

KLASCH – an inventory of elements for the protection of World Heritage Sites: the case of Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut

Renate Bornberg, DI, PhD, Lara Tudor, BA

renate.bornberg@welterbe-salzkammergut.at

lara.tudor@welterbe-salzkammergut.at

Welterbemanagement Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut

Introduction

The UNESCO World Heritage List only includes sites that are of exceptional value. This means that they are unique in the world and are therefore meaningful for the whole of humanity. Protecting a World Heritage Site and preserving and developing it for future generations is therefore a central concern for all stakeholders and actors and is a key issue in the management of a World Heritage Site, as is the case in Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut, too.

The cultural landscape of Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997 due to its millennia-old industrial culture of salt production which dates back to the 5th millennium BCE and has been uninterrupted ever since. Salt production also includes forestry, trade, onward transportation of salt via lakes and rivers, alpine pasture farming and creating villages and towns specially adapted to these production methods. All these factors led to a cultural landscape that is unique and outstanding, indeed.

A World Heritage site is defined by its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), which is summarised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The OUV is described via criteria, authenticity and integrity. However, these factors leave a lot of room for interpretation as they are very flexible. To better protect and develop a World Heritage site, a cultural landscape inventory is proposed, which is outlined here taking the case study of Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut as an example.

Steps into the inventory of Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut

(Materials, data, methodology)

In order to create an inventory of cultural assets, a system must be established that defines subject areas, which can be labelled as the first pillar of the inventory. The subject areas are kept generic and are intended to be formulated in terms that they can be used in all other World Heritage sites in Austria and beyond. The expertise of local stakeholders was incorporated, like the Federal Monuments Office (BDA), the Natural History Museum (NHM), the Salt Mine authorities, or the Tourism Association, to just name a few. After a detailed evaluation and analysis of all data, an input mask was created for the field study. In the field study all elements of selected regions of the World Heritage Site were entered in the input mask.

So far, however, the inventory would only be a record of all the elements in the area; no assessment of the elements has been carried out. Therefore, the second pillar of the project has now been started, namely the definition of the attributes. Attributes are the detailed description of the elements that make up the World Heritage property and can be derived from the OUV. The attributes were extracted from the field study and were defined in such a way that they reflect the special value of the region's specifics. The

element catalogue of pillar two are thus not transferable to other sites. Once the attributes had been defined, the next phase was initiated, namely the localisation of the attributes, which is currently underway.

Discussion

With the development of the cultural landscape inventory for Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut, an important step is being taken to preserve, protect and further develop the World Heritage Site. The tool is to be available as an 'open source' platform so that, on the one hand, access is possible for all interested parties and, on the other hand, running costs are minimised. The running costs for the data room will be covered by the World Heritage Site's web space. This model project with the methods developed here is to be made available to other World Heritage sites for implementation (replicability). The project is therefore not only relevant for the World Heritage Site Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut, but for all other World Heritage Sites in Austria and other countries.

Conclusions

An inventory of cultural and landscape elements is a good tool for preserving the Outstanding Universal Value. The inventory makes it possible to identify the cultural landscape elements (attributes, characteristics) and to preserve them in a further step. This makes it possible to provide a framework for the further development of the World Heritage Site and to organise its communication.