In 1972, the first protected zone legislation, known as the "Historical City Preservation Amendment" was adopted, integrating the provisions on the protection of the historical centre, and hence the possibility of creating protected zones, into the Vienna building regulations.

The core zone of the Vienna Inner City World Heritage site is in its entirety part of the "Inner City" and "Ringstrasse" protected zones, thereby ensuring overall protection of the entire historical city centre. At present, Vienna consists of 115 protected zones with around 12,000 individual buildings, roughly 8% of the total building stock.

At the same time as the protected zone regulation was adopted in 1972, the Historical City Preservation Fund was set up, a model of its kind for the whole of Europe. The Fund assumes – usually in full – the additional costs caused by monument preservation measures that go beyond a straightforward building renovation. Roughly one third of the annual subsidies is earmarked for privately owned houses, one third for city-owned buildings and one third for ecclesiastical buildings.

From the foundation of the Fund to the end of 2004, a total of 3,876 properties benefited from subsidies of around €193 million. In the last year for which final figures are available, 2004, 71 properties were granted around €5.4 million in subsidies.