

RUSSIA

Inside and Outside the Moscow Kremlin

In its versatility, the Moscow Kremlin stands out as an extraordinary cultural object. Its formidable crenellated walls encompass everything that is considered *de rigueur* for the historic nucleus of a city, and even more. Through the epochs of Russian history, the Kremlin has always been synonymous with the city of Moscow and the Russian state. Today, it retains a firm foothold in the epicentre of current Russian politics and governance. In its spacious squares and courtyards, one witnesses a delicate balance between past and present, between a grand array of old monuments and historical museums on the one hand, and the somber official quarters occupied by the President, his administration, and even the guards of the Kremlin Regiment on the other. The unique obligation to ensure the smooth functioning of the office of the nation's leader adds to the burden of this ancient ensemble.

Unlike other urban areas, the Kremlin and its surroundings are restricted territory that fall under the purview of the Federal Guard Service (FSO) and the President's Administration. Decisions pertaining to the control and maintenance of this territory are almost always made behind closed doors, and approved plans are declared to the public during the implementation phase.

Today, the buffer zone around this World Heritage site¹ has become a hotbed of various enterprises. In a situation where cultural priorities are ignored, it's anybody's guess what the consequences of such large-scale activity will be on the outstanding universal value of the Kremlin. Here is a brief overview of the hot spots in the buffer zone that are currently subject to architectural intervention.

Just behind the Spassky Gate – the ceremonial entrance to the Kremlin – the 14th Kremlin corpus is being pulled down. The administrative building that stood on this spot for over eighty years was the only large building in the Kremlin that was not accorded the status of a protected monument. President Putin has supported the idea of dismantling this building and restoring the two monasteries that graced this site prior to the 1930s. However, the expert community remains highly skeptical of the possibility of a faithful reconstruction of these monasteries due to the lack of the basic data.

To the east, the Red Square is hemmed in by the 19th century Upper and Middle Market Rows that form a unified ensemble. The Upper Rows house the GUM, the department store that remains the mecca of high-end shopping in Moscow. The Middle Rows existed for a long time under the jurisdiction of the Defence Ministry before they were transferred to the Federal Guard Service. The Federal Guard Service promptly began the reconstruction of this complex, the net result of which was the partial renovation of one historic building coupled with the total destruction of four buildings in the courtyard. Several underground levels were also excavated in the courtyard. The Middle Market Rows now wait to become part of the famous Kremlin museums.

Borovitskaya Square, the legendary wellspring from which Moscow rose as a fortified town at the junction of trade routes, is located to the west of the Kremlin, in front of the Borovitsky Gate. At the initiative of the Russian Military-Historical Society, chaired by the Russian Minister of Culture, Vladimir Medinsky, a giant statue of St. Vladimir will be erected on this square. The statue, whose height is planned to exceed 20 metres (a notch higher than the highest Kremlin walls), will assert itself as the new architectural dominant in the vacant space between the



General view of the Zaryadye construction site



Demolition of the inner buildings of the middle rows

Kremlin and the Pashkov House, a neo-classical mansion of the 18th century.

At President Putin's behest, the former site of Hotel Russia, dismantled in 2006, was allocated to the construction of a park. Hotel Russia was located in Zaryadye (literally meaning 'behind the rows' in Russian) behind the shopping arcades on the Red Square. Zaryadye is the oldest district in Moscow beyond the Kremlin walls. An intricate web of medieval streets lined with old buildings existed until the mid-20th century. Most of these buildings were razed to the ground thereafter and remain unexplored to this day. This area was surrounded by the walls of Kitai Gorod, a 16th-century fortress. Parts of the fortress wall and other old constructions have survived below ground level and are available for archaeological research.

Zaryadye was the unfortunate victim of Stalin's insatiable passion for monumentalism. During the period from 1930 to 1950, several projects to build skyscrapers were designed and later abandoned. The 1935 master plan called for the demolition of Zaryadye, clearing space for the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry, but the project did not materialise. The next project involved building a residential structure for party leaders (2nd house of the Central Executive Committee). Finally, in the late 1940s, the construction of a high-rise building for the Ministry of

State Security was envisioned by Dmitry Chechulin, a city planner and leading figure of Stalinist architecture. This building was projected to be the crowning glory of Stalinist skyscrapers – certainly the tallest among the eight. Construction was terminated in the early stages after Stalin's death in 1953, and the building framework was dismantled. The same Chechulin returned to the Zaryadye stage ten years later with a proposal to build the largest hotel in Europe.

Hotel Russia, an outsized modernistic parallelepiped, occupied an entire block and dominated for 40 years, squashing any spatial competition from nearby objects, including the Kremlin. The construction of this hotel precipitated the complete destruction of the old district. Only a handful of unique monuments and a minor fragment of the 16th-century fortress wall survived the ravage. Lining Varvarka Street, they determined the look of the city and seemed intrinsically connected to the World Heritage sites of the Kremlin and the Red Square.

The Chambers of the Romanovs – the family nest of Russia's last ruling dynasty – became a museum in the middle of the 19th century. The Chamber of the Old English Court (16th–17th c.) is the oldest stone civic building outside the Kremlin and the first prestigious office of a foreign state in Moscow. Znamensky Monastery complex (founded in 1631), the churches of St. Varvara (1796–1801), St. George on the Pskov Hill (1626), St. Maxim the Blessed (1698–99), and the Conception of St. Anna (16th c.) are all historical monuments of the 16th–17th centuries.

An early 20th century complex of residential and administrative buildings grouped together under a common address – Varvarka Street no. 14 – is also among the lucky survivors. During Soviet times, additional storeys were sometimes built on top of these buildings without violating the planning structure or damaging the interior decor.

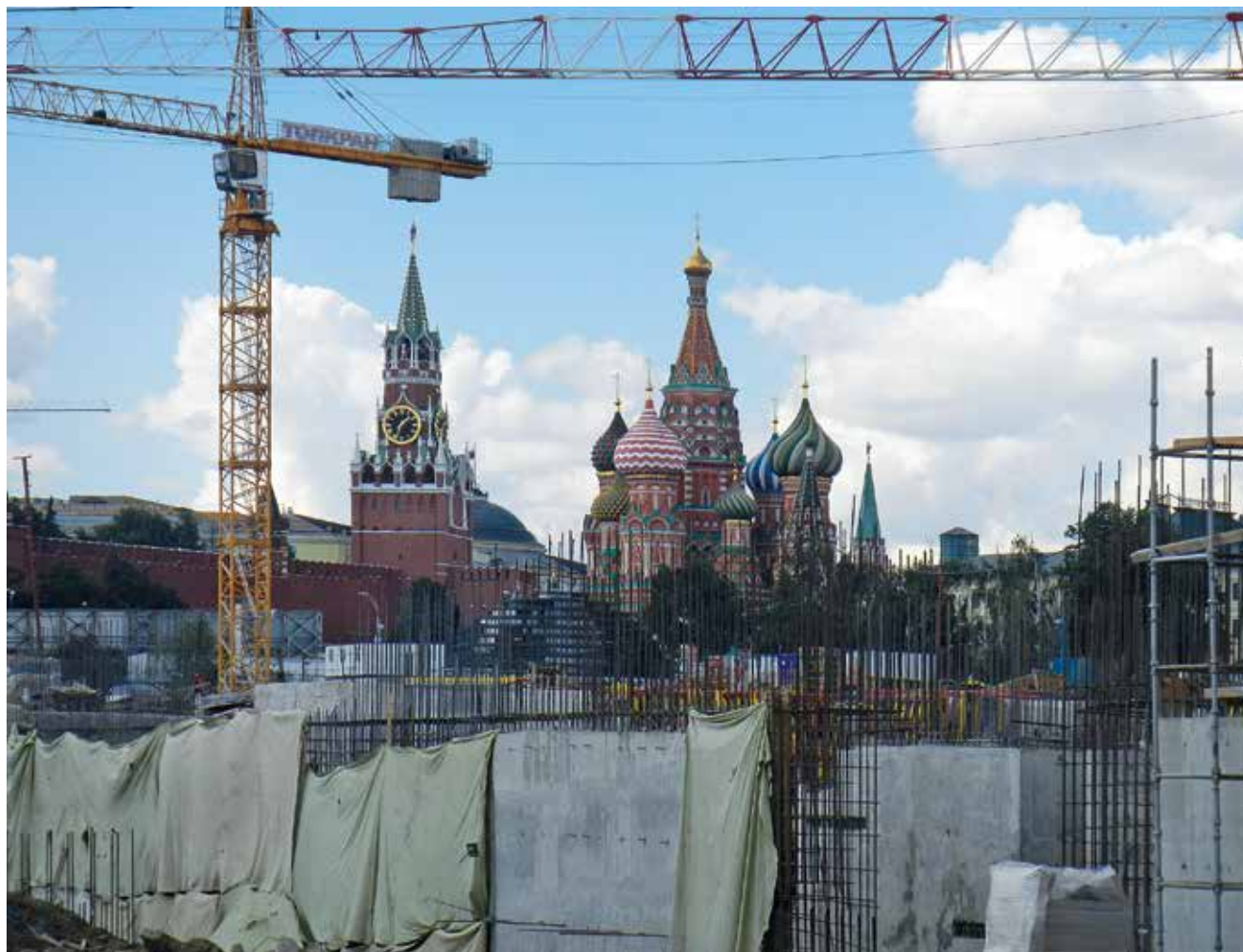
Hotel Russia was demolished in 2006 after ordinary citizens and experts had concurred in branding the hotel as a discordant object in the historic centre of the city. For almost a decade, the land stood in ruins until an extravagant landscape project was launched. The project that originally won the international architectural competition has undergone significant changes.² All of them increase the volume of construction work and the final cost of the project. The original landscape project now has several ap-



Hotel project in Zaryadye



Zaryadye construction site



View of the Kremlin from Zaryadye

pendices: a concert hall with 1500 seats and a street amphitheater for 4000 people; a new hotel complex; underground parking facilities; tens of thousands of square meters of office space. The river view of the Kremlin and St. Basil's Cathedral will be blocked by a new observation deck, whose supports are likely to pulverise the underground remnants of the Kitai Gorod fortress walls. All these unplanned 'accessories' will make the final project just as space-consuming as the destroyed gargantuan Hotel Russia.

Over the past 25 years, the urge for urban development near the Kremlin has never stopped. An underground shopping complex was built in Manezh Square at a stone's throw from the Kremlin; Hotel Moscow was leveled and erected anew with totally lost interiors; the building of Gostiny Dvor built by the famous Italian architect Giacomo Quarenghi is now capped by a glass dome; Kutafya Tower now has a checkpoint for Kremlin visitors; and the Tainitsky Garden can now boast of a helipad.

Petr Miroshnik
Coordinator of the public 'watchdog' movement 'Arkhnadzor'
for the preservation of historic Moscow

Footnotes

¹ Moscow Kremlin and Red Square, Moscow, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1990.

² Authors: Diller Scofidio + Renfro (US), Hargreaves Associates, Citymakers, Transsolar Klima Engineering, Buro Happold. Project launched in 2013; to be realised in 2017.

Will the Medieval Town of Vyborg Lose Its Authenticity?

Historical background

The town of Vyborg lies on the northeast coast of the Gulf of Finland, close to the border between the Russian Federation and Finland. Administratively, Vyborg is part of the Leningrad region (*oblast*). The history of Vyborg spans over seven centuries. Vyborg was first a part of Sweden and received a town charter in 1403, then part of Russia as a town of the Grand Duchy of Finland (1710–1917), then part of the independent republic of Finland (1917–1944), after that part of the Soviet Union, and since 1991 it belongs to the Russian Federation. Vyborg has always been an important trade centre between East



“Linna” in the middle of the old city (photo Maija Kairamo, 2013)

and West. The Swedish, Finnish, Russian and German languages created a multicultural atmosphere. It was only after World War II that it became a closed border town, poor and far from the metropolises of Moscow and Leningrad (after 1991 again St. Petersburg).

Vyborg belongs, together with Stockholm, Visby and Tallinn, to the group of medieval fortified harbour cities of the Baltic Sea. The castle was founded by Swedish crusaders in 1293. In the Middle Ages the town was surrounded by stone walls, which were later renewed. An example of these later constructions is the round canon tower built in 1547–1550, which still stands on the market square. In the 17th century the medieval irregular street pattern was regulated by a rectangular street grid, which largely remains to this day. The construction of new fortifications west of Vyborg began after the Great Northern War (1700–1721), when the town was ceded to the Russian Empire. Work on this fortress, called the Crown of St. Anna, began in 1731 and was largely completed by 1742. Until the 1860s, all traffic from the west leading into the town passed through the vaulted gates of the Crown of St. Anna. After the Crimean War in the 1850s it was noted that the defensive constructions needed improvement.

Most of the old fortress was considered to be useless and a new fortification system was built between 1860 and 1877 on a nearby hill in the east part of the town, later called Battery Hill, *Batareynaya Gora*.

Each period of this history has left its own marks on the present townscape. In 1809, Tsar Alexander I conquered the eastern provinces of Sweden and formed a new political unit of these areas by founding the Grand Duchy of Finland, in which Vyborg and the adjoining areas were incorporated in 1812. Vyborg soon grew to become the second largest town in Finland. In 1917, Finland became an independent republic. After World War II, Karelia along with Vyborg was ceded to the Soviet Union.

The town was not devastated by real street fights during the war, but the central area was heavily bombed. The Finns were evacuated and the Soviet state took over an empty and ruined town, which was then repopulated by Russians. The first Rus-



Progonnaja uliza 10, reconstruction of a bombed house, rebuilt in 1994 (photo Maija Kairamo 2014)

sian decades were almost as fatal as the war, the new rulers also demolishing many repairable buildings. However, the old town structure remained and thus the rich architectural and archaeological heritage still exists.

Protection of the heritage

In the 1970s, when the second generation of Russian citizens grew up, their interest was aroused in the history of their home town. In early Soviet plans, the historical centre of Vyborg was prioritised as a target of restoration. In 2010, the town was inscribed on the list of historical settlements of the Russian Federation.

At present, Vyborg as a listed historical settlement has 264 heritage objects, of which 17 are classified as federally valuable, 81 as regionally valuable, and 166 are listed as cultural monuments. The definition “cultural heritage object” can mean either a single building or construction, or a larger entity of buildings. The scope and richness of the town’s values, however, exceed the present day’s officially accepted and applied evaluation systems. It is nec-

essary to develop a deeper understanding of the true character of Vyborg's urban, architectural, archaeological, cultural and artistic heritage. This requires a detailed documentation and evaluation of the town structure, its buildings and archaeological findings. Preparatory material for this has been collected by Russian and Finnish experts.

The legislation of the Russian Federation on the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage is relatively well established and theoretically provides a framework for protection. However, this legal instrument dealing with the protection of the cultural, archaeological and architectural heritage has become a complex bureaucratic and hierarchical system that is ineffective. The necessary planning processes, statements, specifications, decisions and permissions require financial resources and lots of time, and yet in the meantime the fragile heritage is more or less breaking into pieces. The present state and the prospects for Vyborg's heritage are a sad example of this problem and should arouse both interest and concern among the international community.

Present state of the heritage

The network of streets in Vyborg's historic centre has escaped dramatic post-war changes. The historic centre comprises a considerable number of valuable buildings, which are central to the town's identity. These include the bell tower and the ruins of the former cathedral, the Round Tower, the churches of the *Val*-district and the market hall. But the old town should be seen as an entity, where also ordinary buildings from various ages, partly dilapidated and partly altered, are genuine, authentic documents of the town's history.

Vyborg is a poor border town, with a population of around 80 000. At present there are no adequate legal instruments for the protection of buildings. Vyborg's master plan lacks an appropriate correspondence between the protection zones and existing historical and cultural values. The necessary document for the protection zones, which the Russians call a "specification", requires a payment to the Oblast of 150 000 rubles (c. 3750 euros), which the town has not yet agreed to pay.

There are a few positive examples of restoration of local architectural objects. The first worth mentioning is the restoration of the Central City Alvar Aalto Library, originally designed by the world-famous Finnish architects Alvar and Aino Aalto. The library building has Federal monument status. The 20-year-long restoration process – a joint Russian-Finnish project – was completed at the end of 2013. The building was restored and conserved using mostly traditional building technologies. Special care was given to the original construction and fittings, but also a few of the later Soviet layers were conserved.

Another monument of Federal status is the Pantsarlaks bastion dating from 1579–80, which belongs to the eastern defensive fortifications. In 1930, the Finnish architect Uno Ullberg designed on top of the bastion an art museum and art school. Initiated by the Hermitage, Leningrad Oblast and municipal authorities, an exhibition institute Hermitage Vyborg was founded and the whole complex was restored and re-opened in 2010.

A listed monument, an apartment building at Progonnaya Street 76, dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, was renovated by a private owner, the historian Bair Irintseyev, who opened an exhibition in the restored building about the Soviet-Finnish War and the so-called Great Patriotic War.

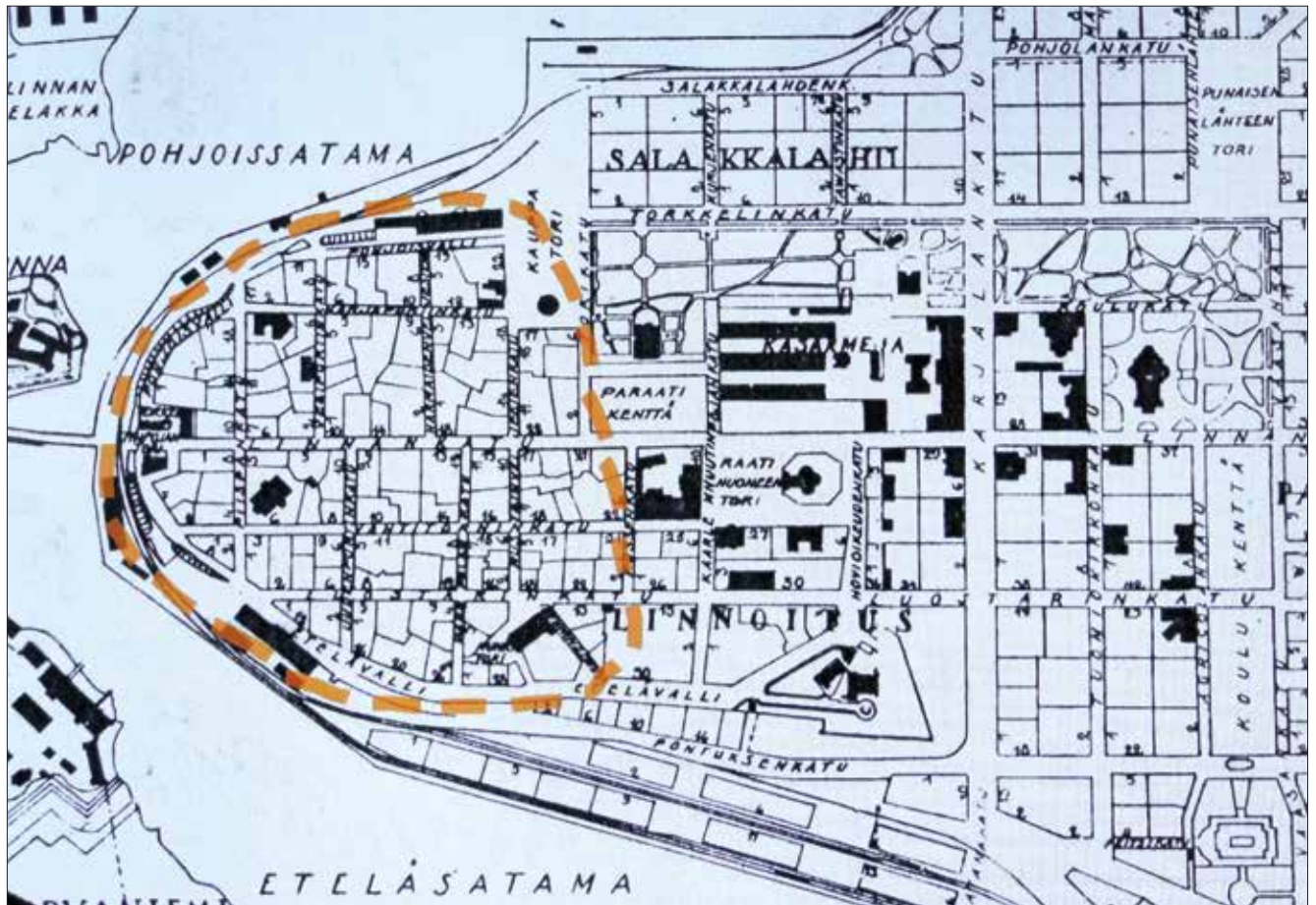


Demolished block in the middle of the town (photo Maija Kairamo, April 2013)



The Crown of St. Anna southern gate (photo Maija Kairamo 2014)

In summer 2013, the renovation of a red-brick neo-gothic building at Vyborgskaya Street 25, dating from 1903, was completed and now houses a children's art centre. The restoration was financed with both Oblast and local budget funds. Comprehensive restoration work will also start soon in the famous historic park of Mon Repos. The history of the park began in 1788 when the chairman of the Scientific Academy of St. Petersburg, Ludvig Heinrich Nicolay, bought a large estate in the vicinity of Vyborg. At the beginning of the 19th century a wooden neo-classical mansion with a library was built, and small bridges, pavilions, and statues appeared in the park. The park and its buildings have Federal museum and monument status. Mon Repos is participating in an international programme "The protection and use of the Russian Cultural Heritage", a joint project of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Regional Administration and the World Development Bank. The budget for the Mon Repos project



The city structure of the old town in 1933, the medieval city wall marked on the map (seminar paper by Petri Neuvonen 2014)

is \$23 million, a third of which comes from the Bank, and the rest from Federal, Oblast and Vyborg Region budgets. The works started in 2012 and should be completed in 2016.

But the real state of the historic town is dramatic. Many buildings in the historic centre are at present abandoned and almost completely ruined. In April 2013, a block in the middle of the medieval town structure was demolished. This block included some buildings that had been registered in 1993 as built heritage by the Leningrad Oblast Inspector of Protection and Conservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments. The owner was informed about the protection, but nothing was done to renovate the buildings during the twenty years and the authorities of the Vyborg region decided to demolish the badly ruined block for safety reasons. The demolition was stopped, however, by the Governor of the Leningrad Oblast Aleksander Drozdenko.

The building at Krepostnaya Ulitsa 3, the so-called “Domus”, was built in 1904 and approaches the highest point of the street. The building survived the war. In the 1980s there were plans to convert the building into a hotel, but the works were interrupted and after that the building was left to the “elements”.

On July 13, 2014, a fire started at Severnyi Val 11, a four-storey-high building erected in 1897. The fire destroyed the roof, the corner tower and two upper storeys. This building is significant for the northern townscape.

Several other buildings in the oldest part of the town are either abandoned or partly ruined. These include: the Hackman & Co building (1909) at Severnyi Val 7, which is empty; the Governor’s house (1873) at Krepostnaya Ulitsa 22, which has deteriorat-

ed; Ulitsa Storozhevoi Bashni 4 (1894), which is one of the few wooden houses in the centre; an old firewood storage shed (c. 1898) at Vyborgskaya Ulitsa 8, which is in a ruined state; and the Old Dominican Monastery, founded in 1392 and converted into a Lutheran church in 1833, at Vyborgskaya Ulitsa 13, which is in a ruined state.

A real threat appeared in 2011, when an investor received permission for a new building in the centre of the old town. The authorities had formed a new plot from two and a half older plots, where also some ancient vaulted cellars were situated. Since the master plan lacks protection zones and as there are no legal instruments for the protection, the building permission was given to an overly large building, leading to the creation of a Disneyland-like castle. In addition, no documentation of the historic cellars was carried out. The quality of the building techniques, the architectural forms and the detailing are inadequate, with light concrete blocks, plastic window frames, etc. This building even has a Finnish name, “Linna” (meaning “Castle”). The severe threat to the urban fabric is that private investors can act on commercial and speculative interests without paying respect to the real historical environment.

Legislation, official activities and financial problems

With reference to the demands of the present legislation of the historically valuable settlements, in 2013 the Cultural Committee

of the Leningrad Oblast prepared an application for funding the scientific research for the planning of the protection zones of the cultural heritage objects in Vyborg. Such funding should be provided by the federal programme “Russian Culture 2012–2018”.

The governor of the Leningrad Oblast has appealed to the chief of staff of the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, Sergei Ivanov, to transfer the historic objects of federal status to the possession of the Oblast. This would give the Oblast the possibility to fund the restoration of the monuments with a special budget. Primarily this would mean that the 17th century clock tower, which has acute cracks in the basement, could be conserved. The clock tower presently has no use; it has been open to the “elements” and used as a “public toilet”. Such misuse, however, was brought to an end when local activists locked the door. The actions are a positive sign about the citizens’ interest in heritage problems.

Immediately after the fire in summer 2013 at Severnyi Val 11, the government of the Vyborg region decided to preserve the partly damaged house and try to find an appropriate investor. Also funding for urgent protective repair was immediately granted. This meant that research on the technical conditions, provisional protection and restoration of the preserved parts could be carried out. Accordingly, copies of the original drawings were ordered from Finnish archives. However, the building has now remained without any protection for several years.

Also a specialist group has been nominated to plan the strategic programme for tourism in Vyborg. The authorities of Vyborg have begun to understand that the historic and cultural heritage can be an impulse for economic growth in the town.

But still, what is missing is a long-term funding for the complete restoration, conservation, repair and building of the whole entity of the old centre, with its listed and registered monuments, ordinary houses and the necessary new buildings to fill the *lacunae*.

How to protect the authenticity of the old town

At first, any demolition and construction work or establishment of new building plots in the historical centre should be prohibited. At present – ever since the replacement of the socialist system of governance – the ownership of land is unclear. The urban structure of the old town based on the blocks and plots as they existed in 1933 should form the basis for the future real estate formation, planning and building. The urban pattern, its structural elements, street grid, plots, and heights, scale and materials of the buildings are important elements of the town and should be respected when future development is planned.

There are many empty sites and ruined remains of buildings in the old town centre. How should these be filled? Should the old town centre in the future be filled with reconstructions? Most international recommendations are not in favour of reconstructions. In fact, ICOMOS was founded in 1965 on the initiative of UNESCO to create a critical attitude, when in many European countries rebuilding meant reconstruction of the bombed buildings and towns.

The ICOMOS General Assembly on November 28, 2011 adopted *The Valetta Principles for the Safeguarding and Man-*



Krepostnaja uliza 3 built in 1904; the last inhabitants left 25 years ago (photo Maija Kairamo 2013)

agement of Historical Cities, Towns and Urban Areas. This document gives valuable recommendations for solving the problems of Vyborg. The Disney-fashion “Linna” case shows that the historic structure of the town plan, the town and street views, and the archaeological heritage are endangered. An additional threat is the uncontrolled and inferior quality of contemporary building technologies.

The future authenticity of the historic centre must be based on traditional building technology, workmanship and materials. This means that the new buildings should be built in a traditional manner, with massive brickwork plastered with lime plaster, and painted with lime paint. The volume of the new buildings should be in balance with the surroundings, and the height of the eaves and the forms of the roofs in harmony with the street space. In this way the new constructions would live and gain a patina in the same way as the old surroundings, while still allowing freedom to plan and design in a contemporary architectural language and at the same time fulfilling the modern functional needs of the citizens. Progonnaya Ulitsa 10, a free reconstruction built in 1994 at the site of a bombed two-storey building from 1791, is an acceptable example.

The joint Russian-Finnish venture for the restoration of the Alvar Aalto Library demonstrated that in Russia one still can find traditional building skills, good craftsmanship and people who can work with their hands. This made it possible to retain the goal of high quality building, and the well-trained working team managed to fulfil this demanding job and achieved a successful result. Such an experience should be fully utilised in future works.

The ICOMOS International Scientific Committees on Shared Built Heritage and on Historic Towns and Villages should consider the revival of Vyborg as an international pilot project and should act as practical advisers in the coming years.

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