



AMENDMENT/PROPOSAL

Agenda Item	7B
Draft Decision	45 COM 8B.19
Submitted by the Delegation of....	<u>Oman</u>
Co-author(s) (if any)	
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TEXT

Draft Decision: 45 COM 8B.19

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/23/45.COM/8B and WHC/23/45.COM/INF.8B1,
2. ~~Defers the examination of~~ Inscribes the nomination of **Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939, Lithuania**, ~~in order to allow with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested,~~ on the World Heritage List as a cultural landscape on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv);
3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief Synthesis

Modernist Kaunas is situated in central Lithuania, at the confluence of two major rivers: the Nemunas and the Neris. The area within the nominated property was planned in the mid-19th century and developed in 1919–1939 when, after the declaration of an independent Republic of Lithuania in 1918, Kaunas served as the provisional capital of the state. The status of provisional capital was crucial for the city's unprecedented growth and architectural development. In less than twenty years, under the auspices of the new national government and civic initiative, Kaunas was transformed into a modern city based on the assimilation of modern urban planning and architecture with pre-existing natural, urban, and other local conditions. Architecture, specifically in the form of a local inflection of the international language of modernism, played a particularly important role in that transformation. Kaunas Modernism, therefore, bears exceptional testimony

to an authentically multifaceted modernism born out of local political and cultural exigencies and an evolutionary urban modernisation responding to pre-existing humanmade and natural features.

The nominated property comprises two areas: Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis. Naujamiestis (New Town), a generous grid planned in 1847, was attached to the eastern edge of the Old Town and extends eastwards along the valley of the Nemunas River. Naujamiestis was modernised and intensively developed in 1919–1939. Encircling Naujamiestis to the north and east is Žaliakalnis (Green Hill) – a distinctive natural plateau rising to an average of 35–40 metres. Žaliakalnis was developed as a garden city residential suburb in 1919–1939 according to a 1923 master plan of Kaunas, which enabled a seven-fold increase in area and accommodated a doubling of the city’s population to 155.000 over the same period.

The most significant attributes of the city’s resulting urban form and associated architecture are defined by the inherent optimism and civic initiative behind the creation of the new modern city as a provisional capital with inherited geographical and urban morphological distinctiveness. A rich architectural heritage of emerging modernism overlaid on the 19th century urban grid and a new garden suburb create a unique ensemble of two complimentary urban landscapes. The sensitive adaptation of the pre-existing 19th-century urban grid, implementation of a garden city residential suburb, the successful integration of the natural environment, and the assimilation of local and global interpretations of architectural modernism gave birth to Kaunas Modernism, that reflects a diverse and innovative response to Lithuania’s encounter with modernity and early 20th century European modernism. 1500 of the 6000 remaining buildings erected in Kaunas in 1919–1939 are concentrated in the nominated area and bear exceptional testimony to the multifaceted nature of architectural modernism in response to local conditions. The façades, streetscapes, and natural elements, combined with the pre-existing urban and geomorphological setting, create a unique sense of place exhibited through broad panoramas, open urban and natural spaces, and varied topography. Unlike many experiences of urban and architectural modernity, Kaunas reflects an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process of and response to modernisation in the early 20th century Europe.

World Heritage criteria under which the property is proposed

Criterion (ii): Kaunas Modernism of 1919–1939 expands the concept of Modernism beyond the International Style by revealing a more diverse, complex fabric of numerous, often divergent, cultural, social, political, and artistic trends. Kaunas Modernism is an exceptional example of rethinking architecture as a process of social, political, and cultural modernisation in the 20th century. Kaunas Modernism provides arguments for the decentralisation of modernism not only in the geographical sense, but also in terms of stylistic expression. Outstanding value of the Kaunas cityscape is its architectural diversity, represented through the plurality of modern architectural ideas, from modernised Neo-Classicism to National Modernism, which co-existed throughout the world in the first half of the 20th century. By integrating and locally interpreting the principles of the Modern Movement, Kaunas Modernism displays a bold plurality of modern architectural expression in response to local needs and conditions.

Criterion (iv): Modernist Kaunas is an outstanding example of a historic city subject to rapid urbanisation and modernisation, encapsulated by diverse expressions of the values and aspirations associated with an optimistic belief in an independent future amid the turbulence of the early 20th century, when national borders were changing fast. The creation of a modern capital city of an emerging nation state is an outstanding testament to people's faith in the future and their ability to be creative under difficult political and economic conditions. The gradual and sustainable modernisation of Kaunas, carried out through civic initiatives with respect to the urban context and natural environment, produced an outstanding urban landscape and modern architectural language serving the needs of provisional capital and possessing functions, structures, and building typologies that reflected the modernisation of urban life in the 20th century.

Statement of integrity

Modernist Kaunas consists of Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis, two adjacent districts that have been preserved in adequate size in almost unchanged historical form and design. The significant architectural structures and the original urban layout, including the characteristic sloping natural and humanmade terrain, public spaces and historic parks, have been retained in their entirety. Of 6000 surviving buildings constructed in Kaunas in 1919–1939, the greatest concentration of significant modernist structures is located in Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis with 1500 buildings of representative administrative, public, industrial, and residential functions testifying to the speed and diversity of development undertaken in the spirit of modernity. 220 structures and urban areas, constructed in the period of 1919–1939 within the Nominated Property, are listed on the National Register of Cultural Heritage. The buffer zone contains structures and groups of buildings dating back to the interwar period which strengthen the character of the nominated property.

Kaunas lost its status as Lithuania's provisional capital in October 1939, and the sudden change in the city's political status helped to preserve the physical attributes of the 1920s and 1930s. Under the Soviet rule, which lasted from 1944–1990, the physical state of interwar modernist buildings was not deliberately neglected, since the superior quality of the architecture was put to pragmatic use. Intermittent development of the area continued with the construction of many buildings that, although new, were compatible with the interwar period of development by being restrained in volume and form. Construction during this era did not alter the established street grid and squares, but it did see the addition of large modernist buildings. The growth of contemporary Kaunas and developmental pressures resulted in several large structures along Karaliaus Mindaugo Prospektas and sparked numerous debates about the relationship between new commercial architecture and the historic surroundings. Any risk is mitigated by listing of all areas comprising the Nominated Property on the National Register of Cultural Heritage and preparing of adequate conservation and management plans.

Statement of authenticity

Because the historically evolved areas of Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis have changed relatively little, Modernist Kaunas is truly a time capsule of the 1919–1939 period. The location and setting, form and design, material and substance as well as use and function of the Nominated Property all represent a historic

modernist city of the interwar period that evolved harmoniously, integrating the natural and historic settings, producing a diverse legacy of architectural modernism. The area of Naujamiestis is home to the largest concentration of landmark modernist buildings that were part of the formation of a new administrative, cultural, and social core of the Lithuanian state in 1919–1939. Modernist residential areas of Naujamiestis constitute a superior architectural background for the landmark buildings, creating a harmonious cityscape. The urban structure of the Naujamiestis, embodying the architectural and urban nature of a modern city, is noted for the greatest diversity of stylistic forms, materials, and functions – a feature which is still evident in the city today.

The Žaliakalnis area with Ažuolynas Park, designed in 1923 and gradually developed up to 1939, represents an outstanding example of the integration of urban and natural landscapes and the adoption of the contemporaneous garden city concept to local conditions. Although the plan was only partially implemented, the elements that were realised and which have survived to this day reflect the local interpretation of the most progressive garden city urban planning concepts of the time, adjusted with an intelligent approach to suit pre-existing natural, topographical, and humanmade features. Another feature of Kaunas Modernism that has retained its authenticity is its historical, cultural and symbolic significance (intangible heritage). Today, the Nominated Property continues to see the highest concentration of active social, cultural, and economic activity, as well as the evolution of new traditions and initiatives inspired by the legacy of Kaunas Modernism.

Protection and management system

The Nominated Property covers a central part of the city Kaunas – a group of areas that are legally protected on the national and local level under the Law on the Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage, the Law on Protected Areas, the Law on Spatial Planning, the Law on Construction, the Law on Landscaping, and the Law on Environmental Protection. The property consists of seven protected zones: Naujamiestis, a historic district of Kaunas (National Register of the Cultural Heritage No. 22149); Žaliakalnis, a historic district of Kaunas (National Register of the Cultural Heritage No. 22148); Žaliakalnis 1, a historic district of Kaunas (National Register of the Cultural Heritage No. 31280); Kaunas Ažuolynas Park Complex (National Register of the Cultural Heritage No. 44581); the Kaunas Ažuolynas Sports Complex (National Register of the Cultural Heritage No. 31618); the Research Laboratory complex (National Register of the Cultural Heritage No. 28567) and Christ's Resurrection Church (National Register of the Cultural Heritage No. 16005). There are 408 listed cultural heritage properties and areas within the nominated property.

The cultural significance of the Nominated Property is integrated into the Kaunas City General Plan 2013–2023, as well as in subsequent preservation, regulation, and special plans on the national and local level. In 2015, the Kaunas City Municipal Heritage Restoration Programme was launched to provide financial support for the maintenance of cultural heritage and to improve the condition of modernist buildings in Kaunas. In 2017, the Kaunas City Municipality approved a Cultural Strategy for 2027 to establish an integrated approach toward the interwar period heritage, with a view to protecting this legacy and meeting the contemporary needs of the public. A management plan concept was formulated in

2020 to safeguard the preservation and proper management of the Nominated Property, Modernist Kaunas.

3. ~~Considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site;~~

4. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) ~~Define~~ **Highlight** the model of modernisation developed within Eastern and Central Europe and stipulate its key features in relation to Western modernity in order to ~~situate~~ **emphasize** the specific contribution of interwar Kaunas within this framework, ~~and deepen the comparative analysis to demonstrate the exceptionality of the nominated property and its attributes defining the Outstanding Universal Value,~~

~~b) Explore the possibility of proposing a new justification of Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (iv) based on a comprehensive analysis of interwar Kaunas' contribution to the project of modernity as produced and experienced by the countries in the Eastern and Central European geo-cultural region,~~

~~c) Define the attributes of the nominated property that express the new proposed Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (iv) based on the analysis of Kaunas' model of modernisation and its position within Eastern and Central European modernity,~~

~~d) Deepen the comparative analysis to demonstrate the exceptionality of the nominated property within this conceptual framework,~~

~~e) b) Revise the boundaries accordingly, so they reflect the proposed justification of Outstanding Universal Value and include~~ **Clearly demonstrate that** all the necessary attributes that have a bearing on the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, ~~and contributing to the potential Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries of the nominated property,~~

~~f) c) Expand the~~ **Prepare an** inventory of all the buildings and structures from the 1919-1939 period within the nominated property, with ~~details on their state of conservation and~~ **brief** restoration history, ~~to be able to identify~~ **reinforce the** attributes of the nominated property and effectively manage and protect the interwar modern heritage of Kaunas,

~~g) d) Design new~~ **Improve the Management Plan so that it includes** management mechanisms that will ensure protection of the full range of attributes that express the potential Outstanding Universal Value ~~and not just the sites and buildings listed in the National Register for Cultural Heritage, and sets out the conditions for the Heritage Impact Assessment of new development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property,~~

~~h) e) Prepare an integrated conservation plan that considers the nominated property as a whole and ensures the conservation of all attributes that support the potential Outstanding Universal Value, including modernist wooden architecture,~~

~~i) Ensure the proper protection and conservation of modernist wooden architecture, given its importance for the nominated property,~~

~~j) Ensure that Heritage Impact Assessments are undertaken as a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property, as is required under paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines,~~

~~k) Propose a different name for the nominated property that will reflect the reconceptualization of the nomination;~~

f) Strengthening management instruments to protect privately-owned buildings and structures within the nominated property and support the owners in maintaining their properties,

g) Raising Continue raising awareness among the local community about the values of the nominated property and creating procedures for public participation in the management of the nominated property to ensure its long-term protection,

h) Developing a Complete the monitoring system that encompasses to include indicators related to all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and takes into account the main factors affecting the nominated property.

5. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2025, a report on the implementation on the above-mentioned recommendations.