

The 7 Most Endangered 2016

Project Fact Sheet

<u>Project Title</u>	Patarei Sea Fort
<u>Location</u>	Tallinn, Estonia
<u>Initial input date</u>	08.2018
<u>Current status</u>	Post appraisal follow-up
<u>Latest update</u>	28.08.2018

Summary, status, prognosis

The restoration of Patarei is important for heritage and urban planning reasons. In view of its current state and scale restoration will be complicated and costly. The Authorities favour selling the site and buildings to the private sector for wider development hoping this will solve the financial problems. The report highlighted the risks of such an approach notably to the heritage components and put forward an alternative keeping the main control under public control. Much preparation work is necessary before any action and this is not widely accepted by the Authorities. More recently the Authorities have reinforced the preservation conditions, requiring restoration before construction of any new buildings. Also, a new Government potential tenant for Patarei has been identified – in effect breaking the private sale monopoly by allowing other users. Some progress but hard won and the major risks remain.

Classification: **C Slow progress**

Basic data

Nominator:

Mrs Helle-Silvia Solnask. Vice-chair Estonian Heritage Society (EHS).

Brief description:

Conserve, restore, develop and put into use an historically important building complex comprising a former fort and its site.

Owner:

The Estonian State.

Administrator:

The State Real Estate Ltd. (SRE) operates for the State as effective promoter / administrator. It is under the Ministry of Public Administration.

Context, description.

The Patarei Sea Fort is adjacent to the capital city Tallinn and situated directly on the coast. It was completed in 1840 under the Russian occupation to defend the entry to St. Petersburg and was also defensible from the land side. In 1880 the fort was converted to military barracks and continued operating thus until 1920. Modifications to the buildings were made adapting to the new use. Following Estonian independence in 1920, the buildings were converted to a prison including a prison hospital. During the turbulent years of World War II, Estonia was occupied by the Soviets then the Germans before the Soviets returned and Estonia became part of the USSR. Many important Estonians were interred in this prison and some executed including numerous Jews. The prison thus has a strong emotional link for the Estonians. In 2005 the prison was closed and has since been neglected and become seriously rundown and unsafe in parts with only limited access. NGOs help with some basic maintenance and organise visits to the site on an *ad hoc* basis but this has recently been discontinued by the Authorities.

The Patarei Sea Fort is an important architectural and historical monument now formally protected by the State. It is considered the best-preserved fort in Estonia despite having been changed over the years to adapt to the new uses, notably for a prison.

The Administration's proposal is to sell the site and the fort buildings to a private developer and has established a zoning plan to control this development which in theory protects the heritage value of the Patarei fort. No serious interest has been shown by the private sector so far.

Issues, problems, threats.

The virtual abandonment of the complex has meant that it continues to deteriorate particularly as the roof is in poor condition and in some cases absent. Dampness from the marine environment and through the foundations has also seriously damaged the structure. Immediate short- term protective measures and repairs are essential.

The latest studies on the buildings' state were undertaken over 10 years ago and with the further deterioration since, the knowledge of the building condition is poor and inadequate to plan with any confidence for any restoration work.

The SRE and the State's proposal to sell the site to the private sector is considered a major risk as it is clearly not commercially viable, particularly if the heritage components are restored as currently required. These heritage components are at risk.

Very little firm data exists on the detailed scope and extent of the restoration of the existing buildings and their potential new uses. More work is required on these issues.

Available suitable finance is an ever-present concern.

Status pre-mission

Numerous discussions have taken place on the possible development of the site. It is in a desirable residential area and situated close to the recently modernised Sea plane hangars as a Maritime Museum which is a fine example to follow. The State through the SRE still plans to sell the site for development and to rely on the Zoning Plan to guide any development including protecting the Fort's heritage. The State has commissioned an outline scheme to show the potential for development with restoration of the fort and two new blocks in the grounds of mixed residential and business offices with 9000 m2 floor space. Heritage Groups are keen to preserve and re-establish as much as possible of the original fort and have contributed to the key discussion on the Zoning Plan, in particular to limit the new developments. Discussions have taken place with potential users of the Fort building including the War Museum which is keen to relocate from its current inadequate location in Tallinn.

Summary EN/EIBI mission recommendations, action programme:

The Technical report was issued in November 2016 (available on the EN website).

Site visits and discussions were held notably with the Ministry of Public Administration, the SRE and the Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage Board.

The report confirmed the importance of restoring the Fort and accepted the pragmatic idea of some further development and multi-functional use in order to facilitate this restoration.

Concerns were expressed on several technical issues such as the lack of recent credible data on the buildings' condition and the urgent need to protect the building and notably to repair the roof.

The most serious concern was on the manner in which the development was to be implemented with the site and buildings to be sold to the private sector for development. This approach as proposed was considered very unlikely to succeed as it was not viable commercially. The alternative was that the developer would omit or delay the costly heritage components.

The financial viability was reviewed with broad assumptions being made on costs and benefits which showed that a large grant component was essential to provide any form of viability.

Recommendations were made if the sale to the private sector were still to be adopted; essentially to protect the heritage components and to reduce the inherent risks by better preparation. A Steering Committee was proposed to ensure better cooperation between the interested parties including selected NGOs and the public, a perceived weakness.

The preferred option proposed was that the Authorities retain overall control of the development with perhaps some role for the private sector. Further preparatory work is essential prior to implementation. This would include studies of the existing state of the buildings and research into potential uses with appropriate market and feasibility studies. Grant finance should be sought from EU sources or otherwise. A more controlled development would result, implying a more complicated role for the Administration but should result in a greater chance of a successful outcome for all.

Progress on recommendations and latest status

The report, its conclusions and recommendations were well received by the Nominator and these were noted by the Administration.

In order to clarify and support the report's message, letters were sent to the relevant Ministers before it was issued and subsequently these were followed up by the Nominator (EHS).

The effect has been rather limited in that it is still the intention to sell the site to the private sector. However, the State has acknowledged the concerns about the heritage value of the Fort and has required that the heritage restoration must be undertaken before any new development. Also, that Patarei must be open to the Public. The sale is still proving difficult as was predicted in the report and the SRE is beginning to modify its previous optimistic attitude.

A public petition was launched by EHS and Kalaranna Patarei, an interested NGO, with EN support to require Parliament to address the problems of Patarei. This resulted in high level discussions and the demonstration of popular support (over 1000 petitioners).

The Ministry of Justice has decided to create a "Centre of Communist Crimes" to be housed in Patarei (5000 m²) and an international design competition is in hand.

The recommended Steering Committee has not been created. Only limited repairs have been undertaken and the recommended studies have not been carried out.

Impact of EIB/EN intervention

Nominator's Comments:

The general opinion is that the EN/EIB-I intervention drew attention to the problems associated with a direct sale and certainly made the Government and responsible Ministers consider other options before selling the complex. It also helped communicate to the public the issues and problems and thus increased the pressure on the Authorities. The contacts and discussions with Ministers were handicapped by numerous changes with three different Ministers in charge – every time some small understanding and progress seem to be achieved, the Minister changed!

On the positive side as a product of the “7 ME..” initiative, the authorities have agreed that after any overall sale the historical part must be restored prior to the construction of new buildings and an agreed time frame will be included. It was also stipulated that Patarei must be open to the public. Also the Ministry of Justice decision to house a Centre of Communist Crimes at Patarei is positive.

Despite being clear from the start that the “7 ME..” programme was not a funding scheme, a possible reason why the advice given was not followed was that the Authorities expected or hoped for some form of financial assistance. The SRE was always confident that any sale would succeed without problems but their enthusiasm is now diminishing – exactly as the report predicted.

In conclusion, the EN/EIB-I intervention greatly helped to move things in the right direction; the media often reacted, the entire government including the Prime Minister got involved in trying to resolve the problems. Yet the advice given was not really followed although some recommendations have been included as conditions in any future sale. Some hope remains for Patarei thanks greatly to the mission. The EHS has been more noticed by the decision makers.

Appraisal Team's Comments:

The mission was productive with key meetings arranged with the responsible Ministers and their teams thanks to the efforts of the nominator EHS. The report's conclusions were well accepted by all except the responsible Ministry who took note but persisted in continuing with the site sale. The impact of the mission was probably enhanced by letters being sent to the two Ministers directly after the mission rather than waiting for the full report.

More recently, some progress in enhancing the safeguards on the heritage components is evident. Time will tell if the wider messages and advice of the report will be adopted.

Very positive support from the Nominator (the Estonian Heritage Society).

Lessons learned:

- Patarei is an important heritage complex in urgent need of attention. The initiative was therefore worthwhile and necessary, being of considerable national interest.
- An important reason for the success so far has been the very professional dynamic follow-up by the Nominator, the Estonian Heritage Society. This ensured good high-level access and mature sensible discussions – even if not fully successful. Also a continuing dialogue was established with some advisory follow-up role.
- Sending letters directly to Ministers following the meetings was a good reminder for action, although not immediately effective.
- As with many heritage projects the issues are complex, being part technical, certainly financial and very political. A long time-frame and patient consistency is essential.
- Follow-up post appraisal has helped support progress.

<u>Data on inputs & timing</u>	<u>Dates, Participants</u>
Appraisal:	
Nomination form submitted	July 2015
Project selected as 7 ME:	March 2016
Questionnaire from EIBI	June 2016
Response to questionnaire	July 2016
Appraisal mission	17 - 20 September 2016
Participants:- EN - EIB Institute	Piet Jaspaert, EN vice president Patrizia Valle, EN Scientific Council's Architect Peter Bond, consultant
Technical report issued	November 2016
Follow-up:	
Request for progress report	July 2018
Response on progress	August 2018
Follow-up visits	No technical visits. The 7 ME committee visited in 2017 and discussed the project at Ministerial level.
Participants: EN EIB Institute	na na
Report on follow-up visit	na
Fact sheet prepared by	Peter Bond