

Cultural Landscapes Identification and Assessment: Teaching Experiences from the Department for Landscape Architecture and Horticulture, Faculty of Forestry, University of Belgrade

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Serbia has a long history of the traditional way of landscape usage, ranging from prehistoric to the present times. There are many significant cultural landscapes of the high quality but, as it is a case in many countries worldwide, the contemporary land use reflecting in urbanisation, intensive agriculture, mining, forestry and others, threatening their existence. Prior to any protection of the significant cultural landscapes, which is certainly the pursued goal, of an exceptional importance is their identification and documentation, which implies the impacts assessment on the ecological patterns and landscape scenery. Unfortunately, studies of such type are very rare at the territory of Serbia. As one of the reasons that may be mentioned is the fact that the term "cultural landscape" is a relatively new, both in the Serbian legislation and the spatial planning practice, as well as in the protection of cultural heritage. Thus, the term "cultural landscape" was mentioned for the first time in the Law on Nature Protection from the 2009, as a category of a natural good, where a *landscape of outstanding features* can be a *natural landscape of outstanding features* and a *cultural landscape of outstanding features*. In the mentioned Law, the "cultural landscape" is defined as an area of its significant landscape, aesthetic, cultural and historical value, which has developed over time as the interaction result of the nature, the natural resources of the area and the traditional lifestyle of the local population. An another important document that includes the landscape policy, is the Law on Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (2010 to 2020), which states that "the values of the natural and cultural heritage, as well as of the landscapes of Serbia, must be considered as the spatial development indicators through the prism of the regional and local diversity, uniqueness and distinctiveness, as the identity holder through whom the competitiveness of the municipalities or regions will strengthen. It is necessary to establish and objectively perceive the real state and the vulnerability of the natural and cultural heritage, its values and the required priorities of the activities on the protection, rehabilitation and the improvement". These positive determinations in the strategic document, such as the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, as well as in the Law on Nature Protection, are largely encouraged by signing and later ratification of the European Landscape Convention in 2007 and 2011.

The "Cultural Landscape" course was introduced for the first time in the 2008 at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture of the Faculty of Forestry in Belgrade, when the new curriculum harmonized with the Bologna process was accredited. In the previous curriculum within the course of "Landscape ecology", the cultivated landscape was studied as one of the gradients in the landscape modification (Forman & Godron, 1986). The focus was primarily on the agricultural or rural landscapes, or the areas located between the natural and urban landscapes. By the accreditation of the mentioned curriculum, the Master programme entitled "Landscape architecture" was established, and it included the "Cultural Landscape" course. The three-year TEMPUS - LENNE¹ project made the great impact and the contribution on the establishment of a new Master study program. The aim of this project was the establishment and development of the structure and content of new two-year master study program of the "Landscape Planning and Management" at the Belgrade and Novi Sad Universities. As noted in the project explanation - "the new program will be aimed in particular at responding to the needs of public administration in Serbia for the education of specialists able to support the introduction of and compliance with recent and forthcoming European

¹ LENNE (Landscape Education for a New Neighborhood of Europe) was the Curriculum Development Project carried out under the TEMPUS EU Programme from the 2005 till 2008 at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture.

environmental legislation. As most important among them are: EU's Environmental Assessment (1985); Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (1996); Water Framework Directive (2000); European Landscape Convention (2004)". The consortium of the TEPUS-LENNE project was consisted of six universities from Austria, United Kingdom, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, Hungary, as well as the external experts from ECLAS (European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools), EFLA (European Federation for Landscape Architecture) and UPAS (Serbian association of Landscape Architects). One of the nine developed modules was the "Cultural Landscape". As it was defined: "The Module Cultural Landscape, within TEMPUS-LENNE Project, deals with historical development, protection and landscape management, which are formed around Europe under the human influence. Special focus is given to identification, characterization and understanding of various cultural landscapes types in relation to their visual, ecological, cultural and usage significance. The aim of the module is to provide understanding of the processes of landscapes development and evolution during the last 5000 years which have resulted in the current pattern of landscapes and distribution of landscape features which we see today ('genealogy of the landscape)". The new knowledge resulting from the LENNE-TEMPUS Project has shifted the understanding focus of the term "cultural landscape" in the education at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture in Belgrade. The following definitions of the term "cultural landscape", according to Jones (2003), have been adopted:

- a landscape modified or influenced by the human activities;
- the valued features of the human landscape that are threatened by the changes or disappearance;
- the elements within a landscape of significance for a human group in a given cultural or socio-economic context.

An introduction of the new course "Cultural Landscape" has required preparing the lectures and exercises, where the focus is given on mastering methods and the practical skills necessary for future independent professional activities of the students.. Therefore, within the course content, students are invited to: select a research area according to the initial theoretical knowledge's on the cultural landscapes; study the historical development of the landscapes within the spatial and cultural framework; study the driving forces that led to the formation of the cultural landscapes; assess the significance of the cultural landscape; establish contact with the local community through the interviews and surveys; draft a proposal for the cultural landscape management with the proposed guidelines for the preservation and treatment of the investigated cultural landscape for the planning documents; understand the need for establishing the balance between the historical, cultural, environmental, functional and visual landscape values.

Identification and Assessment of Cultural Landscape Ivanovo – a student's project overview

Since the 2009, when the course "Cultural Landscape" began to be taught, through the student's seminar projects and master thesis, the several significant cultural landscapes on the territory of Serbia have been documented. In the following text, on an example of a student's seminar project (Ivošević M., Petrović, A., Glavinić, I., Ignjatijević, M., 2013), the insight into the applied cultural landscapes identification and assessment within the scope of training of the master's degree students at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture in Belgrade will be presented.

The particular student's project refers to a wider area of the settlement of Ivanovo, located in the western part of the South Banat, in Vojvodina. The ethnic structure of the area population is very diverse. The village itself is inhabited by Hungarians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Slovenes, Macedonians, Croats and Romanians. The river island Ivanovačka ada and the significant part of the Danube River floodplain vegetation on the foreland, as well as 20 km of the embankments along the Danube, belong to the settlement district (Figure 1). Owing to its natural and ambient values, Ivanovačka ada is protected as natural monument. The relation between Ivanovo and its place of origin, the relation between the village population and the Ivanovačka ada with the Danube, as well as the relation

between the Danube and its hydrologic system with the canals and the Danube bayou - Dunavac, and once again the population relation to it, make a closed chain that in many ways has been held throughout history almost a century and a half, although the environment changed in many ways. The formation of the village of Ivanovo is not the result of a spontaneous settling, but it is a reflection of the planned colonization in the area of Vojvodina, in the time when it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The colonization purpose was the amelioration of the fields and the formation of the new cultivable land for the Monarchy, which was done by the construction of the embankments along the Danube in the vicinity of the village.



Figure 1: The settlement of Ivanovo and the view at the Dunavac (Ivošević M., Petrović, A., Glavinić I. Ignjatijević, M., 2013)

The students' task was to conduct the landscape analyze of the wider area of the Ivanovo, assess the landscape character, identify the valuable cultural landscape and provide the suggestions for the possible development guidelines. According to the adopted methodology, work was conducted in the studio as a desk study and at the site in the form of field survey. The work in the studio included review of the relevant information, cartographic and photographic material and the planning documentation, leading to the analysis of the natural and socio-cultural factors. The field survey encompassed site visits, observation and mapping of the environmental features and interview with the local population and stakeholders. Students also studied the changes in the landscape over time, which included changes in hydrologic features, vegetation and infrastructure changes. The gathered information formed the foundation for the classification of the landscape character types and the landscape character areas, based on the methodology given in the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (Swanwick, 2002) and the overlay method. The next step has included the assessment of the classified landscape character types and the landscape character areas from the standpoint of the cultural landscape. The assessment was based on the criteria of the landscape character type rarity at the regional level, the landscape scenery, the historical heritage (cultural layers) and the visibility of the cultural layers. The conducted assessment enabled the selection of those landscape character types that have potential value to distinct as the significant cultural landscapes. The following step has included a detailed inventory and mapping of the cultural landscape elements in the landscape character types which are designated in the previous step as potentially significant. After that, the final border of the selected significant cultural landscape is defined, according to the findings obtained through assessment of the cultural elements. The assessment of the cultural elements has included the following criteria: age, present condition, rarity, expressiveness in the landscape scene, impact on the landscape scenery, usability, emotional relationship of the local population and the synergy of elements (Figure 2).

Finally, the students gave the development guidelines in the form of the development strategy proposal for the designated cultural landscape and the landscape guide. The outcome of the project is the identification and assessment of the significant cultural landscape which preliminarily can be

classified as the “organically evolved landscape” in the subcategory of the “continuing landscape”², at the regional level.

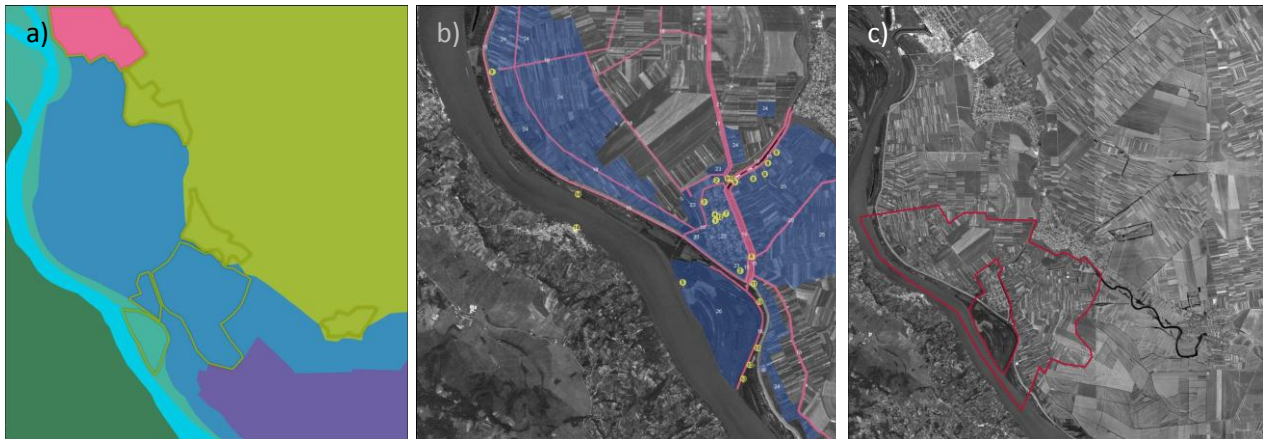


Figure 2: a) Landscape character types and areas b) Identified cultural elements c) Map of the study area with the boundaries of the designated valuable cultural landscape types and the surrounding buffer zones (Source: Ivošević M., Petrović, A., I. Glavinić, M. Ignjatijević, 2013)

The specificity of the settlement of Ivanovo is the embankment that surrounds it, which is unique at the territory of Vojvodina, as well as the hydrological complex consisted of the Danube River, the Danube bayou – Dunavac, the drainage canals and the preserved settlement planning system from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy period. The river island Ivanovačka ada, under the protection as a monument of nature, represents a valuable wetland which is traditionally used by the inhabitants who devote special care to its preservation. This area is also distinguished by its significant cultural potentials and values deriving from an immaterial heritage of different ethnic groups, so it is very distinctive and today represents a rarity. The customs, language, folklore, dishes, fishing "secrets", boat maintenance and all other activities related to water including the flood protection, have remained in this landscape.

Conclusions

On the example of one student's project we tried to present the methodology of identification and assessment of cultural landscapes within the Cultural Landscape course at the Master programme of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture at the Belgrade University. As pointed out, an important influence on the course formation had the TEMPUS-LENNE project and the ratification of the European Landscape Convention in Serbia.

The experiences so far, deriving from the practice of the spatial planning and the cultural monuments protection, indicate a lack of understanding of the term "cultural landscape", first of all by the general professional public. The recent legislative solutions provide the implementing possibilities of the cultural landscapes issues within spatial planning and the cultural monuments protection. The link which is still missing is an understanding of the cultural landscape issues and the knowledge of the identification and assessment methodology of the cultural landscapes, primarily by the dominant experts in mentioned fields.

In the given situation it is apparent that the reasons for the existence of the course dealing with the cultural landscapes are justified. Quality of the projects, student's persistence and even passion during the work on the semester projects at the presented cultural landscape course, indicate that there could be positive change in the current practice related to the cultural landscapes in Serbia. Besides, the direct contact established between the students and the local community also play some part in the promotion of the importance of the cultural landscapes preservation.

² According to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Emphasis on the multidisciplinary approach which recognizes needs for the balance between the historical, cultural, natural, environmental, functional and visual landscape values will be the base for the future development of the subject of the cultural landscapes at the Department of the Landscape Architecture and Horticulture at the University of Belgrade.

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