

# Turkey

## Historic Areas of Istanbul

### Brief description

With its strategic location on the Bosphorus peninsula between the Balkans and Anatolia, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, Istanbul has been associated with major political, religious and artistic events for more than 2,000 years. Its masterpieces include the ancient Hippodrome of Constantine, the 6th-century Hagia Sophia and the 16th-century Süleymaniye Mosque, all now under threat from population pressure, industrial pollution and uncontrolled urbanization.

### 1. Introduction

**Year of Inscription** 1985

#### Agency responsible for site management

- Ministry of Culture and Tourism  
General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums  
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### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

#### Justification provided by the State Party

All of the nominated property in the Old City of Istanbul corresponds to criteria (i), (ii) and (iii).

(i) Monuments in the Archaeological Park, St. Sophia and Sultan Ahmet Mosque, represent the culmination of the classical periods of Byzantine and Ottoman religious architecture, respectively. The Topkapi Palace is an unmatched assemblage of buildings constructed over four centuries, unique for the architectural quality of its individual buildings as well as their organization that reflects the social disposition of the Ottoman Court.

Churches of the monasteries of Pantocrator and Chora witness developments in late Byzantine architecture and, in the latter case, house masterpieces of mosaics and frescoes of the so-called "Byzantine Renaissance". Seven religious complexes and mosques built by Sinan during the

sixteenth century that are included in nominated sites reflect the sequence of development as well as experiments with domed space that carried Ottoman Architecture to its classical period, dominated by the masterpiece of Sinan in Istanbul, the Süleymaniye Complex. The Land Walls constitute a superior example of defensive architecture, combining esthetic appeal with utility.

(ii) Byzantine churches and Ottoman mosques built in the capital city of the respective Empires reveal the evolution of each type. The masterpieces of both developments have set examples for similar architectural endeavors elsewhere.

(iii) The Old City of Istanbul itself, the capital of three great empires, the witness of three religious conversions and a palimpsest of various civilizations, is unique.

The traditional quarters of old wooden houses in Süleymaniye, Zeyrek and Kadirga are rapidly disappearing examples of vernacular architecture that used to characterize Istanbul. The threat to their survival justifies their inclusion under the criteria (v): It a significant traditional style of architecture, method of construction or human settlement that is fragile by nature or has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural or economic change.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of the historic areas of Istanbul on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria i, ii, iii and iv.

- Criterion i: the proposed cultural property includes unique monuments, and masterpieces of universal architecture such as St. Sophia which was built by Anthemios of Tralles and Isidoros of Milet in 532-537 and the Süleymaniye mosque, a masterpiece of Sinan architecture.

- Criterion ii: throughout history, the monuments in the city's center have exerted considerable influence on the development of architecture, monumental arts and the organization of space, both in Europe and in Asia. Thus, the 6,650 meter terrestrial wall of Theodosius II with its second line of defences, created in 447, was one of the leading references for military architecture even before St. Sophia's became a model for an entire family of churches and later mosques and before the mosaics of the palaces and churches of Constantinople influenced the Eastern and Western art.

- Criterion iii: Istanbul bears unique testimony to the Byzantine and Ottoman civilizations.

- Criterion iv: The Palace of Topkapi and the Suleymaniye mosque with its annexes (Caravanserail, madrasa, medical school, library, hammam, hospice, cemetery, etc.) provide the best examples of ensembles of palaces and religious complexes of the Ottoman period.

#### Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- No information available on whether the Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- Need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the statement of significance
- Proposal for revised text has not been made by State Party proposal for a new Statement of Significance is made on the datasheet.

#### Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- No buffer zone has been defined, is not needed

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

### 3. Protection

#### Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Conservation Legislation
- Several sub areas within the historic site are declared tourism centres
- There is a study to declare the area a "historical urban rehabilitation area" according to the Legislation of Conservation and Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage in Historical Areas
- Protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

#### Actions taken/proposed

- Amendments to the Conservation Legislation in terms of rational planning, management and source utilisation and studies are carried out to solve the severe problems related to the conservation of the cultural heritage
- A management plan will be prepared in accordance with the revised Conservation Legislation
- "Conservation, implementation and monitoring units" will be established within the local authorities in accordance with the revised Conservation Legislation

- Within the scope of the "Project for Minimization of Istanbul Seismic Risk and Capacity Improvement of Emergency Case" a protocol is signed between the Prime Ministry and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to protect cultural assets against earthquakes

### 4. Management

#### Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, urban centre, religious use, tourist accommodations, historic trade centre

#### Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group since 01/08/2004
- No site manager/coordinator, but is needed
- Levels of public authority primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional and local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

#### Actions taken/proposed

- An International Search Conference on Urban Management Strategy Development and Action Plan was organized in 2004 with the support of UNESCO

### 5. Management Plan

- No management plan, but will be prepared by steering group

### 6. Financial Resources

#### Financial situation

- There is no core funding. Every year state funds are allocated for various purposes to related bodies within the area
- Funding for conservation and protection provided by state budget, municipalities, national and international associations, sponsorships, NGOs, foundations, 10% of property taxes, grants by the Ministry, 10% of mass house credits
- Financial assistance by World Heritage Fund; UNESCO International Campaign; National and/or regional projects of UNDP, the World Bank or other agencies; Bi-lateral cooperation; EU-MEDA Funds; Japan Bank for International Cooperation
- Extra funding through World Heritage status: Emergency assistance for evaluation of earthquake damage to Hagia Sophia; Completion of the documentation of the buildings and monuments within the city walls

of Istanbul; Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Project; Zeyrek "Save Our Roofs" Project

- Funding is sufficient

### 7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: no information

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, education
- Average: promotion, interpretation, visitor management
- Bad: management

### 8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Training courses for museum specialists are organized by the Conservation Laboratory of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Istanbul
- Qualified Implementation Staff Training Programmes for the Process of Conservation of Cultural Heritage are organized by KOREFD (Conservation and Restoration Firms Association) in coordination with the Cultural Awareness Development Foundation

### 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: no figure provided
- Visitor facilities: All kinds of services and facilities are provided for the visitors throughout the site

### 10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, studies related to the value of the site, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, transportation studies
- All planning decisions, construction/restoration projects and public transportation implementations are being evaluated and carried out according to the outcomes of these surveys

### 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention emblem used on some publications

- Adequate awareness of World Heritage site among visitors, local communities, businesses and local authorities
- Special events concerning World Heritage status
- Web site available
- Within the scope of the Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Project and Zeyrek "Save Our Roofs Campaign" steps have been taken to involve the local people in the process

### 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

#### Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 17<sup>th</sup> (1993); 22<sup>nd</sup> (1998); 23<sup>rd</sup> (1999)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 16<sup>th</sup> (1992); 18<sup>th</sup> (1994); 21<sup>st</sup> (1997); 22<sup>nd</sup> (1998); 23<sup>rd</sup> (1999); 24<sup>th</sup> (2000); 25<sup>th</sup> (2001); 27<sup>th</sup> (2003); 28<sup>th</sup> (2004); 29<sup>th</sup> (2005); 30<sup>th</sup> (2006)<sup>1</sup>

#### Conservation interventions

- Conservation plan is approved; Taksim-Yenikapi Subway System; Marmaray Rail and Bosphorus Tunnel Project; Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Project; Zeyrek "Save Our Roofs" Campaign; Seismic Master Plan for Istanbul; Studies are carried out for preventing the earthquake risk of Istanbul; Istanbul-Museum City Project and other restoration and rehabilitation projects carried out by the related municipalities
- Present state of conservation: needs more resources

#### Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disasters, number of inhabitants, visitor/tourism pressure
- Increase of lower income groups in the site; transportation and parking problems for visitors; high earthquake risk; huge amount of trade activities

#### Measures proposed/taken

- A seismic master plan is being developed by four Turkish Universities to minimize the risk on cultural properties in case of an earthquake
- A Project on "Protection of the Cultural Assets against the Earthquake: Capacity Building in Experimental and Analytical System Definition"

<sup>1</sup> Decision **30 COM 7B.73** on the state of conservation of the Historic Areas of Istanbul

will be carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Bogazici University, Kandilli Observatory

- By the year 2005 grants started to be provided to the individuals for the restoration projects and their implementations in the framework of the new Conservation Legislation

### **13. Monitoring**

- Formal monitoring programme
- Topkapi Palace, St Sofia, St. Irini, Archaeology Museum, Çinili Kiosk are being monitored by the Provincial Department of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; For St. Sofia, a scientific council is established with the participation of international experts; All kinds of archaeological surveys at the site are being monitored by the archaeologists of the museums; The regional conservation council monitors the implementations in the site as a whole; For the urban site "conservation, implementation and monitoring units" will have to be established within the municipalities according to revised conservation legislation

### **14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation and management
- Strengths of management: increase of public awareness for conservation; increase of sensibility and care for all kinds of construction activities among the local, regional and national authorities
- Weaknesses of management: long process of preparation of management plan

#### **Future actions:**

- The management plan will be prepared in accordance with the revised conservation legislation