

Methodology (Certificate no. 186 on the recognition of an applied methodology, issued by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Research and Development Department, ref. no. MK 717/2019 OVV, file ref. MK-S 16654/2015 OVV).

This Methodology for the Evaluation and Protection of Industrial Heritage from the Perspective of Heritage Management was elaborated as part of the project “Industrial Heritage from the Perspective of Heritage Management” (“Průmyslové dědictví z pohledu památkové péče”) in the NAKI II programme (project code DG16P02H029).

The main aim of the publication Methodology for the Evaluation and Protection of Industrial Heritage through Museology is to delineate a museological approach to evaluating the importance and benefits of surviving examples of industrial heritage during the selection of items and their thesaurisation (i.e. their systematic integration to create a museum collection). The publication aims to provide users with methodological guidance that can be applied when devising activities for the conservation of industrial heritage through museum-type collections; the museum concept is a well-established and sustainable form of protecting industrial heritage. This methodology is intended to serve as a tool that can be used to elaborate a coordinated approach to be applied by museum institutions when engaging in heritage conservation activities under the conditions defined by Czech legislation. As such, the publication aims to provide clear and explicit guidance on defining industrial heritage values, determining priorities vis-à-vis institutional collections, and exploiting the possibilities for incorporating examples of industrial heritage into museum collections in order to rescue and preserve them.

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Photograph Mining Museum in Příbram, 2015.

Rear cover: Těšany, Technical Museum in Brno (Technické muzeum v Brně), Těšany forge. Photograph Eva Řezáčová, 2019.

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01. Foreword

Introduction by the project coordinator

This publication follows on from a previous text in the same series presenting a methodological basis for the evaluation and protection of industrial heritage from the perspective of heritage management; it is our opinion that only coordinated efforts by heritage experts, museum institutions and archeologists can ensure that industrial heritage is recorded, documented, evaluated and protected to a high professional standard. After these first two publications, we expect further additions to the series in the form of a third general methodology (for archeological surveys of proto-industrial and industrial heritage), followed by a number of field-specific methodologies focusing on individual industries; it has become apparent that basic evaluations of technical and architectural developments first need to be carried out on a field-specific basis.

Nevertheless, there is a problem: although heritage experts are gradually amassing a growing body of knowledge concerning important buildings and technical equipment, they lack the tools enabling them to store technical equipment and smaller items in depositories, to create exhibitions and to conduct educational activities as part of these exhibitions; it is only museum institutions that have these tools at their disposal. For this reason, it would be of great benefit to coordinate the activities of heritage professionals and museums. Essentially, this cooperation would involve a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities in heritage conservation work. In our opinion, the role of heritage professionals should be to document and conserve immovable monuments, and the role of museum professionals should be to carry out museum documentation, to create and manage collections (including large machinery and equipment), and to present items – including explanations of the principles, functions and values related to these items. Both approaches should be integrated and mutually complementary; for example, a museum can be established at a location where an industrial site has been preserved (along with its technical equipment), or historically interesting technical equipment can be transported to a depository and an exhibition can be created there, supplementing and above all explaining and contextualizing cultural monuments that still exist in situ.

Unfortunately, it is rare for both approaches to be coordinated, and for heritage professionals and museums to work together on joint conservation projects. At least as far as we are aware, there is no integrated concept which would approach the issue of industrial heritage as a holistic entity with respect to key industries and industrial agglomerations. There may also be a general lack of specialist museum institutions with specific responsibility for industrial heritage (this is certainly the case in the Ostrava industrial agglomeration). And there is a shortage of sufficiently large depository premises – whose existence is one of the key preconditions for the conservation of industrial heritage.

In our opinion, the necessary overarching concept (priorities, allocation of roles and responsibilities, and a basic idea of funding sources) should be based on a knowledge of collections (i.e. an awareness of whether at least the most important industries are represented) and clear principles for managing collections (coordinated acquisition plans to ensure that institutions do not attempt to collect everything and that the most important items do not escape their attention because they lack funds to dismantle them or they lack space in their depositories).

Sources of inspiration here can be found in the United Kingdom and Germany, where large-scale examples of technical equipment are initially deposited at “controlled scrapyards” in order to prevent them being destroyed entirely, and are then evaluated to decide what should be done with them in the future.

A somewhat contrasting approach is represented by efforts to maintain industrial heritage sites in an operational state, and to “musealize” these operations by retaining a small number of employees who produce small volumes with