

STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT
BY THE STATE PARTY

(In compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (C 708bis)

1. Executive Summary of the report

In accordance with Decision 45 COM 7B.186 of the World Heritage Committee adopted at its extended 45th session, the State Party has prepared the State of Conservation report concerning the World Heritage property 'Historical Monuments of Mtskheta'.

This report updates the Committee following the previous report submitted to the World Heritage Centre in December 2022.

In response to Decision 45 COM 7B.186, this report provides updated information on progress in the elaboration of the Mtskheta Urban Land Use Master Plan. The document also presents conservation activities conducted at the World Heritage property 'Historical Monuments of Mtskheta'.

The report is structured in line with the template provided at Annex 13 of the *Operational Guidelines*. The clauses of the World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.186 are given in italics.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

Decision 45 COM 7B.186

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision 44 COM 7B.48 adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Acknowledges the State Party's continued efforts to advance the development of the 'Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta', including Mtskheta Urban Land Use Master Plan (ULUMP), and reiterates its request that the drafts of the main components of ULUMP be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, no later than 1 February 2024;*

On 29 February 2024, the Council of Mtskheta Municipality formally approved the Mtskheta City Master Plan Concept by Decree #36 and adopted some recommendations for consideration. The documentation was submitted by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia (hereinafter referred to as the Agency) to the World Heritage Centre for review and evaluation by the Advisory Bodies. In September 2024, the Agency received the ICOMOS Technical Review regarding the Mtskheta City Master Plan Concept, which was subsequently provided to Mtskheta Municipality for its consideration.

4. *Commends the State Party for its decision to maintain the 'Enactment of Special Regime of Regulation of Urban Development and Land Privatization in the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones of Mtskheta Municipality' (the Moratorium) until the 'Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta' has been adopted, and until all the necessary control and monitoring systems have been put in place, and encourages the State Party to strictly implement the Moratorium in the meantime;*

The Moratorium remains in full force until the Management Documentation for Special Territorial Development of Mtskheta is adopted.

5. *Welcomes the ongoing and planned conservation works at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church, Jvari Monastery Complex and Samtavro Monastery taking into account ICOMOS recommendations on these projects in order to complete the procedures or considering additional aspects for their documentation, analysis, conservation and protection measures;*
6. *Invites the State Party to continue to implement the recommendations of the 2018 Advisory mission as well as to take into account the recommendations included in relevant ICOMOS Technical Reviews to ensure that actions with negative impacts on the World Heritage property are avoided;*

The Agency continues to conduct conservation studies and implement conservation works at the property.

During the reporting period, the Agency undertook a comprehensive conservation study regarding the interior of Jvari Monastery (Great Church). The overall aim of the project was to evaluate the current state of the building by investigating the interior building material and conducting structural analysis, thereby identifying conservation needs and defining corresponding conservation actions. To achieve this, a range of multidisciplinary studies, fieldwork, laboratory analyses and in situ tests were performed. The key aspects of the conservation study included:

- Assessment of the interior building material of the monastery: laboratory analyses were conducted to define the composition and current condition of the interior building material, as well as the types and causes of the deterioration and the extent of the damage. Based on the assessment, the mapping of the building material, stone damages, proposed interventions were carried out.

- In situ testing of the conservation material: stones with different damages in the interior of the monastery were treated with ethyl silicate, voids between the still stones were filled with lime solution and the residues of candle wax and soot on the stone surface were removed using three different substances.
- Structural assessment of the interior of the monastery and analysis of the stress-deformation state of the entire structure: material damages were assessed and classified into four distinct groups, according to which maps of structural damages were produced. Comprehensive studies and calculations were carried out to assess the impact of damages and the strengthening interventions on the bearing capacity of the monastery, in particular, to determine the causes of nonlinear distortion (cracks), evaluate the impact of the cracks and climate on the strength of the monastery, and assess the effectiveness of previous strengthening interventions. Additionally, it aimed to determine the strength of the building elements, seismic resistance and evaluate the impact of recommended conservation activities.

The conservation study, based on multidisciplinary research, identified necessary interventions for the interior building material of the monastery, established conservation methodologies, and offered relevant recommendations.

During the reporting period, the Agency conducted a conservation research project regarding Transfiguration Church and St. Nino's Church (Samtavro Monastery). The primary objective of the research project was to assess the condition of the building material used on the plinth of Transfiguration Church and the first row of the facade of St. Nino's Church, to identify conservation needs and define appropriate conservation measures.

A fundamental part of the research project involved fieldwork and laboratory diagnostics aimed at analyzing the composition and current condition of the

building material as well as investigating the types, causes, and extent of the deterioration. Various laboratory analyses were performed, including biological and salt analyses, mineralogical-petrographic analysis, and determination of physical-mechanical properties of the building material. Furthermore, in situ tests were conducted to identify effective and safe treatment methodologies.

Based on scientific findings of the project, proposals were made on specific methodologies aimed at addressing the long-term negative effects of the natural factors and past interventions on the plinth and the first row of the façade of the churches. These proposals were developed with an emphasis on the principles of minimal intervention and reversibility.

This conservation research project was submitted to ICOMOS International, which, in its conclusion (dated May 2023), assessed it positively and made recommendations for implementing the proposed conservation activities outlined in the project. Consequently, the Agency undertook following conservation works at Samtavro Monastery: Water run-off basalt slabs along the northern facade of Transfiguration Church were rearranged to prevent water infiltration into the foundation of the church, the slabs of the basalt drainage channel were laid on a lime-sand mortar reinforced with a fiberglass mesh; Furthermore, facade stones of the church were fixed with stainless steel anchors at the southwest and southeast corners, and missing plinth stones were partly filled with stones matching the type and nature of the existing masonry; Biological damage on the facades of St. Nino's Church and the lower parts of Transfiguration Church was treated with biocide; Consolidation of existing micro cracks, restoration-injection of lost mortar were performed; The cement layer of previous interventions was removed from the facades of St. Nino's Church and the lower parts of Transfiguration Church, and the resulting voids were filled with lime solution.

7. *Encourages the State Party to continue to submit, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, detailed information on all*

proposed development within the property, its buffer zone and its wider setting, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies prior to any decisions being taken that could be difficult to reverse;

The Agency consistently submits to the World Heritage Centre all proposed development, at as early stage as possible, as per the guidelines set out in Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

8. Takes note that no major development project other than the Tbilisi Wind Power Plant project is currently planned in the setting of the World Heritage property, requests that an update of its status be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, and invites the State Party to continue to ensure that Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) for development projects are undertaken, assessing the multiple and cumulative impacts of current and planned developments and taking into account potential impacts on the OUV of the property, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;

The Agency has deemed the Tbilisi Wind Power Plant project within the setting of the World Heritage property 'Historical Monuments of Mtskheta' unacceptable, per the ICOMOS Technical Review dated October 2021, and refrained from endorsing the project or granting consent for its execution.

Throughout the reporting period, the Agency submitted two major development projects within the buffer zone of the property. One of these proposals included Heritage Impact Assessment concerning the construction of E-60 Highway.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity other development proposals that may affect

5. **Public access to the state of conservation report**

The State Party gives its consent to upload the full report on the World Heritage Centre's State of Conservation Information System.

6. **Signature of the Authority**

Date: 2024.11.29

Nino Guloshvili
Acting Director General
The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia