
Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops (Czechia) No 1558rev

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops

Location

Ústecký Region
Czechia

Brief description

Located south of the Ore Mountains in north-western Bohemia, Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops has been shaped for centuries by the living tradition of cultivating and trading the world's most renowned hop variety, which is used globally in beer production. The serial property is composed of a rural hop landscape and parts of the town of Žatec. The rural component (component part 01) of this cultural landscape consists of particularly fertile hop fields near the river Ohře that have been farmed continuously for hundreds of years, two historic villages and other buildings associated with the processing of hops, as well as related road and railway infrastructure. The urban component (component part 02) encompasses the medieval centre of Žatec and its 19th to 20th century industrial extension known as the "Prague Suburb" (*Pražské předměstí*). Together, the agricultural and architectural testimonies of both component parts illustrate the development of the agro-industrial processes and socio-economic system of growing, drying, certifying and trading hops from the Late Middle Ages to the present.

Category of property

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

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2021) paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a *cultural landscape*.

Included in the Tentative List

29 May 2007 as "Žatec – the Hops Town"

Background

This is a revised nomination. The World Heritage Committee examined the nomination of Žatec – the Town of Hops, Czechia, at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018):

Decision: 42 COM 8B.26

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/18/42.COM/8B and WHC/18/42.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Defers the examination of the nomination of Žatec – the Town of Hops, Czechia, to the World Heritage List, in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to deepen the research on the theme of hop growing and processing, as well as on the proposed property and its wider setting to bring into focus areas of potential significance and areas where traditional hop farming and processing and its impacts on the landscape can be identified and, if a robust case can be made, then reconsider the scope of the nomination;
3. Considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site.

As recommended by the World Heritage Committee, an ICOMOS advisory process took place from January to July 2019.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

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

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation and their management were received from IUCN on 4 March 2022.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 30 August to 5 September 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 27 September 2021 requesting further information about the summary of revisions, the concept and presentation of the nominated property, the legal protection, factors affecting the property, development projects and conservation works, management, and intangible heritage expressions related to the cultivation and processing of hops.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the justification for inscription, protection, conservation framework for urban areas and historic hop-processing buildings, conservation of landscape features of component part 01, residential development north of Stekník, Hop Lighthouse, and mid- and long-term financial resources.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 24 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

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

Description and history

The riparian landscape of the Žatec Basin south of the ridge of the Ore Mountains in north-western Bohemia offers very favourable climatic and natural conditions for the cultivation of hops. This region is the origin of the world's most famous hop variety, named after the town of Žatec (German: Saaz). Of the highest aromatic quality, Saaz hops have been continuously cultivated, processed and exported here from the Late Middle Ages to the present and are currently used in beer production throughout the world. Constituting one of the primary sources of livelihood in this region, hop production and trade have visibly shaped both the rural and urban environments over centuries. The agricultural and architectural testimony of this evolved and continuing cultural landscape illustrates the entire hop cycle from growing to processing to international trade, as well as its development over the centuries and the socio-cultural context of the agro-industrial system.

This serial property consists of a rural and an urban component. Component part 01 – Saaz Hop Landscape – is located in the alluvial terrain. Component part 02 – Žatec – with its 19th to 20th century industrial expansion known as the “Prague Suburb” (*Pražské předměstí*), is located on an elevated promontory about five kilometres from the rural component. The meandering river Ohře, roads and railways routes that were formerly used to transport hops constitute historical connections between the complementary component parts within a shared buffer zone.

Saaz Hop Landscape (component part 01)

This rural component part encompasses the highest concentration of particularly fertile hop fields within the Saaz hop growing region located near the river Ohře to the east of Žatec. The State Party presents evidence that the selected fields have been cultivated continuously from at least the second half of the 18th century. Their appearance changes with the seasonal growth and harvest of hops. The fields' trellises, which originally consisted of wooden poles with wires, have become a permanent feature since the introduction of concrete poles.

Within the fields lie two historic villages as well as historic road and railway infrastructure. The architectural testimony of rural hop production in the historic village core of Stekník includes residential and farm buildings (stables and granaries) and eleven rural hop drying kilns. It also includes the Stekník Chateau and in its vicinity a large granary from the 1780s which was adapted into a hop drying structure at

the turn of the 20th century. Remains of early hop drying technology is preserved in several buildings throughout the nominated property.

Most farmsteads in Stekník, which typically enclose a square and a pond, date back to the planned reconstruction of the village after a fire in 1784. The buildings are mostly single-storey, brick built, with gabled roofs and a rectangular layout. Large openings in the roofs and smaller openings in the facades make up a ventilation system to regulate air flow when hops are dried in the lofts. Tower-like buildings testify to the addition of hop drying kilns to the farmsteads since the end of the 19th century.

The Stekník Chateau, with its terraced garden and preserved Rococo-style interiors, is part of the socio-cultural testimony of hop production and trade. First mentioned in 1539, the building was bought in 1681 by a burgher family active in hop production at Žatec. About 1765 it was reconfigured in the Rococo style. A contextual feature in Stekník is the Hop Research Institute. The institute was founded in 1925 and has been in the ownership of the Hop Growers Union since 1992. New buildings were erected in the back of the farmstead in the 1970s and 1980s, and the hop drying kiln was converted into workers' accommodation.

Trnovany village is located along the railway line connecting Žatec and Louny and on the historic hop road from Žatec to Jimlín. The urban structure of the village is less well preserved, but it features some of the most iconic hop-processing buildings of the entire Saaz hop growing area in terms of location and technological and architectural design. Among them are a multi-storey hop drying kiln in Neo-Gothic design from 1908 and another early 20th-century four-chamber hop drying kiln in a farmstead with a residence, barn and stable near the confluence of the river Ohře and Blšanka stream. The railway station at Trnovany, with several hundred metres of railway line currently not in use, dates from 1878. The line was used to transport hops to the processing sites and warehouses in Žatec, and workers to the fields.

Žatec (component part 02)

This urban component part is characterised by historic monuments related to the history of hop production and trade. Among them are burgher houses with hop drying lofts (38) and kilns (2), hop warehouses (35), villas of hop entrepreneurs (13), various buildings for administration and certification and other buildings which are of particular importance as testimonies to the local socio-cultural context of hop production.

The historic centre of Žatec is characterised by its organic medieval urban plan. The mostly two-storey Baroque and Renaissance fabric relates primarily to hop production during the 17th to 19th centuries, when most burgher houses had hop gardens as well as drying lofts in the attics; many of the latter are still discernible in the town's roofscape. Eight hop warehouses, most of them from the late 19th century, one of them with a hop packaging room and one

with a hop drying kiln, testify to the industrialisation of hop production and trade in the town's historic centre.

Further socio-cultural features include a synagogue (built 1871-1872), which testifies to the Jewish community's former involvement in hop production and trade, a Capuchin monastery (founded 1675), Žatec Municipal Theatre (built 1848), Elysium Cinema (built 1928-1932), Austro-Hungarian State Bank (built before 1914) and several hotels from the first half of the 20th century.

The Prague Suburb (*Pražské předměstí*) is a mid-19th to early 20th century industrial expansion to the south of Žatec's historic centre. It consists of six groups of industrial hop-processing buildings and associated residential and administrative buildings. Its skyline is characterised by high-rising chimneys of the sulphur chambers that were once used for drying hops. The facades of the historic industrial buildings are rather unassuming, as they had to comply with restrictive local building codes. Their interiors, however, feature outstanding architectural and technological evidence of hop production, including typical ancillary wooden structures. The Prague Suburb also features the old Public Hops Certification Centre and the administration building of the new Certification Centre. Moreover, a Hop Museum hosts an extensive collection of machines and tools used at different historic stages for the production and trade of hops, including a large hop picking machine.

Both the nominated property and its buffer zone feature contextual buildings that include modern hop-related facilities and various historic buildings associated with hop and beer production. Beyond the urban expansions around Žatec, the buffer zone includes additional hop fields and historic villages with farmsteads.

The area of the two components totals 593.97 ha, with a single buffer zone of 3,330.94 ha. The boundary of component part 01 conforms to a designated Landscape Protection Zone. The boundary of component part 02 conforms to the protected Urban Heritage Reserve of the medieval town centre and the Urban Heritage Zone of the Prague Suburb. The shared buffer zone lies within the areas of the land-use plans of Žatec, Zálužice, Staňkovice, Holedeč, Postoloprty, Liběšice, Lipno and Lišany. Its boundary follows topographic, administrative and functional features of the Žatec Basin.

In terms of this cultural landscape's history, cultivation of hops here dates back to the 11th century, and was commercialised for international trade by the 14th century. This makes the area one of the oldest, if not the oldest, remaining regions of commercial hop cultivation in Europe. With the industrialisation of beer and hop production in the 19th century, Saaz hops gained fame on all continents. Saaz hops became a certified brand in the 18th century and has had "Designation of Origin" protection by European Union law since 2007. Hop production was again significantly modernised in the second half of the 20th century, which has resulted in the abandonment of many of the 19th century structures.

Apart from technological innovations in hop production, the landscape around Žatec and the town itself have been subjected to significant historical and socio-economic developments over the centuries. These include tremendous changes in population and ownership from medieval times. In the 1930s the Jewish population, which included many hop traders, was forced out, as was the predominantly German-speaking population after the Second World War, replaced by Czech, Sinti and Roma inhabitants.

Despite the demographic changes to which the nominated property testifies, hop production and trade continues to the present. Hence, associated agricultural and industrial traditions, research and educational practices as well as cultural traditions such as festivities persist. The nominated property therefore presents both tangible and intangible evidence of the development of hop production and trade from the Late Middle Ages to the present in both rural and urban contexts. The State Party provided additional information in November 2021 on how skills, knowledge and traditions have been passed on from generation to generation despite the significant demographic changes throughout the area's history.

State of conservation

The nominated hop fields continue to be cultivated and are in an excellent state of conservation despite several modernisations in cultivation and harvesting techniques. However, many of the historic hop production buildings dating from before the mid-20th century, along with their related infrastructure and technological apparatus, are no longer used for their original purposes. The abandonment of some of the nominated or contextual buildings poses a threat to their preservation. Nevertheless, a number of the nominated buildings have been re-used and subjected to conservation works under the supervision of the state heritage authorities, particularly since the 1990s, and the process is ongoing. This includes the provision of interpretation and presentation facilities within several buildings and in the urban realm.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are development and environmental pressures. In general, development pressures are effectively checked by the legislative and administrative setup. A key challenge is the appropriate adaptive re-use of abandoned hop-processing buildings.

ICOMOS notes that the current Zálužice Land Use Plan includes development rights that allow new residential buildings to be built along the entrance road to Stekník. A development of this type could be detrimental for the historic rural landscape and village.

According to the information provided, protection of the historic buildings from fire hazards is generally appropriate. ICOMOS however points out the particular vulnerability of wooden structures (as is the case with many of the buildings within the nominated property), particularly the abandoned ones.

In terms of environmental pressures, the risk of inundation in the parts of component part O1 that are located within the flood plain of the river Ohře has largely been remedied with the construction of a dam. However, ICOMOS considers that a response scheme should be developed in the case of a dam failure, unlikely as that may be.

Expected impacts of climate change on the hop fields are described by the State Party as minor, due to the area's natural conditions. These potential impacts are also being addressed by the continuous research that is integrated into the local hop cultivation processes.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory and that factors affecting the nominated property are under control.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

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

- Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops bears an exceptional testimony of a strong, centuries-long living cultural tradition of hop growing and processing in Europe, concentrated on a relatively small area.
- Its traditional hop fields and buildings used for drying, packing, certifying and storing hops, as well as the related administrative, cultural and religious buildings, collectively, and parts of the historic transportation network of roads and railway, the river Ohře and other water streams represent an outstanding example of a unique type of a monoculture landscape associated with hop growing and processing in both rural and urban environments.
- It is an outstanding example of a continuous, never interrupted and, to date, traditionally used agricultural landscape with traditional human settlements (villages and a town) focused on a crop requiring rather specific climatic, growing and processing conditions.

Based on the nomination dossier the key attributes of the nominated property are: landscape features including the productive traditional hop fields with associated natural and topographic characteristics; urban, architectural and technological features of hop related settlement areas and buildings; parts of the historic hop related transportation network of roads, railway and water streams. Traditional knowledge of hop growing and processing developed over the centuries can be considered an intangible attribute.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed on the ground of the characteristics of landscapes that have been shaped by hop production or other food-related monocultures. It has examined twenty-four historical and contemporary hop-growing locations in Czechia, in neighbouring European countries and throughout the world, including Hallertau in Germany; Poperinge in Belgium; Kent in the United Kingdom; and George in South Africa, none of which is currently on the World Heritage List or on the Tentative Lists of States Parties.

The analysis also examines thirty-four single-crop agricultural landscapes on the World Heritage List and/or Tentative Lists, including numerous vineyards such as The Climats, terroirs of Burgundy (France, 2015, criteria (iii) and (v)), coffee plantations such as Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia (Colombia, 2011, criteria (v) and (vi)), as well as rice terraces, tobacco plantations, tea plantations, olive groves, sugar cane plantations, and date palm plantations. The comparisons are made on the basis of adequate chronological, thematic and typological parameters.

Despite an overemphasis of rural landscapes over urban environments in the comparative analysis, ICOMOS considers that the analysis demonstrates the unparalleled quality and quantity of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in both rural and urban environments within the nominated property that are associated with the cultivation, processing and trade of hops. The nomination dossier also presents convincing evidence that the selected component parts of the living cultural landscape are the best representatives here of this tradition. It demonstrates that the serial property includes the longest farmed productive hop fields in the Saaz region and the best preserved and most outstanding architectural and technological testimony of the different historical phases of Saaz hop production.

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

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (v).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property provides a unique testimony to an uninterrupted centuries-long tradition of breeding, growing, processing and trading Saaz hops, globally the most sought-after hop variety. The way in which German, Jewish and Czech communities interacted in the past shaped the nominated property's extraordinary rural and urban features and led to Žatec becoming a globally recognised centre of hops in the 19th century. The State Party stresses that the living tradition is an integral part of the local identity. This tradition is reflected in cultural and

scientific events linked to hops and in this region's reputation within Czechia and abroad.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii).

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property contains well-preserved historic architectural and technological testimony and a productive monoculture landscape associated with the growing, processing and trading of hops, which in its combination of rural and urban environments is globally unparalleled.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iv) and that the stages of human history illustrated by the property range from the Late Medieval to the present, with the strongest testimony residing in the 19th century industrialisation of hop production and the globalisation of its trade.

Criterion (v): *be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property represents an outstanding example of a traditional and still evolving hop landscape. Its symbiotically linked rural and urban environments have been visibly shaped since medieval times by the European cultural tradition of producing and trading hops, which relies on specific climatic and natural conditions. The State Party moreover stresses the local development of technical knowhow and skills related to hop production and their dissemination to other hop growing areas in the world.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (v), although there seems to be no conclusive evidence that the specific design of hop wire trellises currently used in the Saaz hop growing area and elsewhere originated in the Žatec region, as is claimed in the nomination dossier and supplemented in the additional information sent in February 2022. ICOMOS points out that the nominated property should not be considered as an evolving cultural landscape but as an evolved and continuing cultural landscape.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii), (iv) and (v), and that the serial approach is justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on how the cycle of growing, processing and trading hops for centuries has shaped these rural and urban environments. The nominated property is of an appropriate size to include all relevant attributes, most of which are in satisfactory state of conservation. These range from traditional hop fields and buildings used for drying, sulphuring, packing, certifying and storing hops, to parts of the historic transportation network of roads, railway, the river Ohře and other water streams. Only the extensive Ore mountain range, which contributes to the specific climatic conditions that favour hop cultivation, lies outside the nominated property or its buffer zone. Further tangible and intangible elements illustrate the socio-cultural context when Czech, German and Jewish communities interacted within the agro-industrial system up to the 1930s and 1940s. These include administrative, cultural and religious buildings as well as cultural practices.

The boundaries of the nominated property have been drawn to encompass the elements that best contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The selection of serial component parts is thus justified. The boundaries of the buffer zone are adequate to support the legislative and administrative setup which effectively protects the nominated property from adverse impacts.

Adverse effects of development and/or neglect can be found in limited and specific cases. Some developments since the mid-20th century, including urbanisation in the buffer zone, construction of modern facilities for hop production and modernisations of the agro-industrial system, have somewhat disrupted the scale and traditional structure of parts of the wider landscape and parts of the nominated villages, thereby contributing to a negative visual impact. In such cases, ICOMOS encourages the use of land-use planning tools which the State Party highlighted as means to restore characteristic landscape features. While most historic hop fields in the immediate vicinity of Žatec have fallen victim to urbanisation, many other developments within the nominated property are expressions of the continuity in hop production to the present day, and can be valued as such.

While recognising the existence of specific adverse effects, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series of the nominated property as well as of each of the component parts is satisfactory.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the series as a whole to truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its attributes. Within the context of the agro-industrial system of hop production and trade and its development throughout history, Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops can be said to be authentic in terms of its locations and setting, its forms and designs, its materials and substances, and, to a degree, its uses and

functions. The nominated property contains well-preserved attributes that truthfully illustrate how the cultural tradition had an impact on the historic parts of the town of Žatec as well as the rural landscape, including the two historic villages. There is also authentic evidence of the past involvement of German, Jewish and Czech communities in the hop production system.

While the spatial and architectural authenticity of the village centre of Trnovany is poor, it is high in Stekník despite the construction of modern hop facilities in its northern part. The layout and skyline of the rural landscape have kept their distinct seasonally changing character, despite the use of newer technology in the way hops are cultivated and harvested. Both the historic town centre of Žatec and its 19th-20th century industrial extension exhibit a high level of urban and architectural authenticity. In particular, some of the most recently abandoned historic hop-processing buildings, with their preserved technological apparatus, exhibit a high level of authenticity. Other historic buildings in the nominated property, however, have suffered from inappropriate modifications or neglect.

Authenticity extends to the continuity of location as well as use and function, which is given in the case of the nominated hop fields and the town of Žatec, although many of the historic buildings are no longer used for hop production. Žatec remains the seat of scientific institutions having global influence in the research and trade of hops. The Saaz hop growing region remains one of the world's most productive areas for hops, which are globally exported. There is also continuity in expressions of intangible heritage ranging from farming techniques to cultural practices. Moreover, the strong association of the region and town with Saaz hops and the significant contribution of the heritage to the local cultural identity are factors of authenticity.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property is generally high.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries

There are 1,769 inhabitants within the boundaries of the nominated property (55 within component part 01; 1,714 within component part 02), 18,106 in the buffer zone, and 19,875 in total.

There is a logical basis for the selection of the nominated area in terms of encompassing the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and this underlying rationale has been applied appropriately and consistently. The boundaries of the nominated property and the shared buffer zone are adequate and follow topographic, administrative or functional features of the rural and urban environments. The buffer zone provides an added layer of protection to the nominated property.

Due to the region's topography, a visual connection between the two component parts is possible only from a few elevated positions such as the tower of the so-called Hop Lighthouse in Žatec. Both component parts can be seen together from elevated points located outside the nominated property in the wider landscape.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis adequately justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS also considers that the proposed justification for inscription under criteria (iii), (iv) and (v) is appropriate. The serial approach is justified, and the selection of component parts is appropriate. ICOMOS further considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

Records of the nominated property are kept in national and regional archives, various governmental agencies, educational institutions including libraries and museums and the local Hop Research Institute. A register of municipal hop-processing buildings in Žatec was prepared from 2007 to 2010 and is continuously updated. The most recent inventories and documentation projects for the nominated property and the hop-related heritage of the wider area which serve as baseline data include the nationwide "Documentation of the Historical Buildings for Hops Processing" (2016-2020), with results published online; a project for the documentation of the hop lofts in Žatec (2018-2022); and a project for the documentation of the warehouse chimneys at Žatec (2020-2022). ICOMOS commends the past and ongoing documentation of hop-related heritage within and beyond the nominated property.

ICOMOS strongly encourages expanding the existing inventories to encompass all historic buildings within the nominated property as a basis for monitoring and decision-making. ICOMOS also encourages the analysis and documentation of landscape features in component part 01 as a basis for future conservation activities.

Conservation measures

Ongoing and planned conservation measures for the nominated property and its spectrum of tangible and intangible attributes are based on a "SWOT" (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis presented in the management plan. These are geared to conserving the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Most of the future activities are oriented to the mid-term and long-term, as they require pre-investment preparations including securing funds. Day-to-day monitoring and maintenance are carried out by the predominantly private but also public owners and custodians throughout the nominated property.

Conservation measures that are ongoing or planned include restoration works at the Neo-Gothic kiln at Trnovany, at the Stekník Chateau, at the mayor's house at Stekník and at the Capuchin Monastery at Žatec; conversion of a hop warehouse into a storage and trading centre in Žatec; planning for the revitalisation of the railway station at Trnovany for touristic purposes; urban planning for the village square at Stekník; restoration and conversion of the Baroque granary at Stekník into a tourism centre; provision of parking places outside the historic centre of Žatec; and initiation of projects on contextual elements located in the buffer zone. As mentioned in the Interim Report, ICOMOS encourages the development of a framework that will guide conservation activities and ensure their coherence throughout the nominated property. ICOMOS commands the ongoing and planned steps towards this aim described in the additional information.

One of the key challenges is the preservation and re-use of abandoned hop and beer production buildings within the nominated property (and beyond). An initiative that addresses this specific issue is a cooperative effort between the town management and the Department of Architectural Conservation in the Faculty of Architecture at the Czech Technical University in Prague (2018-2021). ICOMOS appreciates the development of guidelines for the conservation and adaptation of former hop-processing buildings, particularly in the Prague Suburb.

Responsibility for preserving the landscape character of the hop fields rests mainly with the local Hop Growers Union, which is also responsible for the Hop Museum, the Hop Research Institute at Žatec and the Hop Research Farm at Stekník. ICOMOS strongly encourages the involvement of a landscape professional competent in historic landscapes for future planning within component part 01. In addition, ICOMOS recommends the preparation of an analytical study of the characteristic features of the rural landscape as a basis for defining limits of change in future decision-making processes.

Monitoring

In Czechia, there is a uniform national methodological system for annual monitoring of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. It is carried out by the National Heritage Institute with authorisation from the Ministry of Culture. For the nominated property, annual reporting will be performed by the Regional Department of the National Heritage Institute in Ústí nad Labem, which has already been involved in the nomination process. The nomination dossier provides a generic list of monitoring indicators that relate to the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. More detailed baseline data for future monitoring activities and improved key indicators would be advantageous. ICOMOS stresses the importance of having complete inventories as a basis for monitoring.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures and monitoring mechanisms respond to the vulnerability of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, but can be further enhanced by expanding inventories and developing conservation guidance as initiated by the State Party. ICOMOS also considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The two component parts are protected under different legal instruments, each of which is based on the Act of the Czech National Council on Monument Care No.20/1987 Coll. As mentioned in the additional information of November 2021, Component part 01 was designated as the Saaz Hop Landscape Heritage Zone during the nomination process (August 2021). It includes the Stekník Rural Heritage Zone of 1995. In component part 02, the historic town centre of Žatec, with 140 individually protected buildings, was designated an Urban Heritage Reserve in 1961. The Prague Suburb has been a designated Urban Heritage Zone since 2003. Maintenance and modifications to buildings and public spaces in all protected areas is subject to detailed review and official case-by-case approval.

Additional protection is given by the land use plans, especially those of Žatec and Zálužice. These and further statutory regulations also encompass the buffer zone. The land use plans prevent major future changes in the protected areas, preserve the visual qualities and protect continuous hop growing. The hop fields are also protected by Act no. 97/1996 Sb. on Protection of Hops and by a Protected Designation of Origin appellation, both of which regulate the quality and processing of the hops. Compliance with the regulations is checked by the authorities at three levels: the municipalities of Žatec and Louny at the local level; the Regional Office of the Ústecký Region; and the Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage Institute at the national level.

As mentioned in the Interim Report, ICOMOS encourages the development of a coherent conservation framework to guide the heritage authorities' case-by-case decisions on interventions within the nominated historic settlements and on the conservation and re-use of historic hop-processing buildings in the future. ICOMOS appreciates the steps the State Party has initiated in this regard according to the additional information.

ICOMOS likewise appreciates the statement No NPU-351/3413/2022 by the National Heritage Institute as it reinforces the height restrictions for constructions in the nominated property. ICOMOS stresses the importance of preventing future projects of comparable visual impact and height to that of the Hop Lighthouse within the property or in its vicinity.

ICOMOS moreover considers that potential future residential buildings along the entrance road to Stekník, for which the current Zálužice Land Use Plan provides development rights, could negatively impact the rural landscape and the village. ICOMOS encourages the State Party to further explore ways to modify the current legal status in light of the outstanding significance of the concerned landscape and to shift the focus on providing residential functions within the existing buildings of the historic village while maintaining the agricultural use of the concerned plots. Should development plans nevertheless arise for any of the eight plots in the future, ICOMOS strongly recommends Heritage Impact Assessments to be carried out.

Management system

In 2018 the National Heritage Institute published a management structure for World Heritage properties in Czechia. The management system of the nominated property corresponds with this structure. On the national, regional and local levels it involves the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry for Regional Development and Ministry of Agriculture, the Regional Office of the Ústecký Region and the Municipalities of Žatec and Louny. Responsible for management is the site manager – the deputy mayor of Žatec – who is supported by a steering group. The legal mandate for management is with the Municipal Office of Žatec, which is responsible for the state administration in heritage care and spatial planning for the entire nominated property.

The Žatec town council appoints a World Heritage coordinator and a town architect to support the site manager. These three persons are in charge of managing the nominated property. The supporting steering group includes all relevant stakeholders ranging from authorities and organisations involved in hop production to private and public owners of relevant real estate. In addition, the establishment of working groups in the areas of education, promotion and presentation and heritage conservation is planned. For the property's nomination and its future management, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by the relevant stakeholders.

ICOMOS considers it necessary to engage a landscape professional competent in historic landscapes to oversee the future conservation of landscape features in component part 01.

A management plan has been approved and sets out goals and measures for the effective protection of the property's tangible and intangible heritage for the period 2020-2030.

According to the information provided in the nomination dossier and in additional information provided by the State Party, financial resources for the documentation, conservation and presentation of the property come from various private and public owners, including hop growers, as well as from international, national, regional and municipal budgets, endowment funds, sponsorships and crowdfunding campaigns. As requested in the Interim

Report, the State Party presented information that these will also sustain the mid- and long-term conservation of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the management system is generally appropriate and effective, and is based on adequate human and financial resources. However, response schemes to flood risk in the case of component part 01 could be improved. ICOMOS moreover stresses the importance of carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the property, as required in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraphs 110 and 118bis.

Visitor management

In the urban component, a wealth of commendable visitor and interpretation facilities, including the Hop Museum in Žatec, are already operational, and further projects and activities are planned. A tourism strategy in line with national tourism planning is under development. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, some touristic and educational activities have been realised since the submission of the nomination dossier, including the production of promotional and informational material and a website in Czech and English. Most interpretation vehicles and on-site visitor facilities for the rural component part, with the exception of the Stekník Chateau, are still in the planning phase.

Community involvement

The nomination dossier describes the involvement of various stakeholders in the nomination process and in the management of the nominated property. According to the information provided, the public was well informed of the property's nomination and is generally supportive. ICOMOS notes that there have been no concentrated attempts to involve organisations representing groups of people who left the region in the 1930s (Jews) or after the Second World War (Germans). ICOMOS recalls the importance to include stakeholders that may have an interest in, and connection with the nominated property, and that are not involved yet in the protection and management of the property, in line with paragraphs 40 and 117 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and management system are adequate.

6 Conclusion

Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops testifies to the entire cycle of cultivating, processing and trading the world's most renowned hop variety and illustrates how this living tradition has shaped both rural and urban environments for centuries.

ICOMOS considers that the applicability of criteria (iii), (iv) and (v) has been demonstrated, and that the serial composition as well as the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone are adequate.

ICOMOS considers that, overall, the legal protection, management system and available resources are adequate to preserve the nominated property. A number of recommendations to improve the mid- and long-term conservation of both component parts of the nominated property are presented below.

Overall, ICOMOS commends the manner in which this nomination has been revised as a consequence of the ICOMOS advisory process in 2019.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops, Czechia, be inscribed, as a cultural landscape, on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii), (iv) and (v)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is situated in the north-western part of Czechia in a location that provides ideal conditions for growing hops, a central aromatic ingredient in beer production. It consists of two component parts that together illustrate the entire cycle of cultivating, processing and trading the world's most renowned variety of hops. Component part 01 – Saaz Hop Landscape – consists of rural hop fields and the small villages of Stekník and Trnovany, and component part 02 – Žatec – consists of the historic urban centre of the town of Žatec (Saaz in German) along with its 19th century industrial suburb. Both component parts are geographically close, linked by the river Ohře.

This evolved and continuing cultural landscape and its built heritage associated with hop growing and processing is testimony to a tradition that has been practiced here for more than 700 years and still continues to this day, despite tremendous demographic changes at various points in its history. The features of this striking landscape range from traditional hop fields, to buildings used for drying, packing, certifying and storing hops, to parts of the historic transportation network of roads, railway, the river Ohře and other watercourses. These also include supporting

administrative, cultural and religious buildings, as well as cultural practices. This landscape, with specific buildings and structures linked to hop production, demonstrates close interactions between the rural hop growing landscape and its urban base.

Criterion (iii): Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops bears exceptional testimony to a strong centuries-long cultural tradition of growing and processing the world's most renowned hops variety. Evidence of this testimony is found in the spatial configurations, urban patterns and buildings of this evolved and continuing cultural landscape. The town of Žatec became a globally recognised centre of hops in the 19th century as a result of innovations in hop production and flourishing global trade undertaken by local Czech, German and Jewish communities. This renown continues to the present day. The exceptional testimony of this cultural landscape is expressed in its traditional hop fields and buildings used for drying, packing, certifying and storing hops, as well as the related administrative, cultural and religious buildings.

Criterion (iv): Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is an outstanding example of a monoculture landscape. Associated with hop growing and processing in both rural and urban environments over a period of more than 700 years, the property includes outstanding examples of agricultural landscapes, buildings, architectural and technological ensembles. These examples illustrate various methods of hop breeding, drying, preservation, packaging and quality certification that were developed here since the Late Middle Ages and climaxed in the 19th and early 20th century.

The rural landscape is particularly defined by hop fields, with their typical trellises of poles and wires. It also includes rural settlements with preserved farm buildings and barns where hops were dried and stored, and the former residence of the local landlord, the Stekník Chateau, which is a dominant landmark in the landscape as it rises above the still-used historic hop fields. The urban centre of this hop-growing landscape is the town of Žatec, with its municipal warehouses, hop drying kilns, sulphuring chambers, and hop packaging and certification facilities. The town's exceptional skyline is accentuated by the vertical dominants of the hop-drying kilns and the tall chimneys of the sulphuring chambers.

Criterion (v): Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is an outstanding example of a traditional agricultural landscape and traditional human settlements related to growing a crop with very special requirements for climate, cultivation and processing. It illustrates continual interactions between people and their environment over a very long period of time in a well-preserved example of the cultural tradition of hop breeding, cultivation and processing in Europe.

The technical knowhow and skills developed and refined here are well demonstrated by the hop fields with their characteristic trellises, drying kilns and other hop-related facilities that were built in the rural area. The processing of the hops grown here had a defining influence on the town

of Žatec and its Prague Suburb, where very specific typologies of industrial facilities were created by communities associated with the hop processing business, as well as the residential buildings, educational and religious institutions and amenity centres needed to support this agro-industrial system.

Integrity

The serial property includes all the elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value. Its boundaries adequately ensure the complete representation of the entire cycle of growing, processing and distributing hops.

The two component parts contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site as a whole. Among the most distinctive attributes of component part 01 are the hop fields around the small villages of Stekník and Trnovany. These illustrate the growing and initial processing of hops. The village of Stekník features well-preserved typical brick buildings surrounding a central village square, and an eponymous chateau. A transportation network based on historic roads, railways and water streams enabled access to the hop fields and facilitated the export of hops. This landscape has changed little over the centuries and its current use reflects its historical use.

Component part 02, the historic centre of the town of Žatec and its industrial Prague Suburb, illustrates the further processing, certification and distribution of hops. This urban environment includes all the elements needed to illustrate the last stages of the industrialised “hop cycle,” as well as the administrative and socio-cultural infrastructure that testifies to the specific societal contexts of hop production in Žatec. Traditional knowledge of hop growing and processing developed over the centuries can be considered an intangible attribute. The property does not suffer unduly from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

Authenticity

Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is authentic in terms of its locations and setting, its forms and designs, its materials and substances, and, to a degree, its uses and functions. The locations, setting and function of the hop-growing rural landscape in component part 01 have been fully preserved. The locations of hop fields have not changed, nor has the presence of watercourses and historic communication networks. Rural settlements that served as bases for the farmed fields have largely preserved their forms. The built environment has a high degree of authenticity, including individual buildings, farmsteads, the former estate of the local landlord (Stekník Chateau) and the large Baroque granary at Stekník, which was later converted into a hop drying kiln.

The buildings in the historic centre of Žatec (component part 02) display authentic signs of an older traditional method of drying hops in lofts. The authentic forms of the buildings are closely monitored during all refurbishment and restoration projects. Even more recent hop-related buildings with unique functions concentrated in a small area

of the Prague Suburb have mostly been preserved. Some of them no longer serve their original function but remain in a relatively stable condition, authentic in form and materials and with many specific details preserved. They are expected to undergo sympathetic conversion.

Management and protection requirements

Both component parts of the property are protected under the National Act no. 20/1987 Coll. on the National Heritage Protection, as amended, in combination with other protective regimes stemming from this Act. At present, the cultural values are administratively protected by Land Use Plans of the village of Zálužice and the town of Žatec. For the hop fields of component part 01, a Landscape Heritage Zone has been outlined for designation and declared by the Measure of General Nature N. 1/2021 in August 2021. The cultural values of Žatec in component part 02 are fully protected by two decrees of the Ministry of Culture which, in several steps, delineate joint heritage areas.

The hop fields located in the property and its buffer zone are also protected under Act no. 97/1996 Sb. on Protection of Hops and safeguarded under a Designation of Origin appellation, both of which regulate the quality and processing of the hops.

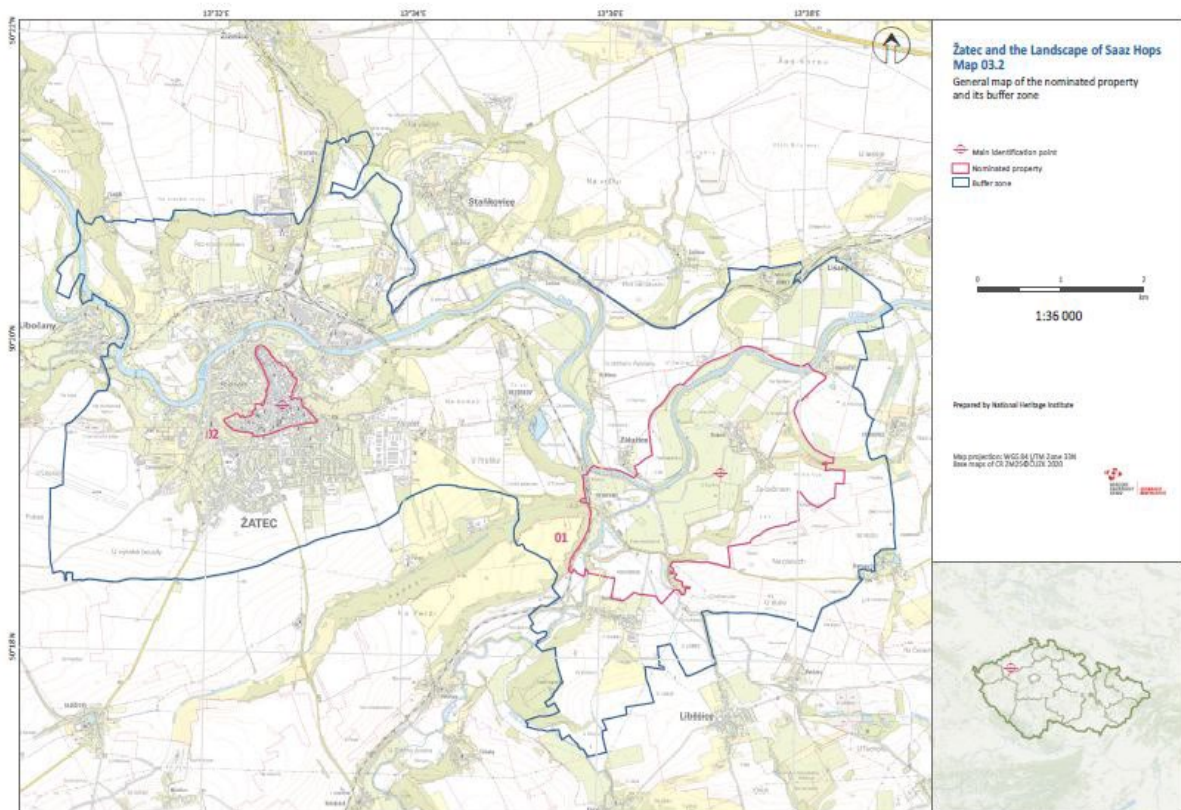
Management is the responsibility of the Municipal Office of Žatec through a steering group, the core team of which was established at the municipal level in 2013. The steering group includes the key stakeholders active in the property, and is assisted by working groups focused on specific areas of the management plan. A management plan sets out goals and measures for the effective protection of the property’s tangible and intangible heritage for the period 2020-2030. No major changes are envisaged for component part 01 or the urban structure of component part 02. A key issue that will require long-term attention is finding appropriate uses for historic hop processing buildings that have been left vacant or underutilised in the wake of evolving processes.

Additional recommendations

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

- a) Expanding the existing inventories to encompass all historic buildings within the property as a basis for monitoring and decision-making,
- b) Developing a coherent conservation framework for the urban component part and for hop-processing buildings throughout the property, including guidelines for the conservation and reuse of empty hop warehouses in the Prague Suburb,
- c) Involving a landscape professional competent in historic landscapes for future planning within component part 01,

- d) Preparing an analytical study of the characteristic landscape features of component part 01 as a basis for defining limits of change for future conservation and development,
- e) Preventing future projects of comparable visual impact and height to that of the Hop Lighthouse within the property or in its vicinity,
- f) Reconsidering the residential development rights along the entrance road north of Stekník, as is currently granted by the Zálužice Land Use Plan and carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments should specific development plans arise for any of the eight concerned plots in the future,
- g) Adhering to the principles of good governance by fostering the inclusion of stakeholders not yet participating in the protection and management of the property, in line with paragraphs 40 and 117 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,
- h) Developing and implementing risk preparedness plans for the property, such as fire protection for historic buildings and other attributes, and flood protection in the event of a dam failure;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property