



Heritage of the historic core of Koroška Bela village

Located at the foot of the Karavanke mountain range, Koroška Bela village is an old settlement at an altitude of 609 m, lying in the valley of the Bela stream between the hills Malnež in the east and Strana on the west, northeast of Jesenice.

To preserve the existence and integrity of the features of the historic settlement at Koroška Bela, the urban heritage conservation area »Koroška Bela - Village core, HRN 16400« has been planned, consisting of a nucleated village core with part lying on a plain and part leaning on the slope of a hillside with a church, a preserved concept of farmhouses with outbuildings, shrines, chapels and troughs.



Military map, 18th century

»Through deeds of donation of the German king in the 11th century, the area of Koroška Bela village came to the possession of the Diocese of Brixen, which made it part of the lordship of Bled.

The majority of the population was engaged in agriculture, as evidenced by the oldest land registry of Bled from 1253 referencing fifteen hubas in Koroška Bela.

The church of St. Ingenuin and St. Albuin is dedicated to the two founders of the Diocese of Brixen. The earliest reference to the church dates back to 1362. Initially, it was a filial church of the Radovljica parish, and later, of the Jesenice parish. Since 1875, Koroška Bela has got its own parish. It has been rebuilt several times throughout history: after the Turkish invasion in 1483, the fire of 1761, the lightning strike of 1875, and the Italian bombing of 1917. In the 16th century, Koroška Bela was one of the centres of the štiftar movement (from the German word stift, meaning an institution such as church or monastery; transl. note), which sought to build new churches and open new pilgrimage routes.

Trade was an important industry, as the village was at the crossroads of roads leading to Carinthia, the Upper Save valley, Bled and on to Bohinj and the Primorska province.

A charter of the Diocese of Brixen from 1403 contains the first mention of an iron ore mine in the mountain pastures above the village. Although ironmaking spread on the village periphery, it took away, especially in the 20th century, its most fertile land and stimulated population growth.



Belsko polje field in 1961

Among the most important buildings of the village core are the church, school, shrines, farmhouses with outbuildings.

The multi-apartment buildings did not encroach on the agglomerated village core, but on the area south of it. The village was devastated in an Italian bomb attack of 14 August 1917 and was rebuilt after the First World War.

The school was originally located in the presbytery. In 1859, a new building was built, which was shared by the municipality and the People's School. The school remained at this location all the way until 1904.

There are Turkish and French shrines in the village. The first one is reminiscent of the Turkish invasions in the 15th century. According to oral tradition, the Turkish advance was stopped at the very place due to the sinking clay soils. The second one refers to the time of the Illyrian provinces. The French army was stationed in the village from May 1809 to September 1813.

The villagers were obliged to supply them with food, horses, and transportation.

The especially difficult times were when larger military formations passed through the village. On October 14, 1809, about 2,000 soldiers encamped at Javornik and Koroška Bela.«

The Upper Sava Valley Museum



Koroška Bela around 1962

Erected on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Koroška Bela Parish Cultural Society in cooperation with the Upper Sava Valley Museum, SIJ Acroni, d.o.o. KOV, d.o.o., S-gradnje, s.p., Napiši Bernik Aleš Bernik, s.p., Municipality of Jesenice and with the help of the local population

Photographs courtesy of: The Upper Sava Valley Museum, Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, Barbara Toman, Nik Bertoncetel

Sculpture on the left: Attached to a steel structure is the ring of the oak tree which grew at the entrance to the settlement at Koroška Bela.

The oak tree in the forma viva in Koroška Bela

An exceptional attraction of the village core in Koroška Bela is the oak tree in forma viva, set up by the Parish Cultural Society. According to the analysis by dr. Novak from the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana, the oak tree was 140 years old. Unfortunately, it was cut down in 2015, but the villagers won the right to a part of the tree and incorporated it in the village core to be preserved for good.