

ART NOVEAU IN ORADEA, SEEN AS A EUROPEAN TOURISTIC CITY

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RESEARCH ARTICLE!

Abstract

The development of the Art Nouveau movement has brought Oradea into one of its best periods in terms of tourism due to its beauty. In this paper, we will explore the incredible evolution of tourism in Oradea through statistics, the money invested in the city's development in general and "before-and-after" examples.

Keywords: tourism, development, architecture, beauty, city.

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will focus on the development throughout the years of the city Oradea. This city is the perfect example of going from a mediocre city to one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. All it took was a creative and devoted mayor and some money. Oradea is located in Bihor County, Romania and is renowned for its rich Art Nouveau architectural heritage, making it a significant cultural destination in Europe. The city boasts an impressive collection of Art Nouveau buildings, many of which have been meticulously restored to their former glory.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In creating this work, I will use public information provided by the city's website and social media pages and also people's opinions. All the links and information used will be provided in the references part of this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Art Nouveau movement, known as Secession in the austro-Hungarian context, flourished in Oradea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period coincided with a time of economic prosperity and cultural development in the city, leading to the construction of numerous buildings that showcased the distinctive characteristics of the style, such as intricate façade, flowing lines, floral motifs.

Some of the most notable buildings in Oradea are The Black Eagle Palace which is located in Unirii Square and it features an iconic and stunning stained glass panel depicting a black eagle soaring over green hills. Originally designed to host a theatre, ballrooms, a casino and offices it remains a central attraction. Another iconic building is the Moskovits Miksa Palace, it was built between 1904 and 1905 and was commissioned by engineer Miksa Moskovits, also it is characterized by its decorative elements and architectural elegance reflecting the prosperity of the era.[1] Darvas -La Roche House is a well preserved building that was designed by architects Jozef and Laszlo Vago between 1909 and 1912 for the Darvas and La Roche families, its façade is adorned with floral motifs and colorful mosaics exemplifying the art nouveau style.[2] Next, we have the Rimanoczy Kalaman Senior Palace, built in 1905, this palace stands out with its ornate facades and decorations. Designed by architect Peter Sztarill it was intended as the residence of Hungarian aristocrat Rimanoczy Kalaman Senior. The building features an impressive entrance and a balcony overlooking a lush garden. Lastly, the Poynar House, constructed in 1907 by architect Ferenc Sztarill, notable for its exquisite ornamentation and it stands as a testament to the city's art nouveau heritage.[3]

Oradea's commitment to preserving its art nouveau heritage is evident through its membership (since 2011) in the Réseau Art Nouveau network and the Art Nouveau European

route. The city celebrates world Art Noveau day annually, attracting tourists from around the globe to admire its architectural treasures. [4]

Visitors can embark on guided tours to explore the city's Art Noveau landmarks. Starting from the Oradea city hall tower, these tours highlight the most beautiful palaces and provide insights into the architectural and cultural history of the area.[5] Oradea's Art Noveau heritage is one of the best preserved in Europe, rivaling more famous destinations like Brussels and Vienna. The city's commitment to restoring and promoting its architectural gems has made it a major attraction for cultural tourists, architecture lovers and history enthusiasts. Whether exploring the black eagle palace, visiting the Art Noveau museum, or simply walking through the beautifully restored streets, visitors to Oradea can experience a unique blend of history, art and innovation. Quantifying the exact impact of Art Noveau architecture on tourism in Oradea is challenging due to the interplay of various factors influencing visitor numbers. However, available data provides insights into the city's tourism trends over the recent years. Between 2007 and 2019, Oradea experienced a significant rise in tourist accommodations with a 290.90% increase in the number of available lodgings options. Also, since 2010, substantial investments have been made in restoring Oradea's historical sites, including the fortress with approximately 21 million euros allocated from regional operational programs.

While these statistics do not isolate the specific contribution of the Art Noveau architecture to tourism growth, the city's emphasis on restoring and promoting its Art Noveau heritage has likely played a role in attracting visitors. The annual celebration of World Art Noveau Day and the inclusion of Art Noveau buildings in local tourism programs further underscore this focus.

The money invested in the development of the city this year beats records with a total of 2 billion RON. This total is divided into 54% investments and 46% operational expenses.[7] There are some priorities when it comes to the investments and these are:

- 200 million euros for the educational system for two years and that includes a new school in Nufarul neighborhood, IT equipment, new furniture and 31 electrical efficiency contracts
 - modernization of the county hospital
 - continuing the construction of the new infectious diseases hospital
 - finishing the passages for traffic flow
 - expansion of the tram network and electric buses
 - continuing the bicycle infrastructure development
 - renovation of the historical buildings
 - expanding the pedestrian areas
 - finishing the big projects of urban infrastructure and park landscaping [6]
- In 2024, Oradea was visited by 235,429 tourists, an increase with 4.5% compared to 2023.[8]

The increase of tourists in the last 4 years

| Year | Tourists |
|------|----------|
| 2020 | 150.000 |
| 2021 | 180.000 |
| 2022 | 215.000 |
| 2023 | 225.000 |
| 2024 | 235.000 |

Source: <https://dinculise.com/industria-ospitalitatii-din-oradea-se-mentine-pe-crestere-si-in-2024-specialistii-estimeaza-o-dezvoltare-de-minimum-10-fata-de-anul-precedent/>

The majority of the citizens have a positive attitude towards the development, appreciating the changes. Oradea is considered a successful example in the efficient use of European funds for modernization and urban development.[9] Romania has ratified key international conventions for heritage protection, such as the Granada Convention (1985) on the protection of Europe's architectural heritage and the Valletta

Convention (1992) on the protection of archaeological heritage. These international legal instruments emphasize the importance of preserving architectural heritage, including the Art Nouveau style. At the local level, cities like Oradea have adopted specific strategies for the conservation and promotion of Art Nouveau heritage. A relevant example is the ARTNOUVEAU 2 project, initiated by Oradea City Hall, which aims to protect and enhance

the Art Nouveau architectural heritage in the Danube region. Therefore, both the national legislative framework and local initiatives play a significant role in protecting and promoting the Art Nouveau style in Romania.

The Valletta Convention was adopted on 16 January 1992 in Valletta (Malta) and came into force on 25 May 1995 (Council of Europe Treaty Series no. 143). It is open for signature by member states of the Council of Europe and other states party to the European Cultural Convention and for accession by non-member states and the European Community.

The European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) replaced and updated the original London Convention of 1969. It reflected the change in the nature of threats to the archaeological heritage, which now came less from unauthorised excavations, as in the 1960s, and more from the major construction projects carried out all over Europe from 1980 onwards.

The revised Convention drew on twenty-two years of experience in implementing the original Convention. It established a body of new basic legal standards for Europe, to be met by national policies for the protection of archaeological assets as sources of scientific and documentary evidence, in line with the principles of integrated conservation.

The revised text makes the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies. It is concerned in particular with arrangements to be made for co-operation among archaeologists and town and regional planners in order to ensure optimum conservation of archaeological heritage. The Convention sets guidelines for the funding of excavation and research work and publication of research findings. It also deals with public access, in particular to archaeological sites, and educational actions to be undertaken to develop public awareness of the value of the archaeological heritage. Finally, the Convention constitutes an institutional framework for pan-European co-operation on the archaeological heritage, entailing a systematic exchange of experience and experts among the various States.[10]

The Granada Convention was adopted on 3 October 1985 in Granada (Spain) and came into force on 1 December 1987 (Council of Europe Treaty Series no. 121). It is open for signature by member states and for accession

by non-member states and the European Community.

The adoption of the Convention was both a consecration and a new beginning - a consecration because it marked twenty years of European co-operation on architectural heritage and a new beginning because this was the first time that an international treaty had included the principles of integrated conservation.

The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.[11] Regarding the laws, I will list the ones that makes interest in the subject of of historical monuments:

TITLE I: General Provisions

Art. 1 (2) For the purposes of this law, historical monuments are immovable property, buildings, and land located on the territory of Romania, which are significant for national and universal history, culture, and civilization.

Art. 2 (1) Historical monuments are an integral part of the national cultural heritage and are protected by law.

(3) For the purposes of this law, protection means the set of scientific, legal, administrative, financial, fiscal, and technical measures intended to ensure the identification, research, inventory, classification, record-keeping, conservation (including guarding and maintenance), strengthening, restoration, enhancement, and socio-economic and cultural integration of historical monuments into the life of local communities.

(4) To protect historical monuments, the law provides for incentive measures of an economic or other nature.

Art. 3:

According to this law, the following categories of historical monuments are established, being immovable goods located above ground, underground, or underwater:

a) Monument – a building or part of a building, together with installations, artistic components, interior or exterior furnishing elements that are an integral part of it, as well as commemorative, funerary, or public art works, together with the associated land defined topographically, which

represent significant cultural-historical testimony from an architectural, archaeological, historical, artistic, ethnographic, religious, social, scientific, or technical point of view.

Art. 4 (1) Historical monuments may belong to the public or private domain of the state, counties, cities, or communes, or may be privately owned by individuals or legal entities. (2) Historical monuments that are public property of the state or territorial-administrative units are inalienable, imprescriptible, and unseizable. These monuments may be managed by public institutions, leased, granted for free use to public utility institutions, or rented, in accordance with the law, with the approval of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs or, where appropriate, its decentralized public services.

(3) Historical monuments belonging to the private domain may be subject to civil transactions under the conditions established by this law.

Art. 6 (1) The guarding, maintenance, conservation, strengthening, restoration, and enhancement by appropriate means of historical monuments are the responsibility of the owners or holders of other real rights over them, in accordance with the provisions of this law.

Art. 7 (1) The state guarantees and ensures the protection of historical monuments under the conditions established by this law.

(2) The Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs is the central public administration authority that develops strategies and specific rules for the protection of historical monuments, monitors and ensures their implementation.

TITLE II: Protection of Historical Monuments

CHAPTER I: Historical Monuments

Art. 8 (1) Historical monuments are classified as follows: a) Group A – historical monuments of national and universal value; b) Group B – historical monuments representative of local cultural heritage.

(2) The classification of historical monuments into groups is made by order of the Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs, at the proposal of the National Commission for Historical Monuments, in accordance with the classification procedure provided by this law.

Art. 9 (1) A protection zone is established for each historical monument, defined based on topographic, geographic, or urban planning

reference points, depending on the street layout, terrain, and characteristics of the monument. This zone ensures the integrated conservation and enhancement of the historical monument and its built or natural surroundings.

Art. 10 (1) Historical monuments are protected regardless of their ownership status or state of conservation.

(2) The protection of historical monuments is an integral part of national and local strategies for sustainable economic, social, tourism, urban development, and spatial planning.

(4) The imposition of servitudes that result in the demolition, partial destruction, or degradation of historical monuments and their protection zones is prohibited.

Art. 11(1) Any intervention on historical monuments or on buildings within their protection zones, as well as any change in the legal status of historical monuments, may be carried out only under the conditions established by this law.

(2) The demolition, partial or total destruction, desecration, and degradation of historical monuments are prohibited and punishable by law.

CHAPTER II: Inventory and Classification of Historical Monuments

Art. 18 (1) Historical monuments, protection zones, and protected built zones, as defined by law, must be included in the spatial planning and urban plans of administrative-territorial units.

(2) Under legal conditions and based on the approval of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, local public authorities may establish servitudes or prohibit the demolition or modification of constructions in order to protect the cultural heritage values that justified the establishment of the protected built zone.

Art. 22 (1) The List of Historical Monuments includes the classified historical monuments from Group A or B and is compiled by the National Institute of Historical Monuments.

TITLE III: Interventions on Historical Monuments

CHAPTER III: Interventions on Historical Monuments

Art. 23(1) Interventions on historical monuments may only be carried out based on and in compliance with the approval issued by the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs or, as appropriate, by its decentralized public services.

(2) For the purposes of this law, interventions on historical monuments include:

- a) all research, conservation, construction, extension, consolidation, restructuring, landscaping, and enhancement works that modify the substance or appearance of historical monuments;
- b) creating casts from components of historical monuments;
- c) permanent or temporary installation of fences, protective structures, fixed furniture, advertising panels, signs, logos, or any kind of markings on or within historical monuments;
- d) changes in the function or use of historical monuments, including temporary changes;
- e) relocation of historical monuments;
- f) development of access roads (for pedestrians or vehicles), auxiliary utilities, and signage, including in the protection zones of historical monuments.

(3) Building permits, demolition permits, and any authorizations related to the interventions listed above may only be issued based on and in accordance with the approval of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs or its decentralized public services, as well as with all other necessary approvals, in accordance with the legal provisions in force.

Art. 24 (2) All interventions on historical monuments, except for function or use changes, routine maintenance or repairs, or the installation of equipment or physical infrastructure to support electronic communications networks (categorized as micro-works, standard works, or small-scale works under specific legislation), regardless of the source of funding or ownership status, must be performed by certified specialists under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Culture or its decentralized services, according to the law.

(3) In case of unauthorized works, works without approvals, or works that violate the approved conditions, authorized inspection personnel have the right to halt the works until legality is restored, apply sanctions, and if needed, order a return to the original state and notify criminal investigation bodies.

(4) The development of technical assessments, consolidation and restoration projects, and the supervision of such works can only be carried out by certified specialists approved by the Ministry of Culture, in accordance with specific requirements related to historical monuments and quality standards in construction.

(5) Protection and conservation of archaeological finds left exposed must be carried out, according to the law, by the investors under the coordination of the site's scientific supervisor and the organizing institution.

TITLE IV: Responsibilities of Historical Monument Owners and Local Authorities

CHAPTER II: Responsibilities of Local Public Authorities

Art. 47

The mayor has the following responsibilities:

- a) verifies the existence of all specialized approvals related to historical monuments and ensures that the construction permit complies with them, including the obligations concerning the use of the historical monument, and ensures that all conditions included in the approvals are mentioned in the permits for works on historical monuments or buildings within their protection zones, as well as in the operating permits for such buildings;
- b) takes measures to prioritize the authorization of technical documentation concerning interventions on historical monuments;
- c) orders the suspension of any construction or demolition works if archaeological remains are discovered, organizes protection, and immediately informs the county (or Bucharest) department for culture, religious affairs, and national cultural heritage;
- d) ensures, through the specialized department and in collaboration with the decentralized services of the Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage Institute, the application of identifying marks and symbols of historical monuments, as well as other protection signs defined by international conventions for the protection/promotion of cultural assets, manages the content of accompanying texts, and oversees the maintenance of these signs by the owner;
- e) ensures the protection and security of historical monuments belonging to the public or private domain of the state or administrative-territorial units, as well as of abandoned or disputed monuments, and urgently notifies the local cultural authority in case of any legal violations;
- f) ensures that the fire department conducts fire prevention and extinguishing operations at historical monuments.

Art. 48

County councils and the General Council of Bucharest have the following responsibilities:

c) support and guide the activity of local councils of communes or towns that do not have organized services or specialized positions for the protection of historical monuments included in Group B of the List of Historical Monuments and located within their administrative boundaries.

TITLE V: Financing the Protection of Historical Monuments

Art. 49 (1) The protection of historical monuments is financed by their owners or holders and may be co-financed from funds provided by the state budget, local budgets, or other sources.

(2) Research, evaluation, design, and execution works carried out on historical monuments and financed from public funds are subject to the general public procurement procedures, according to the legislation on public procurement.

Art. 50 (1) Local public authorities are obliged to allocate in their own budgets the necessary funds for protecting historical monuments owned publicly or privately by administrative-territorial units.

(2) Central public authorities allocate in their own budgets the funds approved through the state budget for the protection of historical monuments owned publicly or privately by the state, which they administer.

(3) The budget of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs shall include:

- a) budgetary credits needed to finance works on historical monuments administered by the National Office for Historical Monuments;
- b) budgetary credits for financing or co-financing protection works on historical monuments owned by the state or administrative-territorial units;
- c) budgetary credits intended for financing or co-financing protection works on historical monuments owned by private individuals or legal entities.

(4) From revenues obtained through ticket sales and land rental fees (from events such as shows, fairs, amusement parks, etc.), 1% shall

be transferred to the owner or administrator (as applicable) of the historical monument in whose protection zone the event is organized. These amounts shall be used exclusively to fund protection works for the respective historical monument.

Art. 52 (1) Funds obtained through the historical monuments stamp shall be used exclusively by the National Office for Historical Monuments for:

- a) granting loans under the provisions of Art. 28(3)(b) and (c), with priority for urgent interventions on historical monuments, depending on the monument protection strategy;
- b) financing the development of technical-economic regulations, norms, and methodologies for preparing specific documentation, executing works, procurement, contracting, and payment related to historical monuments;
- c) financing arrangements for preparing historical monuments for free public visits, and for developing cultural programs or projects.

(2) The amount of the historical monuments stamp is set by Government decision and updated annually by order of the Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs.

TITLE VI: Sanctions

Art. 53

Violation of the provisions of this law may result, as applicable, in civil, administrative, material, disciplinary, contraventional, or criminal liability. [12]

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, Oradea experienced a great evolution touristically speaking and became one of the most loved and admired cities in Romania. What we can learn from this is that by being devoted and having a vision we can do anything

we put our minds to. Going from a mediocre city to being such a developed and beautiful city is the perfect example for every mayor, president etc. I say we should be forever in love with our city and be happy we are here because at the end of the day we are the change.

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