



HISTORIC AREAS OF ISTANBUL

2015

STATE OF
CONSERVATION
REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bearing a unique testimony to the Ottoman, Byzantine and Roman civilizations and sheltering monuments representing the masterpieces of human creative genius, Historic Areas of Istanbul celebrates the 30th Anniversary of its inscription to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015.

This site, located in Historic Peninsula, the heart of Istanbul which is the most populated and rapidly growing city of Turkey has always felt the pressure of this developments. The balance between conservation -use and development-progress has always been a vulnerable and hard to keep. Governors and bureaucrats of the city remained in between to meet the needs of an ever-growing city and conserve the vulnerable historical fabric and cultural heritage of the city. Sometimes, suggested plans and projects are in favor of cultural heritage but to the detriment of developments in the city and sometimes just the other way around.

Historic Peninsula, the richest part of Istanbul in terms of cultural heritage, has long been without conservation or plan, the best parts of the city became gradually dilapidated getting its share from the social and economic developments in a negative way. Only after 2005, a conservation master plan could be made for the site with the self denying works of the authorized local governments. Restoration and conservation works and activities of raising awareness and promotion gained momentum visibly after this date. The foundations of institutional structures were laid in this period within the local governments such as Directorate of Projects for Cultural Properties, Directorate of Supervision of Conservation Implementations (KUDEB) and Site Management Directorate, which would break grounds in this field later on. On the other hand, Special Provincial Administration allocated serious amounts of funds collected from the property taxes to the restoration and revival of cultural heritage especially in Historic Peninsula. Similarly, General Directorate of Foundations also allocated substantial resources to the restoration of monumental building which has long been without maintenance or repair in Historic Peninsula. Especially in the last ten years, a great fund like 1 billion 160 million TL was allocated for the restoration of cultural heritage in Historic Peninsula.

There are also important developments concerning the restoration techniques which were severely criticized since 2006 especially in the mission reports. Laboratory of Wet Chemistry, Petrography Laboratory, Laboratory of Instrumental Analysis, Laboratory of Advanced

Instrumental Analysis, Stone Laboratory, Timber Conservation Laboratory and Conservation Laboratory was founded within KUDEB. Analysis of the authentic materials used in the monumental and vernacular architecture buildings are made in this laboratories. With these analyses, former restorations and damages, material problems and their reasons can be detected, so that, most suitable restoration methods and materials can be determined within the framework of international criteria.

Site Management Directorate , which was founded in 2006, brought together the related and authorized institutions, organizations, NGOs, constituted the Advisory Board and Coordination and Supervision Board and started the studies for the Historic Peninsula Management Plan in 2009. As a result of a two-year of examination, research, search conferences and workshops, Historic Peninsula Site Management Plan could be completed with the contributions of related stakeholders and qualified experts at each phase and submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center.

In accordance with the decision of UNESCO World Heritage Committee, a joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission was invited to Istanbul on November 19-22, 2012. During these intense meetings, Mission was informed about the current status of conservation of the site and the current and potential development projects. On site examinations were also made.

World Heritage Committee in its 37th Session in Cambodia, **"requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Center by 1 February 2015, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th Session in 2015."** Hereby, this report was prepared on the grounds of that decision.

The report is composed of four parts. Issues stated in the Decision of World Heritage Committee are mentioned in the first part of the report. Headlines of this part are Review of the Management Plan, Golden Horn Metro Bridge, Eurasia Tunnel Project, Yenikapi Project, Vernacular Architecture Buildings (Ottoman Period Timber Houses), Renewal Areas and Silhouette Master Plan.

Second part covers the issues not stated in the decision of World Heritage Committee but about which information was requested by World Heritage Center. The headlines are Ayasofya Fatih Madrasa, Restoration of Tekfur Palace and Gardens in the Land Walls Area.

In the third part of the report, restorations carried out primarily in World Heritage Sites and then in Historic Peninsula. Restorations by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, General Directorate of Foundations and Fatih Municipality which are recently finished or ongoing are mentioned.

The last part of the report is named as Promotion, Education and Raising Awareness. It covers the activities of Site Management Directorate, IMM KUDEB, IMM Directorate of Projects for Cultural Properties and General Directorate of Foundations such as training, raising awareness activities, seminars and publications .

As it is already known, World Heritage Committee "**considers that the revised Management Plan is a significant improvement, commends the State Party for its scope in relation to the overall Historic Peninsula, and also requests it to address, at the first annual review of the Management Plan, the recommendations that ICOMOS has provided**" in the decision adopted in Saint Petersburg in 2012.

In accordance with this request of World Heritage Committee regarding **Historic Peninsula Management Plan**, Istanbul Site Management Directorate organized a meeting on February 21, 2013. Experts of ICOMOS International, Ministry of Foreign Affairs General Directorate of Cultural Diplomacy, Istanbul Site Management Directorate, Governorship of Istanbul, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Fatih Municipality, and Executive Board of Historic Peninsula Management Plan attended this meeting in Istanbul. The meeting served as a platform to exchange ideas as well as the comments and recommendations communicated by ICOMOS about the management plan, how the plan was implemented to date, the challenges faced, which aspects of the plan need to be focused on during the annual review process and how the plan could set the framework to harmonize it with the management of the World Heritage Area were some of the topics discussed in the meeting. The need to make the connection between the four areas identified as property, to identify how they contribute to the outstanding universal value as well as to align the plans for the Historic Peninsula with the decisions of the Management Plan were also stated during the meeting. A tender was held to review the Management Plan and the work was given a start based on the preliminary coordination work carried out by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and the Site Management Directorate. In this scope, focus group meetings are being held with the related stakeholders under the seven themes of the Plan. The first round of meetings have already

been made focusing on the following themes: Risk Management, Visitor Management, Accessibility, Perception of the Importance and the Value of the Site, Promotion, Education, and Raising Awareness. A final report will be prepared once the meetings in question are completed and will be shared with relevant stakeholders. The plan for later stages is to organize a workshop with the participation of a large group of stakeholders. The objective is to complete the revision of the Management Plan before the World Heritage Committee Session that will be held in Bonn, Germany in June 2015.

At its 37.Session, Committee "**acknowledges the commitment of the State Party to halt work on the Golden Horn Bridge for a year in order to consider ways of further improving its design and mitigating its intrusion into the historic landscape, but notes that although amendments have refined the original design, the bridge will still impact adversely on views of the Historic Peninsula and on the ability of the property to convey certain aspects of its Outstanding Universal Value**".

In line with the recommendation of UNESCO World Heritage Committee on the lightening of the Golden Horn Metro Crossing Bridge and the reports of the Independent Expert Committee, an architectural lightening project has been prepared to constitute a basis for the application that will result in a harmonious effect of the Bridge on the historical silhouette of Istanbul and the station lightening was completed along with the bridge walkways. Works related with pylon lightening are being continued. Landscaping works have been completed for the entrance structures of the bridge in the scope of environmental arrangement of the close surrounding areas and will be started in the near future for the upper side of Tersane Road (North side) and the upper side of Gümüşpaşa Road (South) at the Unkapanı area of the bridge. Landscaping Projects regarding the "Restoration of the Historic Buildings affected on the Route of the Bridge and Preparation of Urban Design Projects for the Areas Affected by this Crossing" have been presented to the related Conservation Councils for the approval. The comprehensive landscaping works will be carried out by the Department of Cultural Properties.

For Eurasia Tunnel Project, a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) that aligns with ICOMOS guidelines was verbally requested during the meeting of the UNESCO Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission in November 2012. In accordance with that report, 37th Session of UNESCO World Heritage Committee (2013) requested that **a Cultural Heritage Report Impact Assessment Report should be prepared and**

submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. The report prepared by an independent team lead by Prof. Dr. Enzo Siviero in accordance with the ICOMOS Guidelines was presented to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in 2014. Some changes were suggested in the project design for especially Samatya, Yenikapı and Kazlıçeşme areas on the basis of the Heritage Impact Assessment Report. Then another HIA Report was made to evaluate the impact of these changes on the cultural heritage. The report in question is presented in the attachment. (ANNEX 1)

World Heritage Committee "**urges the State Party to undertake multi-disciplinary studies (technical, environmental, social, cultural and economic) as a basis for considering the extension of the tunnel beyond the Land Walls and to remove an intersection at Yenikapı in order to ensure that the impacts on the Historic Peninsula are both limited and largely positive.**" An assessment report related to the recommended changes has been prepared by experts from many disciplines and presented in the annexes. (ANNEX 2)

The report of Joint WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Mission (2012) recommended that an impact assessment report be prepared in line with the ICOMOS Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment for the World Heritage Cultural Properties for **Yenikapı Reclamation Area Project**.

World Heritage Committee, in the Decision adopted in 37th Session (2013) in accordance with that report, "**requests that the State Party finalize the Heritage Impact Assessment, which should include the potential impact of such large gatherings on the environment and infrastructure of the peninsula as a whole, and submit it as soon as possible to the World Heritage Committee for review by the Advisory bodies.**" The authorized administration, then, contacted an expert team that had carried out similar work at the international level. The studies for the preparation of the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Report was given a start under the leadership of Mr. Michael KLOOS from the RWTH University in Germany. Report is enclosed to be submitted to the World Heritage Center for its examination by the Advisory Bodies. (ANNEX 3)

Decision of UNESCO WHC "**notes with concern the mission's opinion that a crisis point has been reached for the remaining Ottoman timber buildings, and further requests the State Party to consider a rapid assessment of Ottoman buildings at risk, to reconsider renewal area schemes, to undertake first-aid works in order to slow down the rate of**

decay and loss, and, if possible, to reinstate grants allowing private owners to repair their buildings." Within this context, a protocol among Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Site Management Directorate and TOKİ (Housing Development Administration of Turkey) is on the agenda to give long term loan with low interest rates to private owners. As a result of a series of meeting and related analysis, this protocol is about to be signed. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, continues to work on a new legislation to give grants to private property owners for simple maintenance and repair. Restoration works by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and Fatih Municipality regarding the Ottoman Period timber houses/buildings in the site are presented in detail hereby in this report.

In accordance with the Decision of WHC **to reconsider Renewal Area Schemes**, it is considered providing coordination among the approved projects in renewal areas and if necessary, making revisions in the projects in question. Within this framework, the objective of this study is to approach the site as a whole with all infrastructure and street fabric rather than just restorations and conservation for individual buildings. As for the current state of the project, Fatih Municipality revises projects for the renewal areas to ensure the active participation of the stakeholders and a parcel based implementation approach.

Decision adopted in WHC 37th Session states that **"it is welcomed that the height restrictions have been put in place by the State Party in a truly manner to protect the silhouette of the Historic Peninsula."**

The 1/100,000 scale Istanbul Master Plan that serves as the reference document defining the major decisions regarding Istanbul's future with respect to spaces and guiding zoning plans emphasizes that "a holistic silhouette main plan" for the districts including the Historic Peninsula, the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus that constitute the silhouette of Istanbul and that have the potential to have an influence on the silhouette be prepared and "the work to preserve the silhouette" need to be made. Within this scope, various view points were identified at important areas of observation and use (the Bosphorus Bridge, the Üsküdar coastline, Harem, Haydarpaşa, Kadıköy Center coastline, Moda, Kabataş coast, the Unkapanı Bridge, the Galata Bridge etc.); the natural surface differences and the average eye level were also included in the analyses carried out according to these view points. Therefore, the ultimate height of the buildings that would not have an impact on the silhouette of the Historic

Peninsula was analyzed digitally. The work on the Silhouette Master Plan for the Asian side of Istanbul still continues.

In this regard, the maximum verge difference heights were determined according to sea level for the properties in the periphery districts (Bağcılar, Bahçelievler, Bakırköy, Bayrampaşa, Esenler, Eyüp, Gaziosmanpaşa, Güngören, Küçükçekmece ve Zeytinburnu) that have the potential to have an impact on the silhouette of the Historic Peninsula, in other words the most important part of the silhouette of Istanbul, from the west and the northwest directions and the values obtained were provided as an annex to the plan based on the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Assembly's 13.01.2012 dated and 173 numbered decision.

The Second Part of the Report, covers the issues not stated in the Decisions of World Heritage Committee. These are Fatih Madrasa of Ayasofya Museum, Restoration of Tekfur Palace and Garden Areas by the Land Walls.

The letter of UNESCO World Heritage Center dated 17.04.2014, which was conveyed to the Site Management Directorate via the Permanent Delegation of UNESCO to Turkey expresses concerns regarding the potential reconstruction of Ayasofya Madrasa which is a two storey building next to Ayasofya Musesum. Istanbul Site Management Directorate, sent an official letter dated 28.05.2014 and numbered 2014/50 to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism about the necessity of preparation of a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Report on the basis of World Heritage Convention and the ICOMOS Guidelines of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment. The tender was already made, but the implementation of the project was called off. And, the studies for a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Report was started. Although, all of the approval processes are completed, project will be reviewed in accordance with the results of the impact assessment report and UNESCO World Heritage Center will be informed about all developments.

Tekfur Palace, next to the wing of the Land Walls in the direction of Golden Horn, is a very important building as it is the last Byzantine Palace which could survive since 12th century in a fairly good state of conservation. Current survey, archaeological survey, restitution and restoration projects was prepared by Architect Şirin Akıncı. The project was approved with the Decision dated 13.01.2010 and numbered 3484 NoIV. Regional Conservation Council of Istanbul.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Directorate of Construction Affairs held the tender according to the Law no:2863 Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties. Mr.Kishore Rao, Director of UNESCO World Heritage Centre, states in his letter dated 27.04.2014 that he was informed about the current projects on site by Europa Nostra and emphasized that according to the 174. paragraph of Operational Guidelines, the feedback of the related units are considered important. According to the report of Europa Nostra, attached to the letter, serious problems were detected such as reconstructing the historical buildings rather than conserving them in their meeting organized in Istanbul on 16-17 October 2003 and similar construction works were done in the Tekfur Palace which is the only Byzantine Palace standing today and they requested to be informed regarding this issue. Studies regarding these issues mentioned in the letter will be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Dr Tim Greenwood of the Oxford Byzantine Society (England) sent an e-mail, dated 11 February 2014, to the authority in charge. In his e-mail he voiced his concerns based on a new report, dated January 2014, and its findings, written by Figen Kıvılcım Çorakbaş, Asu Aksoy, and Alessandra Ricci on the issue of the World Heritage Site of the Istanbul City Walls. This report was developed on the basis of dissertation named as "Management Plan for the Istanbul Land Walls World Heritage Site" written by Figen Kıvılcım Çorakbaş in Koç University Anatolian Civilizations. Research Center. In his message, Dr Greenwood states that the rigorous and sensitive approach shown during the archaeological excavations in connection with the construction of the metro line, was lacking in the conservation of the historic Land Walls which are part of the UNESCO World Heritage. He kindly requested that the report and its findings should be considered and the necessary steps should be taken in order to prevent further damage to the heritage sites of Istanbul and the cultural image of Turkey.

Meetings were organized bringing together the representatives of the Fatih Municipality with the report's authors Figen Kıvılcım Çorakbaş, Asu Aksoy, and Alessandra Ricci. Objections to this report and potential improvements in the projects in question were discussed under the coordination of Site Management Directorate. The meetings held on 12 and 29 May, 25 August, 15 October and 9 November 2014 were also attended by the project implementation unit, the IMM Directorate of Construction Affairs.

With correspondence 226329 of 25/11/2014 the Culture Ministry requested the preparation of an environmental impact study for the "Yedikule Restoration Implementation Project" to be

carried out on the basis the ICOMOS Guidelines on Heritage Impact Assessments. After completion, the study is to be submitted to the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage Sites and Museums with the Culture and Tourism Ministry for submission to the World Heritage Centre.

The mayor of Greater Istanbul, Dr Kadir Topbaş, suspended project implementation and announced that the project will be reassessed on the basis of the outcome of a workshop to be held with broad participation by representatives of the authorities in charge, civil society organizations and academia.

It is planned to revise the planning and design work for the historic walls including the **Land Walls gardens** project. This revision will cover the entire project area and take the current zoning plans, the decisions of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and its regulations into account. After this work has been completed and a comprehensive project been drawn up, it is planned to prepare an environmental impact study based on the ICOMOS Guidelines on Heritage Impact Assessments.

The third part of the report, is composed of the restorations taking place primarily in the world heritage areas of Archaeological Park, Süleymaniye, Zeyrek and Land Walls. Restoration works of General Directorate of Foundations, IMM Directorate of Projects for Cultural Properties and Fatih Municipality are presented in detail.

The headline of the **4th part** of the report is Promotion, Education and Raising Awareness. Site Management Directorate being in the first place, the activities such as publications, seminars, symposiums and workshops of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Directorate of Inspection of Conservation Implementations (KUDEB), Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Directorate of Projects for Cultural Properties and General Directorate of Foundations are stated in detail in this part.

All of the information and documentations presented in the report are provided by related and authorized institutions and organizations working actively on the site and responsible for the issues mentioned in the World Heritage Committee Decision.