GHF Final and Interim Progress Reporting

Global Heritage Fund
Interim Progress Report - June 6th, 2006

Izborsk Fortress and Greater Pskov,
Russian Federation

GHF EPICENTER BACKGROUND

Site Name and Country:
Izborsk Fortress and Greater Pskov, Russian Federation

GHF Partners:
Ministry of Culture, Russian Federation (Co-Funder and Experts)
General Directorate, Pskov Reconstruction Office (Conservation & Planning)

Date GHF Started
- Investigation: 2003
- Master Planning: 2003-4
- Site Conservation: 2004-Present

Authors:
- John Hurd, Head of Archaeological Conservation, GHF
- Terry Quan, Chief of Operations, GHF

Persons Interviewed:
- Ivan Strelbitski, Historic Architect (GHF Project Advisor)
- Igor Lagunin, Assistant Manager of the General Directorate, Pskov Reconstruction
- Ms. T N Kalashnik, Director of Izborsk Museum Reserve
- Mr. I I Maksimov, Deputy Governor of Pskov Oblast Authority
- Archaeologists and workers of the Izborsk Museum Reserve
- Officers of the Oblast of Pskov
- Officers of the General Directorate, Pskov Reconstruction
- Local heritage enthusiasts and the entrepreneurs involved in establishing private museums and other tourist attractions in the Izborsk region

The inspectors are grateful for the co-operation and generous hospitality of our hosts.

SITE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Izborsk Fortress is one of the most ancient Russian towns, mentioned in the chronicles as early as 862 AD, which began as a small settlement of the Slavic Krivich tribe. A more permanent wooden fortress was built in the mid 10th century, later replaced by a stone fortress occupying the hill’s entire summit at the end of the 11th century. In 1303, the Izborsk Fortress was moved to neighboring Zheravya (Crane) hill 700 meters from the first site, where it still stands today.

Izborsk Fortress’ unassailable walls and organized defenses stopped the many advancing armies of German, Swedish, Polish, Lithuanian and other invaders, and along with sister fortress of Pskov, is famous in Russian history for saving the empire’s Western Frontier.

Izborsk Fortress has survived for over 1,200 years due to its excellent engineering, monumental construction and continual restoration and improvements by Russian engineers and architects until the 16th century when it was abandoned. Over the past
hundred years, the deterioration has rapidly accelerated as the mortars which previously sealed the walls and towers has disintegrated, and wood roofing protecting the ancients walls has disappeared. The region’s extreme weather cycles of rain, snow and freezing and thawing continues to destroy Izborks’s last remaining walls and towers.

In 2001, work begun to authentically restore one tower and a portion of the walls as a model conservation for the ancient fort. Drainage, new capstones and restoration of the deteriorating walls was successfully completed, and the work results sent to Moscow for quality assessment. Despite excellent reviews for quality of the restoration work, Izborsk restoration stopped due to lack of governmental funding and Russia has little private-sector philanthropy available, especially for critically needed for archaeological conservation and research.

**GHF INVOLVEMENT**

GHF is working in partnership with the Pskov State Department of Restoration and leading Russian archaeologists from Pskov, Moscow and St. Petersburg to develop Izborsk’s first site management plan to be submitted for UNESCO World Heritage nomination, and to complete archaeological conservation and authentic restoration of this jewel in Russian history.

**GHF’s Primary Goals:**

1. **Master Planning**- Completion and approvals of Master Conservation Plan (MCP) for Izborsk Fortress and Greater Pskov.
2. **Site Conservation** - Completion of the entire Izborsk Fortress including its walls and towers
3. **Interpretation** - development of international signage and site interpretation.
4. **UNESCO World Heritage**- Formal designation of Great Pskov including Izborsk Fortress

**EPICENTER PROGRESS REPORT** by John Hurd and Terry Quan

*On-site visit June 24-28th*

**MASTER CONSERVATION PLANNING**

The well developed GHF Master Conservation Plan changes slowly as the project develops. It is appropriate that the Master plan responds to needs on site and the changes of view in respect of presentation. Most of the changes occur in changing views about the impact and expanse of Museumisation in the master plan. It is normal to find moderation increasing as the project develops. 

*To date, all of GHFs targets have achieved approval and enforcement.*

Other structural elements covered within the Master Conservation Plan have achieved approval for intervention through elements of the project funded by the Ministry of Culture.

The GHF Master Conservation Plan will be a valuable appendix to the World Heritage Site application dossier.
CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE

Work on the Nickolski Gate, and walls associated with this gate, has been achieved with a high standard of planning, documentation, craftsmanship and management. Work now proceeds to the Kolokolnaja (Bell) Tower and it is clear that the management team hopes to continue with the established high standards and even intend to improve some aspects.

Lessons learned on the conservation of the Nickolski gate will be implemented on the bell tower. Training has occurred within the team, but needs to outreach to a larger number of students interns and other parties. Due to regional rules concerning the standards of contractors, GHF may wish to assist in specific training sessions and demonstrations of techniques in the future.

There has been some limited use of cement in consolidation and capping activities, this has been discussed and the inspectors are happy with the progress towards improving materials. All works done to date are reversible and do not strongly threaten the wellbeing of the historic fabric. Authenticity is not compromised but John Hurd urges the project leader Igor Lagunin to maintain a high standard.

CONSERVATION SCIENCE AND METHODS

The Intervention so far achieved is of very high standard. John Hurd has proposed a tightening up of documentation protocols in order to establish a dossier for each individual structure within the project.

Materials analysis should be improved and this will lead to a more measured and expert selection of precise conservation materials. John Hurd will supply training in this area of research, documentation and decision making, he has also taken mortar samples for laboratory analysis. There is a tendency to an over use of ordinary Portland cement, especially as the capping of the conserved structures. In part this is due to the standard of hydrated lime available in the region.

John Hurd agrees with Ivan Stelbitski that the answer is to burn good quality and fresh lime close to the site, as apart of the project. Lime burning can be sustained by the added value of the sale of a proportion of the produced lime putty for the improvement of other conservation projects in the region and beyond. There would have other impacts including a useful didactic archaeological reconstruction of historic methods, and of huge interest to tourists.

John Hurd and Ivan Strelbitski are researching other lime burning projects in the region together with historic sources. For the 2006 season and until high grade lime putty becomes available, John Hurd recommends that mortar
mixes do not exceed, 1 part cement, 2 parts lime and nine parts of well graded mortar sand.

The work so far achieved conforms well to the Master Conservation Plan. Prior to the GHF-supported Master Conservation Plan (MCP), the Pskov Reconstruction Office envisaged a great deal of reconstruction in line with the museum and interpretation of the site, including new roofs on most towers and widespread wall walkways for visitor access. This is now moderated and the inspectors hope that several of the towers will be conserved in the found state.

The advantage here is to didactically demonstrate to the visitor the form and evolutions to the towers. Internal access construction and roofing to towers such as the NW Tower will remove this important didactic experience for the visitor and damage the ‘spirit of place’.

Local regional authorities and the Izborsk Museum Reserve are dedicated to working within the scope of the MCP. Enforcement is not formal, but is limited to general and specific commitments on behalf of all authorities and management to the MCP. Staffing at the Izborsk Museum and reserve is large enough to manage at present. The staff is attentive, polite and well trained.

REGIONAL RESPONSE AND SUSTAINABILITY
The regional and local authorities prefer to separate individual aspects of the conservation work for funding by GHF and for separate funding from the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. General pooling of funding is not preferred. For instance, GHF have funded the Nickolski Gate, while the Ministry have funded the Lukovka Tower. GHF will now fund the Bell tower and the State will match and even improve on this funding for the raised wall walkway leading from the Nickolski Gate to the Lukovka Tower. This walkway will include visitor access to the Bell tower, now underway. This seems a reasonable protocol and will continue to ensure matched funding from the ministry of Culture.

Present levels of Federal financing is ahead of the amounts being contributed by GHF

There is an advanced plan to levy revenue from visitor ticketing. GHF will continue to support and advance this initiative. GHF will also continue to encourage the provision of Handicap facilities on the site. The museum interpretation of the site is good but will improve in presentation of important didactic signage within restored towers and other areas.

In respect of the issue of application for UNESCO World Heritage Site status for greater Pskov and its satellites, the inspectors held meetings with both the General Directorate, Pskov Reconstruction and with the Deputy Governor of the Pskov Oblast region. The paperwork to support the application is now in an advanced state and the Oblast Authority, recently elected, are strongly behind the proposal. Great Pskov was listed on the
Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage Nomination in June, 2004 by the
Russian Federation.

During a meeting with I.I. Maksimov, the Deputy Governor of Pskov, it
became clear that the application had his absolute support and thanks to
GHF’s plans to assist the region, the inspectors are of the impression that the
Oblast authorities will supply extra budgeting in respect of the UNESCO
World Heritage application. The Greater Pskov Master Conservation Plan co-

funded by GHF is well developed, boundaries are proposed and a buffer
zone well defined.

On the whole the values of the site have been maintained, John Hurd felt
that there was a tendency to praise the very old and would like to see more
modern evolutions to be respected. Even the houses built by German
prisoners after WWII are extraordinary and of careful balanced design and
colour. Soviet buildings and monuments also play a part, and the Dom
Sovietov with its sculpture of Lenin, will be much admired by international
visitors.

The long term sustainability of the project and its future management is
reinforced by a financial commitment from both Federal and regional
authorities.

In 4 years time, Pskov will celebrate 500 years since Pskovites joined Russia
under the rule of Ivan the Terrible. The World Heritage Site application for
inscription should be completed and submitted two years before the
anniversary. Inscription should be targeted to coincide with this celebration.
This anniversary should also be used to educate and raise the awareness of
the local population to the historic significance of the sites and the need to
treat them with respect, which is the normal local attitude. There is little
sign of graffiti or vandalism in Izborsk. In Pskov city there may be a growing
problem in this area.

GHF can assist in smoothing the passage of this UNESCO World Heritage
application which John Hurd details in his confidential report to the
Executive Director of GHF.

TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
There continues to be a strong emphasis on regional tourism development
including close and detailed planning for the provision of visitor facilities
and visitor control. The inspectors were impressed by this effort on behalf
of the Museum reserve and by meeting held with Ms. Kalashnik, director of
the reserve. Inspectors noted the presence of a large number of visitors to
the site during the inspection period.

Visitor numbers trends. Izborsk.
2000 - 47400 visitors
2001 - not available
2002 - not available
2003 - 82900 (jubilee year in Pskov)
2004 - 77800
2005 - 79800

It is believed that visitor numbers continue to increase in 2006. Active promotion of the Fortress will strengthen when priority consolidation is completed on the bell tower and places in the walls. At present these areas compromise visitor safety. GHF will monitor the progress of visitor promotion publicity.

*International visitors are still of quite low numbers, but increasing.* The positive effort being made towards World Heritage status for greater Pskov including Izborsk as a satellite attraction will improve this position. The work of GHF is drawing attention to the site with all its positive benefits.

There is a small rise in local employment for site management and maintenance. Local stallholders are finding healthy trade from visitors with per visitor expenditure rising steadily.

In Pskov the authorities are aware of the need to develop Hotel development and tourist infrastructure. Hotel development is slow, but developers are carefully monitoring visitor numbers in the region. Commercial interests, (shops) are growing in number.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

At present there is moderate development pressure to the historic core of Pskov and at Izborsk there are strictly governed rules for development. Izborsk is slowly developing as inhabitants change efficient modern roofing for the old and beautiful Birchwood shingles and the inspectors felt that regulations in the form of building listing will help to protect the best examples.

Industry is, for now, still in decline and there is little pollution or environmental pressure. In Izborsk the natural environment is included in a well policed conservation plan, with detailed and well organised plans and drawings are available for viewing at the Museum.

The pressure of tourism is approaching with reasonable forward planning, especially at Izborsk but the infrastructure is poor and improvements will need to be made in facilities. The tourists will arrive before the end of the conservation project and more widespread and available toilet facilities, dining and refreshment outlets will quickly become necessary to achieve the best possible visitor experience.

These improvements should be planned and accessible, especially to the area of the springs and lake. Facilities should be discreet and remote in
terms of the unspoiled beauty of the springs, but accessible including
disabled person access where possible.

Limited New development of an hotel and residences within the Core
Archaeological Area and Buffer Zone have occurred (see map Appendix 1
detailing encroachment).


None of these represents a serious encroachment although efforts are being
made for some demolitions. The exercise of defining and monitoring
encroachments is now efficient and rigorous.

Commercial pressure will come with increased visitor numbers. The Museum
Reserve is aware of the many dangers of commercial pressure and have
plans to organise sensible commercial zones and protect the interests of
local traders and Izborsk residents, and to preserve the charm of the Izborsk
Fortress setting.

Risk Mitigation

1. The physical risk of collapse of parts of the structure and danger to
visitors.
This is mitigated by good planning and focus on areas in a critical condition.
GHF current campaign to stabilise and conserve the bell tower is a vital part
of this effort. The tower is in poor condition. Visitor access is closely
controlled in danger areas and good clear signage is provided.

2. Contractual laws in the Russian Federation insist that only officially
registered contractors are used on intervention projects for historic
monuments.
The contractors must work under the supervision of the Museum reserve
and its archaeological staff.

Difficulties in ensuring attendance of the locally registered contractor,
who is busy with many projects, did cause management problems during
2005.

The inspectors had some reservations about the volume of work achieved
for the budget provided and support the decision by GHF to limit funding
during 2005.
Discussions with the inspectors have clarified these risks and a realistic volume of work is expected during the short season remaining for the 2006 campaign. This position will be continually monitored by John Hurd. Ivan Strelbitski has recommended an annual independent audit of volumes against payment. This audit can be arranged from Moscow and should be a topic for future discussion by GHF, dependant on our analysis of results during the 2006 campaign.

3. **Differing cultural understandings of the best way to present and interpret sites like Izborsk.**
GHF must assist closely with the risk of over presentation and museumisation of the Izborsk Fortress. There remains a danger of a ‘Disneyland’ presentation and for a tendency to adapt every aspect of the site to visitor access. It is important to conserve parts of the site as stabilised ruins, partly for strong didactic reasons and partly to allow future scientists and conservators to interpret the site in its own and evolving understanding. The inspectors have strongly focused on this risk with a sympathetic response from the managing groups and authorities. GHF and authorities must, however, maintain vigilance.

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**MILESTONES AND BUDGET**

Since GHF is going to fund individual features of the fortress, benchmarks become clearer and budgetary requirements and auditing, straightforward.

During the now shortened 2006 season the target and benchmark for the site team and contractor will be the **reinforcement, stabilisation and conservation of the external façade of the Bell Tower**. This is a challenging target since instability renders the work conditional on ongoing assessments of safety and stability.

The **total budget request to GHF for the 2006 season is $42,000**. The inspectors view this as a reasonable figure. The inspectors recommend that half of the budget be issued now and the remaining half be issued during August 2006.

*The total budget for Izborsk Fortress conservation in 2006 is $96,000, with $54,000 being provided by the Ministry of Culture, Russian Federation.*

The management team should supply a brief progress report before the second payment is made, and this report should be supported with pictures of progress made. Since the first part of the work includes removal of loosened material and interstitial consolidation the inspectors do not expect strong visual changes to occur until later in the season. When the season is completed a full report of progress on the tower should be prepared for insertion into the Bell Tower dossier and be distributed to GHF.
Before each season the target structure for GHF should be nominated, documented and defined. It seems likely that GHF seek donors to expand its budget to make broader progress during 2007; the contractor is able to produce greater volumes of work if the finance is available. The alternative will be to continue drip feeding funding for several years. Next season the target will be to complete works to the bell tower and during the 2006 season further works for a good 2007 season, may be discussed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS - INDICATORS
The achievements in the last two years of interventions on site have been very good, both in terms of the quality of work and also in the general raising of awareness to the project.

There is always a steep learning curve when working on ancient structures which have evolved and been restored at different times in history. In practical terms both the managers and contractors have learned a great deal and intervention continues to improve reflecting this growth of sensitivity and understanding.

Work to the Nickolski Gate is exemplary; a need to make some small modifications to the materials used in conservation has been recognised and will be acted upon.

Difficulties in defining the progress of works on the Bell Tower during last season are now dealt with and 2006 progress is expected to show a large improvement.

Work funded by Federal and local partners reflects the high quality of GHF funded interventions.

The inspectors rate the Nickolski gate at 9 out of 10, and the investigative work on the Bell Tower at 6 out of 10. The inspectors expect a dramatic rise in assessment for the Bell Tower at the end of the 2006 season.

End of report. Inspectors John Hurd and Terry Quan, July 2006.

Appendix 1.
Encroachment Map. Izborsk.