

Turkey

Great Mosque and Hospital of Divriği

Brief description

This region of Anatolia was conquered by the Turks at the beginning of the 11th century. In 1228-29 Emir Ahmet Shah founded a mosque, with its adjoining hospital, at Divriği. The mosque has a single prayer room and is crowned by two cupolas. The highly sophisticated technique of vault construction, and a creative, exuberant type of decorative sculpture - particularly on the three doorways, in contrast to the unadorned walls of the interior - are the unique features of this masterpiece of Islamic architecture.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription 1985

Agency responsible for site management

- Ministry of Culture and Tourism
General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (i) (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

Divriği Great Mosque and its hospital that we tried to introduce corresponds to the first criteria as a cultural property.

Apart from its architectural composition its technical and aesthetic features made Divriği Great Mosque and its hospital universal and different than its similar examples in Anatolia.

No other example can be shown in Anatolia in which technique combined with aesthetics and how technical possibilities help the construction of this architectural power. At this point we have to appreciate the great ability of the head architect of the külliye (Collection of buildings surrounding a mosque), Hürremşah, from Ahlat, in his stone and wooden work.

Apart from this, architectural techniques of the region with the opportunities supplied by natural materials and the artisan and craftsman group from different cultural environments helped Divriği Great Mosque and its hospital brought out as an original structure.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of the Divriği monumental ensemble on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria i and iv.

- Criterion i. A unique artistic achievement, this cultural property in itself represents one of Islamic architecture's most beautiful built spaces.
- Criterion iv. The Divriği mosque is an outstanding example of Seldjukian mosques in Anatolia having neither a courtyard, colonnades nor an uncovered ablutions basin but which (owing perhaps to the harshness of the climate) organizes all religious functions in an enclosed area. A charitable foundation, the contiguous hospital, makes an already exceptional ensemble even more interesting thanks to a princely command.

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- No information available on whether the Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value
- Need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the statement of significance
- Short proposal for revised text has been made by State Party: "The only existing example of Seljukian hospital and mosque complex in Anatolia with its technical and aesthetic features constructed by the architect Hurrem Shah from Ahlat"

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- No buffer zone has been defined, but is needed
No need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the buffer zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Since the property is designated a "cultural property to be conserved" it is subject to the conservation legislation

- Protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Religious use, visitor attraction free of charge

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group set up in 2004
- No site manager/coordinator, but is needed
- Levels of public authority primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional
- The current management system is not sufficiently effective

Actions proposed

- A protocol was signed between the bodies related to the preparation of management plan and conservation project

5. Management Plan

- No management plan, but will be prepared

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Extra funding through World Heritage status: a special fund is allocated to the governorship to be used for the conservation project
- Funding is sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: no staff
- No adequate staff resources to protect, maintain and promote the site

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Average: conservation
- Bad: management, promotion, interpretation, education
- Very bad: visitor management

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- No training on or off the site, but needed

9. Visitor Management

- No visitor statistics available

- Visitor needs: All kinds of service units for visitors are needed

10. Scientific Studies

- Agreed research framework/strategy
- Researches on building materials
- After the finalization of the researches, the outcomes will be used for determining the intervention techniques and types

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage site among visitors, local communities, businesses, and local authorities
- Web site available

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- The timber roof is restored, the cover is replaced by lead; the concrete stairs attached on the northern and southern facades are replaced by iron; the soil ground of the gallery is paved with concrete; the front courtyard is stone paved; the eaves are extended and covered with lead
- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Improper interventions

Measures taken/proposed

- A management plan will be prepared
- Measured drawings, restitution and restoration projects will be prepared
- Conservation, promotion, education and visitor management issues will be handled within the scope of the management plan

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation and social
- Strengths of management: A unique Seljukian social and health complex is worldwide recognized
- Weaknesses of management: lack of management plan; lack of permanent specialized staff on site; location out of the main touristic routes; lack of service units

Future actions:

- A management plan will be prepared
- Measured drawings, restitution and restoration projects will be prepared
- Conservation, promotion, education and visitor management issues will be handled within the scope of the management plan