"SAMARKAND - CROSSROADS OF CULTURES"
WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT
(2020)
Samarkand-Tashkent, January 2021
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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.
2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee (43 COM 7B.44)

This section of the report informs about the progress made in the implementation of the decision 43 COM 7B.77 adopted at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Baku, 2019).

The overall condition of the historic center of Samarkand, which is included in the World Heritage List as "Samarkand Crossroads of Cultures ", is good, thanks to the continued efforts made by the Department of Cultural Heritage in Tashkent and its regional branch, the Samarkand Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and the support of Samarkand city and Samarkand region administrations.

In the last two years, a series of important resolutions and decrees has been issued, in order to improve the preservation of historical objects and the protection and management of the historic cities, in particular the World Heritage cities of Uzbekistan. Most of them have been mentioned in the previous State of Conservation Report for 2019, but a very important document that have been issued recently, needs to be further added: 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 main tasks of the Institute are the following:

- conducting scientific research work on conservation, restoration and reconstruction of heritage sites, archeological monuments, museum collections and other items of tangible cultural heritage while preserving their outstanding historical value;
- conducting inventories of objects of immovable cultural heritage and heritage impact assessments for restoration or development proposals and infrastructure projects planned in the protected areas, especially in World Heritage Properties;
- learning and introducing advanced and innovative practices and technologies in preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage, creating new museums, expositions, etc.

As suggested by the World Heritage Committee in its Decisions 39 COM 7B.73 (Bonn, 2015) and 43 COM 7B.77 (Baku, 2019), the Master Plan (GenPlan) of Samarkand city applied the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape (HUL, 2011), to help manage the rapid urbanization and development of the property.

A new revised traffic scheme for the city of Samarkand, as part of the Master Plan has been finalized. The main transport routes in the inscribed property and buffer zone will not be widened, as envisaged by the previous scheme of 2004, and pedestrian access to the city centre will be increased. Transit roads are planned outside the buffer zone. Both Master Plan and Traffic Scheme documents will be referred to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS before adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Until the city's Master Plan and the new updated Management Plan are approved, a temporary moratorium has been established in early 2020.

In 2019, a team of the "Institut Paris Région" (Paris Region Urban Planning Institute, France) examined the proposed development projects and their location and developed Design Guidelines for priority projects in Samarkand related to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization event in 2022. Following the conclusions of this study, the major tourism development planned initially on the site of the former Alpomish plant, on Amir Temur Street in Samarkand, including tourist facilities and hotels, have been relocated to the rowing canal area, 4.0 km away from the buffer zone of the historic city. This development is currently under construction.

Also regarding the construction of large hotels for the reception of guests of the SCO event, it should be noted that all initial plans for the construction of hotels requiring the demolition of private houses on the territory of Namozgoh and Jamshid mahallas and Spartak Stadion have been canceled. Projects considered for further implementation, are the existing "Afrosiyob", and "Registan Plaza" (to be renovated) "Inturist" (new construction replacing the former InTurist Hotel),
and a new hotel that reuses the structure of the former Drilling Plant, all located in the protected area of the inscribed property. The proposals for the above have been discussed with the WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission during their visit to Samarkand in January 2020. For each of them, recommendations have been provided in the RMM report. These will be closely followed in the review of these proposals and HIAs are being prepared then submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS.

After preparing the heritage impact assessments in accordance to ICOMOS HIA Guidance (2011), the documents will be submitted to the World Heritage Center for review by ICOMOS.

According to the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 19, 2018 No PP-4068 "On measures to radically improve the activities in the field of protection of tangible cultural heritage" all the planned construction and beautification projects will be carried out in coordination with the Department for Cultural Heritage and the UNESCO World Heritage Center.

Point 22 of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 5781 of August 13, 2019 states: The General Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan to ensure strict control over the prevention of landscaping and construction work on the territory of tangible cultural heritage sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, unless the matter is agreed by the UNESCO National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Thus, since early 2020, all new construction, demolitions and reconstructions of buildings and landscaping works on the territory of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone were stopped.

Also, the traffic scheme envisaging the widening of roads within the property and the buffer zone has been discarded. In the framework of the development of the Master Plan, a new traffic scheme has been proposed.

As a new measure, no major development work or conservation work within the property and buffer zone can be carried out without a Heritage Impact Assessment study.

The owners of houses demolished in 2017-2018 were paid compensations at the market price, or provided with alternative housing in a suitable area. Each demolition decision was agreed on a voluntary basis and documented.

The approval of a new Master Plan for the city of Samarkand is a necessary measure for the further development of the city for the next 20 years. The preparation of this Master Plan has no connection with the upcoming holding of the Shanghai Organization Summit in 2022. This plan was needed to replace the outdated plan of 1980, which is still valid.

As indicated in the previous State of Conservation Report for 2019, during the preparation of the Master Plan for the City of Samarkand it was noted that the boundaries of the buffer zone approved in 2016 by the World Heritage Committee present some inaccuracies and that they are not properly established as to provide an efficient protection of all the attributes of the inscribed property. By the order of the Governor of Samarkand region no. 03-01/440 dated April 14, 2020, a working group was established to review the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, based on thorough research. The boundary issue was presented and discussed in a meeting of the regional administration (minutes of April 20, 2020 No 06-01/77), following comments of the Reactive Monitoring Mission of January 2020. The suggestions included in the RMM Report are being currently integrated and a new minor boundary modification will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in view of its examination by the World Heritage Committee.

In the last two years, the Ministry of Culture, and the Regional Department of Cultural Heritage initiated and carried out a series of community outreach and awareness rising activities, using diverse tools and media. Among these, it is worth mentioning that on August 26, 2019, Samarkand hosted an international conference on the "Preservation of tangible and intangible heritage: current problems and strategies for their solution", with the participation of Mr. Abdullah Aripov,
the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Mrs. Audray Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO. The conference program included presentations by scientists and experts in the field of preservation of urban heritage in post-Soviet cities, urban planning, management of historic cities, documentation of urban heritage using new technologies.

Several additional measures have been taken in 2020 to improve the protection and preservation of the historic center of Samarkand and build awareness among the population, including:

- community inspectors have been assigned to all protected heritage objects in Samarkand.

- a plaque with the UNESCO emblem and the World Heritage emblem following the guidelines for their use defined in the Operational Guidelines was erected on Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo Street informing residents and visitors that the historic center of Samarkand is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List under the name "Samarkand Crossroads of Cultures".
3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

There are no other conservation issues that may have an impact on the property's OUV identified in 2020.

4. Intended major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the property, the buffer zone and/or corridors or other areas

The following projects are planned for the next three years:

- A series of restoration works will be carried out on listed buildings within the inscribed property, following submission to the World Heritage Centre and review by ICOMOS. They include among others:
  - Restoration of the Amir Timur gates, in particular the White Gate portal, which is part of the Ark (citadel) residence of Amir Timur.
  - Restoration of the Mausoleum of the great spiritual leader Sheikh Nuredin Basir Kutb-Chaardakhum in Samarkand. The mausoleum is located near the palace of the emirs of Bukhara, who ruled Samarkand after the expulsion of the Timurids in the early 16th century. The palace was referred to as "Kok Tash" after the throne of Timur, who built the citadel in Samarkand.
  - Restoration of the Amir Timur Hammam in Samarkand.

- Creation of a pedestrian street project as a recreational area to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors on Alisher Navoi street in the inscribed property following submission to the World Heritage Centre and review by ICOMOS.

- Creation of a residential development on the territory of the Alpomish plant (formerly called "Red Engine"), following submission to the World Heritage Centre and review by ICOMOS.

- Creation of an Astronomy Centre in the vicinity of the listed site of Ulugbek Observatory. A Heritage Impact Assessment report for this project has been prepared and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

The full report can be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System.

6. Signature of the Authority

Mrs. Kamola Akilova
Deputy Minister of Culture, Republic of Uzbekistan
ANNEX 1

MAP OF THE INSCRIBED PROPERTY AND BUFFER ZONE

THE MAP OF SAMARKAND - CROSSROAD OF CULTURES, WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

1. Afro-asiab archaeological area (229 ha)
2. Medieval Timurid and European cities (841.5 ha)
3. Ulugh-Bek's Observatory (19.5 ha)
4. The ensembles of Abi-Darum and Istaraut-Moana (26.3 ha)
5. Namazgoh mosque (6.7 ha)

Principle Scientific Production Department for the preservation and utilization of objects of cultural heritages of the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2011

PROJECTED UTM ZONE 42, WGS 1984
ANNEX 2
PROPOSALS FOR NEW HOTEL DEVELOPMENT OR RENOVATION OF EXISTING HOTELS

Hotel Registan Plaza

The Registan Plaza Hotel is a 4-star hotel with 164 rooms. It is currently in good condition and is considered to be one of the best hotels in the city.

The building is 28 meters high and has 8 floors, what could have a strong impact on the city landscape. The hotel is located inside the World Heritage Site, along the University Boulevard in the European historic district, at the crossroad with the Amir Timur monument. The location of the hotel is a very strategic one. The Registan, Gur Emir, Ruhabod and the entire historic centre can be seen from the hotel. Also, the building is located on the edge of the Timurid city, near the wall of the Timurid citadel. Remains of the Timurid city walls are still present between the building and the main boulevard.

It is surrounded by a large park. Its footprint does not correspond to the street alignment followed by the other buildings along the boulevard. The exteriors and interiors are in good condition, but need to be updated.
Registan Plaza Hotel
Hotel Afrosyob is located inside the former Citadel walls. The Rukhobod complex, the Gur Emir mausoleum and the Registan ensemble could be seen from the hotel. Some of the remains of the walls of the Citadel are in the basement of the hotel.

Hotel Afrosyob is considered one of the most comfortable hotels in Samarkand. It must be renovated to meet the modern standards required for a luxury hotel.

It is built on the slopes of the former walls of the Citadel. The hotel has little visual impact from the Hokimiyat area. But there is an important visual impact from the area of the Rukhobod complex and from the axis of the Registan boulevard. The hotel building should be maintained or reduced, but not expanded.

The hotel benefits of great views. The usages of light yellow burnt bricks on the facades corresponds to the colors used in the historical walls of the Timurid city. Its form, organized around the courtyard, around the garden and pool, is consistent with the principle of traditional dwellings, despite its large scale. The current contemporary design of the hotel does not mimic the historic buildings avoiding confusion between exceptional monuments and hotels.

But the hotel must be modernized and its visual impact has to be reduced. The use of white colour has a strong effect. The vertical shape of the facade gives the impression of a greater height than necessary. The massive awning at the hotel entrance is heavy. The exterior facades should be changed as to better integrate with the surrounding monuments.

Thus, the new design will play an important role in mitigating the visual impact of this hotel on some of the important attributes of the World Heritage of the city of Samarkand.
The building has a surface of 13,440 m² and is located along the main axis of the European historic city, the University Boulevard. It is located near to an important listed monument, the Faculty of Biology of the University of Samarkand, and other universities and schools that have high architectural value. In such a prestigious location, the quality of the architectural design is very important.

Within the project site there are several buildings of different value. The large building of the previous commercial center had no architectural interest and should be demolished. The small building also has no architectural value. There are two large industrial buildings, one of which is built of baked brick, which must be fully protected and restored. Its facade on the main boulevard disfigured by the recent poor alterations, must be restored to its original appearance.

Most of the buildings on the boulevard were aligned, but there are some new constructions which do not respect this established alignment. They should align with the pre-existing historic building on each side of the boulevard. The rear area of these buildings is connected to a small public space with a mahalla center and a pool, which could be rehabilitated and integrated to the mahalla. Thus, the project should create a smooth link between the prestigious boulevard of the European part of the historic city and the mahalla pattern behind.

One part of the project site is overlapping the protective zone of the Faculty of Biology building.
The location of the former Drilling Plant
InTourist Hotel

The building of the InTourist Hotel is located in a very strategic area of the inscribed property. It is located at the outskirts of the European part of the historic city, at the beginning of the University Boulevard, next to the Timurid mahalla, near the Gur Emir mausoleum, opposite the Ruhobod ensemble, overlooking the Registan and Bibi Khanem ensembles.

This prestigious location indicates the complexity of the project to be prepared, as the views onto the important buildings located near the hotel could be spoiled.

This hotel, located opposite the Registan plaza hotel, needed to be well coordinated with this building located on the other side of the Boulevard. A good balance between these two buildings had to be found as a gate for entering the main boulevard of the European part of the historic city.

Today the hotel is not occupied. The previous InTourist Hotel was considered to be too high (11 floors) for the historical landscape. The proximity of the listed building of the Faculty of Biology and other remarkable buildings, could be very sensitive. The protection zone of the Faculty of Biology building established by the Department of Cultural Heritage covers the entire site of the Intourist Hotel.