

European Heritage Label listing – Application Form

HUNGARY

Szigetvár Castle

2007

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Country	HUNGARY
Region	Southern Hungary
Name of site ¹ or cultural artefact	Szigetvár Castle
Proprietor of site / property	The Hungarian State
Private or public authorities responsible for site or cultural artefact (control delegation)	Hungarian Treasury Property Directorate Zrínyi Miklós Museum
Postal address	7900 Szigetvár, Vár u. 19. Hungary
Geographical details of site / artefact:	See picture 1.

¹ The term 'site' covers places, buildings and landscapes. It also signifies intangible heritage attached to a given place

Justification for application	The castle is a national symbol of tragic perseverance against the invading Turkish armies, which substantially outnumbered the defending Hungarian forces. In 1566, when it was no longer possible to continue to defend the castle, led by the Croatian-born Miklós Zrínyi, the defending battlers ‘dashed out’ of the castle only to meet their destiny in the heroic assault they launched on the Turks. This act of heroism was later on many times commemorated both in Croatian and Hungarian literature as well as in several works of fine art.
Description of proposed site or cultural artefact	The castle is located to the north of the town centre, at the place of the castle’s former, drained lake, which now serves as a park. The castle’s ground plan forms the shape of an irregular quadrangle, with polygonal bastions made of stone bricks at each corner. The curtain walls and the parapet connecting the bastions are made of brick. A belt of earth mound runs along the inner sides of the southern, western and eastern walls, whilst the wall facing north has been complemented with a dungeon. The present entrance of the castle is situated on the eastern section of the south wall, very next to the south eastern bastion. The centre of the castle hosts the mosque of Suleiman with the remnants of the adjacent minaret and the inner castle, which was erected later on. Where once the old inner castle stood, today one can behold the ruins of the main walls of the ancient castle that constituted the core of the building complex, now arranged in a garden-like manner, with a well in the middle of the ward. The castle was surrounded by a moat. A square-shaped tower was subsequently built on the northern part of the moat, and another tower, accessible through a bridge, was erected on the east side, actually on the opposite side of the one-time moat. The place where Zrínyi dashed out of the castle with his defenders, that is the bridge that led to the outer castle, can be found somewhat more to the south from this tower, above the outer moat. By now, a concrete bridge has taken over the place of the wooden bridge, whose remnants were discovered during the excavation works.
History of site or cultural artefact	The quadrangular <i>castellum</i> , the heart of the castle, is supposed to have been built at the turn of the 14 th and 15 th centuries by the son of Antimus, János, vice-ban and later vice-palatine of Slavonia. The first written records of the castle date back to 1449. In 1473, the castle became the property of Ambrus Török of Enying, to serve as the main home for the Török family, who played a prominent role in the first half of the 16 th century. The castle assumed its current size presumably after the construction works ordered by Bálint Török, who extended the former building to a fortress that was divided into the inner, middle and outer castles. Following the capture of Bálint Török and his transportation to Istanbul, Török’s wife handed over the castle to King Ferdinand in August 1543. The castle, modernized during the period extending from 1558 to 1559 on the basis of plans by Paolo Mirandola, became the most significant fort in the Transdanubian chain of border strongholds. In 1555, and then again in 1556, the Turks failed in their attempt to siege the castle. In 1566, Miklós Zrínyi, for as long as 34 days, managed to fend off the attacks led by the army of Sultan Suleiman, who could only conquer and take hold of the castle after the remaining guards had shot valiantly out of the castle and fell in battle. As a final event of the siege, the

	<p>gunpowder stored in the rotund tower of the inner castle exploded, hence destroying all the buildings of the inner castle. The Turks hastily restored the castle, which was severely damaged during the siege, to a defensible state. It was at that time that the mosque of Suleiman was erected in the middle of the castle. The Sultan gave orders for the full reconstruction of the castle in 1568. The former timber bastions were replaced by new ones made of brick and stone.</p> <p>The Turkish rule, which lasted 123 years, came to an end with the blockade of 1688–1689: on 13th February, 1689 the Turkish guards surrendered the castle. The fortification of the recaptured fortress started in 1689, headed by the Italian Negrini. As a result, the northern wall now gives home to dungeons along its entire length, whereas in the ward, barracks were erected. The south, north and east gates were also built around that time. The castle had last been assigned a military function during Rákóczi's war of independence. It was decided in 1740 that the fortress, which was no longer of military use, should be demolished. The castle was bought from the Treasury by Lajos Festetich, and then passed into the possession of the Andrassy family in the 1860s, who retained the property up until 1944. Count Mihály Andrassy ordered some minor repairs on the castle in 1931 and had the one-storey house next to the mosque rebuilt into a multi-storey castle. The castle took its current appearance as a result of restoration works carried out in 1966 as part of a monument restoration project.</p>
<p>Preservation method for site or, where relevant, cultural artefact</p>	<p>Monument of national significance protected by law.</p>
<p>Condition of site or artefact</p>	<p>Due to freezing, bricks in the castle wall became crumbly at several points, and there is a risk that the wall of the north west bastion will tumble down if no intervention is undertaken.</p>
<p>State of preservation of the site/object</p>	<p>Szigetvár Castle has been the site of continuous reconstruction works during the past 5 to 6 years. At the same time, however, the complete restoration of the monument complex and the introduction of modern cultural and tourist facilities require major additional funds, amounting, on the whole, to some HUF 2 billion. Based on preliminary discussions it is foreseen that available European Union funds for 2007–2008 would probably cover the complete implementation of the Szigetvár Castle project.</p> <p>The castle walls and bastions, especially the north west and south west bastions, are in danger of tumbling down. Their restoration and presentation appropriate to the historical site in question is an urgent task.</p> <p>The utilization of the site is primarily the responsibility of Király & Partners Kft., the maintainer of the castle. The use of the site is greatly hampered by reconstruction works and/or failure to complete such works.</p>
<p>Policy to promote and enhance the appreciation of the site/property (detail actions already performed and required)</p>	<p>“It took a miracle for the Habsburg Empire to survive and this miracle happened exactly in Szigetvár. This is where it was finally settled whether the majority of Europe would, for many centuries, come under the rule of the Cross or the Crescent.” (Excerpt from a letter by Richelieu, Chief Minister of Louis XIII of France)</p>

	<p>The historic past of Szigetvár Castle, known all over Europe, represents a marketing value the exploitation of which could, for instance, be compared to that of the European Swimming Championships hosted by Hungary in the summer of 2002, where the finals were regularly preceded by television broadcasts of the then ongoing top programme (ROMBARÁT Nap – THE DAY OF CASTLE RUINS) offered in the castle.</p> <p>Similarly, Hungarian broadcasters – such as Duna TV, which uses satellite broadcasting and is thus accessible all over the world, has regular programmes about the castle. These include programmes about artist Ignác Konrád, thanks to his Paris-based daughter, Hilda Konrád. The works of Ignác Konrád depict the epic struggle of the heroes of Szigetvár: their altruistic sacrifice, the death of Suleiman and Zrínyi, as well as the heroism of the defenders are all viewed by Konrád as heroic acts in world history; he emphasises the role <i>Propugnaculum Christianitatis (Defender of Christianity)</i>.</p> <p>Despite current ongoing construction works, the monument complex maintains efforts to stage artistic and scientific events with national or international relevance in a wide range of fields and domains.</p> <p>The complete restoration and reconstruction of the castle walls and bastions, the full excavation of the ‘inner castle’ and its reconstruction up to the first storey, as well as the landscaping of the castle courtyard, the re-arrangement of the museum, the landscaping of the surrounding protected area, the enrichment of the town park with entertainment facilities and the erection of an open-air stage are all envisaged actions in a future project.</p> <p>Along with the above monument restoration works and communal development and with a view to providing the necessary financial resources thereto, the one-time tourist hotel’s reconstruction is heading towards completion, and a castle (scale-model) park is planned to be created in the courtyard.</p> <p>The castle park, with the help of outdoor mock-ups, is foreseen to present the evolution and development of the Hungarian border stronghold system as well as mediaeval castles and towns connected to Suleiman and Zrínyi. As a result of the implementation of this major project, the castle should, by means of its facilities, the exhibition material to be displayed, and the development of an adjacent outdoor area, be capable of representing the European relevance of the historic past of the castle and can therefore become one of the most significant demonstration sites of Hungarian history.</p>
Cultural exchanges and networking	<p>The international cultural programmes organised in the castle are first and foremost associated with the so-called Zrínyi Days, which look back on a tradition of a century and are held every year.</p> <p>Events therefore include, among others, the display of the works produced in the ‘Finnish-Hungarian creative camp’, the cooking contest between the master chefs of twin towns, international chorus concerts, and other events linked to Finnish, Croatian, Romanian, German and Turkish twin town relations (e.g. performances by the Trabzoni Mehter Janicsár Band or the concert of the Eppingen Percussion Ensemble).</p>

Heritage and creative activities	See section 'Policy to promote...'
Sources and level of finance	<p>The budget of the castle is financed from public funds and revenues generated from museum tickets and souvenirs sold in the museum shop.</p> <p>To cater for additional funds, the maintainer organisation has submitted an application under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the establishment of a guest house and a restaurant as well as for the creation of wellness facilities. The revenues realised from these operations are to contribute to the maintenance of the castle.</p>
Activities taken/planned to heighten the profile and representativeness of the site	<p>The maintainers of the castle accord high priority to intensifying social dialogue about the castle. The town portal is scheduled to host an Internet forum, where local residents and actually anyone who feels committed to the preservation of the castle will be able take part in public discussions, make their views heard and propose suggestions.</p>