



PROTECTION OF  
CULTURAL HERITAGE  
LATVIA

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The translated English version has been complemented highlighting the aspect of international cooperation in the area of heritage protection.



## INTRODUCTION

Culture and faith in their broader meaning is a phenomenon that establishes human boundaries on the public life. Either knowingly or not, a man has always wanted to live and work in a comfortable, rational and highly aesthetic environment. In a place with history. Each era leaves behind its monuments. These are like footprints that make the space richer. We have the privilege to live in the richest part of the world in terms of culture, in Europe. Heritage is a value acquired from the past, however, it does not belong solely to our time, but to the future society too. The message to the next generations about our time is passed on by means of heritage. In a situation when the humanity increasingly turns into a consumer society and many focus more on their well-being, the culture is under a permanent risk, although it is the sole significant reason for the existence of Latvia as a nation state. The heritage of Latvia has suffered a lot. Majority was destroyed during the Revolution of 1905, the World War I and World War II, and as a result of the functioning of the Soviet economic model.

Following the restoration of independence, the heritage of Latvia has attracted greater attention, however, the critical condition of many sites and the insufficient financial capacity, as well as the economic interests of new entrepreneurs have caused a range of problems. This is why it is important to understand the development of the heritage field in time and space. Having been faced with the heritage in various ways and based on experience, each of us has developed individual attitude, vision and even a different desire to enjoy it. Everyone who is routinely closely exposed to the issues of heritage protection, will soon shape his/her own professional position. There is no absolute rightness and single truth in this area; there is only vision at this particular moment and the best possible solution in the particular circumstances - a solution that may change as time goes by. In the area of heritage it is important to have a diversity of opinions, ensure possibility for them to exist and survive, as well as the ability to agree on a common most beneficial road of development. Therefore, these notes are just orientations or accents in a very complex, but inspiring and beautiful work of protecting heritage.



## THE CONCEPT OF HERITAGE

When taking a picture in front of a heritage site, a person identifies him - or herself, encodes in his or her mind the belonging to a civilisation. It is important for the person's identity. Usually, a person does not make pictures in a physically or morally degraded site, but looks for an environment that inspires, delights, strengthens or that reveals history. Heritage is the totality of achievements of all people and the humanity in general — usually an unappreciated resource, strength and energy. Humanity cannot exist without a memory and consequently without cultural heritage. Dreams of the future are born in memories of the past. Losing these memories leaves nothing to build dreams on, only the existence of the present remains.

To look into the philosophy of the heritage preservation, one must first touch on the concept of culture. In a broader meaning, culture is a form and shape that infuses any human activity and existence. Culture is continuously developing and without being inherited it is handed over from one generation to other. Culture comprises values recognised across the society, tolerance, external and internal orientation of individuals and society on the whole, faith, creative spirit and interests. The basis for preserving and developing a culture consists of language, folklore, customs, rituals, traditions, knowledge, the process of education, diversity, interest in other cultures and, most significantly, the outcome of a creative work that represents the present time. In a long run, the purpose of the culture has always been striving for spiritual and moral perfection. In a narrower meaning, the culture is understood as creative expression of art, architecture, music, literature and other fields. The existence of the State of Latvia in future is based on four pillars: language, land with all its riches, creative, eager-to-work and wise people and culture.

Culture is the foundation ensuring the quality of life of modern society and the sole instrument for the development of the civilisation. The world exists because of the culture. We judge the previous generations only after delving into the culture, and also our generation in the long run will leave behind only culture — everything else will decay, be forgotten and disappear. The influence of culture

and heritage cannot be precisely measured; its impact is larger than reflected in any study. Do we need to prove the economic significance of the culture at all? What's the purpose? Culture exists on its own and it is not subject to the statistic methods of economy. Would the significance of culture be small if we would not prove it with figures?

Cultural heritage forms the collective memory and highlights the most outstanding values of all time. Over time, it all increasingly becomes part of our lives and it is not something exclusive. In everyday life it is impossible to avoid contact with heritage. Heritage and creativity are two inseparable notions.

In the meaning of cultural heritage, in Europe the human values are being increasingly advanced as the key aspect. The essence of heritage preservation is being based on general ethical principles putting the quality of life in the centre. The most important among these principles is the responsibility — well-considered activity, which is focused on long-term development and oriented towards being able to be responsible to the future society. Today we should strive to do what will be acceptable or necessary to our descendants. Responsibility does not appear from scratch — it stems from experience and knowledge. Depending on the past, daily needs and future dreams, each individual understands the concept of "quality of life" differently. In my opinion, in a wider meaning it is a totality of circumstances that besides a simple existence ensures development of an individual in time and space, including freedom, identity, culture, creativeness, knowledge, ecological, functional and aesthetic aspects of the environment, safety and also material prosperity.

Protection of cultural heritage monuments is a system of measures that ensures the conservation of the most significant part of material heritage. The system includes identification, accounting, research, maintenance, use and promotion of heritage. In line with the evolution of the heritage protection more and more efforts are pursued to understand the cultural heritage, learn its history and significance, ensure that the values are carefully cared for and professionally restored, moving from the preservation of individual symbolic values to the preservation of the cultural environment and from the involvement of a few specialists to the involvement of an entire society. The concept of cultural heritage in Europe has evolved reaching a new understanding: is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time (Faro Convention, 2005). The value of cultural heritage is composed of its symbolic, historic and

aesthetic importance, authenticity, as well as the meaning of its social, spiritual and practical use. Heritage comprises the totality of values — movable and immovable heritage and environment, as well as the directly-linked part of the intangible heritage. The theory of heritage protection supports the protection of as much authenticity and original substance of the protected values as possible. In order to understand what it means to lose even a small part of the original substance of a cultural monument, we can compare it, for example, to an old book with crumpled and loose pages, and when fixing the book we throw away some of these pages, but then we want to read the book. Every detail and element in a cultural monument is like a piece of text in a book that comprises the wholeness, gives the book the overall coherence and meaning.

Intangible heritage includes customs, knowledge, skills, games and spoken forms of expression, as well as related instruments, articles, artefacts and cultural space, which communities or groups and in some cases individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible heritage, which is handed over from one generation to another, is constantly newly created by communities and groups depending on the environment and in interaction with the nature and their own history. In a person this creates the sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and creative work. UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) lays down that consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

Cultural heritage has become part of our daily lives and the society has recognised its value and undertaken its increased share in protecting it. Heritage policy will never be static — it must follow the changes in the society. By means of heritage policy we try to enforce the best theory, however, we also recognise a more simple understanding and position, which people find much closer. In essence, the cultural heritage is not a symbol of nationalism; the dimension of the heritage is much wider. It was culture, which comprises a rich cultural heritage that provided the opportunity for Latvia to regain its independence. Today, a developed culture is increasingly becoming a safeguard.

The environment we live in has not become solid — it is continuously changing destroying everything created by previous generations. Cultural values are endangered not only by natural tear and wear, but - even more so - by natural feature of human evolution, namely, the desire to replace everything old with new.





## THE ORIGINS OF THE HERITAGE PROTECTION

World heritage theorists date the first attempts to preserve the cultural heritage quite differently with deviations of more than a thousand years. The main question is, whether we want to clarify the development of modern terminology and principles, or do we actually want to focus on the idea of protecting and caring for values. The responsibility of a man to preserve and protect values and beauty has been described even in the most ancient written sources. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it"(Genesis 2: 15) In Hebrew the word abad, translated as "work it", has another meaning - "to serve", and the word shamar, translated as "take care of it" means also "to look after" or "preserve". The first man was instructed to serve the land and preserve it. Humanity was granted the power over all God's creation to take care of it, not to destroy it. The text also says: "The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food" (Genesis 2: 9). Consequently, first - the aesthetic satisfaction and only then practicality. Already from the early days, taking care of the nature included also the environment created by man, which corresponds to the concept of cultural heritage.

The origins of the idea of heritage protection in Europe date back to ancient times. Throughout the entire history up to modern times this idea was advanced by vandalism and destruction of heritage. Already the Law Code of Hammurapi, the ruler of Ancient Babylon (1792-1740 BC), contains a law on the protection of forests. During the rule of Roman Emperor Tiberius Claudius (41-54 BC) the Senate ruled to take care and preserve the buildings in Rome and across Italy. In the 15th-16th century Florence, Rome and Padova a new trend started, namely, digging out of antique monuments and collection of ancient coins, statues and commemorative marks, but in 1514 the Pope created a special post "A custodian of all classical antiquities". In 1627 in Sweden the position of National Antiquarian was established. In 1666, Carl XI, the King of Sweden, issued an order on preservation and protection of monuments (all monuments were put under king's care), and the order applied also to the region of Vidzeme. In 1686 a church law was adopted that prohibited pastors

in Vidzeme region to hand over historic items to private individuals. In 1793 the National Convention of France adopted a law on the protection of art, history and science monuments, but in 1830 the French Supreme Inspection of Historic Monuments was established, and in modern understanding this fact should be considered the beginning of the cultural heritage protection system.

This gave impetus that started major changes across Europe. In the 2nd half of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century the heritage protection laws were adopted also in other countries. In Latvia already in 1818 the Kurzeme Literature and Art Society established the Museum of Kurzeme Province. Thanks to the activities of local historians and scientific societies in the area of identifying cultural values, the time period from the late 18th century until the 2nd half of the 19th century encouraged the opinion (widely supported by the public) that heritage needs to be preserved. In the Baltics, the Baltic German intellectuals took active part in this work. Portraying of cultural landscapes became increasingly popular, evidenced by the drawings by Johann Christoph Brotze. A fight for influence in the region took place between the Baltic German, the Russian and the Latvian elites maintaining a seeming balance only on the outside. The cultural scene of the communities was rather isolated, focusing on their own different identity. Around this time the national self-assertion of Latvians started to grow. Still unappreciated is the role of Riga Latvian Society, founded on 12 October 1868, in identifying and researching of cultural values and development of the sense of national identity.

Significant changes took place all over the world. In 1872 the US Congress established the world's first national park, the Yellowstone National Park. In 1880 the Riga Baltic German press announced the idea to organise a cultural exhibition of the Baltic provinces. The exhibition was opened in 1883 in the Great Guild building. In 1888 a similar exhibition was opened in Jelgava creating preconditions for activating the work on the protection of monuments in the Baltics. Exploration and collection of cultural values in Latvia were promoted by the Russian Geographical Society whose Ethnographic Section in 1846 organised its first expedition to the provinces of Vidzeme and Kurzeme. In 1894-1895 ten expeditions took place in various parts of modern day Latvia with approximately 6000 articles being found. This was followed by the 10th Russian Archaeology Congress, which was held in Riga in 1896 from 1 August to 15 September and which included an extensive exhibition, which can be considered to be the ideological predecessor of the Ethnographic Open-air Museum of Latvia.

In the area of natural heritage in 1912 the Moricsala Nature Reserve was established (area of natural beauty), while in the area of cultural heritage, particularly, in terms of identification of hill forts, an important role was played by the Society for the Antiquities founded in 1922.





## THE PERIOD OF THE BOARD OF MONUMENTS OF LATVIA

A genuine cultural heritage protection system in the territory of Latvia was put into place soon after establishing the sovereign nation state. Latvia adopted the state-of-the-art principles of the heritage protection systems of the most developed European countries. In 1923 a law was adopted on the protection of monuments and the Board of Monuments was established. The purpose of the law was to "protect movable and immovable monuments of archaeological, ethnological, historic or artistic value and preservation of which is in the interests of the State of Latvia and its people". In 1923 the Ministry of Education issued the Regulation on the Co-workers of the Board of Monuments thus recruiting the help of volunteer teachers and local historians the number of whom in 1925 exceeded 300.

An active collection of information was launched about the potential heritage sites to be protected. On 1924 the official journal "Valdības Vēstnesis" published the first listed sites brought: Gaide Moravian Brethren community house, Rīņukalns Stone Age site and Pinnu (Dievekļa) stone. In 1924 the Board of Monuments made a decision to establish the Open-air Museum and in 1928 the first historic building, the Rizgu threshing barn, was moved to the museum, but in 1932 the museum was opened to the public. To improve the existing system, the Cabinet of Ministers in 1932 approved the Regulation on the protection of monuments. The Culture Fund, established in 1920, contributed greatly to the identification of cultural values. From 1936 to 1940 the Board of Monuments in cooperation with the State Printing House published the journal "Senatne un Māksla" (Antiquity and Art). The work of the Board of Monuments was particularly focused on archaeology, because throughout its period of existence, it was dominated by archaeologists and historians. In 1940 the number of sites inscribed in the lists of the Board of Monuments reached 1459, of which 232 were architectural heritage sites. However, the cultural heritage protection ideas and the officials in charge were not influential enough at that time to prevent and resist deliberate tearing down of valuable buildings. As a result, Old Riga lost the historic profile of the Dome Square and other significant sites. From 1935 to 1938 alone 70 historic buildings were torn down in Old Riga.







## THE PERIOD OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION

During the Soviet occupation the activities of cultural heritage protection were subject to the ideology dominant in the USSR, as a result the cultural landscape was degraded, historic buildings of great value were abandoned or used for improper function. However, this period cannot be viewed only as the expression of the Soviet regime, because in Latvia a significant role in heritage protection was played by traditions, previously acquired understanding and specialists loyal to their area of work. For political purposes the Soviet system needed to show that it cares for the history and the cultural heritage, therefore, during the time when the representation of history became biased, the political system was looking for its enemies and several types of monuments were endangered, the ability of professionals involved in heritage protection to demonstrate the significance and value of individual monuments in many cases saved unique cultural treasures from destruction.

On 1 October 1940 the functions of the Board of Monuments were taken over by the Museum and Monuments Protection Unit of the People's Commissariat. On 29 October 1948 the Council of Ministers of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (hereinafter — Latvian SSR) adopted a decision to improve the protection of cultural heritage and extended the USSR Regulation on heritage protection to Latvia.

More vibrant work in the area of heritage protection began in 1956. A number of decisions were made: "On the protection of memorial buildings" (1956), "On the zoning off of archaeology monuments in the physical environment" (1958), "On the foundation of the Nature and History Society under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR" (1959). The first congress of the Society took place in 1960 (since 1970 its full name is Nature and Heritage Protection Society of Latvia). On 29 October 1976 the Supreme Council of the USSR adopted the Law on the protection and use of historic and cultural heritage. In line with the practice effective throughout the Soviet times, the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR, too, on 29 December 1977 adopted the Law on the protection and use of historic and cultural heritage, which, in essence, was

a copy of the law adopted by the USSR, however, it greatly influenced the preservation of cultural heritage in Latvia. At the same time, politicisation of the heritage protection work took place. The government adopted such decisions as "On the procedure of construction of monuments and installation of memorial signs in the territory of the Latvian SSR" and "Procedure of maintenance of the graveyards of Soviet soldiers and partisans in the territory of the Latvian SSR" (both were adopted in 1979). Decision on the protection and use of historic and cultural heritage, a more detailed piece of legislation in the area of cultural heritage, was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Latvian SSR on 13 November 1982. At the initiative of field professionals also very practical documents were supported in the area of preservation of cultural heritage, for instance, the Decision on urgent reconstruction, restoration and improvement activities to be carried out in Old Riga" (1982).

During the Soviet times there were the following authorities working in the area of cultural heritage protection: Museum, Visual Arts and Heritage Protection Administration under the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR, Cultural Heritage Protection Scientific Methodological Council, Museum and Cultural Heritage Scientific Research Council (founded in 1968). The Cultural Monument Restoration and Design Office (established in 1965), later renamed as the Restoration Institute, worked in the area of research and design of monuments. The actual restoration works were performed by the Scientific Restoration Administration (dating back to 1951). The regional local history museums acted also as heritage protection sectors (regional inspectors since 1973), but Riga Architectural Heritage Protection Inspectorate was founded in 1968.

To make an objective assessment of the period of Soviet occupation, we should look at the changes that took place elsewhere in the world. On 31 May 1964 In Venice the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites was adopted that introduced the understanding of the authenticity concept in the area of heritage protection. On 16 November 1972 in Paris the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted. The year 1975 marks the beginning of understanding and appreciation of architectural values in Europe. The Year of European Architectural Heritage organised by the Council of Europe was a strong impetus that brought about the necessity to preserve the architectural heritage. This led to understanding that the damage done by the industrial construction is too large, because cities are losing their individuality and the new development does not take into account the cultural heritage and is destroying it. Often the new architecture does not correspond to the environmental quality

profile of the particular place. On 3 October 1985 in Granada (Spain) the Council of Europe adopted the European Convention for the protection of the architectural heritage.

The new understanding greatly influenced the further development of the cultural heritage philosophy in all of Europe and slightly influenced also the preservation of cultural values of Latvia. In a politically restricted situation, the enthusiastic professionals were able to preserve the most outstanding values even during the Soviet occupation. This is characterised by several examples written information on which is rather scarce.

In 1974 a fire fully destroyed one of the oldest stone churches in Latvia, the St.Bartholomaeus Lutheran Church in Rūjiena. The church was insured and it was due to receive compensation in the amount of 16 470 roubles, which the congregation had intended to use for restoring the church. Despite the regular requests by the congregation, the Soviet authorities were able to deny the permit for starting the renovation works for almost ten years (and consequently delayed the disbursement of the money). The party officials had intended to use the church walls for other purposes, but due to general negligence the realisation of this plan was delayed. After 1982 when new specialists started working in the area of cultural heritage protection the congregation was granted the required approvals and permits (however, in the beginning the top management criticised the new specialists pointing at their lack of experience).

In 1971 a fire destroyed the Liepupe Lutheran Church with Baroque interior, organ and archive. In 1980 in connection with the Moscow Olympic Games and Tallinn chosen as the host city of the sailing programme, attention was drawn also to the vicinity of the Riga-Tallinn motorway. Party officials and economic functionaries suggested to tear down the walls of Liepupe church. The cultural heritage protection specialists opposed such plans and achieved that the walls are properly conserved that saved the church from complete collapse.

In Latgale Region, when at the Piedruja Roman Catholic Church priest Arnolds Oļehno built the heating system that used warm air, the church attendance in winter significantly increased. Party officials in Krāslava District asked the senior officials at the Ministry of Culture to suspend the work of the church. The cultural heritage protection specialists sent on site assessed the carefully performed quality work, the innovative self-made heating system and gave their evaluation: no irregularities have been found and the church is to be preserved as provided for in the law.

In Jelgava, the St Simeon and St Anna Orthodox Cathedral was in near-ruin condition for long time. It was planned to blow up the church. Holes were drilled in the massive walls to insert the

explosives, but just one day before the intended demolition date it was cancelled due to the information provided by cultural heritage protection specialists that hinted that the cathedral walls have preserved the foundations and the altar layout of the earlier church build in 1774 according to the design by F.B. Rastrelli. The church ruins were preserved.

In 1982 during the restoration of the Freedom Monument the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Latvian SSR suggested to "sovietise" the monument. It was known that architect Ernests Štālbergs in the sketches of the monument had represented additional delimiting granite walls in the shape of semicircle, which were never built. An idea was advanced that the construction of the monument cannot be considered completed and these walls should be built and decorated, of course, with sculptural elements pertinent to the particular era. Cultural heritage protection professionals carefully studied the E.Štālbergs materials at the archive and provided proof that these are only sketches that have never been included in the final design of the Freedom Monument. Olga Klints, the Head of the Museum, Visual Arts and Heritage Protection Administration under the Ministry of Culture, referencing to the broad opinion prepared by the cultural heritage protection specialists was able to convince the party officials and thus the Freedom Monument was saved from alterations.

In 1983 new lists of state-protected cultural monuments were prepared for approval at the Cabinet of Ministers of the Latvian SSR. Having examined the list, the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet pointed out that the number of sites to be listed is too high and instructed to shorten the list significantly. Cultural heritage protection professionals devised an original solution - they put several cultural monuments under one protection item, thus avoiding any exclusions, meanwhile reducing the number of protection items. Similarly, in case of politically sensitive objects, they changed the name of the object. The adjusted list was approved by the Cabinet with a note that the task has been completed and the number of listed cultural monuments was no longer "exaggerated".

In 1983 the government had intended to expand the current Kaļķu Street to divert traffic through Old Riga. Several historic buildings were planned to be destroyed. Having understood that traditional measures will not be sufficient to resist the government pressure, a letter was drawn up to be sent to influential architecture theorists in Moscow. It was signed and sent by architect Leons Plauciņš in the eve of his 80th anniversary and phrased as a personal consultation with a request for help. When the government learned the opinion of professionals from Moscow, they dropped the idea. When asked to explain the appearance of the letter, the cultural heritage protection specialists replied that it is rather difficult to influence the actions of an old man.

Quite an extensive process of identification of cultural values was launched. For the first time in Latvia, inventory was made of icons and other articles of artistic value in orthodox and old-believer churches. In the area of architectural heritage, the research and measuring of the most significant cultural monuments were carried out.

The evaluation of the cultural heritage protection work of the Soviet era must be done carefully and responsibly. In circumstances of political dictate not all events and actual reasons were objectively documented. Having worked in this period and being familiar with many officials and specialists for long time, I must admit that in the circumstances where historic values are routinely destroyed it were the decent people who helped to save the most significant cultural values of Latvia from being lost forever.

Restoration of sites such as Rundāle Palace, Lielstraupe Castle, Freedom Monument, St. Peter's Church, Old Riga and many others and organisation of archaeological research on the banks of river Daugava during the construction of hydropower plants was not the achievement of the Soviet system, but instead the ability of the specialists of that time to trick the regime by presenting the necessity for restoration and research providing acceptable to the political regime argumentation and using it for the purposes of quality of life of both the society of that time and for the generations to come. In this regard, I would like to express gratitude to architects Leons Plauciņš, Andrejs Holcmanis, Jurijs Vasiļjevs, historian Aleksandrs Jansons, Voldemārs Kalpiņš (Minister for Culture 1958-1961), Vladimirs Kaupužs (Minister for Culture 1962-1986), Olga Klints, Mārtiņš Apinis and many other public figures of that time.



## HERITAGE PROTECTION AFTER THE RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In the future, this period will certainly be examined more precisely. The time distance allows for more unbiased and general view, however, at the same time insufficiently documented facts and actions behind the scenes that sometimes cannot be openly discussed are being lost. On 30 September 1988, at the time when the society of Latvia experienced aspirations for independence, the State Inspection for History and Heritage Protection was founded, which in 1992 was reformed into the State Inspection for Heritage Protection (VKPAI). The Inspection is a public institution under the supervision of the Minister for Culture that implements the public control in the area of cultural heritage protection, identifies and studies the cultural heritage and performs the inventory of monuments.

The aspirations for independence first spread in the various branches of culture. The cultural heritage protection staff were among the first to bring to light new values. Already in 1989 the Inspection suggested to grant the status of a cultural heritage site to the homestead Kolnasāta in Sakstagals, Rēzekne District, where Francis Trasūns, a public figure, essayist, teacher and priest, was born. In 1990 this place of great significance to Latvia became a museum and was opened to visitors in 1992. Valentīna Bruzgule, the charismatic inspector in Rēzekne District, became the head of the museum and its main driving force.

Since the first days, throughout the entire evolution of the Inspection, it has financially supported the renovation work of this homestead. Despite the presence of the Soviet army, already in 1990 the Inspection started fixing the cultural landscape of Latvia using aerial photography. On flights with helicopter more than 600 pictures were taken that show the condition of preservation of the cultural heritage at the moment of restoration of independence of Latvia.

In the beginning, still working with monument lists which was made and accepted at the Soviet period and based on the laws of the Latvian SSR a number of conflict situations arose. At the time when the aspirations for independence generated an active and

change-oriented action, the Inspection allowed to dismantle the monuments of Lenin in the historic centres of towns and cities. Usually these monuments were situated in significant public open spaces disregarding the historic planning, urban scale and profile. Officially, this action was not in accordance with law. The Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet initially felt that aligning the legal side of this should not be rushed. Only when the prosecutor's office of the outgoing regime started to show its interest in what has happened, the Inspection was able to achieve that the government adopts a decision that excluded the Lenin monuments from the lists of cultural monuments. Consequently, this also prevented the possible punishing of the Inspection.

In the first stage of the collapse of the Soviet regime and the restoration of an independent state, the formal bureaucracy was eliminated from the area of cultural heritage protection. Laws and regulations that contradicted the idea of an independent state were not complied with and in the severely difficult economic circumstances the cultural heritage protection work was focused on pragmatic action.

On 12 February 1992 the Law on the protection of cultural monuments was adopted in Latvia, which became the first former Soviet country having adopted such law; besides, with several amendments the law is still in force.

The legal framework of the cultural heritage protection is based on a number of specific international conventions that Latvia has acceded to, as well as laws and Cabinet regulations, decisions of the Supreme Council and Cabinet orders that are directly related with the cultural heritage protection work, and on other general instruments: more than 70 international charters, declarations, resolutions, recommendations and other international documents. When developing the cultural heritage system of Latvia, the experience of other developed European countries made a significant contribution, therefore it should be viewed together with the developments in this area that took place both in Europe and globally.

The Council of Europe (CoE) has contributed full of enthusiasm work in developing the European cultural heritage philosophy, by organising cooperation with all European countries and drawing up various recommendations related with the practical protection of cultural values. On 16 January 1992 in Valletta, Malta, the CoE adopted the Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, on 20 October 2000 in Florence, Italy, it adopted the European Landscape Convention and on 27 October 2005 in Faro, Portugal, the CoE adopted the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, which can be considered as the height of the CoE's contribution to the preservation of the cultural heritage.

The professional cooperation platform for the cultural heritage of European countries built on the principles of democracy, and the high-level expert assistance system to new member states had both successfully determined and driven the cultural heritage preservation tone in Europe. As a result, almost all European countries acquired a mutually recognised cultural heritage preservation philosophy, improved cultural landscape, achieved more professional work regarding the maintenance and taking care or cultural values and draw greater attention to the understanding and recognition of cultural values. Unfortunately, this system is gradually losing its impact due to the reforms introduced by politicians.

In 1994 the Inspection established good and friendly relationship with Jose Maria Ballester, the Director of the Cultural Heritage Division of the Council of Europe at that time, who has frequently visited Latvia to consult and show support.

Since 1993, when international specialists extensively discussed the values of Riga art nouveau, Latvia has been regularly hosting international conferences, seminars and various cooperation projects.

The Inspection has involved in the work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO, ICOMOS and other international institutions, it cooperates with experts from Estonia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, France, Spain, Finland, Belgium and other countries.

While participating in the work of the Cultural Heritage Committee of the Council of Europe since 1993, a number of technical cooperation projects have been implemented in Latvia regarding the preservation of historic centre of Riga, improvement of regulatory framework, preservation of cultural values of Daugava valley and training in vocational skills. The first successful international cooperation project was "Abava Valley Protection and Development Programme" (1994) where the landscape and heritage preservation was linked with contemporary environmental art.

European Heritage Days, which are being held in Latvia since 1995, have had a significant role in implementing the cultural heritage philosophy. Every year a topic is chosen which then becomes a certain priority in the entire heritage preservation work, and a special publication is published and distributed free of charge. In December 2000 Latvia hosted the final ceremony of the Council of Europe's campaign "Europe, a common heritage", but in 2001 — the opening ceremony of the European Heritage Days for all European countries. Latvia has been actively cooperating with its closest neighbouring countries. The initial cooperation among the three Baltic States has expanded, and Latvia has joined the Baltic Region Heritage Committee.

For twenty years the Inspection focused on the relations between the heritage and contemporary architecture, art and design. Already in 1999 the Inspection organised the seminar "Cultural heritage, art and society", in 2000 it hosted an international conference which adopted the Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage, in 2002 the Inspection held a discussion "On planning problems and new development in urban historic centres", in 2007 it organised an international seminar "Preservation and development of urban historic centres", in 2008 it held a discussion "Urban design quality in historic centres of cities", in 2009 using the French tram planning and design examples it organised a seminar "Development of tram traffic in urban historic centres", in 2010 it hosted the 4th Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum "Cultural Heritage - Modern Challenge", in 2012 it organised a French-Latvian series of lectures dedicated to the cultural heritage, architecture and landscape "Hear, Taste, Touch, Sight", in 2015 under the auspices of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union it held an international conference "Interaction between cultural heritage, modern architecture and design".

The Inspection has for a long time underlined the quality of spatial environment by building a bridge between the cultural heritage, contemporary architecture and design, and has tried to pave the way for promoting a wider interdisciplinary perspective. Besides, Latvia has been the first among its neighbours who joined the original initiative of the European Heritage Label.

Since 1996 for a whole ten years the priority of the cultural heritage protection work was to protect the historic centre of Riga. The work included preparation of documentation for the inscription of the site on the UNESCO World Heritage list, as well as organisation of extensive discussions on the most diverse planning, architectural, art and design issues. For instance, in 1997 in the course of the discussion "Development of a night image of the historic centre of Riga" attention was drawn for the first time to the quality and mood of the lighting in historic urban setting.

Conferences were held, laws and regulations of various level, as well as other protection documents were drawn up (this work is described in section "Individual examples representing the heritage protection").

The Swedish National Heritage Board has contributed greatly to the development of the heritage preservation system of the restored Latvia. Already in 1992 the Swedish colleagues organised exchange of experience trips and training on the cultural heritage protection issues for the leading officials from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It was a special privilege for every participant to have the opportunity to acquire understanding of

the concept of authenticity from a world-class expert such as Ove Hidemark. In 2000 the State Inspection for Heritage Protection signed a contract with the Swedish National Heritage Board on cooperation regarding the restoration of Ungurmuīža manor, Rāmava manor and Sabile synagogue, as well as on exchange of experience, training of restorers and craftsmen and dissemination of information. The Inspection was managing a professional, very extensive international training project. The government of Sweden invested 11 million krona in this undertaking.

Latvia has long and successful cooperation with the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage. What started out as advice to the owners of buildings in historic centre of Riga and lectures on restoration of wooden windows gradually grew into a regular inspiring cooperation among professionals and sample restoration of several heritage sites that are of great significance to Latvia. The restoration works of such significant heritage sites as Ludza Great Synagogue, Rēzekne Green Synagogue, Western Tower of Cēsis Medieval Castle, Kuldīga old town hall, Jānis Akuraters Museum in Riga, Rainis and Aspazija Museum in Jūrmala, Rainis and Aspazija home in Riga, harbour warehouses in the Ethnographic Open-air Museum of Latvia and Rainis Museum in Tadenava show the extent of the completed work. This collegial cooperation among professionals from two countries has helped to achieve a standard that in the professional environment the Latvian-Norwegian projects in the area of protection of material cultural heritage are associated with high responsibility and particular quality.

Among the many involved cooperative Norwegian colleagues the contribution by Nil Marstein and Dag Myklebust should be particularly highlighted. Thanks to the interest shown by the French Embassy in Riga and the French Institute in Latvia cooperation projects are being regularly implemented focusing on strengthening the cultural heritage philosophy and acquiring the restoration experience. Several series of seminars and professional consulting have been organised. Also our Italian counterparts have been very responsive and shared their special knowledge.

Restoration of Lutheran churches in Latvia has to a large extent been possible due to the support from private funds in Germany, while the Polish government's support and involvement of heritage professionals have made a significant contribution in identifying and preserving the cultural values in Latvia.

The Inspection has continuously developed a constructive dialogue and cooperation with non-governmental professional organisations such as: Latvian Architects Association, Latvia Association of Restorers, Latvia Association of Archaeologists, Chamber of Trades and Crafts of Latvia, ICOMOS Latvia,

Docomomo, etc. Cooperation has been established also with education establishments: Riga Technical University, Latvian Academy of Culture, Art Academy of Latvia and University of Latvia.

In 2009, due to the onset of economic crisis in Latvia the budget for cultural heritage was substantially cut by 56 %. All branches of culture suffered. This showed that politicians and responsible officials consider culture basically as a spending industry. At the initiative of the Inspection, as a result of negotiations with the heads of other cultural institutions of national importance an idea emerged to start a new cooperation and provide a joint explanation of the crucial role of culture. Society "Laiks kultūrai" (Time for Culture) was established gathering the heads of all cultural institutions of national importance. The objectives of the society are as follow: adopt a position supporting Latvia as a nation state; achieve that culture is defined as one of the national development priorities; agree on a joint action so that culture would acquire a decisive role in ensuring the quality of life for the people in line with international conventions and a practice recognised in Europe.

The society actively supports the role of culture in the development of the State of Latvia, it holds regular meetings with the top political parties and senior state officials, organises discussions and has achieved the understanding that due to inconsiderate and insufficiently gauged decisions the culture has severely suffered as a result of general budget consolidation process. The society has invited the responsible officials to look more closely into the specific nature of the cultural sector. Joining of the forces of individual institutions took place in a critical moment, thus acquiring a significantly larger support for the cultural sector. Culture is generating an added value by any commercial activity. In a long run, it provides essential benefits to private business, as well as revenues to the state budget and local governments, it promotes publicly recognised employment and creativity and improve the quality of life.

Since 1998 the Inspection has been focusing to and supporting a quality modern architecture and design in the cultural environment. Successful solutions have been created by architects Andris Kronbergs, Zaiga Gaile, Reinis Liepiņš, group "Vincents arhitektūra" and others.

Following the restoration of independence, as a result of development of the cultural heritage protection a rather stable functional system has been put in place. It is not static, but is continuously evolving responding to priorities and feasible options. The practical cultural heritage protection work in Latvia is started with the identification and assessment of values, inscription of

objects in the list of state protected cultural monuments, defining of protection requirements, practical maintenance and renovation works, as well as control over changes, consulting and provision of financial support. The guidelines issued by the Inspection lay down specific protection requirements for each individual object. In order to ensure protection of an environment that is heritage friendly, as well as their visual perception, the immovable cultural monuments are set protection zones. If a particular object has not been defined particular zones, then according to law this zone is 100 meters, but in the countryside: 500 meters.

Supervision and control of the condition of listed cultural monuments includes compiling of relevant information about the objects, their inspection and examination on site. Heritage protection requires regular maintenance and care, which depends on the engagement, understanding, knowledge and skills of the owner. Violations are punished by a corresponding fine.

Listed cultural monuments are getting older and deteriorate. Also the quality of life requirements are the reason behind certain preservation measures and sometimes — alteration works. The Inspection assesses the admissibility of repairs, conservation, restoration and other alterations of cultural monuments, provides consulting, approves project documentation and issues permits to complete the works. Cultural heritage research and monument preservation activities receive support from the state budget, as well as have access to international funding.

The cultural heritage protection work cannot be successful without documentation of the values, as well as studying and collecting of all types of information. The Documentation Centre of the Inspection has compiled more than 700 000 archive files. The centre stores valuable materials from the very beginnings of the heritage protection system with some documents being very old (the oldest being the S.Hanning's Chronicle from 1589). The largest volume of the documents is made up of materials gathered by Leons Plauciņš about each architectural monument, as well as systematically collected inspection materials about archaeological and artistic monuments.

In protection of cultural heritage it is important to minimise the illegal circulation of works of art and antiquities. The Inspection is controlling the export of these articles, gathers information on stolen and lost articles related with listed cultural monuments, evaluates the articles to be exported and issues permits. Priority in this area is to prevent the export of listed movable cultural monuments or individual parts of immovable cultural monuments. Within the structure of the Inspection there is also the Latvian Museum of Architecture, established on the initiative of architect

Jānis Lejnieks and situated in a building at Mazā pils iela 17, Riga. The task of the museum is to identify, gather, study and promote the Latvian architectural heritage. The stock of the museum includes biographic information about architects and a collection of drawings by the most outstanding professionals.

Realising that it is not always possible to execute absolutely everything planned, the Inspection has continuously followed that in the area of cultural heritage protection the most essential work is done in good quality, that the cultural heritage protection work complies with internationally recognised principles, that the area attracts competent, knowledgeable, skilled and experienced professionals, that there is a dialogue at work and that the main indicator is the preserved heritage.

When assessing the preservation of cultural heritage over the last 30 years, it is important to remember in what condition many properties were at the moment of restoration of independence, and evaluate the situation now. The churches in Latvia have recovered their original function, majority of the abandoned churches have been restored, installed with new roofs, renovated equipment, interior and improved landscaping. Also manors and castles, unique residential and public buildings have been renovated.

The landscape has changed dramatically and so has the quality of human life in Latvia. The state has also been able to benefit from various international events in favour of cultural heritage. For instance, when organising the NATO summit in Riga in 2006 some high ranking official had the idea to tear down the historic wooden buildings along the Kalnciema Street, which were described as "ruins". With the help of Helēna Demakova, the Minister for Culture at that time, the Inspection was able to convince the government that it is possible to fix the overall image of Kalnciema Street by preserving the historic wooden buildings and restoring their street facades. We even succeeded in acquiring funding from the state budget. The renovation work attracted such well-known architects as Zaiga Gaile and Pēteris Blūms. This particular activity was the key driving force that resulted in further renovation of the Kalnciema Street Quarter.

Unfortunately, like in other countries, also in Latvia there are objects which are not being renovated and even such that have been lost forever. There are many cases in Latvia, Europe and all over the world when listed cultural monuments are not being properly maintained. The reasons mentioned are diverse, but the most common — lack of financing.

Cultural heritage of Latvia has endured the period of irresponsibility and even deliberate destruction during the rule of the Soviet regime. The lawful owners have recovered their property, but not

all of them have had the means to properly maintain them.

Not always we succeed in achieving the required quality in preserving the values. Although there are many international conventions, recommendations, resolutions by scientific conferences and systems of national laws and regulations the cultural heritage authorities in Latvia, just like those of any other European country, are still facing with conflict situations that emerge when modern development activities are pushing to expand into the historic centres of cities, cultural landscapes and the territories of protected cultural monuments. Meanwhile, when doing a restoration work, quite often it is confined only with leaving an impression while losing the original substance of the site, its true materiality and structure.

Cultural heritage has always been vulnerable to fire. Despite the precautions, many outstanding cultural values of the world were lost due to a fire. Latvian heritage has suffered too. The public experienced this in the hard way in 2002 when Cēsaine castle was burning down and in 2013 when Riga castle went up in flames. The most difficult challenge in managing a government property relates directly with the Riga castle: the fire started during the castle renovation works (which were subject to the most stringent safety measures) and the following inability to act fast and in agreement to eliminate the damage done revealed the incompetence and lack of experience of the state real estate management system. Only after attracting a widespread attention to this challenge at various levels, it became possible to complete the renovation of the castle in rather good quality. In 2014 the Inspection published a guidance document intended for the owners of cultural monuments titled "Fire Safety of Historic Buildings", but in 2016 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia published church buildings maintenance books. Despite the guidance and reminders, on 10 December 2017 during renovation works the Carnikava Lutheran Church (built in 1728) was destroyed by fire. It was the oldest remaining wooden church on the Vidzeme coast. Fire is still one of the greatest risks particularly to wooden cultural heritage.

Although reduced, the damage caused to archaeological sites by treasure hunters still remain a problem. Protection of cultural heritage in Latvia suffers from insufficient funding. In the area of preservation, use and transfer of Latvian cultural values and even more - across the entire public administration, there is an excessive bureaucracy that has a clear negative effect that consumes resources, suffocates initiative, enhances distrust and only creates an illusion that everything is in order.

The functioning of the cultural heritage protection system in Latvia should be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Compliance of the national cultural heritage preservation policy with the international heritage policy instruments;
2. Regulatory framework put in place in the area of cultural heritage;
3. Share of identified and studied cultural heritage;
4. Number of listed sites, their cultural value and the complex nature of the set of values;
5. State protected cultural heritage supervision system, responsiveness and control of changes;
6. Economic support system;
7. Stability, independence, experience of special authorities and the level of public trust in them; contribution of the cultural heritage preservation in raising the quality of life;
8. Amount of information available about the cultural monuments, promotion of the heritage and involvement in a daily life.
9. The condition of preservation of cultural monuments, which is characterised by the following elements:
  - 9.1. Level of authenticity, particularly the amount of original substance and quality;
  - 9.2. Technical condition and potential threats;
  - 9.3. Use that corresponds to the value of the site (function);
  - 9.4. Site daily maintenance (tidiness);
  - 9.5. Historic patina;
  - 9.6. Compliance of alterations with the modern heritage preservation philosophy, scientific research level, quality professional conservation and restoration, as well as new quality layers that generate added value;
  - 9.7. Overall visual image, perceptibility.

The functioning of the Latvian heritage protection system is focused on the dialogue between the preservation of original authentic cultural values and quality modern architecture, design and comfortable use of spatial environment. Unfortunately, since the economic crisis the system is overloaded, it has excessive work amount and significantly reduced team of professionals with limited capacity. While understanding the financial capacity of the state, it should be, however, concluded that having analysed the supported activities of other industries, politicians are not always willing to hear the heritage protection needs or consider them just as important.

The achieved results of the heritage protection system were possible due to the enthusiastic and professional contribution of each professional, expert and official.

Among professionals to be mentioned who have dedicated most of their lives to a loyal work in the area of heritage protection and continue to surprise with their erudition there are art historian Dace

Čoldere, Dr. art. Rūta Kaminska, architect Pēteris Blūms who is a successful author of several restoration projects, Dr. hist., Dr. habil. art. Juris Urtāns, archaeologist and an author of many books, Jānis Asaris, archaeologist, Dr. arch. Jānis Zilgalvis, academician, author of many books dedicated to the history of architecture, architect Liesma Markova and many others.

I must mention the contribution by Baiba Mūrniece, a professional of the incoming generation with inexhaustible energy and clear view of the heritage protection system.

The heritage protection system can be proud for its team of professionals experienced in multitude of areas ranging from history, arts, spatial planning and restoration to communication and modern technologies. Many young and promising professionals work at the Inspection. A team of nearly 100 employees with comparatively small funding and material resources has ensured the protection of the most significant part of Latvian cultural heritage for over 30 years.

Invaluable help in this work was provided by 50 experts on various advisory boards, as well as individual advisers. On many occasions in the heritage protection work consulting without reward was provided by Dr. arch., academician Jānis Krastiņš, Imants Lancmanis, Director of Rundāle Palace Museum, Dr. arch. Ilmārs Dirveiks, Dr. arch. Jānis Lejnieks, on the relation between modern architecture and cultural heritage - by architects Andris Kronbergs, Zaiga Gaile, Andis Sīlis, Jānis Dripe, on design issues - by Leons Jakrins. Dr. hab. geogr. Aija Melluma, one of the most prominent landscape experts in Latvia, has helped to maintain a philosophical position valuable for the development of the cultural heritage. In the area of restoration of monuments of art help and professional support was provided by Sarmīte Gaisma, Head of Restoration Department of the National History Museum of Latvia, restoration virtuosi Dzintra Temerova, Aida Podziņa, Gunita Čakare, Vilnis Līdaka, in archaeology Dr. hist. Andrejs Vasks, Dr. hist. Ingrīda Virse, Dr. hist. Zigrīda Apala, in the area of industrial heritage — historian Andris Biedriņš. Always supportive were the following perfectly managed other cultural establishments: Rundāle Palace Museum, Turaida Museum Reserve, National Library of Latvia, Latvian Academy of Culture, Art Academy of Latvia, etc. Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments and particularly its long-standing Chairman Andris Jaunsleinis never refused assistance in solving difficult situations. The most significant role in practical preservation of values is played by the owners of heritage sites, researchers, restorers, as well as persons who admire the historical heritage.

The Inspection has received support and understanding from the Education, Culture and Science Commission of the Saeima.



When analysing the cultural heritage protection work in the restored Latvia, the role of the following former Ministers for Culture should not be forgotten: Ivars Ķezbers (1988) — during the Awakening period he quickly decided to support and promote the establishment of a new cultural heritage protection authority; Raimonds Pauls (1989-1993) — supported the adoption of a new law on the protection of cultural monuments, creation of a state paid vacancies of district heritage inspector, development of cultural monument research and rescue programme, supported the elimination of an approach characteristic to socialism in the sector, achieved the transfer of the building complex "Three Brothers" for the development of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection; Jānis Dripe (1994-1995) supported urgent inclusion of a large amount of the cultural heritage in the list of state protected cultural monuments, as well as the establishment of the structural unit of the Inspection, the Latvian Museum of Architecture; Ojārs Spārītis (1995-1996) — actively supported the preservation of many individual cultural monuments, intensively visited the key sites; Rihards Pīks (1996-1997) — supported the process of promoting the historic centre of Riga for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list, fully relied on field professionals on all matters; Ramona Umblīja (1997-1998) — promoted the special role of the cultural heritage in the development of Latvia as a nation state, achieved the establishment of a heritage branch in the Culture Capital Foundation; Kārina Pētersone (1998-2002) — supported the strengthening of a clear system in the cultural heritage sector, supported the preservation of the values of historic centre of Riga; Inguna Rībena (2002-2004) — supported the adoption of a special law for the protection of historic centre of Riga as a UNESCO World Heritage site; Helēna Demakova (2004-2009) — achieved significant increase in funding for the cultural heritage sector, increased remuneration for professionals, recognised and strengthened professionalism and experience, ambitiously supported major projects; Ints Dālderis (2009-2010) — took care of survival of culture during the economic crisis; Sarmīte Ēlerte (2010-2011) — supported the inclusion of cultural heritage in the planning of national development; Žanete Jaunzeme-Grende (2011-2013) — in the most significant process of economic planning of the the future of the nation she achieved the strengthening of the role of culture and cultural heritage; Dace Melbārde (since 2013) works on recovery and increase of the funding for the culture sector, promotes the centenary programme of Latvia as a nation state.

In the course of evolution of the cultural heritage philosophy, the following key figures have influenced the position of the Inspection: Ove Hidemark, expert in the deepest aspects of the

authenticity concept; Andrea Bruno, one of the most prominent experts in relations between cultural heritage and modern architecture; Jose Maria Ballester, Director of the Heritage Department of the Council of Europe, admirer of cultural heritage, art and design; Michael de Thyse, one of the most experienced international project coordinators at the Council of Europe; Dag Myklebust, supporter of the ideas of democracy in the area of protection of cultural heritage; world-class architecture virtuosi Gunārs Birkerts and Meinhard von Gerkan; urban planners Sigurds Grava and Andris Roze; Bernd von Droste and Mechtild Roosler, directors of UNESCO World Heritage Centre; Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines, Spanish professor; Herb Stovel, major contributor to the development of ICCROM; Christopher Young, well-known ICOMOS expert, and many other.

Every five years since its foundation the State Inspection for Heritage Protection has reviewed its priorities in response to the situation in the country and the area of cultural heritage both in Latvia and Europe. Special strategic development documents were adopted in 2000, for instance, the Cabinet approved the subprogramme "Cultural Heritage" of the National Programme "Culture", in 2008 the Ministry of Culture approved the Development Strategy of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection, but in 2015 the ministry approved the Strategy for the Cultural Heritage Protection sector 2015 -2020.

The latest Development Strategy of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection was developed and approved in 2017. Its objective is to continue the development of a cultural heritage protection system that is professional, convenient for the society and that helps the managers and users of cultural monuments to preserve the values in line with internationally recognised principles, prevents monument degrading activities and ensures that the society of Latvia understands, appreciates and protects the cultural landscape as a part of a quality living space that helps to create a sustainable growth.

The strategy is focused on the reduction of bureaucracy and formal processes thus making the sector closer and more customer friendly. In managing the values, professional consulting should increase while reducing inspections, but the emphasis on strict requirements should be moved to a constructive dialogue. The restrictions should be balanced with the development opportunities, specific instructions should be replaced by guidelines and best practice, but sanctions — more by economic benefit.





## HOME OF THE LATVIAN HERITAGE PROTECTION SYSTEM

Since 1993 the State Inspection in Latvia for Heritage Protection is situated in the building complex "The Three Brothers" that serve the heritage protection work for already more than 60 years, and the complex has been gradually developing into a sector competence centre. The group of medieval buildings "The Three Brothers" that have been rebuilt on several occasions acquired its current appearance after the restoration of 1953-1957 (project author P.Saulītis).

The Three Brothers are oriented with the end towards the street, which conforms with the type of dwelling houses characteristic to Hanseatic towns in Northern Europe along the Baltic Sea. The house at Mazā Pils street 17 is the oldest stone dwelling house in Riga (end of the 15th century). In 1697 it housed a bakery which was expanded by an outhouse in the yard, but later also on the street side (torn down during restoration). The step-like pediment of late-Gothic style and the Gothic portal of the 15th century house that was transformed in the 18th century were renovated. Although the house has been exchanged several times, its layout has preserved some Gothic features. The ground floor has a large living space with a fireplace and chimney (mantelpiece) situated in the corner. Beneath the living space there are vault cellars, but above it — attic on three floors. In the middle of the building there are several hatches that allowed lifting of goods from the cellar to the attic. A wooden stairway connects the first and the second floor.

The "middle brother" (1646) is a typical dwelling house from the 17th century. Its facade and pediment is shaped keeping in line with the Nordic Renaissance mannerism and has been restored based on the drawing from 1785 by J.C.Brotze. The entrance portal from 1746 with an inscription in Latin "Soli Deo Gloria" (Glory to God alone) has been moved from the entrance of another older adjacent building. The interior reflects a quality evolution of dwelling houses — the premises have become more spacious with larger windows. In the corner of the room there is a chimney and a hearth, which was built using the bricks from the foundations of the House of the Black Heads and which is still in working condition.

Built-in wardrobe in the shape typical to the 18th to 19th century, ceiling finish reconstructed in Baroque shapes. The interior is supplemented with items from the 18th and 19th centuries. Above the lounge of the low first floor there is a hall.

The newest (the 17th century) and smallest of the houses was rebuilt in 1898-1899. During the restoration the yards of all three houses were merged, the walls were equipped with stone portals and the oldest coat of arms of Riga. The portal that has been moved here from a lost building at 4, Melngalvju Street still carries an inscription in German that translates as "You will be blessed, when entering here, and you will leave with God". It is the shape of the yard that stirs up imagination, creates mood and a unique feeling.

The complex of the "Three Brothers" is a unique example of how cultural heritage has been preserved in Latvia. The restoration philosophy during the early Soviet times which was shaped by the professionals taught during the period of the first free state of Latvia saved the buildings from threats coming from the occupying power. The consistent efforts to restore the three brothers in a very careful and the right way lead to lengthy professional discussions and disputes which at the end resulted in a rather good outcome corresponding to the era. The substance added during the restoration has become a protected value of the complex. A particular fact to be mentioned is that already during the restoration the houses were intended to be used for the cultural heritage protection function.

The spatial location of the houses in this particular place in Old Riga is characterised by an interesting urban landscape. Standing in front of the entrance of St Jacob's Church, visitors have a majestic view at the "Three Brothers", the spike of the Riga Cathedral, the altar part of the St. Mary Magdalene Church and the small coach-house situated next to the St. Jacob's Church. This area is without any traces of the modern trend to expand the volume of historic buildings or fill the yards with new buildings.

In 1993 when the Inspection took over the buildings from the basically bankrupt Restoration Institute their condition showed that the buildings have been managed in a classic soviet style: the yard was filled with construction waste, the finishing on the facades had peeled off, the interior space has been divided into individual working spaces using plywood and filled with old damaged furniture, the toilet facilities were in a terrible condition and, overall, the premises were unclean and a total mess. The Inspection now had a challenge — to restore the building complex and achieve an aesthetically pleasant mood using a step-by-step, slow and prudent approach.

Today the home of the protectors of heritage shows an authentic cultural value and the respect for the original substance, modesty

and simplicity in setting up office space, openness, elegance and good taste in creating public space. This is a complex of buildings with an unchanged yard with a peculiar historic ambiance. On the other side of the yard, opposite of the Pils Street, "The Three Brothers" complex is joined by two other historic houses that have experienced an identical renaissance. The concept which focused on preservation of a maximum historical patina, natural tear and wear and only cautious modern additions has led to a convincing result. It stands out with a special mood and historic aura. "The Three Brothers" are filled with a fiery modern cultural heritage philosophy, professionals obsessed with detail, diversity of opinions, but at the same time — ability to agree on a common position, know-how, skills and a long-standing experience. All of it creates stability and faith in the principles of the heritage. These positive changes, however, do not necessary mean that the houses have avoided various attacks. In 1997 when the buildings were just brought in order, initiatives suddenly emerged to review their property rights. Possibly, the initiatives were intended to start a hidden privatisation. The State Inspection for Heritage Protection was able to prevent any of that. In this particular aspect the cultural heritage protection sector has distinguished itself with a consistent position. During the restoration of the State when the regulatory framework was not yet sorted the employees of the heritage inspection had many advantageous opportunities to take possession of valuable cultural monuments, but none had used this chance. This speaks volumes of the sense of mission the area professionals had. Unfortunately, in 2010 as a result of the economic crisis the Inspection had to lose a group of historic buildings at 5 and 7, Klosters Street, which housed the Monument Documentation Centre of the Inspection. The buildings, which date back to the 17th century, with an impressive timber frame pediment were renovated during the Soviet time, connected and adapted for the work of cultural heritage protection. For the entire heritage protection industry its home at "The Three Brothers" has become an identity mark that serves the value preservation work. The peculiarities and the unique aura of this place improves the productivity of staff and sometimes even "heal" the customers. For us the ability to show by example how to maintain a building, participate in repair and restoration works for the sake of learning, prove that it is possible to use narrow historic stairs on a daily basis, work on brick floors, instead of hiding, openly showing old wall cracks and interesting deformations that have required centuries to appear, unwillingness to see perfectly plastered and freshly painted walls, but using the method of retouching to achieve the look of an ancient wear — it all gives a true professional satisfaction to every specialist. Today such approach is called the restoration of feelings.





## EXAMPLES REPRESENTING HERITAGE PROTECTION

Heritage protection in Latvia is reflected by the cultural landscape that belongs to the Western culture, historic centre of Riga with the preserved medieval, art nouveau and wooden architecture, the atmosphere created by the combination of silhouettes and heritage, the historic centres of Kuldīga, Cēsis and other small towns, renovation of Rundāle Palace (consistent example of long-term scientific research and restoration in Europe), Riga Castle, Turaida Castle, Bauska Castle, other medieval castles and manor houses, renovated countryside churches, farmsteads, hill forts and other archaeological sites, the Freedom Monument and The Riga Brethren Cemetery, historic interiors and objects of art, certain monuments from the modernism era and even newer ones. To preserve and protect cultural monuments means control and manage the ongoing changes precluding the loss of the original substance and authenticity. Compelling illustration of the functioning of the heritage protection system in Latvia requires examination of some characteristic objects.

### RIGA CATHEDRAL, CONSERVATION OF THE AUTHENTICITY

The preservation of the 16th century constructions of Riga Cathedral tower from being destroyed is a good example of a successful functioning of the heritage protection system. During eight centuries Riga Cathedral has evolved and been reconstructed several times. Its foundation stone was laid in 1211 during an official ceremony led by Bishop Albert. Initially the church was built using the laconic shapes of the Romanesque style and was envisaged as a basilica-type church. In the late 14th century and in the beginning of the 15th century the Cathedral was expanded by constructing the western transept and side chapels, as well as by raising the central nave. At the same time the tower with octagon pyramidal spire was elevated.

The oldest depiction of the tower of Riga Cathedral is shown in the book "Cosmographia" (Description of all lands) by Sebastian Münster published in 1550 in Basel, which depicts the panorama

of Riga as it was before 1547. At that time the cathedral tower was the tallest spire in Riga. The tower kept its appearance until 1547, when a fire broke out and the Gothic spire of the cathedral burned down. A new tower with a pyramidal 140 meter tall spire and two galleries were built by 1595. During the city siege in 1710, the cathedral roof was seriously damaged. During the reconstruction works, the roofs of the side naves were rebuilt by changing their slope. The choir obtained a Baroque roof and the central nave - its eastern pediment with the year 1727 on it. In 1775, Riga City Council, on the grounds of the conclusions drawn by the engineers of those days, ordered the demolition of part of the tower spire and building a new Baroque tower as seen today. In 1881 Riga Society of Researchers of History and Ancient Times started reconstruction and renovation works in the church and the Cloister. The works continued until 1914. As a result of these works, the Cathedral acquired its present-day appearance.

During the Soviet times, two major renovation and reconstruction works took place: from 1959 to 1962, the Cathedral was adapted and turned into a concert hall (the altar was dismantled); from 1981 to 1984, a Dutch organ building company Flentrop Orgelbouw Zaandam carried out a major organ restoration. At the same time, the Cathedral interior was renovated and all utilities were reinstalled. Also, the copper plating of the tower and the railings of both galleries were renovated. A new rooster was made and the copper sphere was renovated, too. An automatic fire extinguishing system for the tower was installed, but the hall was equipped with air conditioning equipment.

Until 2005 Riga Cathedral was maintained by the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation, but then by a special law the property rights to the real estate, the Cathedral and its land plot, were returned to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.

Major reconstruction works started with the financial support from the government. The owners of the building had planned to start ambitious reconstruction work of the cathedral's tower in 2012. In order to strengthen the wooden constructions of the tower spike a peculiar solution was elaborated — to support the tower spike on a new spatial system made of metal constructions inside the tower (by building a separate foundations for it). Also, for reaching the tower spike, a elevator was planned to be built. Since the tower wooden constructions, which are situated both in the stone part of the tower and above it represent the oldest and largest group of wooden building construction in Latvia, such solution would destroy the unique original wooden constructions of the 16th century and the first floor interior of the tower. Besides, due to incompatibility of materials and unpredictable loads this solution would be questionable and even unsafe. The church

desired a new development and expansion of tourism services, but the heritage protection professionals called on prudence and preservation of the original values. A major conflict broke out, however, through a dialogue the Inspection was able to achieve that the significant cultural values are respected and the monument was rebuilt by preserving the original substance as much as possible, and only in certain places where indeed necessary it was carefully supported with metal constructions. The works took place in a complex environment, the damaged constructions were renovated, secured and supported using solid wood elements of impressive size. After completion of the restoration, even the authors of the original ill-advised alterations agreed that a much better and safer solution has been achieved.

#### ĀDAŽI (BALTEZERS) CHURCH, CONSERVATION OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The parish of Ādaži is first mentioned in written sources in 1549, but the existing Ādaži church (during the last 50 years known more as Baltezers church) was built from 1772 to 1775 between the lakes Lielais Baltezers and Mazais Baltezers next to a busy road.

This scenic area is home to one of the most beautiful landscapes in Riga vicinity, it has all the classical landscape elements: lake with a reflection and islands, meadows, forest, a church with a Baroque tower and a built-up area that has shaped in a longer period and does not display the trivial showing-off of the newly-rich. When entering the village a nice view emerges from the elevated point upon the dominating elements of the area — the church and the lake. Sunrises, movement of the mist, water or ice mirror, nightingale singing and the choir of frogs, sunsets and moonlight in this natural and man-made landscape are constantly creating peculiar beauty competition among seasons leaving no one untouched.

Already since the Soviet times Ādaži church has faced constant attacks, and it has survived only thanks to the efforts by the heritage protection system. In 1932 the Board of Monuments included Ādaži Lutheran Church with the built-in interior on the list of state protected cultural monuments. In 1953 the church activity was discontinued and the building was subjected to vandalism. In 1955 a suggestion emerged to turn the church building into a tourist centre. In a politically tense situation it was probably difficult for heritage protection professionals to intervene openly. In 1956 some tourist had submitted a complaint to top officials about the cultural values at risk in Ādaži church. It appears from the archive documents that after sending the reply, a message from the post office was received saying the the author of the complaint is not

residing at the specified address. However, the complaint, which was phrased in a surprisingly professional language (probably, it was written by the responsible official Leons Plauciņš), was the reason for heritage protection professionals to step in and protect the church.

In 1958 the Head of the Culture and Education Department of the Executive Committee of Riga District adopted a decision and achieved that the spike of Ādaži church tower is taken down. For a short time the church served as a community centre, later it was used for showing movies, then it was turned into an empty packaging warehouse, a place for cabbage fermenting, metal workshop.

At the moment when the Ādaži Village Council had started the construction of a multi-storey silicate brick apartment house, an architect from Riga District stopped the construction and the development was moved to another location.

Then an idea emerged to transform the landscape into a all-union angler's centre. Local people opposed the idea and prevented it from being implemented. In 1987 the church faced another attack — a plan to transform it into a tourist centre (motel). At the end of the same year the Ministry of Culture took over the church for its own use.

The heritage protection system was able to rebuild the church tower, install a golden rooster on top of the spike and renovate the roof.

After the restoration of independence, in 1994 the church was returned in the possession of the congregation that had resumed its work. However, the attacks did not end there. A plan emerged to build a gas station in the vicinity of the church and turn the natural landscape into a residential and public development. Despite all the challenges, this site has preserved its uniqueness. The damage caused during the Soviet times and the efforts to eliminate the image of the church from its identity all had failed. It is unbelievable that even in 2017 there are active attempts to transform the landscape surrounding the church with the intention to turn it into a developed territory.

Although the church has lost its original interior, its value is upheld by its historical construction volume and the surrounding landscape. The church has been renovated and is well maintained and its scenic surroundings are not damaged. No other landscape in Riga vicinity has had to endure so many attacks, and all of them were successfully fended off. It is the achievement of Latvian and international heritage protection system, as well as the testimony to the understanding of values by many.

## HISTORIC CENTRE OF RIGA OVERCOMING THE ECONOMIC PRESSURE

The fight for preservation of the cultural heritage in Latvia is particularly apparent in Riga historic centre. Riga is a live illustration of the European history. Through centuries it has been the point of intersection of various significant events and meeting point of European nations. Up to this day the capital city of Latvia holds evidence about the influence of Western- and Northern Europe on its historic development, about the borders between the West and the East, as well as about the intersection of trading and cultural routes. Riga architecture and the planning of the historic centre shows the influence of different European nations. Layer by layer the historic centre reveals the threads of the history of the Baltic States.

The largest and the most significant element among the many natural and cultural values of Riga is the space along river Daugava. Until the early 20th century, when ships moored next to the Old Town, the role of the river both in terms of commerce and visual appearance was dominant.

Geographical and topological profile of Riga gives it individuality, while the medieval buildings and the narrow streets — antiquity. Archaeological layers hide the oldest evidence of the origins, population and architecture of the city.

The characteristic network of streets of Old Riga and the key architectural elements with the supporting development appeared already by mid-13th century. From the 13th to the 15th century the city of Riga was a member of the Hansaetic League. The profile of its medieval centre reflects prosperity, although majority of the early buildings have been lost due to fire and wars. In the 17th century, Riga became a significant city in a Swedish province, but in the 19th century it turned into an active international centre of economic development, therefore the most substantial urban development changes took place in this particular time.

In the 20th century, Riga achieved the status of an art nouveau metropolis. In terms of amount, density and artistic quality of the art nouveau buildings there are not many equivalents in Europe, since art nouveau buildings make up almost one third of all construction of the centre. They are easily noticeable in the urban space, because the buildings stand out with a decorative and expressive finish: twines of tense lines, motives of exotic plants, masques, mouldings of actual or imaginary beings, as well as with reproductions of absolutely simple geometrical shapes that create a special mood. The essence of the architectural quality

of this style is that each era has a new thinking that manifests also in a comfortable layout of premises, rational use of construction materials and engineering solutions. It all is focused on the aesthetic quality. In Riga the art nouveau has melted almost all branches of visual arts into one piece.

Jānis Krastiņš, architect with the highest academic status in Latvia, is the greatest contributor who has highlighted the value of Riga art nouveau heritage and presented it to the society in a scientifically justified way.

For already several years a successful work in this area is done by the Riga Art Nouveau Centre situated at Alberta Street 12 and run by Agrita Tipāne.

Also the Functionalism of the second half of the 20s and the 30s of the 20th century has left Riga a noteworthy heritage. Some of the buildings from that era show Art deco features.

The Soviet time dictate brought significant changes and alien moods to the centre of Riga. The architectural execution quality was often lost, but the scale of exaggerated urban environment was gained. However, thanks to certain influential professionals Riga did not lose its uniqueness. However, the Soviet time has left also some successful vibes.

The semantics of Riga are particularly manifest in the silhouette of the historic centre which in a most distinct way shapes the overall image of the city, the relations between the scale, forms, horizontal and vertical lines, harmony between the nature and the man-made environment. Since 1544 when the panorama and silhouette of historic centre of Riga was first depicted, it has remained one of the most well-known and oldest visual identities of Riga in Europe and in the world.

Riga is a green city — parks, street and avenue greenery and squares are the value of central Riga. This is characterised by the spatial planning composition created by talented landscape architects and gardeners, and by the distinctive selection of plants. The public space is emphasised by an outstanding sculpture dominant — the symbol of freedom.

Riga is rich also with wooden heritage. About 10 % of all development in the historic centre is made up of wooden buildings designed in different architectural styles. Their location provides a better understanding of the gradual urban development in Riga. If one would have asked, whether these values were always taken for granted and were never endangered, the answer would be no. This is evidenced by many different activities experienced in the past.

Architect Pēteris Blūms has been the fiercest supporter of the value and significance of the wooden Riga. It was the heritage protection system that forced the preservation of the face of

Riga, its most valuable vibes, urban harmony and quality of life. Historic centre of Riga remarkably illustrates the European culture and history in a transnational dimension, promotes the understanding of the European identity and secures the European citizenship.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has recognised that historic centre of Riga, which comprises a rather well preserved medieval and later period urban structure, has an outstanding universal value created by medieval structures, quantity and quality of Art Nouveau architecture, which is unparalleled anywhere in the world, and the 19th century wooden architecture. The preservation of Riga architectural heritage has been the focus of a special attention for already more than fifty years, but the most active work has been undertaken after the restoration of independence. In 1993 an international conference was held in Latvia dedicated to the Art Nouveau values of Riga. Soon in 1996 the State Inspection for Heritage Protection in cooperation with the responsible bodies of the Riga City Council launched an intensive preparation of documentation to nominate Riga for the inscription in the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage list. On 6 December 1997 historic centre of Riga was awarded the status of a UNESCO World Heritage site.

At the turn of the centuries, with the growing economic pressure on cultural heritage several heritage places in Latvia became endangered. Broad discussions and disputes emerged between the heritage protection professionals and businessmen who wanted a fast profit while ignoring the quality of the environment. Historic centre of Riga faced the greatest threats.

In 1999 the leaders of Riga City Council announced the idea of tearing down the building of the Occupation Museum that embodies the evidence of an entire era and represents a valuable architecture from the period of Modernism. Following a wide protest by the architectural community the idea was dismissed. One after another new projects emerged that had acquired approval by the Riga City Council, but it were the State Inspection for Heritage Protection, the Environmental Protection Club, cultural historians and architects who opposed them for the sake of protecting the cultural heritage.

Starting from 1998 the cultural heritage protection professionals launched an ambitious cooperation campaign with mass media. By organising conferences, holding discussions and disseminating the urgent information we succeeded in informing the public on a large scale about the cultural heritage problems. From 2000 to 2003 every week national newspapers, television and radio broadcasted several times information about preservation of cultural heritage. This provided a significant support in creating an understanding of

cultural values and laid the foundations for further changes.

To create simple playing rules for the preservation of historic centre of Riga, the Inspection in 2002 performed a detailed survey of urban values and drew up the concept for the preservation and development of historic centre of Riga "Vision 2020". Gradually a disagreement grew among professionals about the philosophy and methodology of the renovation of cultural monuments. Some of the professionals supported the renovation of lost cultural objects in the shape of a copy and were ready to support only such a construction in a cultural environment that matched the image of the historic style. This approach was implemented when reconstructing the House of Black Heads, the Riga Town Hall and several summer houses in Jūrmala. Following broad discussions that were held to assess and agree on an international level on the position of the Baltic States about the understanding of authenticity, on 24 October 2000 the regional conference that was held in Riga and was participated among others by representatives from UNESCO and ICCROM adopted the Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage. It was a turning point in introduction of the present heritage protection philosophy. This internationally recognised document that lays down a clear and scientifically justified attitude towards replicas, copies and the possibility to use them to replace original and authentic monuments, serves as a foundation for defining the State Inspection's for Heritage Protection policy and position as regards reconstruction of historic objects.

Also non-governmental organisations joined the process of protecting the cultural values of Riga. On 23 March 2001 the Environmental Protection Club submitted to Riga City Council a protest signed by 10 000 people and achieved a ban on development in the green zones, squares and parks within the boundaries of historic centre of Riga. In fact, it was a reaction to the plea for help by the heritage professionals.

Feeling that the protection measures are not effective enough, in December 2002 an international conference was organised titled "Preservation and Development of Historic Centre of Riga " with keynote "In development, a good idea is more important than money". Besides heritage professionals, urban planners, architects, entrepreneurs, journalists and politicians, the conference was attended also by professionals from the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

Despite the extensive measures taken, the disregard for heritage preservation principles in Riga historic centre continued. The last straw in the minds of heritage professionals and large part of the society was the green light for the construction of the high-rise Saules akmens (literally "Sun stone") in Ķīpsala in 2002. On 2 June



2003 during their visit the representatives from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre were briefed about the situation. It was recognised that the envisaged development endangers the integrity of historic centre of Riga. Since this moment, for the next seven years UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Committee had repeatedly expressed critical remarks and paid special attention to the quality of the changes of central Riga.

Considering the authority of UNESCO, the Inspection suggested to adopt a special law on the protection and development of Riga as World Heritage site. The Education, Culture and Science Committee of the Saeima was responsive and in a short time the law was drafted and adopted on 14 April 2003. The law resulted in stricter requirements for the preservation of cultural values, established a more open and transparent decision-making procedure, expanded the mandate of the heritage protection sector to prevent actions that degrade cultural values. The unhappy businessmen approached the President of Latvia with a request not to proclaim the law and return it to the Saeima for repeated review. Opposing the mandate of the Council for Preservation and Development of Historic Centre of Riga provided for in the draft law, as well as the requirement that every new development in historic centre of Riga must organise an architecture idea competition, the President of Latvia returned the law back to the Saeima for repeated review. The request by businessmen was satisfied, but after a few clarifications the law was adopted on 29 May 2003 with even more votes in favour. In protest against the new law, Riga City Council brought an action before the Constitutional Court asking to repeal several substantial provisions, but the Constitutional Court being the supreme body with the mandate to examine laws decided that the law shall remain effective. Situation remains heated, because certain entrepreneurs had plans that envisaged exaggerated development that intended to build on new sites within historic centre of Riga and its protection zone. But these plans were not meant to become reality.

The adoption of the law on preservation and protection of historic centre of Riga can be considered as the most important event of that year in the area of heritage protection in the Baltic region. In Latvia it was a turning point in terms of significant change in attitude and understanding of cultural values over a decade. After the adoption of the law and experiencing some unexpected turns and difficulties, a constructive work on the preservation and development of historic centre of Riga has begun, a cooperation is established between all responsible authorities, a procedure for open discussion and adoption of decisions is put in place, the public is now more involved and further activities degrading

cultural values have been prevented.

The fight for the cultural heritage has been a fight for the quality of life in a long-term. If this fight was lost, the scenery of Old Riga would now include two high-rises on the location of present Citadele Bank, several large volume buildings along the Daugava embankment between Vanšu Bridge and Akmens Bridge, a high-rise in the Central Station Square, multi-storey car park next to the Latvian National Opera, new development in Līvu Square and Dome Square, as well as in the square next to the St.Peter's Church. Dozens of historic buildings (particularly, wooden) would be destroyed and many of such buildings would be elevated for at least one floor. New construction function and car parks would have sneaked into the parks of Riga, while in Kīpsala historic buildings would alternate with new construction disturbing the spatial scale. The Kalnciema Street Quarter of wooden buildings would not be renovated, but the territory would be used to expand the street. Luckily, in Riga the threats to the heritage of the historic centre were accepted as a challenge and were transformed into a new benefit.

The intellectual strength of the society in Riga is being enhanced by cultural heritage professionals, architects and artists endowed with enthusiasm and competent in modern professional philosophy. The growth of the city has not stopped, it is constantly developing, allowing historic values to be supplemented with quality modern architecture and design that generates a new heritage for the future society and describes the creative spirit of people of our time and vitality of the society.

Riga architecture and the entirety of cultural and natural values is supplemented with events of a long and rich history, traditions of urban life, society that is proud of its city and outstanding science and culture personalities. Riga is a city with a cultural flavour that creates special feelings. Riga has been a city for the quality of life, it keeps evolving and will be as such.



## PROTECTED MONUMENTS AND SITES

Even the most outstanding values of the world cannot delight almost anyone if they are not identified, studied, compared and made public. Cultural values can be established only as a result of comprehensive identification, research and analysis followed by a broad consultation and discussions. The history, structure and nature of an object needs to be understood, as well as the origins of the location, how and why it has changed over time and continues to do so, the shape and condition of elements and materials, constructions and technologies. It requires also a comparison with other objects and places.

The practical work in the area of protection of the cultural heritage in Latvia starts with the identification of cultural objects, their research, documentation and inscription on the list of state protected cultural monuments.

Cultural monuments are part of the cultural heritage registered in the national legal system in line with a certain procedure — they include cultural landscapes and individual territories (ancient burial sites, cemeteries, parks, locations of historic events and key figures), groups of buildings and individual buildings, works of art, equipment and items of historic, scientific, artistic or other cultural value and whose preservation for the next generations complies with national and also international interests.

Both objects that have preserved in their original appearance and their individual parts and fragments should be recognised as cultural monuments. According to the legal framework governing their use and preservation, cultural monuments fall into immovable and movable monuments and typological groups.

First people arrived in Latvia about 11 000 years ago, but available written records cover only about 800 years. Only the records that have been made in the last 250 years are sufficient for complete research of the history. In order for the people to acquire a justified reflection of their history, a significant contribution is made by the preservation of the archaeological heritage.

Archaeology is a branch of historical science that studies and documents the material evidence left behind by people and based on the acquired information reveals the human activity in



the past. Based on research materials, archaeology provides a chronologically and potentially complete depiction of historical processes.

The most significant part of the archaeological heritage of Latvia is made up of archaeological monuments: ancient dwelling sites (settlements, villages, hill forts, lake settlements, stone castles, historic cultural layer of towns), ancient burial grounds and their surface formations, Medieval and Modern Period cemeteries, ancient cult places (hills, stones, tress, caves, groves), places of ancient economic activity (places of former factories, agrarian systems), ancient battle fields, meeting, court and gathering sites, ancient roads, military and hydro technical constructions, sunken ships and their cargo. It all holds a valuable information and material evidence about the early history of our nation. Archaeological values can be under ground, above it or in the water. Exploration works have been performed at the archaeological objects, but, in order to preserve the substance, a complete archaeological research has been performed only on rare occasions.

Architectural heritage is the most extensive and difficult, and in the international practice it is sometimes called the built heritage. Maybe only 3 % of this heritage is recognised as architectural and urban development monuments. Among them there are significant places, groups of buildings, individual buildings and constructions, historic centres, villages, gardens, parks, cultural landscapes, manor complexes, grassroots construction objects, buildings and constructions, equipment and items (including their details and decorations) that are either internationally or nationally significant examples of historical styles, works of prominent architects or buildings of rare type.

Latvia is rich with extensive artistic heritage of which monuments of art make up only a small part: sculptures, works of art, church equipment, easel graphic works, rare print works, miniatures, watercolour paintings, samples of applied and decorative art, photographic documents that describe the styles, location and era of the art. The most difficult is the protection of movable monuments of art, because they have always been subject to theft and illegal transportation.

Industrial monuments make up a very small part of the heritage: buildings, constructions, equipment, items and other objects of technical nature that reflect the evolution of manufacturing, crafts, transport and agriculture, as well as the development of infrastructure of certain areas and military history.

In order to get a more complete grasp of the entire material cultural heritage, a special typological group has been established: places of historical events, namely, territories, buildings and other objects

that are related with significant historical events or persons. The history of Latvia is closely linked with the history of other nations in the Baltic Sea region. It has been difficult in all times. In history, one of the key criteria for structuring is time. Due to political reasons unbiased presentation of history has always been problematic, therefore for the development of this typological group of monuments a period of reflection and searching of balance was deliberately created.

A list of state protected monuments existed from 1924 to 1943 which was drawn up by the Board of Monuments and included 2434 objects. It was a consolidated list of the most significant cultural objects in Latvia that was updated yearly. During the Soviet occupation several list of monuments were adopted: the list of architectural monuments protected by the Latvian SSR (1952), the list of historical, archaeological and artistic monuments of republican significance (1954), the list of cultural monuments in the territory of Latvian SSR (1959), the list of cultural monuments of the Latvian SSR (1967 with 3229 objects), the list of historical and cultural monuments of the Latvian SSR (1983 with 4571 object). During the Soviet times the lists were partially politicised and depended on the ruling ideology.

Following the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Latvia on protection of cultural monuments in 1992, an active preparation of a new list begun with eagerness from the very beginning to include as many objects as possible, although not always it was possible to achieve the precision required nowadays. A consolidated, regularly updated list of state protected cultural monuments was restored in Latvia.

On several occasions discussions between politicians and lawyers broke out about who should adopt this list. Starting from 1992, the law delegated this task to the Minister for Culture, but then to the Cabinet of Ministers, however, after a broad discussion with international experts and following the analysis of the experience of other countries this task, responsibility and honour was again conferred to the Minister for Culture.

As at 2017 the List of state protected cultural monuments contained 8865 objects, that includes 2507 archaeological objects, 3457 architectural objects, 46 urban development objects, 2701 artistic objects, 135 historical and 19 objects of industrial heritage. The list is being constantly updated.

Objects are listed after comprehensive identification and assessment followed by consultation with field experts, owners and local governments. According to European practice it is a time-consuming and very responsible task with long-term legal and material consequences, therefore the assessment must be performed responsibly, without hurry and in a qualitative manner.

The quality of the list depends on the precision, scientifically justified analysis and possibly objective and comprehensive evaluations. It is a normal practice if the consulting and discussions last for several years and the final decision is made only when a complete assurance is acquired about the value and preservation options of the object. This practice is clearly reflected, for instance, by the preparation and inscription of objects in UNESCO World Heritage list.

On several occasions discussions among heritage professionals, architects, planners and NGOs have broken out about whether every valuable historic building that is situated in a protected territory must be listed. Based on international experience, in recent years the State Inspection for Heritage Protection is trying more and more to protect the space in its totality without dividing it into individual protected monuments, and only the most valuable objects are granted a special status.

In general the criteria for listing an object are laid down in the Law on the protection of cultural monuments and the accompanying Cabinet regulations. In line with the internationally recognised practice further details of criteria are periodically updated. For the objects of architectural and industrial heritage to be listed, important aspect is their authenticity at the moment of inscription and their unique or rare nature in their particular category. Also their layout in the particular urban context is important.

The quality of buildings in Latvia is different, therefore it is important to divide the listed objects adequately and evenly in terms of geographical location to avoid concentration of protection funds within one administrative area or historic centre. Of relevance is also the diversity and concentration of interests in one object.

Finally, the most important aspect is the significance of the object on national scale and its cultural value which is determined by taking into account the following characteristics: dating of the building; persons and significant events related with the building; building as the social, scientific, economic, cultural or military history illustration of the nation; architectural concept; decorative elements; objects of art; traditional techniques; the way how the architectural concept of the external image of the building supplements the artistic value of the entire ensemble; authenticity; particular type of architecture; technical evolution qualities that are significant from the constructive point of view.

Drawing up of the new list in circumstances when a precise topographic material was scarce and the system of addresses was confused and properties were not registered has caused also some inaccuracies. Such difficulties can be observed also in our neighbouring countries and sometimes also in the developed nations with ancient history. However, the rush has paid off,

because during the transformation of the political, economic and legal system of the state a great number of objects was preserved from being destroyed and declined. Probably, this helped to preserve more the architectural spatial environment of Latvia, the archaeological and artistic values and cultural landscape or, in simple words, the identity. Should Latvia had chosen a slow and gradual drawing up of the lists by including only precisely described and examined objects, the number of listed objects would be significantly lower and the inscription of many objects would not be possible at all, because their owners would block the economically advantageous, but unique places from the heritage point of view from being listed and the state would be required to pay substantial compensations that would not be feasible. To a large extent this would apply to historic centre of Riga and Jūrmala. In the recent years, it was for the objections of owners that the listing of several significant objects has been delayed. This concerns the architectural heritage from the period of Modernism which the Inspection was paying attention since 2010.



## THE USE OF HERITAGE

The status of a listed heritage does not mean that the daily use of the particular object or place is prohibited. In the interests of preserving each object has certain restrictions on its use, which differ by the typological group. Reasonable use of cultural monuments is a safeguard for the preservation of values. Being in touch with the cultural heritage the society becomes richer and appreciates these values more. The essence of preservation of cultural monuments is based on the prolongation of their existence in their authentic condition for as long as possible. Every monument has its material and intangible cultural value. Each monument must be chosen a type of use that does not endanger and affect the preservation of its cultural value in the long-term. Besides the cultural heritage value each cultural monument has also the value of use that includes also the satisfaction of practical needs.

Architectural monuments are the most daily used and directly perceivable part of cultural heritage. During such use some parts of the monuments may get damaged. It is caused by tear and wear, delayed maintenance works, improper use, bad repair and reconstruction work, natural disasters, weather conditions and mixture of different other circumstances. Usually, problems in the preservation of cultural monuments are caused and advanced by the lack of funds or the performance of urgent works executed in a poorly considered sequence, therefore it is very important for the users of cultural monuments to have understanding and cooperation, goodwill and professionalism on behalf of the owner. Primarily cultural monuments are used for the purposes of culture, science and education. Of course, the best type of use of a monument is its original function, but this position should not be made absolute. The owner is entitled to choose the type of use of the cultural monument, but the State Inspection for Heritage Protection can influence that by issuing guidance. When choosing the function for a cultural monument (type of use) the following principles must be met:

1. guarantee physical preservation of the authentic cultural values of the particular listed object;
2. prevent any potential threats to the harmony of the surrounding environment;

3. not to impose an excessive load on the object and the environment that may result in a predictable accelerated wear;
4. not to cause contradiction with the intangible values of the object;
5. make only such additions and changes required by the quality of life that respect the value of the heritage;
6. do not affect certain aspects of the cultural heritage appreciated by the heritage community;
7. allow maximum access by public to the monument or site.

Practice has shown that the preservation of a cultural monument is performed in the best possible quality, if the owner perceives the maintenance as a set of successive activities. One has to believe that the weather, material, traditions and the structure of the cultural monument itself teach us the most. In preserving and renovating a monument it is important to follow a comprehensive sequence of activities based on the following principles of professionalism:

1. study and understand the object;
2. chose the most suitable type of use;
3. perform regular maintenance of the cultural monument; in case of damages, first, identify the cause;
4. choose the optimum preservation techniques and methods for the monument, develop preservation concept, programme or project;
5. attract professionals in performing the works; in case of non-availability of professionals, organise an additional training;
6. protect the original as the main asset; when restoring, use materials that correspond to the original;
7. first contemplate and only then make the decision and act; admit that the original decision can be adjusted if new discoveries are made;
8. manage and control of the entire process, document everything that concerns the object;
9. after the completion of renovation works carry out monitoring and draw conclusions about the decisions made;
10. provide professionals and the society with transparent information about the works taking place at the object.

The immediate surroundings play an important role in preservation of a cultural monument. A cultural object is perceived in the context of environment, and a monument is not detachable from the environment it has emerged and exists in, therefore the space must be viewed as a whole. The environment can either raise or reduce the cultural value of a monument. Seemingly immaterial changes (torn down, rebuilt or reconstructed historic fences and auxiliary buildings, transformed profile of the historic development and other ill-advised activities) may irreversibly transform the mood created by cultural values. A neglected object and the impression of abandonment provoke vandalism. A sign with information about the history and the cultural value of the object (even better if added with the vision for future development) installed at an unused monument, as well as some clean-up work will serve as a

sufficient safeguard of the monument that will prevent nine out of ten potential vandals from entering the area. The impression of abandonment and, most importantly, also physical damage to monuments are caused by overgrown trees, shrubs and climbing plants that have been either deliberately or accidentally planted too close and have not been duly maintained or removed.

The use of cultural monuments, particularly of the built heritage, is associated with larger or smaller time-imposed alterations implementation of which requires quality documentation. For the assessment of all construction projects the Inspection has elaborated rather clear criteria that have remained unchanged since 2000, however, in practice the assessment has not always been without difficulties. In the process of elaboration of complex and difficult restoration projects the pre-set requirements clearly specify that the documentation will be examined by an advisory expert panel, or that before evaluation the Inspection will additionally visit the site, or that, in certain cases, it will refuse reviewing the documentation, if the irregularities endangering the value of the object will not be eliminated. Such information prepares the monument owner in due time and reduces potential for conflict situations. In the evaluation of preservation and development projects of cultural monuments, their territories and protection zones, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection has used the following criteria:

1. Do the submitted documents list all envisaged works clearly and in a professional manner, whether the object has been sufficiently studied and its values documented, whether the documentation has been executed in line with the set requirements, and whether the documentation has been submitted in the sufficient level of detail?
2. Whether the object and area transformation activities meet all applicable cultural monument protection laws and other regulations?
3. Whether the cultural values will be preserved as a result of planned works?
4. Whether the envisaged works comply with the overall cultural heritage preservation development policy in the particular place (any programmes, plans etc.)?
5. Whether the methods and techniques of the envisaged works comply with the Latvian and international heritage preservation philosophy, practice and key principles (specific restoration methodologies and knowledge of methods)?
6. If a loss of cultural values is expected, is it the only option how to ensure the development of the particular object or area and will the cultural value of the object or area be reduced as a result of the alteration (whether the gains will outweigh the losses)?
7. Whether the envisaged works have already been accepted by any heritage authority? The State Inspection for Heritage Protection does not consider itself to be the sole competent authority, but it is focused on cooperation with all professional stakeholder groups.



## RESTORATION

Cultural heritage protection work is inconceivable without professional restoration. Initially, only a small interest group of society was captivated by the idea of preservation of the values of cultural heritage and the first heritage renovation activities were implemented mainly to acknowledge belonging to an old culture. These origins are difficult to date, but it can be assumed that basically the renovation of cultural heritage is as old as the very idea of heritage preservation. A fairly professional conservation and restoration of historical values begun in the 19th century.

The term "restoration" means renewal of a cultural object or its individual parts based on scientific research, using materials, methods and technology corresponding to the original. It does not necessarily mean that by restoring the object only its oldest substance has to be preserved. Also overlays — quality alterations from earlier periods, even loss of some elements, damages and natural wear — are a testimony of its time and a cultural value. In order to respect the authenticity and the original substance of an object as much as possible and to avoid any new additions, a conservation method is used in the preservation of cultural heritage — constructive, physical and chemical fixation of a monument or part of it.

Nowadays heritage protection professionals, researchers, restorers, owners and users are entrusted with outstanding values. The fate of each particular monument depends on the competence, ability to cooperate and decency of each participant of this interest group. Each year brings the society new cultural values saved from being abandoned or destroyed where professionals have invested their love for what they do, loyalty to preservation of values, inexhaustible energy, careful and patient work, endless desire to discover as much as possible and understand the object deeper, slowly, responsibly and using best professional skills once again bring these values to light for everyone to admire them.

The number of objects restored in Latvia is impressive. The amount of major restoration works in objects such as Rundāle Palace, Ungurmuīža Manor, Rīga Castle, Latvian National Museum of Art, Dzintari Concert Hall, Rīga Brethren Cemetery, Rēzekne Green Synagogue, Ludza Synagogue, Durbe Castle, Lūznava Manor,

Daugavpils Fortress, Krāslava St. Ludvik Church, Cēsis Medieval Castle, Bauska Castle, Kuldīga Old Town Hall, Jānis Akurāters Museum in Riga, Rainis museums and many other places, as well as individual objects of art or parts of buildings indicate the vitality of this industry. Since 2016 the Inspection is publishing a volume titled "Restored Cultural Monuments in Latvia". The established Commission of experts in 2014 and 2015 named 31 object as an example of quality restoration, and 27 objects in 2016.

Preservation of cultural artefacts requires continuous expansion of knowledge and skills in identification, research, maintenance, restoration and supervision of values. Latvia is one of the few countries with effective assessment system for the qualification of restorers. It was set up based on the initiative by the Latvia Association of Restorers. Since 1993 the skills of restorers are being regularly examined by the board of experts specifically established by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection. 128 restorers specialising in 17 domains have acquired the qualification of a restorer. Substantial work in maintaining the system is done by art historian Dace Čoldere. The Latvia Association of Restorers regularly provides support to professionals in solving restoration problems. Large amount of work, high level of expertise, long and stable performance in the research of cultural monuments and development of restoration projects are the achievements of the architectural research group, company SIA AIG, founded in 1991, whose origins go back to the Cultural Monument Restoration and Design Office under the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR and date back to 1982.

The best achievements of the restoration industry in Latvia is clearly illustrated by the renovation of the Rundāle Palace. It is a striking, successful and consistent example of a long-term scientific restoration on a European scale. Count Ernst Johann von Biron (1690-1772), later the Duke of Courland (from 1737), commissioned Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli (1700-1771), the chief architect of the Russian Imperial Court, to draw up a design for the new palace. The construction started in 1736. The interior decorations were consigned to Johann Michael Graff, a sculptor from Berlin. By 1767 Italian painters from St. Petersburg Francesco Martini and Carlo Zucchi had completed the plafonds of eight halls. They are also the authors of the wall paintings in the Great Gallery and the Duke's suite. Interior works were completed in 1767. In 1795 the estate was handed over to Prince Valerian Zubov under whose supervision the palace resumed its economic life. The outstanding Baroque palace suffered during the wars in 1812 and 1916, but most severely in 1919 when it was vandalised by the soldiers of Bermond-Avalov. 1971 marked the foundation of the Rundāle Palace Museum, as well as the development of an ambitious palace restoration programme. The first restored premises were opened to public in 1981, but the

restoration of the entire palace ensemble was completed in 2014. A significant part of the ensemble is the reconstructed regular French style park.

Being the largest and the most splendid manor ensemble not only in Latvia, but also in a wider region, Rundāle Palace has been a challenge for the evolution of the idea of cultural heritage preservation. A clear concept and vision in the beginning of the process, efforts to achieve the best restoration quality, decision not to follow the fashion, but to use a stable, constant and consistent approach implying a full respect towards this unique Baroque value has brought success. An exact period mood and a bouquet of sensations of that era has been created, as well as the harmony of tangible and intangible heritage values has been achieved. Rundāle Palace is not only an outstanding architectural and artistic monument of Baroque era, but also a museum in the deepest sense of this word. The main displays are the palace ensemble and the park, everything else is subordinated. The sense of mission of the team working at the museum is attested by the cultural values saved from being lost forever from the churches abandoned during Soviet times, which have found their shelter in the museum's collection. Constant scientific research work, rich and conceptually pure exhibitions, unforgettable Baroque style events organised at the palace provide the palace a strong vision about what a modern museum should look like.

There is nothing incidental in the renovation of the palace, everything is thought-out, deserving delight and admiration. Beauty, harmony and the feeling created by the entirety of the values leave no one unaffected. A teamwork full of enthusiasm for over fifty years under the supervision of an outstanding personality, Imants Lancmanis, has established the supreme restoration school and the highest quality standards. Imants Lancmanis has dedicated his life to Rundāles Palace. His most pronounced personal traits are being energetic and at the same time aristocratic calm, erudition, enthusiasm, stubborn aspiration for quality, intolerance against carelessness, incompetence and foolishness, detailed knowledge of history's finest features, sense of period, style, colours and form, elegance. The process of renewal of Rundāle Palace confirms the role of a personality in culture. By setting a common objective, personal involvement and responsibility, modesty in available funding, but with strong ambition to achieve a good outcome, the team of Rundāle Palace has outran the existing practices of managing real estate, the established procurement systems and major construction companies.

Over the last couple of years the town of Kuldīga has been showing a successful model of preservation and restoration of cultural values that confirms a new understanding of authenticity, the options of preserving unique cultural values, the use of internationally



recognised professional restoration skills and a model for preserving the existing spatial environment while respecting the identity of the place. Kuldīga has changed its urban appearance demonstrating that even the smallest detail is of great importance when developing its urban image and creating in the public open space the sensation brought about by the totality of cultural values. At the initiative by the District Council and with the financial support from Norway the Kuldīga Restoration Centre was established (wood restoration workshop) whose professionals have been successful in shaping the public understanding of the cultural heritage and the importance of its preservation. Since its inception in 2010 the centre has ensured the preservation of building carpentry details from wooden houses in the old town, implemented a door rescue programme resulting in restoration and conservation of sets of unique doors. Besides the practical function, windows and doors have also an important philosophical significance in the urban environment. Throughout centuries people have paid a great attention to the aesthetic quality of doors, because it is the place on the facade we use to enter a different world, a border between the public and private space.

To provide the local society with an insight into the principles of restoration and the craftsmanship in other European countries, every year an international restoration workshop is being organised. More and more quality restoration examples appear in Kuldīga old town. In 2013 Kuldīga Restoration Centre was awarded with the Europa Nostra prize.

The city of Ventspils is showing good understanding of restoration of cultural objects for already long time. Within the overall tidiness of the spatial environment, ever new values are being brought up, but the requirements regarding the compliance with the restoration principles laid down by the professionals of the municipality ensure a quality outcome for each object. The restoration of Ventspils Castle should be noted as a successful restoration example.

Also private owners show good restoration traditions in Latvia. Many cultural objects across the entire country have been saved from being abandoned. Bright examples that stand out for their accuracy, fascinating enthusiasm and love for the site are Nurmuiža Manor, Mālpils Manor, Liepupe Manor, Olery Manor and many other recovered values.

Professional restoration takes place also in the course of renovation of many churches in Latvia. Thanks to the regular support by the government of Poland and the professional work of Latvian experts Krāslava can be proud for its example of successful cooperation and quality restoration. Having desired to explore cultural values as deep as possible and understand them, Eduards Voroneckis, the priest at the St. Ludvik Roman Catholic Church, has patiently and responsibly guided the renovation of artistic values of the church.





## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

When assessing the cultural heritage sector by comparing it to the other branches it can be concluded that from the society's enthusiastic general efforts it has evolved into a precise and legal definition of activity putting it in rather narrow boundaries set by professionals. It is turning into an inter-disciplinary phenomenon and will continue to do so in the future.

Both on the national and international level a significant stage has been completed for the cultural heritage sector, and it is time for change now — even for a certain “restart” of the sector. It does not mean that the previous systems were inefficient, they corresponded to the time and circumstances. However, now the cultural heritage preservation requires a new approach, a wider involvement of the society is needed, as well as a redistribution of the responsibility and new emphases. The state functions must be subordinated to the new circumstances.

Nowadays, by using modern technologies, people are themselves able to reach a wider society in the most effective way to share their personal experience, feelings and emotional experiences, but most essentially — by providing individual view to each audience. We do not need a standardised unification, but accentuation of the most diverse heritage values through personal prism.

The heritage preservation system must become the driving force that promotes diversity. Should we continue the existing practice and obey the excessively controlling general supervision, the protection of cultural monument will drown in bureaucracy losing the purpose and meaning of heritage preservation. There will be a document, an excessive red-tape, a database or a software, but no substance, the monument itself.

At international level, the understanding of the significance of the cultural heritage in the development of a democratic, legality and culture-focused society is continuing to strengthen. This is confirmed by the fact that 2018 was declared as the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

There is no absolute truth and one correct approach, but we can assume that the optimum solution is in the diversity with expanding number of participants, where ethics, professionalism and

tolerance is a norm, and where humans and their quality of life in the broader meaning of this word are in the centre of attention. In fact, the heritage system has already started to change, and in the future the scale of such changes will increase even more. The concept of the cultural heritage is being understood in a broader sense as ever before, transforming from an exclusive museum-like function into more of a component of the daily living space.

The environment we live in is not frozen, it is constantly changing, and only by understanding the interconnections we can successfully influence the changes. Preservation of cultural heritage requires more an inter-disciplinary view that provides a much broader notion about the development of the place in time and space than it is when looking at things from a narrow point of view of the object and highly specialised point of view of the industry. Only in-depth research of the centuries-long evolution of each place and the modern life provides the opportunity to find and understand lasting values, while considering the fact that over time also the system of values is changing with it.

Basically, the status of a listed monument or site is a manifestation of a value significant to the society, the highest recognition, and the burden that comes along with the status is the means to preserve the value in the long run. Probably, there will always be a certain conflict between the regular and the state protected cultural heritage. The state will never be able to cover everything, and it is not necessary either. It is important to find the coupling between the heritage understood and protected by the society and the heritage identified and maintained by the state.

In Latvia, we should gradually start reviewing the supposedly less significant part of the list of cultural monuments, to remove the burden imposed on individual cultural monuments where the preservation of the environment and objects is possible through other instruments (for instance, by means of spatial planning or public support).

However, each typological group of cultural monuments requires an individual approach, for instance, in the archaeology sector due to the damage caused by illegal treasure hunters we should protect as large as possible share of the heritage.

The list of state protected cultural monuments will never be exhaustive, it will always change. We should put on the list objects whose owners have expressed their interest to do so, however, the status of a listed monument should be imposed only upon outstanding, rare and unique values. Inscription of a new object on the list of state protected cultural monuments should become an event, this process should not be turned into a mass production, therefore professionals should be allowed to study and assess difficult objects even several years if necessary.

Discussions will continue about how old a value should be to be listed. It is a paradox that the most endangered heritage in Europe appeared to be the recently created, the newest heritage. Many architectural masterpieces from the second half of the last century have been torn down or transformed beyond recognition. Due to changes in the function of an object and faced with new technological solutions, architecture most often has not been able to endure the long-term pressure. The easiest thing for heritage theorists is to prove to the society the value of an older or richer cultural heritage. No one will doubt the significance of and the necessity to preserve the archaeological monument of, for instance, Āraiši lake settlement from the 9th century or the Baroque masterpiece, the Rundāle Palace. It will be more difficult to persuade not to tear down some building from the Soviet time such as the former restaurant Sēnīte, an example of the period of Modernism, or the gas station in Ogre. The cultural heritage industry should be able to assess and recognise also the values that have been created recently. Decisions must be justified and also brave.

In future, greater attention should be paid not so much on individual objects, but rather the overall landscape. With the spatial environment constantly changing, the quality of the development becomes essential, and we should worry less about alterations that are required by the quality of life. In protecting the heritage, we should be more afraid of standardisation. A different solution can be found for each place. Requirements for the preservation of each particular cultural monument must be individual, which will evolve over time. It is impossible to create an absolutely precise regime.

Architectural heritage is the broadest, the most used on the daily basis part of the cultural heritage, but also the most difficult one to preserve. Each period leaves its mark, and it makes the space richer. Throughout history the built heritage has been most endangered by construction itself. Architecture is the artistic ability to create a quality living space and an important, not yet recognised information medium. The architecture of each period and the spatial environment in general contains its own information. Losing architecture of a certain period means losing also its part of information, and archive records will not be enough to comprehend this information, because this information is perceived basically by sensations caused by the source, the piece of architecture itself.

Looking back into history, we see that the changes in architecture are not happening fast, we can distinguish periods and styles. But sometimes the concept of architecture is unjustifiably applied to square meters of built up area and cubic meters of volume,

which have nothing to do with architecture, because they have not been created based on the principles of architecture. On the other hand, exaggerated attempts in architectural thinking and the use of forms with the intention to create something new lead to a plain show-off that undermines the environmental harmony and makes artificial impression. It is regrettable that today a good architecture and design is recognised mainly among professionals. However, although slowly, we see the shaping of a generation that can appreciate a quality architecture. On all levels architecture should also be perceived more as a responsibility towards the future. Heritage and creativity are two inseparable notions. Modern additions will always be in conflict with preservation, therefore care should be taken not to lose values, destroy and transform the monument to the extent where its main value is lost. Intervention is acceptable, but it should be very gentle.

Reform of the work of heritage protection system should be started focusing more on consulting, guidance, best practice, dissemination of information and broad involvement of society. An understanding must be promoted that first of all we love and take care of the closest heritage — our family, living and working places, where we become their protectors, and even where restorers patiently, carefully and with interest bring to light relics that are important to them and give them a new life. This is the only way to truly understand also the values of national and global significance. Every time we touch an old, genuine and worn item or piece of wall surface, we make a contact with history, and in our consciousness these authentic fragments become information mediums and create extraordinary feelings. They must not be levelled out and painted, they must be highlighted as a value. Inevitable damage should not be added with new (sometimes even synthetic) materials, but rather with materials, techniques and methods that correspond to the original. To be true in the environment as much as possible, understand that any imitations just create illusions without soul. We should remember that already in the near future the cultural places and values will be seen by new eyes — what we do not notice or appreciate today can reveal itself to a future observer in a totally new quality with different information and meaning.

In future the taking care of and renovation of cultural heritage will develop in relatively two dimensions: one will focus on a broad society, its involvement, its skill to do evaluation on its own and participate in the renovation and restoration work, while the other, a clearly smaller dimension, will remain at and continue to evolve towards a high professional level, based on science, modern technologies, experience, delicate specific knowledge

and restoration skills. It must be achieved that these dimensions (both levels) understand each other and avoid conflict situations. The understanding of the value of cultural heritage should be strengthened in all stages of primary education as early as possible. It is necessary to develop more the training in restoration skills, the restorer qualification system must not be lost. Every employee involved in the cultural heritage management must be a competent professional in his/her field. Universal specialists skilled in all trades sometimes create just an illusion of work; quality cultural heritage preservation is not possible without experienced professionals.

A new information system needs to be developed, which by means of differentiated access levels would be available for heritage protection services, monument owners, municipalities, professional organisations and different interest groups of the society. This system should be able to consult and be consulted, agree cultural heritage reconstruction plans, acquire the necessary permits, submit reports and carry out other required activities. Positive attitude and cooperation will be promoted, if a customer, having accessed the information system, has the option of explaining his/her ideas concerning the renovation of a cultural monument, but the competent professional will provide advice on how to do it in the most professional way, and at the same information system will prepare a simple permit to commence the work. After completion of the works, the monument owner will enter the required information, and if the information is exhaustive, the heritage professional, often without disturbing the customer on site, will provide a positive opinion. Of course, restoration will not be able to do without research and precise reconstruction documentation of the object. Monument owners should be provided the opportunity to be able to take care of the amount of information stored in the database. Also it is important for the owners to be able to participate in evaluating the level of preservation, as well as to use the information held by the cultural heritage services and documentation centres and supplement it with his/her own materials. The owners of cultural monuments should be provided the opportunities to take a more active part in the management of the heritage, follow all plans and compete with other owners in terms of better management of the object.

Meanwhile, the interest groups of the society should be able to receive a precise and updated information about listed cultural monuments and future plans.

Such information system must function as a cooperation platform that stores specific advice, recommendations, craft achievements and best practice not only of cultural heritage services, but also

of other professionals. Quite often in their daily work, professionals protecting the heritage see the threats to, basic negligence and even destruction of cultural values. In such case there should be the option for decisive response to prevent and eliminate the abuse of cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage protection industry is characterised by the use of traditional materials, technologies, methods, techniques, ancient tools and crafts. Without denying their critical importance, the age of modern technologies provides new opportunities how to perform better fixation at architectural, artistic, industrial and even archaeological heritage sites, as well as how to acquire precise data on the substance, volume, form, colour, surface pattern and materiality of an object. These data are then used to clarify the level of preservation of a monument, its reconstruction and for the documentation of history.

Cultural heritage documentation is a continuous process which by means of relevant and duly submitted information ensures the supervision (monitoring) and maintenance of monuments, as well as understanding of values. Cultural heritage services must actively introduce modern technologies.

Although the first archaeological excavations took place in ancient times, archaeology turned into a science only in the late 18th century and in early 19th century. The constant development of modern technologies provides new unprecedented opportunities for studying the archaeological heritage, as well as for a more precise and richer documentation (in terms of information). This is exactly why we should try to restrict the use of the excavation method for archaeological research and apply it only in cases when a commercial activity is expected to affect the substance of a monument or if a precise information is required to discover significant historic events. We should leave the door open for future research to use non-destructive methods. The ownership of archaeological finds should as much as possible remain with the particular area, and they should be made available for display for local society.

Over the last twenty years, a new threat has emerged for the world's archaeological heritage: secret, non-scientific excavations using the capabilities of modern technologies destroy and wipe out the fragments of history. Destruction of history must be stopped with strong sanctions. In this regard two strongly opposing parties exist. On the other hand, the willingness of the society to explore history should not be restricted. By means of a dialogue, treasure hunters should be informed about the harm caused to cultural heritage by illegal excavations. It might seem impossible at the first sight, but at least some of the enthusiasts functioning in the "grey zone" could be persuaded to switch sides and become preservers of

values. But those who are secretly digging out archaeological artefacts from their original environment and even involve in their trade, must be punished even more severely.

Looking back into the history of architecture, we can see that on some occasions certain outstanding global values — landmarks — were created by destroying the previous layer of values. Such values would have never been created without decisive action, or if a powerful, bureaucratic heritage protection system was in place. It means that there can be situations where those in charge of protecting the heritage should step back in the name of development in order for new, more outstanding values to emerge. Co-existence of cultural heritage, modern architecture and design is a matter of relationship and by solving it the values generated throughout centuries are granted importance and shown respect; a sensitive and quality modern architecture and design becomes an added value, while the use of forms, colours, materials and technologies creates a dialogue. It is a dialogue where with the purpose of improving the quality of life the cultural heritage professionals invite and expect new and modern additions to the cultural environment, but in certain cases modern architects and designers are able to tell their clients: "No, in this case there is nothing left for us to do. Everything is already created. What remains is careful renovation and maintenance of the values." An architect should be able to establish a good dialogue with history and be careful in instances where architecture has already filled in the space.

Depending on the type, character and value of an object, in the use of cultural monuments there will always be differing requirements. There will be part of heritage that needs to be touched as little as possible (for instance, archaeological and artistic values), there will also be heritage that the society will be able to use on a daily basis with rather little alterations, but there will also be objects with strong symbolic significance and objects that will perform the function of a museum.

Particular attention should be paid to cultural monuments — museums, since they show the system of values and the attitude of the state to the society. A museum must be the promulgator of a mission and a message significant to the society. Elements such a place, building and display are not mutually separable details, but a combination that either functions successfully, or is losing the competition due to lack of ideas and creativity.

Creation or reconstruction of a museum requires a strong, deep concept, which is created by the cooperation among the architect of the building, the management of the museum and the executors of the idea. A non-traditional approach should be used more often, because new quests create interest due to its uniqueness, creativity and different view, they are able to

fascinate more. The common is losing the race to the unexpected surprise. A person wants to be stylish — just like in fashion there are always new trends. Not because the outgoing trend is bad, but because the new one is exciting, brings discoveries, adventure and emotional experience. People are free to choose, no one can be forced to visit a museum, and one can only be persuaded by its quality. Clear answers should be provided to the following questions: what does the museum provide in addition to what already exists, will the offer captivate, what is the central message, will a visitor become intellectually richer? In the future we should not support the use of cultural heritage as museums where the monument performs only the function of a building and sometimes even disturbs the exhibition, where the building (the monument) does not become one of the main displays of the museum. It is important to recognise that the building affects the performance of a museum, but the concept of a museum affects the building. Nowadays, the most valuable cultural heritage is more and more linked with tourism that drives economic development and advancement of the particular place. However, the use of heritage for the purposes of tourism must not become the reason for depletion of the value of cultural sites or for degrading of the environment. Preservation of the authenticity, the totality of the values of cultural heritage and the special feeling is the most essential aspect in using the cultural heritage products. The load tourism imposes on cultural monuments must be controlled. Strategic planning of this load should be promoted to reduce the overload of the most popular sightseeing objects when new objects are opened. The use of cultural heritage for the purposes of tourism must not restrict the rights of local residents to enjoy the value and special feeling of their cultural heritage. It is not only a matter of human rights, but also of heritage philosophy. Tourism services desire a greater diversity, quality and an elegance based in culture.

In future the Latvian Museum of Architecture should be developed as an independent institution with larger team of professionals and better resources. The museum should also have the functions of an information centre for architecture and urban development. Taking into account the experience of other countries, more suitable premises should be found for the development of the museum with larger premises housing the permanent display, collection storage premises and possibilities to organise more ambitious exhibitions.

The functions of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection have long been much wider than the name implies. The Latvian authority responsible for the protection of cultural monuments does not differ from the national heritage administrations of other

European countries. Renaming the Inspection as the National Heritage Board of Latvia would provide greater clarity and the Latvian system would better fit in the common model of European heritage system. The home of the cultural heritage protection work must remain and develop in the existing and not so easily acquired and protected, perfectly suitable environment of the Three Brothers.

The functioning of the cultural heritage protection systems depends not only on their structure, but also on their fulfilment with wisdom, energy and enthusiasm. In all countries the systems are massively influenced by politicians whose activities whether to support, leave behind or hinder the development of the heritage systems always have particular visible or hidden reasons. Unfortunately, the political establishment has not always been completely free and loyal to the society; however little, they have had to serve some other purposes. Good cultural heritage preservation systems have always opposed the desire for fast economic benefit that puts burden on the future society. Namely, the systems have opposed poor transformations of the spatial environment, exaggerated accents and standardisation of cultural values. Therefore society must be alert and feel whether ill-advised reforms of heritage systems are not on agenda, plans to reduce funding or increase the amount of work without providing a corresponding capacity. This could destroy any system and make it unable to function actively. Politicians in the world continue to lever the influence of the cultural heritage systems, it is only normal on the condition that their goals are clear, open, genuine and based on high moral principles.

It is not possible to draw up a law for every life situation, therefore public administration should employ professional, active, interested, development-focused and positive-minded professionals and officials who use the law understanding its objectives and applying it on its merits. In any situation it is not the formal approach that is important, but rather a reasonable proportionality and sense. Public administration needs more creativity. Laws will never be ideal and fully mutually harmonised. It is a constant development — a well-intended idea becomes obsolete sooner than we can imagine. On the other hand, not everything should be subject to standards, sometimes we should leave some space for creativity, goodwill and belief that, in essence, a person does not want to make mistakes and intentionally act bad. There is not a law yet that would be better than a clear conscience.

Indicators and performance figures in cultural heritage system planning are valid as long as we don't know that they are used. They will never reflect the actual situation. Heritage cannot be

measured using statistics methods, culture does not abide to them. Measurable methods of culture have not yet been created, culture exists on its own and it can be the reason of a successful economic development.

Large part of heritage across the world is being lost to natural disasters. It is unbelievable that even in our age cultural values are still being destroyed also in wars and different riots. Latvian cultural heritage professionals must take part in the rescue of global values, we cannot remain only in the room of our own problems. We have experience and it allows us to help, although little. The sense of solidarity in cultural heritage system is important not only to those who receive help, but also to the providers of such assistance.

Excellence must be honoured more. The Soviet regime destroyed free and talented personalities just because they were able to mobilise society. Outstanding persons raise the society out of daily routine. We are a small country with little human capital, therefore it should be used reasonably. The most talented should be protected and defended and conditions should be created for their talent to be used efficiently. Knowledge and skills are particularly important, however, sometimes knowing, but not willing to work is worse than not knowing, but willing to learn and work.

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Luke 12:48). We have our own country, and each inhabitant of Latvia is entrusted outstanding cultural values. We do not own cultural heritage, we are just its holders. Neither we own time. Time is a gift and the greatest value given to us. Overt time, everything around us changes, as do we. Nothing stays still. The past is teaching us, however, looking back with lament about the past defeats the spirit of development. Therefore we are not succeeding in the way we want to. Development is the basis of the meaning of life — it is moved by dreams, talent, responsibility and smart action. Latvia will endure, if it will develop and if the development framework will be based on culture and cultural heritage.



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The Centenary of our nation and the European Year of Cultural Heritage makes us remember and evaluate what has been done, as well as to take a look into future — what needs to be done to meet the next anniversary of our country with testimony of new growth. Cultural heritage is one of the most significant industries that shape the image of a nation. Therefore it is essential to provide a broad society with information about the establishment and development of the cultural heritage protection system of our restored nation throughout the years, and its achievements and challenges. These matters, however, should be viewed in a broader context, including the origins of heritage protection in Europe. The above matters were addressed by Dr. arch. Juris Dambis, the Head of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection, by compiling a comprehensive overview of the heritage protection system in Latvia, its establishment and development from the very beginning to modern days, particularly highlighting the period after the restoration of independence. It is just as important to look into the future where new technologies, professional and highly competent specialists, international cooperation and logistics supply will have increasingly important role. Describing the work of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection in a broad context, the author has justifiably considered these matters to be important too. The philosophical opinions formulated by architect J.Dambis throughout his long professional career underpins the information compiled.

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The cultural heritage of Latvia exists regardless of political establishments, however, over the years of Soviet rule the heritage value parameters were deformed in line with the ruling ideology of proletarian internationalism, which announced the Bolshevik coup of 1917 as the history's reference point. Nevertheless, also under occupation there were people who were able to continue the heritage care work at time unfortunate for culture. The proof of that is the establishment of the State Inspection for History and Heritage Protection in 1988.

Following the restoration of independence of Latvia in 1991 the cultural heritage is still endangered by the assimilating tendencies of globalisation, liberal market and consumer philosophy on the part of the society. However, with the heritage protection constantly evolving, an operational system has been established that provides an opportunity for a dialogue among stakeholders — investors, modern architects, authentic cultural value preservation enthusiasts and public servants — for the sake of a common goal, namely, a quality environment that has a historic memory.

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In 1979 obtained higher education at the Faculty of Construction and Architecture of Riga Polytechnical Institute. After acquiring the qualification of an architect, started working in the field of cultural heritage. At the same time, worked in private practice, acquired skills in construction craft. In 2010 obtained Dr. Sc. degree in Architecture. Since 1988 Head of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection. From 1993 involved in the work of the Cultural Heritage Committee of the Council of Europe. Committee Chairman from 1999 to 2001. Since 1992 member of ICOMOS, International Council on Monuments and Sites. Chairman of society "Laiks kultūrai" since its foundation. From 2014 to 2017 Chairman of National Culture Council of Latvia.



