



**International Council on
Monuments and Sites**

**Conseil International
des Monuments et des Sites**

**REPORT ON THE JOINT
WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE/ICOMOS REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION**

MISSION REPORT

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA



**GEORGIA
FROM 22 TO 28 APRIL 2012**

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Particular thanks go to the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO and its Secretary-General Ms Ketevan Kandelaki, who continuously supported and accompanied the mission team to the World Heritage properties.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As requested by the Committee at its 35th session, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property from 22 to 28 April 2012 to review the overall situation of the World Heritage property of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994, including new developments and any impacts on its Outstanding Universal Value.

The summary conclusions and key recommendations of the mission are as follows:

- The mission expresses its serious concern about the major urban development and construction works, on the river bank surrounding the areas comprising historical monuments, which it considers has a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.
- The mission reiterates the Committee's decision requesting the State Party to declare a moratorium on any new construction of any kind and to stop all developments before the legal approval of an Urban Master Plan of the Mtskheta City. This Master Plan should include the World Heritage property's strict protected areas and its buffer zones with all necessary restrictive regulations.
- The mission recommends that any development projects (including a project for the recreation area) should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, for review by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, before any commitment has been made.
- The mission notes that the State Party clarified the boundaries of all component parts of the property and its buffer zones within the framework of the Retrospective inventories. The members of the mission recommend that the State Party develop a proposal for minor boundary modification in order to create a buffer zone which will include the landscape surrounding all components, in particular the panorama

along the rivers and the mountain setting, as previously requested by the Committee.

- The mission assessed the progress of the development of the management plan of the property within the framework of the international assistance received by the Georgian authorities, as well as the progress in the establishment of a clear institutional coordination mechanism within the framework of the State Programme for Cultural Heritage in Georgia, involving all stakeholders concerned;
- The mission notes that although considerable efforts have been undertaken on all historical monuments, no attempt has been made to prevent inappropriate construction and development projects in its surroundings, nor to preserve the panorama along the rivers;
- The mission underlines that it is essential to maintain the dominating presence of the historical monuments over Mtskheta City, and to ensure that its connection with the natural environment and setting remains unspoiled in the future. This should be taken into consideration regarding the volumes, the heights and the views of any new town buildings.
- The mission concluded that while the State Party has made significant progress in implementing the corrective measures regarding the historical monuments, the recommendations of the 2010 mission and the Committee's decision were ignored regarding the surrounding areas.
- The mission discussed with the State Party the possibility to consider the development of a national law for all World Heritage properties in Georgia, as well as of a "5C strategic World Heritage country programme" proposal, based on the State Programme for the protection of Georgian cultural heritage, to serve as a consolidated basis for cooperation within the State Party to enhance the implementation of its commitments within the framework of the *World Heritage Convention*;
- The mission recommends to the World Heritage Committee **to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

1.1 Justification of the mission

At its 33rd session (Seville, 2009), the World Heritage Committee decided to inscribe the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Decision 33COM 8C.1).

At its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), the World Heritage Committee decided to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger, adopted the Desired State of Conservation for the property for its future removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as the corrective measures and the timeframe for their implementation.

At its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the World Heritage Committee decided to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger and requested the State Party to invite a joint reactive monitoring mission to the property to assess the progress in the implementation of the corrective measures.

On 31 January 2012 the State Party submitted a detailed state of conservation report that addresses progress with the implementation of the corrective measures, including conservation work at the Jvari Monastery, surveys of the Svctitskhoveli Cathedral, clarification of boundaries, and progress with the Management Plan. Details are also provided regarding a proposed visitor centre at the Jvari Monastery.

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property was undertaken from 22 to 28 April 2012.

The mission conducted by Ms Anna Sidorenko, Programme Specialist in charge of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Professor Dr. Alkiviades Prepis, ICOMOS representative, met with the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Georgian Apostolic Autocephaly Orthodox Church, Mtskheta City and the site managers.

1.2 Background information (provided in the ANNEX I)

2 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY (from the previous mission report of March 2010)

2.1. Protected area legislation

At the time of inscription, both properties were protected by the 1947 Law for the protection of the Monuments of GSSR.

Five years after the inscription, the protection of the monuments was based on the 1999 Georgian Law *on Cultural Heritage Protection* (with amendments in 2002 and 2004).

The national protection zones of Mtskheta approved, by the joint Order of Minister of Culture and the Minister of Economic Development, "On the definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta" on 27 October 2006.

The new "Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage Protection" was adopted in 2007. Two types of protection zones were defined by this legal instrument:

- **Individual protected areas** are composed of a zone of physical protection and a zone of visual protection (1000 m for the World Heritage properties). This area is applied automatically with the attribution of the status of monument and could be extended by Ministerial Decree. The zone of physical protection is defined around the monuments (no less than 50 m) in order to protect against any threats. All construction is forbidden which is not beneficial for the monument's protection or its landscape.

- **General protected areas** comprise a protection zone for immovable monuments, a construction regulation zone, an historic landscape protection zone and an archaeological protection zone.

The historic landscape protection zone is meant to be free of any constructions and objects which do not have any historical value. In this area, the following activities may be carried out:

- research;
- rehabilitation works of historically valuable buildings
- new authorized constructions which respond to the public interest;

- horizontal constructions which do not modify the sense of the historic fabric and space, and do not disturb the visual appreciation of the historic monuments.

In accordance with the Cultural Heritage Law and the Urban Planning Law, protected area Plans and Historic-Cultural Plans constitute the base for all urban planning documentation, including Land Use Plans and the General Plans.

2.2. Boundary issues

As previously recommended, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre, within the framework of the Retrospective Inventory, boundary clarification of the three components of the serial property, that is the Sveti Tskhoveli Church, the Samtavro Church and Monastery, and the Mtskheta Jvari (The Church of the Holy Cross-Mtskheta), and its buffer zones.

The mission reiterates its previous recommendation that the State Party should consider establishing a common buffer zone to include the landscape surrounding the components, in particular the panorama along the rivers and the mountain setting, and provide the buffer zone with appropriate protection. The buffer zone would need to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee as a minor boundary modification.

2.3. Management structure

Urban Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including land-use regulations

The mission took note that at the initiative of the local authorities, work has begun on a systematic data collection of the urban topology, related developments and other studies. The authorities underlined that this data will form the basis for an Urban Master Plan of the town which is currently being prepared and is due to be completed by the end of the year.

As already mentioned in previous mission reports, the “*Heritage and Tourism Master Plan*”, has been elaborated in 2003 as a UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, with the collaboration of Georgian authorities and specialists. This project has not been accepted so far as an official document. The mission reminded that it is essential that the “*Heritage and Tourism Master Plan*” be reviewed, integrated in the Urban Master Plan and officially approved as soon as possible by the State Party, and its conclusions be integrated within the management plan of the property.

Management Plan

The mission noted that the management plan of the property is still under elaboration in coordination with Dr. Jukka Jokilehto within the framework of an approved International Assistance Request and with the support of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation. This project will also consider the management system for the property and the possibility of establishing working groups to allow for the participation of representatives of the church authorities, NGOs and the Mtskheta civil society. The mission stressed the need for the Management Plan to acknowledge that the property is an ensemble of religious monuments within a very sensitive historical environment and thus needs to be managed as a cultural landscape.

State Programme for Cultural Heritage in Georgia - towards a strategic World Heritage country programming

The mission was informed by the World Heritage Centre that the World Bank prepared a “Regional Development Program: An Integrated Approach to Urban Regeneration, Cultural and Natural Heritage for Economic Growth and Job Creation” which is under implementation in Georgia. On 23 April 2012, the Minister of Finance of Georgia presented an “Innovative Approach to Regional Development” during a meeting organised by the Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Thematic Group, the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Sustainable Development Department and the South Caucasus Regional Management Unit at the World Bank Headquarters.

The mission has been informed that the Governor of Mtskheta discussed with the World Bank representative the possibility to extend this project to Mtskheta. The mission recommended to the authorities to establish, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a global approach for all projects and activities which could be developed for the World Heritage properties in Georgia.

During the meeting with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and the National Commission of Georgia for UNESCO, the mission underlined the urgency to develop this global approach towards a strategic World Heritage country programming in coherence and alignment with the State Programme for the protection of Georgian cultural heritage prepared by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

The mission recommended that the State Party consider a possibility to organize, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre, a seminar or a round-table in order to define this country-based approach using the 5C World Heritage Strategic Objectives in order to achieve greater coherence, efficiency and effectiveness at country level of all activities related to the protection, management and use of the World Heritage properties, and to avoid fragmentation and duplication of projects and activities.

2.4 Institutional framework

A clear institutional coordination mechanism, ensuring that the conservation of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta receives priority consideration within relevant governmental decision-making processes, has been established.

The mission noted some disagreements between the stakeholders concerned regarding the consultation process on projects. The mission recommended that a continued collaboration should be enhanced between the Patriarchate Technical office and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Protection.

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

Urban development pressure

The 2010 mission report highlighted the need for special care to be given to the sensitive area extending along the river Mtkvari bank, between the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and Jvari church. It recommended that the area where the rivers converge should not be developed and that the historic landscape be restored. However, the 2012 mission noted that the State departments, in cooperation with the local authorities have proceeded with the construction of new administrative buildings (Police and Court buildings and a Conference Hall) in this area. The 2012 mission was also informed that a new Museum building is to be erected on the same area, the plans of which have already been approved, as well as a hotel complex. The mission also saw a new tourist information building in front of the entrance of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, constructed in an inappropriate style without any respect of the property's value.

The 2012 mission noted that these considerable developments have been undertaken within one of the most sensitive areas of the property, in the visual corridor between the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and the Jvari hill. This is currently being assessed independently of the directions that may be developed by the Urban Master Plan and the Management Plan that are both under preparation. The mission further noted that although all these interventions have an immediate impact on the property, they have not been notified to the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

The mission noted that the aforementioned projects, under realization, are not following-up the Urban Master Plan (which is still under preparation process). It is inconsistent that all of these constructions are decided upon and realized outside of the frames of any Management Plan, which, once elaborated, will face a situation already formatted independently. The mission pointed out that all interventions of that scale that have an immediate impact on the World Heritage property should have been under serious consideration and in open dialogue with the World Heritage Centre.

The 2012 mission underlined that by all means and to all stakeholders and official authorities, Mtskheta is not only composed of religious monuments, but also a multicultural complex of archaeological sites, and traditional architectural arrangement, within a very sensitive historical natural environment. All these factors should be taken under consideration within the frames of the Management Plan.

Long-term consolidation, conservation and monitoring measures

The mission assessed the state of conservation of the property and noted that the State Party has made significant progress in implementing the requested corrective measures regarding all historical monuments - components of the property.

A comprehensive conservation assessment of archaeological components of the property was undertaken by the State Party. Conservation work was carried out on the roof, walls and stone plaques of the Jvari Monastery, with the participation of an ICCROM expert, and of the wall paintings in the southern part of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral.

At the Cathedral, another capacity-training project, headed by an international expert, addressed the production of up to date measured drawings during 2010-2011. This resulted in a full set of measured drawings for the Cathedral that will form the basis for developing a comprehensive conservation plan.

At the Samtavro nunnery, a project is being prepared to strengthen the southern support wall, taking into account the 2010 mission recommendations.

In addition, a special project was implemented for monitoring the groundwater fluctuations around Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. It is anticipated that by the end of 2012, additional monitoring mechanisms will be proposed for all elements of the property.

The mission proposes its recommendations, related to conservation, management and presentation of the property and its buffer zone, as described in detail below.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS AT JVARI

Description

The Jvari (Mtskheta Holy Cross) Monastery stands on the rocky mountaintop at the confluence of the Mtkvari and the Aragvi rivers. The existing church was built upon a large cross, between 586 and 605.

The Large Church of the Holy Cross is one of the best examples of Georgian early-Christian architecture. It is a tetra conch, i.e. a four-apse domed building. The corner chambers communicate with the central space by means of $\frac{3}{4}$ circular niches. The transition from the square bay to the dome circle is effected through three rows of pendentives. The church was rebuilt and extended a number of times over the centuries and has suffered from exposure and warfare, having also been burnt at least once (probably by Tamburlaine). There was, at one point, a small monastic complex near the Church which now consists of some fragmentary ruins.

Conservation History

In the 1980s an extremely heavy handed restoration intervention was begun on the small Chapel to the North of the Main Church which involved the replacement of a substantial amount of original material with new stone bedded on Portland cement. This intervention was halted by the authorities but not before a great deal of damage had been done. There is now a proposal to roof this building with a wooden structure and to consolidate the heavily decayed constituent sandstone. The apse of the Church was subject to a survey carried out within the framework of an ICCROM Training Programme in 2005 during which a protective scaffolding was built and all stone surfaces were mapped and included in a documentation system. The three carved panels are in a particularly dangerous situation and are subject to severe exfoliation and detachment. The scaffolding is still in good condition but conservation work on these panels and the protective cornices needs to be carried out as soon as possible.

Current conservation issues

- *Project for a Visitor Centre at the Jvari Monastery*

The mission noted that the State Party revised plans for the visitor centre at the Jvari Monastery, as recommended by the 2010 mission. The basic idea is not to leave the building above the ground level, but to be embedded into the ground. The ICOMOS suggestions are already taken into account and incorporated into the design. These plans will now be reviewed by ICOMOS and comments sent to the State Party.

- *Conservation work* (all works were carried out with the participation of an ICCROM expert)

Positive achievements:

- The chapel located on the north side of the church received a new roof covering of excellent wood construction, and an aside closure with discreet reversible woodwork.
- Fixing of functional wooden doors and a good drainage system.
- Maintenance of the chapel and the side entrance on the south side of the church.
- Maintenance of the perimeter wall remains (together with the towers) of the Monastery, removal of the plants and mounting - completion of building stones.
- Dangerous parts on the perimeter wall to the cliff are supplemented with additional distinctive masonry and / or with appropriate metal fencing.
- Improving the pavement of the trail leading to the monument.

- Placement of new, modern luminaries for the night lighting of the monument.
- Demolition of the incompatible building, raised by the religious community next to the entrance of the site.

A negative remark is that some maintenance work was undertaken hastily, and made with visible, widespread use of cement into the joints.

Recommendations:

- The maintenance of the other stone reliefs that are placed on the external surfaces of the church to proceed by the same exemplary achievements;
- A detailed diagnostic report on the situation of the stone building blocks on the outer surfaces of the church to be submitted to the WH Centre and, if necessary, accompanied by a study for their (selective) maintenance in places.
- The demolished building had been used to meet the needs of the religious community (living in another place about 2 km far away from the site), since Jvari is a living religious monument, functioning for the Sunday liturgies, weddings, christenings etc. The new architectural plan for the infrastructure of the site has not provided any similar space. We propose to expand the space provided, in order to give approximately 30 m2 for the above needs (after collaboration with the religious community).
- A metal barrier to be placed in the maintained side chapel at the south entrance of the church to prevent people from entering.

General remarks:

- The mission noted that a constructive collaboration has been established between the Jvari monastic community and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia. Monks are ready to cooperate for the improvement of the arrangement of the monument site and express their needs and willingness in an atmosphere of good, mutual understanding. The mission noted that an inappropriate building was demolished, as recommended by the 2010 mission. In presence of the mission experts, the representative of the monastic community requested the national authorities to allocate a proper space within the (new) visitor center in order to get out of the church the small shop for candles etc. The mission noted that to date the small shop is installed directly in the church and recommends that a sufficient space be allocated to the religious community within the future visitor centre.
- The mission underlined that due to the effects of the hard atmospheric conditions, the monument does need some further stone conservation work, especially regarding its facades.

SVETITSKHOVELI Monastery and Cathedral Church

Monastery Katholikon (main church) – exterior

Description

Svetitskhoveli (“*life-giving pillar*”) has been the Cathedral of the Archbishop of Georgia, even at early times when it was built of wood. In the year 420, the wooden church was destroyed. A new, stone church was constructed in 480, a large three-nave basilica with four pairs of cruciform pillars and a projecting apse. In the year 914, the Arab general Abul Qassim burned the cathedral down. It was soon restored, although by the early 11th century, it was destroyed again. The existing Cathedral church was built between 1010 and 1029 by the architect Arsukisdze on the initiative of Catholicos Melchisedec I. It is the

largest church in Georgia and one of the best examples of medieval Georgian architecture, an inscribed cross- type building.

The exterior appearance of the gigantic dimensions of the monument continues to be outstanding - in spite of its partial destruction, alteration and reconstruction, all of which present a harmonic amalgam of living building history through the ages: the perfect analogies, the wise gradation of the volumes, the fine lines and the elaborated construction details, the impressive decoration with the sensitive mix of building stones with grey-red and green colours, as well as the coloured bas-reliefs, walled during the different historic periods – are the constant architectural values which continue to underline the authenticity of the building. However, careful inspection of the building shows that it faces serious maintenance and conservation problems.

2010 conservation issues

- Partial restoration of the damaged cornices in some places.
- Placement of the guttering system seems to function, though in some places the rain waters are channelled straight to the base of the monument.
- The religious paraphernalia on the altar are well organised and arranged. There is no use of candles.
- The glass panels placed in the floor at the base of the main columns that allow the visitor to view the different phases of construction of the church have been well designed and executed.
- In 2004 – some parts of the mural paintings were cleaned.

Current conservation issues

- The old gutters were replaced with new ones, in a better and correct position.
- Preparation for the forthcoming cooperation:
 - with the stone conservator Simon Warrack, regarding the checking of the existing condition and maintenance of the building stones of the church, and
 - with Prof. A. Crocci for checking the cracks on the structural elements of the interior of the church and for any possible gaps inside the masonry.
- Partial restoration of the wall-paintings on the southern church wall.
- A new shop for liturgical objects is placed in the Cathedral courtyard.

THE CHURCH AND MONASTERY OF SAMTAVRO

Description

The cathedral of the Saviour was built between 1030 and 1050 and is one of the best examples of 11th century Georgian architecture. It is an inscribed-cross-type building, with the dome resting on the projections of the apse walls and two free standing pillars. The Catholicon church is built out of similar materials to the Cathedral at Svetitskhoveli though sandstone is more predominant and there are less decorative coloured stones.

The wall-paintings in the interior of the church (mainly on sanctuary and on the cupola surfaces) date from the mid-17th century, and are evidently related to the name of Queen Mariam.

The frescoes in the sanctuary are among the most interesting examples of Georgian mural painting of those times, and reflect the common features of Post-Byzantine painting. The dome frescoes are the handiwork of Russian painters invited by the Georgian kings.

The altar screen (*templon*) is an excellent example of the stone-carved iconostases of the

15th century.

2010 Conservation Issues

- The new roof covering has been installed with care and attention, and has effectively protected the monument from the penetration of rain water, which was a problem before. However, its galvanised iron sheeting is in strong contrast with the appearance of the medieval churches in Georgia, and should be replaced with the traditional stone slab roofing.
- A general cleaning and conservation work has been done concerning the interior walls (which were covered with plaster) and the remaining wall-paintings (mainly on sanctuary and the cupola surface) in the interior of the church.
- Bearing in mind that the monument is a functional church, the arrangement of the altar is sufficient.

Current conservation issues

- In the western part of the Cathedral courtyard the permission to proceed with the construction of an underground space and of a retaining wall was given. The mission realized that in that very place an old brick pipeline was discovered, together with a masonry wall. Therefore, it is necessary that these new findings be maintained and the proposed plan be adapted accordingly.
- The problem of controlling the rising humidity on the church's external walls, which destroys the stone basement – remains unsolved.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA OF SAMTAVRO

Description

This is the largest ancient burial ground in the Caucasus, situated in a field stretching from the Samtavro Nunnery to the medieval Bebristsikhe Castle, in the west outskirts of the town. Archaeological excavations of the burial ground started in 1874 and the last archaeological research ended two years before. More than 4,000 burials of various types and various periods have been discovered, lying on several strata. The oldest of these are Bronze Age tumuli dating from early 2nd millennium BC. The latest cists of the cemetery date back to the 8th and 9th centuries. Fragments of 2nd and 1st century BC buildings have been excavated on the territory of the burial ground as well as 8th to 7th BC houses, on the neighbouring hills. The precious archaeological findings uncovered in the tombs are kept at the Janashia State Museum of Georgia and the Great Mtskheta Museum Reserve.

2010 Conservation Issues

- The archaeological area has been thoroughly cleaned. The old ugly constructions and the abandoned bus have been removed from the area.
- Installation of a metallic net fence has begun along the boundaries of the site. The entrance is protected with gates, beside which a new guard-house with toilets has been built.
- The half-destroyed old metallic roofing over the excavated area has been replaced with new iron constructions.
- New visitor's paths to the excavations have been organised.
- Explanatory labels have been installed at various points in the archaeological site.

Current conservation issues

- In accordance with the recommendations of the 2010 mission, an archaeological education program aimed to school children of the region was prepared, which was attended by the members of the mission. During the last 1,5 year of operation, about 5,000 pupils have been involved within this program, which has received wide response by the schools.
- Information signs were placed in front of the archaeological findings.

Remarks

- No indicative archaeological excavations have been made within the surrounding buffer zone of 50 meters (according to the laws of the country). Therefore, the limits of the area with archaeological interest are not yet fully clarified, and the determination of the boundaries of the site to be protected from any future reconstruction cannot be fixed.
- The proper maintenance and presentation of the graves area still remains a challenge. It has been suggested that an educational representation of the prehistoric way of life (in those houses) be developed in an adjacent area.

MTSKHETA CITY

Current conservation issues

- The replacement of roofs, the re-construction of houses and the renovation of fences in the area around the Cathedral is extended, within the not-yet specified buffer zone. Although one can maintain some reservations (this kind of “facade-and-volume beautification” should have undergone a thorough study of the typologies and morphologies as well as an analysis of traditional materials used within this area of traditional architecture), though the interventions have obviously improved the previously difficult living conditions of the citizens, as well as improving the internal and external image of the town.
- The pedestrian and car circulation have been normalized inside the town core. A car and coach parking lot has been organized in an appropriate location near the Cathedral, which during the 2010 mission was in a poor condition, full of useless material. A proper network of walkways leading to the Cathedral has been created. The road pavement has been improved with appropriate small stone blocks, sidewalks are constructed and street lights have been placed.
- The ex-degraded area around the (partly ruined) historic "Old House" has been regenerated and transformed into an attractive recreational area (according to the recommendations of the 2010 mission), with parking, restaurant, etc. The “Old House” building has been restored and converted into an attractive restaurant (partially preserving the function of residence). There are electric cars for group visitors within the pedestrian areas of the town.
- The area in front of the Cathedral is transformed appropriately into a square.

Remarks

- The gas pipelines have not been placed underground yet, remaining over ground. The TV trays have not been removed nor replaced with cable TV.

- The formulation of the new, tourist information buildings in front of the entrance of the Cathedral, with big columns out of scale, recalls Egyptian cenotaph. Who introduces and who approves these buildings - remained unclear.

ARMAZTSIKHE – BAGINETI ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Current conservation issues

It should be emphasized strongly that within this very important archaeological site great and exemplary work has been made.

The mission noted the following positive measures:

- The archaeological finds are consistently maintained and protective covers have been placed over them, as well as railings around them.
- Earthly paths have been organized and wooden ladders are placed so as to provide easy access to visitors.
- Touristic routes on wooden corridors allow unobstructed viewing of the buildings.
- Signs with appropriate virtual and written information (maps, photographs, reproductions, explanatory texts) are placed.
- Places for viewing the historic village of Mtskheta and Jvari church are organized, together with rest places for visitors, with appropriate signs and explanations.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the initiative of the local authorities a solid start has been made on a systematic collection of all data relating to recording the current situation in the town (built and un-built areas, ownership status, underground geology, planning system of neighbouring settlements, historical maps, historic photographs, old development studies etc.). A copy has been given to the mission members. This data will form the basis for the Urban Master Plan of the town, which is under preparation, and should be finished by the end of the year.

The existing pressure on the formation of the state of management and on the exploitation of the areas around the monuments according to projects (already accepted) and decisions, already taken, by the Local and Central Government (Ministries of Culture, Development, Transportation, Tourism, etc.), is strong. These projects are elaborated independently of the directions that may be developed, secondly, by the Urban Master Plan and the Management Plan – both now under preparation.

The mission report of 2010 had highlighted the need for special care to be undertaken on the sensitive area extending along the river Mtkvari bank, and located between the Cathedral church and the hill where Jvari church is raised up. In particular, strict suggestions were given that the area where the rivers converge should be vacant from any construction and the historic landscape to be restored. Already the State Central Departments, in cooperation with the Local Authorities decided and proceeded with the construction of new administration buildings (Police and Court buildings and a Conference Hall) in the immediately adjacent area (being the owners of that area alongside the river). Also, we were informed that the New Museum Building is to be erected on the same area, the plans of which have already been approved (among 10 candidates). In the future, also, a hotel complex is to be built there, in order to meet the needs of the touristic development of the town - probably on the basis of the earlier project "Touristic-recreation and sports-sanitation complex on the right bank of the r. Mtkvari ".

The 2012 mission expressed its concern that despite the 2010 mission recommendation regarding the sensitive area extending along the river Mtkvari bank, between the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and Jvari church, the State Party authorised new constructions in this area and plans new developments which will impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, without any submission of these projects to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, for review and comments prior to any approval.

While the State Party has made significant progress in implementing the corrective measures regarding the historical monuments, the mission considers that the new constructions work undertaken in one of the most sensitive areas of Mtskheta's landscape does not respect the Corrective Measures developed by the 2010 mission jointly with the State Party authorities and agreed by the Committee nor will contribute towards achieving the Desired State of Conservation.

The mission underlines the fact that Mtskheta is an ensemble of religious monuments within a very sensitive historical environment. Taking into account that this sensitive area of Mtskheta's landscape are being compromised by new buildings, the mission recommends that the World Heritage Committee retains the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The mission recommends to the Committee to urge the State Party to halt developments within the property and in the vicinity of the property within the area of the river Mtkvari bank, between the Svctitskhoveli Cathedral and Jvari church until details of proposed developments, together with Heritage Impact Assessments, have been submitted to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, for review and comments by the Advisory Bodies before any irreversible decisions have been made.

The mission discussed with the State Party the possibility to develop a national law for all World Heritage properties in Georgia, as well as initiate a "5C strategic World Heritage country programme" proposal. This could serve as a consolidated basis for cooperation within the country to enhance the implementation of its commitments within the framework of the *World Heritage Convention* and take into account the need for a more sustainable longer-term approach. It could be developed on the basis of the analysis of the challenges, corrective measures and the national priorities and strategies as set out in the Periodic Report.

The mission took note that the State Party clarified the boundaries of all components of the World Heritage property. The mission recommends to the State Party to define the buffer zone of the property to allow a clear understanding of the archaeological and visually sensitive areas around the property and to submit this proposal as a minor boundary modification of the property.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**for the joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS / ICCROM reactive
monitoring mission
to the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
Georgia**

23 – 28 April 2012

Carry out a joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS / ICCROM reactive monitoring mission, as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (**Decision 35 COM 7A.30**, Paris, 2011) to review the state of conservation of the World Heritage property of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994;

- 1) Review the overall situation of the property, including new developments and any impacts on its Outstanding Universal Value;
- 2) Evaluate the progress of the implementation of corrective measures adopted at its 34th session (Decision **34 COM 7A.27**, Brasilia, 2010) as follows:
 - a) Review the boundary issue, including adequate maps clarifying clear limits of all components of the property and its buffer zone;
 - b) Review progress in achieving long-term consolidation and conservation of the historical monuments in Mtskheta;
 - c) Review the status of the Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including:
 - complete cadastral information (land ownership), in publicly available and easily accessible format, for all land within the World Heritage property and its buffer zone,
 - clear operating plans and strict limits to development rights and management regulations within the property and its buffer zone, to ensure the long-term protection and conservation of the World Heritage property,
 - conservation master plan;
 - clearly defined and strictly controlled development rights on existing private or leased lands within the property;
 - infrastructure rehabilitation, zoning regulations with particular emphasis on the establishment of no-construction zones, the institutional reform and capacity building, community relations, and tourism development,
 - publicly available information on land-use for all lands within the property and its buffer zone, in easily accessible format, to ensure transparency in land use and allocations;
 - d) Review the status of development and implementation of a management system, including:
 - progress in adoption of legislation that assures the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the whole of the World Heritage property and its component parts,
 - progress in defining and prioritizing the long-term conservation and consolidation measures within the World Heritage property;

- progress in setting up a 5-year training programme in conservation and management for the staff in charge of the preservation of the property,
 - progress in elaboration of an Integrated Management Plan for the World Heritage property and its buffer zone, including:
 - a tourism strategy,
 - strategic guidelines for the integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings,
 - design guidelines for new constructions and the street furniture,
 - clear guidelines for the type of management, religious or visitor infrastructure that can be built within the World Heritage property,
 - Monitoring mechanisms
 - progress in establishment of a clear institutional coordination mechanism ensuring that the conservation of the property receives priority consideration within relevant governmental decision-making processes,
 - progress in development of a State Programme for the protection of World Heritage religious properties in Georgia, as a legal framework for co-management under which the respective responsibilities of the State Party and the Georgian Patriarchate are effectively established, monitored and evaluated in relation to the protection and conservation of the property;
- 3) Review the status of development of strategies to enhance awareness of World Heritage among stakeholders and developers;
 - 4) Evaluate the implementation by the State Party of the decision of the World Heritage Committee encouraging the State Party to continue implementation of the integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Monastery and urging the State Party in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop similar work programmes over the next ten years for the other monument complexes of the property;
 - 5) Evaluate the implementation by the State Party of the decision of the World Heritage Committee encouraging the State Party to prepare, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS/ICCROM a 5 year work programme designed to address the major problems identified.
 - 6) Prepare a detailed report for review by the 36th session of the World Heritage Committee including, in conformity with the *Operational Guidelines*:
 - a) an indication of threats or significant improvement in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee;
 - b) any follow-up to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee to the state of conservation of the property; and
 - c) information on any threat or damage to or loss of outstanding universal value, integrity and authenticity for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List,

as well as considering *Operational Guidelines* paragraphs 190-199 (review of the state of conservation of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger); 192-198 (procedure for the eventual deletion of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger), and submit the joint report to the World Heritage Centre in electronic form (according to the enclosed format).

BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION / THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

Inscription history

The outstanding universal value of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta is defined by the following:

Justification provided by the State Party :

City-museum, architectural reserve, Mtskheta is a multi-layered monument, testifying to the great scope of building activity and high culture of the country. Preserved architectural monuments and unearthed archaeological material testify to the high artistic value of building and minor arts in various epochs, beginning from the 2nd mill. B.C. to today.

The architectural monuments of Mtskheta, being stagemaking in the development of Georgian architecture are at the same time extremely significant for the study of the medieval architecture of the whole Christendom. Besides they are striking examples of the unity of architecture with the surrounding landscape.

Of special value from the artistic and historical points of view are the monuments of monumental painting (mosaic floor in "Dionysius Maison" in Szalisa, 2nd c. A.D.) and metalwork (goldsmithery) discovered in Mtskheta. Special place in semitic epigraphics is occupied by Armagi inscriptions, giving vast valuable data for the study of the written language in general and making it possible to deal with the origin of Georgian written language anew.

ADVISORY BODY STATEMENT:

The nomination dossier submitted by the Republic of Georgia was accompanied by a number of books and other documents. Most of these are written in Russian or Georgian, neither of which is a working language of the World Heritage Convention. The most useful book, *Georgien: Wehrbauten und Kirchen*, is in German, another non-working language. More importantly, the only map provided showing the "Protective Zones of Mtskheta", was a very small-scale photographic print of a much larger map; the barely decipherable legends were, in any case, all in Georgian. However, new maps showing the areas proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List, together with buffer zones, were supplied to the mission, together with a summary of the Georgian protection legislation, as required by the *Operational Guidelines*.

Recommendation: That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iii and iv.

Inscription criteria and World Heritage values

The nominated property of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta correspond to criteria (iii), (iv).

Criterion iii: The group of churches at Mtskheta bear testimony to the high level and art and culture of the vanished Kingdom of Georgia, which played an outstanding role in the medieval history of its region.

Criterion iv: The historic churches of Mtskheta are outstanding examples of medieval ecclesiastical architecture in the Caucasus region.

Bureau (July 1994): The Bureau recommended the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List and suggested to the State Party to change the name to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta".

Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau (refer to previous State of Conservation reports etc.)

THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

35th session of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO, 2011

Extract of the Decisions adopted the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011)

Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (C 708)

Decision: 35 COM 7A.30

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-11/35.COM/7A,
2. Recalling Decision **34 COM 7B.27** adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010),
3. Notes the efforts made by the State Party in the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions with regard to the corrective measures aimed at future removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
4. Urges the State Party to submit proposals for a buffer zone as a minor boundary modification, as well as to develop and finalize the Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta;
5. Also urges the State Party to adopt legislation that ensures adequate protection of the property and of any defined buffer zone and wider setting so as to sustain its Outstanding Universal Value;
6. Encourages the State Party to continue developing strategies to enhance awareness of World Heritage among stakeholders and developers;
7. Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the property to assess the progress in the implementation of the corrective measures;
8. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2012**, a detailed state of conservation report, including a progress report on the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012;
9. **Decides to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

Extract of the Decisions adopted the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (Brasília, 2010)

Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (C 708)

Decision: 34 COM 7A.27

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/7A.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision 33 COM 7B.102, adopted at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009),*
3. *Notes the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Commission to ensure co-ordination of all World Heritage matters;*
4. *Also notes the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the property in March 2010;*
5. *Reiterates its serious concern about the state of conservation of the different components of the property, and the slow rate of progress made by the State Party in addressing urgent issues;*
6. *Adopts the following Desired State of Conservation for the property, for its future removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger:*
 - a) The World Heritage property with clearly marked boundaries and buffer zone precisely identified,
 - b) The Urban Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including land-use regulations and conservation master plan approved,
 - c) A comprehensive management system, including an Integrated Management Plan of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone, approved,
 - d) Long-term consolidation and conservation of the historical monuments in Mtskheta ensured;
7. *Adopts the following corrective measures and the timeframe for their implementation:*
 - a) Changes to be effected within one year - Precise identification of the World Heritage property and clearly marked boundaries and buffer zones by the following actions:
 - Prepare adequate maps showing clear limits of all components of the property,
 - Undertake topographic and archaeological surface surveys including the archaeological remains, important historical monuments and landscapes,
 - Define the boundaries of the World Heritage property according to the results of the relevant surveys,
 - Develop a 5-year training programme for the conservation and management of the site, possibly with participation at sub-regional/regional level,

- Develop a monitoring mechanism for the physical conservation of the buildings and archaeological sites,
- Define and prioritize the long-term conservation and consolidation measures within the World Heritage property;

b) Changes to be effected within one/two years –

Implementation of the Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including operating plans and conservation master plan by the following actions:

- Establish complete cadastral information (land ownership), in publicly available and easily accessible format, for all land within the World Heritage property and its buffer zone,
- Establish clear operating plans and strict limits to development rights and management regulations within the property and its buffer zone, to ensure the long-term protection and conservation of the World Heritage property,
- Ensure that development rights on existing private or leased lands within the property are clearly defined and strictly controlled,
- Adopt and implement the Urban Land-Use Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta, including all aspects of infrastructure rehabilitation, zoning regulations with particular emphasis on the establishment of no-construction zones, the institutional reform and capacity building, community relations, and tourism development,
- Make publicly available the information on land-use for all lands within the property and its buffer zone, in easily accessible format, to ensure transparency in land use and allocations;

c) Changes to be effected within two/three years - Ensured site management by the following actions:

- Adopt legislation that assures the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the whole of the World Heritage property and its component parts,
- Adopt the necessary priority for the conservation of the property in national policy, planning and budgets, and take pro-active measures to solicit donor support for property management and conservation,
- Develop and implement an Integrated Management Plan for the World Heritage property and its buffer zone, including:
 - a tourism strategy,
 - strategic guidelines for the integrated multi-stakeholder approach to the conservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings,
 - design guidelines for new constructions and the street furniture,
 - clear guidelines for the type of management, religious or visitor infrastructure that can be built within the World Heritage property,
- Develop and implement a management system,
- Undertake appropriate training in conservation and management for the staff in charge of the preservation of the property,
- Establish a clear institutional coordination mechanism ensuring that the conservation of the property receives priority consideration within relevant governmental decision-making processes,

- Develop a state programme for the protection of World Heritage religious properties in Georgia, as a legal framework for co-management under which the respective responsibilities of the State Party and the Georgian Patriarchate are effectively established, monitored and evaluated in relation to the protection and conservation of the property,
- d) Changes to be effected within five years (after possible removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2 - 3 years) - Long-term protection and conservation of the historical monuments and the archaeological remains in Mtskheta by the following actions:
- Complete the documentation and recording of all historical monuments and archaeological remains in a digitized information database for management, conservation and planning purposes,
 - Establish a full inventory of paintings including digitalization and reference system for all historical monuments in Mtskheta,
 - Implement restoration of the paintings,
 - Develop a special programme on the protection of all archaeological components of the City of Mtskheta;
8. ***Urges** the State Party to develop, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a draft retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011;*
9. ***Requests** the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2011, a detailed state of conservation report, including a progress report relevant to the implementation of the corrective measures, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011;*
10. ***Decides to retain the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

33rd session of the World Heritage Committee, Seville, Spain / 22-30 June 2009

The World Heritage Committee, at its 32nd session (Quebec City, July 2008), expressed its serious concern about the privatization processes of land situated in the vicinity of the property, and urged the State Party to immediately halt these before the boundary clarification and the preparation of a "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" are completed. The World Heritage Committee reiterated its request to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the property, and invited the State Party to establish a Special State Commission on World Heritage. Expressing its serious concern about the state of conservation of the archaeological components of the property, the World Heritage Committee urged the State Party to develop a special programme on protection of all archaeological components and indicated that, in the absence of substantial progress, it would consider the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The State Party state of conservation report was received on 29 January 2009 and covered: a) *Conservation The main Church, the northern small Church, parekklession and southern building of the Jvari Monastery: Damaging impact of aggressive natural conditions on stones is still a problem during 2008. Parts of the bas-reliefs have completely disappeared. Construction issues are still the same: the damaged cupola pillars, threshold stress and cracks in the carrier structures. Some building stones around the eastern arches and around the foundation of the main church are damaged - mould, sooty walls,*

and cracked building stones are reported. The tiles of cupola's roofing needs immediate renovation. The small Church remains without roofing. The report underlines that the small Church has partially lost its authenticity due to the use of inappropriate materials during the "restoration" works. The conservation project for the small Jvari Church has been prepared. These existing damages are only planned to be addressed in 2009. The joint ICCROM project on conservation of the Saint Cross Monastery is still under implementation. In 2008, the Small Jvari Church Site Development Plan was completed and works were started to develop a conservation plan. *Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, the Bell Tower, Catholicos-Patriarch Melchisedec Palace, Catholicos-Patriarch Antony Palace, The Defence Wall*: The report noted that parts of the Cathedral walls are disintegrating and in a wrecking state, some building stones of the northern façade are partially demolished, the tiles of roof are partially cracked, the increased humidity damaged the frescoes. The state of conservation of wall paintings should be studied. The XVIIIth century Bell Tower was demolished; the gates of Catholicos- Patriarch Melchisedec Palace urgently need rehabilitation works. The State Party is monitoring Svetitskhoveli Cathedral to assess its structural state and develop a detailed plan to ensure conservation of the frescos. The report states that the Palace of Catholicos - Patriarch Anton II in the South-Eastern part of a courtyard, reconstructed between 2001 – 2004 has partially lost its authenticity.

Samtavro Nunnery: The report informed that the problem of roofing of the Cathedral still remains unresolved. The original tiled roofing should be restored. In the Cathedral, archaeological research has not been completed. The northern and southern annexes of the Cathedral need archaeological research, as well as the territory inside the defence wall. The Bell tower significantly bended to the Cathedral needs comprehensive research and conservation works should be implemented on the remains of the King Mirian Palace. In 2008, the restoration works were concluded, which aimed at restoring the bearing wall adjacent to the Tower of Gabriel the Monk and damaged by natural conditions. As the project design had stipulated, a cobble-stone wall with regular sandstone quartz was constructed in front of the concrete wall. In order to prevent accumulation of water in the rear of the wall, drainage of plastic pipe work was arranged in the wall. In order to prepare for conservation of the Samtavro St. Nino Church existing damages were studied and assessed, which led to a plan to construct a new roof to the church. *Armaztsikhe-Bagineti, The roman-type bathes, the "Column Hall", Fortification system*: The report also noted that the six-Apse Church has lost its authenticity due to the reconstruction works conducted with unacceptable methods. The roman-type bathes and the "Column Hall" need conservation. There is a risk of destruction of the building due to the aggressive influence of climatic conditions. Conservation works on the Fortification system should include different construction periods and layers and a conservation and rehabilitation plan should be developed. In September 2008 a competition was announced, aiming at drafting a development concept of Armaztsikhe-Bagineti. Its results are to be announced in spring 2009. Recommendations have been prepared on issues comprising site development, monument conservation and planning of tourist infrastructure. *b) Boundaries* Concerning the boundary issues, the State Party underlined that the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage has defined a special protection area for all components of the property of a 1 km radius and that the protection zones such as Construction Regulation Zone, Archaeological Heritage Zone, Landscape Protection Zone are currently being adjusted and expanded based on the requirements. The protection zones also regulate new constructions. As a result, there were no incompliant buildings constructed during 2008. In 2008, the development plan process aiming at restoring the geographic and historical connection between the Jvari Church and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral started, including the rehabilitation of historic routes. *c) Inventories* The State Party also mentioned that the Ministry of Culture, established a regular monitoring exercise for all World Heritage properties, as well as recorded a full inventory of archaeological and architectural monuments in Mtskheta. The creation of the data base of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta was initiated by the National Agency. Monitoring missions are regularly visiting

all properties and are producing summary state of conservation report every year. *d) Management* The State Party created in 2008 an *ad-hoc* “Committee of World Cultural Heritage” established under the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation to be in charge to define functions and liabilities of state agencies, regulate national, local and religious rights in order to ensure a protection and management of the World Heritage properties. This *ad-hoc* Committee shall deal with issues existing in the usage of monuments between private owners, the state and the Patriarchate as well as with privatization-related problems. The Mtskheta Museum-Reserve was reorganized and transformed into the Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve and affiliated, in 2008, with the aforementioned National Agency.

The State Party informed that the *Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan* developed in collaboration with UNESCO and UNDP is under examination for formal approval by the Ministry of Culture. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the state of conservation of this property and that some monuments may no longer be authentic. The report provides very limited information concerning the preparation of a legal and technical basis to address the threats. The State Party did not provided any detailed responses to the World Heritage Committee’s key requests such as the land privatization issues, development of an integrated management plan for the property, establishment of a Special State Commission on World Heritage issues, development of a special programme on protection of all archaeological components, monitoring of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. No document clarifying the exact boundaries of protected areas of the property and its buffer zones, or any boundary modification proposal, has been provided by the State Party. The State Party did not provide any comments concerning the eventual inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS consider that the State Party has been unable to take into account the World Heritage Committee’s decisions or to carry out the necessary preparatory activities to address existing and any new potential threats. Considering Paragraphs 177 – 179 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS note the absence of substantial progress, which could lead to the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. They furthermore consider that the progress, if exist, cannot be evaluated on the basis of the report submitted by the State Party, and therefore suggest a reactive monitoring mission to the property.

Decision 33COM 7B.102

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision **32 COM 7B.90**, adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),
3. Expresses its serious concern about the state of conservation of the different components of the property;
4. Regrets that the State Party report did not adequately address the preparation of legal and technical provisions to address the various threats, the aspect of land privatization, the development of an integrated management plan and the development of a special programme on the protection of all archaeological components;
5. Further regrets that the State Party did not submit documents clarifying the exact boundaries of the protected area of the property and its buffer zone;
6. Notes with regrets that some components have lost their authenticity due to restoration works conducted with unacceptable methods;
7. **Decides to inscribe the Historic Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) on the List of the World Heritage in Danger;**
8. Urges the State Party to develop, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value a proposed desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of the World

Heritage in Danger, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010;

9. Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS mission to the property in early 2010 to assess the state of conservation of the property;

10. Also requests to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2010**, a report on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendation contained in Decision **32 COM 7B.90**, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session in 2010.

32nd session of the World Heritage Committee, Quebec City, Canada / 2 - 10 July 2008

The Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia submitted a state of conservation report dated 25 January 2008, confirming, in one page, that no significant progress has been made since the last session of the World Heritage Committee.

A joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the Historic Monuments of Mtskheta and to the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex invited by the State Party, with some delay due to political factors, took place from 2 to 10 June 2008, met all relevant Georgian representatives, and discussed the following issues:

Legal framework

The new Georgian Law on Cultural Heritage was adopted in June 2007. Different protection zones were defined in this legal instrument. In accordance with this Cultural Heritage Law and the Urban Planning Law, the Protected Areas Plans and Historic-Cultural Plans constitute the base for all urban planning documentation, including the Land Use Plans and General Plans.

The mission evaluated the national protection zones of Mtskheta approved by the joint Order of the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Economic Development "On the definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta" of 27 October 2006. The areas approved at the national level by this Order do not correspond to the boundaries of the protection areas of Mtskheta or its monuments, as inscribed on the World Heritage List, and which constitute the legal reference within the framework of the *World Heritage Convention*. This situation illustrates that the above-mentioned Order was prepared without any link with the *World Heritage Convention*, its *Operational Guidelines* and previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

At this time, the main threat to the property is the distribution or sale of lands situated within the protected area of the property, as part of a privatization process without any detailed legal regulations approved in conformity with the expectations of the World Heritage Committee. Numerous proposals submitted by the municipality were already approved by the Ministry of Economic Development without any knowledge of the nomination dossier submitted by Georgia during the inscription of property.

The mission recommended:

a) To inventory all lands already distributed within the protected areas of Mtskheta, and to halt any construction permits and works within the existing protected areas of the World Heritage property as inscribed ;

b) To immediately halt any land distribution or sale, as well as any construction within the protected area of Mtskheta as inscribed in 1994, the preparation and approval in conformity with the *World Heritage Convention*, its *Operational Guidelines*, the World Heritage Committee's decisions of the following documents:

- "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" defining the World Heritage property's status, the World Heritage properties' strict protected areas and its buffer zones with all necessary restrictive regulations,

- Boundary clarification document to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, and if relevant, the boundaries modification proposal in order to clarify exact boundaries of protected areas of the World Heritage property and its buffer zones,
- Plan of the protected areas ("Historic-Cultural General Plan"), Land Use Plan ("Plan of Regulation") and Master Plan ("General Urban Plan") of Mtskheta.

The mission also recommended the establishment of a "Special State Board on World Heritage" in order to officially share the responsibilities between all relevant State institutions and national, local and religious authorities in ensuring an appropriate legal protection and management of the important and outstanding heritage of Georgia.

Management plan

No management plan exists for the property. The mission noted that the concept of the management plan is not known by the authorities; as such plan does not correspond to the existing documents or rules. The Cultural Heritage Programme prepared each year by the Ministry of Culture is a unique framework for any activity concerning the cultural properties in Georgia, including the World Heritage properties.

The mission recommended that the preparation of a management plan for the World Heritage properties in Georgia should be added, as priority, to the Cultural Heritage Programme.

Management system and institutional framework

The management, monitoring and survey of the property are under the supervision of the Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture. The Georgian World Heritage Committee, created in 2006, assumes the role of coordinator of World Heritage issues.

The Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve, under the Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture, acts as the local site manager. However, the mission noted that this institution does not fulfill its role as World Heritage site manager as the function has not been clearly defined by the authorities.

A special Commission on Cultural Heritage was also created by the Patriarch of the Georgian Church but its function is still unclear. The responsibility for cultural heritage, management, protected areas, rules of maintenance and use of religious monuments is determined by the relevant State authorities, in accordance with the 2007 Law on Cultural Heritage, and with the 2002 Constitutional Agreement.

Physical conditions of the major components of the nominated property

a) Jvari Church

The mission underlined the serious problems at the Jvari Church. The general state of conservation of the monument is very critical due to the negative influence of natural conditions and climatic change. The conservation works of the Jvari Church should be started immediately involving international experts on stone conservation, as a follow up to the ICCROM training course organized in 2005.

The mission noted that new construction within the vicinity of the Jvari Church had been stopped, and recommended the removal of this inappropriate construction.

b) Svetitskhoveli Cathedral

The mission commented on structural problems at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral due to factors affecting the monument. The mission noted that no progress has been achieved in order to improve the global monitoring of the structures of the Cathedral. The mission recommended undertaking a global monitoring for the structural stability of the Cathedral and also undertaking special interventions for conservation of the important mural paintings of different periods in the interior of the Cathedral.

c) Samtavro Monastery

The authorities reported that stabilization works were completed between 2002 and 2003. The archaeological remains discovered during the reparation works were recovered by the new floor. The structure of the associated belfry outside of the church, which was in serious danger of collapse, was reinforced.

Within the direct vicinity of the church new monastic cells were recently built but did not affect the functional integrity of the property. However, taking into account the necessity to continue scientific investigation of the area, the lands around the walls should be reserved for relevant archaeological excavations and research studies.

Furthermore, the mission noted serious damage to the archaeological sites of the World Heritage property, which have been completely abandoned by the authorities. There are no conservation, protection and promotion activities in place and nothing has been suggested for the future. The mission confirmed that this part of the World Heritage property has completely lost its authenticity due to vandalism and absence of management.

In general, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the scope of the problems described even if the mission noted the progress accomplished by the State Party in attempting to prepare a legal and technical basis to address these problems.

Decision 32COM 7B.90

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-08/32.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **31 COM 7B.96**, adopted at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007),
3. Notes the substantive efforts of the State Party in defining and establishing the Cultural Heritage Programme, including legal assessments and relevant conservation, protection measures;
4. Expresses its serious concern about the privatization processes of land situated in the vicinity of the World Heritage property, and strongly urges the State Party to immediately halt these processes before the boundary clarification and the preparation of a "Special Statement on protection of World Heritage properties in Georgia" defining the World Heritage property's status and its buffer zones are completed;
5. Recalls its request to the State Party to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the property;
6. Invites the State Party to establish a Special State Commission on World Heritage in order to officially share the responsibilities between all relevant State institutions and national, local and religious authorities in ensuring an appropriate legal protection and management of this property;
7. Urges the State Party to immediately start the implementation of an integrated multistakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Church in coordination with ICCROM and relevant international experts on stone conservation;
8. Also expresses its serious concern about the state of conservation of the archaeological components of the World Heritage property, their progressive deterioration and the abandonment of conservation efforts by the State Party, noting that this loss has a major impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the property and further urges the State Party to develop a special programme on protection of all archaeological components;
9. Encourages the State Party to undertake global monitoring of the structural stability of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and implement special interventions for the conservation of the paintings;
10. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2009**, a progress report including all above mentioned documents, as well as the boundaries clarification document, and if relevant, the boundaries modification proposal, for

examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009, **with a view to considering, in the absence of substantial progress, the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

**31st session of the World Heritage Committee,
Christchurch, New Zealand, 23 June – 2 July 2007
Document WHC- 07/31.COM/7B**

Main threats identified in previous reports

- a) Lack of a management mechanism;
- b) Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities;
- c) Need to re-define core and buffer zones;
- d) Loss of authenticity in recent works carried out by the Church.

Current conservation issues

The World Heritage Committee, at its 29th session (Durban, 2005), expressed “serious concern over the state of conservation of this property” and urged the State Party to take urgent and appropriate measures, including implementing the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003, defining appropriate core and buffer zones of the property, and addressing the problem of the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace that affect Mtskheta’s outstanding universal value.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Georgia submitted on 12 March 2007 a state of conservation report dated January 2007 which covers a wide range of areas of concern:

The State Party recalls the justification supplied in the nomination document at the time of inscription, however does not provide a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. The State Party also attempts to articulate a Statement of Authenticity/ Integrity but not fully in accordance with the *Operational Guidelines*. In this regard, the State Party notes a significant number of losses of authenticity, including: The Palace of Catholicos-Patriarch Anton II, inappropriate interventions by local clergy at the Svetitskhoveli Complex; erroneous “restoration” works (suspended in 2004), executed at the church of the Jvari Monastery; inappropriate reconstruction works at the six-apse Church in Armaztsikhe-Bagineti.

The State Party also notes a number of monuments which have been “completely destroyed” as a result of the recent work:

- a) some bas-reliefs of the Jvari monastery;
- b) the belfry of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral;
- c) a part of the fortification system in Armaztsikhe-Bagineti.

ICOMOS finds these reports very worrying as in the circumstances the reported loss of authenticity implies a significant potential loss of outstanding universal value.

The State Party reports that in December 2005, the President of Georgia issued a Decree which reorganized the Mtskheta Museum-Reserve (1968) into the *Greater Mtskheta State Archaeological Museum-Reserve (2007)*. The State Party notes that in January 2007, the *Mtskheta Heritage Integrated Management Commission* was instituted within the Municipality to better coordinate at local level the “sustainable and integrated conservation and management of the cultural heritage located on the territory of Mtskheta”. However the State Party notes that no progress has been made in development of a management

plan for the property and that the 2003 Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan was being used to guide short and long term decision making for the site.

The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS are very concerned that the State Party has not been able to pursue implementation of the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003. ICOMOS believes strongly, given evident different views about development between Church and State, and the already strong reported material losses of authenticity that it is of paramount importance that a management plan involving all stakeholders be developed urgently.

Furthermore, the State Party report provides a detailed monitoring overview of physical conditions of the four major components of the nominated property:

a) Jvari Church: Apart from discussing difficult moisture management situations which threaten the survival of important frescoes, bas reliefs and materials, comments also concern unauthorized construction activities undertaken by the Georgian Church on site. The report notes that though damaging efforts to reconstruct the northern small church have been halted, the church and the parekklesion remain without roofing.

b) Svetitskhoveli Cathedral: The report comments on structural problems at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The seventeenth century Bell Tower has been demolished, and that “absolutely erroneous “reconstruction” works” carried out on the recently discovered 11th century Melchisedec Palace have been very damaging. The State Party repeats comments of 2005 that “it is of paramount importance for the future of the monument that stratigraphic investigations, systematic archaeological excavations, and conservation should be initiated all over the churchyard...”.

c) Samtavro Monastery: The report notes that while stabilisation works were completed in 2003, a permanent solution to roofing the Cathedral has not been found and archaeological research had not been completed before the beginning of the “restoration” works inside the Cathedral. The report also notes that the associated belfry is in serious danger of collapse.

d) Armaztsikhe-Bagineti: The report notes that the six-apse church of the second and third centuries AD, excavated in the 1990s is in an alarming state, and that it has completely lost its authenticity due to priority given reconstruction over conservation of the discovered monument. The report also documents threats to monuments excavated in the 1940s, the roman-type baths, and the fortification system, the major part of which has been irretrievably lost.

As noted in earlier reports, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the severity and scope of the problems described, and the inability of the State Party to address these.

The State Party report further notes that on 27 October 2006, the Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport and the Minister of Economic Development issued a joint Order n° 3/471 – 1-1/1243 “*On the Definition of the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones in Mtskheta*”. This joint Order provides for the establishment of a series of zones to better focus protection in the territory of Mtskheta, including:

a) The Immovable Monuments Protection Zone (IMPZ) to protect both physically and visually the monuments existing in the Mtskheta urban fabric: Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Samtavro Nunnery, Antiochia and Gethsimania Churches;

- b) The Construction Regulation Zone (CRZ), a buffer zone, aimed at protecting the integrity of the Mtskheta Historic Centre and its historical landscape;
- c) The Archaeological Heritage Protection Zone (AHPZ) including the major archaeological complexes located on the territory of Mtskheta and its surroundings;
- d) The Landscape Protection Zone (LPZ) to protect the “historically formed landscape as an indissoluble natural and cultural phenomenon”.

Following reports in earlier years of serious problems at the Jvari Monastery it is noted that the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia and ICCROM had launched a joint project (2005) aimed at monitoring, documentation and conservation of Jvari Monastery. The report also notes that a second phase of ICCROM's project will address development of a conservation plan for the site, and continue the training of Georgian specialists. Efforts to develop cooperation with the Council of Europe within the framework of the *Kyiv Initiative* Regional Programme, to assist Jvari are also mentioned.

Finally, the report a documentation project planned for 2007, with the support of the *Society and Heritage Association* (Georgia) and the World Monuments Fund is indicated. Such an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach to resolve the problems of Jvari Monastery is to be commended.

Decision: 31 COM 7B.96

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **29 COM 7B.64**, adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005),
3. Regrets the late submission of the state of conservation report by the State Party but notes substantive efforts in defining and establishing clear zones of protection;
4. Encourages the State Party to continue implementation of the integrated multistakeholder approach to the conservation of Jvari Monastery and urges the State Party in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop similar work programmes over the next ten years for the other monument complexes the property;
5. Strongly urges the State Party to give highest priority to development of an integrated management plan for the site to be built with the full involvement and collaboration all stakeholders based on the 2003 Masterplan;
6. Requests that the State Party invite a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to assess the state of conservation of the property, including reconstructions, new developments and any impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the property;
7. Also requests the State Party to provide a progress report to the World Heritage Centre on **1 February 2008** for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008.

**29 session of the World Heritage Committee,
Durban, South Africa
10-17 July 2005**

Main threat(s) identified in previous report(s):

Lack of a management mechanism; insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities; need to re-define core and buffer zones.

Current conservation issues:

Following the decision by the Committee, the State Party requested on 17 March 2005 to change the name of the property to the "Historical Monuments of Mtskheta".

The State Party submitted a detailed state of conservation report on 13 February 2005. Following the elaboration in 2003 of the "Mtskheta Heritage and Tourism Master Plan" with the assistance of UNESCO/UNDP, the State Party recognised the urgent need to prepare a Management Plan for the property. According to the State Party, factors affecting the property include (1) lack of funding, (2) climatic conditions, (3) inappropriate interventions by the Church authorities and (4) absence of an effective management system.

ICOMOS' detailed comments and recommendations on the preparation of the wellstructured and detailed report were transmitted to the State Party on 25 April 2005.

Concerning the Jvari Monastery, ICOMOS fully shared the concerns expressed in the State Party report on the state of conservation of both the interior and exterior of the main Church. There are serious problems of stonework maintenance and bas-relief protection. In addition, scaffolding from the earlier restoration work should be removed and a buffer zone must be defined. Therefore, ICOMOS recommended that (1) conservation and partial restoration is needed for the seriously damaged limestone blocks of the external facades. Soot, mildew, and parasites must be removed from certain building stones and capitals; (2) the carved building stones must be carefully removed without delay and taken to a special centre for stone conservation so that the crumbling parts can be strengthened. Thereafter, they should be on display in the Regional Museum. They should be replaced by replicas in accordance with Article 8 of the 1964 Venice Charter. The replicas should be distinguishable from the authentic building stones.

The attempts, now halted, to restore the Northern Church and Parekklesion also pose a significant problem. ICOMOS recommends that (1) specialized cleaning and treatment using herbicide, of the surrounding wall to remove plant growth, (2) repair work to the walling, including careful repair of the construction joints and restoration work in some sections. A protective layer should be put on the upper level, as protection against inclement weather conditions, (3) removal of later, minor constructions or their replacement where necessary (e.g. small wooden gates).

Concerning Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, the State Party reported on the continued and alarming state of the roofing, the bas-reliefs and ornaments of the cupola, and the facades of the monument. Unfortunately, no conservation work has been carried out on the wall paintings inside the Church, which are of exceptional historical and artistic value. They are at grave risk of further damage and eventual disappearance.

ICOMOS considered that it is of paramount importance for the future of the monument that stratigraphical investigations, systematic archaeological excavations and conservation should be initiated throughout the entire churchyard in advance of 'Territory

Maintenance'. Illicit underground construction inside and outside the Monastery grounds and unsupervised excavations carried out by local Church authorities should be prohibited. It is regrettable that the State Party provided no information on new building activities in the buffer zone of the monument, including the surrounding urban architectural ensemble. According to ICOMOS, the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace continue to constitute one of the most difficult problems in preserving Mtskheta's outstanding universal value, since this building continues to be the residence of the Catholicos– Patriarch of Georgia.

ICOMOS regretted that the State Party report made no comment on the condition of the wall paintings inside the *Samtavro Nunnery* Church, which had been seriously damaged by plastering during the Soviet period (see *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003, p.51). The State Party report made no comment on the present condition of the Samtavro burial ground, the largest and one of the most important cemeteries in the Caucasus region. Short-medium- and long-term recommendations were made in *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003, p.37–40).

ICOMOS shared the views on the existing condition and work carried out at the important Armaztsikhe- Bagineti archaeological property. The proposals in *A Heritage & Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta, Georgia* (UNESCO & UNDP-SPPD Pilot Project, March 2003) have not been acted upon in the face of the very serious problems of excavation, conservation, protection and adaptation of this property in the city of Mtskheta. Some 'conservation' methods on the unfired brick walls are open to serious challenge as regards the protection and the underlying layout of the buildings.

Decision 29COM 7B.64

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-05/29.COM/7B.Rev,
2. Recalling its Decision 28 COM 15B.69, adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Urges the State Party of Georgia to define core and buffer zones of the property;
4. Expresses its serious concern over the state of conservation of this property and urges the State Party to take urgent and appropriate measures;
5. Encourages the State Party to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003;
6. Recalls the importance of cooperation between the State Party and stakeholders for the conservation of the property.
7. Requests the State Party to solve the problem of the illegal and inappropriate additions to the old Catholicos Palace that strongly affects Mtskheta's outstanding universal value.
8. Requests the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre with an updated report by 1 February 2007 for examination by the Committee at its 31st session (2007).

29COM 8B.1 - Changes to Names of Properties (Historical Monuments of Mtskheta)

At the request of the Georgian authorities the Committee is asked to approve a change to the English and French names of the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994.

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-05/29.COM/8B,
2. Approves the proposed name change to the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia) as proposed by the Georgian authorities. The name of the property becomes Historical Monuments of Mtskheta in English and Monuments historiques de Mtskheta in French.

28 session of the World Heritage Committee, Durban, South Africa 10-17 July 2005

Conservation issues:

At the request of the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee, a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was undertaken from 8 to 16 November 2003.

Despite the political situation in Georgia at that time, which made it difficult to organise meetings with the relevant authorities, the mission evaluated the state of conservation of the property, the management of the World Heritage site and consulted local stakeholders on how best to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003.

Subsequently, the Georgian authorities provided a state of conservation report on 25 February 2004, which addresses a number of conservation issues.

The Church of Georgia has constructed new buildings in the vicinity of the Cathedral of Sveti Tskhoveli, which in the opinion of the mission affects the character of the World Heritage site. While the basilica of the Cathedral is in a good condition, the inappropriate method used for the restoration of mural paintings is of particular concern as the mission observed surface abrasion and general deterioration. The mission noted further conservation problems that include damages on the defence wall and uneven ground level as well as an underground concrete structure outside the defence wall of the Cathedral. The Georgian Church constructed a bishop palace within the ground, in view to demolish it later when another building is constructed outside the wall of the Cathedral.

The State Party further mentioned in its report that the Church has made some inappropriate interventions for the conservation of the property. The exterior of the Samtavro Monastic Complex is in a good condition but the mission could not obtain permission to examine the interior of the building. The state of conservation of Jvari is favourable, except it is necessary to remove the scaffolding from the earlier restoration work and to define a buffer zone for the property. The State Party stated in its report that inappropriate material was used to restore the small church of the Jvari Monastery.

The mission considers that the Master Plan for the World Heritage property needs to be implemented with a more active involvement of the local, regional and national authorities as well as the Church. The translation of the Master Plan into Georgian would further facilitate this process. Moreover, future developments should take into account the vision provided in the Master Plan and to keep the integrity of the World Heritage property by, for example, respecting the existing architectural styles and using local material. The mission

explored different ways in which the Master Plan could be supported by different international and national organisations including the World Bank, Soros Foundation and UNDP.

The ICOMOS-UNESCO mission highlights an urgent need to clarify the extent of a core zone and to define buffer zones as appropriate. At the time of the inscription in 1994, ICOMOS evaluated the outstanding universal value of only three churches. The World Heritage Committee at its 18th session in 1994, therefore, suggested to the State Party to change the name of the property to the "Historic Churches of Mtskheta" but this has never been taken up. The Georgian authorities stated in their state of conservation report that they wish to extend the core zone of the property to include an area as defined by a triangle of the churches of Jvari, Samtavro and Armatsikhe. The mission of November 2003 supports the view taken by the State Party in order to ensure landscape integrity, while recognising potential problems in controlling future developments in the enlarged area. In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement with the State, the Georgian Orthodox Church owns all ecclesiastic buildings in Georgia. The report by the State Party confirmed the view of the mission that the interventions made by the Georgian Church for the conservation of the property are often inappropriate and the country lacks an overall process to manage urban development and other conservation issues at the national and local level.

Decision 28 COM 15B.69

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Noting the outcome of the joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property,
2. Expresses its serious concerns for the lack of management mechanism for the property as well as insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities in safeguarding the outstanding universal value of the property;
3. Urges the State Party to change the name of the property to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta" as suggested by the World Heritage Committee at its 19th session in 1994, following the original ICOMOS evaluation at the time of the inscription that refers to the Churches of Jvari, Samtavro and Armatsikhe as the components of the property, and to prepare a detailed map indicating their core and buffer zones;
4. Encourages the State Party to implement the Master Plan developed by UNESCO and UNDP in 2003;
5. Requests the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre an updated report by 1 February 2005 so that the World Heritage Committee could examine the state of conservation of the property at its 29th session in 2005.

<p>27 session of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room XII 30 June – 5 July 2003</p>
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The World Heritage Committee strongly urged the State Party of Georgia to provide, before 1 September 2002, a report on the on-going constructions and degradations at the site and requested that the authorities invite a UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to the site. To date no report has been received and pending the official invitation by the authorities, the experts identified by ICOMOS and the Centre were not able to undertake this mission.

Decision 27 COM 7 (b) 62

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Recalling the decision taken at the 26th session of the Committee in 2002 (**26 COM 21 (b) 46**), to carry out a mission to the property and for a report to be provided by the State Party,
2. Reminds the State Party of its responsibilities as described in Article 6 of the *World Heritage Convention* to ensure the preservation and conservation of World Heritage properties;
3. Urgently requests the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the State Party to work closely together to ensure timely organisation of a joint mission and for a detailed report to be completed in order that the World Heritage Committee can examine the state of conservation of the property at its 28th session in 2004.

26 session of the World Heritage Committee, Budapest, Hungary, 24 - 29 June 2002

Main issues: The degradation and construction projects at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral are a cause for concern. The Bureau requested a report on the state of conservation and up-to-date information on all the restoration and construction projects at the site.

New information:

At the time of the preparation of this document no report from the authorities had been received.

Decision 26 COM 21 (b) 46

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Strongly urges the State Party of Georgia to provide before the 1 September 2002, a report on the on-going constructions and degradations at the site;
2. Requests the Government authorities to ensure that all these works are halted and that no further restoration works or constructions in close proximity to the Cathedral be undertaken;
3. Requests that the authorities invite an UNESCO-ICOMOS mission to the site in the near future and that a report be presented for examination at its 27th session in June/July 2003.

23rd session of the World Heritage Committee, Marrakesh, Morocco, 29 November - 4 December 1999
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City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia)

From 1996 to 1999 an amount of US\$ 36,800 was made available under technical cooperation for expert services on a management and tourism policy. A preliminary study for a Master Plan for the heritage and tourist policy for the World Heritage site was prepared.

In September 1999, the major elements of this study were presented during a World Heritage Centre mission to potential donor institutions in the form of "Terms of Reference for 9 Actions". As a result, a project is being prepared with UNDP (to be financed by UNDP and the World Heritage Fund) for the development of a Heritage and Tourism Master Plan.

The mission team particularly noted the critical conditions of two archaeological sites: the Armaztsikhe and the Samtavros Veli sites. Furthermore, the mission took note of a plan to build a new bell tower within the enclosure of the cathedral.

The Observer of Germany inquired about the results of the previous assistance and pointed out that urgent interventions and rehabilitation works are needed in the site. These issues should be taken into account by the Committee when examining a request for technical co-operation for the preparation of the Master Plan.

The Bureau decided to transmit the report to the Committee for examination and recommended the following for adoption:

"The Committee welcomes the initiative of the Government of Georgia and the Mtskheta Foundation to develop a Heritage and Tourism Master Plan for the City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta. It expresses its full support for this initiative that will provide the appropriate framework for a coherent set of actions to be financed by different sources and donor institutions. The Committee recognizes that on the middle and long-term major investments will be required for the actual implementation of the Master Plan and calls upon States Parties, international institutions and organizations to collaborate in this effort.

The Committee urges the Government of Georgia to take immediate measures for the protection of the Armaztsikhe archaeological site and for the recuperation of the total area of the Samtavros Veli Necropolis site. It requests the Georgian authorities to provide the plans for the bell tower at the cathedral for further study by ICOMOS."

<p>World Heritage Committee XVIII session / Phuket, Thailand / December 1994</p>
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The City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta : The Committee, in inscribing this property on the World Heritage List, suggested to the State Party to change the name to "Historic Churches of Mtskheta".

PHOTOGRAPHIC and TOPOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS AT JVARI



- 01 Jvari church ensemble with the surrounding walls, as in 2010 (view from east).
- 02 Jvari church ensemble with the surrounding walls, after the conservation works (view from east).
- 03 Jvari church as in 2010 (view from S-E).
- 04 Jvari church as in 2012 (view from S-E).
- 05 Jvari church: Condition of the chapel aside to the southern entrance, as in 2010.
- 06 Jvari church: Chapel aside to the southern entrance, after the conservation / restoration interventions.



- 07 Jvari church: Chapels attached to the north side, with the old interventions, as in 2010.
- 08 Jvari church: Chapels attached to the north side after the new protective interventions.
- 09 Jvari church: Condition of the remains of the defense wall tower, as in 2010.
- 10 Jvari church: The remains of the defense wall tower, after the recent conservation works.
- 11 Jvari church: Condition of the bas-relief on the southern entrance lintel.
- 12 Jvari church: Condition of the bas-relief over the southern entrance.



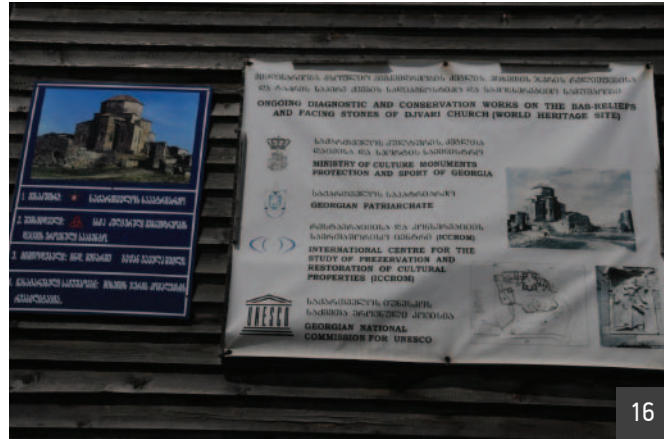
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- 13 Jvari church: Condition of the bas-relief and of the window over the southern façade.
- 14 Jvari church: Condition of the interior religious small shop.
- 15 Jvari church: Metallic information label on the path side to the monument.
- 16 Jvari church: Information label on the wooden covering of the monument eastern façade.
- 17 Demolition of the incompatible building, raised by the religious community next to the entrance of the site.

MTSKHETA CITY



- 18 Mtskheta pedestrian area at the entrance of the city.
- 19 - 20 Mtskheta pedestrian area: Condition of houses before (2010) and after rehabilitation works (2012).
- 21- 22 Mtskheta pedestrian area: Condition of houses before (2010) and after rehabilitation works (2012).



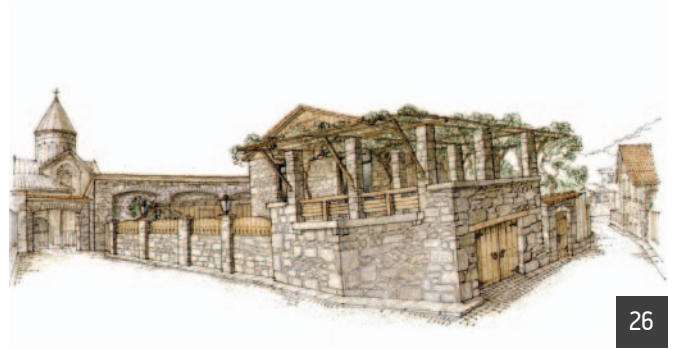
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- 23 - 24 Mtskheta pedestrian area: Condition of houses before (2010) and after rehabilitation works (2012).
- 25 - 26 Mtskheta pedestrian area: Existing condition of houses and future rehabilitation plan.
- 27 Mtskheta: The oldest traditional house of the town, as in 2000 (south façade).
- 28 Mtskheta: The oldest traditional house of the town, as in 2012 (south façade).



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SVETITSKHOVELI MONASTERY ENSEMBLE



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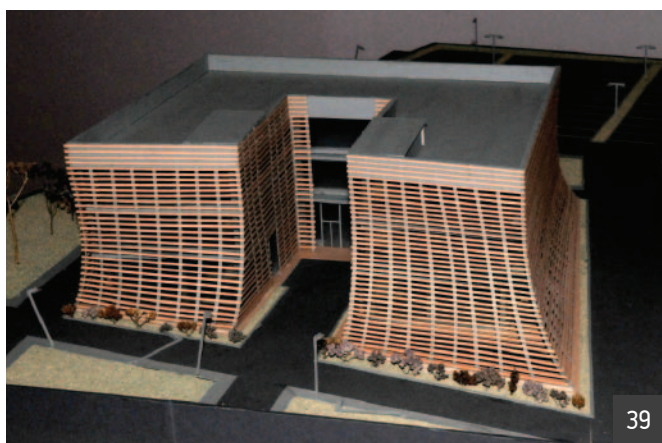
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- 29 Mtskheta - Old house area as in 2010
- 30 Mtskheta recreation area around old house.
- 31 Mtskheta central place before Svetitskhoveli Cathedral.
- 32 Mtskheta: Tourist Information Office new building in “neo-traditional” style.
- 33 Svetitskhoveli Cathedral with new gutters
- 34 Svetitskhoveli Cathedral grounds new religious bookstore.

HISTORIC PANORAMA OF THE CITY FROM JVARI CHURCH HILL



- 35 Mtskheta riverside area from Jvari church hill, as in 2010 - A
- 36 Mtskheta riverside area from Jvari church hill, as in 2010 - B (zoom)
- 37 Mtskheta riverside area as from Jvari church hill, in 2012 - A
- 38 Mtskheta riverside area from Jvari church hill, as in 2012 - B (zoom)
- 39 Mtskheta: Model of one of the new buildings under construction along river side.
- 40 Mtskheta: Gas pipe lines still visible.

SAMTAVRO ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUND



SAMTAVRO NUNNERY CHURCH



- 41 Samtavro archaeological ground – existing condition.
- 42 Samtavro archaeological ground – existing condition.
- 43 Samtavro archaeological ground – existing condition.
- 44 Samtavro archaeological ground school programme.
- 45 Samtavro Nunnery new findings during construction of the supporting wall.
- 46 Samtavro church rising damp.

ARMAZTSIKHE – BAGINETI ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE



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- 47 View from Armatzikhé– Bagineti archaeological site to river Mtkvari and Svetitskhoveli Cathedral.
- 48 View from Armatzikhé– Bagineti archaeological site to river Mtkvari and Jvari church.
- 49 Armatzikhé– Bagineti archaeological site: The stairway up to the hill top.
- 50 Armatzikhé – Bagineti archaeological site: Information label.
- 51 Armatzikhé– Bagineti archaeological site: Conservation, protection and presentation works.
- 52 Armatzikhé– Bagineti archaeological site: Protective metallic covering over king’s bath.



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- 53 Armatzikhe– Bagineti archaeological site: king’s bath (III-IV c. AD).
- 54 Armatzikhe– Bagineti archaeological site: The remains of the six-apse pagan temple (I c. AD) as in 2010.
- 55 Armatzikhe– Bagineti archaeological site: Protected remains of the six-apse pagan temple (I c. AD), as in 2012.
- 56 Armatzikhe– Bagineti archaeological site: Protected adobe wall remains of the six-apse pagan temple (I c. AD).
- 57 Armatzikhe– Bagineti archaeological site: Two-cell structure (late Hellenistic period).
- 58 Armatzikhe– Bagineti archaeological site: Remains of the six-column hall (II-I c. BC).



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- 59 Armatzikhe– Bagineti archaeological site: Protective wooden covering.
- 60 Meeting with the Local Governor of Mtskheta (24/4/2012).
- 61 Meeting with the Local Governor of Mtskheta (24/4/2012).
- 62 Dinner in the traditional tavern, in the yard of the rehabilitated old house.
- 63 Tbilisi: Meeting with the team of Georgian Patriarchate Technical Office (25/4/2012).
- 64 Tbilisi: Dinner with the vice-Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of Georgia.

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF MTSKHETA

