

Project Summary

Vilnius Heritage Conservation Programme 2024 - 2025

Residential buildings account for a large proportion of all buildings and are an important characteristic of the Old Town. A significant number of these buildings are registered cultural heritage objects. However, their maintenance and renovation require substantial financial resources and craft skills, which private owners often lack.

Financial support for private owners was first allocated under the Vilnius Old Town Revitalisation Programme in 2000 and continued until 2023. The type and amount of support varied over time, with some periods without financial support, depending on annual local government decisions. Based on this experience, the City of Vilnius, in cooperation with the Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency, launched the Vilnius Heritage Conservation Programme in 2023 as a more stable, strategic, and integrated instrument. The Programme was developed by the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the City of Vilnius together with the Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency, defining clear strategic goals, funding mechanisms and implementation procedures. Cultural heritage property owners were invited to apply for financial support through the Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency. Approximately 300 consultations and seven public meetings were held with property managers, owners, and users of cultural heritage buildings. During these consultations and meetings, the conditions of the Programme were presented, and participants were guided through the application process and informed about how the Programme operates. This process helped to increase awareness of heritage values and ensured that residents were able to effectively access available support. A total of 176 applications were submitted in 2024. The Programme was approved by the Vilnius City Council on January 30, 2025, and is being implemented by the Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency.

In 2025, 143 contracts with property owners were signed, enabling renovation works in 143 buildings. The works included the restoration of 5 wooden buildings, roof and facade works on 8 buildings, facade renovations of 10 properties, the repair or reconstruction of 308 balconies, and the restoration or reconstruction of 193 wooden windows and 39 wooden doors. Additionally, 221 applications were submitted in 2025, with further works planned for 2026-2027, subject to available funding.

Property owners received a 60% subsidy for exterior building maintenance and up to 80% for balconies and other facade elements in urgent (emergency) cases. A 70% subsidy was provided for the maintenance of wooden architecture, and 80% for the renovation or reconstruction of wooden windows, doors, and courtyard gates.

In line with the principles of habitability, the Programme promotes participatory governance by encouraging active involvement of residents and local stakeholders, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging. It also raises awareness among residents about the heritage value of private buildings and public spaces in the Old Town. Municipal financial support enables private owners to maintain and renovate their properties, helping to preserve and strengthen the residential function as a key objective of historic centres. The restoration of authentic elements, wooden doors, and windows contributes to preserving and safeguarding local heritage that might otherwise be lost without such support.

Overall, the Vilnius Heritage Conservation Programme shows how heritage can be actively used to support sustainable urban development and help create a more inclusive, resilient, and liveable historic centre.