

Nature Park Lonjsko Polje

Country or territory:
Republic of CROATIA

Name of organization
compiling the information:
Ministry of Culture,
Conservation Department in Zagreb

Contact name:
Tomislav Petrinec dipl.ing.arh.

Email address:
tomislav.petrinec@min-kulture.hr



Name and address of building or site:

NATURE PARK LONJSKO POLJE,
RURAL SETTLEMENTS AND
TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL
ARCHITECTURE IN WOOD

Inventory reference number:

Building(s) type:

Village houses and accompanying
outbuildings

Main date(s):

18th/19th century

Current use(s):

Residential, partly unused, abandoned

Significance:

Lonjsko polje - a protected natural area specific precisely by its unique cultural and natural values highly assessed in both Croatian and European frameworks.

Waterways (the Sava River and its tributaries) as the dominant element in space influence the morphologic, natural, aesthetic and functional characteristics of the cultural landscape, which has all the features of a lowland agricultural region.

The cultural heritage of Lonjsko polje is linked to the settlement tradition and establishment of rural settlements after the end of the Turkish domination in the 18th and 19th centuries.

They developed as the liner, longitudinal type of settlements built unilaterally along the road which follows the line of the River Sava and its backwaters. The villages are located in the preserved natural environment that reflects a balance between architecture and nature. The historic network of settlements and communications as well as the original organisation of the villages and individual house plots have been preserved.

All the villages are symmetrically structured in a continual row of house plots on narrow and markedly elongated lots, situated vertically towards the direction of the road.

Essential determinants of the organisation of space are the narrow house facades facing the street and built in the same construction direction.

In terms of construction, the villages of Lonjsko polje are traditional ensembles characterised by exceptionally well preserved traditional residential architecture. They are made up of different types of structures characteristic of rural households. They are built of wood - oak, the traditional building material in the Sava river basin region.

The houses are the basic and dominant structures on the plots giving a very picturesque appearance to the settlements because of the gables directed towards the road and repetitive sequence of the facades. The oldest houses were built completely out of wood, and the newer ones have a masonry ground floor and wooden first floor. The form-based characteristics include the elongated rectangular ground plan, a two-eaved roof at an angle of 40-45 degrees, roofed-over outer staircase with a porch, decorative details (carved fences, columns, details on the roofing and girders). The building technique consists of the horizontal setting of oak panels with the visible oak structure on the outside. These wooden houses are very numerous in the villages.

Various types of outbuildings on the house plots have been preserved: barns, hay-lofts, sheds (storehouses, wood-sheds), hog pens, corncrubs.

From the cultural heritage point of view the region has been assessed as exceptionally valuable due to its historical, cultural, architectural, ethnological and social specificities. There is almost no new construction in the area.

Categories of Significance:

- National significance
- International significance due to its natural values - proposal for entering the site on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage List is under preparation.

Categories of ownership or interest:

Private property

Significance in the ethnic sense, maintenance and demographic renewal of the region

Documentation and bibliographic references:

The documenting of the cultural heritage has been done according to conservation methodology: the terrain has been surveyed, the settlements assessed, descriptions, architectural surveys and complete photographic documentation made. Historic and in part archival research has been carried out.

The lists of cultural goods have been updated and legal acts on the protection of specific cultural goods brought. The data is a very good foundation for planning future models of protection. This documentation is kept in the Ministry of Culture (Administration for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Conservation Department in Zagreb).

Cadastral data and detailed maps of the settlements with all topographic details lacking.

Bibliographic references:

Mlinar, A., The Traditional Culture of rural settlements in the Nature Park Lonjsko polje - values and preservation measures, rehabilitation models and integral protection in accordance with environmental principles (paper presented at the expert meeting in Jasenovac, 1991, unpublished)

Mlinar, A., Renovation of cultural heritage in the village Čigoć after the example of the plot no 26, Bulletin of the Nature Park Lonjsko polje, Vol.1, No. 2, Jasenovac 2000.

Petrić, K., Preservation of the cultural heritage of Lonjsko polje, Bulletin of the Nature Park Lonjsko polje, Vol. 1, no. 1, Jasenovac 1999.

Petrić, K., Conditions for the construction of new family houses in rural settlement in the Nature Park Lonjsko polje Vol.1., no. 2., Jasenovac 2000.

Petrić, K., Mlinar, A., European village of storks - presentation and preservation of the traditional culture of Lonjsko polje, Informatica Museologica 24 (1-4) 1993., MDC, Zagreb 1994.

Petrić, K., Mlinar, A., Lonjsko polje Nature Park- Čigoć br.26, A study on renovation and rehabilitation -conservation documentation, State Administration for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage, Zagreb 1994.

Petrić, K., Assessment and Conservation in a Country Area, Post-War Reconstruction and Conservation in Croatia, York Conference November 1992., Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies University of York 1992.

Mutak, K., Mavar, Z., The History of Settlements-Catalogue 1, Documentation catalogue on rural settlements damaged in the war - Municipality of Sisak, State Administration for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage, Zagreb 1996.

Schneider - Jacoby M., Ern H., Nature Park Lonjsko polje, diversity conditioned by flooding, Croatian Environmental Society, Zagreb 1993.g.

Bulletin of the Nature Park Lonjsko polje vol.2/No. 1/2, 2000., Tourism Master plan - Regional concept for the Nature Park Lonjsko polje - Sava River basin.

Condition:

There are severe architectural and architectonic damages in the area so that the condition can be characterised as follows:

1. Very poor - yielding or caving in of the bearing construction, caving in of the roofing, damage due to the penetration of rain, uneven settling and yielding of the foundation is causing the destabilisation of entire structures which can cave in at a critical moment (wind, snow), significant deterioration of the interior, as well as severe damage to structures as a result of abandonment and lack of maintenance.

2. Poor - yielding of construction, roofing damage, partial damage of buildings due to yielding of foundation, caving in of staircases and porches, inadequate window and door woodwork.

3. Inadequate installations and sanitary standards

The region suffered war damage that can generally be characterised as:

1. slight damage
2. windows, doors, etc. require repair
3. up to 30% of the roofing damaged - renovation possible

Risk:

The main problem is the depopulation of the region and abandonment of houses. The existing ones are mostly old households of very low living standards. The historical traditional architecture is inadequately maintained and wooden houses are demolished and moved from the area. The reasons are mostly of a financial nature but are also the result of the local population's lack of awareness of the value of the architecture and need of its renovation.

The cause of such a condition lie in the economic and political decisions after World War II which resulted in the employment and resettlement of the rural population in industrial urban centres.

The long-standing neglect of the space is apparent, as are non-investment in the infrastructure, renovation and production as well as the lack of appropriate development programmes. Likewise the area was exposed to the latest war devastations during the Homeland War.

All this has resulted in the decrease of value of the settlements in respect to its human, spatial and economic potentials.

With the establishment in 1998 of the Public Institution - Lonjsko polje Nature Park, the more intensive promotion of the region and tourism began. Quite soon the lack of adequately presented cultural heritage became apparent as well as the great need for funds for the integral development of the area.

Condition risk:

Indirect risk from the further accelerated deterioration or loss of material; there are solutions for specific parts, and for others no solutions have been found

Indirect risk from the further accelerated deterioration or loss of material; solutions found but not initiated, renovation initiated on only a small number of examples.

Gradual deterioration, solution found but not initiated.

Renovation underway, user not defined but risk of abandonment

Renovation underway; end use and user defined.

Technical assessment and costings:

A general assessment of the technical status and costs of renovation for all the wooden houses in the protected region has been drawn up. In the Lonjsko polje area there are 700 wooden houses.

The rehabilitation and putting into use of each wooden house requires on average 400,000Kn. This amount does not include the costs of renovating the outbuildings that require approximately 25,000 EURO per household.

Given that it is a multi-purpose project requiring high overall investments, the financing is provided for now from a number of state funds of the Republic of Croatia (protection of cultural heritage, development of tourism). The need of finding investors and additional sources of financing is permanent.

Within the framework of the Council of Europe technical assistance we propose the financing of the renovation of selected complexes (rural individual holdings).

Ownership:

The houses are mostly in private ownership. However, some of the structures are in the ownership of state institutions or municipalities. There are cases when the owner is unknown or else known but inaccessible.

Occupation:

The structures are fully or partly in use. They are used permanently or occasionally, A number of structures are abandoned.

Management:

The management of the structures is the responsibility of the owners.

If financial means are provided, the Ministry of Culture in co-operation with the local authorities will be responsible for their management. Supervision will be provided by the Conservation service in the Ministry of Culture and authorised technical personnel.

Summary:

The area is of great natural and cultural value as a cultural landscape. The rural environment is at very high risk due to the lack of human potential, neglect of rural settlements and architectural structures, however with possibilities of revitalisation and renovation through sustainable economic development based on tourism, agriculture and livestock rising.

Sign and date:

Ksenija Petrić dipl.ing.arh.
22. 03. 2004.