

Die Würzburger Residenz als Welterbestätte der UNESCO: Begründung ihres herausragenden universellen Werts/ The Würzburg Residence as UNESCO World Heritage Site: Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Located in Southern Germany, the sumptuous Würzburg Residence was built and decorated in the 18th century by an international corps of architects, painters, sculptors, and stucco workers under the patronage of two successive Prince-Bishops, Johann Philipp Franz and Friedrich Karl von Schönborn.

The Residence was essentially constructed between 1720 and 1744, decorated on the interior from 1740 to 1770 and landscaped with magnificent gardens from 1765 to 1780. It testifies to the ostentation of the two Prince-Bishops, and as such illustrates the historical situation of one of the most brilliant courts of Europe during the 18th century. The most renowned architects of the period - the Viennese, Lukas von Hildebrandt, and the Parisians Robert de Cotte and Germain Boffrand - drew up the plans. They were supervised by the official architect of the Prince Bishop, Balthasar Neumann, who was assisted by Maximilian von Welsch, the architect of the Elector of Mainz. Sculptors and stucco-workers came from Italy, Flanders, and Munich. The Venetian painter Giovanni Battista Tiepolo frescoed the staircase and the walls of the Imperial Hall.

The residence gives consummate testimony to the imposing courtly and cultural life of the feudalistic era of the 18th century, but at the same time its varied use today is an example of modern utilisation and preservation as a monument of ahistorical structure.

Criterion (i): The Würzburg Residence is at once the most homogeneous and extraordinary of the Baroque palaces. It is an autonomous work of art in European Baroque style illustrated by its structure and décor elements. The Residence represents a unique artistic realisation as a result of its ambitious programme, the originality of creative spirit, and the international character of its workshop. Perhaps no monument from the same period is able to claim such a concurrence of talent.

Criterion (iv): The Residence is a document of European culture. The structure is a joint achievement of the most significant European architects, sculptors, and painters of the 18th century from France (particularly Paris), Italy (particularly Venice), Austria (particularly Vienna), and Germany.

Integrity

Though heavily affected by an aerial bombing on the 16 March 1945, the Residence of Würzburg has undergone careful and exemplary restorations since 1945. The property, therefore, contains all elements necessary for Outstanding Universal Value. There are no urgent, adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

Authenticity

The authenticity of Würzburg Residence with the Court Gardens and Residence Square is truthfully and credibly expressed through the main attributes of the property.

Protection and management requirements

The laws and regulations of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Free State of Bavaria guarantee the consistent protection of the Würzburg Residence and its surroundings: The Würzburg Residence together with the Court Gardens and Residence Square is officially listed as a historic monument and lies within the monument ensemble "Old City of Würzburg". Furthermore, the Ring Park, located to the east behind the Court Gardens, is also protected as an individual monument. Therefore, alterations to the Residence, its immediate surroundings, or in the Old City ensemble are subject to existing legal regulations, such as the requirement for conservation-sensitive authorisation, or integration into the historic building fabric. The management authority is the Bavarian Palaces Department. The implementation of the Management Plan is guaranteed by a steering group including members of the Bavarian Palace Department; the Bavarian State Ministry of Sciences, Research, and the Arts; the Bavarian State Office for Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings, the City of Würzburg, and ICOMOS Germany.

The World Heritage site and its buffer zone are defined in such a way to ensure the lasting protection and sustained preservation of the visual and built integrity of the Würzburg Residence and its immediate surroundings.

Furthermore, all important visual connections and street axes from and to the Residence warrant protection. The Free State of Bavaria and the City of Würzburg commit themselves to guaranteeing the comprehensive and permanent protection of the World Heritage property, "Würzburg Residence with the Court Gardens and Residence Square". They acknowledge a shared responsibility for the material and immaterial heritage they have been entrusted with. The Bavarian Palaces Department is co-ordinating all structural, restoration, and conservation issues relating to the World Heritage properties. Based on research, experience, and consultations the impact of visitation and events has been regulated by the Bavarian Department of Palaces. Moreover, detailed provisions of the visitor' and event management, among others, are laid out in the Management Plan. Of special interest are the chapters on "Potential risks and conservation measures", and on "Restoration and conservation measures" of the Management Plan.