

THE FUTURE OF THE OLD TOWN IS IN OUR HANDS



TALLINNA
KULTUURIVAARTUSTE
AMET



United Nations
Educational, Scientific, and
Cultural Organization



Old Town of Tallinn
Inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1997

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Let's work together to preserve our Old Town!

Tallinn's Old Town is an asset not only to Estonia, but to the whole world. Preserving it demands that we all do something to ensure that future generations are also able to enjoy its unique medieval atmosphere and architecture.

Thousands of locals, and thousands more visitors to the Old Town from far and wide, enjoy what this historical space has to offer every day – but few of them can say that it is where they reside or are employed. To actually live or work in the Old Town is a badge of honour, but also more complicated than doing so elsewhere in the city, since

there are restrictions on both construction and parking. The Division of Heritage Protection and Milieu Areas does what it does in order to guarantee the preservation of the Old Town, whether that involves the entire structure of a building, a simple door or the smallest fragment of a painting.

Worthwhile results are based on mutual trust and cooperation. Those responsible for defending Tallinn's heritage are there to help the owners of buildings in the Old Town, however big or small the issue they're facing.

Aini Härn
Director, Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department

Boris Dūbovīk
Head of Heritage Protection Division



Photo: Viktor Burkiuski

THE FUTURE OF THE OLD TOWN IS IN OUR HANDS

This booklet is designed for all those who live and work in the Old Town in Tallinn.

The heart of Tallinn, and the city's greatest asset, is the area which is today known as the Old Town. The first major steps towards preserving its historical value were taken in the late 19th century, and by the 1920s many of its structures had been placed under protection. It was declared a national heritage conservation area as early as 1966, making it one of the first in Europe.

The Old Town was inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List as a place of outstanding universal value in 1997. Such a title is the highest form of international recognition any historic city can receive.

It falls on us, today's users of the Old Town, to ensure that its rich cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. This can only happen if those of us who live and work here are aware of, interested in and concerned about its heritage.



UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was founded in 1946. The focus of its attention is on the protection and advancement of cultural diversity. The most recognised area in which it operates is the protection of cultural and natural heritage, in which it has an international reach. By the start of 2013, 962 cultural and natural sites in 157 countries had been added to the World Heritage List. The full list can be found online at <http://whc.unesco.org>.

Nominating a site for inclusion on the World Heritage List shows the free will of the local community to take responsibility for heritage that is of importance to mankind. Sites that are included on the list are placed under the protection of international law and are not reliant on local politics or changing tastes. All countries with sites on the list are obliged to submit regular reports to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee regarding the state of their heritage.

1 The heart of Tallinn is an exceptionally well-preserved medieval Hanseatic town. Its network of streets and alleys has remained largely unchanged for hundreds of years, as have the layout and structure of its buildings.

WHAT MAKES TALLINN'S OLD TOWN A PLACE OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE?

The ancient heart of Tallinn is a remarkably complete and well-preserved medieval northern European trading town in which the traits characteristic of the social and economic standing of the community at the time can still be seen. The city developed from the 13th to the 16th centuries as the Hanseatic League flourished and was one of the trade organisation's most important centres. Lübeck law was established in the city in 1248, marking its inclusion in the legal and cultural space of Europe.

The Upper Town of Toompea, perched atop a tall limestone bluff, and the Lower Town, which spreads out from its foot and is punctuated by innumerable church spires, create an impressive silhouette that can be seen from far and wide, whether on land or at sea.

The Upper Town, which is the site of the city's ancient fortress and oldest cathedral, has long been its seat of power. The Lower Town is little changed since medieval times, retaining the same layout of squares and winding streets and many of its original buildings. The streets themselves radiate out

from Town Hall Square, the historical heart of the Lower Town, and are lined with structures dating mostly from the 14th to 16th centuries. Many remain intact today, from impressive civic edifices like the city wall, the apothecary's and the Town Hall itself to churches and cloisters and the proud guild halls and private homes of merchants and craftsmen. A great number of the city's defensive structures have also retained their medieval size and appearance.

The key values of the Old Town are its:

- 1) well-preserved public, residential and sacral buildings and structures from different periods of history;
- 2) medieval network of streets;
- 3) near-complete city wall with its towers and earthen fortifications;
- 4) rich seam of archaeological culture;
- 5) unique silhouette; and
- 6) use as a living environment.

Values change over time, and life in the Old Town has both created and preserved as well as worn away its cultural assets. In parallel with maintaining the physical heritage of the town in its original form, it is extremely important that the Old Town continues to thrive as a place in which people live and work and which attracts visitors from near and far. Strik-

ing a balance between these two objectives is a challenge we all face.

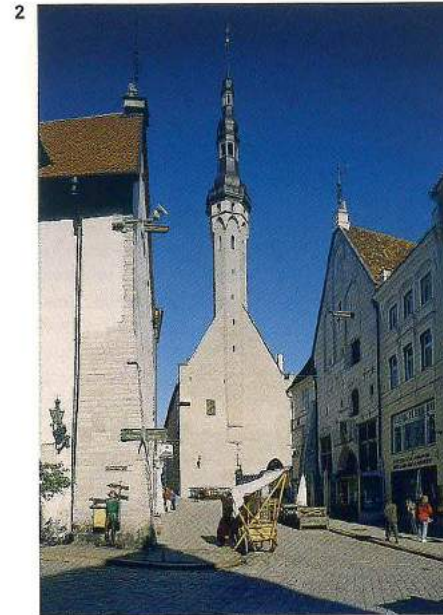
The current state of the Old Town and future plans for it are covered by the Tallinn Old Town Development Plan 2013–2021.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN THE OLD TOWN

The fact that the Old Town remains so intact is one of its greatest assets. It is an environment which reflects the different functions and periods of history of the city.

In order to protect this historical space, the Old Town was declared a national heritage conservation area as early as 1966. It was the first such area in the former Soviet Union to be based on its own statutes. Today its status is upheld by the **Heritage Conservation Act** and the **Statutes of the Tallinn Old Town Conservation Area**. These documents set out the conditions for the preservation of the town's buildings and edifices and describe the rights and obligations of their owners and occupants.

- 2 *Venaturu kael – the old market alleyway.*
- 3 *Residential buildings on Vene Street.*
- 4 *The unique façade of Kuninga I.*
- 5 *The city wall and its towers as seen from Laboratooriumi Street.*



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The task of any heritage conservation area is to preserve the structural integrity of a site as it has developed over time for future generations. This includes the buildings and structures that give the area its form, the rooms and spaces within them, aspects of their construction, the seam of culture they represent, elements of the landscape, the atmosphere of the area and its views, as seen from within and afar. All of these features tell us the story of the Old Town. Many of its buildings and structures are also unique and important in their own right, which is why the most outstanding examples (in total 174) have been placed under individual national protection as cultural monuments.



The symbol of cultural monuments. Many buildings in the Old Town bear this mark.

6–8 Every year, paintings are discovered on beam ceilings and on walls and window lintels in the course of studies prior to rooms being restored. Other decorative details such as stonework, wall staircases and parts of old heating systems are also frequently uncovered. Such discoveries are of great value and enrich the construction heritage of the Old Town. An unusually large proportion of original interiors have been preserved in the Old Town in European terms.

Heritage conservation is coordinated at the national level by the National Heritage Board, although in accordance with the administration agreement entered into between the state and the City of Tallinn the **coordination of heritage conservation in the city of Tallinn is the task of the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department**. Key decisions are made in conjunction with the National Heritage Board or its Heritage Conservation Council.

According to the law, the upkeep and preservation of any building, structure or monument located within a heritage conservation area is the responsibility of its owner or occupant. As such, not only the owners of buildings and apartments but also their tenants are key figures in the preservation of cultural heritage. Heritage conservation specialists look to assist them in the preservation and sustainable upkeep of every aspect that makes the Old Town so valuable. Restrictions and requirements related to such preservation and upkeep form a public agreement that is expressed in the Heritage Conservation Act. This act must be observed so that the cultural values of the Old Town are preserved.

The UNESCO Tallinn Old Town Management Committee was established in 2010 in order to streamline cooperation and the division of tasks be-

tween the agencies responsible for protecting the Old Town and third sector organisations, the local community and other interest groups. The committee is also charged with the task of overseeing the drafting and fulfilment of the development plan for the Old Town.

Heritage conservation objectives and requirements. The following are the heritage conservation objectives and requirements that we follow in order to preserve and ensure appreciation of the cultural heritage of the Old Town of Tallinn.

- To preserve the Old Town, the structure of the buildings in the belt of earthen fortifications that surrounds it and elements of the city space (squares, courtyards, alleyways etc.)
- To preserve the appearance of buildings and edifices (traditional roofs, façades, doors, windows, stairs, gates etc.)
- To preserve and exhibit valuable interiors, construction details and historical structural features
- To use traditional construction materials in the maintenance, conservation, restoration and renovation of buildings and structures
- To exhibit valuable structural features, details and finishing uncovered in the course of construction work

- To avoid the erection of structures (fences, street lights etc.) and the installation of items (heating pumps etc.) that are inappropriate to the historical environment of the Old Town
- To preserve and exhibit structural features, details and elements that are archaeologically and culturally valuable and worthy of preservation
- To preserve valuable natural sites and areas of greenery
- To ensure as much as possible that people are still able to live in the historical heart of the city
- To preserve views of the Old Town from within and without

In order to guarantee the knowledge and skills that are needed for the regulation of this valuable area, buildings may only be designed, restored and constructed and research and archaeological excavations may only be carried out in the Old Town by companies and specialists authorised to do so by the National Heritage Board.

Any restoration work, construction, research, digs and installation of advertising in the heritage conservation area of the Old Town must be approved in advance by the Heritage Protection

Division of the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department.

Please note: some work requires the approval not only of the Culture and Heritage Department but also of a number of other agencies. Detailed guidelines and the application forms can be found on the website of the City of Tallinn. City government staff will explain how to fulfil the requirements of these administrative proceedings.

Buffer zone, view sectors and view corridors

The primary objective of establishing the heritage conservation area's buffer zone, view sectors and view corridors was to preserve the unique views of the Old Town. No structures may be erected within the zone, sectors or corridors which would disrupt the silhouette of the Old Town or block views of it from afar.

BUILDINGS

The Old Town is a well-matched assortment of buildings from different periods in history. What makes it particularly unique is the number of buildings dating from the 14th to 16th centuries that remain standing to-day. The most common construction material – limestone – lends the buildings a very specifically local aura which sets them apart from the brick architecture more typical of Northern Europe.

What to do if you are looking to restore or carry out construction work on a building in a heritage conservation area

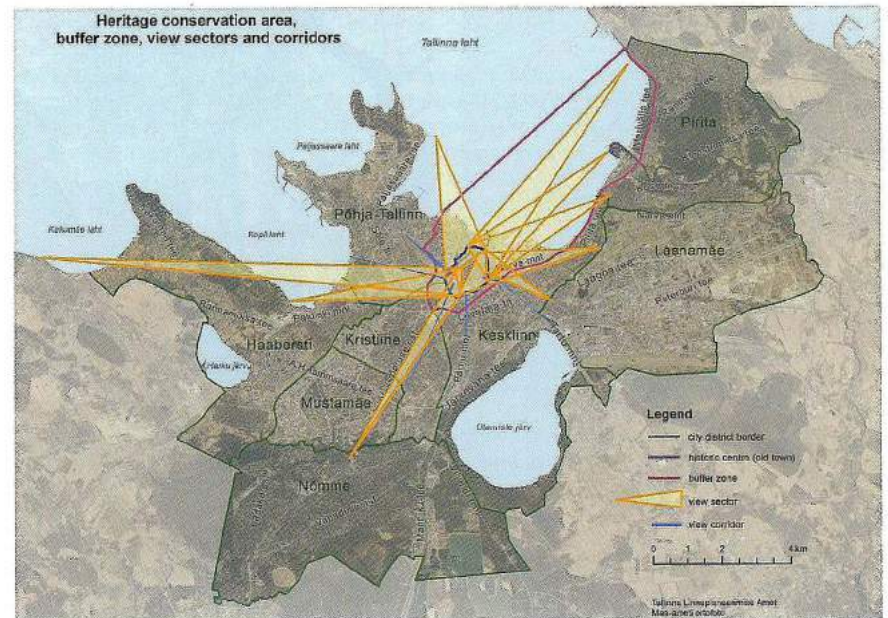
- Get in touch with a specialist from the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department and ask them for preliminary advice.

Contact the Culture and Heritage Department as soon as you start planning your work, even if all you are intending to undertake is simple repairs. The staff there are charged with the task of advising owners and assisting them to find the best solutions for the maintenance of their buildings in such a way that their unique value is highlighted whilst ensuring that it is possible to create a contemporary living or working space within them that is respectful towards the Old Town.

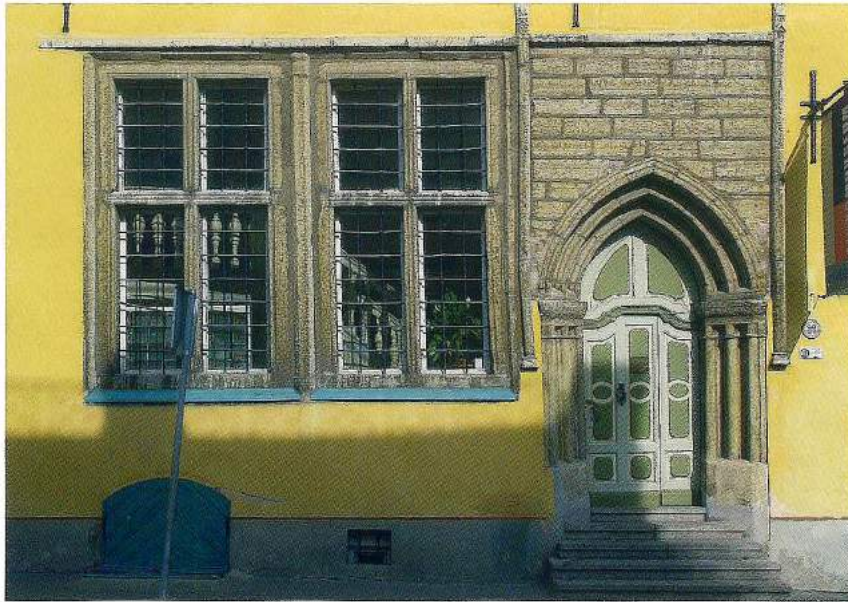


- 9 A unique view of the Old Town's towers.
- 10 Both the buffer zone and the view sectors and corridors ensure unique views of the Old Town from different points in Tallinn. A view sector represents the view that opens up from specific points, often from a distance. A view corridor is generally the view that opens up along a specific stretch of road.

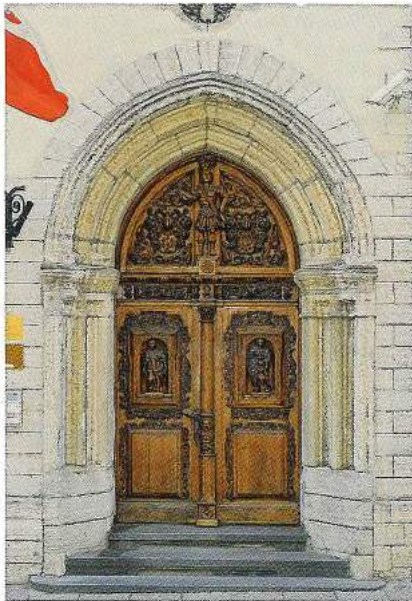
The heritage conservation area is surrounded by nine view sectors and five view corridors established under the Statutes of the Tallinn Old Town Conservation Area and the 'Placement of high-rise buildings in Tallinn' planning document.



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An expert will then assess whether special documentation needs to be commissioned and approved for the work you have planned and whether the builder needs to be licensed or the owner can carry out the work themselves. This way you will avoid anything that could have a negative impact on cultural value and which in turn could be subject to punishment under the Heritage Conservation Act. Effective cooperation and sensible solutions are in the interests of all parties.

• **If need be, commission a company or specialist authorised to do so to carry out a study and provide special conditions for heritage conservation. That way you can identify the valuable features of the building.**

A study provides a comprehensive overview of a building or structure. For example, a study can document the design and condition of historical layers of finishing in a building. Special conditions are drawn up on the basis of the study and highlight valuable aspects and the conditions for their preservation, as well as presenting construction and restoration requirements and providing an assessment of any planned changes.

11 *Grand stone-framed windows and door on Vene Street.*

12 *The portal of Suur-Karja 1.*

13 *Long, narrow courtyards are typical of the Old Town.*

• **Commission a restoration or construction project.**

The plans forming the basis of the work to be carried out must be in line with the special conditions. The study, special conditions and plans must be approved by the Culture and Heritage Department.

• **Seek quotes for the construction work and supervision from a number of companies or specialists who are authorised to carry it out.**

Supervision is conducted to ensure that work is carried out as planned and with due respect for the structure in question. Restoration issues which arise in the course of the work are also resolved. Supervision must be ordered by the owner.

• **Submit an application to the Culture and Heritage Department for the restoration or construction of a building or structure in a heritage conservation area.**

On the application, note the name of the company or specialist you have commissioned to carry out the work and the details of the heritage conservation supervision.

Once the work is complete, the party responsible for heritage conservation supervision will submit to the Culture and Heritage Department and the owner a report on the work carried out.

Coordinate all restoration and construction work with the Culture and Heritage Department irrespective of whether the building in question is on the list of cultural monuments. Permission must also be sought to change the colour of roofs, as well as that of facades, including doors, windows, stairs and gates.

People who live and work in the Old Town obviously want to have the same mod cons that can be found in new buildings. However, they have to keep in mind that the unique milieu of the Old Town must be protected, which is why air conditioners, air source heat pumps, ventilation and heating equipment, satellite dishes and other modern technical equipment commonly used elsewhere do not go with the roofs and facades of the Old Town. Special attention also needs to be paid to the interior, since it forms an inseparable part of a building and is likewise protected. Since the majority of interiors in the Old Town conceal valuable details and painting work beneath later layers of finishing, careless repairs may cause irreversible damage. Coordinate all interior work and installation of technical equipment with the Culture and Heritage Department.

General principles of restoration

It is important to preserve the original structure and materials of buildings and edifices whilst respecting later additions that are also of value. The city is constantly changing – every era has enriched it and created new value.

Restoration must be based on comprehensive studies, any valuable finds uncovered in the course of which must be conserved. The most common finds of this nature in the Old Town are painted ceilings with exposed beams, hewn stones, portals and wall staircases.

In addition to the form and material of the structure of a building, the other elements that are characteristic of it are also important, such as its doors, windows and flooring. Traditional construction materials must be used in restoration work in the Old Town: sheet metal or roofing tiles; timber for doors and windows; lime rendering and paints and linseed oil paints for finishing; and so on.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The city of Tallinn today was once an ancient settlement site. Archaeological excavations have dated the earliest traces of human settlement here to 5000 years ago. The Old Town has rich ancient, medieval and early modern cultural layers, with all of the remains and finds that

accompany them. The Old Town as a whole is protected as an archaeological monument as a settlement site from the 1st and 2nd millennia. Its borders here overlap with those of the heritage conservation area. The objective of protecting the city in this way is to preserve its ancient culture and the information this gives us in as authentic and complete a way as possible. Any earthwork could have a highly destructive impact on an archaeological monument.

We learn invaluable additional information about the rise and development of the Old Town from archaeological research, which as an advancing science helps us comprehend the stages of construction of historical buildings and how they were used in their own time. **That is why the need for archaeological studies must be determined prior to the commencement of any digging work.** The need for preliminary or full archaeological studies or supervision is determined by an archaeologist from the Culture and Heritage Board. Permission must also be sought from this official to lower the level of cellars or courtyards or to install utility lines underground.

ADVERTISING AND OUTDOOR CAFÉS

The space in the Old Town is a valuable asset in its own right. As such, it has been agreed that companies are not permitted to try to outdo one

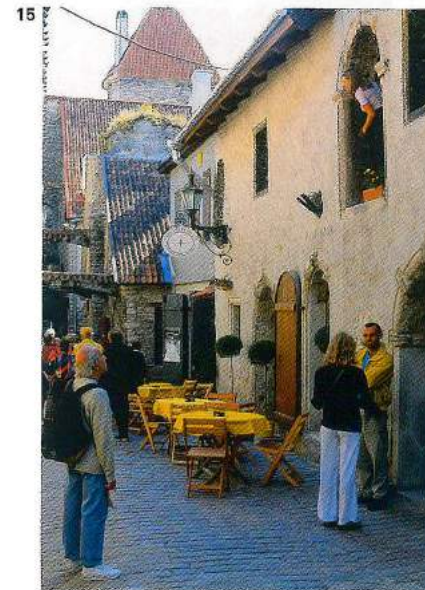
another with ever larger and ever more obvious advertising, as this would overshadow the historical environment. In order for the designs of advertising to take the Old Town's structures and atmosphere into account, Tallinn City Government has drafted guidelines for those commissioning and creating advertising. For example, the design of an advertisement must not affect the appearance of a street, square or building in the Old Town, obstruct a view or in any way cut off or conceal the architectural details of a building.

Should you wish to erect outdoor advertising, set up a small stand or booth (e.g. for ice cream or postcards) or construct an outdoor café within the heritage conservation area of the Old Town, your plans must be coordinated with the Culture and Heritage Department. Your application should be submitted on the form provided and accompanied by draft plans. In the case of outdoor cafés and small stands, three copies of the draft plans with a description of the equipment and materials to be used should be prepared. One copy should be submitted to the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department; another to Tallinn City Centre Government; and the third retained by the applicant.

- 14 Archaeological digs on Sauna Street.
- 15 Outdoor café in Catherine's Alley.
- 16 Tasteful outdoor advertising.



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FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Tallinn's Culture and Heritage Department has provided financial support for the restoration of many buildings in the Old Town. The restoration of other structures (such as the city wall and its towers and the artistic assets of churches) continues from one year to the next, and private owners have also been granted support for the restoration of their buildings.

The greatest amount to date has been provided for the restoration of places of worship as part of the "Renaissance of Tallinn's Churches" project (2002–2010). The aim of the project was to restore the city's most eye-catching churches and to open them up to and promote them among visitors. Attention was also turned to the conservation of valuable assets within the churches. Restoration work was carried out on a total of 13 churches as part of the project:

St. Mary's Cathedral (Toom-Kooli 6)
 St. Olaf's (Lai 50)
 Church of the Holy Spirit (Pühavaimu 2)
 St. Michael's Swedish church (Rüütli 7/9)
 St. Nicholas's (Vene 24)
 Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord (Suur-Kloostri 14)

17 *Rooftops characteristic of the Old Town.*

Aleksander Nevski Cathedral (Lossi plats 10)
 Church of St. Peter and St. Paul (Vene 18)
 St. Catherine's (Vene 12–18)
 Ukrainian-Greek Catholic church (Laboratooriumi 22)
 St. Charles's (Toompea 10)
 St. John's (Vabaduse väljak 1)
 Adventist church (Mere pst 3)

Owners or occupants of buildings or structures in the heritage conservation area of the Old Town can apply to the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department for partial funding of the design work, studies and restoration of their building or structure. Applications are only reviewed at the start of each year. The board assesses the necessity of the planned work and whether the application is justified as well as the cultural, architectural and historical value and function of the building or structure. In making its decision, the board is also guided by the overall state of the building or structure, the applicant's motivation and what they have done in maintaining the property to date and the availability of self- and/or co-financing.

PRIZES

Each year, the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department recognises the owners of and the architects and restoration specialists behind the best restoration projects from the previous calendar year. Owners of buildings in the

Old Town are often among the recipients. The owners of the finest examples of restored buildings and structures are awarded a cash prize.

Tallinn's Old Town is a multifunctional environment in which a balance needs to be struck between the interests of local residents, other city folk, companies, workers and tourists. Well-maintained and actively functioning, it will encourage people to live here and enjoy the heritage and everything else it has to offer.

INFORMATION

Tallinn, Raekoja plats 12.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the experts working at the Culture and Heritage Department. They will be happy to advise you on restoring and constructing buildings, drafting projects, legal aspects, placement of advertising and more. You can also obtain free information materials from the board about maintaining and repairing specific parts of buildings.

Archives

Documentation regarding buildings in the Old Town is held in the archives of the Culture and Heritage Department (Raekoja plats 12) and can be perused by anyone interested. Information about even the most detailed topics can be found in the archives, such as lists of painted ceilings with exposed beams.

The oldest and arguably most interesting section of the archives is the construction records dating from the second half of the 19th century to the mid-20th century for almost every building and edifice in the Old Town. These records are also available online at <http://www.biblioserver.com/ehitustoimikud>. The database allows you to search for information by address, street name, former land register number or file number.

3D model of the Old Town <http://3d.tallinn.ee>

The spatial model of the heritage conservation area of the Old Town provides a detailed virtual environment in which you can walk around and even peek into certain buildings and courtyards.

Database of the national register of cultural monuments

<http://register.muinas.ee/>
This register provides information about the cultural monuments under national protection in Estonia. It allows you to search for information by address, registration number, name, type of monument or cadastral unit number.

Under 'Licence holders' you will find the list of companies and specialists authorised by the National Heritage Board.

Brochures on restoration and traditional building materials <http://muinas.ee/muinsuskaitsetegevus/trukised>

The brochures produced by the National Heritage Board are available in PDF format from the board's website or from the Division of Heritage Protection and Milieu Areas of the Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department on paper.

Related websites www.tallinn.ee/est/

Muinsuskaitse-osakond Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department

www.muinas.ee
National Heritage Board
www.unesco.org
UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
www.unesco.ee
Estonian National Committee of UNESCO
www.renovveeri.net
Information Centre for Sustainable Renovation
www.materjalid.net
Buying and selling of old building materials and parts



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Published by Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department

*Translated and edited by OÜ Päävaker
Designed by Tuuli Aule
Tallinn 2013
Author: Kais Matteis.
Illustrations: Andres Tartu (cover),
Tallinn Culture and Heritage Department
collection (8, 14, 16 & 17), Peeter Säre
(2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 & 13), Toomas
Volmer and the Tallinn City Enterprise
Board Tourism Department collection
(1 & 15) and the Tallinn City Planning
Department (10).*