

Documentation, Interpretation, Presentation and Publication of Cultural Heritage

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1. Documentation of Cultural Heritage

The preservation of cultural heritage requires registration of cultural heritage by means of inventory and documentation. These tasks, as well as the regulations on registration, protection, use and restoration of cultural heritage are set in the Law on the Protection of Cultural Monuments.

State registration of cultural monuments in Latvia is done by the Centre of Monument Documentation of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection. The Inspection acts on the basis of the above-mentioned law and according to the Regulations on Protection, Use and Restoration of Cultural Monuments, issued by the Cabinet of Ministers. All departments of the above-mentioned Inspection are involved in the documentation of cultural monuments, each department is documenting the monuments according to typological groups: archaeological, urban construction, architectural, art and historical monuments. The last group also includes technical monuments.

State Protected cultural monuments are included in the List of State Protected Monuments irrespective of their location, size, ownership, technical condition, time and conditions of origin.

Cultural monuments in Latvia are divided into monuments of State and monuments of local importance, depending on their historical, scientific, artistic or other cultural value.

Documentation (registration information) on cultural monuments includes:

- the name, the address and the proprietor of the cultural monument;
- the description and scheme of the location;
- the reason for registering.
- Cultural monuments should be:
 - precisely localised according to actual location;
 - marked on a map;
 - inspected by specialists.

Registration documentation on each item is stored in the above-mentioned Centre of Monument Documentation, whereas the registration card is stored in the respective department. For example, Alūksne Manor House registration card contains the photo picture of the manor, name and address, type of use, the owner, type of protection, dates of construction, style, materials, transformations of the site, time of inspection and technical condition at the time of inspection. This registration card is stored in the Architecture and Art Department. Such registration cards were worked out in 1970's and they are still used to obtain operative information.

Registration documentation includes various textual and visual information. Part of this information has come to the Centre of Monument Documentation in the beginning of the 20th century, during 1920's, 1930's and 1949, when large-scale registration of historical sites was carried out, as well as during later periods. This documentation is still being supplemented with additional information, such as photo pictures, descriptions, references from literature,

part drawings, measurements, etc. During 1980's rapid reparation of the so-called monument passports was done, which became an important documentation material for many monuments. The content of the passports of architectural monuments was as follows:

Name and kind of the building, construction period, address, present-day function, history of the building, transformations, conservation, description (type, façade, gable-coping, form of the roof, building material, composition, ornaments, windows, doors, etc.), technical condition, protection system. The passports also included photos, ground floor plan, situation plan and a registration card. The monument passports used in Latvia are similar to Inventory cards used in Flanders, which I saw during the training course on architectural heritage inventory and documentation techniques in Belgium in 1998. Passports were produced for many monuments in Latvia, yet at present this work has stopped, since a new computer programme for electronic passports is under preparation.

The buildings comprising the Historical Centre of Riga, inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list in 1997, are an exception. The Historical Centre of Riga is also an urban construction monument of state importance. During the last two years the inventory of buildings (approximately 4000) comprising the Historical Centre of Riga was carried out. This resulted in a database, which is linked with an electronic map. Each building is linked with entries of the database. This enables us to get broad information (both textual and visual). On the basis of these entries it is possible to create thematic maps, according to the type of buildings, their material, number of storeys, technical condition, style, construction period, fixed violations of building regulations, etc. For example, one of Riga's blocks, where the division of buildings according to their construction periods can be seen. Preparatory work for introduction of such programme for other sites has been started.

2. Presentation and Publication of the Cultural Heritage

Popularisation (presentation) of cultural heritage is an important set of activities, which largely influences the understanding and awareness of the society about the preservation, protection and use of ancient buildings, monuments, art and other items. Public awareness is usually raised by means of radio, TV, internet, press, lectures, conferences, etc.

The Internet homepage of State Inspection for Heritage Protection contains data on some of the most important cultural monuments in Latvia, the most endangered cultural monuments and cultural heritage in general. Other kinds of information are under preparation, and this work is co-ordinated by the Information Centre.

Architectural and artistic heritage has been popularised in many publications issued during the last two years. These are monographs dedicated to some typological group, concrete place or building, for example, research of I. Bākule *Town Halls in the towns of Latvia* (Riga, 2001), the latest publication of prof. Jānis Krastiņš *Rīgas rātslaukums. Pagātne, tagadne, nākotne* (Riga Town Hall Square. Past, Present, Future) (Riga, 2000), a book by Jānis Zilgalvis *Pearls of Latvia*, depicting 40 most beautiful castles, palaces and manors in Latvia, a publication by M. Caune dedicated to Riga Medieval Castle (Riga, 2001), as well as many other publications dedicated to the 800th anniversary of the capital of Latvia.

At present preparatory work is being done to issue a catalogue of State protected monuments. Previously several other catalogues (lists) of heritage sites were issued, devoted to a special theme, for example, *100 Most Endangered Cultural and Historical Sites in Latvia* (1999), as well as annual publications issued within the scope of European Heritage Days in Latvia, such as *Churches in Latvia* (1999).

Meetings of specialists are of significant importance. One of the most respectable international conferences was *Art Nouveau in the Baltic: Time and Space*, dedicated to Art Nouveau architecture and art in Europe, held in Riga in 1996. This conference resulted in the publication of articles entitled *Art Nouveau. Time and Space* (Riga, 1999).

The popularisation of cultural monuments is marked by three events this year, and these are as follows:

1. 2nd World Latvian Scientists Congress, where the presentations of papers on architecture and art were attended by a large number of listeners.
2. International Conference organised by *Latvia Nostra* - official representative of International Organisation for Monument Protection *Europa Nostra* in Latvia. This event was dedicated to preservation and restoration of wooden heritage.
3. The European Heritage Days in Latvia. The Council of Europe has honoured Latvia by letting it open the European Heritage Days of 47 European Countries. This year the focus of the European Heritage Days in Latvia was on the historical town centres of Latvia. A special publication has been issued about the historical town centres of Latvia- *European Heritage Days. Historical Town Centres in Latvia*, and it is the latest publication related to cultural heritage.