

## State of the Art report - Czech Republic

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*Ministry of Culture* governs most of official activities including documentation, interpretation, presentation and publication of cultural heritage in the Czech Republic. *State Institute for the Care for Monuments* was established to develop theoretical and methodical guidelines in the process of conservation of culture heritage and to manage *Central Directory of Listed Monuments*. Nine *Regional Heritage Institutes* supervise conservation and transformation activity touching listed monuments and areas of protection declared by law. In the near future, this system should be simplified to only one *National Heritage Institute* disposing of many offices in all important historic centres.

There are three main levels of investigation and documentation activities concerning architectural heritage in Czech republic:

1. Settlement units inventory and evaluation
2. Historic monuments research and documentation
3. Specialised investigation activities

**Head 1.** State Institute for the Care for Monuments co-ordinates regulations and regeneration process in Historic Town Reserves and Urban, Rural and Landscape Areas of Protection. Together with the National Heritage Institute also further institutions work in the field of identification of heritage values. The big scale projects solved by Academy of Sciences are the Atlas of Historic Towns in Czech Republic and Inventory of artistic treasures in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Universities and either professional groups or associations (for example SOVAMM – *Association for Recovery of Villages and Small Towns*) join other considerable research projects, for example The Atlas of Vernacular Architecture in Czech Republic. Presentations by *Geografic Information Systems* (GIS) were succesfully used for larger scale projects in Uherské Hradiště, National Park Podyjí-Thayatal, and region Ústí nad Orlicí – Vysoké Mýto. Another project has been prepared in historical town of Telč, where the methods and approaches were tested in the years of 1996-1998.

**Head 2.** Getting as much information about building history as possible is important not only for the historians of architecture. Better groundwork usually brings success in conservation works. The field research uncovers and describes main consecutive periods of building activity during the history of each architectural monument. Using different colours investigators designate the periods into the ground plans of the building. Another parts of the documentation include particulars of the current state of monument, inventory of valuable details and list of the known historical written sources mentioning the changes. Standard methodical base for analysing of different architectural types (town houses, churches, castles) was elaborated in SÚRPMO (former *State Institute for Conservation of Historical Towns and Objects*) and has been successfully worked with there since early 50' to early 90'.

*Central State Archive* in Prague collects copies of historical monuments research reports. The Journal *Historical Monuments, Research & Documentation* brings several studies and articles regularly twice year.

**Head 3.** It covers all research activities dealing with single parts of bigger architectural structures, for example decoration of the facades, heating systems, timber frames or vaults. Some of them belong to the group of works, which are regulated by concessions licensed by Ministry of Culture. Only qualified restorers can manipulate with masterpieces of visual arts (fine stone and wooden carvings, wall paintings, stuccoes, etc.). Appropriate documentation of the state before and after restoration is a compulsory part of the Restoration Report, which should be archived at competent office of the Regional Heritage Institute.

Historical building constructions belong to the subjects staying aside the compulsory documentation, which could be demanded by State Heritage Institute in case of restoration works or in case of colliding with archaeological situations. The creating of an independent system of documentation should be useful for instance by the roof constructions. Surveying, dating and typological classification of historic timber roof frames create an important part of an architectural heritage research. The qualified care about the structures, which were put together with use of now abandoned techniques, deserves deeper insight. Therefore the integral outlines for description methodology were determined by means of detached project EUREKA EU 1767 ROOFS (*Instruments for the Evaluation and Assessment of historical Wooden Roof Constructions*) in co-operation with Austrian and German experts. The innovative aspect of applied methodology has been the new, integral approach to the analysis of historical roof construction with reference to the specific characteristics and structural conditions of various types of construction. Presentation of the first period of the project you can find on the Internet pages [www.roofs.cz](http://www.roofs.cz). The technological innovation lies in the developing of a specific data processing program, which in the future should serve for stocking the data in catalogue and for making the active searching and comparing possible. The Internet seems to be a medium very good fitting for international sharing of information, but the effective work with catalogue of roof-frames demands vector graphic.

Every year several research projects oriented to cultural heritage, its cognition and protection runs in Telč, which is known like one of UNESCO listed historic towns in Czech republic. The information storage capacity depends on processing capacity of the workplace. In the result we have relatively advanced methodical tools and up-to-date hardware and software facilities to store desired data. The handicaps are still evident – the lacks of trained stuff and appropriate software to make a simply accessible presentation. Telč aspires to become a regional centre of scientific research dealing with traditional building constructions, conservation methods, local history and other disciplines having connection with preservation of architectural heritage.