
Medina of Sousse (Tunisia)

No 498

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Tunisia

Name of property:

Medina of Sousse

Location:

Governorate of Sousse

Inscription: 1988

Brief Description:

Sousse was an important commercial and military port during the Aghlabid period (800–909) and is a typical example of a town dating from the first centuries of Islam. With its Kasbah, ramparts, medina (with the Great Mosque), Bu Ftata Mosque and typical ribat (both a fort and a religious building), Sousse was part of a coastal defence system.

Date of ICOMOS' approval of this report: 17 March 2010

2. ISSUES RAISED

Background

The Medina of Sousse was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988. In 1992, the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee noted that the property comprised both public and private property and was under town-planning regulations based on those at Tunis. The place maintained economic and domestic life, with a majority of residential areas and shops and public activities in about one-sixth of the districts. Challenges were faced in balancing function, the needs of the inhabitants and heritage concerns as well as the implementation of existing regulations. Additional concerns were raised regarding legislation for town planning and legal measures to control new construction and interventions at historic buildings.

The retrospective inventory process identified information needs, in particular the precise definitions of the boundaries of the property and the lack of a defined buffer zone. The State Party was asked to submit the largest scale topographic or cadastral map available to depict the boundary of the inscribed property and its buffer zone and to indicate in hectares the size of the property and its buffer zone.

At the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Seville, 2009), the Committee adopted the following decision:

Decision 33 COM 8B.44:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-09/33.COM/8B et WHC-09/33.COM/INF.8B1.Add,

2. Refers the examination of the proposed buffer zones for the Medina of Sousse, Tunisia, back to the State Party to allow it to:

- a) Consider the enlargement of the buffer zone so as to effectively and adequately conserve and protect the property. The State Party may wish to extend the buffer zone to 200m beyond the ramparts, where possible, thus following the requirements of the Heritage regulations and the listing of the ramparts as "monument historique" (Decree of 25 January 1922);*
- b) Precisely identify regulatory measures to mitigate the impact of interventions at historic monuments and of new developments on the integrity of the property. Intersectorial management arrangements should also be explored to ensure the implementation of said regulations by all stakeholders involved in the conservation and management of the property.*

Modification

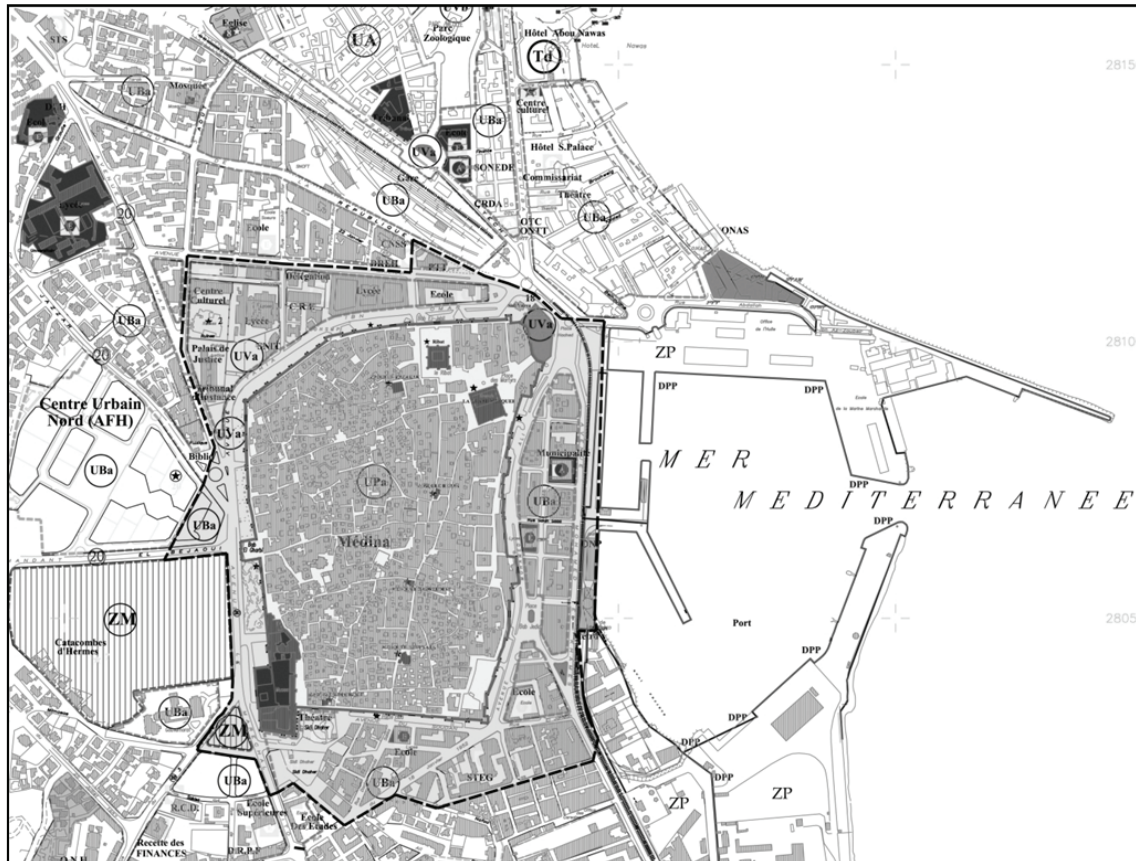
In February 2010, the State Party submitted a cadastral map showing the precise boundaries of the inscribed property and the proposed buffer zone. The inscribed property has an area of 32.61ha and the buffer zone 62.25ha (including the inscribed property). The buffer zone is a polygon whose distance from the inscribed property varies from a few meters to more than 270 meters, and which allows for the urban fabric and cadastral configurations. ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zone should enable effective and adequate conservation of the property.

The State Party has also submitted details about control measures to reduce the impact of interventions at historic monuments and intersectorial management arrangements to ensure that regulations are applied. It states that the Institut National du Patrimoine has set up a management unit for the Medina of Sousse comprising an architect / team leaders, a heritage conservationist, an administrator, a technician and two full-time inspectors based in the Medina, together with two construction superintendents. This unit is in charge of managing the Medina and establishing intersectorial discussions with the local authority and preservation associations.

ICOMOS considers that the details provided are satisfactory

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Medina of Sousse, Tunisia, be ***approved***.



Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone