

Date: 20 January 2019

## **STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT BY THE STATE PARTY (UZBEKISTAN) WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY: “SAMARKAND – CROSSROAD OF CULTURES”**

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(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

### **Samarkand – Crossroad of Culture (Uzbekistan) (C 603 rev)**

“Samarkand – Crossroad of Cultures” was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001 according to criteria (i), (ii) and (iv). The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property was adopted in 2012.

The property is under the State protection, more specifically under the responsibility of the Samarkand Regional Department for Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with the State Committee for Architecture.

The local and provincial administration of Samarkand, together with the Department of Cultural Heritage of Samarkand and Djizzak Region, have prepared this State of Conservation report to provide updated information about the property and acknowledge progress in the implementation of the Decision 43 COM 7B.77 of 2019 (Baku, Azerbaijan), for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020. The State of Conservation report was required by World Heritage Committee, Decision 43 COM 7B.77, point 10.

### **1. Executive Summary**

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Samarkand city is going through an important urban regeneration process, aimed at the improvement of the residents' quality of life, supporting economic development and ensuring a healthy environment, while placing culture, and in particular heritage conservation, within the larger development planning framework.

The draft of the new Master Plan, prepared by Tashkent Planning Institute together with a wide range of stakeholders including city and provincial authorities, the Regional Department for Cultural Heritage, experts and communities, is close to completion. This plan, which embraces the Historic Urban Landscape approach, integrates the goals of social and economic development with the goals of urban heritage conservation and strikes to establish a balanced and sustainable relationship between the built and natural environment. The final draft, together with the new traffic scheme, will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee for review by ICOMOS, before approval.

Thanks to a strong political support, the recent important efforts made to preserve the city's urban heritage while making Samarkand a more attractive and sustainable city have been continued and intensified:

- a) On 24 August 2019, a law “On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of the republic of Uzbekistan concerning the enhanced protection of objects of the material cultural heritage” has been approved. The law envisages increased responsibility and liability for violation of rules for the protection and use of tangible cultural heritage, not only for deliberate destruction, but also for negligence that caused significant damage.
- b) The inventory aimed at updating the list of protected buildings, has been completed. The identified objects, situated on the territory of the property and buffer zones, have been included in the Project of Detailed Planning (PDP) of the draft Master Plan of Samarkand.
- c) The “Development Control of the Historic Center of Samarkand and its Buffer Zones”, prepared by Tashkent Urban Planning Institute, together with local heritage experts, is still under preparation.

- d) The preparation of the Management Plan, which follows the holistic approach of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), is in progress. Its aim is double: the protection and conservation of the World Heritage property, but also its sustainable development. The assessments are already completed, and an overall vision, objectives and actions have been drafted together with the stakeholder group during workshops, meetings, and interviews. The draft plan of actions is now being discussed with the communities living in the concerned mahallas. A first draft of this plan will be available in February this year.
- e) The digital model of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone (orthophotomap), has been completed.
- f) The proposal for creating a network of pedestrian streets, together with streetscape improvement schemes including stone paving and landscaping, has been completed.
- g) The “Tashkent Urban Planning Institute”, together with local experts reviewed and expanded the actual boundaries of the buffer zone and proposed new boundaries in order to correct the errors and omissions found in the minor modification of boundaries approved in 2016. The request will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre as soon as further in-depth studies and expert consultation will confirm the above-mentioned proposal.

Regarding the development projects related to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) international summit, the Samarkand government decided to create a touristic zone far away from the historic centre and its buffer zone - along the Samarkand rowing canal - grouping all the hotel facilities that were initially proposed to be located in areas requiring the demolition of existing mahallas (or parts thereof) within the property, buffer zone and outside the buffer zone.

The multifunctional project “Samarkand City” Tourist Zone – initially planned to be built on Amir Timur street, right outside the boundaries of the property – will be also built at this remote area of the rowing canal. The unbuilt land at the initial location on Amir Timur street will be used for a low-rise hotel development, but no investor manifested interest for this project yet.

Only four projects, involving redevelopment, reuse or refurbishment of existing properties – without requiring any demolition or relocation of residents - have been pursued on the territory of the World Heritage property:

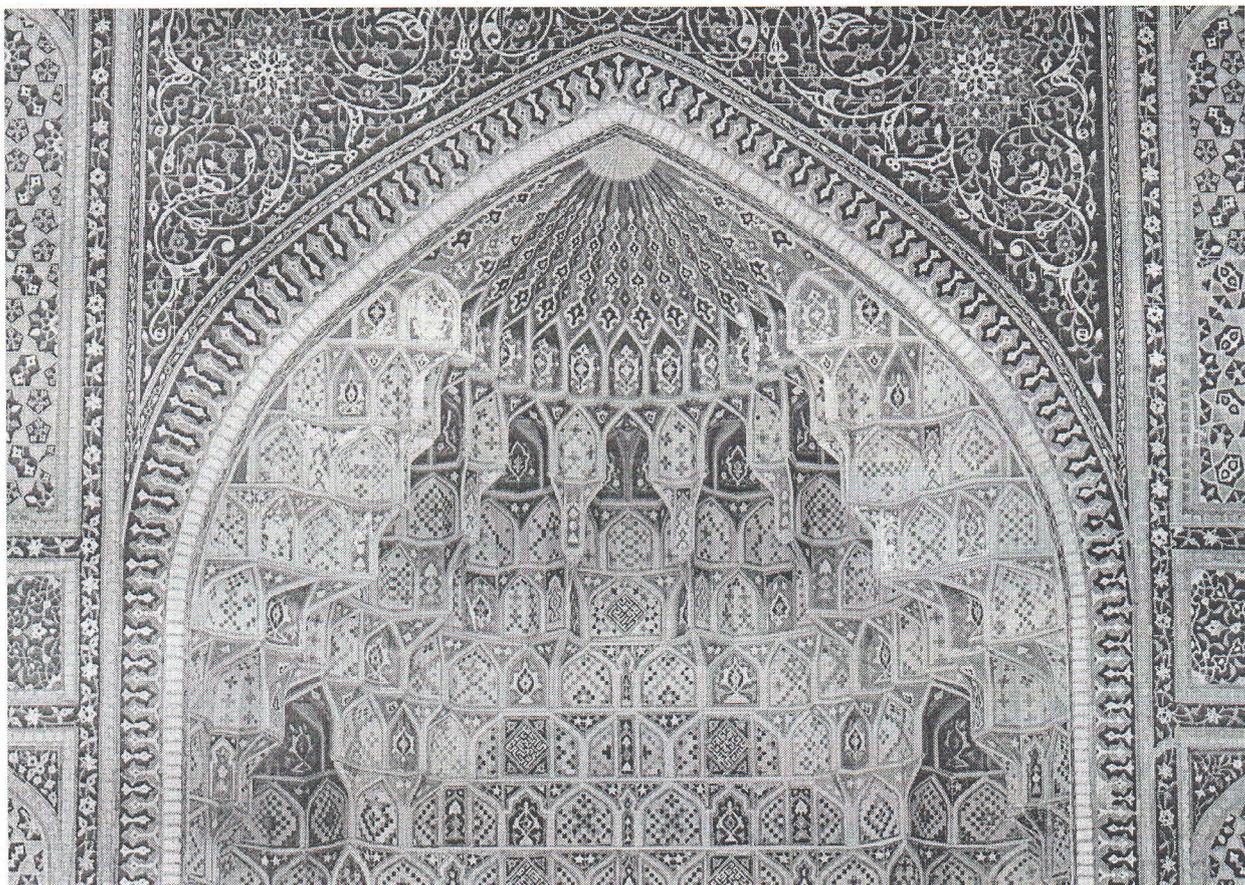
- (1) the development of a new In Tourist hotel in lieu of the former 11-storey hotel, which was in bad structural condition and whose important height had adverse visual effects on the historic urban landscape. The proposed development is not higher than the neighboring historic building of the Department of Biology of the Samarkand State University;
- (2) the re-use of the existing stand-up structure of a former factory on University Boulevard; and
- (3) the refurbishment of two existing hotels involving minor modification of façades but no modification of footprint or height (“President” and “Afrosyab” hotels).

For the above hotel facilities, drawings have been completed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS or discussed with the Reactive Monitoring Mission.

The Hilton hotel located on Ibn Sina boulevard, on a former industrial site, outside the current buffer zone, and outside visual cones, is under construction. Based on prior consultation of topographic map, context analysis and visual examination, the Design Guidelines produced for priority projects related to SCO Summit established that a building at this location would not adversely impact the OUV of the property, provided that the maximum height, alignment, and scale are respected.

The limited resources, both human and financial, of the Samarkand Regional Department for Cultural Heritage remain a concern, especially the limited number and capacity of staff. The Samarkand Regional Department for Cultural Heritage needs to be strengthened. According to the Presidential Order of 19 December 2018, its human, financial, and technical resources shall be enhanced, but these measures have not been implemented yet.

Finally, the need for capacity-building in heritage conservation for decision-makers, architects, planners, engineers and craftsmen constitutes a critical challenge. The assistance of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies in this matter would be greatly appreciated.



**"SAMARKAND - CROSSROADS OF CULTURES"  
WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY**

**STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT  
(2020)**

Samarkand-Tashkent, January 2021

# **SAMARKAND – CROSSROAD OF CULTURES**

## **World Heritage Property**

**(Uzbekistan, 603 rev)**

### **Identification**

**Geographic coordinates:** N39 40 6.996 E67 0 0

**Date of Inscription:** 2001

**Criteria:** (i) (ii) (iv)

**Minor boundary modification inscribed year:** 2016

**Property:** 1,123 ha

**Buffer zone:** 1,369 ha

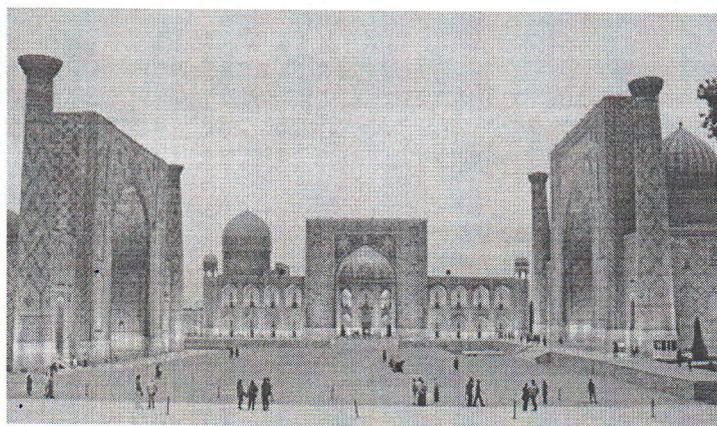
**Ref:** 603 rev

**Reporting period:** 2020

### **Responsible organizations for the preparation of the state of conservation report:**

- Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- Khokimiyat of Samarkand City;
- Samarkand Regional Department of Cultural Heritage.

The State of Conservation Report was required by the World Heritage Committee, Decision 43 COM 7B.77 (Baku, 2019), for examination at its 44th session.



“Samarkand – Crossroad of Cultures” was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001 according to criteria (i), (ii) and (iv). The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property was adopted in 2012.

The property is under State protection, in the responsibility of the Samarkand Regional Department for Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with the State Committee for Architecture. The Management framework acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee in 2013 guides the management activities within the property and a new Management Plan has been developed. Its first draft is currently under internal review.

## 1. Executive Summary of the report

Samarkand city is going through an important urban regeneration process, aiming at the improvement of the residents' quality of life, supporting economic development and ensuring a healthy environment. This process places the conservation and management of the World Heritage property within the larger development planning framework.

The draft of the new Master Plan, developed by Tashkent Planning Institute together with a wide range of stakeholders, has been discussed with the Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) in January 2020. The recommendations of the RMM Report relative to the City Master Plan have been integrated and the Plan will be sent for review to the World Heritage Centre prior to its final approval. This plan adopts the Historic Urban Landscape approach, by integrating the goals of social and economic development with the goals of urban heritage conservation.

Thanks to a continued political support, the recent important efforts made to preserve the city's urban heritage while making Samarkand a more attractive and sustainable city – mentioned in the State of Conservation Report for 2019 – have been pursued in 2020, as follows:

On December 29, 2020, H.E. Abdulla Aripov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, signed a Decree on the establishment of the Scientific Research Institute on Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of Uzbekistan.

The State enterprise "Tashkent research and design institute for urban planning" is finalizing the preparation of the draft Master Plan of the city of Samarkand, the new Traffic Scheme and the Project of Detailed Planning for its historic center and buffer zones. All these documents will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review

The proposal for creating a network of pedestrian streets, together with streetscape improvement schemes including stone paving and landscaping, has been completed and a HIA study is under preparation.

The deficiencies in the establishment of the buffer zone detected by the team of international experts in occasion of the development of Design Guidelines for SCO-related Priority Projects have been confirmed by the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM). The "Tashkent Urban Planning Institute", together with local experts are reviewing the boundaries of the buffer zone upon recommendations of the RMM Report in order to enhance the protection of the property's OUV and attributes. A request for minor modification of boundaries will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for examination by the World Heritage Committee.

Regarding the priority development projects related to Shanghai Cooperation Organization event, a comprehensive study has been completed in March 2019 including survey, mapping and analysis of the building sites selected for these priority projects (mainly hotels) and their settings. The study indicated that redevelopment of built-up urban areas involving demolition of well-maintained neighborhoods and relocation of their residents was not recommended and alternative locations should be sought. Moreover, the study also provided urban design and architectural guidelines for each location, meant to guide the establishment of development proposals. As a result of this study, the tourism developments intended in certain locations considered inappropriate have been relocated outside the inscribed property and buffer zone, while the design proposals for those located in sensitive locations within the property have been reviewed. These projects have been presented and discussed with the Reactive Monitoring Mission in January 2020, which visited all the project sites, and the recommendations of this mission report regarding these proposals are currently being implemented.

The implementation of the moratorium on all capital construction, repair, demolition, excavation and land management in the inscribed property and its buffer zone, has been reinforced in 2020 and the Samarkand Regional Department of Cultural Heritage, in cooperation with law

enforcement agencies, constantly monitors the implementation of the moratorium in the historic city.

In response to point 8 of the Decision 43 COM 7B.77, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission conducted by Dr. Feng Jing, Chief of the Asia and the Pacific Region, World Heritage Centre, and ICOMOS expert Richard McKay was invited to Samarkand on January 12-16, 2020, to consider the full scope of the development projects, including hotel development and refurbishment projects, the different tools and legal instruments for the new development, and the Proposals for the development of the Master Plan and the updates to the Management Plan in following the HUL approach. The Mission met and discuss with the local authorities, experts and professionals. They got acquainted with the construction work carried out in the city and expressed their views. At the end of the visit, the Mission noted that effective work has been done to implement the Decisions of the World Heritage Committee, in particular the Decision No 43 COM 7B.77.



Photo taken at the Ministry of Culture, Tashkent January 12, 2020



At Registan Ensemble, Samarkand January 15, 2020

The limited resources, both human and financial, of the Samarkand Department for Cultural Heritage remain a concern, especially the limited number and capacity of staff. Also, capacity-building in heritage conservation for decision-makers, architects, planners, engineers and craftsmen is still a critical issue, to be addressed in priority.