

## ***Lubenice, island of Cres***

Country or territory:  
Republic of CROATIA

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

Contact name:  
Hrvoje Giaconi

Email address:  
[rikonzervator@ri.tel.hr](mailto:rikonzervator@ri.tel.hr)



<u>Name and address of building or site:</u>	LUBENICE, ISLAND OF CRES
<u>Inventory reference number:</u>	260
<u>Building(s) type:</u>	Urban ensemble
<u>Main date(s):</u>	Continuity from prehistory to the present
<u>Current use(s):</u>	Urban ensemble with rural elements

### Significance:

The fortified urban settlement like the present day ensemble is located on a rock towering over the steep southeast coast of the island of Cres. A fortified urban settlement from prehistoric times, mentioned in the ancient world as strategic Hibernicia, one of the four most important urban centres on the archipelago, continued its life as a villa rustica of which there are material finds. After that parts and traces of a mediaeval fortification can be found, two city gates, the Romanic church of St Dominic and Gothic church of St Anthony of the Desert that were located in front of the city. The Renaissance parish church of the Miracle of the Holy Virgin in the Shrine adapted to the baroque style, St. Jacob's and Barbara's Chapel located along North street, and St. Stephen in the cemetery, with three chapels outside the settlement, St Michael's, St. Peter's and St John's. The urban matrix with the access square south of the parish church with a free standing baroque bell tower that has an added loggia and communal cistern leaning on the southeast perimeter of the city. The substructures and details of the houses and their proportions reflect a mediaeval layer. Today we recognise this semi-urban core as highly valuable and monumental traditional architecture with civic elements. The silhouette of the city is particularly impressive from the southern perspective owing to the merging of the vertical rock with the grey city located upon it. The cultural landscape of the surroundings is characterised by dry-stone walls, terraced agricultural lots and much neglected olive, grape and autochthonous fruit crops.

### Categories of Significance:

National importance

### Categories of ownership or interest:

The ensemble is very significant for national and regional history owing to its anthropological, archaeological, urban, artistic, ethnological values and due to its exceptionally well preserved

ambience properties and blending into the cultural landscape. The real estate is in private ownership and the public spaces in the ownership of the local self-government unit

#### Documentation and bibliographic references:

An architectural technical survey has been drawn up of the entire city with all the buildings. In addition, comprehensive photo documentation of the exterior, the ensemble as a whole and in detail also exists.

Bibliography: B. Fučić, Report on journeys to the islands of Cres and Lošinj, Annals of JAZU, No. 55 1949.; J. Ćus-Rukonić, Archaeological Topography of the islands of Cres and Lošinj, Had edition No. 7 Zagreb 1982.; N. Stražičić, The Island of Cres – Contribution to the Knowledge of the Geography of our Islands, Island Annals, 4, 1981., M. Suić, The ancient City in the Eastern Adriatic,, Zagreb 1986., B. Fučić, Apsirtides, Mali Lošinj 1995.;

#### Condition:

The urban ensemble is morphologically intact, with only slight devastation. The construction status is from poor to moderate, with a few buildings in ruins. The water supply system was introduced in the city only a few years ago but there is still no sewage system. To date, the parish church and the Church of St. Anthony of the Desert have been repaired or else works are in the final stages. Due to the lack of funds the programme of urban renovation has not been initiated yet. It will include the renovation and reparation of the broken stone of the cobble pavements, roofs and roof coverings, replacement of the outer woodwork and facade reparations as a donation to the permanent inhabitants of the city of which there are only 24, mostly elderly women.

#### Risk:

The basic threat is the depopulation of the urban centre and the age of its population. Traditional economy is based on small-scale agriculture with minimum surpluses of wine, honey and sheep that are sold to tourists. Tourist visits are also a threat due to the large number of cars that come to the immediate vicinity of the city. Structures of urban morphology are threatened by age and disrepair, and the change of ownership in the direction of weekend use does not affect favourably the maintenance of life of the whole. Adequate management on the part of the local self-government is not felt in the city.

#### Condition risk:

The direct risk from further accelerated dilapidation is linked to the elderly population who does not have the strength to maintain its own and common property. A solution has not been found to date in respect to new inhabitants that would know how to respect local urban rules. The water supply system came twenty or so years too late and has brought a new problem of waste waters the increased amount of which can cause physical and environmental problems - something that was unknown earlier. Most probably the sewage system will not be built in the foreseeable future. The renovation of specific structures (churches) is underway, there is risk of abandonment.

#### Technical assessment and costings:

The renovation of churches in the city and its surroundings will continue. The school has been renovated for the needs of an environmental organisation. The abandoned parish house also needs to be renovated. The reparation of the facades, outer woodwork, roof coverings and roofs on private houses is planned as a donation as well as the renovation of the ground floor once the water supply system is brought in. Smaller damages should be corrected through measures of coercion. The catering facilities should be adequately renovated by rebuilding the demolished house on whose plot an inappropriate porch has been erected. Walking and bicycle paths should be made and indigenous production encouraged through subsidies.

---

Arable land should be cleared of underbrush. Approximate required funds amount to 1,300,000 EURO.

Ownership:

Land-ownership records are in disorder, as is characteristic for all island environments due to the non-institution of inheritance proceedings and it represents a great problem in renovation. The legislation unfortunately does not know of the practice of coercive renovation based on conservation principles with the mortgage registration in the land register in cases of risk of other ownership, property or health and life of people.

Occupation:

A large number of buildings are used only occasionally, some are not used at all, while some are in ruins. Some of the churches and chapels are not in use. Most of the arable land in the protected valley below the city in the northwest is not under crops.

Management:

In principle, the management of individual structures is the responsibility of their owners. However a donation programme is being prepared that would be managed by the local self-government unit of the City of Cres with the participation of the Local Council organised in Valun for Lubenice. All works would in any case be under the direct supervision of the Conservation Department in Rijeka.

Summary:

The unique and least compact historical urban centre of Lubenice on the island of Cres in the Primorsko-goranska County deserves top priority, care and attention in renovation with the strict and constant control of both conservators as well as other state services and local self-government units. The very well preserved structure with all its elements, due to which it is worthwhile to encourage and successfully implement the rehabilitation programme can run into difficulties in its key factor, and that is man, the user of the property, for whom everything is in fact being undertaken. For adequate rehabilitation it is necessary to undertake systematic individual and general research activities in all professional fields, including natural and social sciences, wherein for conservators the primary fields of interest would be archaeology, ethnology and historical research. The preparation of quality implementation programmes and projects in specialised design offices and construction and rehabilitation experts are of decisive importance.

Sign and date:

Dolores Čikić, dipl.pov.umj., Hrvoje Giaconi, dipl.ing.arh.  
10 March 2004.