
Lijiang (China)

No 811

1 Basic data

State Party

People's Republic of China

Name of property

Old Town of Lijiang

Location

Yunnan Province

Inscription

1997

Brief description

The Old Town of Lijiang, which is perfectly adapted to the uneven topography of this key commercial and strategic site, has retained a historic townscape of high quality and authenticity. Its architecture is noteworthy for the blending of elements from several cultures that have come together over many centuries. Lijiang also possesses an ancient water-supply system of great complexity and ingenuity that still functions effectively today.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2012

2 Issues raised

Background

The World Heritage site consists of three main elements: Dayan Old Town & Heilongtan Pool (Black Dragon Pool), and Shuhe and Baisha villages approximately 4 and 9 kilometres to the north respectively. At the time of inscription, the nominated and buffer zones for the latter two parts were not formally designated, while the boundaries of the nominated area for Dayan & Heilongtan Pool were insufficiently defined.

At its 31st Session, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to "Prepare a proposal for the boundaries of the core and buffer zones of the areas of Baisha and Shuhe, and submit it to the Committee for its examination according to paragraphs 163-165 of the Operational Guidelines".

In January 2008, at the request of the State Party, a joint reactive UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited Lijiang to consider the state of conservation of the property and the boundary issues. Following this visit, the State Party submitted maps and descriptions of the boundaries of the nominated and buffer zones for all three areas.

In its evaluation of these proposed buffer zones, ICOMOS considered that those for Baisha and Shuhe needed enlargement to encompass their wider setting; details needed to be provided of protective designations applied to the buffer zones and how they fit in to the overall management system for the property, and given that the three main elements of the property are linked culturally within the framework of the surrounding hills and mountains and are vulnerable to severe development pressures, ways of protecting the area between the three elements as well as key views of the mountains, perhaps through planning measures, needed to be considered.

The World Heritage Committee adopted the following decision (Quebec City, 2008):

Decision 32 COM 8B.53:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC-08/32.COM/8B.Add and WHC-08/32.COM/INF.8B1.Add,*
2. *Defers the consideration of the boundaries and buffer zones for Shuhe and Baisha villages, China, to allow the State Party to consider enlarging the buffer zones and to provide full details of their protective arrangements as part of the overall Master and Management Plans for the property;*
3. *Recommends that the State Party should consider ways to provide protection to the area between the three main elements of the property, perhaps through planning procedures, to ensure that key elements of the rural landscape that supported the settlements are sustained as well as key views of mountains.*

At its 35th Session (UNESCO Headquarters, 2011), the World Heritage Committee welcomed "the proposal for boundary modification to include protective buffer zones for Baisha and Shuhe cluster sites and to enlarge the buffer zone for Dayan town of the property" and encouraged the State Party to "submit to the World Heritage Centre a formal request for the modification of boundaries of the property and buffer zones with three copies of original topographic maps" (Decision 35COM 7B.63).

Modification

The formal request for boundary modification includes textual descriptions and maps delineating the property components and their buffer zones, summarised here as follows:

Dayan Town: The Old Town property boundary remains as originally inscribed enclosing 89 ha but the Heilongtan Pool (Black Dragon Pool) property boundary has been expanded to enclose 21 ha, extending to Elephant Mountain's foothill in the east and covering the water drainage areas to north south and west. Together the Old Town and Black Dragon Pool are now encircled by a buffer zone of 429 ha which includes Elephant Mountain in the east, the pastoral landscape in the east and south of Dayan Old Town and the water courses between the Black Dragon Pool and the Old Town.

Baisha property boundary has been established to enclose 21 ha and includes the central square and important buildings along the north-south axis and east-west cross street. Baisha's buffer zone of 85 ha surrounds the property and includes adjacent farmland, villages, mountains to the west and water systems.

Shuhe property boundary has been established to enclose 14.6 ha including the originally nominated Shuhe housing cluster and the water source of Shuhe in the north. The buffer zone of 68.3 ha surrounds the property and extends to mountains in the west including water systems and farmland to the south and villages in the north and east.

The proposal clarifies the boundaries of the three components of the Old Town of Lijiang property and includes buffer zones around the components which encompass their settings. The property and buffer zone boundaries were ratified by the Lijiang Municipal People's Government in 2010. When approved by the World Heritage Committee, national laws and regulations will apply to the boundaries including the Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics. Within the property (defined as a protected area under this law), controls prohibit demolition and require repairs and functional adaptation of buildings to retain the original appearance. In the buffer zone (construction control zone), controls require new buildings to be in harmony with the surrounding construction.

Encompassing the property and buffer zones is the 'environment coordination area' established by the 'Conservation Master Plan for the Old Town of Lijiang as a World Cultural Heritage Site' to cover the whole Lijiang *Bazi* (Plain). This provides controls over construction and protective measures for the environmental features and eco-systems in the area between the three components. In this zone, buildings not in harmony with the Old Town are prohibited.

ICOMOS considers that the property and buffer zones for the Old Town of Lijiang have now been adequately defined, and that protective measures are in place to cover the areas between and surrounding the components of the property.

3 ICOMOS Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundaries of the Old Town of Lijiang, China, be **approved**.

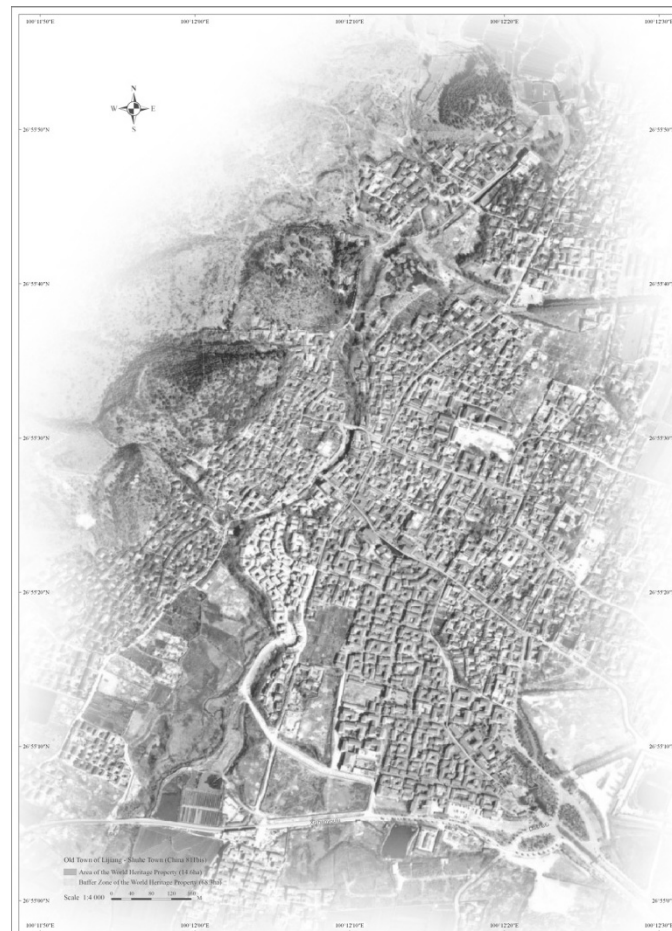
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zones for the Old Town of Lijiang, China, be **approved**.



Dayan Old Town - map showing the revised boundaries of the property



Basha Village - map showing the revised boundaries of the property



Shuhe Town - map showing the revised boundaries of the property