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Russia's Historic Buildings Go On the Market for 1 Ruble

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Irina Krakhmaleva / InfoOrel.ru

Russia has placed 19th-century gates in St. Petersburg, a house from a Turgenev novel and other significant historical buildings on the market to save them from destruction.

The cost to rent them? One ruble.

Several "house for a ruble" programs have popped up across the country in an effort to save historic buildings that have fallen into a state of disrepair.

When city authorities put a building up for auction, investors can rent or buy it on favorable terms if they agree to restore the structure, the Strelka Mag publication says.

Auction winners typically agree to a 49-year lease. During the first seven years, renters carry out restorations of the property. When restoration is completed, the new owners can convert the buildings into hotels, shops and cafes while still paying one ruble per year in rent.

Here's a look at five buildings that can be rented for 1 ruble — or less than $0.01 — right now:

Alexandrovsky Vorota, St. Petersburg

This gate was built in 1806 at the Okhta Powder Factory and named after Tsar Alexander I, who visited the site after a major gunpowder explosion.

It was one of the first lots listed in St. Petersburg's "Monument for a Ruble" program, which was adopted in 2018. An auction for the site will take place Oct. 17 with a starting price of 6,000 rubles ($90) per month, the Gazeta.spb news website reported.

According to the program rules, the tenant will restore the object in seven years and will be able to pay rent at a rate of 1 ruble per square meter per year after that.

Marina Mniszech house, Pskov

According to local legend, Marina Mniszech, a Polish noblewoman crowned Tsaritsa of Russia, lived in this house in northwest Russia during the country's Time of Troubles. Historians have since discovered that while she never visited Pskov, the city was indeed under her authority.

The Marina Mniszech house is one of three historic buildings located near each other in Pskov that are on the market and can be bought together. The terms remain the same — 1 ruble per year after a seven-year restoration period.

A house from Turgenev's "Home of the Gentry," Oryol

Last year the authorities in Oryol, a city almost 400 kilometers south of Moscow known for its literary heritage, launched a program for renting out historical buildings.

A girl who inspired Liza Kalitina, a character from Ivan Turgenev's "Home of the Gentry" was believed to have lived in this house in the 19th century.

Wooden manor, Moscow region

This wooden manor home was built at the beginning of the 20th century and was owned by the son of a goldsmith Pavel Berg. An auction for the right to own the house will be held on Oct. 16. The starting price is 315,000 rubles ($4,873).

A program for renting ruined historical buildings has existed in the Moscow region since 2013.

Collapsing house, Omsk

This Art Noveau building in the Siberian city of Omsk was built in the 1900s-1910s. The structure is close to collapsing, local media have reported. City authorities have tried to sell the house at least five times with no luck.

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