

Holy Transfiguration Monastery

Country or territory:
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Name of organisation
compiling the information:
National Institute for Monuments of Culture

Contact name:
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Name and address of building(s) or site:

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION
MONASTERY "*Preobrajenski Manastir*",
Municipality of Veliko Turnovo

Inventory reference number(s):

Church of the Holy Transfiguration, State
gazette No 69/1927
The Holy Transfiguration Monastery,
Register of the Monuments of Culture,
1956
The Holy Transfiguration Monastery,
Nomination Letter No 2586/05.07.1979,
National Institute for the Monuments of
Culture

Building type(s):

Architectural monument

Main date(s):

Founded in the 11th century, several
rebuilding phases during the 19th century

Current use(s):

Monastic complex

Significance:

The Preobrazhenie Monastery is a monument of high cultural and historical value. It was founded in the 11th century as a convent of the Vatoped Monastery in Mount Athos. Throughout the 14th century the cloister played a significant role in the spiritual and cultural life of the capital city of Veliko Turnovo (old Turnovgrad). The monastery was set on fire and plundered during the conquest of Bulgaria by the Turks in 1393. The remains of the mediaeval monastery are located circa five hundred metres south of the present-day complex. During the excavations, large pieces of architectural elements were discovered, as well as ceramic elements and fragments of wall-paintings. Recent archaeological excavations exposed a mediaeval two-section church with naos and narthex, which was fortified using solid flying buttresses this indicates that even at that time the monastery was subjected to land-slides. This was most probably the reason why it was abandoned and the location changed.

In the third decade of the 19th century, the monastery was raised to a different, more accessible place. The first building renovated was the cathedral, raised on top of the old foundations. The construction of the church and the monastery buildings was taken over by

Nikola Fichev. The church is distinguished for its magnificently painted decorations and the woodcut iconostasis. The interior and façade mural paintings, executed in 1848-1849, are the creation of Zahari Zograph, the great Bulgarian painter from the period of the National Revival. It was also at that time that the work on the wood carved iconostasis began.

The actual monastic complex, rebuilt after 1834, includes the Cathedral, the Winter Church and Ossuary, the Monastic Yard with Cells, the Hospice, the Refectory and the Monastery Kitchen.

Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

Categories of ownership or interest:

The monument is particularly significant in terms of the Eastern Orthodox religious denomination.

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Archives

Archive of the National Institute for Cultural Monuments
Archive of the Regional Historical Museum – Veliko Turnovo

Documentation

Designs for conservation and restoration, structural reinforcement, partial photographic documentation, archaeological research studies. Publications in specialized media

Condition:

A land slide which occurred several years ago partly affected the Cathedral Church of the Transfiguration.

Risk:

Risk is linked to the state of conservation and depends on a constant threat of land slides.

Condition risk:

Partial repair scheme in progress. Very limited funding.

Technical assessment and costing:

The information about technical assessment and preliminary costings is not available.

Ownership:

Owned by the Monastery

Occupation:

Monastic complex

Management:

The Municipality of Veliko Turnovo and the Monastery are responsible for the management of the monument. In the case of financial provision being made available, the Monastery would be responsible for the management of funds, and the National Institute for Cultural Monuments would monitor the repair, preservation and restoration works.

Summary:

The Holy Transfiguration Monastery complex is of an outstanding religious, cultural and historical value. The current physical condition is in general deterioration. There is a severe risk of landslides. There is an urgent need of intervention to stabilise the ground.

The potential priority level of this complex is *high*.

Sign. and date:

Arch. Georgi Ugrinov
Director of the National Institute for Monuments of Culture
19.01.2004