

Old town of Kuldīga

Attribute mapping report for
the UNESCO World Heritage
property



Institute for Heritage
Management





Figure 2: The Old town of Kuldīga embedded in the surrounding landscape

Imprint

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*Figure 1 (front page). View towards the Old town of Kuldīga from the bank of river Venta
(Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga).*

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Figure 3: Ventas Rumba waterfall is an essential attribute of the property's recognized OUV

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Non-technical summary

Task

The nomination file for the Old town of Kuldīga argued that Kuldīga is an exceptional testimony to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, a small political entity in the Baltic states that was largely involved in international exchange and trading activities, and which had a major influence on the development of the architectural language and craftsmanship of the region. With reference to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, the proposed Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) was argued through criterium (iii), *to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared* (UNESCO 2024, 29).

Whereas the Old town of Kuldīga was recognized as UNESCO World Heritage in 2023, the criterium it was inscribed under changed from the proposed criterium (iii) to criterium (v), *to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change* (UNESCO 2024, 29). In this context, the timeframe of the OUV was widened from merely the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia (1561-1795) to the overall development of traditional architecture from the 13th until the early 20th century.

This report's task is to reassess whether the attribute groups and corresponding attributes defined during the nomination process in 2020 appropriately respond to the established Statement of OUV and criterion (v), as well as to complete the existing attribute maps by integrating time periods pre- and post-dating the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia.

Key results

(1) The attribute groups identified during the nomination process – urban layout and streetscape, architectural remains of the 17th and 18th century, continuity of craft skills, landscape elements of the historical town – are still relevant in the context of the refined Statement of OUV.

(2) The four attribute groups derived from the property's OUV needed to be refined to adequately meet management needs. They are now grouped as follows: landscape setting, urban layout, architecture and building fabric, craftsmanship.



Figure 4: Drone imagery reveals the urban layout and clay roofscape of Kuldīga
(Photo credits: Municipality of Kuldīga)

(3) Due to the expansion of the timeframe of OUV, several potential attributes were identified that currently lie within the buffer zone.

(4) Georeferenced maps were created to allow for a visual understanding of the spatial distribution of each attribute group. An additional map shows an overlay of all groups to express areas with a high density of attributes.

Recommendations

(1) It is recommended that the content and importance of this attribute mapping report be communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including citizens living within the property, and that all management decisions be based on the protection of the identified attributes.

(2) It is highly recommended to take into consideration preparing a Minor Boundary Modification request for the boundaries of the Old town of Kuldīga to be able to protect the entirety of attributes contributing to the property's OUV, as potential attributes of the Russian Empire revealed themselves in the current buffer zone of the property. Also, with regard to the attribute of the town's silhouette, it would be valuable to extend the boundaries in a way that the additional church towers can be considered as integral parts, rather than disturbances, of it.

(3) The attribute mapping should be furthermore spatially extended to identify any additional potential attributes that might currently lie within the buffer zone. This is most likely the case for three of the four attribute groups, namely the urban layout, architecture and building fabric, and craftsmanship. Furthermore, it should be discussed up to where to extend the included part of the Venta Valley.

(4) It is recommended to consider relocating existing disturbances to the OUV, especially radio towers, to recreate the historical silhouette of the town. It is furthermore recommended to further analyse whether it would be possible to change the colour of the hospital's roof to a more neutral tone that blends in with the historic roof landscape. In the future, roofs that might be visible from the view corridors identified to be of OUV relevance should always blend in with the historic colours, if possible. Heritage Impact Assessments are a key tool to prevent similar disturbances in the future.

(5) A thorough monitoring system should be developed based on the attribute mapping report to comply with UNESCO standards and facilitate the integration of the results of regular monitoring activities into the periodic reporting survey carried out by UNESCO.



Figure 5: The bell tower of Kuldīga's first cemetery constructed during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia

1. Introduction

In 2023, at the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh, Saudi-Arabia, The Old town of Kuldīga was inscribed as a World Heritage property under criterion (v). By means of this inscription, the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the town in Western Latvia was recognized and the State Party of Latvia committed to protecting this heritage for future generations.

The following document provides a short analysis of the Statement of OUV and criterion (v) to help make well-informed decisions and ensure a management system fully based on the property's recognized OUV. The analysis is used as a basis for defining the physical attributes that need to be conserved to protect the property's OUV and provides an overview of the resulting key attributes. Finally, the attributes conveying the OUV will be identified and mapped accordingly.

A similar activity was first carried out by SIA "AIG" (an architectural firm specialized in the investigation of heritage properties) in 2020 as part of the development of the nomination file. In the course of the 2023 Heritage Impact Assessment on the visitor infrastructure in Pārventas Park, a second analysis was carried out to understand the different value levels, including not only the OUV but also national and regional heritage values. Given that the focus of OUV has slightly changed based on the recommendations of the esteemed international experts of ICOMOS in comparison to that suggested in the nomination file, the following document aims at adjusting the existing attribute mapping report.





Figure 6: The clay roofscape contrasts with the wide, undisturbed landscape towards the property's east (Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga)



Figure 7: Two of the four church towers contributing to the town silhouette

2. Methodology

This attribute mapping activity included a thorough review of previous documentations of relevant attributes as well as expert consultation and site visits in October 2024. The process was overseen by the Municipality of Kuldīga under the supervision of the property's site manager Jana Jakobsone.

The process of the attribute mapping followed seven steps:

(1) Understanding the OUV

The identification of attributes must be preceded by a clear understanding of the OUV and the defining criterium (v), as confirmed by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee upon inscription of the property. Thus, as a first step, the Statement of OUV was thoroughly analysed regarding the mentioned values and attributes, and classified accordingly.

While the values mentioned in the Statement of OUV illustrate the key ideas and themes of why the property is of such value, the attributes are the physical expression of those ideas. To protect the value concepts that the UNESCO World Heritage Committee confirmed to be so important that they should be preserved for future generations, the physical attributes need to be preserved. For example, the value of international exchange between Kuldīga and other regions can be expressed and preserved through elements of craftsmanship, such as tin elements on the facades that resemble similar elements in other towns of the Hanseatic League. Preserving those elements thus results in the preservation of the underlying value concept.

The analysis of the property's Statement of OUV can be found in Chapter 3 (p.18).

(2) Reassessing previously identified physical attributes and (where needed) associated intangible features

As a second step, it was assessed in a joint on-site discussion with relevant stakeholders which attributes had been mapped already during the nomination process and how they respond to the adopted Statement of OUV and its analysis undertaken during stage one of this attribute mapping process. It was further analysed where there were gaps in their textual and georeferenced documentation that needed to be filled. As a

result, it became evident that previous attribute mapping activities lacked of an assessment of the town's verticality as well as of viewsheds that contribute to the legibility of the property's OUV. The results of this joint discussion were fully integrated into this report to ensure their safeguarding.

(3) Categorising the attributes

Based on the Statement of OUV and the previous documentation of attributes of the UNESCO World Heritage property, it was jointly assessed how the existing attributes can best be clustered to provide for effective management and monitoring. This activity was based on the attribute groups mentioned in the nomination file as well as the results of the first stage of the 2023 Heritage Impact Assessment for visitor infrastructure in Pärventas Park. This information was also reassessed considering the feedback and recommendations regarding the HIA brought forward by ICOMOS in the summer of 2024.

As a result, the central value concepts of the World Heritage property were grouped into the following four attribute groups which form the basis of this attribute mapping report:

- (1) Landscape setting
- (2) Urban layout
- (3) Architecture and building fabric
- (4) Craftsmanship

Each of the attribute groups combines a specific category of attributes that share particular qualities, resulting in similar conservation efforts.

It is important to note that the property's attributes may hold additional values on a national or regional level that sometimes differ from their contribution to the property's OUV. Additionally, there may be physical or intangible features associated with the property that are unrelated to the timeframe or storyline of the OUV. While this report is focused specifically on the identification of attributes to facilitate better monitoring of the UNESCO World Heritage property, it is strongly encouraged by UNESCO that the conservation of other heritage values remains an integral part of site management. Other heritage values can be derived from table 10 annexed to this report.

(4) Mapping attributes and verifying attribute categories on-site

As a majority of attributes were mapped in previous exercises, the on-site attribute mapping in October 2024 was limited to identifying and closing existing gaps.

In particular, attributes of landscape setting were mapped, including relevant viewpoints to perceive the scenic character of the property. This included the comparison of historic viewsheds with their current state of conservation.

Additionally, the previously identified attribute groups were verified on site to ensure their ability to grasp the entirety of physical attributes representing the OUV. As a result of the on-site attribute mapping activity, short texts were produced to identify the key characteristics of each attribute group. Colour-coded plans of the property are provided within the respective description to illustrate their locations. All maps have been georeferenced and created using QGIS.

(5) Grading the attributes' significance levels

The significance grading of each attribute is determined based on its contribution to the OUV and its state of conservation. It is crucial to note that every tangible aspect of the World Heritage property identified as an attribute of significance is representative of the property's OUV. Therefore, their preservation is important and no harm should be done to them unless it is absolutely necessary for indispensable research purposes or the prevention of extensive and long-term damage.

In addition, there are single attributes of high significance, the preservation of which is of utmost importance for the World Heritage property to be able to illustrate the OUV also in the future. Attributes of high significance comply with one of the two following decision bases:

- 1) The selected attributes are considered to have a higher degree of authenticity or integrity and therefore, their state of conservation is rather undisturbed and the OUV is clearly visible.
- 2) The selected attributes are specifically mentioned as conveying the OUV to a greater extent verbally within the Statement of OUV or because the OUV is depending on their development.
- 3) Individual attributes can hold significance across multiple attribute groups, and their cumulative importance may be elevated as a result (higher significance). Consequently, any harm done to these attributes may affect multiple attribute groups, leading to a greater loss of OUV.

Lastly, the report also discusses potential attributes. Potential attributes are physical features that seem to contribute to the property's OUV but are situated

outside the property's boundary, within the buffer zone. While it is more common for properties that were inscribed in the early years of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention to present potential attributes beyond the boundary, it can also occur in later nominations. With regard to Kuldīga, the expansion of the timeframe of OUV upon the recommendation of ICOMOS suggests that attributes may be found just outside the property. Those potential attributes identified during this attribute mapping exercise are marked with hatches.

To distinguish the different significance levels on the attribute maps, they were given the following colours:

Table 1: Overview of significance grading

Significance Level	Attributes
Highest significance	Areas, in which one or more attributes of very high significance overlap
High significance	Attributes representing OUV
Significance	
Potential significance	Areas where evidence contributing to the OUV is expected. Additional research considered necessary to determine attribute character
Neutral	Neutral area without OUV (might hold other cultural values)
Disturbance within property boundary	Impairments/Disturbance of the OUV within the property boundary
Disturbance within buffer zone	Impairment/Disturbance of the OUV within the buffer zone

(6) Vulnerability and risk analysis

The vulnerability and risk analysis for the World Heritage property was carried out in a multi-step process to ensure thorough assessment and preservation. In this context, existing disturbances, such as single structures in the buffer zone that disrupt the silhouette of the World Heritage property, were mapped to document the status quo, and existing development plans were discussed. As a result of this process, it was decided to conduct a preventive viewshed analysis to determine areas from which developments, such as wind farms, should be excluded to protect the property's OUV.

The results of this analysis can be found in chapter 5 (p.56).

(7) Finalising the attribute mapping report

The report comprises the identification, analysis, and description of the attributes according to their specific characteristics, as well as a detailed mapping of their location.

Contextual Parameters

All results presented in this report take into consideration the Statement of OUV, the property boundary, its buffer zone, and its wider setting. As previously defined, the OUV forms the basis for determining the attributes and key values of the World Heritage property. The Old town of Kuldīga has been inscribed on the World Heritage List considering the following aspects:

Located in the western part of Latvia, the town of Kuldīga is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement, which developed from a small medieval hamlet into an important administrative centre of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia between the 16th and 18th centuries. The town structure of Kuldīga has largely retained the street layout of that period, and includes traditional log architecture as well as foreign-influenced styles that illustrate the rich exchange between local and travelling craftspeople from around the Baltic Sea. The architectural influences and craftsmanship traditions introduced during the period of the Duchy endured well into the 19th century.

A comprehensive analysis and complete description of the Statement of OUV and criterion (v) can be found in Chapter 3 (p. 18).

Spatial Parameters

The physical dimensions of the areas relevant for attribute mapping of the UNESCO World Heritage property are defined by the property boundary, as confirmed by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee through its inscription in 2023. According to the Operational Guidelines (UNESCO 2024), the boundaries of the World Heritage property need to include all attributes necessary to express the property's OUV, whereas the buffer zone offers an additional layer of protection that does not include further attributes.

(§ 88) Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore, requires assessing the extent to which the property: a) includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value; b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance; c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

(§99) The delineation of boundaries is an essential requirement in the establishment of effective protection of nominated properties. Boundaries should be drawn to incorporate all the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value and to ensure the integrity and/or authenticity of the property.

(§100) For properties nominated under criteria (i) - (vi), boundaries should be drawn to include all those areas and attributes which are a direct tangible expression of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, as well as those areas which, in the light of future research possibilities, offer potential to contribute to and enhance such understanding.

The Old town of Kuldīga covers 84.33 hectares, with a nearly equivalent buffer zone of 88.85 hectares. The property boundary includes the town's historical features, such as Baznīcas Street, as well as natural elements like the Venta River and Alekšupīte which reflects the town's setting within its natural environment, and is able to fully illustrate the property's OUV. The buffer zone was defined, among other reasons, to preserve the visual coherence of the World Heritage property and to safeguard the property as a whole.

In the context of potential disturbances of the property's OUV, it is also important to consider actions and development carried out in the property's wider setting:

(§112) [...] The wider setting may relate to the property's topography, natural and built environment, and other elements such as infrastructure, land use patterns, spatial organization, and visual relationships. It may also include related social and cultural practices, economic processes and other intangible dimensions of heritage such as perceptions and associations. Management of the wider setting is related to its role in supporting the Outstanding Universal Value. [...]

Time Scope

The Old town of Kuldīga includes attributes representing the entire timeframe of the OUV from the 13th century until the early 20th century. The town's foundations were laid during the medieval period, dating back to the 13th century. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, Kuldīga emerged as an important administrative and cultural hub of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. It was during this period that the features of wooden architecture and urban layout developed. These influences continued to shape Kuldīga well into the 19th century.

In the 20th century, Kuldīga experienced a strong commitment to preserving its unique heritage. The continuity of cultural and architectural traditions underscores the town's significance over the span of seven centuries. Therefore, the preservation of all attributes dating to and reflecting the development of Kuldīga throughout these years is considered of the highest importance to the OUV of the World Heritage property.

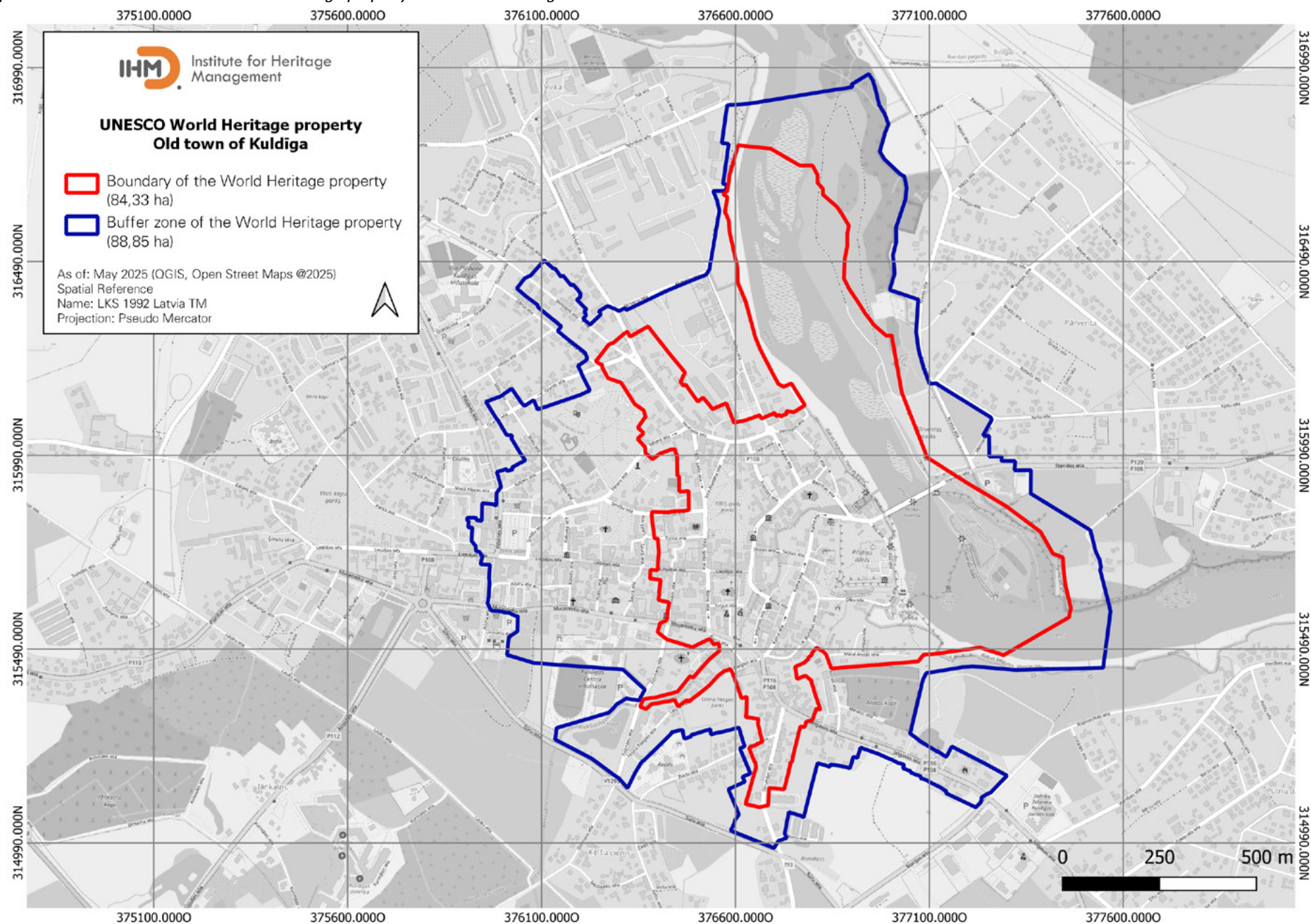
Mapping

The textual descriptions of the attributes within this document are directly reflected in the corresponding georeferenced maps and serve to provide a more in-depth explanation of them. Each attribute group is depicted with its own map representing all respective attributes. Within the text and attribute tables, each attribute contributing to a specific attribute group is assigned a corresponding number which can be found within the maps of the components attached to the respective chapters.

When an attribute is, for example, assigned the number (1.1), this is also reflected within the table and the map. Each attribute group has been assigned a specific colour, which is shown in an overview map of all the attribute groups in Chapter 8 (p. 66). Attributes of group (4) Craftsmanship were not mapped in GIS. The recommendation chapter advises on how to proceed with the attribute mapping of attributes contributing to this specific group. Viewsheds as well as the building materials were also not integrated into the map material. For an overview of those attributes, photographs have been included in this report to demonstrate the identified value-bearing attributes that are to be protected.

The maps were created using the open-source program QGIS, which enabled the location of the individual elements according to their actual position in the World Heritage property.

Map 1: Boundaries of the UNESCO World Heritage property "Old town of Kuldīga"



The following table displays the colour coding that represents each of the attribute groups within the overview map:

Table 2: Overview of colours used to represent each attribute group in the overview maps (as opposed to the significance maps)

Colour	Attribute group
	Landscape setting
	Urban layout
	Architecture and building fabric

Elements of craftsmanship are not spatially mapped. Instead, there are photographs integrated into this report that illustrate the different attributes of this attribute group.



Figure 8: Traditional wooden architecture in Raina Street

3. Analysis of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Statement of OUV under which the Old town of Kuldīga is recognized as a World Heritage property forms the basis of all decisions made in relation to the Latvian World Heritage property and, consequently, requires careful analysis. It reads as follows:

Brief synthesis

Located in the western part of Latvia, in the central Kurzeme (Courland) region, the town of Kuldīga is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement. At the confluence of the Venta River and the smaller Alekšupīte stream, the beginnings of Kuldīga, which was called Goldingen at the time, date back to the 13th century. The rivers' intersection is a defining element of the town's structure, contributing to its scenic character. The medieval area of Kalnamiests, located on a hill, is clearly distinguishable in the townscape, given its oval shape.

A significant part of Kuldīga's history and development is linked to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, which governed a significant part of the Baltics between 1561 and 1795. The town was the primary residence and administrative centre of the Duchy's first ruler and maintained an important role afterwards. As a result, the town developed into a prosperous trading hub. The international orientation of the Duchy led to a rising number of foreign merchants and craftsmen settling in Kuldīga, who left their mark on the architectural language and building decoration of the region. The town's structure has largely retained the street layout which developed during the period of the Duchy.

The architectural influences and craftsmanship traditions introduced during the era of the Duchy endured well into the 19th century. However, different laws and regulations, aimed at fire safety, led to the progressive replacement of fire hazardous roofing materials. The proportion of masonry buildings also increased, replacing traditional wooden ones. In the second half of the 19th century, the brick bridge over the Venta River was constructed, connecting Kuldīga to the east.



Figure 9: The Old Town Hall on Town Hall Square

Unlike other towns in the Baltic region, Kuldīga survived the great wars of the 20th century largely unscathed and modern urban developments were largely implemented far outside its historic centre.

Criterion (v): *The old town of Kuldīga is an outstanding example of a well-preserved urban settlement, representative of traditional Baltic architecture and urbanism and of multiple historical periods – from the 13th to the early 20th centuries. Its historic urban fabric includes structures of traditional local log architecture as well as largely foreign-influenced techniques and styles of brick masonry and timber-framed houses that illustrate the integration of local craftsmanship with foreign influences from other Hanse towns and centres around the Baltic Sea as well as Russia. The craft skills are prominent in functional and ornamental building details throughout the town and continue to be employed by craftspeople today. The predominance of clay tiles as a roofing material contributes to the harmonious townscape of Kuldīga.*

Integrity

The property encompasses the medieval castle mound plateau, the medieval area known as Kalnamiests, and the urban areas which developed during the ducal period from the 16th until the 18th centuries but continued to organically evolve afterwards. In addition, large areas of the environmental setting of Kuldīga are also included, namely the intersection of the Venta and Alekšupite rivers, as well as the Ventas Rumba waterfall, which was essential for the growth of Kuldīga into a trading centre.

In the past, fires destroyed substantial parts of the urban fabric and remain a risk to this day, since the town has many wooden buildings as well as buildings with important wooden elements. Floods are another important factor that can potentially affect the property, particularly in view of climate change. To maintain the harmonious townscape, the town's general construction rules stipulate maximum building heights within the property and its buffer zone.

The boundaries of the property coincide, for the most part, with the national designation of the "urban construction monument" of state importance. The area of the Venta Valley is not included

in that designation but is protected as a nature reserve. The buffer zone corresponds to the "individual protection zone" and has complementary legal provisions in order to give an added layer of protection to the property.

Authenticity

Kuldīga's urban and architectural heritage is well retained in terms of material, design and craftsmanship. It illustrates continuity in function and use as residences, auxiliary structures and religious spaces for the resident community. The old town further preserves its authenticity in setting and location, which was a fundamental aspect for the development of the urban structure of the town, influenced by the intersection of the Venta and Alekšupite rivers. The river landscape has changed over time but not to the extent that it fundamentally alters the environmental setting of the property.

Protection and management requirements

The property was first nationally recognised in 1969 and received the highest level of national protection as a cultural monument under the national Law "On the Protection of Cultural Monuments". The landscape elements of the Venta Valley have been protected since 1957 and were recognised in 2004 as part of the NATURA 2000 network. The buffer zone also has legal status as a monument of architecture (urban construction) of local importance in the list of state protected cultural monuments.

On a local level, multiple planning documents, such as a local territorial development plan, define strict legal mechanisms that contribute to the protection of the historic urban settlement and further prevent development pressures that might affect the property's significance.

Kuldīga Municipality acts as the main management authority for the property and its buffer zone. With regards to the conservation of historic buildings, the Kuldīga Restoration Centre is an essential partner of the municipality. The day-to-day management of the World Heritage property is guided by a management plan, which is complemented by subsidiary plans related to risk management and tourism management.



Figure 10: Mixed style buildings are a testimony to later stages of architectural development in Kuldīga

As a basis of the attribute mapping, this statement was carefully analysed to identify values and attributes as well as to reassess the previously chosen attribute groups. Table 3 gives an overview of the analysis of the property's OUV as suggested in the World Heritage Resource Manual Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0 (UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN 2023, 34). In addition to the values (**bold**) and attributes (underlined), the table was adapted to also analyse each sentence of the OUV regarding the four attribute groups identified for this property. Only those sentences mentioning values or attributes, were integrated into the tabular overview.

It is important to note that in addition to the attributes of OUV, the property's overall authenticity and integrity are important elements to be protected for future generations. Authenticity is generally assessed for different categories, namely a) form and design, b) materials and substance, c) use and function, d) traditions, techniques and management systems, e) location and setting, f) language, and other forms of intangible heritage, g) spirit and feeling, and h) other internal and external factors. (UNESCO 2024, 30). In the annex, a similar overview can be found for other heritage values (see Chapter 9, p. 68).

Table 3: Analysis of the property's Statement of OUV

Level of recognition: OUV						
Statement of OUV	Heritage/ conservation values	Attributes	Landscape Setting	Urban layout	Architecture and building fabric	Craftsmanship
Brief description						
Located in the western part of Latvia, in the central Kurzeme (Courland) region, the town of Kuldīga is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement . At the confluence of the Venta River and the smaller <u>Alekšupīte stream</u> , the beginnings of Kuldīga, which was called Goldingen at the time, date back to the 13th century.	well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement	confluence of the Venta River and the smaller Alekšupīte stream		x		
The <u>rivers' intersection is a defining element of the town's structure</u> , contributing to its scenic character .	scenic character	confluence of the Venta River and the smaller Alekšupīte stream	x	x		
The <u>medieval area of Kalnamiests</u> , located on a hill, is clearly distinguishable in the townscape, given its oval shape.	well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement	medieval area of Kalnamiests		x		
A significant part of Kuldīga's history and development is linked to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, which governed a significant part of the Baltics between 1561 and 1795 . The town was the primary residence and administrative centre of the Duchy's first ruler and maintained an important role afterwards. As a result, the town developed into a prosperous trading hub .	Duchy of Courland and Semigallia as a prosperous trading hub					
The international orientation of the Duchy led to a rising number of foreign merchants and craftsmen settling in Kuldīga, who left their mark on the <u>architectural language and building decoration of the region</u> .	international influence on building traditions	architectural language and building decoration				x
The town's structure has largely retained the <u>street layout which developed during the period of the Duchy</u> .	well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement	street layout which developed during the period of the Duchy		x		
The architectural influences and craftsmanship traditions introduced during the era of the Duchy endured well into the 19th century .	Continuity of craftsmanship traditions	architectural influences and craftsmanship traditions				x
However, different laws and regulations, aimed at fire safety, led to the progressive replacement of fire hazardous roofing materials . The proportion of <u>masonry buildings</u> also increased, replacing <u>traditional wooden ones</u> .	progressive replacement of fire hazardous roofing materials	Masonry buildings, wooden buildings			x	
In the second half of the 19th century, the brick <u>bridge over the Venta River</u> was constructed, connecting Kuldīga to the east .	Exchange with other regions	Brick bridge over Venta river		x		
Unlike other towns in the Baltic region, Kuldīga survived the great wars of the 20th century largely unscathed and modern urban developments were largely implemented far outside its historic centre.	Authenticity		x	x		

Statement of OUV	Heritage/ conservation values	Attributes	Landscape Setting	Attribute Group		
				Urban layout	Architecture and building fabric	Craftsmanship
Criterion (v)						
The old town of Kuldīga is an outstanding example of a well-preserved urban settlement, representative of <u>traditional Baltic architecture and urbanism</u> and of multiple historical periods – <u>from the 13th to the early 20th centuries</u>.	outstanding example of a well-preserved urban settlement, representative of traditional Baltic architecture and urbanism and of multiple historical periods – from the 13th to the early 20th centuries.	traditional Baltic architecture and from the 13th to the early 20th centuries		x	x	
Its historic urban fabric includes <u>structures of traditional local log architecture</u> as well as largely <u>foreign-influenced techniques and styles of brick masonry and timber-framed houses</u> that illustrate the integration of local craftsmanship with foreign influences from other Hanse towns and centres around the Baltic Sea as well as Russia.	integration of local craftsmanship with foreign influences from other Hanse towns and centres around the Baltic Sea as well as Russia	structures of traditional local log architecture, foreign-influenced techniques and styles of brick masonry and timber-framed houses			x	
The craft skills are prominent in <u>functional and ornamental building details</u> throughout the town and continue to be employed by craftspeople today.	Continuation of craftsmanship traditions	functional and ornamental building details				x
The predominance of <u>clay tiles</u> as a roofing material contributes to the <u>harmonious townscape</u> of Kuldīga.		Clay tiles, harmonious townscape	x		x	
The property encompasses <u>the medieval castle mound plateau</u> , the medieval area known as Kalnamiests, and the <u>urban areas which developed during the ducal period from the 16th until the 18th centuries</u> but continued to organically evolve afterwards.		medieval castle mound plateau, Kalnamiests, urban areas which developed during the ducal period from the 16th until the 18th centuries		x		
In addition, large areas of the environmental setting of Kuldīga are also included, namely the <u>intersection of the Venta and Alekšupīte rivers</u> , as well as the <u>Ventas Rumba waterfall</u> , which was essential for the growth of Kuldīga into a trading centre.	environmental setting essential for the growth of Kuldīga into a trading centre	intersection of the Venta and Alekšupīte rivers, Ventas Rumba waterfall	x			
To maintain the harmonious townscape, the town’s general construction rules stipulate <u>maximum building heights within the property and its buffer zone</u> .	harmonious townscape	maximum building heights within the property and its buffer zone		x		
Authenticity						
The old town further preserves its authenticity in setting and location, which was a fundamental aspect for the development of the urban structure of the town, influenced by the <u>intersection of the Venta and Alekšupīte rivers</u> .		intersection of the Venta and Alekšupīte rivers, Ventas Rumba waterfall	x			



Figure 11: Attributes include auxiliary buildings located in the back yards of residential buildings (Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga)

4. Identification and Mapping of Attributes

The following text describes the attributes contributing to the legibility of the property's Outstanding Universal Value based on their contribution to the respective attribute groups derived from the Statement of OUV. All mentioned attribute groups need to be preserved adequately to guarantee the protection of the property's OUV¹.

4.1 Landscape setting

Introduction and historical background

The landscape setting of Kuldīga is dominated by its location at the confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta River next to the waterfall Ventas Rumba in the Venta Valley. Historic images often depict the town embedded in its landscape setting with extensive lush greenery and the water flowing beneath and through the town of Kuldīga. Additionally, elements of greenery were carefully placed throughout the town, providing residents with park areas. In 2024, a project was initiated to fund the restoration of traditional gardens to further enhance the perceivability of the place's overall character as a traditional urban settlement. Attributes of the landscape elements are essential for understanding the property's integrity.

¹ For a detailed account of Kuldīga's historic development, see "Kuldīga – architecture and urbanism" by Janis Krastiņš (2013).



Figure 12: Venta Valley gives context to the development of Kuldīga throughout time



Figure 13: Venta Valley with its wide river banks



Figure 14: Alekšupite stream flowing into Venta river



Figure 15: Ventas Rumba waterfall

ATTRIBUTES “LANDSCAPE SETTING”

(4.1.1) Venta Valley

The Old town of Kuldīga is embedded in the Venta Valley, which due to its ecological importance has been recognised as a nature protection zone since 1957 (see Chapter 9, p. 68). Venta has not been straightened or heightened by human interventions, and the surrounding meadows, trees and shrubs are maintained in their original expansion until this day.

The parts of Venta Valley lying within the property boundaries communicate the original setting of Kuldīga and therefore clearly contribute to the legibility of the property’s OUV. The Venta Valley is considered a **significant** attribute.

To further protect not only the landscape setting but also the visual integrity of historic viewsheds, the prolongation of the Venta until it bends (in the north and south) is considered a potential extension of this attribute.

(4.1.2) Confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta river

The confluence of Alekšupīte and Venta rivers can be traced back as a culturally important aspect of the landscape setting to as far as the 13th century, when it sparked the interest of the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Order to settle (see attribute 4.2.1). Several paintings from the following centuries depict this particular element of the property’s landscape setting (see Figure 17), strengthening not only its strategic importance but also the scenic qualities appreciated by many up until today. Its recurring presence in paintings proves for its significance as an integral element of Kuldīga.

This attribute is repeatedly mentioned in the Statement of OUV and therefore needs to be considered a **highly significant** attribute contributing to the scenic character of the property.

(4.1.3) Ventas Rumba waterfall

The Ventas Rumba waterfall is a stronghold for local identity and has shaped the development of the town since the beginning (see attribute 4.2.2). Visually, it provides the backdrop of the main panorama of the old town, which directly connects the architecture and building fabric of Kuldīga with its landscape setting. In addition, the soundscape created by the waterfall, when standing on the medieval castle mound plateau or at Mārtiņšala beach, has not changed during the course of Kuldīga’s expansion.



Figure 16: The former location of the castle shows the town setting location on a hill above the riverbed

Ventas Rumba waterfall is the most prominent feature in imagery as well as local stories around the Old town of Kuldīga throughout history and has remained unchanged during the inscribed period (13th - 20th century). It holds a strong immaterial value and is considered a **significant** attribute of OUV.

(4.1.4) Town setting

Kuldīga has evolved organically from a small hamlet to a town. Throughout this process, its relation to the wider landscape surrounding the town has always played a key role. Being located in the Venta Valley, on a small mound above the level of Venta river, the old town cannot be perceived irrespective of the landscape surrounding it. The two elements have a deep connection, which is specifically mentioned in the property's OUV.

The town setting, the deep interrelation of the historic centre with the wider landscape, is therefore considered a **significant** attribute of OUV.

(4.1.5) Panoramic views and view corridors

The Statement of OUV carefully describes the connection of the old town with its surroundings, which is a particular stronghold of the property's authenticity,

as it allows one to fully grasp the context of a traditional settlement in the Baltic states. Throughout the town's development, special attention was consistently given to the interconnection between its architecture and the surrounding landscape. To enhance the safeguarding of the integrity and authenticity of the attributes and the establishment of a more comprehensive framework for new developments, the attributes mentioned in the nomination file as "scenic testimony to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia" are specified below by identifying the specific panoramic views and view corridors that highlight and allow appreciation of the described relationship between the town and its surrounding landscape. Thus, holding significant value to the property's OUV.

(4.1.5 a) From the northern end of the property, near the Venta River, one can trace the historical viewshed of the Venta Valley, showcasing the historic Old town on its Western bank and the brick bridge connecting it with the later capital of Latvia. This view of historic significance (see Figure 17) can still be perceived largely undisturbed today, when walking along the nature trail north of the property. Similar to the historic depiction, the view is dominated by the width of Venta river. The tower of St. Catherine's Lutheran Church is visible behind the treeline on the river bank. In months of lower vegetation, additional residential buildings become visible.

Due to the unique perception of the Old town's connection to the Venta Valley, this view is considered to be of **high significance**.

(4.1.5 b) A few metres north of the ancient brick bridge, on the Eastern river bank, a small, yet very popular walking path runs along Venta. This particular perspective has inspired many artists to capture Kuldīga in the past (see Figure 17). Aside from the later constructed observation tower, this is the only vantage point from which Kuldīga can be fully perceived as an integral part of its landscape setting, offering a direct view of the town next to the bridge and the confluence of the Venta River and Alekšupīte stream.

The view corridor from the riverbank onto the confluence of Venta and Alekšupīte is considered to be an attribute of **high significance**.

(4.1.5 c) Opposite the location of the Kuldīga Regional Museum, on the Eastern riverbank, the beach of Mārtiņsala is located. This place is closely connected to the waterfall, as it makes for the landing point for those crossing the waterfall on foot. A historic image (see Figure 19) shows this viewpoint from times when people used horse-carts to cross Venta river. Similar to the historic view, the location of Kuldīga on a small mound above the river landscape can be perceived



Figure 17: Historical view from the North-Western riverbank of Venta onto the Old town of Kuldīga (Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga)



Figure 19: Historical view from the Eastern riverbank of Venta onto the Old town of Kuldīga with the river's intersection (Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga)



Figure 18: Current view from the North-Western riverbank of Venta onto the Old town of Kuldīga (attribute of high significance)



Figure 20: Current view from the Eastern riverbank of Venta onto the Old town of Kuldīga with the river's intersection (attribute of high significance)



Figure 21: Historical view from Mārtiņšala onto the Old town of Kuldīga (Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga)



Figure 23: View from the brick bridge across the Venta Valley towards the north (attribute of significance)



Figure 22: Current view from Mārtiņšala onto the Old town of Kuldīga (attribute of high significance)



Figure 24: View from the brick bridge across the Ventas Rumba waterfall towards the south (attribute of significance)

from this perspective. Along the riverbank there are several historic buildings, such as St. Catherine's Lutheran Church and different dwellings from the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. In comparison to the historic image, today's view also includes the brick bridge as an urban element of the 19th century. In addition to its scenic qualities, this viewpoint integrates the historic soundscape of the falling water right next to the town.

The view corridor from Mārtiņsala beach towards the location of the former castle of the Livonian order and seat of the Dukes of Courland and Semigallia is considered to be an attribute of **high significance**.

(4.1.5 d) Since the 19th century, Kuldīga is connected to Riga via the prominent brick bridge crossing the Venta river. This bridge is now the main entrance point to the city. With regard to the OUV of the property, it created an opportunity for everyone to appreciate viewsheds that in the centuries prior were only available to those people crossing the river on foot or horse cart. What is particularly exceptional about the view is not so much the perception of the town's silhouette, as this can also be wonderfully perceived from the opposite river bank. What makes the views from the bridge unique is the deep understanding of the Venta Valley that it facilitates when standing at its centre. Looking to the



Figure 25: View across the waterfall and Venta Valley from the Kuldīga Regional Museum in the location of the ducal castle (attribute of significance)

north, it is possible to fully understand the width of the river and the abundance of the Valley's nature, with the small islands and the river banks presenting themselves in shades of green in summer. To the south, the entire width of the Ventas Rumba waterfall is visible and enhances the understanding of its importance also regarding the town's urban layout (see attribute 4.2.2).

The viewsheds from the centre of the brick bridge towards the north and south are considered **significant** attributes of the property's OUV.

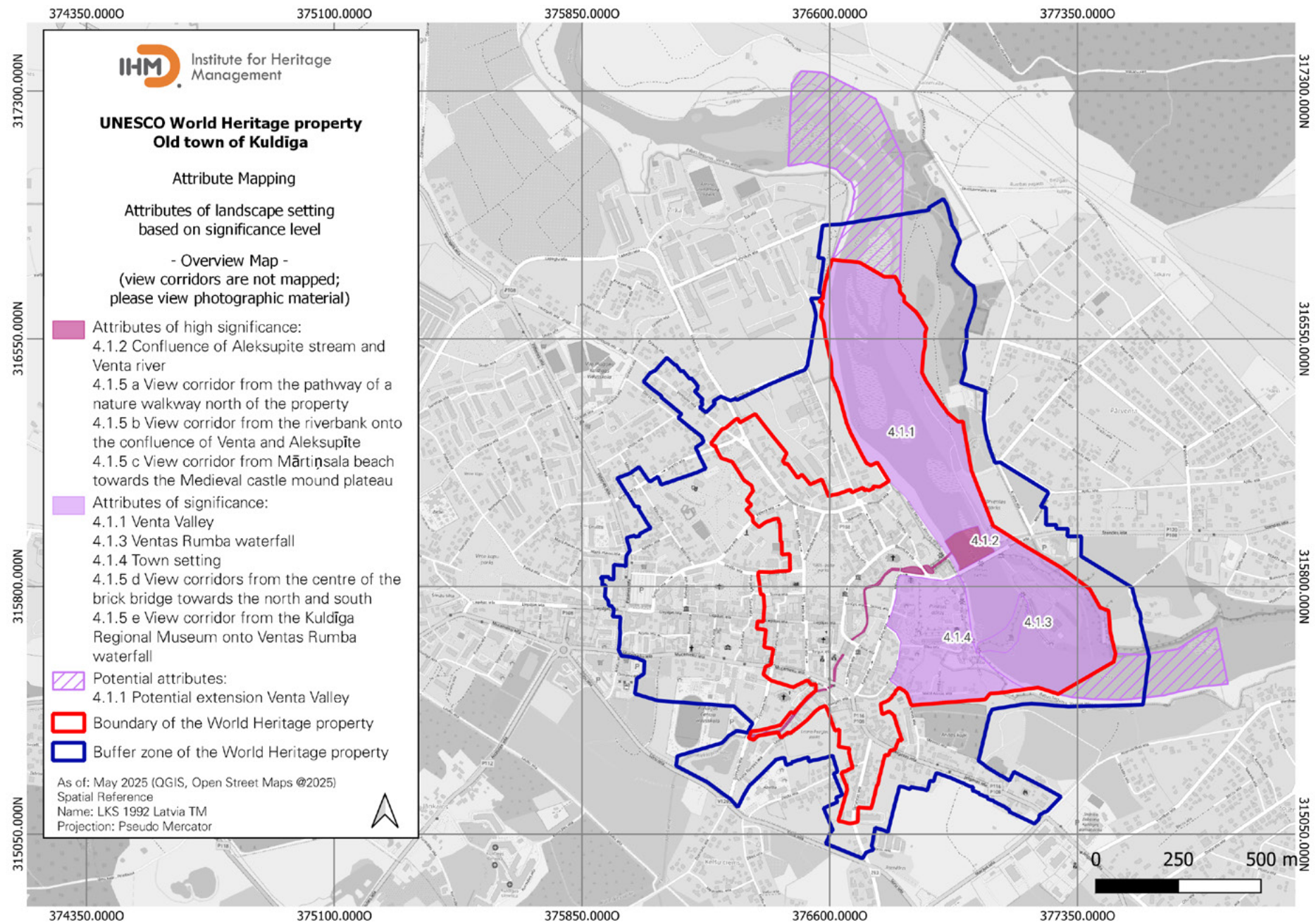
(4.1.5 e) From the balcony of the Kuldīga Regional Museum, it is possible to have an undisturbed view of Ventas Rumba waterfall and the surrounding Venta Valley. The museum is situated at the historic location of the duke's castle. The view corridor from this location toward the waterfall provides continuity with the historic vistas from the castle, reflecting the strategic significance of its chosen location.

The view corridor from the museum onto Ventas Rumba waterfall is considered to be a **significant** attribute.

Table 4: Overview of attributes for the attribute group "landscape setting"

No.	Attribute	Level of significance
4.1.1	Venta Valley	significance
4.1.2	Confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta river	high significance
4.1.3	Ventas Rumba waterfall	significance
4.1.4	Town setting	significance
4.1.5	Panoramic views and view corridors	
4.1.5 a	View corridor from the pathway of a nature walkway north of the property	high significance
4.1.5 b	View corridor from the riverbank onto the confluence of Venta and Alekšupīte	high significance
4.1.5 c	View corridor from Mārtiņsala beach towards the Medieval castle mound plateau	high significance
4.1.5 d	View corridors from the centre of the brick bridge towards the north and south	significance
4.1.5 e	View corridor from the Kuldīga Regional Museum onto Ventas Rumba waterfall	significance

Map 2: Significance levels of the attributes for the attribute group "landscape setting"



Map 3: Overview map of attributes for the attribute group "landscape setting"

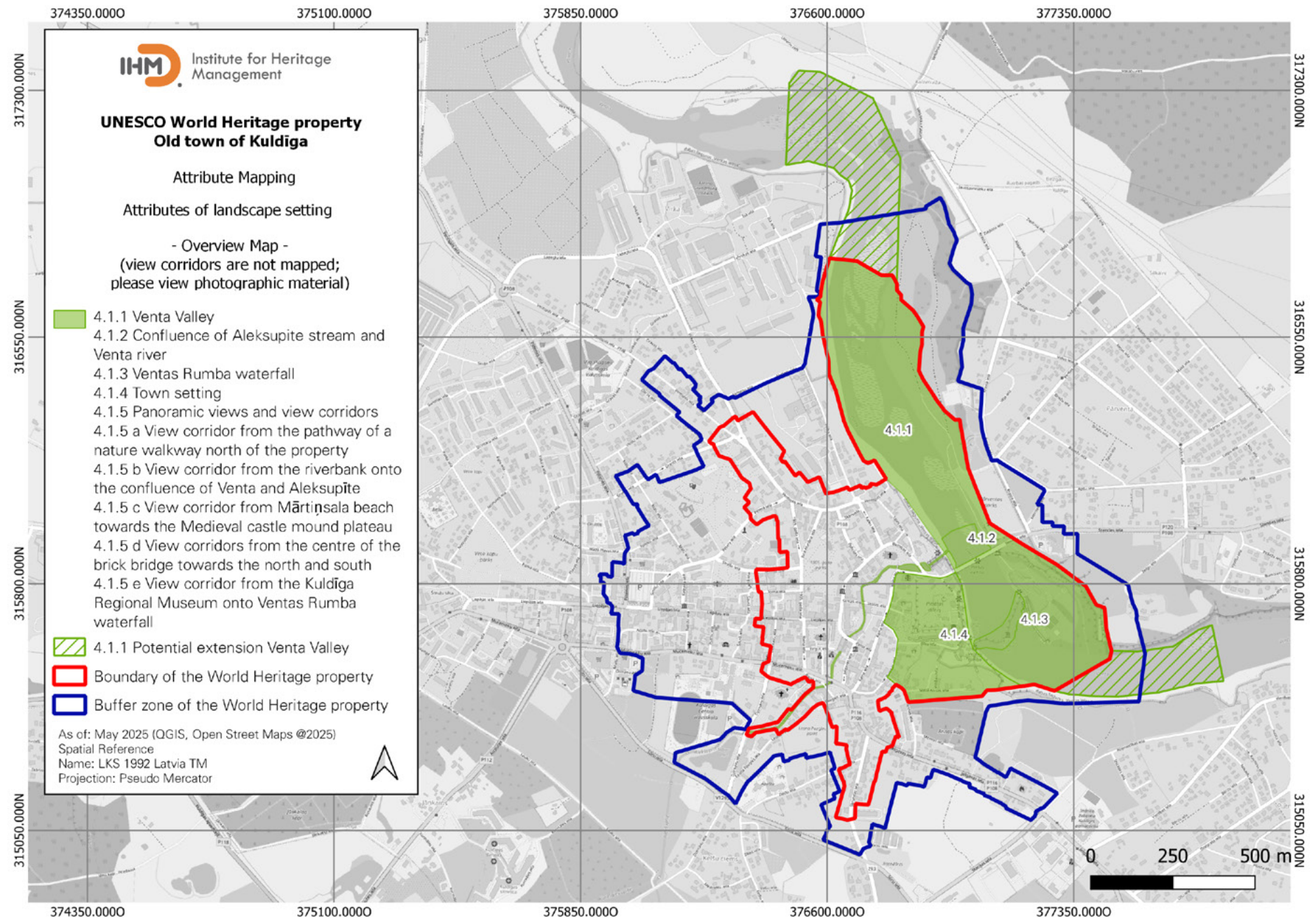




Figure 26: The Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church provides testimony to international relations of Duke Jacob in the 17th century

4.2 Urban layout

Introduction and historical background

To understand the Old town of Kuldīga as an “outstanding example of a well-preserved urban settlement, representative of traditional Baltic architecture and urbanism and of multiple historical periods – from the 13th to the early 20th centuries”, it is crucial to understand the rationale of its historic development.

With little to no changes or destruction to the urban layout having occurred until today, attributes of the urban layout allow for a clear understanding of the urban development in the Baltic states over a period of more than 700 years. The medieval remnants of the urban layout provide insight into how and why the region was initially chosen for settlement in the 13th century. They further illustrate the reason for it becoming a strategic location for the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, while allowing the tracing of subsequent developments during the Russian Empire, the First World War, the Republic of Latvia, the Second World War, and the Soviet era - all reflected within the property's urban layout.

Until today, streets and squares are named according to their function or direction at the time of their original development, strengthening the continuity of the urban layout. The attributes of this group provide a comprehensive understanding of the property's overall context and significance, both as an individual site and as a representation of Baltic history.

ATTRIBUTES “URBAN LAYOUT”

(4.2.1) Confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta river

It lies within the nature of humankind to settle next to running water, whenever possible. When the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order moved through the Baltics to identify strategic locations to settle and promote Christian faith, the natural confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta river offered perfect conditions. The rivers provided for food and hygiene while the elevation of the land between them proved ideal regarding safety. In the second half of the 13th century, the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Order built a castle where the Kuldīga Regional Museum sits today. The beginning of the town's development is closely intertwined with its location on this intersection of waterways.

The two rivers shaping the urban layout of Kuldīga, and especially their confluence is considered a **significant** attribute of the property's Outstanding Universal

Value, as it provides the backdrop of all later developments, including the medieval castle mound and the street layout with its historic crossing points.

(4.2.2) Ventas Rumba waterfall

The location of Kuldīga next to Ventas Rumba waterfall is of extraordinary importance for the understanding of the town's development from a small hamlet into a trading hub of the 17th and 18th centuries, which formed the base of today's town representative of a unique architectural development based on internationalisation. While the Venta river connected Kuldīga to the Baltic Sea, its location slightly above the waterfall - navigation further inland became impossible from this point onwards - provided a secure and strategic location. As Kuldīga grew and the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia was established, the town's location offered even greater advantages, transforming Kuldīga into a major trading hub. It served as a vital link, connecting the towns further inland to the important port of Ventspils, which was accessible by boat from Kuldīga. The waterfall played a crucial role in this development, as the increasing trade activities necessitated a transfer point where ships could not continue further up the Venta River. It was hence the benefits arising from Kuldīga's strategic location next to the waterfall that ultimately made for its growing importance, resulting in a diverse range of architectural styles inspired and influenced by tradespeople who visited the town.

The location next to Ventas Rumba waterfall is considered a **highly significant** attribute of the property's Outstanding Universal Value, as it provides the rationale for Kuldīga's striving as a trading hub as well as the availability of resources influencing the architectural language.

(4.2.3) Street layout

The street layout of Kuldīga developed around the early medieval Mountain hamlet (Kalnamiests), which can still be perceived in its original location today. In the 13th century, the castle mound plateau was developed by the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Order northeast of Kalnamiests, right next to the intersection of the two rivers (see attribute 4.2.1). In the 16th century, the town continued to grow, with the first church district evolving around St. Catherine's Lutheran church. Thus, all major functional elements of the town were established. In the 17th century, Kuldīga expanded further west, as reflected in the Catholic church district, which remains as a reminder of this phase. By the 18th century, the town experienced rapid growth, with newly created streets extending from the Old town towards neighbouring towns north, west and south of Kuldīga. This expansion underlined Kuldīga's increasing involvement in trade and its role as



Figure 27: Ventas Rumba waterfall seen from the stairs leading down to Mārtiņšala

a strategic distribution hub during the final years of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia.

As shown by the famous Kuldīga map of 1797, created by district surveyor Friedrich Babst, today's street grid corresponds largely to that of the end of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, reflecting the rapid growth of Kuldīga as a trading hub in the 17th and 18th century (see Figure 28). In the second half of the 18th century, only a few streets developed within the town, including the construction of two bridges crossing the Alekšupīte stream to better connect its two sides. In the second half of the 19th century, the brick bridge over the Venta River was constructed, connecting Kuldīga to the east. As historical maps show, no other major streets were added within the property since this time. The street layout hence gives testimony to the urban necessities of the respective times, such as the connection to other towns.

Originally, all streets belonging to the historic street layout were paved with larger pebble or boulder stones. While this has changed in most places, there are few areas where the traditional craft of paving streets with pebble stone is still visible. Those areas should be given specific attention in management activities to safeguard their high degree of authenticity.

(4.2.3 a) The street layout, including Kalnamiests and the castle mound plateau originating from Medieval times, as well as river crossings, pathways and streets from all of the different relevant periods up until the construction of the brick bridge in the 19th century, allows for a thorough understanding of the property's spatial development. It therefore clearly contributes to the legibility of the property's OUV and is considered a **highly significant** attribute.



Figure 28: The oldest town plan of Kuldīga (Source: Latvian State History Archive, fund ID 1679, description ID 162, case ID 6722)

(4.2.3 b) Additionally, there are several streets within the buffer zone that were constructed within the extended timeframe of OUV. Thus, they contribute to the legibility of the property's expansion after the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia ceased to exist and Kuldīga came under rule of the Russian Empire. The layout of streets originating from this time period which lie in the buffer zone is therefore considered a **potential** attribute and needs further assessment.

(4.2.4) Public spaces

Public spaces within the World Heritage property, such as squares and green areas, mostly correspond to the ducal era. Historically, squares were built in strategic locations, near centres of power, in economically important places, or near churches and pubs. The property includes multiple historic squares, some of which have not only maintained their location but their original purpose. The first of those squares was located next to St. Catherine's Lutheran Church in the 16th century and served as the first market square. In the 17th century, the town hall square was developed as part of the extension of Kuldīga towards the west. The park surrounding the Kuldīga Regional Museum, on the other hand, gives continuity to the moat of the Ducal castle, thus enhancing the legibility of the ducal era in the urban layout. The square at the corner of Baznīcas street and Policijas street, on the other hand, testifies to the Russian Empire.

Public spaces remaining in their historic position are considered **significant** attributes of OUV.

(4.2.5) Continuity of urban development proportions

In addition to the street layout, a comparison of the current building plots with historical maps reveals minimal changes regarding the size and distribution of plots within the property boundary. The same applies to the dimensions of built structures, with only minimal disruptions from the general building heights (see Chapter 5, Disturbances).

(4.2.5 a) Plot layout

A majority of historical buildings, both public and private, remain in their original location, and there has been little redistribution of the connecting parks, gardens, and yards within the Old town of Kuldīga. As a result, the plot layout is representative of traditional Baltic towns, reflecting how these towns developed through their continuous expansion. The continuity of buildings and squares with public functions, such as churches and the town hall square, illustrates the

functional organisation of historic towns. St. Catherine's Lutheran Church is a particularly striking example for the continuity of Kuldīga's plot layout. Despite having been rebuilt in the 17th century, the church has been standing in the same location since the 13th century (see Krastiņ 2013, 234). In contrast to towns altered and changed by modern developments, Kuldīga maintains the character of an organically evolved town in the Baltic states, preserving original plot sizes, and allocation, including the distribution of private and public spaces.

Thus, the plot layout, retaining the size and location of the historical parcels, is considered a **significant** attribute of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

(4.2.4 b) Town silhouette

Historically, the traditional buildings of the Baltics consisted of up to two stories, with some auxiliary buildings having three stories. Churches were the only structures that interrupted the general building heights, allowing for orientation within the town. At the end of the timeframe relevant for the property's OUV, Kuldīga counted with a silhouette dominated by four church towers (St Catherine's Lutheran Church, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, St. Anna's Church, Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin), and apart from that maintained its character of a historically developed small town.

During Soviet times, a phase post-dating the property's OUV, there was a shift towards vertical residential construction, clearly distinguishing this period from earlier building phases both considering the architectural style and the verticality of urban development. Buildings did not only become higher, but it also became more common to construct radio and telecommunication towers. One such tower was built next to Kuldīga's police station, within the buffer zone of today's World Heritage property and needs to be considered as a minor negative impact towards the property (see Chapter 5, Disturbances).

Recognizing the exceptionality of Kuldīga's Old town, in 1977, local legislation established a height restriction for residential buildings within the Old town of Kuldīga. Today, the general construction rules of Kuldīga determine a maximum height of three floors for new constructions within the area of the cultural monument and its Individual Protection Zone. Since 2023, those areas correspond to the UNESCO World Heritage property and its buffer zone (see Nomination File, 113; 206). This measure helped prevent additional disturbances and largely maintained the proportions of an organically evolved town, showcasing the typical silhouette of urban development in the Baltic states during the second millennium.



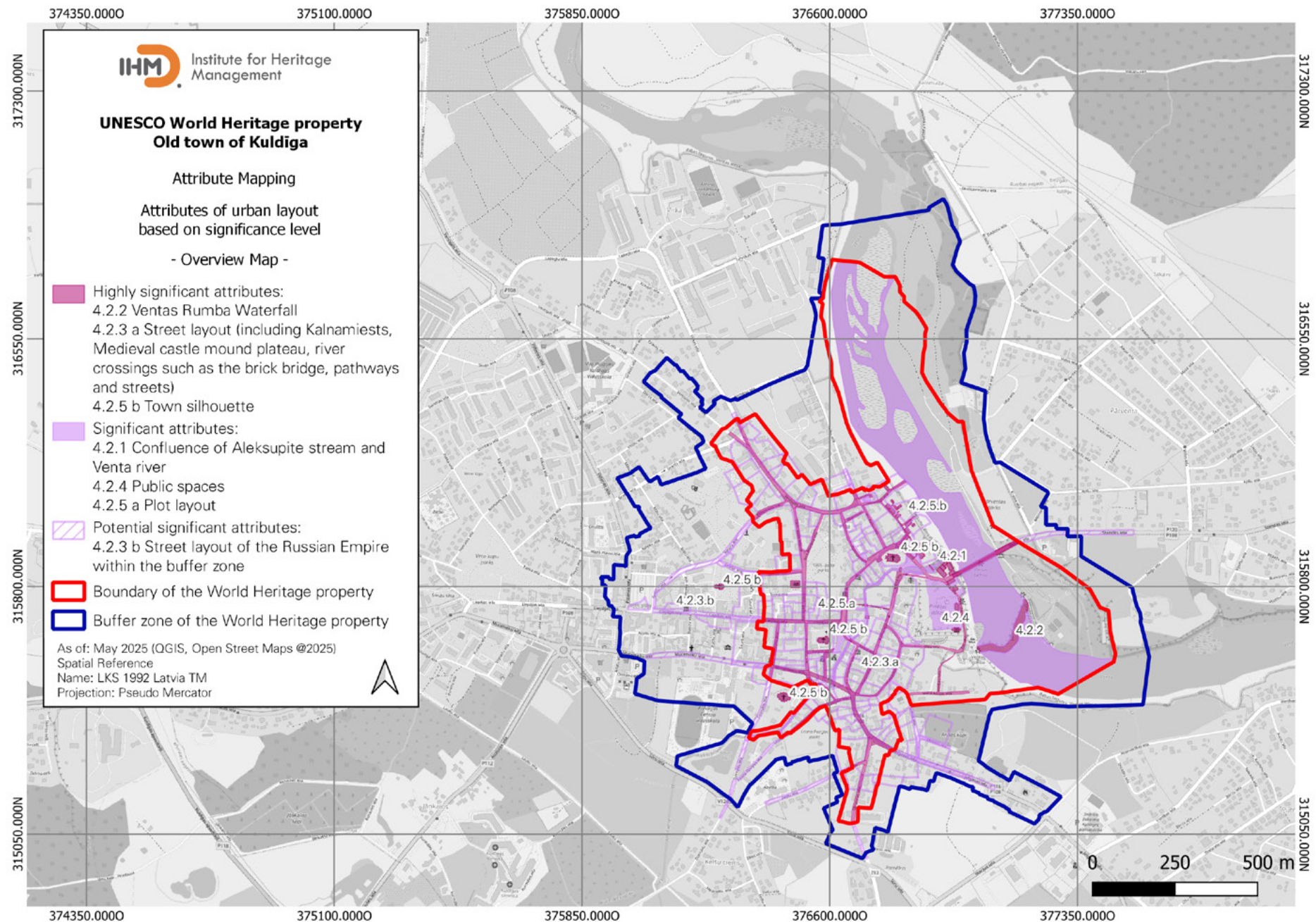
Figure 29: The town silhouette integrates the brick bridge, dwellings from ducal times as well as the different church towers (St. Catherine's Lutheran Church is visible in this picture)

The town's vertical dimensions allow future generations to meander through the setting of a traditional Baltic town, which is therefore considered a **highly significant** attribute of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

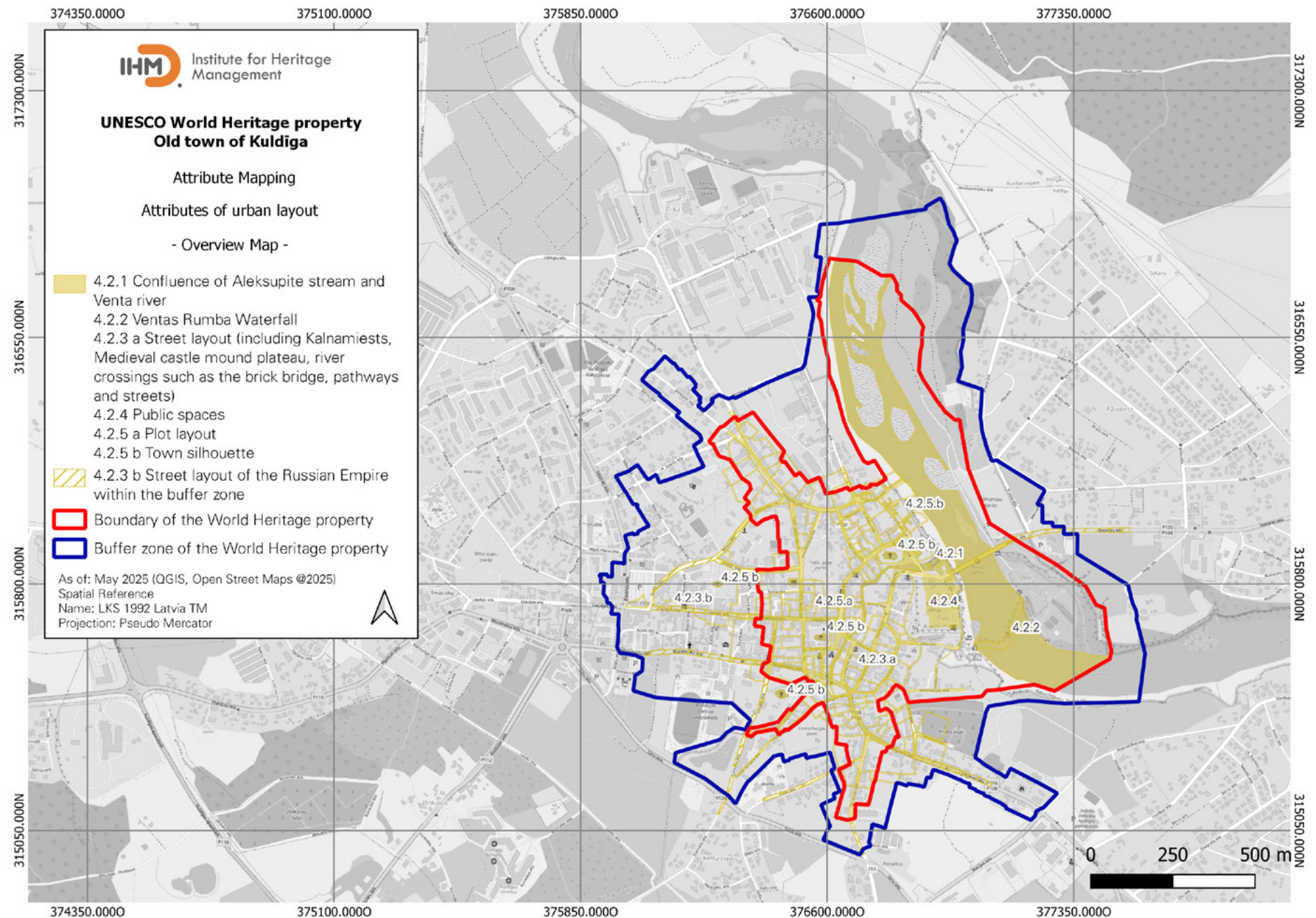
Table 5: Overview of attributes for the attribute group "urban layout"

No.	Attribute	Level of significance
4.2.1	Confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta River	significance
4.2.2	Ventas Rumba waterfall	high significance
4.2.3 a	Street layout (including Kalnamiests, Medieval castle mound plateau, river crossings such as the brick bridge, pathways and streets)	high significance
4.2.3 b	Street layout of the Russian Empire within the buffer zone	potential significance
4.2.4	Public spaces	significance
4.2.5	Continuity of urban development proportions	
4.2.5 a	Plot layout	significance
4.2.5 b	Town silhouette	high significance

Map 4: Significance levels of the attributes for the attribute group "urban layout"



Map 5: Overview map of attributes for the attribute group "urban layout"



4.3 Architecture and building fabric

Introduction and historical background

Attributes of architecture and building fabric include private as well as public buildings from different materials and different time periods that are representative of the developments in the Baltic states. Traditional Baltic towns and villages comprise of a number of influences that result from the changing political systems of the region. In the Courland region, at the centre of which Kuldīga is located, four different time periods with different political systems can be noted for the timeframe of OUV: the Medieval era with the Livonic Order residing in Kuldīga, the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, the Russian Empire, and the First Independence of Latvia. All of these left their mark on the Old town of Kuldīga, with the ducal era having the highest impact. With regard to the attribute group of architecture and building fabric, only the three later time periods can still be observed on site.

As stated in the property's Statement of Authenticity, the respective attributes show "continuity in function and use as residences, auxiliary structures and religious spaces for the resident community". In the context of the overall OUV, the architecture and building fabric allows for the understanding of the development of traditional Baltic architecture throughout time, especially due to the comparatively little loss of architecture and building fabric suffered throughout several wars, including those of the 20th century.

ATTRIBUTES "ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING FABRIC"

(4.3.1) Architecture and building fabric of Ducal times

Whereas the urban layout can be traced back to Medieval times, attributes of architecture and building fabric are strongly connected to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia (1561-1795). During the almost 250-year reign of the dukes the Old town of Kuldīga expanded significantly, which also resulted in the construction of many new buildings that are central to the organically evolved traditional settlement that we can see today. Examples of this time are plenty and include both public and private buildings.

(4.3.1 a) A vast majority of buildings located in the centre of Kuldīga originate from the era of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia and retain significant amounts of building fabric from their time of construction. Due to their density, they are able to impressively recreate the experience of a 17th or 18th century



Figure 30: St. Catherine's Lutheran Church allows for a multi-layered understanding of architectural, urban and social developments of Kuldīga

settlement in the Baltics, with a large number of preserved dwellings as well as auxiliary buildings¹.

All buildings originating from the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia are considered to be **significant** to the property's OUV, as their loss would significantly harm the integrity of the property.

(4.3.1 b) Particular importance has to be given to the remaining buildings of ducal times with public functions. They largely contribute to the legibility of the property's importance as a traditional urban settlement, as they illustrate the rapid development of the town with regard to the number and diversity of inhabitants as well as regarding its role as an administrative centre of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. This includes the St. Catherine's Lutheran Church as the first ecclesiastic building of Kuldīga and representative of the Lutheran faith dominating the beginnings of the Duchy; the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church with the connecting sexton's and organist's homes in Raiņa Street as a testimony to the close ties with Poland-Lithuania; the old Town Hall as material evidence of the organisation of the growing settlement; the remaining bell tower of the town's first cemetery; the Supreme Court House of the ducal era; and the warehouse at 3 Liepājas Street which is representative of the trading activities of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia.

Due to the specific insights that each of those buildings give into the development of Kuldīga, they are considered to be of **high significance** to the property's OUV.

¹ An overview of all remaining buildings from this specific time period can be found within the nomination file of the property.



Figure 31: A traditional dwelling from the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia

(4.3.1 c) There are single examples of dwelling houses and auxiliary buildings in the buffer zone of the property, for example on the Western end of Liepājas Street. Those are considered to be of **potential** significance to the property's OUV.



Figure 32: The Holy trinity Roman Catholic Church gives context to the Duchy's relations with Poland-Lithuania

(4.3.2) Architecture and building fabric of the Russian Empire

From 1795 until 1918, Kuldīga was part of the Russian Empire. Architecturally, the style that had developed during the reign of the dukes remained predominant, persisting even through the significant political changes brought about by the rule of the tsars. The most recognizable change was the introduction of plaster facades, which widened the previous spectrum of different building materials. Despite the changing building fabric, the facades continued to follow a similar design as before, including corner decorations and cornices (see attribute 4.3.4). During the late phase of the Russian Empire, the increase in inhabitants demanded a different building scale, leading to the construction of multi-apartment blocks on the outskirts of the town. Additionally, in 1896, regulations mandated that residential buildings be constructed from stone or brick to mitigate the risk of fires in the increasingly dense urban environment (Melluma 2015, 136).

(4.3.2 a) All remaining architecture and building fabric of the Russian Empire that is preserved in an authentic way is considered to be **significant** to the property's OUV, describing the building traditions of the 125 years of this period of OUV. This includes predominantly residential and auxiliary buildings, as well as single public buildings, such as today's Town Hall, Kuldīga's main library in the Street of 1905 (see Figure 33), the combined commercial and residential building "Staburadze" at the corner of Liepājas and Raina street or today's "BUTS" training centre in Kalna street, which all originate from the 19th century. All buildings are made from plaster and integrate the typical facades of buildings from the Russian Empire.

(4.3.2 b) In addition to the buildings mentioned previously, there are some additional buildings from the times of the Russian Empire which are currently located outside of the property boundary, within the buffer zone. Nevertheless, they contribute to a better understanding of the influence this time has had on the development of the town's architecture and building fabric and should be considered for an integration into the UNESCO property in the future, as they significantly contribute to the legibility of its OUV.

One architectural element that allows for particular understanding of the development of society, is the existing church landscape. Similar to the introduction of the catholic church during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, the construction of two additional church buildings during the Russian Empire illustrate the societal changes brought about through a new political system. The relevant churches are the Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin (1871) and St. Anna's Church (1904).

The churches are considered **potential** attributes of high significance.



Figure 33: The former synagogue today houses Kuldīga's library



Figure 34: The Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin



Figure 35: View across the orthodox building complex at Liepājas Street



Figure 36: This Art Deco building from 1934 today houses the Collection and Research Department of the Kuldīga Regional Museum. It is a potential attribute of OUV

(4.3.2 c) Apart from the churches, a few additional public buildings allow for a deeper understanding of the architectural developments during the Russian Empire. South of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin, an entire building complex was constructed along Liepājas Street, serving different functions for the orthodox community of Kuldīga. The new buildings included a hospital, a laundry as well as a parish house, and the Baltic Teachers' Seminary (until the beginning of World War I). All of these buildings are considered **potential** attributes of significance.

(4.3.3) Architecture and building fabric of Latvia's first independence

The final period contributing to the property's OUV is the time of Latvia's first independence, from 1918 until 1939. Stylistically, this phase was dominated by the Art Deco style, which is expressed through further evolution of the plaster-built structures introduced during the Russian Empire. Examples of this period are scarce within the property boundaries. The few existing structures, such as Metropole Hotel, are considered **significant** attributes of the property's OUV.

(4.3.3 a) Single buildings of this period are located outside the property boundary. Architecture and building fabric of Latvia's first independence lying with the buffer zone are classified as **potential** significant attributes of OUV.

(4.3.4) Building materials representative of societal and economical changes based on international relations and trading

As mentioned in the Statement of OUV, Kuldīga is representative of different building materials, illustrating the evolution of building traditions in the course of the availability of different resources. Specific building materials are often linked to specific time periods, however, they got more intertwined throughout time and resulted in mixed-material constructions. The growing number of foreign craftsmen skilled to work with the diverse materials contributed to the changing materials and techniques.

(4.3.4 a) While traditional building materials differ around the globe, there is one common thread to vernacular architecture: It is based on locally available resources. Consequently, dwellings in the Baltics were traditionally made from local wood harvested from the wide-spread Latvian forests. This wood was traditionally kept as logs that were used to construct the typical outside walls still seen throughout Latvian villages and towns today. Log was the predominant building material in Medieval times and the early phase of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia but continued to be used up until the end of the 19th century.

Nowadays, the use of wood is most common for ornamental details on doors (see attribute group 4).

The facades of wooden buildings changed throughout time and became more delicate in their design. They were often painted. Below the roof, cornices can be found, which changed from plain board cornices to more detailed designs.

(4.3.4 b) In the 18th century, masons started their work in Kuldīga, and soon left their mark on the architecture of the town. The townscape shifted from a predominantly wooden one to a combination of wood and masonry structures. Despite its different characteristics, the buildings made from this new material, follow a similar style as the ones before, incorporating not only proportions but also architectural details such as stone plinths and delicate windows (see attribute 4.4).

(4.3.4 c) Adding to the architectural styles of Kuldīga, there are several buildings made from clay. Both red and yellow brick can be found throughout town. Similar to the wooden buildings, some of these brick buildings are kept rather simple, while others have cornices as well as additional ornamental façade details, giving continuity to elements that have emerged already during previous periods, and that were common also for buildings made from other materials.



Figure 38: Stone buildings were introduced to Kuldīga during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia



Figure 37: The earliest wooden facades remain without further decorations



Figure 39: The façade of the building at Baznīcas Street 36 shows the typical façade design of later wooden buildings found throughout the Old town of Kuldīga, including delicately carved corner cornices



Figure 40: Red and yellow brick facades with brick cornices are common elements of Kuldīga's townscape

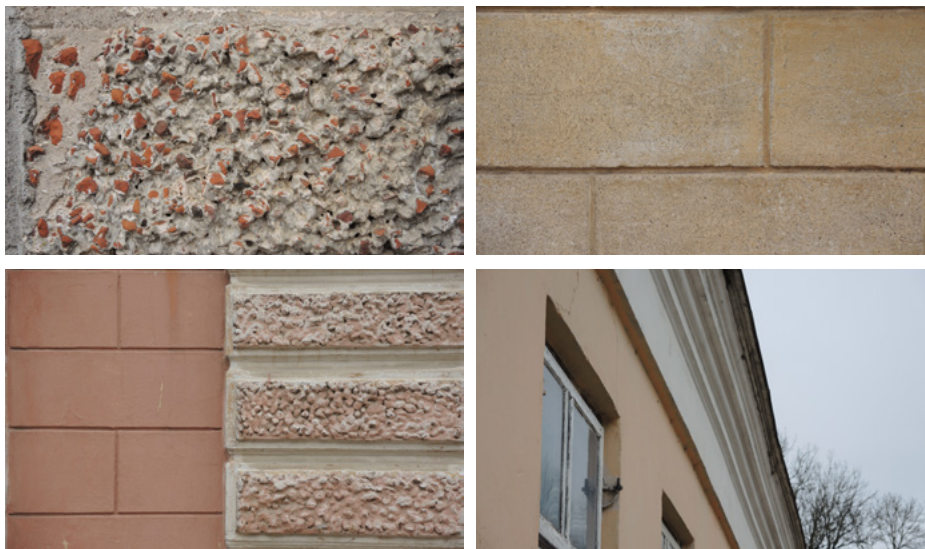


Figure 41: Plaster facades started appearing during the Russian Empire. They continue the rectangular partition of the façade and also include cornices

(4.3.4 d) During the Russian Empire, plaster became the most common building material. Buildings from this period can be recognized by the distinct material, which had not been used prior to this time. Plaster facades were usually coloured with light pastel colours. Despite the different materiality, they were continuous with the previous designs, often interpreting the historic wooden facades. This also includes the use of cornices from plaster.

(4.3.4 e) As a result of the increasing exchange with craftspeople from other regions, building materials continued changing throughout the 18th century, leading to an increasing number of mixed-material buildings and half-timbered houses. Examples of the different combinations of building materials are found throughout Kuldīga and allow for a thorough understanding of how the political development of the region increased the introduction of foreign materials that turned into standard elements of regional architecture.

Building materials representative of societal and economical changes based on international relations and trading are considered **significant** attributes of the property's OUV.



Figure 42: Mixed-method approaches (brick and plaster on the left; timber-frame on the right) show the different foreign influences and their fusion into new architectural styles

(4.3.5) Clay tile roofscape

The earliest vernacular architecture in the region consisted of one-storey log buildings with either reed (Courland region) or wooden shingle roofs (Semigallia region) (Municipality of Kuldīga 2021, 7). As Kuldīga continued to grow, and more and more people settled in this prosperous trading hub of the 17th and 18th centuries, resulting in a higher density of historical urban fabric, fires became a more pressing issue. The many fires witnessed by the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, especially in the second half of the 17th century, resulted in the unfortunate loss of many original roofs. When clay tiles were introduced in Kuldīga in the 18th century, it showed that they were much more fire resistant than the traditional materials. As a result, clay tiles became increasingly common throughout the reign of the dukes and slowly replaced the traditional thatched roofs of Medieval times. However, it was a new legislation act during the Russian Empire that had its biggest impact on Kuldīga's particular roofscape as we still see it today. To prevent the recurrence of previous fire incidents that had largely affected the Medieval and early Ducal roofscapes, decrees were issued in 1828 and 1893 requiring the replacement of all thatched roofs with clay tiles (Melluma 2015, 136 f.).

Nowadays, a vast majority of roofs, no matter the respective building's time of origin, consist of clay tile. More modern materials can only be found outside

of the property boundary. The unified roofing material leads to an overall improved legibility of the property's history, making the roofscape a priority for conservation efforts. The clay tile roofscape is considered a **significant** attribute of the property's OUV.

(4.3.6) View corridors

Significant view corridors were already identified in the context of the property's landscape setting. In addition to these, there are additional view corridors within the property boundaries that are of significance to the legibility of the significance held by Kuldīga's architecture and building fabric.

(4.3.6 a) The view corridors from St. Catherine's Lutheran Church are unique in that there is no other historical viewpoint within the town from where the old town can be observed from above. The views towards the north, east, south and west all allow for a particular appreciation and understanding of the property's diverse attributes. From St. Catherine's Lutheran Church it is not so much the view towards the horizon that is of importance to the property's OUV, but the view onto the vast clay roofscape that can be seen in all directions. The view corridors from St. Catherine's Lutheran Church are considered **highly significant** attributes of the property's OUV.



Figure 43: The roofscape of Kuldīga mirrors the 19th-century building regulations that aimed at preventing fires from spreading



Figure 44: The roofscape of Kuldīga mirrors the 19th-century building regulations that aimed at preventing fires from spreading



Figure 45: The western view from St. Catherine's Lutheran Church provides a unique view of the different building materials and the vast clay roof landscape of Kuldīga

(4.3.6 b) Liepājas street is the main pedestrian road of Kuldīga and holds particular value for the communication of the property's changing architectural styles since the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. Like no other view, this view encompasses a variety of attributes of architecture and building fabric, with buildings of different materials and times of construction. Both the ducal era and the Russian Empire can be distinguished within this view. The visible attributes are mainly residential buildings from the different time periods as well as a warehouse from the Ducal era in the view's foreground. The view corridor along Liepājas street is considered a **significant** attribute of the property's OUV.

(4.3.6 c) In Raina Street, Kuldīga's catholic church is located. The catholic church and the adjoining buildings, including the organist's and the sexton's house, up until this day provide an authentic image of Kuldīga's streetscape of the 17th century. The viewshed along Raina Street allows for particular appreciation of the particular architectural language of Kuldīga that developed in the 17th century, including delicate aspects of local craftsmanship, such as windows and tin elements. The street is a stronghold of urban and architectural development during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, integrating a pebble street, log, brick and masonry buildings from the 17th century, the clay roofscape and the church tower in the back. The view corridor along Raina Street is considered a **significant** attribute of the property's OUV.



Figure 46: The view along Liepājas Street integrates residential and auxiliary buildings from different periods and materials



Figure 47: Raina Street is a stepping stone into Kuldīga's streets from the Duchy period



Figure 48: Historical buildings from the Duchy period dominate the visual appearance of the Old town of Kuldīga (Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga)

(4.3.6 d) From the balcony of the second floor of Kuldīga's Town Hall, a building from the Russian Empire, a unique view of the town hall square with the surrounding buildings unfolds. From here, architecture and building fabric from the ducal era (such as the Old Town Hall) and the Russian Empire can be seen, as well as the urban layout with one of the important historic public squares, and even elements of craftsmanship, such as the weather-vanes on the buildings on Pasta Street. The roof landscape is clearly visible from this point, including the typical clay tiles on private and public buildings. In the far back of the view, the tip of St. Catherine's Church's tower can be seen. The view corridor across the town hall square is considered a **significant** attribute of the property's OUV.

(4.3.6 e) The view from the Needle Tower integrates a series of residential buildings, especially from the Russian Empire. In addition, it is the only vantage point from which all church towers can be seen. Lying within the buffer zone, this view is a **potential** attribute of OUV.



Figure 49: The view from the town hall includes buildings from different styles and periods, clay tiles and craftsmanship details

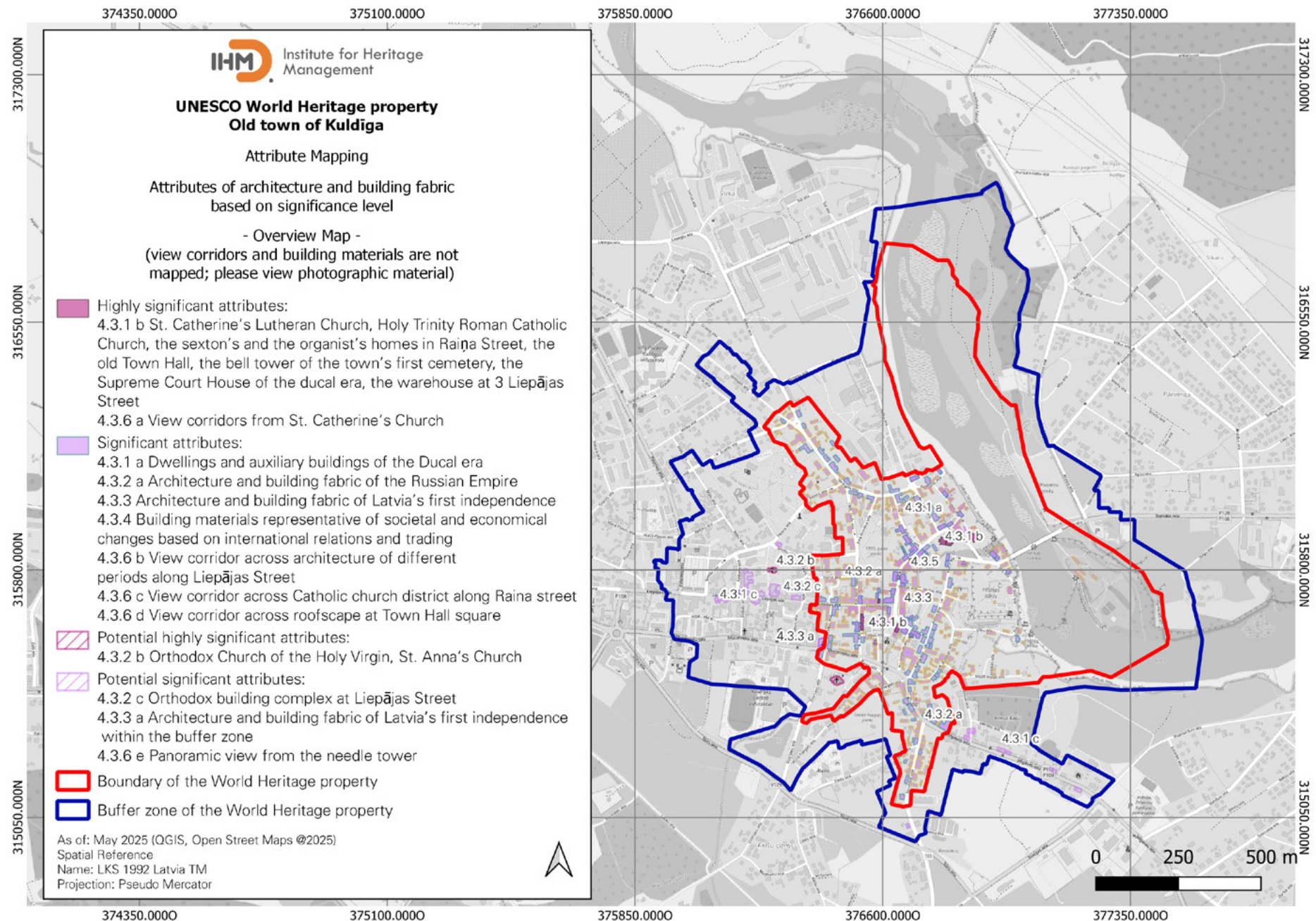
Table 6: Overview of attributes for the attribute group “architecture and building fabric”

No.	Attribute	Level of significance
4.3.1	Architecture and building fabric of Ducal times	
4.3.1 a	Dwellings and auxiliary buildings of the Ducal era	significance
4.3.1 b	St. Catherine’s Lutheran Church, Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, the sexton’s and the organist’s homes in Raiņa Street, the old Town Hall, the bell tower of the town’s first cemetery, the Supreme Court House of the ducal era, the warehouse at 3 Liepājas Street	high significance
4.3.1 c	Dwellings and auxiliary buildings of the Ducal era in the buffer zone	potential significance
4.3.2 a	Architecture and building fabric of the Russian Empire	significance
4.3.2 b	Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin, St. Anna’s Church	potential high significance
4.3.2 c	Orthodox building complex at Liepājas Street	potential significance
4.3.3	Architecture and building fabric of Latvia’s first independence	significance
4.3.3 a	Architecture and building fabric of Latvia’s first independence within the buffer zone	potential significance
4.3.4	Building materials representative of societal and economical changes based on international relations and trading	significance
4.3.4 a	Wooden facades	significance
4.3.4 b	Stone facades	significance
4.3.4 c	Brick facades	significance
4.3.4 d	Plaster facades	significance
4.3.4 e	Mixed-method facades	significance
4.3.5	Clay tile roofscape	significance
4.3.6	View corridors	
4.3.6 a	View corridors from St. Catherine’s Church	high significance
4.3.6 b	View corridor across architecture of different periods along Liepājas Street	significance
4.3.6 c	View corridor across Catholic church district along Raiņa street	significance
4.3.6 d	View corridor across roofscape at Town Hall square	significance
4.3.6 e	Panoramic view from the needle tower	potential significance

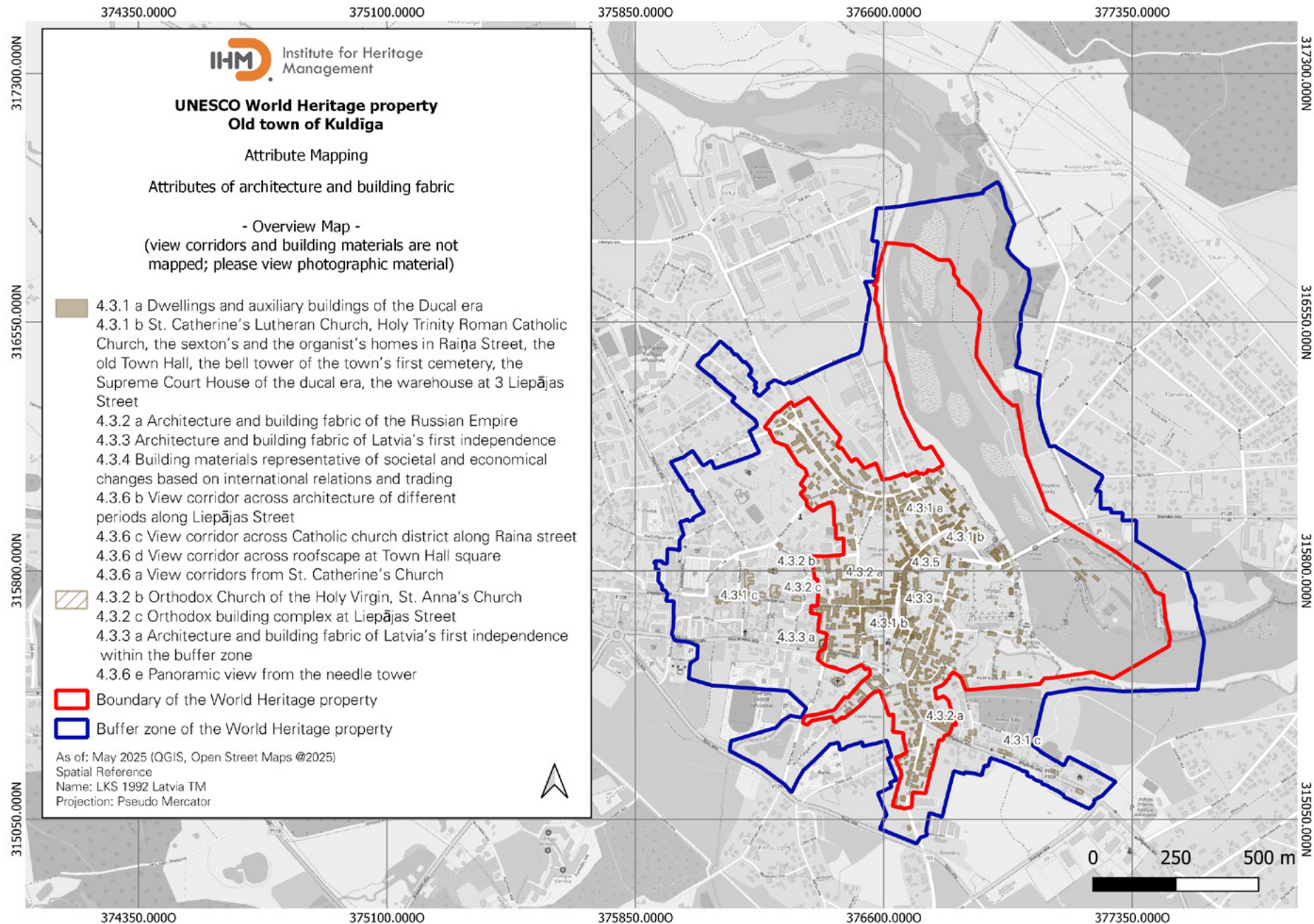


Figure 50: Ventas Rumba waterfall provides continuity to the environmental setting of the town

Map 6: Significance levels of the attributes for the attribute group "architecture and building fabric"



Map 7: Overview map of attributes for the attribute group "architecture and building fabric"



4.4 Craftsmanship

Introduction and historical background

Albeit its small size and its location, Kuldīga interacted with many bigger cities and empires throughout its history. The start of its internationalisation is marked by joining the Hanseatic League in 1368 and peaked in the context of Duke Jacob's international relations in the 17th century. Looking into the history of international trading activities in the Baltic states, the Old town of Kuldīga allows for a thorough understanding of the diverse influences that foreign craftspeople had on the development of the architectural language as well as the used building materials and styles in the region. Since joining the Hanseatic League in the 14th century, Kuldīga was in contact with other Hanseatic towns around the Baltic Sea. Later, mainly during the reign of the later dukes of Courland and Semigallia, international relations and trading activities were intensified and broadened, now also including contact with the Russian Empire, England, France, and Norway, amongst others (Nomination File 2021, 92). The different attributes of craftsmanship are a unique mirror of the historical extension of the international orientation of the Baltic states and particularly of the diplomatic relations of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. They showcase societal changes and testify to the settlement of large numbers of foreign craftsmen that remain influential of local craftsmanship up until this day.

Walking through the streets of the UNESCO World Heritage property, it becomes evident that whenever a historic element of craftsmanship is endangered, it is being saved rather than replaced. All over town, the sun reflects from the surfaces of newly crafted tin elements that follow the historic techniques and patterns. In the course of a year, doors and windows can be observed as they are carefully restored to their former glory, using appropriate tools and techniques as well as the knowledge from careful research regarding the historic craftsmanship traditions introduced during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia.

While the facades incorporate a variety of materials, such as wood, stone, brick, and plaster, the craft elements are predominantly made from tin and wood. The Kuldīga Restoration Centre has employed and educated specialists on both materials long before inscription of the property as a UNESCO World Heritage property, reinforcing the deep connection of Kuldīga's people with the legacy of the craftspeople travelling and settling in Kuldīga 300 years ago.



Figure 51: The delicate craftsmanship traditions often show themselves in details
(Photo credit: Municipality of Kuldīga)

ATTRIBUTES “CRAFTSMANSHIP”

(4.4.1) Doors

Up until this day, wood remains an important material of the Kuldīga craftsmanship and the work of the Restoration Centre. It is found throughout town and is present not only in log buildings, but also in later constructions, such as brick and masonry buildings. The details crafted from wood for functional as well as ornamental purposes largely contribute to the legibility of the property’s OUV and therefore should be protected as well as restored in the future.

One of the most prominent features of the townscape of Kuldīga in this regard are the many wooden doors found throughout town. None of these doors are the same, yet they all follow a similar style and intention. Their ornamentation illustrates the particular craft skills that resulted from the encounters of local and foreign craftspeople as well as the combination of local materials and foreign techniques.

The wooden doors found across Kuldīga all share delicate ornamentation with traditional Latvian patterns carved into them. Those patterns often have a somewhat floral characteristic. The doors are made from local materials and include a decorated window above the two door wings, so that lanterns could be placed inside the house (see attribute 4.4.5 c). Today, restorations of those doors are carefully organized through Kuldīga’s Restoration Centre, where the use of traditional techniques and materials is of utmost priority.

The door designs, as well as the continuity of their restoration, are considered **significant** attributes of OUV.

(4.4.2) Canopies

Above many of the doors, canopies made from tin protect the wooden doors from unnecessary exposure to rain and snow, and give protection to the residents as well. These canopies consist of a roof-like structure that sits on the building’s front façade, right above the main entrance. It is stabilized by decorated tin elements. Similar to the design of doors, the design is distinct for each of the canopies throughout town, while it follows a unified style that makes the canopies recognizable as a specific and consciously designed craft element.

The canopies, as well as the continuity of their restoration, are considered **significant** attributes of OUV.



Figure 52: Wooden doors in the Old town of Kuldīga



Figure 53: Restored canopies above the traditional doors

(4.4.3) Porches

Another element of traditional craftsmanship that influences Kuldīga's architecture, are porches which are found in the backyards of several buildings. These porches are elegantly carved from wood and provide for impressive entrances. They exist in an open and a closed design. Sometimes, tin elements similar to those of the canopies, are found along the edges of the porches' roofs.

Porches, as well as the continuity of their restoration, are considered **significant** attributes of OUV.

(4.4.4) Windows

Another element displaying the continuity of the extraordinary craftsmanship found throughout Kuldīga are the different types of windows.

(4.4.4 a) One of these types of windows are the façade windows, which remained largely consistent throughout the different building phases of the town regarding their positioning and therefore give continuity to the proportions of building facades. Windows follow a similar aesthetic for many buildings in the Old town of Kuldīga, whether they are made from wood, stone or brick. They are usually divided into three sets of glass above each other, with the top set facilitating easier ventilation of the building. The window frames are made from wood and are fixated with tin hinges in the corners. Wooden windows have a frame around them, while windows of brick buildings often have a frame-like ornamentation made from differing brick patterns. The window shutters, wherever they exist, are made from wooden boards that are again fixated with hinges made from tin.

(4.4.4 b) In addition to windows on the front and back facades, there are also some additional windows that are typical elements of craftsmanship of the Old town of Kuldīga. One example are gable windows which impressively illustrate the skilled work of local craftsmen and which showcase that windows in the Old town of Kuldīga are more than just a functional element. Those gable windows were first introduced during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. Similar to the door designs, the window designs often draw from floral patterns of the surrounding landscape.

(4.4.4 c) Finally, the lantern windows above the wooden doors are a typical element of Kuldīga craftsmanship that is still of relevance today (see Figure 52 above). The ornamentation is of different levels of detail. It often incorporates



Figure 54: Porches offer a sophisticated entrance area and exist in closed (here) and open form



Figure 55: Porches offer a sophisticated entrance area and exist in closed and open form (here)



Figure 56: Examples of different front façade windows show the continuous style of the windows throughout different building periods

floral patterns, however, there are also doors with more simple designs. The decoration of these windows is made from tin and make each entrance a unique piece of craftsmanship. The diversity of the ornamental detail displayed above Kuldīga's doors is an extraordinary testimony to the rising importance of traditional crafts during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, and their continuity throughout later periods.

The continuity of window designs is considered a **significant** attribute of OUV.

(4.4.5) Windboards

For functional reasons, windboards are installed between the roof and the façade of a building. These windboards are common elements of architectural design and have a long tradition. In Kuldīga, those windboards, which are traditionally made from wood, have been turned into ornamental details, hence combining functionality and aesthetics. Throughout time, the design of windboards has changed, making it possible to understand the timeframe of its creation based on the specific design. Older designs typically include some spikes along curved lines, or have rectangular carvings, whereas later designs have more of a wave-like design.

The windboards are considered **significant** attributes of OUV.



Figure 57: Gable windows with ornamental details are typical elements of local craftsmanship



Figure 58: Different windboard design are found throughout Kuldīga.



Figure 59: This finishing on a rain gutter shows the delicate craftsmanship traditions of Kuldīga

(4.5.6) Rain gutters

Another functional element that was crafted into ornamentation are the rain gutters. Made from tin, they feature similar elements as the canopies, showing floral top pieces. The delicate tin works are unique elements of local craftsmanship and are carefully restored and recreated today.

The ornamented rain gutters are considered **significant** attributes of OUV.

(4.5.7) Weather vanes

Finally, weather vanes illustrate the delicate craft skills that developed in Kuldīga over centuries and are considered **significant** attributes of OUV.

Table 7: Overview of attributes for the attribute group “craftsmanship”

No.	Attribute	Level of significance
4.4.1	Doors	significance
4.4.2	Canopies	significance
4.4.3	Porches	significance
4.4.4	Windows	significance
4.4.4 a	Front façade windows	significance
4.4.4 b	Gable windows	significance
4.4.4 c	Lantern windows	significance
4.4.5	Windboards	significance
4.4.6	Rain gutters	significance
4.4.7	Weather vanes	significance



Figure 60: Weather vanes on Kuldīga's Town Hall square

5. Current disturbances

UNESCO World Heritage properties often face threats to their OUV from a variety of challenges. These can stem from natural factors such as climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation, leading to issues like erosion, flooding, and other forms of physical damage. Additionally, human activities pose a growing threat to the properties.

In the case of the Old town of Kuldīga current challenges include proposals for wind farms as well as infrastructure projects such as large shopping malls that alter the landscape and its historical context. To mitigate these threats, it is crucial to implement a comprehensive management plan that includes conservation measures, sustainable tourism practices, community engagement, and international cooperation. An attribute-based monitoring system furthermore contributes to effective decision-making processes in day-to-day management of the property.

This final chapter of the attribute mapping report documents disturbances to the property's OUV that were already present upon inscription. Despite them having been accepted as existing interferences with especially the visual integrity of the property, it is important for future management decisions to be aware that similar developments should no longer be implemented within areas that have sight relationships to the property. Especially attributes such as the town silhouette are largely threatened by vertical structures that heighten the historic appearance.

DISTURBANCES

(A) Radio tower next to Kuldīga's police station (buffer zone)

The radio tower next to the police station of Kuldīga is situated within the buffer zone of the property. With a height of 70 metres, it is clearly visible from several prominent views in town and surpasses the historical architecture within the property boundaries. The tower was already existent during the process of the property's evaluation and therefore does not endanger the property's UNESCO status. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance not to build similar structures in the future, as it was specifically discussed with ICOMOS how such developments cannot be tolerated to be built again. It is particularly disturbing in the context of attribute 4.2.4 b, describing the silhouette of the town and its verticality. As mentioned above, during the timeframe of OUV, the silhouette of the town was that of a historically grown town with four church towers that



Figure 61: View towards the brick bridge from the confluence of the two rivers



Figure 62: Radio tower next to the police station

testify the growing number and cultural diversity of inhabitants. By interrupting this silhouette with additional vertical structures, the legibility of the attribute becomes endangered. It is important to be aware that each additional interruption of the original silhouette leads to a decrease of the inhibition threshold as plans for similar projects might be seen as less problematic than they really are.

(B) Radio towers near Upīškalns (wider setting)

In the wider setting of the property, there are three radio towers located on a small hill west of Kuldīga, just outside Upīškalns. Those towers are rather slim structures and lie outside of the property's protection zone. Nevertheless, it needs to be documented that from specific viewpoints, such as from the observation tower, these radio towers largely interfere with the silhouette of the Old town, as they appear in one line with the historic church towers. Similar to the radio tower, they interfere with the aesthetical qualities of the historic silhouette and threaten the legibility of this particular attribute of OUV. If possible, it would be recommended to relocate those towers in order to reestablish the historical landscape setting. No similar structures should be tolerated within any of the viewsheds described as attributes above.



Figure 63: The radio tower in the buffer zone interferes with the view of the town silhouette



Figure 64: Radio towers near Upīškalns in the wider setting



Figure 65: The radio tower next to Abele is clearly visible behind Ventas Rumba waterfall

(C) Radio tower near Ābele (wider setting)

This radio tower is a singular structure which is located outside Ābele. In contrary to the previously mentioned radio towers, this tower appears in the background of the Venta Valley and the brick bridge when looking at them from the north. As this view is considered a highly significant attribute of OUV, based on its continuation of the historic perspective (see attribute 4.1.5 a), this disturbance is to be seen critical. If possible, it is recommended to consider relocating this tower. No additional interferences with this important viewshed should be tolerated in the future.

(D) Hospital building (wider setting)

Despite being only four stories high, the hospital of Kuldīga, which is situated in the property’s wider setting, distracts from Kuldīga’s silhouette due to its blue-coloured roofs. While the height of the building does not harm the property’s OUV, it is recommended to further analyse whether it would be possible to change the colour to a more neutral tone that blends in with the historic roof landscape. In the future, roofs that might be visible from the view corridors identified to be of OUV should always blend in with the historic colours.

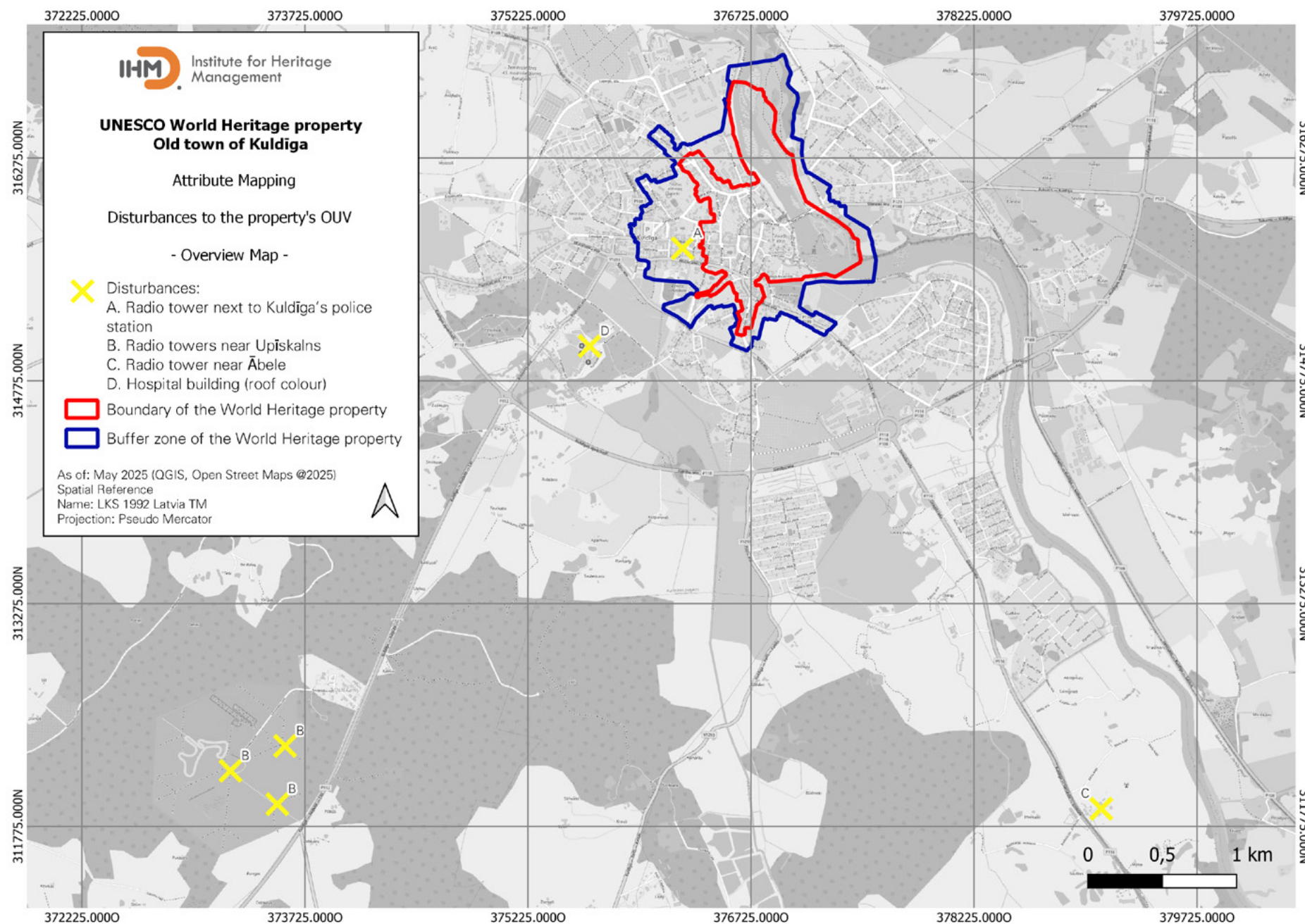
Table 8: Overview of current disturbances

No.	Attribute	Location		Level of significance
		Buffer zone	Wider setting	
A	Radio tower next to Kuldīga’s police station	x		Disturbances
B	Radio towers near Upīškalns		x	
C	Radio tower near Ābele		x	
D	Hospital building		x	



Figure 66: Due to its location on a small hill west of the town, the roof of Kuldīga’s hospital is visible behind the town silhouette

Map 8: Overview map of current disturbances



6. Evaluation

It was the purpose of this attribute mapping activity to identify and locate all physical attributes contributing to the inscribed OUV of the Old town of Kuldīga. The resulting report explains how each of the identified attributes contribute to the overall narrative for which the property holds international significance. Additionally, it groups all attributes in a way that allows for effective day-to-day site management and protection.

The first attribute mapping activity for the Old town of Kuldīga was carried out in 2020 as a part of the compilation of the nomination file. This report focused on the narrative of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia and identified which physical elements of the town contribute to its legibility. In this context, a first categorisation of attributes was undertaken. As a result, the nomination file spoke of three attribute categories: 1) urban attributes, 2) scenic/landscape attributes, and 3) architectural attributes. The 2023 Heritage Impact Assessment for the planned visitor infrastructure in Pārventas Park assessed the relevance of these attribute groups in light of the widened OUV statement as suggested by ICOMOS and later officially adopted by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

During the compilation of this report, both previous attribute mapping activities were critically assessed and analysed regarding their practicability for site management. It was the intention to refine the attributes and attribute groups to encompass the entire timeframe of the OUV, which was widened from 1561-1795 to the 13th until the early 20th century. Additionally, the attributes should be documented in a way that this report can serve not only as a tool for day-to-day management and site interpretation, but to furthermore build a baseline document for monitoring activities, including the Periodic Reporting carried out by all UNESCO World Heritage properties.

It could be confirmed that the three previously identified attribute groups are highly relevant for communicating and preserving the recognized OUV. However, it was also found that one of the attribute groups should be split into two sub-groups to cater for the specific management needs related to them. The resulting attribute groups were defined as follows:

The first attribute group focuses on the landscape setting of Kuldīga. It is particularly important to understand the context of why Kuldīga was originally settled and how its location has benefitted the development it



Figure 67: Walkway along the river

underwent over the centuries. The protection of all attributes identified within this attribute group is of utmost importance to understand the interrelation of the town with its landscape, as suggested by criterion (v).

The second attribute group, urban layout, creates an understanding of the growth of the town from a small hamlet to a seat of the Livonic Branch of the Teutonic Order to a bustling trading hub under the political activities and relations of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. While the plot and street layout illustrate the different development stages of the town, its silhouette gives evidence to the societal changes related to the international exchange of Kuldīga which resulted in a growing diversity of faiths that reflects in the different churches and their towers dominating the silhouette otherwise shaped by houses of mainly two storeys.

The third attribute group, architecture and building fabric, gives evidence to the development of architecture in the light of internationalisation. It shows the shifting materials as well as the shifting styles, and is largely intertwined with the fourth attribute group.

The fourth attribute group, craftsmanship, adds to the understanding of the property's OUV by illustrating the lasting impact that the political development of Kuldīga has had on the works of local craftspeople until today. The influences Kuldīga was under have not only shaped the town's appearance, but also resulted in a long tradition of working with different materials, which reflects in the thorough conservation works performed by the Kuldīga Restoration Centre that are mentioned in the description of protection and management requirements in the Statement of OUV.

Within the property, a total of 23 attributes could be identified that contribute to the legibility of the property's OUV. Wherever it contributed to the enhancement of understanding and management responses, these attributes were subdivided further. Corresponding to the methodology used for this attribute mapping activity (see chapter 2, p. 12), the attributes were graded regarding their significance. Attributes that contribute to the OUV to a higher degree, and the loss of which would respectively pose a greater threat to the property, were classified as attributes of high significance. This was noted for the following attributes: 1) Confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta river, 2) Ventas Rumba waterfall, 3) View corridor from the pathway of a nature walkway north of the property, 4) View corridor from the riverbank onto the confluence of Venta and Alekšupīte, 5) View corridor from Mārtiņsala beach towards the Medieval castle mound plateau, 6) Street layout (including Kalnamiests, Medieval castle mound plateau,

river crossings, pathways and streets), 7) town silhouette, 8) St. Catherine's Lutheran Church, Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, the sexton's and the organist's homes in Raiņa Street, the old Town Hall, the bell tower of the town's first cemetery, the Supreme Court House of the ducal era, the warehouse at 3 Liepājas Street, and 9) the view corridors from St. Catherine's Lutheran Church.

In addition, some potential attributes could be identified in the property's buffer zone that might need further assessment regarding their possible contribution to the property's OUV upon expansion of the timeframe under consideration.

As stated in the property's statements of authenticity and integrity, the Old town of Kuldīga currently is in an exceptional state of conservation, which needs to be maintained. As part of this attribute mapping report, four disturbances were documented and described to indicate the types of developments that could potentially harm the OUV if they were repeated in the future. The following recommendation chapter gives additional advice on how to act in this regard.

7. Recommendations

As attribute mapping processes come naturally with an intense analysis of the respective site, it is common for resulting reports to include recommendations for the site management team to take into consideration when integrating the report and its results into their day-to-day work. The following presents the main recommendations derived from the work related to this report.

Stakeholder communication

This attribute mapping report was written as a tool for more targeted day-to-day management. Part of day-to-day management, however, includes the interaction with a large variety of stakeholders, including citizens, politicians as well as development companies. Understanding that every action taken with regard to Kuldīga, be it by a citizen deciding on painting their historical facades or a development agent planning a windfarm, needs to be considered regarding the potential impact it has on the property's OUV, the communication of what attributes the town holds and how they can be protected should be of utmost priority. It is therefore recommended that the content and importance of this attribute mapping report be communicated to all relevant stakeholders as well as citizens living within the property, and that all management decisions be based on the protection of the identified attributes.

Minor Boundary Modification

During the process of developing this attribute mapping report it became evident that the widening of the OUV's timeframe, which was initiated by ICOMOS and confirmed upon the edited Statement of OUV, had a direct impact on what needs to be considered an attribute of the UNESCO property. As the timeframe was expanded from only the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia to also include the Medieval era as well as the Russian Empire, physical evidence of those times needs to also be preserved to safeguard the property's OUV. Particularly with regard to the Russian Empire and the First Independence of Latvia, the team conducting the attribute mapping was confronted with the challenge of multiple significant buildings of this time phase lying outside of the property boundary, but within the buffer zone. Examples for this are the three additional church buildings of Kuldīga, two of which are significant elements of the town's silhouette. In addition, the street network that developed during this time phase is



Figure 68: View of the Venta Valley and into the wider setting from the observation tower

currently located beyond the property boundary. It is highly recommended to take into consideration to prepare a Minor Boundary Modification request for the boundaries of the Old town of Kuldīga to be able to protect the entirety of attributes contributing to the property's OUV, as potential attributes of the Russian Empire as well as the First Independence of Latvia revealed themselves in the current buffer zone of the property. Also, with regard to the attribute of the town's silhouette, it would be valuable to extend the boundaries in a way that the additional church towers can be considered as integral parts of it.

Extension of Attribute Mapping

In the case of initiating a Minor Boundary Modification process, the attribute mapping should be spatially extended to identify any additional potential attributes that might currently lie within the buffer zone. This is most likely the case for three of the four attribute groups, namely the urban layout, architecture and building fabric, and craftsmanship. This report integrated several potential attributes, however, it should be carefully assessed for the entire buffer zone whether there are additional attributes that should be protected as part of the UNESCO World Heritage property. Furthermore, it should be discussed up to where to extend the included part of the Venta Valley.

Monitoring

A thorough monitoring system should be developed based on the attribute mapping report to comply with UNESCO standards and facilitate the integration of the results of regular monitoring activities into the periodic reporting survey carried out by UNESCO.

Heritage Impact Assessments

It was noted that several constructions within the World Heritage property would be specified as disturbances to the OUV. This includes radio towers located within essential view corridors, which should ideally be relocated to recreate the historical silhouette of the town. Furthermore, the roof colour of the hospital building, which is situated in the property's wider setting, has a minor negative impact on the UNESCO World Heritage property. It is therefore recommended to further analyse whether it would be possible to change the roof's colour to a more neutral tone that blends in with the historic roof landscape. In the future, roofs that might be visible from the view corridors identified as of OUV relevance should always blend in with the historic colours, if possible.



Figure 69: Venta Valley

8. Overview Material

Table 9: Overview of all attributes including the corresponding significance level and attribute group

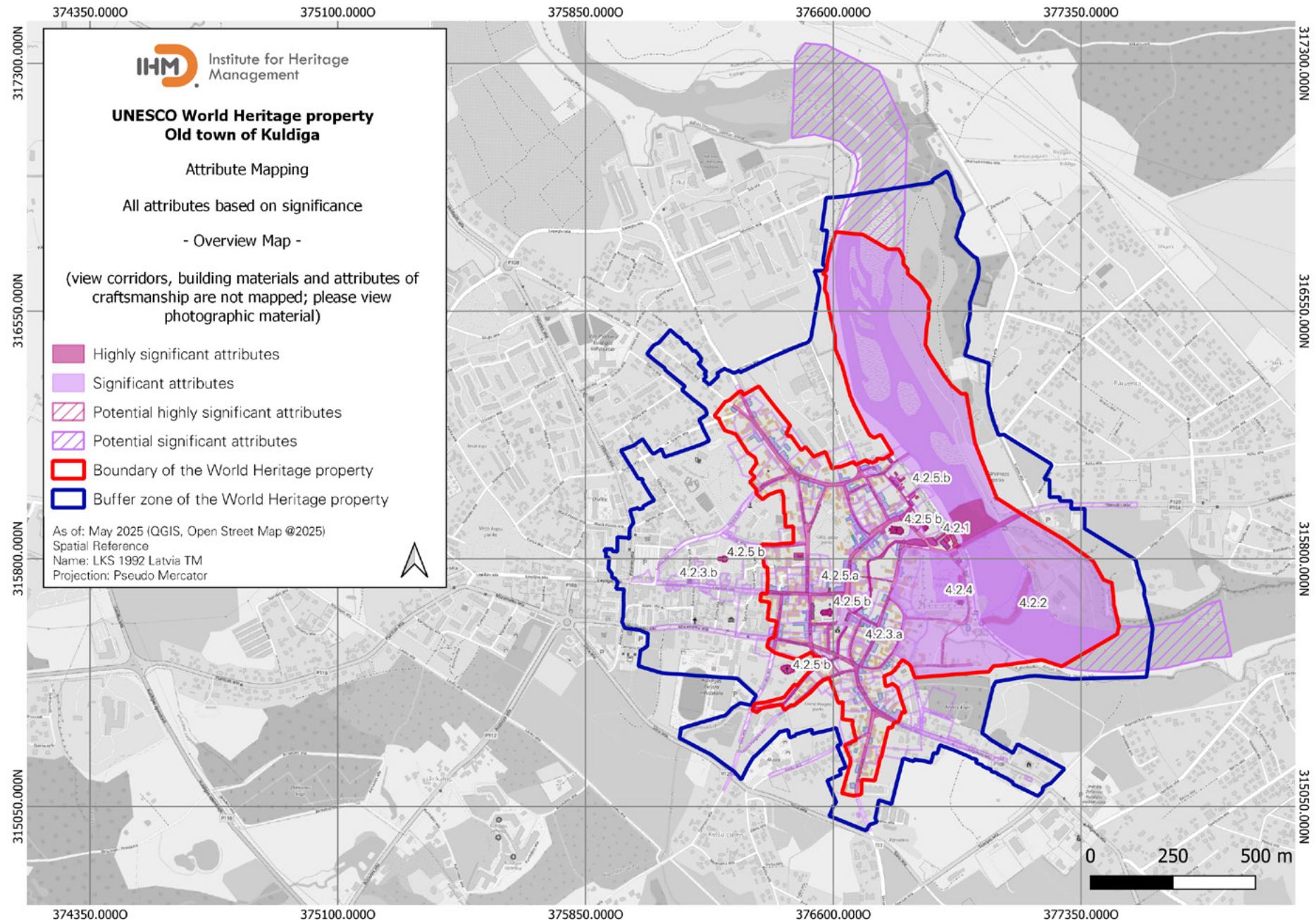
No.	Attribute	Level of significance	Attribute Group
4.1.1	Venta Valley	significance	Landscape setting
4.1.2	Confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta river	high significance	
4.1.3	Ventas Rumba waterfall	significance	
4.1.4	Town setting	significance	
4.1.5	Panoramic views and view corridors		
4.1.5 a	View corridor from the pathway of a nature walkway north of the property	high significance	
4.1.5 b	View corridor from the riverbank onto the confluence of Venta and Alekšupīte	high significance	
4.1.5 c	View corridor from Mārtiņšala beach towards the Medieval castle mound plateau	high significance	
4.1.5 d	View corridors from the centre of the brick bridge towards the north and south	significance	
4.1.5 e	View corridor from the Kuldīga Regional Museum onto Ventas Rumba waterfall	significance	
4.2.1	Confluence of Alekšupīte stream and Venta River	significance	Urban layout
4.2.2	Ventas Rumba waterfall	high significance	
4.2.3 a	Street layout (including Kalnamiests, Medieval castle mound plateau, river crossings such as the brick bridge, pathways and streets)	high significance	
4.2.3 b	Street layout of the Russian Empire within the buffer zone	potential significance	
4.2.4	Public spaces	significance	
4.2.5	Continuity of urban development proportions		
4.2.5 a	Plot layout	significance	
4.2.5 b	Town silhouette	high significance	
4.3.1	Architecture and building fabric of Ducal times		Architecture and building fabric
4.3.1 a	Dwellings and auxiliary buildings of the Ducal era	significance	

Figure 70: Baznīcas street as seen from St. Catherine's Lutheran Church

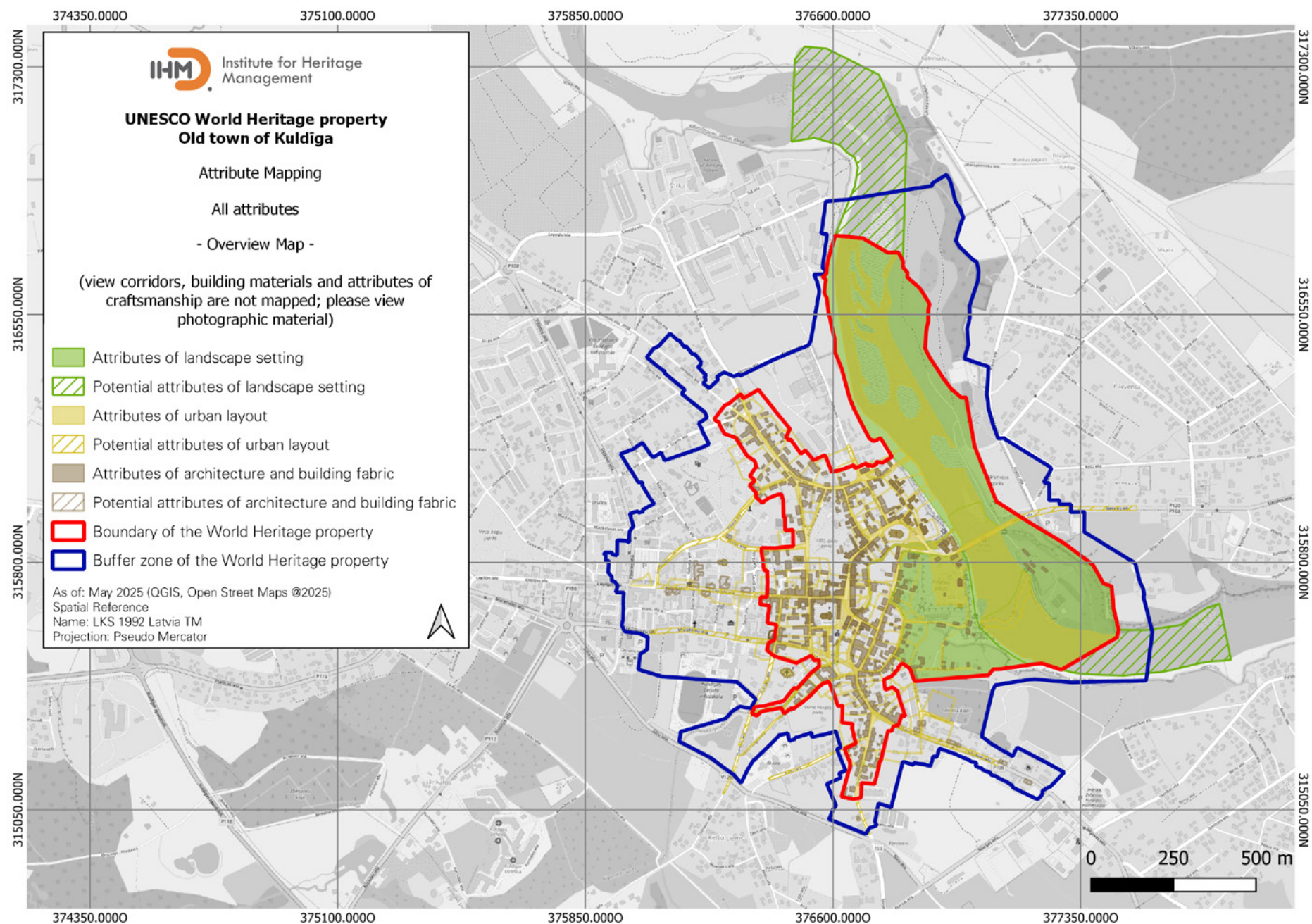
No.	Attribute	Level of significance	Attribute Group
4.3.1 b	St. Catherine's Lutheran Church, Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, the sexton's and the organist's homes in Raiņa Street, the old Town Hall, the bell tower of the town's first cemetery, the Supreme Court House of the ducal era, the warehouse at 3 Liepājas Street	high significance	Architecture and building fabric
4.3.1 c	Dwellings and auxiliary buildings of the Ducal era in the buffer zone	potential significance	
4.3.2 a	Architecture and building fabric of the Russian Empire	significance	
4.3.2 b	Orthodox Church of the Holy Virgin, St. Anna's Church	potential high significance	
4.3.2 c	Orthodox building complex at Liepājas Street		
4.3.3	Architecture and building fabric of Latvia's first independence	significance	
4.3.3 a	Architecture and building fabric of Latvia's first independence within the buffer zone	potential significance	
4.3.4	Building materials representative of societal and economical changes based on international relations and trading	significance	
4.3.4 a	Wooden facades	significance	
4.3.4 b	Stone facades	significance	
4.3.4 c	Brick facades	significance	
4.3.4 d	Plaster facades	significance	
4.3.4 e	Mixed-method facades	significance	
4.3.5	Clay tile roofscape	significance	
4.3.6	View corridors		
4.3.6 a	View corridors from St. Catherine's Church	high significance	
4.3.6 b	View corridor across architecture of different periods along Liepājas Street	significance	
4.3.6 c	View corridor across Catholic church district along Raina street	significance	

No.	Attribute	Level of significance	Attribute Group
4.3.6 d	View corridor across roofscape at Town Hall square	significance	Architecture and building fabric
4.3.6 e	Panoramic view from the needle tower	potential significance	
4.4.1	Doors	significance	Craftsmanship
4.4.2	Canopies	significance	
4.4.3	Porches	significance	
4.4.4	Windows	significance	
4.4.4 a	Front façade windows	significance	
4.4.4 b	Gable windows	significance	
4.4.4 c	Lantern windows	significance	
4.4.5	Windboards	significance	
4.4.6	Rain gutters	significance	Craftsmanship
4.4.7	Weather vanes	significance	

Map 9: Significance levels of all the attributes and attribute groups



Map 10: Overview map of all attributes and attribute groups



9. Annex: Additional value levels associated with the Old town of Kuldīga

Table 10: Other heritage values associated with the Old town of Kuldīga

Level of recognition	Heritage/conservation values	Features	Sources of information	
International	Venta Valley is a united ecologically important complex with protected biotopes, species and habitats of European Union importance.	Biotopes, species and habitats of Venta Valley	Nature reserve "Venta Valley" (2004)	NATURA 2000
National	The monuments show a combined human and natural urban environment and landscape with the respective street network, buildings, historical planning structures and spatial layout as well as distinctive patios and landscape perspectives.	Building design structure, spatial layout, landscape and scale, panoramas and silhouettes, greenery system, plot construction and spatial layout, spatial organization of quarters, cultural layer of ancient buildings, characteristic terrain and waters, ancient brick bridge	Urban construction monument (No.7435) of state importance "The Historic Centre of the Town of Kuldīga" (1969, 2014) and urban construction monument of local importance no. 9320 "The Outskirts of the Historical Centre of Kuldīga with Venta valley"	Law "On Protection of Cultural Monuments" and "Protection Zone Law"
	Archaeological evidence of an important cultural layer of the town's history.	Traditional urban settlement, historical street layout	Archaeological monuments of state importance "Ancient town of Kuldīga"	
	Archaeological evidence of an important cultural layer of the town's history.	Medieval castle mound plateau	Archaeological monuments of state importance "Kuldīga Medieval Castle"	
	Individual monuments, works of art, facilities and articles with historical, scientific, artistic or other cultural value and the preservation of which for future generations is in conformity with the interests of the State and people of Latvia, as well as international interests.	Architectural language and building details developed from international exchange, historic urban fabric (masonry, brick, timber- framed and log buildings), ancient brick bridge.	State Protected Cultural Monuments: 13 architectural, 1 historic and 58 art monuments of state importance, 7 architectural, 1 historic monuments of regional importance and 3 architectural monuments of local importance.	
	Venta Valley is a united ecologically important complex with protected biotopes, species and habitats of Latvian importance.	Biotopes, species and habitats of Venta Valley	Nature reserve "Venta Valley" (1957)	
	Landscape structures, natural and aesthetic values of landscape elements, biologically valuable areas and protected biotopes	Venta Valley	Nature reserve "Venta Valley", nature park area (zone)	
	Scenic character and socio- economic value of the nature reserve	Historic water bodies, the Ventas Rumba waterfall and historical landscape zones	Nature reserve "Venta Valley", landscape protection area (zone)	
	The natural monument consists of a dolomite ridge with a waterfall and outcrops on the banks of Venta River. The natural monument is the largest and the most impressive of Latvia's waterfalls.	Venta waterfall	Geological nature monument "Ventas Rumba"	

Level of recognition	Heritage/conservation values	Features	Sources of information
Local	The character and uniqueness of the historical urban environment, local building traditions, existing buildings and landmarks with cultural-historical and architectural value, as well as the structure of the city's historical planning, street network and character, cultural layer and landscape singularity.	Urban layout: traditional urban settlement, historical street layout, medieval castle mound plateau Historic urban fabric: architectural language and building details developed from international exchange, historic urban fabric (masonry, brick, timber- framed and log buildings), ancient brick bridge. Environmental setting and scenery	Territory of Local plan – the central part of the city of Kuldīga, which consists of urban construction monument of national importance no. 7435 “The Historic Centre of the Town of Kuldīga” and urban construction monument of local importance no. 9320 “The Outskirts of the Historical Centre of Kuldīga with Venta valley” territory and the adjacent territories of Jelgavas street, Krasta street and Ventspils street. Local plan for the Old town of Kuldīga in Venta Valley

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