. At the centre of a huge landscape of human exploitation and suffering, the remains of the two camps of Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau were inscribed on the World Heritage List as evidence of this inhumane, cruel and methodical effort to deny human dignity to groups considered inferior, leading to their systematic murder. The camps are a vivid testimony to the murderous nature of the anti-Semitic and racist Nazi policy that brought about the annihilation of over one million people in the crematoria, 90% of whom were Jews.

The fortified walls, barbed wire, railway sidings, platforms, barracks, gallows, gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz Birkenau show clearly how the Holocaust, as well as the Nazi German policy of mass murder and forced labour took place. The collections at the site preserve the evidence of those who were premeditatedly murdered, as well as presenting the systematic mechanism by which this was done. The personal items in the collections are testimony to the lives of the victims before they were brought to the extermination camps, as well as to the cynical use of their possessions and remains. The site and its landscape have high levels of authenticity and integrity since the original evidence has been carefully conserved without any unnecessary restoration.

Criterion (vi): Auschwitz Birkenau, monument to the deliberate genocide of the Jews by the German Nazi regime and to the deaths of countless others, bears irrefutable evidence to one of the greatest crimes ever perpetrated against humanity. It is also a monument to the strength of the human spirit which in appalling conditions of adversity resisted the efforts of the German Nazi regime to suppress freedom and free thought and to wipe out whole races. The site is a key place of memory for the whole of humankind for the Holocaust, racist policies and barbarism; it is a place of our collective memory of this dark chapter in the history of humanity, of transmission to younger generations and a sign of warning of the many threats and tragic consequences of extreme ideologies and denial of human dignity.

Integrity

Within the 191.97-ha serial property – which consists of three component parts: the former Auschwitz I camp, the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp and a mass grave of inmates – are located the most important structures related to the exceptional events that took place here

and that bear testimony to their significance to humanity. It is the most representative part of the Auschwitz complex, which consisted of nearly 50 camps and sub-camps.

The Auschwitz Birkenau camp complex comprises 155 brick and wooden structures (57 in Auschwitz and 98 in Birkenau) and about 300 ruins. There are also ruins of gas chambers and crematoria in Birkenau, which were dynamited in January 1945. The overall length of fencing supported by concrete poles is more than 13 km. Individual structures of high historical significance, such as railway sidings and ramps, food stores and industrial buildings, are dispersed in the immediate setting of the property. These structures, along with traces in the landscape, remain poignant testimonies to this tragic history.

The Auschwitz I main camp was a place of extermination, effected mainly by depriving people of elementary living conditions. It was also a centre for immediate extermination. Here were located the offices of the camp's administration, the local garrison commander and the commandant of Auschwitz I, the seat of the central offices of the political department, and the prisoner labour department. Here too were the main supply stores, workshops and *Schutzstaffel* (SS) companies. Work in these administrative and economic units and companies was the main form of forced labour for the inmates in this camp.

Birkenau was the largest camp in the Auschwitz complex. It became primarily a centre for the mass murder of Jews brought there for extermination, and of Roma and Sinti prisoners during its final period. Sick prisoners and those selected for death from the whole Auschwitz complex – and, to a smaller extent, from other camps – were also gathered and systematically killed here. It ultimately became a place for the concentration of prisoners before they were transferred inside the Third Reich to work for German industry. Most of the victims of the Auschwitz complex, probably about 90%, were killed in the Birkenau camp.

The property is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey its significance. Potential threats to the integrity of the property include the difficulty in preserving the memory of the events and their significance to humanity. In the physical sphere, significant potential threats include natural decay of the former camps' fabric; environmental factors, including the risk of flooding and rising groundwater level; changes in the surroundings of the former camps; and intensive visitor traffic.

Authenticity

The Auschwitz camp complex has survived largely unchanged since its liberation in January 1945. The remaining camp buildings, structures and infrastructure are a silent witness to history, bearing testimony of the crime of genocide committed by the German Nazis. They are an inseparable part of a death factory organized with precision and ruthless consistency. The attributes that sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are truthfully and credibly expressed, and fully convey the value of the property.

At Auschwitz I, the majority of the complex has remained intact. The architecture of the camp consisted mostly of pre-existing buildings converted by the Nazis to serve new functions. The preserved architecture, spaces and layout still recall the historical functions of the individual elements in their entirety. The interiors of some of the buildings have been modified to adapt them to commemorative purposes, but the external façades of these buildings remain unchanged.

In Birkenau, which was built anew on the site of a displaced village, only a small number of historic buildings have survived. Due to the method used in constructing those buildings, planned as temporary structures and erected in a hurry using demolition materials, the natural

degradation processes have been accelerating. All efforts are nevertheless being taken to preserve them, strengthen their original fabric and protect them from decay.

Many historic artefacts from the camp and its inmates have survived and are currently kept in storage. Some are exhibited in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. These include personal items brought by the deportees, as well as authentic documents and preserved photographs, complemented with post-war testimonies of the survivors.

Protection and management requirements

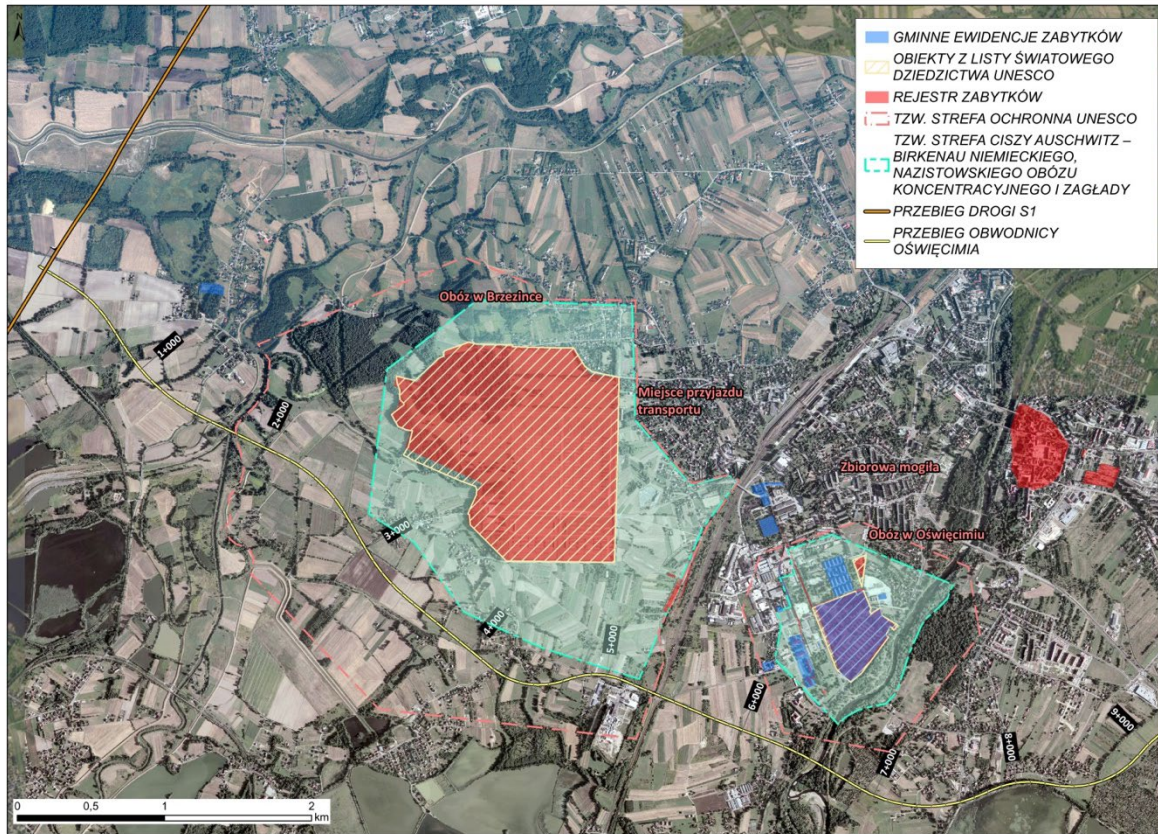
The property is protected by Polish law under the provisions of heritage protection and spatial planning laws, together with the provisions of local law. The site, buildings and relics of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp are situated on the premises of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which operates under a number of legal Acts concerning the operation of museums and protection of the Former Nazi Extermination Camps, which provide that the protection of these sites is a public objective, and its fulfilment is the responsibility of the State administration. The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is a State cultural institution supervised directly by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, who ensures the necessary financing for its functioning and the fulfilment of its mission, including educational activities to understand the tragedy of the Holocaust and the need to prevent similar threats today and in future. The Museum has undertaken a long-term programme of conservation measures under its Global Conservation Plan. It is financed largely through funds from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, which is supported by states from around the world, as well as by businesses and private individuals. The Foundation has also obtained a State subsidy to supplement the Perpetual Fund (Act of 18 August 2011 on a Subsidy for the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation Intended to Supplement the Perpetual Fund).

The existing legal system provides appropriate tools for the effective protection and management of the property. The Museum Council, whose members are appointed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, supervises the performance of the Museum's duties regarding its collections, in particular the execution of its statutory tasks. In addition, the International Auschwitz Council acts as a consultative and advisory body to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland on the protection and management of the site of the former Auschwitz Birkenau camp and other places of extermination and former concentration camps situated within the present territory of Poland.

Several protective zones surround components of the World Heritage property and function de facto as buffer zones. They are covered by local spatial development plans, which are consulted by the Regional Monuments Inspector. The management of the property's setting is the responsibility of the local government of the Town and Commune of Oświęcim. For better management and protection of the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, especially for the proper protection of its setting, a relevant management plan must be put into force.

Annex IX: Maps and photographs

Map showing the route of the proposed ring road (in yellow) in relation to the property (barred red and purple), its silence zone (green) and the outline of the protection zone (red dash line).



Source: Multiconsult Heritage Impact Assessment Report on the investment “Construction of the S-1 expressway from the Kosztowy II junction in Mysłowice to the Suchy Potok junction in Bielsko-Biała”.

Former potato warehouses



Source: photos by the mission team.