

State Party: Property	Poland: Centennial Hall in Wrocław
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Brief synthesis

The Centennial Hall in Wrocław, a milestone in the history of reinforced concrete architecture, was designed by the architect Max Berg and built in 1911–1913. The hall has a symmetrical quatrefoil ground plan with a huge circular central space covered by a ribbed dome topped with a lantern. It can accommodate up to 10,000 people.

The Centennial Hall is an outstanding example of early Modernism and the innovative use of reinforced concrete structures in the building industry. At the time of its construction, it was the largest ever reinforced concrete dome in the world. It played a significant role in the creation of a new technological solution of high aesthetic value, which became an important point of reference in the design of public spaces and in the further evolution of this technology. Drawing on historical forms, the building at the same time was a pioneering design responding to emerging social needs, including an assembly hall, an auditorium, dramatic performances an exhibition space and a sports venue The building is a significant watershed in the history of Modern architecture.

The Exhibition Grounds, whose main feature the Centennial Hall, stands at the intersection of its principal axes, constitute an integral spatial whole. They were designed jointly by Max Berg and Hans Poelzig. On the west side of the Centennial Hall there is a monumental square modelled on the ancient forum, which is preceded by the colonnade (built in 1925) of the main entrance. To the north of the square stands the Pavilion of the Historical and Artistic Exhibition, now known as the Four Domes Pavilion, which was built in 1912–1913 to a design by Hans Poelzig. In the northern part of the Exhibition Grounds stands a concrete pergola enclosing a pond. It is separated from the Centennial Hall by a building housing a restaurant with an open terrace.

The design of the Exhibition Grounds combined new elements with the southern part of the 19th-century Szczytnicki Park, which was used as the setting for thematic garden exhibitions, such as the Japanese Garden, as well as for the temporary Exhibition of Cemetery Art, an extant reminder of which is an 18th-century wooden church relocated from Upper Silesia in 1912.

Criterion (i): The Centennial Hall in Wrocław is a creative and innovative example in the development of construction technology in large reinforced concrete structures. The Centennial Hall occupies a key position in the evolution of methods of reinforcement used in architecture, and represents one of the climax points in the history of the use of metal in structural consolidation.

Criterion (ii): The Centennial Hall is a pioneering work of Modern engineering and architecture, which exhibits an important interchange of influences in the early 20th century, becoming a key reference in the later development of reinforced concrete structures.

Criterion (iv): As part of the Exhibition Grounds of Wrocław, the Centennial Hall is an outstanding example of Modern recreational architecture that served a variety of purposes, ranging from hosting conferences and exhibitions to concerts, theatre and opera.

Integrity

The Exhibition Grounds, together with the Centennial Hall, have retained their compositional integrity within the boundary of the property. As a whole, they have retained their structural and visual integrity and views on the property. Also, the use of the grounds is compatible with the originally intended functions.

Since the time of its construction, the Hall has remained a fully complete and unique facility in terms of structure and materials used. The building has undergone a series of renovations in order to maintain its structural condition and to replace installations in accordance with obligatory safety standards for public use buildings.

The property's boundaries include the entire extant central part of the Exhibition Grounds. After the end of the Centennial Exhibition in 1913, temporary architectural features and seasonal garden plantings were removed. Some permanent structures, such as the roof of the colonnade of the main entrance and the restaurant building with its open terrace, were destroyed during Second World War.

Despite some losses, the most important features situated on the two main axes of the Exhibition Grounds survive to this day: the Centennial Hall, the Four Dome Pavilion, the colonnade of the main entrance and the pergola with its pond. The Japanese Garden and the wooden Baroque church are also extant.

In 1948 the composition of the Exhibition Grounds was supplemented with a steel spire designed by Stanisław Hempel, which was placed in the middle of the 'forum'.

All investment plans in the property and its buffer zone need to be assessed carefully to avoid adverse impact on its Outstanding Universal Value.

Authenticity

The Centennial Hall and Exhibition Grounds within the boundaries of the inscription have retained their unique cohesive spatial layout and permanent compositional features. The Centennial Hall is a fully authentic building in terms of architectural form, specific construction technology and materials. The building is in good condition following the completion of renovation work addressing its conservation as well as functional and technical modernisation.

The structural condition of other features within the exhibition complex is varied, as is the state of preservation of their historic fabric. The property is used in accordance with its original intended functions.

Protection and management requirements

The entire site (36,69 ha) is legally protected under regulations governing the protection of monuments, which are implemented by national and local conservation services.

The system of legal protection pertaining to the property has been supplemented by the perennial efforts of the local self-government, which have led to the entire area within the buffer zone (189,68 ha) being covered by local spatial development plans protecting the site at the level of by-laws in accordance with the provisions of the spatial planning and development act.

All conservation and investment works are preceded by pertinent historical studies and research as well as environmental analyses, taking into consideration the spatial context. Each operation requires that the proposed work be approved and relevant permission be obtained from conservation services.

Responsibility for the property is shared by several legal entities with various profiles of activity, hence individual buildings and spaces are used for different functions. The main part of the Centennial Hall complex serves as an exhibition and conference centre and as a widely accessible recreational area, in keeping with its original intended purpose.

All investment plans in the property and its buffer zone must be subordinate to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value, and the preservation of its character and historical spatial context.

Fulfilment of this objective will be through the implementation of a Management Plan for the area inscribed on the World Heritage List. The aim of this document is to coordinate activities relating to the management and monitoring of the Centennial Hall complex and its buffer zone. The plan will ensure the sustainable use and functioning of the entire complex, taking into account social, environmental and economic issues, as well as the full use of its tourism potential and the landscape values of the property and its surroundings.