

# St. Petersburg: the lofty dreams of President Putin and aggressive plans of Gazprom



# Images of St. Petersburg: main space of Neva, wide views, flat low silhouette with a sparse strong dominants



...In Moscow at every step there is a beautiful view; the flat Petersburg one may walk from end to end and not find any, even a mediocre view; but proceeding, one must go back to the embankment of the Neva and say that all the views of Moscow is nothing compared to this...

A. Herzen, 1842

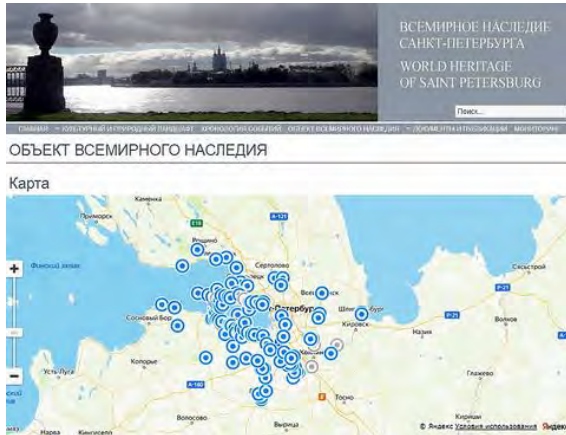
...The perhaps most characteristic architectural feature in the look of Leningrad is preponderance of horizontals over verticals. Horizontals build a base on which all the rest lines loom...

The characteristic city elements are three spires: one of the Peter and Paul Fortress, one of the Admiralty and one of the Mikhailovsky Castle. They are somewhat perpendiculars to the horizontal lines and do not conflict with them, but emphasize their existence...

D. Likhachev, 1991



# Cultural landscapes: St. Petersburg nomination and the Vienna Memorandum



<http://whl.spb.ru/>

The St. Petersburg nomination, listed in the World Heritage in 1990, covers the entire historical agglomeration of the "northern capital" of Russia. It is a mega-landscape with a predominance of the cultural components, but including the most important natural objects. Its leading component is the Historical Center of St. Petersburg (ID 540-001).

The application was formed at the beginning of perestroika and reflected the hope for changes in the outdated Soviet system of heritage protection. It was supported by the World Heritage Committee and became one of the steps towards the formation of an international concept for the protection of historical and cultural landscapes.

## Landscape

5. Increasing concern for sustainable development and the inclusion of sustainability in heritage conservation led to the World Heritage Committee adopting in 1992 the concept of cultural landscape as a heritage category reflecting the definition of “combined works of nature and of man” present in the World Heritage Convention. This made the Convention the first international legal instrument to recognize the importance of the relationship between people and their natural environment. The “cultural landscape” category has since become an excellent tool for identifying, managing and protecting such areas of Outstanding Universal Value in all regions of the world.

## Historic urban landscape

7. UNESCO convened a conference in Vienna in May 2005, to discuss how to deal with contemporary transformations of historic areas in ways that are compatible with the preservation of their heritage values, with special focus on cities inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The main outcome was the adoption of the **Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture**, which promoted an integrated and harmonious relationship between conservation and new urban developments in order to preserve the integrity of the Historic Urban Landscape. The Memorandum was welcomed by the World Heritage Committee at its 29th session, and formed the basis for the **Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscape**, adopted by the 15th General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in 2005 (Resolution 15 GA 7). By emphasizing the need to respond to new development dynamics with careful consideration to the urban context and respect of the inherited landscape setting, the Memorandum and the Declaration reflected a change towards sustainable development in the governance of historic cities, as well as a broader vision of the nature of urban heritage. The Memorandum and Declaration encouraged a broad debate among policy-makers, professionals and practitioners on the issue of development in historic cities and supported a process of re-assessment of the existing tools for their preservation.

*Preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects relating to the desirability of a standard-setting instrument on the conservation of the historic urban landscape. UNESCO. General Conference, 35th, 2009*

# The Valletta Principles (2011) - principles of world civilization



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Valletta Principles (Russian)

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2b. ...New architecture must be consistent with the spatial organisation of the historic area and respectful of its traditional morphology while at the same time being a valid expression of the architectural trends of its time and place. Regardless of style and expression, all new architecture should avoid the negative effects of drastic or excessive contrasts and of fragmentation and interruptions in the continuity of the urban fabric and space...

## 4c. Contemporary architecture

When it is necessary to construct new buildings or to adapt existing ones, contemporary architecture must be coherent with the existing spatial layout in historic towns as in the rest of the urban environment. Contemporary architecture should find its expression while respecting the scale of the site, and have a clear rapport with existing architecture and the development patterns of its context...

Perspectives, views, focal points and visual corridors are integral parts of the perception of historic spaces. They must be respected in the event of new interventions. Before any intervention, the existing context should be carefully analysed and documented. View cones, both to and from new constructions, should be identified, studied and maintained...

## From Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (39 COM, Bonn, 2015):

- Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments (C 540bis)

## Brief synthesis

The unique urban landscape of the port and capital city of Saint Petersburg, rising out of the Neva estuary where it meets the Gulf of Finland, was the greatest urban creation of the 18th century.

.....  
The greatness of Russia's northern capital, with its horizontal silhouette coupled with vertical landmarks and its ensembles of embankments and squares, lies in the heart of the city's "imperial" spirit, its genius loci. The main feature and attraction of Saint Petersburg's historical centre is characterized by a perfect harmony of architecture and waterscapes.

# 2006-2010: plan of aggression 1 - the Okhta-center skyscraper vs the image of St. Petersburg and "Petersburg Troy"



"City chooses the future"

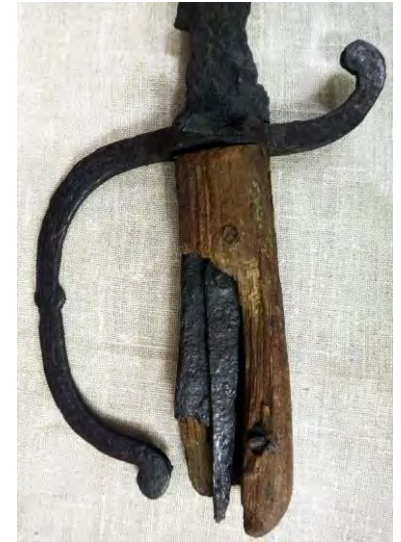
Город выбирает будущее



City struggle  
against skyscrapers

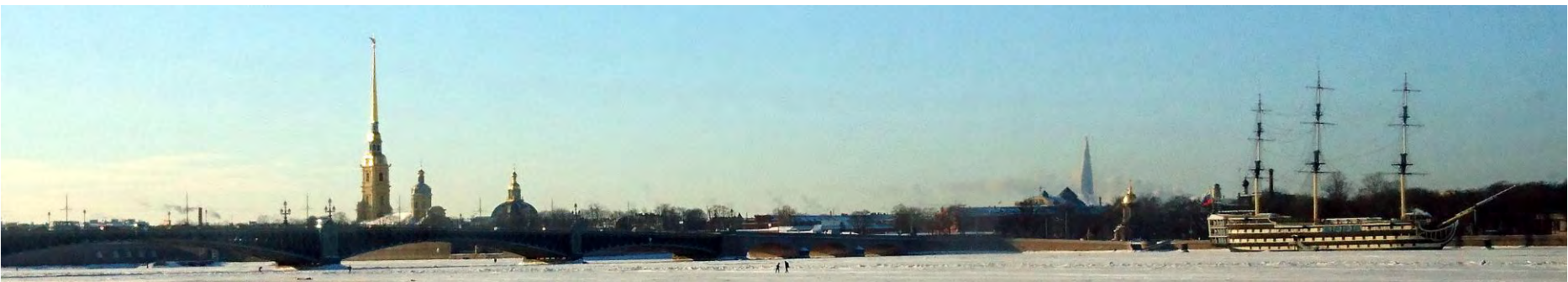


# 2006-2010: Okhta Cape discoveries - the history from Neolith to the Nyenskans



## 2011-2022: aggression 2: Skyscraper "Lakhta Centre"

Joint WHC / ICOMOS MISSION 2019: Although the tower is located outside the protection zone of the property, it is visible from several important view points in the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and thus affects the Historic Urban Landscape.

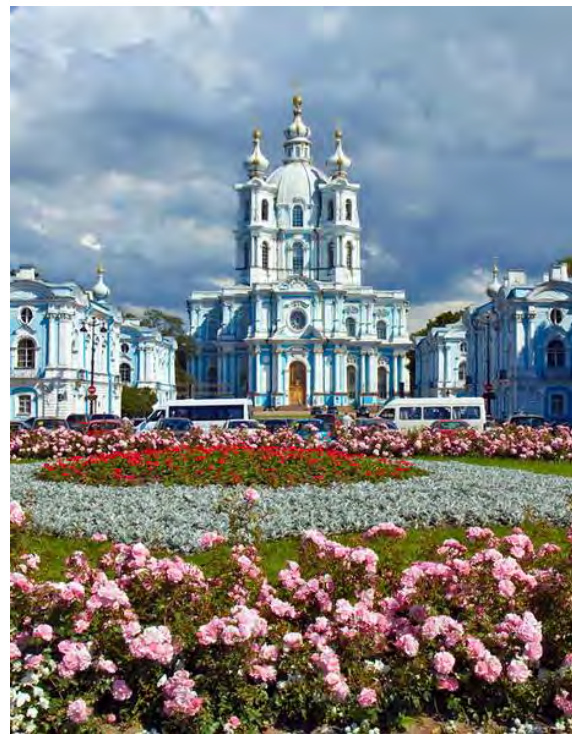
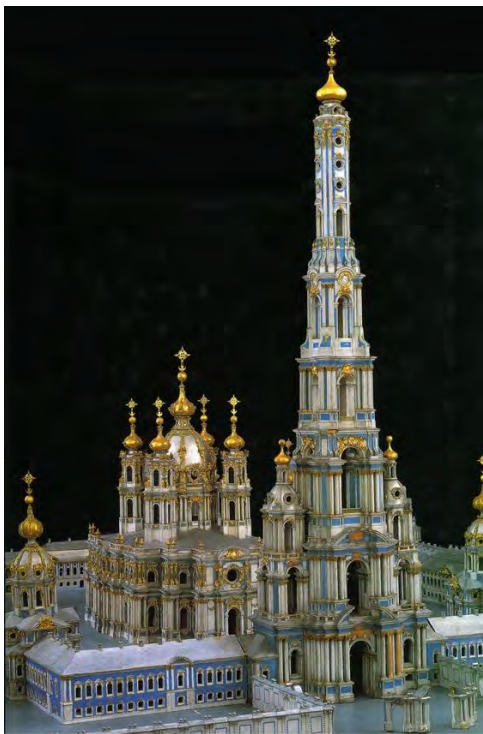
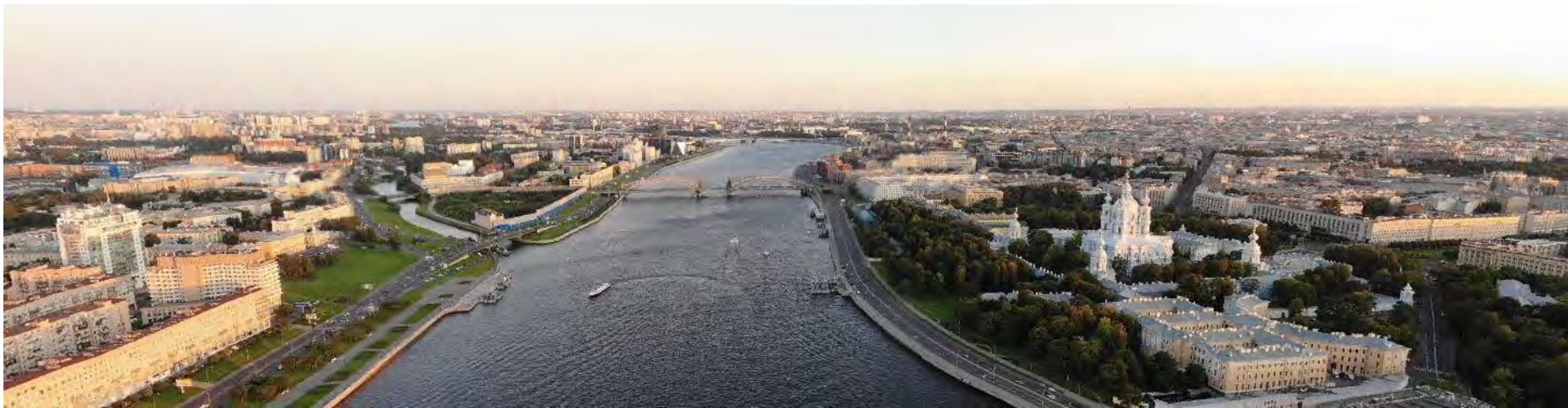


## 2020-2022: plan of aggression 3: business center vs "Petersburg Troy"



Joint WHC / ICOMOS MISSION 2019: The site has been turned into an archaeological site exhibiting unique historical objects such as a number of Neolithic sites, and the remains of the fortifications of Landscrona and Nyenschantz from the 14th and 17th century respectively... The mission recommends that the site should be kept under constant watch due to its historic value.

## 2020: plan of aggression 4 – “skyscraper” bell tower that never existed



## 2021: plans of aggression 5,6: skyscrapers Lakhta center 2 and 3



# Gazprom or the Kremlin?

Press conference of President Putin 2007

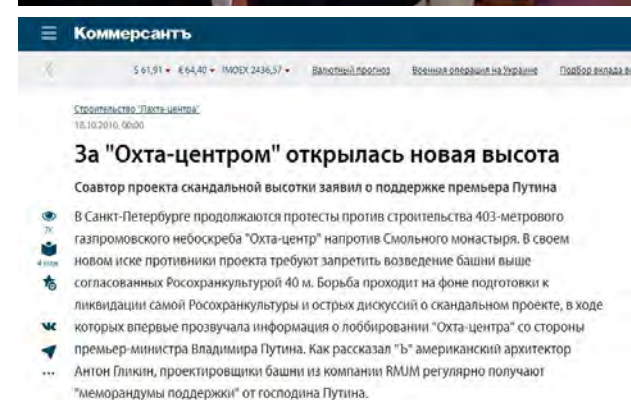


During the life of past generations, of course, St. Petersburg has become an outstanding center of world culture and architecture, but our generations have done almost nothing. And, of course, we need some fresh air here, we need some centers that would give impetus to the development of business activity, among other things...

I do not claim that this is the best solution, and, moreover, I do not even want to influence the decisions made by the city authorities. The fact that such structures would not damage the city is for sure. But where to make them – this decision, I want to repeat once again, should be made at the level of city authorities. There is no need to shift these decisions to me, I have enough problems of my own.

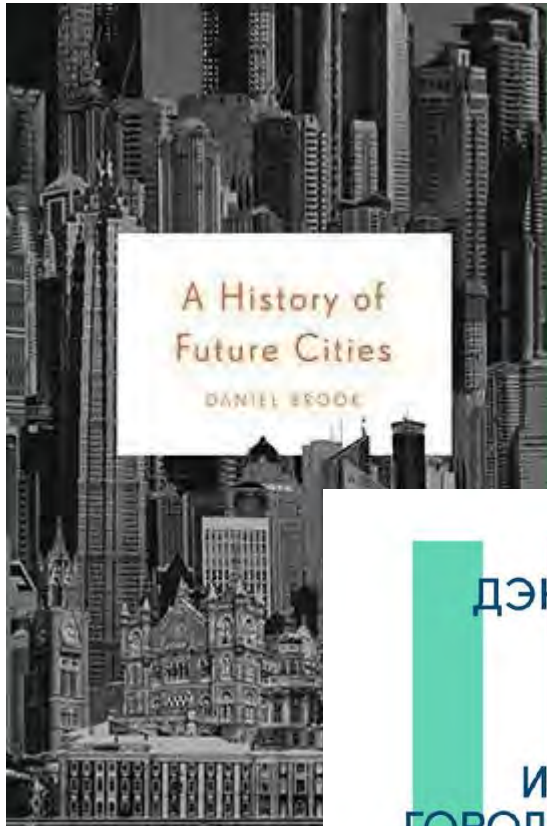


Boris Nemtsov, Vladimir Milov  
Independent expert report "Putin and Gazprom"



Anna Pushkarskaya  
The co-author of the scandalous high-rise project  
declared support for Prime Minister Putin

## 2013: Daniel Brook. A History of Future Cities



ДЭНИЭЛ БРУК  
ИСТОРИЯ  
ГОРОДОВ БУДУЩЕГО

STRELKA PRESS

.... The leaders who proposed to build the highest tower in Europe in the middle of St. Petersburg also had a very vague idea of the future of the city. The tower was not a symbol of a dynamically developing global center, or even a sign that St. Petersburg aspires to become one. Nor was it the pinnacle of a massive urban development program worthy of the successors of Peter the Great. It was a one-time exercise in vanity - a monument to the hydrocarbon wealth that bubbles up from Russian soil, and to the St. Petersburg cabal in the Kremlin that presciently took control of it. Ultimately, the Gazprom tower was an ice palace of the 21st century, a testament not to state wisdom, but to the depth of the ruler's pockets.



## Position of UNESCO

2011-2015: successful lobbying of the interests of Gazprom by the representative of the Russian Federation in UNESCO Eleonora Mitrofanova.

2022: ???

Eleonora Mitrofanova:  
UNESCO supports  
Lakhta Centre



Российский культурный центр в Санкт-Петербурге  
Постпред: строительство "Лакhta-центра" не повредит образу Петербурга



Лакhta-центр не повредит образу Петербурга  
Постпред: строительство "Лакhta-центра" не повредит образу Петербурга



## The position of the St. Petersburg scientific community in the confrontation with Gazprom

2006-2022: protection of the archaeological values and cultural landscape of the Okhta Cape, struggle against Gazprom's ideas of "enriching" the panoramas of the historical center of St. Petersburg with new verticals.

2022: letter from the author to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Gazprom's actions were called a war declared against St. Petersburg.



Кластер небоскребов в Лакhte - угроза всемирной ценности Санкт-Петербурга. Открытое письмо министру иностранных дел С.В. Лаврову

### Ресурсы

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31.01.2022

Министру иностранных дел Российской Федерации

С.В. Лаврову

Глубокоуважаемый Сергей Викторович,

Как известно, в 2016-2018 гг. ПАО «Газпром» в Санкт-Петербурге был возведен небоскреб «Лакhta центр». 25 мая 2021 г. председателем «Газпрома» А. Миллером была представлена новая инициатива по возведению рядом с ним 703-метрового небоскреба «Лакhta центр 2», а в конце