



Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic

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cesty, state organisation
Prvního pluku 367/5
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Your letter reference

Our reference
ref. no. 9417/2000

Responsibility of /ext.
Mgr. Vajčner/434

In Prague on
8. 12. 2004

As the competent authority of the state administration in the area of state heritage protection, the Ministry of Culture has hereby issued the following

decision:

In compliance with section 2 of State Heritage Protection Act no. 20/1987 Coll., as amended, the Ministry of Culture hereby **declares** the **group of railway bridges** on the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov railway line in Prague consisting of 1) the railway bridge with five openings located at railway km 3.390 of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov railway line with a total bridge span of 38.60 m, 2) the railway bridge with one opening located at railway km 3.415 of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov railway line across Vyšehradská Street, 3) the railway bridge with eight openings located at railway km 3.470 of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov railway line with a total bridge span of 69.0 m, 4) the railway bridge with four openings located at railway km 3.545 of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov railway line with a total bridge span of 77.5 m and 5) the railway bridge with three openings located at railway km 3.706 of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov railway line with a total bridge span of 261.05 m to constitute a cultural monument.

Justification

The Ministry of Culture commenced proceedings on declaring the group of railway bridges on the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov railway line a cultural monument on the basis of a proposal received from the Prague Heritage Protection Office (from 1.1.2003, the National Heritage Institute – the Territorial Office for the City of Prague). The Prague Heritage Institute stated in its proposal that the bridging of the Vltava River was undertaken between 1900 and 1901, at the same time as the construction of the Prague-Vyšehrad station and Fanta's Main Railway Station building. The viaduct represents a highly valuable architectural and technical structure built in the spirit of the late classicist style and smoothly transitioning into the architectural type and morphology of railway line structures dating from the 1950s and 1960s. The bridge's design makes it an excellent technical structure whose history documents the development and continuity of this type of construction in our country at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

The Heritage Protection Department of the Municipal Authority of the City of Prague issued a statement in the proceedings on the basis of section 3, subsection 1 of State Heritage Protection Act no. 20/1987 Coll. In its statement dated 28.6.2002, ref. no. MHMP 55

253/02/Poš, it recommended that the given group of bridges be declared a cultural monument. The justification of this statement especially stated that the railway bridge on the railway line between Vyšehrad and Smíchov, completed in 1901, had replaced an original bridge structure built between 1870 and 1872.

In compliance with section 3, subsection 2 of State Heritage Protection Act no. 20/1987 Coll., the owner of the property and the authorised representative of the property owner, i.e. Czech Railways, a state organisation, nábreží L. Svobody 1222/12, 110 15, Prague 1 or Czech Railways inc., nábreží L. Svobody 1222/12, 110 15, Prague 1 and the Railroad Infrastructure Administrator, a state organisation, Prvního pluku 367/5, 186 00, Prague 8 were informed of the proceedings by means of letters dated 23.4.2002 and 16.10.2003, both ref. no. 9417/2000, and were given the opportunity to issue a statement in relation to the submitted proposal. In its statement dated 11.5.2002, ref. no. 488/2002 – O13, the owner stated its disagreement with declaring the property cultural monuments, especially stating that any declaration of the given bridge structures as cultural monuments would undoubtedly require the adoption of a special approach to the administration thereof, whereby the bridges in question constitute an integral part of Czech Railways' technical infrastructure and in particular must comply with the demanding conditions pertaining to the safe operation of rail traffic. The owner further stated that it was of the opinion that this did not involve any especially significant bridge structures from the point of view of civil engineering, perhaps with the exception of the structure located at km 3.706. In its statement dated 16.10.2003, reference: 33108/03 – OP, the owner further pointed to the fact that the company SUDOP Praha, a.s. had been charged with compiling a land-use/technical study for the "Optimisation of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov" track section in the month of August 2003. Part of this study will also involve an examination of the bridging of the Vltava, including the variant of a bridge at the site of the existing line and the variant of a bridge to the north of the existing track in accordance with the valid town planning map of the City of Prague as approved by Resolution 10/05 of the City Council of the City of Prague dated 9.9.1999 and by Ordinance no. 32/1996 Coll. on the binding section of the town planning map of the settlement formation of the City of Prague. The Ministry of Culture enabled the owner of the property to issue a statement on the basis of the decision and on the method of ascertaining it or to suggest an amendment thereto prior to the decision being issued in the spirit of section 33, subsection 2 of Administrative Proceedings Act no. 71/1967 Coll (the Administrative Procedure Code), as amended. The owner of the property viewed the file on 29.4.2004 and stated that it required a deadline of 30.6.2004, at which time it would enter any further statements or other evidence into the file. The Ministry of Culture was further informed that the land-use/technical study for the optimisation of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov track section was undergoing the comments procedure, which involved the stipulation of the variant for bridging the Vltava River at the site of the subject of the proceedings pertaining to the declaration of a cultural monument. If the aforementioned comments procedure was not completed by 30.6.2004, especially on the part of any third parties, the owner would request an extension of the deadline, by which time it pledged to issue its statement or propose any further evidence.

In the statements dated 22.6.2004, reference: 7951/04 – SSP, (which was supplemented with a statement by the Transport Department of the Municipal Authority of the City of Prague dated 6.5.2004, ref. no. MHMP – 54703/2004/DOP – O2/Re, on the submitted land-use/technical study for the "Optimisation of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov" track section, the statement of the Municipal District of Prague 2 dated 10.5.2004, reference: OÚR/415, MS – 3/112, on the land-use/technical studies for the "Optimisation of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov track section" and the "Optimisation of the Prague Hloubětín – Prague Main Station track section", the preliminary statement of the Environment Department at the Municipal Authority of the City of Prague dated 25.5.2004, ref. no. MHMP – 054624/2004/001/OZP/VI, on the material pertaining to the "Optimisation of the Prague

Main Station – Prague Smíchov” track section” (inclusive) and the statements of the Development Department of the City of Prague dated 26.5.2004, ref. nos. 4459/2004 and 4460/2004, on the land-use/technical study for the “Optimisation of the Prague Hostivař to Prague Main Station track section (inclusive)” and the land-use/technical study for the “Optimisation of the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov” track section (inclusive)” and of 23.11.2004, reference: 6564/04 – OP, the owner further stated that the Railway Infrastructure Administrator, a state organisation – The Prague Construction Administration had requested TOP NOC, s.r.o. to compile documentation resolving the static load assessment of the steel bridges and also including a statement on the deterioration of the service life of the bridges based on the wear on their individual elements, the proposal of any necessary repairs to secure their use for the operated loads proposed in the land-use/technical study, any problems associated with the requirements for increasing the bridge headroom under the bridge structures and the compilation of an anti-corrosion program. This documentation gave rise to a number of essential measures that have to be implemented in order to maintain the operability of the group of bridges, i.e. the realisation of repairs that prevent the occurrence of a critical state in any of the bridge structures. As such, the realisation of any repairs and the maintenance of the structures must be further enabled and the state of the structure after the completed repairs must comply with any declaration of the property as a cultural monument.

At its 24th session, which took place on 11.9.2002, the matter was assessed by the Immovable Cultural Monument Section of the Committee of the Ministry of Culture involved in evaluating proposals for declaring property a cultural monument and applications for the annulment of the declaration of property as a cultural monument and it recommended declaring the property a cultural monument with the justification that it is a unique representative of a good quality technical structure within the context of the city core, which it has likewise influenced.

The Ministry of Culture evaluated all the submitted evidence individually and within its mutual contexts and decided to declare the group of bridge structures on the Prague Main Station – Prague Smíchov line a cultural monument as has been set out in the statement to this decision. The given set of properties objectively displays the characteristics of a cultural monument as per section 2, subsection 1 of the cited Act no. 20/1987 Coll. and as such meets the conditions, under which the Ministry of Culture declares an item or set of items a cultural monument. This conclusion has been borne out by the aforementioned statements of the authority and the locally appropriate heritage protection organisations and the statement of the Committee of the Ministry of Culture. The aforementioned facts have also been borne out by the publication of the matter in expert literature, for example in the book “Prague’s Bridges” by Jan Fischer – Ondřej Fischer, Prague 1985, or in the register of “Technical Monuments in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, Volume III, part P-S”, Prague 2003, pp. 242 and 243: “In 1900-1901, a new two-rail, truss bridge was therefore built out of cast steel with three bays above the river with a span of 72 m and four smaller openings away from the river bed. The reconstruction of the railway bridge under Vyšehrad undoubtedly became the most remarkable event in the bridge construction of the day. The removal of the bridge and its replacement with a new one was a superb piece of Czech technology: the method of reconstruction was proposed by the Prášil Brothers’ bridge-building factory in Libeň in such a way so that the three large bays of the semi-parabolic panels were deposited on newly established, brick-lined columns, which were able to be constructed in the river without disrupting the ship or rail transport. The main bridge designer was the engineer Jan Kolář.” The Ministry of Culture also received a statement from the Club for Old Prague, Mostecká 1, 118 00, Prague 1, dated 18.9.2003, that stated, amongst other things, that the bridge structure has been preserved in a somewhat untouched state from a historical point of view and that its demolition and replacement with a new structure would be to the detriment of Prague with regard to the loss of yet another interesting structure dating from the period of the great development of Czech engineering work.

With regard to the owner's objections, it is possible to state that the subject of the proceedings undertaken in compliance with section 3 of State Heritage Protection Act no. 20/1987 Coll., as amended, involved ascertaining whether the property in question bears or does not bear the characteristics of a cultural monument in compliance with section 2 of the cited Act no. 20/1987 Coll. or whether the conditions designated by law have not been met for the declaration of the property as a cultural monument. It is also further possible to state in relation to the aforementioned statement that implemented modern interventions have admittedly reduced the heritage value of the group of structures to a certain extent, but that they have not been performed at an extent and a significance that would have fundamentally disrupted the overall heritage value of the structures. We hereby further state that the declaration of the properties as a cultural monument has not been conceived as the unilateral limitation of the ownership rights without any compensation, because the State Heritage Protection Act offers a series of facultative and obligatory compensations bound to the preservation and maintenance of the cultural monument, whereby declaring a structure a cultural monument does not prevent any work on its maintenance, repair, reconstruction and so on, but on the contrary provides an impulse to increase the care for the given property. From the point of view of the preservation of the structure and its connection with the nearby structures, the preservation of the bridge is desirable even at the price of the reconstruction of the bedding of the rails and the eventual reinforcement of any first-order elements. It is a matter of course that the further use of the bridge will require more demanding maintenance and monitoring of the structure than would be the case with a new structure.

On the basis of the aforementioned, the Ministry of Culture has reached the conclusion that the given group of bridge structures constitutes evidence of the technical work from the period of the greatest flourishing of Czech technology at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The static scheme of semi-parabolic girders on a two-track bridge is not overly common and the details and structures that have been preserved without any fundamental disruptive intervention are also of value. The group of bridges also plays an important role within the urban contexts due to its connection to the city, especially on the Vyšehrad side, where the access from the footbridges and the raised body of the system of bridges above the city streets has been fully preserved. The actual layout of the bridges has also become interesting in contrast to the Vyšehrad Cliff, the tunnel and the course of the embankment. The place is a unique node with preserved engineering structures from the period of 100 years ago and an important connection to the structure of the capital city. The bridge now finds itself in a somewhat unchanged form: it has merely been maintained and modifications for the electrification of the track have also been undertaken. The maintenance took place in the classic manner, whereby the replaced parts were also rivetted at the level of the lower bridge struts in the 1980s.

The high heritage value of the group of bridges is also borne out by its construction system and very high level of preservation, including the details and the associated structures. Its positive perception in the projections in the direction of Vyšehrad is the result not only of changes in aesthetic opinion, but also of the later visual poverty of newer bridge structures. The bridge is a horizontal plane dynamized by the waves of the tops of the parabolas of the upper strip and forms an interesting grouping along with the two vertical spires of the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Vyšehrad.

The drawing of the scope of the cultural monument constitutes an integral part of this decision.

Instructions

The general regulations pertaining to administrative proceedings (section 44 of State Heritage Protection Act no. 20/1987 Coll.) do not apply to this decision. This decision will enter into force as of the date of its delivery.

Mgr. Petra Ulbrichová
Head of the Unit for the Protection of Cultural Monuments
at the Heritage Conservation Department of the Ministry of
Culture

Copy to: Prague City Hall, Heritage Department
The National Heritage Institute, the Territorial Office in the Capital City Prague
The National Heritage Institute, head office
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