Text consolidated by Valsts valodas centrs (State Language Centre) with amending laws of:

19 May 2005 [shall come into force on 14 June 2005];

16 December 2010 [shall come into force on 1 January 2011];

27 April 2017 [shall come into force on 1 June 2017];

20 September 2018 [shall come into force on 18 October 2018];

9 February 2023 [shall come into force on 12 February 2023].

If a whole or part of a section has been amended, the date of the amending law appears in square brackets at the end of the section. If a whole section, paragraph or clause has been deleted, the date of the deletion appears in square brackets beside the deleted section, paragraph or clause.

The *Saeima*1 has adopted and

the President has proclaimed the following law:

**Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Rīga**

**Section 1.**The following terms are used in this Law:

1) **cultural and historical value** – a masterpiece of the creative spirit of a human being demonstrating an interaction of significant values of humanity in a specific period of time or location in relation to the development of architecture or technology, monumental art, city planning, landscape design which is directly or materially related to events, living traditions, art or literary works which has a special universal value and are not less than 25 years old;

2) **cultural and historical environment** – a location created as a result of intentional activity during the development of humanity if it or individual elements thereof have a historical, scientific, artistic, amenity, or other cultural value to be preserved;

3) **transformation of the cultural and historical environment** – any technical, constructional, economic activity which results in physical changes to the cultural and historical environment (the function, form, colour, individual details, material thereof), and also another cultural value;

4) **public outdoor space** – streets, boulevards, places, parks, squares, quays, space of blocks, courtyards which are accessible to the public without restrictions regardless of the owners thereof;

5) **spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof** – a spatial development planning document drawn up in accordance with the procedures laid down in this Law and other laws and regulations and determining the requirements for the use and build-up of the territory of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof.

[*9 February 2023*]

**Section 2.**The purpose of this Law is to ensure the preservation, protection, and qualitative development of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof.

**Section 3.**The task of this Law is to prescribe the status of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof, the territory thereof, the procedures for the preservation, protection, use, and also for implementation of the development projects and the requirements for the development of spatial planning of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof.

**Section 4.**(1) The territory of the historic centre of Rīga the area of which is 438.3 hectares and the territory of the protection zone of the historic centre of Rīga the area of which is 1574.2 hectares is a part of the territory of the City of Rīga. The boundaries of both abovementioned territories are specified in accordance with the boundary plan provided for in Annex 1 to this Law and the description of boundaries provided for in Annex 2 to this Law.

(2) The historic centre of Rīga is part of a cultural monument of State significance. The historic centre of Rīga is included in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. The preservation and protection of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof shall be governed by this Law, the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and other legal acts.

**Section 5.**(1) Any activity which may cause destruction or damage of the cultural and historical values to be preserved and protected and located in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof is prohibited therein.

(2) The following authentic cultural and historical values existing in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof shall be preserved and protected:

1) the structure of the historic planning (with high quality transformations performed in subsequent years);

2) the panorama and skyline, perspectives of the vistas;

3) the historical build-up (particularly – groups of constructions of the Middle Ages, art nouveau and wood), the scale and character thereof;

4) the archaeological cultural layer;

5) the public outdoor space;

6) the system of greenery and green zones;

7) the historical watercourses and water reservoirs;

8) the historical land surfacing (pavements, gravel paths, etc.);

9) the historical elements of amenities.

(3) Transformation of the cultural and historical values to be preserved in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof shall be admissible if performance of the necessary transformation is the only way to ensure the development of the city and if the transformation does not result in lowering of the cultural and historical value of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof.

(4) Conversion of such historical residential buildings or re-planning of storeys of such buildings which results in the irreversible loss of an opportunity to use the respective building for habitation shall not be admissible in the historic centre of Rīga. This provision shall not apply to the first storeys, basements, and semi-basements of historical residential buildings and also residential buildings in courtyards if they are not suitable for living due to the arrangement or disposition thereof.

(5) Modern, high quality architectural and environmental design objects may be created, and also monuments may be placed in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof, taking into account the following provisions: the location selected for the object does not contradict with the structure of city planning of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof; the character, scale, rhythm of the historical group of buildings, the traditional selection of materials and the atmosphere created by architecture is respected; the object blends with the historical environment.

(6) Such transformations of the transport, engineering communications, and infrastructure are prohibited in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof due to which the cultural and historical values of historic gardens, parks, and cemeteries are lost irreversibly or the area of such territories is reduced, and also the use of such territories or parts thereof is changed in a way that does not comply with the objective to preserve cultural and historical values. The boundaries of historic gardens, parks, and cemeteries shall be determined by the National Heritage Board.

(7) If a tree forming the system of greenery and green zones dies or is arbitrarily felled in the historic centre of Rīga or the protection zone thereof, the land owner has the obligation to plant a new equivalent or more valuable tree within one year. The precise location, species, size, and conditions of care of the tree to be planted shall be determined by the authority of the Rīga City Council responsible for gardens which shall coordinate them with the National Heritage Board. Trees and other plantings which are applicable to the system of greenery and green zones of the historic centre of Rīga shall be determined in the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof (hereinafter – the plan for the historic centre of Rīga) following coordination with the National Heritage Board.

(8) If a culturally and historically unique, very valuable, or valuable building is damaged in such a way that its cultural and historical value has been lost and it cannot be renovated and restored, only a building of the same size and the same building materials may be built in its place, maintaining the existing authentic building elements with cultural and historical value.

[*27 April 2017; 20 September 2018; 9 February 2023*]

**Section 6.**The territory of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof which concurrently is also the territory of the free port of Rīga in accordance with The Free Port of Rīga Law shall be built up or otherwise transformed in conformity with the provisions of this Law.

**Section 7.**The Cabinet shall issue regulations regarding the preservation, protection, and use of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof, the transformation of the cultural and historical environment, and also the procedures for the implementation of development projects, laying down the requirements corresponding to the value of the respective cultural and historical environment (hereinafter – the Cabinet regulations regarding the preservation and protection of the historic centre of Rīga).

**Section 8.**(1) The current and planned (permitted) use of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof demonstrated in writing and in graphical form, the restrictions on use, the requirements for the preservation of the cultural and historical environment and historical values shall be determined by the plan for the historic centre of Rīga.

(2) The requirements laid down in the plan for the historic centre of Rīga may be detailed or amended in a local plan or specified in a detailed plan. If a local plan for an area smaller than a block is developed in the historic centre of Rīga or the protection zone thereof and it amends the plan for the historic centre of Rīga, an assessment of the potential impact of these amendments on the cultural and historical values to be preserved in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof at least within a block shall be carried out as part of the development of the local plan.

(3) [27 April 2017]

[*27 April 2017; 9 February 2023*]

**Section 9.**(1) The Rīga City Council shall develop and approve a plan for the historic centre of Rīga for a part of the State city of Rīga – the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof – in the form of binding regulations, taking into account this Law, and also the requirements of the National Heritage Board and the recommendations of the Latvian National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (hereinafter – the Latvian National Commission). It shall be developed also on the basis of the sustainable development strategy of the local government and by assessing the related solutions included in the spatial plan for Rīga, and also taking into account the Spatial Development Planning Law and other laws and regulations, insofar as they are not in contradiction with this Law.

(2) Prior to its approval at the Rīga City Council, the draft plan for the historic centre of Rīga, its amendments, or a local plan which amends the plan for the historic centre of Rīga shall be coordinated with the National Heritage Board and, if the Board does not have any objections, it shall be promoted for approval at the Rīga City Council. Concurrently the draft plan for the historic centre of Rīga shall be sent for examination to the Council for Preservation and Development of Rīga Historic Centre.

(3) The National Heritage Board or any other interested person shall propose to the Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development the suspension of the binding regulations of the Rīga City Council by which the plan or local plan for the historic centre of Rīga has been approved if:

1) the requirements laid down in the Law regarding the procedures for the development and coordination of the plan or local plan for the historic centre of Rīga have not been complied with;

2) the plan or local plan for the historic centre of Rīga is in contradiction with the provisions of this Law, the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments, the Protection Zone Law, or other laws and regulations.

[*9 February 2023*]

**Section 10.**(1) In order to promote the cooperation between authorities and the taking of decisions on issues related to the preservation, protection, and development of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof, the Council for Preservation and Development of Rīga Historic Centre (hereinafter – the Council) shall be established the composition (upon proposal of the Minister for Culture) and by-laws of which shall be approved by the Cabinet.

(2) The Council shall be a public consultative body consisting of ten members:

1) the head of the National Heritage Board;

2) an official of the National Heritage Board who is responsible for accounting and researching cultural monuments;

3) an archaeologist or architect of the National Heritage Board;

4) the head of the authority of the Rīga City Council responsible for the protection of cultural monuments;

5) an official of the responsible authority of the Rīga City Council responsible for the development of the historic centre of Rīga;

6) an official of the responsible authority of the Rīga City Council responsible for the planning of the City of Rīga;

7) a specialist invited by the Minister for Culture;

8) a representative of the Latvian National Commission;

9) a representative of the Latvian Association of Architects;

10) a representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development.

(3) The composition of the Council shall be approved for a period of three years. The members of the Council shall elect the Chairperson of the Council from among themselves for a period of three years.

(4) The technical and organisational activity of the Council shall be ensured by the National Heritage Board.

[*16 December 2010; 20 September 2018*]

**Section 11.**The following shall be within the competence of the Council:

1) to promote the development and implementation of the plan for the historic centre of Rīga;

2) to provide an opinion to the National Heritage Board and the responsible authority of the Rīga City Council on the developed draft plan for the historic centre of Rīga, its amendments, or a local plan which amends the plan for the historic centre of Rīga prior to its approval at the Rīga City Council;

3) to assess the intentions to build new objects, to reconstruct or demolish buildings and structures, and also to place and restore monuments in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof and to provide opinions on the impact of the respective intention on the cultural and historical environment to the National Heritage Board and the authority of the Rīga City Council responsible for the protection of cultural monuments if any of the abovementioned authorities has requested it. In taking a decision on the respective issue, the opinion provided by the Council shall be taken into account;

31) to provide an opinion on issues related to the boundaries, territory of historic gardens, parks, and cemeteries and the use thereof in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof;

4) to provide an opinion if the opinions of the National Heritage Board and the authority of the Rīga City Council responsible for the protection of cultural monuments differ when examining the issue of the preservation, protection, or development of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof and if any of the abovementioned authorities has requested it. In taking a decision on the respective issue, the opinion provided by the Council shall be taken into account;

5) to propose the respective authorities to control whether the funds obtained by the State or local government authorities from renting (leasing) cultural monuments belonging to the State or local government and existing in the territory of the historic centre of Rīga, and also other revenues are being used in accordance with the requirements of this Law;

6) to provide an opinion on the draft laws and regulations governing the preservation, protection, and development of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof;

7) to recommend the city blocks and groups of blocks existing in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof for which a local plan should be developed;

8) to propose the examination of other issues related to the preservation, protection, and development of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof in the respective authorities, and also to participate in the examination of such issues and to provide opinions thereon.

[*27 April 2017; 20 September 2018; 9 February 2023*]

**Section 12.**The Council is entitled to receive free of charge the information necessary for deciding on the issues within its competence from the State and local government authorities and the author or submitter of the construction intention.

**Section 13.**The Council is entitled to receive free of charge the information on the use of the funds obtained by the State or local government authorities from renting (leasing) cultural monuments belonging to the State or local government and existing in the territory of the historic centre of Rīga, and also on the use of other revenues provided for in this Law from the State and local government authorities.

**Section 14.**Construction of new buildings in the public outdoor space of the historic centre of Rīga shall be admissible only following the acquisition of projects in an open call for architectural proposals, their public assessment, receipt of a positive opinion from the Council and coordination thereof with the National Heritage Board. The requirement for organising open calls for architectural ideas shall not apply to buildings for temporary use and temporary buildings, and also to the excellent architectural intentions of such new buildings whereon a unanimous opinion has been received from the National Heritage Board, Rīga City Construction Board, and the Council.

[*27 April 2017; 20 September 2018*]

**Section 15.**Prior to coordination of the construction intention, the National Heritage Board shall, in cooperation with the Latvian National Commission, inform the World Heritage Committee of the intended significant transformations of the cultural and historical environment in the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof which may affect its cultural and historical value. Information shall be provided to the World Heritage Committee as soon as possible in order to ensure the preservation of the historic centre of Rīga as the world cultural heritage.

[*27 April 2017; 20 September 2018*]

**Section 16.**The funds obtained by the State or local government authorities from renting (leasing) cultural monuments belonging to the State or local government and existing in the territory of the historic centre of Rīga, the fines for the damaging and destruction of such cultural monuments, and also the compensation of the losses related to such cultural monuments shall be transferred into the State or local government basic budget revenue.

[*19 May 2005*]

**Section 17.**[27 April 2017]

**Transitional Provisions**

1. The Cabinet shall, by 31 December 2003, issue the regulations referred to in Section 7 of this Law.

2. The Rīga City Council shall take the necessary measures so that the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga would be developed, accepted, and entered into effect not later than on 1 July 2004.

[*20 September 2018*]

3. The Cabinet shall approve the composition of the Council and the by-laws thereof within three months after coming into force of this Law.

4. The provisions of Section 16 of this Law shall come into force on 1 January 2004.

5. Until entering into effect of the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga, it is prohibited to construct new buildings in the public outdoor space of the historic centre of Rīga (except for the cases referred to in Paragraph 8 of these Transitional Provisions), to demolish historic buildings (except for the buildings in a state of disrepair if they pose a threat to the health or life of people in the public outdoor space), to reconstruct buildings and structures, and also to place and restore monuments if it significantly alters the cultural and historical environment.

6. The intentions to construct new buildings, to demolish historic buildings, to reconstruct buildings and structures, and also to place and restore monuments (hereinafter in this Paragraph and Paragraph 7 of the Transitional Provisions – the construction intention) in the historic centre of Rīga to which the prohibitions referred to in Paragraph 5 of the Transitional Provisions do not apply shall be examined at the Council until entering into effect of the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga. The Council is entitled to accept the construction intention or to request for the necessary corrections to be made and documents of the construction intention to be submitted to the Council for re-examination, or to reject the construction intention. The Council shall examine the submitted proposals not less than once a month. The Council shall take a decision by a majority vote not later than within 30 days after submission of the documents of the construction intention. The decisions taken by the Council shall be available to the public. If the Council rejects the submitted construction intention, the implementation of the project shall be suspended until entering into effect of the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga or a detailed plan for a city block or a group of blocks of the particular territory.

7. The Council decisions taken in accordance with the procedures laid down in Paragraph 6 of these Transitional Provisions shall be sent to the Rīga City Council, the National Heritage Board, and the author of the construction intention. Decisions may be contested to the Ministry of Culture or appealed to the court in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law.

[*20 September 2018*]

8. Until entering into effect of the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga, but in cases where a detailed plan for a city block or a group of blocks should be developed based on the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga – until entering into effect of the respective detailed plan, the Council shall approve a list of such places of significance to urban planning to be potentially developed where the construction of new objects in the public outdoor space shall be permitted only following acquisition of projects in an open call for architectural proposals, and also their public assessment, examination at the Council, and coordination with the National Heritage Board.

[*20 September 2018*]

9. Until entering into effect of the spatial plan for the historic centre of Rīga, the Ministry of Culture shall be responsible for the material and financial provision necessary for the performance of tasks delegated to the Council under Paragraphs 6, 7, and 8 of these Transitional Provisions, and also for legal and useful fulfilment of the tasks in supervising it.

10. Natural persons or legal persons may continue the construction works in the historic centre of Rīga which have been legally commenced until coming into force of this Law.

11. Owners of the buildings existing in the historic centre of Rīga who have commenced and performed conversion or re-planning of buildings until coming into force of this Law, taking into account the procedures laid down in laws and regulations, shall, until 1 July 2004, arrange the documentation of buildings according to the type of use of the respective building indicated in the documentation of the project.

12. The National Heritage Board shall determine the boundaries of historic gardens, parks, and cemeteries not later than by 31 May 2020. If the transformations of the cultural and historical environment provided for in Section 5, Paragraph six of this Law which may affect specific historic gardens, parks, or cemeteries the boundaries whereof have not yet been determined are planned within the period until determination of the historic boundaries in the historic centre of Rīga or the protection zone thereof, the National Heritage Board shall determine the relevant boundaries not later than within three months following receipt of an application from the initiator of the transformations of the cultural and historical environment.

[*27 April 2017; 20 September 2018*]

13. The Rīga City Construction Board shall examine the construction intentions of engineering structures in the territory of gardens, parks, or cemeteries located in the historic centre of Rīga or the protection zone thereof for which a construction permit has been issued by 31 May 2017, whereas a building design has not been submitted to endorse compliance with the prescribed design conditions. The Rīga City Construction Board shall assess the compliance of intended construction work with the requirements laid down in Section 5, Paragraph six of this Law and shall decide on the necessity to supplement the design conditions included in the construction permit.

[*27 April 2017*]

14. After amendments to this Law concerning the spatial plan of the historic centre of Rīga and the protection zone thereof come into force, the Rīga City Council shall take the necessary measures so that a new plan for the historic centre of Rīga is developed and approved by not later than 31 December 2028.

[*9 February 2023*]

The Law has been adopted by the *Saeima* on 29 May 2003.

President V. Vīķe-Freiberga

Rīga, 11 June 2003

Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Rīga

**Annex 1**

**Boundary Plan**



Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Rīga

**Annex 2**

[*9 February 2023*]

**Description of the Boundaries**

**Boundaries of the Historic Centre of Rīga**

The site of the world cultural heritage – THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF RĪGA – shall include the territory which is bounded by: Hanzas iela, Ugunsdzēsēju laukums, Emiļa Melngaiļa iela, Krišjāņa Valdemāra iela to Mālpils iela, a line in south-west direction to Palīdzības iela, Palīdzības iela, Aristida Briāna iela, Tallinas iela, Aleksandra Čaka iela, Matīsa iela, Avotu iela, Lāčplēša iela, Ernesta Birznieka-Upīša iela, Elizabetes iela, Satekles iela, Marijas iela, 13. janvāra iela, Gogoļa iela, Turgeņeva iela, Ģenerāļa Radziņa krastmala, 11. novembra krastmala, Muitas iela, Citadeles iela, the green belt of the city canal and the territory adjacent to Eksporta iela on the eastern side of Andrejosta to Hanzas iela.

**Boundaries of the Protection Zone of the Historic Centre of Rīga**

The protection zone of the site of the world cultural heritage – THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF RĪGA – shall include the territory which is bounded by: Salu bridge, turn to Mūkusalas iela, Bieķensalas iela, Jelgavas iela, Jelgavas iela from the railway to Raņķa dambis, Raņķa dambis, southern and western embankment of the Āgenskalns Bay, western embankment of Āzene, western embankment of Zunds, the median of Zunds and its extension across the River Daugava to the middle of the Eksportosta mole, from there a line to the intersection of Eksporta iela and Lugažu iela, Lugažu iela, southern part of the railway branch line of the Port to the intersection with Ganību dambis, the railway branch line of the Port to the south from Bukultu iela to Duntes iela, the railway branch line of the Port to the north from Laktas iela to the intersection with the Zemitāni–Skulte railway, the Rīga–Lugaži–State border railway to the intersection with Lāčplēša iela, Lāčplēša iela to Salu bridge.