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# ОЧУВАЊЕ И УНАПРЕЂЕЊЕ ИСТОРИЈСКИХ ГРАДОВА PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF HISTORIC TOWNS



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# HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL TOURISM: BRANKOVINA

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Summary: The Brankovina cultural and historical complex with the immovable cultural property is a very important cultural centre of Serbia with preserved authentic historical and material values that is designated as a cultural property of great importance along with environmental protection. Cultural heritage plays an important role in shaping the character of a place and historical ambience. The insufficiently developed awareness about the importance of cultural heritage for the development of this area, as well as a lack of clearly defined programs and measures that would ensure a continuous process of protection, presents a constant threat to the survival of this important heritage. The main objective of the 2015 General Regulation Plan (GRP) for the Brankovina settlement, which was developed by the authors of this paper, was to define the requirements and measures for the spatial, economic and functional development of this area.

Landscape values, available potential for tourism development and inclusion into tourism offer of Serbia provide an additional basis for improving specific values of Brankovina. According to the Plan, the new facilities were planned such as cultural park with a museum, tourist information centre with a multifunctional space for a contemporary museological narrative, interactive workshops for children and adults, exhibition space, open-air amphitheatre, ethno-restaurant, small hotel, bookshop, and a souvenir gift shop. The main question addressed in this paper is how to plan the new facilities that would be appropriate to the importance of this cultural and historical area but without environmental consequences? How to create harmonious relationships between preservation of inherited values and safeguard authenticity of urban structure and natural areas with cultural tourism so that they could have positive ecological, economic and social effects for the surrounding area? How to make a balance between the protection and development at the same time?

Keywords: cultural and historical landscape, heritage, cultural tourism

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Brankovina cultural and historical complex – the immovable cultural property, is a very important cultural centre with preserved authentic historical and material values that is designated as a cultural property of great importance,<sup>4</sup> along with environmental protection. The importance of the Brankovina resources, owing to which this area has received historic landmark status, primarily lies in its cultural, historical, social and anthropogenic values

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Decision on Declaring the Historic Landmark "Brankovina" the Immovable Cultural Property of Great Importance ("Official Gazette of the City of Valjevo", No. 8, 1991)

related to: (1) historically important figures and important cultural, social and historical events; (2) protected cultural and historical heritage of great national importance; and (3) cultural and religious institutions that bear witness of socioeconomic and cultural-historical conditions in which the area has developed. The complex of the immovable Brankovina cultural property – the monuments of culture and valuable examples of national architecture dating back to the first half of the 19th century in Serbia, are organized as an open-air museum. The cultural and natural heritage of Brankovina are important potentials for the development of cultural tourism and numerous activities that enable affirmation of cultural and historical values, and also a basis for the restoration of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Local authenticity, uniqueness of the ambience, different historical layers, local tradition and customs, geographical and ecological specificities of the area, as well as the architectural genuine identity as a whole, are a basis for cultural tourism of Brankovina (Simonović et al., 2014). The protection of the area within the historic landmark implies an integrated protection of the unity of all structures in the area and its surrounding. This means that the carried out valorisation of cultural heritage and analysis of the current situation must be the starting point in planning all activities in a certain area, whereby it is of decisive importance to identify causes for building it and to provide again the same or similar circumstances in the process of revitalization and regeneration of urban space, which would provide its continuous protection. The consideration of immovable cultural heritage in interaction with its surrounding area as an organically formed landscape is a modern way of considering and an integrated approach to the planning of the area (Roter Blagojević et al., 2009). In areas of historical importance, it is not only sufficient to preserve the physical structures, but an important segment in preserving their cultural identity is to keep pace with the contemporary development trends. Any change in such important sites should be carried out gradually also including the protection services into the planning process. The main guidelines for the protection and sustainable use of cultural heritage of Serbia, as defined by the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010-2020 ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 88/10), relate to the areas containing the immoveable cultural properties and their surroundings, which protection is regulated by legal regulations, planning and strategic documents and rules governing this field. The General Regulation Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "GRP") for a part of the Brankovina settlement, which was developed in the Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia, represents an initial document and a basis for directing and managing the local community sustainable development, land use, organization and planning of the area.

# 2. POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE

The contemporary approach to sustainable development and improvement of historical sites is based on an understanding of the history of the place, with an aim to harmonize all factors relevant for the planning process, which implies a good knowledge about the physical, social, economic and cultural aspects of the area (Jukilehto, 1999). The recommendation concerning the *Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas* (UNESCO, 1976) suggests that any immoveable cultural heritage and its immediate surrounding area should be considered in their totality as a coherent whole, defined by balanced relationships between human activities, spatial organization and the surroundings. In this context, the protection of cultural and historical heritage of Brankovina, linking the architectural structures and cultural heritage buildings and the natural environment, improvement of tourism and economic potentials, as well as the implementation of non-invasive protection measures, are the key planned results to be achieved in this area. The importance and recognisability of cultural and historical complex of Brankovina, as well as its cultural, spiritual and historical value, are the main potential for developing this area.

#### 2.1. Problems in the area

The efforts of the Cultural Heritage Protection Institute of the City of Valjevo to fully protect the cultural heritage have not been sufficient due to the constant pressures resulting from the social, economic and political situation and different forms of uncontrolled construction. The inappropriate reconstructions and interventions in this area have resulted from the lack of urban planning regulations over a long period of time. The insufficiently developed awareness about the importance of cultural heritage for the development of the area and the lack of clearly defined programs and measures for ensuring a continuous process of protection are a constant threat to survival of this important cultural heritage. In addition, the main constraints for more efficient protection of the natural and immovable cultural heritage have occurred due to insufficient tourism promotion and poor accessibility of the natural and cultural heritage as a result of poor quality of road network and other infrastructure systems. Due to the lack of hotels, restaurants, commercial and educational facilities and entertaining contents in the complex and its wider surrounding that would provide additional services to the visitors, the visitors only visit the complex of Brankovina without staying longer in the village, due to which a significant economic development of the area is hindered, except during cultural and tourism/commercial events.

In addition to the mentioned problems of the cultural heritage protection and uncontrolled construction, inadequate tourism promotion and poor financial possibilities, the need to create a planning document that would offer a realistic basis for solving numerous disadvantages in using this area also relates to the constant threat of floods.

Brankovina has created an appropriate recognizable image in the so-far cultural and tourism valorisation and has achieved certain results in tourism development. The unfavourable fact is that the area of Brankovina is not sufficiently equipped and adapted for the contemporary tourist visits (Tomka, 2000; Čulić, 2000).

# 2.2. The urban planning and architectural design concepts for the development of the area

Concerning the urban planning and architectural design concepts, the GRP for a part of the Brankovina settlement implies the introduction of attractive programs, mutual linking of tourism zones, completion of utility infrastructure and raising of standards of services of the existing and planned tourism capacities. The main method for spatial organization is based on the principle of interweaving the exiting values, newly created contents and natural ambiences, along with emphasizing the importance of preserving the cultural heritage not only as the physical evidence of history, but also as an evidence of the development potential of the area. The cultural heritage protection thus becomes an integrated part of the planning process, while the protection measures are harmonized with all activities in the planned area. The choice of method of the Plan is made depending on the problem, while the method should include the phase revival of historical centre and the planned Village Community Centre with the functional development.

#### 2.2.1. Protection zones

Within the General Regulation Plan for a Part of the Brankovina Settlement, the cultural built heritage is considered apart from its natural environment, so that the methods of systemic revitalization of the space envisage three levels of protection as an initial starting point in planning and revitalizing the entire area: level I of protection encompasses the zone of the historic landmark and its immediate surrounding area in which any construction is forbidden; level II of protection encompasses a wider area around the historic landmark and it represents a zone with transitional regime of use and strict control of construction of

educational, cultural, tourism and recreational sports facilities complementary to the function of the historic landmark; level III of protection encompasses the remaining area in which certain activities of rural households can be developed, such as: rural tourism, crafts and activities of small economies, with a primary aim to regulate the unplanned construction. The reconstruction and restoration of the existing buildings along with hard landscaping is allowed in each of these zones.

#### 2.2.2. Cultural tourism in the protected historical landscape

According to the most often-quoted definition, the cultural tourism is "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs" (Đukić, 2005). Cultural tourism is a very broad concept difficult to define only from one aspect. Based on this, McKercher and Du Cros<sup>5</sup> classify cultural tourism in three categories: the definition based on the aspect of tourism, according to the subject of motivation, through experiences and according to activities (Hadžić, 2005). According to the definition derived from the aspect of tourism that is most accepted, the cultural tourism is defined as a selective form of tourist movements oriented towards the cultural and artistic properties, values and contents (Krivošejev, 2014). However, the definition of the experiential perception is interesting where the role of cultural tourism cannot be perceived only through motivations, but the experience is an extremely important factor in defining the cultural tourism: through experiencing the culture, the tourists gather information and experience, educate themselves about the importance of the place and community they visit, their heritage, culture and the natural environment. The related definition is the definition of the concept of heritage tourism, which author Krivošejev also advocates instead of cultural tourism. According to it, the heritage tourism is defined as "the practice of travelling to experience historic and cultural attractions to learn about a community's heritage in an enjoyable and educational way". This concept is directly linked to the heritage which is a place that gives evidence of human activity, i.e. cultural heritage which directs visitor's experience solely towards the cultural and historic properties, their importance and role they played in historical processes (Krivošejev, 2014).

Within the mentioned protection zones in Brankovina, taking into account the problem of insufficient programmatic development of the area, the Plan envisages two sites for further development. The first site is located within the Brankovina cultural and historical complex, while the other one is located in the immediate surrounding where, according to the plans of higher level, the Village Community Centre is planned to be a centre of gravity of a wider region. The development of cultural tourism potentials bring different benefits to the surroundings (Krivošejev, 2014).

The first site comprises the area of the Brankovina historical and cultural complex of prime spiritual, historical and cultural importance to the Republic of Serbia. Currently, the complex of the Brankovina immovable historic properties comprises: the old school, one of the oldest schools in Serbia (a); church with a house and graves of members of famous Serbian family, the Nenadović family (b); *vajat* as a specific form of vernacular architecture in Serbia (c); *sobrašice* – specific small wooden half-open or open houses with wooden porches (d). The main purpose of its development is to preserve inherited values and safeguard authenticity of urban structure by creating a single cultural landscape (Fielden & Jukilehto, 1993) as a synthesis of the natural and man-made elements. In her exploration of new approaches to the restoration and creation of cultural landscapes, the female author Roter-Blagojević refers to the conclusions of the European Landscape

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Classification and definition according to: McKercher, Bob and Du Cros, Hillary (2003) *Cultural tourism: The partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, NY: Binghamton, taken from: Hadžić, O. (2005) *Kulturni turizam* /Cultural Tourism/, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, pp. 20 – 22.

Convention 2000, linking the cultural landscape and sustainable development based on a harmonious relationship between architectural heritage and conservation of natural areas which, in addition to ecological, also have cultural and social dimensions (Roter-Blagojević et al., 2009). According to the Plan, the proposal of programmatic and urban planning solutions (Fig. 1) includes the following contents: cultural park with a museum of a famous poetess Desanka Maksimović, with an open-air stage for different cultural events, and small buildings of a pavilion type for literary workshops and art colonies (2). The idea of this model of research platform is to promote social sciences and artistic creativity in the form of courses and seminars to be held all year round. In such way, the memory becomes an instrument of cultural landscape and valorisation of the protected area (Corner, 1999; Stovel, 2003), whereby the landscape is at the same time a spatial setting and a cultural image and represents a strategic medium of cultural change (Lantitsou, 2014). The following facilities are planned in the zone of extension around the immovable cultural property (3): tourist information centre with reception and ticket office at the entrance to the cultural and historical complex, with a multifunctional space for a contemporary museological narrative, interactive workshops for children and adults, exhibition space, etc. (e); bookshop café and souvenir gift shop (f): small open-air amphitheatre (g); outdoor display of a small authentic ethno-house typical for this region (h). The tourism contents and hospitality facilities west of the Brankovina historical and cultural complex include the contents of ethno-tourism and hospitality facilities (ethno-restaurant, small hotel, pastry café and shop) (4). In the zone of elementary school located east of the complex, the Plan envisages new gymnastics hall (i) and sports grounds (j). In discussing the advantages of conventional approach compared to a modern approach to cultural heritage, Jukilehto indicates that the preservation of authenticity of an entity is an essential quality which implies truthfulness, originality and authenticity (Jukilehto, 2002). In support of such attitude, we can conclude that advancement of methodologies and their better integration into the process of urban planning are a precondition for safeguarding the authenticity of historic sites.



Figure 1. Programmatic urban planning solutions for the Brankovina historic landmark – the existing situation (1) and the planned situation (2) (3) and (4)

The other site to be developed includes a village community centre (Fig.2), planned as an ethno-park with cultural and educational, tourism and sports recreational contents and hospitality facilities. The complex is designed so as to become an unavoidable one-stop shop for nearby tourist tours with the aim to present the culture of western Serbia. The programmatic urban planning solutions contain: visitor centre (1); hospitality facilities (2); the planned artificial lake - the new acquatorium (3); accommodation capacities of pavilion type (as traditional *vajats*) envisaged for organizing the art colonies and accommodation of tourists (4); selling/exhibiting showroom for works of art, handicrafts and souvenirs created in art colonies (5). A special functional entity within the centre includes: recreational sports contents with grounds for the so-called "small sports" (6). In addition to a system of pedestrian paths and biking trails, the covered sitting areas (7), amphitheatre/moveable

market (8) and tennis courts with a tennis club (9), the ambience of ethno-park is complemented with the river permeating the entire area.

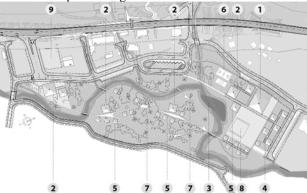


Figure 2. Programmatic urban planning solution for the Village Community Centre

In the recent years, the transformation of cultural tourism has been taking place through educational, interactive and entertaining cultural tours (in the contemporary consumer era and with the development of information and communication technologies, focusing the attention through entertainment is inevitable), aiming at attracting the broader public. Today, the mass visits to museums, galleries, famous historical landmarks are increasingly frequent, but also the visits to the reconstructed industrial complexes that were previously, except for the professionals or students excursions, less interesting for a greater number of tourists. In this way, the coupling between the culture and tourism proves that culture is not only a consumer, but also an initiator of development. In this context, it is necessary for historic places to spatially and functionally adopt themselves to the contemporary needs and way of heritage presentation.

#### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The spatial cultural and historical sites are the ambience entities typical for a certain historical period of cultural development of the area. The ambience authenticity, historical and cultural importance make the spatial historical and cultural sites attractive both for visitors and for different cultural events. The existence of such sites is of outstanding importance for the cultural and tourism offer of the region in which they are located.

The necessity of improving the attractiveness of cultural and historical sites initiates the issue of the implementation of practical models for their protection and improvement for the purpose of their sustainability in the contemporary world. The application of cultural tourism enables the re-examination of new architectural and urban planning approaches and contributes to an active role of Brankovina historic landmark in the overall development of the City of Valjevo and entire Serbia, based on the preservation of heritage value.

The relationship between cultural tourism and historical sites is a key issue in the context of preserving the tradition and protecting the authenticity, on the one hand, and the development, promotion and improvement of different contents and physical structure development, on the other hand. For the purpose of developing the cultural tourism, it is necessary to re-examine the potentials of a historical site as a spatial framework for development, but also to consider the limitations of the area for the implementation of contemporary models for different uses of heritage. As shown in this paper, the very position, role and importance of Brankovina has contributed to the decision on its sustainable spatial development and determined the level of new investments in the area rich in cultural and historical resources. The General Regulation Plan for Brankovina re-examines the place of the cultural and historical landscape from the aspect of spatial and urban planning and puts a special accent on fostering the experience of ambience in the

analyses of development and protection. The development plan has determined the activities that can be carried out, namely those which would enable the renewal and fostering of tradition of the Brankovina cultural and historical heritage, as well as which would not disturb the authenticity of architectural design values and values of urban planning, as well as values of visual aesthetics and ambience of cultural properties, but also ecological values.

The presented plan is a case study and model for considering the contemporary methodological approaches in the fields of protection and renewal of cultural and historic sites.

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# ИСТОРИЈСКИ ПРЕДЕО И КУЛТУРНИ ТУРИЗАМ: БРАНКОВИНА

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Резиме: Културни и историјски комплекс Бранковина са непокретним културним добрима је веома важан културни иентар Србије са очуваним аутентичним историјским и материјалним вредностима, који је одређен као културно добро од изузетног значаја, уз истовремену заштиту природне околине. Културно наслеђе игра важну улогу у обликовању карактера места и историјског амбијента. Недовољно развијена свест о значају културног наслеђа за развој овог подручја, као и недостатак јасно дефинисаних програма и мера које би обезбедиле континуирани процес заштите, представља сталну претњу опстанку овог важног наслеђа. Основни циљ Плана генералне регулације (ПГР) за насеље Бранковина из 2015. године, чији су аутори уједно и аутори овог рада, био је дефинисање услова и мера за просторни, економски и функционални развој овог подручја. Пејзажне вредности простора, расположиви потенцијал за развој туризма и укључивање у туристичку понуду Србије представљају додатни основ за унапређење специфичних вредности Бранковине. Према ПГР-у, планирани су нови објекти као што су културни парк са музејом, туристички информативни центар са мултифункционалним простором за савремену музејску наративу, интерактивне радионице за децу и одрасле, изложбени простор, амфитеатар на отвореном, етно-ресторан, мали хотел, књижара и сувенирница. Централно питање којим се овај рад бави је како планирати нове објекте чија функција и форма је прикладна за значај овог културног и историјског простора, без последица по животну средину? Како створити складне односе између очувања наслеђених вредности и заштите аутентичности урбане структуре

и природног амбијента, уз развијање културног туризма, тако да они могу имати позитивне еколошке, економске и социјалне димензије на околину? Како направити

Кључне речи: културно-историјски предео, наслеђе, културни туризам

баланс између заштите и развоја у исто време?