



RECONSTRUCTION OF DESTROYED ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS IN UKRAINE: BETWEEN HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY AND MODERN NEEDS OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT: In the context of the 60th anniversary of the Venice Charter, this chapter focuses on the challenges and opportunities for the reconstruction of destroyed monuments in Ukraine that go beyond both traditional methods of restoration and conservation. The circumstances of extensive cultural heritage destruction, due to hostilities in Ukraine, have presented us with a crucial decision: how to preserve the historical identity and cultural memory of the nation? An example of this can be a city like Kharkiv, where the conservation of ruins or the creation of memorial sites has proven to be impossible. The paper examines the challenges associated with the reconstruction of monuments in the urban setting of Ukraine, with a particular focus on ensuring the preservation of the urban environment and historical identity.

Recognizing the loss of historic buildings as a threat, the study stresses the necessity of finding adaptive strategies. Special attention is dedicated to preserving the authenticity of the destroyed monuments, while ensuring their adaptation to new functional needs and the requirements of contemporary use. Considering the uniqueness of each site, various approaches are explored, ranging from precise reconstruction to more interpretive methods that maintain the historical essence of the place, while introducing new functional elements.

The report outlines discussions on the moral and practical aspects of reconstructing destroyed objects, addressing the role of the Venice Charter in Ukraine today. It suggests updating doctrinal documents to tackle current urban challenges. The paper highlights the significance of ruined monuments for cities' historical and cultural identities, exemplifying cultural heritage preservation during wartime.

KEY WORDS: Destroyed architectural monuments, historical authenticity, war impact on heritage, reconstruction

1. Introduction

Sixty years after the signing of the Venice Charter, its principles for preserving cultural heritage continue to play a significant role in global practice. Established in 1964 as a means to unify efforts in conservation and restoration, the Charter laid down foundational principles which are now widely recognised among professionals in the field¹. However, in a dynamically changing world, where new issues such as climate change, urbanisation, and particularly the war in Ukraine, raise questions about the ability of current approaches to meet modern needs², the need for re-evaluation and possible adaptation of these principles has arisen³.

The relevance of the research is underscored by the need to preserve cultural identity and historical memory of nations in the face of such global challenges⁴. This article aims to analyse and reflect on the impact of the Venice Charter in addressing the tasks associated with the reconstruction of architectural monuments in Ukraine, considering their historical authenticity and the requirements of contemporary urban development.

¹ Jokilehto J. (1998). The context of the Venice Charter (1964). *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* (2), (pp. 229–233). <https://doi.org/10.1179/135050398793138762>; Lozupone A., Frank F. (2014). The Venice Charter: A Bibliography. *Change Over Time* (4), (pp. 477–485). <https://doi.org/10.1353/cot.2014.0023>; Plamenytska O. (2004). The Venice Charter: A view from the distance of 40 years. *Monuments of Ukraine: History and Culture* (4), (pp. 60–63). [In Ukrainian]; Rojas E. (2014). Historic Cities and the Venice Charter: Contributions to the Sustainable Preservation of Urban Heritage. *Change Over Time* (4), (pp. 196–203). <https://doi.org/10.1353/COT.2014.0013>.

² Araoz G. F. (2011). Preserving heritage places under a new paradigm. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* 1(1), (pp. 55–60). <https://doi.org/10.1108/20441261111129933>

³ Kara-Vasyliieva T. (2022). Cultural heritage of Ukraine: Research, its state in the period of the newest challenges of modernity. *Visn. Nac. Acad. Nauk Ukr.* (7), (pp. 42–46). [In Ukrainian]; Román A. (2002). Reconstruction - from the Venice Charter to the Charter of Cracow 2000, [in:] *Estrategias relativas al patrimonio cultural mundial. La salvaguarda en un mundo globalizado. Principios, practicas y perspectivas*. 13th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium, (pp. 117–119).

⁴ Potapenko V., Tyshchenko Y., Kaplan Y., Bakalchuk V., Lytvynenko O., Mykhailova O. (2023). Cultural heritage and national security. *National Institute for Strategic Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.53679/niss-analytrep.2023.08> [In Ukrainian].

The review of existing research highlights that while the Venice Charter was a significant step in standardising international efforts to protect cultural heritage, it has encountered new challenges and conditions over time that demand its supplementation and renewal⁵. The extensive destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine due to military actions has become a driving force for re-evaluating conservation and restoration approaches⁶. Internationally, organisations such as ICCROM, ICOMOS and UNESCO have extensively explored how to safeguard cultural heritage in conflict zones, offering frameworks that may be valuable for Ukraine's context. In their publication *Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*⁷, they discuss strategies for immediate and long-term preservation during and after conflicts. Similarly, ICOMOS has produced *Guidance on Post-Trauma Recovery and Reconstruction*⁸, which highlights the significance of maintaining authenticity and integrity during post-conflict reconstruction. UNESCO's work, particularly in the context of post-war heritage recovery, also provides valuable insights into sustainable preservation strategies⁹. These resources could serve as key references

⁵ Faris Hmood K. (2019). Introductory Chapter: Heritage Conservation - Rehabilitation of Architectural and Urban Heritage. *IntechOpen*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.86670>; ICOMOS. (2017). *Guidance on post trauma recovery and reconstruction for World Heritage cultural properties*. International Council on Monuments and Sites. Retrieved from <https://www.iccrom.org/publication/guidance-post-disaster-and-post-conflict-recovery-and-reconstruction-heritage-places>; Koziol C. (2014). From international to cosmopolitan: Taking the Venice Charter beyond the 'State-Party' politics of experts. *Change Over Time* 4(2), (pp. 204–217). <https://doi.org/10.1353/cot.2014.0016>; López Morales F. J. (2016). La Carta de Venecia en el siglo XXI. *Gremium* 3(5), (pp. 29–40). <https://doi.org/10.56039/rgn05a04>; Orlenko M. (2016a). Legislative policy in the field of protection and restoration of architectural monuments, [in:] *Regional policy: Historical origins, legislative regulation, practical implementation: Collection of scientific papers* 2(II), (pp. 7–11). [In Ukrainian]; Pinho J., Veludo J., Lambert N. (2022). Power, identity, and cultural heritage: A post-conflict perspective, [in:] *European realities – Power: Conference proceedings* (5th International Scientific Conference). <https://doi.org/10.59014/HLZP8057>

⁶ Rishniak O. (2022). Cultural heritage in a military conflict: International experience of the second half of the twentieth – the beginning of the twenty-first centuries and the Ukrainian present time. *Ukrains'kyi istoričnij žurnal* (4), (pp. 159–173). <https://doi.org/10.15407/uhj2022.04.159> [In Ukrainian]; ICOMOS. (1982). *Declaration of Dresden on the Reconstruction of Monuments Destroyed by War*. International Council on Monuments and Sites. Retrieved from <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-other-doctrinal-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/184-the-declaration-of-dresden>

⁷ ICCROM. (2012). *Protecting cultural heritage in times of conflict: Contributions from the participants of the international course on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*. Retrieved from <https://www.iccrom.org/publication/protecting-cultural-heritage-times-conflict>

⁸ ICOMOS. (2017). *Guidance on post trauma recovery and reconstruction for World Heritage cultural properties*. International Council on Monuments and Sites. Retrieved from <https://www.iccrom.org/publication/guidance-post-disaster-and-post-conflict-recovery-and-reconstruction-heritage-places>

⁹ UNESCO. (2005). *The Reconstruction of the Old Bridge of Mostar*. Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/10162>

for Ukrainian efforts. Studies¹⁰ emphasise the necessity of integrating new technologies and methods into restoration processes to meet modern needs and ensure effective protection of heritage from further threats. Meanwhile, other authors¹¹, highlight the significance of adaptive reuse of monuments for their preservation and integration into modern life, which can help resolve the dilemma between the need for authenticity conservation and urban development requirements.

The article investigates how the adaptation of the Venice Charter principles can aid in preserving the authenticity of monuments during their restoration in the face of contemporary challenges. This includes analysing specific examples and practices of restoration in Ukraine, as well as considering potential ways to update doctrinal documents to match the current needs of heritage preservation¹². Special attention should be given to the situation in the city of Kharkiv, where military actions caused irreparable damage to cultural heritage¹³. The city, with its historical monuments and architectural diversity, has witnessed severe destruction, necessitating urgent

¹⁰ Georgopoulos A. (2018). Contemporary Digital Technologies at the Service of Cultural Heritage, [in:] Chanda B., Chaudhuri S., Chaudhury S. (Eds.) *Heritage Preservation*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-7221-5_1; Osychenko H. (2022). Modern trends in the restoration of architectural monuments. *Urban Planning and Territorial Planning* (79), (pp. 283–295). [In Ukrainian]; Prybega L. (2022). The concept of authenticity in architectural monument studies and restoration. *Ukrainian Academy of Arts* (31), (pp. 7–14). <https://doi.org/10.33838/naoma.31.2022.7-14> [In Ukrainian].

¹¹ Artishevskiy A. (2007). Some aspects of the preservation and use of ancient moments. *Modern Problems of Research, Restoration and Preservation of Cultural Heritage* (4), (pp. 392–396). [In Ukrainian]; Butsenko O. (2020). Issues of culture and cultural heritage in the projection of sustainable development goals. *Art Research of Ukraine* (20), (pp. 8–13). <https://doi.org/10.31500/2309-8155.20.2020.220912> [In Ukrainian]; Cherkasova E. (2007). Forms of adaptation of architectural monuments to modern use. *Scientific Bulletin of Construction: Collection of Scientific Papers* (41), (pp. 22–30). [In Russian]; Hein M. F., Houck K. D. (2008). Construction Challenges of Adaptive Reuse of Historical Buildings in Europe. *International Journal of Construction Education and Research* 4(2), (pp. 115–131). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15578770802229466>

¹² Rojas E. (2014). Historic Cities and the Venice Charter: Contributions to the Sustainable Preservation of Urban Heritage. *Change Over Time* (4), (pp. 196–203). <https://doi.org/10.1353/COT.2014.0013>

¹³ Destroyed history. How the Russians are destroying Kharkiv's monuments. (2022, 22 July). KharkivToday. Retrieved from: <https://2day.kh.ua/ua/kharkow/znyschena-istoriya-yak-rosiyany-ruynuyut-pamyatky-kharkova> [In Ukrainian]; ICOMOS. (1982). Declaration of Dresden on the Reconstruction of Monuments Destroyed by War. International Council on Monuments and Sites. Retrieved from <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-other-doctrinal-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/184-the-declaration-of-dresden>

actions for restoration and conservation¹⁴. Examining the situation in Kharkiv within the research context reveals specific challenges associated with the restoration of destroyed sites¹⁵, while also emphasising the importance of adapting the Venice Charter principles to the extreme conditions of war¹⁶. Post-war reconstruction, as seen in various global contexts, remains a complex issue long after conflicts have ended. The controversial reconstruction of the Frauenkirche in Dresden, decades after World War II, exemplifies how questions of historical authenticity and restoration remain relevant, highlighting the enduring and often contentious challenges of preserving cultural heritage in the aftermath of war¹⁷. The reconstruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar, destroyed during the Bosnian War, sparked debates about the loss of historical authenticity due to the use of modern materials and technologies¹⁸. In a more recent case, the proposed reconstruction of the Baalshamin Temple in Palmyra, Syria, raised critical questions about whether such sites

¹⁴ Araoz G. F. (2011). Preserving heritage places under a new paradigm. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* 1(1), (pp. 55–60). <https://doi.org/10.1108/20441261111129933>; Davydova Y., Hovyna L. (2024, January 14). More than 200 monuments destroyed in Kharkiv region due to the war: What violations do architects see when treating buildings? *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/653632-na-harkivisini-ce-rez-vijnu-zrujnovani-ponad-200-pamatok-aki-porusenna-bacat-arhitektori-pid-cas-povodzenna-z-budivlami/> [In Ukrainian]; ICOMOS-ICCROM. (2021). Analysis of case studies in recovery and reconstruction (Vol. 1). Retrieved from <https://www.iccrom.org/publication/analysis-case-studies-recovery-and-reconstruction-volumes-1-and-2-and-reports>; ICCROM. (2012). Protecting cultural heritage in times of conflict: Contributions from the participants of the international course on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict. Retrieved from <https://www.iccrom.org/publication/protecting-cultural-heritage-times-conflict>; Pinho J., Veludo J., Lambert N. (2022). Power, identity, and cultural heritage: A post-conflict perspective, [in:] *European realities – Power: Conference proceedings* (5th International Scientific Conference). <https://doi.org/10.59014/HLZP8057>; Stanley-Price N. (2007). Cultural heritage in postwar recovery, [in:] N. Stanley-Price (Ed.), *Cultural heritage in postwar recovery*, (pp. 9–19); Viejo-Rose, D., & Sørensen, M.L.S. (2015). Cultural Heritage and Armed Conflict: New Questions for an Old Relationship, [in:] Waterton E., Watson S. (Eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137293565_18

¹⁵ Román A. (2002). Reconstruction - from the Venice Charter to the Charter of Cracow 2000, [in:] *Estrategias relativas al patrimonio cultural mundial. La salvaguarda en un mundo globalizado. Principios, practicas y perspectivas*. 13th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium, (pp. 117–119).

¹⁶ Amiry S., Bshara K. (2007). Political conflict and recovery of cultural heritage in Palestine, [in:] N. Stanley-Price (Ed.), *Cultural heritage in postwar recovery*, (pp. 75–85); Goetcheus C., Mitchell N. (2014). The Venice Charter and cultural landscapes: Evolution of heritage concepts and conservation over time. *Change Over Time* 4(2), (pp. 338–357). <https://doi.org/10.1353/cot.2014.0018>; Potapenko V., Tyshchenko Y., Kaplan Y., Bakalchuk V., Lytvynenko O., Mykhalova O. (2023). Cultural heritage and national security. *National Institute for Strategic Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.53679/niss-analytrep.2023.08> [In Ukrainian].

¹⁷ James J. (2006). Undoing Trauma: Reconstructing the Church of Our Lady in Dresden. *Ethos* 34(2), (pp. 244–272). <https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2006.34.2.244>

¹⁸ UNESCO. (2005). The Reconstruction of the Old Bridge of Mostar. Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/10162>

should be restored at all when so few authentic materials remain¹⁹. These cases underscore the complexity of decisions surrounding restoration efforts, providing a valuable perspective for addressing similar debates in Ukraine's ongoing context.

The significance of the research lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding and resolution of practical challenges related to the restoration of cultural monuments in war conditions, proposing flexible and innovative approaches to the interpretation and application of the Venice Charter principles. Thus, this article calls for a more reflective attitude towards the legacy of the Charter in light of contemporary needs and challenges, underscoring the necessity for its adaptation and renewal to ensure effective preservation of cultural heritage in the future²⁰.

2. Historical background

Heritage of Ukraine: Legacy and Loss

Ukraine's cultural heritage, with its profound historical roots and diversity²¹, serves as a vital testament to the nation's centuries-long history and cultural evolution (Fig. 1). From ancient churches and castles to urban ensembles and industrial facilities, these landmarks not only narrate the past but also play a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of contemporary Ukraine²². The preservation of cultural heritage in Ukraine is marked by a complex and contentious journey, influenced not only by historical events but also by political and economic upheavals of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Significant attention in the history of heritage preservation in Ukraine is drawn to periods of political transitions and economic crises, which often led to shifts in the priorities for preserving cultural assets.

¹⁹ Voice of America. (2023, June 5). Restoration lags for Syria's ruins at Palmyra, other battered sites. Retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/restoration-lags-for-syria-s-ruins-at-palmyra-other-battered-sites-/7121002.html>

²⁰ López Morales F. J. (2016). La Carta de Venecia en el siglo XXI. *Gremium* 3(5), (pp. 29–40). <https://doi.org/10.56039/rgn05a04>; Koziol C. (2014). From international to cosmopolitan: Taking the Venice Charter beyond the 'State- Party' politics of experts. *Change Over Time* 4(2), (pp. 204–217). <https://doi.org/10.1353/cot.2014.0016>

²¹ According to the State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine, the total number of immovable monuments and cultural heritage sites is 148,202, including 74,507 archaeological, 50,420 historical, 3,576 monumental, 19,264 architecture and urban planning, 329 landscape, 69 science and technology, and 67 landscape. It should be noted that the state statistical reports for 2014/15 do not include data for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine. (n.d.). Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. Retrieved from <https://mcip.gov.ua/kulturna-spadshchyna/derzhavnyy-reiestr-nerukhomykh-pam-iatok-ukrainy/> [In Ukrainian].

²² Kupriychuk, V. (2018). The role of national cultural heritage in the formation of Ukrainian identity, [in:] V. Troshchynskyi (Ed.), *Formation of Ukrainian identity in the context of modern challenges: Theoretical and political aspects*, (pp. 78–106). Kyiv: [In Ukrainian].

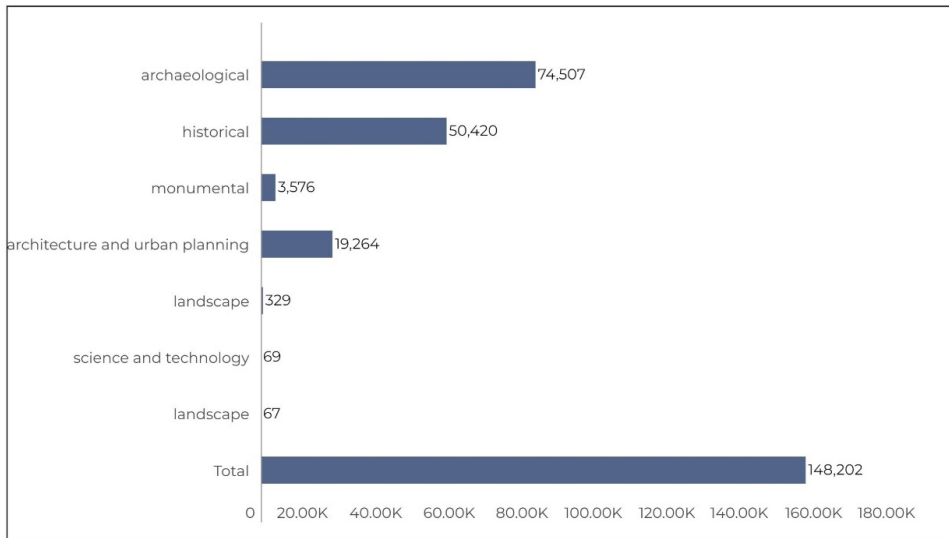


Fig. 1 Cultural heritage sites of Ukraine. The authors, according to the State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine, 2024

Under Soviet rule, the approach to preserving cultural monuments was often restrictive, and at times, overtly antagonistic towards religious landmarks and those deemed emblematic of 'bourgeois' values²³. This era was marked by a deliberate neglect of the nation's diverse historical and urban heritage, precipitating a profound erosion of Ukraine's distinctive historical milieu. The Stalinist regime, particularly after quashing the 1920s cultural renaissance, orchestrated a systematic obliteration of cultural achievements, leading to a near-total collapse of the cultural heritage preservation sector. Restoration sciences and practices were marginalised or entirely disregarded²⁴. This period also birthed a pervasive disdain for Ukraine's historical and cultural legacy, manifesting in widespread vandalism and the demolition of archaeological and architectural treasures for construction materials. The 1921-1922 campaign for the separation of church and state, coupled with the confiscation of ecclesiastical treasures, culminated in the loss

²³ During the Soviet era, the term 'bourgeois' was used to refer to anything associated with the bourgeoisie, i.e., the class of capitalists or owners of the means of production who exploit the labour of workers. In the context of cultural heritage, the term was often applied in a discriminatory way to monuments that were considered symbols or relics of a previous bourgeois, tsarist or capitalist era (Fitzpatrick S. (1995). The cultural front: Power and culture in revolutionary Russia. *Slavic Review* 54(2), (pp. 475–476). <https://doi.org/10.2307/2501665>).

²⁴ Plamenytska O. (1997). Ukrainian restoration: Problems and prospects of development. *Monuments of Ukraine: History and Culture* (1), (pp. 15–18). [In Ukrainian].

of invaluable relics²⁵. These measures, alongside the suppression of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the enforcement of Stalinist policies, gravely undermined efforts to safeguard cultural heritage, leaving an indelible scar on Ukraine's historical narrative²⁶.

Independence and Heritage Challenges

The proclamation of Ukraine's independence marked a new phase in the preservation of cultural heritage. This phase required a reassessment of the criteria for cultural heritage sites, the abandonment of previous ideological approaches, and the beginning of decommunization in this sector. Relevant authorities undertook to revise the existing catalogues of cultural heritage sites, leading to the removal of numerous typical monuments with limited artistic value, dedicated to Bolshevik leaders, as well as buildings and structures registered due to political directives²⁷. However, Ukraine has encountered significant challenges in the field of architectural heritage preservation. The country is subject to both international and domestic legal and regulatory requirements for monument protection, yet clear signs of stagnation and regression in this area are apparent. The main problems arise due to non-compliance with current legislation, which leads to the destruction of the historical environment of cities, including protected areas, under the guise of constructing new buildings and carrying out development projects²⁸. Lviv was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998, yet a new hotel was constructed within the UNESCO protected zone on the site of a historical 19th-century building²⁹. Until 1997, this site at 9 Mitskevych Square housed a townhouse that was severely damaged by fire. Despite its status as a monument of national cultural heritage, part of the 'Lviv - Historic Centre' ensemble, the decision was made not to restore but rather to dismantle the damaged building. The construction of the new hotel has sparked intense debate and controversy among residents and historians, raising concerns about the impact on the historical integrity and cultural landscape of the medieval city. The executive committee of Lviv City Council, in approving the construction, disregarded the legal status of the site as part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This decision failed to adequately consider the legislatively defined category of the land and the type of its permissible use, thereby violating existing legal norms that set clear restrictions for such actions.

²⁵ The campaign for the separation of church and state and the confiscation of church property in 1921-1922 was part of a broader Soviet government policy aimed at combating religious organisations in the USSR. This campaign was aimed at confiscating church property under the pretext of fighting mass famine in the Volga region and other regions (Movchan O. (2007). Campaign to confiscate church values in the Ukrainian SSR in 1922, [in:] *Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine* (Vol. 4, p. 50). Kyiv: Naukova Dumka. [In Ukrainian]).

²⁶ Kot S. (Ed.) (2015). *Cultural heritage in the context of the 'Syllabus of historical and cultural monuments of Ukraine'*. Institute of History of Ukraine, (p. 486) [In Ukrainian].

²⁷ Kupriychuk V. (2018). The role of national cultural heritage in the formation of Ukrainian identity, [in:] V. Troshchynskyi (Ed.), *Formation of Ukrainian identity in the context of modern challenges: Theoretical and political aspects*, (pp. 78–106). Kyiv: [In Ukrainian].

²⁸ Destruction of monument protection. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://kyiv-heritage.com/page/znischennya-okhoroni-pamyatok> [In Ukrainian].

²⁹ The building was designed by Warsaw-based Kuryłowicz & Associates.

Furthermore, this approval reflects a disregard for the principles outlined in the Venice Charter, particularly Article 7, which emphasises the preservation of the historical integrity of cultural heritage sites (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 House on Mitskevych Square, 9. Photo: Ivan Stanislavsky, Tvoemisto.tv, 2023

A critical concern is the legislative concept of the 'object of protection'³⁰, which adversely impacts the safeguarding and restoration of architectural monuments. An overly narrow definition of 'object of protection' may result in only a small part of a monument being preserved, while the rest can be demolished or altered. This creates conditions for the loss of Ukraine's unique historical environment and necessitates a thorough review and adjustment of the existing legal framework. The professional community considers the 'object of protection' to have become a tool of manipulation serving investors' interests, facilitating the demolition of monuments under the guise of restoration³¹. This has led to the loss of the monuments' integrity and significant changes in their appearance, often leaving only facades without preserving the authentic essence of the objects, in direct contradiction to the principles of the Venice Charter, particularly Articles 2 and 3, which emphasise the preservation of historical layers and discourage unnecessary alterations. The principles of the Venice Charter resonate with the concept of 'object of protection', gaining particular relevance in the context of military actions on Ukrainian territory. The

³⁰ The concept of 'object of protection' was introduced into Ukrainian legislation in 2004 with amendments to the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage. This concept was adopted from the Russian legislation of 2002, where it emerged as a mechanism to protect monuments against comprehensive reconstructions amid privatization processes. The term was coined by Professor Natalia Potapova. The underlying idea was to safeguard the most valuable elements of monuments. However, in practice, the implementation of the 'object of protection' has led to significant methodological challenges and a reduction in the scope of monument protection. This has resulted in a proliferation of massive reconstructions and the destruction of monuments, in stark contradiction to international principles of monument conservation that emphasise the wholeness of monuments and their settings. Consequently, this approach has rendered the protection of cultural heritage into a realm of absurdity and superficiality.

³¹ Plamenytska O. (2013). The case of the 'subject of protection' of an architectural monument as a methodological problem. *Ukrainian Academy of Arts* (21), (pp. 133–146). [In Ukrainian]; Semyakin G. (2017). On the definition of the concept of the subject of protection in modern normative sources on the preservation of architectural heritage. *Naukovy vysnik buduyvnytstva* 89(3), (pp.58–62). [In Russian].

Charter underscores the importance of the integrity and authenticity of cultural monuments, viewing them as an inseparable part of the historical context and cultural landscape. Applying the approaches of the Venice Charter could assist Ukraine in expanding the framework of the concept of 'object of protection', ensuring a more holistic approach to the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage.

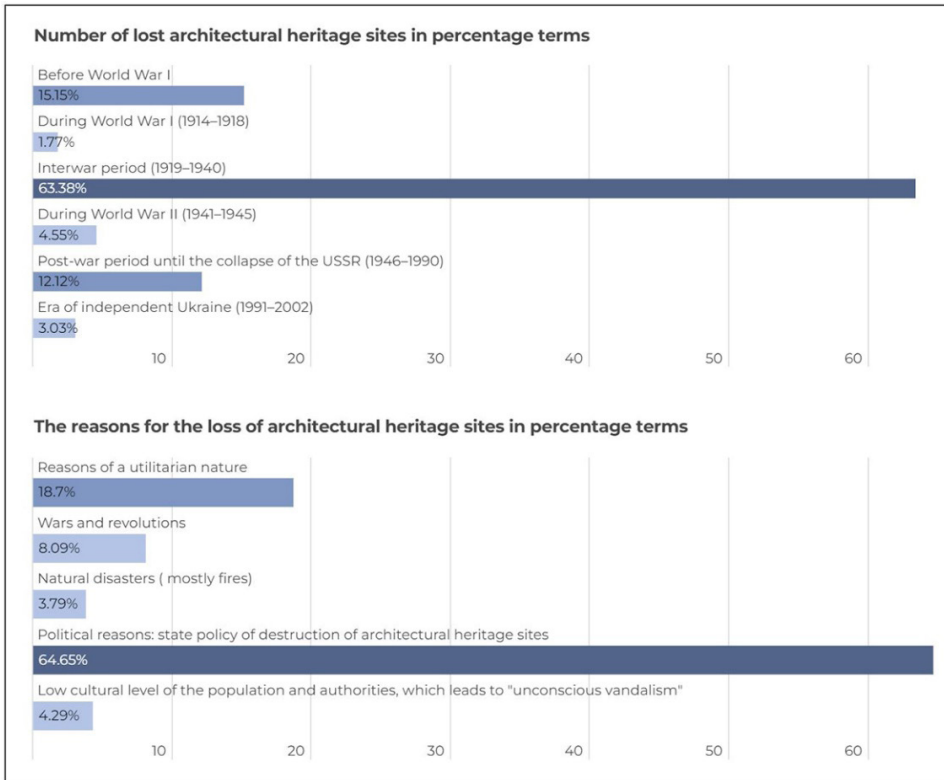


Fig. 3 Lost architectural sites in Ukraine in the 20th and 21st centuries. The authors, according to the V. Vechersky, 2024

Ukraine's cultural heritage, encompassing a rich and diverse array from ancient landmarks to masterpieces of modernist architecture, stands as a testament to the nation's extensive historical and cultural evolution. Despite substantial conservation efforts, numerous heritage sites have encountered severe damage or have been completely lost, attributed to urban development, financial constraints, and a lack of coordinated preservation initiatives³². The effort to compile an exhaustive inventory or catalogue of Ukraine's vanished architectural heritage faces significant challenges due to the absence of essential resources, such as bibliographic entries, archives, and illustrations. This issue stems from the 20th century, a time not only defined by the demolition of physical structures but also by the loss of their documentary records. Nevertheless, research

³² Rybchynskiyi O. (2015). Analysis of programmes for the preservation of cultural heritage of Ukraine. *The CHOICE project: Cultural heritage and modernity*. [In Ukrainian].

led by V. Vecherskyi from 1996 to 2002 succeeded in gathering data on over 400 disappeared architectural entities across the nation³³, revealing the chronology of their loss and determining the proportion of lost sites relative to their total count (Fig. 3).

War and Cultural Preservation

The onset of armed conflict in Ukraine has brought unprecedented challenges to cultural heritage preservation. Warfare has inflicted substantial damage and destruction on numerous historic sites³⁴, necessitating immediate actions for their preservation and restoration (Fig. 4).

Researchers and experts in cultural heritage stress the importance of devising comprehensive approaches that would address the urgent conservation needs during warfare, alongside the long-term strategies for the restoration and integration of cultural heritage into contemporary life³⁵. The efforts of Ukrainian civil organizations and activists in preserving cultural heritage merit special attention. They initiate projects for documenting the condition of cultural sites, developing regulatory frameworks for their protection, and introducing innovative preservation and restoration methods³⁶. These initiatives demonstrate a high level of public awareness and commitment to preserving cultural heritage. Ukraine's verbal acknowledgment of international standards in cultural heritage protection does not always translate into governmental action. In practice, many of these norms and principles, particularly those of the Venice Charter, remain unimplemented due to a lack of willingness and resources. In particular, the following articles are violated: Article 1 (cultural heritage is destroyed or damaged without proper attempts to

³³ Before World War I, 15.15% of objects were lost; during World War I (1914–1918), 1.77% of objects were lost; in the interwar period (1919–1940), 63.38% of objects were lost; during World War II (1941–1945), 4.55% of objects were lost; in the post-war period until the collapse of the USSR (1946–1990), 12.12% of objects were lost; in the era of independent Ukraine (1991–2002), 3.03% of objects, which were classified as architectural monuments, were lost (Vecherskyi V. (2002). Lost objects of the architectural heritage of Ukraine. *Research Institute of the Theory and History of Architecture and Urban Planning*; Main Department of Urban Planning and What is Happening Around the 'Official' Reconstruction of Kharkiv. (2023, August 16). *Kharkiv Anti-Corruption Centre*. Retrieved from <https://anticor-kharkiv.org/our-work/pro-te-shcho-foster-u-pryntsypni-ne-mozhe-rozrobyty-henplan-my-znaly-vid-pochatku-shcho-vidbuvaetsia-navkolo-ofitsynoi-vidbudovy-kharkova-ta-khto-shche-pratsiue-nad-kontseptsiieiu-vidnovlennia-mis/> [In Ukrainian]).

³⁴ The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy continues to record damage to cultural heritage sites in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression. Between 24 February 2022 and 25 December 2023, 872 cultural heritage sites were destroyed or damaged. Of these, 120 were monuments of national importance, 682 of local importance, and 70 were newly discovered (MCIP: 872 monuments of cultural heritage were damaged due to Russian aggression in Ukraine, 2024, 9 January).

³⁵ Potapenko V., Tyshchenko Y., Kaplan Y., Bakalchuk V., Lytvynenko O., Mykhailova O. (2023). Cultural heritage and national security. *National Institute for Strategic Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.53679/niss-analytrep.2023.08> [In Ukrainian].

³⁶ In 2023, the Heritage Operators project created an online catalogue of organisations and people working or involved in working with cultural heritage in Ukraine. The catalogue contains information about 878 profiles of restorers, companies, NGOs, initiatives, government agencies and institutions, museums, etc. related to the cultural heritage sector. <https://reherit.org.ua/operator/>

preserve it), Article 2 (instead of restoration, uncontrolled changes or reconstructions are carried out, changing the authentic appearance and value of the monument), Article 5 (addition of new constructions that do not correspond to the historical context), Article 6 (new construction that harms the integrity of the cultural landscape), Article 9 (lost or damaged elements are removed as rubbish without attempts to document or restore them). This lack of implementation directly contravenes key articles of the Venice Charter, particularly Article 4, which emphasises the duty of governments to ensure the proper safeguarding of heritage through legislative and administrative measures, and Article 7, which stresses the preservation of historical integrity during restorations. Despite these international guidelines, the challenges of war and limited resources often hinder their practical application in Ukraine.

The issue lies not in a misunderstanding of the importance or necessity of these standards but in the fact that adhering to them requires considerable effort, investment, and, primarily, a readiness to forgo short-term financial profit for the sake of preserving cultural heritage. While official statements highlight the importance of heritage conservation³⁷, the actual actions of the authorities frequently contradict these priorities. For instance, the clearing of rubble after bombings may result in the loss of valuable authentic architectural elements, discarded as mere debris. This highlights issues within the heritage protection system.

This contrast between the efforts of the public and the actions of the authorities emphasises the complexity of the challenges facing Ukraine in cultural heritage conservation. It is important to find effective ways of cooperation between all stakeholders to ensure the protection and restoration of the country's unique cultural values, taking into account the needs of security and modern development.

³⁷ 'Kharkiv officials listened to the artists' opinion and decided to preserve the facade of the regional state administration building destroyed by the rashists' (Salimonovich L. (2022, June 16). Recognition by the facade: How Kharkiv's architectural monuments destroyed by rashists will be reconstructed. *Ukraina Moloda*. Retrieved from <https://umoloda.kyiv.ua/number/3808/2006/167129/> [In Ukrainian]).

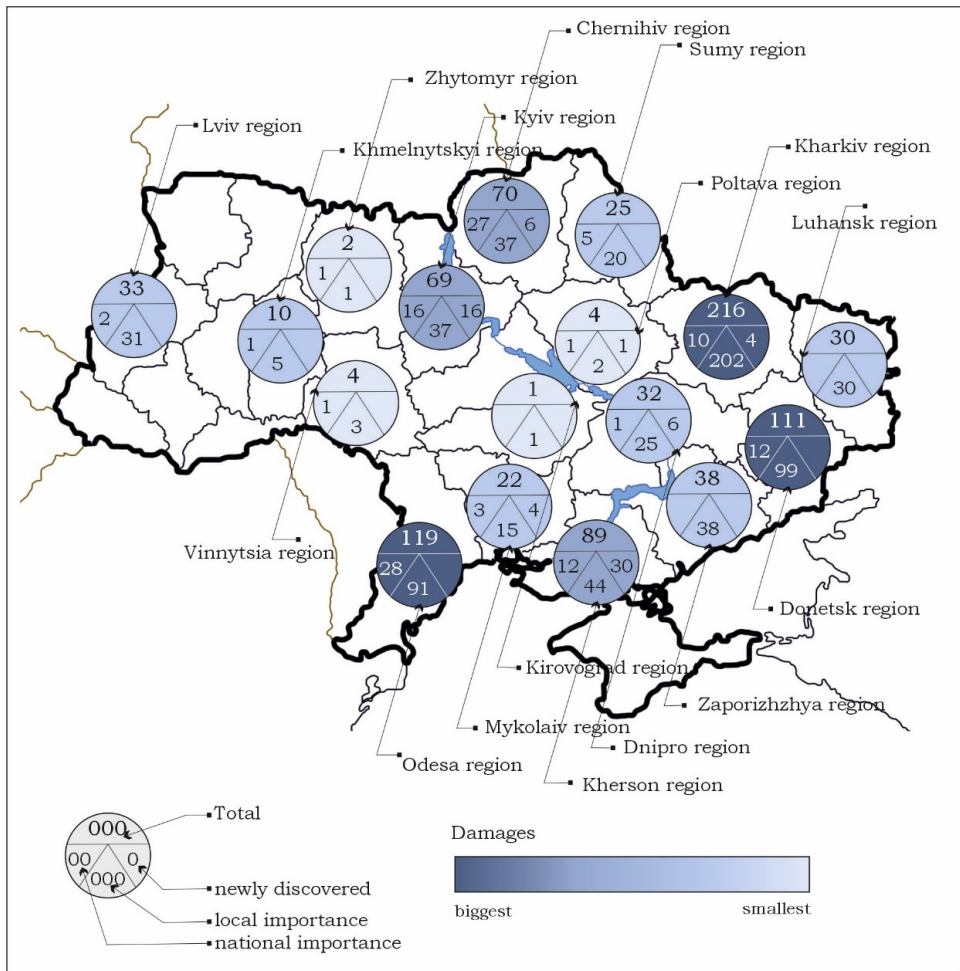


Fig. 4 War crimes of russian military against the cultural heritage of Ukraine. The authors, according to the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, 2024

3. Methodology

This investigation adopts an integrated methodological framework to analyse the war's repercussions on Ukraine's cultural heritage. By combining quantitative and qualitative analytical methods, we've achieved a deepened comprehension of the condition of architectural landmarks and identified the most effective strategies for their safeguarding and revitalisation.

Quantitative analysis hinges on a compilation of statistical insights drawn from diverse sources, including E-pamiatka, the Kharkiv Regional Prosecutor's Office, the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine in the Kharkiv Region, alongside maps delineating the destruction of architectural monuments in Kharkiv, and recovery efforts, as well as data from the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. These sources furnish estimates of inflicted damages and enumerate cultural heritage sites subjected to harm. Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

tools have been instrumental in conducting a comprehensive geographical damage assessment, allowing us to demarcate critical risk zones and develop restoration strategies.

Qualitative exploration encompasses dissecting public discourses and conducting interviews with experts in cultural heritage conservation. In parallel, an analysis of social media narratives was undertaken to gauge public sentiment and unearth grassroots initiatives poised to aid in the heritage restoration process³⁸.

4. The case of Kharkiv: Specific challenges and limitations of ruins conservation

General overview of the situation in Kharkiv

Kharkiv, a city with a long history, is one of the most striking examples of cultural diversity and architectural versatility in Ukraine. Founded more than 400 years ago, Kharkiv has passed through many historical stages, each of which has left its mark on the city's landscape and cultural heritage. Since its founding in 1654, Kharkiv initially served as a small but strategically important trade centre³⁹. Due to its location at the crossroads of key trade routes, the city developed rapidly, becoming a significant settlement in the Russian Empire between 1765 and 1917⁴⁰. During the Soviet era, Kharkiv served as one of the leading industrial and cultural centres of Ukraine, in particular due to its status as the capital of the Ukrainian SSR until 1934. This period was marked by the intensive development and implementation of ambitious architectural projects that reflected

³⁸ Davydova Y., Hovyna L. (2024, January 14). More than 200 monuments destroyed in Kharkiv region due to the war: What violations do architects see when treating buildings? *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/653632-na-harkivsini-cerez-vijnu-zrujnovani-ponad-200-pamatok-aki-porusenna-bacat-arhitektori-pid-cas-povodzenna-z-budivlami/> [In Ukrainian]; Dezhkina M. (2021, January 16). Kharkiv is suing the owner of an architectural monument who changed its appearance. *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/96075-u-harkovi-sudatsa-z-vlasnikom-pamatki-arhitekturi-akij-zminiv-ii-viglad> [In Ukrainian]; Diss J. (2022, November 2). Response to the concept of rethinking the building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration from Dmitry Kuznetsov [Post]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/elevinshteyn/posts/pfbid02WU55foHgkN8Kr6zd4vJWaNhbsGWcQBa56VqAn1dWrx6W31r9T6nohsLmdLudMjRdl> [In Ukrainian]; KhODA building: Demolish or leave? (2023, March 16). Retrieved from <https://art-oborona.weblium.site/khoda-discussion> [In Ukrainian]; Ligostaeva S. (2020, October 28). Architectural catastrophe in the centre of Kharkiv. *UKRINFORM*. Retrieved from <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3124268-arhitekturna-katastrofa-v-centri-harkova.html> [In Ukrainian]; Nakypilo LIVE. (2024, February 2). Discussion of the problems of restoring architectural monuments damaged by Russian aggression [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prxJ5gtRhC0> [In Ukrainian]; Salimonovich L. (2022, June 16). Recognition by the facade: How Kharkiv's architectural monuments destroyed by rashists will be reconstructed. *Ukraina Moloda*. Retrieved from <https://umoloda.kyiv.ua/number/3808/2006/167129/> [In Ukrainian]; Salimonovych L. (2022, June 9). To restore or not: A confrontation is brewing in Kharkiv over the fate of the historic building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration. *Ukraina Moloda*. Retrieved from <https://umoloda.kyiv.ua/number/3807/196/166965/> [In Ukrainian].

³⁹ Yacyna O., Mykhailov H. (2021). *The first Kharkiv fortress*. Kharkiv: The House of Advertising, (p. 95).

⁴⁰ Davidich T. (2013). *Styles in the architecture of Kharkiv*. Kharkiv: Litera Nova, 164 p. [In Ukrainian].

the ideological aspirations and experimental spirit of the time. The construction of new buildings, in particular in the style of Soviet constructivism, was an expression of the desire to create a new social order where architecture played a key role in shaping the public outlook⁴¹. However, this period was also marked by significant losses in the architectural heritage of Kharkiv, especially among the objects that did not fit into Soviet ideology. Many churches and other historic buildings were destroyed or radically rebuilt, losing their original identity and historical significance⁴². This highlights the complexity of the Soviet-era legacy in Kharkiv, where innovative architectural solutions were accompanied by the loss of some of the city's historical and cultural wealth.

After Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, Kharkiv entered a new era of development, while maintaining its role as an important cultural and industrial centre. Unfortunately, the history of cultural heritage conservation in the city has remained difficult, with many cases of loss of valuable architectural objects due to negligence and intentional acts. Kharkiv's Missouri Circus⁴³, known for its unique architecture and historical significance, is gradually deteriorating due to the indifference of the local authorities. Constructed in 1908, the circus once hosted performances by prominent artists such as Feodor Chaliapin and served as a significant cultural centre in Kharkiv. Currently, its dome and walls are in a neglected state, having lost their former grandeur. The negligent attitude towards cultural heritage landmarks has led to the building being removed from the list of architectural monuments and permission granted for the development of a new commercial project on the site (Fig. 5).

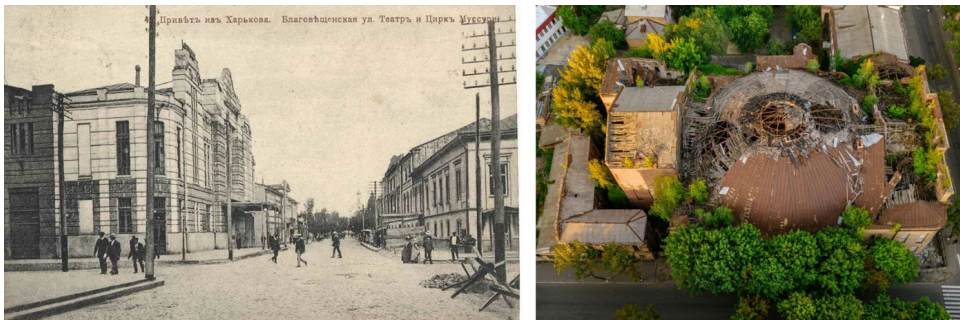


Fig. 5 Kharkiv, Circus and Theatre Missouri, 28 Blahovishchenska St. Photo by Anton Gulenko2020

⁴¹ Smolenska S. (2015). Preserving the monuments of constructivism in Ukraine (based on unpublished archival materials). *Modern Problems of Architecture and Urban Planning* (41), (pp. 190–198). [In Ukrainian].

⁴² Bulavin M. (2019, June 18). Only photos remain: Seven lost temples of Kharkiv. *Mykharkov.info*. Retrieved from <https://mykharkov.info/interesno/ratings/ostalis-tolko-fotografii-sem-utrachennyh-hramov-harkova-29426.html> [In Russian].

⁴³ “The Missouri Circus is collapsing in Kharkiv due to the indifference of the authorities” (Oleynik, 2020)

This case is a clear example of the conflict between historical value and modern construction interests, threatening the preservation of the city's cultural heritage. This situation reflects a broader disregard for the principles of the Venice Charter, particularly Article 5, which calls for urban development to respect the historical character of cultural heritage sites. Problems such as deliberate neglect, leading to inevitable destruction⁴⁴, and the reconstruction of historic facades to create the illusion of restoration⁴⁵, were becoming increasingly common (Fig. 6).

Challenges in preserving and restoring Kharkiv

Since the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine, Kharkiv, as one of the country's largest cultural centres, has faced unprecedented challenges in preserving its cultural heritage. The impact of the hostilities on the city had catastrophic consequences not only for the lives of its residents, but also for numerous historical and cultural monuments. Damage and destruction of architectural objects have become a sad reality that the city struggles with on a daily basis. Numerous historic buildings, monuments, and museums have been damaged or completely destroyed by shelling and airstrikes⁴⁶. Logistical and financial constraints make it very difficult to preserve and restore the damaged objects. Lack of resources, the danger of further shelling, and difficulties in accessing some areas pose serious obstacles to the effective work of restorers and conservationists⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ “Kharkiv, the second-largest city in Ukraine, may lose several more historical and architectural monuments in addition to the old buildings destroyed over the past 5 years. The reason is simple: the buildings with this status are located in the central part of the city, which is of particular importance to business people” (Ligostaeva, S. (2020, October 28). Architectural catastrophe in the centre of Kharkiv. *UKRINFORM*. Retrieved from <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3124268-arhitekturna-katastrofa-v-centri-harkova.html> [In Ukrainian]).

⁴⁵ “Instead of restoring the building at 2 Hohol Street in Kharkiv, they added a floor. The building has the status of a monument, and such interference violates the law, architects say. The court of first instance ordered the owner to stop the work and return the building to its original appearance. The owner is appealing” (Dezhkina M. (2021, January 16). Kharkiv is suing the owner of an architectural monument who changed its appearance. *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/96075-u-harkovi-sudatsa-z-vlasnikom-pamatki-arhitekturi-akij-zminiv-ii-viglad> [In Ukrainian]).

⁴⁶ “In the Kharkiv region, 217 cultural heritage sites have been destroyed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion” (Davydova Y., Hovyna L. (2024, January 14). More than 200 monuments destroyed in Kharkiv region due to the war: What violations do architects see when treating buildings? *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/653632-na-harkivsini-cerez-vijnu-zrujnovani-ponad-200-pamatok-aki-porusenna-bacat-arhitektori-pid-cas-povodzenna-z-budivlami/> [In Ukrainian]).

⁴⁷ Nakypilo LIVE. (2024, February 2). Discussion of the problems of restoring architectural monuments damaged by Russian aggression [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prxJ5gtRhC0> [In Ukrainian].

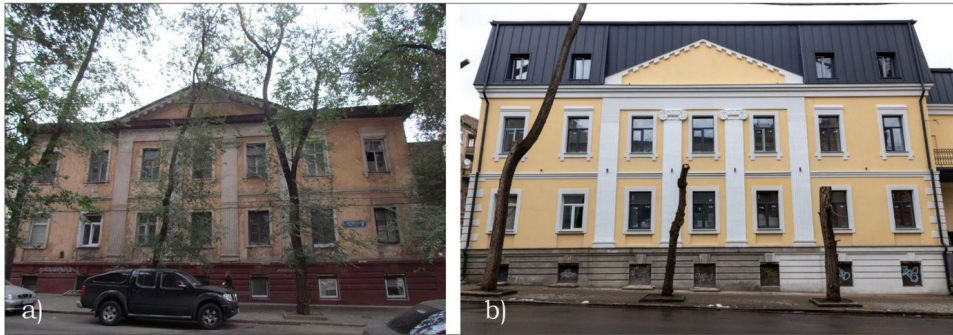


Fig. 6 Kharkiv, Hohol str. 2 - architectural monument (a) Photo by WoxBox, 2012, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0., b) Photo by Ivan Ponomarenko, 2021, source: <https://moniacs.kh.ua/ul-gogolya-2/>

Identification and cataloguing of damaged architectural objects are critical for planning restoration work. It is important not only to record the level of damage, but also to determine the historical and cultural value of each object. One of the key problems is that official statistics include only those sites that have a specific protection status, which leads to an incomplete reflection of the real scale of losses and confusion in the statistics. The data from the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine reflects only a fragment of the concern, as many valuable architectural objects without official status remain unrecorded⁴⁸. The situation in Kharkiv, where the number of rocket attacks has increased significantly since the end of 2023, indicates potentially greater losses. The data collected by the authors from open sources⁴⁹ and through field surveys indicate that the real losses in Kharkiv may be much higher than reflected in the official data (Fig. 7).

The analysis revealed that 163 valuable buildings were damaged by shelling⁵⁰. Of these, 97 are recognised as architectural monuments, while the remaining 66, although not officially recognised, are also of significant value⁵¹. The losses in Kharkiv can serve as an important example for understanding the nationwide challenges of preserving cultural heritage in times of war. The emphasis on including objects without official status in the general statistics will not only increase awareness of the real scale of destruction, but also highlight the need to extend

⁴⁸ The records are kept in the following categories: monuments of national importance, monuments of local importance, and newly discovered cultural heritage sites.

⁴⁹ The identification and cataloguing of damaged architectural objects are carried out by both official institutions and the public sector. The research was based on the following resources: Kharkiv Regional Prosecutor's Office, Main Department of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine in the Kharkiv Region, Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, Map of Destroyed Architectural Monuments of Kharkiv, Map of Destruction and Restoration, Kharkiv, which attracts, NeMo: Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab.

⁵⁰ The statistics were collected by the authors as of the end of 2023, at which time a powerful new wave of Russian missile attacks began, so the number of damaged buildings is constantly growing.

⁵¹ The identification of the significance of buildings without official status was based on professional analysis and assessment by the authors of the study, who have specialised education in architecture, history and cultural heritage, allowing them to competently assess the cultural and historical value of architectural objects.

protection measures to all architectural heritage, regardless of its status. The data also points to the need to expand the concept of “cultural heritage” to include sites without official status in a national strategy for preservation and restoration.

Another problem exacerbated by the war is the loss of authenticity of architectural monuments. In Kharkiv, during the conflict, a practice of discarding historical materials from buildings damaged by missile strikes has developed. Municipal services often remove the debris as construction waste, resulting in the loss of authentic elements of the monuments⁵² (Solodovnik, 2023; Ryazantseva, 2022; Davydova, 2024) (Fig. 8). This practice contradicts the principles outlined in the Venice Charter, particularly Article 9, which stresses the importance of preserving original materials and documenting all stages of restoration. The removal and disposal of authentic architectural elements without proper documentation not only violates these standards but also leads to an irretrievable loss of historical value.

⁵² Solodovnyk M., Dezhkina M. (2023). In Kharkiv, a request to conserve a 19th-century monument damaged by a Russian missile. *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/653632-na-harkivsini-cerez-vijnu-zrujnovani-ponad-200-pamatok-aki-porusenna-bacat-arhitektori-pid-cas-povodzenna-z-budivlami/> [In Ukrainian]; Riazantseva, A., & Hrebinnyk, D. (2022). A century-old building in Kharkiv damaged by shelling: An architect explains how to preserve it. *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/313724-poskodzena-obstrilami-storicna-budivla-u-harkovi-arhitektor-rozpoviv-ak-ii-vberegiti/> [In Ukrainian]. Riazantseva A., Hrebinnyk D. (2022). A century-old building in Kharkiv damaged by shelling: An architect explains how to preserve it. *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/313724-poskodzena-obstrilami-storicna-budivla-u-harkovi-arhitektor-rozpoviv-ak-ii-vberegiti/> [In Ukrainian]; Davydova Y., Hovyna L. (2024, January 14). More than 200 monuments destroyed in Kharkiv region due to the war: What violations do architects see when treating buildings? *Suspilne News*. Retrieved from <https://suspilne.media/653632-na-harkivsini-cerez-vijnu-zrujnovani-ponad-200-pamatok-aki-porusenna-bacat-arhitektori-pid-cas-povodzenna-z-budivlami/> [In Ukrainian].

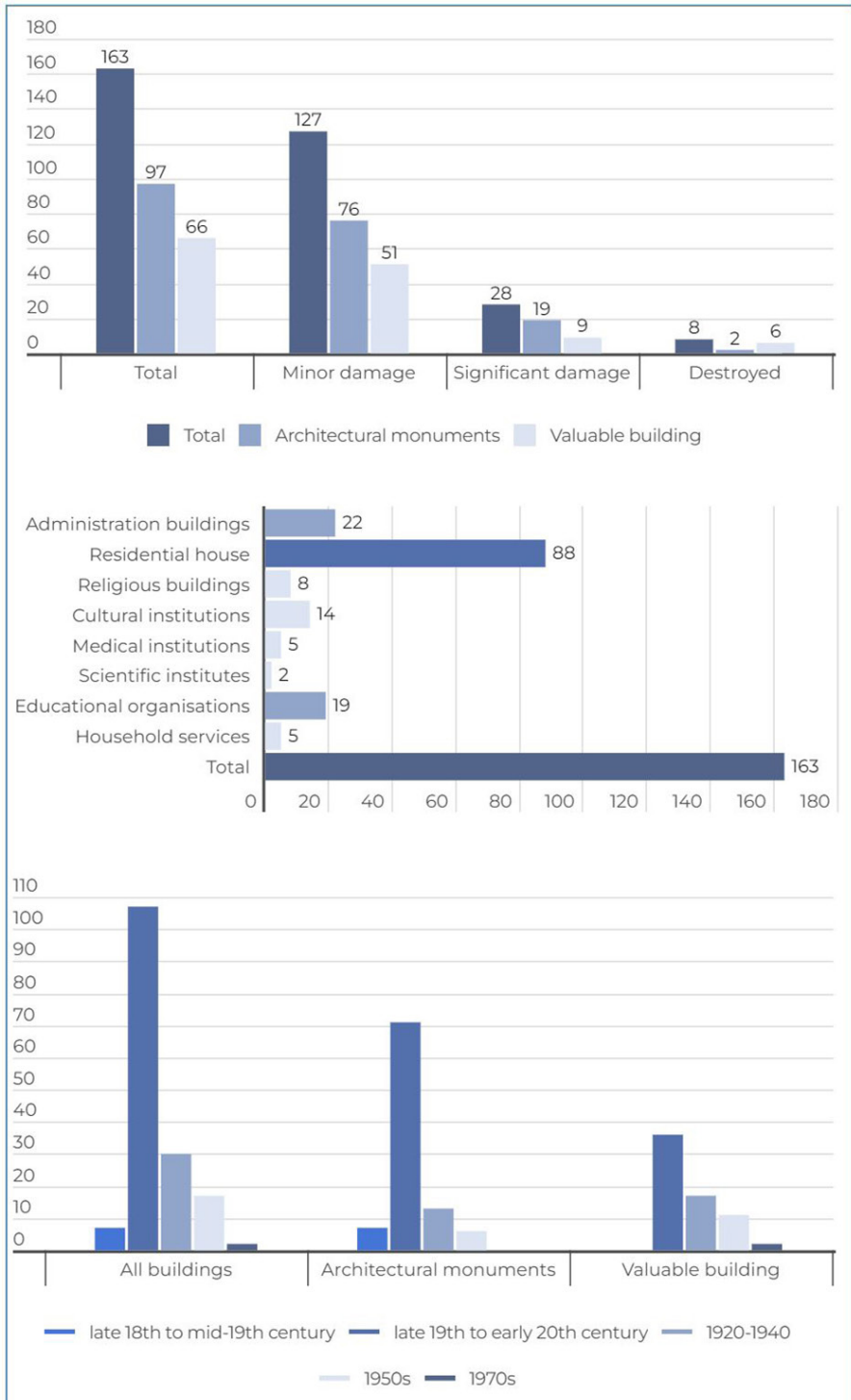


Fig. 7 Statistics of damaged architectural monuments in Kharkiv 2022-2024. Authors, 2024

Perspectives on the restoration of Kharkiv cultural heritage

The prospects for restoring monuments in Kharkiv represent a complex field rich in numerous challenges and possibilities, encompassing both promising and potentially adverse development scenarios. The danger looms that due to the hostilities and subsequent governmental actions, a substantial portion of the cultural heritage might remain unrestored or be obliterated during the city's reconstruction and redevelopment processes⁵³. Under the pretext of monument restoration, the government might opt to demolish the ruins to free up valuable land for new commercial developments⁵⁴. Given the current hostilities and national sentiment, there is a high probability that Soviet-era structures damaged by shelling may be excluded from restoration plans or deliberately destroyed due to their ideological load⁵⁵.

Regarding the restoration and rehabilitation of architectural monuments in Kharkiv, architectural competitions, which are often held to attract innovative ideas and solutions, deserve special attention. Unfortunately, not all architects participating in these competitions fully grasp their responsibility to preserve the monuments' authenticity and historical worth. These competitions often become platforms for personal ambitions and experimental endeavours by architects, leading to profound alterations in the monuments' appearances and functions⁵⁶. Such alterations conflict with the principles of Article 3 of the Venice Charter, which stresses the importance of preserving historical authenticity and preventing major changes to the appearance and structure of monuments. While these actions might be met with positive public reception due to the new

⁵³ Despite the declared support of the authorities for the preservation of historical monuments, there are concerns that the actions and approaches of the authorities may not be in line with their stated intentions. Due to outdated urban planning methodologies and insufficient attention to the specifics of cultural heritage, there is a risk that a significant number of historically valuable objects may not be restored or could be destroyed in the process of building new structures (What is happening around the 'official' reconstruction of Kharkiv, 2023, 16 August).

⁵⁴ "According to preliminary data, the building of the KhODA, on which a Russian aircraft dropped two Iskander-M missiles on 1 March, cannot be restored. This disappointing news was announced by the head of the military administration, Oleh Syniehubov, referring to the findings of a special commission that visually assessed the condition of the landmark building" (Salimonovych L. (2022, June 9). To restore or not: A confrontation is brewing in Kharkiv over the fate of the historic building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration. *Ukraine Moloda*. Retrieved from <https://umoloda.kyiv.ua/number/3807/196/166965/> [In Ukrainian]).

⁵⁵ Bozhenko A., Chahovets O. (2023). Identifying the value of Stalinist architecture in the context of decommunisation processes. *Cultural Heritage of Slobozhanshchyna* (52), (pp. 98–107).

⁵⁶ For example, the open competition Re: Create Ukraine, which focuses on the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities affected by the war, is important for planning the country's future. However, its approach to cultural heritage raises concerns about the lack of attention to preserving the authenticity of historic buildings. Reinterpreting architectural monuments while ignoring their cultural significance can lead to a loss of identity and the inability to pass on historical heritage to future generations. <https://www.facebook.com/recreateukraine/>

projects' visual allure⁵⁷, they pose a risk of erasing cultural heritage and historical authenticity (Fig. 9). In the effort to eliminate reminders of the Soviet past, there is a risk of destroying architectural sites that, regardless of their origin, are an integral part of the city's historical and cultural context^{58,59}.



Fig. 8. a) 8 Svobody Street, D. Hrebynnyk/Souspilne, March 2022, b) 13 Poltavsky Shlyakh Street, (Paramonov, December 2022, c) 77 Goldbergivska Street, Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine in Kharkiv Oblast, November 2023

⁵⁷ Diss J. (2022, November 2). Response to the concept of rethinking the building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration from Dmitry Kuznetsov [Post]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/elevinshteyn/posts/pfbid02WU55foHgkN8Kr6zd4vJWaNhbsGWcQBa56VqAn1dWrx6W31r9T6nohsLMdLudMjRdl> [In Ukrainian]

⁵⁸ KhODA building: Demolish or leave? (2023, March 16). Retrieved from <https://art-oborona.weblium.site/khoda-discussion> [In Ukrainian].

⁵⁹ Today, discussions are taking place not only in conference rooms, but also on social media, where we can hear a wide range of opinions from representatives of different social groups. There you can see a wide range of opinions on the future of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration—ranging from restoration to complete rebuilding <https://art-oborona.weblium.site/khoda-discussion>

When addressing the specific challenges that Kharkiv and other cities in Ukraine face in preserving their damaged cultural heritage, it becomes evident that a deeper, more reflective approach to restoration and recovery processes is necessary⁶⁰. In this context, the 1964 Venice Charter, which has long served as a guiding principle for the preservation and restoration of monuments worldwide, assumes unprecedented importance. In the war-torn context of Ukraine, the widespread destruction of cultural heritage makes it challenging to fully adhere to the Charter's principles of authenticity and integrity (Articles 3 and 9). Yet, these values remain crucial, providing a framework for balancing physical restoration with the preservation of deeper cultural identity. In many cases, the complete loss of original materials makes strict adherence to these principles unattainable, requiring a more adaptive interpretation. Such adaptation must find a balance between reconstructing lost monuments and safeguarding the cultural memory and identity they embody, especially in the face of the deliberate destruction of Ukrainian heritage by Russian forces. This tension—between the irreparable loss of physical structures and the need to preserve the symbolic meaning of heritage—underscores the Charter's renewed relevance. Therefore, updating the Venice Charter to address these realities becomes essential, ensuring it continues to guide heritage preservation in both conflict and post-conflict contexts. Contemporary challenges demand not just the physical restoration of monuments but a profound understanding of the need to preserve historical memory and cultural identity, which are vital for the social healing of the community after war⁶¹. This necessitates expanding our approaches to restoration, incorporating modern technologies, innovative conservation methods, and crucially, fostering active public participation in decision-making. Such a paradigm underscores the need for flexibility and adaptability in approaches to cultural heritage conservation that adapt to the evolving rules and requirements established decades ago⁶².

It's crucial not only to adhere to historical authenticity, but also to understand the needs and expectations of contemporary society. Preserving the authentic structure of a monument is significant in safeguarding cultural heritage; however, maintaining the “spirit of the place” and conveying to future generations not just the physical presence of monuments but also their history, traditions, and significance is equally important⁶³. Changes in legislation, new technological solutions, and increased public involvement in the decision-making processes for cultural heritage preservation can facilitate the development of effective and inclusive restoration strategies. Ensuring open dialogue among all stakeholders, including scholars, architects,

⁶⁰ Leshchenko N. (2022). The principle of 'integrity' in the complex process of restoration and reconstruction transformations of historical city centres. *Modern Problems of Architecture and Urban Planning* (62), (pp. 50–60). [In Ukrainian].

⁶¹ Kupriychuk V. (2018). The role of national cultural heritage in the formation of Ukrainian identity, [in:] V. Troshchynskyi (Ed.), *Formation of Ukrainian identity in the context of modern challenges: Theoretical and political aspects*, (pp. 78–106). Kyiv: [In Ukrainian].

⁶² López Morales F. J. (2016). La Carta de Venecia en el siglo XXI. *Gremium* 3(5), (pp. 29–40). <https://doi.org/10.56039/rgn05a04>

⁶³ Bortnikova A. (2013). The phenomenon of 'Genius loci' in the natural and cultural landscape of a small homeland. *Scientific Notes of the National University of Ostroh Academy, Series: Philosophy* (13), (pp.9–13). [In Ukrainian].

historians, local authorities, and the public, is vital to finding balanced solutions that consider both the cultural and social value of historical sites.

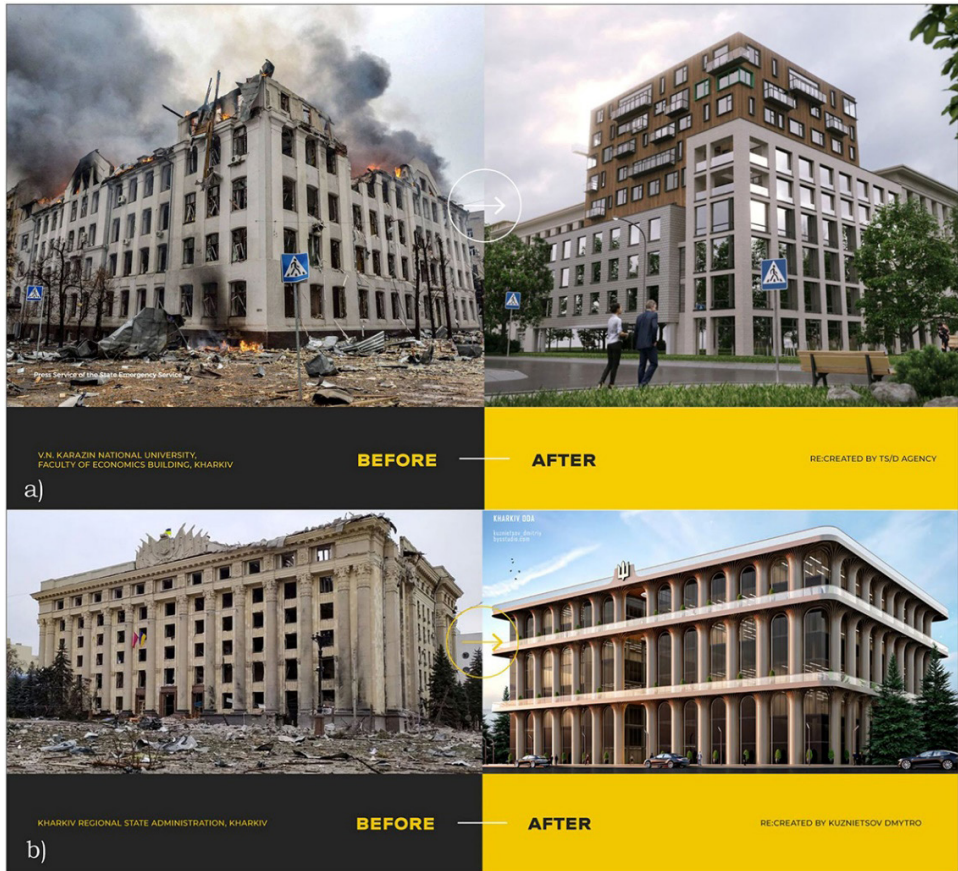


Fig. 9 Works by participants of the open competition Re: Create Ukraine (© recreateukraine, 2022)⁶⁴

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⁶⁴ a) The author of the visualisation is TS/D AGENCY. The building of the Faculty of Economics of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University is an architectural and urban planning monument of local significance. The building was constructed in the 1920s by Serhiy Tymoshenko, one of the first reinforced concrete structures in the country, and has features of the Ukrainian Art Nouveau style. Despite the Soviet authorities' attempts to erase his name from history because of his patriotic stance, researchers' efforts have restored justice by highlighting the building's significance as a marker of historical truth and national identity. Unfortunately, the author of the visualisation completely ignored the historical and cultural context of the building.

b) The author of the visualisation is Dmytro Kuznietsov. The House of Soviets was built in 1954 in the style of Soviet neoclassicism on the site of the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine destroyed during World War II. It is an architectural and urban planning monument of local significance. The author approaches the rethinking of urban spaces with excessive confidence, believing that the restructuring of the ensemble, which includes the building, is not difficult. However, his disregard for the historical and cultural context and his willingness to radically change the landscape without regard to the value of heritage indicate a deep misunderstanding of the importance of preserving historical authenticity and cultural value (Panasiuk S. (2022, November 4). The new building of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration: What did the author of the concept want to say and how did social media react? Luke - online media about Kharkiv. Retrieved from <https://lyuk.media/city/kharkivodanew-concept/> [In Ukrainian].).

5. Conclusion

The research delves into the dilemmas and prospects of reconstructing Ukraine's cultural heritage in the context of modern challenges, particularly the destruction caused by military conflict. While the Venice Charter provides a fundamental framework for restoration, its focus on preserving original materials and forms, as outlined in Article 3, may not always align with the reality of widespread destruction. In many cases, entire buildings or architectural entities have been lost, making strict adherence to authenticity difficult, if not impossible. This calls for greater flexibility in interpreting the Charter's principles within the realities of post-war recovery.

The research reveals the need for a paradigm shift from conventional restoration practices to a more holistic, adaptive, and innovative approach. While Article 7 of the Venice Charter emphasises balancing historical integrity with modern urban needs, it does not fully address situations where such balance is disrupted by the complete destruction of cultural sites. Ukraine's context requires not only physical restoration, but also the preservation of cultural identity, which may necessitate more radical interventions than the Charter originally anticipated.

We propose an updated framework for applying the Venice Charter to the realities of Ukraine's circumstances, emphasizing the integration of advanced technological solutions and community engagement. Article 9, for example, focuses on traditional documentation methods, but requires expansion to accommodate new technological possibilities.

Our study reveals that the destruction of cultural heritage due to conflict and neglect necessitates urgent strategies for protection and adaptive reuse. However, the Venice Charter, particularly Article 1, which emphasise preservation, does not fully account for situations where entire sites are destroyed and need to be rebuilt anew. In such cases, the Charter's focus on material authenticity may not align with the realities of post-conflict reconstruction.

Moreover, the conclusions drawn from the analysis of specific cases in Kharkiv and throughout Ukraine illustrate the necessity for legislative and procedural enhancements to ensure that cultural preservation is ingrained in urban planning and development. Article 6 of the Venice Charter touches on the importance of preserving cultural landscapes, but it does not fully address the challenges of integrating heritage conservation with the demands of sustainable urban development. This gap highlights the need for more flexible legal frameworks that can adapt to both modern planning requirements and the realities of war-torn areas. Furthermore, the current limitations of the 'object of protection' concept, as it is currently defined, often lead to partial preservation that undermines the overall integrity of cultural sites. We call for a more comprehensive definition that includes the preservation of the surrounding historical context, which is essential for maintaining the authenticity and continuity of the cultural landscape.

Based on the issues discussed, this paper outlines the following key directions to address the challenges of cultural heritage restoration and integration in post-conflict contexts:

- Legislative reform: Venice Charter emphasises the importance of preserving the material structure of monuments, as it forms the foundation of their authenticity. However, in cases where monuments have been completely destroyed, the reconstruction of new buildings raises

questions about their status as cultural heritage. The Charter does not provide clear guidance on how to deal with fully restored objects. In light of modern challenges, legislation must be adapted to recognise reconstructed buildings as heritage, considering their ability to continue serving cultural and historical roles. Even if the physical structure changes, these objects retain intangible attributes such as symbolic significance, national identity, and collective memory. Recognising these restored buildings as heritage allows for the preservation of historical continuity, even in a new material form.

- Community involvement: Article 5 of the Venice Charter emphasises the importance of preserving monuments in their historical environment, ensuring they remain a living part of society. This idea is closely linked to the active involvement of local communities, who are an integral part of this environment. However, the Charter does not offer specific mechanisms for engaging communities as active participants in heritage conservation processes. Today, many communities have legal rights and opportunities to influence heritage restoration, but they often face challenges such as a lack of specialists in restoration and insufficient financial resources. As a result, even with formal rights, communities are not always able to effectively fulfil their responsibilities. Mechanisms for support and training need to be established, providing communities with access to experts, funding, and resources. Only under these conditions can communities become not just observers but active participants in the restoration process.

- Technology and innovation: Article 9 of the Venice Charter highlights documentation as a fundamental element in heritage preservation. However, challenges related to the destruction of buildings call for an expanded approach to include the potential of modern digital technologies. The question arises: can digital data serve as a basis for the reconstruction of heritage sites? In cases where buildings were previously scanned using laser scanning or photogrammetry, we have precise 3D models that can serve as the foundation for restoration. But in the absence of such data, new technologies, such as artificial intelligence algorithms, can reconstruct 3D models of buildings based on photographs, historical records, and descriptions. These innovations open up new possibilities for restoration, but another issue arises: can such restored objects be considered authentic? Perhaps, in updating the approaches of the Venice Charter, these modern digital technologies should be considered as a potential tool for reconstructing lost objects. However, this issue requires further research and a cautious approach to balance technological innovation with the preservation of authenticity.

- Education and awareness: educational programmes should become an integral part of national curricula to foster a responsible attitude toward cultural heritage from an early age. Article 4 of the Venice Charter highlights the interdisciplinary nature of heritage preservation, but for long-term protection, more is needed. It is crucial not only to educate specialists but also to integrate heritage knowledge into school curricula, just as we teach mathematics or natural sciences. This will help raise new generations who understand the significance of heritage and are prepared to take responsibility for its preservation.

- Sustainable conservation practices: Article 6 of the Venice Charter addresses the preservation of cultural landscapes, but it lacks specific guidelines on how to integrate heritage conservation with modern urban development. As cities expand and face new challenges, approaches to heritage preservation must also evolve. Updating the Charter could include clearer guidance on how to incorporate heritage into the urban context, viewing it not as an obstacle to development, but as a feature that contributes to sustainable urban planning.

These proposed directions aim not only to address the immediate threats to Ukraine's cultural heritage but also to set a course for sustainable preservation that aligns with global best practices and respects the historical narrative of the nation.

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Author contributions

Olena Zhukova and Olesia Chahovets contributed equally to this study. Both authors were involved in the conceptualization and design of the research, as well as the collection and analysis of data. They jointly authored the manuscript, participating in the drafting and revision of the text to ensure accuracy and coherence. Finally, both approved the final version of the manuscript for publication, sharing responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work presented.

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