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## **Historic Urban Landscape of St. Petersburg**

The unique urban landscape of St. Petersburg is one of the most remarkable urban development projects of the 18th century. Over more than three centuries of its existence the city became the center of the grandiose agglomeration - a holistic architectural space and urban landscape environment, which includes not only the historic centre and city suburb ensembles, a developed system of fortifications, different estates and settlements, but the surrounding natural landscapes as well. St. Petersburg today is a unique socio-cultural phenomenon, a Russian European city.

Since its foundation in 1703 and to the present day, the city developed in accordance with the uniform set of rules that followed the original concept conceived at the time of its foundation. This allowed the relatively young city to retain its architectural wholeness and beauty for posterity, and led to recognition of its outstanding universal value.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Banff, Canada, on 12 December 1990, the “Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and related groups of monuments” was inscribed on the World Heritage List under number C540.

In the evaluation of international experts it was stated that “the inscription of Saint Petersburg on the World Heritage List is so obvious that any detailed justification seems superfluous”.

In 2015 we will celebrate 25 years from the day when the “Historic Centre of St. Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments” became the first Russian property inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Today it is one of the largest historic urban landscapes among cultural heritage sites protected by the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Its area exceeds 23,000 hectares and extends almost 100 km from west to east and from north to south. The site consists of 36 components and 86 elements.

It seems now that Petersburg could have been presented only in that way in the UNESCO World Heritage List. However, during preparation of nomination materials, discussions were held as regards the type of sites to be included: should only architectural ensembles of the historic centre be recognized as world heritage (if yes, which of them) or probably, worldwide known suburbs are worth of being inscribed on the List?

In point of fact, it is apparent that we have no Parthenon or Cologne Cathedral. Petersburg cannot compete with Europe in terms of antiquity of its architecture.

But its main value distinguishing it from any other cities of the world is the unique harmony of the nature and the things created by man. Not only the mainland but also the Neva river area, being named the main urban space, islands and even the skyline have become a part of city planning concept. The concept includes typologically different components and elements: historic centers (Saint Petersburg and its suburbs, including not only monuments and ensembles, but also ordinary buildings, urban texture, environment, without which no monument may exist), palace and park complexes of the suburbs, memorial components, unique fortification system, landscape elements and elements of historic planning pattern (roads, waterways, canals).

Nomination materials were prepared in record-breaking short time. But the same has become a cause of many problems, which had to be solved within the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre's project named "retrospective inventory".

The Russian Federation should have submitted those materials for its sites (by 1998 there were only 8 cultural and 4 natural sites in the Russian Federation), which had not been available at the time of their inscription on the List.

As regards Saint Petersburg, it was required to prepare accurate cadastral or topographic maps in compliance with the up-to-date requirements of the World Heritage Committee, and adjusted list of site components and elements specifying their geographical coordinates and areas in hectares.

That work appeared to be rather complicated, and has been performed in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and experts of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) during the latest 9 years.

In 2011, the International Expert Forum was held in Saint Petersburg, based on the results whereof a working group was established for clarification of boundaries and composition of the sites under the guidance of professor Todor Kretev, ICOMOS expert.

The work was conducted in two stages. First, the boundaries of two components “Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg” and “Historic Part of the town of Kronshtadt” were clarified.

The most disputed were the boundaries of the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg. The point is that the cartography presented in the nomination dossier of 1990 (not even maps, but a layout at the scale of 1:25,000) made it impossible to identify clearly the component boundaries on the basis of modern underlay. There was no verbal description of boundaries, either. There was a clarification concerning only the main component: “Historic Centre of the city of Leningrad taken in the boundaries of low-restricted protection zones”. In 1988, by resolution No. 1045 of the Leningrad City Executive Committee dated 30.12.1988, united protection zones of historical and cultural monuments in the central districts of Leningrad were approved (so called UPZ). They became boundaries of the main component of the nominated site.

The international group decided to preserve to the greatest possible extent the delimitation of 1990 boundaries of the “Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg”. So, the following was included within the boundaries of Petersburg’s centre: all territories of protection zones approved by the law of Saint Petersburg, and development control zone of the first type, as well as some areas of development control zone of the second type due to inclusion of the territories of cultural heritage sites immediately adjacent to the site boundaries. At the second stage the boundaries of 34 remaining components of the site were determined, and the list was adjusted.

The 38th session of the World Heritage Committee approved the results of the clarification of property boundaries. This decision of the World Heritage Committee summarized the results of almost a decade of work that was carried out in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. For this purpose an international group of experts was set up under the leadership of ICOMOS expert

Professor Todor Kretev. The main outcome was to achieve the consent of all parties: experts, state authorities and public organization.

The next stage of work with the world heritage site should be the creation of management system.

All participants to be involved in the site management are shown on the organizational chart:

- World Heritage Committee and World Heritage Centre supervising the site state of conservation at the international level;
- Government of the Russian Federation and its two Ministries: Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for interaction with UNESCO, and Ministry of Culture performing the functions of federal body in charge of protection of cultural heritage sites;
- Executive authorities of both constituents of the Russian Federation, in the territories of which cultural heritage sites are located (Saint Petersburg and the Leningrad Region).

The chart also shows the tools and structures enabling to optimize site management:

- Coordination Council with participation of representatives of the federal and regional authorities;
- Site management plan (elaboration of this comprehensive planning document is one of major tasks that we face).
- It is also intended to create a Public Council with participation of representatives of scientific and public organizations.

On 20 October 2014, the Cooperation Agreement was signed in the Yusupov Palace between the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Government of Saint Petersburg and Government of the Leningrad Region concerning preservation, management and promotion of the world heritage site “Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and related groups of monuments”.

An important step is the establishing of the Coordination Council, which will include representatives of the Ministry of Culture, Committee for the State Control, Use

and Protection of Historical and Cultural Landmarks of Saint Petersburg and the Committee for Culture of the Leningrad Region.

The Coordination Council is established, *inter alia*, in response to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee. In the resolutions of several latest sessions the Committee proposes to elaborate a comprehensive site management system and to determine a special body responsible for management of the entire site but not a part of the site. Establishing of the Coordination Council is the first step on this road.

In fact, it is the first official interregional structure destined to provide interaction between state executive authorities of Saint Petersburg and the Leningrad Region as regards preservation, management and promotion of the world heritage site in the process of preparation and implementation of the site management plan.

The objectives of the council are informational and consulting support of the state executive authorities of Saint Petersburg and the Leningrad Region as regards the matters related to the world heritage site.

The world heritage site management plan is a relatively new tool in the heritage management toolkit.

Its appearance is conditioned by the changes occurred during the latest decades in the understanding of cultural heritage:

- emergence of new types of heritage (immaterial, cultural landscapes, cultural routes, etc.) has expanded the concept of heritage;
- territories have extended: entire cities, vast historic territories, roads are recognized as heritage sites not only at the local and national but also at the continental level;
- the understanding of social functions as a resource for sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life has extended.

It is now generally recognized that cultural heritage is not just of sum of separate cultural values in the environment, but a new component of the life of the society – a certain integral cultural measure of the environment, which includes, *inter alia*, memory, historical context, spirit of the place.

The concept of “historic urban landscape” introduced by UNESCO reflects the new concept of urban and urbanized territories.

All these changes demanded changes in the preservation methods and tools.

The integrated conservation method makes its place more and more in heritage preservation, according to which preservation is not an isolated activity, but is a part of general sustainable development policy (social, economic, cultural) at different levels.

Thus preservation becomes a part of integrated system: preservation – development – management.

The legislation of the Russian Federation and St. Petersburg provides for several levels of protection that allow to guarantee best possible protection for historical and cultural heritage of the site. A total of some 8,000 objects are protected by the state as cultural heritage properties. The law of Saint Petersburg approved the boundaries and regimes of protection zones, comprising a system of restrictions on town-planning, construction and land using activities (including boundary parameters of high-rise construction, restrictions on placement of advertizing structures and small architectural forms, requirements to preservation of historic structures, etc.), total area of the protected territory is about 37,000 ha..

By joint order of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation, St. Petersburg has been proclaimed a historic settlement, which allows to introduce requirements for protecting the city's peculiar features into all town-planning documentation (the master plan, and land use and development rules). The work on defining the boundaries of the historic settlement is conducted by a Committee for the State Control, Use and Protection of Historical and Cultural Landmarks of Saint Petersburg in collaboration with representatives of public organizations and legislative bodies of the city.

Thus our nearest plans include the development of world heritage property management plan, and buffer zone for the entire site, and assigning the status of site to the historic centre of the city, which fact will enable at the level of the Russian Federation law to provide to the fullest possible extent integrated protection of worldwide recognized architectural, artistic and cultural heritage of Saint Petersburg.