

Senje Coal Mine

Country or territory:
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Name of organisation
compiling the information:
Institute for the Protection of
the Cultural Monuments, Kragujevac

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Name and address of building(s) or site:
Despotovac, Central Serbia

SENJE COAL MINE

Inventory reference number(s):

Registry number of Institute in Kragujevac
- 23
Central registry number of Republic Institute –
SK 606
R 66/1; 24.02.1975. ZZSK Kg

Building type(s):

Industrial heritage ensemble

Main date(s):

Second half of the 19th century – 1860.

Current use(s):

The coal mine of Senje is in very bad
condition and is not in use.

Significance:

In the central part of the Senje coal mine, on the left side of the road, which from Cuprija leads to Despotovac, there exist the remains of an old mine known as “Aleksandar’s pit”. It is the oldest mine complex in Serbia, founded in 1860, during the reign of the Serbian Prince Alexander Karadjordjevic. The complex consists of the mine hall, which led to the shaft, with a monumental stone entrance, the old management building (above it), and a plateau (in front) with workshops for machine maintenance and a central warehouse.

The entrance to the mine was built in the form of an arch, out of chiseled stone, whereas the side walls, in front of the entrance, are slanted and function as a support to the tunnel entrance arch, built as they are with broken stones with highlighted horizontal and vertical fugues. The old management building, which is situated above the entrance to the mine, is of wooden construction. The building itself consists of one spacious room with a wooden entrance and three little windows on its main side. In front of the entrance to the mine, there is an area of approximately 50x60 metres, which served for the unloading of coal, as well as for transporting it to the mechanized selection. The barracks are situated immediately beside the mine, and served as workshops. Inside this complex there is also a warehouse. Opposite the workshop, there is a mining museum.

Categories of significance:

Of special national interest.

The mine, with its crossings, has a historical value, because of its way of exploitation, scheme of communications, as well as present structures. The mine settlement of Senjski Rudnik, with its urban matrix, embodies the sociological value of a representative example of a mine-administrative centre. It provides us with a significant insight on the life and work of the miners in 19th century.

Categories of ownership or interest:

The entire environmental industrial ensemble of the Senje coal mine is national property. (public ownership)

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Documentation

Available documentation with detailed architectural and technical analysis of the buildings mentioned above, displaying their present condition. The documentation (written, architectural and photo) of the projects made by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, Kragujevac "Architectural conservation and preservation of part of the blacksmith shop building in Aleksandar's Pit" (October 1985 - February 1988.), - "Architectural conservation and preservation of part of the engineering workshop building in Aleksandar's Pit" (October 1989.).

Condition:

Due to the lack of funding for conservation, lack of care and poor maintenance by the management of the mining museum, there has been a partial deterioration of the structures of the complex "Aleksandar's Pit"

Very bad. The blacksmith shop and engineering workshop are in very bad shape: the roof and wall surface are partially ruined, ruined parts of the interior, with completely ruined equipment. The external plateau is overgrown with weed and with ruined paving. The wooden construction of the building above the shaft entrance is completely worn out. The museum is currently closed, due to the inadequate museum exhibition, and lack of guardianship.

Risk:

There are generally few categories of risks:

Unoccupied buildings, without purpose or adequate user, immediate risk of further ruin, a solution found, but due to the absence of financial sources, nothing has been done so far, inappropriate interventions with permanent damage to the buildings' authenticity.

Technical assessment and costing:

Conservation work, performed till 1989, has not been completed, due to the absence of financial means.

Continuing conservation only, would not be useful without a comprehensive programme, with clearly defined goals, problems, activities, dynamics, and sustainable budget. If only some occasional restoration works are carried out, without finding a use for the site, the complex will remain in its present state of conservation.

In order for an appropriate Programme to be developed, it is necessary to form a specialised team, which would make either a completely new Programme, or revise some of the existing ones, which have become obsolete over the last ten years.

Ownership:

The entire complex of "Aleksandar's Pit" is owned by the state, of the Resava-Morava, coal basin "Rembas" in Reasvica.

Occupation:

The site is in partial use – coal is exploited in an existing shaft, which has another entrance, because the old one is out of use. The museum is relatively preserved, and its exhibition is normally open to the public. The building of the blacksmith shop and workshop are not in use. Residential buildings, which were built for the miners and their families, are partially used.

Management:

The management of the complex is entrusted to the Resava-Morava coal basin "Rembas" from Resavica, and to the local community.

Project funding would be entrusted to the Ministry of Culture and Media, whereas supervision would be shared between the Republic Institute and The Institute for Preservation of the Cultural Monuments – Kragujevac, which has jurisdiction over this very important cultural monument.

Summary:

The coal mine of Senj is an important testimony to the industrial heritage of the region and has a high historical importance. It is the first modern Serbian coal pit and colliery. It includes a pit, a management house, storage and workshops. It is surrounded by an urban area typical for industrial zones. It is extremely endangered, due to the lack of maintenance, as well as hard economic conditions of local community. Obvious need for a very urgent plan of restoration and for a definition of a new function through a comprehensive heritage management plan.

Due to the importance of this ensemble and the need for different levels of conservation and preservation measures on the buildings, the potential priority level of intervention is *medium*.

Sign. and date:

Jelena Milosavljevic
Mirjana Andric
Kragujevac, 4.3.2004.