

A Participatory Approach to Developing an Integrated and Sustainable Management Plan: The Case of Regensburg

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Abstract: There has been a fundamental shift in the societal and academic perception of cultural heritage and the role of local communities since the UNESCO member states adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) over half a century ago. Initially characterized by a linear perspective focused on conserving objects in their original materiality, this understanding has gradually broadened and evolved into a holistic and systemic conceptualization of cultural heritage. The paper argues that contemporary challenges, such as pandemics, armed conflicts, and the climate crisis, require dynamic and adaptive management strategies for World Heritage sites. However, the formal role of World Heritage site management remains poorly defined, lacking detailed descriptions of the competencies and responsibilities necessary to address these evolving challenges effectively. This contribution critically examines the requirements for modern site management. It emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive approach that includes not only tangible and intangible heritage but also all the elements of the interlinked heritage system, including context, actors, processes, etc. It outlines the essential roles, personal qualities, and skills required for managers to cope with the complexity of heritage management today. The article provides valuable insights into the Regensburg World Heritage Management Plan as an example of sustainable and inclusive cultural heritage management. It emphasizes an action-oriented, participatory approach to the management of historic urban landscapes that effectively reconciles conservation with sustainable urban development. The case study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary coordination, stakeholder collaboration and capacity building tailored to the current site management challenges. By offering a practical and adaptable approach, it serves as a replicable template for other World Heritage sites wishing to implement sustainable, inclusive, and adaptive management practices.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage; Site Management; UNESCO World Heritage Site; Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof; Integrated Management Plan; Participatory Approach; Sustainable Development; Current Challenges.

Introduction

A World Heritage designation affects many more people than just local communities, where homeowners, businesses, retailers, etc., are usually involved in decision-making. Others are potentially affected by the changes that accompany the inscription (either primary or secondary), such as the growth of tourism and the interest generated to participate in and shape this development, e.g., through tour guides, and educational institutions such as museums, libraries, and archives (Göttler & Ripp, 2017). Thus, Gustafsson and Ripp state that conflicts can arise, for instance, as a “result of different needs of temporary (e.g., tourists) and permanent (inhabitants) users of the city. World Heritage listing can lead to significant changes in the urban fabric and a range of conflicts between temporary and permanent users of the city” (2022, p. 86).

Such conflicts between the different interests of stakeholders often occur as a side effect of transformation processes (Ripp & Daniel, 2023). While transformation processes in

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the past were more gradual and slower, the current challenges are intensifying the dynamics of change (Cave, 2022). These are the significant issues of our time, such as climate and environment, energy and economy, security, and defense, which also change the conditions for heritage conservation (Avrami & Mason, 2019). In the face of growing pressure to change, the authorities responsible for cultural and heritage preservation face the dilemma of balancing the preservation and adaptation of the built heritage.

Of those current challenges, tackling climate change is the most pressing task of our time. According to scientific studies, there is no alternative to the immediate implementation of climate measures (IPCC, 2023), as climate damage is already having a negative impact on biodiversity and human well-being (Cave, 2022). According to the World Economic Forum's current Global Risks Report, five of the ten short-term and six of the ten long-term risks are climate or environmentally relevant (2023). Richardson et al. (2023) state that the Earth has already exceeded six of the nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can safely operate and continue to exist. Given these undeniable facts, the word "climate change" is cynical. We are in the midst of a tangible climate crisis.

Nevertheless, climate protection and climate adaptation repeatedly encounter resistance in politics and society, as the transformation processes involved mean a change in the reality of life as we know it. Even if this change improves the quality of life in the future, it is associated with a loss of stability and security in the present. In cities with a significant cultural heritage, the pressure to change, which is already painful for many people, also comes up against a dense and valuable stock of monuments. How far can a responsible adaptation of built heritage go? Where is the boundary between conservation and adaptation? The two-pronged strategy of tackling the climate crisis by preventing and reducing CO₂ emissions and by adapting to the negative consequences of climate change involves an immense amount of resources (financial, human, spatial, etc.). This gives rise to a large number of possible conflicts on site and in practice as many climate change adaptation measures that would help against increasing heat, for instance, as more blue or green infrastructure (City of Regensburg, 2012, p. 68-69), compete with the requirements of monument preservation for historic facades, square designs, and entire cityscapes. Built protection against flooding can impair the authenticity and integrity of a historic cityscape. Conflicts of use also arise with natural resources such as water. A typical dilemma is, for example, the demand for an intensification of hydropower as a renewable energy source while at the same time improving water quality and maintaining the ecological continuity of watercourses (Keuneke & Dumont, 2011). Many cities are implementing the 'sponge city' concept to counteract the more frequent heavy rainfall events and more extended periods of drought (Storch, 2023). However, unsealing and the increased use of green areas are hardly possible in many listed areas, such as historic squares with historic surface material (paving). Conflicts arise in historic urban landscapes regarding climate change prevention, particularly when implementing new energy technologies. While the city of Augsburg, for example, has to deal with ensuring the ecological continuity of watercourses when generating electricity, the towns of Regensburg and Hamburg sometimes debate whether or not PV systems may be installed on listed buildings' rooftops (Grosser, 2022). These examples show that the cultural heritage system is characterized by many legitimate interests and claims that tend to conflict and, therefore, need to be taken into account in modern site management.

This fundamental understanding was the starting point for the participatory development of the integrated World Heritage management plan for the Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof described in the second half of this article. The aim was to involve different interest groups and, if possible, to allow the general public to have a say in developing objectives, strategies, and concrete measures that address the World Heritage site of Regensburg. Moreover, as a point of reference, citizens clearly expressed their wish to play a role in the issues around World Heritage in Regensburg. Prior to this, it is essential to contextualize the systemic concept of cultural heritage used here, as it

serves as the basis for what we refer to as *contemporary site management*. Furthermore, the new requirements associated with it will be outlined.

Cultural heritage as a system

Cultural heritage is much more than built monuments and intangible cultural practices. Cultural heritage is a system comprising a considerable amount of elements, such as objects, processes, and a whole range of other entities, especially people (Ripp, 2022). These are sometimes active decision-makers and agents, occasionally passive components with a constitutive function for the cultural heritage system in any case. The preservation of cultural heritage would make little sense if the people who value cultural heritage, inhabit it, and fill it with life were excluded from this process. Without them, cultural heritage would be reduced to its physical substance. According to Sloggett and Scott (2023), there are three conditions for valorizing cultural heritage (Figure 1), considering both external threats and the importance of local communities that give teleological meaning to preserving and protecting cultural assets. Thus, there has to be ...

- (1) an existing tradition of inheritance from the past to the present, combined with a desire to preserve it for the future (= idea of inheritance).
- (2) subjects who value the possibility of preserving and passing on the inheritance (= valorizing community).
- (3) an awareness of risk, combined with concepts for the protection and future-orientated preservation of value (= idea of risk).



Figure 1. Three conditions for the valorization of cultural heritage
(own representation according to Sloggett & Scott, 2023, p.10)

Since UNESCO member states adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) over half a century ago, a new understanding of cultural heritage has evolved. The answer to why (values) and what (attributes) should be preserved has changed over the years from a more material and object-based approach via various intermediate steps to a systemic, holistic perspective on cultural heritage. Progressively, there has been a focus on local communities and their differentiated uses of cultural heritage (Kalman, 2014; Ripp, 2022).

Such *New Heritage Approaches* address the complex challenges facing the collective heritage in the 21st century, such as unsustainable urban growth, climate change, mass tourism, social and environmental conflict, and the erosion of links between society and nature. These approaches are primarily about rethinking why heritage sites are designated and whom they serve and ensuring they provide meaningful narratives supporting their conservation. They also focus on addressing diversity and inequality and consider gender, ethnicity, racialization, and socio-economic status within the

broader geopolitical landscape. They aim to create dynamic, inclusive heritage sites that integrate natural and cultural dimensions, both tangible and intangible, while promoting the decolonization and reinterpretation of heritage sites. Proactive conservation strategies should link heritage education and social participation to encourage citizen participation, empowerment, and inclusive decision-making. Furthermore, integrating heritage conservation into spatial planning through participatory methods is crucial for sustainable and equitable heritage management (OurWorldHeritage, 2021).

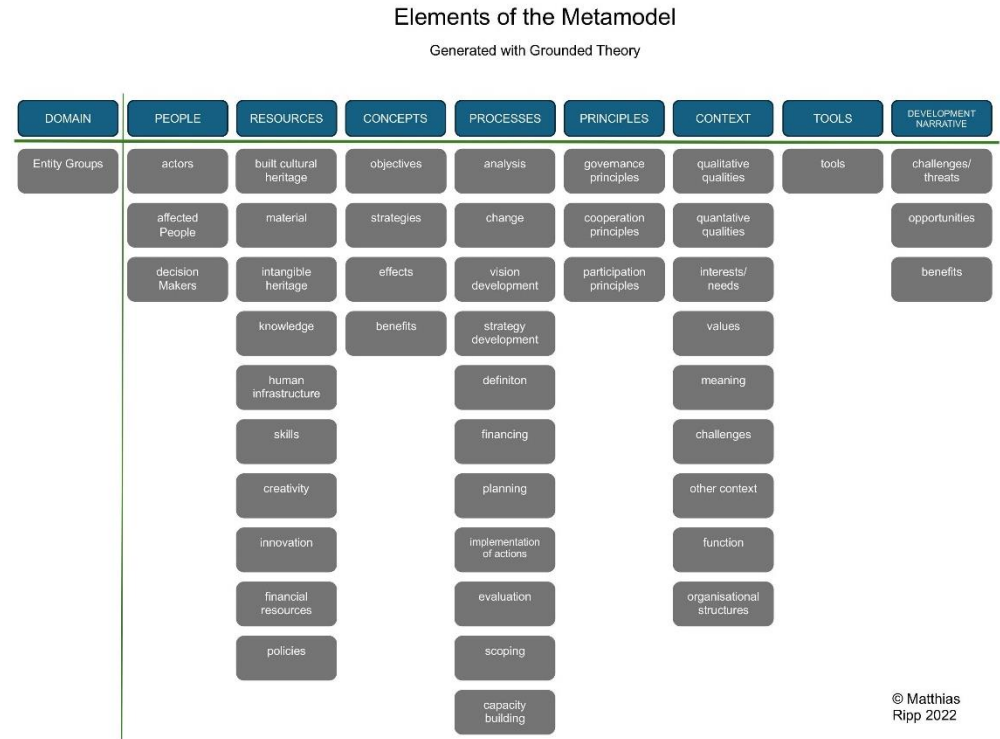


Figure 2. The elements of the metamodel. © Matthias Ripp

Cultural heritage is a system and a process, i.e., it is much more than a collection of physical objects. A holistic understanding of cultural heritage encompasses all elements of the cultural heritage system, both tangible and intangible aspects (Fig. 2). This change in perspective on cultural heritage gives local communities a more active role and embraces a variety of actors, different mindsets and abilities, and the fundamental position that cultural heritage should benefit everyone (Ripp & Hauer, 2017). This modern interpretation calls for far-reaching changes in the cultural heritage sector to create an interactive space involving all relevant stakeholders to accrue the most significant possible benefit. The acknowledgment of this reciprocal relationship between cultural heritage and local communities marks a shift in the understanding of cultural heritage that is different from the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which adopted a materialistic approach and considered only built monuments, ensembles, and sites as cultural heritage (UNESCO, 1972).

The 2005 Faro Convention emphasizes that heritage preservation and sustainable use should foster human development and quality of life (Council of Europe, 2005). The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011) also underscores the importance of civil society as an actor. A modern understanding of cultural heritage is dynamic and holistic (Ripp, 2022; 2018). It considers cultural heritage a “social and political construct” encompassing places, artifacts, and cultural expressions that reflect our identity and deserve protection (Labadi & Logan, 2016, p. 2). To meet the challenges of today and ensure that the contribution of local communities is valued, bodies that

coordinate and integrate different processes and facilities are required (Ripp, 2020; Ringbeck, 2008). Administratively, interdisciplinary cooperation will be needed, and site managers will have to customize their requisite competency and ability.

New requirements for a modern site management

As already mentioned, the systemic conception of cultural heritage goes hand in hand with new requirements for site management, as it incorporates all system elements in a holistic approach. Site managers, therefore, need a completely different skill set than if it were only a matter of preserving the original materiality of physical objects. At the same time, this also increases their range of roles and tasks—as shown below.

Roles and responsibilities in site management

Site management comprises numerous different roles. Coordinating these roles within the broader understanding of cultural heritage involves measures beyond protection and conservation. Site managers are not explicitly mentioned in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972); however, they are considered critical users of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and are linked to the preparation of the tentative lists, and regular reporting (UNESCO, 2023b), among other things. In 2006, the German Commission for UNESCO proposed full-time coordination positions for large and complex World Heritage sites in Germany (Ringbeck, 2008). Accordingly, these positions would account for strategic development, monitoring, scientific studies, cooperative networking, information dissemination, participation, conflict resolution, fundraising, and public relations. Yet, despite this wide range of responsibilities, a coordinating position has no precisely defined job description. In practice, six primary responsibilities have been identified through the on-site collaborative experiences of specialists: coordination, leadership, mediation, communication, moderation, and innovation. Site managers are called to coordinate a variety of interests and actors, manage projects and processes, mediate conflicts, create and disseminate narratives, moderate events, and develop innovative strategies to handle current challenges. As such, their roles have been differentially conceived as follows:

- (1) Coordination
 - Managing projects and communicating inter-divisionally
 - Monitoring project implementation and applying for funding
 - Networking with cooperation partners
- (2) Leadership
 - Developing and supervising integrated projects
 - Creating strategic flow charts for project overviews
 - Presenting and promoting projects to decision-makers
- (3) Mediation
 - Negotiating and achieving consensus among actors with different interests
 - Developing long-term management plans and strategies
 - Communicating competently with a wide range of interest groups
- (4) Communication
 - Presenting and communicating heritage values and narratives
 - Implementing activities and operating visitor centers
 - Maintaining media partnerships and reviewing public relations
- (5) Moderation
 - Organizing and conducting meetings and conferences
 - Documenting outcomes and netting the participation of political representatives
- (6) Innovation
 - Developing and applying innovative methods that address urban challenges
 - Adapting existing projects to changing requirements and conditions
 - Being open to continuous learning and best practices

The responsibilities in Coordination and Communication are of utmost importance. If and when needed, a site manager can always procure the expertise of specialists externally.

Essential abilities and competencies of site managers

Voices of Culture (2017) identifies several important abilities, including linguistic, technical, and digital ones, as well as learning capacities and social competencies, that come into force in site management depending on the situation and scope of application. The competencies and abilities from the report assist in determining many up-to-date site management requirements but are not comprehensive.

The Big Five Personality Model (Howard & Howard, 1995) is widely used in human resource management and recruitment. This model can be used to conclude what personality comfortably fits a position of responsibility in site management and whether that person can successfully carry out his / her role.

Table 1. The Big Five Personality Traits that Correlate to Site Management Roles (Column 1 based on Howard & Howard, 1995, pp. 4-7; Column 2 based on own observations)

Personality Traits	Highly valuable to the roles site managers have as
Extraversion	- Coordinators - Leaders - Communicators/Facilitators - Moderators
Self-assertion	- Mediators - Moderators - Leaders
Affability	- Mediators
Conscientiousness	- Leaders - Coordinators
Openness	- Innovators - Coordinators - Leaders - Communicators/Facilitators

Applying the Big Five personality model makes it possible to conceive of detailed professional roles. Here are some findings that are key to World Heritage site management (in reference to Table 1):

- (1) Extraversion and Self-assertion are decisive because they are linked to communication and social skills.
- (2) Openness is significant to the role of innovation.
- (3) Having a mildly affable profile is more advantageous than an extreme one.
- (4) Conscientiousness is particularly important for the leadership role; however, having an element of flexibility is also needed to be a competent innovator.

The personality traits of extraversion, self-assertion, and openness should be considered in the professional training, development, and selection of site managers. For instance, courses in capacity building, coaching, and mentoring could also foster the competencies and abilities required.

The case of Regensburg

The city of Regensburg has been endeavoring to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1989. The application was finally submitted in 2002. Following a partial amendment in 2004/2005, the World Heritage Committee considered the city's application. In July 2006, the Old Town of Regensburg with Stadthof was finally inscribed on the World Heritage List according to Criteria ii, iii and iv:

“Criterion (ii): The architecture of Regensburg represents the city's role as a medieval trading centre and its influence in the region north of the Alps. Regensburg was an important transition point on continental trade routes to Italy, Bohemia, Russia, and Byzantium. It also had multiple connections with the transcontinental Silk Roads. As such, the city exhibits an important interchange of cultural and architectural influences, which have shaped its urban landscape.

Criterion (iii): The Old Town of Regensburg bears an exceptional testimony to cultural traditions especially in the Holy Roman Empire, being the location for most of the assemblies of the Empire in the High Middle Ages. Regensburg also significantly contributed to more recent European history, being the seat of the Perpetual Assembly from 1663 to 1806. As a testimony to these functions, there are the remains of two imperial Palatine palaces from the 9th century and many other well-preserved historic buildings, which testify to the wealth and political importance of the community.

Criterion (iv): The Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof is an outstanding example of a central-European medieval trading town, which has well preserved its historical stages of development and which is an exceptional illustration of the development of commerce particularly from the 11th to 14th centuries.” (UNESCO, 2023a)

Since then, numerous steps have been taken by the city to maintain World Heritage status and protect the World Heritage area (Fig. 3). To this end, the World Heritage Coordination of the City of Regensburg has taken on tasks in the areas of coordination, monitoring, mediation, science, and exchange.



Figure 3. Mobile flooding protection in the area of the historic sausage kitchen / World Heritage Visitor Centre from 2013. © Bilddokumentation, Stadt Regensburg

Developing an integrated and sustainable management plan

The §108 Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention require establishing an effective management system to protect the so-called Outstanding Universal Value. “The purpose of a management system is to ensure the effective protection of the nominated property for present and future generations” (UNESCO, 2023b, p. 27). The Operational Guidelines do not provide any further concrete specifications regarding content, form, or scope of management plans as “an effective management system depends on the type, characteristics and needs of the nominated property and its cultural and natural context. Management systems may vary according to different cultural perspectives, available resources, and other factors. They may incorporate traditional practices, existing urban or regional planning instruments, and

other planning control mechanisms, both formal and informal. Impact assessments for proposed interventions are essential for all World Heritage properties" (UNESCO, 2023b, p. 27).

However, in addition to other common elements of an effective management system, the involvement of partners and stakeholders is explicitly mentioned. In this sense, the Regensburg model pursued a participatory approach in its development process.

Method and process

As there are no official, standardized guidelines and only a few recommendations on the structure and methodology of management plans, Regensburg developed its approach as a part of the EU project HerO (Heritage as Opportunity), which was mainly managed by the city. Nine European heritage cities worked together to develop and test the new approach in practice. From the outset, the focus was on protecting World Heritage sites and ensuring their sustainable development.

It was drawn up in a cooperative process involving numerous stakeholders to gain broad support, recognition, and approval for the Regensburg World Heritage Management Plan. The objectives of this approach included:

- raising awareness of the challenges and opportunities associated with the development of the historic old town through its World Heritage status
- coordinating the different interests of residents, users, and urban stakeholders while focusing on the priorities of the World Heritage Site
- developing well-planned and practical measures that consider the needs of the World Heritage site, the city, its residents, and its users.

This approach was based on an integrated strategy involving various professional groups and external stakeholders. Citizen participation was also included in the planning process from the outset. The involvement of higher-level administrative bodies such as the Government of the Upper Palatinate, the State Building Authority of the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, the Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure and Transport, and the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments served to coordinate the development of new projects and initiatives in cooperation with the relevant authorities. The aim was to streamline the procedure for obtaining financial support from national funding. In addition, the objective is to collect ideas and strategies and define concrete measures where possible. The implementation of these measures was planned for the coming years, depending on the available financial and human resources.

A participatory development process

An external office, led by the urban specialist Nils Scheffler, was commissioned to support the participatory creation of the integrated World Heritage management plan. It was tasked to draft the World Heritage management plan and involve relevant actors in creating the plan. As such, the office primarily raised awareness among key players about the World Heritage site and its requirements. Furthermore, it aimed to inform the World Heritage coordination and monument authorities of the concerns that actors had to integrate better the protection, preservation, and development of the Old Town of Regensburg with Stadthof and coordinate relevant measures and strategies.

Essential features of this engagement were the formation of the Management Plan Working Group (I) and the implementation of a World Heritage Dialogue with citizens (II).

(I) Management Plan Working Group

A wide range of actors were represented in the Management Plan Working Group, including various city administration departments, state authorities and public-

private institutions. Representatives of the public later also took part in the Working Group. Its primary objective was to bring together informally at a round table the various interests concerned with the World Heritage site and the continuing development of the Old Town. The Working Group was tasked to discuss, coordinate, and further develop the contents of the management plan prepared by the external office. To this end, the external office and the World Heritage Coordination Regensburg prepared and conducted ten, half-day Working Group meetings. These were broadly discursive in style and held for over two years.

(II) World Heritage Dialogue

A so-called World Heritage Dialogue was conducted to involve the public in the creation process. This took place over a weekend and was open to all interested citizens and actors. An information evening for the World Heritage management plan was held to update the public about the plan and to awaken their interest in the World Heritage Dialogue. Flyers about the World Heritage management plan and the World Heritage Dialogue were distributed, and an information stand was set up at the Christmas market in the Old Town. Furthermore, all City of Regensburg's Urban Development Forum members of the city's most influential associations and organizations were contacted and invited to the World Heritage Dialogue. The World Heritage management plan's areas of action were the focus of the World Heritage Dialogue, in which the public could discuss concrete proposals and develop solid measures for the Old Town. The World Heritage Dialogue occurred almost concurrently with the Management Plan Working Group's discussions on measures to take. To align the Working Group with the public dialogue, the Working Group sent "Project Partners" to the World Heritage Dialogue. The measures developed during the World Heritage Dialogue were examined by the Management Plan Working Group for their feasibility and decided upon with city officials. The outcomes were set down in writing, and the measures that would be incorporated into the management plan were explained. Written explanations were given for the measures that were not adopted. The outcomes of this process were sent to all participants in the public dialogue.

The external office received the outcomes from the Management Plan Working Group and public Dialogue and integrated them into the World Heritage management plan. At the closing meeting of the working group, attendees presented, voted upon, and adopted the final draft version of the management plan. A joint letter was signed by all actors recommending that the city council approve the management plan. This resolution was then also passed by the city council.

Lessons learned

Several factors were behind the lively culture of debate and the array of associations and NGOs that energetically committed themselves to the local issues concerning the Old Town of Regensburg (Freunde der Altstadt Regensburg e.V., 2016). The following aspects were decisive for this participative success:

- (1) The project was steered by an experienced external moderator who had the personal qualities to act as a moderator even in conflict-laden situations and, from the start, soundly guide the process design and process planning. The entire participation process could be tailored to local circumstances from the outset because of a broad application-based understanding and expertise of relevant methods and tools.
- (2) Key to the process design were format options (space, time, group size, setting, etc.) suitable for promoting trust between all project participants, allowing room for disputes, and involving the administration transparently and amenably.
- (3) From the outset, the process and the opportunities for involvement had already been communicated through supportive public relations work, a kick-off event

in the media, and personal contacts. This led to considerable interest and participation.

- (4) Implementing a "Project Partner Mentoring System" was key to overcoming existing administrative mistrust. Administrative employees from various fields were trained in their different roles (as moderators and specialists). Their incorporation into the entire process was instrumental in providing a connective link between management and the public.
- (5) Establishing a Working Group with the principal actors as an unofficial forum of exchange and coordination for preserving and developing the Old Town was also decisive. It allowed for the drawing up a coherent and jointly supported management plan and for a greater understanding among the actors of what the World Heritage site was all about and how the World Heritage could be positively dealt with within their purview.
- (6) Decisive, too, was the genuine and conscientious examination of the proposals from the public Dialogue and the openly available documentation as to how the proposals would be dealt with.

Stumbling blocks

Regensburg is not the only site where participation in World Heritage might draw little interest. Other World Heritage sites could face a similar issue when:

- (1) Administrative staff display an evident attitude that only specialists with relevant education can make a helpful contribution and/or that average citizens do not know what is good for the city.
- (2) Despite an elaborate process design involving external specialists, respective site managers cannot ensure a sustainably anchored and lasting implementation of the issue of participation within the administration (Ripp & Rodwell, 2018).
- (3) It is not clearly communicated where participation is possible and where it is not because decisions are most likely made by democratically legitimized boards (e.g., city councils), and the will of these boards at times develops a momentum of its own that differs considerably from the expressed wishes and needs of individual stakeholders and citizens.
- (4) There is no assurance that appropriate steps will actually be taken (Ripp & Rodwell, 2018) because, admittedly, underlying conditions, the on-site situation, and more can always change.

Conclusions

The Regensburg World Heritage Management Plan serves as a benchmark for similar endeavors. It goes beyond the guidelines in the German UNESCO Commission's publication 'Management Plans for World Heritage Sites - A Practical Guide.' The plan also incorporates findings from the URBACT II urban development network project HerO - Heritage as Opportunity, which involved nine historic cities in nine European countries. Led by the city of Regensburg, this network investigated the role of management plans in promoting the sustainable development of historic urban landscapes. The result is a practical and effective plan tailored to World Heritage cities. It emphasizes an action-oriented, interdisciplinary approach and sees the management plan as a dynamic process involving all relevant stakeholders at every stage. The Regensburg model is based on the following commonly defined principles and provides a blueprint for future management plans (City of Regensburg, 2012):

- Integrated approach: Regensburg's World Heritage Management Plan takes a holistic approach and emphasizes the need to strike a balance between the preservation of the historic cityscape and its future development to ensure sustainable urban growth. The plan goes beyond the physical preservation of the architectural heritage. It serves as a comprehensive framework for managing all aspects crucial to developing the World Heritage Site as a vibrant place to live, work, and recreate.

- Action-based orientation: The Regensburg World Heritage Management Plan is designed for practical implementation. It outlines guiding principles, objectives, and organizational framework conditions. In addition, the plan contains strategies for safeguarding and conserving the World Heritage Site and its utilization and development. These initiatives are to be implemented within a clearly defined timeframe.
- Participatory preparation process: Many citizens and organizations have been actively involved in developing the Regensburg World Heritage Management Plan. The plan's framework was tailored both to the stakeholders' interests and to the specific requirements of the World Heritage site. This process not only enabled the city to provide valuable input but also fostered a stronger sense of attachment to Regensburg as a World Heritage Site, ensuring broad support for the plan.
- Continual improvement: Regensburg's World Heritage Management Plan aims to systematically improve the conditions for the World Heritage status and the historic old town. To achieve this, a comprehensive management system has been established that includes specialized structures and processes to ensure the continuous development of the conservation, safeguarding, sustainable use, and development of the World Heritage Site. An integrated monitoring framework evaluates the implementation of specific measures and provides essential insights that enable the management plan to evolve dynamically and effectively over time.

The method of public participation was vastly rated positively in the process evaluation. Although there were occasional differences of opinion during the discussions, they were conducted in a constructive spirit. The division of participants into small groups allowed for more effective individual contributions, which was generally appreciated. In addition, there was broad agreement between the objectives of the working group, the governing bodies, and the citizens' expectations, which fostered a sense of unity.

Overall, the process was very successful and helped the participants better understand each other's perspectives. As a result, UNESCO World Heritage is increasingly seen as a collective responsibility shared by both the administration and the wider urban community.

Contemporary site management refers to coordinating multidimensional functions and objectives tied to protecting, facilitating, and valorizing UNESCO World Heritage sites. Therefore, a variety of tools and methods are needed. These instruments are significant not only for the preservation of cultural heritage but also aid in presentation, cooperation, and moderation. Examples include management plans to develop integrated objectives and measures, modes of communication such as exhibitions and digital tools to mediate urban heritage, and innovative approaches such as "Design Thinking" to create new narratives and products. The World Heritage Visitor Center in Regensburg (Figure 4), which was set up as part of the management plan, is a paradigmatic example of the different roles that site managers have to play. It brings together many of the hopes and expectations of the public gathered during the management plan's development, in the sense that it is used as a place for cultural exchange, world heritage education, and knowledge transfer, and simply being a pleasant place to linger. It is, therefore, a place for the people that ultimately improves the quality of life.



Figure 4. Establishing the World Heritage Visitor Centre was one of the measures defined in the management plan. © Bilddokumentation, Stadt Regensburg

Project management methods help steer plans at different levels, whereas mediation and moderation help integrate different interests and promote cooperation. This broad spectrum of tools is almost impossible for one person to use; hence, having a systematized fundamental set of tools is necessary. Indispensable, too, is the ability to consult external professionals and implement their expertise for the management of a cultural site.

Building on a holistic view of cultural heritage that recognizes all elements of the Cultural Heritage System, site management needs to be envisioned as integrative and cross-sectoral. Site managers who—in various capacities—can carry out their role do so most effectively in a local administration regardless of their official or sectoral involvement. With this in mind, personality and individual abilities and skills are critical success factors for contemporary site management.

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