

CHINA (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF)

The Imperial Palace of Ming & Qing Dynasty



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II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1987

Organisation Responsible for the Report

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II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C iii, iv

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
"The Forbidden City is the best-preserved palace complex not only in China but also in the rest of the world. [...] The Forbidden City represents the highest standard of traditional architectural technology and craftsmanship. As the imperial palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties, it stands out as an example of the art of architecture at that time and provides a tremendous amount of historical information. It bears an extremely high level of scientific, artistic and historic values. [...] It has a long history and is well preserved. The Forbidden City is not only a palace complex with a high level of architectural values, but also houses the most premium collection of treasures and antiquities of the Ming and Qing dynasties in China."
- Extension nomination of the Imperial Palaces in Shenyang city of Liaoning Province proposed. They have direct and close links with the Beijing Forbidden City in terms of not only political but also cultural significance as well as the art of architecture.

Status of Site Boundaries

- The demarcation line and buffer zone are considered as sufficient.
- There is no need for revising the site boundaries.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- As the Forbidden City is preserved in its original realness, it is a special example of the culture of the Ming and Qing dynasties.
- Authenticity/integrity well preserved and no changes foreseen.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics is sufficient to protect the site.
- In terms of management arrangements, the Dept. of Ancient Buildings is an executive division of the Palace Museum with special responsibility for the protection and management of ancient buildings inside the Forbidden City.
- A plan is implemented since March 1988.
- To preserve the values in the future, a new management plan is under preparation.

Present State of Conservation

- Reconstruction of Jianfugong Garden.
- Establishment of the Digital Application Institute of the Cultural Heritage of the Forbidden City.

Staffing and Training Needs

- 1,330 staff members, including 540 researchers, 410 security guards, 160 engineering and maintenance workers and 220 administrative staff.
- The staff does not need extra training.

Financial Situation

- The State allocates about 80 million Yuan (US\$ 9.86 million) annually.
- Funding is considered sufficient.
- * International Assistance from the Hong Kong Chinese Culture Fund, which donated US\$5 million.
- * International Assistance from WHF: none.

Access to IT

- 200 sets of computers with Internet but no email access.
- No use of GIS.



Aerial view of the Imperial Palace

2002-2008 were formulated and implemented. The Development Plan for the Forbidden City for 2003-2005 was put in place.

- Impacts of factors: decreasing.
- Measures to address factors: impact on structures, a number of topics listed for research to protect stone structures, brick and tile wares, and paintings. Positive results achieved. Protection will be further expanded to other areas in the future. Meanwhile, study on the protection of wooden materials will be enhanced to put them under more extensive protection.

II.6 Monitoring

Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics available, with 6.9 million visitors in 2001.
- Facilities: Recording guide assistant; 13 tourist rest areas.
- Needed facilities: Unimpeded passage.
- Plan for public use: not existent but needed.
- Communication of WH values through: the website of the Forbidden City (www.dpm.org.cn), CDs and documentation.
- No educational programs.
- Role of the inscription on the List of World Heritage: protection has increased. It has helped raise public awareness and more attention was paid to conservation.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- The major threat is pressure from environmental and natural disasters.
- Atmospheric pollution exacerbates the weathering and decay of ancient buildings, stone carving from acid rains. It also affects mural paintings. Fading is now worse than 20 years ago, but some protective measures have been taken. Natural disasters mainly refer to thunder strikes.

Counteractive Plans

- 3 plans: the "Contingency Plan of the Forbidden City for Handling the Occurrence of Unexpected Group Incidents", the "Emergency Plan of the Forbidden City for Extinguishing Fires at Their Early Stage", the "Emergency Plan of the Forbidden City for Addressing the Theft of Antiquities".
- Improvements needed: plans for the protection and maintenance of ancient buildings for 2002-2020 and

Monitoring Arrangements

- Atmospheric Environment Monitoring Station of the Forbidden City to monitor impact on ancient buildings.
- Partners: no outside partners.
- Foreseen improvements: links with research institutes or technological protection agencies to engage in joint study.

Monitoring Indicators

- Indicators include: (i) temperature; (ii) humidity; (iii) rainfall; (iv) radiation; (v) atmospheric pollution (nitric oxide, sulphide, suspended particles & chloride) on ancient architectures.

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- Values: The Forbidden City is the best-preserved cluster of palace buildings not only in China but also in the rest of the world.
- Management and factors: management conducted via a specially designated body and implemented in yearly plans in accordance with the Overall Planning Scheme. Negative impact put under effective control.
- Future actions: revision of the Overall Planning Scheme. After the State Council approves the scheme, efforts will be made to strictly advance various work on the protection of the property.
- Timetable for the implementation of the Plans:

(i)	Year 2002-2003 Plan	1 st stage
(ii)	Year 2003-2005 Plan	
(iii)	Year 2002-2008 Plan	2 nd stage
(iv)	Year 2009-2020 Plan	3 rd stage

* State of Conservation Reports

1994 Bureau, WHC-94/CONF.001//3b - State of conservation at the request of the authorities: The Imperial Palace receives 7-8 million visitors per year, which necessitates an extensive maintenance of its brick pavements. The mission discussed the increasing erosion of the carved marble balustrades, from air pollution, and fire-control measures, which are being installed. Disappointing note regarding traditional paints use which was recommended in 1988 and has not yet been adopted.

Interesting restoration work at two ranges of eunuch's quarters at the north of the Palace. (...) It was agreed that it would be desirable to hold a National Training Workshop in timber conservation, to investigate the calculation of the structural strength of timber buildings, biological deterioration and new jointing techniques for timber member in tension. There is an obvious need for the introduction of computer-assisted recording systems.